

Drug lobby kicks off new drive for decriminalization

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The Los Angeles riots have provided the pretext for a renewed drive to legalize drugs. Advocates of decriminalization have seized upon the violence there as "proof" that illegal narcotics such as heroin, cocaine, and marijuana should be decriminalized, arguing that this will remove the financial basis—drug trafficking—of the inner-city gangs.

The riots are "an opportunity for us" to push drug legalization, according to Kevin Zeese, vice president and counsel for the Washington, D.C.-based Drug Policy Foundation, the principal propaganda outfit for the advocates of drug legalization. "Clearly, if you legalize drugs, the gangs no longer have a funding base."

A flurry of articles calling for drug legalization has cropped up in the U.S. media since the riots, and a spate of books advocating decriminalization is scheduled to appear over the coming months. Worse, drug decriminalization is being enacted through the back-door, via the proliferation of "clean needle" programs which major U.S. cities have implemented in the false hope that it will contain the AIDS epidemic raging among intravenous drug-users.

Spreading the drug plague

The drug decriminalization campaign now under way further confirms *EIR's* analysis that the Los Angeles riots were deliberately instigated by the highest levels of the Eastern Establishment, specifically circles associated with the Trilateral Commission, for the purpose of ramming through a host of policies that otherwise would be unacceptable, or at least unpopular, to many U.S. citizens. These policies range from the Trilateral takeover of the Los Angeles Police Department, under the guise of "reform," to drug legalization, and the creation of virtual slave-labor camps in the inner cities.

Several of the recent media commentaries promoting drug decriminalization, including one by Jonathan Marshall

that appeared in the May 17 *Washington Post*, have zeroed in on the Los Angeles Police Department's aggressive enforcement of anti-drug laws, claiming this contributed to setting off the riots.

One of the key figures behind the legalization drive, Richard Dennis, has long-standing and intimate links to Stanley Sheinbaum, a leading advocate of Los Angeles police "reform." Sheinbaum is a close associate of Trilateral Commission member Warren Christopher, who headed the Christopher Commission which was set up by Los Angeles Mayor and Trilateral Commission member Tom Bradley to investigate the Los Angeles police in the wake of the police beating of Rodney King.

Christopher was instrumental in getting his crony Sheinbaum appointed to the top slot in the Los Angeles Police Commission soon thereafter. Sheinbaum has long hobnobbed with some of the most outspoken advocates of drug legalization, Dennis among them.

In a recent discussion, Dennis asserted: "It would be the rational thing" if the riots led to legalization. "People talk about empowering inner-city residents. But you first have to remove the criminal element, and the way you do that is by removing their financial base, the drug trade, through legalization."

Dennis gloated that there will soon be a "spate of books arguing for drug decrim," including one he has just written with the working title of *Let's Legalize Drugs*.

He further predicted that drugs would be legalized in Ibero-America "within the scope of a few years"—a prime objective of the high-level financial interests behind the drug trade, including many of the most important international banks which favor drug legalization, since it would give debtor governments in Ibero-America a new source of funds with which to pay their massive debts.

Dennis traveled to Mexico City in mid-May to attend a

conference sponsored by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think-tank based in Washington, which focused on drug legalization. Ted Galen, Cato's foreign policy director, told UPI that programs aimed at eradicating drug crops in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia could badly harm their economies, since these countries are so heavily dependent on cocaine, marijuana, and heroin poppy production. Milton Friedman, who has long advocated drug legalization, also attended the conference, and was quoted extensively in the Mexican media promoting legalization.

Drug legalization and Trilateral fascism

Dennis isn't just any wild-eyed fanatic. A wealthy, Chicago-based commodities broker, Dennis not only provides major funding to the the Drug Policy Foundation, but he also boasts that he is the second-biggest contributor to the Democratic National Committee, and is backing Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton's candidacy for President. (Dennis lamented that the drug scandals surrounding Clinton's candidacy have made it impossible for him to raise the drug issue, but opined that Clinton would, if elected President, look upon drug legalization sympathetically.)

Dennis also edits *New Perspectives Quarterly*, the magazine of Robert Hutchins's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Sheinbaum is the magazine's publisher, and its board includes Mickey Kantor, the lawyer for the Hollywood mob who currently serves as Clinton's presidential campaign manager.

Dennis exemplifies the "right-left" convergence on what is appropriately labeled "Trilateral fascism," a program whose elements include not only drug legalization, but also massive austerity and the emasculation of constituency-based politics.

A longtime associate of the libertarian Reason Foundation and author of several articles for *Reason* magazine, including at least one advocating drug legalization, Dennis describes himself as a "pragmatic libertarian," and advocates what he calls the "empowerment, not subsidy" approach to the plight of the inner cities. This includes drug legalization, privatization of social services, school vouchers, and "workfare not welfare," i.e., a program that would "do away with welfare, and make the government the employer of last resort"—at low wages.

AIDS as a tool

One of the cynical ploys the drug legalization lobby has seized upon to further its agenda is the AIDS crisis. In a recent conversation, Kevin Zeese of the Drug Policy Foundation said that AIDS has crowded out drug abuse as a leading priority for big-city mayors, and that as a result, many key cities have implemented, or are moving to implement, so-called "needle exchange" programs for drug addicts, ostensibly to deter the spread of AIDS.

"City leaders all across the country are recognizing that AIDS is a much greater threat than drugs, and are reordering

their priorities accordingly," said Zeese, adding that this development, coupled with legislation to authorize the medical use of marijuana and heroin, shows that there is a "lot of progress" being made toward the goal of total legalization, at least on the state level.

Clean needle programs, especially, represent an important back-door means of decriminalizing drugs, Zeese said, since they legitimize government involvement in drug distribution, and also often require eliminating or modifying existing drug-control laws.

Zeese reported that the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR), led by Hollywood mafia madame Mathilde Krim, who spearheaded the campaign against two anti-AIDS ballot proposals advocated by associates of Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche in California, announced a nationwide campaign for needle exchange and condom distribution programs in May. Since then, New York City and Washington, D.C. have initiated such programs. In the case of New York, the decision represented a 180-degree turn-about from two years ago when Mayor David Dinkins halted a needle exchange program because of public opposition. According to sources, Dinkins's change of heart largely resulted from AMFAR's intervention.

As part of its new campaign, AMFAR has given the Drug Policy Foundation a grant to run a clean-needle project in Chicago's North Side, according to Zeese.

New York and Washington have joined a growing number of U.S. metropolises which have implemented programs to hand out needles to drug addicts. According to the May 25 *Time* magazine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut will soon take "the even more dramatic step of decriminalizing the possession of hypodermics."

Further, the magazine reported, "movements are under way in New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts to remove legal barriers and begin officially sanctioned needle programs." In Congress, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), who previously led opposition to needle programs, has asked the General Accounting Office to reevaluate such programs.

The war on drugs fraud

What makes it possible that the drug lobby will succeed in making dangerous drugs legally available in the not-too-distant future, is the utter failure of the Bush administration's vaunted "war on drugs." By focusing almost solely on low-level dealers, while leaving untouched the international bankers and others who reap the profits from the drug trade, and treating favorably the narco-traffickers in Ibero-America, the Bush administration has set the stage for drug legalization.

As Zeese put it, "Americans are growing very weary of the Reagan-Bush war on drugs. It's not working. The latest figures show that hard-core drug usage is up. The population just isn't aware that the alternative is decriminalization."

The drug legalization lobby is doing everything within its power to make that "alternative" known, and is pushing for a moratorium on anti-drug law enforcement.