

• The Report of the Presidential Commission on Privatization, presented to the President on March 18, contained major recommendations promoting employee stock ownership as part of a U.S. public policy thrust for cutting costs through privatization. Among its proposals for privatizing the U.S. Postal Service, the report recommended that "priority should be given to employee ownership, either in whole or in part. Employees should be active participants in the decision-making process." Recognizing that other federal workers should also have a stake when their jobs are privatized, the report stated: "ESOPs can be excellent devices for furthering competition and contracting," and that "FED CO-OP...and other ESOP options, should be pursued by the federal government."

Regarding U.S. foreign policy, the Report stated: "Employee stock ownership plans should be promoted by the Agency for International Development [AID] as a method for transferring state-owned enterprises to the private sector in developing countries."

A member of the commission, Walter Bish, head of the Independent Steelworkers Union at 100% employee-owned Weirton Steel, previously served on the CESJ-initiated Presidential Task Force on Project Economic Justice.

The Commission's final report is available from the President's Privatization Commission, 1825 K St., NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20006 (Tel: 202/634-6501).

• The National Center for Employee Ownership held its annual convention March 24-26 in Washington, D.C., bringing together over 300 participants representing a broad spectrum of viewpoints. CESJ Pres. Norm Kurland made a presentation on international developments in employee ownership, including the recent establishment of an ESOP at the Pirelli tire plant in Egypt and moves by the USSR toward a freer market and the selling of shares in state-owned enterprises to individual Soviet workers.

During the conference Garry Davis, champion of world citizenship, conducted an interview on ESOPs and employee participation with Norm Kurland and Joe Hudetz, VP of Solar Press in Illinois. (Solar Press, a model ESOP company, combines monthly distribution of profits and

stock ownership with worker participation in management.) The interview will be broadcast by International Peace Radio in Costa Rica.

• The Pittsburgh Chapter of CESJ is now finalizing the schedule of events for its labor-management retreat (Oct. 17-19, 1988), expected to have about 100 participants. Areas of discussion will include the world economic crisis and its moral roots, the wages/welfare vs. expanded ownership paradigms, and the use of capital credit for broadening ownership. Please direct your suggestions and questions to Bill Schirra at (412) 789-7571.

• Kris Ludwiniak has completed about 80% of his Polish translation of the CESJ collection, *Every Worker an Owner*. The book, which will be published in Paris, should soon be ready for distribution throughout Poland.

• On March 25, under the auspices of AID's Center for Privatization (CFP), Norm Kurland and three labor leaders presented a labor perspective on global privatization to about 30 top experts in the privatization field. The panel, including Norm, exiled Zimbabwean labor leader Phineas Sithole, Jack Heberle of the American Institute for Free Labor Development, and David Waugh of the International Labor Organization, explained why labor is generally so skeptical about its prospects for being treated fairly under most privatization schemes. CFP has promised Norm an opportunity next month to present the ESOP approach to privatization, where he will outline how the ESOP can overcome typical political barriers to privatization.

• PEJ Task Force Chmn. William Middendorf recently visited the 40% worker-owned La Perla coffee plantation in Guatemala to help celebrate the delivery of a much-needed bulldozer to its 500 worker-owners. The bulldozer, a gift from the Middendorfs and others, will be used to build a road connecting La Perla with the main highway, thus allowing the isolated plantation for the first time to export its coffee and other crops by truck, instead of by airplane.

• Blaine Friedlander, President of the Kiwanis Club of Merrifield, Virginia, has expressed his personal interest in establishing Project Economic Justice as a major project of the Kiwanis International, which has 8100 clubs in 75 nations, with a membership of over 300,000 people. Mr. Friedlander will be collaborating on this project with CESJ's Mac MacGrath.

• The ESOP Association will be holding its 1988 Convention, entitled "Putting Employee Ownership to Work," on May 18-20, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C. (For info., call the Association at (202) 293-2971.)

April Anniversary Meeting of CESJ

When: Saturday, April 16, 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Where: National Graduate University

1101 N. Highland St., Arlington, VA

(across from the Clarendon Metro station)

Information: Call Dawn Kurland at (703) 243-5155

We invite your participation as we brainstorm CESJ's action projects. Items on the agenda will include the Pittsburgh Labor-Management retreat, CESJ chapter development, and Project Economic Justice initiatives.

CESJ Board Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Sun. 17, NGU.

* * * Closing Thoughts * * *

"[I]f a man surrenders all power of self-determination in regard to the profits, management or ownership of the place where he works, he not only loses that special prerogative which marks him off from a cow in a pasture, but what is worse, he loses all capacity for determining any work. This is the beginning of a slavery which sometimes goes by the name of security."

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

(from *Communism and the Conscience of the West*, New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1948)