

Report from Rio by Lorenzo Carrasco

In memory of a Brazilian patriot

With the death of Congressman Osvaldo Lima Filho, Brazil has lost a very unique and precious jewel.

I am not by any means the best person in Brazil to eulogize the memory of a man with the moral stature and personal generosity of Osvaldo Lima Filho, who died suddenly on Nov. 10 in his native city of Recife, capital of the northeastern state of Pernambuco. Nonetheless, I undertake to do so, out of gratitude to a man who, with his long and prestigious career as a moral leader in the Brazilian Congress and as a minister of state, offered me his friendship, based on the sole concern that dominated his life: the defense of the principles of Brazilian sovereignty and independence.

I met Osvaldo Lima Filho for the first time in late 1987, during a trip to Brasilia and under rather strange circumstances. The foreign debt moratorium decreed in February of that year had been lifted once Finance Minister Dilson Funaro was ousted, due to the combined intense pressure—both domestic and foreign—of the financial oligarchies against the weak President José Sarney. Funaro's fall encouraged the efforts of the "Project Democracy" gang, in their zeal to dismantle the Brazilian state.

Specifically, the National Congress was involved in debates around the National Constituent Assembly, which culminated in the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution. It was in that context that the fate of the major state companies, and the legislation that would define a Brazilian state enterprise, was facing a heated polemic. Along with a demonstrative group of congressmen, Osvaldo—who had favored a debt moratorium—headed up the nationalist resistance to the free-

market policies of the International Monetary Fund.

Documents published in *EIR* on the international plot behind Project Democracy and its offensive in the Brazilian Congress, caught Osvaldo's interest and prompted him to circulate those documents within the Chamber of Deputies.

From that moment onward, a friendship was sealed, whose occasional quarrels stemming from differing political judgments were overcome by the conviction that our objective was the common cause of justice. It was in this spirit that, when in early 1989 he learned of the fraudulent imprisonment of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Osvaldo did not hesitate to propose a statement signed by Brazilian congressmen and addressed to the U.S. authorities protesting that unjust and cruel act. His name headed a memorable list of 71 Brazilian congressman, who for the most part had little direct knowledge of the LaRouche case, but who readily agreed to consider it upon learning that it was Osvaldo's initiative.

The reaction of the Brazilian press—encouraged by the U.S. embassy in Brasilia—when that statement was published in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*—was violent against the congressional signators. I shall always remember Osvaldo in his office in Brasilia, reviewing the matter after receiving protests from his colleagues: "I believe in you," he confided to me, "because I share your admiration for St. Augustine and St. Thomas."

Some months after that storm, Osvaldo, in his capacity as president

of the Nationalist Congressional Front, invited LaRouche's wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, to address the Brazilian Congress on the political and judicial persecution of her husband. Although he was not reelected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1989, Osvaldo continued to work for LaRouche's freedom, and his contribution was undoubtedly crucial toward ultimately achieving that end.

Osvaldo was never driven by personal interest or material things, such that he grew poor during his long political career. There is one period in his life to which he referred several times, in his calm and measured way of speaking, which speaks volumes about him.

He had been deposed as agriculture minister of the João Goulart government by the military coup of March 31, 1964, which brought Gen. Castelo Branco into power. Osvaldo had previously esteemed and respected the general. Once in the presidency, Gen. Castelo Branco attempted through common friends to call him several times, out of a desire to discuss the crisis facing the nation. Osvaldo refused the various presidential invitations, not out of any personal aversion nor because of the general's participation in the coup that had overthrown Goulart, but rather, as he honorably conveyed to President Castelo Branco, because of the nominations of Roberto Campos and Otavio Bulhoes—the worst exponents of monetarist liberalism—to the ministries of planning and finance, respectively, nominations which Osvaldo was sure would guarantee Brazil's backwardness for the next two decades.

The loss of our beloved friend is something we feel most deeply, but we draw comfort from the knowledge that his great generosity and Christian charity will keep him always close to God, source of all justice.