

# EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily  
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of  
The Portland Observer

Those of you who watched CNN-TV's "Larry King Live," with Mario Cuomo hosting and Jesse Jackson and Oliver North as guest, know that North still believes the Russians are coming to get us.

According to North, Russia, which could not quickly defeat a small seceding republic, and since the break-up of the Soviet Union has cut its own military spending by two-thirds, is still a threat to the U.S. -- which is still spending 90 percent of what it spent during the Cold War. According to the Republicans and Democratic Conservatives who advocate increased military spending, we are still at risk, even though the U.S. is spending as much on defense as all of the world combined.

The Senate Armed Services Committee just voted \$264.7 billion and the House last month voted \$267.3 billion for increased Defense spending in 1996. That is \$7 and \$10 billion more than the Pentagon requested for itself!

Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA) said, "this is not an increase; it's just stopping the hemorrhaging." In fact, it is so much of an increase that it comes close to ending the post-Cold War decline in arms spending.

What will we spend it on? Seymour Melman reports that both the White House and the Republicans want to fund six existing aircraft programs as well as major new naval craft: the

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Russians Are Coming! U.S. Escalates Military Buildup

B-2 Stealth bomber; FA-18 Navy fighter; F-22 Air Force fighter; C-17A Air Force transport; V-22 Osprey Marine vertical-lift transport plane; Army Apache helicopter, and the Navy's New Attack Submarine and CVN-76 carrier--all of which he says are "superfluous." He argues that they exist to produce corporate profits and preserve local jobs, not to defend our national security. The total cost of these programs--\$391.4 billion!

Who else gets the money? Again, according to Melman, the C.I.A. and related organizations like the National Security Agency, use up about \$28 billion annually. The Pentagon's administration and financing of foreign military sales will cost \$45.5 billion from 1996-2002.

The major nuclear weapons laboratories--Los Alamos, Livermore and Sandia--cost at least \$3 billion year. America's outlay for NATO is

\$80 billion a year. Our 1995 military budget of \$264 billion exceeds the combined military budget of all other NATO members, which is \$147.6 billion. Each of these programs could be cut sharply.

The Joint Chiefs are preparing to fight two wars at once against so-called rogue states: Cuba, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, whose combined current military budgets total only \$9.64 billion.

The Commission on Military Base Closings has made more recommendations, and the President must approve or disapprove them by July 15. Many of his political advisors are urging him to keep certain military bases open in California for political reasons--i.e., to protect jobs in a key electoral state.

It is certainly cruel to close bases and leave trained workers unemployed and families destabilized. The

alternative plan is to convert workers' military skills to civilian use, and military facilities to meet civilian needs. Under such a scenario we would actually gain not lose jobs.

Again, Melman reports that almost half of the nation's badly damaged housing could be rebuilt for \$98 billion. Education would be vastly improved by spending the \$100 billion needed for public school building maintenance, and \$4 billion could be spent to finance major federal education programs. For \$15 billion we could raise the financing of higher education to the same annual per student rate as Japan's.

For \$180 billion we can electrify all mainline railroads. A \$135 billion capital investment would improve and maintain the nation's publicly owned and maintained wastewater treatment facilities.

Projected military expenditures for 1996-2002 total \$1.9 trillion, much of it political pork. Twenty-six of the 31 states represented by members of the House National Security Committee will receive nearly \$500 million in new barracks, family housing, and other military construction projects that the Pentagon did not ask for. According to a study by Business Executives for National Security, an independent group that advocates streamlining the military's budget, child care centers have replaced new National Guard armories as the congressional pork-barrel project of choice.

## "Along The Color Line"

### Violence Against American Women

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

There is a spectre of violence which threatens African-American women at every levels of our society.

That threat of violence manifests itself at the individual level and institutionally. That is, violence may be experienced at work, or on the street, or in the home, by black women. Or it may be produced and perpetuated by large institutions, such as the criminal justice system and the prisons, within the economy and social organizations. In either case, what creates a context for the violence is the deafening silence which occurs when our sisters are abused, violated and murdered.

The most violent crime committed against women of color which is underreported is rape. The National Women's Study, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, interviewed over four thousand adult women about rape in 1990 and 1991. The study found that the number of rapes in the US was more than five times larger than the National Crime Survey had estimated and reported. Police statistics seriously underestimate the instances of rape and other violent crimes against women. The National Women's Study estimated that 12.1 million women have been rape victims at least once. Almost 62 percent of them were attacked when they were minors. About 29 percent were attacked when they were young-

er than eleven years old.

Women are also subject to violence at places of employment. Murder, is the leading cause of death of women at work. According to a study completed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in 1991, 4 out of every 10 woman who died on the job were either "shot, knifed, asphyxiated or beaten." Although the risk of being killed by accident on the job is much higher for males than for females, the percentage of women who are murdered on the job is 40 percent; significantly higher than the percentage for males, only 10 percent. Black women are almost twice as likely to be killed at work than white women.

The pattern of violence against women must be seen in the broader political context of the federal government's assault against the poor. The Republican-controlled Congress has targeted poor women by rejecting proposals to increase the minimum wage. The political assault on welfare has been framed in the public discourse in starkly racial terms, as if women receiving public assistance are virtually all black and Hispanic, and live an "affluent lifestyle."

But according to economist Julianne Malveaux, nearly half of all women on public assistance also do some kind of paid work, usually at under five dollars per hour. The actual AFDC payments can vary dramatically, from \$613 a month for a woman and two children in California, to

only \$121 a month for that same family in Mississippi. And in racial terms, the largest single group of welfare recipients, as of 1992, was not black or Latino, but white.

Perhaps the most pervasive form of institutionalized violence committed against women is represented by the criminal justice system. A comprehensive statistical overview of the status of women in prison has been compiled by Justice Works Community, a Brooklyn-based, nonprofit project that serves women prisoners, former prisoners and their families. The project's research states that women are the fastest growing population in US prisons and jails. As of 1994, approximately 90,000 women were incarcerated throughout the US. The number of women in prison increased by 300 percent between 1980 and 1990.

The vast majority of black women who are in prison are mothers to dependent children. About 40 percent of all women prisoners were either sexually or physically abused prior to their incarceration.

The vast majority of women prisoners, 75 percent, are serving sentences for nonviolent offenses. But of the remaining women, those convicted of violent crimes, were charged with offenses against a spouse, relative or acquaintance. Many of these women, especially black and Latino women, were only defending themselves against an abusive partner.

## Vantage Point

### Campaign For A New Tomorrow Creates Haiti Support Project

BY RON DANIELS

As our delegation to Haiti visited Cite Soliel, one of the worst slums in the world, we observed poverty and squalor on a scale that is unimaginable.

But even in the midst of these unspeakable conditions we found people determined to fight for a better life. Sitting in a little ramshackle house we listened to women and men, young and old, testify to the horrors of life under the coup and express their fervent will to build a new Cite Soliel and a new Haiti. One young militant told us that twelve of his friends had been killed by the reign of terror unleashed on the Haitian masses by General Cedras and company. Standing with him was a woman organizer/leader who had been repeatedly tortured by the dread attaches.

As we toured Cite Soliel both of our new found friends spoke passionately about their efforts to organize the people and their desire to provide concrete services that would

improve the life of the people and spark hope for the future of the community. One project which has been initiated is a simple early education program located in the home of one of the community organizers. They want to build a child care center and health clinic in order to institutionalize this project. They would like to establish an office that can become the focal point for their work in Cite Soliel. Our friends asked for our help and as Africans in America we are duty bound as a matter of family responsibility to respond.

At the invitation of Chavannes Jean Baptiste, the leader of The Peasant Movement of Papay (MPP), the largest peasant organization in Haiti, our delegation journeyed over bumpy crater filled roads to Papay in the central plateau region. Here we saw first hand more evidence of the campaign of repression, terror and brutality which the coup leaders had hoped would break the will of the Haitian masses. As Chavannes showed us around the MPP com-

pound he pointed to hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of destruction of buildings, generators, storage silos, farm machinery and tools.

Clearly the coup leaders were intent on destroying the capacity of MPP to oppose their murderous regime.

Chavannes also took us to mass meetings with peasants from the surrounding villages. Once again we heard the terrible tales of torture, rape, murder and chronic day to day brutality which was commonplace under the coup.

A woman told of being raped repeatedly because she is a member of MPP. She told those assembled that the more her tormentors tried to get her to denounce her allegiance to MPP, the more her devotion to MPP grew.

Another person told how he had been beaten time and time again because the authorities suspected that he was a supporter of President Aristide. These two comrades sur-

vived with their lives. Thousands of Haitians were not so fortunate. Despite these testimonies of terror and intimidation the mood in the meetings was hopeful. Chavannes outlined plans for rebuilding MPP and detailed what programs were already underway.

Stressing the need for participation, self-reliance and self-sufficiency as the basis for democracy and development, Chavannes Jean Baptiste challenged the peasants to pool their resources to start credit unions and community stores, to purchase farm tools and breeding stock to build up their lots of livestock. He also urged them to pool their money to purchase a weapon to be shared among neighbors to watch and defend their families against the attaches and macoutes who are dislodged from power but still armed and dangerous.

To support this project write: CNT/HSP, P.O. Box 27798, Washington D.C. 20038 or call 202-736-1741.

## perspectives

### "So As A Man (Or Woman) Readeth, So Shall They Persevere"

I don't know who said that, or if anyone did. But they certainly should have, for that has proven to be an excellent path to success and understanding throughout history. Besides, this week I am introducing some very, very interesting volumes at a very, very economical price (Publishers remainders).

The following books may be obtained from Daedalus Books, PO Box 9132, Hyattsville, MD. 20781-0932.



By  
Professor  
McKinley  
Burt

Though I cite the individual price with each title and description, please note that shipping and handling is \$4.50 whether for one book or a number of volumes. If you wish to use your credit card rather than send a check, write them for a catalog which will contain convenient order forms (or phone toll-free: 1-800-395-2665).

"Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.: The Political Biography of an American Dilemma". #No.41163 545pp., 1991 \$4.98. This book was selected by both the New York Times and the Library Journal as one of the best of the year. Tells of the extraordinary rise and fall of the powerful and flamboyant black congressman from Harlem. As the author, Charles V. Hamilton says, "we must appreciate him as a contradictory man living in contradictory times."

Those of who are older remember him well as the able and gifted minister of the largest and most powerful congregation in Harlem. The tall, handsome Powell, always a figure of sartorial splendor, mastered two pulpits, one in his church and one in congress. Before the racists within and without our August federal legislative body were able to oust him (on trumped up charges), Powell was able to get much done for his constituency and for the nation as chairman of a powerful education committee. Get this one, for sure.

"Benjamin O. Davis Jr., Amer-

ican", No. 50305, 456pp. 1991, \$4.98. Before General Colin E. Powell, there was this great and brave American warrior. "Born in an era when potential was measured according to race" (not that it has really changed that much), the dust jacket goes on to cite his "silent treatment" at West Point where, never the less, Davis finished 35th in a class of 276 (1936). There were

more hurdles, for upon graduation, he requested assignment to the Army Air Corps, then closed to

blacks. On his way to becoming a three-star general in America's armed forces, Davis headed the "99th Pursuit Squadron" and the "332nd Fighter Group" - now known as the famed "Tuskegee Airmen". He and his men saw distinguished service over North Africa, Italy and Europe during World War II. White bomber crews would request escort by the segregated black flying aces to increase the odds of their safe return from dangerous missions. This African American son of a great general retired in 1970.

I have a very poignant memory of the earlier times, for when England was in danger of losing the war to Nazi airpower (The battle of Britain, 1939-40), British and Canadian Air Force recruiters were sweeping American ghettos for likely pilot candidates. America had not yet entered the war and they appeared monthly at our St. Louis High School: Have good grades in math and fly your own Spitfire from Canada to England (after some brief training of course).

Millions have seen on television the planned dynamiting of the "Wendell Pruitt" high-rise housing project in St. Louis, Mo. This early experiment in 'social' architecture was named after a classmate of mine who became an 'ace' with that 99th Pursuit Squadron from Tuskegee before being shot down over Italy. Enjoy your summer and your reading.

CORRECTION: The July 12, 1995 "perspectives" article should have read, "Peter A. Slayton... has excavated at sites in both Africa and Europe."

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