

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## "Blame the victim" African policy

A destructive international interpretation of the famine in Ethiopia and on the African continent which excuses, defends and sidesteps the activities of colonialism and agribusiness' responsibility for the hunger she is now experiencing.

The white status-quo press is too quick to broadcast the starving faces of Ethiopia's tragedy with an explanation that it was caused by failed land management, inequitable distribution of wealth and aggravated by military confrontation.

But this theory internationalizes the "blame the victim" approach used extensively in the white domestic press. This press reports on situations in Third World countries, especially Africa, as though the slave trade, economic exploitations and social colonialism never took place.

The African slave trade disrupted the culture and destroyed the African family. The standard of living enjoyed by many Americans today was created by the criminal exploitation of human beings torn from Africa.

With all the emphasis placed on obtaining revenge for the genocide committed during the holocaust, a word is rarely uttered about the genocide of slavery and the Middle Passage on Africa and Africans.

After Europeans and Americans robbed human beings from their land, colonialism was introduced in Africa to repatriate the profits to the mother country. The blood on the hands of the French, British and other European empires is infinite. And former policies and practices of past U.S. administrations makes us all accessories to the crime of colonialism.

While Europeans were stealing the resources of Africa, Africans were paid the lowest possible wages and these phony colonialist administrations relied upon legislation backed by force.

For more than 300 years, the financial and agricultural institutions operating in Africa were scandalously neglectful of indigenous Africans. Colonialism forced Africans to engage in intensive farming and growing cash crops that absorbed the nutrients from the soil. Thus, farming practices perpetuated and forced upon the African reinforced and welcomed the approaching desert and drought.

From the very beginning of time, Ethiopia has withstood drought. It was not until this century that the rape and plunder of the land, people and resources made this once-proud people vulnerable.

Within the last 25 years, Africans demanded and fought for their independence from exploitation, colonialism and domination. Yet, the foundation for exploitation which ruled the continent still exists and it's the African majority who pays.

Think deeper whenever the status-quo controlled media offers its opinions as to why Africa is hungry. Africa still has the greatest abundance of raw materials and minerals of any other continent on earth. There is no reason for her hunger except her recent history of exploitation, forced agribusiness policies and selfish leaders who were educated and influenced by Western ideas of capitalism and exploitation.

The correlation between our quality of life and Africa's lack of quality is much too direct to ignore.

## POSAF ON SOUTH AFRICA

by Elizabeth Groff

The Rev. Colin Jones, a Black South African Anglican priest from Capetown, South Africa, gave his first sermon recently at Westminster Presbyterian Church. The service was moving, his message made all the more poignant by the awareness of the state of emergency declared the day before in his country of birth.

The declaration of an indefinite state of emergency, the first of its kind in 25 years, gives the South African government even more sweeping security power than before. Detention without charge or trial of those who oppose the system in any way has long been a part of South Africa's law. Now, the declaration gives the police and military absolute power to arrest and detain people without any charge, search homes and other buildings at will, impose curfews, take over and close private businesses, close areas to travel and censor the press without any limitations, including denying newspapers the right to identify those who have been detained under the emergency regulation. In

addition, security forces have been given the go-ahead to shut off any "essential services" — water, electricity — in urban areas. In a nutshell, it gives authorities complete freedom to act against anyone who speaks or acts in any way against the racist apartheid system.

During these very difficult times in South Africa, Black South Africans need to know that their struggle is supported. Rev. Colin Jones knows what it is to struggle against vicious oppression and can inspire us to continue our own struggles and to support his. He will be giving services at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday through August 25th.

Rev. Jones has been called by his colleague Dr. Allan Boesak, "One of the dynamic young Black leaders in South Africa, a gifted speaker and able interpreter of the painful realities of being a Black South African."

Rev. Jones was educated at the Federal Theological Seminary and is currently Anglican Chaplain to students at the University of Western

Cape. He is also Canon at St. George's Cathedral in Capetown, and holds the position of Chairperson of the Black Solidarity Group in the Anglican Church, South Africa.

Rev. Jones' family is here in Portland with him. His wife, Pat, is a school teacher in South Africa near Bellville. They have two children, ages 8 and 3.

During his sermon, Rev. Jones pointed out some of the contradictions between the religion that white South Africans in power profess and their actions. He ended the service by asking the congregation to repeat a prayer used throughout Southern Africa: "God Bless Africa, guard her children, guide her rulers and give her peace."

POSAF, *Portlanders Organized for Southern African Freedom*, is a local multi-racial citizens action group that supports Black majority rule in southern Africa and an end to U.S. support for apartheid. For more information call 230-9427.

## EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

### PSU balks at adding African Studies

by Nathaniel Scott

Portland State University's (PSU's) president Joseph Blumel is navigating a course that is destined to erupt in a confrontation with the Black community.

Within the past four months, on two different occasions, Blumel has told the *Observer* that a "committee" will be formed to study the feasibility of including African studies into the university's ongoing International Studies Program.

Blumel's rationale is hard to understand, especially since it gives the impression that his intentions pay lip service to the study of Africa at PSU. Initially, when the sordid undercurrents of racial prejudice surfaced, administrators speaking on behalf of PSU claimed that Black Studies did not have the means to formulate such a program.

However, in subsequent investigations, it was revealed that Black Studies would only become a complimentary part of African studies.

The university, the administration, and those who spoke on behalf of the institution knew beforehand that Black Studies was a specialized body.

The faculty members who comprise

PSU's Black Studies Department specialize in the areas of Africanology — a study of the African culture from the development of Africa and political economy dealings which include the African and the Afro-American experience, Afro-American History, African History and African Art, African, Afro-American and Caribbean literatures and anthropology.

Those facts stand and are documented through the courses taught. But what isn't documented is the mentality of "divide and conquer." And as such, Black Studies cannot afford to succumb to a bitter rivalry of back stabbing and non-support. It must rise above what pressures are exerted or may be threatened to drive a wedge between one of PSU's most viable units.

To accuse Blumel of being a perpetrator in such an outlandish scheme, would not only be unethical, but it would also do a disservice to one who professes to have the welfare of PSU at heart.

But one cannot help but wonder what scheme or lack of scheme Blumel has in mind.

Four months by some accounts are

not a long time; its significance can be argued on the basis of more pressing business. But if Blumel intends to deliver as promised: "A committee recommendation by fall term," he must act more speedily on the African studies issue than he has on the Black Studies Department's request to change its name.

That request was made more than three years ago and still hasn't been acted on.

## Letters

To the Editor,

Along with my subscription renewal, I'd like to send special thanks and compliments to Lanita Dyke for her steady, uncompromising and wide-range reporting. It's the audacity to get to the root of the matter which makes much of the reporting by *Observer* writers stand out in this industry dominated by mega-buck molders of national opinion.

BILL COLLINS



## Reagan's racial appointments

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

Most white Americans, Democrats and Republicans alike, do not believe that the Reagan Administration can be described as "racist." When NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks charged recently that the Reagan Administration was responsible for "very grave civil rights and social" problems which blocked "the path of Black Americans towards full equality," the media largely ignored him. When Georgia State Senator Julian Bond claimed that the President's chief "constituents are the right-wing fringe, the Ku Klux Klan types, whites who have always hated Blacks," few were prepared to explore the charges seriously.

Since his reelection, the President's extreme views have become even more apparent to Black Americans. Reagan named Marianne Mele Hall as chairman of the Copyright Royalty Tribunal. Hall was the editor of a book which declared in one passage that Blacks "insist on their jungle freedoms, their women. . . ." Only after intense public criticism was she forced to leave.

Former Nixon aide Pat Buchanan came aboard the Administration as Reagan's Communications Director early this year. Buchanan is well known as the darling of the extreme right, was the chief defender of Reagan's disastrous Bitburg visit, and has frequently criticized the "hair-chested Nazi-hunters." Less noticed is Buchanan's tendency to praise openly-racist regimes. In one 1984 essay, he applauded Ian Smith of Rhodesia and Pieter W. Botha of South Africa as "pro-West" and allies "in the struggle for the future

of mankind."

William Bradford Reynolds, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, has for four years tried to destroy the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Ralph G. Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, describes Reynolds as a "rigid ideologue and an extremist who has done everything possible to weaken civil rights laws." Last April, Reynolds asked 51 state and local governments to halt their affirmative action plans for their fire, police and other departments. Reagan's response to public outrage was to propose that Reynolds receive the third highest post in the Justice Department.

But the real damage to the promise of racial equality has been felt in the judicial system. To date, the President has named only one Supreme Court justice. However, the Supreme Court usually decides less than one hundred cases in any single year. The Federal district courts decided nearly 300,000 cases last year. Reagan's judicial strategy since 1981 has been quite simple — to pack the district courts and the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals with white males who generally share the views of Hall, Buchanan, and Reynolds.

Sheldon Goldman, professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, has documented this racist strategy in a recent article in *Judicature*. By 1988, Reagan will have appointed about 400 Federal judges, or more than half of the 744 total judgeships in the U.S. These men and women, and not the Supreme Court, will be decisive in deciding most legal

issues — from civil rights to Social Security measures.

Under President Carter, about 14 percent of the appointees to the district courts were Black, and another seven percent were Hispanic. During Reagan's first term, the percentage of Black appointments fell below one percent, and 93 percent of all district judges selected were white. In the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, Carter's 56 appointments included 11 women, 10 Blacks, 2 Hispanics and one Asian-American. Reagan's 31 appointments to the Court of Appeals are radically different: only one woman, one Black, and one Hispanic. Professor Goldman adds that another important factor in Reagan's selections to the courts has been social class. Under Carter, 36 percent of all district judges appointed claimed a net worth below \$200,000, and only four percent were millionaires. During Reagan's term, 19 percent of the district judges had under \$200,000; 23 percent of them were millionaires, over five times as many as the Carter appointees. About 11 percent of Reagan's judges are under 40 years old, the highest percentage for any recent president.

Where the Ku Klux Klan, the White Citizen's Councils and the Dixiecrats failed, Reagan has succeeded. By stacking the Federal bureaucracy and the courts with white conservatives and reactionary ideologues, he has crippled the rights of Blacks, Hispanics, the poor and women for decades to come. Reagan's racial appointments help to preserve racism and class inequality.

## EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

### Police overuse of deadly force on Blacks

by Mark Little

Why is there a conflict between police departments and Black communities throughout the United States?

To answer this question, one must first look at the nation as a whole. There is an indifference towards police by all in this society. Police operate as a separate entity within a very homogeneous society. Police are the war lords in a society of civilians. They are the peace makers and the protectors from evil. They are the civil servants who watch and protect our cities from crime.

Although some distance exists between police and the general society, we must look closer to what constitutes society. The general society consists of the white majority and the part that has the largest amount of wealth and political influence. Then there is the largest minority group, Black citizens. This group suffers a clear distinction of institutionalized discrimination.

We know that from its very conception as the peace keeper in our society, police departments have grown farther and farther apart from the psychological structure of society. Many law enforcement agencies see the general public as law breakers or the enemy in the war on crime. Society, that is, the white structure of the United States, is also the power frame. Most attitudes are breathed through the white culture and adopted by the police. The police are the psychological heartbeat and control agent within that society.

There may be some distance that exists between whites and police in society, but the distance between police and the Black community is phenomenal. Since police represent the white community, there is a striking indifference in their attitude towards Blacks.

The white Anglos have embarked on separatism within the American ideal. English-speaking whites are the accepted order of the day by this society. It is becoming clear that non-whites are at a great disadvantage and need to reconcile with a police force and a society that has chosen separatism and white supremacy as the norm.

#### Prejudiced Police Officers

Prejudiced police officers find no fault in their attitudes when their indifference is shared by the white power structure of society. Many of these officers have gotten messages from their parents directly or indirectly to discriminate. It has become a behavior and custom to them. Many of these bad officers within a department do not hold back their hate because many of the good officers act with collective discrimination, that is, unequal treatment of Black citizens. Senior officers see most Blacks as criminal stereotypes. They are indifferent to the reasons why the poor economic status exists in the Black community. These police officers actually believe the American dream is for all who participate. They fail to include the "equality" of education, discrimination in employment and other areas. They do not understand or fail to take the time to find out the lack of participation in that dream by Blacks.

Because most white police officers grow up without much direct contact with Black minorities, they tend to believe in the stereotype as a real model for the average black person and his behavior.

#### Behavioral Differences

With good officers sharing the indifference of the white power structure, it becomes quite hard for any law enforcement agency to see any wrong-doing within its ranks. In fact many times the good officers will use Black citizens as scapegoats when their department has put a quota on ticket writing and misdemeanor infractions. This behavior by our law enforcement agencies has been handed down from generation to generation.

At the end of the Civil War, Black citizens still had no rights as Americans. During the reconstruction period of 1865 until the 1900s, Blacks were lynched and killed for sport — with no protection of law enforcement forthcoming. By the early 1920s the hangings and killings by whites were concentrated mostly in the southern states. Here we see clearly a nation denying its most visible minority group the right of due process.

Police attitudes during the 1920s in this nation stayed right in step with the society that brought it into being. Although Congress has passed laws giving voting rights and citizenship to Blacks, nowhere throughout the country was it actually enforced.

When labor unions started striking for better job benefits at the beginning of the Second World War, these big northern industrial plants hired Blacks. White citizens as well as the cities' police attacked Black workers in the race riots of the 30s and 40s. When Black soldiers came home from fighting in that war, they were still treated as second class citizens.

The lynchings and killings by the Klan and other white hate groups continued but was done discretely. During the periods of the 50s and early 60s, the American police still did not recognize Blacks as citizens. Their psychological feelings toward Blacks was one of suspicion and distrust. Opportunity was there for the bad cops to commit murder, rape and to perpetuate crime on the Black community in the name of the law.

#### Bad Seed

The bigots within the police departments have enjoyed many years of keeping the Black community in fear and deprivation. Blacks have been gunned down by police in the name of suspicion. With no outside help coming from the white power structure, white police were quick to use their guns or night sticks on the Black population. Since the turn of this century, Black citizens have accounted for the largest amount of police related homicides that have stemmed from the overuse of deadly force.

It was not until the late 60s that the white power structure started to examine police behavior within the Black community. Through peace marches and the emergence of armed Black militant groups, there were efforts to change the behavior of the police in the Black communities. Blacks felt it was time to protect themselves from the police force that was supposed to protect them.

#### Necessary Use of Deadly Force

Catherine Milton, a sociologist, and her associates found that 79 percent

(Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

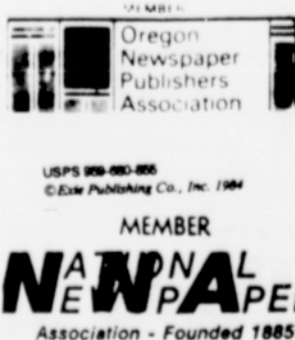
### Portland Observer

The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 1463 N.E. Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97211, 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, General Manager



288-0033

National Advertising Representative  
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.  
New York