

National News

Federal court upholds corporate scab labor

In March 1995, President Clinton issued an executive order prohibiting companies which do business with the federal government from permanently replacing striking workers with scabs. On Feb. 2, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that the President had overstepped his authority by issuing such an order. U.S. Chamber of Commerce lawyer Stephen Bokkat bragged that the court "basically bought what we argued hook, line, and sinker."

President Clinton's order extended protection to 26 million workers—one-quarter of the U.S. labor force—employed by companies enjoying \$437 billion in government contracts. Labor Secretary Robert Reich declared Feb. 2, "We don't want American servicemen and women in Bosnia trying to keep the peace, while driving around on tires made by rookies and replacement workers."

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney reacted to the court decision by stating, "Now, three judges appointed by Presidents Reagan and Bush have declared that firing strikers is right, and that even the President of the United States cannot refuse to do business" with such firms. Sweeney reported that President Clinton has promised to appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Brookings blames low U.S. savings on elderly

A new study by the Brookings Institution attempts to shore up Conservative Revolution efforts to slash entitlements for the elderly, by blaming the elderly themselves for the low rate of U.S. savings. This economic wizardry is attributed to Jagadeesh Gokhale, Lawrence Kotlikoff, and John Sabelhaus, who claim that U.S. consumption by 70-year-olds, relative to consumption by 30-year-olds, has increased since the 1960s.

The three economists supposedly analyzed U.S. per-capita and per-household savings and consumption. They claim that

non-medical consumption by the elderly has grown from 70% in the 1960s to 91% of current non-medical consumption by 30-year-olds. If medical expenses are added in, then the elderly allegedly consume 120% of what the 30-year-old group consumes today.

Brushing aside the issue of whether either group is currently enjoying a decent standard of living, the wizards of Brookings conclude that government entitlement programs—in the form of Social Security and Medicare—are almost single-handedly responsible for a shift of resources from the younger age group to the old. The wizards apparently ignored the deepening economic depression, in accounting for the collapsed rate of U.S. household savings.

An article in the Feb. 5 London *Financial Times*, reporting the findings of the study, places itself firmly on the side of matricide and patricide. "Mr. Clinton," intones the article, "has so far shied away from telling elderly Americans their consumption will have to fall if national savings are to rise. The baby-boomers may have won the Presidency, but they have not, it seems, taken control."

Prisons buy labor cheap and sell goods dear

A trade group representing furniture makers who compete for orders for military quarters and dormitories, are charging that small manufacturers are being driven out of business by the cancerous growth of Federal Prison Industries (FPI). The *Wall Street Journal* reported Feb. 7 that FPI "has gone on an expansion binge" since the early 1990s, exploiting the rapid growth of the federal prison population for "free market" profiteering.

FPI now controls 25% of the market for furniture for Department of Defense quarters and dormitories, and is trying to expand to capture 35% of the market. The military furniture market is already shrinking as a result of Defense Department budget cutbacks. Many of the small furniture-company suppliers may go under, in the face of competition from prison labor.

The military services are reportedly dis-

satisfied with FPI because of poor quality and construction, late delivery, and poor selection of goods. They have also discovered what defenders of the Union knew before the Civil War: The furniture FPI turns out with prison slave-labor is also overpriced, compared with firms employing free men and women—even though the prison labor force is only paid from 23¢ to \$1.15 an hour.

FEC won't penalize Bush for illegal fundraising

The Federal Election Commission has ruled that George Bush's 1988 Presidential election campaign accepted \$223,000 in illegal contributions. But the FEC has decided that it is too late to do anything about it, beyond sending the ex-President a letter of reprimand.

The Associated Press reported Feb. 4 that the FEC had been investigating the Bush Presidential campaign for seven years, and had collected four binders of evidence concerning Bush's acceptance of illegal contributions. The evidence was obtained from the Republican National Committee, and from 18 state Republican Party organizations that paid for 18 of Bush's campaign trips, when his campaign nearly ran out of money in the summer of 1988.

Under federal election law, the Bush campaign could have been fined \$446,000—twice the amount of the illegal contributions. But the FEC declared that too much time had elapsed since Bush's law-breaking spree, noting that a five-year statute of limitations had already run out.

The behavior of the FEC in dealing with the Bush Presidential campaign stands in sharp contrast to its treatment of Lyndon LaRouche. As soon as Mr. LaRouche filed for federal matching funds for his 1976 Presidential campaign, the FEC falsely accused him of illegal practices. These charges were not dropped until six years later, in 1982. Then, during LaRouche's 1988 Presidential campaign, the FEC attempted to deny him matching funds, on the grounds of the fraudulent claims it had made 12 years earlier, in 1976.

Again, in 1991, when LaRouche applied

for matching funds for the 1992 campaign, the FEC cranked up groundless objections to an imagined "15-year" pattern of fundraising violations, reaching back to 1976. The FEC also promulgated bogus complaints to stonewall matching funds for LaRouche's 1984 Presidential campaign. Those claims were not abandoned until 1995—11 years later. The *Wall Street Journal* had no comment on the FEC's evident difficulties in reading a calendar, with respect to the Bush case.

Court order: Freeze!—to save unseen spotted owl

Residents of villages in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico face a heating crisis this winter, according to an Associated Press wire in the *Washington Post* on Jan. 14. Their plight stems from a federal court order supporting an environmentalist lawsuit, to prohibit any useful human activity in southwestern U.S. national forests, in which the "endangered" spotted owl *might* choose to nest.

Most of the generally Hispanic-American villagers are poor, and depend for fuel on firewood gathered from the nearby Carson and Santa Fe National Forests, to cook their meals and heat their homes. But last August, in response to yet another legal assault by some of British Prince Philip's environmentalist flunkies, a federal judge in Phoenix shut down all logging in 11 national forests of New Mexico and Arizona.

The lawsuit was ostensibly filed to protect the "Mexican" spotted owl. On behalf of the "American" version of this hapless bird (a longtime patsy of its feathered predators), environmentalist decrees have eliminated whole communities of loggers and lumber-mill workers in California and the Pacific Northwest during the last ten years. Millions of acres of productively maintained forests have been left to strangle and rot *naturally*, without human care, to preserve the dismal bird's "habitat."

Despite voluminous evidence to the contrary, the environmentalists initially declared that spotted owls required the sanctuary of "old growth" trees, and later argued

that they must have "second growth" trees. Their latest claim, set forth in the New Mexico case, argues that the owls feed on rodents which live among the dead and downed trees on the forest floor.

Even the U.S. Forest Service, after eight years of study at a cost of \$1.5 million, has found no evidence that the Mexican spotted owl lives anywhere in the forests near the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The environmentalists, however, featuring such creatures as the "Forest Conservation Council" and the "Forest Guardians," maintain that the area still must be protected—because the spotted owl might migrate from forests 100 miles away.

DOE plan will wipe out fusion research

On Jan. 27, the Fusion Energy Advisory Committee of the Department of Energy (FEAC) issued its report on "a restructured fusion energy sciences program." The report was requested by Martha Krebs, director of the Office of Energy Research at the DOE, in light of the current budget constraints. The current budget is \$244 million, a \$113 million cut from 1995 levels.

The report deals with what would be the likely scenario, if the fusion budget for FY1997 were \$250 million. The Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor (TFTR) at Princeton's Plasma Physics Laboratory, would have to cease operations. The smaller facilities of DIII-D at General Atomics in San Diego and C-Mod at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology would then be pressed into maximal productive utilization. U.S. participation in the engineering design phase of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) would continue, but at a lower level.

At \$275 million in FY1997, a funding level that FEAC would like to recommend, it would be possible to operate TFTR for another year and meet U.S. obligations to the ITER. However, \$200 million, one of the other scenarios considered, would not only further reduce U.S. contributions to the ITER, but would likely reduce the U.S. fusion program to one major operating facility.

Briefly

FEDERAL JUDGE Thomas Penfield Jackson on Jan. 31 upheld the FBI's "national security" deletions from files concerning Lyndon LaRouche, requested under the Freedom of Information Act. The documents include a 1985 FBI "Do Not File" memo about Henry Kissinger and LaRouche, and a 1983 memo claiming that "LaRouche's organizations dovetail nicely with Soviet propaganda and disinformation objectives."

SINGAPORE'S Lee Kuan Yew met privately with Newt Gingrich at the home of Henry Kissinger in October, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports. Lee's office confirmed the meeting, but none of the three would comment on what was discussed.

RICHARD FEINBERG, the former president of the Inter-American Dialogue, will be leaving government soon. A White House press spokesman insisted that Feinberg's decision to quit his post as senior director for Inter-American Affairs at the National Security Council, and Morton Halperin's decision to quit as NSC Director of Democracy, were "coincidences" of a personal nature.

MOODY'S Investors Service "said it likely will slash [the District of Columbia's] credit rating unless a . . . plan to be put forward by Mayor Marion Barry makes a convincing case that change is coming," the *Washington Post* reported on Jan. 31.

NEO-NAZI LINKS to the Oklahoma City bombing are being probed by defense attorneys and the FBI, the *Sunday Times* of London reported on Feb. 4. Stephen Jones, an attorney for accused bomber Timothy McVeigh, reportedly visited London in January to probe new leads involving British neo-Nazis. Said a source close to the defense team: "We believe that extremist right-wingers in Europe and America conspired to bomb the building."