

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Supreme Court sets back clock

The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling which placed seniority over Affirmative Action is as detrimental to Afro-Americans as their "separate but equal" ruling in 1896. The court legitimized the illegitimate notion of "reverse discrimination."

Affirmative Action was the only active redress to systemic and institutional policies that excluded Americans by race and sex. If an employer discriminated against people of color and women in the past, Affirmative Action allowed for numerical readjustment.

Under the Reagan Administration, society has disclaimed any responsibility for making people of color social, economic and political minorities. White males are in a position of reaping benefits for acts which they claimed they played no part in. "Why should I be laid off when I've put in 15 years at the plant and this Black guy has only been here for 4?" says a white worker in defense of his seniority rights.

However, if the plant did not hire Blacks 15 years ago, the Black worker could not reap the equality of security granted his white counter parts. He or she will be laid off in recessions and barred from promotions because of discriminatory acts ten or twenty years ago. People of color will continue to pay for the sins

of those who would not hire them because of their color or sex.

The seniority system in the collective bargaining agreement between company and the union perpetuates or "locks in" the effects of past discrimination.

When Congress and the courts made white male supremacy illegal in employment, both the formal and informal system of selection remained intact. There was the "old boy" system of filling vacancies by word of mouth and preferences for sons and nephews of employees.

Also, stereotypes held by personnel directors about the kinds of people best suited for certain positions, and assumptions that certain ethnic groups had a natural monopoly in other positions, perpetuates past discrimination.

Federal agencies and the lower courts were willing to confront these much more complex obstacles to equality by imposing goals and quotas

The limited progress of the past ten years was wiped out with the single stroke of a pen. And we must regroup and develop our own economic systems to prevent second-class citizenship from resurfacing.

## Support cultural boycott

Besides being talented and successful entertainers, Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Isaac Hayes, Della Reese and Johnny Mathis have another thing in common: they have all appeared on stage recently in South Africa.

Chances are few Blacks in that country of apartheid had the opportunity to enjoy their shows. Chances are the Black South Africans who comprise the vast majority of the population, were not allowed into the posh convention facilities, golf courses and nightclubs where both Black and white American show business stars perform.

These entertainers earn fat paychecks while their fellow Blacks are denied basic human rights, the choice of where to work and where to

live, and are forced to live separated from family members even in their own country, which is completely dominated by the racist white minority government headed by Prime Minister P.W. Botha.

A boycott of Mathis' recordings and concerts, as well as boycotts of other entertainers who go to South Africa, is an excellent method of calling our attention to the excesses of the apartheid government there and to those who inadvertently help to legitimize it.

Portlanders organized for South African Freedom (POSAF) who organized the Mathis boycott, deserves a round of applause for educating the public on this critical issue.

WE'VE GOT A PLAN TO REDUCE TEENAGE UNEMPLOYMENT —

LOWER THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR THEM DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS



WON'T THIS LOWER OTHER WAGES AND WEAKEN THE UNIONS?

IF IT DOES, WE CAN ALWAYS EXTEND IT



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## Towards a lasting Rainbow Coalition

by Dr. Manning Marable  
"From The Grassroots"

The Democratic Presidential primaries are now history. Walter Mondale's victories in New Jersey and West Virginia, combined with the unnamed delegates yet selected by party officials, assure the former Vice President the nomination. All eyes are turning to San Francisco and the inevitable struggle over the party platform. Hart's triumph in California and other states seems to represent the transfer of power within the party to the technocratic "neoliberals" after 1984. And the most charismatic and progressive candidate, Jesse Jackson, has rewritten American political history by placing the demands of the Civil Rights Movement into the very heart of the electoral system.

I would urge Jesse Jackson, and all members of the Rainbow Coalition, to think beyond the Democratic convention and beyond the November, 1984, presidential election. No matter what concessions the political power brokers make to us in San Francisco, and regardless of any quixotic Third Party challengers, the American public will be faced with a choice between Reagan and Mondale this November. If Reagan wins, the crisis in Central America will probably become a full-scale war with direct intervention by American troops. The current stalemate in arms negotiations will worsen, and billions of dollars from Social Security, food stamps, health care and jobs programs will be seized to feed the bloated Pentagon. Civil rights, peace, and labor activists will come under increased political attack. If Mondale wins, the probability of nuclear and conventional war will decrease, but more modest increases in military spending will continue. The brutal slashes in social services will be halted, but funding levels probably will not be restored to pre-1980 levels. Domestic civil rights will be strengthened, and we should anticipate a more liberal Supreme Court. Yet the fundamental

economic problems which created the basis for Reaganism, might push Mondale to the right—as they did former President Carter in 1978-80. The central question then, is not whether and how Reagan is to be defeated—but how democratic and multiracial groups must prepare for and respond to the political realities of January, 1985, and after.

A permanent, national Rainbow Coalition is absolutely essential to deepen the momentum of the Jackson campaign of this spring. If Reagan wins, millions of Americans will be demoralized and may retreat from political activity. Those few achievements of the Civil Rights Movement which have not yet been attacked immediately will be on Reagan's hit list. Keep in mind that we have not yet seen the real Reagan. Once he's reelected, he cannot run again. As the clock of his presidential tenure ticks away, he'll be more anxious to reshape society into an even more racist, undemocratic order. Most people do not become politically involved when they are under ceaseless, brutal assault by the government—they often acquiesce, conform, and accommodate. It could take years to revive the current level of political momentum in the Black community.

Yet, if Mondale wins—thanks primarily to the Jackson campaign and to the millions of new voters it brought to the polls—there will be a tendency to relax organizing efforts. The clearcut "evil" has been removed from office, but without constant public pressure from the grassroots, Mondale will fail to carry out even his own moderate political agenda. Frederick Douglass' dictum—"Power concedes nothing without demand"—still rings true.

The Rainbow Coalition is still a promise in the making, and not a political reality. Millions of Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, feminists, progressive labor leaders, peace activists and environmentalists, as well as Black

people, are demanding a redefinition of American democracy. A country which contemptuously dismisses their rights, and the demands of the homeless and hungry, the elderly and the poor, cannot claim to be democratic. The right to a job must be seen as "inalienable" as the right to vote; the right to a world climate without the omnipresent specter of nuclear holocaust is as basic as the right to life and liberty. The arc of the Rainbow should embrace all these groups who cherish social justice and human equality—the very essence of democracy. But we must be certain that this family of democracy is not simply another coalition for the Democratic Party. Of course, we must support all progressive Democratic party candidates who challenge the system's inequality, such as Harold Washington, John Conyers, and Ron Dellums. We must redouble efforts in voter registration and education. But to win democracy, we must also use every avenue of political organizing outside the electoral system: demonstrations, marches, neighborhood organizing, union activity. The Democratic party is only a very limited vehicle to fight for democracy, as the Jackson campaign has shown.

Historical opportunities are always fleeting moments. Now is the time to build a permanent Rainbow Coalition, a national membership organization for jobs, peace, and freedom.

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## Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

This is how some of the people reacted to, "should employers be penalized for hiring an illegal alien?"



**Joyce Fletcher**  
Human Resource Worker

"No, we have got to the point where most people in our country are not doing the work. High school kids come out of school wanting \$10.00 an hour. The aliens are serving this country and I hate to see someone penalized for doing work no one else wanted to do."



**Philip Greek**  
Musician

"Right now I'm undecided. I feel it does take away from jobs. I don't know if employers should be given a fine or a warning."



**Carol Flint**  
Office Manager

"Yes. The United States ought to take care of their own. There are a lot of us starving and out of work."



**John Judge**  
Construction

"They should bring in people on a temporary, but organized, basis to work and then let them return to their own country."



**Dawn Williams**  
Mother

"No, everybody should be given a chance to work."



**Steve Duncan**  
Unemployed

"Yes, people in the United States are not working and aliens are taking over our jobs."

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