

EDITORIAL

BY DR. JAMES ZOGBY, PRESIDENT (AAI)

Some of the worst abuses of the McCarthy era may be resurfacing in the guise of the Clinton Administration's recently launched campaign against terrorism.

The principle tools proposed in the Administration's effort are the President's January 24, 1995 Executive Order "Prohibiting Transactions with Terrorists who Threaten to Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process"; and the recently introduced (S.390/HR 896) "Omnibus Anti-Terrorism Act of 1995."

On the surface, the stated purposes of each seem commendable. The Executive Order is designed to cut off financial support for Middle East organizations engaged in violent, anti-peace process activity, while the legislation seeks to expand the power of law enforcement agencies in their effort to combat terrorist activity.

On closer examination, however, both efforts introduce draconian measures that will seriously erode

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Danger To Our Rights

civil and political rights guaranteed to U.S. citizens and noncitizen alike under the U.S. Constitution and international law. In the name of combating terrorism, the legislation would: (1) deny the "presumption of innocence" for those under investigation; (2) allow the government to conduct surveillance against persons suspected of violating conspiracy laws based purely on their stated beliefs and associations; (3) allows for a prohibition of fundraising by "any person or organization" on the basis of a non-appealable declaration by the President that they are engaged in "terrorist activities"; (4)

establishes a secret court and secret trials that can use secret evidence to deport persons convicted of no crimes; (5) allows law enforcement agencies to conduct surveillance against individuals and groups, purely on the basis of their beliefs and associations; (6) allows for preventive detention under an extended pretrial detention scheme; (7) allows permanent detention by the Attorney General of aliens convicted of no crimes with no judicial review; and (8) resurrects the discredited ideological visa denial provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act to bar foreign speakers.

While these measures are dangerous to the rights of all Americans, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans are especially concerned since on too many occasions in the past two decades we have been cast as the weak link in the civil liberties chain. When various administrations have attempted to rewrite extradition law, undo reforms that restricted FBI intrusion into legitimate and constitutionally protected political activities, and otherwise chill or repress the political activity of individual citizens--the targets were our communities.

We oppose terrorism in all of its forms. We maintain that law enforcement must be vigilant and may require some enhancement of tools needed to deal with modern terrorist weapons and technology. But, we must not allow the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to be a casualty in this war against terrorism.

If you want to preserve America's freedoms and eliminate the objectionable parts of this legislation, please call the Arab American Institute (AAI) at 202-429-9210.

Along The Color Line: In Defense Of Angela Davis

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

More than a quarter century ago, African-American scholar/activist Angela Davis first came to public attention.

The young philosophy professor was dismissed from her faculty position at the University of California-Los Angeles in June, 1969, by then California Governor Ronald Reagan. The "grounds" for her dismissal had nothing to do with her scholarship or teaching effectiveness, both of which were outstanding. Davis's membership in the US Communist Party, and her public commitment to black liberation, were the basis for purging her from higher education.

Less than one year later, FBI agents charged her with involvement in a shoot-out in a California courtroom which led to several deaths, including one judge and a member of the

Black Panthers, 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of the revolutionary prisoner George Jackson. Davis was named one of the country's "Ten Most Wanted Criminals." Once captured and imprisoned, she was constantly harassed and victimized. But a massive international campaign erupted in her defense. Throughout the world, the name of Angela Davis came to symbolize racist nature of the US criminal justice system, and the naked political suppression of radicals within American justice system, and the naked political suppression of radicals within American society. In June, 1972, after nearly two years imprisonment, a California jury declared her innocent of all charges.

Since that time, Davis has continued to combine a commitment to political activism and scholarship. Since

leaving the US Communist Party several years ago, she has become a leading member of the Committees of Correspondence, a democratic and socialist organization involved in progressive political activism.

This attack against Angela Davis is a smear against her outstanding record as a scholar and leading progressive intellectual. Her contributions to the literature of race, gender and class in America have placed her at the very center of multicultural scholarship. Experts in the field unanimously praise her intellectual insights and appreciate her theoretical and historical work.

Student and supporters of Professor Davis's UC Presidential Chair appointment, linking their activity to a defense of affirmative action, which is under attack in California and throughout the country. Certainly Professor Davis should be supported on the grounds of academic freedom, and the

right for the free and unrestricted expression of critical ideas from various political perspectives within any university.

Mass conservatism recognizes that it must delegitimize all potential and real voices of progressive opposition, within the academy and throughout society. The Far Right seeks to wage ideological war on scholars advocating the principle of human equality.

The defense of Angela Davis is once again on our agenda, and we are challenged as never before to raise our voices in protest. For if scholars with a commitment to democratic activism, women's rights and black equality like commitment to democratic activism, women's rights and black equality like Davis are silenced or removed from their jobs, it is only a matter of time before other progressive intellectuals, leaders in unions, and other sectors will be targeted.

The Republican Contract: A Second Post Reconstruction

BY RON DANIELS

By the time Jimmy Carter was elected President the reaction/White backlash was so pervasive that openly identifying with civil rights, affirmative action was no longer politically expedient.

Indeed, during his presidential campaign Carter made no explicit public commitment to promote Black interests. Instead, African Americans, the most reliable allies of the Democratic Party were reduced to accepting Carter's private exhortations to "trust me." It was in part the Black disappointment with Carter's performance on the Black Agenda that contributed to the election of Ronald Reagan.

The election of Reagan was a decisive moment in the escalating reaction to Black progress through the civil rights revolt of the fifties and sixties. With the U.S. economy shrinking in the face of expanding global competition and racked by a

new phenomenon called "stagflation" (the unique occurrence of inflation and recession simultaneously), Reagan's assignment was clear: secure a climate for increased profitability and accumulation of wealth for U.S. multi-national corporations, the rich and the super-rich. To accomplish this task the Reagan agenda called for cuts in social programs, drastic increases in the military/war budget and tax cuts for the wealthy. To disguise this scheme it was necessary to divert the attention of White poor and working people away from the real motives and objections of the "Reagan Revolution."

Once in office Reagan launched an all out assault on civil rights and affirmative action, introducing and popularizing the notion of "reverse discrimination." White Americans were depicted as victims of civil rights and affirmative action and a new form of "oppression" called "Black racism." Under the guise of promoting fairness, equality and a color

blind society, Reagan unleashed the Justice Department and the office of the Attorney General to attack civil rights laws and file lawsuits to dismantle affirmative action.

The Democrats chose to target the "Reagan Democrats," those White voters who had abandoned the Democratic Party to create the margin of victory for Reagan and Bush. In essence the Democrats attempted to remake themselves as Republican look alikes. In so doing the Democratic Party abandoned and betrayed its Black allies in favor of pursuing conservative/reactionary/racist elements in the American electorate. The Democrats had learned to play the race card. History was repeating itself in a second Post Reconstruction type scenario where once again the interests and aspirations of Africans in America were being marginalized.

The Democrats felt that by winning the White House in '92, they had greatly diminished the potential for a Republican resurgence. But it is

difficult to beat someone at their own game. The epidemic of crime and violence sweeping the country and the economic insecurities created in part by Clinton's pro-big business economic policies produced a climate ripe for the Republicans to exploit. In announcing their Contract with America in the Summer of 1994, Newt Gingrich made it clear that the goal of the Contract was to "finish the Reagan Revolution."

The Republican victory on November 8, 1994 and the effort by Gingrich-Dole and the radical right to impose their racist Contract on America is the logical climax of the White backlash which swept Richard Nixon into the presidency in 1968. The radical right is determined to turn the clock back to the "good old days" by destroying all vestiges of the New Deal, destroying the "gains" of the civil rights movement, and putting Black people back in their place. The fate and future of Black America is in danger. The second Post Reconstruction is indeed at hand.

perspectives Its Hard To Get Good Help These Days (In Getting Educated)

Most educators I talk to these days say that there is such an air of uncertainty around the educational scene that even the professionals hesitate to make any firm predictions as to outcomes. Where does that leave the general public, especially parents and students?

We may begin our survey with an assessment of congressional actions that will seriously impact the ability of our youth to gain a higher education; that is if they are not already cut-off-at-the-pass at lower levels. In a bill passed last month, the House eliminated \$63.4 million used to match state money for scholarships -- and drastically reduced spending for the program that aids students from low-income or ethnic minority backgrounds who are the first generation in their family to attend college.

In a subsequent debate the Senate restored some cuts, and there seems a possibility that some programs or PARTS might survive. Though Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield (R) was "highly impressed" by student testimony before the Senate, he had a dire warning: "you will probably be unhappy with whatever compromises are crafted". Lisa R. Stevens, the federal lobbyist for the Oregon State System of Higher Education, says "higher education funding is not safe at this point."

Let me refer back to last week's "Perspectives" article where I reviewed the Sunday, April 2 "Town Hall" program on KATU; Oregon's School Reform Act was the topic for the televised debate. I reported the pros and cons of the very heated discussion, but apparently did not satisfy several members of industry who communicated to me in no uncertain terms that they felt it was "industry pres sure" that initiated the movement for school reform. And that "I of all people should know that" (I've never denied it).

This reference was to an in-depth group of articles I wrote for the Portland Observer several years ago after attending a state legislative hearing on education at the invitation of then-state Senator Vera Katz (Teacher Competency Standards was the agenda). In one article I had alluded to experiences as a cost accountant

in a Los Angeles manufacturing plant that manufactured pots, pans and skillets. I compared this poorly educated workforce of Blacks and Mexicans recruited at the Greyhound Bus Depot (cheap labor), who successfully performed their tasks with an admirable skill -- with a less-successful situation encountered as chief accountant for Portland's Albina Corporation.

The latter situation, I explained to several puzzled industry people, may have involved a labor force at near the educational

level of the Los Angeles group, but the parameters of product specifications and quality control were at least a magnitude higher, here in Oregon. At the Los Angeles "Globe Ware" plant a skillet could be as much as 1/300 out-of-round and nobody cared as long as the lid went on and the housewives didn't complain.

However, at the Portland plant the manufacturing process was combined with a Dept. of Labor training program. While the goal was to produce an "ammunition box" for the military--a container made to a 1/10,000 inch tolerance so that its tight-fitting lid would protect the contents even when exposed to the corrosive salt water spray of an ocean voyage while lashed to the deck of a ship. The workforce, recruited primarily in the northeast area of the city, remained too far behind the learning curve targeted to enable one to read and comprehend detailed instructions necessary to operate sophisticated machinery or to make fine mathematical computations or to read some instruments.

For these problems of a grossly deficient education, the school district never admitted to any responsibility despite the incessant clamor of parents and grassroots activists. Industry made small noises back then, but now they are throwing their weight around in respect to the degree of preparation they expect their workforce to have.

Fellow members of the "Association of Oregon Industries" to which I belong have differing viewpoints, although the print media would have you think that all have the viewpoint of Intel and Tektronix on support of the Oregon School Reform Act.

More on this next week.



By Professor Mckinley Burt

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Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
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You Have The Nerve To Ask... "Who Will Ask?"

In response to the recent letter to the editor "Who Will Ask," let's ask who's asking the question in the first place.

Who's asking for the community to be concerned with what's happening in the state prison system? Who's this person that is looking for the black community to support his cause? Who is this person that has obviously put a lot of time and effort to ask the question, "Who

Will Ask?"

Who is this person that is so concerned about the psychological testing that is being done on black inmates? Who is this person that has put a lot of energy into researching why the penal system is being inundated with black youth? Who is this person that is asking for justice?

Low and behold a black male prisoner who unjustly murdered two

African-American women of this community.

And he has the nerve to ASK???

We find it amazing that this person would use the community based newspaper as a forum to voice his opinions about the treatment in the prison system... We already know the type of destruction he is capable of committing.

Debora Leopold, Belinda Warren, and Vickie Toliver

Views Not Supported

The Portland Observer wants to publicly issue a retraction to a letter to the editor in last week's edition regarding the Oregon Judicial System.

The article, entitled "Who Will Ask," does not reflect the views of the publisher or members of the Portland Observer staff.

We apologize for not realizing that this letter was written by Stressla Johnson, 38, a murderer of two African-American women in our community.

Johnson's death sentence was overturned in 1993. He is currently at the Oregon State Penitentiary, serving two life sentences without the possibility of parole.

Joyce Washington,
Publisher