



Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

The Reagan administration has often assailed the virtues of affirmative action policy. President Reagan is an avowed enemy of the policy and the Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, William Bradford Reynolds, has termed the policy a "racial spoils system."

I find this a disturbing attitude, made all the more distressing in light of a report recently completed by the Labor Department which shows some of affirmative action's positive results. Unfortunately, many have not heard about this report. It has not been published, and some congressional

sources believe that the administration is trying to suppress its publication.

A study of the report, obtained by the *Washington Post*, provides impressive figures on the effectiveness of affirmative action and therefore makes a convincing case for "staying the course" on such hiring policies.

The study reviewed hiring practices at some 77,000 businesses between 1974 and 1980. Here are some of the conclusions:

- Minority employment grew by 20.1 percent in businesses with affirmative action hiring requirements, but by only 12.3 percent at compa-

nies with no special hiring requirements.

- In businesses with affirmative action programs, the number of black managers grew by 96 percent and women managers by 73 percent.

- The number of women employed by businesses with affirmative action programs grew by 15.2 percent compared to only 2.2 percent at companies without such programs.

Affirmative action has been a boon to the minority worker. It has increased the demand for minority workers and has contributed to raising their earnings and job status.

It took a trip to Mississippi for Assistant Attorney General Rey-

nolds to believe stories of electoral abuse that had long been reported. It took an 8-1 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court to convince the administration that tax breaks for schools which practiced blatant racial discrimination were illegal. I hope that the new Labor Department report will do the trick in this case and help convince the administration of the value of affirmative action.

If not, the administration will be showing its unwillingness to support policies which lead to the progressive integration of the workplace, and hence of our society as a whole.

Dellums fights for military budget cuts

Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Cal.) continued his effort to reduce the U.S. military budget by introducing an amendment last week that would remove the Pershing II missiles from the budget.

In December of 1979 the U.S. agreed with NATO to deploy Pershing II missiles in the NATO nations of Western Europe if no progress was made in negotiations with the Soviet Union.

The Carter plan for the Pershing II was to use it as a bargaining chip in negotiations. The Reagan administration, however, is intent on actually deploying the missiles.

Dellums based his opposition to funding and deployment of the Pershing II's on four premises:

1) There is no military rationale for deploying the missiles. Their targets can be hit by existing NATO missiles and missiles owned by the French and the British.

2) It is too dangerous. "To deploy

is to create a permanent Cuban missile crisis in Europe." The Pershing II is the fastest and most accurate missile designed. If fired it would reach its target in from 6 to 8 minutes, not long enough to provide time to assess a situation. Currently it takes 25 to 40 minutes for a missile to go from the U.S. to the Soviet Union or vice versa. Although there have been several computer errors that indicated Soviet missiles had been fired, the time lapse provided time to discover the error. With missiles only 8 minutes away from control silos of the USSR, the USSR would have to use "launch on warning" and have no time to reconsider.

"This is a minuscule amount of time to talk about a nuclear holocaust," Dellums said. "It is incredibly dangerous. My voice is crying out to you for millions of people in this country and on this planet who do not want to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust."

3) The Pershing II would undermine the NATO alliance. At the time West Germany asked for the decision on the Pershing II, the U.S. was ready to ratify SALT II and negotiate SALT III. It was commonly thought that there was a degree of stability. SALT II was not ratified and, "there is great calamity in the world." The situation is different and the U.S., "needs to re-think the incredible desire to deploy." NATO never intended that the Pershing II be deployed, but hoped its threat would bring a Soviet reduction. "The USSR did say they would reduce their SS20's, but President Reagan clung to the zero-zero option and turned down the USSR effort to reduce the SS20 and not to deploy the 21, 22 and 23."

NATO has always included the missiles of France and Britain in the count, although Reagan attempts to ignore them. There must be an agreement on the ratio between

NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

The USSR sees U.S. escalation as requiring a reaction. Deployment of the Pershing II will force the USSR to increase its missiles and that will split NATO.

4) The SS20 does not give any new capacity to the USSR. The negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR need more time. The U.S. must count French and British missiles and accept an equal global force — the Western Alliance and the Soviet Bloc's. The talks on various missile systems must be merged.

Once deployed, the Pershing II will no longer be a bargaining chip but will be a new missile system directed at an enemy. No missile system, once deployed, has ever been removed.

Dellums asked his colleagues to debate the issues of the military budget and look at the facts and the consequences rather than push for an early vote.

Israel rejects Ethiopian Jews

by John Blank

The black Jews of Ethiopia — sometimes known as "Falashas" — could well disappear in a new "holocaust," according to Simcha Desta, a Falasha who recently escaped from Ethiopia.

Simcha, who spoke to approximately 100 people Monday night, said that teachers and students in Falasha schools, himself included, have been arrested and tortured, for learning Hebrew and practicing their ancient form of Judaism. Simcha, his wife, and their daughter (3 months old at the time) were imprisoned for 11 months; he and his wife were tortured, in order, he said, to terrorize the other Falashas, (or "Beta Israel," as they call themselves). "The government tells us, 'You are not Jewish, you are black. You must become Christian.'... We have to die for our religion." In addition, he said, the Beta Israel face other forms of persecution: internal and external travel is severely restricted, Hebrew books have been confiscated and burned, and the Jews have been ordered to hold their market day on Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, during which work is strictly forbidden.

The Ethiopian government's motives for persecuting the Beta Israel do not seem to be directly political, as the Beta Israel have not opposed the Dergue (as the government which came to power in 1974 is known); in fact, the Beta Israel have received harsh treatment from opponents of the regime, such as the rebels in Eritrea and Tigre as well as from internal opposition groups. They are "caught between the hammer and the anvil," Simcha said.

Instead, the motive seems to be old-fashioned Christian "anti-semitism," especially on the part of Major Melaku Teffera, head of Gondar Province, where most of the Jews live. Peasant superstitions against the Jews, such as that they "bring the evil eye," are being stirred up; Jews are forbidden to own land; foreign contact with the

Jews is strictly limited to interviews conducted through Christian "interpreters," according to Dr. Jerry Maliner of Eugene, who organized Monday night's program.

Nor is it the case that the Jews are being persecuted because the nominally Marxist, Soviet-supported government is anti-religious, for the majority Coptic Christian religion is not discouraged at all.

Authorities disagree on the origins of these Ethiopian Jews. According to some, they are descendants of Ethiopians converted to Judaism around 2,000 B.C. by Jews from Egypt and Yemen; others say that they are the descendants of the tribe of Dan, which made its way to Ethiopia after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

However they got there, they multiplied and became powerful, and at times dominated Ethiopia until the 4th century A.D., when the Empire converted to (Coptic) Christianity. At that time, the Jews retreated to the mountains, where they maintained their own state. There followed a 350-year period of war against these Jews by the Christians and the Moslems (who contributed the name "Falasha," which means "outcast;" the Jews' own name for themselves being "Beta Israel," meaning "House of Israel"), culminating in their defeat in 1850, at which time there were approximately 100,000 of them left in Ethiopia.

Almost completely isolated from the outside world for the last 2,000 years, they practice a pre-rabbinical form of Judaism. They observe Shabbat (the Jewish sabbath) very strictly; during Shabbat drawing water, making fires, and other work is prohibited; even in wartime, they won't fight on the sabbath unless they are attacked. Other Jewish customs, such as ritual bathing for women who are having their periods, and dietary restrictions, are practiced; the major Jewish holidays are observed.

Today there are an estimated 25,000 Beta Israel left; 20,000 live in Gondar Province, where the majority of them are sharecroppers. Although they were supposed to have obtained land in the land reforms following the 1974 change of government, this has not happened, because peasant committees and local officials would not let Jews own land; where they were allowed to own land, it was the poorest. In addition, the Beta Israel are handicraft workers — weavers, potters, blacksmiths, etc. — who are considered the lowest stratum of Ethiopian

society, according to Samah.

Population estimates do not count an unknown number of Beta Israel who outwardly converted to Christianity, but practice Judaism in secret, as did the Jews of Spain during the Inquisition.

The plight of the Falashas has been little recognized by the world at large. Although some sections of the world Jewish community has taken an interest in them, (through organizations such as the American Association for Ethiopian Jews — AAJEJ), they were not officially recognized as Jews until 1975 (by leading rabbis in Israel). The Israeli government has only recently taken a stand in their favor.

During the 1950's and 1960's, then-Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie prohibited emigration, but Falashas have said that he could have been persuaded to allow the Jews to emigrate, according to Dr. Maliner, of the Eugene branch of the AAJEJ. Only after public demonstrations by the few Falashas who managed to make their way to Israel has the Begin government begun a public human rights campaign, but has limited this campaign to "quiet diplomacy," arguing that this would "bring greater results in the long run." However, some Mossad (Israeli secret service) agents assigned to the Falasha program told a *N.Y. Times* correspondent that the Begin government uses this argument to "cover up its own inactivity." Some speculate that the Israeli government's low profile in the rescue of these Jews — in contrast to the noise made about rescuing the Jews of Russia — has to do with the fact that the Falashas are black. A similar point might be made about the American government, which otherwise has been eager to support the "victims" of the Soviet Union and its clients — except perhaps when these "victims" are black.

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Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown



Clift Smith
Teacher

"I was opposed to the idea of anyone paying to build a nuclear facility because I'm against nuclear power. I remember when they first started talking about building nuclear power plants, they said it would be too cheap to meter. As it turns out, it is the most expensive."



Blake Washington
Crew Leader

"I'm not familiar with all the details, but it would be interesting to see who will pick up the final tab. From what I understand, they didn't have the power to get into a contract. It is a big messy situation."



Elder Frank Martin
Minister

"I feel it's unfair for anyone not to fulfill their obligation. You shouldn't take advantage of anyone just because you have the opportunity."



Nancy Wong
Credit Interviewer

"If anyone has a debt they should be responsible for it. Anyone that incurs a debt should be able to pay it off."



Richard Buckley
Postal Employee

"If I had a debt I would be forced to pay. I'm opposed to the way the whole situation surrounding WPPSS is. It's wrong."



Beth Werman
Nurse

"I don't like the fact that sooner or later, we, the public, will have to pay for it. If private individuals have to pay their debts then I feel businesses ought to."

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