

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Punish 'sales tax' Democrats

The Democrats in the Oregon Legislature are trying to figure out a plan for tax "reform" or property tax relief.

Having wasted the entire legislative session on a sales tax plan that failed to pass the Senate, House members will be under the gun when Governor Vic Atiyeh calls a special session to deal with taxes.

It has been discouraging to see the State's leading "liberal" Democrats leading the charge to put a sales tax on the ballot. It is not only in direct opposition to the Democratic Party Platform and all the party stands for, but it is an abdication of responsibility.

Eighteen Democrats met last weekend, but the consensus seems to be to put a "menu" on

the ballot to let the voters choose among several unacceptable tax options. Yet, all of these Democrats know — and many readily admit — that a slight increase in the income tax would be adequate to meet the state's needs and would be the most fair and just tax.

The Multnomah County Democratic Central Committee will consider a resolution on August 25th that will deny support to any Democratic legislators who support a sales tax and will announce the decision not to support a candidate prior to the primary election.

This action is necessary and should be adopted. It will help the voters differentiate between Democrats who support the party platform and those who use the name for political expediency.

Immigration for politics' sake

Reagan is using the threat of "feet people" to scare the American people into supporting his war in Central America. He says millions of little brown people will flood the U.S. from Central America and Mexico if he is not allowed to destroy Nicaragua and wage war for his allies in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc. These hoards — poor, uneducated and disease-ridden — will take jobs from American citizens, he says.

At the same time, the administration is on an all-out campaign to give "political asylum" to a Russian boy. This boy, the son of a Soviet diplomat, has been in the U.S. most of his life but returned to the USSR for school last year. Reportedly, he has asked Reagan to help him stay in the U.S. The FBI, the State Department, the CIA, the Immigration Service and of course the press, are spending thousands of dollars attempting to meet with the boy to determine how they can allow or entice him to remain in the U.S.

In the United States a 16-year-old boy is too young to legally smoke, drink, marry, have sex,

work without a special permit, join the military, or vote. Yet our government claims a 16-year-old should be able to make the crucial and probably irreversible decision of whether he wants to give up his country and his family and remain in this country — alone — when his family returns to the Soviet Union. The U.S. Immigration Service is already holding a 12-year-old Russian boy who asked to remain with his school friends in Chicago when his parents, disillusioned immigrants, returned to the Soviet Union. Although the Illinois courts have found that he was detained illegally, the government has refused to turn him over to his parents.

While kidnapping children and breaking up homes for a temporary political coup, the United States refuses asylum to Haitian and Central American refugees, deporting them to certain death.

The immigration policies of this country are obviously based on political expediency and not on humanity.

Why no military coups in U.S.?

In a recent Congress on Latin American Political Thought held in Caracas, a question arose: Why are there no military coups in the U.S.?

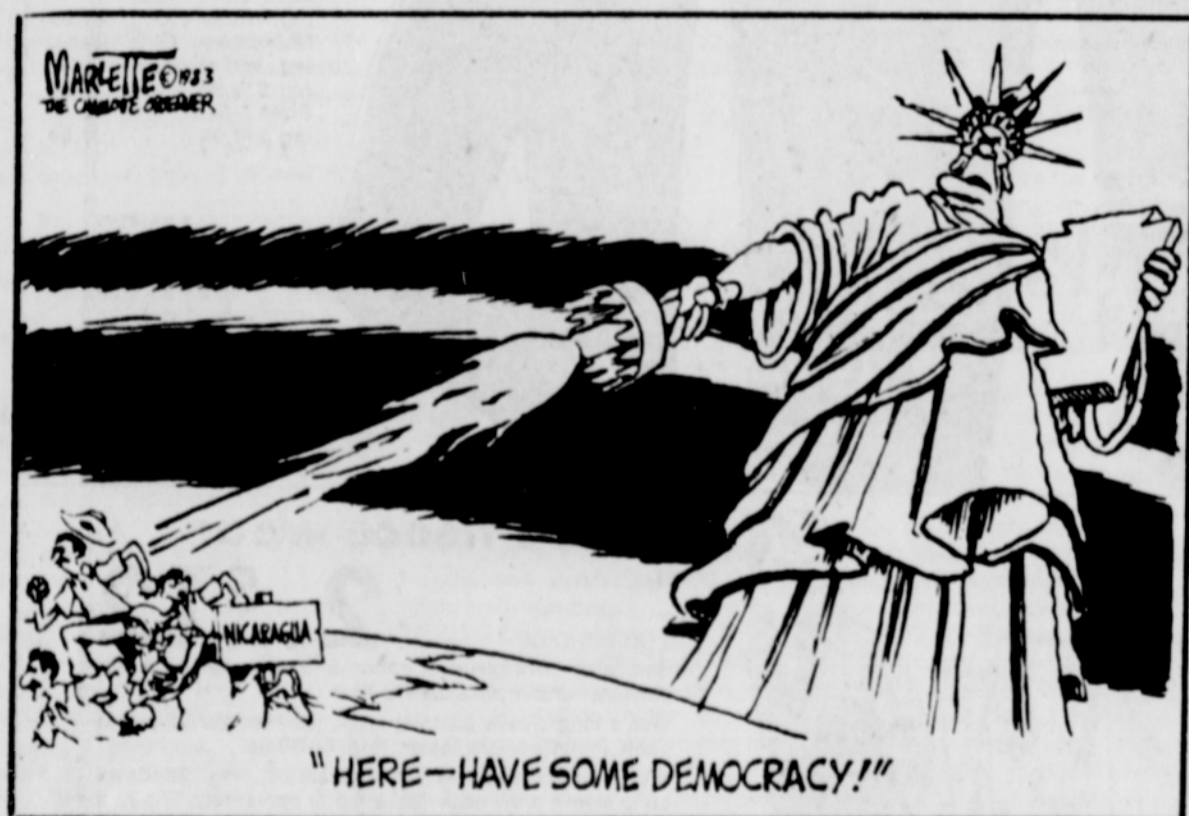
Although many of the Latin American countries have experienced several military coups since their independence, the military has never overthrown the government of the United States.

Bolivian Roberto Jordan Pando gave an incisive response, which was accepted to a greater or

lesser degree by the bulk of the representatives from Latin America, Europe, the U.S. and other regions.

Although the Bolivian delegate spoke an obvious truth, his statement encompassed so much wisdom and reality that no one objected:

"In the United States there are no coups d'etat because there is no U.S. embassy in Washington."



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Is Cuba the problem?

The United States policy in Central America is explained by the Reagan administration as a response to Cuban/Soviet aggression in the area.

The following is an interview with Evan Cecil Martinez, Cuban ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, by a group of professionals from the United States that took place in Havana on August 3rd.

MARTINEZ: Cuba's policy on Latin America has always been a very clear policy, clearly defined and based on principles. This policy has always been maligned and misinterpreted, and said to be an unfriendly policy, by the different governments that have gone through the White House. This is far from the truth, because Cuban policy has expressed its friendship, brotherhood, and hemispheric solidarity in spite of the aggressive U.S. position toward our country.

This policy of aggression began at the very beginning, right after the triumph of our Revolution. The U.S. administration began a policy of isolation, a policy of political and economic blockade, including a policy of psychological and propaganda war.

In spite of this, our country has always thought that Latin Americans and the Caribbean people were brotherly and friendly countries who were suffering the same problems of underdevelopment — depressed culture, lack of scientific and technological development, social and racial discrimination, severe problems of women and children, health problems, lack of resources — which could only be faced with the closest unity and, in a real sense, by national and social liberation.

Our foreign policy, from the very beginning, has been a policy of friendship toward the people of the United States. We do not have any type of prejudice towards the North American people. However, the multinational corporations based in the United States, which have a big interest in our resources and which formerly controlled our economy, tried by every means to show that Cuba was hostile to the United States as a whole. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

From the very beginning, the top leaders of the Revolution went to the United States to show the friendship which our Revolution feels toward the people of the United States. Then, when one of the North American administrations barred United States citizens from traveling to Cuba, they made it appear that it was Cuba that was not allowing North American citizens to visit us.

In a general sense, our policy of principle rests on the fact that we have solidarity with all the progressive movements, with all the liberation movements, with all the parties and groups that are fighting for the independence of Latin America and the Caribbean.

This does not have anything to do with intervening in the internal affairs of those countries. It is a show of solidarity with the people and with the new forces that strive to take their countries from deep underdevelopment — social, political, social underdevelopment — in which they've been suffering for more than a century.

We believe — and this is something very important to the Cuban Revolution which we discovered very early — that the world needs a new international economic order. The world needs the humanity to develop. And we believe, like all non-aligned nations, that a world in which a few have everything and the great majority have nothing is not possible.

Starting from that basic element, all of our political action has been directed toward this new international economic order and toward

international peace — and, therefore, toward ideological pluralism and peaceful coexistence. These are the basic fundamental requirements which have oriented Cuban foreign policy, and specifically our policy toward our hemisphere.

In a recent speech, a member of the U.S. Interest Section in Cuba asserted that Cuba's foreign policy is a slave to Soviet foreign policy — that all of Cuba's military supplies come from the Soviet Union, that there is massive economic aid from the USSR, and therefore Cuba's foreign policy follows Soviet foreign policy even closer than the countries of Eastern Europe that border on the Soviet Union.

Well, as for Cuba being a satellite of the Soviet Union, it is something at which any Cuban would laugh. Do North Americans consider Canada a satellite of the United States? Do North Americans consider England a satellite of the United States? Do North Americans consider Israel a satellite of the United States?

I think the economies of the countries I've named are linked to the North American economy and there is a predominance of North American international corporations in the economies of those countries. But North American propaganda has never said that Israel is a North American satellite.

What happens is that if the North American people might think that Israel is a satellite, it is because Israel is a small country. Big countries are called allies and small countries are called satellites.

Israel is an ally of the United States as much as Canada is. Canada is a member of NATO. NATO is militarily controlled by the United States, but I've never heard that NATO countries are North American satellites or from the "North American bloc." I hear them say "Soviet bloc," but I never hear them say "North American bloc." And I hear talk about the "Cuban satellite," but I never hear them talking about the "Israeli satellite" or the "Canadian satellite."

We are allies. We are close friends of the Soviet people. We are of the same ideology. We agree on the same principles — we believe in co-existence; we believe in pluralism — and this is why we are close friends. Friendship cannot be confused with subordination.

The aid the Soviet Union renders us militarily and economically could be provided by the United States, too. Why doesn't the United States, instead of blockading us, give us dollars for our development; instead of talking about Radio Marti, why don't they send us machinery for our development. Instead of talking about the need to invade Cuba, why don't they send scientists to study how we can better use our mineral resources. Instead of attempting, through the CIA, to kill our leaders and, instead of introducing viruses into our country to kill our children and our people, why don't they give us assistance.

If we have weapons from the Soviet Union, it is because the United States wants to conduct aggressions against us. If they don't do that, what would we need weapons for? We need them because the United States wants to annihilate us. Cuba can never be a danger to the United States. Cuba can never be a danger to the United States unless its security is very weak.

So I think the issue of satellites is a matter of propaganda. Only the communists are satellites; the capitalists are allies.

What is the situation with Cuba's technical and military help to other nations?

The presence of Cubans in other countries is based on agreements

signed between Cuba and other nations. They may be giving medical or technical assistance and, in a few cases, military assistance. The western press is always talking about Cuban troops, which are there only by invitation, not as aggressors. The United States has half a million soldiers in Europe and there's no problem with them and there's no problem with our soldiers. It is different when soldiers are in a country and nobody wants them there — like is happening to North American soldiers in the Panama Canal or in Guantanamo, Cuba. We do not want them here.

Is there a contradiction between wanting a pluralistic world that includes imperialist countries that dominate underdeveloped countries?

What makes achieving a new world economic order difficult is not pluralism. It is the fact that the interests of some countries are alienating interests, dehumanizing interests that are not for the benefit of humanity. They are interests that are only for the benefit of corporations. Sweden is a capitalist country, yet it is really helping Third World countries. But when the strongest western countries have an aggressive policy toward the world, the problem is there. They believe the resources of the world not to be resources for the world, but for them. For the United States — not for the people but for the corporations — what is happening in Asia is as important as what is happening in Latin America. Many of the Third World countries that suffer are not socialist countries, not communist countries or progressive countries. However, they are suffering the economic aggression of the transnational corporations. Therefore, pluralism is not the problem. They have the same ideologies, but have different economic conditions.

How does Cuba decide who it will support in countries like El Salvador when many different groups are opposing the government?

We do not choose groups. Our solidarity is with the Salvadoran people. The Salvadorans will have to choose. We support all those who fight for the people against a criminal regime.

Does Cuba militarily support the FMLN in El Salvador?

Well, we do not support it militarily. We give them all types of solidarity, international support, all types of possible support, but not military support. In fact, they do not need it. All the Israeli weapons, the North American weapons, the western weapons, are taken away from the oppressive regime of El Salvador. Perhaps if they requested it, if they needed it, perhaps we would give it.

Will the Sandinistas be able to defend their revolution?

The Nicaraguan Revolution cannot fail because of one thing — the majority of the people support the Sandinistas. Once a revolution triumphs and the people support it, it is impossible for that revolution to fail.

Why does the United States hate Cuba so much — even more than the Soviet Union?

Cuba was the country most subjugated to the United States — even more than Puerto Rico. Everything in Cuba was dependent on the United States. All we had was North American; nothing was Cuban.

Then one day the Revolution triumphed. We were the first in the hemisphere to throw off United States imperialism, the first to build socialism. We threw out the North American companies that controlled our country and took back our land. I think they hate us so much because they were so shocked that we could do anything ourselves. And for 25 years they have not been able to destroy us.

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