

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Kirk hopes 'The Force' can stop LaRouche

Democratic National Committee chairman Paul Kirk has matched the greatest threat yet to the corrupt, Eastern Establishment control of his party with just what you might expect from his party's current fantasy-ridden leadership, "The Force."

"The Force," that famous irrational feeling-state that blindly propelled Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* movies, is what Kirk has titled a corps of 16 sweaty-palmed yuppies trained and deployed around the country to "get the party's act together."

Wearing sweatshirts bearing the message "The Force Is With You" (this is no joke), this team of youths—all but two in their 20s—are called the "Democratic Party Election Force" and apparently are Kirk's answer to the LaRouche revolt in the party that stirred the entire globe when two supporters of Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche won upset victories in the Illinois primary March 18.

In Kirk's mind, however, The Force also has another meaning: more like "The Enforcer." That is, more of the same top-down tyranny and suppression of debate that has splintered the party since 1980. These 16 kids are supposed to spearhead a Democratic fund-raising drive in 16 states in an operation that will cost Kirk \$1.2 million.

Sent out after two weeks' training in Washington, these 16 will be followed by another 16—all earning \$18,000 to \$20,000 a year—to join the first "wave" in the 16 target states with key Senate or gubernatorial races this year: Alabama, Arizona, Colo-

rado, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Vermont.

This program is so flimsy that Kirk even had to get a written promise from the 32 hirees that they won't bolt for the first new better offer that comes along (or leave the job for a career in cocaine sniffing). They have had to solemnly swear they will stay on through 1988.

What does Kirk hope to achieve by this? Behind the amateurish facade is a desperate attempt to tighten control over the party at the state and local level.

The breakdown of the Democratic Party at its grass roots was devastating in the 1980 and 1984 elections. In 1986 the worst fears of this party's leadership began to be fulfilled in the year's first primary with the shocking LaRouche victories in Illinois.

Now Kirk wants to use The Force—composed of 64 fumbling hands and some computer lists—to buy the undying loyalty of local Democrats to the national party leadership.

In exchange for The Force being visited upon their areas, state parties must swear (presumably in the ritual form required for The Force to take you seriously as in the movies) to "work hand-in-hand with the national party," which includes "not to sponsor, condone, support or lend credence to" any candidate (like LaRouche or a LaRouche supporter) or straw vote (which might include LaRouche or a LaRouche supporter) that "might distract from party-building efforts."

Party chairmen in the 16 Force states have also been "Forced" to sign a new loyalty oath—something which has traditionally irked Democrats who have always preferred their party for

its open organizational traditions. The oath obliges them to "insist that Democratic candidates who benefit from this program do not run campaigns against; and instead run with, the national Democratic Party. This means exerting all of the state party's influence and bringing all of the pressure it can to insure that a positive, unified Democratic Party campaign develops. It also means that the state party and state committee shall disavow any remarks by a candidate or campaign that attacks the national party."

The "oath" bans all debate on issues within the party—confirming that Kirk has not learned anything about what's happened to the party since 1980. The party has broken down not because there has been too much dissension within the party, but too little. It has not been willing to open up, in an orderly way, to real debate on real policy issues that are of vital interests to the grass-roots of the party.

If Kirk thinks he can tame the voters of the party with even more repressive measures, he is in for a big surprise. Illinois is exemplary. When Adlai Stevenson III started slinging around the words, "purge" and "discipline," during the course of freaking out over the LaRouche upset, he raised everyone's hackles.

Even the *USA Today* newspaper confirmed this. Below a vicious editorial slandering LaRouche and his movement, it published the "man-on-the-street" views of seven citizens—six of whom said, emphatically, that they oppose any efforts to restrict who can or cannot run for office or be included in a free debate of the issues.

The Force is not going to save you, Paul Kirk! You have already "Forced" too much. The demand for contentless party discipline continues to be the profoundest blunder of the current Democratic leadership.