



Invention of the '80s: Driving east from Avoca, Iowa, on Highway 83, the first full farm you come to has this thing down by the road—Tim Dinklage's Reaganomics Machine. It's long and pretty tall and looks vaguely familiar, possibly because it's made from junk that represents functions of our government.

Dinklage explains his invention: "This is the motor. It's rated at 600 political power, but only 26 real horsepower. That mower bar reminded me of social program cutting. Lots of people think I'm just another farmer protesting prices. I'll grant you, prices aren't worth a damn, but I'm also protesting social program cuts, inefficiency in the defense budget and the rosy view that the president gets...."

"This is the bureaucratic wheel—spinning all by itself, doing nothing.... Down here, this auger is the working-man's tax collector. It takes it right out of his check and is totally enclosed. There are no loopholes.... Up here collects for large corporations and the well-off," Dinklage says of an elevator chain dangling down. "It's a fine piece of machinery, but full of loopholes.... The Defense Department has no bottom, as you can see," he says of a 55-gallon drum. "I don't know the price of a nuclear submarine engine, but when the government pays \$400 for hammers and 83 cents for bitty fasteners, I'm worried."

Towering over the defense barrel is what Dinklage calls the federal deficit, "the highest thing in sight and getting higher." The driver's seat, for the president, is a fireplace grate. "Some think I mean for it to be a hot seat," Dinklage explains. "But I don't." Then he grins. "He just looks through those rosy-colored glasses." He pats a former hot-water tank. "This is the department that takes care of big banks and big business. It is doled out by the bucket.... Then down here," he says of a corn knife rigged to hit a block of wood, "is where we handle small banks and small businesses." He then points to the rear of the spreader. "Way out here is agriculture, twirling in the breeze."

—William Mueller

quirer editorial observed last year: "To the degree the DLC shapes the thinking of the broader Democratic Party, the party will benefit—and so ultimately will the nation." And the *Wall Street Journal* believes

that the DLC is the only thing standing between the Democratic Party and irresponsible radicalism. The *Journal* warned in December 1986 that if the DLC's "centrist" approach does not guide Democratic

foreign policy, the party "will be well along to joining its counterparts across the Atlantic—rolling to the left and no longer an opposition that can be counted on to defend democracy." —Ken Silverstein

Coalition prescribes antidote to pesticide poisons

CLEVELAND—It was an unusual event. Nearly 200 environmentalists, migrant fieldworkers, inner-city residents, professors, organic farmers and garden club members gathered here last month to learn more about what many—including some Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists—consider the nation's No. 1 environmental threat: pesticides.

Although 25 years have passed since Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring* sparked the environmental movement, little has changed, according to conference keynote speaker Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers (UFW). "We have yet to see legislation that really gives our people any hope," said Chavez who is touring the country to promote a boycott of all California table grapes. The UFW called the boycott to force growers to ban five of the most dangerous pesticides used on the crop (see *In These Times*, Sept. 23).

As Jay Feldman, director of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) explained, "Many believed that with the establishment of the EPA in 1972 the

problem was taken care of. But it wasn't. Entrenched agricultural and agribusiness interests have controlled the process of pesticide development and regulation in this country." (See *In These Times*, Oct. 14.)

The result of this industry bias, charged Feldman, has been the introduction and continued use of dangerous pesticides that, according to a recent study by the National Academy of Sciences, cause consumers 20,000 new cancer cases each year. And that's not all. According to Dr. Marion Moses, an expert in environmental and occupational medicine, the chemicals also lead to an unknown number of birth defects, miscarriages, blood disorders, neurological problems and immune-system disorders.

The production of pesticides has soared over the past 30 years—from 200,000 to 2.7 billion pounds annually, worldwide. But information about the health hazards posed by the chemicals has failed to keep pace. A 1982 congressional report found that 90 percent of pesticides in use lack adequate genetic damage studies, 79 percent lack cancer studies and 70 percent lack birth defect studies.

Karen Snyder, research associate with the Natural Resources Defense Fund, told conference attendees that a 1984 "Market Basket Survey" of 100

fruit and vegetable samples purchased at grocery stores across California, found that more than 43 percent of the food contained pesticide residues. Surprisingly, the most common pesticide found was DDT—banned more than a decade earlier, but still present in the soil and found as an "inert" ingredient in some pesticides currently used (see *In Short*, Oct. 7).

As could be expected in a gathering that sought to bring together individuals from many different backgrounds and disciplines, there was disagreement during the conference over what methods to use in fighting pesticide abuse.

Baldemar Velasquez, founder and director of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee—the fieldworker's union that last year successfully ended a seven-year boycott of Campbell Soup Co.—called political and legislative efforts "useless." Velasquez said the only way to effect changes is through economic campaigns like boycotts, strikes and pickets.

That position is contrary to the efforts of groups like NCAMP that work largely through the legislative process. If not resolved, said some at the conference, these disagreements could blunt the effectiveness of the coalition that is only now beginning to form. —Osha Davidson

destroyed. But a tape recording of the meeting inadvertently survived and was obtained by the Justice Department. Although the U.S. attorney handling the investigation has tried to keep the contents of the tape secret, Metzenbaum read excerpts from it to the Air Force generals, Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials and Boy Scout leaders who were attending the Dayton hearing. These revelations are of particular concern to Boy Scouts from Canton, Ohio, who had camped on the base after the spill. Said troop leader Paul Cice, "The questions they're bringing up now make you wonder even more if the boys are contaminated." Other concerns include a missing drum containing plutonium and a letter signed by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger that mischaracterized the spill as involving "negligible amounts" of radioactivity. The word "negligible" was added to the last draft of a letter that Weinberger sent to Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste.

Brazil moves against the church

Brazil's National Security Council recently criticized the Catholic Church's involvement in social justice issues and authorized a "confidential study of the church's interference in the affairs of state." According to *A Folha De Sao Paulo*, a Sao Paulo newspaper, in June 1986 the National Security Council prepared a secret document accusing the church of "being used for indoctrination diverging from the teachings of the Gospel." The council also said the church was taking advantage of the "religious sensibility of Brazilians to exploit social inequalities and the difficulties being experienced by the great majority of the people." The report listed 118 priests, including three bishops, who, according to the National Security Council, are guilty of "incitement of rural workers to land invasions and encouragement of workers to passive resistance and movements of open rebellion."

It's a bird, it's a plane, its...

Christopher Reeve, a.k.a. Superman, flew to Santiago, Chile, last week to give his support to 78 Chilean actors, directors and playwrights who were planning to hold an open-air theater festival in defiance of threats they had received from a Chilean death squad. The death squad is a previously unknown group that calls itself "Trizano Cultural Action Pacification" after a Chilean frontiersman who in the 19th century organized posses to massacre the country's Mapuche Indians. In early November, the death squad had sent the theater people this message: "You either leave the country by the end of the month or you will be executed." At a press conference held before the stadium doors were to open, Reeve, a board member of Actor's Equity, read a declaration of support that was signed by about 200 U.S. actors, directors and writers. As he finished a colonel from the military police arrived and cancelled the show, saying it was a political and not an artistic event. Reeve and the assembled group—the actors already in costume—then marched through Santiago to a private auditorium. Along the route they were joined by thousands of citizens. But the auditorium could seat only 2,000, and about 3,000 would-be spectators were left at the door. Police then arrived to disperse the people in the crowd, who rioted as they were assaulted by water cannons and tear gas.

Saved

Native people in the Americas continue to die from "imported" diseases that their bodies' natural defenses are unable to resist. Recently two Indian women who were tracked down in the Paraguayan jungle and taken to the New Tribes Mission Base, a fundamentalist mission camp, died during a flu epidemic. The women were members of an isolated, nomadic Amazon tribe known as the Ayoreo. According to *Survival International*, a publication that supports the rights of indigenous peoples, such deaths are still a normal consequence of Western contact with previously isolated tribal people. But apparently these regular losses don't deter the Protestant fundamentalists who scour the jungles in motor boats and spotter planes looking for other Indians needing to be "saved."

Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657. Please include your address and phone number.



Rev. Jesse Jackson (second from left), Ald. Tim Evans (third from left) and other Washington allies at the late mayor's bier.

A true reformer is gone; a political machine reborn

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

THE ECHOES OF EULOGIES FOR MAYOR Harold Washington, Chicago's first black and first modern reform mayor, had barely faded from the mourning-draped city council chambers when the coalition that Washington had cemented together came unglued.

During his tenure of less than five years in office, Washington said he wanted to "show you can take a government of deals and replace it with a government of ideals." But with his sudden death of a heart attack at age 65 the day before Thanksgiving, his ideals were relegated to rhetoric sanctimoniously invoked even by his enemies, and the political reality of a government of deals returned.

The old Democratic machine that Washington had compared to a dying beast extended its weakened claws again to grab a big chunk of power. In a hurried move, put together in private meetings that started even before Washington was declared dead, a few machine-oriented black aldermen allied with the old white ethnic machine bloc to elect black Ald. Eugene Sawyer acting mayor. Despite massive protests by Washington supporters and community groups, the council's hard-core Washington backers were only able to muster the votes of 11 blacks (six of the 18 blacks backed Sawyer and one was absent), all four Hispanics and four of the seven whites from lakefront wards that are historically less machine-controlled than those of the white northwest and southwest sides.

The 29-19 victory of Sawyer over Ald. Tim

Evans, Washington's council floor leader, came at 4:01 a.m. on December 2 after a marathon council meeting that took place while more than 4,000 Evans supporters packed council chambers, city hall corridors

CHICAGO

and nearby streets, chanting "no deals" and waving fistfull of money asking, "How much, Sawyer, how much?"

Making of a reformer: Washington, an ebulliently charming man who deeply enjoyed politics, became a state senator through his work in the infamous Chicago Democratic machine. Later he broke with it and made an unsuccessful bid for mayor in 1977, after Mayor Richard Daley died, then successfully ran for Congress in 1980. In 1983

The old Democratic machine, that Washington called a dying beast, is back.

he won a startling upset in the Democratic mayoral primary and a narrow victory in a racially rancorous general election.

Washington ran as a candidate of blacks, promising to redress their long history of grievances with the machine. But he also campaigned as a reformer, an "urban populist" dedicated to cleaning up a corrupt, unfair and inefficient government, strengthening the city's diverse neighborhoods and generally making the city and its

institutions work better for citizens long neglected by the machine. Both were essential to victory and ingrained in Washington's politics, but the duality led to tensions that were never fully resolved. In addition, Washington was a politician of broad left sympathies knowledgeably attuned to national issues.

Despite constant obstruction by a hostile city council majority during his first three years in office, Washington made significant headway on parts of his reform program: more open and honest government, jobs and contracts for minorities and women, restored fiscal soundness and greater efficiency, and economic development that attempted to balance neighborhood and downtown needs. After a court-ordered ward remap and heated elections, he finally consolidated a council majority last year. But Washington at his death had still made little progress on some major substantive areas—reforming the city's dreadful public schools, salvaging a long-abused public housing system, renovating a park system that had been a patronage haven, improving health care for the poor and bringing jobs and affordable housing to needy Chicagoans. Yet he had become the leading advocate of new federal aid to the cities, and he had just initiated promising action on most of the major local substantive challenges.

Frictions and factions: Many of his supporters were beginning to chafe at the slow pace of change and at growing concessions to the business establishment—building new stadiums for professional sports teams despite neighborhood displacement and ratifying downtown development despite crowding or destruction of historic structures. Hispanics increasingly complained that the Washington administration favored blacks and short-changed Latinos (although Hispanics had gained significantly during his tenure); good government reformers wor-

ried that the drive to efficiency was slowing down. But with Washington's death, it became chillingly apparent to sympathetic critics that the gulf between what he was doing and the potential from even the best of his successors was immense.

Through his own political savvy, overwhelming popularity in the black community and force of personality, Washington had managed to hold together a fractious coalition. Blacks who came up through the machine, like Sawyer and his mayoral campaign manager, Ald. William Henry, were angry that Washington resisted handing out patronage jobs and no-bid contracts to council members' cronies. But Washington's popularity kept them in line. So despite deep opposition from even many of his own supporters, Washington forced through reforms such as an ethics ordinance. Passed near the end of his first term, it was one of his greatest achievements—and one now threatened to be diluted.

Other black community leaders, including some instrumental in Washington's two mayoral victories, were interested primarily in black political power and were insensitive to the needs of political alliances. But Washington insisted on appealing to Hispanics, Asians and whites (even though in his 1987 re-election the presumed liberal white wards failed to support him enthusiastically, and the ethnic wards remained opposed albeit less hysterically). Washington's initial victory politically awakened the Hispanic communities and increased their power. As a result, at least three of the four Hispanic aldermen were among the most sophisticated and left-wing supporters of Washington, more loyal to the Washington reform vision than most black aldermen. Unfortunately, the black aldermen elected last April are generally a pathetic lot with little understanding of Washington's politics.

Having finally gained clear power with his re-election victory last spring, Washington was reaching out even more to white ethnics before his death. For example, he threw his support behind a county ticket uniting blacks and white ethnics shortly before his death. Many in the white machine bloc were prepared to accommodate to his power. Now that he is dead they are even willing to use his rhetoric and to claim to be preserving the Washington legacy. Although such verbal misappropriation strikes supporters as cynical and sacrilegious, it also reflects a lasting Washington victory: the rhetoric of political values has changed in the city and voters' expectations of politicians have been raised.

"We've had a taste of power, a sense of holding public officials accountable," Rev. Emmett Harrison explained as he protested outside council chambers on Dec. 1. "It's hard turning back."

For the fragile Washington council coalition to win, they had to stick together. Rev. Jesse Jackson rushed back from his Persian Gulf trip to keep blacks united. Presumably he backed Evans, despite Jackson's publicly ambiguous stance. But his high-profile intervention raised hackles among many whites throughout the city who dislike Jackson and feared him becoming the kingmaker. In the end, he probably did as much harm as good, although he helped mobilize sentiment against any deal with machine whites.

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