

Point of View

Editorial

Operation S.T.I.F., an operation instigated by the Metropolitan Police Department, has done its thing. We saw and read, via the media, the tactics used by this group (department?) to arrest people who had been "secretly" indicted by a grand jury.

We are not against the arrest of habitual criminals, but we wonder what has happened to the so-called "due process" called for in the Constitution of the United States. Doesn't any human being in the United States have the right to "face his/her accusers" before being indicted? It would appear that Operation S.T.I.F. was done without the defendants being given the right to do this.

Was this a grandstand play by our erstwhile police department?

Circumstances seem to point out that this was indeed a grandstand play coupled with the element of surprise to catch a group of citizens who have been indicted "secretly."

"Secretly" seems to be the word that sets off emotions among citizens of our great country. Our question was and is: Why the secret? Why were these so-called "criminals" not brought before the grand jury to testify in their own behalf?

As we looked at the arrested persons being forced on buses, we were reminded of the tactics used by the German gestapo against the Jewish citizens of Germany during World War II.

Another thing that caught our attention was the disproportionate number of Black youths being arrested. No attempt is being made to justify the "wrongdoings" of these young people if the same standard for "wrongdoing" is applied across-the-board to everyone. Our question is: Is it?

A large amount of these young Blacks are desperate as a result of not being able to find gainful employment. If a man/woman is hungry, he/she will do almost anything to get food. This could also be applied to shelter, etc.

As Blacks, we must be sure that our young people have the same opportunities for employment, education, and wholesome recreation as any other members of our society. Maybe then the S.T.I.F. operations will be less needed.

BISHOP TUTU'S GREAT STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

By Bayard Rustin

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Desmond Tutu, the black South African fighter for racial justice, is a joyous and historically significant event. It confers a great honor upon a deeply religious man and strengthens his struggle for the principles of democracy, majority rule, human dignity and non-violence.

Over the years, the Nobel Committee has made a number of wise and outstanding decisions to honor struggles for peace and demo-

cracy, the world over. Previous Nobel laureates include Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Russian human rights advocate Dr. Andrei Sakharov, and Polish trade union leader Lech Walesa.

Bishop Tutu recognizes the common threads in this legacy of support for freedom and implacable opposition to tyranny when he asserts that through this honor is "a tremendous political statement . . . has been made . . . those who oppose apartheid are seen in the same light as those who

To Be Equal

THE DUTY TO VOTE

By John E. Jacob

As the presidential election campaign goes into its final days, the black community and its community-based organizations are gearing up for a massive turnout at the polls.

The importance of voting, especially for minority citizens, transcends party loyalties or presidential prefer-

ence. The black vote is important, regardless which candidate wins it. The democratic process is more than a horse race between two candidates—the effect of high registration and voting rates leaves its mark on the process and on both parties.

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ences. The black vote is important, regardless which candidate wins it. The democratic process is more than a horse race between two candidates—the effect of high registration and voting rates leaves its mark on the process and on both parties.

On a most elementary basis, voting is an affirmation of a person's rights. By voting an individual makes a statement about himself and about his society—a statement that says "I have rights, know my rights, and will exercise them."

It is especially important for black voters to take this stand be-

cause the right to vote was bought dearly—with the blood of countless martyrs who sacrificed so that the Constitution and the precious right to vote could be extended to all citizens.

And we can't forget that there are plenty of people who would love to take that right away from us. Not by repeal-

ing the constitutional guarantees—they know they can't do that. But by subverting the laws, by making black registration difficult, and by manipulating the rules to make black exclusion easier.

Beyond the rights aspect, black interests depends on a large turnout. Part of the reason black neighborhoods have been neglected and black interests ignored is because the black voter turnout is often far lower than the turnout for whites.

In 1980, black voting was 10 percentage points lower than the white rate. A recent poll

by the Joint Center for Political Studies finds that 61 percent of whites, but only 55 percent of blacks say they will definitely vote on Election Day. That number has to be raised if blacks are to be in a position to influence the political process.

The spotlight on the



John Jacob

presidential election tends to obscure the fact that more is at stake on Election Day than simply choosing the next occupant of the Oval Office.

A host of state and local offices, Congressional and Senate seats are at stake. Whatever the outcome of the race for president, these officials also make decisions that affect our lives, from tax laws and social security benefit levels to street lighting and filling in pot holes.

Not only are those positions important, but they are often filled by people elected by the narrowest of margins. In 1982, for example, 13 congressional races were decided by fewer than 1,500 votes.

Even the 1980 presidential election was decided by a bare handful of voters, compared to

Bishop Tutu invites another quite different comparison—the awarding of this honor to another great black proponent of non-violence, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. However, despite the deep

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the many who stayed home. In many states, black non-voters could have changed the results had they bothered to exercise their right to vote.

A barrier to voting is often the defeatism of the poor who feel they have no stake in the society and no responsibility to vote. In 1980 over three-fourths of people earning over \$25,000 voted, but less than two out of five earning less than \$5,000 voted.

But the poor have a major stake in making the system more responsive to their need for jobs, training and opportunities. And the way to advance their interests is by voting for the candidates most likely to help achieve their goals.

Black citizens have to make sure, not only that they and their families vote on Election Day, but that their friends and neighbors vote as well. Voting is everybody's responsibility. Not voting, especially in this crucial election, is a betrayal of self-interest and of our hopes for a better world.

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apartheid are ideologies of oppression.

Under both systems, small privileged minorities (in the communist world—the Communist Party bureaucracy, and under South Africa's apartheid system the ruling white minority) deny free expression and democratic rights to the vast majority. And both systems make use of repressive police and security systems. Under both, political opponents are sentenced to harsh terms of imprisonment.

For black Americans, the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to