

National News

DOJ preparing attack on M.L. King family

The Department of Justice will soon issue its report on the reopened investigation of the April 4, 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, which, according to sources, will consist of a vile attack on the King family for allegedly having been duped by attorney William Pepper, who was once the lawyer for the man wrongly accused of the killing, the late James Earl Ray.

An indication of what is in the works, is demonstrated in a scurrilous article in *Time* magazine, sarcastically entitled "They Have a Scheme." The article says that the reopened investigation is "a wild-goose chase to satisfy a tragically deluded family." It predicts that the DOJ report will conclude that the King family's allegations of a conspiracy are not "credible," and the article implies that the DOJ investigation consisted mainly of efforts to discredit the new allegations raised by Memphis restaurant owner Loyd Jowers and by former FBI agent Donald Wilson.

Sources say that the FBI report will also accuse Pepper of manipulating the testimony of witnesses in the Memphis civil trial in 1999, in which the jury found that King's assassination was the result of a far-reaching conspiracy, not of a lone assassin.

EIR published the real story, including an interview with Pepper, in our issue of Dec. 24, 1999.

Fascism in New York: Pataki's new bill

On March 22, New York Gov. George Pataki (R) introduced a "persistent misdemeanor bill," which proposes that three or more misdemeanor convictions over a ten-year period would result in a Class E felony conviction—among other draconian "stop crime" measures.

The Governor's press release states: "New York's streets and neighborhoods are the safest they have been in a generation, but we must not be satisfied with our success. We must end parole for all felons, eliminate

the statute of limitations in rape cases, expand the DNA Databank, and crack down on gun violence."

Under the proposal, an individual who commits a Class A misdemeanor and has three or more Class A misdemeanor convictions, could be charged and convicted as a Class E felony offender and face a sentence of up to one and one-third to four years in state prison. Any prior felony conviction in the preceding ten years would also qualify under the proposal.

Under current law, an offender charged with a misdemeanor is subject to a sentence of no more than one year in jail, regardless of the extent of his or her prior criminal record, with limited exceptions.

Shakedown racket builds coffers of the GOP

The Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA) held a national meeting in Austin, Texas (home of the Bush campaign), and was expected to rack up as much as \$550,000 in contributions from corporations that would hear a "political briefing" from George "Dubya" Bush's campaign chairman, Karl Rove, the *Washington Post* reported on March 30.

Corporations can pay anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to various Republican National Committee (RNC) accounts, and designate the money for membership in RAGA. In some of the cases, these good "public relations" result in slowing down, i.e., dropping, investigations into corporate practices.

One example is Aetna/US Healthcare, one of six health maintenance organizations (HMOs) accused of fraud by Texas Attorney General Dan Morales (a Democrat), who left office in 1998. Under Morales's successor, John Cornyn, the investigation is moving very slowly; Cornyn hosted the Texas conference, and Aetna gave \$10,000 to the RNC's "soft money" account last July. Members of the National Association of Attorneys General and former Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger (a Democrat), who is now the head of Common Cause, paint the RAGA tactics as possibly illegal. One of RAGA's founders, the Attorney General of South Carolina, pulled out of

a lawsuit against Microsoft after the company gave a \$20,000 "gift" to the South Carolina Republican Party—one of the largest gifts in the party's history.

Traficant slams FBI link to organized crime

Rep. James Traficant, the maverick populist Democrat from Youngstown, Ohio, has been the target of a Justice Department/FBI operation, at the behest of the Gore/Democratic National Committee apparatus. In an interview on ABC-TV's "Nightline" on March 30, Traficant uncorked charges against the FBI tyranny, much to the chagrin of talk-show host Ted Koppel.

After a 15-minute "news" segment, characterizing Youngstown as the most "mobbed-up" city in America, and charging Traficant with being a mob-tainted politician, Koppel brought Traficant on for a six-minute interview. Traficant told Koppel: "If they want to charge me, charge me. Jim Traficant is coming to court. I'm going to look them in the eye again, representing myself without an attorney, and here's what I want to say: 'Get your best hold.' I think too many Americans fear our government, and let's look back, now. Forty years ago, J. Edgar Hoover said there was no organized crime. And the reason he did that, Ted, [is] because he was a transvestite with a woman's dress with photographs that the mob [had, that] compromised him. . . ."

"I want to know why the FBI has never been investigated in Youngstown. Youngstown has got a dirty eye, and you know why it's got that dirty eye? Not from the politicians there. The FBI was corrupt. The FBI agent in charge, Stan Peterson, who could sue me as I speak, Ted, was on the payroll of the mob. And when he retired he was appointed the chief of police of Youngstown. . . . The FBI was corrupt in Youngstown, and I'm going to prove that in this trial. . . . The Justice Department is out of control. . . . The FBI should be investigated, and I'm going to announce this on your show. I am submitting a Freedom of Information Act request this week on Stan Peterson and the corruption of the FBI in Youngstown, period." A shaken Koppel quickly "went to commercial."

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, addressing a meeting of the Aspen Institute in Venice on March 18, invoked the teachings of Giuseppe Mazzini, the “Young Europe” insurgent of the 19th century and puppet of Britain’s Lord Palmerston. According to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* on March 19, the U.S. Secretary of State charged that the Europeans are unable to cope with military tasks, and called them “a Euro-mess.”

GEN. WESLEY CLARK, the NATO Supreme Allied Commander, was given an honorary knighthood by Her Majesty’s government, the London *Daily Telegraph* reported on March 30. As a U.S. citizen, he is not entitled to be knighted personally by the Queen. His title is Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

DEFENSE SECRETARY William Cohen met on April 1 with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja. This was the first time that a U.S. Defense Secretary has visited Nigeria. Cohen said that he hoped to help Nigeria develop an office comparable to the American Office of the Secretary of Defense, and that he would offer U.S. aid in refurbishing Nigeria’s eight C-130 aircraft.

THE NAACP in Tennessee has issued a statement, “Race and the Death Penalty,” calling on Gov. Don Sundquist to impose a 40-year moratorium on executions. It calls capital punishment “overwhelmingly an issue of unfairness, injustice, and a disregard of Christian value (a principle upon which this country was founded). It is an issue of life and redemption, not vengeance and retaliation, an issue of cruel and inhuman punishment.”

CHARLESTON, South Carolina Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. led 600 people in a protest march from Charleston to the state capital, Columbia, to demand removal of the Confederate flag, which has flown over the state capitol building since segregationists put it up in 1962.

‘Human rights’ at Wackenhut prison

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed suit on March 30 against Wackenhut Corrections Corp. and the State of Louisiana, charging that conditions at a private for-profit juvenile prison in central Louisiana run by Wackenhut are “dangerous and life threatening,” and asking for emergency measures to protect the inmates. Wackenhut is the second-largest U.S. private prison company, and the largest internationally.

Prison officials are charged with beating young boys, throwing gas grenades into their barracks, holding them for long periods in isolation, and failing to provide the inmates with adequate mental-health care and education. A group of experts hired by the DOJ to tour the prison, found that many of the 276 boys incarcerated had no shoes or blankets, and were constantly short of food. Many had tried to commit suicide or had deliberately injured themselves to get into the infirmary as a way to escape physical abuse by the guards.

A New Orleans juvenile court judge, a Republican and former prosecutor, told the March 31 *New York Times* that Wackenhut had treated the boys no better than animals “on all fours.”

Admiral seeks improved U.S. ties with China

Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, called for a cooperative security arrangement with the Asia-Pacific countries, including China, during a speech in Singapore on March 30, reported in the *South China Morning Post* on April 1. “My vision of the future in this part of the world includes a responsible China cooperating with the U.S. and other countries in the region,” Blair said. “I think there are areas where we can work together while we keep the Taiwan issue moving in a peaceful direction.”

He mentioned several regional security concerns which the U.S. shared with its Asian neighbors: North Korea, East Timor,

the Spratly Islands, and piracy. He said his vision of a regional “security community,” which he had presented as a proposal in testimony to Congress the previous month, was not aimed at “containing” China. “It is also not an attempt for the U.S. to withdraw from the region under the cover of some sort of arrangement for others to be here. . . . We anticipate the same level of presence and engagement within the region, but we anticipate it being more effective by being regionally linked rather than a hub-and-spoke arrangement whereby the U.S. operates only bilaterally with individual countries.”

Former Army attaché warns of ‘miscalculation’

The Taiwan Presidential election “should not become the basis for making dangerous miscalculations concerning the serious security issues that continue to confront not only the Taiwanese and Chinese, but the United States as well,” wrote Monte Bullard, a retired U.S. Army colonel and former Army attaché to Beijing, in a commentary in *Asia Times* on March 30. Bullard is now a fellow at the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, in California.

Bullard wrote: “Much of what has been written and said on all sides both before and since the [Taiwan] elections has failed to address the real security situation in the Taiwan Strait. If anything, the potential for miscalculations or misunderstanding by all concerned parties has increased, as many observers have focused on the wrong issues. . . .

“There is an unfortunate tendency, especially in Congress, to make statements and take actions that ultimately reinforce those who are most opposed to U.S. interests in China. . . .

“We are closer now to direct military conflict with China than at any time since the Korean War. . . . What is critical is to find new ways of reassuring all parties so as to limit the potential for miscalculations. We must play a neutral role, emphasizing that our only concern is that the political issues — so susceptible to misunderstanding and miscalculations — be resolved peacefully.”