

National News

LaRouche Spokesman to Arkansas Black Caucus

Harley Schlanger, Western States spokesman for Lyndon LaRouche's Presidential campaign, addressed the Arkansas Black Caucus Legislative Retreat in Hot Springs on Aug. 3. Schlanger spoke for 20 minutes at the business meeting of the caucus and other invitees, on the need to "face economic reality," and counterposed LaRouche's analysis of the deepening depression, to the sugar-coated pabulum that had been discussed prior to his speaking. Schlanger used LaRouche's "triple curve" or typical collapse function, and related analyses, eliciting sighs of relief and acknowledgement from those who realized they were not crazy in thinking that things were going to hell. He ripped apart the New Economy delusion, including energy and related forms of deregulation, and said that LaRouche had told the truth on the economy and that was why he was feared and attacked.

In terms of economic recovery measures, Schlanger went through LaRouche's "FDR" principles, but pointedly took on the slanders and attacks on LaRouche, as proving that he is feared for telling the truth, but isn't it about time they get behind his effort to bring a Roosevelt policy into the country? He put the issue of LaRouche's "electability"—the subject of a 5 million-run LaRouche campaign leaflet—on the table.

Low-Wage Life in America Described

The author of *Nickel and Dimed* described the reality of U.S. life on six bucks an hour, in an interview with *The Observer* of London July 28. Journalist Barbara Ehrenreich, 55, spent two years "undercover," working at Wal-Mart, "family restaurants," and for a nationwide cleaning service. She said, "Turnover in the low-wage world is so fast that companies simply use people up—literally working them until their backs give up

the ghost or their knees buckle beneath them—and then spit them out. . . . The poor are unlikely to have health insurance or pensions, so there is no prospect of retirement." To her, "The biggest—and nastiest—surprise," was "discovering how big an atmosphere of suspicion there was, how much surveillance we were under. First, there were the drug and personality tests, then the endless rules. At Wal-Mart, we were not even allowed to say 'damn'. . . ."

She learned how her fellow employees live: in a van if you are lucky; if not, like a "Czech dishwasher at Jerry's restaurant, whose digs are so crowded he cannot sleep until someone else goes on shift, leaving a vacant bed."

Ehrenreich's book describes how fellow workers lived in filthy motel rooms, in vans, and in trailer parks—like "what amounts to canned labor," and so on—all at high prices, because there is no alternative affordable housing.

At a trailer park, she described conditions: " 'There are not exactly people here,' she wrote, 'but what amounts to canned labour, being preserved between shifts from the heat.' A month's rent and the deposit are \$1,100." And this was a "better" place to live. In Minneapolis, working for Wal-Mart for \$7 an hour, she had to pay \$245 a week for a filthy motel room, because there is no low-cost housing.

Connecticut Emergency Budget Gap Session

Connecticut's legislators did everything to balance the budget by June 30, including broad cuts, and threw in the state's \$600 million "rainy day" fund. But now the revenue figures are in and the state's FY 2002 deficit "ballooned to \$814 million," according to the state's Comptroller Nancy Wyman. Thus they will have to find \$200-500 million to fund the budget already passed for Fiscal Year 2003, which began July 1. State Sen. Martin Looney (D-New Haven) noted, "We will be going into the 2003 fiscal year without a rainy day fund," which leaves the legislature few if any options except to make more cuts or borrow new monies.

But new borrowing is problematic, as the state has a cap on bonded borrowing which is 1.6 times the amount of annual tax revenue. With tax revenue down, it will be difficult to do new borrowing. At the same time, the *Register* reports that legislators were lobbied heavily during their recess, to restore cuts made in the compromise budget passed before June 30. So, many were expecting a "hot" special session, typical of those occurring in states across the country.

Gambling Culture Target States' Woes

The *Washington Post* reported that the gaming industry is now in high gear to legalize gambling of all sorts and is, as the *Post* writes, "capitalizing on the economic slide." Nearly 35 states have moved or are moving to adopt legislation to allow every kind of gambling imaginable.

In the 1990s, elected officials gambled and lost on the stock market and "New Economy" bubbles as the means to feed state coffers, and now are being lured to gambling proceeds as a new revenue source, rather than back Lyndon LaRouche's New Bretton Woods and a physical economic recovery.

Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. is heavily targeting Maryland, claiming that 3.4 million Marylanders travelled to other states to gamble. Maryland's House Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr. (D-Allegany) was quick to get the marketing hook: "Hundreds of millions of . . . dollars are going to other states to build their roads and schools." Harrah's is championing the push to legalize "racinos"—casinos at racetracks.

"Voters in Tennessee, Nebraska, Arizona and Idaho" will have gambling initiatives on their November ballots, while Indiana has "loosen[ed] restrictions on the state's billion-dollar riverboat casino industry." Indiana has lost its manufacturing base; Tennessee, Nebraska and Idaho have huge deficits. Sweetening the bait, the National Institute on Money in State Politics reports an "uptick in political donations from gambling interests" to state and Federal candidates.