

# Amelia Robinson Launches Libel Suit vs. ABC,

Civil Rights leader Amelia Boynton Robinson, who is vice chairman of the Schiller Institute, filed a libel suit in August against the American Broadcasting Corporation, Walt Disney Television, and other parties involved in the production of the Disney television movie “Selma, Lord, Selma,” which aired nationwide Jan. 17, 1999 on the “Wonderful World of Disney” program. The subject of the movie is the 1965 Civil Rights struggle in Selma, Alabama, in which Mrs. Robinson was a leading figure. It was she who invited Dr. Martin Luther King to come to Selma to help her and her husband, S.W. Boynton, lead the struggle for voting rights there.

## ‘This Is Not Me’

Mrs. Robinson told *Fidelio* that she had declined to participate in filming the movie because, after discussing the plans with the actress assigned to play her part, the daughter of Civil Rights leader Hosea Williams, Mrs. Robinson realized, “This is not me. I said, I don’t want them to have me portrayed by anybody and say it is me, and it’s nothing that I did.”

After she saw the movie, she told her son, Selma attorney Bruce Boynton, that she thought the producers should be sued. He entered the suit as her attorney in the Circuit Court for Dallas County, Alabama, on August 17.



Schiller Institute vice chairman Amelia Boynton Robinson (right) shares podium honors with Institute founder Helga Zepp LaRouche, September 1999.

EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

The body of the suit recounts Mrs. Robinson’s numerous accomplishments and awards in her 88 years of life, most of them spent in service of the Civil Rights movement. Just with respect to voters’ rights, Mrs. Robinson has been secretary of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Political Action chairman of the Alabama Association of Women’s Clubs, secretary for Registration and Voting for the Alabama Fourth Congressional District Organization, member of the Alabama Coordinating Committee for Registration and Voting, and member of the Dallas County Voters League.

The suit contrasts her accomplish-

ments, and particularly her leading role in the Selma battle (recounted in her autobiography *Bridge Across Jordan*, published by the Schiller Institute), to the “Black mammy” stereotype with which she is portrayed in the movie—a “person whose main function was to emit religious utterances and lead or participate in the singing of ‘freedom songs.’”

## Mis-Portrayal

The suit has three counts: libel, wanton negligence, and false light/invasion of privacy.

Besides mis-portraying Mrs. Robinson generally, perhaps the worst libel



Mrs. Robinson is greeted by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, following the official ceremony celebrating the signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.



Campaigning for the Schiller Institute’s program of economic development for the Balkans, Capitol lawn, Washington, D.C., September 1991.

Courtesy of Amelia Boynton Robinson

EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

# Disney TV

was to portray her as an unregistered voter who, in attempting to register, challenged the notorious racist Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark over a poll test that forced applicants to accurately count the number of jelly beans in a jar.

“This account was false and a total misrepresentation of plaintiff,” the suit charges. Mrs. Robinson had been a registered voter since 1932 and was one of only 182 Black voters out of a population of 37,000 Black persons in Dallas County. “As was her usual practice,” the suit continues, “Plaintiff was at the courthouse to serve as a person who could vouch for the persons seeking to become registered, because at that time the person who vouched was required to be a registered voter.”

Disney knew, through Defendant Julian Fowles, an executive producer of the film, that Mrs. Robinson was a registered voter, and “intentionally distorted the fact,” according to the suit.

## ‘Bloody Sunday’

As to the infamous 1965 “Bloody Sunday” march from Selma to Montgomery, in which Mrs. Robinson was tear-gassed, beaten, and left for dead by Alabama State Troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the movie portrays her as participating in a songfest following the demonstration. In fact, she was severely injured and hospitalized, while the picture of her beating was sent around the world on television, helping to spark the international reaction that led to passage of the Voting Rights Act later that year, and its signing by President Lyndon Johnson, with whom Mrs. Robinson met at the time.

“To depict the plaintiff as such,” the suit charges, is a gross mischaracterization of both her and the Selma Civil Rights Movement, which received “support and sympathy from persons and organizations throughout this nation and the world.”

Mrs. Robinson told *Fidelio* that she believes the libel targeted her in part for her prominent work with Lyndon LaRouche and the Schiller Institute today.

## Italy Conference of Christian Democrats

# LaRouche: Ecumenical Doctrine Needed To Meet Global Crisis

The first national conference organized by the recently reestablished Christian Democratic Party of Sen. Flaminio Piccoli, held November 27 in Bergamo, Italy, was opened with a message from U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. The conference, on the subject of “The Social Doctrine of the Church,” was attended by 150 candidates and leaders of Italy’s re-established Christian Democracy (D.C.), as well as an invited delegation of seven members and students of the LaRouche-allied Movimento Solidarietà from Milan.

Senator Andreino Carrara, vice pres-

ident of the D.C., opened the conference by calling to the floor Liliana Celani, vice president of the Movimento Solidarietà, who read the message from LaRouche:

“The world as a whole is currently gripped by the most deadly systemic financial, political, and moral crisis of this century thus far,” wrote LaRouche, adding that no one can predict exactly how or when the present world financial system will collapse. “But,” he said, “either an early reorganization of the system in bankruptcy, or its collapse, is now

*Please turn to page 66*

## Book Hails ‘American Sakharov’



*Dr. Josef Mikloško, president of the Schiller Foundation in Slovakia, reads at Lyndon LaRouche’s 75th birthday celebration. Mikloško’s new book portrays LaRouche as “the American Sakharov.”*

On Dec. 12, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the fall of communism in former Czechoslovakia, Josef Mikloško, who was the Deputy Prime Minister in the country’s first free government, and is now president of the Schiller Foundation in Slovakia, presented his book *Ako Sme Boli Slobodni*

(*Since We Became Free*). At the book’s presentation in Bratislava, Slovakia, attended by 500 guests, Mikloško was introduced by Slovakian Justice Minister and chairman of the Christian Democratic Party Jan Carnogursky, and by Petr Miller, who had been Social Affairs

*Please turn to page 66*