

Campaign 1980 by Kathleen Murphy

Reagan loses without Democratic cross-over

The failure of Democrats to cross-over in significant numbers to vote for Ronald Reagan in the Michigan primary apparently was the cause of a surprise upset victory by George Bush on the Republican side. Pollsters had put Reagan—who lost to Bush by a margin of 2 to 1—at least 10 percent ahead only one day before the Republican primary in anticipation of a Democratic cross-over vote.

The failure of the cross-over to materialize was the real surprise. A massive campaign of disinformation on the Democratic side declared that it was a meaningless contest—as only ex-candidate Jerry Brown and Lyndon LaRouche were on the ballot. This seemed to ensure that conservatives would switch from Democrat to Republican on Reagan's behalf. Instead, 10,000 Democrats voted for LaRouche, and 30,000 voted uncommitted. Although delegates had all been selected one month earlier in hastily rigged "caucuses," four times as many voters cast ballots in the primary as in the caucuses.

LaRouche requalifies for matching funds

Democratic presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche requalified his campaign for matching funds by receiving 15 percent of the vote cast in the May 20 Michigan primary. Approximately 47 percent of the Democratic voters cast their ballots as "protest votes" in the "uncommitted" category. Jerry Brown, no long a



candidate but still on the ballot, received 35 percent.

State Democratic leaders, the United Autoworkers and area news media had gone to significant lengths to try to prevent LaRouche's showing, up to and including an attempted cancellation of the primary, but to no avail. A last minute effort to organize a Kennedy and Carter "write-in" vote—neither were on the ballot—was able to garner only 3 percent.

Party officials convinced Carter and Kennedy to officially remove their names from the ballot and then organized caucuses attended by only 16,000 Democrats, most herded into buses and dragged to caucus meetings by the UAW with instructions to vote for Kennedy. Then, they asked the state to drop the primary on the Democratic side, but the primary was statutorily mandated, and the Michigan Court of Appeals forced it to be held. It was LaRouche against Jerry Brown, and 10,000 went for LaRouche, despite the fact that Michigan party chairman Olivia Maynard issued a press release urging Democrats not to vote, and the Detroit Free Press stopped

pussy-footing and ran a lead editorial urging Democrats not to vote for Lyndon LaRouche.

What the press said

Aside from the campaign through local media in Michigan instructing voters not to vote in the Democratic primary, coverage of that primary by the national news media, at a point where voters were still voting in Michigan was a tribute to the best in Orwellian fantasies. ABC Television news stated emphatically through correspondent Frank Reynolds, "There was no primary for the Democratic Party in Michigan today." ABC later admitted privately that its evening news program was incorrect. NBC News in its 11 PM Special Report on the primaries also stated through correspondent David Brinkley, "No primary was held in Michigan today because delegates were chosen at caucus meetings last month." A Mr. Cunningham of the news department stated that he could not explain why the statement was made by Brinkley, but it did not matter because "Mr. LaRouche did not get his 20 percent."

CBS which also initially broadcast through its radio outlets that there was no Democratic primary subsequently reported on television that its meaning was inconsequential and stated that each of the candidates on the Democratic ballot, LaRouche, Brown and uncommitted had gotten "a share of the votes" without specifying the vote total. Reportedly, an angry LaRouche spokesman accused the network of subjectively dealing with news; a CBS local newsman in New York is said to have retorted, "Yes, we do that every day, and we do it rather successfully, I think."