

Point of View



Education Is Power

By Thomas E. Wilson

Back To Basics In Reading

According to information contained in the SLATE bulletin for October 1976, reading is singled out for public attention more than any other skills that children learn in school. If a school's children do not learn to read adequately, the school has failed in an essential task. There is no lack of agreement among parents, teachers, government officials and legislators on this point. However, they may differ in their responses concerning what schools should do

in this task. They also differ as to how successful the schools have been in their teaching of reading.

The clamors of concern that we "must go back to the basics" in teaching reading points at the value that most people place on the teaching of reading. A number of events seem to indicate that schools have failed at this important task: press reports of falling scores on nationally stan-

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DETROIT — Mary Crisp graduated from my alma mater, Oberlin College. I asked myself some years ago how a nice Oberlin girl wound up in Arizona licking stamps for Barry Goldwater.

Mary Crisp licked enough envelopes and did enough of the unglamorous chores to rise to co-chairman of the Republican Party, but she kept making it clear that while she licked envelopes, she wouldn't lick boots — not even those of Ronald Reagan.

Crisp believed all the stuff her party had said for 40 years about women's rights, all that it had been

saying in recent years about broadening its base to include blacks, Hispanics and others.

But Mary Crisp was sensitive enough to know that her "co-chairman" title was a token and her views and old GOP promises were losing favor with the ascendancy of Reagan.

Especially when it became apparent that while someone had gotten Crisp out of Oberlin, they hadn't gotten all the Oberlin out of her. She kept supporting women's rights and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), even when it was known to all that Reagan,

the certain GOP presidential nominee, had flip-flopped and now opposed ERA. She kept talking about a woman's right to control her body, and to have an abortion if she so chose — even when it was clear that Reagan and the conservatives in control of the party machinery were going to call for a constitutional amendment to overrule the Supreme Court and make it a crime for any woman, rich or poor, to get an abortion.

As her party embraced the far right, including some lunatics around Reagan who want to ship masses of arms to the racist regime in South Africa, Crisp had the audacity to say a good word about Rep. John Anderson, the erstwhile Republican conservative turned moderate who is seeking the presidency as an independent.

Suddenly, with a ruthless efficiency that would have made Josef Stalin blush with pride, the power boys in the Republican Party turned Mary Crisp into a non-person. They gave her nothing to do, ordered her not to deal with the press and to take "the lowest possible profile" at this convention where her name was pointedly removed from every piece of convention literature.

Mary Crisp surprised them, though. She cried a little, as the macho foes of ERA will tell you that "weak" women are supposed to do, but she stuck a sharp hatpin into the public relations balloon that the conservatives have puffed up.

"Although our party has presented the outward appearance of vibrant health," she said, "I am afraid we are suffering from serious internal sickness."

Mary Crisp noted that her party had worked for ERA for 40 years, but that "Now we are reversing our position and are about to buy the rights of over 100 million American

women under a heap of platitudes." She walked out of the convention and returned to her apartment in Washington.

Mary Louise Smith of Iowa is a rare woman in many respects. She was born to privilege and Republicanism, and surely licked few if any envelopes on her way to becoming Republican national chairman, a post she held from 1974 to 1977. She gave lip service to ERA and women's rights until it was obvious that the Reagan forces were in control and would have none of what they considered nuisance babbling by women.

Mary Louise Smith wound up capitulating with the explanation that "I am not a one-issue person," adding that she was concerned about unemployment, national defense and other things which "impact upon women," and that she would honor her long-standing commitment to support Reagan.

Reagan left no doubt as to which lady he prefers. He told reporters: "Well, Mary Crisp, I think, should look to herself to see how loyal she has been to the Republican Party for quite some time."

Does Mary Louise Smith really believe that Crisp is a one-issue person? ERA is one issue, abortion is two issues, the Dark Ages GOP platform is 100 issues, the internal sickness of a party is a thousand issues.

Mary Crisp walked out of this convention, I swear, because she was sick at heart over what she knows the controlling forces here will do to this nation. Not just to women, or blacks, or college professors, or foreign policy efforts to prevent the world from being blown up — but to this nation.

Does Reagan really expect people to be loyal first to his party when the national well-being is at stake?

Vernon Jordan

Civil Rights Issues Coming Up

By Vernon E. Jordan

A new Civil Rights Act is likely to cross faces in the next session of Congress in the weeks ahead. Several civil rights-related measures will be on the agenda.

One issue left unresolved by the last Congress was the long-overdue amendments to the Fair Housing Law that would give the government the enforcement powers needed to make the law work.

There had a fair housing law on the books for over ten years but discrimination in the sale and rental of

housing is still rampant. This has been proved time and again by large-scale research programs and by simple anecdotes that can be related by every black person who has ever tried to move out of a ghetto.

The House of Representatives and the Senate Judiciary Committee both backed bills that would let HUD bring lawsuits against those charged with discrimination in housing. But it died in Congress' rush to ad-

dress other issues. The bill, however, did pass the Senate. Discriminators need not fear fines or license suspensions. Under the present law the Department of Housing and Urban Development can only mediate disputes, while the Justice Department can only sue in situations where a pattern of discrimination is evident.

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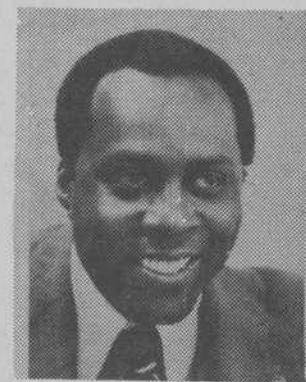
dress other issues.

Another issue Mr. Reagan can capitalize on is one that he muffed last month. Then, he said he supported restrictions on business. At the time the Congress had passed a rider to an appropriations bill that would have prevented the Justice Department from taking part in school desegregation cases involving business.

President Carter was able to kill that blatant attempt to restrict the executive branch's duty to enforce the Constitution by vetoing the bill. But the anti-business crowd has promised to come back with it in the new Congress, hopeful the new President will sign it.

Mr. Reagan can disabuse them of that notion. Even if he's not a fan of business, and even if he doesn't understand the need for business in some cases, he should understand the threat to the powers of the presidency posed by such a restriction on a federal Department to enforce laws and constitutional rights. It is

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Part of the reason discrimination in housing

isn't over though. Some supporters made important compromises.

Fair housing supporters will bring it up again. But we will start out with two strikes against us. Some of the Bill's Congressional supporters were defeated last November and their replacements

will not support the effort to enforce the law as deemed. President Reagan can use this as an opportunity to send signals to the nation that he finds housing discrimination as abhorrent as do its victims. He can get behind the effort to work out a fair housing enforcement bill that puts the government squarely on the side of ending

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