Prairiefire

550 Eleventh Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, Telephone: 515/244-5671

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Key Farm & Rural Contacts

FROM: Daniel Levitas, Research Director; Rev. David L. Ostendorf, Director

RE: Lyndon LaRouche "Food for Peace" Campaign

DATE: November 1, 1988

LAROUCHE PROMOTES FARMBELT DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

"Food for Peace" is the captivating title of Lyndon LaRouche's latest effort to dupe unsuspecting farm and rural people into believing that his far-right political movement has a solution to the farm crisis. Despite the slogan, this effort has nothing to do with the official U.S. government Food for Peace (PL 480) overseas food aid program.

The campaign was launched Sept. 3-4 with an international meeting in Chicago that reportedly attracted as many as 400 people from 30 states and 10 nations. Many of those in attendance were farmers.

While organizers and candidates associated with LaRouche have been present in rural America since the late 1970s, the recent "Food For Peace" campaign represents a strategic departure from more recent LaRouche activities in the farmbelt which have primarily involved smear campaigns and electoral forays.

An Ambitious Effort:

In short, "Food for Peace" is an ambitious organizing drive designed to develop a new group of organizers drawn from a constituency of financially distressed and politically vulnerable farm and rural people.

In the past several weeks, LaRouche operatives promoting "Food for Peace" have attempted to reach beyond their existing follwers by approaching farm, rural and religous organizations - as well as individual farmers - with phone calls, mailings and personal visits. A series of approximately 20 meetings - which have routinely drawn 20 to 30 participants, most of them farmers - have been held in more than 15 states from Oct. 15 - Nov. 6. A second international gathering, which LaRouche organizers claim will attract upwards of 1,000 participants, is planned for Dec. 10-11 in Chicago.

Because LaRouche and his organizations have received considerable negative publicity about criminal indictments they face in Boston, Mass., and Alexandria, Va., rural and religious activists may be tempted to ignore this latest round of recruitment activities. However, as discussed below, the "Food for Peace" campaign requires our attention and response.

The "Food for Peace" Program:

The message being promoted at these gatherings is as follows (also see pg. 8):

• The present "worldwide food crisis" is a result of deliberate policies launched by USDA and the grain trade designed to force farmers to cut production.

• Farmers should be paid parity prices for their products.

• Farmers require low-interest loans to enable them to engage in "maximum food production."

• All potentially-tillable farmland taken out of production should be put back into production at the fastest possible rate.

• The EPA, and environmentalists in general, have contributed to the present food crisis by preventing farmers from using safe insecticides and pesticides, "including DDT."

• There must be an immediate halt to all farm foreclosures.

• A massive "North American Water and Power Alliance" project is needed - along with a "renewed commitment to construction of nuclear power plants" - in order to prepare for future drought years.

The literature distributed at these meetings also asserts that the current food crisis 'will translate into next year's barren dining room tables...if the policies of Lyndon LaRouche are not implemented.'

"We are rapidly descending into a new Dark Age of jungle rule, where only the biggest and fiercest beasts are fit to survive," reads one tract.

The meetings have also had an international emphasis. For example, joining LaRouche operatives Marcia Merry and Peter Bowen in Des Moines, Ia., on Oct. 22, was French dairy farmer, Aline Cotten-Henaff, whose family farms in Brittany. She spoke at length about the evils of French production quotas and supply management. Rosa Tennenbaum, a member of LaRouche's "European Agricultural Commission of the Schiller Institute," attended an Oct. 15, meeting in Jamestown, ND., organized by a Baldwin farmer and LaRouche follower, Anna Belle Bourgois.

In addition to the usual selection of pamphlets and tabloids made available at these gatherings, sophisticated videotapes of the Sept. 3-4 Chicago meeting are being distributed, featuring interviews with farmers from both the United States and abroad. The producer of these tapes is Bob Baker, a former Keota, Ia., resident who now works out of LaRouche's Leesburg, Va., headquarters. Baker had worked at the Haysville, Ia,, bank before it was declared insolvent.

A Disinformation Agenda:

Despite the fact that LaRouche calls for parity and a moratorium on farm foreclosures, the reality is that the entire campaign is designed to do little more than recruit unsuspecting people into supporting LaRouche's real agenda, which is to destroy mainstream and activist farm groups, promote paranoia and an extreme cold war mentality, and build his movement based on a neo-fascist economic and political program.

These objectives have been aggressively pursued in the pages of two prominent LaRouche publications: *The New Federalist* (formerly known as *New Solidarity*), a bi-weekly news tabloid; and *Executive Intelligence Review* (EIR), a slick monthly magazine priced at $400 per year.

Although these publications are usually careful to avoid direct expressions of

anti-semitism or racism, occasionally the message comes through loud and clear - as it did in this July 29, 1988, article by Scott Thompson in EIR:

"Under the present crisis conditions, the activities of the grain cartels ought to be of national security concern. *Historically, today's cartels are the heirs of the Aleppo Syrian Jewish Community* (sic), whose speculations in grain prices during the Byzantine Empire were used to bring about contrived shortages, and usurious prices, and to control nations within the empire." **(emphasis added)**

Articles appearing in LaRouche-sponsored publications over the years have promoted literally dozens of wild conspiracy theories and lies about farm, rural and religious activists. One such article that appeared in the March 1, 1985, issue of *New Solidarity* asserted that:

"A network of tightly linked farmbelt countergangs... is driving forward with a plan to turn U.S. agriculture... into feudal, labor-intensive farming."

These "countergangs," it turns out, include organizations such as: Catholic Rural Life (a "gnostic faction of the American Catholic Church" and an agent of the "Benedictine Order"), the National Council of Churches, and groups such as Minnesota Groundswell, the North American Farm Alliance and Prairiefire.

"In meetings across the country, the countergangs are being allowed to take over the constituencies of older farm organizations such as the National Farm Organization (sic), National Farm Union (sic), and the American Agricultural Movement. These groups call meetings which are given over to Benedictine or Lutheran organizers."

Marcia Merry, the "agricultural editor" of EIR, is the principle author of much of the invective directed at farm movement activists and organizations. She also writes on a wide range of agricultural topics, including everything from PIK certificates to the current drought.

Merry began her involvement with the LaRouche cult in the early 1970s and now operates out of EIR's Leesburg offices. In an April 15 EIR piece entitled "Subversion in the farmbelt," Merry had this to say about the Stillwater, Minnesota, Land Stewardship Project (LSP):

"The rhetoric and activities of the Land Stewardship Project have been aimed to present a more `mainstream' image, but the kook nature of the movement is still plenty evident."

Merry makes the baseless charge that LSP is "attempting to shape farm protest actions so as to divert attention from the collapse of tradi-

LaRouche organizers speak at Des Moines, Ia., "Food for Peace" meeting. From left, Sue Atkinson, Ailene Cotten-Henaff, Marcia Merry and Peter Bowen.

tional, technology-based American family farms." In the same article she also asserted that:

"Over the past several years, as various of the Groundswell operatives came down with AIDS or became advocates of hardcore kook counterculture, funding and publicity for the group was dropped."

In an earlier, Feb. 21, article in EIR, Merry accused groups such as Prairiefire and the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition (IFUC) of "running dirty operations to deliberately demoralize and subvert farmers attempting to mobilize emergency action against the depression."

The article alleged, incorrectly, that the IFUC had received funding from the Ford Foundation and $500,000 from Willie Nelson's Farm Aid. Merry didn't stop there. She also included personal attacks on the Rev. David Ostendorf, director of Prairiefire, and Merle Hansen, President of the North American Farm Alliance. Merry also has attacked Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower as being "anti-technology."

Another key rural organizer for LaRouche is Lawrence Freeman. He was one of the organizers of the Chicago meeting and has attended countless farm and rural gatherings over the past several years. Most recently, on Oct. 22 and 29, Freeman attended "Food for Peace" meetings in Columbus, Oh., and Deforest, Wi. Freeman is one of LaRouche's higher-level lieutenants and is the husband of long-time LaRouche organizer, Debra Hanania-Freeman.

Early LaRouche Efforts:

To understand the signifigance of the "Food for Peace" campaign, it is helpful to review a few background details surrounding LaRouche's early effort to recruit farmers. These began in earnest in 1978 with attempts to woo members of the newly formed American Agriculture Movement (AAM).

Despite the fact that the leadership of AAM, Inc., took a vigorous stand against LaRouche, his organizers made a point of regularly attending AAM annual meetings. On some occasions LaRouche himself would rent a room in the same hotel and meet personally with farmers.

These and other activities were sharply curtailed after the leadership of AAM, Inc. made it known early, in no uncertain terms, that LaRouche organizers were entirely unwelcome. And, more recently, following the 1986 Democratic Party primary victories of Illinois LaRouche candidates Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart, the AAM, Inc. chapter in that state issued a statement saying:

"The AAM cautions all farmers to be wary of political recruiters for extremist groups... Illinois farmers who are reeling from the financial and emotional affects of the ongoing ag. depression are targets for the recruiting efforts of the LaRouche Cult and other extremist groups. AAM urges farmers approached by political organizers promoting extremist political philosophy to report the incident to their farm organization."

LaRouche also established the "Parity Foundation" (now defunct) as a front group to recruit farm activists. As part of his ongoing strategy of appropriating key elements of the progressive agenda, LaRouche even involved some of his contacts in the Teamsters Union in an attempt to portray the foundation as a farm-labor coalition.

Although LaRouche has directed a considerable amount of propaganda at distressed farmers, he has yet to win a mass following among rural people. But, a number of grassroots farm leaders have been recruited into sup-

porting him despite the fact that no mainstream farm organization has ever endorsed LaRouche's efforts.

Among LaRouche's recruits are farmers like Lannie Dickson of Missouri, a 1986 LaRouche candidate for the Democratic Party Congressional nomination, who once served as the treasurer for the National Farmers Organization (NFO) in his state. Ohio farmer and one-time NFO activist Don Scott - who also spoke at the Chicago "Food for Peace" meeting - has been a long-time supporter of LaRouche. Jerome Obringer, former Mercer County, Ohio, NFO president, and Fred Huenfeld, former national president and current board member of the National Organization for Raw Materials (NORM), are also both LaRouche supporters.

Billy Davis, LaRouche's 1984 Vice-Presidential running-mate, was a Louisiana farmer. Davis helped establish LaRouche's "farm hotline" as part of the organization's effort to recruit distressed farmers. Tommy Kersey, a well-known Georgia farm activist, ran for Congress on the LaRouche ticket in the early 1980s. Although Kersey tries to downplay his past association with LaRouche, he still embraces the ideology of the far right. In a Dec. 29, 1986, interview with the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, Kersey had this to say about the Ku Klux Klan: "They were looking out for the well-being of people, white and black, too, (although) they've been called kind of racist."

Kersey also made headlines in November 1985 as one of the leaders of an armed standoff with law enforcement authorities over an attempted foreclosure near Cochran, Ga.

Political "Dirty Tricks":

Farm organization leaders - like a large number of union activists, journalists, and community organizers - have often been the victims of "dirty tricks" launched by LaRouche operatives, who are notorious for their attempts to infiltrate both the public meetings and private functions of community and political organizations.

Outrageous public campaigns of harrassment are frequently directed against anyone who opposes LaRouche. For example, in January 1984, LaRouche wanted to be included in a major forum on agriculture and rural issues in Ames, Ia., involving the Democratic presidential primary candidates. When the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition barred him from participating, LaRouche issued a leaflet claiming that the Coalition's action was "engineered by the KGB's fifth column in the U.S. - the Andropov Democrats."

LaRouche operatives also have been known to impersonate reporters in an attempt to acquire intelligence information on groups they identify as their "enemies."

The harrassment of innocent bystanders also is among the cult's more peculiar and unsettling tactics. For example, during the 1988 Iowa presidential caucuses, LaRouche activists were observed in Des Moines traffic intersections shouting at drivers and calling them "communists" if they refused to pay for materials that were handed through their car windows.

Similar confrontations have occurred at airport terminals throughout the country where LaRouche followers set up literature tables and attempt to engage passers-by in inflammatory discussions about everything from Jane Fonda and nuclear power to AIDS.

Masquerading as Mainstream Democrats:

Unlike other extremist groups such as the Posse Comitatus, which are characterized by their loose-knit

structure and small circulation newsletters, the LaRouche operation is a well-oiled, highly sophisticated political movement which operates through a series of front groups, with skilled, full-time organizers.

The 1986 and 1988 electoral efforts of LaRouche have been carried out through the "National Democratic Policy Committee" (NDPC). The name has confused many unsuspecting people into believing that the group is a legitimate part of the Democratic Party. While LaRouche ran in the Democratic presidential primaries in 1980 and 1984, he ultimately ran as an independent in the general elections, spending more than $6 million in 1984 alone. He also received approximately $500,000 in FEC matching funds that year. LaRouche also purchased television time to appear on 16 half-hour segments broadcast nationwide in 1984. As of June 1988, he had qualified for $660,000 in federal matching funds.

While nationally the NDPC fielded over 2,000 candidates across the nation in 1984, LaRouche supporters claimed to have run more than 800 candiates in Democratic primaries in 1986. Current LaRouche literature states that the NDPC has "helped to mobilize a movement of over 3,000 candidates who received more than 3 million votes" over the past three years.

For example, a total of 16 LaRouche-sponsored candidates ran in Iowa's 1988 Democratic Party primary elections, more than ever before. The fourteen candidates who had opponents averaged 15 percent of the total vote, with one U.S. Congressional candidate receiving as high as 40 percent of the vote in five of the 16 counties in his district. Twelve LaRouche-sponsored candidates ran in Minnesota's Sept. 12, 1988, Democratic-Farmer-Labor primary.

Although it is difficult to assess the ultimate strength of LaRouche's appeal among rural voters, one thing is clear: far too many of them have already chosen to support LaRouche-sponsored candidates in 1988. And, in the absence of continued vigilance, there is nothing to suggest that a significant number of rural people won't make the same mistake again in 1990.

Blacks Also Recruitment Target:

Farmers are certainly not the only constituency that LaRouche and his followers have targeted for recruitment. In recent years they have launched a successful nationwide effort to win support from the Black community.

According to the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), much of this activity was carried out through LaRouche's "Schiller Institute," an organization that he formed in May 1984 as a front for his National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC).

As reported by the CDR, these activities are particularly ironic — and disturbing — in light of the historical ties that have existed between the LaRouche network and various individuals associated with the Ku Klux Klan, as well as LaRouche's characterization of black culture as "bestial" and his attacks on black leadership.

LaRouche's organization was even paid to produce private intelligence reports on the U.S. anti-apartheid movement for the Bureau of State Security of the Republic of South Africa, according to the Oct. 7, 1977, *New York Times*. This activity was continued as recently as 1984.

Current Problems, Future Directions:

Although LaRouche is currently facing charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice, and his overall network has been hit by a series of indict-

ments that began in October 1986, it would be a mistake to predict the organization's demise.

LaRouche has never stopped publishing, despite the fact that hundreds of police and goverment officials raided LaRouche's Leesburg headquarters in October 1986 in connection with a federal indictment, and several LaRouche front groups and publishing companies were bankrupted as a result.

A trial on charges of operating a multi-million dollar fraud scheme has yet to be concluded. After several months of testimony, five jurors asked to be dismissed and a mistrial was declared in May 1988. The case will be reopened in Federal District Court in Boston in January 1989. Additional charges on income tax fraud, loan fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice were filed against LaRouche and his associates in October in Federal District Court in Virginia.

Although it is fair to say that strategic efforts by progressive farm organizations and religious groups to confront LaRouche have been largely successful in recent years, the emergence of the "Food for Peace" campaign requires a reassessment of our current position.

The success or failure of "Food for Peace" will depend on the degree to which farm, rural and religious groups are able to mount an effective campaign to discredit LaRouche and provide constructive programmatic alternatives during the difficult winter that lies ahead.

In short, individuals and organizations committed to exposing the anti-democratic nature of LaRouche's movement will have to renew their efforts.

What You Can Do:

• Go on the record. Adopt a formal organizational policy on the far right if you haven't already done so (see box).

• Be informed. Monitor activities in your area. Find out who is involved and determine how extensive their current organizing efforts actually are.

•Be prepared. Talk about what you would do if LaRouche organizers came to one of your public meetings and asked to speak. Develop pro-active strategies to educate your membership about the dangers of the far right.

• Build coalitions around the issue of extremist activity. Meet with potential allies such as key political leaders, civil rights and minority organizations, religious groups and farm organizations, etc.

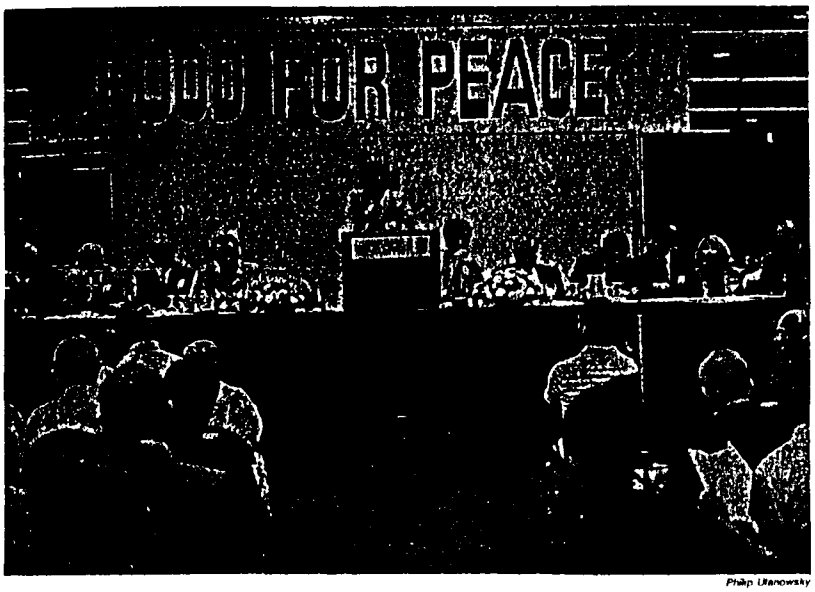
• Inform others. Use your own organizational newsletter as well as the general media to expose the dead-end strategies offered by LaRouche and other organizations. This also will ensure that there is no confusion between your agenda for fair prices and other reforms and LaRouche's similar-sounding demands

• Offer a constructive alternative. It is not enough to simply condemn the radical right. We must emphasize our realistic plan of action to solve the rural crisis.

# # #

Resolution of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union:

We deplore and reject the extremist philosophies and actions of those individuals and organizations that promote violence, anti-semitic, or racist responses to the farm crisis, and reaffirm and recommit our efforts and energies to building a constructive, progressive, non-violent farm movement that is committed to justice for all people of this nation and the world. - *Denver, Co. December 1985*



Philip Ulanowsky

Farmers Gather to Fight for Food Production On the podium during the panel on the state of world agriculture are farmers from North America, Western Europe, and New Zealand. From left to right: North Dakota farmer Gerald Kopp; Amandus Thooft, founding member, National Farm Organization; Elmer Kichula, president, Canadian Consolidated Agricultural Movement; Uwe Friesecke, Schiller Institute (podium); Fritz Hermann, national board member, Danish Agricultural Association; Frido Peper, vice president, Charolais Breeders Association, F.R.G.; Christian Procquez, chairman, French Farmers Association for the Marne Region; Don Scott, National Farm Organization; Marcia Merry, Executive Intelligence Review; John Neill, New Zealand farm leader.

Founding Principles of the New Food for Peace Organization

At the founding conference of Food For Peace held in Chicago, Illinois, September 3-4, 1988, including 400 participants from North America, South America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania, the following founding document was unanimously adopted:

It is the inalienable right of every single human being living on this planet to have adequate amounts of nutritious food in order to live a productive life. In years past, when the United States allowed the productive family farmer to produce, America had the capacity to produce large surpluses, and farmers had the moral outlook to feed the world. Over the last twenty years and especially the last ten years, there has been a systematic effort to destroy the family farmers worldwide.

It has been the deliberate policy of the super-cartels, along with our own United States Department of Agriculture, to drastically reduce the number of independent family farmers. They have used the propaganda of "over-production" and "poor management" to hide their real intentions of contracting U.S. food production, thus reducing the world's food supply.

Their policy has resulted in the current worldwide food crisis, which for the first time will result in food shortages here in the United States. The drought is not the fundamental cause of the crisis, rathef it has revealed the dilapidated infrastructure and decline in investment in food production in this country. We must reverse the post-industrial trend of the last two decades that has led us to the brink of eliminating our agricultural and manufacturing industries.

Presently there exists a huge demand worldwide for food. To bring the world's people up to the level of food consumption that we used to enjoy in the United States, would require a massive increase in food production. If we look to the year 2000 with an expected population of 6 to 8 billion human beings, we would have to more than triple current food production levels. A new, reformed monetary system will make credit available for countries to import necessary amounts of food and as well for producers to make the investments to produce that food.

Until the Soviet Union radically improves their agricultural industry, they will depend on the West for food too. However, we cannot allow the USDA to exclusively export cheap food to the Soviet Union at subsidized prices, while millions go hungry in the Third World. It is now urgent that we massively expand food production in this and every other country. We must ensure that not one person goes hungry or needlessly dies for the lack of food, which we could easily produce with the correct policy. To accomplish this awesome but necessary task will require that we build an ever-expanding movement in the United States, together with our friends from other countries, whose goal will be to feed the world.

An Emergency Program

We support the following emergency program:

1. All farm foreclosures must cease immediately, so that not one single additional farm is taken out of production.

2. An immediate nationwide audit must be conducted, in the briefest period of time, to determine the true level of grain reserves.

3. Total national farm debt is over $200 billion and is forcing farmers into bankruptcy at an accelerating rate. This debt must be placed in moratorium until farmers can generate new income from increased production.

Food for Peace Demands

We demand:

Farmers must be paid parity prices for their products. No longer can we let the cartels buy farmers' products at less than half of the cost of production. It is the responsibility of the government to protect the food producing industry from the grip of a small group of supercartels that are attempting to control the food supply of the West. President Roosevelt ensured parity by making it the law that farmers be paid 100 percent parity for their products. The same must be done today.

Farmers must be freed from the interst rates dictated by the Federal Reserve, which force them further into debt. New low-interest credits are required, to allow farmers to engage in maximum food production. Cheap credit is required for expanded operating costs and for investments in new capital improvements and infrastructure, necessary for expanded production in the future.

All tilled or potentially farmable land taken out of production as part of government set aside programs or taken out of production because the farmer could not afford to farm it at current prices is to be put back in production at the fastest possible rate. If parity is guaranteed, and cheap credit is available, the farmer knows how much land to farm without government interference.

The construction of the North American Water and Power Alliance project, and new nuclear energy projects. There is no reason for shortages of water, in or out of drought years, if sound principles freshwater management are followed. The "North American Water and Power Alliance" project to bring water from Alaska and Canada south into the U.S. farmland; as well as many smaller water projects, have already been studied and are ready to go as soon as we have the will to implement them. Along with water, abundant energy is needed, and can be provided inexpensively by renewed commitment to construction of nuclear power plants.

Suspension of the activities of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, pending careful review of its policies. The Environmental Protection Agency has gone too far in preventing farmers from using necessary but safe insecticides and pesticides, including DDT, in the name of protecting the environment. In fact, the EPA, through its too numerous regulations, has acted to reduce the amount of farmland and food produced in the United States, thus directly contributing to the present food crisis and many of our environmental problems.