
Worldwide Outrage

Billington goes to jail facing 77 years

LaRouche associate and *EIR* contributor Michael Billington, who reported on Sept. 28 to begin serving a 77-year prison sentence for political organizing in the Commonwealth of Virginia, has become a *cause célèbre* in cities around the world.

The most dramatic event was his appearance, by speaker phone, at a Sept. 25 press conference in Lima, Peru. It was attended by the country's top newspapers, as well as a Mexico-based TV station which broadcasts throughout Ibero-America. The Peruvian media were especially intrigued by the contrast which Billington drew between the U.S. government's defense of the "human rights" of Shining Path narco-terrorists, and its persecution of him, Lyndon LaRouche, and others for their political activities against the drug trade.

Billington was also interviewed for a half-hour on *La Voz de Bogotá*, a "drive-time" news show in Colombia's capital city, the station's second interview on the LaRouche movement in two weeks (see *Feature*). The two journalists interviewing Billington asked how old he was and followed up: "What does a man who is 46 years old, who is facing 77

years in jail, say to the world? How do you face it?" He replied that he could have gone free if he had been willing to sell his soul and accept a plea-bargain deal offered by the government. But that would not have been true freedom, for it would have been confessing to a crime he didn't commit.

A small, noisy rally was held in Mexico City Sept. 25, outside the American embassy. It was led by a "KKK member," complete with hood and robe, who was aiming a toy axe at passersby—and who symbolized U.S. "justice."

The newspaper *La Voz de Sonora*, in northern Mexico, printed a long letter on Sept. 26 by Ignacio Mondaca of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSI), on the mobilization to free "a collaborator of the American economist and political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche. On Monday, Sept. 28, Billington will begin serving a 77-year jail sentence." The letter denounced the Anti-Defamation League's role in persecuting LaRouche and his associates, and its collaboration with the former East German Stasi.

European rallies

A day of protest against Billington's imprisonment was held Sept. 28 throughout Europe, but open-air rallies took place already on Sept. 26 in Denmark and Sweden as well as in Munich, the largest city of southern Germany. In three big French cities—Paris, Lyons, and Strasbourg—the fight was taken to the private radio stations.

In Copenhagen, a demonstration downtown featured picket signs saying, among other things, "Release Bush's Political Prisoners: Mike Billington—77 years; LaRouche—



Michael Billington addressed marchers against the death penalty at a rally near Richmond, Virginia on Sept. 28, and then turned himself in at a state prison in Powhatan to begin serving 77 years for "securities fraud"—a trumped-up charge designed to cover for the fact that he was being jailed for political organizing.

LaRouche program is under scrutiny in Russia

The Russian weekly New Times at the end of September (issue no. 39) carried the following unsigned article on U.S. independent presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, entitled "He Is Not Yet President." The magazine circulates worldwide.

For the fourth year now, *New Times'* old acquaintance, the American political activist Lyndon LaRouche, is serving a sentence in federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota. Regular readers of our journal will recall, that in the summer of 1987, Lyndon LaRouche and the French European Workers Party [sic] sued *NT* in a Paris superior court. The pretext for the suit was an article which had called the LaRouche groups in Europe and America "Nazis Without the Swastika." In September 1987, the Paris court declared the suit by LaRouche and his supporters groundless and rejected the accusations on all points. The decline and inglorious demise of the EWP commenced from that time on.

A year and a half later, Lyndon LaRouche himself landed in the dock. At first he was accused of machinations with credit cards, and then of conspiracy to confuse

the Internal Revenue Service. In January 1989, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

LaRouche's supporters consider him a victim of official caprice, and insist that he is a political prisoner. They maintain that LaRouche is dangerous for the American Establishment, because of his views and his widespread (quite scandalous) international fame. Also, he has participated in five presidential campaigns. The main theses of LaRouche's program have been struggle against the International Monetary Fund and private banks, and for a ban on narcotics and resuscitation of America's sick society. For more than one decade, he has been propagandizing his Napoleonic *idé fixe*, the Productive Triangle program: an economic upsurge of united Europe, during an economic depression in the U.S.A.

In order to upset life for "the worldwide usury of the banks" a little bit, LaRouche advises Third World countries to freeze payment on their debts and is surprised that these revolutionary views are not to the liking of the American authorities.

In the Rochester prison, where in September Lyndon LaRouche marked his 70th birthday, he is not wasting any time: He is again taking part in the electoral campaign for the presidency, he has written five books on economics, philosophy, and science, he is fighting for a reconsideration of his case, and he is already giving thought to how he might help Russia.

15 years; Shelley Ascher—10 years; Shubeilat—death sentence?" (a reference to imprisoned Jordanian leader Laith Shubeilat—see *EIR*, Oct. 2, p. 47.) Another poster said: "If the U.S. wants to preach human rights, it should clean up its mess at home."

In Frankfurt, Germany on Sept. 28, a large international delegation gathered around the banner "Stop Death Penalty in the U.S.A." and posters of LaRouche and Mike Billington. The revival of the death penalty in the United States is particularly repugnant to Europeans, whose countries have all banned it a long time ago as a relic of a bygone and more barbarous age.

That evening, a banner "Freedom for the Political Prisoners," was spread out on the ground at a crowded site in the city of Hanover, and about 50 candles were placed around it plus smaller signs with the names of the political prisoners and the years of their sentences. Some people reacted, "This is worse than McCarthy," especially when they heard of the 77-year sentence.

In Cologne, in the heart of the Rhineland, at a busy area in the city center, a similar banner bore the slogan "Stop the Death Penalty in the U.S.A." and was flanked by a makeshift electric chair with life-size manikin strapped into it. The

picket sign, "77 Years and Innocent," referring to Billington's prison term, drew a particularly shocked response from those who passed, among them not only Germans, but also many Americans and other foreigners.

Bush lies about communism

Billington appeared at a rally in Richmond, before surrendering at the state prison in Powhatan, Virginia. The press statement released there noted that he has already served a three-year federal sentence for political fundraising, and added:

"There is a particular irony in this regard. Billington has dedicated his recent years—including those in prison—to work on China, to the purpose of contributing to the defeat of the communist tyranny in that once-great nation. He often expressed his outrage at the lie spread by both Bush and the Democratic Party leadership that communism had vanished from the Earth with the fall of the Soviet Union. Not only does the United States continue to support Beijing, but the United States has effectively supported the Maoist fanatics who are threatening to spread this hideous form of communist tyranny throughout the world, while condemning the leaders of the fight against drugs and terrorism in the United States to longer-than-life prison sentences."