

Andean Report by Valerie Rush

Venezuela fight centers on 'Dope, Inc.'

The ADL and Cisneros clan cover for their filthy drug ties and economic takeovers with attacks on the PLV.

Despite an intense intimidation campaign against the Venezuelan media run by elements linked to multi-millionaire businessman Gustavo Cisneros and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), a full-page ad calling for upholding the right to freedom of speech in Venezuela was published in Caracas Nov. 4 by the dailies *Ultimas Noticias* and *El Mundo*. Addressed to "All Venezuelan Patriots," the paid ad—the latest in a series—was put out by the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV) in response to "the disproportionate and somewhat hysterical campaign of newspaper ads, pamphlets, and anonymous broadsides" that have greeted efforts to end a state ban on the book *Narcotráfico, SA*.

That book—the Spanish-language version of *Dope, Inc.*, the exposé of the international drug trade written by an *EIR* investigative team and commissioned by Lyndon LaRouche—was banned in Venezuela in 1985 because it made reference to Cisneros and to Venezuelan financier Pedro Tinoco, now head of Venezuela's Central Bank and the country's chief debt negotiator.

This newest PLV ad is a response to efforts by the ADL's Jerkow Institute for Latin America, and by the phantom Anti-Drug League of Congressman Gastón Guisandes, to terrorize and intimidate political opponents with slander, and direct attention away from the real issues raised by *Narcotráfico, SA*. The Jerkow Institute joined forces with Guisandes to put out an expensive, full-color pamphlet attempting to discredit

LaRouche's role in identifying the controllers of the international drug trade. The ADL pamphlet was circulated as a paid insert in the Oct. 27 Sunday edition of *El Nacional*. Guisandes has further financed an ongoing series of full-page newspaper ads attacking the non-Cisneros-controlled television station RCTV for selling a total of 48 minutes of broadcast time to the PLV, which demanded that the ban on the book be lifted.

The new PLV ad warned that one key issue in the battle for free speech in Venezuela is the current effort by the Cisneros group to take over CANTV, the state-owned telephone and telecommunications company which is about to be put on the auction block. The Cisneros group, which already owns *Venevisión* (one of the country's two leading television stations), has also just been granted the national franchise on cellular telephone communications by the Venezuelan government. In addition, with Tinoco's financial group, the Cisneros Organization wants to take over the Televen television network. If Cisneros should win the bid for CANTV, it "will give the Cisneros Organization a total monopoly over all telecommunications in the country," read the PLV ad.

Other forces also understand the danger of the Cisneros bid for CANTV. In an Oct. 28 editorial, the newspaper *El Diario de Caracas* revealed that not only does CANTV include the domestic telephone system, but also all telephonic communication between Venezuela and other countries, public telephones, telex sys-

tems, data, voice, and image lines, private telecommunications networks, and control over access to world satellite communications. The editorial warned, "The National Congress, our Armed Forces, and all Venezuelans in general, must seriously reflect on what is being handed over into the sole hands of one person, and on the absolute necessity for a body of laws that will protect us from monopoly rule over our communications system. If there is no change in the present direction, there will be an unacceptable reduction of the country's sovereignty which will do irreparable damage to the pluralism that has permitted us, so far, to live together in a democracy."

A similar argument is made by the former operations manager of CANTV, Orlando Ochoa Terán. In a Nov. 1 interview with the daily *El Nacional*, Ochoa charged: "The political elite of the country does not appear aware that what it is handing over is not only the most important infrastructure of development in the country, but . . . the technology of information and the most powerful means of mass communications and of local and international trade and financial transactions. The monopoly transfer from the Venezuelan state to a private consortium . . . implies not only what is commonly understood as telephony, but all the services which must constitute the most important infrastructure of economic, educational, and cultural development of any country."

The PLV ad concluded: "The Cisneros group has attempted to intimidate all those media that dared to inform the citizenry about the charges made by the PLV. What will be the fate of Venezuela if those who silence the opinion of others through the banning of books and campaigns . . . achieve total control over all the means of communication?"