

The Blumenfeld Education Letter



"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

Vol. 7, No. 10 (Letter # 74)

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October 1992

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

Homeschooling Father Runs for U. S. Presidency

Howard Phillips, founder of the U.S. Taxpayers Party, was officially nominated for the nation's highest office at his party's national convention in New Orleans on Sept. 5. Phillips, 51, the father of six children ranging in age from 6 to 27, is homeschooling his youngest child, 6-year-old Sam. His oldest son, Douglas, is on the staff of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). In other words, this is one candidate intimately involved in the homeschool movement, and a staunch advocate of educational freedom and parents rights. Phillips, a native of Massachusetts, is also a graduate of Harvard University.

Phillips will be on the ballot in 21 states — Alaska, Arkansas, California, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. His running mate in Michigan will be Robert Tisch; in Wyoming and Louisiana, Dr. Stephen Graves; and in the remaining states, Gen. Albion Knight.

Thus, for the first time, homeschoolers

will be able to have a political impact, at least in 21 states, which will send a much-needed message to the powers that be. And for the first time since the Goldwater-Johnson campaign, conservatives will have the kind of candidate they have always wanted, one who will vigorously oppose the liberal-humanist-socialist establishment in Washington and not cave in when the going gets tough. Phillips has vowed to dismantle the U.S. Education Department as well as the Internal Revenue Service. Bush, on the other hand, wants to expand the reach of the Education Department with his America 2000 plan, Clinton will put the Department all under the NEA's benign control, and Perot will probably use the Department "to improve education."

Actually, there are now two presidential candidates who want to get rid of the Education Department and the Internal Revenue Service: Howard Phillips, and Andre Marrou of the Libertarian Party. And because their views are considered "extreme" by the establishment media, the American people will be denied the information that would permit them to vote against the estab-

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lishment, and there will be no open national discussion or debate of the issues raised by either Phillips or Marrou.

As for taxes, Bush has pledged to hold the line, Clinton has promised to raise taxes on the rich, and Perot wants to raise taxes on everyone and everything.

Phillips, on the other hand, has pledged to use the presidential veto authority to abolish the IRS and permit the elimination of the federal income tax by dramatically reducing the size and cost of the federal government, slashing outlays by the hundreds of billions of dollars annually. One would think that the American people would welcome such a plan — if only they knew about it. Phillips' biggest problem will be getting the message to the American people. The press is not likely to help, nor will he be invited to debate the establishment three.

A Principled Approach

Phillips is a rare bird indeed. He's a man of principle who has chosen political activism as a career. He was the only prominent Republican to oppose the nomination of Judge Souter to the Supreme Court because, as a trustee of Concord Hospital, Souter voted to permit abortions to be performed there. Phillips has also rejected any federal funding of his candidacy on the principle that the First Amendment protects the liberty of every citizen not to support candidates, institutions, or ideas which conflict with his or her personal ideological or religious beliefs.

To explain why he decided to launch the new conservative political party, Phillips said in his acceptance speech:

"For too long American conservatives have had as their objective 'losing as slowly as possible'. They've lived so long on crumbs from the Republican table that they think it's caviar. It's time to reject the politics of 'surrender on the installment plan' — and to join

us in raising up a new standard — in offering the American people a vision of victory — not a decade of despair, depression, and defeat.

"I am the only candidate, other than George Bush, who has ever headed a major Federal agency — the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity — the OEO. I learned in that job the hard facts about how our government has departed so far from its legitimate purposes. More important, I learned what can be done — using our great Constitution — to put our government back on the right track.

"At OEO, I became a target for criticism as I sought to terminate discretionary Federal grants and contracts which were being used as ideological patronage for virtually every faction and component of the radical left.

"When President Nixon broke his pledge to veto further funding for the agency and its destructive, counterproductive, unconstitutional programs, I resigned from the Federal government, and I've spent the past 19 years working as a private citizen — and chairman of The Conservative Caucus — to take our government back.

"Many of our good friends, despite the evidence that Republican politicians in office do not vote for or work for what their platforms sometimes promise and what we believe, continue to ask why we don't work through the Republican Party. . . . The fact is the Republican Party is a house divided against itself. The workers oppose Planned Parenthood, safe sodomy, high taxes, and the New World Order — but the leaders favor all of the above.

"In the Republican Party, the conservatives get the platform, but the liberals get the government."

The reason why the Phillips tax plan is completely contrary to the plans of the three establishment candidates is because his

philosophy of government differs from theirs. Phillips believes in limiting the Federal government to its legitimate, essential functions. He writes:

"Our politicians in Washington will not cut spending, because they are unwilling to risk the damage it would do to their careers. They have a greater fear of special interests which feed at the Federal trough than of the general interest which they are sworn to serve. . . . My plan offers the immediate prospect of more savings, more consumer spending, and more investment. Last year, against outlays of nearly \$1.4 trillion, the Federal government received less than \$500 billion from the individual income tax. The actual amount was \$468 billion.

Privatize Federal Land

"If, as a first step toward fiscal solvency, Federal spending were reduced by a like amount — about \$500 billion — the income tax could be eliminated even as, in static terms, the annual deficit would be reduced. . . . I can, and will as president, eliminate the Federal debt through the incremental sale and privatization of hundreds of millions of acres of lands and natural resources now unconstitutionally held by the Federal government in Alaska and other Western states."

In other words, it is Phillips' philosophy of limited government, the philosophy of the Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution, which is the basis of his plan. The economic plans of the establishment three are based on the premise that government must expand its control over the lives of our citizens, economically, educationally, environmentally. They believe in big government, and their plans will enable government to grow bigger — all at the expense of the taxpayer.

Obviously, the U.S. Taxpayers Party is the new kid on the block. It is the beginning

of a movement to return America to the ideals of our Founding Fathers who feared the potential tyranny of an omnipotent government. The beauty of the new party is that it has attracted some of the best brains in the conservative movement. For example, among the speakers at the party's convention were noted theologian R. J. Rushdoony, historian Otto Scott, author George Grant, free-market economist Ed Vieira, former ambassador David Funderburk, congressman Bill Dannemeyer, and 1988 Libertarian presidential candidate Ron Paul. It is hard to imagine a more distinguished line-up of speakers for a new conservative political party. And it is for this reason that the establishment will endeavor to isolate and quarantine the party for as long as possible. For the new party represents the greatest threat to the liberal-socialist establishment since the latter took political and cultural power through the two major parties, the academy, and the media.

The Natives Are Restless

One thing the present political uncertainty has demonstrated more than anything else is that the natives are restless. The American people don't like what is happening to their country. But their inferior public education has not provided them with the knowledge needed to make wise decisions. That is why so many of them are eager and willing to follow a man on a white horse like Ross Perot, whose statist philosophy of government is barely understood, or succumb to the siren songs of a slick huckster named Bill Clinton, whose wife Hillary ("Buy one, get one free!") is about as ambitious and radical as any deconstructionist in law school.

Concerning Hillary's political ambitions, Gail Sheehy wrote in the May 1992 *Vanity Fair*, "Those who keep asking 'Why isn't she running?' miss the point. Hillary Clinton is

running. She and her husband have been a political team for more than twenty years. And now they are, despite protestations to the contrary, *co-candidates* for president of the United States."

Bill Clinton told Gail Sheehy: "If I get elected president, it will be an unprecedented partnership, far more than Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor. They were two great people, but on different tracks. If I get elected, we'll do things together like we always have."

Who Will Win?

At this point in October, one week before the debates, it is impossible to tell who will win in November. The polls tell us that the final outcome will be decided by the presently undecideds and wait-and-seers. My hunch is that Bush will squeak through, mainly because both the Democrats and Perot are offering the American people higher taxes, more costly government programs, and a diet of "sacrifice" and pain. And so, if Bush does win, we will have four more years of Bush-Baker-Darman pragmatism, the creeping federalization of education, and the uncertain trumpet of country-club Republican leadership. Conservative Republicans will have to bide their time until Bush finally leaves the scene. It is predicted that the next presidential candidate of the Republican Party will be an ideological conservative, for conservatives will not accept anything less.

If Clinton wins, the White House will become America's nonstop soap opera, with Hillary emerging as a major political force. The media will have a field day, and the supermarket tabloids will turn the White House into a massage parlor. The abortionists, feminists, and environmentalists will take command of the federal bureaucracy, the NEA will celebrate its takeover of the Education Department, and a draft-dodger

will become Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States.

Slick Willie will become the most powerful Head of State in the world with a headful of liberal clichés picked up in his college classrooms. Neither Bill nor Hillary have the necessary wisdom or character or life experience to be entrusted with the fate of America. They are two smart political animals, members of the new university-trained elite, who can get away with running Arkansas. But they will ruin America with their Keynesian economics, half-baked sociology, and college-bred statism.

A vote for Phillips will be seen as an affirmation of basic Constitutional principles and a rejection of political business as usual. As the U.S. Taxpayers Party becomes better known, the stands it takes will be more widely discussed among thoughtful Americans. The new party will be especially attractive to young conservatives who want to become politically active without having to buck entrenched Republican fossils. One might very well characterize this movement as one of Political Reconstruction. It has to start somewhere, and 1992 is the time and place to start. Perot's initial popularity indicates that the voters want an alternative to the two major parties.

While it is possible that a vote for Phillips will help the Democrats win the White House, it is a risk which, in this writer's opinion, must be taken. It is impossible to launch a new conservative political movement without, at first, weakening the Republican Party. It makes no sense for conservatives to support a party that constantly aborts its conservative agenda. If Bush sounds more like a conservative these days, it is out of necessity, not conviction. A true conservative would not merely want to hold the line on taxes, he'd come out forthrightly for the abolition of the personal income tax. A true conservative would not put forth a plan

to save public education, he'd want to get the government out of the education business.

Only a conservative political party free of the establishment straitjacket will be able to offer the American people a true alternative to the status quo. The U.S. Taxpayers Party has a good chance of doing just that.

Spending on Education Up to \$445 Billion

Total spending by all levels of government on education is expected to increase by 5 percent in 1992, to a total of \$445 billion, the U.S. Education Department reported in September. Over the past 10 years, the department found, education spending has increased by 40 percent after adjusting for inflation, and per-pupil spending on elementary and secondary education (including capital outlays and other expenses) — expected to be \$6,300 in the 1992-93 school year — has increased by 35 percent during that period.

The department's annual back-to-school forecast also shows that enrollments, which have grown steadily in elementary schools over the past decade, are expected to increase in secondary schools this year for the first time since they peaked in the 1970's. In addition, the report shows, college enrollments are expected to reach a record 14.3 million in fall 1992.

The forecast also states that the number of K-12 teachers is also expected to increase this year, to 2.8 million, and that the rate of increase in the teacher population has surpassed the growth in enrollments. That finding suggests that the pupil-teacher ratio has shrunk over the past five years. (*Education Week*, 9/9/92)

Teacher Pay Reaches Record Level

According to the American Federation of Teachers' annual salary survey, the average salary for teachers reached a record \$34,213 in the 1991-92 school year. That amount was 3.6 percent more than the teachers were paid the year before — the smallest percentage increase in 27 years.

Since the 1980-81 school year, the average teacher salary has increased 95 percent, the report says. In 13 states, salaries improved more than 100 percent over that period. Connecticut now has the highest average salary, at \$47,510, while South Dakota has the lowest, \$23,291. The report shows that the average teacher salary now nearly equals the average \$34,460 that assistant college professors are paid. (*Education Week*, 9/9/92)

AIDS Educators Angered By Pro-Abstinence Policy in New York

The New York City Board of Education has angered many volunteer groups that provide AIDS-prevention education in the city's schools by adopting a policy requiring them to agree in writing to stress abstinence over other methods of preventing the spread of the disease. The board, which approved the new policy in principle in May, finalized the requirement on a 4-to-1 vote in what was described as a hastily called session late last month.

Schools Chancellor Joseph A. Fernandez, who opposes the requirement and favors a more explicit AIDS curriculum, was on vacation at the time, as were two board members known to oppose the pledge. Mr.

Fernandez dubbed the new requirement a "loyalty oath." Ninfa Segarra, a board member from the Bronx who voted in favor of the new oath, said that it simply brings the board's policies into line with state regulations.

More than 40 of the roughly 200 groups that provide AIDS-education volunteers in the schools have already refused to sign the pledge, and others are expected to follow suit, said Terry Lewis, a spokeswoman for the AIDS and Adolescent Network, an umbrella organization of community groups. Meanwhile, the city's health commissioner, Margaret A. Hamburg, acting with the support of Mayor David N. Dinkins, denounced the pledge requirement as "abhorrent." (*Education Week*, 9/9/92)

A.F.T.'s Shanker Backs Clinton

Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), urged the union's members to endorse Clinton at the union's July convention in Pittsburgh. He also bashed President Bush for his support of private school vouchers and his threat to veto any legislation that would outlaw the permanent replacement of striking workers. Clinton, who stopped by the meeting, accused Bush of overstating how much the nation spends on elementary and secondary education and of mispending federal education funds.

A poll of the union's members in late July found that 68 percent were for Clinton, 19 percent for Bush, 11 percent undecided, and 2 percent would not say whom they supported. Shanker declined to say whom he would like to see Clinton appoint as Secretary of Education. However, he said, "I would hope that I would be consulted." (*Education Week*, 9/9/92)

Boston Schools in Crisis As Test Scores Plummet

In a pointed attack aimed at Boston School Superintendent Lois Harrison-Jones, the mayor's top School Committee aide, Robert W. Consalvo, yesterday disclosed what he called "intolerable" new test scores showing most Boston high school seniors faring poorly on a national test. Consalvo, who last week proposed a voucher plan that would help pay to send at-risk Boston public school students to private schools, criticized the Superintendent for failing to use such low test scores to fire headmasters.

Standardized test scores for most Boston high school seniors, cited by Consalvo, plummeted last spring, with more than half the students at nine of 15 schools scoring well below the national average in math while students in 11 schools did equally poor in reading. The results of the Metropolitan Achievement Test indicate that many students may have graduated in June lacking basic skills in math and reading.

Consalvo said the scores, and his calculation that the city has spent \$2.6 billion on public education since 1985, prompted him to develop his voucher plan — which calls for schools to guarantee that students will be educated.

Consalvo's proposal calls for any student who regularly attends school for three consecutive years yet fails to achieve a certain standard in basic skills to become eligible to move to another Boston public school or to receive a "scholarship" to attend a private, parochial, or public school in another district. Boston would pay up to 75 percent of its average per-pupil cost on the scholarship. That would leave 25 percent of the estimated \$8,000 per-pupil cost for improvements in the ailing public school.

In another indication that Boston high schools have lost ground, both Hyde Park

High School and Brighton High School were placed on probation last month by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which is one of six national groups authorized to grant school accreditations.

Larry Faison, spokesman for the School Department, said that while many schools need reform, the Superintendent "has worked diligently to see that appropriate funding is provided." He criticized Mayor Flynn for not providing enough money for the school system to fully implement a school-based management effort that was the crux of a 1989 reform effort signed into a contract with the Boston Teachers Union. (*Boston Globe*, 10/6/92)

Comment: The Boston public schools have been in crisis since the bussing controversy of the 1970s. The city has tried everything to improve the schools: more money, more busses, new superintendents, school-business partnerships, school-university partnerships, computers, new textbooks, etc. Nothing has worked because the system is run by bureaucrats, psychologists, and humanist educators who reject all traditional educational values.

The philosophy of education that rules the system is same progressive philosophy promulgated by John Dewey and his colleagues early in this century. There is no evidence whatever that the colleges of education that train the teachers, principals, superintendents and administrators have deviated from the progressives' psychology-driven curriculum. That is why none of the universities in the Boston area that have tried to "improve" the public schools have actually managed to do so. They, in fact, have made them worse. Will Mr. Consalvo's voucher plan work? Will it get the approval of the teachers' union? Stay tuned!

Goodlad Gets Another Grant

John I. Goodlad, one of the nation's most prominent school reformers, has launched a fellowship program to train future leaders in both teacher education and K-12 schooling. The program will be supported with a three-year \$500,000 grant from Phillip Morris Companies, Inc., which announced the award last month during the annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States. Goodlad is a professor of education at the University of Washington.

The grant will go to the Institute for Educational Inquiry, a nonprofit organization founded by Goodlad two years ago to forward his work. The funding will enable up to 60 midcareer fellows from colleges, universities, and school districts that are participating in Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal to attend four weeklong seminars at the institute.

The seminars will focus on the mission of schooling and teacher education in a democratic society, changes in curriculum and pedagogy to ensure access to knowledge for all students, the importance of school-university partnerships, and stewardship of the nation's schools. (*Education Week*, 9/9/92)

Comment: Prof. Goodlad is one of the reasons why a return to academic excellence in the public schools is impossible. There will indeed be "reform" in the public schools, but not the kind that parents want. Back in March 1966, the *NEA Journal* published an article by Goodlad entitled "Directions of Curriculum Change." He wrote that the curriculum of the future "will be what one might call the *humanistic curriculum* and that it may become significantly evident by 1990 or 2000." Goodlad explained: "Webster defines humanism as 'a way of life centered upon human interests and values.' Only

within a humanistic conception of education and a humanistic conception and conduct of the whole of schooling can a humanistic curriculum center upon human interests and values."

Obviously, Goodlad is well on his way to achieving his mission. He is extremely astute at getting government and private grants to fund his efforts which are always described in gaseous educationese. He is still trying to determine "the mission of schooling and teacher education in a democratic society" and how to "ensure access to knowledge for all students." Directions to the nearest public library should be enough to "ensure access to knowledge." But if Dr. Goodlad gets his way, the poor students won't be able to read well enough to make use of the library.

We've also noticed how eager are the great corporations to fawn on the educators and lavish them with generous grants. That is why the business community has been so inept in its attempts to "help" public education. They know the schools are graduating illiterates, but they haven't the faintest idea what to do about it — except award grants to the very professors of education responsible for the illiteracy. Educators have a special knack at making corporate presidents feel as if they were back in the third grade anxious to get a smile and a good mark from the teacher. They know how to intimidate company presidents. And it works. Meanwhile, the system goes from bad to worse while the con artists get bigger and better grants.

Ready to Learn Council Formed

Ernest L. Boyer, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and former Surgeon General C.

Everett Koop have joined together to form a National Ready to Learn Council, a non-governmental group of more than 30 of the most influential organizations concerned with the well-being of children. Boyer and Koop want President Bush and Democratic nominee Bill Clinton to join in a bipartisan proclamation reaffirming their commitment to the goal of making sure all children enter school ready to learn by the year 2000. (*Boston Globe*, 9/7/92)

Comment: As we all know from thousands of years of human experience, children are ready to learn the moment they are born. The only reason why the big establishment educators are interested in "children ready to learn" is because the idea will permit them to gain control of the children before anyone else can influence them.

You can be sure that anything the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching gets involved in is in the interest of the New World Order.

As for C. Everett Koop, he's the man whose office produced "Understanding Aids," a pamphlet purporting to provide "the best information" for fighting AIDS. The word "abstinence" doesn't appear in the pamphlet at all, while the word "condom" appears about 19 times. The pamphlet states: "You won't get AIDS from saliva, sweat, tears, urine or a bowel movement. You won't get AIDS from a kiss." None of which has been verified. The pamphlet states: "Children need to be told they can't get AIDS from everyday contact in the classroom, cafeteria or bathrooms. They don't have to worry about getting AIDS even if one of their schoolmates is infected." Dr. Lorraine Day writes: "The general public stance is that this virus can't transmit via kissing, through sharing of utensils, by shaking hands or via aerosols. . . . The truth is no one has done the proper studies." We wonder how long it will take Dr. Koop to become "ready to learn"?