

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Hansen emerges from prison

Friends who know him well said former U.S. Congressman George Hansen (R-Idaho) looked a little haggard, but nevertheless he spent plenty of time greeting everyone who showed up at a reception to welcome him back from prison at the Capitol Hill Club here Oct. 6.

Hansen was correctly called a "political prisoner" by those who fought to call public attention to the railroad job that sent him away for a year of imprisonment. A slight error in complying with the so-called "ethics in government" law back in 1981 lost him his seat in Congress, almost bankrupted him, and resulted in a harrowing prison experience that just ended on Oct. 1.

Hansen was given a sample of the kind of "justice" that the Justice Department has spent tens of millions of taxpayer dollars since 1984 trying to impose on Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche.

While Hansen was imprisoned and LaRouche has been slugging it out with the Justice Department for three years now, former New York Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, the 1984 Democratic vice presidential candidate, admitted to the same "crime" as Hansen, but was never even indicted.

In 1981, Hansen was indicted and later convicted for improperly filing a campaign expenditure form, even though the House Ethics Committee admitted it told him it was proper for him to fill out the form the way he did.

He also went to a federal agency to get advice on how to fill out the form before submitting it, and was told he should not include his wife's income on the form. Later, the same agency

came back to Hansen, apologized for giving him incorrect advice, and then warned him that he was about to be indicted!

Hansen subsequently lost his congressional seat and was convicted and sent to prison. He was released on parole after serving for six months last December. However, Hansen was re-arrested April 15 while speaking at a church in Nebraska. Federal marshals appeared at the church, handcuffed him and put him in leg irons and flew him secretly back to Virginia in the middle of the night, claiming he had violated his parole—even though he had the tentative approval of his parole officer to speak in Nebraska.

His release Oct. 1 resulted from political pressure from a handful of his former congressional colleagues and hard work by his family and some political action groups. Four days prior to his scheduled release from the Petersburg, Va., federal prison, Hansen was granted permission to testify before a congressional hearing on the dangers of AIDS in the nation's prisons.

Hansen gave a harrowing account of his personal experience, noting that in many prisons, inmates are required to share the same razor for shaving—which is almost as deadly as sharing a hypodermic needle for passing the AIDS virus. This is why, Hansen said, he emerged from prison with a heavy beard. He refused to take the risk of using a razor.

The reception for Hansen after his release was co-sponsored by five senators, 16 members of the House, a dozen organizations and former Republican National Committee chairman Richard Richards. There were many more commitments from congressmen to attend the reception, as the layout of prepared name-tags at the reception table indicated.

Only a handful of the congress-

men who said they'd come, had the courage to show: only two senators—Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) and Steve Symms (R-Idaho)—and, at best count, 10 members of the House.

Everyone else was apparently too intimidated by the TV cameras that roved the room, the reporters from the *Washington Post* and other media, and even the representative from the Department of Justice, all of whom were taking notes on who showed up.

### State Department woos Kaunda

Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, the leader of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as the head of the so-called Frontline States that border the Republic of South Africa, came to Washington for a heavy schedule of meetings over four days, including with President Reagan and leading members of the State Department.

Kaunda has troubled leaders in the West by recent speeches calling for a break with the International Monetary Fund and its crushing debt repayment demands. While willing to talk of "reforming" the debt, U.S. officials are making it clear they don't like the idea of unilateral action by the Africans, such as a debt moratorium. "It will never work," a high-level State Department official repeated over and over to me at one reception for Kaunda.

Instead, the U.S. agreed with Kaunda to put up \$46 million to help improve a rail line between landlocked Zambia and the port of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania.

Ironically, this is a rail line that Zambia had to go to the People's Republic of China to get built in the first place, since no help was available from the West at the time.