

# Point of View

## Editorial

### Blacks Do Not Look, Act Alike

One of my favorite television shows is "The Untouchables." It is a fictionalized version of an era in American history depicting federal attempts to curb the illegal manufacture, transportation and sale of alcohol. It was an era of lawlessness characterized by gang warfare, daily shootings, murders and terrorism. On any given day, law abiding citizens out for a stroll or on their way to work or sitting on the front stoop or in a restaurant, were constantly subjected to the anxieties inherent in wondering if and when a shootout would erupt. Their fears were not of some person pulling out a .22 caliber pistol and firing randomly. There's involved several "hoods" with violin cases who, at any moment, would draw their "axes," release the safety, put it on full automatic and spray an entire area with 30 caliber missiles at the rate of a hundred per minute. The penetrating force of those slugs endangered everyone within a radius of 200 yards. Elliot Ness and the Untouchables sought to end the menace by using their own Thompson submachine guns. Local people spent their time hitting the deck dodging bullets, flying glass and whizzing ricochets. When the dust settled and the echos of the explosions had dimmed into obscurity, they erected themselves, brushed the dust off their gabardine slacks and suits and went on about their business or they lay in the gutters or on hardwood linoleum covered floors while their life's blood oozed out to make their final impression on the world.

There were no mass migrations of residents or business from those areas. There were no negative stigmas attached to a whole populace. Some members of the Untouchables were born and raised in the neighborhood, some policemen on the beat were from the neighborhood, some of the judges, newspaper people and other sin city government were born and raised on the upper south side. All of them had family living there whom they knew were good people. They knew that those people were not components of the criminal element. There was no way that they would suggest that the events caused by the gangsters were reflective of the general populace.

The gangster element sought to capitalize on the weaknesses that a lot of people had — a desire for a shot of gin or some sipping whiskey. The people who bought the brew were not necessarily bad people — a trifle weak maybe but not evil. What they did was against the law and lawbreakers should be punished. Even though we can understand that everybody was not in favor of prohibition just as everybody is not in favor of the 55 mile per hour law. The problem, however, is that they were or are on the books. If we function contrarily to them we are in violation of the law and will be punished if apprehended. We make the choices and that is what it is all about — a matter of choices. Not only those who manufactured the intoxicants but also those who consumed it were in violation of the prohibition amendment and the Volstead Law. Even if they were God fearing, hard working people who said their prayers at night before going to bed they would yet be lawbreakers. Even though those kinds of activities took place constantly, no stigma was cemented to the area.

The capers which were being pulled by the Capones and Schultzes were being repeated in other cities throughout the country. Even in Las Vegas, during the thirties, there were those who were illegally manufacturing and selling liquor. Nowhere in the entire country did those events irrevocably damage the reputations of those towns or neighborhoods where they occurred.

During the early years of hotel/casino development, there was quite a bit of mob involvement. Everyone knows that. Part of the excitement of Las Vegas during the 1940s and 1950s was caused by the possibility of being in the presence of a member of "Murder Inc." Yokels from around the

## To Be Equal

### WELFARE REFORM

By John E. Jacob

There is widespread fear that the broad-ranging government evaluation of social programs will just be a hunting license to end them.

In his State of the Union message, President Reagan charged the Domestic Policy Council to come up with an evaluation of federal programs and

country came here with the hopes of rubbing elbows with or "having their picture 'took' with Mr. B." The occasion of shootouts or murders or what have you caused few to close up shop while vowing never to return because of the lawlessness of the property owners. Perhaps the cause of that phenomena was similar to the excitement centering around the development, a few years ago, of the Neutron bomb. Of course, you remember the announcements that the bomb would only destroy lives and not property. The capitalist mentality can accept the loss of property.

The era of the 1930s with prohibition, merely took lives. There was little destruction of property. Following the repeal of prohibition, the gangster elements moved more strongly into prostitution, numbers, race wires, gambling and slowly — at first — drugs. Wasted lives were the results. The two pronged pinchers of blind justice looked the other way. There was money to be made and it funnelled up to some who were in high places. The business community grew around all of those terrible tenants whose tentacles threw a treacherous tent of temptation which threatened the tender thoughts of teenagers. Only a generation of lives would be lost. What's a life anyway? Right. Were teenagers responsible for the dastardly deeds? Not by a long shot. Some of those who sit up on the hills in the mansions today and bemoan the conditions and who tsk, tskily ask "what is the world coming to?" made their fortunes, to some extent, in the vomit and blood of the victimized masses.

Always, someone or some area has to be placed in the position of the scapegoat. Somebody must pay the piper in order for it to appear that the job is being done. Such is the case with black communities. Blacks are seen collectively as a community whether it is on a street, campus, town, state, country or world level. What one black person does, whoever that person is and whatever that persons happens to be, is a reflection on every black person who has ever or will ever live. Such a burden to bear. We are not permitted individuality. White people do not suffer such a dilemma. Whatever they do, they do as individuals — it reflects only on the person who does it and not on every white person in the world. The key to this difference is their ability to not be maliciously categorized.

In recent days, a group of less than one-hundred individuals have been the cause of intense police activity in the black community of Las Vegas. Rivalry between four gangs in their efforts to control drug traffic is at the root of the problem. Those adults are using young children as "mules" in the transportation and sale of drugs. Black youth who are involved in the activity are susceptible to the misuse by those money grabbing adults because of the lack of job opportunities for youth in this area. This is not being offered as an excuse but merely as a statement of reality.

As the authorities, in their efforts to stem the tide of drugs in the area, become more involved, their actions are being reported by the media. Suddenly, it is more than the hundred who are involved — it becomes the entire community. One who reads the newspapers or watch news reports covering those activities are led to believe that the entire community is involved in the illegal traffic of drugs.

With headlines like "three hurt in Westside melee" or "Cop hurt in Westside unrest," one is led to believe that the entire community is involved. Such is not the case. I do not recall reading when such raids are made at Paradise Park, in the valley, headlines like: "one hurt in Valley unrest."

recommendations for meeting "the financial, educational, social, and safety concerns of poor families."

Those are certainly issues that must be addressed; the tragedy is that they have been ignored for so long.

But the Domestic Policy Council is chaired by Attorney-General Meese, who has opposed federal social programs and whose Justice Department has been negligent in enforcing civil rights laws while waging all-

and skills training as the best way to move people off welfare and into the economic mainstream.

But the Administration's reliance on market forces to create enough jobs for all, and the rhetoric it uses to attack the supposed "dependency" that welfare programs encourage suggest that the Council's strategy will be nothing more than further restricting eligibility and cutting benefits that already are inadequate.

The best and fastest way to reduce welfare rolls is to create jobs for those who can work. With eight million unemployed Americans today, even in the midst of an economic boom, it is clear those jobs are not being created by the private sector.

The Administration should face up to the fact that government can end hunger, poverty and unemployment. That suggests a national fu



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out war on affirmative action, a major vehicle for meeting the needs of disadvantaged minorities.

And there is little confidence that an Administration whose only visible concern for social issues has been to cut or end them will come up with a strategy beneficial to the poor.

In fact, just hours after announcing his charge to the Domestic Policy Council, the President unveiled the proposed 1987 Budget, which continues to slash away at vital social programs.

For example, child nutrition programs are slated for further cuts despite independent evidence of widespread hunger and the proven worth of programs that helped feed poor children.

Dislike of the welfare system is shared by those who advocate job creation

employment and training policy that creates public service jobs, revitalizes the nation's infrastructure, trains the unskilled for the jobs of today, and brings decent housing and quality education to those who are denied them.

There should be special attention paid to the needs of the young, who are, as the President reminds us, our future.

Today one out of every five children grows up in a poor  
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