
Illinois Vote Analysis

Economy was the critical issue

by Stephen Pepper

While the national and state Democratic Party leaderships continue to give a good imitation of Chicken Little, serious political analysts are becoming increasingly aware that the victories scored by the National Democratic Policy Committee-backed candidates in Illinois were no fluke. The candidates, who addressed first of all the issue of the economy, and then fears of drug-related crime and of the deadly disease AIDS, got the support of the voters.

The Democratic leadership in Illinois made a point of declaring to the world before the election that there were no issues. Dave Drucker of the state party told *EIR* before the primary on March 18 that nothing of national importance would take place; and Wade Nelson from Sen. Alan Dixon's office proudly proclaimed that there were no issues in the primary test, "and if they do exist we don't know about them."

Now that the voters' wrath has exploded, the party officials are in a self-proclaimed "state of shock," but although it is clear that the voters intended to send a message, unfortunately for the present Democratic Party, no one is in mental shape to receive it. The same officials who dismissed the vote four days before it occurred, are now fabricating the wildest stories: the LaRouche Democrats had simple names, the Stevenson Democrats ethnic ones; no one knew who he was voting for, etc.

A simple analysis of the vote would soon destroy these fairy tales. In fact, the two successful candidates backed by Lyndon LaRouche restored the coalition created by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which transformed the Democratic Party overnight into the majority party of the last half-century. The FDR coalition consisted of blue-collar workers, farmers, small entrepreneurs, ethnics and minorities, all of whom had been left out of the Hoover "recovery." The Illinois returns show that with the probable exception of the white ethnic vote, the LaRouche Democrats restored this coalition.

The clearest evidence for this result was in an election that has received no media attention, that of LaRouche-backed candidate Robert Hart for State Treasurer. Hart ran fourth in a field of four for this position, with 14% of the vote. The other three candidates largely split the urban vote, but Hart carried 34 counties, or roughly one-third of the total number

of counties in the state, a far higher number than his rivals. These counties form a clear pattern on the map: Almost without exception, they are the ones along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and those adjacent to them, where the Reagan "recovery" has caused the most hardship. Here bankrupt farmers and laid-off miners, unemployed blue-collar workers, and disenfranchised welfare recipients voted solidly for the candidates most identified as attacking the myth of recovery, and the smugness of the status quo. For example, in Johnson County in the far southern tip of Illinois, where fully 40% of the total income is in the form of government checks, Hart and the LaRouche Dems swept the field.

At the other end of the state, the vote for Sheila Jones in her race against Alan Dixon for U.S. Senate in the black wards of Chicago gives an equally clear reading. Jones, herself a prominent black leader, ran consistently 20-30% of the vote in these wards, and in the black 6th Ward, she received 40% of the vote. Anyone familiar with Chicago ward politics knows that for an insurgent, even in this era of breakdown of the old machine, such a percentage is staggering.

Overall the vote for Jones was a remarkable expression of the voters' desire to protest the present politics. She is known throughout Chicago for strong leadership, not to say "outrageous" campaign methods, in the last mayoral race. But far beyond the precincts of Chicago she was pulling an impressive state-wide total of 127,788 votes or 15.2% against Alan Dixon, the incumbent and the most popular vote-getter in the history of the state. Jones had no funds for state-wide media, and her responsibilities to the entire ticket prevented her from touring down-state. Had any of these circumstances been different, it is very likely that she would have topped 300,000 votes.

It is a fairly good estimate that 300,000-350,000 is the size of the protest vote that turned out for the NDPC. Janice Hart, the successful candidate for Secretary of State, polled 359,744 or 51%, while carrying the non-urban vote by 2-1 over her opponent, Aurelia Pucinski. Mark Fairchild, candidate for lieutenant governor, got more than 310,000 votes. In much of downstate it is clear that the voters pulled the lever for Stevenson at the head of the ticket, and then deliberately sought out the LaRouche candidates and voted for them across the board. Peter Bowen, the NDPC-backed candidate for governor, who ran an aggressive campaign, received only 44,807 votes because the voters were not yet ready to buck the Stevenson name. But Donald Clark, running for the NDPC for comptroller, polled 178,621 or 23% of the vote.

If anyone wanted to look, it would be plain as a pikestaff what all this means, but no one in officialdom wants to find out what happened. The LaRouche-linked candidates connected with the voters on the issues, and the rest of the Dems are still denying that the issues—or for that matter, the voters—even exist.