

# A national fight to stop the evil of drugs

Not everyone is sitting still for the plan to drown the U.S. in dope. In cities around the country, groups as diverse as the World Community of al-Islam in the West, the U.S. Labor Party, and the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds are seeking to mobilize the public against decrim. In addition to opposing the pot lobby's efforts to get decriminalization passed, antidrug coalitions are also calling for recriminalization bills in states where decrim is already law.

Here are some of the highlights of that national campaign.

## MASSACHUSETTS

State Senator David Locke, a long-time opponent of legalized gambling, is reportedly planning to introduce a bill to establish a commission that will investigate the links between organized crime, legalized gambling, and the drug trade. He will also submit a bill calling on the U.S. Congress to take increased action against the international drug trade, including increased antidrug education in the schools.

In Boston, City Council President Albert O'Neill has called hearings on proposed legislation to decriminalize marijuana in that city, and has invited the U.S. Labor Party's antidecrim experts to testify.

## ILLINOIS

In Oak Lawn, a suburb of Chicago, the city council unanimously voted down a proposal to decriminalize marijuana. Their decision followed a 36-hour mobilization by U.S. Labor Party networks in the area that included organizing a barrage of calls to the councilmen from Oak Lawn residents.

Last week, the Michigan State House defeated an attempt to reintroduce a decrim bill, 52-49.

In September the head of the International Glaucoma Congress, Dr. John G. Bellows, released a statement to the Chicago Tribune debunking the myth that marijuana is a suitable medical treatment for glaucoma. In his statement, Bellows compared the marijuana cure with standard treatment and noted that a glaucoma sufferer would have to smoke pot every two hours, day and night, for the rest of his life to produce even minimally effective prevention of blindness, which pot advocates claim as an effect.

## CONNECTICUT

The World Community of al-Islam in the West and the U.S. Labor Party initiated an antidrug coalition here last month. The group's steering committee includes Herbert Quinde of the U.S. Labor Party, Norvelle Goff of the

## Catholic physicians call for aid to stop Colombia drugs

The National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds passed this resolution at its October national convention.

Whereas, the illegal proliferation of marijuana and other mind-altering drugs has reached intolerable levels in the United States; and

Whereas, criminal elements in the nation of Colombia plan to harvest a crop of marijuana intended for the international drug trade; and

Whereas, the projected increase in supplies for the illicit drug market represented by the upcoming Colombian harvest poses an intolerable burden on the youth, parents, teachers, law enforcement personnel, as stated by Peter Bensinger, Administrator for the Drug Enforcement Administration of the U.S. Department of Justice, and on the general population, whose youth may be expected to be the marketing target of drug trafficking; and

Whereas, school-age youth in this country are already severely affected by this criminal drug traffic, with widespread abuse of marijuana and other drugs,

which threatens their health and well being as well as the educational process; and

Whereas, the means are available to eliminate this drug crop in Colombia; the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Agency of the U.S. and the United States Government, has chemically eradicated the bulk of that nation's marijuana and opium crops, causing a welcome disruption in the flow of dangerous drugs into the United States.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

The National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds calls upon the President and Congress of the United States to take vigorous and timely actions by providing technical and financial assistance to the Government of Colombia, comparable to that given to the Government of Mexico in 1976, to facilitate the chemical eradication of the projected October marijuana crop. This must be done in the interests of the mental and physical health of the children of America and the welfare of the entire world.

Hartford NAACP, and Reverend Oseh Cole of one of Hartford's churches. As part of the group's activities, Labor Party representative Quinde spoke before the World Community of al-Islam's mosque in Hartford at a "Save the Children" dinner.

## PENNSYLVANIA

Last September State Senator O'Toole introduced a bill, SB 1425, that would have decriminalized marijuana under the pretext of imposing stiffer penalties on the use of PCP. A floor fight in the legislature, prompted by constituency pressure, forced removal of the decrim section of the bill before it passed.

Then on Dec. 7 Philadelphia City Councilman Earl Vann introduced the following resolution to the council:

"Whereas, the use of dangerous and illegal drugs has become widespread in the school system, affecting thousands of students of every racial and ethnic group and every social and economic class; and

"Whereas, the alarming rise and open use of drugs is demoralizing the entire school community, reducing the effectiveness of the educational process, and causing irreparable harm to the lives of our younger generation; and

"Whereas, the present drug laws of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have not been effective in halting this illegal use of drugs; and

"Whereas, the Philadelphia Board of Education has not been able, using the existing laws, to curb the spread and use of drugs by school children;

"Therefore

"Resolved, by the Council of the City of Philadelphia, that we hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States, and the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to promptly review the drug laws, to change and strengthen them, and to provide such new legal frameworks as may be deemed necessary to aid the drug and law enforcement agencies; and we hereby call upon the Board of Education of Philadelphia to take cognizance of the serious drug situation in the schools, and in cooperation with all drug enforcement agencies, police authorities, community organizations, and parents, to take immediate steps to eradicate the drug rings, and eliminate the use of drugs by young people in the school system.

"Resolved, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the President Pro-tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to the Superintendent of Schools, and all the members of the Board of the School District of Philadelphia, as evidence of the deep and abiding concern of this legislative body."

The resolution passed unanimously.

## MICHIGAN

A state-wide antidrug coalition was formed in Detroit Dec. 11, with plans to get tough legislation against drugs introduced in the state legislature, which has been chosen by NORML as one of its 1979 decrim targets. Speaking at the press conference announcing the formation of the coalition were Alfred Akram of the World Community of al-Islam, Juan Torres of the U.S. Labor Party, and Max Dean of the Flint, Mich. NAACP. The group said it also plans to work with schools, boards of education, and local police departments to stop the spread of drugs. The three announced plans for a mass meeting in Detroit this week, which 1,300 people are expected to attend. It will be addressed by the Honorable Wallace Deen Muhammad representing the World Community of al-Islam, and U.S. Labor Party Executive Secretary Costas Kalimtgis.

## CALIFORNIA

A coalition of law enforcement officials, Republicans, and religious leaders has joined with the U.S. Labor Party to organize for a repeal of Proposition W, which was passed in San Francisco in last month's elections. The proposition forbids police from enforcing existing antipot laws.

In Berkeley, the school board is preparing an antidrug campaign and a resolution against Proposition W to be introduced in the City Council there.

## NEW YORK

The Erie County legislature has passed a memorial to the state legislature calling for the reimposition of criminal penalties for possession of marijuana and for tougher measures against pushers of other drugs and drug paraphernalia. A similar resolution was passed earlier by the Niagara County's legislature.

The U.S. Labor Party has been campaigning vigorously against the pot lobby across the state. Dr. Ernest Shapiro, a member of the New York State Non-Partisan Committee of Drug Abuse and a leader of the Labor Party's medical task force on drugs, has spoken at forums, schools, and meetings across the state.

In Buffalo, at a founding conference of the Humanist Academy Dec. 9 and 10, speakers from the Labor Party and the World Community of al-Islam assailed the moves to legalize marijuana. Abdul Ali Hassan, the chief Imam of the Community's Buffalo masjid, told the meeting:

"Religion must speak to the human mind, the reasoning process. Religion is life, the natural life of human beings based on truth. We have the power of reason, and that is a responsibility. . . . We (the World Community — ed.) have had much success with addicts — addicts such as Malcolm X and myself. We have a long-standing record against drug abuse, and we shall continue to work with the U.S. Labor Party to fight this evil."