

Point of View

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TO BE EQUAL

WORLD POVERTY A TICKING TIME BOMB

By John E. Jacob

While the world's attention is fixed on local wars raging in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, perhaps the biggest threat to world peace in the future will come from the tremendous gap between the rich and the poor.

That gap is very obvious to most urban Americans who find homelessness and hunger side-by-side with affluence.

But except when the television cameras cover a famine in a place like Somalia, we aren't aware of the extent of the worldwide poverty that leaves a billion people — a fifth of the world's population — in a constant

struggle with starvation.

It's been estimated that 22 million people a year die from hunger and malnutrition-related diseases; two-thirds are children.

Throughout the world, population growth far outstrips the growth in the capacity of poor nations to feed their people and create enough jobs for them.

The UN's Human Development Report 1993 says that 90 percent of the world's people "have no control over their lives," meaning that ethnic minorities, the poor, rural people, the disabled, and women are excluded from participating "fully in political, economic, social and cultural life."

The worldwide situation of women is particularly bleak. The Report says that many countries exclude them from education, from adequate health care, and from political and economic opportunity.

Throughout the Third World, women lag far behind men in literacy, education, and jobs. Health conditions are so bad that in poor countries maternal deaths during childbirth are fifteen times higher than in the industrial countries.

The Report ranks 173 countries in a Human Development Index, accounting for income, life expectancy, and educational attainment.

Twenty-two of the 25 lowest-ranked countries are in Africa.

That suggests the industrial nations of the world should live up to their worldwide responsibilities. With the end of the Cold War., they have the opportunity to revamp aid programs to focus on helping the poorest countries develop so they can feed their people and provide minimally decent living standards.

James Grant, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that for an additional \$25 billion a year, it would be possible, by the year 2,000, "to provide virtually every man, woman, and child on earth with adequate food,

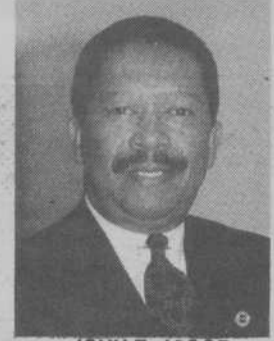
clean water, safe sanitation, primary health care, family planning, and basic education."

And most of the required resources would come from the developing nations themselves, by redirecting some of the waste and military expenditures they indulge in at the expense of their poor.

The U.S. should lead by bringing the world's nations together to pursue a program of international development, including forgiving much of the mountainous debt that sends scarce Third World resources back to the West in the form of interest payments.

The western industrial nations and Japan should make that their major objective in shaping a new world order since it's in their self-interest.

Developing the poor nations means creating exports that

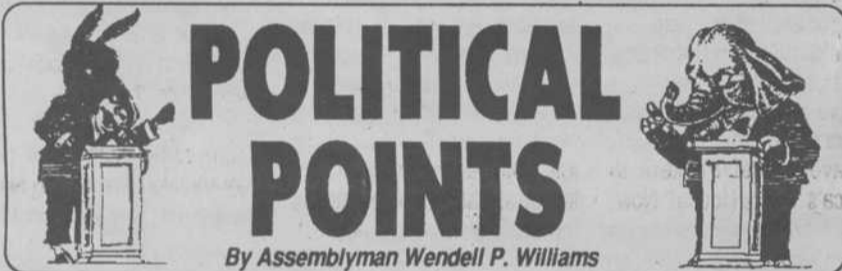


JOHN E. JACOB

would stimulate industrial countries' economies. And the small amounts involved would be far less than the cost of later peacekeeping expenditures to control poverty-related national rivalries and wars.

As former president Jimmy Carter said recently: "The greatest discrimination in the earth today, including our own country, is discrimination by the rich against the poor."

A worldwide development effort could help and that discrimination effort could help end that discrimination and put the world on a path to peace and wider prosperity.



HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

There has been much said and exposed on how the Las Vegas Clark County Library District has been ripping off taxpayers of millions of dollars. Not to mention how discriminating they have been with their employment, bidding and policy practices. However, it is important to know and understand how this monster was created in the first place.

Two major events occurred that has allowed the district to pad their pockets with tax dollars. One, in 1983 the district disregarded the law and secondly, in 1985 the library director misled the state legislature.

This is how it happened. In 1981 the Nevada State Legislature placed caps on property tax increases. After the caps were put into effect, local governments in Clark County came back to the legislature and complained that the limits were too restrictive and requested more flexibility. After much debate, a compromise was reached and a bill was drafted that enabled

local governments to raise property taxes. However, if they did, voters could sign petitions forcing a roll-back election. As a result local governments promptly boosted property tax rates, causing many roll-back petitions. And in every single case where the question made it to the ballot, the higher levels of taxes were strongly rejected by the voters.

In 1983, an Assembly Bill stated, "each local government shall, on or before June 7, 1983, publish in a newspaper of general circulation in its territory a notice which is at least one quarter page in size setting forth the rate of property tax." It also required the local government to advise citizens that they are raising tax rates and outline the procedure to roll it back if they desired to.

Under Nevada law, local governments include special districts which made the Las Vegas Clark County Library District subject to the provisions of AB449. But the library district never purchased the state required newspaper ad, so the heightened property tax rate was

never reduced. Therefore, the property tax hikes for libraries were clearly illegal.

Now let's take a look at your money. In fiscal year 1982-83 the library district collected \$290,945 in property taxes. The following year, after the illegal tax increase, that figure shot up to \$634,833 in property taxes, an increase of 118%. Plus, this increase was not a one-shot deal, compounding interest over the last ten years, costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

Believe it or not this money is just chump-change compared to what happened in 1985. At that time, the district was under county control and had to have its budget approved by the Clark County commission. During that year's session, the library district introduced Senate Bill 158 and declared it an "emergency measure" by the Committee Chairman Sen. Joe Neal, allowing it to kick off immediately. This allowed the district to transform into a consolidated district and becoming independently financed.

Unlike other government agencies, it's funds come directly



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

from taxes, mostly property and sales taxes embarked exclusively for libraries. This means that the library district never has to appear before an elected body to obtain its annual financing, thus allowing it to be unaccountable. Again, as a result, before the illegal property tax hike the district received \$668,432 and after the illegal tax hike they received \$2,438,576. In the area of sales tax, \$1,344,806 was received before the illegal hike and a whopping \$2,370,058 after the game was played. Actually, between 1987 to 1991, the rip-off jumped to over \$10,629,730, an increase of over 122%.

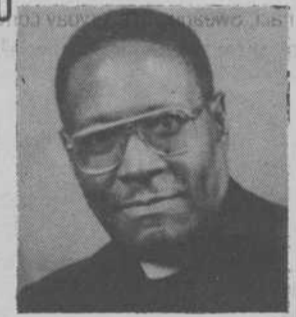
It's not strange that the district is still trying to hold on to their empire and rip-off tactics, it's their consistent behavior.

However, it's real strange that after over eight years, a legislator whose district is getting ripped-off the worst is still trying to protect Hunsburger's butt.

THE NAACP AND YOU



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



THIRTY YEARS LATER

During this period of unparalleled growth of Las Vegas, the fastest growing city in the United States, many changes have taken place socially, politically and economically speaking, but things have just about remained

the same in West Las Vegas with a few exceptions.

There was no Union Plaza Hotel on the corner of Main and Fremont Streets. That corner was occupied by the Greyhound (See NAACP and You, Page 4)

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