



# EDITORIALS

## Democracy Or Censorship?

Last week during a televised School Board meeting the issue of sex education in the schools erupted into a heated debate when the local public schools were accused of teaching offensive sex education and encouraging children to rebel against their parents. In somewhat emotional tones, three mothers and two junior high school students made strong allegations against the school's curriculum.

During the debate several School Board members accused one of the mothers, Mrs. Martha Dellinger, of reading classroom material out of context when she talked about sexual intercourse, homosexuality

and allegations of teaching students to rebel against their parents. Also during the debate School Superintendent Jay Robinson warned the Board against attempting to censor instructional materials.

Supt. Robinson said at a later point that he had "heard many things tonight that, based on the way they were presented, I have consensus about. I don't want to in any way be a part of having materials taught to a child that are inappropriate." Robinson hastily added that the School Board should avoid trying to censor curriculum before complaints have been heard and dealt with through the established review process.

Equally upsetting to Supt. Robinson is the form letters - some 50 or more thus far this school year - representing examples of growing attempts nationwide to censor and control what is taught in public school classrooms. Some of the letters initially given to parents by Mrs. Dellinger, have language and themes used by conservative religious groups attempting to attack the integrity of the nation's public schools.

Undoubtedly, much of the opposition by school personnel and Board members to the allegation of censorship control arises from the organized sources that promote the use of form letters.

## Tax-Cut Proposal

These concerns about the public schools bring to mind California's Proposition 13, the tax-cut proposal led by Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann. It passed by a strong two-to-one margin and quickly spread to other areas of the nation even before the 57 percent cut in California's property tax - a loss of \$7 billion - could be evaluated.

Similar acts across the nation have occurred usually dealing with tax reform but other issues - nuclear power, abortion, utility regulation, health cost containment, the death penalty, to name a few - have also surfaced. Ironically, the initiators of these reforms have not been elected officials but rather have been spirit-minded citizen groups usually concerned about a specific issue.

Groups and individuals such as Howard Jarvis are simply practicing what is commonly called participatory democracy. Surprisingly, noted Washington Post columnist Neal Pierce wrote recently that "A highly disturbing theme in John Nisbitts' widely read book, 'Megatrends' was the movement 'from representative democracy to participatory democracy' - citizens taking power into their own hands."

Pierce adds, "Citizen power sounds fine, but one flinched at Nisbitts' assertion: 'We have outlived the historical usefulness of representative democracy, and we all sense intuitively that it is obsolete.'"

Interestingly, Pierce goes on to talk about conservative groups and individuals like Howard Jarvis, Jerry Falwell and Phyllis Schlafly and note all the tax reform, prayer in the schools and Charlotte's sex education conflict. In too many of these cases the issues of concern are lost sight of because of the anti-conservative mentality of some.

The fact is, as much as we may deplore a Jerry Falwell or even a Martha Dellinger there may be times and issues when our view may be the same as their views.

In this regard, we find a presumed enlightened writer like Neal Pierce expressing doubts about participatory democracy disturbing when in reality he's more pre-occupied who is exercising the right to use participatory democracy than with the merits of the concepts.

### Valid Concern

Likewise, if Supt. Jay Robinson has a valid concern about possible censorship of school materials every effort should be used to offset such censorship. However, if parents, form letters notwithstanding, choose to question what is taught in the

public schools, they should have every right to express their concerns. Martha Dellinger too should be free to express her opinion without reference to the fact that her children attend a private Christian school because she is, nevertheless, a taxpayer of public education.

What is happening in America then is that many people among the so-called "conservative right" are practicing participatory democracy to fight for or against things that they believe in while too many

people not philosophically in support of the "right" say and do nothing due to apathy or indifference. This reminds us of the saying that nothing helps evil men to succeed so well as when good men do nothing.

Participatory democracy is not censorship, nor will it replace representative democracy, but it has its place and usefulness for those who want to use it for their cause as the conservatives do and others don't.



Black's Destiny In Own Hands...

## What's Going On In The News?

By Sabrina Johnson

What's going on in the news? Well, everything! This is an election year you know, so every issue rises to the occasion to make grown men and women evade it. This election - presidential election - brings with it so much. Especially those indepth discussions called debates.

Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale will go head to head in a series of debates, the first of which covered social and domestic issues, the second - international and foreign policies and finally some mention of Party platforms.

The "big" social issues are legalized government subsidized abortions and religion. In the writer's eyes, abortion is a personal issue. For example - how can the U.S. government decide when life truly begins. These men and women are mortal as are all men and women. Who gives them the right to say life begins at conception or during the act of birth or at the sound of a heart beat, or, when brain waves are given off? First of all, has anyone ever seen a planned pregnant woman not happy about her condition? To that woman life begins when the pregnancy is proclaimed.



Sabrina Johnson

Organisms in the womb are referred to as babies not as organisms. So from that aspect life begins at the point of conception.

On the flip side the organism inside of the womb cannot reason, speak nor is self-sufficient. It cannot breathe or eat. It does nothing for nine months but grows bigger like a rolling snowball. To people who feel this way life begins when the organism can breathe air, eat and do other human type things. Thus meaning "it ain't live until the last trimester."

Who's to say who is right or wrong, but government truly has no place in making such a personal decision. The odds have it that this issue will become a chapter in political platform history like the right to die and

capital punishment. When it's hot it's H.O.T. When it's not, it's N.O.T.!

Religion - well that is another personal choice. No one phase should be advocated but if a child wants to meditate - let him. This does not mean he must pray - it merely means it gives the child a chance to think about whatever he pleases for a brief moment. The federal deficit is a "toughie." How can it be cut? By restructuring the tax structure, cutting federal aid programs? One small problem - can a new tax structure really change things? Let's see - Nixon tried it, so did Ford, then Carter gave it a shot and Ronnie has too - where have they gotten us - in debt!

Cutting Social Security benefits and Medicare are sour grapes in Americans' mouths. Social Security was set up to take care of people after they give some of the best years of their lives - so that they can live better in their later years. Medicare was designed to provide adequate medical care for seasoned citizens without costing a mint. Neither seem to be working too well at present. Seasoned citizens are beginning to worry about living in the future - that's not a great idea; because if they unite and rebel this country will have one of the biggest revolutions in its history. Remember, seasoned citizens are living longer and longer. And they truly believe youth is wasted on the young. They will recapture the spirit and take over - look out! Seriously, Social Security not only is an elderly issue it is a youth issue, too. It is the young people today who are tomorrow's elderly trying to live a good, decent life.

What's in the news? Today it's social and domestic issues. Tomorrow it's everything you can imagine. This is a campaign and election year: that is the news. One final news question - are you better off today than you were four years ago? Yes or no - votes taken in November: your turn!

### Leaf Pickup

The City Sanitation Division collects bagged or containerized leaves from curbside on Wednesdays. Cans or bags should not be placed on the curb until after noon on Tuesdays. The Community Improvement Litter Ordinance authorizes the City to issue citations to residents who rake, sweep, or blow leaves into the street. Wet leaves are a traffic hazard and cause drainage problems when allowed to accumulate in the catch basins. For information about leaf pickup, call 336-2673.

## From Capitol Hill

# Empowerment Legislative Weekend A Great Success!

By Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

The nucleus of nine black congressmen, with an attendance of less than 1,000, a one-day legislative meeting and a dinner, now 14 years later has mushroomed into 21 black congress persons, three days or more than 30 workshops and an attendance of 15,000 black people from all across the country.

The workshops centered around all issues of specific concern to black folk. They were on: education, economy, communications, crime, civil rights, voting, foreign policy, women's role, the black family and many other subjects.

While the weekend activities were sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, all of the Caucus members took part in the workshops. These were conducted by Caucus members and a panel of distinguished experts. There were questions and input from the workshop audience. All of these were greatly attended. In some there was standing room only. A farmer from South Carolina said that since a number of black farmers are about to lose their farms, he was going to the local FmFA with the hope of putting pressure on them for giving the same aid to black farmers that they give white farmers. Mellie McLeod of Virginia who worked very hard for Jesse Jackson, said she attended a number of workshops and that she plans to continue to double her efforts for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket because the Reagan forces are for robbing black folks of every single civil rights gain. After the rally in the Capitol for passage of the 1984 Civil Rights Bill, a man from Tennessee said that he never



really had the opinion that Howard Baker was for black folks, and he will remember that when Baker runs for President in 1988.

The theme of the legislative weekend was, "A New Politics: Organizing for Empowerment." Everything focused on what blacks, individually and collectively, can do to bring the theme into fruition. The workshops were a simplistic dialogue that emphasized and informed the participants on ways they can accomplish the goal of the theme.

Some of the high points of the workshops were: the effects drugs have on the black community. While drug abuse knows no racial or economic boundaries, it is an inescapable fact that the black community is suffering disproportionately from the availability of drugs and the lack of treatment available for addiction. The Health workshop emphasized the differences in the health status of blacks and whites. Emphases were on the cause and the urgency of developing strategies for correcting the health ills. The Minority Braintrust gave

accomplishments during the past year and there was a discussion of the regulatory obstacles that deter the acceleration of achieving the goals. The Education workshop focused very strongly on the importance of saving traditionally black colleges in a manner that is equal to the white colleges and that public schools are the bedrock of education for black children and they must not give way to private institutions.

The International workshops were on the treatment of Haitian refugees to this country, which is nothing short of inhumane treatment by this administration. The South African workshop called attention to President Reagan's "constructive engagement" policy, which is simply support for South Africa's apartheid policy. There was intense discussion on preventing the American banks from lending money to South African government and on forcing the Reagan administration to place sanctions against the selling of any military parts to South Africa. President Carter placed these sanctions on the military related materials, but President Reagan lifted them. The Telecommunications workshop explained how minorities have been deprived of full participation in broadcasting, cable communications and the place of black artists in the communications field.

Rep. Conyers, who chaired the Criminal Justice Braintrust, strongly called attention to blacks as victim of crime, blacks in prison, the black role in law enforcement and racially motivated violence. The panelists' list was composed of distinguished people who are active in the field of preventing crime.

Maxine Waters, a member of the California State Assembly, addressed the Women's Agenda. She strongly emphasized that black women must define their own objectives and goals.

Vice President Mondale asked if President Reagan who lauded America's Olympic performance, realized that if this nation had not passed a Civil Rights Bill, it is highly

probable that we would not have won so many gold medals. His failure to support the '84 Civil Rights Act will impede minorities' chances for

gymnastic training. Mondale said the election is not about sending teachers into space, but educating children, not about sending hecklers to rallies, but it's about Jerry Falwell's selection of members of the Supreme Court.

Jesse Jackson, who is in a class by himself, as both speaker and a person to get things done, electrified the audience. He said blacks can refuse to vote, but there are

thousands of reasons why they should vote. He recited a long litany of President Reagan's anti-poor, and anti-minorities' rights and impediments to their economic progress.

He stated how the media gives distorted views of presidential candidates. They criticize Mondale's style and laud Reagan's style. Jackson said that Reagan has been working on his style for 75 years. He

said people must pay attention to substance. Jackson strongly emphasized that it isn't enough to train our children to be adequate, they will have to be superior to be equal.

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