

Leading Democrats Take Up Vote-Suppression Fight

by Edward Spannaus

“What happened on Nov. 2 was not an election, but a not-so-cold coup d’état against the United States Constitution,” former Democratic presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche declared in a Nov. 9 international webcast. And those in the Bush-Cheney campaign and the Republican Party who engaged in a widespread campaign of vote-suppression are guilty of violating the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the Constitution, LaRouche charged. “The kinds of frauds which were perpetrated by the Republicans alone in this election, were sufficient to send these guys to jail, if not to un-elect them,” LaRouche stated.

The theft of the election through the massive suppression of the votes of minority voters, most flagrant in Ohio and Florida, but also prevalent in many other states, is a far bigger question than mere vote fraud. By targetting the lower 80% of the population which the LaRouche movement and elements of the Democratic Party were mobilizing, the George Shultz-Dick Cheney apparatus and their synarchist-financier backers were attempting to consolidate their grip on the U.S. government for their policy of perpetual war and brutal economic austerity.

Thus, the question of vote-suppression is now a central battlefield in the fight to save this Republic from the ongoing coup.

With the dollar crisis hitting, and about to bring down the global financial system, impelling the synarchist financier oligarchy into more Nazi-like dictatorial measures, it is crucial that the real significance of the criminal vote-suppression operations leading into Nov. 2 be properly understood. This is critical inside the Democratic Party, where many activists are being drawn into futile legal actions on the state level, seeking recounts, or redress for vote fraud and irregularities, which do not get at the fundamental Constitutional implications of the Nov. 2 coup.

On the other hand, there is fortunately an effort now under way among key Democrats, in the House and elsewhere, to compile the evidence of how high-level operatives in the Bush-Cheney apparatus, including some in the White House, acted in explicit violation of the Voting Rights Act to suppress the vote on Nov. 2.

The Shadow of ‘Jim Crow’

Prior to the election, a report called “The Long Shadow of Jim Crow: Voter Intimidation and Suppression in America Today” was published by the NAACP and People for the American Way. The report opened by noting that “it would be comforting to think that the last vestiges of voter intimidation, oppression, and suppression were swept away by the passage and subsequent enforcement of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965,” but, “it would be a grave mistake to believe it.”

“In every national American election since Reconstruction, every election since the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965, voters—particularly African-American voters and other minorities—have faced calculated and determined efforts and intimidation and suppression,” the report’s introduction stated. “While the bloody days of violence and retribution are gone, and the poll tax and literacy tests have disappeared,” now “more subtle, cynical, and creative tactics have taken their place.”

The NAACP report then chronicled the myriad methods of vote-suppression used, over the past couple of decades, which have intensified during the 2000 election and subsequently. Unfortunately, despite the attention that has been focussed on such unlawful practices since the 2000 election debacle in Florida, there was no let-up in such activity in the 2004 election.

In recent issues of *EIR* (see Nov. 19 and Nov. 26), we have presented documentation of the many methods of voter-

suppression used, particularly in Ohio. This included dirty tricks and disinformation circulated to voters before the election (such as directing voters to the wrong polling place), and during the election; mobilizing challengers to intimidate voters at the polling places; unlawful purging of voter rolls; and the failure to process new voter registrations in a timely manner. And, perhaps the most important method in Ohio, deliberately shorting the number of voting machines in urban minority precincts, so that would-be voters had to stand in line for 3-4 hours, and sometimes 8-10 hours, causing many to leave in frustration or out of necessity, thus preventing them from voting.

As we have previously reported, voting-rights and civil-rights activists in Ohio are gathering evidence which can be used in civil and criminal complaints, charging violations of the Voting Rights Act.

Congressional Dems Move on Ohio

Now, in a major development, 12 Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee, led by Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, sent a letter to Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell on Dec. 2, demanding that he respond by Dec. 10 to a comprehensive set of complaints and allegations about election irregularities in the 2004 Presidential elections.

The Conyers letter points out that the pattern of complaints received, shows “a one-two punch that may well have altered and suppressed votes, particularly minority and Democratic votes,” and that “a series of actions of government and non-government officials may have worked to frustrate minority voters.” The letter to Blackwell explains:

“Consistent and widespread reports indicate a lack of voting machines in urban, minority, and Democratic areas, and a surplus of such machines in Republican, white, and rural areas. As a result, minority voters were discouraged from voting by lines that were in excess of eight hours long. Many of these voters were apparently also victims of a campaign of deception, where flyers and calls would direct them to the wrong polling place. Once at that polling place, after waiting for hours in line, many of these voters were provided provisional ballots after learning they were at the wrong location. These ballots were not counted in many jurisdictions because of a directive issued by some election officials, such as yourself.”

On Dec. 3, Representative Conyers and other members of Congress announced that they will be sponsoring a forum on voting irregularities in Ohio, to be held on Capitol Hill on Dec. 8. They also sent an invitation to Secretary of State Blackwell, urging his attendance and participation in the forum.

Evidence Must Be Presented to Joint Session

The pattern of vote suppression being compiled by the House Judiciary Committee minority members, is precisely the type of evidence which should be presented to the full

House and Senate on or before Jan. 6—which is when Congress meets in Joint Session to certify the Electoral College votes.

To understand the type of mobization which is needed, it is worth recalling what happened four years ago. In a webcast held by LaRouche on Jan. 3, 2001, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) posed a question about the pending nomination of John Ashcroft as U.S. Attorney General. LaRouche insisted that the Congress had to use every means at its disposal to block the Ashcroft nomination, because it signaled the intent to launch a coup against the Constitution. LaRouche explained that Hitler’s ultimate consolidation of power in 1933, after his rise to the Chancellorship, came as a result of a series of emergency measures crafted by Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt. Those measures were enacted under the pretext of the Reichstag fire which burned the capitol building, and Hitler’s dictatorship was thereby firmly established.

LaRouche’s startling response reverberated through Washington, and especially the CBC, and thus, when the time came for Bush’s election to be certified by Congress a few days later, members of the CBC staged a dramatic action on the floor of the Joint Session, rising one after another to object to the Florida electoral vote, citing the history of the civil rights movement and the Voting Rights Act. Although the Florida voting irregularities were the issue at hand, there was no mistaking the fact that it was LaRouche’s initiative on the Ashcroft question that had catalyzed this dramatic action.

Although the Caucus was unsuccessful in persuading a single member of the Senate to support their valiant cause—as is required to allow an objection to an electoral vote to proceed—they captured national attention. Following Bush’s certification, the drive to stop Ashcroft grew. By the time his nomination came to the Senate floor, there were a sufficient number of U.S. Senators organized and ready to block Ashcroft’s confirmation. At the very last moment, Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, in an act of betrayal that probably cost him his Senate seat in 2004, ordered Democratic Senators to halt their resistance, and confirm Ashcroft.

Today, the LaRouche influence in the party is much stronger than it was then. A growing number of Democratic leaders recognize the importance of making a fight on this issue, as LaRouche has specified. One key Democrat noted that making a fight on this point—even if it does not succeed in depriving Bush and Cheney of a second term—will deliver a clear and reverberating message, that the synarchists’ attempted coup will *not* be a “cold” one, but that they had better be prepared to deal with people who are prepared to fight back.

Moreover, the onrushing financial collapse, particularly as it is manifested in the current collapse of the dollar, may itself, by Jan. 6, be a major determining factor in institutional efforts to block or constrain Bush and Cheney in a second term.