

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## In their place!

Members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) who visited the Middle East last week have disturbed a lot of white Americans who would like to see Blacks stay in their place.

Oregon's largest daily refers to SCLC: "Witness the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a conspicuous example of a minuscule civil rights organization that has leaped beyond its regional boundaries to intervene as a self-appointed international peacemaker."

The newspaper further advises SCLC to take advice from Bayard Rustin who warned them not to forfeit the "long and noble tradition of non-violence" and Black Americas' "moral prestige" by meeting with the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Apparently the editors have forgotten that this "minuscule organization," founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, had influence well beyond its numbers when it forced the United States to redefine the civil rights of its citizens.

It is suitable that this organization fill the void created by a government that refuses to communicate publicly with the Palestinian Liberation Organization—a government that cannot possibly bring peace to the Middle East while ignoring a major factor in the dispute.

Who better than Black people who have endured the brutalities of American racial oppression can understand and interpret the inhuman conditions under which three million Palestinian people live?

What arrogance leads the white press to praise the occasional United Nation visits and peace proclamation of the Popes, while ridiculing the

peace efforts of Black ministers? Is it because they still believe the place for Black people is within their "regional boundaries"—or in the back of the bus?

## Cold feet, runny noses

Portland's elementary children will face another hazzard this year—their classrooms will be kept at a 65 degree temperature.

The School Board chose not to take advantage of an exception to federal regulations that would allow the temperature to be kept at 68 degrees. President Carter's mandate to conserve energy requires that most buildings be maintained at 65 degrees but allows exceptions for elementary schools, child care centers and hospitals.

Children who walk to school or wait for buses in the rain will arrive at school with wet clothing. Some will be inadequately dressed. Cold hands and feet, and general discomfort, cannot add to the learning ability of small children.

The school district did not obtain the advice of physicians or other health specialists on making its determination that cold rooms will not adversely affect the health, attendance or learning of the districts' children.

It is incumbent on the district to keep careful records of illnesses and absences. An assessment of the effect of learning will be more difficult if not impossible.

We believe the district has made a mistake in placing the savings of \$100,000 and a few barrels of oil above the comfort of students. Why not let the young children have a comfortable and pleasant place in which to learn?



## Africa: The housecleaning continues

by N. Fungai Kumbula

One of the sad things about Africa in the past few years has been its preponderance of dictatorships. For many who were beginning to look to Africa as the Motherland, this was a glaring contradiction; while they tried to speak up for Africa, it was impossible to overlook the dictatorships, one party states, military governments and a gross disregard for human rights. In some cases, sad as it sounds, some countries were worse off after 'independence' than before.

In the past few years, particularly the last two, there seems to have been an accelerated shift away from this unhappy state of affairs. So much so that the last OAU conference, held in June in Liberia, even set up a "human rights watchdog committee." This was a far cry from the days of "non interference" in the affairs of other member states. This action by the OAU seems to have accelerated the dismantling of some of Africa's most notorious dictatorships. Since June, Macias Nguema, iron-fisted dictator of Equatorial Guinea has been overthrown. His reign of terror had forced fully 25 per cent of his citizens into exile.

The ouster of Idi Amin in Uganda made headlines the world over and gave newsmen something to bite into for several weeks. The latest despot to bite the dust is the self-proclaimed Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa I of the Central African Empire. He hit the headlines recently when it was revealed that he had killed about 100 to 200

schoolchildren ranging in age from eight to sixteen, simply because they had refused to wear school uniforms. The revelation caused a lot of countries, among them France, then her largest aid provider, to cut off aid to the Bokassa regime. Ironically, Bokassa was overthrown by the very same man he had overthrown 14 years previously. In 1965, Bokassa had seized power from David Dacko, the Central African Republic's first popularly elected president following independence from France.

Bokassa was a source of constant embarrassment to all Africa. Two years ago, he had squandered \$30 million on his own 'coronation' when he converted the then Central African Republic to the 'Central African Regime.' In a country ranked as one of the 25 poorest in the world, this was fully 25 per cent of the total budget. Over the years, his penchant for cutting off thieves' hands, beating prisoners to death and slicing off various parts of the anatomies of whoever incurred his wrath cowed the whole country into helpless submission while his extravagance (among his countless possessions he boasts nine palaces, and several private jets) plunged the country further into the throes of poverty.

That's three dictators gone all in one year and, in each case, it has since been revealed, other African countries lent the support and the means by which their brothers and sisters overthrew the murderers. Con-

tinuing the same liberalization trend, there were elections recently in Nigeria to choose a civilian government to take over after 12 years of successive military regimes. Ghana also chose a civilian government in elections conducted within the past three months. She, too, had lumbered under one military regime after another for the past ten years. These two countries have paved the way for what we hope will be a continuing trend all over Africa: returning the vote to the people.

Southern Africa has not been totally left out of all these good tidings: the wars in Mozambique and Angola resulted in the overthrow of five centuries of Portuguese domination. Over in Rhodesia, after eight decades of white intransigence and defiance the war of liberation has forced the whites to put forward a few Black faces to carry on their dirty work. However, with the war intensifying rather than slackening, the whites have once again been forced back to the bargaining table where, at this very moment, they are agreeing to the abolishment of almost all their privileges.

Both South Africa and Namibia continue to simmer and, it is a fair assessment to say that the days of colonial domination in the south of the Motherland are, finally drawing to a close. Within the next five to ten years, look for a truly independent Zimbabwe and a free Namibia as well as tremendous progress in the struggle to free South Africa.

## VOICES OF REVOLUTION

Agostinho Neto

Agostinho Neto, president of the People's Republic of Angola and leader in the struggle for liberation, was also a poet. Below are some of his poems, many of which were written while he was jailed by the Portuguese.

### here in prison

Here in prison  
I would recall Hikmet  
where I to think of you Marina  
in that house with grandmother and child

Here in prison  
I would recall the heroes  
were I to sing joyfully  
the war songs  
with which our people crush slavery

Here in prison  
I would recall the saints  
were I to forgive them  
the torments and lies  
with which they shatter our happiness

Here in prison  
rage contained in my breast  
I patiently wait  
for the clouds to gather  
blown by the wind of history

No one  
can stop the rain

### struggle

Violence  
voices of steel in the sun  
setting fire to a landscape already hot

and dreams  
dispersed  
against a wall of bayonets

A new wave rises  
and longings dispersed  
over unburied bodies

And a new wave rises for the struggle  
and yet another and another  
until there remains of violence  
only our pardon.

### we must return

To the houses, to our crops  
to the beaches, to our fields  
we must return

To our lands  
red with coffee  
white with cotton  
green with maize fields  
we must return

To our mines of diamonds  
gold, copper, oil  
we must return

To our rivers, our lakes  
to the mountains, the forests  
we must return

To the coolness of the mulemba  
to our traditions  
to the rhythms and bonfires  
we must return

To the marimba and the quissage  
to our carnival  
we must return

To our beautiful Angolan homeland  
our land, our mother  
we must return

We must return  
to liberated Angola  
independent Angola

## Affirmative Action and the Governor

by Calvin O.L. Henry



Earlier this month, Eleanor Holmes Norton, head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, told a conference of federal civil rights offices that the federal government has a worse record of providing job opportunities to minorities and women than private business. Is this any less true for the State of Oregon?

Many state workers feel that the same can be said about the State of Oregon. And certainly, Blacks feel that they are getting less of an opportunity for job opportunity now in state government. Qualifications have very little to do with it. Black college graduates are said to provide a higher unemployment rate than white high school dropouts.

"Recent appointments to key positions in state government reflect that the demand is for white males with a fiscal management background," one state personnel worker noted. While many Blacks, from around the state, are observing that no Black males have been appointed to any key positions in the Atiyeh Administration, regardless of their qualifications.

When candidate Victor Atiyeh spoke at the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs meeting on October 28, 1978, he stated that he would not be opposed to hiring Blacks and other racial minorities in key cabinet or line positions in his administration. Matter-of-fact, he was quoted as saying, "I will not be opposed to it. . . . Yes, I will. . . . I will try. Matter-of-fact, I will encourage it." After his election, Governor-elect Atiyeh stated, "Finding the right person for the right job is one of the highest priorities during this transition

period. The search must be statewide and impartial, with competence and integrity the overriding criteria."

Governor Atiyeh has made three appointments of Black women in highly visible positions within his administration, but they are not in cabinet or line positions. These appointees came from the Department of Human Resources and they were replaced with white males with a fiscal management background.

Maybe Atiyeh is keeping his promise, but are his department heads still acting like those of the past administration? A case in point is the process of selecting the permanent Regional Manager for the Multnomah Region of Adult and Family Services Division.

The former Regional Manager of the Multnomah Region of Adult and Family Services Division was Hazel Hays, who was, at that time, considered the only Black in a high line position in state government. She was appointed to the State Parole Board by Atiyeh, and was replaced by a white male as the acting regional manager. The acting regional manager is Dick Rova.

The recruitment for the regional manager was open and eight names were finally certified with scores of 100 on the examination. Two of these applicants are Black males; however, on the initial certification, one of their names was left off. The current acting regional manager is not one of these eight.

The position was initially advertised on July 17, 1979, and closed on July 31, 1979, as not being in the executive service. Now this position is being changed to executive service so that the administrator of Adult and Family Services will not have to hire off of the certification list from the Personnel Division.

However, Director J.B. Bedingfield, State Executive Department,

requested in his letter of August 28, 1979, that all state agencies limit their transfer of those who qualify with the executive service status to an absolute minimum. And there are some questions in the division whether this particular regional manager position or all regional manager positions should be in executive service. Then, in this change by Adult and Family Services Division being made to prevent a competent Black with integrity from being appointed?

This may be only one example among many in state government where job opportunities for Blacks and other racial minorities are becoming increasingly more difficult and few. One would not have to look very far to see how blatant racial discrimination on the job in state government has increased. Many people are saying that aura of state government is becoming more like the Nixon administration and Watergate.

Norton said equal employment efforts have been more successful in private business because firms that lack adequate affirmative action plans can lose lucrative federal contracts, while the federal government faces no such penalties. What about the states?

Atiyeh has said many times that he is for bringing more qualified minorities in his administration, and he is creating a name bank of qualified individuals. But it appears that the translation of his position on minority hiring to actuality by his department heads is lacking. Will the State of Oregon record of providing job opportunities to minorities become worse than Oregon private business?

Perhaps it is time for state government to take affirmative action.

### LUTHER



By Brumsic Brandon, Jr.

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

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