

# National News

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## Billington files to vacate conviction

Imprisoned associate of Lyndon LaRouche, Michael O. Billington, has filed a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus* with the Virginia Supreme Court seeking to overturn his conviction on grounds that he was denied a fundamentally fair trial. Billington was sentenced to 77 years in 1990 in the Virginia state prong of the "Get LaRouche" effort. He has served three years in the federal frameup, as well.

The violations described in the petition include "a prosecution motivated by political animus and presided over by a judge not indifferent to the cause, an investigation typified by outrageous and illegal government misconduct, the Commonwealth's systematic suppression of exculpatory evidence, defense counsel's abandonment of his client, and external interference with petitioner's right to effective assistance of counsel."

Among other things, according to the petition, Billington was denied effective assistance of counsel when his lawyer, Brian Gettings, abandoned Billington on the eve of trial and attempted to have Billington declared mentally incompetent for insisting on his right to a jury trial. Gettings then joined with the prosecution and the Anti-Defamation League in promulgating the lie that Billington was a member of a cult. Gettings's treachery was backed up by Judge Clifford Weckstein who, as the petition documents, was in the ADL's pocket.

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## Hiroshima bombing still being hotly debated

An editorial opinion column in the *Washington Post* on Oct. 16 by the well-known writer on nuclear diplomacy, Gar Alperovitz, strongly argued that the U.S. nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was unnecessary. The question is being hotly debated as the National Air and Space Museum prepares an exhibit commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II that

casts doubt on the conventional wisdom that the nuclear attack would have "saved thousands of American lives."

Alperovitz cites the 1946 U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey report which stated that, in all probability, the Japanese would have surrendered before Nov. 1, 1945. A 1946 study by the War Department Operations Division came to the conclusion that "the Japanese leaders had decided to surrender and were merely looking for sufficient pretext to convince the die-hard Army Group that Japan had lost the war and must capitulate to the Allies." It judged that the entry of Russia into the war would have clinched the matter.

He also quotes J. Samuel Walker, currently chief historian of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, that "The consensus among scholars is that the bomb was not needed to avoid an invasion of Japan. . . . It is clear that alternatives to the bomb existed and that Truman and his advisers knew it."

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## New Age phone co. pays percentage to greenies

A New Age phone company is paying 1% of its customers' payments to Planned Parenthood, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and similar zero-growth outfits. The company, "Working Assets Long Distance" (WALD), is sending out promotional materials boasting that every time its long-distance customers make a call "we give 1% of your charges to nonprofit action groups working for peace, human rights, economic justice and the environment. . . . Since 1986, Working Assets has sent more than \$3 million to hundreds of worthy groups like Planned Parenthood, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Amnesty International, and the Children's Defense Fund."

WALD's promotional continues: "On each month's bill, we give you background information on two pending issues and the names and phone numbers of political and business leaders to contact. . . . If you call on Free Speech Day—every Monday—we pay for the call."

Working Assets' board of political advisers includes: Jim Hightower, advisory

board chair and former Texas agriculture commissioner; Pamela J. Maraldo, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Marian Wright Edelman, Children's Defense Fund; David Brower, Earth Island Institute; Tim Smith, Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility; and Peri Jude Radecic, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

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## Psychologist blasts 'self-esteem' hoax

University of Michigan psychology professor Harold Stevenson attacked the premises of the "self-esteem" educational reform movement in a commentary in the *New York Times* on Oct. 11, and pointed out that Americans seem to have no trouble requiring hard work and persistence in sports, where coaches do not hesitate to point out errors. But in education, he said, the "self-esteem" movement has cause and effect backwards, when it claims that a child can only do well if he has positive feelings about himself. In fact, Stevenson wrote, a child feels positive about himself because he has achieved something.

Stevenson cited a University of Michigan study conducted between 1990 and 1992, which showed that 96% of fifth-graders in Taiwan and 90% of fifth-graders in Japan earned mathematics scores higher than the average of their counterparts in the United States. At the 11th-grade level, the figures were 86% for the Taiwanese and 92% for the Japanese. "Praise and certificates, the currency of the self-esteem movement, are cheap," he said. "More tangible types of reform that rely on redesigning schooling are expensive, difficult, and time-consuming."

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## Minneapolis paper: 'Stop anti-Clinton witchhunt'

The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* demanded an end to the senseless mudslinging against President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton in an editorial, "End the Witchhunt against the Clintons," on Oct. 12. The edito-

rial recommends that the "High-minded Whitewater prosecutors like Rush Limbaugh, Iowa Rep. Jim Leach, and New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato" should read the latest issue of *Harper's*, which has an article by Arkansas reporter Gene Lyons, who attacks the "insinuations," particularly from the *New York Times*, on which much of the Whitewater uproar is based. The editorial recaps the major allegations regarding the Clintons' relationship to the Whitewater real estate development and details Lyons's debunking of them. "Perhaps as shocking is Lyons' description of manipulations by a bitter Clinton foe to help create and sustain the perception of scandal."

The *Star Tribune* editorial warned that the damage caused to the nation by Whitewater allegations has been huge, including the undermining of valuable policy initiatives. "We look forward to a country that can move forward politically again—with the President doing his job and the First Lady contributing her talents, while journalists, politicians and talk show hosts assess and criticize them fairly, minus the innuendo, insinuation and falsehood."

## How EAI won contract to run Hartford schools

A "conflict resolution" company has been brought into Hartford, Connecticut to overcome resistance to having Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI) run the city's school system on a for-profit basis. According to a source on the city council, which recently signed a contract with EAI, an organization called Plowshares, headquartered in Simsbury, Conn., was brought in to conduct "conflict resolution" seminars with city leadership, including the school board and city council, to bring together the opposing sides on the issue of EAI. "They set up conferences and seminars and retreats where the facilitators grab your mind and get you committed to EAI," said the source. The meetings were held in the offices of one of the Hartford Insurance companies.

Plowshares claims to be a "human rights" organization which has held education seminars in South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Brazil, Peru, Nicaragua, and Mexico,

tying together education, sustainable development, and justice. Trainees from South Africa are working in the Hartford situation, where they using the same line as they did in Africa: "We are moving from a situation of least education to more education," through these innovations, and are helping the community relate to the "outsiders," (EAI).

*EIR* has previously documented how EAI not only falsified test scores in other of its privatized public schools, but that it is intimately tied into speculation in financial derivatives through the Piper Jaffray brokerage.

## Army Corps plan to flood Missouri meets resistance

Almost unanimous opposition to a plan by the Army Corps of Engineers to actively induce flooding on the Missouri River by releasing additional reservoir water in the spring, and to cut off water early in the fall, was expressed in three public hearings held in Missouri in early October.

Outrage was voiced by top state officials and hundreds of citizens. Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan was joined by Republican U.S. Senators Christopher Bond and John Danforth, the Missouri commissioners of Agriculture and Natural Resources, all of Missouri's congressmen, and numerous local officials who condemned the Corps' plan to flood valuable agricultural, commercial, and residential land for the benefit of the piping plover, interior least tern, and pallid sturgeon. One witness after another described how tens of thousands of bottomland farms' planting would be sabotaged in the spring, while the heavy autumn barge traffic would be drastically curtailed on the Missouri and Mississippi between St. Louis and Cairo, Illinois, because of low water levels.

The Corps proposal originated in 1989 at the urging of the then-governors of Montana and North and South Dakota, who wanted more water in the upstream reservoirs for recreation. The Corps performed hundreds of computer simulations, inputting "environmental" factors on a par with economic factors, and produced the current proposal at a cost of \$12 million.

## Briefly

● **DEFENSE** Secretary William Perry arrived in China on Oct. 16, the first visit of a U.S. defense secretary since ties were frozen in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square massacre. A Pentagon official said that Perry "thinks there are some hard problems that need to be resolved with China," including issues of nuclear proliferation, human rights, and tensions on the Korean peninsula.

● **CALIFORNIANS** marched en masse against a ballot initiative that would deny all social services to illegal immigrants on Oct. 16. Some 100,000 people marched through Los Angeles, including delegations from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, United Farm Workers, Mexican American Legal Fund, and the Asian-American Association. The proposition's biggest promoter is Republican Gov. Pete Wilson.

● **TOWSON** State College in Towson, Maryland is using tuition money to celebrate the 150th birthday of Nazi precursor Friedrich Nietzsche, according to the *Baltimore Sun* on Oct. 15.

● **FBI DIRECTOR** Louis Freeh poked fun at "Gay" Edgar Hoover at a recent charity dinner, saying: "I never fly FBI planes to New York to go to the . . . club, I never go in an FBI limousine to a racetrack in Maryland, and I don't have a friend named Clyde." Freeh was referring to Hoover's longtime aide and roommate, Clyde Tolson, who, according to a 1993 book, was also his homosexual lover.

● **SATANIC RITUALS** may be practiced by a federal prison inmate ruled a federal judge in Denver on Oct. 14. "We go through the rituals, too, you know, like going to a shrink," said Judge Edward W. Nottingham. "It helps us deal with life." The judge said that his ruling "does not require prison officials to accommodate every form of Satanism, nor does it necessarily require them to allow each inmate to become a religion unto himself."