

and just working on behalf of the men in this prison, I haven't followed that very closely. I honestly thought it was to privatize new jails. Now I read in the paper today that H.B. 590 is to privatize every new prison. I don't know that it would go backwards and privatize the 29 prisons we now have.

I don't know where that is coming from. Our one experience with this private prison has been horrible. Why this would encourage the legislature to expand—

EIR: Undoubtedly, it's coming from a financial standpoint.
Gerhardstein: I guess.

Interview: Jonathan Smith

Mr. Smith, Executive Director, Washington, D.C. Prisoners Legal Service Project, made a fact-finding visit to the Youngstown prison last July (see EIR, Oct. 17, 1997). He was interviewed on March 27.

EIR: What is the situation for the D.C. prisoners at Youngstown, who must be suffering terribly from being that far away from home?

Smith: It's a real hardship on the prisoners and their families to be transferred that far from home. There's a large number of prisoners who now get visits very, very irregularly or not at all, from family members, as a result of the transfer. Telephone calls are extremely expensive. So, it's hard to maintain that kind of contact, of family relationships, as a consequence. Plus, things like what happened out there, are allowed to happen because you're so far from your community. It's hard to keep in touch with people, let people know what's happening to you, what the conditions really are.

EIR: There's now a hold on sending any more D.C. prisoners to that prison, is that right?

Smith: Well, yes and no. They cannot send any prisoners for a short period of time, until they sort of get everything in terms of this classification system in place. Once that's done, and that will be very shortly, they'll be able to transfer new prisoners into the facility as they remove prisoners. So, if there's a maximum-custody prisoner that's identified and transferred out of the prison, D.C. can send a medium-custody prisoner to replace him.

EIR: Do you have any view on why CCA had allowed this kind of activity to continue, after the first murder?

Smith: I think it's a couple of things. You had a tremendously inexperienced staff in the prison. When I was out there in July, the warden told me that 70% of the corrections officers (he hasn't talked to me since because I made such a fuss) had never worked in a prison setting prior to the opening of the facility. Since then, about 50% of the staff has turned over, and they've brought in a bunch more new people who have

gotten the basic two-week training from CCA. So, you've got a lot of folks who don't know what they're doing, trying to manage a situation that is being badly handled at the administrative level. It's a recipe for disaster.

All of this really flows back directly to the fact that CCA is a profit-making company. Their interest and their obligation is to maximize profits for their stockholders. A lot of corners were cut in order to try to do this whole operation on the cheap, so that they could make the largest amount of profit that they possibly could. That's one of the real problems with privatization, is that it creates a whole long set of incentives for those folks who are operating prisons. Incentives aren't about public safety, they're not about what's good for the community, they're not about rehabilitating prisoners so that they can live in the community when they return, or dealing with the social problems that led to their being incarcerated, or keeping them safe in the institution. It's about how they can fulfill the terms of their contract at the lowest possible price. That's the real danger, that something like this will result.

EIR: Privatization is now spreading all over the country very quickly.

Smith: Yes. CCA has got a tremendous amount of money and is in virtually every statehouse across the country, applying pressure on state legislators to contract with them. They're very sophisticated in what they do. It's frightening, because almost every state has a prison overcrowding problem. Almost every state has troubled publicly run institutions. They're as seriously troubled as the CCA facilities are, but for different sets of reasons, and there's more hope you can actually reform them than you can a private outfit. But CCA is going in and putting on a very sophisticated public relations campaign with these state legislatures, saying, "We're the solution to all your problems. We can do it cheaper, we can do it better."

They're wrong. They can't do it cheaper and they can't do it better. The evidence that they can't do it better is what we've seen in Youngstown. There's been a number of studies that take a look at the pricing and say it really isn't less expensive than publicly run institutions, particularly when you begin to account for the fact that there's going to be tremendous pressure on the operators of the prisons to cut back on labor-intensive things, like educational and vocational programs, in order to maximize profits. It's become very expensive to communities, because you're going to lose the few opportunities that are available in publicly run institutions to help folks who end up in contact with the criminal justice system.

EIR: There's also a very large move to privatize Washington, D.C. now, I understand.

Smith: There's a legal mandate. Congress, at the urging of CCA, last year passed a law that says that the District's correction system will basically close, with the exception of the pre-trial detainees. The Federal Bureau of Prisons will assume responsibility for all sentenced District felons. That will hap-

pen over the next four years. When the Feds take D.C. prisoners, half of them are to go into the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and half are required to go into private prisons under that law.

Interestingly, one of our greatest allies in this is the Bureau of Prisons. They don't like privatization any more than we do—probably for different reasons. They've got the sense that they can do it better than anybody in the country and they know what they're doing, and they don't like to be told that they have to bid out part of this to a private entity. They don't like it any more than we do and are bristling under this obligation. But it is coming, and it's coming in a big way for the District. I think after what we've seen in Ohio and the experience we've had here in the District—we have another privatized facility that is not as troubled as the Youngstown prison is, but has significant problems—it scares me. It scares me to death.

EIR: I recall that when George Bush lost his bid for reelection, that J. Michael Quinlan, the head of Bush's Federal Bureau of Corrections, went over to CCA to head its strategic research division.

Smith: Right. I think he's now heading up their real estate development corporation, or something like that. But he's still with them.

EIR: So it's the Bureau of Prisons under Clinton that doesn't like this?

Smith: The bureau didn't like it before either. I think Quinlan was probably offered a tremendously large amount of money. That can influence your position.

Interview: Vermel Whalen

Representative Whalen (D-Cleveland), a member of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, was interviewed March 30.

EIR: What is your view of the prison privatization bills?

Whalen: Personally, I am against privatization of the prisons. I believe that is the state's job. I do not believe we can monitor what is going on inside, running the prisons, and what is going on with the administration of them. One thing we do know: When you start talking privatization, it's cutting corners and making a profit. That speaks for itself. For that reason, I am afraid that the services that we are supposed to provide once we incarcerate a person, perhaps will be cut, in order to make a dollar. Just briefly, because of that, I'm against it. I think the state should not privatize the prisons and the state should run them as we do the majority of them already.

EIR: I understand there is a bill, H.B. 590, that would privatize all new prisons.

Whalen: Yes, that is what I understand. You can be sure I'll be voting against it.

Interview: Ron Wieczorek

Campaigning for a New Bretton Woods

The following interview with Ron Wieczorek was conducted on March 20 by Marianna Wertz. Wieczorek, a LaRouche Democrat, is a candidate for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Congress in the June 2 primary. South Dakota's only House seat is currently held by John Thune, a Republican. A cattle farmer,



Wieczorek is 55 years old, married, with two children. His family farming tradition goes back to 1879, when his great-grandfather homesteaded in the state.

The Schiller Institute leader in South Dakota, Wieczorek has also travelled to Europe and Mexico in recent years with the Schiller Institute, organizing against free-trade agreements and food control, such as the starvation of Iraqi children by UN sanctions. He calls his campaign the Wieczorek "Committee for a New Bretton Woods."

EIR: You're running for the only U.S. House seat in South Dakota, currently held by Republican John Thune. You have a Democratic primary on June 2, and I understand you're now petitioning to be on the primary ballot. What's the relationship of this campaign to your political fight for the economic policies associated with Lyndon LaRouche and his call for a new Bretton Woods system?

Wieczorek: We're aware of the economic crisis that is about to come down on us. We're looking at a collapse of the economy, as Mr. LaRouche has said, almost certainly before the November election, a major economic crash, very similar to what has already happened in Indonesia, where commerce has come almost to a standstill.

Here in South Dakota, I see it every day, with our hog market falling this winter to one of the lowest levels since the levels that took out 25-30% of the hog producers in 1993-94. Today, we're at \$30 hogs again; the cost of production is about \$38 on those animals. We have the large corporations moving in, which claim to be much more efficient, but they are buying the feed to feed these hogs at about 30% of what it's actually worth.

EIR: How do you see the mobilization for a new monetary