

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## White America ignores African refugees

The most desperate and most ignored refugees in the world are the Somali and Oromo people who are moving from Ethiopia into Somali. Although the U.S. government is concerned about revolutionary socialist movements in the horn of Africa, and is providing military assistance against the Peoples Republic of Ethiopia; the plight of the people is being largely ignored.

The UN High Commission for Refugees recognizes that Somalia has the largest refugee camp population in the world. On February 1st, there were approximately 1.5 million refugees -- about 1/2 million in camps and the rest absorbed into the countryside. Sixty percent are children, with 150,000 under six years. Thirty percent are women. An estimated 1,000 to 2,000 arrive each day.

For a nation whose estimated per capita income is about \$70 per year, the burden is

devastating. The refugee population now makes up one-third of the nation's 3.7 million people.

For centuries the Somalis have eked out a subsistence in the inhospitable desert. The newcomers are a burden to limited resources but, more important, they threaten an ecological imbalance that will cause drought and famine.

The immediate need is for food, shelter, clothing and medical supplies. The Somali government has asked the U.S. government for help, but there has been no substantial response. Despite their numbers and the political complexities, African refugees have never received much attention. There is no sense of urgency and little publicity.

While the American people argue about the Boat People and other refugees from Southwest Asia, and while our government welcomes them by the thousands, the Black refugees of Africa and Haiti are forgotten.



## Cable TV: Now that's entertainment

by N. Fungai Kumbula

How many times have you found yourself flipping from one TV channel to the next looking for something worthwhile to watch only to find each as bad as the next? Then, you might turn to the radio, but there again only to meet with no better luck. Doesn't it make you wish, not for the first time, that you could watch what you wanted to watch or listen to what you fancy instead of making do with what's offered?

The advent of cable television to this starved Portland market is about to change all that. Instead of five channels we have now, there would then be anywhere from Thirty-five to a hundred or more channels to choose from. So vast is the potential that no one can, at this moment, say with certainty, what the maximum number of channels will be. Just by flipping the dial, you can choose from local, national or international news, educational classes, drama, art, first run movies, sporting events from around the corner or around the world or a program about your own neighborhood.

For our purposes, probably the best feature of cable television is community cablecasting. This is when one can watch local events. Just imagine: whole programs devoted to such community events as African Liberation Day, Women's Day, African and Caribbean countries, independence celebrations, Kwanzaa, Neighborfair, Rose Parade, Black Educational Center activities, community workshops of all kinds and anything else that might be going on in our neighborhood.

Currently there are eight companies vying for the Portland franchise east of the river. Liberty Cable Co. already operates on the westside. The Portland City Council will be meeting before long to decide which of the eight applicants will be awarded the franchise. It is in the interest of the Black community to examine each of these applicants and see who offers us the best deal. Minority input is very important

and so anyone with any suggestions should contact the *Portland Observer* and leave name and suggestion.

I have been doing some checking of my own and so far have been most impressed by a company called Cablesystems Pacific, Inc. The local company is 50-50 Canadian and American owned. It has been operating in Canada for more than twenty years. Cablesystems got into community cablecasting more than ten years ago and, if some of the things they have done in Toronto, Canada, can be duplicated here, Portland will never be the same again.

In Portland, a non-profit organization called Portland Community Cable Information Corporation (PCCIC), that will manage the public and community access channels will be formed. These are the channels, of which there will be five, that will feature community programs. One will be on a "first come, first served" basis and the community can borrow the cable equipment from whatever company eventually wins the Portland franchise. The idea is that people from the community who want to film a particular program so it can be shown on the community channels will be able to do so simply by contacting PCCIC and the cable company.

This is where Cablesystems differs markedly from other companies. While each cable company will have to provide its TV equipment to community groups, Cablesystems goes further by providing the technical assistance and showing the people how to improve the quality of the programs they produce. In addition, Cablesystems would have a local originating channel to cater to local talent. Instead of the two minutes or less that we get on the commercial networks once in a blue moon, we will be able to have whole programs devoted to community events. Better yet, these will be programs done by Black people for Black people. For once we will have control over the kind of news about us that

reaches the airwaves.

Quality Black entertainment is woefully lacking in the "City of Roses." Cable TV would change all that. There is a company called Black Entertainment Television, BET, that can provide to cable companies such films as "Scott Joplin" starring Billy Dee Williams, "Across 110th Street," with Yaphet Kotto, "Book of Numbers," starring Raymond St. Jacques and "Emperor Jones," with Paul Robeson, just to name a few. The same company can also supply "The Blues According to Lighting Hopkins," "Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway," "The Cry of Jazz," and "Billy Paul and The Staple Singers" for example. I bet, none of these movies or musical classics have ever even made it to Portland yet. With cable TV, they will be just a flick of a dial away.

Once hooked up, cable TV can also be used to contact such important emergency numbers as the doctors, police, ambulance or fire department. The PCCIC has also mandated that one of the access channels be reserved for the deaf. You can also vote, pay bills, do your shopping or "attend" classes, say at PSU.

Not only will the arrival of cable TV in Portland, in the eyes of Cablesystems, improve the quality of news and sport coverage, showcase community happenings and events, expand and improve the quality of Black entertainment, provide greater and more direct access to important emergency numbers, offer unique new opportunities to minorities in this unique new field, but will also put Blacks in charge of programming about Blacks. The setting of the cable system will have to comply with all city codes for equal opportunity as well as the hiring of the staff to run the system once it's in place. The deadline for submission of the applications is April 30th so, rush in those suggestions to the *Portland Observer*.

Cable TV can provide that rarest of opportunities: "programming for Blacks, with Blacks, by Blacks."



## Trade and the Black worker

By Norman Hill, President  
A. Phillip Randolph Institute

Once again the unemployment rate among Black workers has reached the 12% mark, nearly double the overall rate. And once again, economists have failed to explain the economic depression in the Black community. So we ask: Where have all the jobs gone? Why do skilled and well-educated Black workers, especially in urban areas, face so many workless and payless days?

Part of the answer can be found in the general economic stagnation that has plagued the United States for nearly a decade. But there is also another explanation, an explanation which few economists, business leaders and politicians are willing to deal with. And that is the job-destroying role of international economic policies, which allow foreign nations to flood American markets with imports.

This is not to say that most unemployed Black people would suddenly find jobs if all imports were banned. They most certainly would not. But a substantial body of evidence points to a direct linkage between imports and the loss of a significant number of Black jobs.

As an example, consider recent

developments in the auto industry. At the present time, nearly 200,000 workers, many of them Black, are out of work because of the slackening demand for American-made cars. While the lower demand is partially related to the poor mileage ratings of most U.S. automobiles, and the general downturn in the economy, it is also linked to the influx of cheap, fuel-efficient cars built in Japan and Germany. Last month, for instance, Americans bought 177,500 Japanese cars, an increase of 86% over January, 1979. And 22% of all cars now purchased in the United States come from Japan.

Other industries have also lost jobs because of imports. A study published by the National Commission on Manpower shows that 200,000 apparel jobs disappeared during the period 1964-75. At the same time, over 100,000 jobs were lost in the radio and TV industry. And nearly 100,000 jobs in the fur-nance industry were eliminated. Moreover, the study concluded that import-related job losses were most prevalent among "lower wage, somewhat-less-unionized employees who were more often minorities, women, older workers, less formally educated, and/or part-time employees." In short, the poorest and

most defenseless people are once again called on to make the greatest sacrifices in the name of an abstraction called "free trade."

To make matters worse, the enormous outflow of American capital into low-wage Third World countries also contributes to the erosion of jobs. Whereas in 1950, U.S. corporate investment in foreign countries was \$11.8 billion, the amount had grown to a staggering \$118.6 billion by 1974. And the impact of this on jobs is clear: A study completed by a group of Cornell economists for the State Department concluded that 1.06 million jobs were eliminated in the domestic economy. Without a doubt, many of these jobs would have been held by Black workers especially women and young people.

If unemployment among Blacks is to be lowered to a manageable level, then Black people, their organizations and their political allies must begin not to focus on international economic policy as a key issue in the 1980 presidential elections. Unfortunately, none of the candidates—Democratic and Republican—has demonstrated much concern with the problem. But as the campaign progresses, Black people must raise the issue; they must raise it forcefully, and they must insist on a response.



## Notes from City Hall

By Charles Jordan  
Commissioner of Public Safety

A change in the City's 77-year old Civil Service System has finally come; however, the real work lies ahead of us.

At its April 4 meeting, the Portland Civil Service Board unanimously approved the proposed Affirmative Action Certification Plan to assist in hiring minorities and women for entry level positions in city jobs. What this action does is provide an OPPORTUNITY; it is not a gift. That opportunity, as you know, carries great responsibility. Not only must we come prepared for the tasks at hand but we owe it to ourselves to perform in such a manner that it will pave the way for others to follow.

The opportunities are there but for many of us, it will require some "rethinking" in terms of jobs and careers. Take law enforcement, for

instance. It is a relatively new field which traditionally, has not been cultivated as a career for minorities and women in the home, educational institutions, schools or neighborhood. The reasons are many; however, changes are taking place and we should begin thinking about it seriously as a profession. We need to explore other options, career options where our presence does and can make a difference.

Many issues were raised at the Civil Service Board meeting, some of which were age-old arguments without validity or substance. However, one which seemed to repeat itself was the fear that if the door was opened, those for whom the door was opened would not carry their fair share of the load. Be that as it may, anyone who knows me knows that I will not hold hands. For, as hard as I work to make opportunities possible for those who are qualified and who demonstrate that they can stand alone on their own

merits, abilities and potential, they also know that I would not hesitate to remove anyone from amongst my ranks who does not, and will not, perform. My employees have a responsibility not only to themselves but to me and the public as well, who deserves the best.

Notwithstanding those concerns, overcoming barriers, hard work and perseverance are no strangers to us. We have grown to accept them as part of our lives due to the nature of our society in which we live. And, our survival has depended on it. It has made the difference between failure and success. However, for us to continue to progress, we are going to need to start working on attitudinal changes with respect to career options available to us.

"We cannot and should not forget the past but we must not dwell on backward glances and trip over some present opportunities."

## Fauntroy

(Continued from P 1 col 5)  
approximately 1:00 this Saturday, April 12.

At 2:15 this Saturday, Congressman Fauntroy will speak to the Oregon Education Association's political endorsement convention at the Wilsonville Holiday Inn.

From 5:00 until 6:45, the Congressman will be the guest of honor at a reception at the home of State Representative Gretchen Kafoury, 1508 NE Stanton. Donation for the reception is \$10.00.

At 7:00 Congressman Fauntroy will speak on Senator Kennedy and his campaign at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, NE 1st and Schuyler. Admission is free.

If time permits, the Congressman will attend a champagne sip for Commissioner Charles Jordan Saturday evening at the Galleria.

Congress Fauntroy will depart Portland for Washington, D.C. Saturday night. For more information call Ed Leek, 239-0505 or 249-8179.

## NOMINEES WANTED

Nominees requested for members to Portland's Citizen Economic Development Advisory Committee to the Mayor. Monthly meetings to discuss City policies and programs on job, income, business, neighborhood and downtown development issues. Two year terms. Women, minorities encouraged. Submit names by May 1, 1980 to:

## BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

620 S. W. Fifth Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97204

For more information call Ann Witsil (248-4293).



ALFRED L. HENDERSON  
Editor/Publisher

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