

Gilmore's candidacy: threat to the nation's future

by Nancy Spannaus

Once again, the outcome of an election in the Commonwealth of Virginia may be decisive for the direction of the United States. In 1994, that election was the contest of George Bush's flunky and drug-trafficker Oliver North, against Democratic Sen. Charles Robb. Despite North's nearly unprecedented expenditures and his lying demagoguery, Virginia voters refused to elect him U.S. senator, thus depriving the fascist Conservative Revolution of an incendiary leader in the nation's capital. In 1997, it's the election for governor of the Commonwealth that will have decisive implications for the nation as a whole.

Virginia's gubernatorial race is one of two in the United States this Nov. 4, the other being in New Jersey. The Democratic candidate for the executive position is Donald S. Beyer, Jr., a two-term lieutenant governor from northern Virginia, and a small businessman who has hewn to a centrist course within the party, and attempted to concentrate his campaign on improving Virginia's public education system. On the Republican side, however, is a less flamboyant version of North, in the form of James Gilmore III. Gilmore, the former Attorney General under Gov. George Allen and Allen's chosen successor as governor, has concentrated his campaign around a populist pitch of cutting taxes. But Gilmore is no innocuous populist; he and the apparatus behind him represent a fascist threat to the nation, as well as Virginia.

James Gilmore is the front-man for the Bush-Robertson-North political machine, which explicitly aims at destroying the constitutional form and commitment of government in the United States. While going under the "Republican" label, this apparatus couldn't have less in common with the standard-bearer of that party, Abraham Lincoln. Gilmore's agenda is one of attacking labor, expanding prison slave-labor, cutting government services, and privatizing for the benefit of his cronies. But, because he promises a short-term tax break for

many (which there is no assurance will be delivered), and because he scapegoats those who are in prison or poor, many Virginians are being sucked into supporting him.

As of this writing, Gilmore is being credited with about a five-point lead in the polls, and the Republican Party money is pouring in from around the country. What the Republican leadership hopes to do, is establish a beachhead right next to the nation's capital. Virginia is already the headquarters for many of the most anti-government, and anti-Clinton, operations in the nation, from Pat Robertson, to Jerry Falwell, to treasonous military networks around retired colonel and U.S. Army chaplain Jim Ammerman. Under Governor Allen, the state has openly challenged Federal authority, not to mention the rule of law. Should Gilmore be elected—and especially if he is able to squeak out a Republican majority in the legislature, now dominated by Democrats—it would represent a strategic threat to the nation as a whole.

What Gilmore and Allen represent

Compared to Ollie North, Jim Gilmore seems like a dull bureaucratic lawyer. He barely dares to speak without cue cards, and sometimes his vocabulary seems to have shrunk down to the mere slogan, "no car tax." While North was bold and defiant, Gilmore appears to be Mr. Cautious, despite signs of driving ambition.

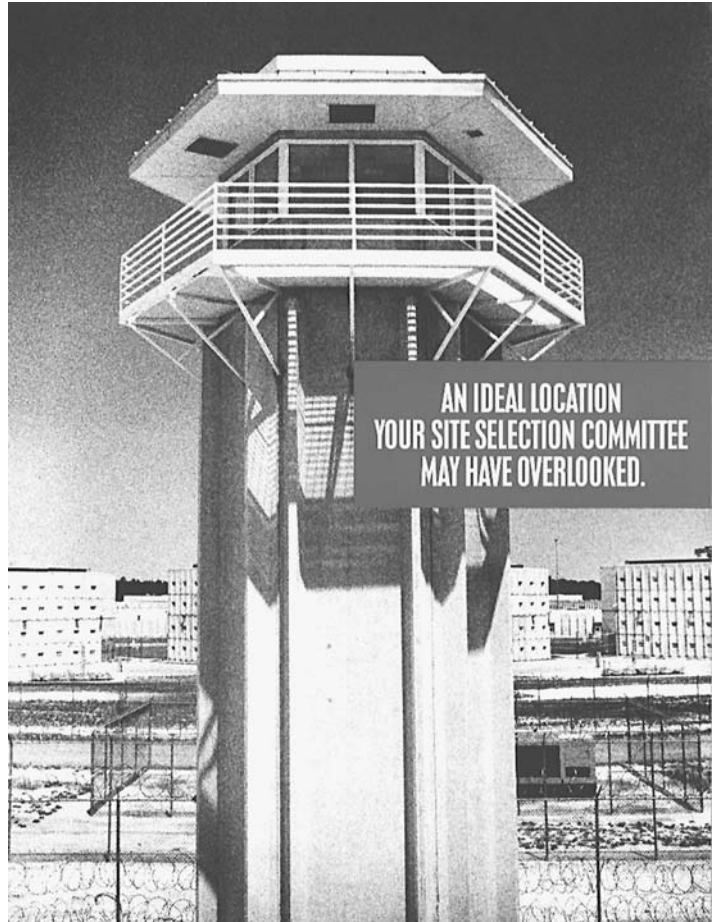
But an intelligent citizen, or observer, shouldn't have any difficulty determining the fascist character of Gilmore's policies. He is standing on a record, the record of the Allen administration in which he played a vital part.

The Allen-Gilmore record is most notable in the area of criminal justice and so-called welfare reform. These are the prize programs which Gilmore brags about, and have made an interational reputation for Virginia.

In the criminal justice area, the Allen-Gilmore administra-



Virginia Gubernatorial candidate James Gilmore III, front-man for the Bush-Robertson-North fascist political machine. Also shown here is a brochure from Virginia Correctional Enterprises, advertising the benefits of slave labor in the prison system, for employers seeking a docile and low-paid workforce.



tion began by eliminating parole, a move which has led to an increase in the prison population by 8,000 inmates—from approximately 17,000 to 25,000—in the course of four years. At the same time, they brought in as administrator of the Department of Corrections, Ronald Angelone, who was notorious for his outright barbarism against inmates during his tenure in Nevada, and has continued these policies in Virginia. Gradually, the Virginia prisons are being stripped of amenities, including any rehabilitation programs and facilities; charges are being imposed for medical care; and even food rations are being reduced.

But Angelone has also brought something into the prisons—private industry! A law passed during the 1993 session, the year before Allen came into office, permitted the Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE) to bring *private* industry “behind the walls.” As of early 1997, according to VCE, about 1,100 inmates were involved in these programs. But VCE is advertising for many more industries to take advantage of their facilities, and cheap workforce.

The propaganda which VCE is putting out, indicates that the Allen-Gilmore program is to use the prison labor program to ensure that labor standards in Virginia are even further destroyed. Bragging that “worker compensation costs in this

right-to-work state are [already] the lowest in the nation,” the VCE brochure features the savings which industry will enjoy by the elimination of health, retirement, and vacation pay, as well as a workforce that will never be able to use transportation breakdowns, or lack of babysitters, as an excuse not to get to work on time.

One trade union leader has noted that the “no-parole” policy seems ready-made for the expansion of private prison labor. He also noted that the Virginia legislature did not intend that prison labor be able to compete with private industry—although this is most definitely the case. Yet, the illegality, and Nazi parallels, have gone generally unchallenged amid “anti-prisoner” rhetoric, except by those associated with the LaRouche wing of the Democratic Party.

Medical murder

While the Allen-Gilmore prison policy is following along the pathway toward Auschwitz (although, currently, under less stringent economic conditions), it is also aping the Nazis in other ways. Medical services are being cut back for prisoners, to the point where they are being left to die.

A major exposé in the weekly *New Federalist* newspaper of Oct. 13, detailed more than a half-dozen cases of “medical

murder,” in which Virginia prison authorities had refused to act on complaints of inmates, or even doctors’ recommendations for their care, in such a way that led to their death. The rationale for this behavior appears to be strictly cost-cutting. Prisoners’ lives are considered “not worthy to be lived,” if they begin to require extra resources.

As the *New Federalist* pointed out, however, this attitude bears a close similarity to that which it being applied to the poor in the health system generally. What is being seen is parallel to what Pennsylvania’s Gov. Thomas Ridge has done with his health care cuts: a deliberate policy of murder through budget cuts.

The Gilmore–Allen administration, of course, is notorious for a more direct form of murder, i.e., the increase in executions. Under this administration, Virginia has taken the lead in the number of individuals executed within a year in the United States—and this has included individuals with clear claims to innocence.

Cutting costs

The other claim to fame of the Allen–Gilmore administration is cutting costs through “welfare reform,” elimination of state jobs, privatization of government services, and other budget cuts. While the welfare reform was able to be slightly ameliorated through the intervention of the Democratic-controlled legislature, the Virginia program nonetheless will not permit welfare mothers to stay in school, where they can train for a higher-paying job, if their deadline is up. In general, what is being created is an enormous competition for low-wage jobs, a competition which is permitting employers throughout Virginia to bust unions, and lower wages and benefits.

Under Allen and Gilmore, services like mental health have been so underfunded, that they have become a national scandal. The state mental hospital became the subject of Federal investigation, after a patient, left strapped in a bed, was found dead. A lot of promises and months later, the hospital is still a disgrace.

Similarly with the juvenile corrections system. The Allen–Gilmore administration brags about having “reformed” the juvenile justice system, which means that the authorities will not prosecute more juveniles as adults. At the same time, the detention centers for youth are in scandalous condition, and there has been an explosion of illegal drug use among youth, who obviously suspect that they have no future under current conditions.

Economic growth?

The popular explanation for why Virginians would tolerate such hideous policies against society’s less privileged strata, is that the economy in Virginia, as in the rest of the United States, is supposedly doing so well. Unfortunately, even the Democratic Party—or its official advisers—have bought into this story, at least for public consumption.

Virginia’s “growth,” like that in the rest of the nation, has

been based on two things: first, the explosion of financial speculation, credit-card debt, and the computer-technology service industries that go along with it, for the moment; and the growth of low-wage jobs, of which the proverbial head of household holds two to three, in order to stay afloat. It should be noted in this regard, that 6 of the 20 top construction projects in Virginia are prisons.

In reality, the standard of living of most Virginians is being crushed, like that of families throughout the rest of the country. Infrastructure is collapsing, and companies with high-paying jobs are shutting down. In southwest Virginia, even official figures show double-digit unemployment, and most other sections of the state, but for the area right around the nation’s capital, show that there is no boom. To the degree that there is an appearance of prosperity in budgets and so forth, it is because services have been cut back for those less fortunate, and—if Gilmore and Allen have their way—less visible.

A fascist machine

A fascist apparatus is not just defined by its economic and social program, but also by its mode of organization. When North was running for Senate, his thug apparatus was very visible. Gilmore’s candidacy has not shown such blatant hooliganism, but the machine is nonetheless there.

The largest contributor to Gilmore’s re-election remains televangelist Pat Robertson, who gave \$50,000 directly for this campaign, and \$50,000 last time. Robertson has also given at least \$35,000 to Gilmore’s Attorney General candidate, Mark Earley. Robertson, as head of the mis-named Christian Coalition, was also the leading backer of North’s drive for the Senate. And he has brought North, his co-thinker Mike Farris, and many other of the same ilk, into the Gilmore campaign drive, although largely at fundraisers, rather than public campaign events.

Robertson tells his supporters that they are upholding morality, but he mobilizes them to destroy the very social institutions required to carry out the moral obligations of government for the general welfare. He demands replacement of the public schools, cutting back of taxes needed to support schools and essential social services, and total freedom for those free enterprise looters who mislabel themselves entrepreneurs. Robertson’s personal track record of raising funds, through tax scams and investments in slave-labor African diamond mines, and so forth, should give a good indication of what he promotes.

With Robertson, comes a band of men prepared to shout down opponents, rip up signs, and worse. And Robertson himself is part of a British-controlled network which has infiltrated our military, and could therefore represent a more violent threat to constitutional order.

If Gilmore is elected, that threat will be at the door of the nation’s capital. If Virginians reject him, they will once again have done a service to the nation.

Budget cuts devastate schools, police force in nation's capital

In our issue of Oct. 17, *EIR* presented an *Investigation*, “Bankers’ Dictatorship Makes Washington a Death Camp,” showing how the takeover of Washington, D.C. by a non-elected Financial Control Board, will compound the economic and financial problems that it was ostensibly designed to solve. The main problem the city faces, is the false axiomatic assumption, shared by people on both “left” and “right” of the political spectrum, that the city administration has been “spending too much money.”

In this issue, we fill out the picture further, with two additional interviews.

Interview: Wilma Harvey

Elected board of education stripped of powers

Wilma Harvey is a member of the Board of Education of Washington, D.C. She was interviewed by Dennis Speed.

EIR: Could you give us an idea of the effect of budget cuts on the D.C. school system over an extended period of time, greater than the last two years?

Harvey: I’ve been affiliated with the Board of Education, as a board member and as a staffer, for almost 14 years. Prior to that, we had over 105,000 children in the District of Columbia public schools. We had a budget of some \$600 million, and we are now down to \$426 million. We have seen a major exodus of students from our school system. We are now down to approximately 78,000. I think that the District of Columbia public schools have been plagued with the same problems that any urban school system is plagued with.

For example, we have students who come to us with sundry social ills that impact upon their learning. Most of our children are on free or reduced lunch. The majority are African-Americans; the next percentage would be Hispanic, and then we have a small group of other groups of children. I think that there has been a breakdown of the various networks that support the schools. They are no longer there. Children who come to school, because of the violence in the neighborhoods,

are more aggressive. We find children who have been prenatally exposed to both drugs and alcohol. As a result of that, their attention spans are lower.

Because of the lowering of the salary ranks, we have not been competitive with the surrounding jurisdictions over the past 20 years. We have not been able to attract the kind of teaching staff that we need. We have not been able to attract new principals into the school system over the past twenty years. The D.C. public schools have been accused of being so heavily administrated, that there is a tremendous downsizing of the central staff. . . . So the school system, in some ways, has gone through some major breakdowns.

There’s the constant threat of vouchers. Citizens in the District, in a referendum, overwhelmingly voted against vouchers. But because of the overall Congressional mandate that has been imposed on education in this city, the choices are limited. Our budget is very much linked to the Congressional appropriations. Since they brought in the Emergency Trustee Board, they basically do all the policymaking, and oversight, of the operation of public education in this city.

EIR: Is the Trustee Board the same as the Financial Control Board?

Harvey: The Financial Control Board is called the Authority. What the Authority did, was to establish what they call an “Emergency Board of Trustees.” In establishing this, they took away the powers of the elected Board of Education, and made it advisory to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees now has the responsibility of making policy, and oversight responsibility for the 146 schools of the District. The Board of Trustees was appointed by the Control Board.

On the Emergency Board of Trustees, we have one sitting member, and that is the president of the Board. We have, as the Board of Education, been relegated to community outreach, and trying to make the community as aware as we can of issues that impact their children.

EIR: The Board of Education is a salaried position, right?

Harvey: Yes. The Board’s salaries were cut in half, from \$29,000 to \$15,000.

EIR: You couldn’t make it on that before. You were already making a sacrifice to be on the Board, if one presumes that that was your full-time job.