

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Reagan claims not true

President Ronald Reagan gave black voters another reason to reject him and his party when he blamed the economic problems black Americans face not on racism but on the social and economic programs of the "Great Society."

"With the coming of the Great Society," he said, "government began eating away at the underpinnings of the private enterprise system. The big taxers and spenders in the Congress had started a binge that would slowly change the nature of our society. And even worse, it threatened the character of our people. . . ."

Reagan explained that without the social programs of the Great Society—the war on poverty, model cities, job training, housing subsidies, public employment, etc.—"black families and all Americans would be appreciably better off today." He also maintained that the poor are better off today than they would have been had he not eliminated many of the social and economic programs.

The recession, which has been instigated by Reagan's policy of high interest rates and high unemployment, has destroyed the gains made by black people during the 1960s and 1970s. The gap between white and black income is increasing and black unemployment rates are double those of whites.

Reagan also claimed that his administration has diligently enforced civil rights of minorities. This, also, is untrue.

An EEOC document refutes Reagan's claim that his administration has improved civil rights enforcement, showing Justice Dept. filings of job discrimination suits have dropped significantly.

The Washington Council of Lawyers reported in a recent study that enforcement in school de-

segregation and housing has all but halted. Reagan claimed the Justice Department has filed 9 new anti-discrimination cases against public employees and has reviewed more than 9,000 electoral changes to determine compliance with the voting rights act. This claim is true but misleading since the reviews are routine and required by law. The Council of Lawyers reports, however, that only two new voting rights suits have been filed by the government, compared to 20 in the first year of the Carter administration.

Also the Justice Department still counts 25 cases it filed during the Carter Administration even though it has reversed its position on some of these cases and has even asked for a reversal of one decision won by the Carter Administration.

In the employment field, the Justice Department has abandoned the use of class action suits and seeks to overturn landmark affirmative action decisions. No new school or housing suits have been filed. Currently the Justice Department is considering supporting school districts in Boston, St. Louis and Denver which want to modify their court-ordered desegregation plans.

Only in the area of police brutality and individual brutality that denies civil rights has the administration kept pace. Although Reagan said his investigation and prosecution "has exceeded the level of every past administration," the record shows that his administration equals those of Carter and Ford.

If Reagan wants to cultivate black support for the Republican party he is off to a bad start. Lies and slippery statistics will not take away the actions and policies that continue to deny rights and opportunities at an ever increasing rate.

Black elite vs. Reaganism

Part II

By Dr. Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

Many black Reaganites have not rescinded their unqualified endorsements of Ronald Reagan. In October 1980, two important aides of the late Martin Luther King, Jr., supported Reagan—the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy and Georgia State Rep. (D) Hosea Williams. Williams justified his support for Reagan because "the mounting KKK's violent activities against blacks all across the country" were indirectly a product of the Carter Administration. Appearing with South Carolina segregationist Strom Thurmond, in December, 1980, Williams and Abernathy announced that they were "for the Republican platform" and backed the bizarre suggestion that Thurmond serve as "a liaison officer between Republicans on behalf of minorities." As loyal members of what one journalist termed "Strom Thurmond's Black Kitchen Cabinet," Williams and Abernathy received a "letter of introduction" from Reagan for a black trade mission to Japan in June, 1982. Williams and Abernathy met with Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki and Japanese business leaders "to promote Japanese investments in the U.S. by offering tax incentives to businesses that invest in joint Japanese-Afro-American ventures." The 17-day trade mission sparked some "interest and curiosity" among Japanese corporations, who admitted that they had "never considered establishing a joint-venture factor in the U.S. with either black or white businessmen." The entire effort may have been futile, however, because upon Williams' return he was sentenced to serve one year in a Georgia penitentiary for numerous traffic violations and for fleeing the scene of an accident in 1981.

The economic initiatives of black managers in the private sector have

ranged from "conservative" to simply absurd. A good representative of their tendency is Joe Black, a Vice President of the Greyhound Corporation. Black condemned unemployed black youth for not understanding the "thrust of the Civil Rights Movement," in July, 1982. "Too many of them have chosen to be guided by emotion and want to believe that it was to prove that black can beat white or mistakenly thinking that we were to receive something just because we're black." In Black's opinion, it was time for "black adults" to "have the intestinal fortitude to tell youthful blacks that they are spending too much time worrying about the word 'racism.' When we were young, we called it 'prejudice,' 'segregation,' and 'jim crow,' but we did not spend our time worrying about it." Racism was not the reason that black unemployment was at an all-time high. "Too often black college students select 'pop' courses rather than those studies that will make them competitive in today's labor market." Like Thomas Sowell and other black conservative economists, Black suggested that blacks' ignorance and inadequate training were to blame for their lack of employment opportunities.

What almost no civil rights leader, corporate manager or politician from the black middle class comprehends is that the current economic plight of Afro-America is an integral part of a worldwide crisis of capitalism. Reaganism, its British counterpart, Thatcherism, and the conservative fiscal policies of Japan, West Germany and other capitalist countries have escalated unemployment throughout the West. Total unemployment in all Western countries has soared from 10 million in 1971-72 to a projected 31 million by the end of 1982. Reagan's July 1

"tax cut" has not increased U.S. corporate investment or consumer spending. Conversely, European basic industries, such as shipbuilding, steel, and petrochemicals, are "all in deep trouble," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. British unemployment exceeds 13 per cent, and even Japanese unemployment is at a post-World War II record. The Western crisis in capital accumulation has forced pay cuts in workers salaries in virtually every nation. In 1980 the West German worker, for example, received \$12.26 an hour; last year, the average salary was \$10.47. In the U.S. a similar process of capitalist austerity has occurred. Average wage increases in the first contract year for settlements made by unions at least 1,000 workers declined from 11.8 per cent in April-June, 1981, to 2.2 per cent in January-March, 1982. The result for U.S. black workers was entirely predictable: official adult unemployment above 18 per cent; black youth unemployment, 58 per cent; the failure of over 30 per cent of all black-owned businesses in 1982 alone.

The recession of 1982 illustrates with painful clarity the essential political bankruptcy of the black middle class "leaders" and organizations. Unable and unwilling to advance a socialist reorganization of America's political economy, they rely upon corporate paternalism, Federal jobs programs and "self-help efforts" which have all been tried without success. Responding to the economic desperation of the black working class and poor, they offer the rhetoric more suitable to the age of Booker T. Washington. Without an anti-capitalist and militant black national alternative, it appears likely that no meaningful solution to the long-term crisis of black underdevelopment will be achieved.

Letters to the Editor

American Jews outraged at massacre

To the editor:

As American Jews we are sickened and outraged at the recent massacres of unarmed Palestinians in Lebanon. While we fully support the existence of the State of Israel, we join in protest with those voices already raised in Israel, including Peace Now, calling for the resignations of Begin and Sharon and with-

drawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. Furthermore, we call for the cessation of all support to the Christian Militia groups responsible for the massacre.

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the invasion of Lebanon as well as her involvement in this most recent tragedy, contradicts Jewish values and our heritage, threatening Israel's survival. The

only policy that can lead to a real and lasting peace is a political settlement between Palestinian and Israeli leaders based upon mutual recognition and the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination alongside a secure Israel.

Portland New Jewish Agenda
Laura Stuchinsky

Wants U.S. offshore oil

To the editor:

Your editorial of September 1, "Reagan Rule Threatens European Economy" is somewhat typical of the editorial opinions occurring in various newspapers in the State of Oregon. Editorials supporting European nations to sell U.S. technology to the Russians is mystifying to many of us in the energy industry in light of the numerous negative editorials opposing our position to improve the energy supply.

If Europeans and the Russians have confidence in U.S. technology maybe the government officials in the states of California, Oregon and other states should rethink their decisions to spend tax dollars on lawsuits to prevent offshore leases and to support various domestic energy projects. How about trying to re-

duce the environmental hysteria against the development of LNG plants, pipeline construction, research development in wilderness areas, offshore drilling and many other energy related projects and programs that are on the drawing boards. Decontrol of crude oil prices was one giant step to improve the stability of our energy supply. Conservation has also helped.

If Europeans and Russians seek U.S. technology for, as you state in your editorial, "guarantee of stable fuel supply for Europeans," why don't our politicians and environmentalists and the news media encourage the same for our country? Mystifying, indeed! It borders on the miraculous that we have any new domestic energy exploration and development to meet our energy needs.

Foreign policy is complex and an ever-changing decision-making process as each nation strives to corner world opinion. Our president has made a decision and I believe he has done so in the best interests of our nation and of our allies. Our nation has bailed out these same European countries by fighting in two World Wars and we helped rebuild their economies with billions of dollars in foreign aid—most of which has not been repaid. Being tied to the Russian energy supply source could prove fatal to these same nations in the future as their economy becomes more dependent on The Bear for their energy needs.

F.J. Barich
Public Affairs Area Manager
Chevron, Inc.

Salvador ballot measure needs support

To the editor:

Dennis Buchanan's failure to support Proposition 7 (*Observer* 9/22) is clearly based on fallacious reasoning. Buchanan claims to support the intent of the measure, which would call for an end to military intervention in El Salvador; he also professes support for the initiative process, but he is withholding his support for passage of this particular measure simply because he believes it should not have been on the ballot in the first place. This is a dangerous position, because, regardless of whether or not Buchanan finds it appropriate, Proposition 7 will be on the November ballot. A yes vote

will put Multnomah County on record as opposing United States military intervention in El Salvador, but a no vote will send a message to Washington that the citizens of Multnomah County do not mind if their tax dollars are used to assist the brutal Salvadoran government

in the random murder of its people. Buchanan's refusal to support Proposition 7 will not take it off the ballot. Failure to support the measure will only result in failure of the measure.

Julie Levak

Abolishment not issue

To the editor:

Rick Gustafson is playing politics as usual. He insists that the issue in the race for Metro Executive is whether or not the Metropolitan Service District is a worthy project and should continue to exist. But, with the failure of the abolish-Metro

petition, the issue is now the quality of Metro's leadership — not its existence.

I suspect that Gustafson knows this but is deliberately trying to avoid defending his dismal record.

Mrs. Ruth Hermance

Appreciation

To the editor:

I wish to publicly thank the many members of our community who responded with love and kindness upon the death of my late husband, Jordan Morris, on July 28, 1982.

The members of my family were especially moved by the loving tribute paid to him by the staff and students of the Black Education Center in closing school on the day

of his funeral.

He was an avid supporter of the school and the honor shown him touched us deeply and reaffirmed what was special about his life on this earth. We will establish a scholarship at the school in his name as a continuing contribution to the work he believed in.


The response to our loss from so many members of the community was immediate, constant and com-

forting in helping us to endure a great loss.

The family also wishes to thank the medical community for its response during the last hours. The staff of the Veterans Administration Hospital and AA Ambulance Co. responded with the professionalism that assured us that he got the very best care.

Mrs. Lenora Morris





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