

# Fighting the Takeover of Detroit's Schools

by Marianna Wertz

The pattern of state takeover of cities and school districts with majority black and Hispanic populations, now escalating across the nation, has become a fighting issue for leaders whose constituents have been effectively deprived of their right to vote. *New Federalist*, the weekly newspaper of the LaRouche political movement, reported in its Nov. 6 issue on the fight in Camden, New Jersey, a test case for takeovers of hundreds, and potentially thousands of cities, in a post-financial-crash abrogation of the rights of the citizenry — including the right to vote.

In October, Camden City Councilman Ali Sloan-El contacted the campaign headquarters of former Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, to bring the Camden scandal to his attention. The Councilman's letter reads, "I am writing today to discuss Senate Bill S-1507 . . . and officially ask for your support in defeating this proposed legislation to privatize the entire city government of Camden, New Jersey. The bill effectively abolishes representative government in the City of Camden and renders the citizens' rights to vote for their elected representatives worthless. It undermines the precepts of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution and, if passed, it promises to establish policy that will be corrosive to the fabric of our democracy."

LaRouche replied, "To understand these actions against which you are protesting, you must see the present situation as the leading financier interests already see it. They see it as the worst financial collapse in centuries, far worse than 1929-1932, and are preparing to loot every public and private resource available once the crash strikes. The actions against which you protest are part of the effort of corrupted political figures to ensure that it is the people, not the bankrupted financier interests, which suffers the greatest part of the burden of the presently onrushing financial collapse."

In Pennsylvania, a threatened state takeover of the Philadelphia school system was narrowly averted in October, when the teachers, at the last minute, decided against a strike. The neighboring black suburb of Chester has already fallen under the state privatization axe, as has the black Detroit suburb of Inkster. In Jackson, Mississippi, state law SB 2672 was passed in March 1995, allowing *only* property owners (most of whom are white) to vote in areas dubbed "Business Improvement Districts," which encompass the major portion of the Jackson inner-city, thereby disenfranchising most of Jackson's black residents.

In the following interviews, *EIR* discusses this pattern with two of the leaders in Detroit's battle to retake their school system from state control, which was imposed by the legislature last year. Sharon McPhail, one of two attorneys representing plaintiff Black Parents for Quality Education, discusses both the suit they launched in September 1999, as well as her own fight against a flagrant vote fraud that cost her the job of Wayne County Prosecutor in the Aug. 8 election. Both battles are being fought against what she charges is a corrupt machine in Detroit-area politics, which is bent on enriching itself at taxpayer expense.

State Rep. Ed Vaughn (D-Detroit) endorsed Lyndon LaRouche's 2000 Presidential bid, and participated on the panel of distinguished state legislators at the June 22 Ad Hoc Democratic Party Platform Hearings in Washington, D.C. In this interview, Representative Vaughn discusses his recent campaign to become president of the Detroit chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the importance of that organization, under good leadership, in fighting for the fundamental rights of Detroit's black citizens.

But all of these battles must be situated in a larger context. Look back to the 1970s, when the New York Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) launched its "Project for the 1980s," which foresaw the "controlled disintegration" of America's cities. Look at Trilateral Commission and CFR member Samuel Huntington's 1975 "Crisis of Democracy" thesis, which put forth a scenario in which, in times of severe crisis, constituency politics would be replaced by a bipartisan governing coalition with little relation to the electorate. Finally, look at the Campaign 2000 project of the CFR this year, in which they simulated an eight-hour war-game for a global financial meltdown, in which the first element was a coup against the U.S. President (see "Exposed! CFR Bankers Plan for Financial Crash," *EIR*, July 28, 2000).

The takeover of school systems and cities now steamrolling across the nation is the playing out of those utopian scenarios, in the context of the onrushing global financial crisis. Cities and schools that are dying financially are being taken over and privatized, feeding the coffers of the private firms and their political patrons with money robbed from the public trough. This must be stopped, and the political movement headed by *EIR* Founder Lyndon LaRouche is helping to do that.