
The Declaration of Independence

'Co-Signers' meet across U.S., Europe

by John Sigerson

In cities around the United States, groups of activists gathered over the July 4 weekend to re-dedicate themselves to uphold the principles laid forth in the American Declaration of Independence, by co-signing that document at events held in parallel to main ceremonies being held in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, in Europe, parallel events were being held to co-sign the Declaration of the Inalienable Rights of All People, a document drafted by Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche in order to give all the world's citizens an opportunity to affirm the principles of the American Founding Fathers.

Below are highlights of these events.

- Nashville, Tenn. was the site of an outdoor Co-Signers' rally at Fort Negley, a historic site which was built during the Civil War by freed slaves and played a key role in the defeat of the Confederate forces in the state. The event was sponsored by the Afro-American Cultural Association, and featured speakers from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Fisk University, and others. Five Nashville churches held Co-Signers' ceremonies on Sunday, and Declaration of Independence Co-Signers' Convention (DICC) spokesman Bernard Lewis was featured on the local CBS television station.

- Activists in Pittsburgh, Pa. gathered with the additional purpose of celebrating their successful efforts to get the Pittsburgh City Council to pass a resolution demanding the removal of the statue of Ku Klux Klan founder Albert Pike from Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C.

- Churches in Laurel, Mississippi and Forkland, Alabama held co-signing ceremonies as part of their Sunday services.

- Virginia gubernatorial candidate Nancy Spannaus made an appearance at the Co-Signers' event in the capital city, Richmond. In Newport News, activists heard addresses by members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and by a leader of the area's Islamic community.

- Boston celebrated the Founding Fathers' principles with a presentation by Schiller Institute spokesman Denise Ham on how the same principles are embodied in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

- Two events in St. Louis brought together a diverse array of activists, who focused on the true significance of the term "the pursuit of happiness," and on the contrary pro-

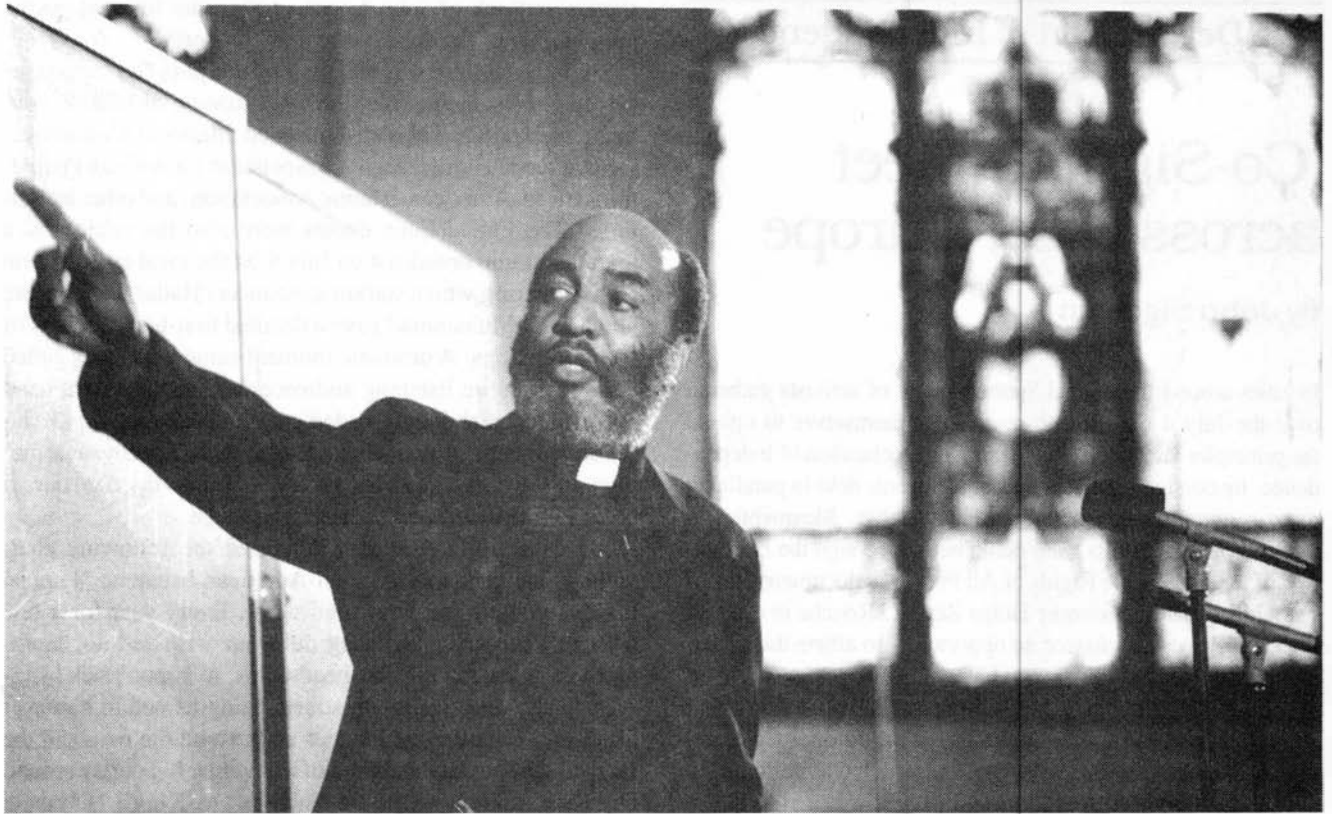
slavery outlook of John Locke et al., who insisted on the inviolability of the dead concept of "property."

- In Des Moines, Iowa, the Philadelphia convention received endorsements from the Organization of Islamic Umamah, the Harriet Tubman-Thurgood Marshall Committee, the Universal Human Rights Association for African People, the African-American-Islamic Association, and other institutions. The Philadelphia events were also the subject of a marathon radio broadcast on July 6 on the local radio station KUCB, during which station announcers Hadaasha Maryum and Jamaal Muhammad gave a detailed first-hand account of the proceedings. A dramatic moment came when they called upon their entire listening audience to raise their right hand and pledge their honor to re-dedicate themselves to the Declaration of Independence. According to reports, many automobiles in the area were seen pulling off onto the roadside in order to free their hand to make the pledge.

Hadaasha Maryum also delivered the following challenge to her primarily African-American listeners: "I am so tired of you all and your tired ways. Every year for a few days in February, you bring out your wrinkled-up, moth-eaten dashikis and African headwraps, to honor black history. I totally disagreed with streets being named in honor of Dr. King, because you haven't understood the man and the method. I get so sick and tired of this vulgar hypocrisy around Dr. King. I know why you embrace Dr. King's 'I Have a Dream' speech. Since you've been doing no work, for you that speech has something about being in 'la-la land.' What you don't understand is that Dr. King had agreed to *not* be a slave! Then he resolved that he wouldn't allow his people to be slaves. With this work going on in Philadelphia, and the international work of the LaRouche movement, we have torn up the contract to slavery, here in Des Moines. Can't you hear what Amelia [Boynton Robinson] and Jim Bevel are saying to you? They're saying to you, 'Peek around the corner, come on! The coast is clear! Come on! Come on!'"

Support from Europe

- In Europe, Helga Zepp-LaRouche addressed a parallel event in Bonn, Germany, while other ceremonies were held in Frankfurt and in Mannheim. Activists in Stockholm, Sweden used the occasion to honor not only the U.S. Declaration of Independence, but the life and works of the Swedish King Gustav III, who fought for the same principles. A telegram sent to the Philadelphia convention read in part: "It was . . . surely under the inspiration of the developments in the Americas that the young Prince Gustav III took leadership. At only 26 years of age, he made a coup d'état against the oligarchy's manipulations. Thanks to him, Sweden later became the second nation in Europe, after France, to recognize the new American nation. . . . Your great work to revive the spirit of the American Declaration of Independence today, is inspiring the whole world, as it did when it was written. Best success for your Co-Signers' Convention in Philadelphia."



Rev. James Bevel, chairman of the Declaration of Independence Co-Signers' Convention, explained the principles of self-government during his address on "The Foundation, Principle, Method, and Goal of the American Revolution," on July 3 at Philadelphia's Mt. Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church.



*Baritone Robert McFerrin and pianist Sylvia Olden Lee—both veterans of the battle to secure equal rights to the universal heritage of European Classical music—performed selections from Robert Schumann's song cycle *Dichterliebe*, along with five Classical settings of Negro spirituals by Hall Johnson.*



Sylvia Olden Lee signs autographs after the concert. During her 50-plus-year career, Sylvia Lee has collaborated and performed with such renowned singers as Gerhard Husch, Paul Robeson, William Warfield, Jessye Norman, and Kathleen Battle.



The weekend of Co-Signers' activities began with a concert in memory of Marian Anderson, one of the great artists of Classical musical performance in the past 200 years. The concert, held at the Tindley Temple United Methodist Church, which Marian Anderson's mother attended, was performed at the natural tuning of C=256 Hz. Here, six of the performers join in the "Chi mi frena?" from Gaetano Donizetti's opera Lucia di Lammermoor. Left to right: bass-baritone Derrick Lawrence, soprano Christine D'Amico DeVault, tenor Gregory Hopkins, baritone Reginald Pindell, mezzosoprano Marietta Simpson, and tenor John Sigerson.



Amelia Boynton Robinson, co-chairman of DICC and vice chairman of the Schiller Institute, affixes her signature to the Declaration of Independence at one of the many co-signing ceremonies held at churches in the Philadelphia area.



Left, Dennis Speed, executive director of the DICC, addresses the opening of the Co-Signers Convention in Philadelphia on July 3. Participants traveled from as far away as Washington State, Ohio, and Illinois.

DICC organizer Lynne Speed addresses the final rally on July 4, at Drexel University's playing field. All told, 225 Philadelphia area churches participated in organizing for the events, along with 130 schools and 70 other organizations.

