

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Window dressing hides decay

The City of New York is spending \$300,000 in federal community development block grant funds to cover the windows of abandoned tenements in the South Bronx with vinyl decals depicting curtains, shades, shutters and flowerpots.

The area of empty city-owned buildings has the appearance of a bombed-out area and would require tens of millions of dollars to renew. City officials believe the "lived-in look" decals and some minor masonry work on the outsides of the vacant buildings will lift the morale of the residents, discourage vandals and impress the thousands of motorists who pass the area daily.

In addition to the initial expenditures of \$300,000 (at \$6 per decal), the city plans to extend the program to empty buildings along traffic corridors.

This superficial face-lifting—foolish as it might seem—is exactly what the government has been doing for years. War on Poverty, Model Cities, Welfare and other funds, for the most part, have not been directed at making fundamental structural changes that would allow for economic development and elimination of poverty and its symptoms. They have been directed toward easing life under unbearable conditions and diverting attention from the causes of the poverty, crime, disaffection, insecurity and isolation that millions of Americans are forced to live with. Only through economic and social planning directed at meeting the needs of the people rather than the profits of a few will change occur.

In the meantime, government will place highly colored decals over the windows of its battered economy to hide the evidence of internal decay.

Social workers register clients

One of the brighter developments in Portland in recent months is the organization of a coalition of social workers, counsellors, and professionals who work with the poor to register their clients to vote.

Voter registration regulations have long served to disenfranchise the poor and minorities. Yet there are the large, untapped pool of voters who have the greatest motive to "dump Reagan." Who has more reason to vote for a change in national leadership than the poor who

have lost their food stamps, the elderly who are in danger of losing their Social Security, the students who are denied the opportunity for an education, the ill who have no medical care, or the minorities who face administration-fostered discrimination?

This coalition to register social work agency clients also recognizes that they are citizens with rights and responsibilities—that they are people. This registration drive could be a great equalizer—humanizing social workers while enfranchising clients.

Provocation?

Having eliminated the hated Grenada government and occupied that nation, the Reagan Administration is looking for an excuse to invade Nicaragua and/or Cuba. Looking for a provocation, the administration has announced that Fidel Castro has ordered the assassination of U.S. embassy personnel in Latin American countries.

The Cuban government responded that it "has not and could not" give such orders since it opposes terrorism and does not believe that actions should be taken against its individual citizens of an enemy nation. This stems from the belief that the American people, though misled, are not evil; that they do not have control of their government and therefore are not responsi-

ble, as individuals, for its actions. Even during the Cuban Revolution there were no acts of violence against the people and government soldiers were treated as employees of a corrupt and evil government, rather than the instigators of evil.

The Reagan Administration statement has set up a situation where any act of violence against the U.S. government or U.S. citizens can be used as an excuse for an invasion of Cuba—a very dangerous situation for the American people to be placed in since this could lead to a nuclear holocaust.

Now is the time for the American people to signal their opposition to such a move through demonstrations, civil disobedience and other appropriate actions—before an invasion of Cuba or Nicaragua is launched.

Letters to the Editor

Reagan's credibility battle casualty

To the editor:

The credibility of President Reagan was one of the casualties of the Grenada invasion. He maintained that our invasion force went into Grenada to save the lives of medical students and the other Americans who were in danger, but no American, student or otherwise, has complained of being threatened by the Grenadian government or its military forces, and the State Department had received assurances by the Grenadian government that the students were safe. The Monday before the invasion, the airport was open and some people left the island through very routing customs' procedures.

President Reagan further stated that he wanted to prevent another Iranian "hostage" situation—but there is simply no parallel. The Iranian students that took the American Embassy officials hostage had reason to be upset with U.S. foreign policy which had interceded in the

internal affairs of Iran in 1953. At this time the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) installed the Shah in power rather than the popular Mosadegh. The Shah, who was supported militarily and economically by several U.S. administrations, tortured and murdered thousands of Iranians suspected of being political opponents. At a time of transition following the ouster of the Shah in 1979, the U.S. Embassy and its employees served as a symbol of conspiracy with the much-hated Shah.

In contrast, the U.S. had denied any support to the very popular Grenadian government of Maurice Bishop because he directed too much of his budget to social programs, i.e., food subsidies, education, and medical care. The American medical students were in no way connected to the U.S. government. Also, in a country heavily dependent on tourist trade, the Grenadian government would have been foolish to do anything that might

endanger a source of income and foreign trade dollars. The danger to Americans was at best imagined and the motive for their safety was a reality.

At the cost of about 100 lives (Grenadians, Cubans and Americans), with the help of 6,000 fighting men, the President was able to save the medical students the taxi fare to the old airport by bringing them out on the new airport via C-130 military transport planes.

I grieve for the relatives and friends of the victims of the invasion but the lost Marines did not die for the noble cause espoused by the President. He squandered the lives of 18 Marines because he and his millionaire pals did not like the government on that tiny island. With the benefit of a free press and vigorous reporting, U.S. public opinion would correspond more to the 109-8 condemnation rather than the 75 percent public support he enjoys.

Herschel Soles



Unanswered questions

by Dr. Manning Marable

In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Grenada, certain facts are already quite clear. Foremost is this undeniable reality: this was an illegal and unjustifiable invasion of a sovereign nation.

This assertion by no means justifies the bloody coup which overthrew the legitimate socialist government of Maurice Bishop last month. Bishop's New Jewel Movement (NJM) had overthrown the U.S.-backed dictator, Eric Gairy in March, 1979, and had the support of the population. This summer, Bishop appointed a five-member Constitutional Commission chaired by highly respected Trinidadian attorney Allan Alexander, which was setting the basis of new elections. Some army leaders and a radical fraction of the NJM which opposed the popular Prime Minister moved to halt this constitutional process. Yet even the execution of Bishop was no justification for U.S. armed intervention. The invasion has been loudly condemned by almost every traditional ally of the U.S., including Italy, West Germany, Canada and France.

The brief regime of Hudson Austin did not constitute an "external threat" to the security of the U.S., as the President so wildly asserts. Americans could have been permitted to leave the island without resorting to wholesale bloodshed. Moreover, Grenada was incapable of any armed attack against neighboring eastern Caribbean states. Its armed forces totaled fewer than 1800 men, and it had no airforce or navy. But using the fiction that Grenada constituted a leftist threat to the docile, U.S. puppets in the region, Reagan ordered the largest U.S. invasion in decades.

But unanswered questions remain, weeks after the invasion of Grenada:

What was the full role of the CIA in disrupting and sabotaging Bishop's government from 1979 to 1983? From the day Gairy's dictatorship was overthrown, the U.S. has been aggressively hostile to the NJM. In April, 1979, Bishop asked the Carter Administration for aid in reconstructing his nation. The U.S. ambassador offered the insulting amount of \$5,000, and warned Bishop against relations with the Cubans. The Reagan Administration stepped up the attacks on Grenada. According to press accounts, a number of the "students" flown out of Grenada in the first hours of the invasion were CIA agents. What was their part in overthrowing Bishop and his followers?

What was the role of Jamaica's reactionary and unpopular Prime Minister Edward Seaga in the invasion? Vice President George Bush visited Jamaica only two days before Bishop's murder. And during the invasion, Seaga was repeatedly interviewed on U.S. television, obediently mouthing the lines written for him by Reagan, Bush and Co. Was Bush's visit entirely coincidental, or was the destruction of the NJM and Bishop on the agenda?

When was the invasion actually planned? No one in Washington, D.C., seriously believes that this massive maneuver was coordinated in the space of several days. Reagan's crocodile tears for Bishop are a pathetic mask to hide his bitter opposition to the NJM. Indeed, in August and September, 1981, "Operation Ocean Venture" was carried out in the Caribbean, the largest "war games" in years. Over 120,000

troops and 1,000 aircraft were involved in the "mock invasion" of a so-called enemy island, "Amber and the Amberdines." The goal of the invasion was to "install a regime favorable" to the U.S. "Amber" was of course Grenada, as recent history illustrates.

Why was the press kept from Grenada during the invasion? Why were representatives of the media quartered 150 miles away for several days?

Did U.S. forces employ indiscriminately heavy fire at the Grenadian population? Scores were killed and wounded when a U.S. navy plane bombed a civilian hospital. How many other unarmed civilians were massacred by U.S. troops as well?

These unanswered questions assume personal dimensions for this writer. I deeply respected Bishop and supported the NJM. Only one month before the coup I met Vincent Noel of the NJM's International Relations Department when both of us were visiting Jamaica. I planned to visit Grenada this March, and we discussed at length international and U.S. politics. Now to my sorrow I have learned that Vincent was murdered, along with other leaders of the NJM, as well as Bishop.

But these crimes cannot begin to compare with the outrages of the Reagan Administration against the whole population of Grenada. I mourn the NJM, and its promise of a democratic revolutionary society for Grenada. But Bishop himself would urge us to challenge and condemn the U.S. invasion, and to resist this latest criminal folly of the Reagan Administration.



From the Boardroom

by Gladys McCoy, County Commissioner

The Association of Oregon Counties is coming back to Portland after a seven year absence! Why is that so important? For two reasons: (1) This is the annual meeting of the 36 counties in Oregon, of which Multnomah is the largest. And, since we have more resources than any other county, why has it taken so long to return? (2) I have been on the A.O.C. Board since my election to the Board in 1979. During that time I have served as Treasurer, 2nd Vice Chair, 1st Vice Chair, and if all goes according to the normal process, I should become President of the Association when it meets here at the Hilton Hotel, November 16-18.

I continue to believe the general population is unknowledgeable about County government, and yet it is a necessary local jurisdiction for which your taxes are paid. It provides services no other jurisdiction provides because they were mandated by the state to do so.

Early on counties were very limited in the services they provided—roads, law enforcement, courts, care for needy, and tax collections.

They acted almost exclusively as agents of the State, with activities being either authorized or mandated by State law. However, since a 1958 Constitutional amendment authorized counties to adopt "home rule" charters, seven counties have elected to do so. This allows Lane, Washington, Hood river, Multnomah (1967), Benton, Jackson, and Josephine County voters to adopt and amend their own county government organization.

23 of the 36 Oregon counties operate under a "Board of Commissioners" of three to five members. The other 13 less populated counties are governed by a "County Court" consisting of a judge and two Commissioners.

Over the years County functions have increased, as counties, especially Multnomah County, sought to provide for its constituents the same kind and level of services provided by its adjoining cities. Counties have moved from a few mandated services for the poor to some very complex and sophisticated health programs, greatly expensive

criminal justice systems, county-wide library service, roads, bridges, energy, housing, and a wide range of services to the elderly, youth, refugees and other needy populations.

There are few counties with the capacity to hold the Annual Convention, so logically it should come to Portland on a systematic schedule. Like all such conventions, it is a time for getting a report from the Legislature in the odd-numbered years, for meeting the new National President (who this year is Sandra R. Smoley from California), for seeing and hearing about new and innovative programs, and for enjoying the fun and fellowship of colleagues and spouses.

This year's convention will feature some of Portland's finest talent including Rev. John Garlington, noted singer Willa Dorsey, Dr. Garfield deBardelaben and the Jefferson Jazz Dancers. When you see people around town sporting a badge shaped like the Multnomah County logo, smile and say Welcome to Portland.

Work for integration, not exclusivity

To the editor:

A community forum to select a Black candidate as the Democratic nominee to run against white incumbent Ed Leek in the 1984 primary election, was in my opinion a grave mistaken endeavor. The straw vote was won by Ms. Margaret Carter, who is a very competent and qualified individual to be a state representative.

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The Observer reserves the right to edit for length.

She has much support including women's groups and others. Ms. Carter's ability is not the issue. The issue is that this forum should have been opened up to any and all potential candidates including incumbent Rep. Ed Leek so that it would have been possible for him to defend his track record.

Two-time loser for the office of state representative and a loser to Ms. Carter in the straw vote, Harold Williams, stated that if he won the straw vote or not that he would run for the office anyway—OH GOD LET US PRAY. This is however Mr. Williams' constitutional right to run for public office. It is al-

so very disappointing to know the District 18 leadership forum committee of John Jackson & John Garlington, both Portland ministers, Herb Cawthorne, Portland Public School Board member, among others, these people should be working toward integration of the community instead of regression back to the ways of the 1950s and '60s. The 1980s are a time for analytical, political strategists to bring about change for a better District 18. What District 18 needs is not a white or Black candidate but the right candidate.

Jimmy Bang-Bang Walker

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