

OAS staff blocked LaRouche complaint

A complaint charging violations of the human rights of U.S. political prisoner and presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche and five other people was sent on Aug. 26 to the president of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States, Patrick Robinson of Jamaica, to the other members of the commission, and to the Secretary General of the OAS, João Baena Soares.

The complaint had originally been presented to the OAS body on July 30, but had to be resubmitted directly to the commissioners after the OAS staff in Washington returned it without explanation to the Federal Medical Facility in Rochester, Minnesota, where LaRouche is serving the third year of a 15-year prison sentence.

After repeated inquiries, LaRouche's representatives were provided with a copy of a letter allegedly sent to him by the Executive Secretary of the OAS commission, Edith Marquez Rodríguez. Neither LaRouche nor any of the other signers of the complaint ever received the letter, a violation of the commission's own regulations which call for complainants to be notified. The unsigned letter from the OAS official, dated Aug. 13, rejected the complaint on what appears to be a technicality.

Conflict of interest

The petition was resubmitted directly to the commissioners by paralegal Mary Jane Freeman, acting on behalf of LaRouche and his co-defendants in the 1988 federal trial in Alexandria, Virginia that led to his imprisonment along with that of complainants William Wertz, Edward Spannaus, Michael Billington, Joyce Rubinstein, and Dennis Small. In her letter, Freeman questioned the ability of the OAS staff to be "impartial and independent" in light of the fact that the LaRouche complaint was decided upon by OAS attorney Christina Cerna, an official of the U.S. government during the Carter administration and a member of the U.S. Democratic Party.

That means, wrote Freeman, that Cerna "is an American citizen passing judgment on a complaint filed against the United States of America, and that she is a member of an opposing faction of the Democratic Party" to LaRouche's faction. This "indicates that a conflict of interest exists between Ms. Cerna and Mr. LaRouche," Freeman wrote. Cerna is also a former employee of Fried, Frank, Harris, Schriver and Kampelman—the law firm of Max Kampelman, a member of the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization that brags that it is at the

center of the "Get LaRouche" operations in the United States.

The apparent animus against LaRouche is indicated by Cerna's "arbitrary haste to dispose" of the original LaRouche petition; she spent less than a day reviewing thousands of pages of the LaRouche complaint and supporting evidentiary documents, Freeman charged.

Support from dignitaries

Freeman reminded commissioners that many of the Hemisphere's leaders, such as former President of Argentina Arturo Frondizi, are calling on the OAS to intervene in the LaRouche case. Ironically, Frondizi's letter to Marquez Rodríguez was delivered to the OAS headquarters in Washington on Aug. 16, the same day that the complaint was inexplicably returned to LaRouche in Minnesota. In his letter calling on the OAS to take up the LaRouche case, Frondizi, who was President of Argentina at the same time that John F. Kennedy was President of the United States and who was an enthusiastic supporter of Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, said that he shares the values common to the nations of the Western Hemisphere, particularly the concept that the human being is sacred. In fact, he noted, "The way the United States of America achieved its international status, was precisely by affirming such values, and it was nourished by the capacity of creativity and work of its people and its farsighted men, who did not retreat in the face of difficulties or, far from it, surrender their fundamental principles."

The image of the United States presented by Frondizi is at odds with the treatment accorded LaRouche by the Bush administration and with the general human rights situation in the U.S., noted Dennis Small in a commentary in the Brazilian daily *Jornal do Comercio* on Aug. 27. Small, who served 25 months in jail for his political affiliation with LaRouche, and who is one of the complainants to the OAS, wrote: "It is little known that the U.S. today has the largest imprisoned population per capita in the entire world: 426 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. By comparison, the Soviet Union has 236 prisoners of all types, and by the way, South Africa has 333. Insofar as the black population, the comparison is even less favorable. South Africa has 729 black prisoners per 100,000 black inhabitants, the United States has 3,109—five times more!"

Among others calling on the OAS to intervene in the LaRouche case are Colombian labor leader Jorge Carrillo, Peruvian congressman Carlos Calderón, and Eduardo Diaz, a director of the Library of Congress of Colombia.

In her letter to the OAS commissioners, Freeman said that if they allow their staff's "bureaucratic rejection" to stand, "it will be a sign to Ibero-American nations in particular, that the OAS has merely become the tool of the Anglo-American establishment. It is this same establishment which has endorsed the invasion of Panama and nurtured the economic policies which have brought a cholera epidemic to this continent."