

VIPs press Clinton, Congress for LaRouche's freedom

A high-level international delegation composed of a former cabinet official from Colombia, two congressmen from Ukraine, and distinguished political and civil rights leaders from the United States, held a press conference on March 17 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to express concern over the ongoing human rights violations against U.S. economist and political prisoner Lyndon H. LaRouche, and to demand his freedom.

Their presence in the U.S. capital takes the worldwide fight for LaRouche's freedom to a new height, in timing with the first and most fluid phase of the new Clinton administration. The foreign lawmakers in particular embodied the rapidly growing movement which an Italian weekly recently named "the LaRouche party," which cuts across all the usual divisions in the ideological spectrum. Thousands of prominent politicians, intellectuals, scientists, clergy, and others signed an appeal to President Clinton to liberate LaRouche, which appeared in the *New York Times* on Jan. 27, 1993.

At the press conference, Ukrainian parliamentarian Pavlo Movchan summed up his purpose in making the unusual intervention: "The reason we left parliament [in Ukraine] to be here, is because the world will be destroyed if the present policies are continued. With the direction things are now going in, we could be heading for a third, and perhaps final, world war. Lyndon LaRouche has indicated how we can change directions, and there are many people who would push LaRouche's ideas."

Joining Congressman Movchan were fellow Ukrainian parliamentarian Vladimir Shovkoshitny, and the former labor minister of Colombia Jorge Carrillo, who are in the United States at the invitation of a group of American political and civil rights leaders, which include former congressman James L. Mann (D-S.C.); the noted civil rights activists Rev. James Bevel and Amelia Boynton Robinson; and Joseph Dix-

on, publisher and editor of the *Birmingham World*. The delegation spent the week of March 15-19 in Washington, meeting with numerous U.S. congressmen, senators, and officials of the Clinton administration, to inform them of the shocking facts of the LaRouche case, as well as to urge them to take action to obtain LaRouche's freedom.

LaRouche is currently serving the fifth year of a 15-year prison sentence at the Federal Medical Facility in Rochester, Minnesota. Two of his associates, Rochelle Ascher and Michael Billington, are serving barbaric sentences on politically-motivated charges in the state of Virginia, and several others are appealing their convictions and face lengthy jail terms. Billington, convicted of "securities fraud" in one of the most bizarrely cruel trials even in Virginia history, is serving a 77-year sentence in a maximum security prison with murderers and other hardened criminals.

At the Washington press conference, former Colombian Labor Minister Carrillo explained that he had spent over 34 years of his life working to defend the rights of the workers of his nation, including "respect for life, education, and development." Through his contact with Lyndon LaRouche and his study of LaRouche's writings, Carrillo reported, he realized that the LaRouche economic policy incorporated that commitment. "LaRouche has been jailed in the U.S. because he has defended those ideas," said Carrillo, who served in the cabinet of President Belisario Betancur in 1985-86.

Ukrainian parliamentarian Vladimir Shovkoshitny noted that LaRouche had been slandered in the Soviet press—in *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, being called a fascist by those communist publications. Then suddenly he was arrested and sent to jail. "Here it was clear, there was something worth investigating," Shovkoshitny said. Through his investigation of the LaRouche political case, he

became interested in LaRouche's ideas. "I'll do everything in parliament to make LaRouche's ideas popular among my colleagues," he said. "I will organize a lobby for LaRouche." Congressman Shovkoshitny concluded: "We should set up many committees to save LaRouche around the world. In that way, he will gain his freedom."

International civil rights leader Amelia Boynton Robinson laid out the need for perseverance to free LaRouche. "Earlier, rulers would call on wise men in order to help them rule the country correctly," she said. "Now, it's different, and the rulers put their wise men into prison. This must change if the world is to be saved."

Candlelight vigil at the White House

After the international VIP delegation held numerous private meetings with Washington policymakers, more than 750 people of all walks of life, from the United States and abroad, held a vigil in front of the White House gate on the evening of March 20, to demand that President Clinton give a signal that he seriously means to bring about change, by freeing LaRouche. The demonstration coincided with the twice-yearly conference of the Schiller Institute, held March 20-22 in the D.C. area; it was attended by delegates from Europe, Africa, Asia, Canada, and Ibero-America, as well as from all over the United States.

Signs reading "Restore Justice, Free LaRouche" were carried by young and old, as the demonstrators marched, three abreast, in a circle on both sides of the block in front of the White House. Demonstrators brought with them thousands of petitions to the President, demanding LaRouche's freedom. By pre-arrangement, the presentation of petitions to Clinton will take place at a later date. To open the rally, Debra Freeman of the Schiller Institute read the text of the international Parliamentarians' Letter to Clinton.

Where does Clinton stand?

Amelia Boynton Robinson, heroine of the 1965 Selma March, a watershed in the voting rights struggle, was the first of several speakers from the civil rights movement led by the late Dr. Martin Luther King. She challenged Clinton to release LaRouche, who had been imprisoned by Bush, asking why LaRouche should now remain a political prisoner, since Bush is now out of office.

The Rev. James Bevel took the microphone, demanding to know whether President Clinton was a servant of the American people or an agent of the British crown. Bevel, formerly a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, was the vice presidential running mate of Lyndon LaRouche during the 1992 election campaign. He told the crowd that although the recent blizzard had passed, "a spiritual blizzard has begun. We here are completing the business of the American Revolution." LaRouche, he said, like Paul Revere, has been riding forth for 20 years telling the American people that the British are coming. We know who Bush was—a subject of the

Queen—but we don't yet know who Clinton is. We ask Clinton, "Who are you?" We will know what kind of man he is by what he does. That will tell us who he is. If he does not stand for the American System, we will know whom he serves.

Bevel pledged to wake the American people to understand that LaRouche is in jail because he refused to give up the American System, "because he knows you cannot build an economy on free trade." He continued, "Nothing will stop the American people" in their fight to establish justice by freeing LaRouche.

Other civil rights leaders who addressed the rally were Rev. Wade Watts of Oklahoma, and Rev. Richard Boone of Montgomery, Alabama. Watts reminded the participants that although the corrupt forces that imprisoned LaRouche are doing everything they can to destroy him, LaRouche's spirit cannot be broken. Boone said he had come from Alabama "with my banjo on my knee," to play a "song of freedom" to Clinton, asking him to stop the war in the Balkans, say "no" to free trade, say "yes" to the American System, and to free LaRouche. Boone led the crowd in songs and chants, both boisterous and solemn, in the spirit of the civil rights movement.

From other continents

Several foreign speakers linked their own national fights to LaRouche's cause. The first was Alexandro Peña, leader of the LaRouche movement in Venezuela, has played a key role in the opposition to President Carlos Andrés Pérez, the unpopular dictator of Venezuela. "We say to Clinton: This injustice cannot go on any longer," said Peña. "We will mobilize Ibero-American-style to win LaRouche's freedom." In Ibero-America, the drug lords are falling; we don't want this President to fall, but we want the prison walls to fall down and LaRouche to go free, he said.

Siah Nyanseor, a Liberian who resides in the United States, chairman of the African Anti-Malthusian League of the Schiller Institute, gave greetings from his "brothers and sisters on the African continent." He said that since joining up with the Schiller Institute, he had learned economics and how to right the wrongs done to his continent by the oligarchy. Craig Isherwood of Melbourne spoke for thousands of Australians who are now aware of the fight to win LaRouche's freedom. "We in Australia have sought to get LaRouche out," he said. "President Clinton, don't underestimate the strength of what we can do down in Australia."

The rally was also addressed by Judge William Goodloe of Seattle, Washington, and by Ortrun Cramer of the Schiller Institute in Germany, who brought greetings from Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche. The rally ended with the singing of "We Shall Overcome," followed by a five-minute silent prayer, as the candles held high by the demonstrators illuminated the street in front of the White House, from one end to the other.