

In 2004, Will There Be A Democratic Party?

by Nancy Spannaus

A loyal Democrat whom I recently met told me about his reaction to the recent behavior of the official Democratic Party leadership. First, after the Democrats refused to support Sen.

Robert Byrd (W.V.) in his threatened filibuster against the war resolution, this Democrat telegraphed Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, saying that the party's behavior made a good case for a third party. Then, after the Nov. 5 elections, he telegraphed Senator Daschle again, saying the party's behavior made a good case for a *two*-party system. In other words, when will the Democratic Party cease acting like the slightly less opulent version of the Republicans?

So far, there is no sign on the horizon that such leadership exists *within* the normal party confines. Lyndon LaRouche, the leading rallying point for the FDR tradition internationally, and the only credible Democratic leader in sight on the crucial issues of the economy and war, is still not even being included in party polls, and drives terror into the hearts of party officialdom.

Around the country, some Democratic parties are holding meetings to "assess" where they stand after the recent elections. Where LaRouche organizers, many of them youth, have intervened, it is clear that there is demoralization and dismay. At a meeting of the Oakland County Democrats in Michigan, for example, leading Democratic officeholders attended, including Rep. Sandy Levin. But, rather than giving the 125 people who showed up a perspective on how to get through the current crisis (which the recently elected Democratic Governor is going to have to deal with), the meeting was turned over to a "facilitator," and broken up into "small discussion groups," to come up with a list of suggestions.

At some of these meetings, the lack of leadership is actually a topic for discussion—but, without any ideas being put forward, that discussion only creates more despair. Such was the case at the meeting of the King County (Seattle) Democratic Central Committee meeting Nov. 30, where, despite the appeal by a party candidate for Governor, for regaining the soul of the party by telling the truth, a presentation of the truth from, and about, LaRouche—his forecasts of the present economic collapse, and his leadership initiative of a "Super-TVA" program for recovery—was met with a generally sullen response!

The core of the party base knows that its current approach is losing, but is still clinging so hard to "public opinion" that it will not bring in LaRouche.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Leadership Council (or Dem-

ocratic Losership Council, more appropriately), which has been the prime mover behind the destruction of the party—epitomized again in the “Typhoid Mary” role of its leader, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (Conn.) in bringing defeat to Democratic Senate candidates on Nov. 5—continues to insist that the party go with the same *ersatz* Republican politics, but more so.

An op-ed by Al From, DLC chairman, pretty much tells the story. First published in the *Wall Street Journal*, the column was entitled “Get the Big Things Right.” Remarkable, was that From didn’t actually seem to realize that the defining factor in the political environment is the dramatic economic collapse, the joblessness, and the budget disasters crushing the states and stalking the Federal governments budget. Apparently, he didn’t find a poll about these things, so he doesn’t think they exist.

So, From was still talking about recapturing “the vital center.” In breaking down the steps which he thought would take the Democrats there, he basically told the party to chase after Republicans. To wit: “There are [also] more conservatives than Democrats or Republicans, more suburbanites than big city dwellers, more whites than minorities, more non-union workers than union workers.”

So, went From’s conclusion, appeal to these guys and their “interests”: the very same strategy that has been leading to disaster.

The prominent play being given to the “comeback” of Al Gore, a leading light of the DLC, does everything to reinforce this climate. Even the polls show Gore to be the last person most Democrats want as a candidate in 2004; and, according to *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen, the *New York Times* reports that Gore’s favorable ratings are among the worst that newspaper has ever recorded since it started taking such polls in 1987.

Signs of a Shift?

The only signs of a shift to sanity, so far, are baby-steps away from the DLC’s dominant and disastrous policies. Senator Daschle has appointed non-DLCers Jon Corzine (N.J.) and Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) as heads of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee, for example. The progressive caucus in the Congress has launched a campaign to extend unemployment insurance, and to extend new “revenue-sharing” help to the states. And just-announced Presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry (Mass.), while still paying lip service to the 1990s New Economy Bubble years, included in his recent Cleveland speech, a call for building high-speed rail, as well as other infrastructure.

Some political insiders report that the party leadership actually wants to sit out the 2004 elections, hoping that the deepening depression collapse (and perhaps war) will ruin the future prospects of the victorious Republicans for a long time to come! Such a “strategy,” as LaRouche pointed out recently, is the way in which nations find themselves walking into the establishment of political dictatorships.