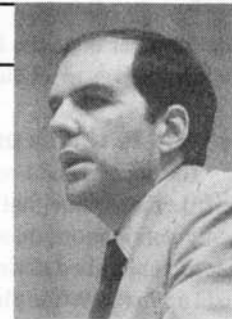


Interview: Melvin Klenetsky



LaRouche adviser assesses 1992 presidential race

Melvin Klenetsky is a veteran of Lyndon LaRouche's political movement. In 1981, he ran a high-profile campaign for mayor of New York City against Ed Koch, and, in 1982, he challenged Pat Moynihan for the Democratic Party nomination for U.S. Senate in New York State. He played an active role in LaRouche's campaigns for the U.S. presidency in 1984 and 1988 and is now coordinating LaRouche's 1992 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Nora Hamerman spoke to him at the campaign headquarters in Leesburg, Virginia on March 19.

In discussing the impact of media on the vote, he mentioned that on the eve of the 1981 mayoral primary, after he had been given major exposure in the electoral debates, he was shown by polls as having 10% of the vote just on the basis of the fact that voters had recognized the name Klenetsky and liked their impression of his policies. The primary was postponed at the last minute, and for three weeks Klenetsky's name was blacked out of the media. When the election did occur, he received only 5% of the vote. "It was a question of name recognition," he points out.

In 1992, LaRouche has qualified for the primary ballot for the Democratic Party in 23 of the 50 U.S. states, and in Puerto Rico. In one of the largest in terms of electoral votes, Texas, he polled 1% of the official returns in the March 10 primary.

Giving constituencies a voice

Where does the LaRouche campaign stand, now that the primary season is about a month old?

"Mr. LaRouche has been a candidate in 13 primaries and he has 16 to go, which could be 17 if we win a legal case in California to get him put on the ballot by the secretary of state," Klenetsky explains. "In nearly 20 states, the secretary of state has the power to place candidates on the ballot, just because he is a nationally recognized candidate. In practically all of those 20 states, the office of secretary of state has played partisan politics against LaRouche—this involves both Republicans and Democrats—except where they were mandated by statutes that clearly indicated that he should be put on the ballot. In a number of states we persuaded the American Civil Liberties Union to take up the fight and reverse the decisions because we have demonstrated that LaRouche is a nationally recognized political figure.

"After all, he put on his own half-hour campaign broadcasts more times than any other candidate in 1980, 1984,

1988, and now in 1992. He has been in scores of primaries in this period. Candidates associated with him have gotten anywhere from 15% to over 50% of the vote. There have been several victories of LaRouche Democrats. In 1986, Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart won the Democratic nominations for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, respectively, in Illinois. In 1988, Claude Jones won the Democratic Party chairmanship in Harris County—that's where Houston is—the second largest Democratic stronghold after Cook County, Illinois, in the United States. So Lyndon LaRouche and the LaRouche Democrats have proven themselves to have a constituency in the United States.

"This is interesting because LaRouche represents a political movement which has set itself the task of reversing the policies which have dominated political life for the past 30 years, since Lyndon Johnson became President in 1963. The LaRouche Democrats find themselves in heated battles within the Democratic Party because the party represents an entrenched political elite which has based itself on policies designed to throw out all political figures which represented ties to the previous set of policies. The reform movements which led up to the McGovern reforms in 1972, were designed to purge out of the party those constituent political leaders representing the trade union movement, farmers, minorities, and entrepreneurs, who were opposed to the post-industrial society policies. The leaders in cities that carried out real manufacturing, and exported that production, found themselves 'watergated' out of power.

"The general population has been left leaderless by these purges. LaRouche is giving them a voice."

No policy discussion

Can you say anything about the number of votes LaRouche is getting in these primaries?

"The issue of votes is very deceptive. Bill Clinton, who was unknown, suddenly becomes the front-runner and gets 52% of the vote when people know nothing about the man and nothing of his policies. For example, he is getting a certain amount of trade union backing although he supports the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the trade union movement has sworn to oppose anyone who backs that policy. Obviously, he has enough corrupt connections in the trade union movement to get allies even though his policy means death for the trade union movement.

"In addition, leaders in the civil rights movement are backing Clinton who, in the middle of the New Hampshire primary, ran back to Arkansas to oversee the electrocution of a prisoner. Both he and his rival Paul Tsongas came out for the death penalty—which no Democratic presidential candidate had ever done. Now the civil rights movement, knowing how black prisoners are targeted within the judicial system in general and are victims of economic and social discrimination, has always opposed the death penalty. This was anathema to the civil rights movement, which is heavily based on the church communities. The death penalty violates the Judeo-Christian ethic. Yet Clinton has received the backing of civil rights leaders, including John Lewis in Atlanta, who took many lumps while marching with Martin Luther King. They are voting on a snap impression or because someone told them to vote that way, but they have no comprehension of the policies.

"The candidates by design have stopped presenting their policies. The political debates around the election have increasingly been designed to take out policy. The sound-byte and the short answer rule the day. In the last century, remember how Abe Lincoln and Stephen O. Douglas went from town to town and demonstrated to the population who was the better candidate and citizens participated in these debates on the fundamental issues facing the country. Through that process a relative unknown, Abe Lincoln, proved himself the superior statesman and thinker and became President. The principle of the Lincoln-Douglas debates has been abandoned. There are no debates."

Well, there are media occasions which are called debates. . . .

"They talk about positions, not policies. The media decide which issues are important. For example, Jerry Brown is 'not for a middle-class giveback tax,' while Clinton is 'for it.' This is designed to destroy the ability of people to begin to understand how the candidate is capable of thinking.

"Candidates come from being unknown, and get elected President, because the establishment gives them financial backing and media exposure."

Building a constituency for policy change

LaRouche is not likely to ever get that backing. How can he win?

"LaRouche is interested in creating a political revolution to overthrow 30 years of the wrong policy. What is required is more than name recognition. We need the formation of a grassroots movement around the policy of reversing the last 30 years. That is the way that LaRouche will come to power—not because he is given the green light by the elite.

"So far he has put on two half-hour nationally broadcast television shows, on Feb. 1 and then on March 8, to explain in-depth to the American people what he stands for. Each time, once every six weeks or so, he is getting the equivalent exposure of what the other candidates get in one day's evening news or morning news or 11 o'clock report on televi-

sion. They are given political exposure in every paper and every radio and television station morning and evening. LaRouche cannot compete with what is offered as a freebie to these so-called major candidates.

"Take the case of Eugene McCarthy, a former U.S. senator and once a highly publicized presidential candidate, who ran in New Hampshire but is not listed as a major candidate and not given media coverage. He got a little more than 100 votes. Tom Harkin and Bob Kerrey, both newcomers to the political scene compared to McCarthy, got tens of thousands of votes, simply because they were constantly publicized by the media. LaRouche will never be handed this free meal. He builds a constituency in the population which is the core of a larger grassroots political movement. When LaRouche got 1% in Texas, in spite of the fact that the establishment did everything to convince voters that he was not on the ballot, that 1% represented a core of the population who had been following his ideas and came out to vote. That 1% is more important than the 52% that Clinton got in Illinois. It was not a glamor vote or a protest vote but a positive vote for LaRouche."

What happened in Texas?

"The state Democratic Party, run by its chairman Bob Slagle, tried to illegally keep LaRouche off the ballot. He had submitted his filing fee and the State Democratic Party committee refused to put his name on the primary ballot. In January, it was front-page headlines all over Texas: 'Democratic Party Kicks LaRouche Off Ballot.' This was the impression left in the voters' minds. Within weeks, the Supreme Court of Texas ruled that the Democratic Party had acted illegally and unconstitutionally under Texas law and put LaRouche back on the ballot. This was not reported in the newspapers, so the impression that was left in the general population was that he was not on the ballot.

"Most voters in most states don't hear that LaRouche is on the ballot. Infrequently, when the papers list the candidates on the last Sunday before the election, LaRouche is given a spot and his positions are presented. In Oregon, we will be on the ballot, but not in the voters' guide, which is produced by the League of Women Voters. Because we were fighting for our ballot status and time was running out, they played a dirty trick to keep us out of the voters' guide. They required a signature of the candidate. Since LaRouche is in prison and it takes time to get that signature, it was not possible to meet their deadline. That is one of many examples which prevent the voters from knowing he is on the ballot."

How to break the media blackout

Aside from his own campaign ads, what can LaRouche's supporters do to break the media blackout against his ideas?

"LaRouche is not just a political figure; he is a patriot, like the Founding Fathers. He understands that Americans are denied in-depth analysis and basic policy discussion needed for the republic to survive, and he has been instrumental in setting up publications designed to bring that information to the population. He is a founder and contributing editor

to *EIR* and he helped to found *New Solidarity* newspaper, which was the precursor to *New Federalist*. He has been involved in setting up scientific journals like *Fusion* and its successor, *21st Century Science & Technology*, which was set up after the federal government illegally bankrupted and shut down a number of publications published by his associates. These periodicals are designed to counter misinformation, but more importantly, to combat a conscious effort by the mass media to destroy the cognitive capabilities of the population and make them cheerleaders for positions."

Since Clinton won the primaries in Illinois and Michigan, and Buchanan was set back in his challenge to Bush, many pundits claim that the nominations for President in both parties are sewn up.

"Opinion is divided inside the Democratic Party itself as to whether any of the existing candidates—of course they don't include LaRouche—can defeat Bush. Former New York Mayor Koch, for example, on national television, said he did not feel that any of the candidates now in the primaries can defeat Bush, although he says Bush is defeatable. On the other hand, Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who ran for President in 1988, says that after Clinton's latest primary victories, the party should coalesce around Clinton and concentrate on winning the election.

"Democratic National Committee chairman Ron Brown is anxious to move things forward as rapidly as possible around one candidate to put up a united front against Bush. But these candidates are considered the second and third tier of the party's eligible candidates. The front-runners would have been Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York, House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), Senators Al Gore (D-Tenn.) and Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), but they aren't running. In reality, neither the first nor the second tier of the party represents any policies which are fundamentally different from Bush's. They cannot resolve what is shaping up as the greatest crisis of the century.

"The electorate is expressing its discontent with its choices by a very small turnout. There are exceptions, but these are usually dominated by local politics, not national politics. In the recent round, in Michigan, only 18% of registered voters turned out, and 82% stayed away. The *Washington Post* published an exit poll which indicates some of the problems perceived even by those who vote. After the March 17 round, 47% of Democrats who voted were not satisfied with the party's candidates, and 44% wanted someone else to enter the race. On the Republican side, only 33% of Republicans who voted approve of Bush's handling of the presidency, and 77% said they think the economy is a mess.

"The abstention is not new, but it is becoming more acute. In 1988, only 50% of registered voters voted in the general election, and only about 20% showed up for the primaries. The pattern goes back at least 20 years."

This indicates that voters don't believe they can or should take part in the selection of the candidates in the primary process.

LaRouche on the ballot

The following information was provided by the LaRouche in '92—Democrats for Economic Recovery staff. Lyndon LaRouche was on the Democratic presidential primary ballot in the following states: New Hampshire (Feb. 18); South Dakota (Feb. 28); Maryland, Colorado (March 3); South Carolina (March 7); Mississippi, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma (March 10); Illinois, Michigan (March 17).

As of March 19, he is on the ballot in upcoming primaries in: Connecticut (March 24); Puerto Rico (April 5); Kansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota (April 7); Pennsylvania (April 28); Ohio (May 5); Nebraska, West Virginia (May 12); Oregon (May 19); New Mexico (June 2). He expects to qualify for the ballot in: Washington (May 19); Arkansas (May 26); Alabama, New Jersey (June 2); North Dakota (June 9). Ballot status is also being sought in Idaho and California, which have primaries in June.

"People are alienated from political life on every level. They don't believe the leadership. Mr. LaRouche has addressed this by defining the decline of the United States from the standpoint of its political, economic, and moral life. Since the assassination of John F. Kennedy there has been a process of alienation, as both parties have been restructured with the introduction of the post-industrial society.

"The former alliances of the Democratic Party, which were between labor, farm, entrepreneurial, and minority sectors, were abandoned, and from the 1972 McGovern reforms onward, the Democrats became a party of special interests. In urban and rural areas, the Democratic Clubs no longer help people with their day-to-day problems."

Something to vote for

Is this why Republican Presidents get elected—although judging from the composition of Congress, most Americans are still Democrats?

"Elections are reactions against individuals instead of a vote for a positive policy, in the sense that people voted for Franklin Roosevelt and later, to some extent, for John Kennedy. JFK got us out of the Eisenhower depression using a combination of the Apollo space program and the investment tax credit, to get the country going again. The net effect is a positive and strong image of JFK in the population which was transferred to his brother. Robert Kennedy could have won in 1968 if he had not been killed.

"Look at the Presidents. Truman so offended people by his handling of the Korean War that he lost to Eisenhower in

1952, who picked up the political momentum developed by Douglas MacArthur, who was kept out of running by the machinations of the eastern liberal establishment. Eisenhower's policies led to the 1956 recession and set the nation back fundamentally from the industrial recovery that had been developed to fight World War II. Kennedy is elected in 1960, and assassinated in 1963; and LBJ comes in. Because of the Vietnam War, Johnson does not run again—he got the level of voter rejection that Bush has been experiencing in the Buchanan vote, but Bush is not dropping out. That was in 1968.

“Nixon came in as a vote against LBJ and the post-industrial society. Then, in 1974, Watergate breaks open, Gerald Ford is placed in the White House, and Jimmy Carter's election in 1976 is a vote against the corruption of the Watergate scandal. Ronald Reagan is elected in 1980 as a reaction against Carter's policies. His second election term is a continued reaction against Carter's legacy carried through by Mondale, and Bush rides the same coattails to the White House in 1988. Now, the reaction to the Carter legacy is running out. The Republicans have had three terms, and the people have gotten fed up.

“The Carter legacy is not different from Reagan-Bush, because it is continuation of post-industrial policy under different names. Both are rabid environmentalists. Both have rabid population control policies toward the Third World. Both welcome technological apartheid, which is a new name for colonialism. This will reintroduce the same evil policies that prevent a positive outward expansion and a natural market.”

The anti-establishment candidate

Some people would say that LaRouche is running now with his biggest handicap: He is in federal prison. Yet, the campaign is going up front with this. It has been a theme in both television shows, and on the campaign posters. What is the response? Is it a plus or a minus?

“The American population in this election has come to understand in a fundamentally different way from 1988 that the whole system is rotten. Of course, people felt it in Watergate. And that reflected the sense that there had been a coverup around the JFK assassination. The policies of the country are driving the nation back into poverty. It is the decline of the greatest industrial and agricultural superpower in the world. Oliver Stone's 'JFK' movie this year captured this sense that something was rotten in the highest places.

“Ronald Reagan pushed himself into political power by playing on that feeling in the population. He appealed to an antipathy to big government. As a professional actor, he convinced Americans that he was sincere, yet under his administration the same policies were perpetrated and the economy has gone into deeper collapse. The political corruption still prevailed in the Reagan-Bush period—exemplified by Iran-Contra.

“Jerry Brown is trying to capture the discontent by presenting himself as an anti-establishment figure. This is a big

joke, as was Reagan's image as a radical or maverick representing the conservative wing of the party against the Big Boys. Jerry Brown is as much a part of the establishment as Clinton and Carter. LaRouche is not; he is in prison. That's the message on the posters, that he is the only candidate George Bush feared enough to put in prison.

“LaRouche is putting on half-hour television shows. Most of the other candidates have trouble developing a concept for more than 20 minutes. If they do talk longer it is just rhetoric. Our shows are getting a phenomenal response: over 500 letters from the first show, we're on a similar trajectory in the second. The letters talk about his being in prison. Without knowing the details, they say they believe Bush put him in prison because of the policies he stands for. That is the best demonstration that can be given to the public that he is anti-establishment and committed to turning around the policies of the last 30 years, which led to the industrial and economic decline of the country.”

What do you think will happen next July at the Democratic convention?

“It's impossible to tell at this point. There is a strong sentiment throughout the Democratic Party that they need another candidate besides Clinton, Tsongas, and Brown. The scandals that have broken in and around Bill and Hilary Clinton just scratch the surface. It is possible that Clinton could get the nomination and then, when he runs against Bush or someone like Quayle, if Bush should drop out for health reasons, the scandals would surface. It is also possible he could be taken out by scandals prior to the convention. Then we might see a brokered convention. The last time that occurred was the nomination of Hubert Humphrey in 1968. The result of the backlash against that was the McGovern reforms which led to the primary system as we have it today. The real problem is not the selection process, it is the policies. The LaRouche movement will be at the convention to put his name in nomination and to put his policies forward as a rallying point for reviving the Democratic Party.”

Do you think there is a danger of a reaction to the Bush globalism, the new world order, in the form of an America First movement such as Pat Buchanan is appealing to?

“It is very easy for Americans to fall into that narrow thinking. But there is not as much as one might expect. Look at the way opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement is being discussed in the trade union movement. For over a decade, labor has been told that their troubles come from abroad, because supposedly Japanese and German workers are willing to work harder for peanuts. Now, the establishment, under free trade, is setting up assembly plants over the border to pay workers at most \$1-2 an hour. The way the trade unionists are discussing this is that Mexicans are being exploited, too, and not just that the American workers are losing their jobs. This is new. That is so rapidly understood that it breaks through the 'me first,' 'America first' mentality. That shows that the population is open to a more universal type of thinking.”