

National News

Support Grows for Conyers' Health Bill

House Resolution 676, "U.S. National Health Insurance Act of 2005," introduced by Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), is gathering support from city councils around the country. (See last week's *EIR* for Lyndon LaRouche's endorsement of this bill, which would ensure that all citizens have needed medical treatment.)

City councils that have passed resolutions endorsing H.R. 676 include Baltimore, Maryland; Erie, Pennsylvania; and Moorehead, Kentucky. In January, the Kentucky House of Representatives Committee for Health and Welfare voted up a measure calling on Congress to pass the bill.

Of the 68 current Congressional backers, 6 had signed up as of February, when the bill was officially filed. Among the many union endorsements are those of the United Auto Workers, United Mine Workers, United Steel Workers of America, and the Service Employees International Union.

A 2003 Indiana University poll reported that 49% of doctors support legislation to establish national health insurance. Dr. George Alexander, director of the National Association of Public Health Workers, is an outspoken proponent. A support group, Physicians for a National Health Program, has seen its membership rise from 10,000 to 14,000 in recent years.

Ohio Clergy Ask IRS To Probe GOP Theocrats

Fifty-six Ohio ministers and rabbis have signed a complaint to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, documenting the blatant use of two rightist churches as action arms for the 2006 gubernatorial campaign of Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell (R). The April complaint amplified one filed by 31 clergymen in January, which the IRS ignored.

The complainants are well aware that their initiative targets a nationally crucial capability of the Cheney-Rove circles. The World Harvest Church (Columbus, Ohio),

under Pastor Rod Parsley, and Fairfield Christian Church (Lancaster, Ohio) under Pastor Russell Johnson, previously partnered with Blackwell. They and he herded voters for Bush in 2004 on anti-homosexual demagoguery, while Blackwell ran the Bush campaign and oversaw the Ohio vote theft as Secretary of State. An African-American board member of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), Blackwell is a favorite of the apparatus backing Dick Cheney.

The complaints cite the actions of the two churches, and of tax-exempt, blatantly political affiliates they have set up, in providing a platform for Blackwell and no other candidate of either party for Ohio governor, in mobilizing voters behind Blackwell's campaign, and building a network of "Patriot Pastors"—the latter a far-right political venture run by Paul Weyrich and James Dobson.

Specifying violations of IRS code and Treasury rules, which prohibit direct church candidate-advocacy (beyond issue-advocacy), the complaints seek taxes and injunctions against the theocrats.

DLC Think-Tank: No More 'New Deal' Dems

The Progressive Policy Institute, a think-tank of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), released a study on April 25, which demands that Democrats shed any vestige of the legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal. The study, by "labor economist" Stephen Rose, is titled "The Trouble With Class-Interest Populism," and is available at www.ppionline.org.

Rose contends that what he calls economic populism and class warfare don't work anymore, because "people no longer choose candidates primarily on the basis of 'pocketbook' issues, as they did when the New Deal coalition dominated national politics."

Rose acknowledges the impact of rising health care and college tuition costs, and that companies are shedding health and pension costs, but nevertheless asserts: "In the post-industrial economy, the great question is how government can equip workers with the new tools for economic success, not how

government can insulate them from the rigors of competition or restrain business power."

The Democratic Party should "modernize" its economic and social programs, and offer an agenda that speaks to America's middle class and "office dads," not the disappearing working class, Rose insists.

Murtha Rejects 'Military Option' Against Iran

Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.), the outspoken critic of the Bush Administration's war in Iraq, reiterated his call for withdrawal from Iraq during an appearance at the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, and his call for the resignation of Donald Rumsfeld, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on April 21. He continued to warn of the strain on the Army caused by the Iraq deployment. "It would be almost impossible for the U.S. to meet the current military strength deployment schedule without sending combat units back to the theater with less than one year of rest," he said. "We have no strategic reserve; that is, the Army could not sustain a major second-front deployment."

As for the prospects of military action against Iran, he said, "It's not going to happen. I do not believe we have the conventional capability. We can't even sustain the deployment in Iraq." He further said that the likely targets in Iran could not be destroyed with conventional weapons without repeated air strikes, and should the United States use nuclear weapons, "there'd be a worldwide anger at the United States. . . . There'd be more and more terrorism, and the terrorism would be directed at us."

Harper's Reports on Growing Dissent at CIA

The "revolt of the generals" within the military against the war policy of the Bush-Cheney Administration, is being matched by growing antagonism to the Administration and its tactics within the CIA, the *Harper's Magazine* Blog reports, in an article by Ken

LAROCHE PAC has released a new DVD, "Retool Auto To Rebuild the Nation." Slightly over an hour in length, the DVD features historical footage, such as FDR's buildup of the "Arsenal of Democracy"; animations of the current crisis; and interviews with trade union officials of the auto and tool-and-die industries.

GEN. JOHN BATISTE (ret.), appearing on CBS's "Face the Nation" on April 23, scored Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's "contemptuous attitudes, dismissive behavior, arrogance" towards the military. Speaking of the decision to disband the Iraqi Army, he said, "As General [Colin] Powell has said, when you break it, you own it. There was no surprise with that insurgency. Anyone who has read a little bit of history of Iraq would have anticipated that."

SEN. PATRICK LEAHY (D-Vt.) has written a letter to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, seeking details on the Bush-Cheney Administration's role in pushing the provision in the House immigration bill to criminalize undocumented immigrants.

REP. GEORGE MILLER (D-Calif.), the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, has started an e-hearing on reversing the raid on student aid. He is asking for testimony from students and experts in the education field. Congressman Miller and Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) have put forward a bill to halve the interest rates charged for student loans, from 6.8% to 3.4%.

REPUBLICAN Congressmen and poultry officials alike have attacked the U.S. Department of Agriculture's response plan for bird flu, *Insurance Journal* reported on April 21. Rep. Michael Castle (R-Del.) called a public meeting in his state and ridiculed the plan for putting no resources into surveillance and containment of the disease. Bill Satterfield, executive director of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc., agreed.

Silverstein on April 19. The unrest comes from CIA officers who fear subpoenas and indictments coming, and don't want to get caught up in it.

A former senior CIA officer says there "seems to be a quiet conspiracy by rational people" at the agency to avoid involvement in some of the particularly nasty tactics being employed by the Administration, especially the "extraordinary rendition" program, under which the CIA sends terrorist suspects abroad to be questioned in countries where torture is commonplace. The source says, concerning the split at the CIA: "There's an SS group within the agency that's willing to do anything, and there's a Wehrmacht group that is saying, 'I'm not gonna touch this stuff.'"

Lawyer Scott Horton told Harper's that he's also hearing stories of growing dissent at the CIA. "When the shit hits the fan," he said, "the administration scapegoats lower-level people. It doesn't do a lot in terms of inspiring confidence."

A legal source told *EIR* that it's not yet a full-blown rebellion at CIA, and described it as very much centered on the "extraordinary rendition" program—sort of a "sick-out," in which officers are coming up with reasons why they can't work on the program.

Private Contractors Curbed in Iraq

U.S. Commander in Iraq Gen. George Casey issued an order acknowledging and "ending" private military contractor (PMC) abuses, including the international crime of human trafficking, the *Chicago Tribune* and *Baltimore Sun* reported April 24. Particularly under fire is Halliburton's subsidiary KBR. Casey's order was forced by a State Department intelligence investigation of the PMC abuses.

EIR featured the PMCs in an April 7, 2006 cover story, "Halliburton's War."

Casey ordered that contractors by May 1 return passports to all the foreign workers they have taken them from; seizing workers' passports to effectively imprison them in Iraq is a violation of international law against human trafficking. Halliburton's KBR was found to be the biggest violator,

being by far the biggest contractor. Of its 48,000 workers in Iraq, 35,000 are neither American nor Iraqi; in addition, its 200 subcontractors, including many labor recruiters, include dozens from Middle Eastern countries which have been cited by the United States and the United Nations for violating human-trafficking and other laws.

Casey's order promises "harsh actions" if firms do not return passports, give all workers signed contracts at all subcontracting levels, and stop cramming employees into living spaces of less than 50 square feet, among other abuses. However, the order appears to apply only to contracts from the point of its issuance, forward, according to the *Baltimore Sun* report.

Wilkerson Hits 'Jacobin' Policies

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson (ret.), former aide to Secretary of State Colin Powell, wrote an op-ed in the *Baltimore Sun* on April 24, entitled "Is U.S. Being Transformed Into a Radical Republic?" "In January 2001," he wrote, "with the inauguration of George W. Bush as President, America set on a path to cease being good; America became a revolutionary nation, a radical republic. If our country continues on this path, it will cease to be great—as happened to all great powers before it, without exception." Identifying how the Bush Administration "in the name of fighting terrorism, has put America on the radical path to ruin," he denounced the "unprecedented interpretation of the Constitution that holds the President as commander in chief to be all-powerful and without checks and balances marks the hubris and unparalleled radicalism of this administration."

He attacked Richard Perle as "head theoretician for the neo-jacobins," pointing out that "it was Mr. Perle and people such as he who put us where we are today, not the terrorists of 9/11. . . . People such as Mr. Perle do not represent the bulk of Americans, who are anything but radical. Instead they represent the Robespierres and Napoleons of this world, the neo-jacobins of today. Robespierre was a leader of the reign of terror."