

## Agriculture by Mary McCourt

### LaRouche on the food crisis

*The candidate warns Democrats that unless the food crisis is solved, none of the other urgent problems facing the nation can be solved.*

**I**n a statement to delegates at the July 16-19 Democratic Party Convention in San Francisco, presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., warned of the impending danger of a food shortage in the United States itself within two years, and declared the agriculture crisis the "litmus test" of economic policy-making this year: "Anyone who thinks sensibly about the present crisis in agriculture will probably think sensibly about every other aspect of our nation's economic policy-making."

The June report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows why LaRouche put this issue forward as the keystone of his demand for action on economic policy from the Democratic Party.

As of June 1, U.S. stocks of both corn and soybeans, the primary feedgrains for meat production, for domestic use stood at less than 23 weeks each. Wheat stocks were at an "acceptable level" of 65 weeks, but even that is threatened. The 1983-84 winter was nearly twice as long as usual, and the demand for feedgrains far exceeded the supply this spring. As a result, farmers began to substitute wheat for corn to feed their herds.

Natural disaster, in the form of the worst drought in 50 years in the summer of 1983, and the cold wet spring following, has taken a severe toll. But the hand of man, in the form of the USDA's Payment-In-Kind (PIK) and other acreage-diversion programs, is the real perpetrator of the crisis. Under PIK, some 100 million acres—the largest acreage-diversion operation in

U.S. history—have so far been taken out of production. Worse, even after the 1983 drought, some 30 million additional acres have been idled, making it impossible for the nation to replenish stocks.

EIR estimates that production of wheat, corn, and soybeans will only increase slightly over the lows of 1983. Soybean production will rise only to 1.82 billion bushels over the 1983 crop of 1.60 billion bushels—34 million bushels below 1982 levels. Wheat production will expand only 7 million bushels above the 1983 level of 2.43 billion bushels, which was a 40 million bushel drop from the previous year. And although corn production may rise some 2.1 billion bushels from 1983 levels, it will still be 2.1 billion bushels lower than the 8.4 billion bushel 1982 crop.

The danger is clear. The USDA's "zero food production growth" policy means that the United States, the most advanced and greatest food producer in world history, will not have the available stocks to keep feeding its own population, much less the rest of the world, if there is just one more bad harvest.

"The simple and clear fact is, the world is presently producing only about two thirds of the amount of food needed to keep individuals alive in reasonable health," LaRouche asserted in his statement for the Democratic Convention. "As long as there's enough food for our families, and those families have enough money to buy that food, we have a fighting chance to overcome most of the problems of

our nation. Without food on the table, none of the other problems are going to be solved, because we won't be in shape to tackle them."

This crisis is not a question for party politics, LaRouche declared, because Reagan administration policies—including maintaining Paul A. Volcker's regime of murderous interest rates—have simply continued Carter-Mondale policies to slash food production.

Carter-Mondale, the "Global 2000" administration, was not acting on its own initiative, however, but in the interests of the international grain cartels—families whose control of the world grain trade goes back for generations. "There is only one institution powerful enough to protect our farmers and other citizens from international syndicates as powerful as the grain speculators," LaRouche asserted. "That institution is the Federal Government of the United States."

Now, it should be the goal of the Democratic Party to ensure that the federal government meets the crisis. "President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration lifted American agriculture out of dust-bowl conditions," LaRouche reminded the delegates. "A combination of water-management projects, rural electrification, and a policy of maintaining parity prices for farm produce produced one of the greatest economic miracles in modern history, the miracle of the 1940s and 1950s revolution in American agriculture. . . .

"Farmers have been warning the government and the parties for years that what is happening now could happen. . . . Very few people listened to those warnings. Now, the hands of the clock are at about five or ten minutes before midnight.

"Isn't it about time that the Democratic Party faced reality?"