

By Geoffrey Rips

AUSTIN, TX

**T**HE PROBLEM FACING LLOYD Doggett in the U.S. Senate election in Texas is how to convince a large enough segment of a traditionally conservative Democratic power base to support his candidacy. He must combine that vote with his support from labor, black and Hispanic voters. But that does not seem like an impossible proposition. His opponent, Phil Gramm, is rated by the *National Journal* as the most conservative of the 435 members of Congress. And Lloyd Doggett, for all his progressive social stands, is not an economic reformer.

Large amounts of conservative PAC and oil money are flooding the state on behalf of Republican Gramm, making it difficult for Doggett to get the message of Gramm's supply-side extremism heard through the din of his opponent's media barrage. Gramm's campaign uses all the buzzwords of the New Right—school prayer, the right to life, family values—to obfuscate economic and foreign policy issues.

Like Doggett's runoff opponent in the Democratic primary, Rep. Kent Hance, Phil Gramm's hardest punches have come in a statewide radio campaign attacking Doggett's support for gay rights. But Gramm did not learn the technique from Hance. His political career has been marked by cheap shots, ridicule of the powerless and the baiting of opponents.

Gramm first came into statewide prominence as an opponent of incumbent Senator Lloyd Bentsen in the 1976 Democratic primary. During the spring of 1976, Bentsen, a conservative Democrat, was trying to run two campaigns—one for the presidency and another for re-election to the Senate from Texas. While Bentsen's presidential bid was relatively short-lived, it did give Gramm the opportunity to ac-

The conventional wisdom in Texas holds that Democrat Lloyd Doggett can win if Mondale loses by no more than 10 percent.

## 34 CAMPAIGN

cuse Bentsen of playing to two constituencies: a liberal Eastern establishment vote and a conservative Texas vote.

Gramm called Bentsen "two-faced" and "liberal," charges that now provide all the motivation Bentsen needs for pitching in with considerable financial and public relations support for Doggett in the current contest. As chair of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee, Bentsen has made \$50,000 to Doggett's campaign. He has also agreed to appear in commercials on the campaign trail with Doggett, a man he is often at ideological odds with.

Gramm's fortunes changed with the 1978 retirement of Rep. Olin Teague from the state's sixth district, which includes Texas A&M University, where Gramm taught economics. Gramm won the Democratic primary and the election in this conservative district, which runs from bedroom communities south of Dallas to bedroom communities northwest of Houston. In Congress Gramm immediately joined forces with Jack Kemp and David Stockman in calling for social-spending and tax cuts. He was also a leader among Democrats voting against

# ELECTIONS

## Texas Senate race: David vs. Goliath



Democrat Senate candidate Lloyd Doggett (above) is campaigning against the most conservative of the 435 members of Congress.

Carter administration initiatives.

But it was with the election of Ronald Reagan that Phil Gramm came into his own. He became the ideological force behind the Boll Weevil revolt of Southern Democrat members of Congress supporting Reagan's tax cuts and budget package. This happened despite the fact that Gramm had promised the Democratic leadership he would vote with them if appointed to the House Budget Committee. Gramm instead used his committee post to team with Delbert Latta (R-OH). Together they authored the so-called Gramm-Latta Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, which included \$6.6 billion more in spending cuts than Reagan was requesting. In his notorious *Atlantic Monthly* article, David Stockman identified Gramm as the administration's "spy" on the Budget Committee.

In 1981 Gramm scored a 99 percent voting rating with the Conservative Coalition, the only Democrat to do so. His votes included one against a resolution by House Majority Leader Jim Wright urging that necessary steps be taken to insure that Social Security benefits not be reduced for those already receiving them. It passed, 404-13.

While barnstorming his district in 1981, Gramm referred to a *Dallas Morning News* article about a family rationing its food to avoid hunger. "Did you see the picture?" he asked the crowd in a small-town civic center. "Here are these people who are skimping to avoid hunger, and they are all fat!" he laughed. "In fact, in an unguarded moment, this picture induced me to point out the other day that because of the perverse impact of food stamps where we force people to buy food when, given a choice, they would choose to spend the aid we give them on other things, that we're the only nation in

the world where all our poor people are fat."

In the eyes of the Democratic leadership, Gramm had, in the words of Gillis Long (D-LA), "abused his responsibility and his trust" with his supply-side leadership. Gramm switched parties in late 1982 and had outgoing Republican Texas Gov. Bill Clements declare a special election in his district. Gramm outspent and outran his opponents, former Democratic state representative Dan Kubiak, who had labor support, and humorist John Henry Faulk, a victim of McCarthyism in the '50s and early '60s who was using the campaign to promote a nuclear weapons freeze.

In 1983 Gramm also attacked Rep. Albert Gore Jr. for voting against a Gramm amendment prohibiting the distribution of International Monetary Fund money to "communist dictatorships." In a press release distributed in Gore's Tennessee district, Gramm said, "In this vote, we had a clear choice—prevent the hard-earned money of the working people of this country from going to Communist dictatorships or support Communism. Obviously Albert Gore chose to support Communism rather than the people of this country."

Gramm's 1984 campaign is no different. He rails against welfare chiselers and freeloaders. He has campaigned across the state with a photograph he claims to be a picture of Doggett accepting a campaign contribution raised by a gay group from a male strip show. The photograph actually shows him receiving a campaign contribution from a gay rights organization and was published several weeks before the strip show in question took place. The strip show was performed at a gay club in San Antonio, and the proceeds were sent to Doggett, who returned

them post-haste, issuing a statement that he would not accept funds from any such demeaning entertainment, male or female.

Gramm, nevertheless, has persisted with his campaign, which includes radio ads saying: "Doggett supports the 'gay rights' bill, which would give homosexuals special status before the law. It would make them eligible for affirmative-action hiring programs previously preserved only for minorities. Homosexual groups in San Antonio even had the poor taste to hold an all-male strip show to raise money for Doggett. Their magazine ran his picture taking their money."

In an attempt to mask his own extremism, Gramm has tried to paint Doggett as an "ultra-liberal" and, taking a cue from Doggett's Democratic opponents, has claimed that he, not Doggett, is in the Texas "mainstream." A Gramm radio spot proclaims: "Massachusetts does not need a third senator."

The Doggett campaign has come on slowly. Doggett spent the summer following the primary trying to raise money and to shore up support among the more conservative Democrats who had supported his primary opponents, Kent Hance and Bob Krueger. While Doggett was able to raise enough money to come through the primary with the smallest campaign deficit of the Democrats, he still trailed Gramm by a considerable margin. Among major Gramm contributors are members of the oil and gas industry. According to the Citizen-Labor Energy Coalition, Gramm has received more money—\$187,489—from oil and gas PACs than any other congressional candidate. Gramm's funding has enabled him to blanket the state with radio and TV ads since June, while Doggett has had to wait until September to begin his media campaign.

### Corporate Philistines.

The thrust of the Doggett campaign has been to portray the race as a battle of David versus Gramm's Goliath, backed by the strength and money of large corporate Philistines. It is an idea that suits Doggett's record in the Texas senate, where he was a leader for consumer and worker interests, authored legislation making state agencies accountable by requiring them to renew their charters on a regular, rotating basis and sponsored a bill establishing a state Human Rights Commission.

While Gramm portrays Doggett as anti-business, the truth is that Doggett, a lawyer and a business major when attending the University of Texas, has introduced several bills regulating large corporations in order to protect and encourage smaller businesses. Doggett's problem in this campaign is that the David-and-Goliath representation does not seem to be capturing a public imagination inundated with Gramm ads about male strip shows.

The conventional wisdom in Texas holds that Doggett can win if Mondale loses by no more than 10 percentage points. Gramm is waving Reagan's coattails everywhere he runs. Doggett, on the other hand, has maintained some distance between Mondale and himself, appearing with Mondale and Ferraro at an Austin rally at the state capitol but not playing a prominent role in the Mondale campaign in Texas. Doggett has also been trying to ease himself toward what he perceives to be the political middle, saying he supports right-to-work legislation and opposes gun control.

He has courted and received the support of Bob Strauss as well as of former Ambassador Ed Clark, a Lyndon Johnson confidante who had recently supported John Tower. House Majority Leader Jim Wright, who harbors a raging antipathy for Gramm, has helped Doggett raise money and support. One month before the election, private polls indicated Mondale trailed Reagan in the state by about 16 percent while Doggett trailed Gramm by 4-8 percent.

But these percentages may not accurately reflect the newly registered voting population in Texas. The Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project estimates that it has helped register close to one million new voters in Texas since the

2 election. Most of these potential voters are Mexican-American, make less than the median income of the state and live in urban areas or in the Lower Rio Grande Valley bordering on Mexico.

Voters in those categories gave Lloyd Doggett 75 percent of their vote in the Democratic runoff, and they will be the key to a Doggett, or Mondale, victory in November. The Industrial Areas Foundation community organizations throughout the state pledge that they will turn out half of the 104,000 new voters they have registered since January 1.

While the Republican Party has mounted a voter registration campaign of its own, largely through Christian evangelical campaigns, it has been far outdistanced by nonpartisan efforts that will undoubtedly benefit Democrats. In 1978, Democrat Bob Krueger lost to John Tower by a mere 12,000 votes. Democrat Mark White upset incumbent Gov. Bill Clements in 1982 by 230,000 votes. There may be 500,000 new voters participating in the November election. Jesse Jackson and Sen. Edward Kennedy have recently visited black and Hispanic urban areas in an effort to generate this vote for Doggett and Mondale.

Meanwhile, a large segment of the Texas population with rural and Democratic roots is waiting out this campaign. They will vote for Phil Gramm—and Ronald Reagan, for that matter—unless they perceive the race tightening up and see support for Doggett or Mondale as a viable position to take.

Mondale can turn both elections around with a sudden surge. And Doggett can turn his own election around with last-minute pyrotechnics in either his October 18 televised debate with Gramm or in his escalating ad campaign.

Members of the state's traditionally conservative, Democratic middle—who controlled the state for four decades until the election of a progressive slate in 1982—are anticipating the power shift. And when it shifts, they want to be on the winning side.

Geoffrey Rips is editor of the *Texas Observer*.

# Salvador

Continued from page 3

one observer just before Duarte unveiled his peace offer.

Some Christian Democratic Party members, labor officials, priests and nuns had been meeting weekly for several months in a group called the Permanent Committee for Peace.

Analysts here point out that the Salvadoran people, tired of fighting and bloodshed, have begun to speak out more forcibly in favor of peace negotiations, overcoming fears of right-wing extremists who denounce any negotiations as virtual

treason. A poll conducted by a San Salvador radio station, *Radio Sonora*, found a four-to-one ratio in favor of the La Palma meeting and a strong sentiment for peace. Another poll found 78 percent of the population supporting the results of the La Palma meeting.

The analysts say that one of the goals of Duarte's initiative may have been to regain the image he created during the election, when he campaigned on a broad but ill-defined promise to seek "national reconciliation." Another, they added, may be to take away the issue of peace from the grassroots groups that have started taking their own initiative.

In this way, the analysts say, Duarte could reassert his control over the peace process and make certain it doesn't go in directions he doesn't support.

tional standards.

Harkin's economic policy mixes a critique of Keynesian solutions to current problems with an advocacy of a budget freeze, a modified flat tax, "pay-as-you-go" budgeting, tax indexing and a constitutional amendment requiring the president to submit a balanced budget. He attacks the unmodified monetarism of the Federal Reserve and current tax and credit policies toward big corporations. He favors a farm program that targets support to family farms and restricts production to raise prices and restore profit so that small farms can survive.

Several years ago a friend of Texas agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower suggested that Harkin read Lawrence Goodwyn's *The Populist Moment*. Harkin found a new identity and later started the populist caucus in Congress. He avoids the liberal label "because the opposition—I refuse to call them conservatives—has succeeded in defining what a liberal is. I am not going to be their definition of a liberal. Their definition is a big spender, soft on Communism, soft on defense, pro-abortion, pro-homosexual—all that kind of junk."

And populism? "Substantively, it's talking about those issues and concerns that really do affect people's daily lives,"

he said as we drove across the fogged-in Iowa countryside to Ottumwa. "But talking about it in a way the average person understands. My argument with traditional liberals is that they have sat by for 30 years and watched all the gains we have made through the application of populist principles erode and thought just by patching it up we'd be okay."

"About 1950 the income tax was fairly progressive," he continued, "and people paid their fair share. More and more special interests came in and found they could manipulate the tax code. The liberals didn't do anything. [They said], 'If the tax code is being eroded, if people are being hurt, then we'll come up with welfare schemes to take care of them. Unemployment's going up? We won't really have a good jobs program. We'll have unemployment compensation.'"

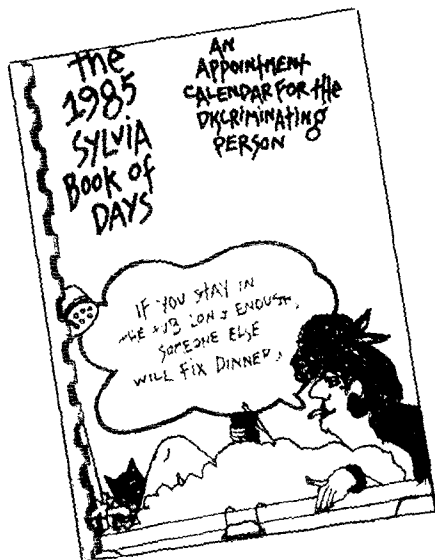
Yet Reagan has portrayed himself as friend of the little guy and made the enemy big government. How can Democrats confront that?"

"With great difficulty," Harkin admitted. "Populists in the old days said, 'You're suffering, you're hurting, you're going out of business, losing your farms because the big boys are taking you over, and government is sitting on its ass not doing anything. Now you've got to get government to protect you, to act on your behalf.' Populists of today ought to say, 'Government is your enemy. You know why? Because, goddamnit, it's owned lock, stock and barrel by the big guys. Now you kick them out and the government could be your friend. Now you've got to take it back.' I'd like to hear some Democrats talking in those terms."

Harkin talks in those terms himself at times, calling for the resignation of Agriculture Secretary John Block, a wealthy farmer with big landholdings, and for the appointment of Texas populist Jim Hightower.

"People want to vote for someone who they think is one of them, who they can trust, who won't embarrass them," Harkin said, summing up what he thought the election may hinge on.

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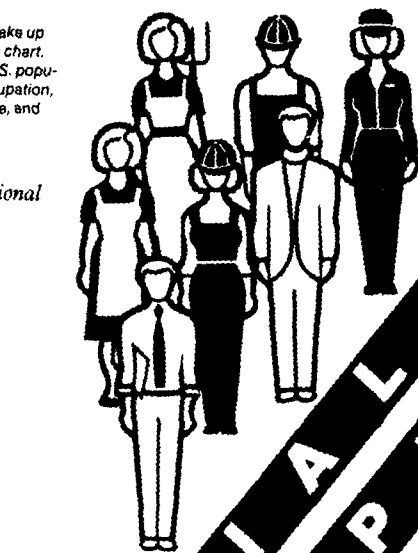
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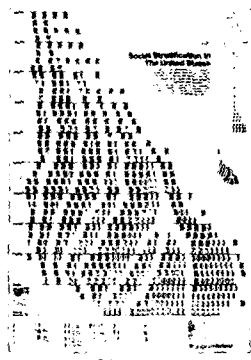
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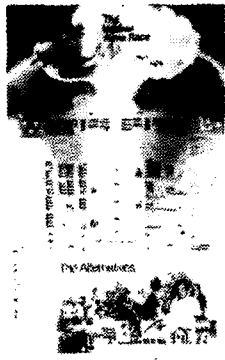


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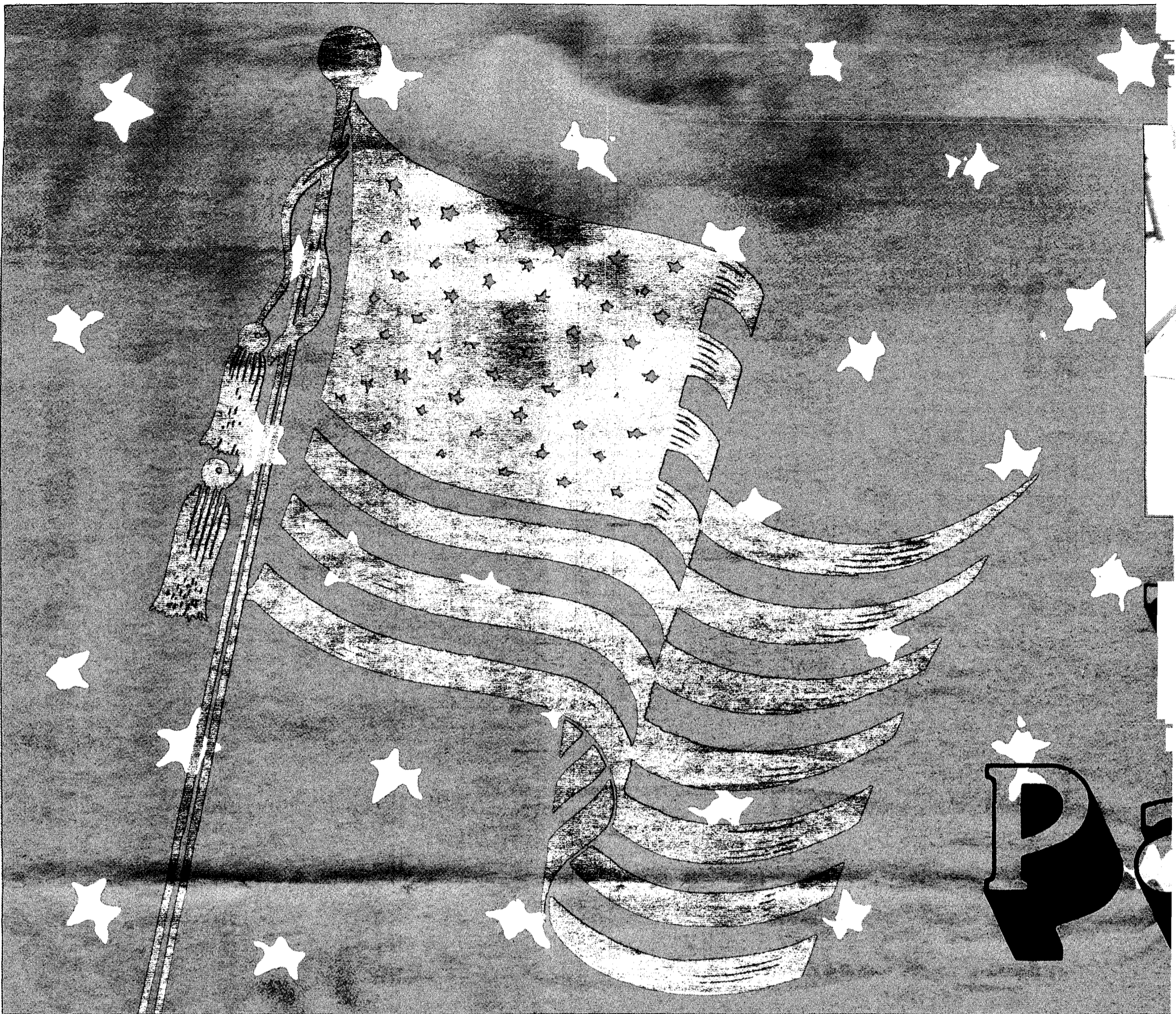
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### By Salim Muwakkil

THE NEW, MEDIA-FED MOOD OF patriotism that is sweeping the country has Conrad Worrill worried. When Ronald Reagan declares "America is back," Worrill feels no thrill.

"This so-called new patriotism is really no different from the old patriotism," he contends, "and both of them represent the forces of reaction."

Worrill, who is the national secretary of the Black United Front (BUF), argues that this new national mood "is simply the re-emergence of something that's existed all along in this country. It's the same kind of patriotism exhibited by the Klan—anti-poor, anti-black, anti-government, pro-military, pro-imperialism. But instead of white sheets, these modern-day patriots are wrapping themselves up in the American flag."

He believes the forces of reaction are promoting this "neo-jingoism" to help lay the foundation for new and blatant expressions of white supremacy and racial demagoguery.

"Ronald Reagan is using this manufactured patriotism to give some very subtle codes to white America," says Monroe Anderson, one of the two black columnists at the *Chicago Tribune*.

"The essence of his message is that it's okay again to be a racist. White superiority is 'in' once again. How else can you explain why a white, blue-collar worker could be for Reagan?" Anderson asks. "The only way to make sense of that is to understand that Reagan appeals to them on another level. This new patriotism is actually a code word for racism-as-usual."

These two may seem to be overstating

the case, but according to several recent polls their views are reflected in much of the African-American community. Blacks clearly do not feel as good about this country as do whites.

A Gallup poll commissioned by the Joint Center for Political Studies (a black-oriented think tank) found that 79 percent of the blacks questioned were dissatisfied with the state of the U.S.; 67 percent said Reagan's reign has left them either the same or worse off than they were.

"Blacks are less likely to fall for all this patriotism bullshit because all they have to do is look at the facts of their lives," notes Nate Clay, editor of the *Chicago Metro-News*, a highly respected black weekly. "When they look around them and see that things are not all they are projected to be by the media, when they

see the unemployment rate is still high, when they see no trace of a recovery, how can they believe the flowery stories of the patriotism pushers?"

"When Reagan talks about traditional American values, blacks know that racism is one of America's most traditional values," Clay explains.

A recently released study by the non-partisan Center on Budget and Public Priorities concluded that the Reagan administration's policies have devastated poor blacks and threatens the precarious position of the black middle class.

The report's major findings are:

- The average black family in every economic stratum suffered a decline in its disposable income and standard of living since 1980. Hardest hit were two-parent families where one parent works and the other takes care of children.
- From 1980 to 1983 the income of the typical black family fell 5.3 percent after allowing for inflation.
- Nearly 36 percent of all blacks lived in poverty in 1983, the highest black poverty rate since the Census Bureau began collecting racially specific data. Almost 50 percent of all black children are listed as poor.
- From 1980 to 1983, an additional 1.3 million blacks became poor.
- Black unemployment, at 16 percent, is significantly higher than the 14.4 percent it was when Reagan took office. Long-term black unemployment is up 72 percent.

"For the first time in recent years in this country, we are pursuing policies that actually make black Americans worse off economically and divide them further from white America," said Robert Greenstein, the center's director.

Nearly 50 percent of all black children are poor.

That growing economic division has apparently affected social perceptions. The Joint Center's poll shows that 68 percent of the whites surveyed believe that blacks are better off than they were before Reagan. And while only 14 percent of the blacks polled were satisfied with things in this country, 48 percent of the whites were quite satisfied.

But not all blacks view this new patriotism as an ominous development.

"I don't have any trust in those so-called polls," says Walid Rahman, an executive at a federal agency and a member of the American Muslim Mission (AMM). "Most of the African-Americans I know are happy about this new feeling of patriotism and they feel much better about this country."

"Of course, you'll always have those civil rights and black nationalists—those people who make their living off of peddling misery and promoting dissatisfaction—who will find something negative in patriotic feelings. But they find something negative in anything. Most mature Americans are grateful that their countrymen are once again feeling good about their country."

The AMM is headed by Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, the son and successor of the late Elijah Muhammad. He has transformed his father's black-nationalist cult into a group that is well-respected by the Islamic world. For several months Imam Muhammad has hinted he may endorse Ronald Reagan's re-election and many of his followers have got the hint. Just last month Muhammad Ali endorsed Reagan and praised the new patriotism.

"In many ways, the Imam (Muhammad) foreshadowed this new feeling of patriotism," Rahman said. "We've been celebrating 'New World Patriotism Day' since 1977, and each year the crowds at



Paul Comstock