

LaRouche Youth Lead Democrats In Mobilization Against Bush

by Nancy Spannaus

In a phenomenon unseen since the 1970s, U.S. Congressmen around the country are convening town meetings to discuss the issue of Social Security, which is now threatened by President George Bush's manic plan to steal the elderly's pension funds for Wall Street. The Democratic Congressional Caucus has announced that it will hold at least 300 meetings by the end of February, and, in a counter-attack, some Republican legislators are taking to the hustings as well. Anywhere from tens to hundreds of citizens are showing up, and engaging in heated discussion of this national policy issue.

The most promising feature of this mobilization, however, is not just the fact that Congressmen have decided to involve their constituents in this life or death issue, but the role which is being played in many of these meetings by members of the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM). In Ohio, New England, Pennsylvania, Washington State, Maryland, and California—to name a few—LYM members have stepped forward to address the crowd on the issues *behind* the Social Security issue as such, specifically the need to adopt Lyndon LaRouche's proposals for reindustrialization, and a new monetary system. LaRouche's proposals, as FDR's in the 1930s, the youth argued, are the only means of thoroughly defeating the synarchist bankers, who are driving Bush into the privatization plan as a means of imposing fascist looting upon the nation.

Ohio's Representative Tubbs-Jones in Action

While, in many cases, the Congressmen or their aides seek to protest the youths' straightforward briefing on the fascist threat, and how to defeat it, the citizens attending the meetings have been largely receptive. In several cases, some of the older persons attending, especially those from working-class backgrounds, have risen to take on their Congressman for having permitted American jobs to be moved overseas. They have taken thousands of the latest LaRouche PAC pamphlet,

and in some cases, sought to set up other meetings where the LaRouche youth can educate people on what's really at stake in the Social Security battle.

Cleveland area Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, the brave Democrat who raised the challenge to the electoral vote result in Ohio during the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress, has held at least two town meetings on Social Security, which the LaRouche youth have attended. Tubbs-Jones, who is on the Social Security subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, led off each of the meetings with a power-point presentation showing that there is no crisis for Social Security. The audience of the first meeting, held in Cleveland, was mostly elderly, with about 50 persons attending. The second, held in the suburb of Bedford Heights, drew about 75 people, including many elected officials from the area. It was notable at these meetings, as at others around the country, that there were almost no youth present, other than the LaRouche Youth Movement members.

At the first meeting, LYM leaders Merv Fansler and Maria Channon both distributed literature, and spoke. Fansler congratulated the Congresswoman for opposing the certification of Bush, and then went ahead to challenge her to address the larger issue of *why* the Administration was seeking to steal Social Security, and the threat of default of U.S. Treasury bonds. Tubbs-Jones responded by citing statistics showing that Wall Street would benefit to the tune of \$904 billion *a year* under Bush's plan. Channon's intervention called on Tubbs-Jones to join LaRouche in his drive to revive the Bretton Woods system, as the necessary next step in restoring the FDR tradition.

At the second meeting, Tubbs-Jones was even more aggressive toward the Bush Administration, and said that "we are going to make Bush a lame duck President." She also characterized the Administration's pattern of manufacturing crises, as in the case of Iraq's WMD. When LYM member Fansler asked a question, the Congresswoman said: "Oh

good, the young man with LaRouche came back to our meeting. What's your question?"

This set the stage for Fansler's intervention, in which he outlined that the intention of the Bush Administration is to dismantle Social Security, and then brought up the challenge of involving youth in this fight. After noting that there were only two or three youth in the room, he described how LaRouche had organized an international youth movement, and issued a challenge to Tubbs-Jones: "I am asking for not just you, but council members and all the men and women in the room to work with our youth movement to build town hall meetings and get youth involved in the greater Cleveland area."

While there was no immediate commitment, the citizens present responded to Fansler, and Channon (who spoke again on the choice before the nation being Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet versus FDR), by coming up for discussion, and in many cases, literature. Others proffered invitations for the youth to speak to other events.

Setting the Agenda

At numerous other meetings held after the Presidents' Day conference of the LaRouche movement, the LaRouche youth were able to lift the agenda from the question of simply fighting Social Security privatization, to the real fight against fascism, and *for* restoring the FDR approach to reviving the economy.

One of these meetings occurred in Oxon Hill, Maryland, with Congressman Albert Wynn, who led off the meeting of about 60 people with a speech about how there is no crisis in Social Security, and that the whole economic agenda of the Bush Administration has to be changed by taxing the rich. This set the stage for sharp interventions by three LaRouche youth. The first, Victor Folyan, slammed the role of George Shultz and the point that the Social Security theft plan was the outgrowth of the bankruptcy of the financial system. Wynn immediately agreed. The second, Keshia Rogers, asked Wynn to address the question of bankruptcy reorganization and job creation, as well as reaching out to young people. (Wynn said they had tried to do the latter.) The third youth, Muiyi Abasi, went directly to the point: "LaRouche has been right; are you going to support LaRouche?"

At this point Wynn, whom the LaRouche youth have attempted to visit on Capitol Hill in their many Days of Action, reverted to a bureaucratic stall, saying he wouldn't meet with anyone without an appointment. The contrast between his approach, and that of the LaRouche youth, was quite instructive for the audience.

A meeting held by Rep. James McGovern in Marlborough, Massachusetts also drew about 60-70 people, and resulted in extended discussion between LaRouche youth and the Congressman. After addresses by the Congressman and a representative of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which primarily stuck to the "numbers" of the case against Social Security privatization, LaRouche youth

Matthew Ogden stood up to speak. Despite initial heckling against a LaRouche spokesman, he was permitted to continue, and laid out the need to reorganize the financial system to make Social Security solvent forever, by creating millions of jobs and re-industrializing the economy. Further discussion continued after the formal meeting dissolved, with people asking lots of questions, especially about LaRouche, since their media-molded image of him had been shaken by the youths' interventions.

Other town meetings convened in Ohio, by Rep. Dennis Kucinich and Sherrod Brown, also featured discussions on how the economy has to be reindustrialized, with massive job creation, sparked by the interventions of the LaRouche. The Brown meeting was attended by about 100 older workers, who quickly picked up on the jobs issue. At the Kucinich meeting, a LaRouche youth challenged the former Presidential candidate to actually join LaRouche to bring about a New Bretton Woods, but, as had happened during the Presidential campaign, ran into a blank wall. It's going to take more popular pressure, to get these Congressmen to respond openly, and work with LaRouche, but the LaRouche youth are well on their way.

Republicans To 'Drink the Kool-Aid?'

Under pressure from the Bush Administration to go along with the unpopular privatization plan, Republican Congressmen and Senators are also holding some town meetings. According to media reports, they are running into a large amount of hostility from the mostly older crowds attending, which, unlike President Bush's audiences, have not been pre-screened. One example: Republican Shelley Moore-Capito of West Virginia, after holding two town meetings on Social Security, issued a statement: "If anyone tells you that I want to privatize Social Security, that person is lying."

This is reminiscent of the Florida Congresswoman who responded to pressure on this issue in her state by declaring, "I will not drink the Kool-Aid" of suicidally supporting Bush's plan.

The LaRouche youth intervened into a town meeting by Pennsylvania Republican Sen. Rick Santorum at Drexel University, which drew a highly polarized crowd of 250-300, and another one at Widener College, where the audience was heavily against Santorum's pro-Bush pitch. At the Drexel event, the LaRouche youth intervention was a direct challenge on Santorum's supporting Pinochet. Santorum showed his "democratic" inclinations by having the campus security evict both LaRouche youth, heavy-handedly. That was his way of answering the question of whether he was with Pinochet, or FDR.

Overall, the Republican leadership in the Congress is cautioning the Administration to "go slow," but remains committed to the privatization plan, which they hope to sell as part of the "ownership" society, and to which they hope to recruit some weak-kneed Democrats. As long as the LaRouche youth stay on the case, they don't have much of a chance of success.