

numerous others, who were slapped on the wrist or told to do community service.

What happened to our rights, which were given Americans by our Constitution: freedom of speech and freedom of expression, protection against excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishment?

If Donald Phau, Paul and Anita Gallagher, Laurence Hecht, Rochelle Ascher and Michael Billington had been working in the interests of those who are corrupting this country, dealing in drugs, gambling, killing, and other corrupt practices, their deeds would have been covered up by the evil ones that have a death-hold on this country. But they have been targeted because they are associated with a man, Lyndon LaRouche, who fought and is still fighting against the evils that are destroying this nation. . . .

Termites and cancers work alike. They don't stop until everything is destroyed. Look out America!

John Remington Graham, county attorney (prosecutor), Crow Wing County, Minnesota:

Little did I ever expect that the Old Dominion, the birthplace of American freedom, would sink to such depths of barbaric and naked oppression, such obvious abuse of the prosecutorial function to suppress political dissidents. Prisons are for dangerous criminals, not for political activists. This kind of legal savagery has brought down Mary Sue Terry in Virginia, and will bring down her partner in oppression, Attorney General Skip Humphrey in Minnesota.

Yousef Haddad, president, Arab-American Press Guild:

Lately the American justice system proves to be a mockery; the denial of sentence reductions for the Gallaghers, Hecht, and Phau is a continuation of what we've seen over the years, from the sentencing of LaRouche to many other cases.

William Nezowy, president, American Ukrainian Political Action Council of United States:

Even Soviet Russia had lesser sentences for innocent people imprisoned as political dissidents. Mary Sue Terry and Judge Weckstein are in the same category as the worst tyrants of history, like Ilsa Koch of Nazi Germany.

Nancy Spannaus, independent candidate for governor of Virginia in the 1993 election:

The fact that the Virginia electorate so thoroughly rejected former Attorney General Mary Sue Terry in the recent election, provides considerable hope that her filthy legacy in the form of the atrocious jail sentences for Paul and Anita Gallagher, Larry Hecht, and Don Phau, can be reversed in the near term. Terry's defeat was directly related to the fact that Virginians saw her as a vindictive, corrupt person, who was willing to disregard the human and legal rights of pensioners, death row prisoners, and anyone else who got in her way. . . .

Scientists decry political atrocity

The Fall 1993 issue of 21st Century Science & Technology magazine included an interview on the Virginia case with Laurence Hecht and his wife, Marjorie, by Dr. Jonathan Tennenbaum, editor of the German-language magazine Fusion. Laurence is an associate editor and Marjorie is managing editor of 21st Century. It was suggested that readers write to the Virginia governor concerning the cases, and scores of readers sent copies of their letters to the magazine. Here are some excerpts:

From a professor at the National Institute of Hygiene in Poland:

In my opinion [the defendants] they are politically oppressed people. . . . We have a long history in this country of political oppression and are very interested in any similar situation elsewhere. I appeal to you to nullify the sentences of the court which has been misguided.

From a professor of chemistry in Texas:

I ask your intervention and release of these people so they can get on with their work. If there is some civil case against them, let them be fined as with other people who have committed the same sort of offense. For goodness sake, let us stop this business of political persecution for views which are not those of the Establishment.

What kind of a country do you think we are in? The incredible sentences to which these people have been sentenced are characteristic of Russia or Germany in the late 1930s.

From a professor of microbiology in New York City:

It is difficult to understand how this lengthy term of imprisonment, which is clearly cruel and unusual for a nonviolent crime, can be seriously considered in any part of the United States. . . .

I write to you on my professional letterhead to indicate that although the news media seem to be generally uninterested in this unusual set of circumstances, I and other scientists worldwide will follow the outcome of [the] hearing next week.

From a science professor in Copenhagen:

A society advances by ideas and debate, and suffers stagnation from suppression. Expressed opinions, especially when not acceptable by a majority of people, generally are true signs of a healthy state of the society.

The case exemplifies mass or group suggestion which is an imminent danger of all varieties of mob rule. The Ameri-

can jury system is admirable from a democratic point of view, but it *must* be based on informed, upright, equable, and truth-seeking individuals able to shake off prejudice. It appears clearly that such kind of jury has not been involved in the present case.

From a French scientist:

It is the issue of the independence of the courts and their yielding to political pressures that is at stake. I feel that taking a firm stand against such irregularities is our obligation and duty. The rise of totalitarian systems in Europe or the McCarthyism in the U.S.A. had been possible by condoning similar events by our predecessors. . . .

From a U.S. scientist in Chicago:

It is really difficult to explain the rationale and justification for the treatment and the harsh sentences that the defendants received. Have these people committed mass murder? How do they compare to those who "milked" the stock market through insider trading (billions of dollars from thousands of investors)? Can one commit any crime and plea bargain oneself into no sentence at all? Did the LaRouche associates run Soviet or Nazi-type concentration camps and deserve a Nuremberg trial and sentences?

Without a single exception, all interested parties around

the world are convinced that these were political sentences rather than civil, securities, or state/federal sentences.

From an Argentine scientist:

Of course, you must be aware of the case and all the political implications it has in the U.S., but you might not be aware of the *adverse publicity and implications this situation may have abroad*. . . . The U.S. has always been regarded as the cradle of Freedom and Human Rights, but in the view of this case, I personally feel things might have changed. . . . Especially when we see the severity of the sentences in this case—how disproportionate!—we cannot avoid seeing the dark shadow of an injustice. . . .

From a Polish scientist:

I am a scientist, and living for a long time under the communistic regime in Poland I know perhaps better than many others what may be the results of the lack of freedom in politics and science. In medieval times people having scientific opinions different from those of the authorities were burned. In the Soviet Union, not [long ago], the scientists opposing the views of Trofim Lysenko were sent to gulags and died. This should not happen anymore. . . . In a modern society we do not punish those with whom we disagree by prison sentences. The times of Stalin and Lysenko are over.

State legislators appeal to the judge

The following are excerpts from some of the letters written to Judge Clifford Weckstein by 13 Virginia state legislators:

- It seems to me, after reviewing some other cases similar to Mrs. Gallagher's, that there may be a clear case of disparity in sentencing.

I know that sometimes it is important to make it clear that certain crimes will not be tolerated, but there are many violent crimes that receive lighter sentences than these nonviolent offenses.

- The current cost to house a criminal is \$17,000 a year. . . . I firmly believe that our taxpayers would have no problem with this cost if it meant keeping two violent criminals off the streets, but the Gallaghers do not qualify as that type offender.

- It appears to the outside observer that these sentences are excessive, when compared to the sentences received by Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky and Charles Keating. . . .

- As an African American, I am particularly sensitive to the broader issues of equal justice or disparate sentences, and of very long prison sentences for first-time convictions on charges of white collar crimes. While I am extremely limited in knowledge regarding the LaRouche issues and resultant political ramifications, there appears to be great disparity in sentencing in the Commonwealth's prosecution of these case. . . .

- Please consider this request as a humane appeal in support of sentence reduction motions in aforementioned cases. . . .

- I have no sympathy with the Lyndon LaRouche movement and I understand that many people were financially hurt by the "presumed loans" which were determined to be securities by the SCC and at trial. . . .

Yet, extended prison sentences such as those determined by the jury for the codefendants in this case would seem to be disparate as compared to those convicted in other related or similar cases. . . .

- It would appear in these cases concerning several members of the Lyndon LaRouche political group, that the court would be on sound footing to carefully review the sentences in light of the disparity in the terms, and also in consideration of sentences imposed for crimes of a similar nature in Virginia. . . .