

National News

Gramm wants privatized prison labor camps

In a raving, off-the-cuff speech to the National Rifle Association's (NRA) convention in Phoenix, Arizona on May 20, U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) called for "decriminalizing prison labor" and turning the federal prison system into "industrial parks," according to reports from Reuters and the *Washington Times*.

Gramm proposes that inmates will work 10 hours a day, six days a week, at below minimum wage. He reportedly told the NRA that the scheme will require abolishing laws passed in the 1930s under labor union pressure, which either ban the sale or shipment of goods produced by prison labor, or require prisoners to be paid prevailing union wages.

Gramm allegedly also pushed for shortening the time it requires to execute prisoners, and endorsed the shooting of criminals by private gun-owners: "My 82-year-old mother has a revolver and knows how to use it. If she sentences some thug, no judge will ever be able to bring him back."

Gramm admits backing porno film 'spoof'

The Presidential aspirations of Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) are reeling, following exposure of his financial backing for a pornographic film project. Both the *New York Post* and *New York Daily News* on May 18 leaked material from a feature in the June 5 *New Republic*, entitled "The Porn Broker; Phil Gramm's Curious Investment."

The *New Republic* wrote that Gramm invested \$7,500 in 1973 in the production of a pornographic movie called "Beauty Queens." Gramm's former brother-in-law, George Caton, told the magazine, "It was a sexploitation of beauty contests, how all the beauty queens are screwing the contest judges to win. We gave Phil the script to read and he loved it." Responding to the

charges, Gramm reportedly claimed he had lost money on the investment, in what he thought was "an R-rated spoof of beauty contests."

The *New Republic* alleges that Gramm had first tried to invest in a film called "Truck Stop Women," which Caton claims "really got Phil titillated because there was frontal nudity in it. . . ; he thought it would be a way to make a lot of money." Gramm was left on the outside looking in, however, because that movie had been oversubscribed. The magazine reports that the film featured an abundance of bare-breasted women and simulated sex, with a flimsy plot centered on the madam of a truck-stop brothel supposedly fighting a mob takeover.

Gramm's investment hopes remained unfulfilled, when the projected "Beauty Queens" fell through; but the magazine claims that Gramm then approved Caton's proposal to put his money behind another pornographic film, called "White House Madness." That venture reportedly featured a porn actor's portrayal of President Richard Nixon in the nude. On May 17, Gramm appeared at a Christian Coalition press conference, where he applauded their support of "family values" against Hollywood sleaze.

Gingrich R&D cuts flop at U.S. industry meet

House Speaker Newt Gingrich's (R-Ga.) "Third Wave" fantasy of "life-without-industry" left him beached once again, following his May 18 address to the National Association of Manufacturers. After a lengthy breakfast-meeting harangue on how to lead "the planet" into the New Age, Newt permitted two questions from his audience—and perhaps wished he had not.

One of the questioners declared, "The issue that we have, is what you're doing to the science and technology budget, particularly manufacturing R&D." The questioner noted that when companies are "downsizing," the first thing they do is to cut trading, and the second is to cut research and development. "We're [spending] less than 3%," he said, far lower than Japan and Europe.

"We're really concerned [about] what you're doing," Gingrich's challenger said. He rejected the Conservative Revolutionists' claims that federal incentives for technological improvements and inventions are merely "corporate subsidies." The questioner protested that the United States traditionally was the "first to invent," but added that U.S. manufacturers are now "dead last in dominating the market."

Gingrich's response was to blame U.S. management, while lying that, "Nobody's talking about gutting real basic research." Newt claimed he would be glad to work on supporting research, but only if it is "non-government-directed."

Spannaus urges Dems to 'defeat defeatism'

Nancy Spannaus, the LaRouche Democrat who led an aggressive campaign to defeat the 1994 Senate campaign of Oliver North, released a call to party activists on May 15 to "defeat defeatism in the Democratic Party."

Spannaus noted that some party leaders "are already taking off the gloves" against the vicious budget cuts "being rammed through Congress by the Gingrich-Gramm fanatics of the Conservative Revolution," and recalled the advice given in January by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), that the last thing which the country needed was two Republican parties.

"The Conservative Revolutionists around Gingrich and Gramm could well be called 'devolutionists,'" Spannaus said. "Their proposals add up to the destruction of the lives of 70 to 80% of our population, and they could care less."

"Unfortunately, there is a visible sense of defeatism in local Democratic parties around the country. Instead of going on the attack, local leaders are moaning about money, advertising, and tailing the allegedly popular Conservative Revolution slogans about tax cuts and other snake-oil remedies. This attitude and strategy has to be changed, or it will turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy."

"We LaRouche Democrats are committed to building a 1996 landslide against the

fanatics of the Conservative Revolution. These policies of looting the poor, elderly, and sick have to be smashed decisively. The budget-cutting fanatics may be over-confident now, just as Ollie North was, but they can be defeated.”

AFL-CIO leaders move to oust Lane Kirkland

With an eye on the 1996 Presidential and congressional elections, trade union leaders advocating aggressive political and labor organizing are moving to change the national leadership of the AFL-CIO. A committee headed by Gerald W. McEntee, international president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (Afsme), has been formed to oppose the reelection of AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, at the organization's convention in New York City on Oct. 23-26.

In a May 17 press release, the committee announced that it had the backing of the national presidents of 16 major unions, representing approximately 7 million members—“more than 53% of the AFL-CIO's reported 13,018,550 membership.”

On May 18, McEntee spoke bluntly at the convention of the Michigan AFL-CIO. According to Michigan labor leaders interviewed by *EIR*, McEntee said he and his allies had asked Kirkland to set aside \$10 million for upcoming congressional elections, and an equivalent amount for union organizing campaigns. After Kirkland reportedly stonewalled the request, the decision was made to oust him from the national presidency of the AFL-CIO. McEntee reportedly said union leaders were tired of Kirkland's “no, maybe, can't do it” attitude.

In its May 17 press release, the committee for new leadership of the AFL-CIO suggested that the issue was not Kirkland per se, but labor's entire policy orientation. “This effort is not about personalities or popularity. It is not about who heads the labor movement, but where the labor movement is headed. . . . What we want and must do is to open up the AFL-CIO structure to allow the emergence of strong, bold, and innova-

tive leadership at every level of the federation. . . . We want to reinvigorate the American labor movement and make it once again an effective voice for America's working families.”

Union organizers told *EIR* that the drive for a new labor leadership is related to pro-labor statements now being heard from President Bill Clinton and Secretary of Labor Robert Reich. As one source put it, “The Democrats know they need really active unions, who are going to go out and talk up the issues and fight for their candidates. The unions know they need government officials who will turn around the rotten economic situation.”

Weld, death penalty denounced in Boston

A bill to legalize the death penalty in Massachusetts, introduced by Gov. William Weld, met strong opposition on May 12 in a hearing before the state legislature's Criminal Justice Committee, the *Boston Herald* reported on May 13. Weld himself didn't show, but Lt. Gov. Paul Cellucci faced “blistering challenges” and a crowd of 300 booing citizens who delivered non-stop testimony charging that capital punishment is immoral, expensive, racist, and prone to fatal mistakes.

Roman Catholic Cardinal Bernard Law opened the testimony saying, “We do not believe that violence on our part can be a solution to violence, or that the taking of a life, even of the guilty, can be an effective means to demonstrate that killing is wrong.” When asked about punishing the perpetrators of the Oklahoma bombing, he replied, “The question is . . . is there evidence that we can be protected from that kind of crime by capital punishment? If there's reasonable doubt as to whether that would result, then we would argue that the advantage should be given to the right to life—even of the guilty.”

Many victims of crime testified against the death penalty, saying, “It won't bring him [their loved one] back,” and, “If killing is wrong, how can we kill anyone?”

Briefly

● **LABOR SECRETARY** Robert Reich said the leading issue in the 1996 election campaign will be, “How are you going to reverse the decline in real wages and improve benefits?” in a May 16 meeting with the *Los Angeles Times*. The Clinton administration, he said, will “do everything we can to smoke the Republicans out” on budget cuts that hurt the poor, elderly, and middle class.

● **COMMERCE SECRETARY** Ron Brown has called Republican efforts to abolish his department or its essential high-technology programs “as ludicrous as they are shortsighted,” adding that they “amount to unilateral disarmament in the battle for global competitiveness.” The programs provide support for high-risk, innovative projects, and bring existing advanced technology to small and medium-sized companies.

● **GOV. PETE WILSON** of California is the front-runner for the Republican Presidential nomination, party sources claim. That speculation surfaced after Wilson was given the nod over Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) by Britain's Lord Rees-Mogg, a chief orchestrator of attacks on President Clinton. Some party leaders now envision a Wilson “dream ticket,” with New Jersey Gov. Christine Whitman as his running mate.

● **ATTORNEY GENERAL** Janet Reno recommended on May 18 the appointment of an independent counsel to inquire into the business dealings of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, acceding to Republican demands. In an editorial the next day, the *New York Times* called for Brown's removal, without waiting even for the investigation to begin.

● **THE TEXAS** State Legislature on May 18 backed the Conservative Revolution's demand for the quick execution of death-row inmates, whether guilty or innocent. The House voted 124-19 to adopt a Senate bill which cuts the period during which death-row inmates may appeal, to as little as two years.