

National News

Mobe defeats California anti-union referendum

A hard-fought effort by the AFL-CIO brought about the defeat of California's ballot initiative Proposition 226—the mis-named Payroll Protection Act—in the June 2 elections. Prop. 226 would have required state labor organizations to obtain written permission from union members before withholding pay or using union dues or fees for political contributions. The Conservative Revolution had hoped to use the measure to hamstring union political activity during the 1998 mid-term elections, at a time when the 1994 Republican sweep is in trouble. Despite early polls showing up to 72% support for the anti-union law, Prop. 226 was defeated 54-46%. Similar measures are pending in a dozen states and at the Federal level.

Throughout the state, union volunteers walked more than 5,000 precincts, visited 18,000 worksites, and manned phone banks making 650,000 calls to union homes. A leading trade unionist in Southern California termed the defeat a “paradigm shift” in the state's politics, away from California's brand of the Conservative Revolution.

Study proves racial bias in death sentencing

A well-documented study issued on June 4 by the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) in Washington indicates that black Americans are nearly four times more likely to receive the death penalty in Philadelphia than any other race. DPIC Executive Director Richard Dieter told the weekly newspaper *New Federalist* on June 4: “This is a different kind of study. This looks at comparable cases controlled for even the differences in a person's criminal record and considers in similar cases—all things being equal—are blacks still more likely [to get the death sentence]? It's not just saying there are a lot of blacks on death row. This is a controlled study, which isolates out the issue

of race and sees whether it has an effect on sentencing. That's why it takes a few years to conduct this study, but it has a high degree of reliability.”

According to DPIC, “The gravity of the close connection between race and the death penalty is shown when compared to studies in other fields. Race is more likely to affect death sentencing than smoking affects the likelihood of dying from heart disease!”

The study was conducted by the country's foremost researchers on race and capital punishment, law professor David Baldus and statistician George Woodworth, taking a statistical review of nearly 1,000 murder cases between 1983 and 1993. Philadelphia was selected for the study, Dieter told *New Federalist*, because “the pervasiveness of this problem, the evidence of racism in Philadelphia, is glaring.” This is particularly remarkable because Philadelphia is not in the deep South, where racial injustice in sentencing has a long history, the report says.

CSIS gang wants Social Security privatization

Four U.S. Congressmen—Senators Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) and John Breaux (D-La.), and Representatives Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) and Charles Stenholm (D-Tex.)—pushed for new legislation to privatize the Social Security system, in a commentary in the June 7 *Washington Post*. The four are part of a 24-member commission to study Social Security, set up by the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The commission also includes Donald Marron, PaineWebber investment bank chairman, whose “industry” stands to gain mightily from privatization.

The gang of four's plan would divert 2% of the 12.4% payroll tax that is paid to Social Security (6.2% paid by the employer and 6.2% paid by the employee), into individual retirement accounts (IRAs). These IRA funds would then be shovelled in to feed the stock market bubble. The Congressmen and the CSIS call their plan “moderate,” because more radical privatizers, such as the Cato Institute and various banks, advocate fun-

nelling up to 10% of the withholding tax into stocks.

In response to objections that their plan “may be too risky for lower-income individuals,” they argue that the stock market rate of return, from 1926 to 1996, has been above 7% per annum. They call this a bonus for lower income individuals. They don't mention that most of the market gain has been since 1982, and especially since 1990, and that the stock market bubble is about to come down.

Overbearing power of prosecutors aired on CNN

A televised dialogue on independent counsel Kenneth Starr's legal assault on the President, between defense attorneys Alan Dershowitz and Gerry Spence, and *National Journal* reporter Stuart Taylor, came up with some interesting conclusions regarding the systemic corruption that has infected the U.S. justice system. Speaking on CNN's “Larry King Live” on June 1, Dershowitz argued that President Clinton's lawyer should not have allowed his client to swear under oath that he had not had a sexual relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Dershowitz argued: “You never allow your client to swear to something that is in conflict with evidence the prosecutor may believe to be true.” “Even if it's the truth?” asked King. Dershowitz responded, “Even if it's the truth. You just don't do it.”

“You don't let your client walk into a perjury trap, even if he's innocent,” he added. The comments prompted Taylor later to point out: “If in fact, prosecutors in this country have such incredible power that they can frame up the most powerful man in the country, the President of the United States, so that he's afraid to tell the truth in public, that's a terrible commentary on our system of justice. We shouldn't just fire Ken Starr, which would be a start if that's true. We should junk the whole thing and start over.”

Gerry Spence agreed. “And as a matter of fact, I think that what America needs to listen to, Larry, is the proposition that if they can do this to the President of the United

GEORGE SOROS'S Lindesmith Center in New York took out a two-page ad in the *New York Times* on June 8, urging the UN to back drug legalization, to coincide with the special UN General Assembly on the drug plague. The ad was signed by Walter Cronkite, former U.S. Secretary George Shultz, former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, and Milton Friedman, among others.

THE ORANGE COUNTY, California Democratic Central Committee endorsed the McDade-Murtha "Citizens Protection Act," on June 8. The aim of the act, introduced by two Pennsylvania Congressmen, one Republican and one Democrat, is to rein in systemic abuse in the Department of Justice, by establishing standards of conduct, similar to those that many states have.

STANLEY ROTH, Assistant Secretary of State, met with Indonesia's new President, B.J. Habibie on June 4, and later told reporters "that we would like to be able to help Indonesia, and this requires . . . circumstances which enable the economic agreement to work." What's needed is "a resolution of the political situation." He noted that Washington is "pleased" with the release of political prisoners, labor law reforms, and greater press freedom.

'HOUSTON FIVE' jurors, whose deadlock caused the Justice Department-FBI sting against minority city councilmen to end in a mistrial, told reporters that the government should not re-try the case. "Supposedly, \$2 million have been spent on this case, and I think it would be a waste of time and money to continue with a second trial," said one.

THE AMERICAN Federation of Government Employees has launched a grassroots campaign to urge Congress to vote against the "Freedom From Government Competition Act," which would allow the government to privatize all Federal commercial activities. Some 1.4 million Federal employees could lose their jobs.

States, think what this power structure can do to little people, to ordinary people who don't have any way to protect themselves. . . . Now we can see the power, the real—basic power of the prosecution to do whatever it wants, even to the President of the United States."

Clinton reminds press: 'I'm not dead yet'

President Bill Clinton poked fun at the Washington press corps on June 4, during a victory fund dinner in Washington for South Dakota Democrats:

"I was in this grade school yesterday in Cleveland, seeing what my AmeriCorps volunteers are doing, and I was shaking hands with all the kids," he began. "And I came up to this young man—he was about so tall—he couldn't have been over seven, he was probably six. And he looked up to me and he said, 'Are you really the President?' I said, yes, I am. He said, 'You aren't dead yet?'"

"At first, I thought, what's a six-year-old kid doing reading the Washington press every day? And then I realized that, in fact, the President was George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—he thought part of the job qualification was being dead."

U.S. CSI branch splits with Swiss headquarters

The U.S. branch of Christian Solidarity International has split with the organization's Basel, Switzerland-based group, and formed what it calls the "Christian Federation International." The announcement was made in April by board chairman Faith Whittlesey (at one time, Reagan's ambassador to Switzerland), and was featured in CFI's first newsletter in May. Earlier this year, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords Baroness Caroline Cox announced that her British branch was also splitting from Basel, and forming Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

CSI, especially under Cox and her U.S.

puppets, such as Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) and Chris Smith (R-N.J.), has campaigned to destabilize governments which they claim "persecute Christians"; these nations include China, as well as Indonesia, Sudan, and Myanmar (Burma), where the campaigns against so-called religious persecution are backing armed separatists. The pro-British geopolitical goals of the new split-offs—against U.S. foreign and strategic interests—have not changed.

The split was apparently occasioned by the Swiss headquarters' demand for more centralized control, but more details are not known.

Scaife rag's tax-exempt status in jeopardy

The tax-exempt status of the American Spectator Educational Foundation, which is part owner of the Clinton-bashing *American Spectator*, is threatened, according to the online *Salon* magazine. The foundation, along with its partners in the *American Spectator*, Richard Mellon Scaife's Carthage Foundation and Sarah Scaife Foundation, may face serious problems with the IRS because of the use of tax-exempt money in the "Arkansas Project" to dig up dirt on President Clinton and possibly to influence the 1996 elections. "This wasn't a legitimate use of tax-exempt moneys," said a former *American Spectator* employee. "I would suggest that what was going on here was opposition research. . . . The Scaife foundations ought to be really sweating."

The Arkansas Project got its first money from Scaife in late 1993, and the first meeting of the Project team took place in the law office of independent counsel Kenneth Starr's friend Theodore Olson in early 1994. Ronald Burr, a co-founder of the *American Spectator* 30 years ago, was fired after he demanded an outside audit of the use of the Scaife money, and Olson took his place on the board of directors. Scaife ended his 27-year funding of the *American Spectator* last year, after it panned an anti-Clinton book by one of his poison pens.