

National News

Hentoff blasts Court's 'hate crimes' ruling

Columnist Nat Hentoff denounced the recent Supreme Court decision upholding hate crimes sentencing enhancement legislation, calling it an attack on free speech, and placing the blame for it squarely on the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which drafted model laws adopted in over 30 states.

In a syndicated column in the *Washington Post* of June 19, Hentoff charges that the "Anti-Defamation League has conjured up and successfully implanted the concept of hate crime laws in many states. It has not demonstrated, however, that viciously battered victims of criminals motivated solely by greed suffer any less than black or gay victims." Hentoff asks: "[W]hat kind of message is sent by such laws to those in any community who are in fact random targets of violence? Are their lives less valuable to society or themselves because criminals have stalked them without any concern for who they are? This is equal protection of the laws?"

Koresh attorney challenges media

Dick DeGuerin, the Houston defense attorney who took on David Koresh as a client during the U.S. government siege of Waco, was a panelist at a June 17 roundtable discussion of the media and Waco, sponsored by the Houston chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. DeGuerin said he was "disappointed" that reporters had allowed the ATF and FBI to "spoon-feed the news" through daily briefings. "Why weren't you out there digging?" he asked. "You could have gone to the music stores, the car repair shops, hardware stores, restaurants, and bars. All these people had seen David recently," he said. Instead, the ATF said that Koresh had been "holed up" for months to justify their decision to storm the Branch Davidians' farm outside Waco.

Many of the stories about Koresh and the Branch Davidians, DeGuerin said, were

"thinly attributed," and the sources were often anonymous. In the discussion later, he responded to a question about the role of the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) in both inciting the ATF against Koresh and then shaping the press coverage with its profile of the Branch Davidians as a "dangerous cult," by acknowledging that that's what he meant when he said stories had been "thinly attributed." DeGuerin said he believes that sources quoted by the press, including those from California and Australia (referring to private investigator Geoff Hossack, who worked for a CAN affiliate) "had a bone to pick" with Koresh.

DeGuerin believes the survivors who say there was no suicide pact, and that they didn't set the fire. It's clear, he continued, that the conflagration helped protect the ATF. He said the people inside had photographed bullet holes, including those in the ceiling caused by firing from the helicopters. The film was destroyed in the fire.

Spannaus lays out water program for Va.

Nancy Spannaus, the independent candidate for governor in Virginia, issued a policy statement on her plans for providing safe, clean water to Virginians on June 1: "I intend to begin now to assemble a Water Management Commission of individuals scientifically qualified to deal with the pressing water problems we face" in the Commonwealth.

"The solution lies with new technologies, specifically the technologies of desalination. This option, of turning sea water into fresh water, has been bandied about for decades, and yet has only begun to be put into effect for U.S. cities. The federal government, in its fit of privatization, discontinued supporting research into desalination in 1982. It's time we took this technology seriously." Spannaus, an associate of physical economist Lyndon LaRouche, pointed especially to the modular high-temperature gas-cooled reactor as holding much promise.

"Here in Virginia we have other capabilities," she continued. "As the center for the U.S. Navy, we are the home of research into some of the nation's most advanced techno-

logies, which have been put into practice in the nuclear Navy and other military arenas. We know that desalination capabilities are standard for use in military theaters of operation, and on ships as well. . . .

"A similar approach should be taken to the processing of dirty water and sewage. The inadequate treatment of waste, both solid and liquid, has become a major health hazard again. . . . Certain pioneer projects have even shown the feasibility of 'recycling' dirty water, through electron beam processing, for example. Rather than shut down industry, due to Clean Water Act restrictions, we should use government R&D."

Noriega exposes crimes of George Bush on ABC

The ABC News program "Prime Time Live" ran the first televised interview with the imprisoned Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega on June 17. Despite the harshness of his situation as a prisoner of war at the Miami Correctional Center, General Noriega appeared quite lively, laughing and making many jokes.

Noriega directly blamed "George Walker Bush" for the destruction of Panama during the Dec. 20, 1989. His description of the crimes Bush committed were accompanied by shocking clips of the gutted neighborhood of Chorrillo, in which thousands died in the U.S. bombing.

If I had been a yes-man to the White House and the CIA, Noriega told ABC's Diane Sawyer, why am I here in prison? It is because I said, no. Sawyer then proceeded to point out many of the witnesses against the general were drug dealers whose sentences were reduced, and showed footage of the hooded witness before Congress and the imprisoned (although unidentified) Carlos Lehder Rivas. The interview also made the point that drug operations have exploded in Panama since Noriega's capture, and showed a collage of headlines covering the fact, followed by footage of U.S. puppet Guillermo Endara.

Sawyer also said that Noriega had told her that in 1985 then-National Security Adviser Adm. John Poindexter had wanted Noriega to set up a provocation with Nicaragua, and then ask the U.S. for help, allowing

a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. Of course, Noriega refused, and went on to accuse Bush of punishing him for his refusal to be a yes-man. The program was broadcast in Panama as well, where the government of Guillermo was installed after Noriega's illegal overthrow. *EIR* sources say that the Endara crowd is extremely upset with it.

Va. must refund stolen taxes from retirees

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on June 18 that Virginia must refund money it raised from unconstitutional taxes on federal retirees totalling \$467 million. The decision is a huge defeat for former Virginia attorney general, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Mary Sue Terry.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that its 1989 *Davis v. Michigan* decision was retroactive. *Davis* struck down a Michigan law giving state and local retirees a tax break withheld from the state's federal retirees. Virginia rewrote its own, similar law after *Davis*, but refused to make refunds to its 200,000 federal retirees for years of illegal taxation. Terry's representative had argued that the federal pensioners had procedurally forfeited their right to a refund because they had not challenged Virginia's law prior to *Davis*.

The U.S. Supreme Court has remanded the case to the Virginia Supreme Court to work out the relief required.

Military wary of Aspin 'win-hold-win' strategy

Military officers have already expressed grave doubts about the new "win-hold-win" military strategy announced by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin to 400 graduates of the National Defense University. The new strategy foresees conducting a holding action in one regional war, while fighting to victory in another regional war, then returning to the first war to win that. Aspin told the new graduates that the strategy is made possible by new "smart" weapons—which, he omitted, are not yet in the military inventory.

According to the *Washington Post* June

17, senior officers are deriding the new strategy. One four-star general is reportedly telling colleagues that the strategy "is a recipe for 'win-lose-lose.' Another senior officer, reflecting the views of a service chief, said in an interview, 'I call it the win-hold-oops strategy.' "

Aspin said that "the most critical" element of the strategy is the ability to stop heavy armored attacks with very small military forces. "For the first time," Aspin said, "it appears that air and missile forces will be able to kill large numbers of armored vehicles from the air, land and sea. . . . [New surveillance technology will] detect the main concentrations of the enemy force, process and analyze the information, and then pass it to the shooters before it becomes obsolete."

Coal companies make new offer to strikers

The chief negotiator for the Bituminous Coal Operators Association announced a new job security proposal in an attempt to get the United Mine Workers Union back to the bargaining table, according to the *Roanoke Times and World-News* of June 15. The number of strikers has doubled to 12,000 since the selective strike began on May 10.

UMW President Richard Trumka said the companies failed to live up to the 1988 contract which expired Feb. 1. It called for the operators to give three of every five jobs at their new mines, including non-union mines, to laid-off members of the UMW. The companies contend that the non-union operations were not covered by the 1988 agreement.

Now, BCOA's chief negotiator, B.R. Brown, president of Consol, Inc., says he has authority to negotiate for the non-union companies not covered by the 1988 agreement. The UMW said the new proposal would allow the companies to fill the first 40% of all new jobs with whomever they wanted, with UMW workers guaranteed only three of five jobs in the remaining 60%, or 36% of the total. "We had three out of five jobs at all their mines and now they are offering 36% of the jobs. That's certainly not acceptable," said UMW spokesman Greg Hawthorne.

Briefly

● **AIDS** is the leading cause of death among young men in five states and 64 cities, according to 1990 data from the National Center for Health Statistics released on June 15.

● **JEFFREY GARTEN** was tapped to become Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade on June 15. A former New York banker, Garten warned Clinton in the Winter 1992 issue of *Foreign Affairs* that Wall Street would "bring him to [his] knees" if he didn't "emerge as a tough fiscal conservative right away."

● **NEW YORK CITY** is planning decade-old schemes to privatize key city services, according to the *New York Times* on June 15. The plans are being promoted by the New York City Partnership and the New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

● **THE SECOND** African-African-American Summit in Libreville, Gabon held over May 24-28 was addressed by Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan, Coretta Scott King, Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, Virginia Gov. L. Doug Wilder, and others. The conference was organized by Rev. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia.

● **THE ADL** is willfully exaggerating the extent of anti-Semitism in the United States, according to a feature by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg in the *New York Review of Books*. Hertzberg cites the November 1992 report, "Highlights from an Anti-Defamation League Survey on Anti-Semitism and Prejudice in America," whose conclusions contradict its own findings.

● **THE AMERICAN** Assn. of Retired Persons and the Texas Motor Transportation Assn. have already begun to mobilize against proposed cuts in entitlements and the 7.3¢ a gallon increase in gas taxes, according to the June 15 *Houston Chronicle*.