

PREFACE

The theme of this issue of the National Black Law Journal (NBLJ) is the impact of human rights issues on African people around the world. Our articles discuss issues arising in Haiti, South Africa, and the United States. Although the oppression in South Africa is much more severe than in the United States, the problems of Black people worldwide share a common thread. African people, and their descendants, continue to be exploited economically throughout the world. In each country that exploitation takes on different forms, but the impact is the same. Our people are underfed, undereducated, underemployed, under-sheltered and under the political control of others. Until Black people are full participants in the determination of their own destiny, the exploitation will continue.

As always, the goal of the NBLJ is to expose truth and to discuss ideas that are often ignored in traditional law journals. We are committed to providing a forum for the discussion of ideas and policies that will lead to improvements in the socio-political condition of Black people in the United States and internationally. This is indeed a lofty ideal. However, melting the glacier of social injustice has always required a multitude of small groups igniting the flames of truth wherever they can.

The article by A.G. Mariam on political refugees from Haiti lays bare the racist actions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) towards the Haitian refugees. Recent events have exposed the American public to the reality of the brutal Duvalier regime. Americans now understand that Duvalier was another U.S. supported totalitarian dictator who pillaged his country's treasures while his people starved.

The State Department understands these matters far better than the general American populous. Yet as the author explains, both the State Department and the INS ignored the political reality in Haiti, and continue to deny the Black refugees asylum in the United States.

If America continues to show such arrogant indifference to its neighbors to the South, allowing millions to live in poverty in Mexico, Latin America, and the Carribean, while we bask in affluence, then this country will ultimately face a problem much larger than denial of entrance to 40,000 Haitians because of their race.

Rebecca Hamilton's article on the interrelation of South African property laws with the system of apartheid is very informative. This article demonstrates the complexities of the legislation supporting apartheid, and suggests that substantive changes in property laws are the key to meaningful change for Blacks in South Africa. Given the complexities of the legislation, and the long history of deprivation, one can sense the frustration of attempting change through legislative means.

A striking contrast to statutory analysis is presented in the comment by M. Yusuf Cassim. Cassim contextualizes the horror of South African Apartheid by describing actual cases of torture perpetrated by the South African government under its Internal Security Act. The Comment underscores the illegitimacy of white minority rule in South Africa.

Consistent with NBLJ's human rights theme is Rhonda Copelon's article

on abortion clinic violence. Copelon draws the analogy between violence perpetrated against Blacks attempting to exercise their constitutional rights, and violence perpetrated against women attempting to exercise their constitutional right to have an abortion. The recent battle over Supreme Court nominees has brought the abortion issue once again to the forefront of American politics. Copelon points out the weaknesses in the Reagan Justice Department's arguments to justify their failure to pursue perpetrators of abortion clinic violence. She shows how the criminal conspiracy statutes have been interpreted to allow government prosecution of private individuals who violate the constitutional rights of others.

Finally, Andrew Haines provides a fitting close for this human rights issue, an analysis of why law schools should celebrate the contribution of Martin Luther King, Jr. to legal education. Haines points out that law schools should be critical social institutions and draws parallels to the critical social analysis set forth by King.

NBLJ hopes that these articles will inspire and motivate its readers to join the struggle to promote truth and work towards social justice whenever and wherever they can.

GEORGE H. BROWN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF