

Labor in Focus by Marianna Wertz

Kirkland could get 'LaRouched'

The AFL-CIO has launched a risky campaign against the presidential contender and the candidates who back him.

The April 5 issue of the *AFL-CIO News*, the weekly newspaper of the federation, is taken up almost entirely by an unprecedented, wild-eyed slander of Lyndon LaRouche, the only declared 1988 U.S. presidential candidate. "Lyndon LaRouche's Nightmare World," is the lead story, followed by a page-three article on the Schiller Institute, a think-tank founded by LaRouche's wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche. In the same issue, there is a defamatory political cartoon, on the editorial page. The entire back page is a memo from COPE, the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education, titled "Best Antidote for LaRouchism: Exposure."

The labor federation has apparently decided to put its entire political capital on the line, to try to stop what it calls the "dangerous" LaRouche and his movement of candidates for political office, two of whom captured the Democratic nomination for Illinois secretary of state and lieutenant-governor in the March 18 primary. While thus slandering LaRouche, the AFL-CIO has deployed its top leadership into Democratic Party meetings around the nation, to slander and harass LaRouche candidates. Not in many years has the AFL-CIO put so much muscle into a single operation.

The first open attack on a LaRouche-backed candidate occurred on April 5, when Iowa State AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Mark L. Rich publicly slandered LaRouche associate Juan Cortez, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, in front of a Democratic county convention in Des

Moines. Cortez is a member of the Democratic Party's National Committee, a former official of the AFSCME union, and current president of the Cedar Rapids chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the national black trade-union organization.

Rich called Cortez an "anti-Semite" and a "neo-Nazi," and attempted to lead a walkout from the room when Cortez rose to answer his slanders and deliver his speech. The walkout was only partially successful. Many people knew Cortez well and disregarded Rich.

Many of the close to 1,000 candidates running on a LaRouche-authored platform in national and state campaigns this year, are members and/or officials of trade unions. They have issued an "Open Letter to American Labor," responding to the AFL-CIO's charges. It reads in part:

"Why is the AFL-CIO devoting so much time and money and trying so hard to destroy LaRouche and his associates? Because LaRouche's associates in Illinois won the votes of working men and women, farmers, the unemployed, and minorities, who are fed up with the leadership of the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party and their consistent failure to solve the real problems that are besetting our nation and its people. When LaRouche puts forth solutions to the depression; when LaRouche calls the 'recovery' a hoax; when LaRouche calls for AIDS victims to be quarantined; when LaRouche says the international drug trade is an organized war against our

children—people agree, and they vote for his policies. That is what the AFL-CIO fears, because Lane Kirkland and his cronies are part of the Eastern Establishment crowd in the Trilateral Commission and Council on Foreign Relations who created this depression.

"Kirkland says it was a 'mix of demagoguery, prejudice and voter apathy [that] demolished the Democratic Party's statewide ticket' in Illinois. When the majority votes against the chosen candidates of the establishment, all of a sudden, Kirkland thinks the majority is stupid and racist.

"As candidates for public office who have devoted our lives to the trade union movement, we have found in Lyndon LaRouche's leadership the courageous fighting quality that the trade unions have lost under men like Kirkland. We will not be intimidated by such petty tyrannical tactics. And we trust that you, sisters and brothers in this fight, will join us at the polls, on the job and off, in organizing to take this country back from the dope-pushers, the Trilateral Commission, and their judasses in the labor movement."

Signers include Cortez and Henry "Hank" Wilson, United Auto Workers Local 600 General Council delegate, and a current Executive Council member and former president of the Dearborn Assembly Plant's UAW Local. Wilson was the victim of a physical assault last year by UAW goons, who jumped him at a Local 600 meeting in Detroit when he attempted to discuss LaRouche's policies with fellow members.

The AFL-CIO's Murray Seegar announced at a jam-packed National Press Club address by LaRouche on April 9, "I don't think LaRouche can stand exposure." An organization losing members as fast as the AFL-CIO should probably be more cautious in blowing its wad.