

Point of View

Editorial

Black businesses in the Las Vegas area are becoming more and more prominent. The businessmen and businesswomen are making their voices heard in the economic, business, social, and political arenas.

Much of the credit for more visibility of our Black businesses is due to the very capable leadership being shown by the Black Chamber of Commerce of Las Vegas. These business leaders in our community are proving beyond any shadow of a doubt that Blacks can work together for the common good. For this, those of us who are not businessmen or businesswomen are thankful.

No other ethnic group in America has been held back so long by so many people as members of the Black ethnic group. Las Vegas could very well be among the leaders in the nation in developing close cooperation among our business leaders.

It has been rumored that the Las Vegas Black Chamber of Commerce has or will soon have a program that will aid in the development of promising young Blacks in the area of business. If the rumor has any substance to it at all, we applaud the Las Vegas Black Chamber of Commerce in our community will start thinking about a youth program very soon.

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce has been, and according to recently received information, is in the forefront in the efforts to create an atmosphere of cooperation, a clean environment, and an active Black business community.

Much still remains to be done. However, with worthwhile organizations with the zeal and determination of the Las Vegas Black Chamber of Commerce, we feel assured that within a very short while we will see some much needed improvements in our community.

Letter To Editor

Mr. Ed Brown
Las Vegas Sentinel
1201 South Eastern Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104

Dear Mr. Brown:

I wanted you to have the enclosed materials on my fact-finding visit to South Africa earlier this year, as well as the legislation I have introduced in the United States Senate as a result of the trip — The Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985.

Apartheid — the official racist policy of the Government of South Africa — is one of the great moral evils of our time, and the United States should be doing all it can through peaceful means to work for change. The most distressing aspect of my visit to South Africa was the widespread feeling among South African Blacks that the United States is a partner in their oppression, because of the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" with the apartheid regime.

The Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985 would place America firmly on the side of justice and the true future of South Africa, by beginning to apply U.S. economic sanctions against the current racist government. The legislation, which is now beginning to move ahead in Congress, is supported by the Free South Africa Movement in the United States, and I hope you will write your Senators and Representatives to urge them to support its swift enactment.

I particularly wanted you to have the enclosed photograph taken at my meeting with Winnie Mandela, which was the high point of my visit. Her husband, the great Black leader, Nelson Mandela, has been imprisoned for 22 years in South Africa, but Winnie Mandela, a courageous leader in her own right, has helped to maintain his vision of a free South Africa.

With my best regards, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Edward M. Kennedy

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To Be Equal

By JOHN E. JACOB

America, the world's richest nation, tolerates a situation in which a significant portion of its children grow up in deep poverty. Recent Congressional studies report that 22 percent of all children — more than one out of five — live in poor families.

What's more, that shocking figure has climbed steadily. Back in 1969 less than fourteen percent of U.S. children were poor, a significant reduction from earlier figures. Since then, the total number of children decreased by 9 million while the total of poor children increased by 3 million.

As in all aspects of poverty, the effect is heaviest in the black community. Nearly half of all black children are poor. But child poverty in America is not solely a "black" problem — not by a long shot. Two out of three poor children are white.

And today's poor families are a lot poorer than their counterparts were in the late 1960s. Then, the typical poor family had about 90 percent of the income they needed to meet the basics — food, shelter, and utilities. Today's average poor family has only about sixty percent

Save the Children

And poverty in female-headed households with children also cuts across racial lines. Almost half of all white children in female-headed households are poor,



John E. Jacob

while over two-thirds of black and Hispanic children in such homes are poor.

And today's poor families are a lot poorer than their counterparts were in the late 1960s. Then, the typical poor family had about 90 percent of the income they needed to meet the basics — food, shelter, and utilities. Today's average poor family has only about sixty percent

of the income needed for survival.

Over two million of the nearly fourteen million poor children live in families with a full-time wage earner. And the biggest increase in poverty has been among two-parent families. The working poor have been whipsawed

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by rising taxes, federal cuts and low wages in the industries in which they are concentrated — and their children suffer most.

In the context of the expanding poverty among children, it is unconscionable to make more cuts in the programs that sustain them. Such cuts have fed the widening pool of poverty as the poor have found themselves removed from the rolls of surviving programs and impacted by lower real benefits as payments lag far behind inflation. Between

1976 and 1983, cash and food stamp benefits per poor child have decreased in purchasing power by about \$300.

For all the propaganda about less government, Americans have to face the fact that without new federal initiatives to help children

break the bonds of poverty and want, they consign a significant portion of future generations to lives of hopelessness. We are wasting the potential contributions of over a fifth of the people we will need to run the computers and design the systems of a changing economy.

Realizing that, the nation needs to make a major effort to ensure that all of its children get a decent start in life. One major step would be to establish minimum

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Americans Can Lend aid to Democratic Forces in South Africa

By BAYARD RUSTIN

During my two trips to South Africa, blacks repeatedly stressed that meaningful change there can only come about from within. Social activists, educators, political leaders, virtually everyone with whom I met wanted me to understand

Bayard Rustin is President Emeritus of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

that the struggle to achieve justice and democracy in South Africa ultimately depended on the action of the South African people. While they welcome international demonstrations of support, they know that outside pressure cannot be the determining factor for basic change. The struggle for justice in South Africa must be fought on South African soil by South Africans, black and white.

Recently events have

taken a turn for the worse in South Africa. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the infamous Sharpeville massacre of 69 blacks by security forces, police gunned down 19 black demonstrators marching in a funeral procession near Uitenhage. This incident

touched off violence in many of the black townships and for several days reports of the violence dominated the news. The government (in what was called "an act of desperation" by the Rev. Beyers Naude, the twice-banned General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches) banned 29 black organizations from holding meeting for three months.

This was followed by the government's announcement that it was abolishing its

statutes prohibiting sexual and marital relationships across racial lines. Although the decision was hailed by some few as an indication of



Bayard Rustin

the government's willingness to bring about reform, the relaxing of these laws will have little or no effect on the average black suffering under the apartheid. A more important

announcement was the modification of the government's plan to relocate the residents of Crossroads, the infamous squatters camp on the outskirts of Cape Town. It now appears that the government will raise the number of residents who will be allowed to remain in that area. So the struggle continues, punctuated by acts of violence on the part of

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The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of mail received, unpublished individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.

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