

Dodson

California Politics

Here are the latest political notes from the Beautiful People's Republic of Santa Monica, home of Tom Hayden, Jane Fonda and their anti-big business Campaign for Economic Democracy. Mr. Hayden is running for the Democratic nomination for state assemblyman, the city planning commission heatedly debated but rejected a proposal to limit commercial buildings to no more than four stories, and the CED-backed mayor and her husband are embroiled in a flap the local press has dubbed "Lakergate."

It seems that Mayor Ruth Yannatta Goldway and her spouse, Planning Commissioner Derek Shearer, intellectual leaders of the "economic democracy" movement, accepted free tickets from Laker Airways last December for a London holiday. On their return, the horrified city attorney discovered they had violated a section of the state constitution adopted in 1879 during a public outcry against the monopolistic Central Pacific Railroad.

The section ordered that any public officer accepting a free pass from any "railroad or other transportation company" should immediately forfeit his job.

The mayor and the commissioner wrote out a check for the tickets, but not before the former city attorney heard of the faux pas and launched a suit on behalf of the carpenters union—angry over proposed construction restrictions—to remove them from office. State Attorney General George Deukmejian, a Republican candidate for governor, passed through town last week and ruled that the suit should go forward. Ruth and Derek replied with a bitter blast at "political harassment" based on "an out-of-date and inapplicable provision of the state constitution which no one in Santa Monica heard of before this." Needless to say, they are not appreciating the irony that they ran afoul of a law passed by the anticapitalist movement of a century earlier.

Bob:

You may have seen the spot "60 Minutes" did on Santa Monica and its initiation of stiff rent controls and construction regulations. I placed a call to the Mayor's office on Monday, managing to speak to one of the mayor's legislative aids. Addressing their problems as a member of the Incentive Tax League, I gave them Mason Gaffney's name and suggested the city contact Mason with regard to giving input on how to bring down rents through site value taxation. I also told them we were close to similar legislation here in Philadelphia. Perhaps they will call Mason (or me) ... perhaps not.

Ed