

LaRouche Leads Fight vs. Ashcroft in Philadelphia

by EIR Staff

An Oct. 28 call from Lyndon LaRouche to “deliver a devastating blow to [Attorney General John] Ashcroft’s Gestapo methods, by a massive turn-out to re-elect Mayor John Street” of Philadelphia, led to a shock-wave mobilization which began the very next day against the Attorney General’s blatant interference in that city’s elections. By late Oct. 30, LaRouche Youth Movement forces had already distributed 100,000 out of 250,000 copies of a powerful leaflet in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, helped by churches and civic and political organizations; and were turning around sections of the population fooled by Ashcroft’s last-minute “corruption” drive against Mayor Street. The Nov. 4 Philadelphia election was taking on national and international significance.

LaRouche representative in Philadelphia Philip Valenti delivered the message at an Oct. 29 press conference in the Mayor’s City Hall conference room, called by Pennsylvania State Rep. Harold James, and attended by most area media. Also speaking at the press conference were six of Philadelphia’s Democratic state legislators, the chairman of the city’s Black clergy association, leaders of community organizations, and Federal Marshal Matthew Fogg, who won a famous lawsuit proving racial discrimination inside the Department of Justice. Statements were also made by members of the LaRouche Youth Movement, who made clear that the objec-



LaRouche representative Philip Valenti reads the candidate’s statement denouncing Attorney General John Ashcroft, at Pennsylvania State Representative Harold James’ press conference Oct. 29, from which an all-out mobilization was launched to make the re-election of Mayor John Street of national and international significance.

tive of mobilizing against Ashcroft’s election tampering, was his removal from office.

The Youth Movement organizers were determined to distribute at least a quarter-million copies of the leaflet, “Philadelphia Voters Must Say ‘No’ To Ashcroft’s Fascism,” in this city of one million people within the final week before Election Day, holding downtown rallies and sound-truck caravans with scores of activists at a time. “We’re going to do the same thing here, that we did successfully in Los Angeles County and Oakland against Schwarzenegger,” they told City Council members staffers, who immediately started taking stacks of leaflets themselves to distribute. Dozens of churches, trade union locals, and the Committeemen who represent the Democrats in the city’s wards, were mobilized to take thousands of leaflets or to address Sunday congregations on Nov. 2. As Fogg commented, “I know the LaRouche Youth Movement from D.C.; when the youth get involved, things get done!”

Fight Grew From LaRouche Webcast

Representative James had attended LaRouche’s Oct. 22 webcast, and had raised the Street issue directly with LaRouche, who moved immediately on it. The Ashcroft travesty began in Philadelphia on Oct. 7, the day of the California Recall election, when a sophisticated listening device was found hidden in the Mayor’s office. The FBI began raiding the homes and offices of Street’s top supporters the next day, with massive use of incriminating leaks to the media, and executed subpoenas for the personal bank records of Street’s wife and son. Ashcroft has visited Philadelphia personally at least three times since Oct. 1. On Oct. 27, James e-mailed a letter to LaRouche and the other nine Democratic Presidential candidates, inviting them to participate in the Oct. 29 press conference with a statement, and/or to send a representative. Besides LaRouche, only Carol Moseley-Braun bothered to reply.



Rep. Harold James denounces Ashcroft’s intervention to attempt to defeat Street with a last-minute corruption investigation, and demands a Congressional investigation and legislation to prevent such targeting.

Rep. Leanna Washington, Chair of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, opened the event by introducing all of the speakers, including the LaRouche spokesman. Representative James quoted former California Congressman Mervyn Dymally on the FBI's targetting of Black elected officials—"Operation Frühmenschen"—and used national charts to make the case clear. A letter from Dymally, urging the mobilization, was also read. All of the state representatives testified in support of Street's handling of the Mayoralty; one referenced "Bush's lies" on the Iraq war as a reason not to believe Ashcroft's highly political corruption charges about Philadelphia.

Representative James charged that clearly "The timing of the investigation is unfair, and the leaks and discovery of the listening devices are too coincidental not to have been planned [by Ashcroft] to impact the mayoral election and control its outcome." He called on Philadelphia-area Congressmen to investigate Ashcroft's moves by a special prosecutor, and asked for legislation to stop such targetting of candidates before elections. After statements from the Black clergy, Fogg, and women's groups, James explained that he had invited all

the Democratic Presidential candidates to participate; Mosely-Braun's statement was read, and then Valenti delivered LaRouche's statement (see box) to the assembled officials and press. It was clear that all were shocked and happily surprised with the statement. Lightbulbs seemed to go on in many heads at LaRouche's showing the historic, national, and international implications of the Philadelphia vote, given Ashcroft's "filthy effort to steal an election." Vigorous assent was given by several of the elected officials on the podium.

This was reinforced by the comments of members of the LaRouche Youth Movement, of whom more than 60 were mobilizing to win the Philadelphia fight—including some visitors: An International Youth Movement member from Germany spoke about the horror felt in Europe and around the world at the policies of Ashcroft and Vice President Dick Cheney. She asked if the elected officials understood the international implications of the re-election of Street as a rejection of Ashcroft's fascism. A Youth Movement leader from Philadelphia asked why the state representatives didn't demand Ashcroft's resignation, rather than just a Congressional investigation.

LaRouche: Defeat Ashcroft

This statement by Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche was released on Oct. 28 at a press conference called by State Representative Harold James (D-Philadelphia).

As in the case of the California Recall election, the Republican Party, faced with the plunging loss of credibility of the Bush-Cheney government, has resorted to a pattern of unusual bureaucratic tricks to try to pre-rig the results of the 2004 Presidential election by capturing control of key positions of state and municipal government. The governorship of California, the key state for the next Presidential election, and the thuggish role of Attorney General John Ashcroft's ham-fisted recklessness in the Philadelphia mayoralty campaign, are reflections of these dubious maneuvers.

There is much more than an election-result as such at stake in this. The U.S. today is gripped by a general financial-monetary collapse which is far more dangerous than the 1929-1933 Depression dumped on us by foolish and cruel policies of the successive Coolidge and Hoover Presidencies. Unless we return now to the philosophy of government of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the condition of our nation, especially the lower 80 percentiles of family-income brackets, will be far worse than

during the 1930s Depression.

We might wish that the Administration of President George W. Bush would change its ways; but, are you willing to gamble your family's, your community's life on that hope?

Let us make sure that in Philadelphia, we do not have a repeat of those shameful performances by my fellow Democrats, which allowed Ashcroft to become Attorney General in January 2001, and allowed Arnie "Beast-man" Schwarzenegger to take over California earlier this month. Let us deliver a devastating blow to Ashcroft's Gestapo methods, by a massive turnout to re-elect Mayor John Street. This election has taken on national and worldwide significance, as the result of John Ashcroft's filthy effort to steal an election through his all-too-familiar methods of terror, deceit, and brutal abuse of governmental power.

I call on all my fellow Democrats—including my rivals for the party's Presidential nomination—to join me in this effort to send John Ashcroft packing. This is not a partisan issue. The kind of Hitlerian Gestapo tactics being employed by this Attorney General, in league with the Dick Cheney-led neo-conservative war party in Washington, cannot be tolerated if America is to remain a free society. Our Constitution, the greatest living document in modern history, was crafted in Philadelphia. Let us perform an act of grateful service to our Founding Fathers, by delivering a crushing blow to the Ashcrofts and Cheneys, who would trample on those sacred principles of the general welfare and the common good, which our Founders worked to establish on these shores.