
International Jurists Meet in Washington

Rights panel promises independent inquiry into 'LaRouche case'

The Fact-Finding Committee of the Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations in the United States began public hearings May 26, on alleged human rights and constitutional rights violations in the case of state and federal actions against U.S. presidential contender Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and his associates.

LaRouche associates have charged that a faction of the Department of Justice, acting on behalf of both the Soviet Union and the U.S. Liberal Establishment, are waging a political witchhunt against their political movement.

During the two days of hearings in Washington, the Committee's six lawyers from four countries, advised by two English attorneys, heard detailed testimony on the pattern of government actions against LaRouche associates since Oct. 6, 1986, the closure of publications associated with LaRouche, and allegations of Soviet involvement in instigating "legal measures" against LaRouche.

Committee chairman Don Victor Girauta y Armada, an attorney from Barcelona, Spain, explained the purpose of the group. "We, as professionals from different legal communities, are observing, with affliction, that the world's severe crisis is causing the failure of many well-established institutions, with the increasing danger of lawlessness. We have been requested, by some friends and supporters of Mr. Lyndon LaRouche, to examine some facts and circumstances in reference to the series of state and federal prosecutions of Mr. LaRouche associates. . . . As an independent committee, and as lawyers, we are here with the intention to investigate the facts, documents, and all possible information we can get in connection with this case."

Girauta said the Committee planned to "make some official contacts, so as to be able to have a clear, objective opinion about the matter," and will eventually issue a report that "will be sent to all the legal communities in the Western world."

"We are focusing our work, for the time being, on supposed human rights violations in the United States," he explained, "from the recognition that no other country has any chance to maintain its freedom, if the freedom in the United

States cannot be defended."

The other members of the Committee are: Dr. Edwin Vieira, Secretary, an American attorney and constitutional law expert; S.C. Birla, counsel of the Supreme Court of India and Secretary-General of the All-India Bar Federation of New Delhi; Dr. Frederick Wills, former Minister of Justice and of Foreign Affairs of Guyana, and now a U.S. resident and professor of constitutional law; Lennart Hane, a Swedish expert in international law, attorney at the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg, and author of the book *Creeping Dictatorship*; and Larry Lopez-Alexander, U.S. attorney at law and former municipal judge.

'The American ideal of freedom'

The aim of the hearings was elaborated by Kenneth Richardson, Senior Queen's Counsel in England and former chief prosecutor at London's Old Bailey Court, who is acting as an adviser to the Fact-Finding Committee. "We are not here as politicians," said Richardson, introducing himself and his junior, attorney Jill Gort, "but as properly instructed legal advisers to this Fact-Finding Committee." "We have looked up to and admired the American ideal of freedom, out of which the American Constitution was born, and thus, we're happy to assist those who wish to champion the right of persons to express their views without fear of harassment or reprisal." Richardson invited anyone with relevant information on the topic to contact the Committee. He then outlined the main areas of investigation:

"We are anxious to find out, if there is justification for branding Lyndon LaRouche, and those who support him, as 'political extremists,' 'subversives,' 'fascists' . . . or, is the alternative view tenable, that his political writings—and certainly if one judges him only on that—would suggest on the face of them a man whose political philosophy many quite ordinary and reasonable people would find moderate. And I'm not going to go into any of those matters now: You know what I'm talking about, his views on fighting AIDS, SDI, and the various matters that he considers important. But I repeat, we're not here to look into the political side of the

views of any political character or political party.”

The Committee, said Richardson, will consider “whether there has been a longstanding and continued harassment” of LaRouche and supporters. The group particularly wants to investigate the circumstances surrounding the Oct. 6, 1986 raid of nearly 400 federal and state agents in Leesburg, Virginia, and “whether the show of force that was there used could conceivably be justified in the circumstances in which it was used.”

Richardson said the Committee will also consider the circumstances in which contempt proceedings resulting in \$21 million in fines were brought against four LaRouche-associated entities, and the bankruptcy proceedings which followed. “The problem about bankruptcy proceedings in relation to people who are to face criminal prosecution,” Richardson noted, “is that they may be deprived of the resources and of what they need to put forward a proper defense.”

“It is alleged,” he said “that there has been a concerted effort to close down all Lyndon LaRouche-connected businesses and publications, and there is the worry . . . first of all, that that might be prejudicial to criminal trials that are coming up, and secondly, that his own position as a presidential candidate will become, if it has not already, seriously flawed in such a way that fundamental rights are being infringed.”

A pattern of harassment

The first witness to be heard was Sanford Roberts, a paralegal aide to some of the organizations involved, who described the government’s legal attacks on LaRouche-associated organizations. He testified to the role of the FBI and the news media, especially NBC, in instigating the Boston Grand Jury investigation (started in October 1984 by then-U.S. Attorney in Boston William Weld, who was appointed last year to head the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice), and the immediate effect on the LaRouche 1984 presidential campaign. He testified that FBI agents instigated a New Jersey bank to freeze LaRouche campaign funds, leading to cancellation of a scheduled LaRouche TV broadcast on the night before the presidential election.

Roberts proceeded to outline the extraordinary events of the past eight months, starting with the Oct. 6, 1986 raid in Leesburg, and leading up to the April 21, 1987 closing of two businesses and a scientific foundation.

Roberts was followed by Lewis du Pont Smith and his wife, Andrea Diano Smith, who testified to the denial of their constitutional rights, because of the opposition of his wealthy family to his political association with LaRouche. Smith was declared “mentally incompetent” and was politically and socially disenfranchised by a court that, acting at the instigation of Smith’s family, issued its ruling simply on the basis that Smith was supporting LaRouche both financially and politically.

The following day, the Committee heard testimony from *EIR* Counterintelligence Editor Jeffrey Steinberg, who presented evidence of mounting Soviet government pressure on the U.S. government to “terminate the political and publishing efforts” of LaRouche and his associates. Steinberg detailed LaRouche’s key role, since the late 1970s, in developing and promoting the policy of Strategic Defense Initiative. Within months of President Reagan’s adoption of SDI as U.S. policy in March 1983, said Steinberg, the Soviets began a “continuous stream” of propaganda attacks on LaRouche, culminating in a demand for “legal measures” by the U.S. government against LaRouche in September 1986, only weeks before the Oct. 6 raid in Leesburg. Steinberg detailed the kind of channels through which the Soviet Union could influence the U.S. government, focusing on official channels like the Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigation, and “back channels” including Dr. Armand Hammer, Edgar Bronfman, and other individuals and associations.

Then Carol White, of the Fusion Energy Foundation, outlined the role of the FEF and *Fusion* magazine in circulating and promoting ideas and policies on the frontiers of science and, in opposition to the idea that the FEF was “bankrupt,” showed that *Fusion’s* circulation had increased to 114,000 and that paid advertising had greatly increased, shortly before the magazine was shut down by the bankruptcy court.

Next Nancy Spannaus, editor of the newspaper *New Solidarity*, traced the history of attacks on her newspaper dating back to the mid-1970s, and testified that *New Solidarity* was a pioneer in coverage on such topics as AIDS and the SDI.

Dr. K.D. Sharma, of India, testified on the brutal treatment of LaRouche associates in court proceedings, emphasizing the treatment of Mark Calney, for whom \$500,000 bail was originally declared, by a California judge who specified that the reason for such exceedingly high bail, was his political association with LaRouche.

The last to testify was *EIR* counterintelligence expert Herbert Quinde, who gave a blow-by-blow eyewitness account of the raid against LaRouche-associated organizations in Leesburg on Oct. 6, 1986.

Each individual who testified was questioned by committee members concerning details of testimony, and most were asked to produce material substantiating their statements. Each was also asked to refrain from drawing conclusions, and to limit themselves to factual statements.

The Commission will soon issue transcripts of the hearings, and the Fact-Finding Committee has tentatively scheduled further hearings in July, to investigate allegations made thus far, especially those by Steinberg concerning the Soviet instigation behind the legal attacks, and the government’s attempts at security-stripping conducted against LaRouche. The Commission will also have observers present at various court appearances of LaRouche-associated individuals.