

Swiss referendum is crucial in fight against drug legalization in Europe

by Karen Steinherz

Over 150,000 Swiss citizens, including educators, parents, teachers, professors, scientists, and engineers, have signed a petition, entitled "Youth Without Drugs," calling for a restrictive drug policy in Switzerland, based on abstinence and fighting the international drug cartels which are currently attempting to integrate themselves into the Swiss banking system. If the petition is accepted by the National Congress of Switzerland during its March 4-22 deliberations, it will then come before the Swiss population, in the form of a national plebiscite, sometime around the beginning of 1997.

The outcome of such a vote would have implications for years to come in the fight in Europe over drug legalization. If the plebiscite were ratified by Swiss voters, it would be a clear victory for the nation of Switzerland, which, along with Holland, has served for 15 years as the experimental model in western Europe for the drug lobby. In Switzerland, heroin is already given out freely to some 800 addicts and in 18 experimental projects, a program which speculator George Soros, who sponsors the pro-drug legalization Drug Policy Foundation, has hopes of expanding throughout Europe.

Conversely, however, were the "Youth Without Drugs" initiative *not* ratified, its defeat would give momentum to the initiatives of the Drug Policy Foundation, which is seeking to legalize drugs through the "back door" in Holland and in Germany.

Furthermore, its defeat would be interpreted as a green light to those international banks which launder drug money via Switzerland, many of which are now under increasing pressure to identify the sources of their liquidity. Defeat of the plebiscite and a victory for the drug lobby would mean that such banks could depend on continuity, security, and legality in Switzerland, for their secret, layered bank accounts. In "Crime and Secrecy: The Use of Offshore Banks and Companies," issued by the U.S. Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee in March 1983, after two years of investigations, the committee reported that London is the leading center worldwide for the concealment of dirty-money funds, a charge first made in *EIR's* book *Dope, Inc.* The report also said that two-fifths of all foreign banking activities conducted out of Switzerland are carried out in

conjunction with offshore centers, Switzerland being the center for the practice of "layering secret financial accounts so that beneficial ownership is impossible to determine."

Bankers come out for drug legalization

While citizens all across Switzerland are mobilizing against the drive to turn their country into a haven for drug addicts, some of the nation's leading financiers are now coming out openly in favor of drug legalization. A petition which supports legalizing drugs for "humanitarian purposes," appeared in Switzerland a few months ago, which was signed by some leading Swiss bankers and corporate officials.

According to a report in the *Bulletin of the European Cities Against Drugs*, which is actively involved in the fight against drug legalization, almost 100 representatives of Swiss businesses have signed this petition, a position paper in which they declare that they are in favor of the controlled distribution of drugs, including methadone and heroin, to "ill people," e.g., those with AIDS, "to seriously addicted people, and to those who have not yet made up their mind to stop using drugs" (emphasis added).

Among the signers are leading representatives of Swiss banking and business firms, including Roland C. Rasi of the Swiss Bank Corp.; Fritz Leutwiler, the former president of the Swiss National Bank; Hannes Goetz, the president of Swissair; and Antonio Riva, the director of Swiss Radio and Television.

The *European Cities Against Drugs* article warns that, under this proposal, the State would have a monopoly on the sale of drugs. "The fact that representatives of the Swiss banking system and other businesses are among the signatories in favor of distribution of drugs is a matter of great concern, especially as the position paper states, in paragraph 11, that *there should be an investigation into the pro's and con's of a controlled drug business connected to private, extensive, geographically dispersed, medically prescribed distribution of drugs to resident 'registered' and also to integrated addicts.*" It calls this "a naive and dangerous idea" (emphases added).

This is not, however, a "naive" initiative on the part of this group in the Swiss banking community; their intent is to

set up a State-controlled monopoly. The “big three” Swiss banks hold \$5.3 trillion in financial derivatives outstanding, making Switzerland the country with the highest level of derivatives per capita in the world. Derivatives are side-bets on underlying financial instruments, and investigators report that huge sums of drug money are laundered weekly through the derivatives market, which helps keep the global speculative financial bubble from bursting. Could this be one reason that Swiss Bank Corp., which is the number-one holder of derivatives in Switzerland, in the amount of \$2,009 trillion, is so eager to sign on to drug law “reform”?

A strategy for legalizing drugs

On Feb. 23, a so-called “expert commission,” consisting of doctors, politicians, and police officials, recommended a complete revision of the Swiss medical drug code. The commission, which received its mandate in November 1994, cautiously stated that, while it had not come to a final decision, it would probably be a good idea to distribute drugs medically, including heroin, morphine, and methadone, and to *decriminalize* personal possession of drugs.

Commission members also recommended that the ongoing 18 projects in which drugs are distributed, should be continued until the end of 1998, beyond their original 1996 mandate, thus providing a pretext to prolong the discussion of drug legalization in the public domain.

The so-called experts don’t care about suffering drug addicts, or teenagers possibly ruining their lives because they are caught with a marijuana “joint”: The commission’s recommendations would merely be the second step toward legalizing drugs (the first step was getting these projects established), a danger which has not been lost on the adversaries of drug legalization. According to Torgny Peterson, chairman of European Cities Against Drugs, advocates of legalization are trying to find a way around the United Nations Drugs Convention, because it forbids governments from engaging in drug trafficking. Peterson notes that, instead, in Switzerland, for example, the legalizers call it “scientific experiments,” or “harm reduction.” The best-known European document backing “harm reduction” is the Frankfurt Resolution, which was endorsed by the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hamburg, and Zurich. Instead of getting rid of the causes of drug addiction, one should manage the risk or the pain, runs the argument.

Dope, Inc.’s interests behind the “soft sell” in Switzerland, are reflected in the argumentation in *Drogenland in Mafiahand* (*Drugland in Mafia Hands*), by Beat Kraushaar and Emilie Lieberherr. In their book about the conflict over Switzerland’s drug policy, the authors discuss the history of the fight against money-laundering from a pessimistic standpoint. Kraushaar, citing German government sources, explains that 60-70% of drug-money turnover is circulated through the banking system. The European Commission wanted stronger regulations against money-laundering, she



Bankers in Europe have begun to call for drug legalization, which will make it possible to bring the billions from the drug trade through the front door of the banking system. Here, the “red light” district in Frankfurt, Germany, which is next door to the banking center.

explains, but behind closed doors, they were watered down at the level of the Ministerial Council. Because it is hopeless to attempt to contain international drug-money laundering, they argue, let’s go ahead and legalize it.

Kraushaar claims that “there will be no stabilization or reduction of drug consumption in the future.”

We have lost control of drug profits, Kraushaar explains, and we have a rising supply of drugs (for which she gives the examples of Central Asia’s marijuana and opium poppy crops). Together with the rising demand, Kraushaar concludes that we have lost the war on drugs. Therefore, let’s go ahead then and take advantage of this money “before it is in mafia hands—that is an estimated 200 billion Swiss francs [roughly \$170 billion] that flows through Switzerland or its foreign affiliates.”

To have authors of books prepare the intellectual argumentation for delivering Switzerland’s banking system into the hands of the dirty-money kings, is a dream come true for drug-money-laundering criminals.

The ‘reform’ road to legalization

The Swiss expert commission’s call for revision of the drug medical code came two weeks after a major escalation by

the international drug-legalization lobby. William Buckley's reactivation of the campaign for legalization appeared in the Feb. 12 issue of his magazine, *National Review*, under the title, "The War on Drugs Is Lost."

Praising Switzerland's example, Buckley says that "the Swiss have embarked on a national experiment of prescribed heroin to addicts. The two-year plan, begun in Zurich, is designed to determine whether they can reduce drug- and prohibition-related crime, disease, and death by making pharmaceutical heroin legally available to addicts at regulated clinics. The results of the experiment have been sufficiently encouraging that it is being extended to over a dozen Swiss cities. Similar experiments are being initiated by the Dutch and Australians."

Buckley recommends, "You don't need to go for formal legalization to embark on *numerous reforms* that would yield great dividends" (emphasis added).

Such "reforms" have also begun in Europe's drug mecca, Holland. The Dutch Council of Public Health has agreed to experimental distribution of heroin to drug addicts. According to the Dutch daily *Algemeen Dagblad* on May 20, 1995, F. Sturmans, director of the municipal public health service (GGD) in Rotterdam, says that whereas methadone makes people dull and unresponsive, "heroin has a short, but strong effect. . . . One can function better with heroin . . . and addicts like heroin better." He says that "both methadone and heroin are addictive substances," and concludes that "it is crazy to forbid one and not the other." Rather than calling for the end of so-called "methadone maintenance," which was one of the first foot-in-the-door efforts in the push for drug legalization, he urges that heroin be legalized as well.

Among the widespread public opposition in Europe to such schemes, drug therapy organizations, such as the Hassela Nordic Network, identify this barbarism as the "Swiss Solution," in which some 300,000 Swiss francs, of which SF 180,000 are provided by Swiss medical authorities, are now given out in Switzerland yearly for distribution of heroin to prisoners and in other experiments.

Medical transition to 'hard' drugs

In a presentation at the Ninth International Conference on Drug Policy Reform in October 1995, Freek Polak, a Dutch psychiatrist and prominent member of the European pro-drug legalization lobby, echoed Buckley: Reforms can *and will* yield "dividends" as great as legalization, he claims. Referring to Holland, he asks:

"Is it wise to embrace medicalization of problematic drug use as a positive development, or should we only accept medicalization as a means in the transition to legalization of hard drugs? Personally I have argued along the last line recently. *It will not be enough to convince politicians of the futility of the international drug conventions. They will have to be forced to support a revision of the drug laws and this probably will be a step-by-step development*" (emphasis added).

According to the *European Cities Against Drugs* bulletin, Polak is a colleague of Kevin Zeese "of the George Soros-sponsored Drug Policy Foundation . . . [and] is a frequent visitor to Europe to help realize the goals of the Netherlands-based foundation."

Zeese, a former leader of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), has boasted that Soros's \$10.5 million grant to the Drug Policy Foundation, which is the leading advocate for drug legalization in the United States, will greatly expand their work.

The Dutch mecca for drug users

Amsterdam is a mecca for drug tourists seeking cannabis under Holland's relaxed cannabis laws. The cocaine, hashish, and heroin smuggled into Rotterdam via incoming cargo, only a small percentage of which is uncovered by harbor inspectors, is sold openly out of over 2,000 apartments near the port.

Tourists from as far away as Australia come to Amsterdam's coffee shops to sample Dutch-grown *nederwiet*, purported to be the best-quality marijuana in the world, for a mere \$100 registration fee. Tons of *nederwiet* are shipped to England and France, much to the consternation of English and French border police.

The Dutch Federal Police estimate that hundreds of millions of dollars are made from the sale of Holland's marijuana crop, and the laundered money is reinvested in criminal activities, including prostitution, blackmail, gambling, and murder rackets.

In Venlo alone, since the Schengen Agreement, which opened Europe's internal borders (and is referred to as the "event of the century for drug-dealers"), thousands of German tourists have come to purchase Dutch marijuana, Moroccan hashish, and heroin off the ships in Rotterdam, the world's largest port.

There is some resistance from the German and French governments. On March 7, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President Jacques Chirac held a "drug summit" in The Hague, Netherlands. The theme was to force the Netherlands to impose sharper border controls, and to use more drug-sniffing dogs at Rotterdam's wharf. The influx of drugs from Holland has been an issue with the French since at least 1993.

But Kohl is in a weak position to do anything. Even within his own government, there is an aggressive drive to promote drug legalization through regulatory reform, without even taking the issue to the voters. The German Health Ministry has decided to permit hashish and marijuana to be sold over the counter for medical purposes. In addition, the opposition Social Democratic Party is considering a plan to legalize marijuana in small amounts for personal use. Even some law enforcement officials, such as Cologne Police Chief Jürgen Roters, want to give addicts heroin and cocaine, a position which echoes the Swiss bankers' petition that addicts who have not successfully dealt with their habit should be supplied with drugs.