

Town hall meetings build coalition to end DOJ tyranny

by Marianna Wertz

A nationwide series of town hall meetings sponsored by the Schiller Institute, beginning in late July and continuing through August, is organizing a growing coalition, to expose and destroy the tyrannical apparatus that controls the Department of Justice. As Debra Freeman, national spokeswoman for Lyndon LaRouche, told an audience of 100 citizens at the July 27 meeting in Prince George's County, Maryland, "What the Department of Justice represents is the chief enforcement arm of the financial establishment and their Nazi-economics/slave-labor policies."

In order to clean out that apparatus once and for all, Freeman said, the LaRouche movement has resolved to build on its victory in the battle to pass the McDade-Murtha "Citizens Protection Act," by bringing new forces into the fight. By exposing those slave-labor policies behind the North American Free Trade Agreement, workfare, and the transformation of America's prisons into Nazi-style work camps, Freeman said, thousands of Americans can be moved to demand honest hearings in Washington, D.C. when Congress returns in September. Those hearings would, in the most explosive way, shine a spotlight on the Department of Justice fascist apparatus, and its controllers in London and Wall Street, who have so viciously targetted President Bill Clinton, Lyndon LaRouche, and every other political leader who dares to speak out against this tyrannical monster and its fascist policies.

Beginning on July 25 in Phoenix, Arizona, where Pennsylvania State Rep. Harold James (D-Philadelphia) endorsed LaRouche Democrat María Elena Milton in her campaign to unseat Gingrichite Rep. John Shadegg (R), town hall meetings have been held in Prince George's County, New Orleans, Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Philadelphia, Flint, Birmingham, Seattle, Los Angeles, Newark, and Manassas, Virginia. By the end of August, meetings will also have convened in Norfolk, Washington, D.C., Youngstown, Oakland, Buffalo, Toronto, Baltimore, and New York.

Human rights violations

At every town meeting to date, elected officials, labor leaders, and minority and other grassroots constituency leaders are speaking out against the policies that are destroying Americans' livelihoods, and lives. We indicate here a cross-

section of those speeches.

At the first town hall meeting, in Phoenix, Representative James, who heads the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, spoke about the trip he took in February 1997, together with Congressional candidate Milton, to Sudan: "This issue of Sudan," James said, "is important for exposing the hypocrisy of some American politicians, who cry crocodile tears about alleged 'human rights violations' in other countries, but turn a blind eye to gross human rights violations occurring right here in America. One of the most important areas of human rights violations in America that must be addressed, is that associated with prison privatization, and the use of prisoners as virtual slave labor." He said, "In the emergence of privatized prisons as a big business, perhaps we are seeing the true reasons for the 'tough on crime,' 'three strikes and you're out' policies of Newt Gingrich, John Shadegg, and the rest. Perhaps this is one reason they want to fill the prisons and build more of them every year, while they keep people incarcerated for longer and longer periods of time."

Two days later, in Prince George's County, LaRouche spokeswoman Freeman was joined on the podium by Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, a national spokesman of the Nation of Islam, and the medical director of the Abundant Life Clinic in Washington, D.C.; and by Matthew Fogg, a highly decorated member of the U.S. Marshals Service, who recently won a \$4 million judgment against Attorney General Janet Reno and the U.S. Department of Justice, in a lawsuit charging them with racial discrimination against DOJ employees of African-American descent.

In his speech, Fogg, who has played a key role in bringing some of America's most notorious drug kingpins to justice, said of the endemic racial prejudice in the DOJ: "You know, sometimes the best measure of someone's nature is to see how they behave in their own house." In the discussion period, a woman who is the wife of a prominent Prince George's County judge and had lost a son in the battle against the DOJ, said, "I can't tell you how much it means to someone like me, to find a national organization that is prepared to take this on. It has been very difficult to take this on alone, but every other organization that I expected to help—well, they were just too frightened."

'This is a serious fight'

"This is a serious fight. Now is the time for you to get into it." That was the way that Louisiana State Rep. Arthur Morrell summed up his message to New Orleans citizens, at a town hall meeting on July 28 on the campus of Dillard University. Representative Morrell, who had travelled to Washington, D.C. to help the Schiller Institute lobby for passage of the Citizens Protection Act, told the audience that what they were hearing may be shocking, but was not "fairy tales."

Participants in the meeting included a number of prominent New Orleans political leaders who are well-acquainted with the political battlefield, among them a former judge who had himself been illegally railroaded into jail.

More than 125 people attended the Aug. 1 town meeting in Los Angeles, on the theme "Stop the Political Lynchings, Stop NAFTA and Prison Slave Labor." Speakers included Ray Cordova, a member of the executive board of the State Democratic Party and president of the Los Angeles branch of the Communications Workers of America, who had introduced and succeeded in passing a resolution supporting the Citizens Protection Act in the Orange County Central Committee. Cordova told the audience, "The government lied to me about Vietnam and they lie about Lyndon LaRouche!" Another speaker, Theresa Allison, who founded a prison rights group called "Mothers Reclaim Our Children," told the story of her son, who had helped to bring about a truce between two rival gangs, and was then himself framed up for doing good.

Four Congressional offices sent messages of support or greetings to the conference. Attendees spanned the political map, from Hispanic organizations to representatives from Bosnia and eastern Europe, and a Chinese journalist, who was fascinated to hear about human rights violations in the United States.

Over the next two weeks, audiences in Boston and Philadelphia heard presentations from political prisoners, state legislators, and religious leaders, who condemned the slave-labor policies which the DOJ's tyranny is helping to enforce. On Aug. 11 in Philadelphia, following a stirring keynote by Representative James, Rev. Carl Fitchett of the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, who serves as the first vice-president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Philadelphia, invoked the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King in exhorting the group to oppose prison privatization. Leodus Jones, head of the Philadelphia-based Community Assistance for Prisoners, gave a terrifying account of his experience as a human "guinea pig" at Holmesburg prison in the 1960s, when prisoners were convinced to take part in trials of pharmaceutical and psychedelic drugs.

Rochelle Ascher, a former political prisoner associated with LaRouche, wound up the program by showing that the United States is headed directly into a repeat of the policy of Nazi concentration camps. She reminded the audience that the

LaRouche movement still has four political prisoners serving long sentences in Virginia.

In Boston, Lynne Speed, another LaRouche organizer targeted by the DOJ for prison time, gave a powerful presentation on the history of the DOJ's illegal operations. She then introduced former State Senator Bill Owens, who reviewed the way in which he and his family had been politically harassed by so-called law enforcement officials.

The Aug. 14 meeting in Birmingham was addressed by Stu Rosenblatt of the Schiller Institute; James Barnett, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Northwest Alabama; and Norm Stover, president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 725 and vice president of the CBTU, Central Alabama. Longtime civil rights leader Amelia Boynton Robinson also spoke briefly. Stover urged a broader mobilization by organized labor against these policies, while Barnett detailed the destruction of human labor power that NAFTA's "free trade" policies have wreaked in Mexico.

'Support the Citizens Protection Act'

The Newark town hall meeting, on Aug. 15, opened with a message sent by U.S. Rep. Robert Andrews (D), a co-sponsor of the Citizens Protection Act: "On behalf of the First Congressional District of New Jersey, I commend the Schiller Institute for its sponsorship of the Citizens Public Hearings in an effort to generate support for the Citizens Protection Act of 1998, legislation which protects American citizens from prosecutorial misconduct.

"I believe this forum will give our neighboring communities the opportunity to be educated about human rights violations across our nation. It is my sincere hope that, through this forum, citizens will be able to offer prevention tactics and will create solutions to further violation of our very basic, human, decent rights. . . ."

Former New Jersey Rep. Henry Helstoski (D), who was himself a victim of DOJ illegal targeting, also sent a message to the meeting, commending the Schiller Institute for its "recent landslide victory in the House on the McDade-Murtha bill." "This signals the beginning of the end of the Justice Department reign of terror. FDR said, in his first inaugural address, 'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.' The Justice Department witch-hunts induce fear in political leaders, labor leaders, civil rights leaders, and ordinary citizens. We stop the witch-hunts, and we can re-establish the political freedom that is required to deal with the great problems of our time," Helstoski said.

Also speaking in Newark were Gilberto Soto, administrative organizer, District 1199J, National Union of Hospital and Healthcare Employees (AFSCME), who discussed the horrible conditions in hospitals; Moses Ballon, also of AFSCME, who described the economic ills brought on by privatization; and Cassandra Savoy, an attorney from Essex County, who described the horrors she has seen while visiting "every Federal prison from Maine to Maryland."