

National News

Justice Dept. denies charges against Weld

In an official letter dated March 27 to Warren Hamerman, chairman of the National Democratic Policy Committee and a close associate of Lyndon LaRouche, Michael E. Shaheen, Jr. of the Office of Professional Responsibility at the Department of Justice wrote:

"This is in response to your letter of September 3, 1986, in which you set out various allegations of misconduct against then Assistant Attorney General designate William F. Weld. We note that you also raised these allegations with the Senate Judiciary Committee, which subsequently confirmed Mr. Weld as head of the Department's Criminal Division. We have completed a review of the allegations, some of which we have previously addressed in response to an earlier complaint. On the basis of that review, we have determined that the allegations are without merit."

The Hamerman letter had charged Weld with deliberate cover-up of bank money-laundering and other illegalities, selective and vindictive prosecution of political opponents, resorting to "trial by press," and various conflicts of interest—all of which Weld has more recently come under investigation for by the office of Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh in the Iran-Contra affair.

Has Michael Shaheen's office just implicated itself in a cover-up?

Kemp announces presidential bid

New York Rep. Jack Kemp announced his 1988 presidential bid with a pledge to promote economic growth, defend freedom, and protect family values. "There's nothing wrong with America that can't be fixed," said Kemp.

"There are three great challenges facing us in the decade ahead: the defense of peace and freedom; the defense of our children and the family; and a national commitment to

the highest ideal of economic justice—full employment without inflation for each and every American."

Kemp, who will not resign his House seat while campaigning, demanded immediate deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative and later told a news conference that the administration hasn't been aggressive enough in pushing it.

He also said he would prefer stronger promotion of U.S. exports and a firmer commitment to open trade. He also said he disagreed with President Reagan's reappointment of Paul Volcker to head the Federal Reserve.

Schroeder proposes tax on allies

Rep. Pat Schroeder, an ultraliberal opponent of whatever the Soviet Union opposes, recommended April 6 that the U.S. levy a service fee on exports by allied nations to help pay for the defense of Western Europe and Japan.

Schroeder, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, suggested as an example a 6% surcharge on imported Japanese Subaru cars. She told reporters it would compensate for Japan only contributing 1% of its GNP to allied defenses while Washington allocated about 7%.

The Colorado Democrat said about half of America's \$300 billion annual defense budget went to NATO. "Indirectly, the United States taxpayer is subsidizing education, housing, and health programs in Europe," she said.

She said the surcharge would make the allies pay for housing the 385,000 troops presently in Europe and Japan, adding, "The party is over."

She said she may propose the service charge as an amendment attached to the omnibus trade bill.

Oral Roberts sued for misrepresentation

A federal lawsuit filed in New Orleans April

3 accuses Oral Roberts, the television evangelist, of portraying God as a blackmailer and asks that a judge force Roberts to return contributions to any donor who asks.

The lawsuit, filed by two aerospace workers, Douglas Coggeshall and Russell Richardson, contends that Roberts and his Tulsa, Oklahoma ministry have been guilty of "fraud and deceptive practices" by telling people he would die if he didn't get \$8 million in donations by March 31.

"When Oral Roberts goes on television and preaches, he is a corporation. . . . He should have the same standards of responsibility as Coca-Cola or Exxon or any other corporation," the complaint said.

Proxmire report hits SDI deployment

A report prepared for Sen. William Proxmire, released April 7, accused the Reagan administration of covertly seeking early deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative as a ploy to commit the United States to missile defenses after President Reagan leaves office in 1988.

"Near-term deployment is an absurd and dangerous course for America," said Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-La.)

sued with the report. "It would force us to break the bank, throw out the ABM Treaty, and commit us to an arms race in space."

"This report exposes the fact that without a presidential directive or congressional consent, the SDI program . . . is being changed to pursue a near-term deployment of strategic defenses," said Proxmire, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee. "In other words, they're covertly reorienting the SDI program without congressional approval."

Johnston said the proposed system is "not a military shield, it is a political ploy."

New law blamed for Pentagon exodus

A number of top Defense Department officials are resigning because of a new law that would limit industry jobs open to them after

Briefly

April 16, and that exodus threatens national security, claimed Robert Duncan, director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

"In DARPA, in particular, there is need for turnover," Duncan said, arguing that the flow of talent back and forth between private industry and the DOD "gives us access to individuals who are leaders in their fields."

Duncan made his comments at a weapons research conference in Alexandria, Va., and named Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle, Navy Secretary John Lehman, Air Force Secretary Tom Cooper, and the deputy director of DARPA, James Tegnalia, as individuals he believed were leaving because of the new law.

The law specifies that any government official who spent the majority of his time negotiating a contract or settling a claim of more than \$10 million with a company cannot go to work for that company for two years after he leaves government service.

Six more LaRouche defendants released

On Wednesday, April 8, six political associates of Lyndon LaRouche indicted by state Attorney General Robert Abrams appeared in New York for arraignment on securities-fraud charges. The six were expeditiously processed by the Attorney General's office, which consented in advance that any bail decided upon by the court did not have to be immediately posted. They were released.

New York is only the latest state to hand down indictments against LaRouche associates since the Justice Department's William Weld spearheaded a 350-man police raid on their offices on Oct. 6 in Leesburg, Virginia. Most charges are based on the argument that political loans to organizations working for the policies of LaRouche were in fact "unregistered securities" and that defendants received loans they never intended to pay back.

The vindictive political motivation behind the indictments has become clearer and clearer as the witchhunt has unfolded—and the New York cases left presiding Justice Steven Crane clearly taken aback. On April

6, when four other defendants had appeared before him, the judge was informed that one of the accused, George Canning, had also been indicted in Virginia—on the same charge! Canning's attorneys pointed out that their client was charged with an "overt act" of securities fraud for signing a loan-repayment check! Moreover, the state was at the same time claiming that part of the fraud scheme was intentionally not repaying loans!

As other Virginia inditees appeared April 10, the judge became concerned that certain defendants could get "whipsawed" between jurisdictions.

When the Court turned its attention to another defendant, Ed Spannaus, his attorney, John Flannery, stated that Mr. Spannaus had been indicted in Boston. Justice Crane was visibly surprised at the existence of another indictment. Flannery described Weld's grand jury in Boston, which had to be adjourned after 18 months for lack of evidence, only to be reconvened at the time of the Leesburg raid, which included "armed personnel carriers and helicopters."

Four remaining defendants are scheduled to appear on April 13.

Washington reelected mayor of Chicago

Harold Washington won a second term as Chicago's mayor, defeating independent candidate and former city alderman Edward Vrdolyak and the Republican candidate, Donald Haider. Turnout was lighter than expected in the April 7 vote.

The race was thrown into disarray when Cook County Assessor Thomas Hynes, (like Vrdolyak, a Democrat turned independent), suddenly dropped out of the race only a few days before the election. Although white voters backing Hynes were expected to support Vrdolyak, apparently this was not enough to take the race away from Washington.

Jane Byrne, former mayor of the city, recently came out with an endorsement of Washington, despite losing to him in a Feb. 24 primary that was marred by intimidation of voters and fraud, totaling to more votes than Washington's margin of victory.

● **FUNDAMENTALIST** preachers' popularity has dropped 34% nationally, as a result of the "Pearlygate" scandal surrounding Jim and Tammy Bakker of PTL, says a *Los Angeles Times* poll. TV evangelist Pat Robertson's bid for the presidency is now opposed by Christian fundamentalists seven to one. Also hurting are Revs. Jimmy Swaggart and Jerry Falwell.

● **SEN. PAUL SIMON** (D-Ill.) held a news conference in Washington April 9 to announce that he will run for the Democratic presidential nomination if he thinks he has "a real shot" of winning.

● **CONGRESSIONAL** investigators have reached an agreement with the White House to see excerpts from nearly three years of President Reagan's diaries related to the Iran-Contra affair, it was announced April 8. Under the terms of the agreement, White House counsel Arthur Culvahouse will review Reagan's diaries from Jan. 1, 1984 through Dec. 19, 1986, looking for entries that mention Nicaragua, Iran, and related matters. These will then be made available to the investigators.

● **LLOYD CUTLER**, former White House counsel under Jimmy Carter and a member of the Trilateral Commission, will be launching an offensive soon for "radical" changes in the U.S. Constitution, to make it more like the British parliamentary system, according to London's *Sunday Express*. "Pressure is growing in the United States for a radical switch to a parliamentary form of government, similar to the one in Britain," says the newspaper.

● **BESS MYERSON**, New York City cultural affairs commissioner, may be indicted within two months, according to news reports on a scandal surrounding her mob-linked boyfriend's receipt of city contracts. Myerson, now on a leave of absence, is not expected to return to her \$80,000 a year city job.