

Point of View

Editorial

The shooting down of the Korean Air Lines passenger plane recently by the Russians was indeed a dastardly deed. The incident will not be soon forgotten, especially by the friends and loved ones of those aboard the plane.

The President of the United States has made political hay of the incident by airing bits and pieces in all of the media.

However, we cannot help but pause a moment and reflect upon some other national problems that should consume some of our president's time. Farmers in the Midwest lost much of their crops this summer because of the drouth; hurricane victims have been without homes for some time; the

economy, although the administration claims that it is in a state of recovery, is still depressed; children, especially minority children, are homeless and are going hungry; senior citizens are not being cared for properly; concerns expressed by the marchers on Washington recently have not been properly addressed, etc. The list could go on and on.

We are aware that the job of being president of the United States is an awesome one, however, we are becoming more and more concerned that the average voter is being ignored, written off, and pushed aside by this administration.

On the state level, we see an active administration that is making a sincere effort to attend to pressing matters within our state. We wish that our national government will start doing the same by giving more attention to domestic matters, while at the same time, staying abreast of international developments.

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



Some weeks ago, we entertained the subject as to why Mr. Reagan seems to be pushing the issue of deterioration of the educational process. As this issue becomes prominent on the local scene, we are able to decipher more clearly the intent of the educational issue as it is being put forth by the Republicans.

We find that the educational issue has more to do with politics than it does with the quality of education. The Republicans need an issue which can catch the attention of a large number of people. Since we all are concerned that our children have a decent education so that they may be successful in life, there is no greater area to attract our attention than to say the schools are not educating the children properly. Well, they have our attention and we are listening. I particularly don't like what I am hearing.

The Republicans are having Sen. Bob Ryan, who is blind, to do their race baiting for them in this state. Senator Ryan was quoted in the Review Journal on Friday, Sept. 23 as saying that "it is insulting to indicate to a black child that the only way he can learn in school is if he is seated between two white children." To view Senator Ryan's statement from the standpoint of educating children, many black people would share his viewpoint in its literal sense. Black children do not have to be seated between white children to learn or be educated. The integration of the schools in this state, and I dare say throughout the nation, stems from the application of school policies, policies which permitted a different quality of education to exist in an all-black school as opposed to a white school existing under the same jurisdiction of a school board.

Even though blacks realized that whites as a group have no intrinsic values that blacks should need or want, they realized that the school boards throughout the nation are mainly controlled or dominated by whites. The thinking is that these school boards are not going to effect any policy which would damage the education for whites. We are speaking of the Public School Systems, where most people in this nation are educated.

To stop busing in Clark County would allow a different policy to be applied to the education of a large segment of blacks. We cannot say that this would not happen. It has happened in the past and it is for this very reason that we now have a busing program. We have a black member on the school board, but we do not control the board. It is quite evident that our black member of the school board has not been allowed to hold a position of being one of the officers of the board.

So, it is not a problem of black children being between white children for black children to learn. It is a problem of who has the power. If the schools are going to be a place where children learn the use of power and how to take power, then black children should be in the midst of this so they can learn to take power, too.

The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists or authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.

To Be Equal

ACT ON FAIR HOUSING

by John E. Jacob

The world's most neglected law has to be the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Intended to end housing discrimination, it has gathered dust. Rarely enforced, the law has failed to discourage housing discrimination.

The betrayal of the promise of the fair housing law is a national scandal that should be rectified by passage of tough enforcement provisions. Those provisions should have been there from the beginning; they weren't

enforced.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development withdrew the regulations implementing the Fair Housing Act and still has not replaced them with new regulations, an indication of where housing discrimination stands in the order of priorities.

HUD's fair housing office spends a hefty part of its limited funds and manpower in peaceful persuasion to encourage voluntary compliance with the law. That is a worthy effort, but I

finally introduced a set of proposed changes in the law that would allow the Justice Department to handle individual complaints and to raise the ante for bigots by providing for hefty fines — up to \$100,000 — for landlords and realtors who discriminate.

Better still is another plan, being considered in the Senate, that would establish a system of ad-



John E. Jacob

ministrative judges to hear housing complaints. The judges, appointed by a presidential commission, would have the power to award damages and fine violators.

Cases would be referred to the judges by HUD and their decisions could be appealed, ensuring fairness. So critics complaining about the power of the housing judges are off-base; that power would be tightly controlled. Such a system would

have many advantages. It would short-circuit the slow complaint process under the existing law, a process that amounts to preventing redress. It would also compensate victims of discrimination while punishing violators of the law.

Such a strong enforcement mechanism is long overdue. Housing is the one area where blacks can be sure that discrimination is still strong. Each year there are well over two million specific instances of discrimination against black homeseekers.

That illegal discrimination has to be stopped. The marketplace has had fifteen years to come to terms with the law and the government has had fifteen years to learn that the present law isn't working the way it should.

This most pervasive form of discrimination has to be tackled at its roots, and now is the best time to mount a real effort to pass an enforcement law.

With a presidential election coming up few contenders will want to appear to be against stopping housing discrimination. But the real test is whether they'll back a strong law that does what it is supposed to do — end housing discrimination.

because of a naive faith that people will obey the law even if there is no serious penalty attached to violating it.

That hasn't worked out. And an Administration not noted for its toughness on bigotry has not pressed the fight on housing segregation.

The Justice Department, for example, has filed only five housing discrimination lawsuits, compared with an average of 32 a year in previous administrations. Worse, it concentrates on minor suits involving redress for individuals, rather than broader, precedent-setting suits that would have wider appli-

wouldn't call it tough enforcement. A better job of education could be done with a few well-timed lawsuits and by publicizing offenders.

The existing enforcement mechanism is so cumbersome that it is no bar to discriminatory practices. It stresses conciliation to the point where a home can be long off the market by the time a case is resolved. While the Justice Department can handle cases of systemic discrimination, it has been lax in doing so.

So the law is not working. That's something even the Reagan Administration admits. It has