

EDITORIAL

BY KEN WONG

If the passage of California's Proposition 187 was a wake-up call for Asian Pacific Americans throughout the country, the Republican Contract with America is a three-alarm fire.

The contract is anti-immigrant, anti-Asian and anti-worker. It goes beyond attacking undocumented immigrants to attacking legal immigrants. And it will harm all Asian Pacific Americans struggling to become economically secure.

From an economic standpoint, the contract is a dangerous rehash of the Reagan/Bush policies that brought us a huge national debt, a growing gap between rich and poor and attacks on the civil rights of women and people of color.

The Republicans want to help the rich by cutting capital gains taxes. They are also calling for millions more for prison construction and billions more for military spending.

At the same time, they want to

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Asian Pacific Alliance Attacks Contract

slash and restrict social programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and to place children in orphanages. Cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security will also be necessary to meet their budget goals. This would only make matters worse for the elderly, struggling families and millions of poor children.

The contract makes a mockery

of the Statue of Liberty by eliminating over 60 social programs for legal permanent residents. Many recent immigrants are in great need of government services to facilitate acculturation and their ability to enter the work force and become financially secure. Yet the Republican contract would deny legal immigrants access to school lunches, nutrition programs, childhood immunizations, AFDC,

Supplemental Security Income, job training and other programs.

Two thirds of Asian Americans are immigrants and the elimination of benefits for legal residents would have a disproportionate impact on the Asian community. In addition, the poverty rate of Asian Americans exceeds that of whites and is very high among Asian refugee communities. Cuts in social programs and services would have a devastating impact on these newcomers to America.

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, a national organization of Asian Pacific American workers, is fighting hard to protect our community from the Republican contract. We are joining with labor unions, civil rights organizations, environmentalists, women and community groups to oppose Republican efforts to attack working people and immigrant communities. We urge all Asian Pacific Americans and all working people to join in this important struggle.

perspectives

A Final List Of Both Classic And Modern Books On Black History

This is not to say that in the past few weeks we have come close to covering the growing number of texts and authors rendering truthful accounts of the black races to the world's culture and science. What we have sought to do is produce a list of very interesting and "readily obtainable" volumes which will bolster your pride and your self-esteem--not to mention sure motivation for you and yours.

In the February, 8 issue of the Portland Observer newspaper, this column provided a list of 3 prime sources for



By Professor McKinley Byrt

books and other materials of special interest to African Americans. Inadvertently, I omitted a valuable local source: Powell's Book Store at Tenth and West Burnside. If still having difficulty call me at 284-7080, or FAX at 284-0484.

"The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality", Cheikh Anta Diop, Lawrence Hill & Co., 1974, A very readable and fundamental account of the title, this classic thoroughly documents the archaeological, anthropological and linguistic evidence. Includes illustrations by this renowned scholar from the African Continent (Senegal).

"The Destruction of Black Civilization", Chancellor Williams, Third World Press, 1976. This black author's account of the great African civilizations that earlier the Greek historians and philosophers, Herodotus and Plato, had described as "the greatest in the world" is perhaps the most widely read of his genre. Progresses forward through the conquests of Islam, European Colonization, American slavery, right up to today's racism.

"Stolen Legacy", George G. M. James. This is an immensely popular account; this black author documents that the so-called "Greek" schools of philosophy, religion and sci-

ence were really of African origin", and that "the Egyptian Empire extended to Western Asia, Syria and Palestine."

"Before The Mayflower" Lerone Bennett Jr. and "They Came Before Columbus", Ivan Van Sertima are two great companion books to have before the Europeans.

"The Miseducation Of The Negro", Carter G. Woodson and his earlier-written, "Education of The Negro". Both of his fifty year-old classics warned even back then of what was happening in our education system, "America's chains of slavery are no longer on our bodies but on our minds."

"Marcus Garvey And The Vision of Africa". Early on this organizing genius clearly understood the vast economic power that lays within the grasp of African Americans if they would pool their monies and talents to develop commercial relations with their home kind ("just as whites have already done"). He organized a half-million American blacks and scores of business enterprises including a steamship line -- before being betrayed by envious, jealous and frightened blacks.

And let us by no means neglect the pioneer who, unacknowledged, pointed the way so early on for our more renowned historians, the prolific J.A. Rogers. With revealing photos he wrote "Nature Knows No Color-Line, World's Great Men of Color, Sex and Race, Africa's Gift to America, 100 Amazing Facts About The Negro, As Nature Leads", and others; W.E.B. Dubois said, "Greatest Living!"

Say, I just read, "Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator" by Doris L. Rich. A wonderful, motivational story of a black female aviator who was licensed as a pilot in 1921, two years before Amelia Earhart. Published by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. Afterword copyright by Mae Jemison, M.D., the first black female astronaut.

BLACK EMPOWERMENT Is Real Welfare Reform Possible

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

Everyone - those on the receiving end and those whose taxes pay for it - agrees that the welfare system isn't working. The system is degrading, inefficient and top-heavy. Much of the hundreds of billions of dollars that the federal government spends each year on welfare never reaches people in need. Some surveys indicate that close to 80 percent of it winds up in the hands of the bureaucrats and poverty professionals.

But while the current welfare system is a disaster, most Americans believe that the country can't just turn men and women without jobs or other means of support out on the streets. Most Americans believe that children - all children - must have food to eat. That's why the welfare program was originally established 60 years ago as part of the Social Security Act.

Still, the outcry for reform persists. Some have pointed out how politically motivated that outcry is. On my television show this week, my guest, the Rev. Al Sharpton, noted that while Congress was willing to bail out the Savings and Loan companies to the tune of \$400 billion, many of our elected officials are obsessed with cutting welfare. Most of the proposals being put forward, both from Newt Gingrich's Republicans and Bill Clinton's Democrats, talk about replacing "welfare" with "workfare." The Republican plan outlined recently by Congressman E. Clay Shaw Jr., R-Fla., echoing the reforms proposed last year by President Clinton, would require that after two years on welfare people take jobs or become part of some work program. But neither the Republicans or Democrats have addressed the critical questions: What jobs? What programs? Who would pay for these work programs? And how would cuts in welfare spending affect the overall economy?

These questions are being posed

by economists and labor experts who criticize both the Democratic and Republican proposals. In a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, these economists argued that the proposed restructuring of welfare could increase the poverty rate from the current 13 percent of the population to as much as 22 percent and that the reduction of per capita income could have a negative "ripple effect" on poorer urban and rural areas of the country. Labor experts have noted that the economy will have difficulty absorbing millions of workers without skills or job experience.

The real question is: Can we create an economic arrangement which takes millions of people off welfare and brings them into the work force in ways that foster the growth and development of both the economy and the people whose lives will be profoundly affected by this shift?

In my opinion, there is no evidence that the government can produce serious and workable solutions

to these problems. Government has simply become too controlled by Democratic and Republic politicking to come up with real solutions capable of moving the country forward. Until we take care of that problem, there is no way out of social, economic and political gridlock, no possibility of reforming the welfare system and no chance of setting the stage for bona fide economic expansion.

A restructuring of the political process that opens it up to include the American people and breaks down the control of the two major parties would be the first real step in the direction of welfare reform. If the process is open to the people--through term limits, initiative and referendum, recall, the elimination of PACs, ballot access and election reform--if we can create real democracy in America, then I am very confident that the American people can find humane and developmental solutions to the failure of the welfare system and all the other problems we face today.



Letter To The Editor

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Amendment Could Hurt Social Security

BY MARTHA A. MCSTEEN

Some members of Congress are acting like mad scientists. They're trying to mix two incompatible issues, knowing full well the results could be explosive.

I'm referring, of course, to a proposal now before the Senate to include Social Security in a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget. On their own, Social Security, which keeps millions of Americans young and old out of poverty and a balanced budget are great ideas. But, together, in a constitutional amendment, they're a recipe for fiscal disaster.

Despite all the campaign promises to leave Social Security alone, proponents of the balanced budget constitutional amendment are steamrolling toward a major and dangerous change to Social Security.

Don't misunderstand - Ameri-

can's senior citizens strongly support the idea of a balanced budget. But any constitutional amendment which includes the Social Security program is the wrong way to go.

The proposed constitutional amendment would rely heavily on the annual surpluses of the Social Security trust funds - payroll taxes paid by working Americans - to offset the huge deficit in the general revenue fund.

In fact, if this amendment were passed, the Social Security trust fund, in effect, would cease to exist. All the monies that have been earmarked specifically for beneficiaries both young and old no longer would be separated from the rest of the budget. There would be no trust funds - only revenues and outlays. There would be no distinction made for monies taken in by the government for a specific purpose.

The problem is the entire federal government does not operate at a

deficit. Only the spending programs financed by general revenues are running a deficit. Social Security and many other trust fund programs are running substantial surpluses, which then are being taken to mask the true size of the deficit.

The Social Security program is soundly financed. In fact, the Social Security trust fund is estimated to run a surplus upwards of \$60 billion this year. This money was collected for Social Security benefits and administrative expenses only and should not be used for deficit reduction. The Social Security program should be protected from the general budget process, not just for today's seniors, but for the future beneficiaries who are counting on the program when they retire.

Controlling government spending and getting the federal budget in order is part of the job of every lawmaker elected to Congress. Of course we need to control a deficit

that runs in the hundreds of billions of dollars. But why unnecessarily destroy a successful program to accomplish that?

The 1994 elections should not be construed as authorizing Congress to divert Social Security revenues to a federal deficit slush fund. But that is precisely what the balanced budget amendment would do. If members of Congress cannot do their jobs without raiding the Social Security trust funds, then it's time to find leaders who can.

Despite all the campaign rhetoric and promises to leave Social Security alone, proponents of the balanced budget amendment are moving toward a fundamental change to Social Security. They need to be told to keep their fingers out of the Social Security cookie jar.

Martha McSteen is president of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

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