

Martin

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because of a movement toward a direction that is contradictory to our beliefs. If we drop our bucket and head off in that other direction, what does that say about our commitment?

We should not try to get ahead of the pack and attempt to lead it in the direction it is already headed, unless that is really the direction we want to go and unless we are prepared to go all the way in order not to be overrun or devoured. I seriously believe that such actions played a role in the defeats of some Democratic candidates on Nov. 6.

As a party, we need to stop and examine our principles -- not our politics -- and if we find them unsound, then we should modify them; if, however, we find them basically sound, our mission is to hold firm and fight harder to make other persons aware of that soundness.

I have heard a great amount of discussion about projecting a more conservative image, but very little about projecting a more principled image, nor about examining and reaffirming our principles. The focal point must be our principles, not our politics; if we get the principles straight, the politics should fall into line.

This entire controversy surrounding conservatism and liberalism has developed into a veneer covering up a mass of distorted and confused labeling and mislabeling. Persons are labeled based on the positions they take regarding substantive issues.

This is an inaccurate measure, because each of us is both conser-

vative and liberal. The question is not what position is taken on substantive issues, rather, it is related to how one responds to change or proposed change. The "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" attitude is connoted to reflect conservative opinion.

It is an attitude that is resistant to change and even resistant to examining whether "it" can be made to work better "even if ain't broke." The liberal attitude is connoted by a willingness to change without knowing or giving due regard to the consequences. Of course, whether change should be considered is a function of who is affected.

It is my opinion that we should always be willing to consider not only how we can best fix that which is broken, but also what adjustments can prevent a breakdown or make improvements that could be beneficial now and in the future.

Since liberalism has become such a disgusting and revolting concept, I feel compelled to pose a question in its defense. Why would a person be disturbed about being referred to as a progressive, fair-minded, open-minded, enlightened, humanitarian, charitable, forgiving and desirous of improving conditions for the masses of people in North Carolina and elsewhere?

In terms of both process and philosophy, the N.C. Democratic Party should not be jerking to the right nor to the left. We need to "put down our buckets where we are" and carefully reflect upon how we can define and communicate a clear sense of purpose

and conviction that is consistent with the reasoned and progressive aspirations of those persons who have been the heart, backbone and conscience of the Democratic Party and who have been most loyal to that which they have perceived as the principles of the party.

Involvement of blacks and women in the N.C. Democratic Party is a subject Democrats do not like to discuss very much. When it is discussed, the prevailing attitude is "Let's get it over with and out of the way."

If the party is to survive, it will be because the current and emerging leadership makes an unqualified affirmative determination to include black persons and women in all facets of the party's operational and decision-making processes.

This inclusion cannot be on a token basis, nor can it be perceived by the general public as being such. The true leaders of the party within the next several years will be the ones who today vigorously, unashamedly and unapologetically begin to facilitate this sort of involvement.

These true leaders will need to actively seek out and consult with, on their own initiative, black persons and women. They will need to carefully consider their opinions and ideas. This is true, whether those leaders are white, black, male or female. Merely to seek out and consult, however, connotes maintaining a rather firm grasp on the power, rather than distributing it. One who chooses to distribute power is one who is self-assured enough to believe that by sharing power, he also maintains power.

One who erects barriers to secure his own power simply builds the foundation for his ultimate downfall. The Democratic Party will be safe and secure when this new power-sharing leadership convinces the

public that:

I am sincere in my beliefs, and my actions -- not just my words -- reflect those beliefs. I view power as a mechanism for empowering the many, as opposed to supporting the few. Power should not be acquired for the purpose of keeping it; rather, power should be acquired for the purpose of bestowing it upon others, for the benefit of all.

I cannot acquiesce in a philosophy or practice that does not recognize and project that justice, human dignity and truly equal access to opportunity constitute the cornerstone of a civilized society and government.

I recognize that I am not where I should be in the fight to implant the cornerstone, but I am willing to learn and be pushed forward by you who hold those same beliefs; and while you are teaching and pushing me, I will be pulling and teaching you so that we will arrive there together, side by side.

Although this open letter is designed to be critical of the direction in which the N.C. Democratic Party could be headed, it is not too late for us to take corrective action. It will be necessary for us to have conviction, a desire for success and keen awareness as to the pain and distress that could befall many persons if we fail to take that corrective action.

I am convinced that many of the persons with whom the immediate fate of the party rests want to do that which is best. Some have been bombarded overwhelmingly with one viewpoint and have, consequently, become unsure as to "what the people (which people?) want."

I would say that we need to focus our attention and energies on making that solid cornerstone of civilized society and government the solid cornerstone of the N.C. Democratic Party. Shall we?

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Marable

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tly, "The American people have to feel a little like they were walking into the office of a cruise ship and found out they were in a cancer clinic. This is not the upbeat Opportunity Society commercials of just six weeks ago. If you are going to convince people that they need cancer surgery, you've got to convince them they have cancer."

Reaganomics has painted the Democrats into a fiscal corner, however. Trained in the Keynesian tradition, the congressional Democrats know that you can't raise taxes during a recession. The way out of the economic doldrums is through pump-priming via additional deficit spending, creating new job programs. The problems with this scenario is that Reagan, the greatest deficit spender of all time, has swollen the deficit by billions. No additional deficit spending could occur without reigniting interest rates back to double-digit levels.

The Federal Reserve Board is currently trying to keep the recovery alive by increasing the amount of currency in circulation. But this monetary strategy also will push up interest rates, which in real terms -- factored for inflation -- are already at an all-time high.

Thus, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have any viable solutions to avoid the next recession -- which will occur sometime within the next 15 months and promises to be even more severe than its predecessor in 1982.

The only way out has already been suggested by the Congressional Black Caucus, civil rights groups, peace and some labor leaders. Defense spending must be cut dramatically and billions allocated for nonproductive weapons must be spent on human needs.

The current tax crisis is caused fundamentally by the corporations, which don't pay their fair share. Of the 250 largest corporations, 67 paid absolutely no federal taxes last year.

The typical tax rate of 14.7 percent of these firms is well below the statutory corporate income tax rate of 46 percent. When welfare for the military and upper-income groups is finally halted and federal priorities focus on housing, education, jobs and transportation, the specter of recession will be lifted.

(Dr. Manning Marable teaches political sociology at Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y.)

Jacob

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future health for the community was laid.

Finally, as the year drew to a close, the vicious racist actions of the South African government brought whites and blacks together in mutual outrage and concern.

For the first time in years, preachers and rabbis, labor leaders and civil rights proponents marched hand-in-hand singing, "We Shall Overcome." Congressmen of the Black Caucus and conservative Republican senators alike protested the South African oppression.

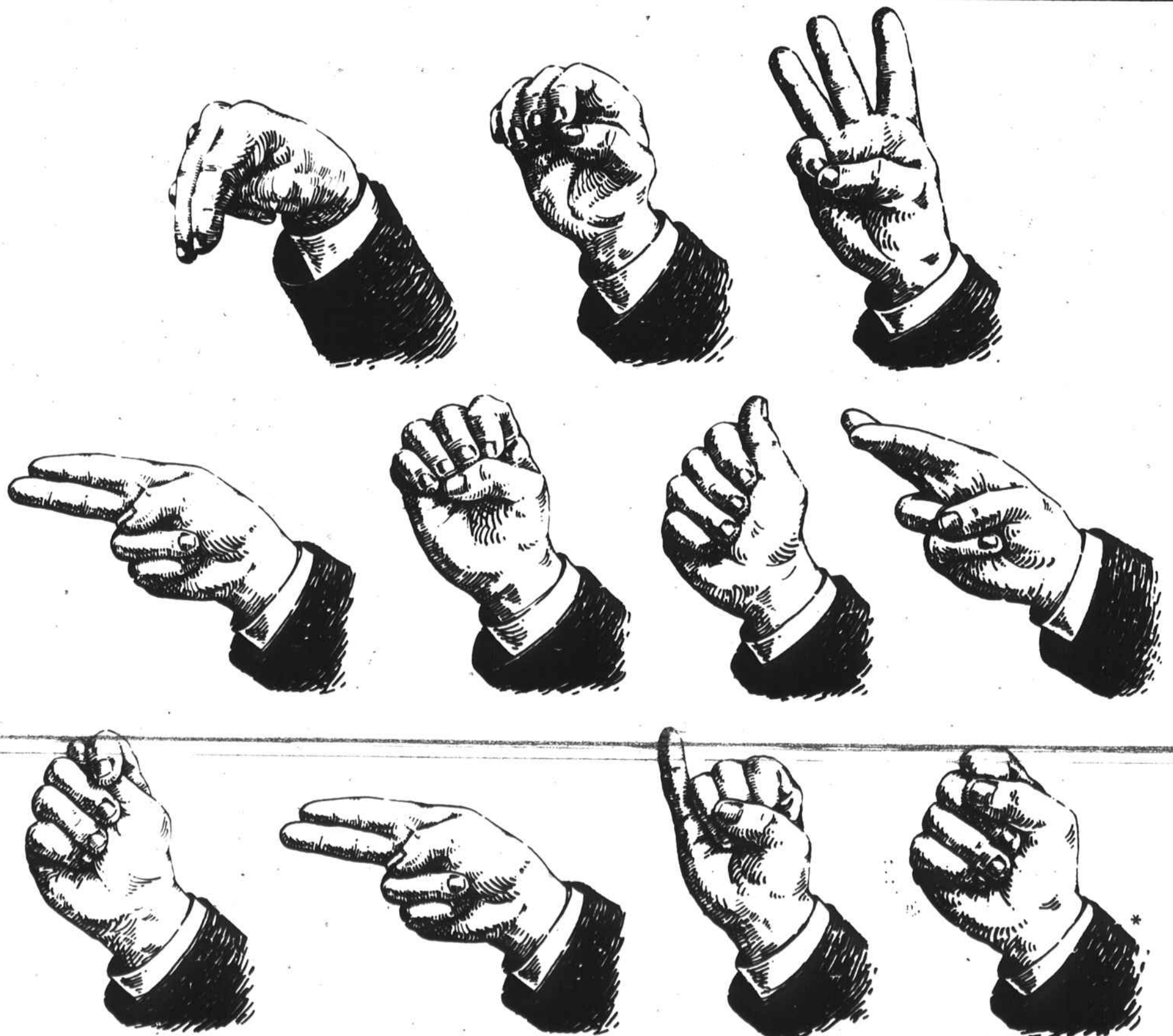
A similar coalition was active to urge aid for the starving victims of the famine in Africa, and

communities all over the country mobilized their resources to send food to the hungry abroad.

What is happening is an emerging new coalition of decency in which moral values and a sense of fairness are reawakening.

Now those feelings of solidarity are being directed abroad to the victims of racism and hunger. But once those positive values have been tapped, how long will it be before the discrimination, hunger and unfairness at home also generate an active coalition for change. If they do, then the hopes of 1984 will come to fruition.

(John E. Jacob is president of the National Urban League.)



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