

Point of View

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Fascism, The Environment, And You

Dear Editor:

A historian named Martin Niemoeller explained the rise of fascism in the 1930's by using the following parable: "In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the gypsies, but I did not speak up because I was not a gypsy. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak up because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for ME... but by that time there was no one to speak up for anyone."

A similar analogy can be used to explain current environmental apathy. In the 1980's, I did not speak up about the environmental

holocaust occurring in Africa because I was not an African. I did not speak up about the thousand acres of forests destroyed every hour because I did not live in South America. I did not speak up about the nuclear power plants because I did not live in Pennsylvania or a dozen European countries affected by Chernobyl. I did not speak up about the millions of Americans experiencing water shortages or water quality problems because I used Sparkletts water. I did not speak up about acid rain because I did not live in New England or Canada. I did not speak up about nuclear waste or nuclear weapons testing because I did not care about Nevada. Then environmental pressures came for ME.

Henry David Hecht

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 The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.

Fair Housing: Another Dimension

By Norman Hill

A key piece of legislation to be considered by this Congress is the Fair Housing Amendments Act (\$558), which was introduced in the Senate on February 19. The bill would add an enforcement mechanism to the Fair Housing Act of 1968 to handle the complaints of housing discrimination by racial and ethnic minorities, disabled persons and families with children.

housing discrimination "American apartheid" which "perpetuates the isolation of minorities."

But there is another, broader dimension to the fair housing question which touches on the issue of the relationship between employment opportunities and housing for blacks and other minorities.

Over the last two decades, many industries and

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The Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that 2 million instances of housing discrimination occur each year. The Department also reports that black families seeking to buy a home stand a 48 percent chance of encountering discrimination.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) has called

businesses have left American cities for surrounding suburbs. This trend corresponded with the continued influx of blacks and other minorities into the industrial urban centers. But as blacks and other minorities sought to follow the jobs to the suburbs, too often they found blatant housing discrimination, redlining and the lack of affordable housing near the relocated businesses. Thus unable to move, many workers were forced to travel long distances to keep their jobs. Lower-paid workers who could not afford to do so were forced to quit. The loss of industrial jobs in the inner cities, coupled with the added factor of discrimination and other barriers in the suburbs, have contributed to the decline of economic prospects for urban minorities.

Hence, the concept of fair housing must be viewed not only in terms of discrimination, but also in the context of its fundamental relation to equal economic opportunity. This analysis is too often overlooked in the fair housing debate. It is not only important to ensure that all Americans be allowed to live where they want, but they must also be able to live near where they work. There will continue to be economic inequality in this country if, on the one hand, some workers are free to choose where they live and work, while others — particularly blacks and other minorities — are often forced by unfair housing practices to live where there is no work.

Freedom And Social Justice

By Alexander R. Jones

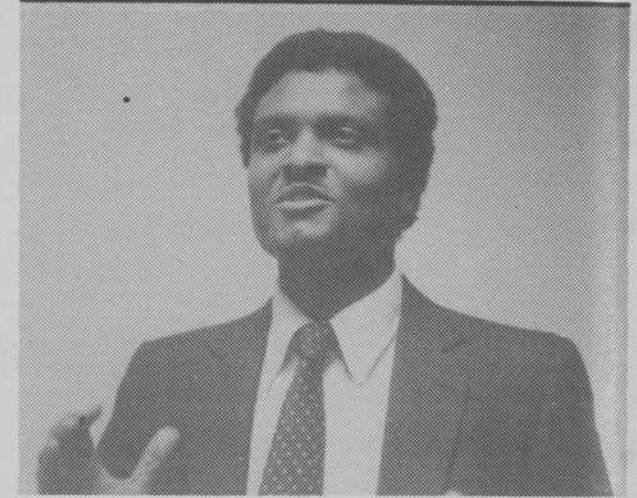
Freedom & the U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution was the legal thunderbolt that toppled the Jim Crow system in America. Yet, if it were not for a thorough knowledge of the rights conveyed by the Constitution, the NAACP's Thurgood Marshall would not have been in a position to argue the landmark Supreme Court school desegregation case in 1953. And without the resulting Supreme Court decision, we might very well be living in a segregated society today.

from infringing on any of these freedoms.

Now take a look at the world around you. Take a look at the Soviet Union, which so oppresses its people that it won't even let people LEAVE freely, or South Africa, which has racial oppression etched in official decree.

Our freedoms are precious, and as we approach the bicentennial of the Constitution, it is time to read it, to learn about the



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The power of the Constitution, the oldest and most successful document of its kind in the world, lies in UNDERSTANDING the restraints it places on government, and having the COURAGE to fight any attempts to decrease our freedom. The NAACP's victory is a textbook example of applying these principles.

The freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution are quite remarkable. First of all, despite all the problems we have in this country, we have the right to speak openly about them. In some countries people are machine-gunned or thrown into dank prison cells for such "arrogance". Yet we Americans can freely speak out against abuses by government agencies, or protest increased government funding for ineffective and damaging psychiatric practices. We can even openly criticize the President. We have the right to practice the religion of our choice. The Constitution limits and restrains the government

men who created it, and to discover how and why they wrote it as they did. I have found that the National Center for Constitutional Studies at P.O. Box 37110, Washington DC 20013 is an excellent source of information on the Constitution. Write or call them at 202-371-0008 for further information.

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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