

# LAS VEGAS VOICE

## EDITORS VIEWPOINT

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### PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

Senator Joe Neal



### "The Boat People"

Wars have punctuated World History since the beginning of Man. There have always been winners and losers. But not until the end of the Vietnam Conflict, have the losers been given sanctuary in another country on such a large scale as is now the case with the Boat People.

It is not as though the Boat People do not have a homeland. They do. It is because their homeland is now under a new government with new and different policies that the Boat People venture upon the high seas seeking a new home. This situation is not different from many other people of various nations who live under policies with which they do not agree.

People from Haiti have been coming to this country for many years in boats and many have been picked up at sea. In most cases it was the policy of their government which precipitated an exodus of the Haitian people and led them to embark upon such dangerous journeys. However, upon the Haitians arrival in this country, they were arrested and deported. The Haitian people are Black.

We can still recall the ill-fated secession movement of Biafra from the Eastern part of Nigeria in the early seventies. We were inundated with news stories of starving children. Through the Red Cross and the United Nation, this country made a giant effort to aid those starving children in their homeland.

We must run the risk of questioning our country's policy as it relates to the Boat People. The humanitarian effort to save lives by rescuing those unfortunates from leaking boats who, almost surely, would drown at sea but for that effort, is, of course, the right and Christian thing to do; but does the circumstance of being lifted from leaking boats in stormy seas give the Boat People the right to settle in this country? We do not think so! We can only question our country's motivation in light of the manner in which it handled the problem of the "Boat People" - including the "forced boat people" -- the Blacks.

The economic stability of this country can not withstand any large migration of people as residents from anywhere without major consequences to the citizens of this country. The economic pressure generated by numbers of Boat People finding refuge here bears more heavily upon the poor Black and poor White, who are already living at a bare subsistence level, because these are the groups that "Boat People" replace on jobs. Some of you may have seen how those Crab fishermen (white) on the Texas coast, treated the boat people in their community.

There are already rumblings to be heard in the Black community about foreigners taking jobs from Blacks. The fact that the boat people want to become self-sufficient, and the owners of various hotels want cheap labor is a combination which may have explosive consequences.

The Vietnam war was a bloody mess and could not have happened without acquiescence of that country's leadership of the time. America could not have dropped one napalm bomb on the soil of that country without the approval of South Vietnam's leadership.

It has long been a cardinal rule that if one makes a stand, one must suffer the consequences. So it should be with the Boat People.

In conclusion, I suppose it's safe to say that only the wealthy are happy that the Boat People are coming.

Since this country cannot take all the boat people who would be willing to come here, we must theorize that our government is attempting to put pressure on the Communist regime of South Vietnam by aiding a program to drain all the skilled labor from that country. It is the skilled Vietnamese who can afford to purchase passage out of Siagon and other coastal regions of Vietnam.

What about the people who remain in Vietnam? Why should their lives be different? Only one factor makes a distinction between the two groups -- money. Those who must stay are the unskilled and the very poor. Our government is making a mistake if, indeed, its intent and purpose for assistance to the Boat People is to aid the draining of skilled labor from South Vietnam. We would remind America the same thing happened when Castro came to power in Cuba and it took him a mere twenty years to become a force the world recognizes must be reckoned with and whose proximity to the shores of the United States is never forgotten for a moment.

### NEW DAY BEGUN

by

Benjamin L. Hooks



### "Jubilee Day"

by Benjamin L. Hooks

One of the tragedies of our times is how little Black Americans draw upon the strengths of their history and heritage for normal, everyday survival. Black Americans have a rich, illustrious, glorious and majestic history. They are descendants of a race of people who came from a 3,000 mile stretch of Africa extending from the Senegal River southward to the coast of Angola.

Civilization began in Africa long before Europeans were to build their first significant edifice, at a time when they were still living in caves. Africans knew about smelting iron, working with gold, and had complex forms of governments and kingdoms well before Europeans learned about these developments. Yet, for one reason or another, not many Black Americans are fully aware of this history.

Instead, today, members of America's largest minority group give lip service to "black heritage" and "black pride." These were some of the constructive legacies of the civil rights movement a decade ago and of which we all should be mightily proud.

But let us also be aware, though, that many of these pronouncements and slogans derive, by and large, from only a skin-deep awareness of the rich heritage that belongs to Black Americans. Such a superficial knowledge and appreciation for the long history of accomplishment that is theirs can be no guarantee for survival and advancement in today's highly complex and competitive society.

No group or race of people were ever able to throw off the extended legacy of oppression with such light reinforcements. "Black power" and "soul brother" do

play a symbolic role in the lives of the poor, especially residents of America's decayed fetid urban slums. But, they also need much more substantial fortifications for not only survival but progress. It is primarily through the understanding, knowledge and support of their history that other similarly oppressed groups were able to overcome their own oppression and attain significant prosperity.

As a means of helping to overcome the growing negative spirit in Black America, I therefore issued a call on the closing night of the NAACP 7th Annual Convention in Louisville that Black Americans celebrate the first day of January all over again. We shall call January 1 "Jubilee Day" in recognition of Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

It is understood that Lincoln was more interested in saving the Union than in freeing the slaves. But nevertheless, all over this nation the Proclamation represented the first expression of the white conscience of America that the time had come to deal with the question of slavery.

Upon this foundation and history let us rebuild our family altars. Let us call our children in, eat some bread and water, similar to the slave ship diet. Also eat some rice, corn, peas and greens symbolizing the foods of slavery. Then, while we have some vinegar and oil symbolizing "Our New Day Begun," also review and recall the history of survival as the griots, or storytellers, who were transplanted from Africa to the American plantation did. They handed down the stories, developments and accomplishments of ancient times from generation to generation.

Let us more actively lift up and educate our youngsters on the works and great accomplishments of such giants of black history as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, William E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, George Washington Carver, Mary Mc Leod Bethune, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, Harry T. Moore and the many others much more than we presently do.

The black churches will also play a key role in this observation. They too will help raise the consciousness of their members as well as seek funds for the strengthening of the NAACP.

At the same time Black Americans must also never forget the cruelties of slavery, lynchings and other degradations of the American Jim Crow system. In the memory of these degradations, more so to the perpetrators than to the victims, they will recognize the strengths of the race upon which they may construct tier upon tier for a brighter tomorrow.

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