

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Washington columnist upbraids press corps

It is unusual these days to witness a credible journalist take his professional colleagues to task as forcefully as nationally syndicated columnist Ralph De Toledano did here Sept. 9, when he testified before the Fact-Finding Committee of the Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations in the United States.

While he devoted most of his testimony to the impressions made on him and his wife by presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche during a six-hour meeting recently in West Germany, he left time in his remarks to lash out at the media with a force that matched any "unbridled rhetoric" he has attributed to LaRouche from time to time.

Of course, De Toledano has been used to taking some hits from the "Establishment" media himself over the years, particularly for his strong views on issues of national defense. But then, that's due in large part to the fact that he knows a few things, especially about Soviet penetration of the institutions of power, including the government and media, in the United States.

Friend of three (Republican) Presidents, author of 19 books, including two novels and a book of verse, De Toledano had a role in the circumstances surrounding the defection of Soviet diplomat Yurchenko and in exposing Soviet "scientist" Alexandrov's "nuclear winter" hoax.

Serious and knowledgeable about the national security interests of the United States as few of the intellectual pygmies of the Washington press corps are, De Toledano admits he has made some enemies of his own. His willing-

ness to give a fair assessment of LaRouche will earn him more, as he knows.

He reported that a column he wrote on LaRouche, in which he dared to say that the Justice Department was engaged in a blatant violation of the Constitution, by shutting down a newspaper and two scientific magazines, "earned me the hatred of fellow conservatives."

By traveling to Europe and the Middle East to interview one of the most controversial figures of our age, De Toledano was only doing what almost any good journalist would have leapt at in the "good old days," when journalists were interested in reporting on the news.

But that's not journalism any more. Popular opinion is all that counts, not a scoop on the truth. De Toledano will be villified by his peers for saying something fair about a man they've all agreed to write off as a kook or a crook. They never stop to examine why they adopted that agreement, except that their editors told them to, and that it coheres with their own anti-nuclear, anti-SDI, pro-drug prejudices. The fact they have never read anything by LaRouche—well, most of them don't read anything—and bother to know only enough to get them past their next assignment.

'Utter corruption' of the media

De Toledano told the Committee, when asked why the media so uniformly accuses LaRouche of being an "extremist," that "this is a sign of the utter corruption of the national media." He said this corruption includes "the penetration of Soviet disinformation which has permeated upward and downward in the liberal community," adding, "Over the years, the

Communists have permeated the media, schools, and colleges, every area of influence on the thinking and prejudices of Americans."

He said that this has resulted in "a bias of the media against anyone who thinks about the democratic needs of the people."

He blasted the press for its indifference to the Justice Department's outrageous actions in closing down the LaRouche-linked publications last April. "I can't think of a single instance so blatant in American history, yet only one small Washington D.C. publication [a weekly giveaway tabloid called the *City Paper*] covered what should be a national *cause célèbre* for the protection of freedom of the press."

De Toledano gave three reasons why he thinks LaRouche is being attacked so viciously:

First, he said, "LaRouche is a threat to the Establishment, to the Eastern secret government and the powerful international banking interests. From their point of view, he must be destroyed, whether by ridicule, diatribe, or legal persecution."

He added, "Look what they did to Barry Goldwater. He tried to divorce the Republican Party from the Eastern Establishment and look what they did to him."

Second, he added, "LaRouche has a logical mind." Instead of just calling someone's views erroneous, LaRouche will see how they lead to a Soviet advantage, and that logic will lead him, therefore, to call that person a Soviet dupe. That creates a great deal of bad blood. (De Toledano himself doesn't hesitate to accuse the national media of being heavily penetrated by Soviet disinformation.)

"The third thing militating against him," he concluded, "is that the worst thing you can be in American politics, is right."