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Dr. Marable Speaks in Portland

Three young students came in: they were about 15 or 16 years old, much taller than I. This young Brother came up to the front and said, "Yo, is this where the Martin Luther King thing is?" I looked at the young Brother and said, "Yes, Brother, that's right. This is where the Martin Luther King thing is." And he said, "Is that King?" pointing to the portrait. I said, "Yes, that's right. That's Martin." You know what he said? "Well, is he coming?" That's no joke. And you know what I said? "I hope not, but if you see him, let me know."

Story number two: I teach a course on Black political movements and political theory. And in the class, we cover everything from Frederick Douglass through the Civil Rights movement to Black power. The very first lecture I gave was on Frederick Douglass, and I asked the class if there were any questions. A young woman in the back row raised her hand and said, "You know, Dr. Marable, this discussion of Frederick Douglass is absolutely fascinating, 'cuz I never heard of the Brother before, but I have a question. What is this Civil War you keep talking about?" She started taking notes; this was new information for her. I said to myself, "Marable, make this student a project and by the end of this class make an awareness emerge in this person." And I began to see a change. At the start of class, the student was sitting at the back of the class; by the time the class ended, she was sitting at the front of the class.

Why is this so important? Why do we dwell on the past? My grandmother put it quite clearly when she would say, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The same thing is true for political and social struggle. If you don't have a sense rooted in the past, if you don't have a sense of the patterns, the texture processes of exploitation that comes from inequality within a class system, how can you ever hope to build an economic program for freedom? If you don't have a sense of political institutions and how they are related to your oppression in the past, if you can't see how they relate to the present, then how can you possibly devise a strategy for political empowerment in the future? So it's imperative to think historically.

When you think about the conditions, economically and politically, of African people who are involved in revolutionary change, instantly we think of South Africa. Now, outside of South Africa, the world's leading defender of the apartheid regime, unquestionably, is the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. In 1981, the Reagan Administration asked Congress to repeal the Clark Amendment prohibiting covert military aid to Angolan terrorists; authorized the U.S. training of South Africa's Coastguard and vetoed a UN Security Council Resolution condemning South Africa's illegal invasion of Angola. In 1982, the Reagan Administration rescinded control on non-lethal exports to apartheid military and police, and voted for a 1.1 million dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund for South Africa. In 1984, the Reagan Administration established offices in downtown Johannesburg to promote accelerated corporate investment from the U.S. and granted a license for U.S. firms to service South Africa's covert nuclear power plant.

How do we explain all of this in the context of our struggle here in the U.S.? What can we learn from foreign policy abroad, and how they echo into domestic policies at home on race class issues?

In August of 1980, Reagan gave his first campaign address after winning the Republican Party nomination. In a small town called Philadelphia, Mississippi, at a large gathering of about 6,000 people, many who were waving confederate flags, Reagan got up and spoke these words: "I have always been and I will always be for states rights."

Question: What does "states rights" mean in the context of the Mississippi Delta? Given the political culture and history and the economic environment, it means white supremacy. The crowd knew that. Reagan's speech writers understood that.

Question two: What happened in the town of Philadelphia, Mississippi, during the summer of 1964? Answer: Three civil rights workers were brutally murdered, two whites and one Black. The crowd understood that. When the President of the United States defends states rights in a place where civil rights workers were murdered, what is the message that is going out to the crowd?

We can see so many parallels between Reagan's America and the nature of race/class oppression inside South Africa. All of us know that inside of South Africa that racism is at the heart of the criminal justice system. Let me give you an example. The Internal Security Act of 1982 allows for the indefinite detention, without trial, of political protesters; the outlawing of Black and progressive organizations; the prohibition of any public gathering

Stress: Myth or Migraine?

Stress disability claims are a growing phenomenon. Former Portland Police Chief Penny Harrington's recent stress claim propelled this once-quiet issue into the spotlight. Oregon has acquired a reputation for being the most liberal state in the nation when it comes to dispensing stress disability awards. The number of mental stress benefits awarded in Oregon has more than tripled since 1980. Five claims are filed for every one that is accepted! The average cost of a mental stress award is nearly triple the average for workers' compensation claims in general.

Some professionals claim that since you can't see or feel stress, it doesn't exist! They say if you accept the job, you also accept its strains. Is stress a myth? If so, why the rapid rise in claims? Is it for the "pot of gold"? Or do these people have legitimate illnesses and complaints? Should companies be financially liable for creating a stressful work climate? Or is "job stress" a cop out for those unable to handle their jobs? How can we know whether a job, or the employee, is responsible for the stress? How can we protect against frivolous claims, while also protecting the mental health of employees? What do YOU think? Join Jack Faust and his guests for the taping of this discussion on Sunday, November 22nd from 6-7 p.m. Guests need to arrive at KATU (21st and NE Sandy Blvd.) between 5-5:15 p.m. Please call Mary Fetsch, Frank Mungerson or Janice Rickhoff at 231-4620 for seat reservations. The public is welcome. This program will be broadcast on Sunday, November 29th from 6-7 p.m.

or meetings of individuals or groups that criticize the apartheid regime; the prohibition of the printing and publication and dissemination of any Black or anti-apartheid newspaper, journal or magazine. And it sanctions random police searches without warrants.

Racism is also at the heart of the American political system. We talk in this country about having political freedoms. Do we have political freedom? Let's take a look at the relationship between criminal justice or injustice and African-American people.

Every year in this country, over 2.2 million arrests of African-Americans occur. Every single year! There are currently over 350,000 Black men and women currently incarcerated in federal and state penitentiaries. At least one-half of all Black prisoners are 29 years old or less. About 3,000 Black prisoners are not even old enough to vote. Most Black prisoners earn less than \$8,000 annual income in the year prior to their arrest. And 45% of all Black prisoners were unemployed in the year prior to their arrest.

So what is the relationship between economic inequality and the criminal justice system? Former director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers said, "Someone Black and poor tried for stealing a few hundred dollars has a 90% chance of being convicted of robbery with a sentence averaging between 84 to 134 months. A white corporate executive who embezzles millions of dollars from his firm has only a 20% chance of conviction and a sentence averaging about 20 to 48 months. In short, justice is not color-blind when Blacks are the accused in this country. And there is a direct relationship between incarceration patterns, imprisonment patterns, social class and race patterns.

So many people have focused on the fight involving Bork, Ginsberg and now Kennedy. But what people fail to understand is that the Supreme Court decides only about 150 cases a year. The Federal District Courts and the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last year decided nearly 300,000 cases. Reagan's judicial strategy to perpetuate political inequality and economic oppression has been quite simple.

What Reagan has tried to do is to pack the federal district courts and the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals with white, conservative, racist, elitist males. By 1989, January 20th, Reagan will have appointed roughly 400 federal judges, more than one-half the total number of 744 judgeships throughout the country. It is these white conservatives, and not the Supreme Court, that will be decisive in deciding most legal questions that will affect you and your children over the next half century.

Under Jimmy Carter, as ineffective as he was, 14% of the appointments to the Federal District Courts were African-American, 7% were Hispanics. During Reagan's first term of office, from '81 to '85, Reagan's appointments to the Federal Courts for Black and Hispanics together was less than 1%.

In the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Carter had 56 appointees. This included 11 women, 10 Blacks, 2 Hispanics and 1 Asian-American. Reagan's appointments have been somewhat different. In the first four years, 1 woman, 1 Black and 1 Hispanic.

Let me turn to the issue of education. What about students who are planning to go into teaching as a profession, whether college or secondary education? It's critical to recognize the role of institutional racism in the underdevelopment of African-American children and African-American people. Let me give you three very frightening statistics. First, the percentages in the patterns of Black college and university enrollment has decreased in the last five years. From 1900 to 1981, education was the one constant success story in the Black freedom struggle. Because Black parents understood that the college door, the college schoolhouse represented the door of opportunity through which their young women and men could move into positions in the economic mainstream of society, and could advance the political goals of the Black freedom movement. In 1981, 1.3 million African-American students were enrolled in colleges and universities at all levels across the country. Did you know that since 1981, the percentage of Blacks enrolled in college has declined more than 20%?

As a people united, we have lived through many processes. We know what it's like to be excluded by signs that said "white only", "for colored only." We know what it's like to live in fear of violating the laws of segregation. The definition of democracy was expanded, deepened and broadened; we understand through that process of sacrifice and struggle we can change the boundaries of democracy in a more fair and just manner. But, unless we link that to the task ahead, for economic democracy, for economic justice, the political process of democracy will always be compromised...

Deadline for Academy Applications Nears

Young men and women who are residents of the 5th Congressional District and are interested in applying for a nomination to one of the U.S. service academies have until November 30, 1987 to get their completed applications into Congressman Denny Smith's office.

Each year, Congressman Smith is allowed to nominate 10 individuals between the ages of 17 and 22 to each academy. The nominations are made by the Congressman's Academy Nominations Advisory Committee in December.

Applications must send a completed application and two letters of recommendation. One of the letters must be from a high school official. In addition, the applicants must send a list of extracurricular activities, a one-page essay detailing their interest in receiving a nomination, a copy of their high school transcript, and a copy of either their SAT or ACT scores.

For more information, please contact Congressman Smith's Salem office at P.O. Box 13089, Salem, OR 97309; or call 1-800-452-7889 or in the Salem area 399-5756.

Local Truck Diving School is Endorsed by the Oregon Trucking Association

The International Institute of Transportation Resource Inc., (I.I.T.R.), a vocational truck driving school in Clackamas, Oregon, has been endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Safety Management Council of Oregon Trucking Association.

The school's corporate offices and training facilities are located off Highway 212 at 15828 S.E. 114th in Clackamas, Oregon. I.I.T.R. has branch campuses at Chicago, Illinois and Detroit, Michigan.

For information about the school, call Dan Simpson at (503) 657-8225.

Oregon Democratic Party Announces Affirmative Action Committee

Chairwoman Judy Camahan, of the Democratic Party of Oregon, has announced the appointment of Frank Biehl, 30, a Portland millworker and lobbyist for the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers; Bobbie Greelick, 42, a Portland teacher of learning disabled children; Richard Meyer, 35, Director of the Burnside Community Council of Portland; and Lois Stranahan, 58, of Portland, a retired Communications Worker and Union Activist, to the Democratic Party of Oregon's "Affirmative Action Committee".

This Committee has been charged with the task of assuring adequate implementation of the provisions of the Delegate Selection Plan for the 1988 Democratic Presidential Convention to be held in Atlanta, Ga. in July, 1988.

The Committee members will serve as a speakers bureau on the Delegate Selection Plan and will be working on the delegate selection process. Mrs. Stranahan has been a national convention delegate and is active in the Multnomah County Central Committee. She is presently an alternate to the State Central Committee.

Mr. Biehl has been active in the Multnomah County Democratic Central Committee and is an alternate to the State Central Committee. He is also an active member of his union.

Mrs. Greenlick who recently moved from Salem to Portland is active in the Jewish Community.

Mr. Meyer has been active in the Multnomah County Democratic Central Committee and at present is a delegate to the State Central Committee representing the First Congressional District.

Other Committee members include: Senator Jim Hill, Salem, Chair of the Committee; Peggy Sato, Salem, Lobbyist for Georgia Pacific Corporation; Anne Bunnenberg, Attorney, Eugene; Harold Bock, Retired Teacher, Myrtle Creek; Diane McDonald, Legal Secretary, Madras; and Elnathan Davis, Retired Log Scaler, Klamath Falls.

Gas Assistance Program Underway

Starting Monday, Northwest Natural Gas will send special red envelopes with their bills to solicit tax-deductible donations to the Gas Assistance Program (GAP), which helps the less fortunate stay warm in the winter.

Each year, the company's customers, employees and shareholders contribute to GAP, which helps the elderly, handicapped and less fortunate pay their heating bills. Donations are used to help those living in all communities served by the gas company.

"Helping our less fortunate neighbors in the community is a good way to get into the holiday spirit," said Phil Griffin, coordinator of the GAP campaign and Customers Office manager of Northwest Natural Gas. "Because of the generosity of our customers, we were able to help 2,202 families and individuals last

year." Northwest Natural Gas shareholders are contributing funds to match donations up to a total of \$75,000. During last year's campaign, a total of \$188,020 was raised including a shareholder contribution of \$75,000 and the \$14,926 raised from the company's Spring Classic 8-kilometer road run held last April.

Contributions are sent directly to United Way/GAP and are then distributed to the needy by the state's community action agencies. Each individual or family is screened by a community agency to determine eligibility. Those requiring assistance should contact their local community action agency or the United Way.

Send all contributions to UW/GAP, 718 W. Burnside, Portland, Oregon 97209.



Free children's clothing was available Saturday at the O.B. Williams Convention Center, 220 N.E. Beech St. The clothing is the result of a "Children Helping Children" drive that was sponsored by KGW (Channel 8), Children's World Centers and the Low Income Families Emergency Center (LIFE). Clothing is available during business hours from L.I.F.E. Center, 2746 Union Ave. Photo by Richard J. Brown

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