

EDITORIAL/OPINION



The challenges of 1982

by Rep. Ron Wyden

'Federalism' is not not new!

President Reagan's proposed new "federalism" is nothing new: it is an effort to turn the clock back 50 years. For minorities the prospect is especially frightening.

Why was the responsibility for social programs shifted from the states to the federal government in the first place? Because many states did not or could not provide for the basic needs of their citizens—food, health care, decent housing, education. In many states—especially those without industry to support their tax base—people were in abject poverty. Many starved, were uneducated, had no opportunity for employment.

During the Great Depression social security legislation was passed, setting up a federal system to provide retirement benefits. Additional programs—subsidized in part by the federal government—followed: unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation for injured workers, welfare for children, the disabled and blind, rehabilitation for the handicapped.

Indirect federal subsidies include support to health care, education, housing, public works, highways, research, etc.

By the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement was sweeping through the South, the federal government acknowledged that many states discriminated against their Black citizens in the provision of services. Along with the War on Poverty and the Model Cities Programs, responsibility for many social programs was shifted to the federal government. This gave the federal agencies the power to enforce anti-discrimination regulations by withholding funds. Each state that applied for funds for specific programs had to adhere to strict guidelines that not

only forbid discrimination but set requirements for levels of service. Monitoring of expenditures and service is the responsibility of the federal government.

Reagan earlier proposed that, rather than fund specific programs, the states be provided "block grants" for broad areas—education, social welfare, etc., which could be used as the states see fit. There would be no federal requirements—no required service levels, no ban on discrimination.

Reagan's newest proposal goes a step further. He would allow the states to be fully responsible for welfare, food-stamps and other social programs. In turn, the federal government would collect less taxes from the states, theoretically leaving the money for them to fund these programs.

Not only is this plan unfeasible because the decline in the national economy has left the states without adequate funds to provide these services, but it would remove all the safeguards and all the rights that the residents of the states possess as citizens of the United States. We would go back thirty years to the time when the citizens of Minnesota had more rights than the citizens of Mississippi. It would leave the Black, Indian and Chicano citizens without access to government services.

And for those who live in the liberal Northern and Western states like Oregon, all is not secure. We have seen that only the threat of loss of federal funds has made the Portland School District move a little step toward equality.

An end to federal supervision and the threat of loss of funds would deal a death blow to civil and human rights.

When the Reagan Administration first took office, there was a lot of talk about something called "New Federalism."

At the center of this New Federalism was to be a fresh partnership between federal, state and local governments—a partnership in which the federal government would take a back seat to local entities. State and local governments were to have more control over their own affairs—and everybody was supposed to come out ahead.

Unfortunately, with a year of this New Federalism under our belts, we find that all it has delivered is more bills—and fewer services. State and local governments have more responsibilities, all right, but no money to pay for them.

In other words, all we have is a tax shift—to state and local govern-

ments. So the taxpayer pays just as many taxes—but into a different coffer. And services are reduced because states like Oregon cannot even afford to pay for services they already offer—let alone picking up what the federal government has dumped in their laps.

The most unfortunate thing about this whole sorry situation is that it could have been avoided. Certainly we need to cut federal spending. Balancing the budget is critical to get our economy moving forward. But there are plenty of places to cut without leaving the states high and dry.

For example, consider what we could save by eliminating waste in the defense budget.

*\$76 million, the cost of reactivating two decrepit World War II battleships, would cover the \$350

million cost of completing Oregon's interstate system.

\$44 million, the cost-override to date on just two F-18 fighter planes, would more than cover the \$43 million (fiscal year 1982) cost of reforesting some 145,000 acres in Oregon and Washington—thus ensuring the longevity of our forests and the industries which depend on them.

And then there are the billion dollar handouts to oil companies—and the millions of tax dollars squandered to prop up corrupt dictators abroad.

I feel strongly that Congress must resist this kind of fiscal shell game. It must demonstrate the will to stand up to its responsibilities.

And as we move into the 1982 Congressional session later this month, I intend to do my best to see that this is the case.



Dick Bogle

Perhaps no single act by President Reagan has enraged as many citizens, Black and white, as much as the administration's move to grant tax exempt status to nearly a hundred colleges that discriminate against Blacks.

The reversal changes a policy in effect since 1970. Two colleges, Bob Jones University and Goldsboro Christian Schools of Goldsboro, N.C. appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

The policy shift came when Justice Department lawyers filed papers with the court. No explanation of the change was contained in the papers.

After the storm of protest, the President issued a statement decrying racial discrimination and said he will support legislation to attack the problem.

White house spokesman David Gersen said Reagan was disturbed by and regrets the perception that his administration is retreating on civil rights.

"I am unalterably opposed to racial discrimination in any form. I would not knowingly contribute to any organization that supports

racial discrimination," the President said in a brief statement.

The President says there is another issue at stake which went to the heart of the decision by Treasury and Justice, and it involved "administrative agencies exercising powers that the Constitution assigns to Congress."

In other words, Gersen said, Reagan still objects to agencies like the IRS taking such broad actions without the benefit of legislation.

"Such agencies," Reagan said, "cannot be allowed to govern by administrative fiat." That was the sole basis of the decision, I regret that there has been a misunderstanding of the purpose of the decision." *

It was a very wise thing for Portland Black leaders to call that recent news conference disputing published reports of extensive gang activity in Albina.

I recall a few months ago, after hearing rumors of Southeast Asian gangs, I checked with a variety of sources and determined that no Southeast Asian gangs exist. At the same time, I asked about other

possible gang activity. All the sources I asked said there had been only a couple of feeble attempts to organize and that after a very short existence, they collapsed.

However the people I talked with did say the possibility exists that gang activity could begin.

So the Urban League and others are wise to create programs to fill a void which leads to the inception of gangs. One void is the absence of adult male role models. We can look forward to some big brother type programs and others which could go a long way to blunt the organization of criminal gangs.

Some of you may remember a loose group of individuals called the Bandana Gang back in the sixties. In some people's minds that "so called" gang actually existed. It just so happened that during the peak of the "process" hair style, a number of those youngsters wore their bandanas on the street. Sure, they knew each other and many of them were engaged in criminal activities, but they were not a gang. The one thing they shared in common was wavy, close to the head hair.

Letters to the Editor

American poor denied basic citizenship rights.

To the editor:

Brother Martin Luther King's contribution to Amerika and the world was his willingness and determination to confront a sick, insane and vicious Amerikan system. He confronted Amerika's national sickness with her own health chart—the United States Constitution. He marched under the banner of the Constitution, and was jailed, beaten and finally killed. All the while Brother Martin confronted Amerika with the haunting question: can a nation whose rights are so clearly defined and so loosely interpreted expect to survive?

It is not at all surprising that the vicious system which Dr. King exposed over and over again would do everything it could to destroy him. But in so doing, others were enlightened concerning the nature of the system. As a result, a more militant determination has taken root among both Blacks and Caucasoids, a deeper probing of the depth of Amerika's sickness and a more radical commitment to changing the Amerikan system.

You see Brother Martin clearly understood that there is nothing inherently wrong in a human being who is poor. But there's something inherently evil and sick about a society that perpetuates poverty. By and large, unemployed Black youth are demoralized and degraded, and they know it. They know there is little they can do about it, and many know why. Living in the wealthiest, most technologically advanced society in history, condemned to urban

ghettos, they already realize that their immediate challenge in life is to escape a fate devoid of opportunity, purpose and productivity.

The question begs to be asked, why? Why are such dangerous levels of unemployment countenanced as part and parcel of the Amerikan "free enterprise" system which, in reality, translates into a creed of rugged individualism for the poor and social welfare for the rich? Why is the shortage of jobs for the young, with its attendant demoralization, rising crime rates and degeneration of the quality of life, tolerated with such complacency by our national leaders and so many of our citizens who have jobs?

The poor and the unemployed, in effect, are the by-products of the functioning of the Amerikan system—the exhaust, as it were, from an economic engine. Thus, unlike the gentle rain, unemployment does not fall on everyone equally. It falls first on the poor, longest on the Black, and hardest on Black youth. The fact of the matter is that after a generation of renewed struggle for racial justice the only explanation for the discrepancy between the unemployment rates of Blacks and Caucasoids is that it is a matter of color. No other conclusion is rationally supportable.

The Amerikan culture demands, on one hand, that a man, to be worthwhile, must support himself and his dependents, a process that contributes to the overall functioning of society. Yet, on the other hand, generation after generation, amounting to millions of young people, and adults as well, are de-

ned this basic passport to citizenship—a job. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., believed, to deprive a person of work is to negate a portion of his or her humanity.

The criminal justice system—the police, prosecutors, courts, and prisons—aggravates and compounds the problems of Black youth which stem from the racism and poverty that surround their lives. Rather than rehabilitating youthful offenders, the system of criminal justice reinforces criminal behavior in the manner in which it selectively punishes Blacks. Along with the schools, it conspires to keep young Blacks in their degraded status on the pain of removing them from society altogether.

Until a movement for economic justice arises, "democracy" will remain a meaningless aphorism and "equality" an empty slogan. Considering the billions in taxes the people of this country channel each year into the federal budget, it would seem that our society should be able to meet the particular needs of its women, youth, seniors and of the population as a whole.

This apostle of the purest Christian idealism served the cause of Freedom and Peace well. He was sustained by a great sensitivity to the suffering and needs of his fellow human beings at a time in history when the land of his birth had become the main cause for much of humanity's suffering and deprivation. Dr. King fought its racism, its militaristic arrogance, its hypocrisy and its apathy.

Dr. Jamil Cherovee
Field Dir. for CORE

Cure can be worse than sickness

by Jonathan Marshall

In a huge coordinated raid this August, federal agents in Miami rounded up 44 suspected drug traffickers who, over a two-year period, had laundered nearly \$200 million in profits through an FBI undercover front. This successful "sting" followed earlier arrests this year that netted some of the largest marijuana and cocaine rings ever busted.

Yet officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) admit that they still intercept only a tiny fraction—on the order of 5 per cent—of the illicit drugs pouring across our borders. In fact, DEA agents are warning of a new heroin "epidemic" as the bumper opium crops of South and Southeast Asia come to maturity. Despite the vast sums of money spent each year on drug control—upward of \$10 billion, by some estimates—we are no closer than ever to stamping out drug use.

Now, in desperation, both houses of Congress, with support from the Reagan administration, have voted separate bills to permit the U.S. military to join federal and local law enforcement agencies in doing battle against the drug traffic.

But the experience of numerous other countries suggests that it would be an enormous mistake to embroil our military and intelligence agencies in the drug war. Almost invariably, such policies elsewhere have led to a steady erosion of civil liberties and democratic rule—the very considerations that prompted Congress to ban military and CIA spying in the United States. Moreover, the enormous profits from the drug trade also have corrupted many high-ranking foreign military and intelligence officials so that the drug traffic has become better protected than ever.

The classic example of this phenomenon occurred in nationalist China after 1928, when the regime of Chiang Kai-shek first turned drug

traffic control over to the military under the guise of opium "suppression." Instead, the military sought to monopolize the distribution of narcotics to raise money for its own operations. During World War II, Chiang transferred control of the traffic to the head of his secret police, who traded opium across enemy lines with the Japanese. Ironically, many of those very police were trained by unwitting agents of the FBI and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

The same pattern is repeating itself today almost everywhere that the military has taken a major role in internal policing and security, often with U.S. aid and training: •In Sao Paulo, Brazil, the leading drug trafficker has been identified as Sergio Fleury—who was appointed head of the city's criminal investigation department in 1977. Fleury also is said to direct a notorious local "death squad" that liquidates opponents without formal arrest or trial.

•Last year's "cocaine coup" in Bolivia actually put a group of drug-trafficking colonels and generals in charge of the government, much to the displeasure of the Carter and Reagan administrations.

•The Paraguayan army is primarily financed not through taxes but through trade in contraband, including heroin. The three top traffickers, according to U.S. government files, are General Andres Rodriguez, commander-in-chief of the armed forces; counterinsurgency chief General Patricio Colman; and chief of the investigative police, Pastor Coronel.

•In 1978 CBS-TV implicated Colombian presidential candidate (since elected) Julio Cesar Turbay and defense minister General Abraham Varon in the flourishing cocaine trade. Among those already jailed for drug corruption are a former head of the judicial police and numerous military officers.

•At his 1975 trial a top Burmese heroin smuggler, Lo Hsing-han, fingered many government officials and military officers in President Ne Win's government as having taken bribes to protect his trade. These revelations brought the trial to a quick halt. The United States supplies equipment and training to Burma's anti-drug forces, who use it against political rebels while protecting the top pushers.

•In 1971 NBC News reported that South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky had financed their campaigns out of heroin profits, and that chief intelligence adviser General Dang Van Quang was "the biggest pusher in South Vietnam." Numerous reports also confirmed the CIA's role in supporting Vietnamese generals who moved opium and refined heroin into world markets.

These examples all come from the Third World, but the West hasn't been immune from the same disease. When "French Connection" traffickers began talking in the early 1970s, they quickly implicated leading members of SDECE, the French intelligence agency, and of the Gaullist "parallel police," SAC, in running the traffic for their own personal and institutional profit.

Thus far, America has escaped the worst of these abuses only by keeping its drug enforcement operations decentralized. Critics complain, rightly, that past enforcement hasn't been effective. But to mobilize against drugs the U.S. military—half of whose soldiers, according to recent studies, abuse drugs themselves—and the CIA, which has aided drug traffickers for its own reasons in Southeast Asia and Latin America, is not a desirable solution. Far from eliminating the drug epidemic, we might only end up with a cure that is worse than the disease.

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