

Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Reaganism's Not the Problem

For the past six-and-one-half years, virtually every Black politician in America has denounced "Reaganism." Superficially, the term is taken to mean the specific policy decisions of the current occupant of the White House or the actions of his underlings. More broadly, "Reaganism" has been interpreted as a reactionary legislative and socioeconomic agenda, which has sought to reverse the historic gains of the civil rights movement. But whether one refers to an individual — Reagan himself — or to a general repressive body of policies on health care, welfare, jobs and housing for working people and the poor, the term "Reaganism" remains the generic category for nearly everything that's gone wrong in the 1980s.

It is precisely this terminology, and the strategic political assumptions which form its foundations, which must be overturned. The President and his administration have done many things which border close to criminality, at least in the minds of the majority of Black Americans. But an "ad hominem" attack on Reaganism per se sheds little light of the factors which gave the original impetus to the rebirth of conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Reaganism" represented one conservative response by a wing of America's power elite in corporate and financial sectors to a growing crisis within the economy and society during the previous decade. But this political conservatism was not confined to the Republican Party. We fail to remember at times that Jimmy Carter was perhaps the most conservative Democratic president since Grover Cleveland. It was Carter, not Reagan, who sponsored decisive cuts in social welfare and human services; it was Carter who initiated "Cold War II" by his revival of sterile, anticommunist rhetoric and Pentagon expenditures. Carter's utter failure to carry out a moderate liberal agenda, which was responsible for his narrow elevation to office in 1976, led directly to the more destructive programs of Reagan. Black Democratic leaders who want to focus all of their attention on the social havoc spawned by the GOP should be cautioned to turn around and examine their own party's responsibility for the Black community's current difficulties.

Civil rights spokespersons and Black public officials too frequently imply that the resolution to the crisis of Reaganism will come about through the election of "good people" to public office. "Good" in this political lexicon means liberal-to-progressive positions on most public policies. The difficulty with this political logic is that the U.S. political system generally doesn't create "good politicians" vs. "bad" ones. Some of the "best" politicians can be reactionary on certain issues; and in rare instances, an ideological conservative can be fairly enlightened on civil rights or civil liberties issues. The strategy to replace bad politicians with good ones will always fail, unless elected officials are made to be organizationally accountable to their primary constituencies. We need to transcend the politics of personality and charisma, in favor of emphasizing a coherent progressive policy agenda which advances the political objectives of racial minorities, working people, the poor, and other oppressed groups.

Black politician's efforts to check Reaganism have faltered because they are too frequently defensive and reactive. The Reagan administration initiates a policy, and Black Democrats denounce it; the Reaganites nominate someone like Bork, and the Black leadership mobilizes troops to halt his confirmation. We need to be on the front lines in halting Bork's appointment to the Supreme Court, that's true. But we also should do more to transcend the defensive nature and character of our own politics. Its not good enough for us simply to oppose someone else's agenda, while not representing a fundamental alternative.

There's also a failure, among most Black leaders to distinguish tactics from strategy. A tactic is a specific, short-term action designed to increase any group's power; a strategy is a long-term set of tactics which constitute a complex social program: nonviolent demonstrations, economic boycotts, and voter registration drives, are necessary tactics in the freedom struggle. But they're no substitution for the devising a general political strategy which is appropriate for our times.

Most of the White candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination have backed away from both the traditional liberalism of Walter Mondale as well as the neoliberalism of Gary Hart. They're promoting a thinly-veiled echo of Reaganism, without the harsh edges. They're also arguing against real reductions in the military budget, and no major increases in redistributive social welfare programs. And on these terms, there's no fundamental distinction between most of the Republican and Democratic candidates — except the Reverend Jesse Jackson. So Reaganism isn't the problem — the problem is a failure of policy inside both major parties. We need a bold strategy which challenges the conservatism and nonresponsive character of the two party system as a whole.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department at Ohio State University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Employers around the country and in Oregon are beginning to provide child care assistance of various types to their working parent employees. At least 3,000 employers nationwide offer such assistance, compared to around 600 just five years ago. Those firms are not just good corporate citizens. They are finding that child care makes good business sense. Employers report that child care-related employee programs have important payoffs — including fewer missed days, higher employee morale, lower turnover, and an easier time recruiting good people to work for them.

As Child Care Coordinator, Mary Louise will help employers around the state develop child care-related programs. She also will assist employee groups who are interested in encouraging their employers to consider such programs.

What types of programs can employers sponsor? Establishment of a child care center on or near the workplace is one of the most obvious steps, and several Oregon employers have or are developing such a facility. However, a child care center is not a practical option in every work situation. Other valuable programs and policies include flextime, part-time work and job-sharing (policies which can help employees balance their work and family obligations); allowing the use of sick leave for family illnesses; contracting for information and referral services that help parents find suitable child care; and tax-free salary set-asides that can be used for child care.

Companies also can join other firms, local governments and community groups in developing and supporting community-wide child care solutions. Some of these options involve little or no cost to the employer. Moreover, the state is offering a financial incentive in the form of a new business income tax credit for part of the cost of child care assistance to employees.

The adequacy of our child care system affects the future of our children, the strength of our families, and the health of our economy. There is no issue more deserving of our attention and commitment. And through effective public-private sector partnership, we can improve and expand child care services.



FREEDOM & SOCIAL JUSTICE

BY ALEXANDER R. JONES

Director of Minority and Third World Affairs for The Church of Scientology International

Evil Men at Work

The Iran-Iraqi war in the Persian Gulf is a major international conflict which threatens the peace and security of the entire world. You've read about it in the papers, seen it on TV, or heard about it on the radio. Yet despite all the outpouring of information on this war, we are only being shown a facade. The basic cause of this war has been completely, and dangerously, ignored.

The hidden truth about the Persian Gulf fighting is that it was caused by an unsuspected Third Party; a PERSON who purposefully started the conflict. Exactly WHO this person is remains to be discovered, however, such a person is the root cause of not only the Gulf war, but any conflict, whether it is between nations, groups or marriage partners. Incredible? Of course it is. That is the reason it is usually overlooked.

According to best-selling writer and philosopher L. Ron Hubbard, there is actually a natural law: "A third party must be present and unknown in every quarrel for a conflict to exist." This does not mean, Mr. Hubbard explains, "that there are no bad conditions that cause conflict. There are. But these are usually remedial by conference unless a third party is promoting conflict."

He gives an intriguing historical example of this law at work. "The revolutionary forces and the Russian government were in conflict in 1917." However, "only when Germany's official state papers were captured in World War II was it revealed that Germany had promoted the revolt and financed Lenin (the Third Party) to spark it off, even sending him into Russia in a blacked-out train!"

There are many examples of the "Third Party Law" in action. You probably have seen some yourself. A marriage blows up in heated argument. The wife moves out. Meanwhile, the hidden, unsuspected Third Party, an in-law, chuckles quietly. Another example is the FBI which utilized Third Parties to destroy the Black Panther Party by promoting conflicts between the Panthers and other organizations.

Given this information, the solution to any conflict is for both parties to sit down and isolate the Third Party by honestly comparing notes. Only then can peace be obtained.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL
A NEWS SERVICE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE
by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director

Stop the Torture of Children in South Africa

The photos in the newspaper are familiar — unarmed South African youth running away from armed police who fire upon them with teargas and bullets. We have almost become conditioned to these images, to this brutality. What we cannot see on the front pages of our newspapers, however, is the overwhelming numbers of young people who are presently being detained without trial in South Africa's jails. It is this information which the South Africa regime foolishly hopes to hide from the eyes of the world with its new repressive measures.

There are now approximately 8,000 Black South Africans in detention. Of that number, perhaps 3,000 are children, some even as young as 9 years of age. Hoping to extinguish the growing rage which the detentions have incurred, the government has recently forbidden any act which would publicize or seek the release of those now detained. This includes signing petitions, wearing T-shirts with sympathetic slogans, or even praying for those behind bars.

Detention in South Africa has frightening connotations. It is synonymous with beatings, with torture . . . with death. The book, "The War Against Children: South Africa's Youngest Victims," published by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, related the stories of these detainees. The information was provided to them by South African human rights groups such as the Detainees' Parents Support Committee and Black Sash. The book speaks of Joseph, a child of 14 years, whose fingernails are twisted and blackened from electric shock treatments performed while in

detention and whose leg still bears the scar where he was cut by police with a broken soft drink bottle.

The book notes, "A terrifying pattern of abuse has emerged in townships with a heavy military presence: soldiers pick up children on the streets, load them into casspirs (armored vehicles) and hold them for several nightmarish hours. Inside the casspirs, the children are threatened, intimidated and assaulted before being turned out to make their way home."

Then there are the many innocent children who languish in prison for months at a time, denied visits from their parents or a lawyer. One such child, 11-year-old Fanie Goduka, has been accused of throwing stones at two unoccupied vehicles. He was eventually acquitted of the charges. However, before the acquittal, he was denied bail and remained in jail for 57 days because, the police said, they feared the 11-year-old would interfere with witnesses in the case.

The torture of those detained, including the children, has been well-documented. In late 1985, Dr. Wendy Orr, then a district surgeon, was responsible for examining detainees. She filed affidavits regarding the physical condition of the detainees, half of whom were under 18 years of age. According to her affidavit the prisoners "had [welts], bruising, blisters over their backs, arms and on the palms of their hands. Some had lacerated lips and the skin over their cheekbones was split. Several had had their eardrums perforated."

Though the brutality takes its toll on the children, it is equally unbearable for their parents. As one mother recently told a New York Times reporter, "We parents of detainees don't feel like people anymore, we feel worthless. I don't know if we'll run mad or die . . . I keep writing letters to the police to see my children, but I've received no replies."

This is the information which the South African government seeks to hide with its recent, stepped up repression. And idel words of "shock and outrage" from the Reagan Administration are not sufficient. The new crack-down is so outrageous that not only the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference and the South African Council of Churches have vowed to defy the new laws. But even 6 ministers of the conservative Dutch Reformed Church, to which much of the South African cabinet belongs, has stated these regulations would "prevent Christians from obeying the Bible."

Let us remember the images of the fleeing South African children and the brutality we are not allowed to see. Let us keep up the pressure to dismantle the horror that is apartheid. For the suffering children of South Africa are the children of God . . . they are also our children.

Letters to the Editor

Find Ways to Tell the Truth

Permit me to respond to the article in your September 30 issue: "Dr. Prophet Yes . . . Ron Herndon No."

Good journalism dictates that controversial issues be covered in a balanced manner. On the question of whether our schools are doing the job for its African American students, you did a good job of preserving that axiom.

It is regrettable, however, that this front page story served only to exacerbate a situation rather than draw us nearer a solution. I commend Ron Herndon's courage in biting the hand that feeds part of his early childhood education program, and Matthew Prophet's deft handling of sensitive issues. However, I hasten to point out that no other paper carried that story which causes me to wonder where it originated. Was there a press conference, a board meeting, or was this investigative journalism?

I have my own concerns about the demographics of underachieving students, too. However, depending on what statistics you investigate, a considerable range of stories can be told. Given what it at stake, and the permanency of headlines in 72 point bold (very big) type, and the relative unimportance of minor differences in perspective and priorities between Dr. Prophet and Ron Herndon, I caution your staff to find ways to tell the truth which have more meaning. GPA represents only one measure of student performance, and is highly correlated to the subject matter. A "C" grade in algebra may be of more value than an "A" in Physical Education. A more exact focus would be investigating the trend on the number of Black students completing math and sciences courses.

Ultimately, it is the community, not the schools, that can do the most about changing the circumstances of African American children. The Observer's listing of exemplary Black students on the opposite page in the same issue is a good start.

Be reminded that criticism is easy, but creative solutions is where the action is. Please don't let your newspaper stoop to competing with rags whose headlines exploit people's emotions and forego community commitment. Dr. Prophet, Ron Herndon, and the Oregon Alliance of Black School Educators have much in common that would be beneficial to African American students in Portland's schools. I urge you to investigate that.

Michael Grice
President
OREGON ALLIANCE OF
BLACK SCHOOL EDUCATORS
Portland, OR

by Gov. Neil Goldschmidt
GOVERNOR

News From Neil

On September 10, I announced the appointment of Mary Louise McClintock of Portland to the new position of Child Care Coordinator in the State Department of Human Resources. She will work with the business community and with other state agencies to identify ways in which we can meet the needs of Oregon's working parents.

The need for child-care cuts across all segments of our society, because a growing number of Oregonians rely upon child care in order to work. It is no longer true that most families fit the "traditional" model. In reality, the mothers of more than half of Oregon children under the age of six work outside their homes; and more than half of Oregon families have two or more wage-earners.

Yet, as important as child care is to us as a society, it's a struggle for many families to find care which is both affordable and of good quality.

I am seeking the involvement of our state's business community in child care — not only because there aren't enough government resources to solve all of our child care problems, but also because employers have a stake in the adequacy of our child care programs and in the strength of our working families.

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