

Have blinders, will fund

While Congress dickers with President Bush about how much aid to give to the Salvadoran military in light of the November murders of six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter, a court in El Salvador has absolved 14 of 17 defendants of murdering 10 peasants in 1988 and of kidnapping several businessmen for profit between 1982 and 1986. Once considered crucial tests of the Cristiani regime's intention to respect human rights, the cases have fallen from public view since the Jesuit slayings. In 1989 Vice President Dan Quayle went to El Salvador and lectured its military and civilian leaders about the prosecution of the former case, known as the San Francisco massacre. Now, while doing their best to justify continued aid, both the administration and Congress are ignoring the absolution. The media, too, has barely mentioned this latest evidence of Cristiani's commitment to freedom and democracy.

Corporate amnesia

In a May 9 editorial we noted how Deputy Attorney General Donald Ayer's recommendation to sentence corporate criminals to fines up to hundreds of millions of dollars was undercut by White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray. Last week Ayer resigned from his post. The story made page 1 of the *New York Times*, but, like the rest of the media, the *Times* forgot to mention the issue of white-collar crime. Instead, it attributed Ayer's departure to differences in management style.

Department of sanitation

The State Department might do well to face up to its Orwellian censorship tendencies and change its name to "the Ministry of Truth," say some of the country's top historians. The department stands accused of purging its published editions of diplomatic archives—edited by retired State Department officials—of almost all references to the CIA, reports *The Guardian's* Martin Walker. The recently published Volume X of U.S. foreign relations from 1952 to 1954, for instance, contains no reference to the CIA's role in the coup which brought the shah of Iran to power in 1953. (The CIA and British intelligence veterans have published their own accounts of the coup.) In addition to complaints by the Organization of American Historians, the chairman of the State Department's own advisory board of outside historians has resigned in protest over the censorship policy. Another row is brewing, says Walker, over a similar falsification of the volume on Central America, which fails to mention the CIA's role in overthrowing the left Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954.

To file or not to file

Millions of low-income families may be losing up to \$910 a year by failing to file federal income-tax returns. Under the federal government's Earned Income Credit (EIC) program, working families who earned less than \$19,340 in 1989, who do not owe federal income taxes and who have at least one child living at home can file to receive their 1989 EICs any time during the next three years. More than 11 million families now qualify for the credit, established by Congress in the mid-'70s to help offset the burden of regressive payroll taxes.

Glasnost misses Ohio

The president of Ohio's Oberlin College—a self-proclaimed bastion of free speech—has been subpoenaed on a felony charge of inciting violence. More than 200 Oberlin students clashed with police during an April 13 "Speakout Against Bigotry" demonstration outside President Frederick Starr's residence, a traditional protest ground. According to 43 police-brutality complaints filed by the students, police gave no warning before rushing the assembly with attack dogs and a fire truck. At question is who ordered the removal of the students and whether or not their First Amendment rights were violated. A preliminary hearing will determine whether there is enough evidence to bring the charge against Starr to a grand jury.

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New York AIDS policy goes from bad to worse

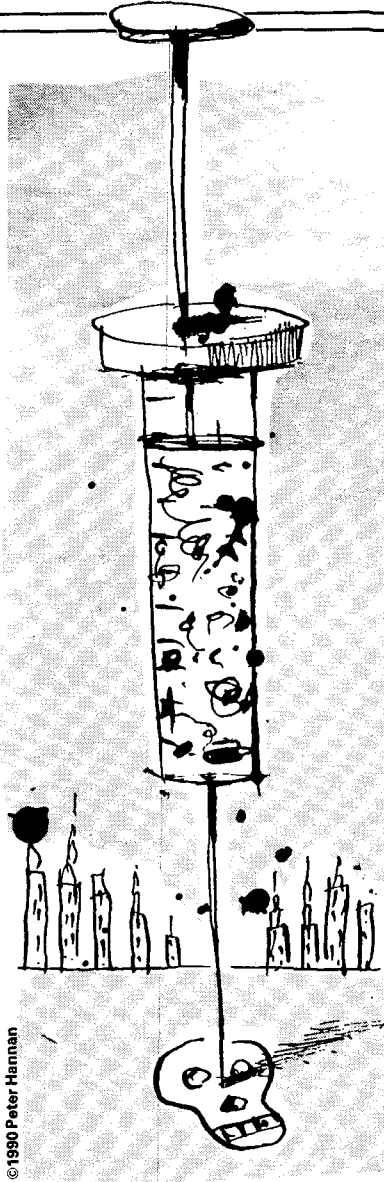
NEW YORK—Mayor David Dinkins' AIDS policy went from bad to outright shocking in early May when city health officials informed a highly regarded outreach program that it could no longer use city funds to teach addicts not to share dirty needles.

The decision was a radical step even for Dinkins, an official who had made no bones about regarding the war on AIDS as secondary to the war on drugs. Whereas Dinkins had previously opposed programs to distribute clean needles or to teach addicts to disinfect their "works" by using ordinary household bleach, his latest stance put the city for the first time in the position of embargoing the simplest AIDS-prevention information. Under former Mayor Ed Koch, the city printed up posters and handbills by the thousands on the dangers of needle sharing. But as of July 1—barring some compromise—the information is to be withdrawn.

The policy, which leaked out around May 1, triggered the most serious protests by AIDS experts and advocates since the dimensions of the epidemic first became apparent in the early '80s.

Dr. David Rogers, a physician who is vice chairman of the National Commission on AIDS, called the city's position "punitive." Mathilde Krim, founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR), called for "aggressive outreach to [intravenous] drug users with information" on how to save lives. The Minority Task Force on AIDS, which

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previously had backed the mayor in opposing clean-needle giveaways, pronounced itself "dismayed" by the latest ruling.

"The one sign of hope we had is the demonstrated role education has played in reducing the spread of AIDS," task force Director Ronald Johnson said on May 10 outside the city Department of Health. "To deny them education is to sentence the substance abuser and his family to

misery and perhaps even death."

A few feet away, several dozen members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) chanted amid a drenching downpour, "Dead addicts don't recover" and "Hey hey, ho ho, addictophobia has got to go."

The administration move was shocking to AIDS workers simply because the problem of needle-borne AIDS is so huge in New York—up to 155,000 people have been infected directly or indirectly from dirty needles—and the program in question is so highly regarded. Run by the Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, commonly known as ADAPT, it is the brainchild of a former social worker named Yolanda Serrano who began outreach to drug addicts at a time when most city officials wished they would simply go away. As early as 1985, Serrano and her co-workers started making the rounds of the city's shooting galleries passing out two-ounce bleach containers and photocopied instruction sheets. Under Koch the city's attitude was one of grudging approval. Under Dinkins, however, it has turned blatantly hostile.

It's as if the city, confronted by a vast AIDS epidemic among gay men, not only banned condoms but also defunded any organization warning of the dangers of unprotected sex. The result would be a form of biological warfare in which the threat of disease is used as a technique to induce a dissident population—gays in one instance, intravenous drug users in another—to surrender. By withholding information of AIDS prevention, Dinkins is apparently prepared to allow AIDS to run its course as part of a general war on drug users.

—Daniel Lazare

Suspicious break-in at Center for Constitutional Rights

NEW YORK—There's plenty of irony surrounding the April break-in at the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR).

For one thing, CCR is home to the Movement Support Network (MSN), a clearinghouse that documents instances of harassment against anti-government groups, including suspected political break-ins.

The April 18 incident at the CCR fits the bill perfectly. A large window at the entrance of the office was smashed. Although valuable computer and electronic equipment was exposed, only a set of keys was taken. The office answering machine was tampered with, and desk and file drawers were rifled.

"The object is to intimidate people," says MSN's Jinsoo Kim. "It's an obvious attempt to let us know they were here."

The CCR in 1988 filed a lawsuit against the FBI on behalf of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) for what the group says is continuing harassment despite the censure of six agents last year by FBI Director William Sessions. As a result of 1987 House subcommittee hearings and 1989 Senate hearings, Sessions acknowledged that the FBI's surveillance of CISPES and other groups was "improper." He also, however, called the work—which he said ended in 1985—"an aberration."

Since the CISPES investigation "ended" in 1985, MSN has documented 117 break-ins or incidents of harassment of anti-administration groups, with a marked increase in incidents since last November's guerrilla offensive in El Salvador. While most reports describe damage done to offices, some organizers say that their homes and cars have also been targeted. Michael Lent, CISPES' organizing director, said that his home was entered in November 1985. Although nothing of value was taken, his papers were searched.

"It leaves you with the feeling that you are always being watched," he said.

Most telling, perhaps, is a State Department memo dated March 6 acquired by the American Civil Liberties Union through the Freedom of Information Act. It describes in detail upcoming events of CISPES and CRE-CEN, a Salvadoran Refugee support group, including a demonstration protesting the inauguration of Alfredo Cristiani to the Salvadoran presidency on March 19.

Because the State Department does not conduct its own intelligence gathering, the information must have come from either the Secret Service or the FBI. FBI officials refused to comment.

The memo also states that information contained within should be "shared with appropriate law-enforcement contacts as well as official government of El Salvador representatives."

Earlier this month a federal judge dismissed the CCR suit against the FBI. Officials at CCR say they may appeal.

—Jessica Jiji

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

WHEN MAYOR HAROLD WASHINGTON DIED in November 1987, the progressive political coalition he helped forge expired with him. All attempts to resurrect it thus far have failed. The movement spirit that spawned his coalition and inspired admiration among progressives everywhere apparently is en-

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tombed with the man who was Chicago's first black mayor.

Mayor Richard M. Daley, the city's second Daley mayor—the first was his father, Richard J.—has been the major beneficiary of this division; he exploited it shrewdly to win an easy victory over coalition candidate Alderman Timothy Evans in last year's mayoral contest, and most pundits predict Daley will easily win re-election in 1992. The electoral coalition that Evans fronted in 1989 was a crippled remnant of Washington's broad-based network. In 1990, that coalition is leaderless, spiritless and virtually defunct.

Some segments of the former Washington coalition think that situation may be a blessing in disguise. "Now African-Americans can concentrate on building a unified black coalition without the distractions of other agendas," said Robert Starks, director of the Task Force for Black Empowerment. "People may have forgotten that Harold Washington's campaign got started because a unified group of grass-roots African-American community leaders decided to push for black political empowerment. It's important to remember that we have to coalesce with each other before we can do so with others."

Pincham's challenge: Groups like Starks' task force—for example, the Black United Front headed by Conrad Worrill and the Black Independent Political Organization headed by longtime organizer Lu Palmer—that have consistently pushed a black nationalist agenda but were effectively excluded from the Washington administration's inner circle have gained influence as the old coalition has crumbled. Old-line black politicians whose machine-like tendencies were considered anathema to the old coalition are gaining new respectability merely by rallying behind their racial identities.

What's more, former Illinois Appellate Court Judge R. Eugene Pincham, a losing candidate in the March 20 Democratic primary election for Cook County board president, has launched an acrimonious campaign against Richard Phelan, the man who defeated him. Pincham has urged his supporters not to vote for the Democratic candidate in the upcoming general election because of charges Phelan leveled against Pincham during the campaign.

The former judge accused Phelan of "insulting" the black community by questioning his so-called lenient treatment of alleged rapists whose trials he presided over. Pincham compared Phelan's tactics to the racist "Willie Horton strategy" that George Bush featured in his 1988 presidential campaign. Although Pincham failed to excite the electoral passions of the black community in the primary, his unrelenting assault on Phelan since then has upped his popularity quotient among African-Americans.



Former mayoral candidate Tim Evans: reminiscent of Harold Washington's broad-based network.

Chicago's bleak prospects for coalition politics renewed

"Pincham has nothing to lose and everything to gain by selling wolf tickets to Phelan," said a black politician who requested anonymity. "But somewhere along the line, black people are going to ask the judge if he has any program other than 'blacker-than-thou' rhetoric."

This city politician was eager to offer his off-the-record criticism of Pincham, but he candidly fears going public with his doubts. "We're being led around by the nose by the judge, because his hard-line attitude has made him the new hero of the black community."

Reagan legacy: The bleak prospects for a revival of coalition politics distress Alderman David Orr, who in March won the Democratic primary for county clerk. One of Washington's closest white allies, Orr captured 80 percent of the black vote; clearly he remains well regarded in the African-American community. Orr said he understands blacks' renewed determination to pursue empowerment strategies but he fears they may ultimately be self-defeating.

"White Democrats who make general criticisms of African-Americans' empowerment aspirations should try to understand how many in that community view Democratic political leadership," Orr said. "Too many Democrats turned their backs on the increasing misery in growing numbers of African-American neighborhoods."

"Ironically," Orr added, "Democrats are getting blamed primarily for what the Republicans did. We're confronting the devastation brought on by the brutal policies of the Reagan years. And in truth, the Democrats share much of the blame for not speaking out more forcefully against those inhumane policies. But when we have an opportunity to make

the Democratic Party more responsive to the needs of the people, I think we should take it. And building political coalitions is the most effective way to do that."

Orr fears that Pincham, by urging black voters to defect from the Democrats' flagship candidate, is both endangering a Democratic victory and squandering an opportunity to exert real influence on the party's direction. But being the most visible white member of the crippled coalition, Orr is also reluctant to openly criticize Pincham's strategy. He would prefer that Aldermen Evans and Danny Davis, two of the city's most prominent black advocates of coalition politics, provide critical analysis of Pincham's tactics. But they are both decidedly noncommittal.

"I have not yet made a determination who to support in the Phelan race," said Davis. "I'm trying to evaluate the situation, the climate." Indeed, Pincham's star could well rise high enough to make him a formidable contender for the mayoral seat in the 1992 elections. Added Evans, "I think the best approach would be to engage in ticket-splitting—if people decide not to vote for Phelan—and vote for the candidates on the basis of issues."

Blacker-than-thou: Some black politicians—Aldermen William Henry, William Beavers and Robert Shaw, among others—who had problems with the Washington coalition's reform agenda have now adopted "blacker-than-thou" postures that place them on the current political bandwagon. Curiously, Alderman Bobby Rush, the former Black Panther, is the most forthright black supporter of Phelan.

"Dick Phelan has demonstrated a genuine commitment to the philosophy of progres-

sive government," Rush said. "His agenda for the African-American community stands in sharp contrast to the non-agenda of the Republican candidate." Rush's position has been widely denounced by black political leaders and, since Phelan named him as the coordinator of a voter-registration project, many have charged him with selling out.

"I heard one community leader say that the voter-registration money Bobby reportedly received is really a euphemism for political bribery," Pincham said. In this city's racially charged political atmosphere, black politicians who maintain friendly contacts with white politicians are accused of Uncle Tomism. Pincham has cleverly exploited the spirit of the times to fuel his popularity. He justifies his decision to ignore the hallowed political tradition of supporting the primary winner by claiming he's not a traditional politician; his choice has been reinforced by his growing political popularity.

Although he's using nationalist-approved terminology in his condemnation of white racism, many black nationalists are uncomfortable with Pincham. "The judge remains somewhat of a mystery," said Worrill. "I think that's the way he wants it. And although I think he's a good candidate, I wonder if some black people find it hard to relate to a judge. Many times I've heard people comment that Judge Pincham sent one of their relatives away to jail and wonder if some African-Americans may be harboring some kind of quiet resentment about him for his role in a system that demonstrates such contempt for our community's young men. Maybe that's part of the reason there was such a low voter turnout for the judge [in the March election]."

Rather than leave all of the political mobilization efforts to Pincham, nationalists have initiated protests against Mayor Daley's delay tactics in choosing nominees for the permanent school board. The turmoil surrounding the city's radical school-reform effort provides ample opportunity for legitimate protests from many segments of the community. Chicagoans were so ill-prepared for the radical reform of the city's educational system that chaos has replaced the bright promise offered by the planners who structured the design of the new system.

Paradoxically, the nationalist-led school-board protests have forged the most promising coalition of the post-Washington years. "We're all interested in the education of our children, so this is the kind of issue that has the potential to build a broad coalition," said Emma Lozano, a Latina organizer who was also an integral part of the Washington coalition.

"It's my contention that the Washington movement never died," she continued. "It just needed the right issue to revive it. And this struggle for educational excellence and relevance seems just the issue to unite a wide range of people. Remember, it was the fight against insensitive school-board appointments that got things started in the first Washington campaign."

Chicago's rough-and-tumble brand of racial politics makes it a bellwether city. If coalition politics fails in the city of Harold Washington, there's little hope it will succeed elsewhere any time soon. The historians and political scientists who flocked to Chicago in the '80s to study the Washington phenomenon would have little problem explaining what's gone wrong so far in the '90s.