

International panel to probe Justice Department

A Commission of internationally prominent jurists and others has been formed to investigate lawless activity by the U.S. Justice Department that many fear is leading the United States toward a police state. The "International Commission to Investigate Soviet-style Human Rights Violations Inside the United States" was prompted by recent U.S. government behavior toward the movement surrounding controversial political figure Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and his associates.

Charging the U.S. Justice Department with a politically motivated witchhunt against LaRouche, Commission members at a press conference in Washington Oct. 29 called LaRouche "the hope of the present-day world," and said they feared that no one's political rights would be safe if the United States permitted opponents of government policies to have their civil rights mercilessly trampled upon in the way they charged LaRouche's rights have been.

A massive raid was carried out on offices of businesses operated by supporters of LaRouche in Leesburg, Virginia on Oct. 6. Two of his associates, Michele and Jeffrey Steinberg, are currently being held without bail in Massachusetts, although neither has a criminal record nor is charged with any violent crime. A third LaRouche associate, Michael Billington, faces trumped up charges of "securities fraud" in several states. All the charges are without merit, according to LaRouche spokesmen, and according to members of the international commission formed Oct. 29.

Internationally, 28 press conferences were held on three continents to announce the formation of the commission. Many of those involved have stated their fear that the process under way inside the United States, only currently focused on LaRouche, parallels the 1933-34 process by which Adolf Hitler wiped out all potential institutional opposition to his dictatorship.

At a press conference in Rome, a guest appearance, something of a surprise, was made by Elizabeth Rose, the octogenarian LaRouche supporter from Philadelphia whose children, with the connivance of attorneys and a corrupt judge, have had her declared "mentally incompetent" for no

other reason than her support for LaRouche. She walked out of the courtroom and went to Europe after the judge declared he would find against her.

The commission was formed by prominent international figures who are familiar with LaRouche's activities as the 1982 intellectual author of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a fighter against international narco-terrorism, and for international monetary reforms. Many of the commission's backers have expressed the fear that Soviet-style injustices in the U.S. threaten Western civilization.

A large fraction of the hundreds forming this commission, are outstanding legal professionals in their own nations, some of international repute. Many of these have stated, that what the U.S. news-media concede to be major features of the Leesburg raid are flagrant violations of the most elementary past standards of law in the United States. Leading Europeans have stated, that these actions remind them of the practices of the Nazi Gestapo, and the Soviet political police. It has also been noted, that these actions are clear violations of the Helsinki Accords on human rights of political dissidents.

'A great and noble man'

S. C. Birla, an attorney at the Supreme Court of India and secretary of the All-India Bar Association, issued a statement at the press conference forming the commission, calling LaRouche a "great and noble man." The statement was read by an associate of Mr. Birla's, K. D. Sharma. He was one of six eminent spokesmen from Spain, Peru, India, and the United States to denounce the recent legal actions against LaRouche.

"We are surprised and shocked beyond belief that the U.S. government and state agencies conducted a massive raid on the headquarters of organizations associated with a great and noble man like Mr. Lyndon LaRouche. We regard Mr. LaRouche as the greatest hope for the present-day world. And if he has to be treated in this ugly fashion in his home country, we do not know what future awaits others. We have

always viewed the United States as the land of the law which guarantees freedom and privacy of the individual, and protects their right to dissent. By any standards, the raid on Mr. LaRouche's

and in violation of all known principles and conventions governing search and seizure operations. We find it hard to believe that innocent persons were arrested as part of this search and seizure operation, and that they are still being held without bail. It is a well-known and absolutely established legal principle that bail in all cases, except those involving heinous crime, is a right, and not subject to discretion.

"The least the government agencies can do is to release the innocent persons, drop the matter, and dismiss the officers who indulged in such an illegal act. This alone will restore to America the dignity which crowns her in the eyes of the whole world. The U.S. government owes an immediate apology to Mr. LaRouche and his associates, and of course, full compensation."

Milton Croom, former U.S. Senate candidate and North Carolina head of "Peace Through Strength," denounced "politically inspired prosecutions in this country aimed at destroying targeted individuals, their careers and effectiveness," at the Washington press conference.

Croom attacked what he called a "two-track justice system in the U.S." in which, he said, "persons guilty of horrendous crimes, who are unquestionably guilty, are freed if the slightest imprecision is found in their trials," while, on the other hand, "politically inspired prosecutions against minor alleged transgressions are carried out in an aggressive and merciless fashion."

He included the cases of Watergate, Sen. Harrison Williams, Rep. George Hanson, and Judge Harry Claiborne as examples, and said these and the case of LaRouche associates Jeffrey and Michele Steinberg are "extreme examples" of victims of such a system. "In this case," he said, "individuals of an organization unpopular with the government were assaulted by a small army of government agents based on minor charges and dubious evidence, and are now being denied bail."

As a result of tolerating such action, he said, "No citizen of the United States is safe."

He endorsed Senate Resolution 514, sponsored by Sen. William Armstrong (R-Colo.), which creates a congressional subcommittee to investigate violation of individual rights by excesses of the Justice Department and its agencies.

A protest from Spain

Victor Girauta y Armada, a noted attorney from Spain, appeared at the press conference to proclaim the war on international drug trafficking and "narco-terrorism" as "the main object of my life," and declare LaRouche "the most courageous fighter in this field in the world."

Girauta is a member of the National Lawyers Board of

Spain and the Spanish-German Lawyers Association.

He joined other spokesmen in expressing his "deep concern" for recent actions led by U.S. Assistant Attorney General William Weld against LaRouche. When asked by reporters if he concurred with the analogy made by Schiller Institute President Webster Tarpley between the treatment of Mr. LaRouche and his associates and "Soviet-style human rights violations," Mr. Girauta said, "I do not disassociate myself from such a view."

He praised Mr. LaRouche's "courage and integrity in the face of the banks and the big businesses behind the drug trade," and said that Spain, "as a new, young democracy, looks to the United States as a model.

"We look up to the United States," he said, "where human rights are supposedly protected. It is hard for us to accept what has been going on in the treatment of Mr. LaRouche. . . . It is the intention of European legal associations to inquire about this case, from the standpoint of violations of the U.S. Constitution and the Helsinki Treaty."

Ricardo F. Martin, former assistant attorney general of Peru, and former ad hoc prosecutor for drugs and narco-terrorism, made one of the most moving statements of the press briefing: "I fully support the formation of the Investigatory Commission of Human Rights Violations in the United States, raising my energetic voice of protest and surprise at the violations of constitutional and civil rights, which citizens who support the Democratic presidential candidacy of Lyndon LaRouche have suffered.

"I energetically protest the use of force in violation of the human rights of people who find themselves jailed on the basis of absurd accusations, without any right to defense and bond. Even the worst criminals are granted these minimum rights, which are a guarantee that the law is carried out. I also protest the brutal police methods employed in the raid on the offices of organizations which support Mr. LaRouche. Hundreds of policemen, armed to the teeth, armored cars, and helicopters were used in the raid. This entailed unprecedented levels of force for the United States in the battle against crime. I want to ask if at any time, similiar force was used to carry out an anti-drug operation, to combat the 'crack' which is assassinating thousands of citizens? I answer, never has this been done!

"We, the people of Latin America, are accustomed to the fact that, when in one of our countries, members of some political party are arrested, or their offices or homes are raided, the U.S. State Department and all the press immediately open fire against these acts, calling them 'violations of human rights,'

states.'

"Well, today, the people of Latin America alert the U.S. State Department: 'You are violating the Constitution and trampling on civil rights, trampling on human rights, and using police state methods!'"