

# Balanced Federal Budget Is No Cure For Inflation, Simplistic Solutions No Good

By Baynard  
Rustin

Many years ago I listened to a clever and seasoned political leader as he explained one of his most important operating principles. "People," he said, "don't want complicated answers to complicated problems, even if they're the only real answers. People want simple answers, and they'll accept them everytime even when they probably know they're bad and stupid answers."

This rather cynical maxim of politics comes to mind as I constantly hear the even louder demands for a balanced federal budget as a quick cure for inflation. President Carter, who promised a balanced budget for fiscal year 1981, is responding to the appalling acceleration of inflation by proposing deeper cuts in an already bare bones federal budget.

Meanwhile, the Republican presidential candidates, especially Ronald Reagan, continue to promote the simplistic notion that the federal deficit is the prime cause of inflation. Strangely enough, many voters, including quite a few poor people, have bought this simplistic analysis of inflation. What is worse, they have swallowed it without even looking at the basic facts, and without considering the political and economic consequences.

A look at the facts reveals an enormous gap between the rhetoric and reality of the situation. To begin with, most people who buy the balanced budget line have no idea about the size of the federal deficit. They assume that the deficit is enormous, perhaps equal

to a quarter or a third of the overall Gross National Product.

Such exaggerations are understandable considering the intensity of the propaganda about "bloated government" and "printing press money." But the truth is quite different: the current \$16 billion deficit accounts for only .6% of the nation's \$2.5 trillion economy. In other words, if you earned \$10,000 last year, and if you incurred debt in the same proportion as the federal government, does this year, your total annual debt would be only \$60, hardly a frightening amount.

In addition to exaggerating the size of the federal deficit, conservatives and their friends also grossly oversimplify the relationship between inflation and deficits. To listen to Mr. Reagan or for that matter a few economists in the Carter Administration, one might be persuaded that the inflation rate inevitably drops as deficits decline.

But again the facts tell a different story. For example, between 1971 and 1974, the deficit declined from \$23 billion to \$4.7 billion. But while the deficit was shrinking, inflation rose from 3.4% to 12.2%, hardly the expected result. Moreover, Germany and Japan, both noted for their relatively low inflation rates (at least half the American rate) presently have government deficits which, as a proportion of their GNP, are four to six times larger than the American deficit.

In light of all this, I think it makes very good sense to challenge the so-called conventional wisdom of

the economic experts who seem to have so much influence with political leaders.

Some people, like Senator William Proxmire, now assert that even though budget reductions will not reduce inflation, they will serve as a symbol of the federal government's will to cut the inflation rate. This sounds nice and sensible until one realizes that the symbolic commitment to a balanced budget is much more than a symbol for poor people, the elderly and the workers of America.

Does it really make sense to use the checks of Social Security recipients, many of them living below the poverty line, as symbols of restraint? Will anyone be convinced that the government is serious about inflation when it cuts the food stamp program, when it slashes employment and training programs, or when it reduces funding for vocational training?

I don't think so. If anything, people will only be further convinced that the war against inflation is a sham, and an effort to rush the poor and have-nots into the frontlines while the better-off sit behind the lines in relative prosperity.

What is more, the ridiculous concentration on balancing the budget will keep attention from the true complexities of the nation's economic predicament. And it will be another victory for the conservative simplifiers and sloganizers over the individuals and groups that want to examine the true sources of inflation, and who want to formulate workable and effective solutions.

## Dynamic Black Art Showing

By  
Doris K. Pinkney

A tinkling wine sip and a groovy jazz combo provided the atmosphere at a showing of dynamic Black Art. The Westside Art Gallery presented the second in a series of shows Friday night at the Union Plaza Hotel.

The room was filled with sculptures, paintings, and some authentic African Artifacts. The collection was unique and enlightening. This gallery is strictly a volunteer community action program, which was founded in November, 1977.

The gallery is managed by three people: Faye Daniels, Orlando Hogan and Dave Washington, who have dedicated their time and money to maintain the existence of our Black Culture.

"We want our kids to know what Black Art is," stated Faye Daniels, while excitedly expressing her love of and her desire for others to love Black Art. "We're willing to work hand in hand with groups such as the Boy Scouts to enhance their knowledge of Black Art," stated Orlando Hogan.

The creative works of local visual artists, such as Benni Casselle and Rudean Gaston, as well as guest artists are on exhibit in the main gallery. The gallery features group exhibits as well as one person shows throughout the year.

## Child Abuse Growing

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dangling the child around the genital area or it could be forcible rape.

Most sexual abusers are male and most of their victims are females between the ages of 9 and 13. If sexual abuse is occurring within the immediate family unit, the abuser is usually the father, step-father or someone portraying a father figure to the child. Unlike physical abuse this crime often involves more than one child in the family.

There have been cases reported where a father

or father figure has sexually assaulted 4 girls in a family of 5 or 6 girls. Usually the child is reluctant to report this abuse because of embarrassment, guilt or the fear of no one believing him or her.

There have been problems with mothers not believing their daughters who have accused their mother's husband or boy friend of sexual assault. There are also many cases in which the mother of the victim is aware of the assault, but refuses to believe or accept it. The mother

feels that if the problem is ignored, it perhaps will eventually fade away. As with child abusers, some sexual abusers were victims of sexual abuse when they were children. However, there are other people who have further psychological problems and are in need of further professional help.

Abuse of any kind may permanently impair the child mentally as well as physically. This is a very serious problem and a fast growing one. Everyone's help is needed to stop abuse.

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