

Peruvian in E. Europe for LaRouche cause

by Cynthia Rush

“This is a matter of conscience. . . . I have a debt to repay. When I first met Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, I was a mere trade unionist; I had been fired from my job; I was a nobody. But they had confidence in me, they knew I could become a leader. Now I must repay that debt.” These were the words stated repeatedly by Juan Rebaza Carpio, former fisheries minister in the government of Peruvian President Alan García (1985-89), and former president of the world’s largest fishing concern, Pescaperú, during a Feb. 3-16 tour of four eastern European countries.

Sponsored by the Schiller Institute, the tour took Rebaza to Prague, Budapest, Kiev, and Warsaw for a series of public conferences and private meetings in which he emphasized two points. First, people must fight for the release of American presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, who is imprisoned because of his policies toward the developing sector and his rejection of the International Monetary Fund’s malthusian policies. Second, the governments of eastern Europe must repudiate the IMF’s policies, and link up with the nations of the developing sector to seek an alternative economic approach that can guarantee these nations’ industrial development.

In every meeting and discussion, the Peruvian leader urged his listeners to send messages to the U.S. House and Senate Judiciary committees demanding action on the LaRouche case, and detailed his personal history of association with the LaRouches, which began in 1980. Not since John F. Kennedy, has there been a President who cared about Ibero-America, Rebaza stated. He told this writer, “When I was a child in Peru, we received powdered milk in our school from the Alliance for Progress, which Kennedy created. Now, people in my country who try to provide milk for poor children are assassinated by Shining Path” narco-terrorists.

LaRouche, Rebaza told his audiences, would change the policy orientation of the United States, were he to become President. Communism has fallen in eastern Europe, and dramatic change has occurred in the world, he noted. “Don’t we have the right to demand now that the United States also change?” Those who heard Rebaza speak, including parliamentarians, businessmen, political leaders, trade unionists, and press, responded warmly to his remarks, and were shocked to hear of “political prisoners” in the United States.

In public conferences in all four cities, Rebaza’s remarks

were accompanied by a discussion of LaRouche’s proposal for creating a “Paris-Berlin-Vienna Productive Triangle.” This plan is based on the development of massive infrastructure and energy projects which could turn the region into a capital goods-exporting center able to serve as the “motor” for developing the rest of eastern and western Europe. In a Feb. 7 conference in Budapest, co-sponsored by the Hungarian Association for Former Political Prisoners, Rebaza was joined by Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who reiterated that LaRouche’s ideas and freedom are indispensable for defeating the IMF and George Bush, and creating a just world economic order.

Central and Eastern Europe are suffering a deep economic crisis caused by the application of the IMF’s austerity recipes, promoted by Harvard “economist” Jeffrey Sachs. Rebaza told his audiences that if they want a horrifying example of where these policies will lead them, they need only look to Peru. “You can tell me about communism,” Rebaza said, “but I can tell you about the IMF. Both these models have failed.” With the economic “shock” program imposed in August 1990, President Alberto Fujimori has destroyed every last vestige of productive activity in Peru, Rebaza reported. Farmers can’t produce food, because they can’t get credit, and turn to cultivating coca for cocaine instead. Parents, unable to feed their children, resort to selling them, and this has now become a lucrative “business.” Over 400,000 people have lost their jobs since Fujimori took office, Rebaza said, and thousands more will follow. Deaths from the cholera epidemic, unchecked because of intense poverty and lack of health infrastructure, mount daily. The Peruvian leader used slides to show how Shining Path has devastated the country’s energy infrastructure, and how it works together in an unholy alliance with the drug mafias to necessary weapons and money.

‘I can’t starve my family to pay debt’

Rebaza repeatedly blamed the crisis in Peru and Ibero-America on the payment of the continent’s foreign debt which has been extracted by creditors over the past decade at a terrible cost to the continent. “We have to think about this as the head of a household would,” he said. “I have a wife and family. I also have a debt. But I can’t put all my resources into paying my debt, and let my wife and children starve. It’s not that we don’t want to pay the debt, but the policy has to be humane and just.” Rebaza explained that when former President Alan García limited Peru’s debt payment in 1985, a two-year period of economic growth followed. But other Ibero-American nations didn’t rally to García’s support, and he was isolated. Today, he explained, recent developments in Venezuela show that people are fed up with the IMF’s policies and with the governments which impose them. If patriotic forces everywhere unite and fight for real economic integration, Venezuela “will only be the beginning” of a real revolution, he stated.