
Washington State Democrats

Leftist purge attempt follows key election

by Donald Baier

In a pre-rigged election on Aug. 1, the forces of the Socialist International seized control of the "official" Democratic Party organization in the state of Washington, installing ultra-liberal Karen Marchioro as the chairman of the state central committee. Among their first actions was the passage of a resolution of censure condemning the voting record of U.S. Congressman Norman Dicks, a Washington Democrat who had introduced a resolution in Congress early this year opposing Paul Volcker's high interest-rate wrecking job on the U.S. economy.

The National Democratic Policy Committee, which for the past two weeks had waged a high profile campaign throughout the state under the slogan "ABM—Anyone But Marchioro," issued a statement Aug. 1 defending Dicks and other Democratic moderates targeted by such purge efforts.

"These tricks are not just going on in Washington," NDPC chairman Warren Hamerman charged. "They are being carried out in California and around the country by the Socialist wing of the Democratic Party in its mobilization with the Socialist International for high interest rates."

Noting that so far national Democratic Party chairman Charles Manatt has allowed Marchioro, millionaire socialist Tom Hayden, and other creatures of the Socialist International a free hand for their takeover efforts, the NDPC called on Manatt to "turn this around immediately."

Although zero-growth austerity candidate Marchioro, a product of the Seattle-area King County Democratic forces which have sabotaged the state party for years, won the election over "unity candidate" Diane Oberquill by a vote of 100-71, the state party will remain split for the moment. Former IBEW official Joe Murphy, the statutory chairman of the party, has announced he will not resign his post but will continue to fight the Marchioro takeover. Murphy had previously withdrawn from the election race in favor of Oberquill, an appointee of pro-growth former Governor Dixy Lee Ray, and said he would have stepped aside had Oberquill won.

But the election was stacked against the Democrats'

pro-labor, pro-industrial FDR traditionalists from the start, because in mid-1980 the Marchioro liberals packed the state convention in Seattle and rewrote the party rules to ensure their dominance on the central committee. Under the old rules, Oberquill would have won the Aug. 1 election by a vote of 70-7!

During the same spring/summer period, the Trilateral Commission forces allied with the Socialist International unleashed the "Gamscam" FBI sting operation against the state's traditionalist Democrats, framing up pro-labor Senate Majority Leader Gordon Walgren and Speaker of the House John Bagnariol on racketeering charges, and dragging the Dixy Lee Ray administration through the mud as well. This softened up the party for what was expected to be a quiet takeover by the Marchioro forces. Then the NDPC stepped in.

Putting the Gamscammers on trial

In mid-July, the NDPC released a 20-page dossier on the Gamscam frameups, documenting the Trilateral crew behind the FBI "sting" and their collaboration with the Socialist International/Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee forces backing Marchioro. For the next two weeks, NDPC spokesman Mark Calney held near daily press conferences in every major city and town throughout the state, and the Trilateral/Socialist operation to "Volckerize" the Democratic Party into a weapon for depression enforcement of austerity became the hottest political issue in Washington. Everyone from local party women's caucuses to top party political figures in the state capitol at Olympia discussed the Gamscam dossier, and scores of moderate Democrats and anti-Trilateral Republicans were drawn into the mobilization.

Most of the state's major newspapers, radio, and television stations covered the story; and twice the Seattle area KING-TV station felt compelled to run strident editorials denouncing the "insignificant NDPC" for its exposés.

Several of the state's most prominent Democrats reportedly campaigned for Marchioro to withdraw her candidacy in the interests of party unity after Murphy announced that he would step aside; others, as one put it, "wanted to do it, but lacked the guts."

The impact of the NDPC's efforts was clearly visible in Marchioro's own speech to the central committee after she was installed as chairman, which she began by invoking the names of every nation-building Democrat from Franklin Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy who had upheld the party's tradition of progress. But her only programmatic recommendation was a campaign to "get the reactionaries like James Watt," the Reagan administration's interior secretary who has become the target of a Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee/Sierra Club environmentalist mobilization.