

# Meeting of Italian mass movement told to 'free and elect LaRouche'

by Our Special Correspondent

On Sunday, Aug. 23, Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson was the main guest speaker at the Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples which is held every year in Rimini, Italy. The 81-year-old civil rights leader, author, and winner of the Martin Luther King Freedom Medal gave a stirring speech to an audience of 2,000, on a panel devoted to the past and future of the American "melting pot" ideal. Decrying the destruction of her homeland, she called for Lyndon LaRouche to be freed from jail, and elected President of the United States.

The sponsor of the Rimini Meeting is the Catholic mass movement, Communion and Liberation. CL is close to the Popular Movement, a Christian Democratic political tendency with a presence in the national Parliament; and to two outspoken periodicals, *Il Sabato* and *30 Giorni*. The grouping polemically opposes Anglo-American dictates in politics; the reduction of the Church to "an agency trying to impose principles through laws of the state"; and what it calls the "lay fundamentalism" of the U.S.-linked P-2 Freemasonry. Popular Movement head Giancarlo Cesana and Fr. Claude Larre, a French Jesuit priest and expert on Chinese minorities, also took part in the panel on America in Rimini.

Amelia Robinson was introduced by Sheila Jones, an American leader of the Schiller Institute with Robinson, who sang three of her favorite Spirituals. Mrs. Robinson then spoke on who Lyndon LaRouche is, why he is being kept in jail by George Bush. LaRouche, she affirmed, is the only man who has "the programs and knowledge necessary to revive the economy and return to moral values."

She invited the young people present "not to be misled by fear" and to courageously oppose Bush's "divide and conquer" tactics, which are "destroying not only America but the whole world." Fear is the means used by Bush to turn not only minorities "but each one of you into slaves." She minced no words in criticizing NATO, the U.N., and European governments which take orders from Bush, letting people be used as cannon fodder for his wars.

Explaining the Spiritual, "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," she recounted how African-Americans have been historically mistreated in the U.S.: "kidnaped, sold and treated like beasts of burden." "This is a life," she said, "which George Bush wishes to impose on the whole world," starting with his slave labor and depopulation programs.

That morning, she had given a press conference with the meeting spokesman, Robi Ronza (see *Documentation*).

## 'Diplomatic incident'

The CL sponsors of the Rimini Meeting, used to being pilloried for opposing Desert Storm and other Bush lunacies, did not back down to the provocative accounts of Mrs. Robinson's speech in the freemasonic Italian media, typified by a headline in the Rome daily *Il Tempo*: "Afro-American Pasionaria Supports Tax-Evading Guru." It soon became evident that all the slanders were baked in the same oven: an obscure press agency AGI. AGI is under the wing of ex-Minister Scotti, who recently resigned in an attempt to topple Prime Minister Giuliano Amato's government; but observers say, only the U.S. embassy could have imposed the AGI story all over the country.

The nationally circulated right-wing Milan daily *Il Giornale* was typical. First, it quoted the endorsement of the CL meeting by Cardinals Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, and Joseph Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on behalf of the Pope. Then: "An incredible diplomatic incident spoiled the triumphal atmosphere. To speak about America, there had been invited Mrs. A. Robinson . . . today an activist of the Schiller Institute, an extremist, fanatic cult in legal trouble in the U.S. due to maneuvers by its guru LaRouche. He was sentenced to 15 years for tax fraud and other crimes. 'He is a martyr of Bush,' said the black lady ' . . . we want him in the White House.' "

*L'Unità*, organ of the former Communist Party, now called Party of the Democratic Left, headlined its copycat coverage: "Pope Blesses Meeting, CL Supports Anti-Bush Guru—Freeing of LaRouche, in Jail for Tax Fraud, Demanded in Debate." The article ends: "The first day of the meeting had a surprise in store. The guest was Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson, presented as an associate of M.L. King. . . . She went to the podium and demanded that a shocking character like Lyndon LaRouche be freed. He is the guru of an ambiguous movement; in the 1980s, he tried to impose himself by backing Star Wars, and accused the English Queen of running world drug traffic. LaRouche, sentenced to 15 years in jail for tax fraud, was presented by Mrs. Robinson as a 'political prisoner' of Bush. And Clinton? 'A bad copy of Bush. We will vote LaRouche,' she told the CL audience."

The Socialist Party paper *Avanti* served the same bilge (an irony, given that the party's top leaders are heading to jail in droves over the kickback scandals). *Avanti* seized the

occasion to attack CL for being “too hasty and imprudent” in inviting Amelia Robinson, “a gentle, old, but rough lady, who transformed the debate aimed at attacking the current President into a crusade against the United States, Clinton included, [Bush] accused of having condemned Lyndon LaRouche to 15 years prison . . . a shocking character, a guru of a reactionary cult which drowned in fraud and ridicule (they accused the Queen of England of being a drug runner).” The cowardly correspondent concluded: “We are certain that this anti-western wind will not leave any traces.”

Only the regional papers *La Gazzetta di Rimini* and *La Gazzetta dell' Umbria*, and national radio's Channel 3, whose stories were based directly on the press conference, omitted the “ambiguous guru” line. The papers underlined, though, that Mrs. Robinson's backing of LaRouche for President, “contradicted the endorsement of Clinton which *Il Sabato*, close to CL, had published.”

### **‘Pities’ timorous press**

In a statement to the Italian press on Aug. 26, Amelia Boynton Robinson said, “I pity the press, so dominated by fear that it is losing precious time while the world is again moving toward a new military adventure of George Bush, dictated purely by his electoral aims.

“My heart is especially saddened by the fact that here in Rimini, we are on the shore of the Adriatic which looks across at the nations of former Yugoslavia, victims of Serbian brutality. In these very days here at the Meeting of Rimini, the youth who belong to this praiseworthy organization, Communion and Liberation, are debating how to resolve the grave problems of the world. I too—who visited Croatia this past June at the invitation of Mothers for Peace, and have seen with my own eyes the sufferings of these people—have been fighting for more than 60 years for human and civil rights, and I recognize the same spirit and commitment in Communion and Liberation.”

She reminded the press of its responsibilities. “In defaming Lyndon H. LaRouche, whose case was recognized by the last official human rights report of the United Nations as one of the three victims of human rights violations in the United States,” she observed, “the press organs show that they have let themselves be dragged along by fear, because they knew not of what they spoke.

“The Schiller Institute has never been a cult, and Lyndon LaRouche is in no way a *guru*, but an American political leader to whom millions of voters are looking, and who is running as an independent candidate for the White House, on the ticket with Rev. James Bevel, another spokesman of the American civil rights movement.

“Martin Luther King was also imprisoned, slandered, stabbed and killed because he fought the ruling system in America. . . . I was beaten, tortured, and left bleeding in a street in 1965, when I led the first march for the right to vote to the blacks in Alabama, just because I worked with Martin Luther King.”

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## Documentation

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*Following is the Rimini Meeting's news bulletin on Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson's press conference on Aug. 23. It was translated from the Italian.*

“America was wonderful, but we destroyed its beauty, its culture, and what it could have become.” With these words Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson emphasized her being both a product of the United States and a person fighting for the United States to become again, what it should be.

Robinson, among the speakers on the panel “And If the United States Became an ‘America’? The Melting Pot, Till Now Denied, Could Come in the Near Future,” was born in Savannah, Georgia, and since the 1950s has been engaged in the Afro-American civil rights movement. Her collaboration with Martin Luther King dates back to the '50s. She was the one who invited him to go to Alabama, where together they mobilized numerous marches to support colored people's voting rights.

Robi Ronza, in introducing her, stressed the fact that no European can call himself anti-American, as America is a sort of European *Magna Graecia*. One can, however, Ronza said, be critical of the U.S. claim to be the world's policeman, since that not only creates imbalances at the international level, but also produces a big crisis internally, by increasing the gap between the few rich and the many who are really badly off.

Robinson went through the various stages of her activity in the fight for American blacks' rights, starting in the years right after she graduated from college. “At the university in Alabama, I learned to fight and to be beaten for what I believe, and to believe in God.” In her work for the Agriculture Department it became very clear to her that apartheid and slavery were still unsolved. “Blacks were handled like cattle, the boss could kill them for silly reasons, and the murder was upheld in court.”

Her most difficult struggle, which saw her at the side of Martin Luther King, was for voting rights, not only in Alabama, but throughout the United States: “My husband, before dying, told me: ‘I want you to make all black Americans win their right to vote’.” Because of this struggle, she has repeatedly been threatened and was even arrested in 1965, during a march in her hometown.

Responding to some journalists' questions, she spoke about the present U.S. situation: “Unless the whole system changes, the melting pot will degenerate, Bush's aim is to set everyone against each other, both internally and internationally. Clinton is a bad copy of Bush. The only solution is to elect and free Lyndon LaRouche from prison. He was jailed after Bush's election because he opposed the corruption of the American political system.”