



The Schiller Institute

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On the Death of Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson

In Memory of Amelia

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Michelle Rasmussen

Amelia Boynton Robinson (August 18, 1905 - August 26, 2015).

Amelia left us at the proud age of 110. Until very shortly before her death, she was in full possession of her faculties, brimming as always with her passionate love for humanity and the idea that “God still has plenty for you to do”—a maxim of her life that she never gave up, whether in the famous freedom march from Selma to Montgomery on March 7, 1965, “Bloody Sunday,” during which Amelia was beaten and left for dead by police on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, or when she nearly drowned in a river but survived, even though she couldn’t swim, only because she was unswervingly dedicated to her mission.

Already in the 1930s, she was one of the initiators of the civil rights movement, perhaps the most important one, as it was she who started the registration of African-American voters, and especially women. And this was when the conditions prevailed that were almost the same as during the time of slavery. In view of the deep-seated racism in Alabama (among other Southern states), which prevails there to this day, and the very definite danger posed by the Ku Klux Klan, what she did took enormous courage and an unwavering vision of the true identity of

mankind. Along with her husband, Samuel William Boynton, she brought many of the leaders of the movement to Selma, including James Bevel, the first who called for the march to Montgomery, Hosea Williams, and Martin Luther King. She offered them her house as a base of operations.

The film “Selma,” which was released last year, and in which Amelia is indeed represented, did not do justice to her groundbreaking importance. She herself told me, during our last meeting in Philadelphia in April, that another film about the beginnings of the civil rights movement must be made, which emphasizes the crucial role of African-American women, without which the movement never would have existed.

I met Amelia back in the early 1980s in Virginia, in the context of my husband Lyndon LaRouche’s collaboration with many American civil rights activists. She was an extraordinary person of great magnetism, who was instantly able to lift her interlocutor to a higher plane of history. She saw the Schiller Institute as the continuation of the civil rights movement, and contributed to its work from 1984 to 2009 as vice president, through numerous international tours, speeches, and interventions.



Amelia B. Robinson and Helga Zepp-LaRouche in 2003.

Our relationship became more intense when Amelia, in March and April 1990—i.e., immediately after the peaceful revolution in Germany and in the transitional period of German reunification—visited Cottbus, Zwickau, Chemnitz, Sondershausen, Worbis, Heiligenstadt, Crivitz, and some other cities. She bolstered the courage of the people there through many speeches, showing the parallels between the American civil rights movement and the one underway in Germany at that time. In this turbulent period of German history, she contributed her unique ability as a poet—with her poems and stories about Martin Luther King, as well as with beautifully performed Spirituals. Addressing people in the regions that were being transformed from the G.D.R. (East Germany) into the new federal states of reunified Germany, she made them conscious of the eternal human principles that link all those who have fought for freedom, human and civil rights—across all times, nations, and cultures. In those exhilarating days, we adopted one another as mother and daughter.

For 25 years, Amelia worked with the Schiller Institute as its vice president and with the Civil Rights Solidarity Movement in Germany, and often visited such countries as Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, India, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, and, of course, countless cities in the United States itself. She always stressed the importance of love for humanity, peace, and the Dialogue of Cultures. And the many thousands of people whom she inspired to think about mankind in a bigger way, reacted with gratitude at getting to know an ambassador from the "other America," especially in the period during which the series of U.S. wars based on lies became the fashion.

She condemned the Iraq War in 2003, saying, in an interview with the Italian newspaper *Confronti*: "Evil can be changed only by its opposite, the Good. That is why I am against the war, and I don't think that evil can be corrected by an even greater injustice that will kill many innocent people. ... I am proud of what I am, I am proud of having worked with Martin Luther King from the moment when he came to Selma up to his death, and today I am proud of my collaboration with Lyndon LaRouche, a white man, and the Schiller Institute."

And a bit later in the interview she said: "The United States was for a long time a beacon of hope for the world... Unfortunately American society and democracy have been sullied by many of our political leaders, who want to see blood and more blood. Many say the war in Afghanistan served to cover up the fact that our economy is in bad shape and we have a debt of \$32 trillion.... To attribute all of our problems to September 11 is a way of keeping the truth hidden and distracting the world's attention from our weaknesses.

The United States cannot lead a fight for Justice, if it is unjust itself. It cannot lead the world to solidarity, if acts itself according to the motto 'Divide and conquer,' and helps itself to whatever it wants from a weaker country. But those who want war against Iraq and potentially even more wars, are not the majority of the American people. Americans see with horror and shame what we are doing to other countries in whatever name."

In view of the imminent threat that the United States and NATO are about to incite a huge war against Russia and China, it sounds like a last testament when Amelia, in the same interview with *Confronti*, said that Europeans should refuse to support the U.S.A. and should send representatives of their national parliaments and governments to tell Washington that "their countries will not participate in this vendetta, that they will not allow the use of military bases on their territory, and that they will give no economic support for the killing."

Another Italian publication, *Buddismo e società*, published the text of a speech that Amelia gave on September 28, 2002 before a thousand people at a conference in Rome. She said, among other things: "My husband said, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, that we were sitting on a powder keg that could explode at any time. Today, I have the same feeling. Therefore we must absolutely act, not only to prevent the war against Iraq, but also to avoid all the other wars that could follow from it. Today it is Iraq, tomorrow it could be Pakistan, North Korea, Vietnam, and may soon even your own country... Do not allow yourselves to be corrupted, do not allow them to force upon you NATO bases for waging this war."

In her report on the civil rights movement in the United States, Amelia compared the African-Americans who at that time were afraid to become independent farmers, with those people who today are willing to accept the war: "They [these African-Americans] did not come up with the idea on their own, because they had been indoctrinated for centuries. They thought they would always have to work for their masters, just as many today are indoctrinated and think that if Bush wants war, then America has to wage war."

Amelia's immediate social milieu was dazzled at the beginning by Obama as the first African-American President, just as were countless Europeans, such as the 200,000 people who frenetically celebrated Obama in 2008 in Berlin. Now there is disillusionment everywhere. All the more should all those who loved her, celebrate her immortality by protecting the world in her spirit, the spirit of her wonderful mind, and liberating it to true freedom.

Beloved Amelia, you will be with us forever, and we with you!

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