

Point of View

To Be Equal

EDUCATION AND EQUITY

By John E. Jacob

The attention being given to improving the educational system, as symbolized by the highly publicized reports on today's schools, is welcome. But aside from their attention-getting value, most of the recommendations in those reports are troubling.

One, for example, would limit high school entrance to those deemed "qualified." All tend to place an undue emphasis on tests, not as diagnostic tools for individualized learning, but as screening devices and as indicators of potential.

Few of the reports appear concerned that our educational system has become a giant tracking machine. The children of the privileged get pre-school educational opportunities, attend schools with programs and resources that nurture their talents, and

receive further educational enrichment opportunities from the home.

The children of the disadvantaged rarely enter school before the first grade, generally attend schools that are strapped for resources, and urgently need educational opportunities that compensate for their dis-



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advantages.

Through their single-minded concern with Excellence—defined as competence in science and math—these reports tend to neglect the vitally important issue of Equity. By not address-

ing the equity issue the national debate on education is unbalanced.

Equity is not an issue that can be sidestepped. For blacks, it is the central issue—equal access to quality education is the prime issue on the black education agenda. I believe it has to be at the core of national educational policy as well.

Only about half of all white families have

evidence that investing in the human resources represented by disadvantaged children pays off for the nation, those programs have been cut heavily.

The past several years have seen ruthless cuts in programs that provide compensatory educational opportunities, that feed children from poor families, and that offer pre-school enrichment experiences. The cuts were worsened by

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school age children. But almost three out of four black and Hispanic families include children under 18. The black and brown share of the school age population is growing, and those demographics must be considered in any rational discussion of education reform.

Ignoring the equity issue encourages national policies that undermine the limited progress that has been made toward greater equity.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, minorities made important strides toward greater educational achievement. Those improvements were the direct result of additional resources made available to individuals and to school systems by federal programs targeted to helping the disadvantaged.

Those improvements are proof that federal programs do work; that federal resources can make a difference. But in spite of demonstrated

packaging key educational programs into block grants for the states.

That resulted in a clear pattern of shifting resources away from school districts with special needs. The biggest losers were school systems with the largest enrollments of minorities and the poor. And the total funds available through block grants are less than a third of what had formerly been available in categorical grants.

We have to be seriously concerned with the direction in which national education policies are going. There's a drift away from excellence and equity; away from universal education opportunities, away from strengthening public education.

In its place is a drift toward elitism, toward screening the children of the poor out of the system, toward writing off the needs, hopes, and aspirations of minorities.

**NOW IS THE TIME
TO REGISTER
GREATER VOTES,
GREATER POWER**

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



THE PROSPECT OF U.S. WAR IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Oil is a fuel which can be used for many things. It could become the fuel which ignites the Third World War.

The war which is taking place in the Persian Gulf between Iraq and Iran has taken on serious consequences. They are bombing oil tankers and threatening closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow passage of water about 50 miles long through which oil tankers must pass in order to get to the Arabian oil fields along the coast lines of the Persian Gulf.

Over half of the oil used by industrialized nations in Europe comes from this area. The Iranians and Iraqis are making it difficult for the big oil tankers to traverse these waters with any degree of safety. A Saudi Arabian oil tanker, the Yankee Pride, was attacked 35 miles off the coast near the kingdom's major oil-loading port at Ras Tanura. Earlier, the Iranians had attacked two Kuwaiti tankers. These attacks have frightened many of the neutrals in the area.

Saudi Arabia, which has been opposed to U.S. intervention in the area, now seems willing to accept some support from the U.S., the French and the British as escorts in international waters. These three countries have already situated themselves in the area and the U.S. has indicated that it is willing to send in a squadron of interceptor aircraft to defend any ship in international waters.

The escalation of the Persian Gulf war could not have come at a worse time. We are in the process of electing a president and I am sure that Mr. Reagan would not allow Khomeini to run rough-shod over the oil trade in the Gulf without challenging him to a fight.

The Reagan administration has indicated in the strongest terms that it will not allow the Strait of Hormuz to be closed by Iran.

Can you imagine what it would mean for Reagan and his administration if this country should happen to go to war with Iran? All the emotion surrounding the Iranian Hostage Crisis of 1980 would be played all over again and if this country should win such a war, there would not be a Democratic president in 1984. Reagan would be elected by a wide margin.

In such a war the black troops would see wide participation, for the reason that the Iranians do not have anything against blacks of this country. Knowing this, our Commander-in-Chief would not hesitate to commit a large number of black troops to such a battle.

It is the hope of many who have been observing this matter, that a peaceful conclusion can be reached before it becomes necessary for the U.S. to get involved. It is the feeling of many that Mr. Reagan's entry into the presidency for another four years should not be easy. A war with Iran would, in my judgment, make Mr. Reagan more electable for another four years than he is presently.

The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the SENTINEL-VOICE editorial represents this publication.

Editorial

The stages are being set and the curtains are about to be lifted for Election '84, starring the candidates for various offices to represent the West Las Vegas community, city and state, as well.

Not only in West Las Vegas, but throughout the nation, history has it that it's during the election period that "promises to make it all better, untruths and accusations, mudslinging, underhandedness and bitter back-stabbing, sometimes occurs."

In this time and age, voters have become far more sophisticated and politically astute, and they demand higher ethics and intelligence from their candidates and elected officials. In fact, they have become turned off dramatically by those who have demonstrated unacceptable behavior.

By contrast, the voters of today desire only that their representatives be caring, sensitive to their needs, hard-working, dedicated, honest, able to get things done, make promises only that they can keep and most importantly, after attaining the office that they so diligently seek, work to the best of their ability to represent well, each and every person, never once forgetting who put them there and why.

We call upon all the various candidates seeking offices not only throughout the West and North Las Vegas communities, but our entire city, state and nation, to keep those facts in mind, and to also realize that not only will they be held accountable for their actions, whether good or bad, before or after the elections by the voters, but more importantly, that they can count on their "sentence" being exactly what the voter passes via the ballot box and nothing else.