

## Attempt to break Billington in prison

Michael Billington, a 20-year associate of former presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, has been strip-searched and thrown into "The Hole" at Danbury, Connecticut federal prison. Mike was sentenced along with LaRouche and five other co-defendants a year ago after a 15-day show-trial in Alexandria, Virginia. He had been in the Allenwood federal prison camp until last fall when he was moved to Roanoke, Virginia, to stand trial on hoked-up "securities charges," in violation of his constitutional right not to be tried twice for the same crime.

Since George Bush campaigned in Iowa to become our nation's next President, he has made it clear that he believed his opponent Democrat Lyndon LaRouche was "in trouble." In an effort to make his wish come true, Bush denied LaRouche and his six associates access to the super-secret national security files which would have shown their innocence. This denial of exculpatory evidence by the administration, along with the railroad trial Judge Albert Bryan conducted in Alexandria, led to the frame-up and conviction of LaRouche and his co-defendants. Now, with George Bush's house of cards shaking, his administration is attempting to put the iron mask on anyone who may be able to tell the truth about Bush's role in his sellout of our country's national security interests in the Iran-Contra affair.

Michael Billington is just such a person. He had met and organized top-level Republican party members who were being courted by Bush's flunkies, Ollie North and Spitz Channell, to support the Contra operation. But Mike used reason and beauty to convince some of these sunshine-patriots that the Contra operation was against the interest of the United States. Now, in retaliation, Mike is being subjected to torturous conditions while in prison.

Mike's sister, Margaret Greenspan, was able to visit him for a day and a half after he was summarily thrown into "The Hole." She reported on Jan. 24, "On Monday night, one hour after hearing that his federal appeal had been rejected, Mike was taken in handcuffs from his dormitory, strip-searched and told he was being put in 'The Hole,' a segregated area of the Danbury Prison, meant for prisoners who are being punished.

" 'The Hole' is a three-story cell block with open cells, with bars over the front part, where two prisoners share a space six feet by ten feet, having only two bunks and a toilet. Prisoners in this area are very noisy and obscene, shouting back and

forth throughout the night to each other. At midnight Monday night, Mike was handed a paper saying he was being reclassified, which is why he had been put in 'The Hole.'

"On Wednesday morning, he was visited by the lieutenant of the block, who confirmed Mike's suspicions, that the warden had just received Mike's papers showing that he had a 77-year sentence, and the warden arbitrarily decided that due to the length of Mike's sentence, he intended to move Mike to a high-level security prison.

"Prisoners in 'The Hole' are allowed one personal phone call every 30 days; calls to lawyers must be approved. They get three showers per week; they are led to the shower in handcuffs. They are allowed one hour per day in an "outdoor recreation area." When they took Mike to this area in handcuffs, it turned out to be a 10x10 foot concrete space with barbed wire surrounding it! There is nothing anyone could do there except bathe in the sun on a sunny day."

### Abuse continues

On Jan. 31, Michael Billington was still being held in these circumstances. Conditions in "The Hole" are geared to break those who are designated "troublemakers" by prison authorities. Mike can make calls only by express permission of a duty officer, and when they have occurred, Mike is subjected to constant nagging to keep them short, even though he is now working with his attorney on the appeal of his Virginia sentence.

That Mike was ever moved into "The Hole" because of his 77-year sentence is highly suspect. After his release from the Roanoke County jail, Mike was initially returned to the federal prison camp where he had been serving his federal sentence. Officials there refused to let him stay, because of the 77-year Virginia sentence. He was then shuttled off to a local jail pending a Bureau of Prisons (BOP) review of his security-level designation. By mid-January the "reclassification" was made and Mike was sent to Danbury, Connecticut federal prison.

Upon Mike's arrival at Danbury he was assigned to the normal orientation session for the facility. But with this *Nacht und Nebel* snatching of Mike and putting him into "The Hole," the warden apparently decided to reject the recommendation of the Bureau of Prisons. Prison officials have told Mike that there is an almost 100% chance that he will be removed to a high-security prison. Unless he is moved or some intervention occurs from the Justice Department's BOP he will have to remain in "The Hole."

In the week beginning Jan. 29, the campaign of bureaucratic misinformation about Mike's status escalated, under conditions in which Mike has been denied adequate communication with his attorney or paralegal staff. Officials are extremely evasive about Mike's situation.

What is happening in Danbury is not an "internal" matter, but part of the attempt to break the LaRouche movement. Demands for justice should be directed to the White House.