

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. . . .