



**“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”**

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*The Skanner Newspaper*, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published each Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.,

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*The Skanner* is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

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## Planning for Our Own Success

Are we living in the last days? If so, what are we doing about it? It seems the world is coming apart at the seams. The Muslims are attacking the Christians, the Christians are attacking the Muslims; Africa is under siege, the Earth is shaking, the United States is waging war on its African American citizens, but why are you surprised? Yes, we live in the land of the free and home of the brave and are still not equal. Now what? Do you think we can make people care about us before we can care about ourselves? I am proud to see our people finally coming together and standing as one unit. Now what?

Now that we all agree that we are not going to let anyone come into our communities and kill our people without a fight, we need to use the moment to improve who we are and how we are perceived. Our action plan has to include more than threatening a march, pointing a finger and waiting to see if the Department of Justice is going to convict officers for their crimes. That is a distraction. It's more than tearing up buildings, throwing rocks and dancing in the street for minor victories. It's not about being interviewed for your perspective on the problem of police brutality. It's succeeding out loud. It's about making our money speak for us.

It's about going back to the drawing board to see what part we play in making America a better



**HIP HOP UNION**

Jineea Butler

place for ourselves. The generation before us changed their status by getting educated, by changing their style of dress and their manner of communication. They outsmarted their opponent.

We have to change how we are living. Point blank. Stop fronting

The world around us or ourselves? My beef is while we are rallying for justice we are leaving out a few key factors that are necessary for growth and development. How are we jumping out in the streets fighting the establishment, but not changing how we spend our money? Why is that not #1 on the agenda?

Furthermore, if we are asking them to grow then we have to grow. We can't spit in the face of our oppressor and then ask them to help us in the same breath. We have to have a plan for our own success.

We have to be real about the

Our action plan has to include more than threatening a march, pointing a finger and waiting to see if the Department of Justice is going to convict officers for their crimes

like these killings are not exposing a bigger problem. We can't expect to be treated fairly when we don't even treat each other fairly. We turn up our noses and look down on our own people the same way these cops and the rest of America does. We just don't kill people in the exchange. We have become complacent with a part of the community that is underperforming.

Everybody is toting signs saying, "Black Lives Matter," but who are we trying to convince?

problem, because the same reason you are not marching through the hood and telling every drug dealer, murderer and criminal that they can't occupy the hood and kill the babies, is the same reason these cops are on edge and quick to pull the trigger. Because there is a problem. I call it the Hip Hop Dilemma. You know that intense feeling you get when someone of the urban persuasion walks into your circumference. The feeling you get when you wait to see if

they are a troublemaker, a fool or a Hip Hop musician. The feeling you get when you don't want to confront this person because you don't know if the response is going to be negative or lead to an altercation. This is the symptom of those suffering from the Hip Hop Dilemma. The cops are on the front lines dealing directly with this traumatizing experience and it is affecting their work performance.

If we work to change the narrative of who we are, what we stand for and how we live. The cops will have to change how they are policing our communities, because they won't know who to profile, they won't know who to arrest, because we all look like success. Sometimes we give the underperforming members of our community an excuse not to be the best they can be by leaning on white supremacy. It's deeper than officers abusing the law, the war been going on and we have known it.

Our response looks like a horse and pony show because as soon as the cameras arrive everybody throws their capes on and swoops in for the rescue, but the community has been burning for years. Why does everything become more important when the TV camera arrives? I'm fighting for our everyone in our community to step up and be better. We have to eliminate the reasons they are stopping us in the first place. Change the game.

## Ethiopian Jews in Israel Struggle for Rights

By Lekan Oguntoyinbo  
NNPA Columnist



**GUEST COLUMNIST**

Lekan Oguntoyinbo

Considerable fanfare greeted Israel's airlift of tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews in the 1980s and 1990s. The Israeli government sprung them out of their ancestral east African homeland in the midst of a famine that led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

To many, it was a powerful affirmation of Israel's "Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to all Jews. It sent a strong signal that Israel, a nation of immigrants and children of immigrants from more than 100 countries, was serious about its intent to create a comfortable homeland for Jews from around the world irrespective of skin color.

But for most of these Black arrivals and their children life in their new homeland has been anything but comfortable. Israel has been less than welcoming to it Black citizens.

Israelis of Ethiopian ancestry number about 135,000 or about 2 percent of the population. But they have higher rates of poverty, unemployment, incarceration, divorce and suicide. As the New York Times reported, Ethiopian-Israeli youth are three times as likely to be held in detention facilities. Like blacks in America, Ethiopian Israelis are the lepers of society. They routinely encounter discrimination, police harassment and racist slights.

For several days earlier this

month, in scenes reminiscent of Baltimore and Ferguson, Ethiopian Israelis took to the streets after a video surfaced online of a uniformed Ethiopian-Israeli soldier being beaten by police officers in what was an apparently unprovoked attack.

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For several days, demonstrators threw bottles and rocks, shut down a major highway and overturned at least one police squad car. Scores of people, including more than 50 police officers, were injured and dozens of demonstrators were arrested.

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin hit the nail on the head when he said the unrest revealed "an open, bleeding wound in the heart of Israeli society."

The demonstrations were just

another in a long line of grievances by members of the Ethiopian community. Despite the kudos accorded Israel upon the arrival of the Ethiopians 30 years ago, the decision to bring them into their new home was not without controversy.

For years debates raged over the authenticity of their Jewishness before the government consented to bring them into the country. Ethiopian Jews, also known as Beta Israel, believe they are the lost tribe of Dan. Their roots in Ethiopia go back thousands of years. For more than a

authorities had thrown out their donated blood over fears or suspicions of HIV.

Some landlords refused to rent to Ethiopian Jews. And there have been reports of schools restricting the enrollment of their children.

In 2013, Israel's health ministry all but admitted that doctors "may" have injected newly arrived Ethiopian Jewish women with contraceptives without their consent or without fully explaining the effects of the drug.

If Israel fails to check this problem, here's the kind of future it could face: an Ethiopian-Israeli former member of parliament called for a variety of forms of civil disobedience, including refusing to serve in the military or pay taxes if the situation for blacks doesn't change. The military is Israel's most strategically important institution. Young Israeli men and women are required to serve. Ethiopian Jews have consistently been diligent about serving. Demas Fikadey, the soldier who was beaten up by the police officers, had just left his military post and was on his way home when he was assaulted.

To his credit, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has moved quickly to quell tensions. He has met with leaders of the Ethiopian Jewish community. He also had a brief meeting with the Fikadey in which he commiserated with him.

These are great first steps. But the real work lies in ensuring that the quasi-legal oppression of Black Israelis is vanquished.