

unemployment were to be definitively eradicated. The book was published in both English and Spanish.

At the current time, the essence of that book's proposals continues to be the real agenda for the survival of the nations of Central and South America. The book details the railway corridors that should join together the continent; the great hydraulic projects to connect the Orinoco, Amazonas, and Paraná basins of South America; the hydraulic Plan of the Northeast, and the Hydraulic Plan of the Northwest Gulf, to bring water from the rivers of southern Mexico to the dry northern regions; the interoceanic canals to join the Pacific and the Atlantic; the great agricultural, mineral, and industrial projects for the region; the industrial use of nuclear energy, lasers, and high-intensity beam weapons; and the foundations to establish an Ibero-American Common Market—all projects that needed to be undertaken immediately to put an end to the bleeding of our nations through the growing and usurious servicing of the foreign debt.

The recent call for Ibero-American integration on the part of Presidents Luis Inácio Lula Da Silva of Brazil, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Alvaro Uribe of Colombia, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain (see article in *Economics*), can only be understood in its true dimensions if one understands the profound impact on the region and on the world by—as López Portillo stated—the “wise words of Lyndon H. LaRouche.”

In November 1984, during the third international conference of the Schiller Institute, held in Washington, D.C., the Trade Union Commission of the Schiller Institute was created, of which Jorge Carrillo was a founding member. In July 1985, in Mexico City, the First Continental Trade Union Conference, in which the Ibero-American Trade Union Commission was established, was held. Among the coordinators of this body was Pedro Rubio, friend and representative of Carrillo. On Sept. 2, 1985, Carrillo was sworn in as Colombia's Labor Minister. In August 1986, the book *Ibero-American Integration* was published, of which more than 50,000 copies circulated in just its first edition. In October 1987, the Wall Street crash that LaRouche had forecast, occurred on schedule. From that point onward, the density of banking, commercial, and industrial bankruptcies, and the bursting of numerous financial bubbles, has worsened.

Jorge Carrillo was a pioneer in this battle for the physical integration of our nations. His legacy is more in effect than ever; we shall miss him, but the guiding light of his courage and of his teachings will continue to light our way.

—Bogota, April 4, 2005

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Jorge Carrillo: Leader For Social Justice

by Javier Almario

Social and economic justice, the general welfare, real economic progress, improvement in the living standards of the workers, the dignity of labor, and in general, the social doctrine of the Catholic Church and the harmony of interests between workers and businessmen, were constant themes in all of Jorge Carrillo Rojas's thoughts and actions, whether as a polemical trade union leader, as Labor Minister, as political activist, analyst, ambassador, or as administrative director of the Peasant Family Compensation Fund, the position he assumed in 2003, and which he held until his death on March 20, 2005.

Jorge Carrillo was going to be 70 years old on April 9, 2005. He was born in Bogota on April 9, 1935, although his family is from Boyaca, and he lived most of his childhood and youth in that province. When he was a boy, a friend of his father took him every Friday to hear the Colombian nationalist leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, who paradoxically died on one of his birthdays.

Because his school performance wasn't the best, his father decided that “this boy won't be a doctor, so he will have to learn a trade,” and he was sent to the School of Arts and Trades in Chiquinquirá. When Carrillo was 14 years old, his father died, which, as he told it, “forced me to crack the books.” He graduated as a mechanic and got a job as a lathe operator, third class, in the Paz del Río steel plant.

Later, he went to Bogota and worked in machine shops, holding various jobs until being employed by Cauchosol, which no longer exists. There, in 1955, he entered the union, and as a member of the union, he organized a series of sports competitions in which primarily the youth participated. There he met his wife-to-be, Maria Ramirez. Those same youth voted for him to become a member of the union's steering committee, as secretary general of the union. This union was affiliated to UTRACUN (the Workers Union of Cundinamarca) and the national UTC (Union of Colombian Workers).

Carrillo took various union courses given by the Jesuits at the Javeriana University, where they taught accounting, administration, leadership, economic solidarity, and the social doctrine of the Church. From very early on, he understood that although it was necessary to fight for the workers, the goal of trade unionism was not class warfare, but that there had to be a “harmony of interests” between workers and businessmen.



Carrillo greets Pope John Paul II in Bogota, where the Pope has given a mass dedicated to the workers of Colombia, in July 1986. It is estimated that 2 million people participated. To the Pope's left is President Belisario Betancur.

He became a trade union activist in UTRACUN and was involved in the creation of 40 trade unions. Later, he was elected secretary general of the UTC, in which post he served for ten years. Later, he was secretary of political affairs and vice president of that labor federation.

Entering Politics

Never forgetting his union obligations, Carrillo was elected a deputy to the Cundinamarca Assembly in 1968, by a dissident faction of the Liberal Party headed by Consuelo de Montejó. In 1980, he supported Presidential candidate Belisario Betancur against the candidate of the National Front, former President Misael Pastrana Borrero. In 1974, Carrillo was elected for four years to the Federal House of Representatives, where he presented a bill to force businessmen to pay interest on severance pay.

From the Congress, he supported the 1977 National Civic Strike, in which for the first time, the (Conservative) UTC, the (Liberal) CTC, the (Communist) CSTC, and the (Christian Democratic) CGT labor federations joined forces in a common action. It is possible that from that moment onward, he began to think about creating the Unified Workers Federation (CUT), to pull all the unions into a single organization.

A Harmony of Interests

As of 1978, Carrillo became one of the leading opponents of the economic policies of the International Monetary Fund and of a whole succession of finance ministers. He fought the idea that inflation could be controlled by lowering workers' wages, or by increasing them at a rate below the inflation level. He proposed the creation of a common front of workers and businessmen, to force the banks to lower interest rates

that were strangling in equal measure "the companies and the workers."

He studied the history of the United States, to try to understand how that country had the highest wages in the world, and at the same time generated the highest profits for its companies. He mentioned that Henry Ford, although a fierce enemy of trade unionism, nonetheless paid the highest wages in the United States at his factories, and by this means encouraged productivity and a capacity for innovation. In effect, the creator of the modern automobile realized that the car industry only had a future "to the extent that the auto workers and workers in other industries have the ability to buy a Ford."

To those who proposed eliminating the minimum wage, eliminating social benefits and the various

achievements of the workers, which some economists and businessmen were proposing as a means to create more jobs, Carrillo charged that they wanted to send humanity back centuries and turn workers into slaves. He stated many times that inflation must be fought by producing more, with better technology, with more skilled jobs, and by fighting usury.

He studied the problem of the Colombian and Ibero-American debt in depth, and concluded that this debt has already been paid several times over, and its continued growth was due to financial manipulations. He supported the idea of a collective moratorium on the Ibero-American foreign debt, by forming a debtors' cartel, and that the economy of the countries of the region would be integrated through great physical infrastructure projects, an idea first expressed by U.S. economist Lyndon LaRouche in the 1982 book entitled *Operation Juárez*.

In 1982, when UTRACUN ended its affiliation with the UTC, Carrillo and his close friend Pedro Ignacio Rubio organized the Union of Bogota and Cundinamarca Workers (UTRABOC), turning it into the regional organization of the UTC.

The Betancur government organized a meeting in the city of Cartagena in 1983, to discuss the problem of the Ibero-American foreign debt, and threatened to use the debt bomb to pressure for negotiations. However, at the last moment, the President retreated, undoubtedly because support from other Ibero-American countries was not sufficient. The Cartagena meeting went from a Debtors' Cartel to a Payers' Cartel, and the Betancur government acceded to pressures to impose a drastic adjustment program, during which "drop-by-drop" devaluation of the Colombian currency turned into a flood. At that point, Carrillo became the main opponent of the gov-

ernment's economic policy, and that of its Finance Minister, Roberto Junguito Bonnet.

Labor Minister

When President Betancur announced his nomination of Carrillo for Labor Minister, the debate was hot and heavy. "How could it occur to the President to name the leading opponent of his economic adjustment policy to the labor ministry?" Former President Alfonso López Michelsen accused the government of attempting a "Peronist" model, in reference to the alliance of Juan Perón with Argentina's CGT labor federation. Minister Junguito was on the verge of resigning. The weekly magazine *Semana* predicted that the experiment wouldn't last. The organizations of businessmen argued that Carrillo would be biased in favor of the workers, and Carrillo admitted that this was true.

On Sept. 2, 1985, Carrillo assumed the post of Labor Minister in the Betancur government. From his first actions in labor conflicts at the time, Carrillo proved himself a great negotiator, intellectual, visionary, and also an excellent administrator. He took advantage of every opportunity to convince the country and the world that unemployment could only be resolved with large investments in economic development, both by the state and by the private sector. He argued that promoting micro-companies as the supposed solution to unemployment would only encourage the growth of the informal sector, where workers could not even get a minimum wage.

Carrillo promoted the construction of the Atrato-Truandó Canal, of various transport infrastructure and health projects, and projects that would integrate the nations of Ibero-America. With the exception of a strike at the Caracol radio station, which Carrillo refused to declare illegal despite pressures to do so, labor peace reigned under his ministry (something which hadn't been seen in the country for a long time) and earned him praise from both the workers and the business sector. Carrillo will be remembered in Colombian history with the honorable title of The Worker Minister.

Unifying the Labor Movement

He had barely completed his stint at the Labor Ministry when he dedicated himself completely to pulling all the labor federations together into the Unified Workers Conference, with the idea that workers would unite into a single powerful organization independent of the political ideologies they held. Carrillo became its first president, through 1988, when he resigned his post. As president of the CUT, Carrillo cultivated a close friendship with Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva, who was president of his country's CUT at the time, and who is today the President of Brazil.

Later, Carrillo became an advisor to the Peace Advisory Council, official government delegate to annual meetings of the International Labor Organization (ILO), and Colombian Ambassador to Guatemala in 1994.



Jorge Carrillo at the Nariño Presidential Palace in Bogota on Nov. 24, 2003, on the occasion of the issuance of the first unemployment subsidies handed out by Comcaja, the Peasant Family Compensation Fund, which he headed.

Carrillo also participated in a number of world forums. In 1980, he participated in the founding of the Club of Life, led by German political figure Helga Zepp-LaRouche, whose intent was to combat spreading Malthusianism worldwide. In 1982, he participated in the founding of the Schiller Institute, also led by Helga Zepp-LaRouche. It was his idea, and that of Pedro Rubio, to organize a Schiller Institute Labor Commission, to fight for a new and more just world order.

In 1998, together with former Mexican President José López Portillo, U.S. economist Lyndon LaRouche, and other world personalities, Carrillo signed a widely circulated international statement which proclaimed the necessity of a Union of Sovereign States to reorganize the world monetary and financial system, to create a new, just world order.

He participated in the Presidential campaign of current Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Vélez, and from 2003 to the time of his death, was the Administrative Director of the Peasant Family Compensation Fund (Comcaja.) Carrillo always thought that Comcaja was the best mechanism available for the government to carry out its social policy. Because of Colombian business culture, we no longer spoke of "Compañero Jorge" or "Compañero Carrillo," but called him "Dr. Jorge Carrillo," which is the customary way we speak to an administrative director or a general manager in the business world. His main achievement in Comcaja was to transform a company on the verge of bankruptcy into a viable entity.

Throughout his illness, Carrillo was always lucid. Even when his body could no longer function, he was always bril-