

## Decisions Rushed into Now Could Come Back to Haunt Us

I doubt that this country has ever faced a confluence of political-economic-social-moral decisions as dangerous as the ones we face today.

Guest  
Commentary  
**CARL ROWAN**

- We are lurching into an emotional orgy of welfare reform based on knee-jerk assumptions about welfare causing dependency, welfare causing widespread illegitimacy, welfare as a "way of life for lazy bums"—and an orgy of simple, brutal contempt for the poor on the part of well-off Americans.

- We are entering a withering debate over whether to raise the \$4.25-an-hour minimum wage for the first time in four years or to abolish it.

- We are talking of drastic downsizing of government, and of corporate America, even as "angry white men" wage war against "affirmative action" programs that have put a few good jobs within the reach of women, Hispanics, and others.

Add these forces up and you get a vulturous form of "capitalism" in which millions of children are harmed, the lowest level workers are discouraged and abused, disillusioned teenagers turn to crime, and the wealthy will pay only for more prisons, foolishly thinking they are protecting themselves and their treasures.

I would love to write today about the clichés that welfare has debased millions of Americans to the point where they aspire to nothing else. Or that there will be no explosive fallout if the Congress tries to make children pay for the sexual and other sins of their parents. But another time. I only have space to offer a few facts about the minimum wage, as set forth by the nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

- 1) The purchasing power of the current minimum wage is lower than in any year since 1955, with the exception of 1989. The minimum wage is 35 percent below its peak value in 1948.

- 2) The minimum wage sustains life for working women and employees 25 or older. Minimum wage earners tend to bring in 45 percent of their often-patetic household's income.

- 3) The cry of some employers that raising the minimum wage throws terrible numbers of young people out of work is not supported by studies. Recent surveys show that a 10 percent hike in the minimum wage may provoke a one-percent decrease in teenage employment and a one-fourth of one percent job loss for workers 20 to 24 years old.

I cannot understand how even the least benighted Americans think they can fail to provide education and jobs to millions of unemployed; force millions more to work at veritable slave levels; use bogus cries of "quotas" to deny good jobs to women and minorities; take welfare food, shelter, clothing and health care away from the children of the aforementioned victims of right-wing cruelty and general bigotry and still wind up with less crime and more tranquility.

Are there no politicians of consequence who dares to declare that this country is following a formula for tragedy?

©1995 by King Feature Synd.



## New Covenant, Same Old Politics

Clinton's State of the Union address was so sweet with bipartisanism's I think I developed several cavities.

Moderately  
Speaking  
**DAVID KANAAN**

As usual, the master politician said most of the right things, and said them well to boot.

But alas, hypocrisy is no stranger to Clinton. One need only review several of his former speeches to see the man has a knack for telling the people what they want to hear.

This being the main reason he defeated former President Bush. Bush preferred imperium to compromise.

I hate to admit it, but I feel sorry for Clinton. This is not to say that he has done a great job; he has been as slimy as most of Washington's elite. It just seems that since Kennedy, whenever a Democrat is elected president, he is torn to shreds. Kennedy seemed to be the first to master the modern press and the Republicans have never forgiven the Democrats for that.

Look at recent history. Every Democratic candidate has been destroyed by the press (Carter, Gary Hart and Clinton).

For some reason, the Republicans claim the Democrats are usually favored by the press. Unless the Democrats are into some sort of Holistic healing process, I find this hard to believe.

The truth of the matter is, Clinton is a product of our modern system of government. The "tabloid" era has a "tabloid" president. The person who can garner large amounts of corporate money coupled with providing lullabying Populist sound bites for television is the one who gets elected. This president is the zenith of what our greed-fueled system has created.

The people are seeing the corruption and reacting against Clinton; they did the same to Bush.

All isn't rotten in the state of Denmark, however.

As much as one can banter on about how our system is controlled by a wealthy corporate elite whose goal is to crush the masses into submission (as I did last week), the system does provide for change, and a chance at good governing.

All this fighting for popularity between the two parties has created compromises that will benefit the people at large.

Eliminating over 100 useless programs, a balanced budget amendment and the middle class "Bill of Rights" are products of these compromises.

The irony is two-fold. First, Clinton is becoming more popular due to his most criticized quality, his ability to re-create himself (Sometimes I can almost see him day dreaming about his face in history books or on certain hillsides in the Badlands of the Dakotas).

Second, the press (now officially proclaimed evil by both parties), and all its polls (although easily manipulated), charts and critics, have caused useful compromise and legislation to blossom in reaction.

Clinton's "New Covenant", a phrase he made sure all listeners would remember, is not all that new. It is the old same stuff that has kept this country revolution free the last 100 years or so.

Only time will tell if it's really worthwhile.

—David Kanaan is an opinion columnist at The Rebel Yell.

## Upcoming Political Changes Will Offer Hope for Most Americans

A few months back, I wrote that I didn't expect to see any real reform in Washington. It was my view that politicians weren't about to give up their gravy train and that they'd simply mouth the correct platitudes to placate people.

Guest  
Commentary  
**DIANE AMANTEA**

I am ecstatic to tell you that I was dead wrong. Nov. 8, 1994 changed everything. In that first week of January, when the Republicans finally took over the House and Senate, the American people were rewarded with real change—the kind of change that watches out for our pocket-books and gives us back the power that rightfully belongs to the states.

Unbelievably, some Democrats are still clinging to the old ideas which brought them defeat in the first place. We hear talk of how this is going to affect the poor and penalize minorities. I have said this time and time again, but apparently, it bears repeating.

Welfare is not a charitable institution. It actually enslaves people and demoralizes them. We, as human beings, thrive on challenge.

Now, we no longer live in caves and have to hunt for food so the closest way we have by way of challenge is earning a living. If you take away that challenge, you own a piece of that person's soul—pure and simple. Human motivation and incentive die.

I will give you an example. Some months ago, a welfare mother wrote to me. She said she had a right to stay home with her children. After all, she reasoned, isn't that what "good Republican women" do and tell other women they should do? She also said that she sees no reason to work at some minimum wage job when she gets better money on welfare and gets to stay home and raise her kids!

To add insult to injury, she was of the opinion that "they" should go after the fathers of the children for support. She pointed out that most of her friends (also on welfare) knew who the father(s) of their babies were and the government should go about tracking them down!

I don't have to tell you how typical that reasoning is for a welfare recipient. It is exactly what I object to, as well as millions of other Americans. And, Ms. Welfare, if you must know, as a Republican woman I don't tell other women how to live their lives. If I choose to stay home with my children, it is because my husband is out there working to support us and I to sacrifice my second salary in order to be home with them. If I want to work, I can—and I do.

I look forward to the many changes to come. I feel they will strengthen our country and reverse the decay our society has been suffering for the last 30 or so years. I now have that wonderful thing called hope.

©1995 by King Feature Synd.

### Letters to the Editor

#### Filing for elections a key to opening the doors of the future

Dear Fellow UNLV Students:

Throughout life, we are bombarded with countless "meaningful" sayings formed to inspire us to work harder, play better and live longer. Although many of these ideas go in one ear and out the other, one particular saying has stuck: MAKE IT HAPPEN! I'm writing this letter as a form of inspiration for those of you who want to make it happen.

I'm quite aware of the negative connotations surrounding your Student Government. In my short year as Student Body President, I've tried to alleviate the negativity. I know how difficult it is to change the

perceptions of the masses. I can only offer you my personal experiences. In one year, I've made UNLV's Student Government a positive student organization in the eyes of students, regents, faculty, administration, and peer schools. I now have no problem relaying that students are a priority on campus.

If it needs to get done, I get it done. As a student, I knew what we needed at our university—as student body president, I have the ability to accomplish what we need. Not only am I the spokesperson for approximately 18,000 undergraduate students but I am responsible for the allocation of a \$750,000 budget consisting of student monies. I know I've made a difference, and will continue to do so until my presidency comes to an end. All the while, I've kept in the back of my mind the countless comments about how a "chick" would never be UNLV Student Body President.

As UNLV students, we deserve the best person for the job. Please don't sit back and think someone else will run for the important job of being your student body president. You have the first ten days of instruction in February to file for the three open seats of the Consolidated Students-University of Nevada (CSUN) President, Vice-President and Senate President. Think about the doors which you can open.

People will always say one person will not make a difference. It is up to you to change their minds—if you don't try, you'll never know. Remember, the last day to file for Student Body President, Vice President and Senate President is Tuesday, Feb. 14, 1995. Thanks for your time, and good luck in the upcoming semester!

Stephanie C. Boixo  
Student Body President 1994-95