
National News

Child poverty and hunger grow with welfare reform

As many states are now hitting the mandatory two-year cutoff for persons receiving welfare under the 1996 "welfare reform" act, studies are beginning to track an alarming rise in poverty and hunger, especially among children. According to the *Washington Post* on Jan. 2, in a growing number of states, nearly half of those who remain on welfare are children whose parents do not qualify for public assistance because they are in jail, on drugs, or have lost custody due to abuse or neglect. The total is 1.8 million children (20% of the welfare caseload nationwide). The worst states include Alabama (51% of cases), South Carolina (49%), Mississippi (47%), South Dakota (43%), Arkansas (41%), North Carolina (38%), and Florida (36%). These children receive only one-quarter what a foster parent receives; the money is given to family members (largely grandparents), who take care of them the best they can.

A year-long study by Project Bread, released on Dec. 22, found that in Massachusetts, some 60,000 children go hungry every day and 15,000 children are chronically malnourished. Statewide, 35% of clients served by food programs in 1997 were children; 27% of clients have a job. Further, on Dec. 1, some 7,000 families lost all welfare benefits.

A report from Children's Defense Fund, issued jointly with the National Coalition for the Homeless, showed that many former recipients now lack food, medical care, and stable housing. Among recipients who find jobs, 71% earn less than \$250 per week, and the number of children living in extreme poverty (below one-half of the poverty line) grew by 400,000 between 1995 and 1997.

Rev. McSorley offers Clinton his support

A good friend and former Georgetown University professor of President Clinton's, Rev. Richard T. McSorley, SJ, sent a letter of support to the President, the text of which

he released to *New Federalist* newspaper. Father McSorley, the director of the Center for Peace Studies at Georgetown, is well known for his courage in the cause of justice: During World War II, he was imprisoned in a POW camp in the Philippines. After the war, he fought hard for desegregation and the right to vote, and vocally opposed the Vietnam War. He is a signer on the Appeal to Clinton to appoint Lyndon LaRouche as his economic adviser.

In his letter, he related a telling incident to the President:

"This morning a lady said to me, 'I know you are a friend of Clinton, but he is a liar.'

"Where is your evidence?' I asked her.

"It is everywhere.'

"Is it there under the table?'

"It is everywhere,' she replied again.

"Did you ever hear the Gospel text that forbids us to judge others?'

"I am not judging him, I am only calling him a liar.'

"Let me give you a partial anatomy of a lie. It is speaking contrary to your mind. Its elements are: the speaker, the one spoken to, the mind of the speaker and the message. One of its essential elements is the mind of the speaker. Only God can read the mind of the speaker. That is why God orders us not to judge others. Only God can know if a person is lying. We cannot know unless God tells us. And God is not likely to tell us. I don't believe that God told you.'"

"She was not convinced, but I am writing to you to tell you how wrong I think the attacks made on you are."

Father McSorley concluded his letter "with a prayer that God will give you the grace and strength to serve Him well."

Oklahoma grand jury ends bombing probe

The Oklahoma state grand jury that has been probing whether there was a broader conspiracy involved in the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building, completed its deliberations and delivered a 21-page final report to County Judge Bill Burkett on Dec. 30. According to news accounts, the grand jury's report, which was read by the judge in open court, could neither confirm nor rule out the possibility that

"John Doe 2" or any other individuals were involved with Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols in the bombing. The report did include one sealed indictment, which, according to Reuters, involved witness tampering by an undisclosed party.

The state convened the grand jury in July 1977, following a petition drive led by State Sen. Charles Keys, who has been a vocal critic of the Federal investigation, which placed all the blame on McVeigh and Nichols. According to news accounts, the grand jury final report also concluded that there was no evidence that any Federal agencies, including the FBI or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, knew in advance about the bomb plot. The report also reportedly ruled out involvement by neo-Nazis and British-Israelites who were operating out of a base in rural eastern Oklahoma called Elohim City.

As *EIR* has reported, forensic experts remain convinced that the expertise required to bring down the Murrah Building was far beyond the capacities of McVeigh and Nichols, whether the bombing involved a sophisticated shape-charge truck bomb alone, or other devices planted inside the Murrah Building.

Gilmore lets Virginians freeze in the dark

Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore (R) waited until Dec. 30 to declare a state of emergency in Southside Virginia—including the capital, Richmond—after tens of thousands of residents were left without heat or electricity because of a Dec. 23 ice storm. Under the state of emergency, state police and National Guardsmen were mobilized to get people out of danger and into shelters. As of New Year's, at least 23,000 were still without power, from outages that affected up to 400,000.

Three elderly people were found frozen to death in their homes earlier in the week. State Delegate Donald McEachin (D), whose county south of Richmond was affected, charged that Gilmore showed "almost a Marie Antoinette 'Let them eat cake'" attitude in refusing to declare an emergency.