

# Point of View

## Editorial

Have you noticed that your utility bills have been more expensive lately? Have you also noticed that the Public Service Commission has done very little or nothing about the escalating costs of utilities?

Many of the members of our Black community have been unable to pay their utility bills, and have had to either turn to federal programs to help them or have their utilities disconnected with no visible means of having them turned back on.

The utility companies have used various excuses for securing raises in their rates. Some of them may be considered legitimate, while others seem to be for the express purpose of exploiting the populace.

We have no particular vendetta against the utility companies, and certainly believe that they, as well as any other business, must make a reasonable profit in order to stay in business.

The utility companies in this area operate the only plants that provide our utilities, therefore the populace cannot move into a nearby area served by another company.

We only ask that the utility rates be looked at for possibilities of reducing these rates to a level which our poor people will be able to pay without having to resort to asking for help from the federal government which must use taxpayers' money to pay for private utility use.

Isn't this a form of welfare when the utility companies accept payment from the government for their exceedingly high rates? You be the judge-

## CUTTING RATES AND ELIMINATING SHELTERS MAY BE FAIRER

By Norman Hill

In my last column on Treasury Department's plan to simplify the income tax, I pointed out that the idea of taming the loophole-and-deduction monster had been shown to be very popular. People think that the tax system now is too complicated and unfair.

summary of the effects of the plan, families below the poverty line would pay no taxes. Individuals making \$10,000 or less would have their tax rate cut, on average, by 32.5 percent. "About 20 percent of all taxpayers would pay the same tax as they do now, or less; 20 percent—those who

credits, corporations and investors are aghast at what they may lose under the plan. But the plan is meant to subject business activity and investment to more rational criteria than whimsical tax breaks and loopholes give. The Treasury Department says that under the present system "the taxation of capital and business income in the U.S. is deeply flawed. It lacks internal consistency, and . . . it contains subsidies to particular forms of investment that distort choices in the use of the nation's scarce capital resources. It provides opportunities for tax shelters that allow wealthy individuals to pay little tax, undermine confidence in the tax system, and further distort economic choices."

As an example of this, there is a wide disparity in how much different companies pay in taxes. Some companies pay up to 46 percent of their profits in taxes; others actually receive refunds, even with large profits, because of the numerous shelters and loopholes available to them. There are deductions that other groups will want to retain. The labor movement is concerned that the business groups will succeed in lobbying for keeping their breaks, while workers will lose deductions on unemployment compensation, and fringe benefits such as unemployment and health insurance above \$2,100 per family. However, if the plan is passed intact, See HILL, Page 19

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Norman Hill is president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

The idea behind the tax simplification, according to the Treasury Department, is to end up with the same amount of revenue as before—the deficit has to be tackled separately—but with people paying in a much more straightforward and equitable way. Rates would be slashed for everyone, but shelters and most deductions would be eliminated. In the *New Republic's*

itemize their tax returns and depend upon shelters and other deductions to reduce their taxes — would pay more. That is both the beauty of the plan and the cause of part of its political opposition." Every interest group has its own particular favorite deductions that it will fight hard to protect. From accelerated depreciation allowances to oil depletion and foreign investment

## Letter To Editor

To: Ed Brown, President  
The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice

It always gives me great pleasure to commend those special people in our community who seem to give that "extra something" towards making life more meaningful for the elderly. You, sir, have done just that.

On behalf of the Economic Opportunity Board staff and members of the Senior Citizen Center who were invited by you to attend the fabulous "Cotton Club" show at the Bagdad Theater in the Aladdin Hotel, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. The seniors truly enjoyed the singers and dancers. For many of the seniors, it was their very first time attending a show at a strip hotel.

Again, thank you, Mr. Brown, for inviting the seniors—we shared an enjoyable evening.

We would like to extend to you, and all of the members of your organization, an invitation to visit our Center.

Sincerely,

For the Executive Director,  
James W. Tyree  
Hazel Geran, Supervisor

## To Be Equal

# TOWARDS A NEW DIALOGUE

By John E. Jacob

Recent years have been marked by growing polarization between blacks and whites. There has been a deepening sense of alienation in the black community as public policies retreated from the war against poverty

have been responding to signals from Washington that black citizens and the poor are no longer items on the national agenda. They could be persuaded to renew their commitment by indications that the Administration is indeed concerned about the gap between the races and about racial polarization.



John E. Jacob

and discrimination. The Administration's policies are seen as reflecting and stimulating a new mood of meanness. The time is long overdue to reverse that polarization, and that will take a commitment from the private sector and from the government.

But that can only come from the top, and some argue that given the overwhelmingly anti-Reagan vote by blacks in last November's election there is little need nor reason for the White House to be more forthcoming to black Americans.

But while a candidate responds to his constituents, a president of all of the people, including those who voted against him. He must keep the interests of the total nation in mind, and there is no conceivable advantage to be gained for America

John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

Some of America's leading corporations have been unswerving in their commitment to affirmative action and to working closely with community-based groups to create job opportunities and to assist in solving social problems.

Others have done a lot in this direction, but could, and hopefully will, do a lot more. Still others dropped out of the fight for social justice and it is time for them to get back into the battle.

The dropouts may

through widening the racial gap and tolerating polarization.

In releasing the National Urban League's State of Black America report, I called on President Reagan to order his Cabinet and agency heads to institute regular meetings with national black leadership, and to hold such meetings himself.

The purpose would be to initiate a real dialogue between blacks and the only Administration in the past quarter-century that has voluntarily iso-

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