

Point of View

Carl Rowan's Commentary

I'd like to be able to say that the victims of a second federal government shut-down will find their sacrifices worth it once the political warfare ends and the nation gets a balanced budget.



CARL ROWAN

I compare the federal government with the ordinary family and say, "Of course every family needs a balanced budget." Then I look at the level of debt of most families, and the billions being charged to plastic cards, and I am reminded that the normal American family lives on credit. Colossal business mergers are based on credit.

Being in debt is the American way of life!

We're not seeing brave political leadership toward giving the nation financial stability. We're seeing pandering, by both Democrats and Republicans, to the greed of electoral constituencies that will grab 1996 tax cuts now and not give a damn whether the budget is balanced in the year 2002.

President Clinton takes the so-called high road of trying to cut taxes for "the middle class," that swath of Americans who are blessedly undertaxed compared with the amounts paid for the good life by their cousins in Europe. The Republicans, driven by their historic philosophy that if almost all the wealth is given to the richest, shamelessly undertaxed, the super rich will be nice to the rest of America.

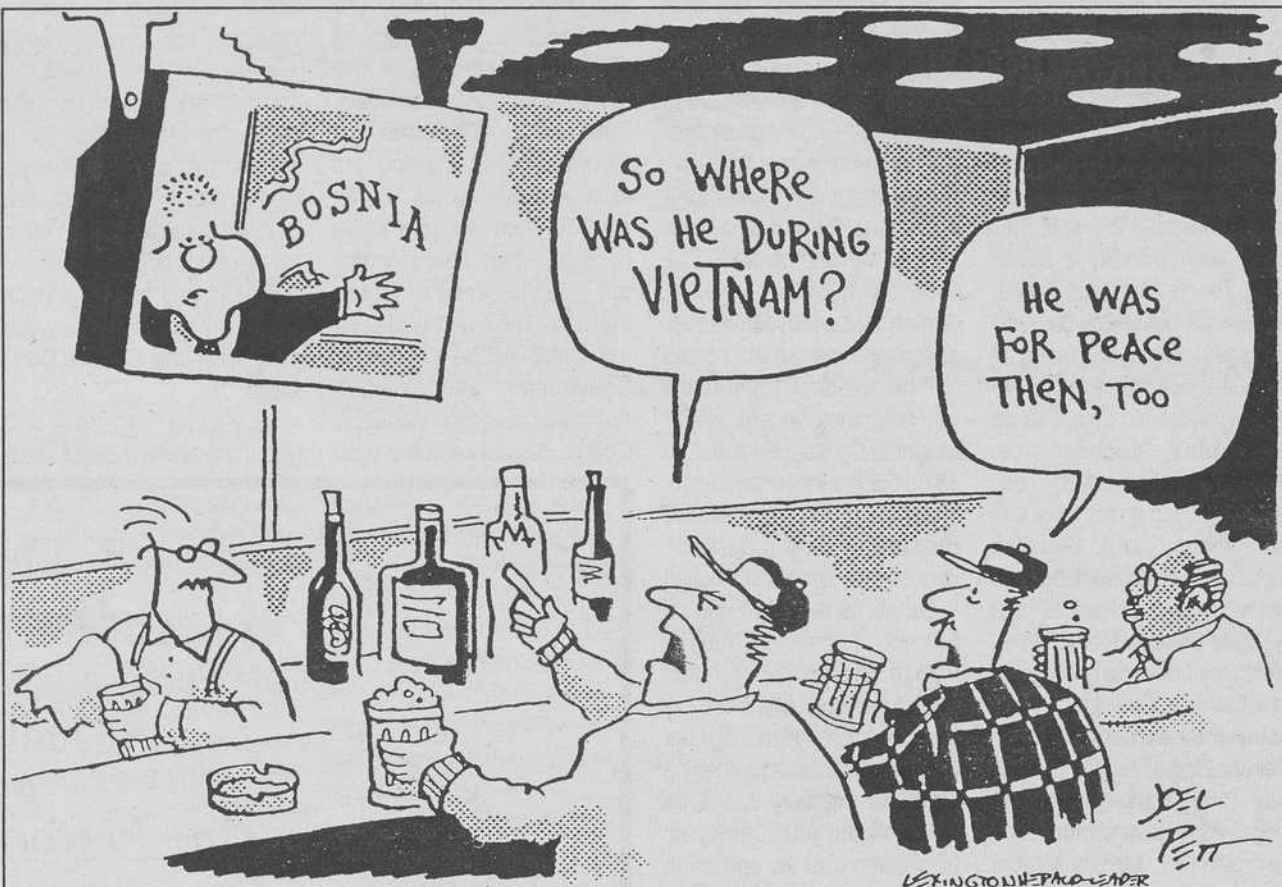
President Clinton is arguing that Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole and their robbing hoods are using "balanced budget" as a shield behind which they can take Medicare, Medicaid, the earned income tax credit for the working poor, food for the needy children and more away from middle class and poor

citizens. Anyone who speaks seriously about balancing the budget, about the high interest costs of the national debt, or about the debt burdens we are bequeathing to our children and grandchildren, has to be wise enough to know that we don't need tax cuts in America at this time. So one step toward ending the current impasse is for both Democrats and Republicans to abandon their tax-cut schemes. Abandoning these raids on the treasury will go a long way toward making a balanced budget possible. Our lawmakers can then stop bickering and better explain and control what our taxes pay for.

We all want to be protected physically, externally by a unified, reliable military, and internally by trained and restrained, uncorrupted police forces. We all want our children educated in ways that will enable them to further enrich this society. Most of us want more than an income that balances our families' budgets; we want some art, music, a winning football team, the joy of good and prosperous neighbors and friends of all races and backgrounds. We all want shelter from the ravages of illness and old age.

If our politicians stopped posturing, they would see that in this rich nation we can have all these things, for everyone, at prices we can afford.

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

A FAREWELL TO JEAN

By Bernice Powell Jackson

Someone said it better than I. Our values are misplaced. You hear about the deaths of old sports and entertainment figures who have abused their bodies, but those people who have donated their lives to justice so that the lives of others might be better get no lines in the newspapers or time on the television.

The world was a better place because Dr. Jean Sindab was in it and some 800 people came to Riverside Church in New York in the middle of a snowstorm to testify to her life of commitment to poor people, to oppressed people, to young people. Young people came, native Americans came, environmental justice advocates came, Southern Africans came and many of her friends and colleagues came to pay tribute to this gentle woman with an uncompromising spirit.

Dr. Jean Sindab was an Africanist, whose love for Mother Africa was central to her own identity. Through her work at the World Council of Churches, she was able to work for the liberation of black people throughout Southern Africa and for the eradication of racism the world over.

Through her more recent work at the National Council of Churches, Dr. Sindab became a leading voice in the environmental justice movement. She helped black churches to understand the



Bernice Powell Jackson

impact of environmental racism on the lives of their communities and she clearly understood the link between living in degraded physical environments, mass alienation and destructive violence.

Jean Sindab was also a vocal supporter of our youth and one deeply concerned about the violence which threatens to engulf them. She put together a program called "Things that Make for Peace" and was an active participant in the Kansas City gang summit.

Jean Sindab died at 51 of breast cancer. Another warrior for justice felled during what should have been the prime of her life. Another front-line casualty in the war against racial, social and economic injustice.

We seldom talk about the price one pays for being on the front-lines in the battles. We seldom talk about the early deaths, the nervous breakdowns, the health problems of facing into the winds of injustice and power. But they are clearly there and we as a community need to acknowledge

them. And then we need to do something about them.

We need to take better care of our leaders. We need to embrace them, to support them, to demand that they take care of themselves physically, mentally and spiritually. We need to encourage our leaders to stop smoking and to find time to exercise in the madness of the world. We need to make sure that our men on the front-lines watch their blood pressure and their diets and have prostate cancer tests. We need to make sure that our women on the front-lines have mammograms.

It seems that I've lost a lot of folks I respect and love to cancer. Indeed, African Americans have the highest overall age-adjusted cancer incidence and mortality rate of any group in the U.S. Black women are more likely than white women to die from breast cancer and black men

are more likely to die from prostate cancer, for instance.

Cancer, I am told, is a relationship between a host and an invader. There are a number of factors which impact how your body reacts to that invader and clearly heredity, environment, social and nutritional factors all have a part to play in cancer. So do racism and stress.

Being a drum major for justice is full of stress. It means being sensitive to the plight of those who are oppressed. It means speaking difficult words to power. It means putting your life on the line, sometimes in not-so-obvious ways.

Tell someone you respect, someone who is on the front-lines for justice that you care. Make sure they take care of themselves. We can not afford to lose many more Jean Sindabs. We can't afford to lose many more drum majors for justice.

Send us your Letters to the Editor by fax (702) 380-8102 or mail: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice 900 E. Charleston Blvd. Las Vegas, NV 89104

Letters must be signed and leave a day time phone number. Thank you



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