

# Government seeks to silence LaRouche with life term for 'arrogance'

by Nancy Spannaus

Judge Albert V. Bryan did his job for the treasonous cabal in the U.S. Establishment on Jan. 27 in Alexandria, Virginia, when he bowed to the government's request and immediately threw international political figure Lyndon LaRouche and his six associates in jail. Bryan sentenced LaRouche to 15 years, and denied both self-surrender and bond on appeal, saying that he found no substantive issues on which an appeal of the conviction for conspiracy could be made.

Bryan imposed five-year sentences and fines of \$1,000 per count on William Wertz and Edward Spannaus, two close LaRouche associates who were in charge of fundraising and legal work for the National Caucus of Labor Committees. The four fundraisers who were convicted—Michael Billington, Paul Greenberg, Joyce Rubinstein, and Dennis Small—were each sentenced to three years in prison, and \$2,000 fine per count.

In response to statements made by the defendants on their own behalf, Bryan and prosecutor Kent Robinson showed some of the animus which lies behind the denial of bail and the murderous sentence for LaRouche. Both attacked the defendants' alleged "arrogance" for declaring their innocence, and made clear that their intention was to prevent the defendants from carrying out their political organizing.

Although Judge Bryan said that he had read and considered the letters sent to him on behalf of LaRouche, which came from prominent citizens all over the world, he clearly dismissed them out of hand.

LaRouche's attorney Odin Anderson told the court that the trial had only proved that LaRouche has spent the past 20 years working solely for the benefit of his fellow Americans and the citizens of the world, and that the letters submitted testified to that fact. This means that LaRouche's activities cannot afford to be diminished, he added.

Anderson then urged the judge to reject jailing LaRouche, but that if he did jail him, to limit the sentence to one year. Even one year for a person of LaRouche's age is a life sentence, he said. Additionally, Anderson requested a recommendation for a level one facility (minimum security and maximum access), self-surrender to prison, bond pend-

ing appeal, and a 60 day delay in the sentencing in order to permit LaRouche to have a necessary eye operation.

LaRouche then issued a statement on the role of top levels of British intelligence in predicting and arranging the political frameup, and urged the court to consider the negative international repercussions of following through on the political persecution. He named a top-level British intelligence operative, Kenneth DeCourcy, as an individual who delivered a "message" to LaRouche, that he either cut a deal with the Establishment, or expect to have his political movement dismembered piece by piece. It's time this persecution was stopped before more damage is done, LaRouche said.

LaRouche's statement led Assistant U.S. Attorney Kent Robinson to issue a long diatribe against him and all the defendants. Robinson accused LaRouche of being "cynical" and of setting the tone for the fundraising by saying that "anyone who doesn't give money is not morally fit to survive." Since LaRouche refuses to show remorse or take responsibility for his "crime," Robinson said, it is clear that "they" could do the whole thing again. Therefore the sentence should be substantial, he said, and LaRouche should be denied both the time for private medical treatment, and bail pending appeal.

Judge Bryan didn't waste any time in response. Declaring that he was "unwilling to accept the idea that the end justifies the means in this case, he said that incarceration was warranted. Without explanation, he also denied self-surrender, and insisted that there is no substantive reason for appeal, and therefore no right to bond pending appeal.

The next defendant to be sentenced was William Wertz, represented by Brian Gettings. Gettings addressed the court on Wertz's moral character and absence of greed. Wertz then read a statement stressing his devotion to the American System, and his pride in working side by side with LaRouche on this goal. He said that he had always acted in good faith and truthfully, and followed the one true law, that of love of God and love for mankind. He will continue to follow that for the rest of his life, he concluded.

AUSA Robinson took this occasion to spew out his main

complaint about LaRouche's movement in response. These people are "arrogant," he said, claiming that they are only doing the public good in their activities. They think they are the only ones who know what the public good is, and don't have regard for the good of the people whose money they take.

Robinson pretended to answer Wertz's additional statement that he would work to repay lenders' money if he had the power, by saying that it was too little, too late. He neglected to repeat what he had said in response to LaRouche, that the government itself had shut down the corporations which owed the debt—thereby preventing the potential for any repayment.

Judge Bryan then imposed sentence, and sent Wertz immediately off to jail.

### 'Political persecution'

Edward Spannaus then appeared before the bench for sentencing with his attorney Kenly Webster. Webster made extensive remarks at first, noting in particular that the government had just dropped its Boston case against Spannaus, and was likely to drop the New York case.

Webster also elicited from the judge some of his reasons for denying self-surrender. Bryan said that he was still not concerned with flight of the defendants, but claimed that the defendants' freedom would be a "danger to the community" since they would carry out the same activities as before.

Since the defendants have not taken loans for two years, this argument could only mean the political activities of the defendants, and any fundraising at all.

Spannaus then read a statement, declaring his innocence, and underlining the fact that the whole trial was a "political prosecution," the "targeting of individuals, not crime." He particularly contrasted the Boston case with that held in Judge Bryan's court, including the fact that the jury in that case polled itself in favor of acquitting all the defendants due to the flavor of government misconduct.

The statement was sufficiently sharp to provoke Judge Bryan into responding with sarcastic venom to both Spannaus and LaRouche on the issue of "political prosecution." The idea that this is a political prosecution is "arrant nonsense," Bryan said. The "idea that this organization represents a sufficient threat" to anyone to make the government want to shut them down "defies human experience." He then imposed five years, and sent Spannaus immediately to jail.

Lawyers for the fundraisers all spoke on behalf of their clients by underlining their unselfishness, dedication, and good faith. Speaking on his own behalf, Dennis Small described the basis for his association with LaRouche and his fundraising as the "elementary moral precept, that we must each use our brief mortal lives to leave something of lasting worth behind us for all of humanity."

Rubinstein delivered a brief statement declaring that she was innocent and proud of her association with LaRouche

and the other defendants.

In response, Kent Robinson argued that the fundraisers were all liars. Judge Bryan had already decided he agreed, it seems, as he sent all three immediately to jail, denying even the request to recommend a low-security prison for Billington, who has to prepare for trial in Loudoun County, Virginia in the next months.

The final official act in the hearing was a question from Wertz's attorney Gettings, who asked that the judge reconsider his decision against self-surrender since it was prejudicial against the defendants for their treatment in prison. Judge Bryan said he was aware it was prejudicial, period.

Overall, legal observers found the sentencing for LaRouche in particular to be steeper than any other fraud cases. They were also shocked at the denial of self-surrender.

The only concession to reason which Bryan gave was his decision to strike from the government's sentencing report, the statement that the defendants were responsible for raising \$32 million by fraud. Only \$294,000 was "proven" at trial, and that is the figure that will be included in the report.

### Motion for bond denied

On Jan. 31, defense attorneys sought unsuccessfully to overturn Bryan's ruling and have the defendants released from jail pending the results of an appeal of the Alexandria verdict. The defense argued that there are four substantive issues that will make up the appeal:

1) The inadequate *voir dire* process, which prevented defense attorneys from adequately questioning prospective jurors. The "rocket docket" method of choosing a jury in about two hours, resulted in a jury packed with government employees and their spouses, including the jury foreman, who is a middle-level employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2) The failure of Judge Bryan to grant a continuance, rushing the defendants to trial in just 38 days after their indictment, and depriving defense attorneys of adequate time to prepare their case;

3) The failure of the judge to sever the tax and loan fraud conspiracy cases, which further prejudiced and confused the jury;

4) The insufficient evidence for the case altogether.

Following a hearing in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, Judge John Butzner denied the motion. Judge Butzner commented that it would be "presumptuous" of him to accept the defense's argument on the *voir dire* without reviewing the transcript. He said he thought 38 days was sufficient time for preparation of the case.

It is expected that the defendants will appeal for bond at the next highest level, a two to three judge panel of the Fourth Circuit. In the meantime, all seven are still in jail, as of this writing, and a powerful international political mobilization is under way to free them—and rescue the United States from the self-destruction that is inherent in this trial.