

National News

Wall Street says states must cut to the bone

Through a lead editorial in the Aug. 21 *Wall Street Journal*, the bankrupt titans of the nation's finance have demanded that state governments impose brutal austerity. As a model, they tout the policies peddled by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a spinoff of the fascist Mont Pelerin Society.

The *Journal* licked its chops over the growing influence ALEC claims over state governments, after 1,600 legislators attended its recent convention in San Diego. The organization now includes the majority leaders of 34 state legislatures, and claims to have 12 current governors affiliated with it. According to the *Journal*, nearly 1,000 bills introduced in state legislatures this year were based on ALEC models, and 24% of them have been enacted.

The *Journal* reported that "enthusiasm for the conservative revolution in the states was high," but complained that many legislatures have failed to put through "meaningful" budget cuts. The editorial warned "the governing class" to "respond to the middle-class revolution that is seething beneath them."

In addition to drastic budget cuts, ALEC promotes weakening or breaking up the federal Union, reducing taxes on speculators, privatizing the prison system, and increasing the severity of sentences.

Health panel urges N.Y. City to scrap hospitals

A so-called "health advisory panel," hand-picked by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, recommended on Aug. 15 that New York City abolish its public municipal hospital system, the *New York Times* claimed on Aug. 16. Currently run by the city's Health and Hospitals Corp., the system includes nearly 11,000 beds in 11 hospitals and 5 long-term care institutions; 76 clinics; and the Emergency Medical Service. The city hospital

system provides service for millions of patients, many of them poor and low-income.

Under the sway of the lunatic privatization program of the "Conservative Revolution," Giuliani's advisory panel recommends that the system should be "fragmented." Some hospitals will be absorbed by private hospital systems run for profit, where they will be "rationalized" and their fee structures sharply raised. Others will simply be boarded up and put out of service.

New York City's public hospital system, built up over the last 100 years, provides care for 50% of the city's outpatients, 20% of inpatients, 40% of emergency patients, 30% of Medicaid patients, 40% of tuberculosis patients, 23% of patients treated for substance abuse, 37% of AIDS patients, and 39% of psychiatric patients.

In the mid-1960s, the city's public health care system maintained 153 hospitals; half of them have shut down since then. If the Giuliani plan goes through, hundreds of thousands of poor and low-income families will have nowhere to go for medical care.

'Dr. Death' Kevorkian claims another victim

Ester Cohan, 46, of Skokie, Illinois, was found dead on Aug. 21, in a car abandoned in an emergency room parking lot at a suburban Detroit hospital. Cohan was the latest "assisted-suicide" victim of Jack Kevorkian, the Michigan homicidal maniac who, for the last five years, has rigged so-called suicide machines and mini-gas chambers to bring death to his patients.

Geoffrey Fieger, Kevorkian's attorney-accomplice, told the press that Cohan is the latest of 25 "reported suicides" attended by Kevorkian, implying, as *EIR* has reported, that Kevorkian is involved in arranging other unreported homicides elsewhere, via mail or phone.

Oakland County Medical Examiner L.J. Dragovic said the death was a homicide, caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. Just after performing an autopsy on Cohan, who had multiple sclerosis, Dragovic told *EIR*,

"Now, we have people acting like mobsters. Instead of leaving bodies in car trunks, we find them in the back seats." The abandoned car with Cohan's body was reportedly leased by Kevorkian from a local dealer. The accomplices, who left the car in the hospital lot, were seen jumping into another vehicle before speeding away.

The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear Kevorkian's appeal of a Michigan Supreme Court ruling in December, which declared that active "assistance in suicide" can be a violation under common law. Kevorkian was scheduled to face oral arguments on Aug. 30 on murder charges stemming from two 1990 deaths; and a pretrial hearing in two later deaths that violated Michigan's ban on assisted suicide.

Squirrel habitat ruled priority over astronomy

How nuts are the environmentalists? Construction of the Large Binocular Telescope on Arizona's Mt. Graham, employing the most advanced mirror technology of its kind ever devised, will be blocked for many years to come, to protect a few hundred yards of "habitat" for the red squirrel.

A U.S. Court of Appeals refused on Aug. 11 to hear a challenge by the University of Arizona and the U.S. Forest Service, to a lower-court injunction against the university's plans to improve the telescope's observation by moving the site 500 yards. The earlier ruling, issued last July at the request of 18 environmentalist groups braying about the Endangered Species Act, requires further "impact" studies, to determine whether the move would threaten the red squirrel.

Proceeding on an apparently mistaken assumption, that the squirrels were neither endangered nor confined to wheelchairs, the university had already cut trees on the alternative site before the environmentalists filed suit against construction of the telescope. The ruling left standing by the appeals court will delay the project by at least four to six years, according to a University of Arizona spokesman, simply to get through the jungle of required environmental studies.

Additional lawsuits could be contrived to block construction beyond that, and the existing court order precludes cutting more trees to build on the originally approved site, the university believes. It is now considering seeking legislative relief in Congress, on the grounds that the Endangered Species Act was never intended to be applied in such a manner.

The university's spokesman underscored the importance of the Mt. Graham project, by noting that the premier observatory for optical astronomy in the continental U.S. today, the federally funded Kitt Peak National Observatory, "is dying," from both technological obsolescence and being starved for funds.

Earth First! calls for 'revolt' against Clinton

The eco-terrorist organization Earth First!, part of the direct-action arm of Prince Philip Mountbatten's World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), issued a deranged attack on President Clinton in the Aug. 1 *Earth First! Journal*. According to recent press accounts, the organization is under investigation by the FBI, for possible links to a number of bombings attributed to the "Unabomber."

Making the absurd claim that the Emergency Salvage Timber Program, signed into law by President Clinton on July 27, will bring on the "apocalypse" in U.S. national forests, Earth First! declares, "We have no choice but to revolt." Earth First!, like its "mother" WWF, openly seeks to crush human population levels, by banning nearly all development of natural resources.

The bill, in fact, simply allows the U.S. Forest Service to conduct "salvage timber sales," to remove "trees that are diseased or insect-infested, dead, damaged, down, burned or 'immediately susceptible' to being burned or eaten by bugs." Logging companies are thus permitted to cut the trees before they rot, or spread disease and pests to healthy forests, and salvage what remains for lumber and other timber products. Millions of acres of forest are already undergoing such decay, as a result of previous environmental prohibitions.

An environmentalist protest in Washington, at the time the bill was signed, featured demonstrators gunning chain saws in the air aimed at the White House. The attack on Clinton in the *Earth First! Journal* calls him "pathologically spineless," and complains that he ignored his environmental advisers in signing the measure. A front-page caricature portrays the President with a Pinocchio-like nose. Below the statement calling for a revolt, a picture of a man firing a gun at a tree is captioned, "That pioneering spirit lives on!"

Secretary Shalala hits drug legalization push

In a *Wall Street Journal* commentary on Aug. 18, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala attacked drug legalization efforts in general, and specifically rejected claims that use of marijuana is not harmful.

Shalala reiterated findings presented at a national conference earlier this summer, "that marijuana use during pregnancy has harmful effects on children's intellectual abilities a decade or more after they are born. . . . Research continues to show that it damages short-term memory, distorts perception, impairs judgment and . . . motor skills, alters the heart rate, can lead to severe anxiety, and can cause paranoia and lethargy."

She criticized both the drug legalization lobby and the budget-cutters in Congress. "Given the facts, it is surprising that some people . . . continue to bring up the issue of legalizing marijuana and other illicit drugs. . . . Make no mistake. We face a national challenge," she said.

"It is unfortunate, however, that the Republican majority in Congress is attempting to cut back dramatically our commitment to stopping drug use. . . . At a time when marijuana use has climbed, the foundation of success is education, prevention, treatment, research, law enforcement, interdiction and massive community involvement—not legalization or gutting our national commitment against drug use."

Briefly

● **FBI DIRECTOR** Louis Freeh, quoted by the *Washington Post* on Aug. 23, called coverup allegations against FBI agents in the 1992 shootout at the Randy Weaver cabin in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, "shocking and grievous"—and the most serious that could be leveled against law enforcement agents. In an interview with the *Post*, Freeh said that the damage to the Bureau could be comparable to the Cointelpro scandals of the 1970s.

● **ORVILLE FREEMAN**, former U.S. secretary of agriculture and currently involved in grain trading, told *EIR* on Aug. 19, "There is a worldwide tight market on grain. The Russians are going to have to learn to farm. I wouldn't lift a finger to help them." During his career in Minnesota politics, Freeman was part of the Kid Cann-Meyer Lansky organized crime network associated with Hubert Humphrey.

● **REPUBLICAN** congressmen submitted their "Freedom to Farm Act of 1995" on Aug. 4, designed to eliminate farm subsidies by the year 2000. The seven-year plan would cap total agricultural spending, resulting in declining payments each year. It would also eliminate the government role in maintaining basic crop outputs and price levels, ensuring the population's "freedom" to starve.

● **THE SCHOOL CHOICE** Project, at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, now admits it has doubts about whether tuition vouchers and similar "choice" schemes can work. In a July report to the National Conference of State Legislators, the project staff concluded that school choice initiatives tend to hinder students in impoverished families, and promote segregation.

● **AMERICAN YOUTH** are among the worst off in 18 leading western industrial nations, says the Luxembourg Income Study. U.S. children suffer the widest gap between rich and poor, and have the least supportive assistance programs.