

Point of View

NNPA FEATURE

COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner



Drug Pushing is a Profitable Job

I know that you must be tired of reading articles about the drug problem but one more won't hurt you. I received a letter last week from Mr. J. in Columbus, Ohio who said, "Dr. Faulkner, you always talk about the drug problem in America as if it is the worst thing in the world. All that they have to do is build enough treatment centers for addicts and arrest the dealers, and the problem will be ended."

America has far more than a drug problem to deal with, Mr. J. In fact, if addiction were the sole problem, there might be hope for elimination of the problem. However, sale of illicit drugs has become a profitable and relative "easy" way to earn a living. For many young men, selling drugs is the *only* way to earn a living. It is, for them certainly, the *best* way to make a buck!

Try telling a 16-year-old drug "salesman" to rehabilitate himself/herself by obeying the law and getting a "decent" job at McDonald's paying \$3.65 an hour. He will probably pull a wad of "bread" out of his pocket

and count off twenty \$100 bills. He might then point to his BMW parked a half block away while, at the same time, showing you his \$2,500 gold necklace and bracelet set. After that, he might tell you how stupid your suggestion sounds.

The unpleasant fact is that many young people, some as young as 11 years old, are earning large amounts of money selling drugs. They feel that they have no need for high school (or, even Jr. high school) in some instances. They watch the same television shows that you do. They see wealthy people driving big cars and wearing expensive clothes. They know that a poor person in America, even if he finishes high school and college, will be lucky to earn \$25,000 a year. They know that they are poor (and worse, if black) and will probably always be poor. They know that selling drugs can put a quick end to their difficult circumstances. They know that selling drugs is a good way to support their own expensive drug

habit, with only moderate risk.

To solve the problem, society must show the person who sells drugs how it would be to his advantage to finish school and get a job. It hasn't done that yet and probably will not do so in the near future. In the absence of such a solution, drug dealers will continue to take violent action against anyone who tries to take their "job" away from them or who seriously tries to stop the public from buying drugs.

In most major cities, competition for customers (and rip offs) have caused up to 50% more killings this year than last year. Drug pushers are a greater problem than drug addicts. If you stop making the sale of drugs profitable, there won't be anybody selling to the addicts.

Need advice? Have questions? Write to Dr. Charles W. Faulkner, P.O. Box 50016, Washington, D.C. 20004.

THE AGONY OF HAITI

by Norman Hill

When the Duvaliers were driven out of Haiti nearly two years ago, the international community uniformly hailed the departure as auguring the prospect of democracy in the impoverished island nation. Those hopes were brutally dashed last November 29th when the presidential elections were suspended after junta-backed killers ran amok at the polling stations, killing 24 people and injuring many more.

Most experts blame the violence on the regime of Gen. Henri Namphy, who served briefly as Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier's army chief of staff before being asked by the U.S. government to run the country after the civil unrest forced the hated Duvaliers to flee. Gen. Namphy has announced new elections for January 17, but with procedural modifications that violate the Haitian Constitution and make a mockery of democratic processes.

First, Gen. Namphy sus-

pended the electoral council and asked the appropriate organizations to name a new one. After seven of the nine organizations declined, the general appointed his own toadies. He then announced that his own handpicked su-

another guise. Clearly, Gen. Namphy is trying to ensure the election of a pliant president who will tolerate continued corruption and right of the military to do as it pleases. Haitians will again have to endure tyranny and its

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preme court would review any commission decisions. Moreover, the new council, in open defiance of the Constitution, was asked to register 13 candidates who were disqualified as "Duvalierists" by the former council.

What's more, Gen. Namphy has barred poll watchers, assigned armed soldiers in their place, and threatened to fine and jail those advocating an election boycott. And finally, he has insisted that he will remain as commander-in-chief for three years no matter what happens at the polls.

The upshot of all this is that the Namphy military regime is simply Duvalierism in

trappings: crushing poverty, illiteracy, fixed elections, terror and repression.

There is no simple solution to the mess in Haiti. But one thing is clear. The Western democracies must be more vocal in their support of Haitian democracy. Thus far, the United Nations has ignored the issue. The Organization of American States (OAS) has paid lip service to democracy, but opposes intervention. The United States has cut off all military and economic assistance, but has said little about the consequences of another botched election.

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CHILD WATCH

By Marian Wright Edelman

President Children's Defense Fund

Our Children's Example: Register and Vote

In many ways, my generation of Black Americans set an important example for our children. We organized, marched and worked behind the scenes to bring about a civil rights revolution in this nation.

'Now, it is our young people's turn to make their mark on history. And, in their own way, they are beginning to do so. The Census Bureau informs us that in the 1986 elections, young Black Americans' rate of voting participation had surpassed that of young whites. The voting rate among young people ages 18-24 in our community has surged forward from 10 percentage points behind that of their white peers to three percent ahead.

Our young people are turning out in higher proportions just at a time when most other groups' turn out rates are dropping. Overall voter turnout has been on the decline since 1982, as has overall turnout among the

black community. Our young people are the praiseworthy exception to this sad rule.



Marian Wright Edelman

Why are a greater proportion of our young people now going to the polls? U.S.

Representative John Lewis (D-Ga.) says: "I think there is a feeling among black young people that they missed the civil rights movement, and the vote is their instrument for social and political change." Reverend Jesse Jackson's campaign has stimulated the interest of many young black people.

But Black Americans, young and old, still have a long way to go in fully exercising our political clout. Too many of us are not even registered to vote. Of those who are, less than half went to the polls in 1986. And while our young people have recently made great strides forward, they are still turning out at a rate even less than that.

This is a crucial time to get registered and to get our

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