

Point of View

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CHAZ NIGHT CLUB

Dear Editor:

My relatives and other people I know tell me this is a new day and age that we are living in. We now live in a country that has amended its constitution to protect the fact that all men are created equal. I was also led to believe that the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* is a legally bound, enforced, piece of legislation that states among other things that all persons are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of public accommodations. In Las Vegas, there is such a place that is telling me that all men are not created equal, I do not have any constitutional rights, and there is no such thing as the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. This place is Chaz Night Club.

This establishment would not allow my friends or me entrance simply because we were black. I came to the conclusion that such outright racism exists because of certain undeniable facts: At Chaz, there were only people of the black race or other minority groups standing in line waiting to enter while Chaz employees proceeded to let caucasians, who had not entered the club before, in; the Chaz employees told my friends and me that Chaz was a private club, but everyone knows that Chaz is in fact a public accommodation with only a membership into its VIP room and not a membership into the club itself, and Chaz has been warned before about its racist conduct.

Why then is this discrimination continuing? Why are my rights and the rights of other people being violated? Places like Chaz are sending me a message and I am receiving it loud and clear. A place such as Chaz is telling me that we still have a long way to go in the fight for civil rights. We may be losing the battle when it comes to places like Chaz, but the war is not over yet.

Tiffanee Johnson

**SUPPORT
OUR
ADVERTISERS**

THE TRAGEDY OF ETHIOPIA CONTINUES

by Norman Hill

In 1985, the Live Aid rock concert helped galvanize international public attention to the millions dying of hunger in famine-stricken Ethiopia. The concert and subsequent record sales raised \$140 million to help famine victims, and Western governments, the UN, and charitable organizations contributed millions more in supplies, transportation equipment and food. But today, less than three years later, between 2 and 3 million Ethiopians are again threatened with starvation.

The latest calamity has been caused by a combination of drought and ongoing insurrections in the provinces of Eritrea and Tigre, but inarguably the most important factor has been the misguided and destructive economic policies of the Marxist regime headed by Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Since seizing absolute power in 1977, Col. Mengistu has squelched political opposition through imprisonment and murder and mobilized the largest army in Africa (with Soviet assistance)

to battle rebels in Eritrea, who have been seeking autonomy for 26 years, and insurgents in Tigre seeking to overthrow his regime. At the height of the 1984-85 famine, the regime embarked on a brutal resettlement program to forcibly relocate some 1.8 million Ethiopians from the rebellious northern areas to the southwest, a policy which Western relief agencies have reported was engineered primarily to undermine the insurgencies

and which resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths from malnutrition and disease. To further exacerbate matters, the regime launched a "villagization" plan that relocated farmers from the countryside into villages. This attempt to collectivize agriculture along the Soviet model severely destabilized food production. Government policies such as high taxes, extremely low government-established grain prices, onerous political education requirements, and the imprisonment of farmers for minor

offenses also contributed to fueling the famine.

Today, Ethiopia again finds itself on the brink of disaster. The government has banned all foreign humanitarian agencies from sending food and medicine to the affected areas in the north. Government planes have reportedly bombed convoys carrying Western grain to Eritrea through the Sudan, and systematically uses its Soviet hardware to kill livestock and frustrate the attempts of civ-

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

ilians in rebel areas to feed themselves. For their part, the Eritrean rebels recently destroyed a 23-truck UN convoy carrying U.S.-donated wheat to government-controlled distribution centers in Tigre, claiming that the government was using food shipments to camouflage the movement of arms in rebel-held areas.

In Ethiopia's civil war, all sides use food distribution as a potent weapon with which to control territory and people. The government has

See HILL, Page 16

To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

We've had an abundance of special commissions and task forces examining minority deprivation in America, and all come up with the same conclusions—that we are nowhere near where we should be in terms of equality.

Twenty years ago, the Kerner Commission issued its warning that America was sliding into "two societies—separate and unequal."

In 1988, we've had re-examinations of the Kerner's Report's conclusions that reinforce the warning and say that its grim prophecy is coming true.

Most recently, a blue-chip national commission headed by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford and made up of political, busi-

ness and education leaders drawn from both parties and all parts of the ideological spectrum issued a new warning.

It said "America is moving



John E. Jacob

backward" in its efforts to secure equity for minority citizens.

That's a conclusion amply justified by the facts, and it ought to be taken very seriously by America's policymakers and by the elector-

ate. Certainly the number one issue in the presidential campaign has to be how to stop the backward movement and start moving forward again.

The full name of the commission is "The Commission on Minority Participation in

John E. Jacob is President of The National Urban League

Education and American Life." The report is titled "One-Third of a Nation," based on the demographic facts that a third of America's children are minorities.

And the report's conclusion: We've got to surpass the progress of the past and keep building until America is a nation in which minorities experience no disadvantage in key areas compared

THE NEW MORBIDITY: YOUNG BLACK MALES

by Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

The disturbing plight of economically disadvantaged young black males in America is a national problem which needs immediate attention. These young men are falling prey to a "new morbidity"—or the destruction of life opportunities through social and behavioral factors. These factors include high illiteracy rates and school drop outs; criminal and violent behavior; premature deaths; unemployment; and incarceration.

The "new morbidity" is most clearly manifested in the absence of the black father from the family. This not only creates a loss of role models for our youth, but it places increasing black families in poverty. Hence the following statistic: 57 percent of black families were headed by women in 1986, and children in female-headed black families are five times as likely to be on welfare as those in stable black families.

Blacks are dropping out of the mainstream society in alarming numbers: Note the following statistics:

—About 20 percent of black males drop out of high school according to the U.S.

Department of Education;

—The leading cause of death among black males ages 15 to 24 is homicide; and while the typical American has a 1 in 133 chance of being murdered, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that for black males the chance is 1 in 21;

—While black males account for about 6 percent of the U.S. population, they represent over 40 percent of the prison population;

—Black teenage unemployment is over 30%, or more than twice that of white youth.

Most of these statistics are not new to many of us, but it is helpful that they are being discussed. For example, these statistics were provided by the National Health Policy Forum which is conducting workshops and discussions entitled "Young Black Males in Jeopardy: Risk Factors and Intervention Strategies."

I think we have to address the problem from many angles. We must not abandon any person who is at risk — infant, pre-teen, young adult, or adult. But we must also make better attempts to reach children earlier in life with good programs such as Head Start, Chapter 1, and magnet schools. We must improve community environments to shelter our youth from drugs and crime. In short, we must take our children from the cradle and nurture them through their youth. The report of the Democratic Policy Commission puts our current lack of priorities with respect to preschool investment into perspective:

"Under our current system of education, we spend \$240 billion a year on children over the age of six and less than \$1 billion for children under six. Yet we know . . . children's predisposition to learn is largely formed in the first few years of life. We should not let this time go to waste."

The problem of poverty in America has been swept

See JACOB, Page 16

See HAWKINS, Page 4

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.