

the International Monetary Fund, the technocrats now occupying the innermost corridors of power, and on his own instincts which favor the trickle down theory of economic development.”

Another commentary compared President Obasanjo’s “constant deference to the globalization hegemony of the West, the World Bank, and the IMF on economic matters” to former President Ibrahim Babangida, “who allowed the World Bank/IMF to pull a fast trick on the country in the form of a structural adjustment program, or SAP, which the people of Nigeria are still reeling from [that] disaster.”

The government rationalized its dramatic increase in the fuel price, imposed on 110 million poorly paid Nigerians, many of whom are living in poverty, by claiming that it has been subsidizing the domestic price by selling oil to the state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corp. (NNPC) for domestic fuel consumption at \$9.50 barrel, far below the international

market price. This is compounded by the fact that the NNPC has to import 80-95% of its domestic refined fuel requirements, because the country’s four refineries operate at approximately 20% of capacity, worse production levels than under Gen. Sani Abacha. Aside from the known reality in Nigeria, that millions of dollars are made through the importation of refined fuel, there is little excuse the government can give for not acting immediately to upgrade the functioning of the refineries, in Kaduna, Warri, and Port Harcourt.

However, the real reason for the price hike, which President Obasanjo contemplated last December before the NLC forced the government to abandon such plans at that time, lies elsewhere.

While President Obasanjo has been making speeches around the world accurately attacking the huge unpayable debt strangling Nigeria and other poor nations, the IMF/World Bank, acting on behalf of the financial oligarchy,

Italian Senators Probe Abuses of U.S. Voting Rights Act, LaRouche

On June 14, a group of Italian Senators from across the political spectrum presented an inquiry in the Senate, asking the Italian Foreign Minister to comment on the violations of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in the United States. The initiative was discussed with Amelia Boynton Robinson during her recent visit to Rome. Here is the text of the inquiry:

Senate of the Republic

Inquiry requesting a written answer to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, Italy

Whereas:

Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson, collaborator of Martin Luther King in the movement for the right to vote of African-Americans in the 1960s, and recipient of the Martin Luther King Medal for Freedom in 1990, informed members of the Parliament and government representatives of the incredible decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, abolishing the Voting Rights Act, which since 1965 has guaranteed the right of each American citizen to participate in the election process, both as a voter and as a [candidate’s] delegate, declaring it “unconstitutional,” and upholding an earlier decision taken in the same vein by a local court;

The Italian Parliament was already aware of a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, a decision equally racist and profoundly unjust, regarding the death penalty, inclusively in cases of doubt concerning the innocence of the condemned person;

Following the decision by the Supreme Court which nullifies, unbeknownst to the public, 35 years of advancement by the movement for civil rights in the U.S.A., there have been a number of cases of violations of the right to vote, and of the respect for the right to vote, against some American Presidential candidates, among them, Democratic candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, as documented by Mrs. Robinson, as official observer in the Democratic Party primaries in the State of Michigan, and as brought to the attention of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights [of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] in Warsaw, due to the fact that they violate the fundamental principles of democratic right as stated in the OSCE Conference on the Human Dimension of 1990;

We ask:

Whether or not the government is informed of the extremely grave decision to abolish the right to vote for those Americans who are deemed undesirable by the leaderships of the parties, and what the Italian government thinks regarding this.

Rome, June 12, 2000

Signed: Sen. Giovanni Russo Spina, Sen. Ersilia Salvato, Sen. Fausto Cò, Sen. Aurelio Crippa, Sen. Antonio Carcarino, Sen. Francesca Scopelliti, Sen. Athos De Luca