

# Teamsters committee calls for debate on U.S. presidential qualifications

The Teamster Committee to Elect LaRouche President on June 18 issued an open letter to Teamster General President Frank E. Fitzsimmons which applauds his and the IBT Executive Board's decision not to endorse a 1980 U.S. presidential candidate at this time. The letter also urges a thoroughgoing debate within the union on the qualifications for a U.S. presidential candidate. The letter will be mass circulated.

A presidential candidate, the Committee states in the letter, "must be judged on both the issues and on whether he is the kind of man who will do as he says on issues after he is elected...."

Commenting on the Executive Board's action in not endorsing a candidate at this time and how this affects the Committee's activities, the letter states: "All we have ever asked is that Mr. LaRouche be fairly and carefully considered on the same basis as other candidates. Our business [as the Committee—ed.] is to carry out a dialogue on these issues and qualifications in order to educate the general membership and officers to prepare them for this most important choice. The dialogue and education is what is most important now. The choice of a candidate, we agree, must come later...."

Since its formation nearly a month ago, the committee has sparked an intense debate within the union over who the Teamsters should endorse for President. Upwards of 1,000 Teamster members have helped circulate nearly one half million copies of leaflets announcing the Committee's formation and plans and the recent endorsement of the LaRouche candidacy and the anti-drug fight by Teamster General Organizer Rolland McMaster.

In response to the many questions and rumors—including many deliberately false statements—about the committee's intentions, the committee has decided to restate its purpose emphatically to President Fitzsimmons and Teamster members: "The committee's reasons for forming are and have been at all times to educate Teamster members and officials on the qualities needed in a presidential candidate for 1980. We state clearly that our choice for President in 1980 is Lyndon

H. LaRouche of the U.S. Labor Party. Our broader educational purpose is to educate the Teamsters on the nature of the crisis facing Teamsters and the labor movement in the country...."

Reliable sources in the Teamsters report that Teamster President Fitzsimmons and the executive board are being wooed by representatives of various presidential candidates. Most prominent among these is former Governor John Connally, who is trying to represent himself as a friend of labor despite his support—albeit sometimes covert—for antilabor policies like the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act and deregulation of the trucking industry. The presence of the TCELP has already thrown a monkey wrench into the plans of wheeler-dealers like Connally.

In another open letter to Fitzsimmons being circulated by the Committee, Lyndon H. LaRouche analyzes the potential for a Labor Party victory in the 1980 elections and the fissuring apart of the two party system. The current situation, says LaRouche, requires that new institutional machines be built to give the American people a chance to speak with a loud and powerful voice on policy matters affecting their lives. The Teamsters have an important role to play in this process. LaRouche cautions the Teamsters against the efforts of individuals like Connally, who will try to sway them into betraying their responsibility to the members and the republic.

The Teamster committee makes a similar point. "In 1980, we cannot pick a President who will promise to give the Teamsters preferential treatment, while their overall policy brings the country to ruin. We must pick a President by understanding the mental and moral qualities that must be assumed by a President. We do not see those mental and moral qualities in the other candidates. What we do see in people like Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Connally are cheap promises to woo us into their administration, promises they have no intention of keeping...."

—L. Wolfe, New York and  
Scott Elliott, Detroit