

National News

Gonzalez: Prisons not the answer to crime

Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.), on Dec. 7, assailed the notion that the answer to the crime problem is to build more prisons. "In Texas," he said, "there are nearly 127,000 people in prison. That's nearly equal to the prison population of the whole United States less than 20 years ago. We also execute more criminals in Texas than in any other state, and yet, I don't think anyone would say that we've turned the corner on crime." He described this situation as both a burden on society and on the prisoners who are only made bitter, rather than being rehabilitated.

Gonzalez described the debtors prisons in the 18th century and the novel idea the city of Edinburgh, Scotland came up with in 1742 to relieve itself of the burden caused by imprisoning people "whose only crime was to be in debt." "The city's government commissioned an artist to write a musical piece, hoping that the resulting concert would raise some money to pay off the debts of the people who'd been imprisoned," he said. The composer was George F. Handel, and the music he wrote for the occasion was *The Messiah*. "It was a great hit. . . . The city raised a great deal of money, paid off the debts of a number of prisoners and freed them. It's hard to imagine a city council smart enough to commission a concert to raise money to free prisoners . . . but we should think about the lesson here: Surely there is a better thing to do than make a failing system worse."

Astronauts demand rescue of space program

Two of the twelve men who have walked upon the Moon have called for reversing the devastating cuts in the National Aeronautic and Space Administration budget. In a December letter accompanying a national survey on the U.S. space program, Apollo 11's Buzz Aldrin, head of the National Space Society, declared, "Since I left the Apollo

program, I've watched with a great deal of frustration as our national commitment to space has waned." Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell stated in a similar letter, "Today, I am dismayed and angered by what I see happening in Washington to our space program."

Referencing the rescue of the crew of Apollo 13 with help from the engineers on the ground, Lovell wrote that today, "*Our space program needs to be rescued*. Budget hawks and cynics in Washington have laid the groundwork to dismantle what's left of our space program—a program which many, including myself, consider this country's greatest legacy. . . . Short-sighted politicians are today sounding the call to retreat; to slash investments in promising programs; to bail out of our space program; to walk away from its many benefits."

Lovell recounted the overwhelming, positive response to the recent film *Apollo 13*. "I am making it my mission," he declared in his letter, "to capture some of that public fascination with space spun out of *Apollo 13* and translate it into a plan of action to rescue America's space program."

State reps royally rinsed at ALEC meeting

Hundreds of state legislators from across America were in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 5-9 for an "orientation" conference of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), hosted by the British government and an array of allied purveyors of evil. ALEC claims as members nearly 2,900 state legislators, governors, and congressmen.

ALEC's official sponsors, besides Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's government, include: the Bronfman's Seagram's liquor company, and Philip Morris—two British surrogates now driving the gangsterization of Russia; Promus Companies, America's largest casino owner, and Argosy Gaming Co.; Koch Industries, funders of the drive for dope legalization; Corrections Corporation of America, the private prison conglomerate profiteering in slave labor; the National Right To Work Committee, the coalition determined to crush labor unions;

Shell Oil Company, the British Crown's main corporate organizer of "indigenist" terrorism and ecological fascism; and Golden Rule Insurance, promoter of schemes to disinsure the poor and sick—and a prime funder of Newt Gingrich's GOPAC.

At the opening plenary, Cato Institute President Ed Crane, an advocate of legalized narcotics and pension-looting by dope bankers, spoke on "The Future of Conservatism in the States." The next night, attendees were shuttled to the British embassy for a private reception, where they were permitted to mingle with some of the leading advocates of these criminal policies.

Featured speakers at other sessions included former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, who railed against judges who have "arrogantly" interfered with executions; and conservative guru Grover Norquist, who demanded higher taxes on the poor and an end to "gross discrimination" against the rich.

Wash. Post notes Brits run attacks on Clintons

Even the scandal-mongering *Washington Post* drew the line at one of the latest rounds of British-manufactured propaganda attacks on President Clinton and his wife. The *Post's* widely read Style Section on Dec. 16 blasted the British media and its neo-conservative clones at the *Washington Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, in an article headlined "True Brit: The Birth of a Story," and sub-titled "U.S. Press Follows, No Questions Asked."

"Another accusatory story about the Clinton administration echoed across the Atlantic this week, making its way from a Rupert Murdoch newspaper in London to two conservative U.S. papers," the Howard Kurtz feature began. It detailed British-initiated allegations that Hillary Clinton had intervened to suppress a sexual harassment investigation at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The *Sunday Times* of London made the claim Dec. 10, under the lurid headline, "Hillary Clinton Stopped Sex Case Against Friend."

The *Washington Times* ran the undocu-

mented London version of the story on Dec. 13, and the *Wall Street Journal* ran an editorial the next day, attacking the *Post* for reporting the incident without naming Hillary Clinton. None of the papers which retailed the slander checked either with the White House or the CPB, both of which firmly denied the allegation; and the *Post* reports that even documents "leaked" to the media made no mention whatsoever of Hillary Clinton.

Kurtz noted that "the story is part of a pattern in which openly partisan British newspapers, some of which have looser standards of verification than their U.S. counterparts, have been the vehicle for airing disputed allegations that are then repeated, without further checking, in the American press. . . . London newspapers have carried a number of thinly documented stories about the Whitewater investigation, Vincent Foster's death and the President's alleged extramarital affairs, some of them peddled by Clinton's political enemies."

Enviro laws to shut down the Statue of Liberty?

Rep. Robert Franks (R-N.J.) warned at a press conference on Dec. 12 that, unless the approach to Liberty Island is dredged sometime in the next few months, ferries carrying sightseers to the Statue of Liberty will be unable to reach it. The water depth around Liberty Island's pier is already down to 14 to 18 feet—less than the 17 to 19 feet required for the ferries to operate safely.

According to the Dec. 13 *New York Times*, 130,000 cubic yards of New York Harbor bottom would have to be dredged around the pier to restore the depth to a safe level. Since the harbor bottom, however, would be "contaminated" with the effluvia of modern industrial society, environmental regulations make it illegal to dump the dredged material back into the ocean, off Sandy Hook, N.J. Instead, the *Times* claims, "Federal officials want the sediment disposed of on land, where health-risk guidelines are far less stringent"—but where local residents would be far more likely to oppose the plan.

Worse yet, the same obstacles could prevent much larger dredging operations needed to maintain the harbor as a whole. According to Peter Shugert, spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers unit responsible for New York Harbor, "We're talking about the survival of this port." To keep the entire harbor open, and not just the approaches to Liberty Island, the Corps estimates that 4 million cubic yards of harbor bottom must be dredged. Franks warned that if this is not done, the ports of New York and New Jersey will rapidly decline, losing their business to Baltimore and Norfolk.

While the environmentalist establishment is perfectly content to dismantle some additional vital infrastructure, shutting down the Statue of Liberty apparently still produces some qualms. A spokesman for the State of New York's Department of Environment told the *Times*, "We're not going to let that happen. That's not even a remote possibility. We'll make sure we have a solution."

Drug use on the rise in secondary schools

In its annual survey, the National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education reported significant increases in marijuana use by students in grades 6 through 12 during 1995, as well as in cocaine and hallucinogen use by students in grades 9 through 12. "As in recent years, marijuana use increased more dramatically than any drug in the study. One-third of high school seniors (33%) smoked marijuana in the past year, and one-fifth (21%) smoked monthly. Since the 1990-91 school year, annual reported use of marijuana in junior high school (grades 6 through 8) has risen 111% (from 4.5% to 9.5%) and has risen 67% in high school (16.9% versus 28.2%)."

But the dramatic increases were not limited to pot. According to the survey, "The so-called 'hard-drugs'—cocaine and hallucinogens—reached their highest levels of use among high school students since the 1988-89 school year. There has been a 36% increase (from 3.3% to 4.5%) in cocaine use by students in grades 9 through 12."

Briefly

● **HENRY KISSINGER** was awarded the "Torch of Liberty" by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith Dec. 3. The self-professed British agent, knighted by the queen earlier this year, received the award at a gala dinner in Los Angeles held for El Salvador's President Armando Calderón Sol. The ADL gang gave the same award to Las Vegas mobster Morris "Moe" Dalitz in 1985.

● **LYNDON LAROCHE** filed Dec. 26 as a Democratic Presidential candidate in the Delaware and Arizona primaries, bringing the number of states where he has qualified to eight. An Associated Press wire on the Delaware filing received coverage in newspapers around the country, including the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* and the Manchester, New Hampshire *Union Leader*. LaRouche will be the only nationally known Democrat on the Delaware ballot.

● **REP. KWEISI MFUME** (D-Md.), former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, was unanimously appointed president and chief executive officer of the NAACP, and will resign from Congress to assume his new post on Feb. 15. "What pushed me into this was my absolute, utter disdain for the ultra-right-wing agenda that is being foisted on our communities," he said, referring to the Newt Gingrich agenda.

● **HUNGER** is now stalking the "able-bodied" poor in the Philadelphia area: 23,000 in the city and 6,000 in the surrounding counties who were cut off when the state eliminated general assistance in June. Emergency food requests are up 25% over last year; and the shutdown of major steel and paper plants has left thousands of skilled workers unable to pay their rent.

● **PAGANISTS** sing carols to the animals. An item in Federal News Service for Christmas Day reported: "People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals will sing Christmas carols to the animals caged in The National Zoo" in Washington, D.C.