

Prominent international figures sign petition to Clinton: 'Free LaRouche'

by Carlos Wesley

On April 2, the White House received a letter signed by 25,000 persons from the United States and other countries who have joined the international Coalition to Free Lyndon LaRouche. The letter, calling on President Bill Clinton to give a signal that he seriously means to bring about change by setting jailed statesman "LaRouche and his associates free," bore the signatures of hundreds of notables, including at least two former heads of state (former President of Argentina Arturo Frondizi, and former President of Panama Manuel Solís Palma), several former cabinet members, and scores of chairmen of bar associations, bishops, farm and labor leaders. At the same time another letter was presented to the White House, also calling on President Clinton to free LaRouche, signed by nearly 300 elected members of national parliaments, ranging from Armenia to Ukraine, from Colombia and Brazil to Venezuela, as well as France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States itself. The two appeals were accompanied by scores of individual letters from heads of national bar associations, lawmakers, including members of the Congress of Bolivia, military leaders, and other prominent personalities and institutions.

LaRouche, 70, a former candidate for the U.S. Democratic Party presidential nomination, was sentenced to 15 years in prison on contrived charges during the administration of George Bush.

The unprecedented mobilization by some of the world's leading figures on LaRouche's behalf underscores the importance attached to his economic policy and other programmatic proposals. As former Colombian Labor Minister Jorge Carrillo told members of the U.S. Congress in March, had LaRouche's plans for a war on drugs been adopted when they were presented more than a decade ago—including his proposals for crop-substitution and paying farmers parity prices—Colombia today would be a major food exporter, instead of being the world's leading producer of cocaine. Minister Carrillo was part of an international delegation that visited Washington—along with former U.S. Rep. James Mann and civil rights leaders Amelia Boynton Robinson, Rev. James Bevel, and Joe Dickson, editor and publisher of the *Birmingham World*—to discuss the LaRouche case with U.S. lawmakers, over March 15-20.

Two Ukrainian members of Parliament in the delegation—Pavlo Movchan, chairman of the Ukrainian freedom

organization Prosvita, and Vladimir Shovkoshitny, president of the Chernobyl Union International—also told U.S. congressmen that some among Ukraine governing circles view LaRouche's economic proposals as a superior alternative to the free trade nostrums that are destroying their economy.

Demand 'detailed and precise' explanation

Also spurring the worldwide protest is what is viewed as hypocritical behavior by the U.S., which is constantly attempting to bludgeon other countries over alleged human rights violations, while grossly violating the rights of political dissident LaRouche and others. This was made clear in a strongly worded letter from Peru's Congressional Committee on Human Rights, formally requesting that the foreign minister demand a "detailed and precise" explanation from the U.S. government "regarding the abuses and the violations of the human rights of U.S. politician Lyndon LaRouche and his movement." The LaRouche case was one of several cases of human rights violations taken up during hearings held by the Peruvian congressional committee on March 30. According to the Lima daily *La Nación*, committee chairman Roger Cáceres said in the letter that it is "inadmissible" for the U.S. government to raise "so many objections, observations and demands regarding the human rights situation in our country, if within the United States itself there are such grave and delicate situations" (see box).

In Colombia, the LaRouche case was "the most significant topic discussed" at a three-day symposium co-sponsored by Colombia's National Bar Association, according to the March 27 issue of *El Colombiano*. The daily reported that the case was presented at the First National Symposium of Colombian Lawyers by two representatives of "the Coalition to Free Lyndon LaRouche, a U.S. political prisoner." According to the article, the speakers noted "that just like LaRouche, there are many political prisoners behind bars due to fraudulent trials," in the United States. "LaRouche's sin was his fight against the economic model of Reagan and Bush," and against the "financial interests from his country involved in the international drug traffic" the article said. The LaRouche case drew particular attention from symposium participants, among them some of the country's most respected attorneys, because Colombia adopted an adversarial trial system on the U.S. model a few years ago. There are now

U.S. hypocrisy condemned

On March 30, the Peruvian Congressional Committee on Human Rights took up several cases of human rights violations, including that of U.S. political prisoner Lyndon H. LaRouche. In a letter signed by its chairman, Roger Cáceres Velásquez, the committee requested that Peru's foreign minister ask the United States to provide an explanation. Following is the committee's request to be forwarded to Peru's Executive branch.

By agreement of the Committee on Human Rights and Pacification, over which I have the honor to preside, I ask that the Minister of Foreign Affairs be instructed that through diplomatic means, a request be presented to the government of the United States for a detailed and precise report regarding the repeated charges of human rights violations we are getting from numerous citizens of this country and from other nations of the world, regarding the abuses and violation of the human rights of American politician Lyndon LaRouche and his movement, as is detailed in the attached documents. It should be noted that it would be something inadmissible for the aforementioned government to raise any objections, observations and demands regarding human rights in our country, if within the United States itself there are such grave and delicate

situations, which more than justifies that at the very least we are provided the information requested.

The following message was sent by LaRouche associate Donald Phau, who has been sentenced to 25 years in prison in Virginia, to the participants at an international conference in Caracas, Venezuela. The individuals he mentions have all been convicted by the state of Virginia for their political activities as part of the LaRouche movement. Ascher and Billington are serving their sentences. It was read by his wife Ana María Mendoza-Phau.

Though I have never been to your country, having been married to a Venezuelan, I have a strong affinity to you as a wonderful people. . . .

By the end of this conference you all should know some of the details of why I am facing an imminent jail sentence of 25 years. The charges against me, and my friends Shelley Ascher [10 years], Mike Billington [77 years], Paul [34 years] and Anita Gallagher [39 years] and Larry Hecht [33 years], are, of course, bogus. . . . Many lawyers have told me that if I had raped and murdered someone, I probably would have gotten a smaller sentence. My real crime is that I am associated with Lyndon LaRouche; that is why, only by freeing him, can we all get our freedom. But if being a criminal is supporting someone who can save this planet from a new dark age, maybe being such a criminal is not really that bad. . . .

fears that some of the worst abuses now seen in American courts, such as the wholesale buying of testimony in exchange for plea bargains, which lets dangerous felons go free and even cash payments for witnesses, may also be imported.

The Venezuelan Senate Committee on Human Rights was also urged to demand an explanation from the U.S. government on the political persecution against LaRouche. According to the March 30 issue of *Ultimas Noticias*, the request came from Ana María Mendoza-Phau, who charged that there are "human rights violations against Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, including my husband Donald Phau, illegally sentenced to 25 years in jail by the state of Virginia." Mrs. Mendoza-Phau was in Venezuela to address a conference on the persecution of her husband and other members of LaRouche's political movement. Reportedly, those in the audience, including a member of the Venezuelan Congress, were visibly moved when she read a letter from her husband explaining why he was unable to honor the invitation to also speak at the conference.

Mrs. Mendoza-Phau said that former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger pressured the FBI to go after LaRouche, and that her husband and others were convicted for

allegedly breaking Virginia's securities laws, by obtaining loans for political activities, loans "that were not classified as securities until after they had been indicted. The state commissioner who made the ruling was rewarded with a seat on Virginia's Supreme Court," she said, according to *Ultimas Noticias*.

Joining the chorus of protest from Ibero-America was Mexican Congressman Jesús González Gortázar, a leader of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). During a radio interview in Guadalajara, González condemned the execution of Mexican national Ramón Montoya by the state of Texas, and said that there are other frequent violations of human rights in the United States, citing the LaRouche case. González Gortázar said that the U.S. justice system is influenced by racial and political considerations, saying LaRouche's 15-year sentence was solely for "political reasons."

Last year in Mexico, the Committee on Human Rights of Congress heard testimony on the LaRouche case and promised an investigation, and Gonzalo Ruiz, chairman of Bolivia's Congressional Committee on Human Rights, also protested LaRouche's imprisonment in an open letter.