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## CROSSWINDS

### The Packwood proposal

From the National Newspaper Publishers Association

OVER THE past several years, there have been a number of attempts to develop legislation to create broadly based, fair and revenue-neutral tax reform for the American people. Most of these attempts have called for a "level playing field" for consumers and business alike.

Now the Senate Finance Committee is considering a measure that would have the exact opposite effect and would tip the playing field even more sharply than it is today.

Simply put, the proposal by Sen. Robert Packwood, R-Ore., the committee chairman, would not allow businesses to deduct from their income taxes the excise taxes they pay to the government. Currently, the federal government imposes excise taxes on things like gasoline, alcohol, cigarettes, telephone service, airline tickets and many others. The excise tax is usually included in the product's price, and consumers pay the tax when they buy the product. The maker of the product acts as a tax collector -- receiving the tax from consumers and handing it over to the federal treasury.

Packwood's proposal would tax businesses on the excise taxes they are merely collecting for the government. The senator says this is just an increase in corporate income taxes, and that it won't hurt consumers. But according to the Citizens for Tax Justice, a labor-sponsored research group, Packwood's proposal would increase excise taxes by 50 percent. And those increases would flow straight to the consumer in the form of higher prices.

Gasoline prices would rise by 4 or 5 cents per gallon. The tax on distilled spirits would jump from \$2.50 to \$3.50 a fifth. Cigarettes would cost between 9 and 20 cents more per pack. The 8-percent airline ticket tax would increase to about 12 percent, and phone service taxes would go from 3 to about 5 percent.

Other prices would be affected indirectly. Higher excise taxes on the trucking and other shipping industries would increase the prices of virtually everything that is transported on the U.S. highways -- from potatoes to col- or TVs.

Not only would Packwood's proposal increase the prices consumers pay for everyday goods; it would fall disproportionately hard on low-income families because excise taxes take a greater percentage of their income.

The Packwood proposal also ignores the effect of higher prices and distribution costs on business and jobs. When the price of a product increases dramatically, sales drop. When sales drop, businesses lay off employees, close plants, work shorter and fewer shifts and generally cut back to make ends meet. The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, a trade association, estimates that 23,000 jobs would be lost and up to 10,000 small businesses would close in that industry alone if the Packwood plan becomes law.

Under Packwood's proposal, the consumer loses. Business loses. And the government may not gain as much as it thinks. Higher taxes on products won't bring in much if the products are priced out of the reach of millions of consumers.

Tax reform is serious business. And Packwood's plan is seriously flawed. It should not become law.

The NNPA is the national organization of black-newspaper publishers.

## ABOUT LETTERS

The *Chronicle* welcomes letters from its readers, as well as columns. Letters should be as concise as possible and typed or printed legibly. They also should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns should follow the same guidelines and will be published if we feel they are of interest to our general readership.

We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and grammar.

Submit your letters and columns to *Chronicle* Mailbag, P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.



## Reagan's failing South Africa policy

FROM THE GRASSROOTS  
By DR. MANNING MARABLE

HAMILTON, N.Y. -- For five years, the Reagan administration has followed a policy of "constructive engagement" with the South African government. No divestments from the apartheid state, Reagan has pleaded, because American corporations somehow exert a positive influence on the racist state's economic system. No sanctions, the president has insisted, because quiet persuasion is more effective than direct confrontation.

Now the world has seen in grim detail the logical consequences of "constructive engagement." South Africa's recent military commando air and ground raids against Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia were denounced throughout the world. The Reagan administration was probably not upset about the loss of Africans' lives -- it was simply embarrassed that its covert ally in Pretoria had acted too rashly and in such an overtly criminal manner.

Consequently, Reagan promptly ordered the expulsion of South Africa's senior military attache from the United States. But the U.S. government simultaneously vetoed efforts at the United Nations to carry out effective sanctions against the apartheid regime.

South Africa also embarrassed Reagan when it proudly justified its military maneuvers by pointing to the American bombing of Libya. We have only done what you Americans did in Africa,

South African President P.W. Botha claims.

However, this recent example of armed, state-directed terrorism has backfired. Even inside the apartheid system, some influential whites are attempting to divorce themselves from their government's desperate actions. The Johannesburg *Star* termed the raids "irresponsible" and "shortsighted." South Africa's *Business Day* journal warned that the actions could "weaken the economy, delay the long-awaited revival of business and aggravate employment." Since September 1984, about 1,600 people have been killed in political violence, and growing numbers of white leaders in the private sector are recognizing finally that the only resolution to their crisis is open, political negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC), the legitimate representative of oppressed blacks.

The raids have nearly destroyed the Commonwealth's peace efforts in the region. A team of negotiators was in Capetown when the attacks occurred. Reportedly, the ANC had been urged to use its influence to reduce political demonstrations and strikes. In return, the apartheid regime was to legalize the ANC and to release imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

But in the wake of these assaults, the ANC has called for a

massive, national strike on June 16. Oliver Tambo, the highest-ranking leader of the ANC in exile, has declared: "Let every university and school be emptied of its youth. Let every mine, factory, farm and white home be without labor. Let every shop close its doors. Let every community strike a blow for freedom."

What obligations do we Americans have in this campaign for democracy and black freedom in South Africa? We must organize solidarity marches, demonstrations and vigils on June 16, speaking out against the criminality and immorality of apartheid. Second, these demonstrations should support efforts by more than 20 congressional Republicans and Democrats to levy more effective sanctions against South Africa. The proposed legislation would halt any new U.S. investment and ban bank loans to South African businesses. It would halt U.S. firms from engaging in construction, energy-related or engineering contracts with apartheid corporations.

And the bill also would ban the importation of South African steel, uranium and coal into the United States.

Finally, we must again demand the immediate release of Nelson Mandela. Please see page A13

## Blackness: Don't bother me; I can cope

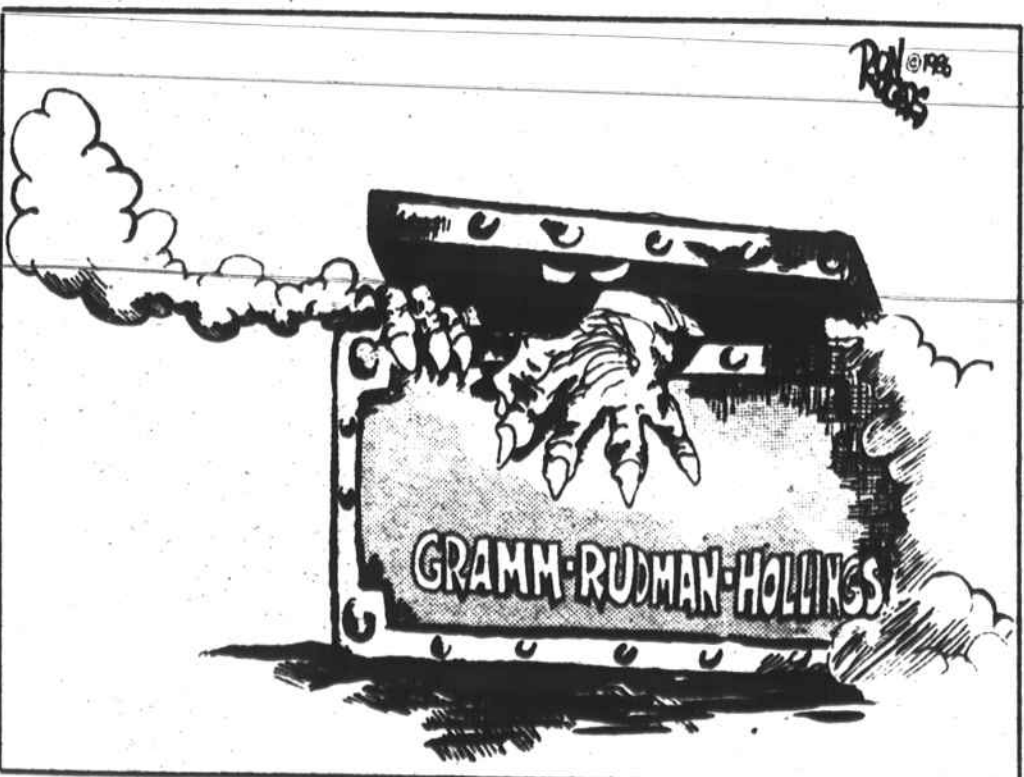
TONY BROWN  
Syndicated Columnist

order to get this special something, we must get near it, the logic says.

Therefore, if the opportunity arises, live as near whites as

make better neighbors (good laws or cordial friends), provide instruction that makes blacks more efficient in reading, writing and arithmetic, share business opportunities that make blacks richer or make better mates.

No, the expectations of whites and the disadvantages of being



possible, avoid as many blacks in school settings as the law will allow, work in white businesses and avoid black ones and, whenever possible, "marry up" into the so-called white race.

These perceived "improvements" are not based on facts demonstrating that whites

black are internalized in the psyche. They exist nowhere in fact.

To recognize your equality with white, brown and red people is to recognize your humanness as a black person. To do otherwise -- to believe that your potential as a black person is limited -- is to believe that your potential as a black person is limited. Please see page A5

## CHILDWATCH

### Striking terror in young hearts

By MARIAN W. EDELMAN  
Syndicated Columnist

WASHINGTON -- At 3 a.m. on Oct. 10, 1985, in a black township near the South African City of Port Elizabeth, the police came for Lulamile Matoto.

According to a recent report from Amnesty International, they dragged Matoto, a 17-year-old black high school student, from his bed and threw him to the ground, the youth alleges. Without allowing the boy, who is crippled by polio, to fetch his crutches, they forced him to walk unaided and then crawl to a police van.

In the van, they beat him with a stick.

The next day, while holding him at gunpoint, they asked him to identify suspects at the local police station. They released Matoto a week later. He is not believed to have been charged with any offense.

On Aug. 27, 1985, Amnesty International reports, the police took Eugene Dlamini, age 16. They drove him to the police station, where they suffocated, kicked and punched him until he lost consciousness, he says. Later, they again assaulted him, blindfolded him, poured water over him and gave him electric shocks until he once again lost consciousness.

On Oct. 15, they released the boy from prison, announcing that he would later be tried. The charge: public violence.

On Sept. 12, 1985, says Amnesty International, the police took Kenneth Fihla. The 18-year-old boy was boarding a bus to attend a funeral when they rounded him up, along with the rest of the group. According to reports from fellow detainees, the police beat him and gave him electric shocks.

As of February 1986, Fihla was still in detention.

These are not isolated cases. Since July 1985, the South African police have detained more than 2,000 children under 16 without trial, according to "South Africa: Imprisonment and Ill-Treatment of Children and Young People," a report published in February 1986 by Amnesty International. These children often are assaulted, tortured, held for long periods of time and denied any contact with their parents, the report says.

Speaking of his time spent in detention several years ago, South African attorney Nicholas Haysom has said that "one of the more awful memories I have is of children screaming through the night."

Arrest is not the only terror facing the black children of South Africa. In the recent years of unrest, South African police and army units have killed more than 1,100 people, according to Amnesty International. The organization believes that a large proportion of the blacks shot down by government units developed in the townships have been children.

In the midst of a wave of concern about terrorism, the South African government continues its business as usual: terror directed against its black population, including children.

We can strike a blow against terrorism by trying to influence American governmental policy towards South Africa, and by supporting the leadership of TransAfrica. For more information, contact TransAfrica at 545 Eighth Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for youth.