



*We see the world
through Black eyes*

The issue is racism

The Community Coalition for School Integration has presented comprehensive recommendations for change in the Portland School District's policies toward Black and minority students. These include desegregation, education, teacher training, discipline, administration, etc.

Implicit in the findings and recommendations — though not stated — is the fact that the cause of segregation and all its resulting evils is racism. The cause is not the housing — education — employment cycle; for those also are the results of racism.

The only way the School Board can deal with these recommendations in an intelligent and enlightened manner, and to honestly attempt to deal with all of their ramifications, is to accept the premise that the decisions that have brought them to this point in history have been made because of racism.

It is an accepted fact that the history of this nation has endowed American citizens with racism that is an important part of our culture and institutions. It is a true, but lesser known fact, that throughout Oregon's history this institutional racism has been carefully nourished.

The schools in Portland did not become segregated through chance. The real estate industry — with the support of government and the corporate decision makers — confined Portland's Black population into a designated area. The School Boards — who are responsible for determining school attendance boundaries — drew those boundaries in a manner that put Black children in one school and white children in another. Two schools (Eliot and Humboldt) were built in the Black community — over the protest of Black people — and were segregated when they opened. One of those, Humboldt, was built after the 1954 Supreme Court Decision.

Black people have not remained silent, but over a period of at least thirty years have consistently pointed out the inequities — first segregation and the poor quality of education in Albina schools, then the inequities and indignities of the "Model Schools" program, the failure of

the "Schools for the Seventies" plan to desegregate the lower elementary grades, etc. The Black Coalition brought suit against the School District in 1970 claiming discrimination in discipline — a problem that continues today. In the late 60's and early 70's students were struggling to have Black culture and history taught in the high schools — a feat that still has not been accomplished and is all but forgotten.

School Board members have come and gone. Superintendents and administrators have come and gone. Yet the Districts' basic racist demeanor toward the Black student remains in tact.

The current School Board and Superintendent must forget their own egos and cease their defensive stance. If they don't want to shoulder the blame for the Districts' past and current racism they can blame it on history. But if they are to deal with the serious problems that face this city they will have to accept the facts and go from there.

There is nothing radical in the Coalition's recommendations. School pairing is the oldest and one of the most common practices in desegregation. It has proven to be successful. But research has found that the most vital ingredient in a successful school desegregation/integration program is a committed School Board.

Move now!

The small group of Southwest area residents who so eloquently opposed the idea of busing white and Black children to achieve school desegregation at the School Board meeting Monday have a great idea. They claim that housing is the culprit and therefore the answer to the problem is integrated housing.

This could be an accomplished fact — and not in fifty years either. Just let those twenty people and several thousand of their friends and neighbors in Southwest Portland exchange their homes with Black residents of Albina: Then we would have two fully integrated communities!

The *Observer* will gladly provide the service of matching families who are ready to move. Let's go!

NAACP election: Hicks

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

they have activities to get involved in, they have a sense of accomplishment because they have various tasks to achieve. Otherwise we find ourselves in a situation where we have over 2,000 members on paper and far less than ten percent in function. This is undesirable and I think it can be turned around.

Observer: What should be the role of the NAACP in Portland?

Hicks: In terms of the role the NAACP should play, I think the first role it must always maintain is being an effective voice of the people that it represents. Being an effective voice of the people naturally includes representing all people. Not just young, not just old. Not just Black, not just white — all people because that's what the NAACP stands for. We should be a voice in at least the areas that our standing committees address. Those areas include veteran's affairs, education, church, youth work, housing, employment, labor and industry. Any person, and especially any member of the NAACP, should feel privileged to call on us and express their concerns in any of these areas and others. We should be able to be responsive enough to citizens to develop with all deliberate speed an ad hoc committee or special task force to look at special issues that arise, but we should primarily be able to plan and direct action in the areas of those standing committees.

That's why I think it is important for each standing committee to at least have some initial direction. I think we will get more progress in a shorter period of time I also feel that we should allow those committee to have some room to develop their own agenda, but we should at least provide them with an initial framework.

Roles of the NAACP, I believe, include reviewing and analyzing affirmative action programs and practices. Based on this analysis, initiate a report to our membership. If the findings, strongly support that there's been ill will of any sort in any agency we should exercise our powers to investigate that possibility. We should use every power in our realm to bring about legal action against that company, agency or entity.

I think one role should indicate leadership development, particularly as it relates to young people. We must remember that our young people are our future. It is important for them to have models in positive, neutral and negative. It is important for them to decipher for themselves which way they want to go in life and its important for us to provide opportunities and equal access for them to become whatever they want to become.

The NAACP should double if not triple its activities in youth leadership. We should sponsor leadership conferences for our young and various age ranges. Then should address such topics as community participation, leadership, education, Black values, the NAACP itself, career opportunities from the 1980's and whatever the young people think is important for them.

Another role the NAACP should play is in the field of housing. I feel, and I have gained input from various people, that housing conditions in Portland are unfair. NAACP should investigate these feelings and allegations. We should develop a housing inspection team which would be a team of volunteers who have housing skills, either in construction or different levels of housing development. These individuals would respond to complaints and reports of unsafe housing

conditions. They would enter the dwelling, check the conditions and submit to the Branch its recommendations. Its recommendations could include a note being sent to the landlord, a renters strike if conditions are that drastic, or anything the housing committee feels would be an appropriate action to take to make sure the people we represent have equal housing conditions and opportunities.

We should adopt that attitude in all our committees — education, housing, career, and others. NAACP should address not just young people in high school but young people in elementary school. It seems feasible that we could collect donations to set up a children's reading library where we would have books written by various authors, probably minority people but not necessarily. One thing these books would have in common is that they would portray minority people in positive roles. This library could be located in our branch office, open at regular hours, and be available to parents and kids who want to learn about themselves and their heritage and culture. It seems like a natural service that we should offer.

Another role that we should play is intervening with City and County officials in situation where there have been planned resources for the city for various activities — economic, housing development, job development, etc. The NAACP has a role to play to make sure that this community is not overlooked in negotiations on the first level, not the second level. The NAACP should take a role in any further negotiations regarding the layoff of Public Service Employees. The NAACP should also take a role in the Community Coalition in its efforts to insure quality education for all kids. The NAACP should take a role to insure that all of our veterans receive and are aware of the benefits available to them. We should become more involved in the training and preparation of young employees.

Some other roles relate to economic development. By that I mean the NAACP should be strong economically. We should not rely upon a membership earnings to operate the office. We should have regularly scheduled campaign drives to insure that our treasury is substantial and has the resources to enact programs. If I am elected president I will move to set up a special task force to investigate possibilities of receiving donations. It is important that the NAACP take advantage of the many resources in the city of Portland.

The NAACP should become the educator and the consciousness of the City of Portland. We can be as much as an ally as a foe and it is not our desire to be either one in particular. But it is our desire to articulate the needs of our membership where ever that leads us.

Observer: What are some of the issues you think the NAACP should address in Portland.

Hicks: I have discussed many of the issues, but another is legal redress. Legal redress is an area in which we have been weak. I think that we could develop a resource bank of lawyers who are willing to work with us to pursue our goal to right the wrongs against various members of this society. I think that these lawyers should be willing to conduct legal education seminars — for example in citizens' rights or contracts. They would refer people to agencies that have been set up to investigate certain legal concerns. The area of being able to address political concerns needs to be addressed also.

We should advocate for the elderly. We forget too much — they are often put aside. Too often they are treated as people who are unable to do anything and not interested in doing anything, and I don't think this is the case. We should assist them in seeking to have a livelihood and if they are physically disabled, we should assist them to maintain their houses.

Observer: What experiences in the NAACP or elsewhere do you feel demonstrate your ability to provide the leadership to address these issues?

Hicks: I've been involved in the Oregon State System of Higher Education since 1969 as a special services program director. I've gotten countless numbers of students into college; I developed curriculum that speaks to the need of employment preparation, skills development, job skills, etc. I've developed programs that attempt to offer minorities an opportunity to prepare themselves for positions that are not traditionally career areas for minorities, such as engineering. Also I have held two Black youth leadership conferences.

In addition I have worked with students as a student and as a teacher so I feel like I have a close relationship with students that have difficulty in attending school and deciding what school has to offer them. In this area I have developed some effective skills.

Politically speaking I've been in the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs, the NAACP and other movements that articulate the needs of Blacks in Oregon.

My experience as an administrator gives me excellent organizational skills. My ability to communicate with people of diversified backgrounds has indicated to me an ability to be persuasive. I am an intense person and an analytical thinker.

In terms of leadership, I have provided what I think is notable leadership, first as a newly appointed member of the NAACP board in 1975 and second as Chairman of the Education Committee and as Vice President. I have represented our Branch at three of the last four area conferences. Not only was I designated as official representative but I also was required to give a status report for the Branch. So in being required to do these things I've gotten a feel for the characteristics of the Branch. I have a very good handle on our financial situation, our membership situation and our program situation.

I participated very vigorously in the National Convention. First, I was the initiator of the task force that organized the wine sip for Mr. Hooks last August. It was that process that led to the eventual existence of the Convention Planning Committee of which I was designated Branch Liaison because the president didn't have the time to put into that committee.

I have formed valuable relationships with members of the national office and with the area officers.

I see myself as having been fortunate enough to encounter different experiences and to have translated those experiences into action and skills. Now within me is the desire to put those experiences and skills into implementation. I cannot in all good conscience, as vice president, sit back and maintain my comfortable position and allow this Branch to be without sound, effective leadership. I think that would be an omission of my challenge and my charge as received in our 1976 installation program. Consequently I'm running for the office of president.



UN showdown over Namibia?

by N. Fungai Kumbula

There has been a battle royal going on between South Africa on the one hand and the Western Powers on the other. The battle is over elections scheduled to be held in Namibia starting next week. South Africa, which has administered Namibia the end of World War I has promised to relinquish control as soon as Namibians elect their own government.

South Africa had originally been given a mandate by the now defunct League of Nations to run Namibia as a trust territory. The League of Nations folded and was superseded by the United Nations. In 1966, the UN revoked South Africa's mandate and ordered that Namibia be granted self government but, up till now, South Africa has refused to give up Namibia.

Several weeks back, the aforementioned Western powers had wrenched an agreement from South Africa that she would allow the holding of elections in Namibia and relinquish control by the end of this year. In September, John Vorster the then prime minister, resigned and was replaced by the more reactionary Pieter Botha. One of the first things Botha did was to reject the whole idea of UN supervised elections in Namibia claiming that the UN was biased in favor of SWAPO, the movement that has been fighting a guerrilla campaign against South African troops in Namibia since 1966.

So, Botha decided that South African troops and not UN peace keeping forces would supervise the elections slated for December 4th through 8th. The Western powers, the U.S., Britain, France, West Germany and Canada have been leaning on South Africa to cancel the elections which the UN has already branded "null and void." South Africa claims that they should hold these elections now, and then hold another round of elections later on which the UN forces can oversee.

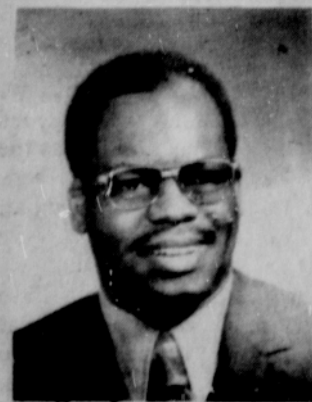
The thing, of course, is that South Africa is so afraid that if free and fair elections are held, SWAPO would win. If she had been so concerned about Angola, you can imagine the consternation they feel at the thought of having a strong, Black, Marxist government for a neighbor. SWAPO has already indicated that none of its people will contest the elections under the present set-up. That leaves the pro-South Africa and South African financed DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance) as the most likely winner. If the DTA wins, the present status quo can be maintained under the guise of a freely elected Namibian government.

Better yet for South Africa, Dirk Mudge, the white leader of the DTA has already voiced his opposition to the later elections to be supervised by the UN. It's easy to see why — in free and fair elections, — he would not stand a chance. So South Africa

has to rig the elections in order for him to win.

The whole scenario is now shaping up into another Rhodesia. If South Africa goes ahead with this internal settlement, SWAPO would have no option but to escalate the war, like the Patriotic Front is doing in Rhodesia. The Western negotiators have been pressuring the Botha regime to abandon this plan and so avoid the Rhodesian tragedy. They have threatened that the UN would impose economic sanctions against South Africa unless she allows the holding of elections under UN supervision. But, would they carry out the threat? In previous years, it has been these same countries that have vetoed repeated Third World resolutions aimed at imposing these very sanctions.

South Africa too, knows that such a threat is most likely a bluff and indications are she will call the bluff. What then? Supposedly, at this very moment, negotiations aimed at securing some form of a compromise are taking place. They will probably come up with half a solution and hope life goes on as usual. This, however, is a forlorn hope because now the opponents of apartheid are in a stronger position to fight for the imposition of sanctions. In a way, the UN has squeezed itself into a corner and will have to take some form of action. Sanctions against South Africa would also affect Rhodesia. Stay tuned.



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