

LaRouche, for which Michael had raised funds. The forced bankruptcy prevented the companies from repaying lenders. The court ruling in this case charged the federal government with "fraud on the court" and acting "in objective bad faith."

Denying the right to a jury trial

At Michael's sentencing hearing on Dec. 1, the prosecutor outdid himself in arguing for the jury's suggested sentence: "Mr. Billington was certainly made aware by his counsel of the pros and cons, the risks and benefits of putting his case to a jury . . . my argument is that, in addition to what Mike Billington has done, in addition to the choices that he has made . . . there is another purpose behind our judicial system . . . and that is the deterrent factor. And in that respect this Court should look not only upon Mike Billington's situation, but upon the big picture. Look at the overall interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and look at Mike Billington's co-defendants. There are 14 other people out there who have been charged with similar crimes. . . .

"And I would submit, Your Honor, that if the lessons to those people are that, go ahead, have your jury trial, take up the time and effort of the Court and the Commonwealth . . . then that's not much of a lesson. . . .

"I believe that the jury was trying to send a message to Michael Billington and to Lyndon LaRouche and to everybody affiliated with that organization."

Judge Weckstein agreed and imposed the jury's 77-year sentence.

Political efforts continue in prison

During his incarceration, Michael has returned to his love of Asia, fostered by a student tour in Japan and a two-year stint as a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand from 1969-71. From prison he has written a paper, published in *Fidelio* (Summer 1993) outlining the historical basis for the ecumenical unity of East and West, following in the footsteps of the correspondence of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz with the court of Emperor Kang-hsi and the Catholic missionaries to China.

Ascher jury was a lynch mob against LaRouche

The following is excerpted from a speech given by Rochelle Ascher after she was sentenced to 86 years by a Loudoun County, Virginia jury in 1989. Judge Carleton Penn reduced the sentence to 10 years.

We began jury selection in the middle of this charged, lynch-mob atmosphere, the same week that LaRouche and his six codefendants were sentenced to 15 years in prison for the same "offense." Of course, the judge "forgot" to tell the prospective jurors not to read the newspapers. This was the longest jury selection in the history of the county, possibly in the state. The judge finally resorted to the following formulation:

"This case involves the fundraising practice of individuals and organizations associated with Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. I am sure that you have read something about this in the newspapers, or heard something of this in the media. Can you put aside everything that you have heard and judge this case solely on the basis of its merit?" On this basis, jurors who expressed the most vile bias were seated if they could assure the judge that they could put this out of their mind for the purpose of this trial. The only difference between this and the LaRouche case in Alexandria, where the jury selection took under two hours, is that we got to hear the filth pour out of people's mouths for two weeks before they were seated: People



Rochelle Ascher is visited in prison by Mexican Congressman Rufino Saucedo, who came to the United States this fall to appeal for justice for LaRouche. Ascher, formerly a leading fundraiser for the LaRouche movement, is a student of American history who has published numerous articles on Abraham Lincoln.

who said LaRouche is an extremist, anti-Semitic, racist, neo-Nazi, a threat to the country—but sure, Your Honor, I can put my personal "opinion" about the man and his organization aside to sit on this jury!