

## Soviet justice

Just as Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was arriving on U.S. shores, the American people were given another taste of the rapidly evolving Soviet justice now taking over their courts. In this instance the victim was Mike Billington, a co-defendant in the railroad of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates.

It is now being demanded of Billington, who is on trial in the State of Virginia for the same alleged crimes for which he was convicted in federal court, that he receive psychiatric evaluations to determine whether he is competent to determine his own defense. His own lawyer and the prosecution have joined forces against him—amazingly—because Billington is demanding his constitutional right to be tried by a jury of his peers, rather than try his case solely before a judge.

If this is not Soviet justice, then what is? Not only is he being subjected to double jeopardy, and treated as insane because he is a political dissenter, but he has been sequestered in the county jail in which he is now being held, under conditions unique to himself, and far more stringent than those applied to other prisoners in the facility.

Since the first psychiatrist who tested Billington declared him to be sane, the court is now operating under a unique theory, that Billington may be sane but suffering a “shared political delusion.” In other words, they are resurfacing the vicious Anti-Defamation League slanders that the LaRouche movement is a cult whose members do not have a will of their own.

The use of psychiatry in the pre-trial period is a hallmark of political prosecutions in the Soviet police state, documented in the testimonies of victims who escaped. In the Soviet court system, trials never reach a jury, only a judge or a three-judge panel. The prosecutor and the defense lawyer are employed by the state.

An accused whose prosecutor and defender agree with the judge that he is “abnormal” often has no recourse. The Soviet legal system provides for an array of thought crimes.

In his 1977 autobiography, *To Build a Castle*, the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky described how he was dispatched to a mental hospital not long after his first arrest in the early 1960s, for activity in an unauthorized student club. Bukovsky, who now lives in the West, recounts how he was sent to the psychiatrist when the KGB had failed to trump up a case against him, to take before a judge.

Billington’s case is part and parcel of the outrageous treatment being meted out to LaRouche in his Minnesota prison. In both instances, minimally extra-legal measures are being taken to break the prisoners; in the instance of the brutal treatment of LaRouche there is also a question of whether the intent is not deadly.

If the justice system in the U.S. is allowed to become corrupted on the model of the Soviet system, then in no place else will democracy be safe. The persecution of LaRouche and his associates is precisely because they are the most vocal and committed opponents of the Russian regime and those in the West who would transform our civilization on that model.

It is by no means coincidental that the Virginia Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy, before which Billington has been ordered to appear for follow-up psychiatric evaluation, has as its director a committed supporter of the legalization of marijuana. The director, Richard J. Bonnie, gave the keynote address before the National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws on May 8, 1987. LaRouche and his associates have been at the forefront of the war on drugs. One can suppose that this Institute will be inclined to view opposition to drugs as a mental aberration!

Similarly, FBI spokesman Kenneth Lanning is connected to the Institute. He is infamous for his remark that more people have been killed by Christians than Satanists, a remark made to argue that the fight against Satanism is a witchhunt.

Wherever you may be, oppose the application of Soviet justice to LaRouche and his associates.