

# Shubeilat in U.S.: Exonerate LaRouche!

by Bonnie James

On April 28, the eve of scheduled Senate Judiciary Committee oversight hearings on the Justice Department, Laith Shubeilat, a former Jordanian parliamentarian (1984-93), addressed a seminar of the FDR-PAC in the nation's capital, on behalf of the urgent necessity to exonerate Lyndon LaRouche.

Umberto Pascali, who moderated the meeting, announced that we are engaged in a "war of ideas," and that the case of Lyndon LaRouche is the clearest way to understand the conflict. "The world needs LaRouche's exoneration," he stated, striking a theme which would be carried through the presentations of all four speakers.

Keynote speaker Laith Shubeilat was among the earliest international dignitaries to call for LaRouche's release from prison. Also addressing the meeting were Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, national spokesman for Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan; Dr. Sabah Karam, Director of Islamic Schools of North America; and Bruce Director, trustee of the Constitutional Defense Fund, which funds the LaRouche legal cases.

Director spoke first, reviewing the extraordinary events surrounding the railroading and imprisonment of LaRouche, and demonstrating that LaRouche's exoneration was the single most important issue in the world today. History is replete, he said, with examples in which the persecution of a single individual becomes the defining moment for society; the LaRouche case is such a case.

Dr. Sabah Karam then outlined Islam's historic ban against usury; he said that LaRouche's unswerving opposition to usury, as practiced today by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has a basis in Islam, since any form of interest, not just "exorbitant" interest, is prohibited by Islamic law. Dr. Karam also called for LaRouche's exoneration, even though, "those who are not exonerated in this life, will be exonerated by God, on Judgment Day"—adding that this does not mean we should not fight for justice now.

## All people deserve justice

Shubeilat, an engineer by profession and president of the Jordanian Engineers Association, was introduced by Pascali as being one of the most beloved figures in the Muslim world, because of his courageous defense of the human rights of all people. Twice a political prisoner himself, Shubeilat ex-

plained why he took up LaRouche's case, despite being told repeatedly, "Don't listen to those people." After being contacted by *EIR* in 1990, during the buildup to the Gulf War, when the LaRouche movement was virtually a lone voice in the West opposing that war, Shubeilat began to realize that "those people are being targeted by the same agencies who are targeting me."

Despite his unjust imprisonment in 1992, Shubeilat, like LaRouche, continued his political activity.

He is best known for his philosophical commitment to an ecumenical alliance among the "Abrahamic" faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—based on the common principle that all men are made in the image of God. Shubeilat is also known as the leading opponent in Jordan, of the usurious policies of the IMF and World Bank. He commented that the only time Jesus ever became angry in public, was when he threw the usurers out of the Temple!

Although Shubeilat knew the risks of activities of conscience in his own nation of Jordan, a monarchy, he was shocked to learn, in reading the book *Railroad!*, about the LaRouche frame-up and show-trial, that such things could occur in the "American democracy." This led him to investigate LaRouche's ideas in depth. "I found an 'encyclopedic man,'" he reported; although he disagreed with certain views expressed in LaRouche's publications, he recognized that the underlying principles of the movement were identical with his own. He described a meeting with Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, where LaRouche spoke at some length about the importance of music in educating young people. "I was very impressed" by the depth of his knowledge, said Shubeilat. "I was also impressed with his courage"; in his decision to "go against the mainstream . . . I saw a bit of myself. I don't want to be against the mainstream, but if the mainstream is wrong, I must be against it."

So, Shubeilat decided to fight for LaRouche's freedom, although his stand may have contributed to his own second imprisonment during 1996. "Why should I take up LaRouche's case?" he asked. "Why should I meddle? Because if I don't meddle, I will lose my humanity, my self-respect."

Shubeilat then recalled the courage of Michael Billington, the LaRouche associate who is serving a barbaric 77-year sentence in a Virginia state prison. "I cannot forget Mike Billington—when the day came that he should go to jail, first he went to a demonstration, calling for my freedom; facing his darkest day, going to jail for 77 years. I cannot forget that."

The final speaker was Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, who runs an AIDS clinic in a poor, black ghetto of Washington, D.C., as well as acting as national spokesman for Minister Louis Farrakhan. "The people who persecuted Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, are the ones who are persecuting Mr. LaRouche," he declared. "LaRouche has been persecuted, because he has a vision."