

National News

Rally against Ridge draws 20,000 Pennsylvanians

The biggest demonstration in the history of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania took place outside the state capitol on Nov. 19, when over 20,000 trade unionists were joined by contingents of welfare rights and community activists in a mass rally against Gov. Tom Ridge (R) and the Republican-controlled Legislature. The rally was originally called by the Pennsylvania Building and Construction Trades Council to fight Ridge's plan to repeal the "prevailing wage" rule, which mandates union-scale wages on state-financed construction projects.

Supporters of Lyndon LaRouche, who first called for a mobilization to impeach Ridge in September, were out in force, circulating copies of the pamphlet "Impeach Gov. Ridge for Nazi Crimes Against Humanity," and the Nov. 11 issue of *New Federalist* newspaper, featuring a call by State Rep. Harold James for hearings on Ridge's medical cuts—hearings which may lead to an impeachment resolution.

Among the speakers were Rep. Robert Belfanti, Democratic chairman of the House Labor Relations Committee, who denounced Ridge's cuts in the state medical assistance program; and Henry Nicholas, president of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees District 1199C, who shouted: "We say 'no' to cuts that are killing the poor of Pennsylvania." A number of speakers attacked "welfare reform" (workfare) as anti-labor, because it forces welfare recipients to work for their checks, displacing skilled, unionized workers.

'Chainsaw Al' Dunlap lays off Sunbeam workers

Sunbeam Corp. announced on Nov. 12 that it is cutting 6,000 jobs—half its workforce—and is eliminating 87% of its product lines. Sunbeam said it will sell or close 39 of 53 facilities, including 18 of its 26 factories, leaving four factories in the United States and

four overseas. In addition, warehouses will be cut to 24 from 61. Sunbeam thus becomes the latest company to be ravaged by Albert ("Chainsaw Al") Dunlap, who took over four months ago, after gutting Scott Paper, where he fired 10,000 workers and sold the remains to Kimberly-Clark. Dunlap has a history as a corporate hitman, working for Kohlberg Kravis Roberts at Lily-Tulip in the 1980s, then becoming president of Sir Jimmy Goldsmith's GOSL Acquisition Corp. Goldsmith has been known to refer to him affectionately as "my Rambo in pinstripes."

Retiring Labor Secretary Robert Reich, in a farewell address to staffers, remarked acerbically: "I'm not going to say that that's irresponsible corporate behavior. It would be inappropriate and presumptuous of me to make that comment. And so I will not say that."

Seven million people have been homeless

During the latter part of the 1980s, between 4 and 8 million American adults experienced homelessness, and, if children are included, between 4.95 million and 9.32 million Americans experienced homelessness, concluded a study by Columbia University, released in 1994 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness.

A spokesman for the Inter-Agency Council explained to *EIR* on Nov. 14, why the study's homeless figure is so much greater than the government's official figure of 600,000. The latter figure is the product of a study by the Urban Institute in 1987, which looked at homelessness at any one time, a snap-shot on a given day. The Columbia figure more accurately reflects the fact that at least 7 million Americans are persistently in the homeless milieu: They may find housing for a few months, only to be without a home or shelter soon thereafter.

The HUD/Columbia figure does not include the many millions of Americans who have housing only in name. According to the Oct. 6 *New York Times*, tens or hundreds of thousands of people are now crammed into illegal housing, or shoe-horned into legal

housing, in attics, cellars, or apartments that have been subdivided four or five times, with as many as 12 persons to a room.

Environmentalism is immoral, anti-human

Author David Gelernter blasted both conservatives who make anti-environmentalism into a mere question of "costs, growth, and property rights," and environmentalists such as Vice President Al Gore, who insist that nature has "intrinsic value," in a commentary for the Sunday edition of the *Washington Post* on Nov. 17. Instead, Gelernter counterposes a moral basis for rejecting the environmentalist tyranny. He cites the example of California homes that were consumed in an uncontrolled brush fire after their owners were prohibited from building firebreaks that would disturb the habitat of the kangaroo rat.

Rather, "we anti-environmentalists hold to the Judeo-Christian view that man is emphatically *not* part of nature. We hold that human life has a different kind of value from animal life: that protecting and preserving human life is a moral duty that sweeps away all 'duties' to nature, and the very idea of 'duty to nature.' Maintaining the kangaroo rat in its natural habitat is no kind of recognized moral obligation in the Judeo-Christian, or American, moral traditions on which our laws are based."

Welfare reform's victims barred from N.J. hearings

Angry welfare recipients denounced members of the New Jersey State Senate when they were excluded from speaking at the first legislative hearings on the Work First New Jersey "welfare reform" of Gov. Christine Todd Whitman (R). Whitman and the Republican leadership of the Senate are now attempting to ram the legislation through. The welfare activists were denied the right to speak after Sen. C. Louis Bassano (R-Union), who chairs the Senate Human Services Committee, ended the lengthy hear-

ings by pleading that he had another appointment, while a dozen welfare recipients and activists were still waiting to testify. According to the *Bergen Record* of Nov. 15, Bassano has submitted several bills that would "fast track" the governor's new welfare program through committee and onto the floor, by Nov. 25. Whitman has asked the legislature to approve her program by the end of the year.

The New Jersey Catholic Conference has expressed concern that jobs will not be found for those who will be required to work when Work First New Jersey goes into effect. The program will require most welfare recipients to find jobs, and subject all recipients to a five-year lifetime cap on benefits. Spokesman Regina Purcell cited one Paterson job bank that already has a waiting list of 300 people looking for jobs. Purcell called on legislators to provide more time than the two six-month hardship exemptions in Whitman's plan. Bassano callously responded that his committee planned no such changes because "It sends the message there is still an escape hatch."

Milton: Emergency airlift to Zaire, now

LaRouche Democrat and former Congressional candidate Maria Elena Milton held a press conference on Nov. 12, calling on her former opponent, Rep. John Shadegg (R-Ariz.), to initiate an emergency Congressional resolution for an immediate U.S. airlift of food, medicine, and water, to save the lives of 1 million Hutu refugees in Zaire. Milton cited the statement of Catherine Bertini, executive director of the World Food Program, on Nov. 9, that, without immediate emergency action, "80,000 children under the age of three will die by the end of the month."

"In 1994, the United States acted rapidly, and saved the lives of these refugees, mostly women, children, and the elderly, through an emergency airlift of food and fresh water supplies," said Milton. "We cannot wait 10 days, two weeks, or more, and allow what is being called publicly, 'genocide by starvation' against 1 million

innocent people.

"Congressman Shadegg has access to the Speaker and other leaders of the Congress. It is his moral responsibility, as it is that of the U. S. government, to act to prevent this horrible tragedy." At her press conference outside Shadegg's office, she delivered a statement from Bishop Daniel P. Reilly, representing the United States Catholic Conference, which calls for the U. S. government to lead an emergency airlift.

ADL renews invective against Nation of Islam

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) crawled out from under its rock to host a conference on "The Rising Tide of Extremism in America: The Psychology of Hate in the 1990s," held on Nov. 18 at George Washington University. Assistant ADL National Director Kenneth Jacobson told the audience, which included many law enforcement personnel, that the growing acceptance of the Nation of Islam, represents the same kind of problem as the "infectious ideas" adopted by the militia movement.

"Three years ago," he said, "the notion of the mainstreaming of such hatred of a group like that was not taken too seriously." But, he complained, last year, NOI leader Minister Louis Farrakhan attended the Congressional Black Caucus annual conference, meeting with then-Black Caucus head Kweisi Mfume and then-NAACP director Rev. Benjamin Chavis, who "indicated they were going to establish a sacred covenant with the Nation of Islam, that created a new level of legitimacy for an individual who has been spouting lies and hatred, not only anti-Semitism but racism of every kind, anti-Catholicism and anti-gay thinking." Jacobsen got down to what really bothered him: "the ensuing Million Man March and its success," lying that "many of us supported [it] in concept," but, "there was the additional problem, that it was giving legitimacy to a thinker who was spouting views that were very much a concern to many Americans. . . ."

The ADL has fallen on some hard times, since it was caught in 1991, spying on over 10,000 Americans.

Briefly

LYNDON LAROCHE addressed an *EIR* seminar in Washington on Nov. 19, attended by some 100 diplomats and political leaders. LaRouche emphasized the potential for a "Big Bang" financial blowout following the U. S. general elections.

GOV. WILLIAM WELD is apparently having trouble dealing with his defeat by Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry (D), according to the *Boston Globe*. His advisers are quoted saying, "He is going through a catharsis. . . . It's weird." Weld, the scion of an old Massachusetts family that made its money as bankers for the 19th-century opium trade, is not used to not getting his way.

OHIO STATE University is negotiating to rejoin the large binocular telescope project on Mount Graham, Arizona, says *Nature* magazine. The university plans to buy a one-eighth share for \$6.4 million. OSU had withdrawn from the project in 1991, when environmentalist hostilities brought the project at a standstill.

THE AFL-CIO and a broad coalition of labor, civil rights, and religious organizations launched a nationwide "Strawberry Workers Campaign" earlier this month, beginning a "battle to improve life for 20,000 California strawberry workers." The newly formed National Strawberry Commission on Workers Rights has said that raising the price of a pint of strawberries only 5¢ would allow wages, which now average \$8,000 per year, to be increased by at least 50%.

VIRGINIA GOVERNOR George Allen commuted the death sentence of Joseph Patrick Payne on Nov. 7, after overwhelming evidence showed that Payne, serving a life sentence for another crime, did not kill a fellow prisoner. The victim's family also pleaded for commutation. Allen had campaigned in 1993 for the death penalty in Virginia, the state which ranks third in the country in executions.