

# Has Harsh Words About the Media

by Kenton Kirby

Black people must begin seriously to address some of the burning issues that tend to divide them if they are to move forward as people with a common heritage. And, they must pay particular attention to the role the media play in efforts to divide them.

This was the view of journalist Gil Noble who was examining the moral and social responsibility of the media in an address to the recently formed New York-based Caribbean group called Sons and Daughters of the Caribbean (SADOC).

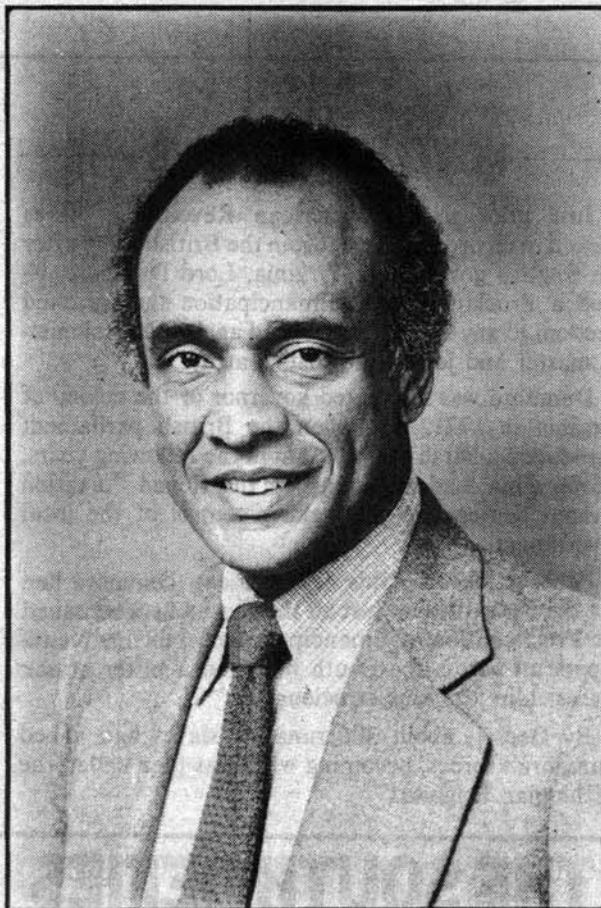
Noble's address, sprinkled with a little humor, was well received by the audience, which was mainly from the English-speaking Caribbean. But whether they were from Jamaica, Mississippi or Texas, he said, all Black people share a common African heritage.

"We are a Caribbean people and we have an identity and history there and a culture that is significant. But that's not really what we are. We are an African people," Noble said.

Noble, who was born in New York of Jamaican parents, disclaimed originality of the thesis, saying that some 60 years ago, Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican-born Pan-Africanist, had made the same point.

"Garvey was right," Noble said. "He reminded us that we needed to band together as a people based on that which was common and fundamental to all of us and not to accept those images and statures that have been imposed on us.

"I think we put ourselves at a disadvantage politically, culturally and economically when we limit our identity to being from the Caribbean. Those differences have been imposed on us by the people who came from Europe," he told his audience.



**Journalist Noble: Say no to distortions.**

Noble, who hosts "Like It Is," a Black news and commentary program on WABC-TV, stressed the im-

portance of assessing the role of the media in shaping and influencing attitudes about Black people.

The media, he said, influence every aspect of our lives. "So, it seems to me that we ought to take a look at [it] and try to think of what happened, how these conduits of media distorted us and misshaped us so that we are as diffused and differing and unable to come together even when the situation warrants it," he said.

Black people, Noble added, should stop looking at media with such reverence because only a few have been given the benefit of understanding who they are.

"We are in serious trouble," he said, "and the many conduits of media have helped to exacerbate the problem.

"Yes, we know how to assemble all kinds of sophisticated chemical formulas, if we are scientists. Yes, we understand the complexities of law, if we are attorneys. Yes, we understand the mechanics of journalism, if we are journalists. But few of us have been given the benefit of understanding who we are as African people," Noble said, adding that the dismantling of Black culture has robbed Blacks of an authentic link with the Mother Land.

He suggested that Blacks should put pressure on preachers for a more relevant religious "meal" before it is too late. And, they should insist on a more relevant education so that they could advance themselves rather than benefit those who oppress them.

But, most importantly, "we should put the same pressure on print and broadcast journalism to see to it that people who call themselves journalists serve our common interests and bring out the fact that we have a commonality of interest instead of speaking about us as a different people," Noble said.