

# Editorial

A strange thing happened after Sunday night's presidential debates. Three Republicans, along with a lot of Democrats, told me they thought Mondale won.

None of them said they would change their votes, nor would they concede any advantage to Mondale at the polls. But they thought Mondale won. Not with his lackluster voice or average appearance, but with his words. And that is what counts.

An Associated Press story also gave Mondale the edge. Seven forensics experts, using a standard debate scorecard, gave Mondale 174 points to Reagan's 157.

Mondale countered Reagan's claims well and seemed to have a better grasp of the issues. Mondale was smoother and even pulled a couple smooth moves on

## Mondale snatches debate from 'Great Communicator'

the "Great Communicator."

Reagan denied claims that he tried to cut social welfare programs, including Social Security. Mondale recalled that Reagan at one time wanted a 25 percent cut in Social Security. When Reagan denied that, Mondale aptly quoted what Will Rogers once said about Hubert Humphrey:

"It's not what he doesn't know that worries me. It's what he knows for sure but just ain't so."

Reagan said he was running on his record, but he spent a great part of the debate defending his cuts of social programs and deny-

ing the damage his programs have done.

He admitted there are more poor people now than there were four years ago, but he contended his programs would eventually reduce the number of poor.

It's more likely his policies will continue to broaden the gap between the rich and the poor. Reagan could not deny that his cuts gave more of a break to the wealthy.

And on the subject of Social Security, Reagan said he would never cut benefits for those now receiving them. That's bad news

for those who pay Social Security now and hope to see some. It sounds like a falsehood to the hundreds of beneficiaries who were taken off the payroll because of Reagan's reviewing of benefits.

Mondale stung Reagan after the president used one of his old debate tricks; "There you go again." Mondale turned that smarmy phrase right around on Reagan.

Mondale said, "There you go again..." The American people remember Reagan promising not to cut Medicare, then turning around after the election and

seeking cuts, he said.

Reagan also lost points on the deficit question. Mondale has made his deficit-reduction plan open. It's a solid plan that would have tangible results. Mondale asked Reagan to reveal his plan for reducing the deficit that has exploded during his term. Reagan responded vaguely that his recovery plan and government cuts would slowly mend the deficit, and he dismissed Congressional Budget Office estimates of an increasing deficit, by saying the CBO is usually wrong.

Reagan might have made up for his lack of sound answers with his quick wit and engaging smile. But neither was there. Reagan looked a little tired, sounded a little absent-minded, and lacked his normal conviction. Even Republicans noticed it.



## School vouchers foster free choice

Public schools, or more accurately, government schools, come as close to being a sacred institution as anything in America. Silly Americans. Any advocacy of change for the better is usually met with scolding claims that the advocate is ungrateful for what government schools have provided to him or her as well as to society as a whole. Such scolding is vaguely reminiscent of the tired old phrase which is now America's newest favorite catch-phrase: "I do and do for you kids and this is the thanks I get."

Well, I'm not ungrateful, but the current method of funding and structuring education must be rejected as an unfortunate leftover from the antiquated past. However, the rejection of government schooling does not necessarily entail the rejection of a form of government

**Jim Rogers**

funding which preserves family choice, namely, some form of educational vouchers.

Although there are lots of voucher plans, the gist of all the plans include the providing of an educational coupon to families with school-aged children which may be redeemed at the school of the family's, rather than the government's choice.

There are two major arguments for the support of a voucher system over the current method of government established schooling. Conservative economist Milton Friedman advances the first argument. He says that vouchers would establish competition for the educational dollar and thus foster better education for children as each school sought to provide better services in order to attract more students. Friedman's claim could be true. But the second argument for the establishment of a voucher system so overshadows Friedman's argument that it makes it of little ultimate concern.

Law professors Stephen Arons and Charles Lawrence III wrote an article, published in a 1980 issue of Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review. In the article they claim that the popular "equation of the American school system with social democracy and personal liberty, may be more self-serving than self-evident. In fact, American schooling may be structured in a way that undercuts the most basic freedoms of democracy. For at the heart of American school ideology is the belief that schooling decisions, like most governmental decisions, are the proper province of the political majority."

The notion underlying this belief is that education is never neutral, rather, schooling "is everywhere and inevitably a manipulator of consciousness, an inculcator of values in young minds." Yet this manipulation by the government, Arons and Lawrence argue, is the very object which the First Amendment was designed to protect against. The very basis of a truly democratic society is that belief formulation, especially among the most defenseless members of our society — the young — would not be subject to majority will.

The majoritarian imperialism of government schooling, Lawrence and Arons rightly argue, falls most heavily upon those unable to afford schooling in a politically free school — the poor, namely the working class, minorities and women-headed household which comprise the large proportions of this group. Ironically, while it is the poor who bear the brunt of government schooling, "all the while, our present school ideology tells these same poor and working class persons that the present structure of school is their best hope for an equal place in society."

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## Ferraro's 'star quality' attracts crowds

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Geraldine Ferraro is sitting in yet another hotel room, pumped full of Tylenol and vitamin C, fighting a cold that's run through the staff and reporters on her campaign trail. It's down time, between planes and rallies, and she's talking and nibbling at the platter of cheese and fruit in a compulsive campaign gesture which — as she tells everyone — has added eight pounds to her fighting weight.

Ferraro, candidate for vice president and a working mother, had left Queens at dawn, carrying clothes for her daughter Laura, who's waiting at the next stop. "I bring her a suitcase of clean clothes, then she goes off on another trip and leaves me her dirty clothes," she says with a fond and rueful smile about the things in life that don't change.

**Ellen Goodman**

This is the beginning of what will be one of her most successful campaign swings through the South and Midwest, but for a moment the frustration that she feels campaigning against the Republican ticket percolates up to the surface. Running a hard-hitting campaign against Ronald Reagan is just a bit like punching jello.

"I have to tell you," she begins. "I talked to my cousin last night. He said, 'You know, we're with you.' Then he said the most amazing thing: 'Everybody I talk to, they say, too bad Gerry isn't running with Ronald Reagan because he's such a wonderful man and she's such a wonderful person.' I said, 'He's not! Don't they look at what he's cost us! Don't they look at where we're coming from on the issues!'"

Ferraro is conscious of the paradoxes of this campaign. She is at the center of one herself. The woman, a political "natural," attracts enormous crowds of the curious as well as the committed. People, especially women, simply want to see her, touch her. But her star quality hasn't yet translated into confidence in her ability. In a Washington Post/ABC News poll comparing her with George Bush as a potential president, the man who can hardly scare up a quorum on the campaign trail beats her 61 to 33 percent.

This doesn't surprise or rattle Ferraro, who attributes it to the wonders of his incumbency, not to her sex. "How many times do people put faith in people they don't know?" she asks. "The polls are reflecting the fact that the man has been vice president of the United States for four years."

It's the second paradox, the one reported by her cousin, that she finds hardest to deal with. "They think he's wrong on the budget deficits, wrong on trade, wrong on arms control," she says, reciting a litany of issues. "But then, when you talk about Ronald Reagan, they say, 'Isn't he wonderful!'" She repeats this in the manner of a Queens prosecutor who knows she has a perfect case but hasn't yet convinced the jury.

Her conviction, that if the Democrats can only get a handle on the right argument they can win, prompts Ferraro to throw away her speech the next morning at the Chrysler plant in Rockford, Ill., and ask the auto workers there to "Tell me, Tell me" why the polls say one-third of the UAW members will vote for Ronald Reagan. "What is it that would make you vote for him?" she asks the assembly-line workers, mostly men, opening a risky, free-wheeling session that transforms their reserved body language and wins their respect.

At every stop, Ferraro emphasized the disparity between Reagan's image and his acts. In Nashville, at a speech attacking Reagan's strongest point, leadership, she told the President, "Do not pretend to be a friend of the very things you undermine."

You don't have to be clairvoyant to see Ferraro itching to get Ronald Reagan on the witness stand and cross-examine him. What she will get is a debate with his second and surrogate. For 90 minutes, she will be compared to George Bush, not in abstract notions of leadership but in performance. For 90 minutes, she'll have her chance to turn the show-and-tell campaign into a confrontation.

Ferraro is conscious of the importance of that debate. "It just so happens that it's the 11th of October, Eleanor Roosevelt's 100th birthday," she says. "How do you like this as a series of coincidences? I was born on Women's Equality Day and the debate is on Eleanor Roosevelt's birthday." Somewhere in the numbers, she reads a pretty decent omen.

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