
Civil Rights Commission

An idea whose time has passed?

by Edward Spannaus

On Friday, May 9, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights turned its facilities over to three of the most discredited opponents of Lyndon H. LaRouche, permitting them to mount a vicious attack of lies and falsehoods against the only announced Democratic presidential candidate. Billed as an "informational briefing," the Commission took testimony from Dennis King, a writer for the drug-pushing *High Times* magazine, Irwin Suall, an official of the organized-crime connected Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), and John Rees, a fruity British intelligence stringer.

Reviewing the Commission's recent history, it is not surprising that it has become a dirty-tricks operation of the ADL and the Israeli mafia in the United States. Under the Reagan "reorganization" of 1983, the Commission has abandoned its traditional civil-rights concerns, to the point where Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), chairman of the House subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, recently said: "There isn't a traditional civil rights group in this country that doesn't think this commission should be done away with."

The current round of attacks on the Commission and its chairman, Clarence Pendleton, are bi-partisan, coming from black Republicans as well as civil-rights groups. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the umbrella organization of all mainstream civil-rights groups, is calling for the Commission's funds to be cut, and a bill has been introduced into the House calling for its abolition altogether.

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission was originally created in 1957 to investigate and make legislative recommendations with respect to voting rights and discrimination. But in 1983, Reagan fired three of the six Commissioners, in order to replace them with conservatives who were opposed to quotas and busing. One of Reagan's new nominees was Morris Abram, former president of the American Jewish Committee (of mobster Max Fisher) and of Brandeis University (sometimes known as "Meyer Lansky University"). Shortly thereafter, ADL National Director Nathan Perlmutter jumped to Reagan's defense. In fact, it was only because of the "pro-civil-rights" cover presented by the ADL and the American Jewish Congress that Reagan's reorganization finally limped through Congress, in a compromise vote which expanded the

number of Commission members to eight.

Abram was made vice-chairman of the Commission, and Linda Chavez was made staff director. Chavez's husband, Christopher Gerson, is the political director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the official Israel lobby in the United States. (Chavez was replaced by Al Latham as staff director last November.)

Reagan had appointed Clarence Pendleton, a black Republican San Diego businessman, as chairman of the Commission in 1982, after he fired the then-director Arthur Fleming and another commissioner. Pendleton had sat on the board of a bank which allowed Attorney-General Ed Meese to fall 15 months behind in payments on mortgages worth \$423,000. Pendleton is under investigation by the California attorney-general and the Small Business Administration, and was sued for over \$100,000 by the Urban League of San Diego. The General Accounting Office is also investigating the Commission for mismanagement, and a congressional committee is following up the GAO investigation.

On April 16, twenty-eight black Republicans called on Pendleton to resign immediately from the Civil Rights Commission. They said that Pendleton "has no constituency and no license to speak for black Republicans." And on April 21, another conservative Reagan appointee to the Commission, John Bunzel, also called upon Pendleton to resign.

On May 12, a letter was delivered to President Reagan on behalf of candidate LaRouche, calling upon the President to dismiss the current members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The letter demanded the firing of the Commissioners for gross malfeasance and violations of the statutes and regulations governing the operations of the Commission, particularly the clear violation of the statutes governing the Commission (42 U.S.C. 1975 *et seq.*) which prohibit the Commission from taking evidence in a hearing which would tend to "defame or degrade" any person, without offering that person the opportunity to appear and respond.

The letter from the LaRouche Democratic Campaign to President Reagan stated: "The Anti-Defamation League and Dennis King are known to be currently involved in a massive operation of harassment and attempted extortion against persons who have made financial contributions to Mr. LaRouche's campaign and organizations associated with him. By giving these individuals a government-sponsored forum, the Civil Rights Commission gives the appearance of putting the imprimatur of your administration on this campaign of illegal harassment and extortion."

The LaRouche letter also reminds the Commission that it knows the ADL to be an unreliable source of information. In 1982 (before the Reagan "reorganization"), the Civil Rights Commission rejected as "not suitable for publication," a report prepared for it under contract by the ADL, saying the report used "inaccurate" and "unverified" information.

The letter concludes with a call for the President to dismiss the responsible commissioners, and to constitute a new Commission "true to its intended purpose."