

IN SHORT

Lawyers who need lawyers

The Reagan administration—in still another effort to paint Cuba as a danger for North Americans—has now taken on a small New York travel agency and lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the National Lawyers Guild (NLG). Late last month the Treasury Department's Foreign Assets Control Office subpoenaed Marazul Tours, forcing it to turn over names of 13,000 Americans who've visited Cuba since the 1982 travel restrictions. Most of these were Cuban-Americans visiting relatives, but about 2,000 visited the island for research and professional reasons—and it's these records that the Treasury Department will scrutinize more closely. A second subpoena zeroed in on a legal conference scheduled for September 16-23 in Havana, hosted by the Cuban Ministry of Justice and the National Union of Cuban Jurists and planned by CCR lawyers. The Treasury Department asked Marazul to furnish it with the names of the 2,000 lawyers on the mailing list for the conference. This caused an uproar at the NLG and the CCR that caused the government to rethink its tactics—now it seeks only the names of lawyers who attend the conference, not the entire mailing list.

As *In These Times* went to press, the trip is still on (with eight or so lawyers braving the possible harassment), and Marazul successfully avoided having to turn over the CCR's original mailing list. But the subpoenas represent a new form of government intimidation. A new form with an old purpose, however, says David Lerner of the CCR: "Our entire Central American policy right now rests on the attempt of the administration to make Cuba a bugaboo. This is one more effort in that direction."

Strangers on the right?

A group of Catholics mostly aligned with conservative interests, fearing that the upcoming bishops' pastoral on the economy will go too far in its criticism of American capitalism, will release their own report on November 11, one day before the bishops' is due. Gregory Bergman reports that the lineup for the 32-member American Catholic committee reads for the most part like a who's who in right-wing Catholic circles: former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, corporate head J. Peter Grace who was recently associated with anti-Sandinista efforts (see *In These Times*, August 8), along with 16 CEOs from major U.S. corporations. The few exceptions to this corporate and ideological battalion are notable, however. Edward Cleary of the New York AFL-CIO joined the committee because he thought it was important for the bishops to hear from business and labor. He dropped out a few weeks ago, however, because "the more I found out about the committee the more I realized it was Michael Novak trying to slam the bishops' statement before it even appeared. I wonder where he got this crystal ball." The other labor leader, John Henning of the California Labor Federation, has in the past been a spokesperson for left causes in the labor movement. Though *In These Times* was anxious to ask Henning what it was like listening to the "Economy According to Haig, Novak, et al.," he was unavailable for comment.

Philaposh proposes

What was once a Heritage Foundation proposal on cutbacks in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has now become OSHA reality, thanks to Thorne Auchter's almost-perfect implementation of their 1979 blueprint. Now Philaposh, the Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health, counters the right-wing's corporate suggestions with proposals of its own. "Revitalizing OSHA After Reagan" focuses on the administrative and regulatory changes that have made OSHA unresponsive to workers since President Reagan's takeover and makes suggestions for a "post-Reagan, worker-oriented OSHA." The report cites changes that led to OSHA's declining quality of inspections, including docking OSHA administrators merit pay when they go over the "allowable number" of citations to businesses and encouraging OSHA administrators to routinely reduce penalties to businesses by 50 percent to avoid a courtroom battle.

Philaposh, a union coalition once funded through OSHA but now primarily a labor-supported group, has been working on the proposals for more than a year. Their purpose is to "wake up the American public—the price they pay for one nuclear attack submarine could be used to increase OSHA's budget by 250 percent," said Charles Morris of Philaposh. "Philaposh is here to pick up where OSHA leaves off—unfortunately, in recent years that's been an impossible burden on our budget of \$135,000." For a copy of their 10-page proposal send \$5 to Philaposh, 5th floor, 3001 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104.

What's up, Doc?

Apparently the average American male has a high regard for science. When Stanford researcher Dr. Julian Davidson put out the call for 40 volunteers to test a new drug, more than 300 men eagerly responded. The drug, yohimbine hydrochloride, has been rumored since the '20s to be an aphrodisiac and now doses of it have excited Stanford rats. But Dr. Davidson put a damper on a rat-to-human analogy: "The drug's effects in people may be different from those seen in rats. Human sexual behavior is complicated by emotions and other such things."

—Beth Maschinot



The Civil Rights Act of 1984 would protect women's gains in sports.

Senate stalls sex bias bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Americans excited by the nomination of Geraldine Ferraro won't have to wait until the November elections to see if the women's vote has become a powerful force in American politics. The major civil rights bill of this Congress, the Civil Rights Act of 1984, still languishes in the Republican-controlled Senate. Backers hope to use two powerful symbols—women and the Olympics—to force passage. But they may have to overcome threatened amendments and a possible filibuster by right-wing opponents, and then may still face defeat by a possible presidential veto.

The legislation was introduced

into Congress last April by a bipartisan group after the Supreme Court's *Grove City College vs. Bell* ruling that severely limited the scope of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX is the only federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally assisted programs and is credited for expanding women's and girl's educational and athletic opportunities.

The Court, siding with the Reagan administration, said only the programs that received direct federal money had to comply to Title IX. In all previous administrations every program in a school being helped by government money had to comply to Title IX. Since the ruling the Department of Education has closed almost two dozen cases, including some affecting athletic departments, saying the programs did not receive direct funds.

And because of the Court's

ruling, three other significant civil rights laws protecting racial and ethnic minorities, the disabled and older Americans could also be similarly restricted and less effective in combatting discrimination.

The bill passed the House with minor amendments in June by a 375-to-32 margin, but things have not gone according to the fast-track strategy hoped for by the Senate supporters. The administration and right-wing Republican Senators Orin Hatch (R-UT), Jesse Helms (R-NC) and John East (R-NC) have managed to delay consideration of the bill in Hatch's Labor and Human Resources Committee and on the Senate floor.

Supporters recently held a Washington press conference to try to break the legislative deadlock. Using the interest in women's athletics generated by the Olympics, Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, warned that "many Americans do not realize that our civil rights laws and our future Olympic efforts are in serious jeopardy. Indeed, your [Reagan's] opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1984 poses more of a threat to America's future Olympic efforts than any other possible factor, including political boycotts."

Judy Goldsmith, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), said that by opposing the legislation, "President Reagan and the Republican Senate leadership would deny the next generation of American women the chance to compete in the Olympics."

Senate majority leader Howard Baker (R-TN), an original co-sponsor and expected 1988 presidential contender, has promised to bring the bill directly to the Senate floor in mid-September, bypassing Hatch's committee. Plans are now underway to bring Olympic athletes to the Capitol to lobby for the bill.

If the bill passes, one Republican House aide said that presidential approval will depend on the polls. "If he's ahead, then they'll pressure him to sign it." If the bill fails, then Democrats hope to use Reagan's opposition of it to demonstrate that the showcasing of women at the Republican convention in Dallas lacked depth. In short, they hope to show that the Republicans refuse to fulfill their promise of equal rights without a Constitutional amendment.

While many people bemoaned the commercialization of the Los Angeles Olympics, civil rights strategists now hope that if Olympic gold can be used to sell soft drinks and Xerox paper, it can also sell legislation.

—Jeffrey Menzer

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Taxes

Continued from page 3

For example, it would reward single individuals and penalize large families that are forced to spend most of their income. (Kemp justly described a consumption tax as "anti-family.") It would also penalize the elderly who live off their savings, students living on loans and those middle-income people who spend beyond their means.

Like the current tax system, a consumption tax would reward investors regardless of what they invest in. A person who invests in commodity futures would get the same tax break as a person who funds a day-care center.

Republican rejoinders.

In response to Bradley-Gephardt and the other Democratic plans, conservative Republicans and Democrats have come forward with plans of their own. This year Kemp and Sen. Bob Kasten (R-WI) proposed a "Republican Bradley-Gephardt" that would simplify the tax code by imposing a flat 25 percent tax on all individual and corporate income.

Kemp-Kasten would preserve a semblance of progressiveness by doubling the personal exemption and allowing wage-earners who make less than \$40,000 to deduct 20 percent of their income, but it would bestow another bonanza on the rich and the corporations and would lead

to a substantial drain on the Treasury.

Other conservative proposals are less generous to the poor and the middle class than Kemp-Kasten and equally, if not more, generous to the rich. Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), Rep. Mark Siljander and Richard Viguerie's Populist Conservative Tax Coalition are pressing for a pure flat tax. The most widely discussed proposal, devised by Hoover Institution economists Robert Hall and Alvin Rabushka, calls for a 19 percent flat tax and elimination of the corporate income tax.

In a Capitol Hill discussion on the plan, Hall admitted that it "represents in the short-run a redistribution of the tax burden from the most successful members of our economy to the middle class." But he assured his listeners that a family making \$30,000 would at worst suffer a tax increase of "only [sic] about 5 percent of their income."

Charls Walker has been pushing for a national sales tax that would either supplement or replace the income tax. Walker favors a virtually invisible form of sales tax—a Tax on Business Transactions—that would be charged in every stage of the production process except the final retail sale to a customer. When a consumer bought a car, it would already have a large federal tax bill incorporated into its final price.

Walker and other corporate tax lobbyists like the idea of a sales tax because it functions like a consumption tax—penalizing consumers and rewarding savers—and because it is less likely to encounter public opposition than an annual tax.

Their assumptions about public sentiment have been borne out by recent polls. One poll found that Americans preferred by two-to-one that any new taxes come through a sales tax rather than an income tax.

Reagan and Mondale.

Since taking office Reagan has signed one bill for an enormous tax reduction and three bills for successive, but far smaller, tax increases. He has consistently resisted committing himself to tax increases. (In 1982 he declared he could not imagine a tax increase being approved "unless there's a palace coup and I'm overtaken or overthrown.") But last winter, faced with soaring deficits through 1989, Reagan announced that he was forming a Treasury Department committee that would submit recommendations for tax reform to him by December 1 of this year.

The Treasury committee is reported to be studying four alternatives: a pure flat tax, a modified flat tax (like Kemp-Kasten), a consumption tax and a national sales tax. Administration observers expect that if Reagan is re-elected, he will propose some combination of a "simplified" and modified flat tax and a consumption tax.

But in response to Mondale's challenge Reagan has insisted that he has no plans for raising taxes in 1985 and will not do so except as a "last resort."

Reagan's response leaves Mondale with the unfortunate task of proposing his own plan for raising taxes. Last January he endorsed Bradley-Gephardt and called

for raising \$60 billion by increasing taxes on the wealthy and on corporations. But in his nomination acceptance speech Mondale promised to cut by two-thirds Reagan's projected deficit for 1989. To do this, Mondale will have to propose tax increases and spending cuts amounting to \$175 billion.

Mondale could still meet his target by cutting projected increases in the military budget and raising taxes on the corporations and well-to-do—in plugging his sales tax, Charls Walker recently warned that \$100 billion a year could be raised by placing a 45 percent surcharge on incomes above \$40,000—but it is very unlikely that Mondale will propose additional cuts in military spending or radically redistributive tax reform.

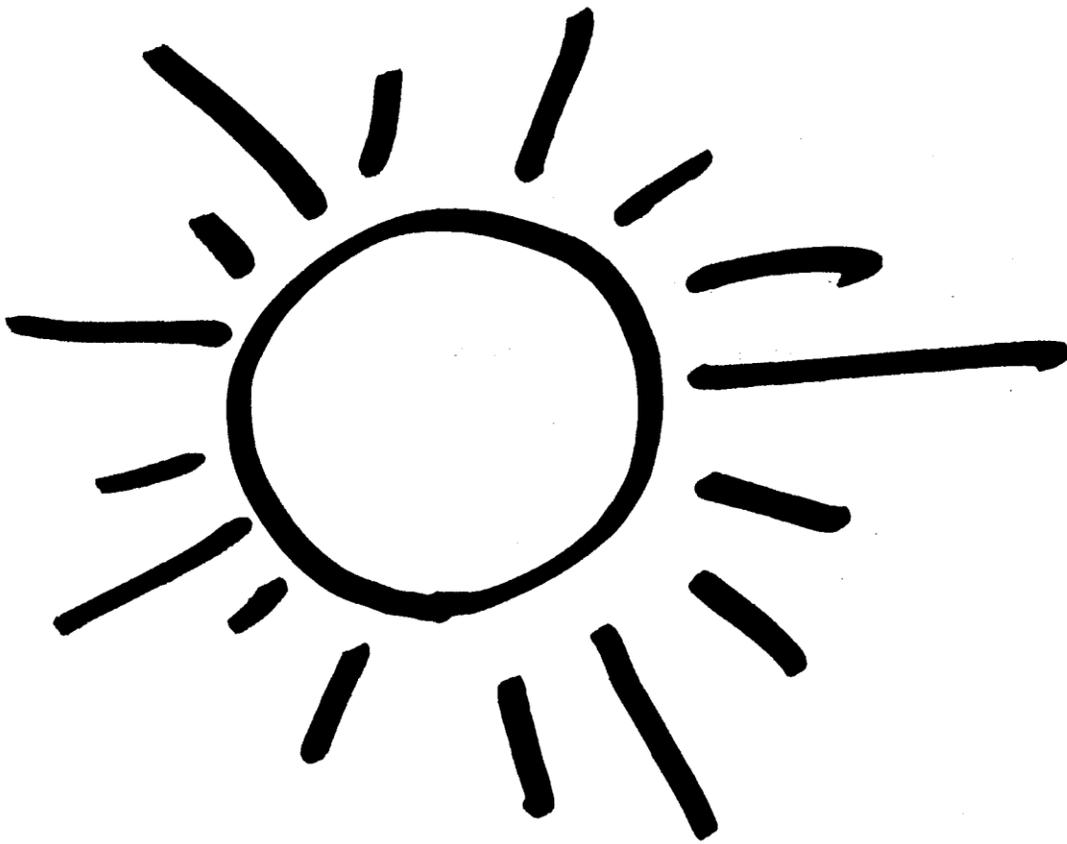
Mondale is, after all, a product of the same Democratic malaise that produced Bradley-Gephardt's "populist" tax plan and the neo-liberals' progressive consumption taxes.

The savings snare.

In 1978 Jimmy Carter did not abandon his pledge to reform the tax system because he decided that the rich deserved to keep every cent that they made. Charls Walker convinced Carter, Sen. Alan Cranston and other Democrats that the commitment to equality, built into the income tax system, had to be sacrificed in order to provide business greater savings.

To advance genuine tax reform, the Democrats must return to this bend of the road and examine the assumption that led both them and the Republicans to an impasse from which they can only seemingly escape by raising taxes. Has the stagnation of the American economy been caused by business and the wealthy having too little money at their disposal? Or has it been caused by their not being able or willing to find productive uses for the savings they do have?

Of course, the tax issue could work to the Democrats' advantage, but it will not do so as long as they simply mimic the Republicans in finding ways to divert income from spenders to savers. ■



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