Message from New York City

Every week, Henry Ratliff sends me a letter. Reverend Ratliff, a minister on New York's East Side, hasn't singled me out because I am special; he regularly corresponds with dozens of college and city newspapers. For years, Henry Ratliff was a running joke in our office; I suppose his often off-the-wall material caused many chuckles in other newsmen across the globe. Somehow, as the stranger than fiction actions of Ronald Reagan and his cohorts grabbed the headlines of the national press, Ratliff's columns continued to get Raum in special relevance. Ratliff, further inspired by recent government actions, began to type and photocopy his messages, rather than write in his personal checkbook.

Ratliff's writing is usually brief. His unadorned, ungrammatical ramblings are strongly elegant. He doesn't waste words; every one counts. For example, no one's carefully reasoned tome says more about fundamental rights than Ratliff:

"Freedom of Speech/Assembly."

Hence let all folks talk about it a few practice it.

No one can accuse the good Reverend of not stirring his political views, even when his grammar makes his thoughts difficult to follow.

November

Criminal negligence not go to polls and not vote our Reaganties emanate.

I think Ratliff's ministry puts him in close touch with humanity. He is particularly concerned about the Reagan Administration's cuts in social welfare programs. His commentary is abrupt, unlike the smooth, conversational style cultivated by nationally famous writers. Ratliff doesn't ossify.

If mendacious Reagan gets his teeth into Social Security, he'll never take them out.

Ratliff took a trip around the world last spring, yet he didn't cease writing of his concerns across the globe. He is one of the old familiar handwritings on the backs of exotic post cards. In the midst of some feverish night in Australia, Ratliff was compelled to write this passage about world peace.

Defence

Kindergarten children learn a conversational Russian. Does more for defence than Reagan Stratolines.

Rerverend Ratliff, a man of peace, is more concerned about the threats of war than he is about other issues. Although he often writes about other subjects, his comments on nuclear disaster are as effective here: one's concern with thelatin of corresponding Reaganettes. This message we all should heed.

War

Roll of drum — bagpipe call — unfurled flag — burned brass — playing band — marching column — cheering crowd — martial song — demonic emotion; lead to mutilation/death in youth or age.

Mystery

How any reaper from battlefield of razing unrested bodies can participate in patriotic exercises is a mystery no one understands.

The Hard Way

Must we see — smell — hear buzzing flies: unburied — stinking — message we all should heed. What terrible stink of millions of dead bodies from history's battlefields when terrible.

Kindergarten children learn conversational Russian. Does more for defence.

Ratliff doesn't obfuscate.

In the midst of the economic slide of 1982. The President's policies have not worked as promised. Instead of prosperity, there are now over ten million unemployed Americans, tens of thousands of bankrupt businesses, near-record interest rates, and 150 billion dollar deficits. While inflation has been reduced as a result of the deep recession, the prospects for long-term economic growth appear to be very bleak. And because of the President's massive military and defense buildup, there is no end in sight to gigantic budget deficits and high interest rates — recent drops in the prime rate notwithstanding.

Over a year has elapsed since President Reagan guided his package of record tax cuts for businesses and individuals through Congress. As he energetically argued for his proposals in the hopeful days of 1981, he claimed that they would immediately restore investor confidence, balance the budget by 1984, and set off a supply-side economic boom. Using his tremendous lobbying skills, he was able to convince many Americans that his plan would solve the country's economic problems. After a great deal of debate, the Congress also decided it was important to "give the President a chance" by accepting his tax cuts. It voted to give Reaganomics a field test by passing the President's proposal essentially intact, with a few sweeteners added for special interest groups.

Unfortunately, the euphoria of 1981 has been replaced by the economic slide of 1982. The President's policies have not worked as promised. Instead of prosperity, there are now over ten million unemployed Americans, tens of thousands of bankrupt businesses, near-record interest rates, and 150 billion dollar deficits. While inflation has been reduced as a result of the deep recession, the prospects for long-term economic growth appear to be very bleak. And because of the President's massive military and defense buildup, there is no end in sight to gigantic budget deficits and high interest rates — recent drops in the prime rate notwithstanding.

As stifling interest rates have suffocated economic recovery, there have been a number of proposals to rein in the galloping deficit budgets that have run up the government demand for credit. In particular, Republicans led by Senator Bob Dole have fashioned a bill to increase taxes by $9.3 billion dollars over the next three years by closing tax loopholes; increasing levies on cigarettes, liquor, and phone service; and strengthening the enforcement of tax laws already in place. Not surprisingly, the conservative supply-side gang, led by Representative Jack Kemp, warned that such a tax reform would stymie economic growth and contradict the principles of Reaganomics. But much to the dismay of his right-wing supporters, President Reagan disregarded the advice of the supply-side magistrates and proposed a bipartisan Congressional coalition to pass the tax increase legislation.

This unexpected turn of events may indicate that the Reagan Administration has finally received a long-overdue dose of economic reality. The financial world certainly feels this way; the passage of the tax bill and lower interest rates have sparked an unprecedented bull market on Wall Street and renewed hopes for economic recovery on Main Street. The President's support of the Dole tax reform bill could be a sign that he is now willing to put national interests ahead of myopic ideologies. He and the Cong- 


gress showed a great deal of courage by supporting a tax hike in this election year and recession year. They have taken an encouraging step in the right direction.

But even with this tax increase, much work remains to reduce Federal budget deficits. There are a number of lucrative, but unecessary, tax loopholes and pork barrel projects for special interests that must be eliminated. These include the Synthetic Fuels Corporation, the business tax lunch deduction, the Clinch River Breeder Reactor, the safe-harbor leasing tax breaks, the Tennessee Tonsihigh Waterway, to-hoo and sugar subsidies, and a host of other unproductive boondoggles. There are also many examples of imprudent spending in the Defense Department: weapons that do not work, strategic systems that are not needed, and procurement practices that are grossly inefficient. Finally, the government must regain control of runaway expenditures on entitlement programs for the middle class, including social security.

Thus far, the President and the Congress — especially the Democ- 

crats — have shed away from these politically sensitive issues. The short-term interest is to earn the vote of the country, they must face them. Perhaps, in the same spirit that led to passage of the tax increase bill, America's elected leaders in Washington will go beyond their rhetoric and join together to meet the serious budget challenges that loom ahead.

Column/Mark Templer

Leaders must address the budget

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