

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## A minority point of view

In recent years a heated debate has taken place between the underdeveloped nations and the developed nations over news and information and Third World demand for a "new information order."

The Third World, with two-thirds of the world's population, charges that the news is dominated by four western news agencies: Associated Press and United Press International of the U.S., the British Reuters and Agence France - Presse. Ninety-five percent of the international news is distributed through these four companies.

Third World critics say western news pours into their countries praising the industrial world and influencing their people to think like westerners. However, the news that flows out is often highly biased, full of stereotypes, and limited to wars and disasters. The news read within the Third World comes from the same sources so promotes a bad self-image and deprives the people of sources of useful information.

Hampering the Third World from developing its own news and information sources is their poverty. Although the Third World have Seventy percent of the world's population and thirty percent of its land area, it has only twenty-three percent of its income. Developing countries still have only 12.6 percent of the television sets and little or no access to satellites.

Within the U.S., much of the same problem exists. News of the Black and minority com-

munities is distributed in large part by the networks and the major newspapers. Minority media do not have access to the capital required to reach all citizens.

The news that reaches the white community about Blacks is often incomplete, biased, and restricted to sensationalism. It would be possible to enjoy the major media and not realize that Blacks live in Portland were it not for occasional crisis situations over the police or the schools that bring reporters to the neighborhood.

Seldom do Blacks see their friends and relatives in the media - in the "public interest stories" and "feature stories." The only time Blacks are asked to appear on panels and talk shows are to discuss civil rights and Black issues - never to discuss the budget, business, health, etc. And those who do - through the course of events - find themselves on the tube are so few that they are seen as "leaders" or "opportunists." Reporters lack of knowledge of "sources" restricts the viewpoints and expressions reflected.

There are many causes: lack of knowledge by news reporters and editors; cultural differences; lack of knowledge of "sources" and limited "sources."

The lack of general reporting, and the frequent biases in the reporting that does occur, has a detrimental effect. It denies Black citizens access to news about their own community; it slants the news that is available; it has a constricting affect on the access to information.

## Stopping the oil flow

The world-wide inflation and depression has two admitted causes - the billions spent on the arms race and the high cost of oil.

The cost of oil is maintained through shortages - fantasized or real. At the present time the high cost to the consumer has caused an oil glut. As the *Wall Street Journal* says, "If there's one thing the big oil companies don't need these days, it's more oil." But rather than reduce the price of oil products, which would aid the world economy, the oil companies practice all kinds of subterfuge.

The oil corporations cannot just refuse to buy oil; it would look bad to the citizens back home who still believe there is a shortage, and besides, they are bound by contracts. So they have found a number of ways to get out of their commitments without jeopardizing long term supply arrangements or profits.

Occidental Petroleum Corporation, which buys from Libya, arranged to work on its facilities in Libya, which temporarily slows output. Some oil companies hold up shipments by saying tankers are disabled or by delaying shipments. Exxon is telling its tankers to move slowly, keeping them at sea for extra weeks. Gulf Oil is asking Nigera to sell at a lower price.

The oil companies still have too much gas on hand, but rather than lower the price they are encouraging sales.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the voice of big business, the danger signs to look for are:

- Although ads discuss quality of products, especially of unleaded gasoline, there is little difference among brands.

- Low prices for regular leaded gas are advertised but once the driver pulls up, he sees unleaded gas prices are not reduced. Stations are being told to sell regular for less and to make up for it on unleaded.

- There is consideration of giving discounts with cash. The three cents saved by cash purchasers would be added to the cost for credit card users.



## A little bit of Africa

By Fungai Kumbula



Stepping into the room, one is greeted by all kinds of aromas of what must be very tasty dishes; cuisine from all over the African continent. The sight, of course, is one to assault all taste buds however hardy. Here and there one catches snatches of conversations in a dozen-odd languages. All over the place are all these people dressed in all the colours of the rainbow; dashikis and floor length gowns with the fanciest designs and patterns one has seen in many a long year.

Just in time, the announcer-cum-master-of-ceremonies come on stage to pronounce the opening of African Cultural Night 1981. For a fleeting second, one expects him to make the announcement in some ancient and long revered African tongue but, peace, on this night at least, the medium of communication is still English (or, is it American?). With that, the spell is broken and we are back in PO.

This, as you might have guessed by now, is a journey into the future but the not-so-distant future because by the time you read this, this fantasy will be only a matter of hours away. So, let us come back to the present and speak in ordinary everyday lingo: The place: Portland State University's Smith Memorial Centre Ballroom (on the third floor). Date: May 29, 1981; Time: 7:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.; Event:

African Cultural Night.

Last year's Cultural Night was a tremendous success and from that we learned a lot of things the most important of which was the number of friends and supporters we have in the community. We are hoping, therefore, that all those "old" friends will return this year and bring their "new" friends, cousins, uncles, neighbours, foes, associates, acquaintances and whoever else they can persuade, cajole, sweettalk, implore, threaten, "Whitemail" (do they call it "blackmail" in America?) or whatever it takes to bring them all along but bring them along all the same.

The refugees in the Horn of Africa will be the focus of the evening: there are some 2 million of them in Somalia alone and an additional 3 million in Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan and Djibouti. The proceeds from the sale of the tickets will go toward aiding these brothers and sisters (90 percent of them women and children) of ours. Not only does your \$3.00 admission allow you to sample all kinds of African cuisine, meet all sorts of Africans, watch various plays from all across the continent, listen to some heavy speakers discuss Africa today, partake of African music and dance, fashion show, artifacts, drumming, you will also have the satisfaction of knowing that your

money will go towards a very worthy cause. We all know how Africa's refugees have been neglected because they are not as politically exploitable as refugees from other regions of the world, right?

The speakers slated, Professor Babu from San Francisco State University and former Tanzania Minister of Economic Planning and Development is one of Africa's leading scholars who has written a number of books. He also currently writes a column for *The New African* published monthly in London. Backing him up will be Professor Melaku Lakew from Ethiopia and currently teaching Third World Economics at Portland State University. In the brief period of time that Professor Lakew has been at PSU, he has made his presence felt by his steadfast, unwavering dedication to the development and uplifting of the African continent as a whole.

These two eloquent African scholars are well worth the price of admission many times over the fact they will more than feed your mind while the rest of us feed your eyes, tummy, ears and funny-bone.

So, see you Friday, May 29 at 7:00 p.m., at Portland State University's Smith Center Ballroom, so we can bring back to you, a little bit of Africa.

## Letters to the Editor

### Black people support Jordan

REF: To article in *Oregonian*, Tuesday, May 19, 1981 Title: "Ivancie Won't Request Pardon from Atiyeh." Reporter: Linda Williams.

Dear Mayor:

You are quoted in the article as having stated, "Ivancie said Monday that he does not believe that removal of the Police Bureau from Jordan would lead to any special dissatisfaction among Portland's Blacks."

The substance of this statement indicates that you are going to use the disagreement in the Black community as a reason for removing Jordan. It seems to me that this reasoning implies that all members of the Black community ought to agree 100% and that no member is intelligent enough to make an individual decision. This would mean

that the Black community is the most unique community in the city. They all march together, think together, and can not think alone.

I suppose that you agree with Eldridge Cleaver's statement, that the damage of slavery stole from Black people the ability to possess individually and know who they are, are.

Jordan was never the issue, the inaction of a crime by officers of the law was always the issue. Removal of Jordan therefore is apart from the issue. However it is impossible to separate issues from personalities. In order to move on an issue it must include personalities.

I know it is possible to find Black citizens who will agree with what ever move you make concerning Jordan. However there are Blacks

who do not approve or subscribe to the "divide and conquer" system that made it impossible for Blacks to make progress. The divide and conquer approach is recognized and therefore obsolete and not politically expedient.

Several weeks ago during the heated discussion on the opossum incident the letter signed by some 13 to 18 persons in the community expressed their stand concerning the incident and Jordan. In the event you do not have the letter we can send you another copy.

I sincerely regret that you underestimate the intelligence of the Black community without consideration of its many citizens.

Sincerely yours,  
John H. Jackson

### Petitions support 'Possum' discipline

Dear Mayor Frank Ivancie:

A number of citizens from neighborhoods and churches in North and Northeast Portland have been very concerned about the issues that have arisen out of the opossum incident and subsequent actions that have taken place in Portland since the incident became public.

First of all, we are interested in communicating our support of the disciplinary actions taken by Commissioner Jordan. We believe that he acted very appropriately in his role as Commissioner of Public Safety. Our community has been concerned about the attitudes and actions of some police officers working in our area.

Over the years the citizens have reported poor treatment, ranging from physical harassment to racial slurs to generally disrespectful comments made at the scene of arrests and also made to victims of

crime. The opossum incident is not seen by us as an isolated issue. It is symbolic of a much deeper problem in terms of the quality and level of service a community can expect from the Portland Police Bureau.

We are united, Blacks and whites, poor and middle class, in believing that the disciplinary action was absolutely necessary. We are also hearing from citizens throughout Portland who believe that the opossum incident reflects racist attitudes or at least racial insensitivity. Those same citizens throughout Portland also have concerns about police attitudes in their own neighborhoods.

Clearly, all our concerns reflect the need for even more long-range review of Portland Police Bureau policies in the areas of internal affairs and training. We believe that many Portland citizens and specifically, Northeast residents are

willing to go on public record as supporting Commissioner Jordan and we are asking the Mayor and City Council members to also take a supportive position. We hope that positive changes will continue so that police and community can work together in more effective ways. It would be a serious mistake to have the process turn into a political football game.

Enclosed are petitions gathered by community volunteers. Originally we had thought that we would send our petitions expressing support to Commissioner Jordan. As we were in the process of completing the first petition, some of the signers suggested we should address our comments to the Mayor and other Council members. Therefore, we re-wrote the subsequent petitions in response to that suggestion.

Sincerely,  
James Loving and Committee



Bruce Broussard  
Editor/Publisher

### Portland Observer

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The *Portland Observer* is a champion of justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social evils; a thorough analyst and critic of discriminatory practices and policies; a sentinel to warn of impending and existing racist trends and practices; and a defender against persecution and oppression.

The real problems of the minority population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in the context of their exploitation and manipulation by the colonial nations, including the United States, and their relationship to this nation's historical treatment of its Black population.

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