

Point of View

Editorial

The Clark County Juvenile Court Services have developed a program, under the supervision of the Juvenile Judge, to recruit, train, and appoint community volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court, as well as for some delinquent and pre-delinquent youths.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program is an innovative program which has received national recognition because of its successful advocacy efforts for children. The Court is enthusiastic about the program's potential for assisting abused, neglected, troubled, or delinquent children, for providing important input to the Juvenile Court Judge making decisions affecting these children, and for increased community awareness and involvement in these serious issues affecting children and families in Clark County.

In the past, such children have had no consistent person who stayed with them and remained committed to representing only their interests in court. The Judge, who must make decisions affecting these children's lives, often hears conflicting assertions and recommendations, with little agreement on what is the best course of action for the abused or neglected child.

Responsible people from as broad a spectrum of the community as possible are sorely needed to represent the diverse children who come through the Court process. Special education and expertise are not required, although any special skills or ability that the advocates possess are beneficial and are matched to the extent possible, with special needs of children. What is needed is a commitment to stay with the child until his or her needs for a secure, permanent home are met, and a sense of responsibility about the seriousness of the assignment. The amount of time involved in functioning as a CASA volunteer varies considerably from case to case. It may be as little as ten hours, or as much as fifty hours over a period of six months or longer. The time constraints of individual volunteers are one of the factors taken into consideration in assigning certain types of cases.

This is the time and opportunity for us as Black adults to help our children and youths adjust to the stresses of life and learn how to live full productive lives.

"You can't understand what's going on in Mississippi if you don't understand what's going on in the Congo. You can't be interested in what's going on in Mississippi and not interested in what's going on in the Congo. They're the same... the same sides are drawn. The same schemes at work.

Malcolm X

To Be Equal

TAX PLAN NEEDS CHANGES

By JOHN E. JACOB

The Administration's sweeping tax reform plan needs to be closely examined by the Congress to ensure that it doesn't result in new inequities. As drafted, the current plan is a mixed bag, with some excellent provisions but with others that need careful study.

The good part is the proposal to raise personal exemptions and standard deductions to the point where poor families with children will be removed from the tax rolls.

It's a scandal for government to tax the poor, yet the tax rates paid by poor families have risen sharply in recent years. Back in 1978 a family of four at the poverty line paid four percent of its income in taxes, including the Social Security tax. Today, they pay 10.4 percent — a 158 percent increase.

And while the government was increasing its tax bite on the poor, it was sharply cutting expenditures on programs that serve them and cutting taxes for the affluent.

By raising exemptions and deductions in a way that would exclude the poor from

paying taxes, the plan also winds up cutting the tax bill of higher income groups. And because the device fits poorly with the way the poverty line is calculated,



John E. Jacob

many poor people who are single or in multi-earner families would still wind up paying more taxes than they did seven years ago.

The overall reform package is so complex that it probably won't be acted upon until next year, but the poor need tax relief now. So it might make sense to legislate a tax exemption for all who fall below the poverty line now — in a separate bill that could be passed this year.

The rest of the tax package presented by the Administration has some questionable features, including possible negative

effects on low-income housing and on manufacturing employment.

And there's a strong bias toward the affluent in the plan. For example, today's biggest tax loophole — the 20 percent maximum tax rate on capital gains — would

the Administration dynamites its own "New Federalism" concept, since many states will be under intense pressure to cut taxes — and that means cutting services.

The plan will foster competition among the states to lower taxes to attract new

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become an even bigger loophole since the maximum tax would be only 17½ percent.

The most controversial part of the package would end deductibility of state and local taxes. That could be part of a hidden agenda to prevent governments from fulfilling their responsibilities.

In recent years the federal government has stripped domestic programs to the bone, saying voluntarism and local governments should shoulder the full responsibility for social programs. That was the idea behind the "New Federalism," which pushed an enlarged, more innovative role for the states.

But by making state and local taxes non-deductible,

industry, while penalizing states whose taxes are high since they must cope with national problems Washington ought to be solving. States with large numbers of poor people won't be able to provide the services their citizens need. And just about every school district in the country can expect resistance to local school taxes if they aren't deductible from federal returns.

So the implications of many parts of the Administration's tax package could be very negative for the country. Congress should treat the plan like the minefield it is — going very slowly to avoid doing more harm than good. And it should get the poor off the tax rolls — now.

The Destruction of American Education

By Alexander R. Jones

Education was destroyed in this country. That's right. Destroyed. It was done systematically and over a period of decades, and it had little, if anything, to do with race.

No, the workable teaching methods that made America the greatest power on earth were abandoned not because of skin color. They were abandoned because major institutions of learning were encouraged by large grants from wealthy foundations to replace the tried and true teaching methods with the "progressive," untried, theoretical methods of educational psychologists.

The word "psychology" originally meant the study of the spirit from the Latin words "psyche," meaning soul or spirit, and "ology," meaning the study of. This

definition of psychology was perverted in the 1800's by German psychologist, Wilhelm Wundt, who believed man has no soul and is simply a complex stimulus-response machine. In other words, Wundt believed man is an animal.

Wundt created psychology laboratories which soon became world reknown and he trained many Americans who returned to the U.S. where they began to apply Wundt's MAN AS ANIMAL principles to education and the training of teachers on a grand scale by the early 1900's.

Within two generations, the methods of these educational psychologists have in effect disenfran-

chised thousands of our youth by leaving them unskilled and ill-suited to compete in our increasingly technological society. Too many have simply been schooled into a state of apathy and resentment; apathy about the chances of making their dreams come true, and resentment towards a society that yet so rich, would so cruelly deny its riches to them.

In April of 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released "A Nation at Risk," a report which shocked the country with the details of the dismal state of American education, and forced all to confront that our nation will not survive if we cannot pass

our wisdom from one generation to the next. Indeed, it is time for a change. A change, fortunately, that has already begun in many schools throughout the country. Let us hope it continues.

More details on the subversion of American education can be found in "The Leipzig Connection," written by Paolo Lionni and Lance J. Klass, and published by Heron Books in Portland, Oregon. It is an excellent little book.

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