

Venezuela's Cisneros exposes himself, orders expulsion of *EIR* correspondents

by Cynthia Rush

Ten days after drug kingpin Carlos Lehder, praising Adolf Hitler, declared total war on the Betancur government of Colombia, and only days after the Pope concluded an Ibero-American tour in which he had emphasized the urgent need for a new world economic order and an end to the continent's drug trade, four correspondents for *Executive Intelligence Review* were expelled from Venezuela on charges stemming from their involvement in the publication of *Narcotráfico, S.A.* the Spanish-language version of *Dope, Inc.*

Mexican citizens Carlos Méndez, Lucía López de Méndez, and Lorenzo Carrasco, *EIR* correspondents, arrived in Mexico City Feb. 7 following their deportation. They had been illegally detained for three days, suffering threats and physical abuse at the hands of Venezuela's political police, the DSIP. A fourth *EIR* correspondent, Italian citizen Stefania Sacchi de Servadio, was expelled from Caracas on Friday, Feb. 8.

Police raided the apartment of Carlos and Lucía Méndez at 2 a.m. on Feb. 5, and at 10 a.m. the same morning raided and cleaned out *EIR*'s Caracas bureau offices. Also on the morning of Feb. 5, police arrested five Venezuelan citizens, members of the *Partido Laboral Venezolano* who collaborate with *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche and are currently seeking official registration as a political party.

The four foreigners and the five Venezuelans were apparently detained at the insistence of the Cisneros family, a powerful Venezuelan banking family whose connections to the international money-laundering apparatus, other dirty financial activities, and Cuban intelligence, were described in a chapter of *Narcotráfico, S.A.* *El Mundo* reported on Feb. 6, "The four journalists were held incommunicado by the DSIP following a complaint by the Cisneros family." Media controlled by the family have been daily slandering *EIR* and LaRouche ever since.

EIR founder LaRouche in response issued a statement which reads in part: "Certain influential circles in Venezuela have joined with the Communist Party of Venezuela in massive circulation of lies copied from such accomplices of the U.S. narcotics-trafficking lobby as the Anti-Defamation League and NBC-TV. This campaign of villification in sections of the Venezuela news-media is being used as part of

an effort to lessen my support for the good work of the government of Venezuela under President Lusinchi.

"It is therefore appropriate that I publicly reaffirm my respect and sympathy for the President and his government, and to state that I understand rather fully the complex circumstances surrounding certain recent actions against journalists associated with me."

Enraged oligarchs

At the end of January, the Schiller Institute, the think tank founded by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, along with *EIR* mobilized internationally to protect the Pope's life as he repeated his calls for economic justice and an end to drug trafficking in virtually every nation he visited. The main threat identified by *EIR* stemmed from Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), the medievalist cult which had threatened the Pope. The mobilization provoked hysteria among the oligarchs who run TFP—the Thurn und Taxis family of Germany and the Braganças of Portugal and Brazil. TFP members left Ecuador and Peru during the Pope's visit so as not to be implicated in any attempts against him. Then came *EIR*'s publication of *Narcotráfico, S.A.*

The book was intended to aid those patriotic forces in Ibero-America who are collaborating with U.S. authorities in the anti-drug offensive and who want to put an end to the International Monetary Fund's policies which have permitted drug traffickers to brazenly challenge even the authority of sovereign governments. It provides documentation on Colombia's cocaine kingpin Carlos Lehder, who not only boasts of ordering the assassination of Colombian Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, to which *Narcotráfico* is dedicated, but vows to also kill Venezuelan Justice Minister José Manzo González and President Jaime Lusinchi.

The book also reveals the links between the drug-trafficking networks in Ibero-America and terrorism, their allies among the international banking community, and particularly their relationship with the "Bulgarian connection" through which the Soviet KGB operates. Since its publication at the end of January, the book has circulated widely and rapidly in Venezuela and throughout Ibero-America. As a result of the Feb. 5 raid, the book is now banned in Venezue-

la. But *EIR* Ibero-America editor Robyn Quijano has announced that a special dossier on the Cisneros family will be translated into eight languages and circulated internationally.

An *EIR* spokesman charged: "The Cisneros are attempting to prevent people from learning the role of Cuba and the Soviet Union in the international narcotics trade, particularly in the Caribbean region." *Narcotráfico, S.A.*, the spokesman asserted, "for the first time reveals Russian and Cuban involvement in the international black economy and their alliance with the narcoterrorists who are fomenting a bloodbath in Ibero-America, and their partnership with drug financiers such as Robert Vesco. This is what the Cisneros don't want people to know, and *this might be explained by their personal relations with Fidel Castro's Cuba.*"

The chapter of *Narcotráfico, S.A.* describing the activities of the Cisneros reports that Oswaldo Cisneros, the president of Pepsi-Cola Corp. in Caracas, visited Cuba in a company plane on June 7, 1984 and met personally with Fidel Castro. In a subsequent interview with the magazine *Resumen*, Cisneros insisted that his trip had been for personal and family reasons, and that his meeting with Castro was "pure coincidence" in which only "generalities" were discussed. The evidence presented in the book, however, strongly suggests otherwise.

International law violated

In their haste to halt the circulation of *Narcotráfico, S.A.*, Venezuelan authorities flagrantly violated international accords regarding the treatment of foreign nationals. Both the foreign journalists and the Venezuelans were stripped and bodysearched by police, and treated as if they were common criminals or drug-runners. For a period of 36 hours, the foreigners were denied their internationally recognized right to contact their embassies. They were subjected to intensive interrogation, always about the book, and especially about the origin and author of the chapter on the Cisneros family which, according to one DSIP agent, "will not permit one single copy of the book to circulate."

Carlos Méndez, who, contrary to lying reports in the Venezuelan press, was officially registered at the Interior Ministry as a foreign journalist, was physically abused by a DSIP agent who slapped him twice in the face and struck him three times on the body. Méndez was presented with what one DSIP agent said was a half-kilo bag of cocaine and told that it had been "found" in his apartment. Agents took several photographs of him holding the bag and threatened that they would publish the pictures in "the newspaper 2001" along with the charge that the publication of *Narcotráfico, S.A.* was only a cover-up for drug-running activities.

Cui bono?

From the moment of the journalists' arrests, the Cisneros family began a series of public slanders and recriminations

against what they described as the "transnational cult of totalitarian characteristics" run by "multimillionaire fanatic" Lyndon LaRouche. But their frantic activities and statements merely confirm *EIR's* charges that the family's attacks on this magazine and LaRouche serve the interests of the international dope cartel and financial community rather than those of the Republic of Venezuela.

On Feb. 6, the Cisneros-owned television station, Venevisión, reported that president Lusinchi had signed the order expelling the foreign journalists because they were involved in activities "denegrating and blackmailing . . . the best of our society" and destabilizing Venezuela's democratic system. LaRouche's associates have tried to undermine the institutional basis of the republic, Venevisión asserted, in accordance with the designs of "Soviet-Castro expansionism." Subsequent international wires reported the lie that *EIR* and LaRouche are tied to Soviet and Cuban intelligence services.

Much of what Venevisión has reported—several times a day beginning on Feb. 5—is a rehash of slanders printed in the *Washington Post* and made by NBC-TV in the United States. The Venezuelan television station insisted, as did NBC's First Camera in February of 1984, that LaRouche practices "the politics of hate" designed to ruin "respectable" political figures or institutions with whom he disagrees.

Respectable? In a report made available to the Caracas daily *Ultimas Noticias*, and published on Feb. 7, the Cisneros family expressed outrage that *EIR* and *Narcotráfico, S.A.* had the audacity to attack the "prestigious" government of Edward Seaga as just the type of "free enterprise" drug-haven envisioned by David Rockefeller's Caribbean Basin Initiative. *EIR's* assertion that "by 1978, [the establishment] of drug economies were the express policy of the IMF" caused similar hysteria, as did the charge that Henry Kissinger is in cahoots with Fidel Castro's drug operations, which help finance terrorism in Ibero-America. Cisneros defends Kissinger's Bipartisan Commission on Central America whose report advocates Hong Kong-style drug economies as the model for "economic development" in the region.

What the family could not tolerate was *EIR's* exposé of their allies in the international banking community who are trying to destroy what remains of Venezuelan sovereignty and economic integrity. *EIR's* correspondents in Caracas were attempting to "sabotage the process of negotiating the public debt," Cisneros raved. *Narcotráfico, S.A.* even "contains attacks on the principal world banks which are the creditors of the Venezuelan Republic."

Lest the point be missed, Gustavo Cisneros lunched on Feb. 8 with banker David Rockefeller, whose brother Nelson used to refer to Venezuela as his "plantation." Rockefeller was on a visit to Caracas with a delegation from Chase Manhattan Bank, there to inspect Venezuela's willingness to impose austerity in order to become "creditworthy."