

Editorials

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Labels And Social Change

Most Americans believe that the nation has two major political parties - Democratic and Republican. Yet, a careful analysis of the ideological or philosophical thinking and values of the individual members of the two Houses of Congress would reveal that there are many Democrats and Republicans who have such nearly identical views that they could more appropriately be called conservative. Likewise, another group of Democrats/Republicans could be called liberals. While we frankly deplore the use of labels, they serve a useful purpose for illustrating what we are seeking to explain and comment on. Our opposition to labels arises from the fact that the general public too often "brands" an elected official a liberal or conservative based on actions involving a few legislative decisions. Furthermore, most members of Congress and state legislatures admit to being a Democrat or Republican but few will willingly accept the "liberal" or "conservative" label unless it provides a particular political advantage in a given situation.

A case in point can be seen in a recent Los Angeles Times analysis of the actions of the so-called "Rehnquist Court." This phase, of course, refers to the U.S. Supreme Court with William Rehnquist as Chief Justice following Warren Burger's retirement and President Reagan's elevation of Rehnquist. Furthermore, with the appointment of Antonin Scalia to the high Court seat vacated by Rehnquist, both of whom are considered to be conservatives, "...the Reagan administration hoped," as stated by the LA Times, "to tilt the Supreme Court toward the right, that is, to have a conservative leaning."

By definition, conservatives generally oppose change and favor the status quo. Therefore, they oppose affirmative action programs designed to enable blacks and women to offset past years of racial and sexist discrimination. For example, seniority systems as a basis for job advancement or promotions are in and of themselves biased because in too many cases blacks and women have only in recent years been able to get some kinds of employment under relatively new Civil Rights laws. Thus, affirmative action pro-

grams are needed to create some degree of equality in job promotions. It is quite obvious then that liberals are by definition, people who favor and support change in order to effect past years of economic and social injustice.

Back to our case in point, the actions of the U.S. Supreme Court. The LA Times suggests that "the first term of the 'Rehnquist Court' has seen a pronounced shift to the left (liberal)." In particular, the high Court's 80-year-old liberal leader "William Brennan, has put together a solid majority in a series of hotly contested cases." Last year the Brennan-led liberal faction won in only 20 of the 69 liberal vs. conservative cases. Thus far in the Court's current term Brennan's group has won in 16 of 28 cases.

In cases involving civil rights for blacks, women, handicapped people or aliens, Brennan has been batting 100 percent. Only in criminal law cases has Rehnquist been able to muster a "conservative consensus" in order to win. Brennan's liberal strength or "liberal consensus" has come because he has been able to get the conservative Sandra Day O'Connor and, another label, the more "moderate" middle of the roader, Lewis Powell to join him and Justices Harry Blackmun, Thurgood Marshall and John Paul Stevens to support issues from a liberal perspective. Being a woman, Sandra Day O'Connor has undoubtedly cast aside her conservative ideology in support of issues to favor the causes of females. Likewise, in Congress' recent vote on the highway bill, President Reagan missed by one vote in getting support for his veto because many conservative members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, perceive a real need for continued improvement in the nation's interstate highway system. Similarly, a local survey found that Charlotteans have expressed a willingness to pay higher taxes for more and better roads in our city.

What this all means is that when issues affect us in a personal way, as an individual, as groups of some kind, we all discard our lofty political or economic ideologies and vote or favor issues from the heart more so than from the head.

Labels And Textbook Bias

Consistent also with the issue of labels has been the emergence of controversies over public school textbooks. The current central issues revolve around two hotly debated issues. In Alabama, U.S. District Court Judge W. Brevard Hand has ruled that about 30 textbooks used in his state, mostly in social studies, history and home economics, are in violation of the U.S. Constitution's provisions on separation of church and state because they promote a creed, a religion that the judge defines as "secular humanism."

The other red-hot issue centers around a California Bicentennial Commission's approval of a textbook that refers to black children as "pickaninnies" and say slave owners were the worst victims of the system. Sale of the book was stopped on February 6. The funds from the sale were being used to raise money for California's observance of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

The book, "The Making Of America," was published by a conservative organization based in Salt Lake City. Thus the book was published by an organization that is not sensitive to the needs and concerns of black people. The California Commission issued an apology and said it was a serious error in judgment.

On the "secular humanism" issue, Judge Hand's sweeping decision appears to us to be weakened by his assumption that humanism is somehow a religion. It seems bad enough that textbooks, especially in U.S. history, have increasingly exhibited a disregard for the historic role of Christianity in the development of this nation, but too many other special interest groups have also tried to suppress historic facts, i.e., the Great Depression of the 1930s. Such suppression by labeling biased groups endangers our very identity as a nation and erodes the historic foundation of our heritage.

Miller Says

America's Powerful Customer Leverage With Foreign Clients

Twenty percent of a company's customers quite often account for 80 percent of its sales volume. Thus business strategists often worry a great deal about large customers because they have purchasing leverage on the business. If we assume that America is a large corporation (United States of America, Inc.), then America should have significant customer leverage on the oil exporting nations (e.g., Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)) throughout the world.

The size of America's customer leverage ought to be gauged from media reports like the March 12 Wall Street Journal import commodity report. "Petroleum imports

free flow of oil into world markets in hopes of forcing up world oil prices.

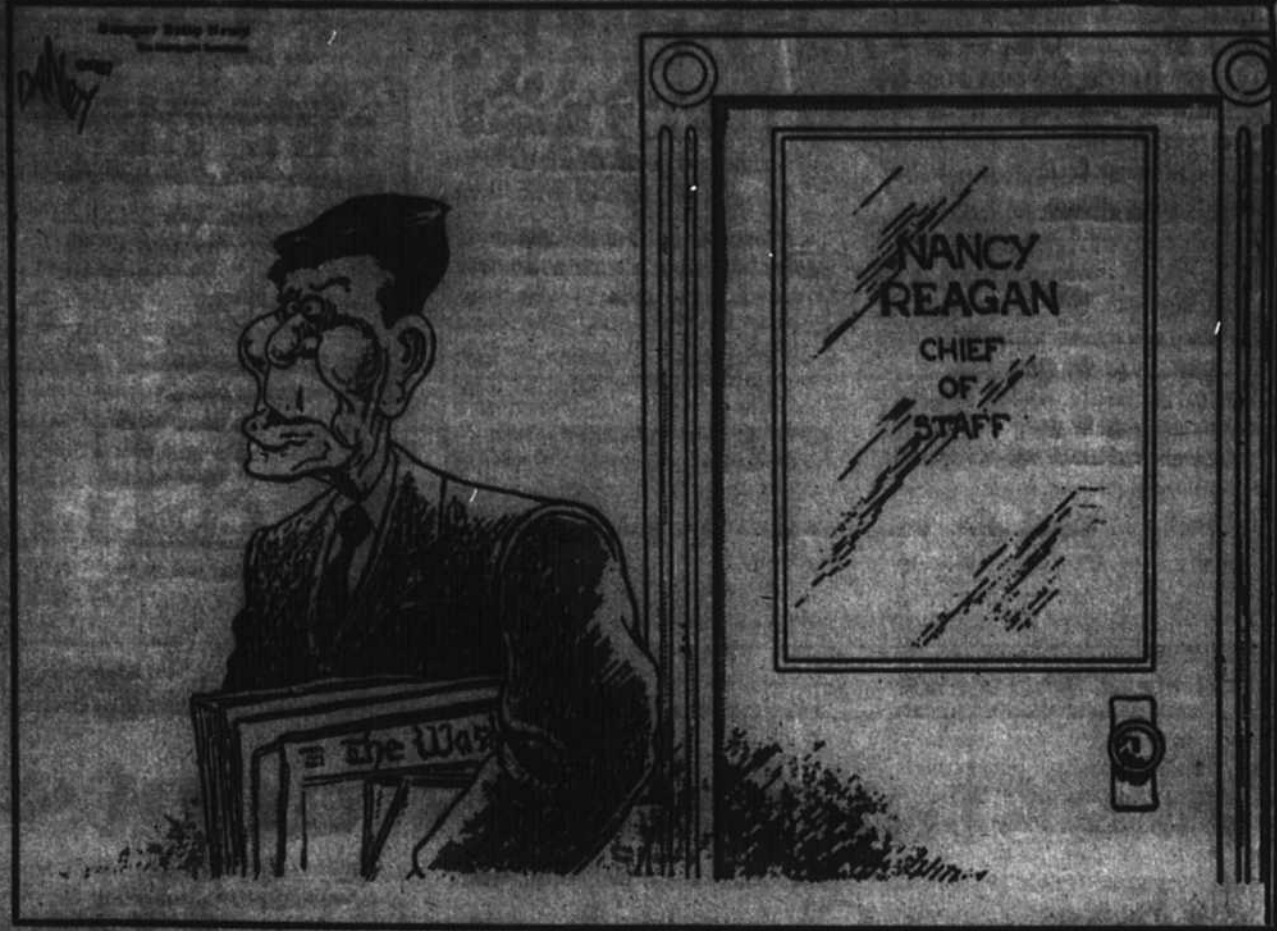
OPEC's latest ploy to forge rose 0.8% to \$8.05 billion after increasing 1.9% to \$7.99 billion in the third quarter." But a couple of oil embargoes have taught America's leadership timidity.

On the other hand, America's energy conservation efforts helped to precipitate a collapse in OPEC's exorbitant oil prices. Furthermore, it is very difficult to accept proud Americans on bended knees paying homage to monarchs and/or dictators in OPEC Nations. Yet OPEC is currently hell-bent on once again financially raping the Ameri-



Sherman N. Miller

can people by suppressing the a new world oil price structure looks like a classic example of the Great Chinese



AS I SEE IT

School-Based Clinics Have A Place

By Gerald O. Johnson

A war is waging over the issue of School-based Health Clinics. Without a doubt the subject is very sensitive. Both sides are using emotionalism and sensationalism to get their points across. The unfortunate truth as you muddle through the facts lies somewhere between the two sides.

It is a fact that 1.1 million teens become pregnant each year. This figure represents 11 percent of all teens between the ages of 15 and 19. Based on this fact proponents of the school-based health clinics feel that teens need the accessibility to sex counseling and to contraceptives. This, they feel, will help curb the alarming increase in teenage pregnancy.

Opponents of the clinics feel that this whole issue is "a battle over the morals of our children". They offer as evidence the associated increase in teenage sexuality and pregnancy with the increase in Planned Parenthood programs. They cite the fact that in 1971 Planned Parenthood had 300,000 clients and a budget of 11 million dollars. In 1980 the figure had increased to 1,500,000 teen clients and a budget of over 442 million dollars. The increase in exposure and money was not paralleled with a decrease in results. Hence, opponents of school-based health clinics argue that this intrusion of the family responsibility is only another ploy by Planned Parenthood and other Government funded health organizations to insure their future.

Moreover, the opponents claim that the increase in contraceptive education has led to an increase in abortion rates by teenagers. Instead of reducing pregnancy, the health organizations are reducing births through promoting abortions, the opponents insist. They feel the inclusion of contraceptive distribution will only increase the promiscuity of our teenagers.

But, here are some statistical facts that I find alarming:

- 19% of non-white teens will become pregnant as compared to 10% of white teens.

- Only 34% of non-white teen pregnancies ends in abortion as compared to 40% of white teens.

Hence, more non-white teens will have their kids.

- Two-thirds of babies born to teens result from unintended pregnancy.

- The birth rate among black teens is double that of white teens, indicating that young black women are more likely to continue their pregnancy.

- The maternal mortality rate is higher than for any other age group; the maternal mortality rate among black teen mothers is more than double that of white mothers (16.6% as compared to 7.6%).

- Younger mothers are more likely to have higher infant mortalities, babies with birth defects, and mental retardation.

- Pregnant teens are four times less likely to receive prenatal care due to the lack of knowledge and the lack of funds. Only 49% of mothers younger than 18 obtained prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy.

- Only 50% of teen mothers finishes high school.

- Daughters born to teen mothers are more likely to become teen mothers.

- Two-thirds of families headed by teen mothers exist below the poverty level.

- Babies born to teen mothers in 1985 will cost the U. S. \$6 million by the time they reach adulthood.

- The U. S. spends \$16.65 billion per year in health and other services for families started by women who gave birth while in their teens.

These facts point out the associated problems that exist with teenage pregnancy. Because of these problems and some that I will mention later, I favor a program like school-based health clinics.

Teenage sexuality is here. I don't condone it, and I would like to believe we lived in a "Father knows best" society. But the facts point out that a lot of kids are growing up with little or no parental counseling about sex and other matters. Do we turn our backs on these kids while we spend the next twenty years trying to develop programs



Gerald

that will teach them morals, I hope not. Furthermore, how do you teach sexually active teenagers abstinence. This type of education must start well before a youngster reaches their teen years. It is estimated that over 70 percent of teenagers will have a sexual encounter prior to their 19th birthday. We must realize the facts and act accordingly.

We are putting a whole generation and possibly future generations at risk by not seriously considering programs that may provide some type of assistance to our teens.

To date the voices being heard in Charlotte are from disturbed parents whose kids this program was not intended to serve. Their kids have alternatives available to them that a lot of kids do not have. Unfortunately, the kids who would benefit from the service have no representation at the meetings that will determine the fate of school-based health clinics in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

Education and contraceptive distribution for sexually active teens can be an effective tool to help fight this growing problem. I think it is a bit naive to try and pin the problem of teenage sexuality on contraceptive education. The basis of the problem stems from a promiscuous society of which teens are a part.

To downplay the problem by ignoring the realities of what exist is irresponsible. The school-based health clinics are not the total answer, but I do think they have a place in what may turn out to be a problem requiring a myriad of approaches to arrive at a solution.

ager technical maintenance support for Florida Power Corporation, says they have learned to control their electric generations cost by being able to readily switch to fuels with attractive economics. That is, they employ coal, oil, and nuclear generators and they bring on line a mix of these generators that gives optimum fuel economics. This operational system permits Florida Power to counter-balance high oil prices with economical coal from the United States of America, Australia, and South America.

According to Higgins, the United States presently has

200 plus years of proven coal reserves. Racist South Africa has demonstrated that a nation can exploit its abundant coal resources to obviate foreign nations' energy leverage on their economy. Why, then, is the United States of America not brandishing its 200-year coal reserve before OPEC?

America's press must play up these creative operational systems that destroy OPEC's strangle-hold on world oil prices. Imagine if America's press took the mindset that we will highlight the nation's strengths in addition to aggressively reporting on its weaknesses.