



We see the world
through Black eyes

An eight year record

Why are Black citizens so angry with Gladys McCoy? Why are they fighting the popular image that Ms. McCoy speaks for Blacks? In 1970, while running for the School Board position she now holds, Ms. McCoy told the *Oregonian* of her candidacy: "I want to state that my most urgent reason is to represent on the School Board a voice for the community, therefore unheard and too little acknowledged."

Has the Black community been heard and acknowledged through the efforts of Ms. McCoy? Judging from the facts about the education of Black children reported last week by the Community Coalition for School Integration, one would have to say no. Judging from the hostile and flippant attitude of certain School Board members and administrators during the past year — a year marked by controversy over racial issues — one would have to say no.

It was in 1970 that a Coalition of Black organizations called a boycott and filed a court suit charging discrimination in discipline. This action led to some policy changes, but in 1977 the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare found that the district was discriminating against Black students in suspensions and expulsions and threatened to withdraw federal funds if the situation was not amended. This year, 1978, information provided by the school district to the Community Coalition for School Integration shows that during the last school year in some schools with minority percentages of less than twenty percent, half of the students suspended were minorities.

In 1970 Dr. Blanchard told the City Club that he would recommend the closure of inner city schools and that the buildings be used for Early Childhood Education Centers and other purposes. Over the objections of Black parents, schools have now been stripped of their upper grades and the children living in those school areas scattered throughout the district in numbers so small as to isolate Black children in white schools.

It was in 1970 in response to Dr. Blanchard's "Schools for the City" program, that the NAACP protested the district's plan to allow continued segregation in grades one through five in Albina's elementary schools. In 1970 seven schools were over fifty percent Black. And in 1978, seven schools are over fifty percent Black in grades one through five.

How much progress has been made in the last eight years, and what has been the effect on Black students? After fourteen years of desegregation, the district has no information to assess the impact of its desegregation efforts on

children's academic achievement or their social adjustment. The district still has no adequate multi-cultural curriculum and teachers still do not receive adequate training in human relations and in cross-cultural communications.

No one would hold Ms. McCoy solely responsible for the district's failures. But has her presence on the Board had a positive effect? Ms. McCoy has not served the "watch dog" role that one might have expected of the only Black member and she has not provided leadership on the Board in any of the areas of special concern to Black citizens.

Two issues face the Board this week and in both cases, Ms. McCoy's role has been negative. The Board will appoint an individual to fill a Board vacancy. Ms. McCoy's role has been to select the appointee and extract from the other Board members their agreement to appoint her candidate. With the Board agreeing that a minority would be desirable, Ms. McCoy did not seek the advice and guidance of Black citizens who have expressed an interest and concern in the schools, but chose to speak for them — behind closed doors.

The other matter of immediate concern is a Minority Business Enterprise proposal that Ms. McCoy has presented to the Board for its acceptance. Although she met with minority contractors to hear their ideas, the proposal she submitted has no resemblance to their request.

This proposal, however, does not deal with the need for the district to adjust its contracting procedures to allow for inclusion of minority contractors and vendors. It defines "minority business" as any business with fifty percent minority managers, or six percent minority craftsmen, so does not deal with minority owned business. Now "Minority Business Enterprise" is defined by the federal and state government, as well as others, to mean businesses that are fifty percent or more owned by minorities. So in effect what Ms. McCoy is attempting to do is use minorities to make it look like the district is doing something for minorities that it is not.

The factual information gathered by the Community Coalition for School Integration is shocking in its indictment of the school district. One can only wonder why the Board's only Black member has remained so silent.

It can be said that Ms. McCoy has done no worse than many other Board members. That is true. But when she was elected, Black people hoped she would have a special sensitivity to the problems of Black students, that she would be close to the community — hearing and expressing its concerns, that she would ask the right questions to reveal inequities, that she would be a bold voice speaking out on behalf of a community that is still "unheard and too little acknowledged."



In integration process

Stand together for equity, understanding

by Herb L. Cawthorne

After nearly ten months of continuous research, the Community Coalition for School Integration has released its preliminary findings. The "discussion document" lists several items which are revealing. It also offers a set of possibilities for change. The list of facts will remain stable, while the possibilities are subject to alteration.

For the next two months, the Coalition will strive to fulfill its commitment to return to the community with rough ideas and preliminary options. The discussion process will involve several community forums, like townhall meetings, which will be held in seven different high schools throughout the City. In addition, presentations will be made to all of the Coalition's 38 member organizations, as well as to the media, special interest groups, and concerned citizens.

It is important that citizens in the Black community take part actively in this process. We have now a chance to be heard. Our voice has been stifled before. We have here an opportunity to learn. Information has been kept from us before. We have in this procedure a wonderful means to influence the treatment of our children. This should be sufficient motivation.

But if it is not, the preliminary findings of the Coalition's research committee should be the last bit of persuasion required.

1. **Racial Segregation Still Exists in Portland's Public Schools.** Seven schools in the Black community have more than fifty percent minority enrollment; and, perhaps more noteworthy, eighty percent (36,000) of the district's white students are "racially isolated" in that they attend schools with less than the average minority enrollment in the district.

2. **Portland Is Not In Compliance With State Board of Education Guidelines.** The guidelines stipulate that schools with more than fifty percent minority enrollment are "racially isolated." Even with such massive changes as the removal of grades and the offering of magnet

programs for early childhood education, seven schools are above that percentage.

3. **Desegregation in Portland Is Not Equitable.** Nearly 33 percent of the Black students are getting on busses every day to attend a school outside their neighborhood. Only two percent of the whites do so. Of the 900 whites involved, 400 are enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Centers (ECEC). And most of these are concentrated in the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms at Eliot, Vernon, Humboldt, King, and other schools in the predominately Black community. However, "the drop-off rate of bused in white students produces a situation where the upper grade levels at these ECECs still remain highly segregated," asserts the Coalition. For example, at the Pre-Kindergarten grade level, King school is fifty percent whites. They are bused. At the third grade, King has only two percent whites who are bused. The Coalition found that, while the creation of ECECs displaced 800 students from the Black community, the magnet program has also "increased the educational options for the white community while reducing those options for the Black community."

4. **Desegregation Is Not Totally Voluntary.** Although it is promoted as though it is, the voluntary transfer program is not voluntary for many Black students. No grade level exists in neighborhood schools for more than 800 Black students. With no grades to attend, they were forced to transfer. That's not voluntary.

5. **Desegregation Scatters and Isolates.** Black students are bused all over the system. Even to the person most sympathetic to the management problems school personnel have, it is hard to excuse the scattering and isolation of Blacks. The desegregation workers, who claim to be the advocates for Black students, have been silent. One wonders what their advocacy is worth. The children from King, for instance, are scattered to 39 different schools. The 44 children from Eliot attend twenty different schools. Clearly some are scattered

by grade level. Third grade students, for example, from Humboldt go to thirteen different schools. Indeed, Coalition research indicates that "a significant number of transfer students find themselves in classrooms with no friend or peer from their neighborhood."

6. **A Disproportionately High Number of Transfer Students Are Suspended or Expelled.** In a survey conducted by an independent research organization, 35 percent of the Black transfer students indicated they had been either suspended or expelled. Admittedly, suspension is less drastic than expulsion. It may be unwise to speak of the two in the same breath. Nevertheless, there is reason to be alarmed, even though the district has tightened its procedures after a recent investigation by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights.

This constitutes only a brief listing of some of the findings. There are others which deserve your attention. They focus on a variety of concerns, including those involving achievement, white flight, teacher training, affirmative action, along with legal and legislative constraints.

The "discussion document" also contains possibilities for an improved program. It is worth your time to read it.

The history of desegregation reveals that a special burden has been placed on the Black community. Consequently, in this discussion process, the Black community shoulders a unique obligation to rectify a situation which does damage to our children. What has been found is extremely detrimental. In some cases, it's disgraceful. The Coalition's discoveries serve to prove that a passive people gain very little. Schools have been changed, grades removed, children disbursed and scattered, and teachers separated.

Now is the time to participate in the dialogue. The Board of Education is listening. They have been cooperative throughout the Coalition's development. The school administration needs to hear your thoughts. The time is now to insist on equity and on a better opportunity for interracial understanding.

America's quiet revolution

by N. Fungai Kumbula

A quiet revolution has been taking place in American politics over the past few years. This revolution has tended to be overshadowed by such hotly debated issues as California's tax limitation measure, the Bakke case and the resurgence of the so-called New Right.

Until a few years ago, Africa was still pretty much a mystery continent. The only news we ever got was probably an occasional, one paragraph story on page 27 about a coup d'ete somewhere in Africa. Even today, very few people can point out Benin, Rwanda or Swaziland on the map. This was because the all powerful media had decided that Africa was small potatoes.

Come 1974 and 1975 and the PAIGC in Guinea Bissau, FRELIMO in Mozambique and MPLA in Angola threw out the Portuguese and suddenly the white power structure was threatened. Most of us African affairs fanatics are well aware of the notorious NSSM memorandum No. 39. What is said, in a nutshell, was that the White regimes in Southern Africa were there to stay and that what the U.S. should do is pay lip service to the liberation movements while continuing to support the minority regimes economically.

The defeat of the Portuguese less six months after this memo was released put a hole in this theory the size of Clackamas county. The 'domino theory' whereby the fall of one country would trigger a chain reaction was back in vogue again. Now nobody doubts the fact that both Zimbabwe and Namibia should be able to throw off the colonial solves within a year, at most. Even South Africa, which somebody called the "godfather of the minority, racist regimes", is no longer regarded as invincible.

All this activity has spilled over into the U.S. of A. where, since the anti-war and civil rights demonstrations of the 60's, there has been a kind of vacuum. The victories of the Africans have triggered a whole new wave of support. Once more, Blacks across the country are rallying to the aid of their brothers and sisters

across the big water.

A number of Africa support groups have sprung up all across the country from Seattle to Los Angeles, San Francisco to New York, Chicago to Mobile and they are becoming very active. The American Friends Service Committee just concluded a Southern Africa Summer program with a conference in Allenspark, Colorado and all the participants in the program agreed that the termination of the program would by no means mean the end of their Southern African involvement.

Here, in the Portland area, we have just had a summer that seemed to be wholly devoted to Africa. There was the very successful Africa Liberation Day May 27th (successful in spite of the rain!). It, for the first time, was planned, organized, publicized and carried out entirely by the Black community. Then there was the Oregon Investment Council hearings at which several people urged the OIC to divest itself forthwith of all OSBHE stock in companies that continue to cooperate with apartheid.

Also there was the rigorous opposition to the visit to Portland of the South African ambassador in the U.S. In this, even though the Black and white groups involved worked from different angles, they had the same goal and their strategies complemented. Such classic Southern African films and slide shows as 'Last Grave at Dimbaza,' 'A Luta Continua,' 'South Africa: Freedom Rising,' 'South Africa: The Rising Tide,' 'There Is No Crisis' and 'Banking On Apartheid' were shown over and over again.

At the government level, the City Council voted and passed a resolution discouraging the sale of the Kruggerrand in Portland. When the NAACP came to town, one of their resolutions it considered was a call for economic sanctions against South Africa — a position the organization had never endorsed before. The last activity of the summer that I participated in was South African Women's Day, an event which everyone agreed was the high point of the whole summer.

The group, Portland Citizens

Against Racism, has worked very closely with AFSC on all our Southern African Summer programs and has also been the mainstay behind our "Clothing Drive" — collecting clothing for the refugees displaced by the wars in Southern Africa. They are now living in such financially strained countries as Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique.

Similar activities have been taking place throughout the summer in such places as Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, Mobile, Philadelphia, Kalamazoo (Michigan), Greensboro and Charleston (South Carolina), Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Youngstown (Ohio), Detroit, etc. Not to be overlooked are the efforts of the Congressional Black Caucus.

In Los Angeles, one Musekiwa Kumbula, a student from Zimbabwe is forming a Pan African Students Union which would be focusing its attention on African affairs as they relate to the U.S. I have been invited to help launch an African Study Group in Portland and this would be "African" in its broader sense when it refers to all people of African origin. Not only would this organization focus attention on events in the Motherland but it would also look into such local issues as housing, redlining, jobs, police — community relations, the family, etc. etc.

This is one area where the Africa support groups need to strengthen themselves — building local ties and demonstrating that the struggle taking place in Africa is not at all removed from the struggle in which we are all involved right here. The enemy's motto is: "Divide and Conquer" — Ours should be: "Unite and Triumph."

P.S. And we all heard about the Vanderbilt (Texas) University Davis Cup matches between South Africa and the United States which were so disastrous — there were more demonstrators than spectators — that the Vanderbilt University officials really admitted they would never do it again. Not only was it a financial disaster, it was also very bad publicity and who needs that???



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