

1975: LaRouche calls for Int'l Development Bank

In a speech to a press conference in Bonn, West Germany, on April 24, 1975, excerpted below, Lyndon LaRouche laid out his plan for an International Development Bank. The proposal was elaborated in a pamphlet titled "IDB: How the International Development Bank Will Work."

The press conference was attended by 20 reporters, including from Reuters, the New York Times, CBS, UPI, AFP, and Corriere della Sera. But, due in part to a heavy-handed campaign of libel by the U.S. State Department, there was absolutely no press coverage of the event. Even so, the idea of the IDB received wide international circulation, through the efforts of LaRouche and his associates.

We propose the immediate establishment of an International Development Bank as a three-way agreement among the three principal world sectors, the industrialized capitalist sector, the so-called developing sector, and socialist countries. The Bank would discount letters of credit and bills of exchange authorized by treaty agreement among nations and self-constituted groups of nations, and would thus act as a rediscount bank for those other letters of credit and bills of exchange generated in the course of supplying needs of final commodities producers producing for bookings issued under relevant international development bank treaty agreements.

For example, several key developing sector nations have demanded that the industrialized sector negotiate interlocking agreements concerning three items: energy, raw materials, and food. Our essential criticism of this agenda is that it included only three principal items, instead of the necessary four. The fourth item should be "development." Our remarks concerning this example are not conjectural; provided that suitable initiative proposals are generated by significant forces of the industrialized sector, key forces within the so-called "Third World" will be prepared to immediately begin working negotiations along the lines of such a four-point form of general treaty agreement with the industrialized sector.

On the basis of our own organization's studies, and our discussions of these studies with governments and leading political forces within the "Third World," we have determined to the point of certainty that the activities of an International Development Bank in connection with present wishes and consumption capabilities of the developing sector, would be sufficient to generate a higher rate of industrial

expansion in the advanced sector than has been seen during the most prosperous intervals of the past quarter century.

The feasibility of this proposed program demands understanding of certain often neglected ABC's of Political Economy. Without understanding those principles, we should all be hopelessly caught in the worst disaster of human history.

The basic fact on which all political economy depends is the characteristic feature of economy. That is, that a proper use of means of production and means of personal consumption generates levels of output in excess of the prime costs incurred. The second basic fact, essential to this solution, is that all general development, including industrial development, depends upon creating a basis for growth in an abundant supply of adequate nutrition at relatively low social cost. To the extent that these two principles are observed in practice, and advancing technology emphasized to that end, it is feasible to generate very large amounts of long-term credit without inflationary effects.

We emphasize that a combined concentration on both industrial development and expanded food production are the absolute imperatives for this period. To the extent that long-term development credit to the developing sector places priority emphasis on rapidly increasing the amount and social productivity of world food production, any amount of credit can be issued over a 10- to 15-year term ultimately payable in expanded food, in increased masses of productive labor, and in the social productivity of human labor generally.

The immediate problem the new bank will face is this. In addition to the immediate potential for substantially increasing agricultural output and productivity generally, there are three regions of the developing sector which represent massive opportunities for increases in agricultural output. One of these, the Rio de la Plata region of South America, offers short-term major benefits for development as an agro-industrial region. The other two, the Sahel, and the India-Bangladesh-Pakistan region, represent potentially major world food-producing regions, but will require 10 to 15 years of massive engineering efforts and development to approach their enormous surplus potentials. Therefore, our problem is to provide a level of development equivalent to approximately a quarter trillion current transferable rubles annually, concentrated on low-interest loans and grants with a typical maturity in the order of 10 to 15 years required for loans.

The apparent difficulty of conducting such programs is only apparent and not actual. To the extent that the industrialized sectors can generate large surpluses in excess of immediate reinvestment requirements within that sector, that portion of surplus can be issued as credits and grants without adverse economic effects. The only real problem involved is that of raising the gross level of industrial outputs to the scale the indicated undertaking requires. . . .