

opinion/editorial

The poor pay price of Reagan legal service cuts

The proposal to eliminate the Legal Services Corporation is another sad example of the Reagan administration's willingness to kick the nation's poor and destitute while they're down.

Describing this intention as a "willingness" may be a gross understatement. This desire to slash social programs seems to have evolved into a favorite pastime among the country's conservative forces.

Therefore, it should not come as any real surprise that the president's budget-cutters see no obligation to ensure a voice in the court system will be heard to represent and defend the rights of needy members of American society.

Critics of the corporation assert that federally subsidized lawyers have not concentrated their valuable time and efforts on representing poverty-stricken clients. Instead, as these people who advocate abolishing the corporation contend,

the lawyers have been concerned with playing politics through the judicial system and wasting precious tax dollars.

Legal aid for civil court proceedings is very expensive and necessary if citizens from all economic classes hope to be treated fairly and justly in the areas of housing, welfare and family law. If poor people are denied legal counsel in civil matters because they don't have the necessary financial resources, this can only lead to oppression and create a breeding ground for injustice.

According to the Reagan administration's proposed funding cutbacks, money for providing legal aid to the poor would be included in federal grants. In this plan, these legal services would compete for state support with a myriad of other services—many of them also being threatened by

the president's budgetary ax.

Another remedy being proposed is to encourage volunteer legal counseling, perhaps providing tax incentives.

But it just doesn't seem fair to leave legal representation of the nation's poor people at the mercy of private lawyers. After all, those are the same people who have established and now are charging exorbitant legal fees for their services.

It is imperative equal justice under the law be ensured for all members of American society, including poor people.

If the Legal Services Corporation is abolished, the scales of justice will tip over farther toward large industries, influential corporations and those who are inherently wealthy, which would be a sad travesty of a noble principle.

Brezhnev seeks kidnapper

And now we present another gripping adventure from *The Casebook of Inspector Brezhnev*. Tonight, the Eastern European Theater presents "The Case of the Crumbling Union," live on the KGB television network.

(The scene: A small house in downtown Warsaw, Poland. A limousine pulls up to the house, and an aging man in a dark suit gets out. He walks gingerly to the house and knocks on the door.)

clark

An elderly lady opens the door, and stands back when she sees the stern visage with the bushy eyebrows staring at her. "Good evening," the man says. "I'm Inspector Brezhnev of Moscow Yard. I hope you won't mind if I look around your charming little house."

"May I ask if there is something going on, you know, something criminal that I should know about?" says the lady.

Inspector Brezhnev smiles a sinister smile. "Let's just call this a, uh, heh-heh, routine investigation. There's been a bit of neighborhood disturbance. . .," he says, his voice trailing off into a series of three black dots.

The inspector steps into the kitchen. He opens the pantry door and starts taking loaves of bread from the shelves.

"What are you doing?" asks the lady. "You seem to have an overstock of bread here," says the inspector. "Are you, perhaps, expecting guests?"

"Uh, no," says the lady, unsure what the kindly inspector is looking for. "I had noticed some talk of shortages at the store lately, so I decided to stock up one

day when I had the chance."

Inspector Brezhnev starts lobbing the bread out the front door of the house. "You won't be needing these any more. At least not until the upcoming trial."

"Trial? Who are you trying?" "C'mon lady, you're not fooling anybody with that innocent routine," says the inspector. "You are an agent with Solidarity, and I am here to arrest you for the kidnapping of Poland."

The old lady grows stern. "Where's your proof?"

"I laugh," says the inspector, not laughing. "The facts of this case are all on my side. Fact: One week ago Poland is reported missing. Fact: I am sent by Moscow Yard to find the kidnappers. Fact: I enter this area with 10,000 crack inspection troops, who ransack every building standing between here and Moscow, and we find nothing."

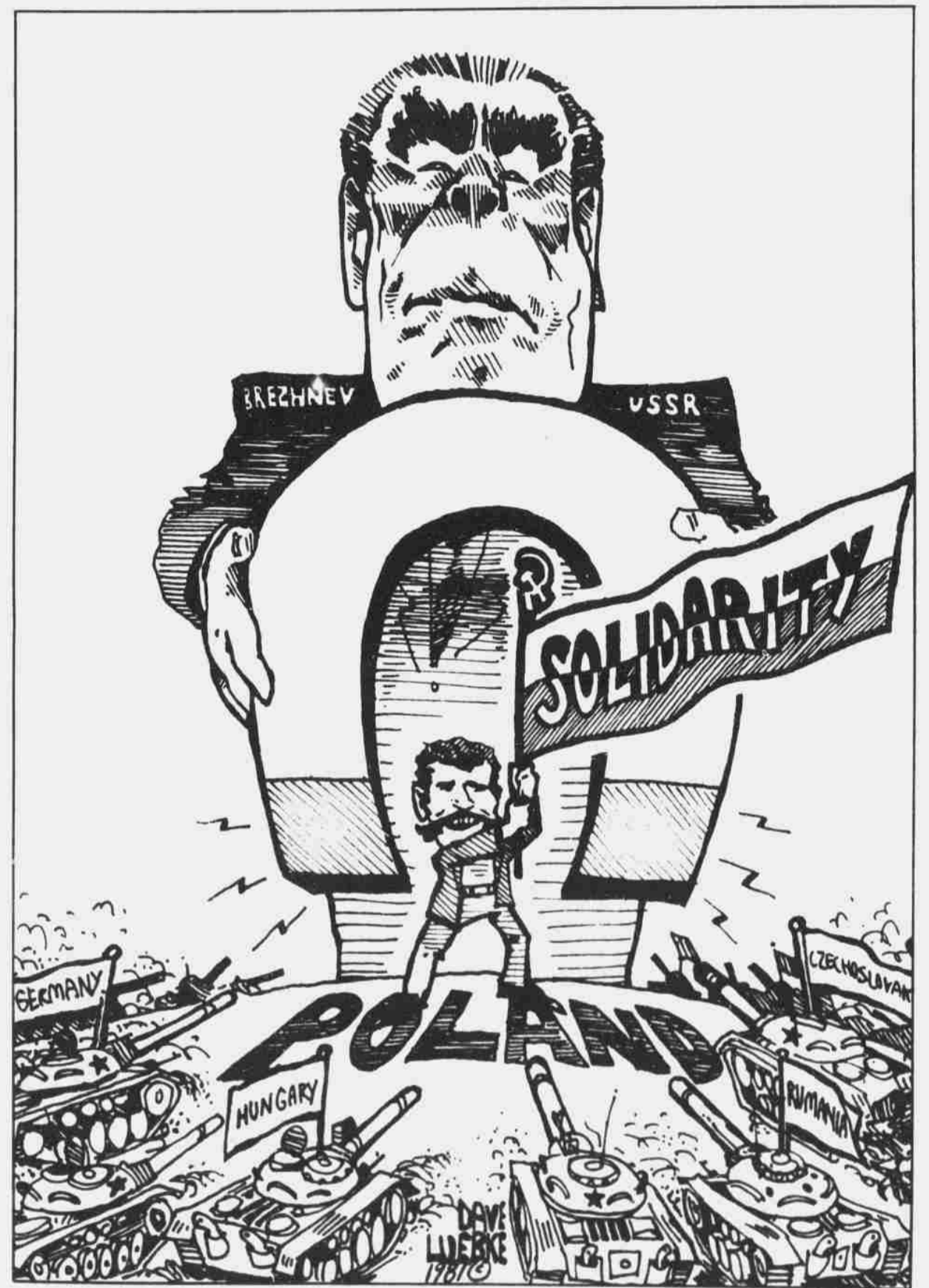
"Your facts add up to nothing," says the old lady. "That is because there is nothing here to find. No crime has been committed."

"I am not here to find a crime," says the inspector. "I am here to kill criminals."

"You can't have one without the other," says the old lady. "Poland is fine. No crime has been committed."

"So you think," says Inspector Brezhnev. "But at Moscow Yard we use the most up-to-date investigation method to uncover criminals where no crime has occurred. Over the years we have been able to convict thousands of people without any shred of evidence of wrongdoing. It has revolutionized the criminal investigation methods of our country, and now we have come to bestow it on you. Believe me, I have all the facts I need."

Join us again next time you want to be left without a clue for another episode of *The Casebook of Inspector Brezhnev*.



S. Africa offers use of naval base

Washington—What did Jeanne Kirkpatrick know and when did she know it? This is the inconsequential contretemps now convulsing a city which feeds upon such nonsense. The question relates to whether or not our U.N. Ambassador was aware the South Africans with whom she chatted three weeks ago were representatives of their military intelligence.

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Overlooked in this silly spat is the urgent message the South Africans were bringing to the United States—intelligence information contained in documents still marked "secret."

The "team" which came to the United States at the invitation of the defense-minded American Security Council consisted of four men: Major-General Pieter van der Westhuizen, Vice Admiral Naude du Plessis, a defense intelligence brigadier, and a major.

Here is the information they brought: Since passage of the Clark Amendment,

tying U.S. hands in Angola, the Soviet Union has moved 250 MiG fighters and 600 tanks into Angola, Zambia and Mozambique. More ominous, these planes and armor are not serviced, operated or controlled by Africans, but by East German, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian pilots, military advisers and technicians whose number in southern Africa rose from 500 to 3,000 during the Carter years.

In addition to the fighter aircraft, a dozen radar sites have been established in Zambia, Mozambique and Angola, complimented by Soviet surface-to-air missiles, again manned by the Warsaw Pact's Afrika Corps, not Africans, not Cubans.

With the most powerful army on the continent, the South Africans do not see these weapons directed at them. The Soviet Empire, they contend, is providing insurance that its African satellites of Mozambique and Angola are not overthrown by the indigenous rebellions operating in both countries.

Second, along with the naval base being established in Agnola and Mozambique — on the east and west coasts of southern Africa — the MiGs give the Soviet Bloc the capacity to interdict the sea traffic that

passes around the Cape of Good Hope and carries 70 percent of Europe's strategic minerals and 90 percent of Europe's oil.

What the South Africans are willing to provide is access to the great naval base at Simonstown, which has the finest docking facilities between Gibraltar and Singapore and can handle almost all American warships. (Vessels too large for Simonstown can dock at Durban and Cape Town.)

Also near Simonstown is the underground communications and surveillance center at Silverstone, a facility capable of tracking Soviet vessels, aircraft and submarines in a vast area enclosed by the southern cone of South America, the Antarctic and the Indian Ocean.

What the United States is being offered, then, is military cooperation with the most powerful country in Africa, a country which considers its survival intertwined with the United States' remaining a world power. Meanwhile, what is being debated is whether or not our envoys should even chat with the military officers of a country whose society retains some of the aspects of segregation that were commonplace in Washington, D.C., 25 years ago.

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