

National News

Clinton hits 'fashion's' glorification of death

President Clinton blasted the so-called "fashion industry" on May 21 for glamorizing heroin, after having seen a May 20 *New York Times* feature about fashion photos portraying models in a drug stupor, or even in an overdosed position.

Clinton noted that most people in his generation had grown up thinking that heroin was the worst thing in the world; but that now, heroin is increasingly becoming the drug of choice in college campuses and neighborhoods.

"And we know that part of this has to do with the images that are finding their way to our young people," the President said. "In the press in recent days, we've seen reports that many of our fashion leaders are now admitting . . . they're admitting flat-out that images projected in fashion photos in the last few years have made heroin addiction seem glamorous and sexy and cool. And if some of the people in those images start to die now, it's become obvious that is not true. You do not need to glamorize addiction to sell clothes. . . ."

"The glorification of heroin is not creative, it's destructive. It's not beautiful, it is ugly. And this is not about art, it's about life and death. And glorifying death is not good for any society."

Sweeney says labor fell asleep during the 1980s

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, addressing the Economic Policy Institute conference on "Restoring Broadly Shared Prosperity" in Washington on May 23, declared that labor unions are the vehicle for bringing that about.

"Further, we don't think it's happenstance," Sweeney said, "that what Lester Thurow has called the greatest redistribution of wealth in history without a revolution, coincided with the greatest decline in member-

ship and corresponding political power in the history of the American labor movement. For the last 20 years, when family incomes were going down 12% on average, union membership declined from 27% of the workforce to 15%."

Sweeney reported that this decline was accompanied by an internal shift in the membership of the AFL-CIO, from private sector workers to larger proportions of public sector workers, as hundreds of thousands of industrial workers lost their jobs. "In other words," he said, "while working families were under attack like never before, America's unions went to sleep." Sweeney proceeded to describe the organizing drive which the AFL-CIO has undertaken, to make up for the losses of the 1970s and 1980s.

U.S. utilities project summer power shortages

According to the annual "Summer Assessment" of electricity supply, soon to be released by the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC), New England and parts of Illinois and Wisconsin are likely to experience "difficulty serving expected customer needs during peak use periods this summer." In a May 19 press release, the association of private and public utilities projected that shortages will result from the unavailability of between 4,700 to 6,500 MW of nuclear capacity, and "limited transmission import capability."

In New England, more than 3,400 MW of nuclear-power generation remains shut down, due to ongoing repairs compounded by arbitrary regulations. The situation is complicated by the fact that major power companies, such as Northeast Utilities, are considering closing down some nuclear plants for good. Besieged by cutthroat deregulation on the one hand, and the absurd costs of environmentalist regulation on the other, nuclear power plants are no longer considered "competitive"—despite having provided the most efficient source of electricity for half a century.

Constraints on the power grid's trans-

mission system have also become common over the past few years. Without investment in expanded capacity, a system designed to deliver electricity from producer to consumer, has been turned into a scavengers' hunt for bulk transfers of power from coast to coast. The current power transmission network has already proven deficient to meet increased demands, for any region that is in short supply.

NERC President Michehl Ghent, referring to lost capacity in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, declared in the press release that, "although utilities in these states have made extensive preparations to mitigate these problems, such shortages could require controlled interruptions (rotating blackouts) of electric service to customers."

NASA contracts for Imax film on space station

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced on May 20 that it has signed a contract with the Imax Corporation, to produce a documentary film of the on-orbit assembly of the international space station—scheduled to begin next year and be completed by 2002. NASA Administrator Dan Goldin declared, "Our astronauts have said that previous Imax films are the closest thing to actually being in space. Capturing the assembly of the International Space Station in this realistic and compelling format will help NASA share this experience with the public."

The announcement coincided with the premiere at the National Air and Space Museum of "Mission to Mir," the fourth Imax film made so far about the space program. Combining historical footage with film taken by the astronauts, "Mission to Mir" tells the story of the relationship between the American and Russian space program—from the beginning of the space age during the "Cold War," through the ongoing, joint missions of the U.S. Space Shuttle and the Russian Mir space station.

"Mission to Mir," also on view in other American cities and in Perth, Australia, will appear in 150 Imax theaters in 22 countries

PAT ROBERTSON'S profiteering in Africa is under scrutiny in Virginia. State Senator Janet Howell declared May 6, "I was disgusted to read the [press] reports on the blatant misuse of charitable contributions by the Rev. Pat Robertson. Virginians giving money to help poor children in Africa should not have their money diverted by the Reverend Robertson for his personal diamond-mining operations." She called for an investigation by the state's Attorney General.

MONEY-LAUNDERING operations face a U.S. Treasury crackdown, effective May 21. The new regulations stem from a task force investigation into drug money-laundering in the New York City area, targeting local check-cashing services and wire-order firms. Now any such transaction of \$750 or more, sent outside of the United States, must be reported to the Treasury Department.

U.S. CORPORATIONS are not in the market for welfare recipients. According to an Associated Press survey of the nation's 100 largest firms, 75% have no plans to employ them, claiming they lack the "high skill levels" required. Even companies which hire large numbers of low-skilled workers—such as Safeway, J.C. Penney, Taco Bell, and KFC—have no programs designed for welfare placement.

GOV. GEORGE ALLEN boasts he has slashed Virginia's welfare rolls by 23% since 1995. But the state "is not yet measuring what happens to working mothers and children who leave the rolls," the *Washington Post* claimed May 26. In Northern Virginia, appeals for emergency assistance are up 25% from last year—mostly from applicants about to lose their benefits.

TINA BROWN, British subject and New Age editor of the *New Yorker* magazine, could be an "imaginative appointment" by Prime Minister Tony Blair, as the Empire's next ambassador to the United States, according to the May 28 London *Times*.

this fall. The previous Imax films on space exploration ("The Dream is Alive," "Blue Planet," and "Destiny in Space") have been viewed by more than 60 million people around the world.

That is far too many for the cultural pessimists at the *Washington Post*. The *Post's* May 21 review of "Mission to Mir" attacks the film for not being a documentary "in any authentic meaning of that word: It has no spirit of skepticism, no sense of objectivity nor does it provide contending viewpoints." Admitting that "actual astronauts operated the cameras," and that the film provides "incredible visual splendor," the *Post* nevertheless attacks the narration for declaring, "We are building a bridge to the future."

Soros and JDL in bed for 'medical use' marijuana

Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* devoted a full page on May 25 to puffing George Soros's latest push to legalize medical prescriptions for marijuana. One story highlights an initiative by State Assemblymen Dick Gottfried, Deborah Glick, and Dov Hikind—co-sponsors of a state bill to legalize pot for medical use in New York. Hikind was a founding member of the terrorist thugs known as the Jewish Defense League (JDL), and a longtime backer of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

The bill has the enthusiastic backing of George Soros's Lindesmith Center. Its director, veteran dope lobbyist Ethan Nadelman, ejaculated to the *Post*, "It's hard to find a real negative about this bill. No one disagrees that marijuana works for sick people." An accompanying feature touts Brooklyn Rabbi Isaac Fried, who goes around his community delivering joints of marijuana to people with AIDS and glaucoma. Fried is a local supplier for the Medical Marijuana Buyers Club, an underground organization that peddles pot to people claiming to need the drug as a "medicine."

The JDL joined forces with the Yuppies, and other pro-dope dregs like Chip Berlet and Dennis King, in attacks on the LaRouche movement during the late 1970s and early

1980s. In Los Angeles, JDL members have been busted for peddling cocaine, and were linked by local police to the Russian Jewish mafia.

So far, there are no Senate co-sponsors of the New York bill, and Gov. George Pataki has stated he will oppose it.

New York workfare ruling will 'recast' the issue

The attorney who won the case on May 12, in which Manhattan's Supreme Court ruled that workfare recipients must be paid the prevailing wage, told *EIR* on May 23 that the decision would "force the country to engage in a debate of a different form, about what to do with the fact that there are millions and millions of unemployed people in the United States."

Marc Cohan, senior attorney for the New York Welfare Law Center, said the ruling—combined with the Clinton administration's determination to apply the Fair Labor Standards Act to workfare—will transform the image of welfare recipients in most Americans' minds. "It's recasting them not as people who are looking to rip off the government, but people who are being treated as workers. It seems to me that once you start to treat poor people as workers, you have created a set of tensions or contradictions that have to be resolved," Cohan said.

"On the one hand, it is no longer easy to victimize or stigmatize welfare recipients because they're no longer 'them.' They now become 'us'; they become people who are working, albeit for an awfully low wage. So, Americans are going to have to look for a different scapegoat, rather than the welfare recipients, because, as I'm sure you know, even if you eliminated welfare tomorrow, it wouldn't balance the budget."

He also warmly greeted the Clinton decision. "I think the White House's determination is really quite exciting. I've very thrilled with it. It's a very far-reaching view to be taking. Frankly, I would have liked to see them take the view earlier. I have some concern about how Congress is going to deal with this."