

Point of View

To Be Equal

Focusing On Civil Rights

by John E. Jacob

President Bush has on numerous occasions insisted that he will not turn his back on the cause of civil rights. He can make good on the pledge in a number of ways.

He can use the bully pulpit of the presidency to call the nation's attention to the unfinished business of civil rights.

Our national goal should be racial parity. The President should order his Cabinet to prepare a parity report card that annually lets us all know what progress has been made toward parity.



John E. Jacob

On civil rights issues, as opposed to the economic and social issues at the core of the thrust to parity, the Department of Justice needs to be far more supportive.

In recent years, the Department was busier trying to overturn settled civil rights law than it was in helping to enforce the laws against discrimination.

Another important area is in federal appointments, demonstrating assuring top Administration policy-making jobs go to minority candidates of proven competence, rather than to political ideologues who cater to the far right.

As judicial openings come up, the President must break with the recent practice of stocking the federal courts with judges indifferent to efforts to remedy discrimination.

Too many presidents have found that appointing judges from the far right wing of the

political spectrum is an easy, cheap way to curry favor with conservative legislators.

The result is a federal judiciary that has changed from being a staunch protector of measures to advance civil rights and minority opportunities into a judiciary bent on tearing away a body of civil rights law that took twenty years to build up.

A further boost to the cause of civil rights can come from a revamped and reconstituted Civil Rights Commission.

It was created back in the 1950s and served to educate and inform Americans about civil rights issues. The Commission's

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studies and hearings were important factors in developing a national consensus behind civil rights progress.

But the Reagan Administration destroyed the Commission by politicizing it. The Reagan appointees were prisoners of ideology and their personal and political antics threw the Commission into disrepute.

Today, many people say the Commission should be allowed to die a natural death when its authorization ends this Fall.

Others say there's no longer any need for a Civil Rights Commission, because the situation has changed and it no longer has a purpose to serve.

That alone is the best argument for reconstituting the Civil Rights Commission on a new basis, for there is a crying need for an effective government voice for racial progress.

Race relations in the U.S. have been a downward spiral for years, and people who

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Political Points

By
Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams



South African Investments: Another Nevada Shame

A few days ago Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 1984 was arrested for his participation in demonstration against elections that exclude Blacks. South African police arrested many protesters after firing tear gas and bullets on the crowd. They then went on a rage beating people of all ages, men women, and children at random throughout the city. For years and years this type of scenario or worse has been the typical day for South African blacks.

If you live in Nevada and happen to work for the state, any county, any city, either School District or the University System of Nevada, and are a member of the Public Employees Retirement System, then whether you know it or not, you are supporting South African Slavery, and the South African military. WHY? Because the Nevada Public Employees Retirement system currently has approximately \$31 million of our dollars invested with 24 companies doing business in South Africa. Also, the University of Nevada System which of course includes UNLV, UNR, and the state's Community Colleges are currently investing in seven companies doing the business in South Africa.

During the last session of the legislature I introduced AB928 which called for the State of Nevada to divest all state monies from South Africa. Ironically, my bill was heard on the anniversary of the Soweto Uprising. Shortly before 9:00 a.m. on June 16, 1976 young black school children of Soweto, South Africa held a protest march and rally to demand an end to discriminatory education and specifically be allowed to be taught in the language of their choice. These school children dressed in school uniforms, all under the age of 18, carried signs of peace. However, they were met by two army helicopters dropping tear gas, several hundred police dressed in camouflage uniforms, armed with automatic rifles and machine guns. By noon over 300 young children still dressed in uniform, lay dead, gunned down by South African military. By noon June 16, 1989, my bill AB928 was also dead.

Will Keating, Executive Director of Nevada Public Employees Retirement System and Edna Brighan, Endowment Director for the University System, both said they refused to divest because the stocks are "Blue Chip" and the money is too good. They clearly pointed out that dollars are worth more to Nevada than moral dignity. They fought and killed AB928.

However, I still understand that investing in South Africa is as much moral as it is economic issue. Black suffering is part of the economy from which the corporations are benefiting. Migratory labor, the deliberate starvation of people through forced resettlement. Nevada's investments make us a part of this.

Keating and many others argue that South African investments yield good returns, but I submit that dollars should never replace human dignity. 20 million people in South Africa must have the right to vote, own property and live in dignity with self government. That is the goal of The Liberation Movement in South Africa. It is not enough to have a few more jobs through Affirmative Action without dignity and self determination.

U.S. Corporations operating in South Africa are there to make maximum profits, pay minimum wages and have a big rate of return on their corporate investment. Clearly, American corporations benefit from apartheid and the racist

United Church of Christ

Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

BY Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Remember YUSEF Hawkins

Racism in the United States continues to kill African American. For some this is a difficult reality to understand given the increasing multi-racial character of American society. But for the vast majority of thirty million African Americans throughout the United States, the consequences of racism resulting in brutality and death are all too familiar.

The senseless murder of young 16-year old Yusef Hawkins in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, New York, is but the latest example of a society gone mad with racial hatred and bigotry. Yusef and three other African American youth were walking through the predominantly Italian-American neighborhood of Bensonhurst when thirty or more white youth attacked them with baseball bats and a gun. Yusef was fatally shot twice in the chest.

According to press accounts, Joseph Fama, 18-years old was the alleged trigger-man. Witnesses have confirmed that Fama in his rage shouted, "The hell with beating them up, forget the bats, I'm gonna shoot the nigger." Four shots were fired and two hit Yusef at close range. No society can afford to let this type of racist violence go unchallenged.

It is interesting to note that as of this writing, only five of the thirty white youth have

been apprehended by the police and there is a question of whether or not any will be charged with murder. Whenever there is a tragedy like this, it is important for the system of justice to act expeditiously and fairly.

There are some who now say, "Well, this was just a case of mistaken identity because the white youth were actually looking for a young black who they thought was dating a neighborhood white girl and Yusef and the others happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time." Anyone who would attempt to excuse or to justify what happened only contributes to the continuation of this type of racial violence.

The fact is that Joseph Fama and his companions were set to lunge and to attack the first African American young male who would dare to violate what they perceived as their territory and their superiority. The issue is not mistaken identity, the issue is the mortality of racism in America, in particular it is the mortality of the African American community as a consequence of racism.

African American church leaders in New York were right in their immediate demonstrations, marches, and protest. Mayor Koch

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apartheid regime profits from American presence in South Africa. We must break up this partnership. And Nevada is a part of this love affair.

Currently 18 states have passed laws restricting state agencies from conducting business with corporations operating in South Africa. Just last month Governor Bob Miller indicated to me that he has all intentions to divest Nevada dollars. Be sure to watch this one really close. I plan to take this issue before the October meeting of the State's Public Employees Retirement System Board which will be held in North Las Vegas. If you would like information on how you can help eliminate another Nevada shame, please contact me or Nevadans Against Apartheid at 362-0772.

FOCAL POINT: The investment of Nevada dollars in business firms and financial institutions doing business in South Africa is both fiscally imprudent, and inconsistent with moral and political values of the people of Nevada. Whether it's done through the legislature, initiated by the Governor or direct protest, we must remove this shame.

POINT OF VIEW: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" -Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking on South Africa.