

National News

Newt and the gang plan 'Dark Ages Weekend'

How deranged are Newt Gingrich and his band of Conservative Revolutionists? Well, consider this item, published in the "Style Section" of the July 28 *Washington Post*, headlined "Surely, They Joust? Conservatives to Schmooze at 'Dark Ages' Retreat."

The *Post* account includes the following allegations, reported as though there were no need to jump on the phone, to call the nearest asylum for the men in white coats: "Conservatives have invited 3,000 right-leaning luminaries to a New Year's retreat in Florida intended to rival the annual Renaissance Weekend in Hilton Head, S.C., attended by friends of President Clinton. The conservatives, those wags, are calling theirs the Dark Ages Weekend.

"The letter of invitation, topped by a black dragon logo, seeks to rally conservatives at the posh Doral Golf Resort in Miami to sharpen their blades for a fight to slay the common enemy of all Americans—the 'big, fat and unaccountable' federal government.

"'Entrepreneurs and executives from some of the fastest-growing companies in the United States will tell us which regulations need to be gutted and why,' the letter promises. 'Of course,' it goes on, cigars are welcome at the big banquet where House Speaker Newt Gingrich is the invited keynote speaker."

Budget fight could shut down government

Conservative Revolutionists' demands in Congress, for both vicious austerity and fat tax breaks for speculators, could lead to a virtual shutdown of the federal government on Oct. 1—the beginning of the new fiscal year. White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta has sent a memo to all agencies, directing them to make contingency plans for suspending all but essential government services on that date, according to the July 29 *Washington Post*.

In the expectation that Congress and President Clinton will not agree on a budget by the Oct. 1 deadline, Panetta reportedly told cabinet members on July 26 that the Republicans in Congress "seemed fully prepared to shut down the government for an extended period."

In recent years, deadlocks which have blocked the timely adoption of a budget have led to shutdowns of only one or two days. They were ended by congressional passage of a "continuing resolution," to maintain funding at previous levels until an agreement was reached. This year, the new gang of Republican freebooters, under the sway of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), is reportedly moving to block such a resolution.

The White House has threatened to veto 6 of the 13 Appropriations bills backed by the Republican majority. The Republicans, meanwhile, are threatening not to increase the federal debt limit, unless President Clinton accepts their spending and tax cuts. The debt is expected to hit the current statutory limit of \$4.9 trillion in October.

Physicians say Medicaid cuts endanger children

Conservative Revolutionist bills, to turn Medicaid funding into block grants administered by the states, could devastate the health care system for the nation's children. At a July 31 press conference in Washington, spokesmen for the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Children's Hospitals warned that children would be the hardest hit by the scheme, if current federal standards are not maintained.

Lawrence McAndrews, president of the National Association of Children's Hospitals, told reporters, "Medicaid pays for the health care of one in every four children—more than half of whom live in working families. It also pays for nearly half of the care for inpatients of children's hospitals." Without federal standards for children, McAndrews said, "the projected cuts in future growth in Medicaid spending are so big, they could force states to reduce future Medicaid coverage for between 2 and 4 million

children over the next seven years."

The impact such reductions would have on a typical children's hospital staff, are equivalent to almost one-quarter of its current full-time workforce. "That kind of impact on a children's hospital," McAndrews said, "could put at risk all children who rely on its specialized services, not just children of low-income families."

Merger of three unions to form largest in U.S.

The United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers of America, and International Association of Machinists announced a merger on July 27, which would result in a union of over 2 million members, the largest in the nation. USWA President George Becker told a press conference in Washington, "Workers want someone to stand and fight for them, and we're going to be able to do that.

"Standards of living have been falling and wages are stagnant. Workers are working much harder, and spouses are working to maintain the standard of living that used to be possible with a single income," Becker declared, adding that "we believe we're going to be stronger by doing this." The merger requires ratification by the memberships of all three unions, a process which could take as long as three years; but their leaders insist that there is a great deal of enthusiastic support for the plan.

A "Unity Declaration" accompanying the announcement stated, "Contrary to those who believe that unions have outlived their usefulness, we share the deep conviction that in a globalized economy dominated by the mobility of capital, organized labor has a more compelling role than ever.

"Left solely to their own devices, profit-driven multinational corporations and the governments subservient to them can neither be trusted nor expected to look out for the well-being of their workers or the welfare of the societies in which they operate.

"Without the countervailing power that only organized workers can achieve, the economic freedom and political democracy that are the foundations of the good life we

have come to enjoy are in serious peril." By combining the three unions' resources, the declaration added, "we can far better bring a vital and necessary balance to the scales of political, social, and economic justice."

More 'punishment' set for Alabama prisoners

Prisoners in Alabama, the first state to reintroduce prison chain gangs, will soon be forced to break rocks—a barbaric measure simply designed to increase the level of punishment—the *New York Times* reported on July 29.

Commissioner of State Prisons Ronald D. Jones is preparing to have rocks trucked to at least three state penitentiaries only for that purpose, and state officials say they have no need for the crushed rock that will result. Prisoners will work just outside the prison gates for 10 hours a day, resting every 20 minutes, five days a week. Summer temperatures in Alabama frequently reach 100°F.

Commissioner Jones has also recently ordered that weekend family visits be reduced, from once a week to every two weeks; that no coffee be served, except on Sunday; and that the prisoners' \$1 monthly allowance be eliminated.

Trail hikers threatened by explosive devices

The U.S. Forest Service found a pipe bomb on a popular trail in New Mexico's Gila Wilderness on July 6—the fourth explosive device discovered in the area in the past few months. The agency issued an alert to all hikers on July 8, warning them of the danger.

On May 18, a small cache of plastic explosives was found south of Snow Lake. Earlier in the year, Forest Service personnel discovered two "pipe devices with trip wires designed to fire a shotgun shell" at hikers. All of the explosive devices were set out along the most heavily used trails in the wilderness area.

Although the Forest Service has declined to speculate on who is behind these terrorist

tactics, private investigator Barry Clausen told *EIR* that shutting down the Gila Wilderness is one of the top priorities of Earth First! Earth First!, part of the eco-terrorist apparatus of Prince Philip's World Wide Fund for Nature, has publicly advocated the use of violence, against human endeavors which they claim might "alter" the primitive domains of their "Earth Mother."

LaRouche campaign opens 'home page' on Internet

Lyndon LaRouche's Democratic presidential campaign committee announced on Aug. 2 that its World Wide Web site on the Internet is up and running. At present, LaRouche's "home page" includes recent statements by the candidate on corruption within the U.S. Justice Department, the global financial crisis, the dangerous strategic situation, and Newt Gingrich's efforts to destroy the United States—as well as a brief biographical resumé.

LaRouche campaign director Melvin Klenetsky told *EIR* that the candidate believes this additional means of outreach "will stir things up" in a number of quarters, and spark a more informed debate over LaRouche's ideas. "We are in the most crucial period in all of modern history," Klenetsky said. "Yet the so-called experts, the leading institutions, and the governments of the world have failed to act upon—or even identify—the gravity of the crisis confronting them."

For citizens of the United States, Klenetsky added, "the controlled media have kept them in the dark, even while leading journals of other nations report the growing influence and unique competence of LaRouche's ideas. For those of you who want to know his assessments of how we got into this mess, and his proposals on how to get out of it, we hope this form of direct access through the Internet will shed some useful light on that."

The campaign announced that "web browsers" can link up to the following address: <http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html> The campaign's electronic mail address is larouche@clark.net

Briefly

● **ENVIRONMENTALISTS** demonstrated against President Clinton on Aug. 1, for signing a bill permitting emergency salvage of damaged timber. Members of the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the World Wide Fund for Nature delivered "a 21-chain-saw salute," gunning their saws in the air aimed toward the White House. The salvage provision was a minor item, in the bill to vastly expand federal anti-terrorist powers.

● **SEN. ROBERT DOLE** (R-Kan.), speaking before the Senate voted on July 26 to lift the Bosnian arms embargo, denounced the "dual key" which gave the U.N. veto power over air strikes. "They should take the key from Boutros Boutros-Ghali," he declared, "and lock the door and throw away the key."

● **LYNDON LAROCHE'S** impact, in exposing the role of the British oligarchy, was reflected on the *Washington Post* "Federal Page" on May 15. The *Post* claimed that a copy of *EIR*, "a publication by political extremist Lyndon LaRouche's organization," was discovered on a government-office coffee table. The issue contained "a fascinating piece on a conspiracy by the Duke of Edinburgh, a.k.a. the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, to take control of Australia or something like that."

● **SHIPYARD WORKERS** in Norfolk, Virginia, already suffering mass layoffs, say the labor force is being further ground up, as non-union shops are imposed by the companies remaining in business. Laid-off workers are offered non-union jobs, with no health benefits. Those who refuse them are being denied unemployment compensation.

● **IS SOMEONE** pushing for a "long hot summer" of urban riots against President Clinton? During the last ten days of July, small-scale outbreaks of violence were reported in Indianapolis, Miami, and East Los Angeles. Each was allegedly triggered by rumors of police brutality.