

## Agriculture by François LePine

### Call for LaRouche's freedom

*At first House Agriculture Committee hearing for 1993, Espy lauded Clinton while Merry called for LaRouche's program.*

On Feb. 3, *EIR* Agriculture Editor Marcia Merry testified before the House Agriculture Committee, at a hearing called by Chairman Kika de la Garza (D-Tex.) to "review the economic situation facing U.S. agriculture and rural America."

The hearing, the first full Agriculture Committee hearing of 1993, was filmed by C-Span and televised in full over the following days, and gave an overview of the crisis of the economy, and worse, the crisis of the absence of leadership at a time of emergency.

The hearing began with a morning-long interchange between U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Michael Espy and most of the 45 members of the Agriculture Committee, 17 of whom are new to Congress. Espy's presentation was characterized by repeated assurances to his former fellow committee members (he was a congressman for six years) that President Clinton "has embraced" the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and that Espy would "be sure that the USDA has a seat" at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and NAFTA talks. He also assured them that while he may trim the USDA budget, he will not let go of USDA control of forestry, nutrition, and other vital programs.

Espy fielded questions ranging from ethanol to the spotted owl, and promised to be "an honest broker" for all interests. He referred to a project he had helped form in 1988-89, called "The Lower Mississippi Delta Commission," which devised "400 reasonable ways to improve life in the basin."

Espy told the committee, "Any

light I can provide is provided by the showers of light on me from President Clinton. He chose me."

The day's proceedings ended with Merry's testimony, which, quite opposite to the views of some of the witnesses and congressmen, spelled out how the country is in a disastrous depression. After documenting this, Merry made a personal request to the committee for their assistance in seeing that U.S. economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche is released from prison because of the "extraordinary leadership" needed to reverse the depression.

In response, committee chairman De la Garza said that although it was "not in the purview of the Agriculture Committee," he thought that "other committees would be happy" to take up the situation of Mr. LaRouche.

Merry began by holding up for ridicule the Feb. 3 *Washington Post* Business Page lauding the "upturn." She said, "The real situation is that the economy is a catastrophe." She briefed the committee on 1) the breakdown of the physical economy; 2) the fact that only the "financial sector," such as through the Federal Reserve interest rate spread scam for the banks and the federally guaranteed loan swindles, is growing; and 3) how to restore federal control of money and start up a mobilization for infrastructure, agriculture, and basic industry. She called the committee's attention to the case of the Zenker family in North Dakota, for whom a sheriff's sale was pending on Feb. 8 (since called off, see page 64).

Merry warned against any attempt

to legislate accommodations to the catastrophe, such as "free enterprise zones" that have brought cholera to the Rio Grande River Basin, in the committee chairman's home district.

"The latest example of this madness is 'animal enterprise zones' in Iowa," she said, identifying it as the brainchild of the Stanford Research Institute. She ridiculed as "madness" Washington's campaign for free trade and trade war in the name of gaining U.S. "market share" under circumstances of worldwide depression. She pointed to the suffering in Africa and the former Soviet sphere as evidence of the need for U.S. production.

Merry ended by citing some of the initiatives going "in the right direction": 1) "The Federal Reserve Accountability Act," introduced by Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.); 2) Sen. Bennett Johnston's (D-La.) oil floor price of \$25 per barrel, "a parity price analogous to what's needed for farm and other commodities"; and 3) the North Dakota legislature's proposal for a moratorium on family farm foreclosures. Lastly, she gave committee members a copy of a Jan. 14 *Washington Post* advertisement, an Open Letter to President Clinton from 1,000 signators around the world asking for the release of LaRouche.

Merry informed the committee, "LaRouche is in the Rochester, Minnesota prison. . . . He has been jailed for four years . . . and you know it was a political frameup. Mr. LaRouche is now 70 years old. . . . His name stands for economic development. I ask you personally to help get him released. We need his assistance now. This economic emergency requires extraordinary leadership."

Merry's written testimony was entitled "End the Regime of the Federal Reserve; Institute Economic Emergency Measures," and is available from *EIR*.