

In a second statement released to the press, LaRouche added, "To describe Mr. Schumacher's conduct as 'zealous' would be perhaps the understatement of the decade. Mr. Schumacher manifests a passion, an irrational hatred, a zeal to victimize my friends, a complete disregard for all fact and truth, and he has cared not that, in the attempt to pursue his wicked ends by aid of a criminal trial which should never have been conceived, he has driven Harriet Driver, a sweet, delightful, valuable person, to a stroke on the witness stand, purely as a result of the evil permeating his malicious zeal in this unholy cause of his. . . ."

"If he were an honorable man, on this occasion, Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan would do the decent thing and resign his office. Because it's his hand which is rather immediately behind Schumacher. Certain elements in the U.S. Department of Justice should also come out and tender their resignations over this affair, because they, too, are immediately behind Schumacher's actions and are his accomplices.

"I cry for justice. I cry it for Harriet Driver, the victim of the prosecution in this case, and I cry it for all those others who have suffered, those who have suffered under the administration of President George Bush on this account."

LaRouche's statement was seconded by Amelia Boynton-Robinson, a distinguished civil rights leader from Alabama and collaborator of the late Dr. Martin Luther King. In a statement released March 8, she called for a day of prayer and candlelight vigils for justice for Mrs. Driver.

"It is unbelievable to think," she said, "that men dressed in robes of black and pretending to be practicing law according to the U.S. Constitution, sitting upon the throne of justice, with a bible of constitutional rights of this United States of America, could defy God and the constitutional rules and regulations and deal with a human being with such abuse, with no mercy. . . ."

"'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord. Let us do our own part by having a prayer vigil through the entire United States and the entire world, asking God to remove these stumbling blocks of injustice that have caused citizens to cry out in mental pain: 'How long, Oh, God? How long, before You will remove these stumbling blocks which obstruct Your justice?'"

Case should never have come to trial

The case against the three LaRouche associates has been a blatant political frameup since its inception. Schumacher has charged each defendant with three counts of burglary, one count of robbery, one count of theft by threat, and one count of intimidation, claiming that they forced Mrs. Driver to make contributions to publications and companies associated with LaRouche's political movement.

Yet Mrs. Driver herself was a very reluctant witness. Throughout her testimony, she continued to refer to the defendants by their first names, and described the reasons for

her political support. In a fashion hardly consistent with that of someone who has been robbed, she described each of the series of conversations and visits that occurred with "Pat and Ron." The worst she had to say was that she had been victimized and had acted "like a fool." Never did she say she had been robbed, threatened, or had ever felt afraid. Her testimony demonstrated that she has been pressured to testify, and that pressure has been applied by Schumacher as well as by family members. It is known that Mrs. Driver's health has been a concern among her friends, as a result of the pressure she felt from Schumacher.

When the trial opened on March 7, defense attorney Michael Null, in his opening statement, stressed that this is a political trial. Mrs. Driver contributed willingly to the cause represented by the defendants, he said, because she wanted to be part of the LaRouche movement, and was "thrilled to death to make a difference." She only stopped giving money at the urging of her financial adviser and family members.

"Harriet Driver was perfectly happy to contribute to a cause she thought would change the world," Null said. "She did not want to die without making a difference. She did not and was not held hostage by anybody."

Null said the defendants are part of a movement that is trying to change the world. LaRouche is a political dissident, like Andrei Sakharov or Nelson Mandela. The movement is trying to promote ideas about politics, philosophy, morality, and aesthetics. All movements need money, and these defendants raised some of the money for this movement.

Null told the jury that contrary to what they had been told, the LaRouche movement is not "far out" or extremist. They promote ideas which jurors will find are consonant with many of their own beliefs. They have been fighting satanism. They have been promoting policies to help farmers, to stop AIDS. They support people who run for office, like Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart, who won Democratic primaries in Illinois in 1986.

Michael Billington, the associate of LaRouche who was sentenced by a Virginia state court to 77 years in prison for political fundraising, on top of a 3-year federal sentence for the same alleged "crimes," was transferred to the federal penitentiary in Petersburg, Va. on March 6, and swiftly placed in administrative detention, also known as "the Hole." No reason was given. Billington has been subjected to continuous harassment in the prison system, since his jailing with Lyndon LaRouche and five others in January 1989. He has been held in lengthy solitary confinement and, in the Danbury, Connecticut federal prison, where he was incarcerated before his transfer to Petersburg, he was also confined in "the Hole."