

# Battle over EIR dope exposé heats up in Venezuela

by José Carlos Méndez

Ever since Oct. 1, when a group of 18 Venezuelan congressmen signed a letter in defense of freedom of expression and demanding that the “irregular and unconstitutional” ban in Venezuela on the circulation of *EIR*’s book *Narcotráfico, SA (Dope, Inc.)* be reversed, the battle to legalize the book has turned red hot. In February 1985, the Venezuelan political police, DISIP, raided *EIR*’s offices in Caracas, and those of the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV). All copies of the book found were seized and four *EIR* correspondents were expelled from the country, including this author. The multimillionaire Cuban-Venezuelan Gustavo Cisneros sponsored these actions, apparently distressed by the mention of his name in the book.

On Oct. 11 of this year, Venezuela’s RCT television network began to air three explosive one-minute advertisements by the PLV. In the first, PLV General Secretary Alejandro Peña Esclusa says: “In 1985, the circulation of the book *Narcotráfico, SA* was banned in Venezuela, and journalists representing the book’s publishing house were expelled from the country. Who is harmed by this action? Let us see what one of those expelled journalists has to say.”

Interviewed from Washington, D.C., Carlos Méndez is asked, “Were you attacked by the Venezuelan authorities?” Méndez responds: “Well, I wouldn’t say I was attacked. I don’t consider it an aggression. I think that with the banning of *Narcotráfico, SA* and the confiscation of its copies, the first party attacked is the Venezuelan Constitution, the Venezuelan institutions, and, in general, the Venezuelan people, because they were denied information that I believe would have contributed a lot, or to a significant degree, to preventing the drug trade, the consumption of drugs, and the laundering of dirty drug money from growing in Venezuela as they have over the last five years.”

In the second broadcast, Peña says, “The country is in imminent danger of becoming a colony of the drug trade. And yet the book which explains how to confront and defeat the drug trade was banned in 1985. Why?” In response, one of the book’s co-authors, Dennis Small, is interviewed from Washington. Small says: “What the book explains is how it

works, what is behind it, and what are the interests that launder drug money, because the true beneficiaries of the drug trade are neither the consumers nor the producers, but the banks which launder dirty money from the drug trade.” In the third broadcast, Small says that *Narcotráfico, SA* explains how the foreign debt, the economy, the drug trade, and the International Monetary Fund, are all linked to each other.

## The real Dope, Inc. responds

In response to all the ferment, the Cisneros-owned television chain, Venevisión, gave major coverage to an Oct. 9 interview with U.S. anti-drug “czar” Bob Martinez. The significance of this interview—later published by Venevisión in full-page paid ads in the Caracas dailies *2001*, *El Nacional*, and *El Universal*—is that the interviewer Leopoldo Castillo did everything to get Martinez to attack *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche or the book *Narcotráfico, SA* by name—to no avail. For example, at the beginning of the interview, Castillo said, in evident reference to LaRouche: “There also is the case of individuals . . . who create conspiracy theories which in the end help the drug traffickers.” When Martinez failed to respond, Castillo tried a new tack: “Regarding economic aid, there are people like Lydon [sic] LaRouche and his group who maintain that this is a new form of imperialism in the Latin countries.” Martinez responded evasively, “Unfortunately, something like this always happens, but we recognize that, particularly in Peru and Bolivia . . . it is important to have an alternative economic opportunity.”

The defenders of the drug trade are also operating “anonymously” in Venezuela. For the past several weeks, two pamphlets have been circulating filled with slanders against LaRouche. One of these includes a compilation of the slanders that were published back in 1985 in several Venezuelan dailies, at the time of the prohibition of *Narcotráfico, SA*. Not included in the pamphlet, of course, is the lengthy front-page article published by the daily *El Mundo* on Feb. 4, 1985, which protested the arrest of the *EIR* journalists and charged that the arrests were conducted at the request of Gustavo Cisneros.

Also not included is an editorial published in late February 1985 by the Caracas magazine *Resumen*, and signed by its director Jorge Olavarría, which stated that the Diego Cisneros Organization “unleashed an illegal executive action against the authors of a book. . . . The Cisneroses have mobilized the political police of the state and have ignominiously expelled three journalists from the country.”

The second pamphlet, “Lyndon LaRouche in Prison,” is anonymous—no author, no publishing house—a violation of Venezuelan laws prohibiting such publications. The pamphlet includes an unsigned article by a journalist who claims to have interviewed LaRouche in the fall of 1985, but who never published the interview because his tape recorder “didn’t tape anything,” which he ascribes to “electronic interference!”