

governor. On Sept. 28, 1978, the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* identified convicted numbers racketeer Anthony Grosso as the head of an "underground" Thornburgh for Governor campaign that was raising funds for the GOP nominee and also carrying out a dirty tricks campaign against his Democratic opponent, former Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty. Thornburgh denied the Grosso links, charging that the allegations of mob ties were a dirty trick. However, published reports revealed that a number of campaign fundraising events had been held by Grosso lieutenants and that a shadow campaign office had been set up.

Following his election as Pennsylvania's governor in 1978, Thornburgh continued to be associated with some of the area's well-known gangsters. In a May 3, 1981 Pittsburgh *Press* article, it was revealed that Thornburgh had arranged a \$10 million beer contract between the government of Taiwan and Philadelphia brewer William Pflaumer, who had been named just a year earlier in the Pennsylvania Crime Commission's annual report as a major front-man for organized crime.

Several years later, Thornburgh associates helped clear the way for a Gambino organized crime family operator in New York City, Nicky Sands, to win lucrative contracts with the Pittsburgh international airport. Prominent Pittsburgh Anti-Defamation League figure Phil Baskin was lead attorney for the Sands-Gambino deal until local media exposure of Sands's prior criminal record put the kibosh on the contract. Thornburgh's campaign manager J. Evans Rose was at the time involved in a complex series of financial deals with Baskin involving the parceling out of \$11 million in commissions for a billion dollar state highway bond issue.

At Governor Thornburgh's January 1983 inauguration celebration, a crime figure from Youngstown, Ohio, Edward DiBartolo, was among 100 guests of honor at a special party for the biggest contributors to the campaign.

### Exposés promised

Pennsylvania state Democratic Party chairman Anthony May has promised that Harris Wofford, the party's nominee in the Nov. 5, 1991 special Senate election, will expose the Thornburgh sleaze factor during his campaign. May told the *Washington Times* that "the only people who have ever said Richard Thornburgh is an honorable man are Richard Thornburgh and the people paid by Richard Thornburgh. His law and order, squeaky clean image is not borne out by the facts."

There is no doubt that Anthony May is correct. What remains to be seen is whether the state Democrats, the media, and voters of Pennsylvania will take the opportunity of this special election to break with their past track record of bowing to Richard Thornburgh and his organized crime pals. The first step is a thorough exposure of "Bugsy" Thornburgh's three-decade track record.

## Setbacks for Virginia 'Get LaRouche' gang

The Virginia branch of the national "Get LaRouche" task force received two setbacks at the end of August, in its efforts to silence the political organizing and fundraising of the associates of jailed statesman Lyndon LaRouche.

Judge Clifford Weckstein of Roanoke, Virginia dismissed "securities fraud" charges against Barbara Boyd on Aug. 26, because the prosecution had violated her right to a speedy trial. Boyd was indicted in 1987, along with 15 others, on trumped-up charges to the effect that political loans constituted "securities" and therefore that their solicitation required registration as a broker. Such a bizarre view has never been applied before or since in the Commonwealth of Virginia to any political organizers *not* associated with LaRouche.

Judge Weckstein issued a one-page statement saying that the dismissal was unique to the circumstances of this case. Boyd had originally been scheduled to be tried in December 1989, but the prosecution for its own reasons balked at going to trial at the scheduled time. Instead, the Commonwealth tried Boyd's codefendant Michael Billington, who was convicted and sentenced to 77 years in prison.

This is the first time that charges against any LaRouche associate have been dropped in Virginia.

Then, on Aug. 29, Loudoun County, Va. Judge Carleton Penn ruled against an attempt by prosecutor John Russell to revoke the bail of Rochelle Ascher, who was convicted on "securities fraud" charges in 1989, and whose appeal was recently denied. Ascher was sentenced by the jury that convicted her to an unheard-of 86 years in prison; the trial judge commuted the sentence to 10 years.

John Flannery, Ascher's attorney, argued that Penn had no jurisdiction to revoke bail, because under the law, bail continues until all appeals are exhausted, and Ascher had already filed a petition for a rehearing before the entire Appeals Court. Furthermore, Flannery said that the prosecution had filed a motion in May 1990 claiming that Ascher was a danger to the community, and no evidence has ever been presented to back that up.

Judge Penn ruled that until the Appeals Court sends him an order allowing him to revoke Ascher's bail, he has no authority to do so. He said since the prosecution had elected not to present any evidence that Ascher was a danger to the community, he had no basis to revoke her bail.