

Point of View

To Be Equal

Reality Catches Up In 1986

By John E. Jacob

The "feelgood" era in which Americans convinced themselves that the nation's problems are all solved, gave way to reality in 1986.

The economy was sluggish all year, and the unemployment rate was stuck at seven percent nationally, fifteen percent for blacks, and even higher in distressed localities.

Major corporations went through job-destroying restructuring and mergers and many in key industries from autos to computers laid off large numbers of workers.

The budget deficit grew, and so did the trade deficit which, in effect, measures the flow of goods into the country and the flow of jobs out of the country.

The black community continue to feel the effects of hostile government actions. The once constructive Civil Rights Commission became irrelevant. The federal courts got an influx of right-wing judges. William Rehnquist became Chief Justice.

While the Supreme Court continued to back affirmative action programs, the Justice Department went its own

way, with Attorney General Ed Meese engaging in guerrilla warfare against affirmative action and civil rights enforcement.

The Administration's credibility was shaken by the strange happenings at the Iceland Summit meeting; by the undercover



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disinformation campaign about Libya that peddled lies to our own citizens; by the trade with the Russians of a spy for a journalist while denying there was any such trade, and by illegal undercover operations in Nicaragua and arms sales to Iran.

Running through all this was a pattern in which the Administration traded substance for manipulation, and emphasized public relations at the expense of

open, honest government and clear public debate of the issues.

That should once again remind Americans that blacks are the barometer of our nation. For the disinformation, undercover secrecy, and public relations drives that troubled citizens about the foreign policy fiascos have been characteristic of the Administration's policy

and the economy.

Hopefully, people will be critical enough and intelligent enough to demand to know why greed is favored over compassion, and why we ignore widespread poverty amidst affluence.

But despite the negative aspects of 1986, there were some promising signs. Congress passed legislation imposing sanctions on South

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towards black citizens.

We know that whatever happens to the nation, happens to blacks first. Blacks were victimized by federal policies that eroded our rights and undermined our economic gains. And those policies were hidden by a smokescreen of public relations talk about "racially neutral policies" and "color blind society."

Black people didn't swallow that line, but the country did. And it didn't take too long before the same tactics were adopted to mislead other Americans about foreign policy, deficits,

Africa and U.S. corporations began a mass withdrawal from that country.

The tax reform bill, whatever its ultimate effect will be, and even though it skirted some important issues, did relieve most working poor families of the burden of unfair taxation.

And the black community demonstrated a new vigor in attacking community problems, such as inadequate schools, teenage pregnancy, drugs, and family breakup.

Those efforts may help make next year a better one.

Buthelezi South Africa's Middle Man

By Rhoda McKinney
NNPA National Correspondent

Washington, D.C.--During his worldwind visit to Washington, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of South Africa's largest ethnic group, the 6-million Zulu nation and chief minister of the KwaZulu homeland, shook hands and politicked his way through the early afternoon reception, held in his honor at the National Press Club, minutes before he addressed assembled journalists waiting to hear the African leader's views on economic sanctions and the dismantling of apartheid, views not widely embraced by America's black leadership.

Buthelezi is characterized, as a moderate, as a man caught in the middle. He advocated power-sharing, constructive engagement and negotiations with South African president P.W. Botha. He opposes one man one vote, calling that type of democracy an unobtainable alternative to apartheid and he sees violent tactics to overthrow the existing government and harsh economic sanctions, as tools that will hinder the black South African population rather than help.

"There will never be justice in South Africa unless we have one sovereign parliament, in one reconciled people, in which there is universal adult franchise," says Buthelezi, outlining what he thinks is a viable alternative to apartheid. "South Africa cannot rediscover democracy and I refuse to be drawn into any politics which attempts to do so."

"Dictators come to power so frequently on a moral ticket, and frequently acquire the power they end up wielding in a fight against another kind of power," continues Buthelezi "Horror can replace horror and dictatorships can replace dictatorships...Apartheid is a dictatorship of hideous proportions and it can be replaced by alternative forms of dictatorships which will be just as horrendous as apartheid."

Buthelezi, accompanied by his wife Princess Irene who

was dressed in traditional garb, says his many critics have no right to judge his political ideologies or question his integrity since Nelson Mandela, South Africa's "martyred" and imprisoned leader, he says, has not condemned him.

Buthelezi gave only a slight indication that his relationship with some of the nation's black leaders like the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, and Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta has been harmed by his moderate stance and claims that he still has an ongoing friendship with them. Although on this trip, Jackson nor Young have yet to meet with the African chief.

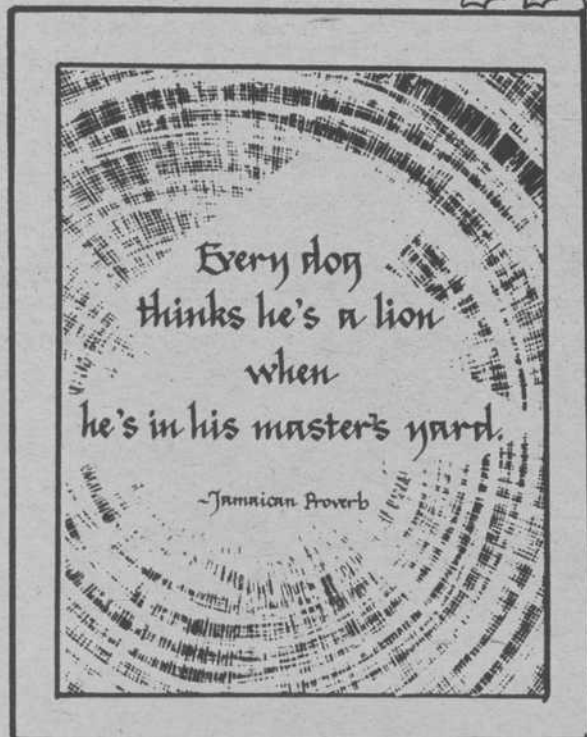
And Buthelezi adds that Randall Robinson, executive director of the lobbying group, TransAfrica has made "trouble" for him.

In 1974, Buthelezi, a descendant of royal Zulu lineage, formed Inkatha, a million member Zulu political organization who's current position on abolishing apartheid is to reject, non-violent methods of protest and support "humanitarian aid" or partnerships with American organizations which would, they write "Alleviate suffering and ensure that black advancement would spread black bargaining power into the citadels of white power." But there have been reports of growing struggles between Inkatha and the outlawed African National Congress, the organization from which Buthelezi dissolved all ties in 1980.

So the conservative, gray suited Buthelezi, says with an uplifting lilt in his voice, the only road to freedom is through reform.

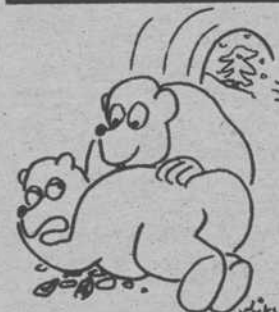
"The cliché that apartheid cannot be reformed is a dangerous cliché," says Buthelezi. "I do not strive to reform apartheid. I strive to eradicate it for the scourge that it is, but its eradication can come through reform...We attempt to negotiate to avoid the necessity of killing because I do so have deep and abiding faith in South Africa."

The one demand, Buthelezi says is non-negotiable and is that jailed ANC leader, Nelson Mandela must be freed.



Don't Drink and Drive

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"Okay, okay! Happy New Year, now go back to sleep."

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