

# Point of View

## PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



In April 1983, I had the honor of appearing before the United States Subcommittee on Apartheid, where I spoke relative to this issue. It was at this meeting that I learned that the District Council of Washington was planning to introduce legislation which would allow them to direct their pension funds from the companies or firms doing business with the South African Government. What I found most intriguing about this action was the fact that any rule or legislation proposed by the District Government of Washington must also be approved by Congress.

Such legislation to prohibit pension fund money of the District of Columbia to be used by firms or companies doing business with South Africa is now before Congress. It was introduced the first of the month and Congress has thirty days to disapprove of the measure or allow it to become law by tacit approval.

This district legislation is becoming a hot potato. After all, it is an election year and many Congressmen are up for re-election and are running in districts which include many black voters. The Reagan administration cannot push too hard on the issue because of his election campaign.

The South African issue before Congress is being looked upon as being equivalent to Martin Luther King's birthday bill in both the appeal for the measure and the opposition to it.

Placing sanctions against investment in South Africa is not a thing that would be appreciated by the Reagan administration. It would be far more palatable to Mr. Reagan and his crew if they could continue their policy of "constructive engagement," which is maintaining a good relationship with South Africa in hope that they could influence them to change. This constructive engagement policy of the Reagan administration has not worked and will not work because it was not intended to work to remove or force change in South Africa's Apartheid policy.

It is not a secret that the South African government has a strong lobby in Washington and spends a lot of money in this country to maintain its policy of Apartheid and to keep one of its staunchest allies, the U.S. government.

The hearing by the House District Committee would have started this past Tuesday. I am hopeful, as many others who have lived with this issue for the divestment of funds from South Africa, that this measure is passed successfully by the House and the Senate.

Bishop Desmond Tutu was here in this country last week. In case you do not know who Bishop Desmond Tutu is, he is head of all the Anglican churches in South Africa. He is black and a staunch opponent of Apartheid. He was one of the gentlemen that our two State Senators Bill Raggin and Nick Horn spoke with when they were winned and dined on a tour of South Africa. On Friday, January 27, Bishop Tutu spoke to a group of Episcopalians and stated that "the Christian Church must fight for

## To Be Equal

# REVERSING CIVIL RIGHTS

By John E. Jacob

The Justice Department has a new partner in its campaign to reverse important civil rights gains, and that partner is none other than the agency created by Congress to be the nation's watchdog over civil rights progress — the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The compromise that extended the life of the Commission also loaded its membership with supporters of the Administration's anti-busing, anti-affirmative action line.

The newly reconstituted Commission began its new lease on life by issuing a denunciation of "quotas," as if that was today's biggest civil rights worry. By doing so, the Commission further muddied the waters, perpetuating public confusion over quotas and numerical goals and timetables.

Quotas are one small tool in the affirmative action arsenal. They are not mandated by any law and are only ordered by courts as a remedy for gross violations of equal opportunities, and occasionally, by private voluntary agreements, again, to correct gross discrepancies in opportunities.

The Commission also killed some planned studies about the effect of budget cuts on the minority poor, demonstrating its lack of concern for the disproportionate impact such cuts have had on minorities. This is a very legitimate civil rights issue the Commission should be concerned about. Such concerns are at the core of the Commission's responsibility to investi-

gate government policies and to assess their impact on equal opportunities. This is hardly the message that our two Senators brought back from their tour of South Africa.

The South African problem is one of injustice. Injustice prevails until it is uprooted by justice. Until we are able to think in ways that Martin Luther King taught us, that "injustice anywhere affects justice everywhere," only then will we be free as a nation to say to South Africa, "you are wrong."

gate government policies and to assess their impact on equal opportunities.

By abdicating its legal responsibility to serve as a protector of civil rights and as an advocate of equal opportunity, the Commission in effect joins in an unholy alli-

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ance with the Justice Department, which has similarly shirked its responsibilities. In fact, the Department has become one of the most visible foes of actions designed to enhance civil rights.

While the Commission was sounding off against "quotas," the Supreme Court was handing the Justice Department a slap in the face by throwing out its pleas for a review of an affirmative action plan adopted by the City of Detroit.

Detroit's police force used to be a paradise of discrimination — few blacks were allowed entry to the force and fewer still could hope for promotion to officer ranks. To remedy this, the city adopted an affirmative action plan in which promotions to the rank of lieutenant would be made on the basis of one black appointee for every white until such time as the police force better reflected the racial composition of the people it was supposed to serve.

No one was promoted who was not qualified — but the Administration decided to use this as a test case of so-called quotas. In fact, as lower courts pointed out, the Detroit system was constitutional, it did seek to

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See JACOB, Page 15

## Editorial

The President of the United States was in our city on Tuesday of this week. While here, he seemed to have been treated in a very royal manner. This is as it should be because the Office of the President of the United States is perhaps the highest office in the world.

President Reagan spoke to about 9000 members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals who are meeting in Las Vegas this week.

Crime and violence in classrooms across the nation received their proper attention from Reagan. He emphasized that other students and teachers had as much right to be safe in school as the criminal elements, and that for too long the courts and others have concentrated on protecting the rights of the disruptive few with little or no regard for the rights of the majority of the students who were in school to learn.

An important point made by the President was that "there is not only a need for order at schools, but also in our students' hearts and minds."

No truer statement has ever been made. For unless we attack the causes for disruptive behavior among our students and remedy these causes, any other attack on this situation will undoubtedly turn out to be fruitless.

Those who think that the major problems in our schools stem from poor teaching or poor materials should visit some schools that seem to be teeming with misfits, students with behavior problems and disrespectful students, to see that the very best teachers available could do nothing under certain circumstances.

President Reagan delved into the subjects of prayer in schools and tuition tax credits for parents who wish to send their children to private or parochial schools.

Reagan sounded more like "Mr. Reagan, the campaigner politician," than he did "Mr. Reagan, the President of the United States."

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