

Vantage Point

By Ron Daniels

Demanding Conversion To A Peace Economy In The U.S.

The Cold War is over. The Soviet Union can no longer be conveniently used as a target and rationale for a huge military/war budget. The end of the Cold War was supposed to result in a "peace dividend" to be used to tackle domestic problems here in the U.S. But there is no peace dividend in sight. Though a modest reduction in military spending is being projected, there is no meaningful effort to redirect national resources to meet the overwhelming demands which are emanating from the tragic State of Emergency gripping the poor and disadvantaged in this country.

Monies are being diverted to the budget deficit, the S&L bail-out, the FDIC bail-out and now there is talk of \$3.5 billion (from the military budget) to bail-out an ailing Soviet Union. In the meantime, the casualty reports continue to come in from the desolate and desperate war zones in America's inner-cities -- suffering children, wasted minds, drugs, crime, violence, wounded and murdered human beings. There is no justice in a nation which continues to bail-out the rich, fuel a bloated military budget, and send scarce resources abroad when millions of people are dying from neglect and spiritual despair in the U.S.

Up from the depths of this death and despair must come a strident demand that this nation's economy be transformed for a war and injustice economy to a peace and justice economy. A peace economy can only be achieved with a conversion from wasteful military/war spending to civilian/domestic spending. Peace and security must come to mean justice, peace and security in every community and every neighborhood right here in the U.S. To accomplish that goal the U.S. must redefine its role on the world scene.

The U.S. cannot be the policeman of the world, intervening in the affairs of other countries simply to protect the "vital interest" of U.S. corporations. The crises of human misery in this country dictates that U.S. public and private capital and resources be directed towards solving domestic problems in this country. The defense/war budget must be reduced by at least 50% and the resulting peace dividend used to invest in human needs and human development here in the U.S.

Needless to say translating the demand for conversion to a peace economy into reality will not be an easy task. But it is an essential task which poor and working people and the disadvantaged must undertake as a life and death proposition. Starting at the local and state levels a grassroots movement for conversion must be initiated. Community based organizations, civil rights groups and labor must lobby school boards, city councils, mayors, county commissioners, and members of state legislatures to adopt resolutions calling on the federal government to drastically reduce military spending in favor of civilian/domestic spending. All of these political jurisdictions which are reeling under the impact of budget cuts must be neighborhood of the wisdom of conversion to a peace economy.

Elected officials at the local and state level must come to see that it is simply impossible to manage the mess created by Reaganomics and the Reagan Revolution. There is no "humane" way to cut aid for the homeless and funds for housing when the number of homeless people is increasing; reduce allocations for public education when the public schools are already pushing out millions of functional illiterates; reduce or eliminate general relief/wel-

fare when the unemployment rate is already at depression levels for poor and working people and the disadvantaged; watch helplessly as hospitals and health care centers close when the drug crisis and the AIDS epidemic is escalating.

Public officials must be actively pressed to emulate the example of Baltimore's Mayor Curt Schmoke. Based on an initiative launched by the Jobs with Peace Campaign, which was backed by community based organizations, civil rights organizations and labor, Mayor Schmoke is leading a march on Washington from Baltimore in mid-October to demand that funds be cut from the military budget to support human needs.

The conversion to a peace economy is indeed a matter of life and death for poor and working people and the disadvantaged in the U.S. Therefore poor and working people must be deadly serious about this mission. People power must be in evidence in the streets and at the ballot box. Those elected officials who are willing to join the initiative to convert to a peace economy should earn some consideration in terms of continued support in their elective offices. But those who fail to fight for the conversion to an economy which will meet the human needs of the dispossessed must be met at the ballot box and defeated.

Ending militarism and ushering in a peace economy may well be the most urgent task confronting those of us who want a more humane society in the U.S. We must fight to seize the peace dividend from the military-industrial complex and use that dividend to lay the groundwork for a peace economy. Otherwise there will be no peace in this land. No justice -- No Peace!

Letter to Mr. Tucker

Dear Mr. Tucker,

I am writing to you to address why "sisters" get upset when they see "brothers" with white women. This past fourth of July, I went to a barbecue where there were 15 - 20 young brothers. Not a one came with a black female. Brothers have told me "they" are nicer. As far as I am concerned it is another very serious form of brain washing. I see too many black persons (male & female with no racial pride). I have seen black men desert their black families. Don't quote statistics on how many sisters will never marry. I am sick of this garbage. Quoting statistics is like playing god and people manipulate statistics to reflect what they want.

Let's get real here. The white folks have just as many serious problems in their community, contrary to what the utopia, a lot of blacks folks think they live in. We need to nurture our own, spiritually and emotionally. Something is seriously wrong in our community.

Thank you,
A concerned "sister"
Brenda

There's only one way to come out ahead of the pack.

QUIT

American Heart Association
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Perspectives

By Professor McKinley Burt

When Is A Wheel Not A Wheel?

That question may not be as nonsensical as it sounds. Where, as suggested last week, some individuals or groups may have been endlessly "spinning their wheels," keep in mind that wheels can be "attached" to a vehicle (program) that is really GOING SOMEWHERE -- going on to reveal new scenes and possibilities, effective action and application of resources.

Following my lead, a number of parents have successfully implemented some initial elements of such an approach (see front page article on education, "Parents Face School Daze"). Now, in addition to the underutilized corporate and governmental resources I have consistently cited as available for the asking, there is the often-neglected community and neighborhood support opportunities. Here, I would emphasize how important it is to have a convenient site available for meetings or other activities -- especially one whose facilities and environs are compatible with the project.

For example, the parent group that obtained thousands of dollars in resources on their own initiative this summer ("School Daze" article, 9/11/91), found their activities expedited no end by having a regular place to convene and plan on a scheduled basis. In Northeast you might consider contacting Jeff Parks, owner of "Texas No. II" at 1708 N. E. Alberta St. (280-9115 after 11 a.m.). This frequent contributor to community programs has available, just off the main restaurant, a banquet room that can seat 12 to 16 people. However, there is available in the 1600 block on the opposite side of the street a very modern public facility with every imaginable amenity, and which can handle up to TWO HUNDRED PERSONS.

Either of those two locations are very close to my office and I am always available for any input or developmental strategy that may prove helpful. Further, I would remind parents of other

undertutilized resources that many neglect. Particularly, THEIR WORKPLACE, where the corporation or public agency may or may not ALREADY be in the role of providing education assistance to "classrooms." The point here is such assistance may not be reaching your school, and that is something which parents must determine -- and follow up on. And if a parent's employer is not a participant in an outreach/mentorship program in support of the schools, then THE PARENTS SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND REQUEST SUCH INTERACTION!

We are speaking of any and everything from providing ethnic or female role models from the plant staff for classroom visits (motivation and career orientation), to providing physical resources and hardware, particularly that which is relevant to technology and communication. Also, it is a fact that all of us know of excellent role models right in our community -- people who are not brought in to interface with our children, but who have tremendous skills as evidenced by the fact that their corporate and public employers have placed them in key positions indicative of their talents. While there are a few exceptions to this attitude in our community's schools, an overall "design" may be inferred. Try the following on for size!

Where earlier in the year I made a series of successful presentations to the student body of an area school, generating over a hundred responses from students of all races to the effect that their eyes had been opened to the magnificent (and nation-building) contributions of African American scientists and inventors -- and that the knowledge would certainly make a difference in their attitudes and perspectives in respect to all minorities, NEVERTHELESS THE SCHOOL STAFF HAS DECIDED THAT "MR. BURT CAN NOT RETURN OR BE RECOM-

MENDED ELSEWHERE BECAUSE HE DOES NOT HAVE A DOCTORATE IN EITHER SCIENCE, EDUCATION OR HISTORY."

Now, we understand what that is all about, and it is not that much of a problem to ME! After all, my book, "Black Inventors of America" is used in schools across the country -- and still selling overseas. And I still get requests from corporate and public agencies to make presentations to their personnel to acquaint them with the documented abilities of minorities and women in science and technology. And I am asked to consult with their staffs on strategies to expedite their involvement and integration in the workforce -- much of that recognition based on achievements ranging from a National Science Association award to being asked by a top, nationally-recognized scientist to provide a math-learning methodology to a school with which he was involved. Not to mention teaching at a state university for ten years with classes accredited in four separate disciplines during that period.

No, not that much of a problem to ME! But, what about the school children who are not to find out who they really are -- who are not to gain a realistic self-image and who are not to be motivated to learn or to say "no" to drugs because "I am somebody and I do have a future." WE HAVE PEOPLE IN THE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT WHO ARE RECRUITING GANG MEMBERS IN THEIR OWN SPECIAL RACIST WAY!

I emphatically urge you parents to implement the suggestions I have made here the past weeks instead of "going with the flow." Though I have encouraged more participation at the school level, it is obvious that meaningful intervention is going to have to come from parents who must organize independently of a rather treacherous system. Continued next week.

Mayor Clark Contacts Pillay Family

Pillay Family Tragedy Is Our Tragedy - Mayor Clark contacted Mr. George Pillay by phone this week following word that his Portland home had been spray painted and vandalized by racists. Mr. Pillay, who recently moved his family to Portland from South Africa, told the Mayor that he planned on staying in Portland but will move his family to a different location. Mayor Clark conveyed his deep disgust and regret for the hateful, racist acts against the Pillay family and offered the help of the Gang Graffiti Team. The Graffiti Team is a community resource available through the Youth Gangs Outreach Program (Telephone: 823-4112). Team members will expertly paint over unwanted gang and racist graffiti.

Urban League names Marketing and Development Director

The Urban League of Portland has announced the appointment of Michael Pullen as director of marketing and development. Pullen was formerly with International Film and Video of Portland. He has also held public relations positions with Royal Viking Line of Coral Gables, Florida and the American Academy of Ophthalmology in San Francisco.

The Urban League of Portland is a private, non-profit community service agency serving and advocating for African-Americans and others in the metropolitan Portland area.

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Reinvestments in the Community

Crime and Punishment

by Professor McKinley Burt

"Stop the merry go round" the nation cries, "I want to get off!" But few, if any, wish to address the real nature of an agonizing problem that has put our nation at risk; WESTERN CIVILIZATION IS FUNDAMENTALLY VIOLENT!

Already, at the end of the third quarter, statistics indicate that crime against both people and property will substantially increase this year. At the same time we are informed that A. There are not enough law enforcement personnel to properly investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice. B. If they were caught, tried and convicted, the facilities are not available to house them all--hence the "revolving door syndrome" that leaves most male factors on the street. C. The concept of "rehabilitation" has been buried under the weight of a failing, underfunded 'system' of "Criminal Justice" (?)

It is increasingly apparent that at the current and accelerating rate of lawlessness in this republic it will be impossible to fund an effective

system of jurisprudence - let alone afford the facilities to house, feed and supervise an evergrowing population that may approach one tenth of our citizenry by the year 2000. But, while we ring our hands and find ourselves overwhelmed by the media reports and polemics on our immorality and culpability--and by the many sermons on our departure from the ways of righteousness--some are as King, "is there really anything new about all of this?"

Of course there is nothing new here, whether one views things in either a religious or a secular context. For many of us the "Bible" provides our concepts of justice, morality, fairness, legality and other codified prescriptions for ethical relationships. And at the same time there are described terrible times of complete breakdowns in law and order as a whole as well as in inter personal relationships. But always these conditions are followed on by equally violent periods of "punishment for sins" leading to eventual

redemption and restoration of righteousness.

And the secular-minded are able to go back 2000 years further in history to find their models in African history -- Egypt and Ethiopia, where between dynasties are found the same catastrophic losses and resurrection of justice and nobility in the culture. Too, one need look no further than the cities of 18th century England to find exact counter points to America's urban traumas -- from "crime-in-the-street" to corruption in government. So, perhaps, the only distinguishing factor in the contemporary scene is DRUGS!

This leads to a pretty obvious conclusion. Unless the problem of drugs in America is dealt with immediately and vigorously, none of the conventional solutions being retrieved from history will be of any avail. "No" must be said not only by the "little people" but by every element of the body politic from congress to the white house - and mean it for a change or we all perish.

"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications throughout the USA