

## The coalition makes legislative gains

### **Marijuana laws**

Since the first state anti-drug coalition was formed in Michigan in December, 1978, the coalitions have effectively prevented "decriminalization" (reduced penalties) for marijuana use in Michigan, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Washington state. The New York Anti-Drug Coalition also stopped a bill introduced by Senator Franz Leichter to "legalize" marijuana outright.

In Massachusetts, the State Senate overwhelmingly passed legislation submitted by Lucy Forti of the Massachusetts Concerned Citizens against Drugs, and Graham Lowry of the U.S. Labor Party, requiring every school to conduct surveys on the extent of drug use; to submit progress reports; and to institute antidrug curriculums in every school.

### **Hongshang bank takeover**

Anti-Drug coalitions in Buffalo and New York City fought and stopped the bid of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation to take over the Marine Midland Bank. The Hongshang has been identified as the leading international financier of opium and heroin traffic and related money-laundering.

The coalitions' mobilization brought the Hongshang's character to the attention of the public. New York State Banking Superintendent Muriel Siebert announced her intention to veto the takeover, and the Hongshang then withdrew its application.

### **Pressure at federal level**

In Maryland, State Senator Harry McGuirk told the 1979 Conference of the Maryland Anti-Drug Coalition, July 21:

"What we really need to talk about ... is the international drug supply. At the international level, I do not see how this amount of drugs could come into the United States without some support somewhere through the system, and we have to make a very large effort to go after it...."

### **Hartford Anti-Drug Coalition Day**

Hartford, Conn. mayor George A. Athanson saluted the work of the Connecticut Anti-Drug Coalition, declaring July 29, 1979 Anti-Drug Coalition Day there. His proclamation read in part:

"Whereas the Connecticut Anti-Drug Coalition is holding its first major public event on Sunday July 29, 1979, to inform the public of its existence and bring together the religious, political, social service

and education leaders of our community on this important issue:

"Now therefore, I, George A. Athanson, Mayor of the City of Hartford, do hereby proclaim Sunday July 29, 1979 as

Connecticut Anti-Drug Coalition Day in the City of Hartford

and call on all Hartford residents to join in supporting this valuable resource and to avail themselves of its services in the fight to eliminate drug abuse."

Mayor Athanson was re-elected for another term in recent elections in Hartford, winning against Democratic Party opponents associated with the Kennedy machine in New England.

### **Toughening Drug Laws**

The Philadelphia City Council, spurred by the local anti-drug coalition, unanimously voted to send the following resolution to the state legislature and U.S. Congress in December, 1978:

"We hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States and the General Assembly of the Commonwealth to promptly review the drug laws, to change and strengthen them ... and we hereby call upon the Board of Education ... to take immediate steps to eradicate the drug rings and eliminate the use of drugs...."

The Massachusetts Legislature sent a resolution to President Carter and Congress condemning the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's efforts to make marijuana a "cash crop" for export by Third World nations:

"Whereas an estimated \$200 billion of international dope trade revenues is destroying the industrial integrity and scientific basis of the U.S. economy....

"Whereas developing sector countries, most notably Colombia, Guyana, and others in Latin America and Asia are being forced to convert their economies to cash crop drug producers to satisfy World Bank/International Monetary Fund terms of debt demand....

"Be it resolved that this assembly calls on Congress and the President to take all necessary steps to collaborate with dope-producing countries to wipe out all dope acreage and to assist in the rapid and thorough conversion of these economies away from debilitating World Bank policies and into sound agricultural and industrial integration into a growing world economy...."