

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Recognize African contribution

The mass media's nostalgic spotlight is on World War II and the 40th anniversary of the allies' invasion of Normandy and the subsequent victories it created.

However, this media beam has not focused on the international, national and local contribution of Africa and Afro-Americans in WWII.

Internationally, these Western European allies exploited the resources and people of Africa to repay military loans and keep their war machine oiled. Raw materials were shipped from British and French colonies to their creditors. The rest of Africa supplied a wide range of products, both mineral and agricultural. Had it not been for the criminal hold on Africa's resources, the allies, even with the help of the Marshall Plan (International Welfare), would have not been able to build itself back up to the point of looking down on the very group it used as stepping stones.

Nationally, the Afro-American soldiers in WWII overcame tremendous discrimination at home and abroad, to make great and

unacknowledged contributions to many important victories won by white-officered armies. Like their Vietnam sons, they came back with medals to wear in "Colored only" restrooms and on the unemployment lines.

Locally, a labor drain occurred in factories, shipyards and on the railroads in the Pacific Northwest. These industries sent out an S.O.S. throughout the South for Black labor. Our grandparents provided the factors of production which aided the war effort while providing a foundation for Portland's Black community.

As praise is being distributed for WWII, we need to stand up and demand recognition for the souls in Africa that were sucked dry to finance the allies' war effort.

We need a twenty-one gun salute to remember the unknown Black soldiers whose contributions should not be overshadowed or undergraded.

And let's remember how many of our neighbors got here. They sweated and toiled, fulfilling defense contracts, while building a community and making a home for their children.

## Jackson's issues should rise

In the interest of party unity, the national Democratic party is urging state parties to include Jesse Jackson supporters among the delegates they send to the convention in San Francisco, July 16-19.

Although Jackson's presidential campaign has been criticized for fracturing that unity this election year, Walter Mondale's inability to wrap up the nomination prior to the convention, and, therefore, dampen Gary Hart's hopes, is now the real cause of disharmony.

By the time this editorial is printed, however, results of another "Super Tuesday"—this one June 5th—will have either handed Mondale enough delegates to walk in with the nomination, July 16th or muddied the waters sufficiently that Hart's delegates could make choosing the nominee a long-drawn-out business.

During the Oregon primary, May 15th, Jackson did not receive the 15% he needed in one congressional district to allot him a delegate

to the convention. Jackson campaign supporters are nevertheless seeking minority representation on the state's 50 member delegation and have met with Hart campaign co-chair Tom Mason and Democratic party chair Dick Celsi, to work out the details.

Meanwhile, Democratic National Committee chair Charles Manatt has asked state parties to include "concern for the Jackson issue" in their delegate selection process. Knowing Jackson's constant examination of U.S. foreign policy, economic policy and treatment of the poor and other oppressed minorities is gaining support among a Rainbow Coalition of voters, party leaders are anxious to avoid the confrontation shutting these constituencies out of the convention would create.

Although including Jackson supporters among the delegates might help unite the party, a more long-term solution would be to insist the Democratic presidential nominee begin discussing the issues Jackson has raised.



## Black families hit hard by economy

by Dr. Manning Marable  
"From The Grassroots"

(Continued from last week)

Probably the most concrete economic benefit of the Black extended family vs. the white nuclear family structure was that the former had more potential income earners per family member. In 1967, for example, only 10.2 percent of all Black families had no income earners. Almost six out of ten Black families had two or more income earners, and 16.4 percent had three workers or more—a much higher rate than among white families. About 80 percent of all Black males between the ages of 16-24 years who weren't in school had jobs, and those who worked full time earned 76 percent of what Black men 25 and older earned. With the structural crisis of capitalism, several million Black workers have been pushed into joblessness and marginal employment in the 1970's and early 1980's. The economic impact upon Black families consequently has been in many respects as severe as the Great Depression of the 1930's. By 1977, 17.2 percent of all Black families had no wage earners; the percent of families with three workers or more dropped to 11.9 percent, and the average number of earners per family declined to 1.5, slightly below that of whites. By 1983, Black young adults were experiencing unemployment rates of about 50 percent—and their ratio of earnings compared to Black adults fell to 66 percent.

of all Black male adults are jobless—either "unemployed, not participating in the labor force, or simply unaccounted for. The comparable figure for white men is 22 percent." Joe and Yu suggest that the "chronic deterioration of the employment status of Black men leaves millions of them incapable of heading a household. Researchers and policymakers may therefore be treating the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes."

The U.S. economy's crisis set in motion the destruction of Black households, and the Reagan Administration's reactionary socioeconomic policies simply accelerated the process in the 1980's. The National Urban League's *State of Black America, 1984*, has listed only part of the economic devastation which impacts Blacks. Black family income is only 55 percent of white family income—the largest gap recorded in over two decades. Over 70 percent of Black families with female householders and two or more children live below the poverty level. Over half of all Black children under three years live in poverty. Black women who have full-time employment earn 47 cents to every dollar earned by males for jobs of comparable worth. To this dire situation, Reagan has slashed Aid to Families with Dependent Children by 13 percent, a program whose recipients are 45 percent

Black and 98 percent women and children. With school lunch programs cut 28 percent since 1981, over 3 million children—largely Black, Latino and poor white—have lost perhaps their only nutritious meal each day. Health-care reductions have meant that six out of ten Black preschool children are currently not immunized against polio.

The U.S. government has responded to the crisis of Black social instability by imposing its own "structure" on Blacks. Poor Blacks are far more likely to be termed "mentally ill," for example, than are whites. Black male teenagers are admitted to state and county mental hospitals at a rate of 2.62 times that of white male teenagers; for male adults aged 25-44 years, the rate of mental hospital admissions is 2.96 times higher for Blacks. Another mode of institutionalization is the armed forces, which is increasingly presented to Blacks as the "employer of last resort." In 1972, Black first term reenlistments in the army were only 20.4 percent. By 1976, the figure reached 42.2 percent; in 1982, Black reenlistments were 71 percent, compared to 49.9 percent for whites. The destruction of Black families today is not due to internal problems, in short: it is the logical product of institutional racism, poverty, legal discrimination, and Reaganism.

Spiraling unemployment must be seen as a fundamental factor in the contemporary crisis confronting Black families. As Tom Joe and Peter Yu, researchers of the Center for the Study of Social Policy noted recently in the *New York Times*, twenty percent of all working-age Black men—nearly two million persons—were out of the labor force in 1982, a three fold increase since 1960." Almost half, or 46 percent



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## Street Beat

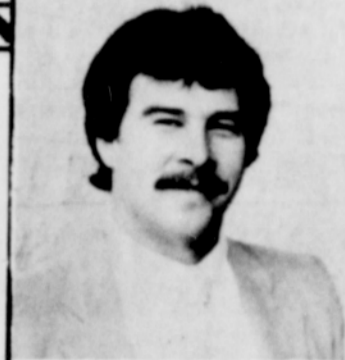
by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

With Russia and other Eastern Bloc countries withdrawing from the 1984 Olympics, the Street Beat team asked, "Should we call the games off because their refusal diluted the competitive spirit of the games?"



Amanda Genus  
Student

"I don't feel we should call it off. If that is what they want to do, then it is no great loss."



Doug Lambert  
Wine Salesman

"I don't agree with them not coming over here, but I did not think Jimmy Carter should have withdrawn either. It is retaliatory and that is too bad. The Olympics should not be used as a political platform."



Rose Abron  
Unemployed

"No, I don't think we should call the games off. If they want to withdraw because of revenge, then it's cool."



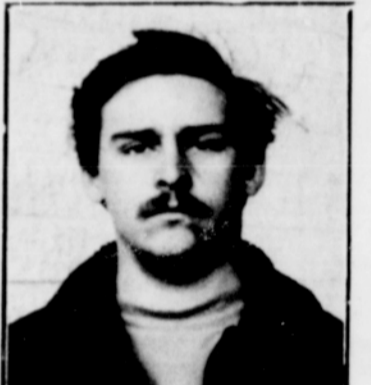
Larry Potter  
Shopper for Senior Citizens

"I don't think we should call off the games. It is disappointing to the athletes, but we should go on as if they had not withdrawn."



Carl McCray  
Bus Driver

"As far as Russia is concerned, we should forget it. America and the other countries will do a good job. Why do we have to have Russia in there to make it successful?"



Charles Nelson  
Security Officer

"Their participation is up to them. If other countries want to follow, then go ahead. We should continue with the tradition."

## Letters to the Editor

### Racist scapegoat

To the Editor:

The plight of Mexican workers in the U.S. needs investigation and attention. Therefore, I looked forward to the April *Oregonian* series, "Crossing the Border." However, reading it filled me with consternation.

The entire series focused on Mexican immigrants who allegedly enter this country to rip off jobs and social services. No mention was made that the Southwest, where many Mexicanos settle, is actually Mexican territory, ripped off by land-greedy Anglos.

In the 1800's, thousands of illegal Anglos settled in this area despite Mexican government protests. Eventually, these whites—with help from the American army—annexed the whole of what is now the Southwestern U.S. The Mexican

inhabitants, stripped of their land and transformed into captive U.S. citizens, found their skills used to form the backbone of the ranching, farming and mining empires built in the Southwest.

For centuries, Mexican workers have been an integral part of the labor force. They have contributed far more than they ever received. Articles like "Crossing the Border" are little more than racist scapegoating when the plight of Mexican workers is seen in its historical context. More balanced press coverage should be focused on their situation.

Madelyn Elder

### Real unity needed

To the Editor:

Referring to Vesia DeWeese-Loving's letter about the District #18 outcome in the primary, I want

to say that *I too am happy* about the unity. The difference is that I am white. The purpose of this letter is to clearly state that if any ethnic group wants to have unity and *harmony* among themselves and the rest of the community and *achieve positive results for all people*, there should not be statements like, "the white system in this city", or any other color. Such a feeling will truly destroy the intent of unity in District #18 and any other district, regardless of the ethnic "make-up". District #18 voters won what was wanted and needed—like in football, take the ball and run with it.

Fran Ariniello

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The Observer reserves the right to edit for length.

## Portland Observer



The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The *Portland Observer* was established in 1970.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Portland Observer*, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher  
Al Williams, Advertising Manager



283-2486

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