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LaROUCHIES AND LITMUS PAPER TESTS

Shortly before the LaRouchies plunged the Democratic Party in Illinois into disarray by winning the Democratic Party nominations for two statewide offices, the national chairman of the Democratic Party, Paul G. Kirk, Jr., wrote a seven-page letter to his contributors. He said he was worried.

He wasn't a bit worried about the impending disaster in the Democratic Party in Illinois because he didn't see it coming. Instead, he expressed himself as terribly worried about the Republican Party.

Kirk's letter approached hysteria in warning that Pat Robertson, the TV host of the 700 Club, might be nominated for President by the Republican Party. Kirk called Robertson "radical right wing," "ultra fundamentalist," and "extremist," the typical epithets which liberals hurl at any Republican to the right of Senator Lowell Weicker (R-CT).

Kirk's letter conjured up the imagery of a terrible danger. "I cannot think of another time in modern political history," he said, "when so powerful an extremist faction as the coalition of the Religious and Political Right came this close to seizing the reins of power in America."

In the words of the old popular song, "What a difference a day makes." On March 18, it turned out that Paul Kirk's concerns were misplaced. It isn't the Republicans who need to worry about extremists getting nominated -- it's the Democrats.

Two followers of the maverick activist, Lyndon LaRouche, won the Democratic nominations for Illinois state office: one for Lieutenant Governor and one for Secretary of State. This was a major embarrassment for Illinois Democrats who are accustomed to primaries which are merely public ratifications of slatemaking decisions made weeks before in the stereotypical smoke-filled room.

The Lieutenant Governor nomination locked Mark Fairchild in a political embrace with the scion of a famous family, Adlai Stevenson III. That's because Illinois law requires the Governor and Lieutenant Governor nominees of a party to run as a pair in the general

election, although they run individually in the primary.

Stevenson said he will withdraw from the Democratic column and run as an independent (which is difficult if not impossible under Illinois law) or not at all. Paul Kirk, however, had an even more interesting reaction. He says that he will now "closely monitor the names and views" of Democratic candidates for office.

This is the same Paul Kirk who has been accusing Ronald Reagan of having a "litmus paper" test for Federal judges and other appointees. Of course, Ronald Reagan doesn't have any "litmus paper" test. But the majority of Americans who elected him certainly expect him to appoint judges and other officials who support the Reagan philosophy.

It's quite a different thing, however, for Kirk to "monitor" candidates on the ballot. Off-beat candidates with bizarre ideas have the same right as anyone else to run in the primary. The way to defeat them is not by "monitoring" the filings, but by putting up good candidates who appeal to the voters.

The Democrats are searching for someone to blame for the Illinois debacle. Some are trying to blame the media for not alerting the voters to the extremism of the LaRouche candidates. The media, in turn, are trying to label the LaRouche candidates as "ultra-conservative" and "right wing."

That type of analysis won't wash. A Heritage Foundation study two years ago showed that the LaRouchies are political chameleons who cannot be ideologically pigeon-holed. They make a business of using any issue that can captivate local attention and support, such as talking about the "worsening depression" among unemployed industrial workers and distressed farmers.

Founder Lyndon H. LaRouche started his political life with the radical left-wing Students for a Democratic Society. For many years, he was a member of the Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyite Communist party. He then founded the National Democratic Policy Committee to work with and in the Democratic Party. LaRouche attacks both conservatives and liberals.

<u>Newsweek</u> magazine published an editorial by a Chicagoan who voted for the LaRouche candidates. He admits that he didn't realize whom he was voting for, but, on the other hand, he said it felt good to "kick the Democrats in the pants."

Fortunately, there is no chance that the LaRouchies will be elected in November. Their nomination assures that the Republican candidates will win.