

## Reagan's Central American Policies Endanger Black American Lives

by Jorge Siman  
Special to the Black Ink

Blacks legitimately views U.S. policy towards South Africa with alarm, but they should be equally concerned about Reagan's Central American policies. The policies of the Reagan Administration in South Africa and in Central America affect Blacks directly, and at the same time, these policies do not represent Black interests. Reverend Jesse Jackson opposes the policy of military aggression that the Reagan administration has pursued in Central America. There is no doubt that on this score, as many others, President Reagan has been insensitive to Blacks.

Social programs have been cut by the Reagan Administration, while the military budget has been drastically increased. For example, public housing has been cut by 75 percent and federal funds for education by 25 percent. In Dorchester, a Black suburb of Boston, the infant mortality rate has gone up, since 1980, by 50 percent due to direct cuts to health clinics, according to a public health survey.

These unjust policies have pushed eight million more Americans below the poverty line in the last four years. All this money, which could have remained in this country to aid these eight million Americans, has been channeled into military aid that has been used to kill innocent people

in Central America. Reagan's policies not only kill babies in Central America, but also kill them in American cities, such as Boston.

The Reagan administration has increased military aid to El Salvador, through fiscal year 1984, thirty fold since 1980. This military escalation in Central America would, according to many experts, lead to an invasion in either Nicaragua or El Salvador, especially after a Reagan reelection.

If an invasion is mounted, who will be on the front line? As in Vietnam, minorities and the poor will be chosen. As Rev. Jackson pointed out, minorities and the poor were the first to die in Lebanon and Grenada. In Vietnam, a lot of Blacks died defending a country that did not want to recognize them as first-class citizens.

Reagan's policies in Central America endanger not only the lives of many Central Americans, but also those of many Blacks that are in the armed forces. Rev. Jackson says: "Either you or your loved ones are on schedule to kill or be killed in Central America." And they would end up dying for the policies of an administration which condones the system of apartheid in South Africa. Remember, the United States was one of only two governments that abstained in a recent vote in the United Nations General Assembly that condemned the South African Government.

## American Companies Should Divest Interests In South Africa

by Herman Bennett  
Special to the Black Ink  
(Part two of a three part series)

In the aftermath of the recent shootings in Sharpeville, advocates of evolutionary and peaceful change continue to claim that by promoting American investments in South Africa, apartheid will be reformed. This idea is based on the notion that by increasing U.S. investments, the American government will be able to act as a force for progressive change.

Arguments like this take on a special significance since they are being articulated by the U.S. Presidential Administration along with various American Blacks such as Andrew Young and Leon Sullivan.

Aside from being an imperialistic position, this attitude assumes that white South Africans are willing to allow a transformation in the status quo to take place.

One must be quite skeptical of the role American corporations play in South Africa and throughout the "Third World." As long as the conduct of U.S. based multinationals is not consistent with their best behavior at home, then the systematic exploitation of the Third World will continue.

Many of the American corporations that operate in South Africa today

## Political Analysis Velma Barfield's Execution Won't Affect Black Vote

by Laurie Willis  
Staff Writer

Despite a number of appeals for clemency, Gov. James B. Hunt refused to spare the life of convicted murderer Margie "Velma" Barfield. Backed by public opinion polls which show that a majority of North Carolinians approve of the death penalty, Hunt made a decision which might seem politically well timed.

But Hunt also seeks minority support in his attempt to unseat Sen. Jesse Helms; Hunt's refusal of clemency in the Barfield case might work against him with regard to Black voters, who overwhelmingly oppose the death penalty.

UNC-CH political science professor William Keech said some Blacks may stay home on Nov. 6 and refuse to vote. "This is another case where the issue isn't whether Blacks will vote for Helms or Hunt, but instead, some of them might stay home and not vote period."

Citing that many Blacks believed the death penalty was a discriminatory tool used against them, Keech said, "It would have been a no-win situation had Barfield been Black."

Keech said he thought the judge who set the execution date made a very poor judgement in holding it four days before the election.

"I think Hunt would have made a different decision had he made the decision after the election," he added.

But Will Marshall, Hunt campaign spokesman, disagreed. "It doesn't really seem to be an issue--least not in the senate race--because both candidates share the same view," he said.

"I really don't know what it's going to do in terms of the election," Marshall said. "Governor Hunt believes in capital punishment



and...he's stuck to it whatever the consequences may be."

Although Marshall said he wasn't sure how the decision would affect Black voting specifically, he did say: "Blacks in this state have a very strong interest in a progressive leadership in the senate. They want to get rid of a leader (Helms) who for 12 years has struck down civil rights issues."

Robert Rupen, UNC political science professor, went as far as to say the death penalty was a non-issue. "I don't think the political effect is going to be terribly strong...it would be had Hunt gone the other way."

In addition, he said, "I just can't see Blacks turning to Helms just because of the issue of the death penalty...it won't significantly hurt his minority support."

Helms, on the other hand, has not made any reference to the governor's refusal to grant Barfield clemency. Claude Allen, the senator's press secretary, was unavailable for comment.

Ruben said Helm's strategy was to say nothing until after the election. "He's probably not going to make any big thing of it until after the election...what could he say: 'Yes, I agree with the governor.'"

went there in the 1920s and 1930s before the white Afrikaners were able to consolidate their political power and impose the policy of apartheid. But, American companies have never been in the forefront calling for fundamental social, political and economic change in South Africa or anywhere else.

American firms, like the rest, have honored and profited from the exploitation of the Black population and will probably continue to do so.

Recently, several American companies in their defense claimed "that only by maintaining a presence in South Africa can they act as a force for progressive change." They pointed out that conditions, salaries and positions they offer to their Black employees are better than what other firms and the South African government provide.

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