

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Another Black History Week

It is Black History Week again and time to remember the past contributions, to evaluate the present and to plan for the future.

We know the past. Black people played an important role in the discovery, the exploration and the settlement of Oregon. Black people helped to build a modern civilization -- as servants and slaves, as farmers, merchants, laborers and businessmen. Although locked out of the state's political, social and economic mainstream, they left their mark.

The present is more difficult to evaluate. Although great strides have been made in the area of legislation -- Oregon is at the forefront in civil rights legislation -- the realities are still not so great. White people and organizations realize they can discriminate without danger to themselves.

Black people are still not found in proportionate numbers in private industry or in civil service. Although there have been gains in professional employment, and in some crafts and trades, Blacks are not properly represented in administration, supervision or planning.

Across the nation Black public officials are under attack -- Diggs, Brooke, Dymally -- and Gilcrease. And who knows who will be next?

The economic development lags behind that of the nation. Although the number of Black businesses may be growing, they are still not accepted as competitors and partners by the white business community. A few tokens are thrown -- and those are mainly at federal direction.

The schools are still segregated -- Black children scattered and largely ignored. The School Board has refused to act in a responsible manner.

There are constant charges of police brutality. Youths are making their way to prison in alarming numbers. The criminal justice system has failed to respond.

The elderly are overlooked and left out. Programs that once held hope have been snatched away.

A dismal picture? Then look to the future.

What does the future hold? Only what the people make it produce. Organizing, voting, uniting and demanding are the key to the future.

## China: The new Sunbelt?

by Bayard Rustin

Like two long-estranged lovers, the United States and China have embraced each other warmly, casting aside bitter memories of old quarrels and deeply-felt hatreds. This sudden and rather passionate reconciliation has many hopeful and positive features. Yet at the same time it would be quite foolish to ignore the many problems -- actual and potential -- arising from America's rapprochement with the world's largest and most tightly-controlled totalitarian state.

By raising my doubts and criticism, I don't mean to dismiss the importance and promise of the newly-established relationship with China. Nor do I mean to suggest that we would be better off if we simply ignored the Chinese. Rather, I raise my questions now because they could be easily lost in the flood of uncritical praise so lavishly heaped on everything Chinese. The present euphoria about the People's Republic -- and even its most gruesome aspects -- forces me to conclude that we may be collectively blinding ourselves to some unattractive realities. Self-deception, as we all know, offers temporary peace of mind, but in the long-run it almost inevitably leads to even more serious problems.

Two questions in particular cry out for attention, especially from Black people. First, what does the new relationship between American business and the Chinese rulers mean for working people? And, second, will the Carter Administration scrap its commitment to human rights in deference to China's heavy-handed and deeply-entrenched governing elite?

In the area of economics, one thing is quite clear: American business views China as a huge pool of cheap, docile and rigidly-disciplined labor. Whereas labor-intensive companies once turned from the Northeastern states to the Sunbelt states, they now look toward China as the new low-wage Mecca. In the eyes of American business leaders, China offers untold possibilities for expansion and huge profits won at the expense of defen-

seless workers.

While it is still too early to estimate the full impact of this low wage Asian "Sunbelt" on American workers, particularly those in semi-skilled or unskilled manufacturing jobs, several recent cases suggest what the future may hold.

Last fall two American apparel companies -- Prestige Sportswear of Boston and Oxford Industries of New York -- concluded a preliminary deal with the Chinese to construct and equip plants in two major cities. Because China lacks hard currency, the American companies agreed to establish a barter system with their Chinese clients. In other words, instead of demanding cash for the plants and equipment, the American companies will be "paid" with finished products, in this case sports clothes and corduroy suits. These apparel items manufactured by low-paid Chinese workers (the per capita income of China is less than \$400 per year) will then find their way to American retail outlets and sell at normal American prices. Under such an arrangement, our own apparel workers -- many of them seriously under-employed and under-paid -- will find it impossible to compete with Chinese workers earning mere pennies.

While the emerging barter system threatens workers in an immediate and direct way, other jobs are endangered indirectly by capital outflows from the United States to China. Simply put, this means that when an American company decides to invest in Chinese-based operations, it has fewer financial resources to invest in job-creating activities in the United States. Subsequently, fewer jobs develop here as new jobs open in China.

A number of firms have already turned to China with heavy investment plans. Kaiser Steel Corporation and Bethlehem Steel, for instance, have both decided to build new iron ore facilities in China. And the Fluor Corporation concluded one of the largest deals (\$800 million for starters) ever negotiated with the Chinese. Other lucrative ventures are planned by Coca-Cola, Hyatt International and Pan American Airways. And this is only the beginning.

Business leaders, of course, argue that large capital exports to China, and a steady influx of cheap Chinese products will not seriously threaten American jobs. Flourishing U.S.-China trade, they insist, will actually create jobs in America. Such an argument might make sense if we planned to export finished consumer goods like automobiles, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners. But the great bulk of American export to China will consist of agricultural commodities, and, to a much lesser extent, high technology items like computers. Neither agriculture nor sophisticated computer and communications industries offer much hope of new employment opportunities for displaced workers. While "free trade" certainly has its theoretical attractions, it makes little sense for the average American manufacturing employee.

Now, let us consider the question of human rights, a question which is intimately connected to the economic problems.

Aside from a few devoted Maoists, most people agree that the Chinese government is oppressive, totally undemocratic, and frequently prone to use force and outright terror in achieving political ends.

How does one promote respect for human rights? One promising approach is the use of economic incentives or sanctions. Just recently, for example, labor organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere threatened to boycott Chilean goods until the Pinochet regime allows workers to freely organize. Already, the Chilean government has shown some signs of moderating its harsh rule.

But in the case of China, scarcely anyone has looked to trade -- or anything else -- as a possible weapon in the battle for human rights.

While history may someday show that President Carter's bold decision to recognize China was a stroke of political and strategic genius, our triumph will surely seem less than magnificent if we cynically abandon the struggle for human rights, and seek to modernize China at the expense of jobs and dignity for America's poor and working people.



## Zimbabwe: An update

by N. Fungai Kumbula

Iran has been so much in the news lately it has completely overshadowed the other area of perennial conflict: Southern Africa. Not that there is anything wrong with Iran's monopolizing the limelight. On the contrary, we all rejoice that the Iranian revolution has achieved one of its main objectives: the ouster of both the shah and his hand-picked "successor" Shahpour Bhaktiar. We hope that it will continue to be carried on to its ultimate goal: the democratization of the Iranian society.

While all this has been going on, the Zimbabwean tragedy has been dragging inexorably on. On January 30th, in a referendum reserved exclusively for whites, Ian Smith won the mandate he needed to carry on with his power sharing plan that will eventually lead to "majority rule." That he won was no surprise. For the first time in their lives, Rhodesian whites now realize the inevitability of a Black takeover.

Actually, they were choosing the "lesser of two evils": they could either have voted for Smith to pursue his version of "majority rule" or (by rejecting it), they could have voted to continue fighting what even the most die-hard among them admit is a war they cannot possibly win. By opting for "power sharing," they are hoping to keep the Africans divided between the "moderate" and "radical" camps. They are also hoping to persuade the outside world, particularly the U.S. to recognize the resultant "internal government." This would ultimately lead to a revocation of the trade embargo necessitated by sanctions.

In this hope, they are encouraged

by a number of recent events in the U.S. Most obvious, of course, is the decided shift to the right of the country's politics. Going along with this is the make up of the 96th Congress. Senator Dick Clark (D-Iowa) who was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was defeated in his bid for re-election last November. Along with Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho) and George McGovern (D-South Dakota), he was one of the most progressive voices in the Senate. His defeat was not tied to his Africa policies, however, he just happened to run afoul of an anti-abortion group back in Iowa.

McGovern has taken over the chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee. He has just returned from a tour of Southern Africa during which he visited Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia as well as Namibia. When he came back, he made the recommendation that the U.S. should disengage from any peace efforts in Rhodesia because the situation was so hopeless. Jesse Helms of North Carolina is also now a member of this committee because, as he puts it: "I want to speak up for Rhodesia and South Africa." He will, no doubt, be pushing hard for recognition of Rhodesia's "internal government."

The House of Representatives has its own headaches too. Representative Charles Diggs (D-Michigan), powerful chairman of the Africa subcommittee was convicted of accepting kickbacks this past year. Though he was re-elected by an over-

whelming majority to his House seat, his colleagues in the House stripped him of his chairmanship of the Africa subcommittee. He is in the process of appealing the conviction and in the meantime, a Representative Solarz from New York has taken over the chairmanship of the subcommittee. Even though this gentleman may have a lot of good intentions as far as Africa goes, he could never be the equal of Diggs, a man who had built the Africa subcommittee into one of the most influential Congressional bodies.

Much of Carter's Africa policy was prompted by the work of these two committees. McGovern may head the Foreign Relations Committee as well as Clark did (they are both liberals) but, with that much more dissension (on the committee) and the prevailing mood of the country, he cannot be expected to be as effective. Without Charles Diggs, the Africa subcommittee can also be expected to be a lot more quiescent. All this works right into the hands of Ian Smith & Co.

After the phony elections of April 30th, Smith and his cohorts will be out to sell the internal government to the world and, they will be relying on such people as Jesse Helms to influence America's Africa policy. Also, with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance tied up with Iran and the Middle East, Zbigniew Brzezinski is left to himself to shape the administration's policy. He would be okay if only he would stop looking at Africa, particularly Southern Africa, in global terms. All this can only mean more trouble for our people.

### LUTHER



By Brumic Brandon, Jr.

## Letters to the Editor

### OSP can with hold mail

To the Editor:

The mail room staff of O.S.P. no longer has to deliver mail to prisoners or even notify them that they received mail. Under a new rule that took effect February 5, 1979, if the mail room staff decides the mail is "unacceptable or controversial" they can withhold the mail. The new procedure states that "... the sender will be notified of such and they will be given the opportunity of having the mail returned or having a hearing."

If a prisoner is controversial, e.g., one who writes the truth about what the staff is doing to prisoners behind these walls, then the same "correctional intelligence" that came up with the rule that prisoners accused of prison rule infractions may have witnesses testify on their behalf as long as the witnesses are not inmates, staff members, or other persons, will possibly be able to classify all mail sent to a controversial prisoner as controversial. If confronted with this

seemingly obvious attempt to suppress the truth from getting out of O.S.P., the keepers may point out that the rule is designed primarily to stop "controversial publications" from coming in here. But the staff has allowed publications in here for years that make jokes about child-molesting. Still, the staff claims in the new rule that they do not want any publications in here "... in that they affront general community standards."

The Prisoners' Legal Services of Oregon (875 Idylwood Drive, S.E., Salem, Oregon 97302, phone 399-9714) filed a Civil Rights Act lawsuit alleging that the staff beats, maces, tortures prisoners, and that prisoners' mail is "... unjustifiably withheld, confiscated, and destroyed."

The staff of O.S.P. have been working on new rules for a year. This new rule allows the mail room staff to justifiably withhold, confiscate, and destroy mail.

Sincerely,  
Donald Danford #32323

### Respect others

To the Editor:

I am not of Oriental descent and I respect the Bill of Rights and decent law-abiding citizens. I cannot understand why Japanese American citizens have had their dignity and possessions stripped from them during World War II. Hamlet's speech to the players describes the above. The Japanese Remembrance Day event will take place February 17th at 2:00 p.m. at the Expo Center in Portland, Oregon. If we do not show respect for one another in this nation, then whose else will?

R. Slaughter  
Portland, Oregon

## Black Educational Center

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

struggles. It is important that Black history be taught consistently. The fabric of the knowledge of the past is woven by exposure over and over and over again. The Black Educational Center presents an international perspective to youngsters -- a perspective upon which they can build later.

**Cooperation.** The BEC teaches that working together "for the good of all Black people" is the goal of education. In a time when Blacks are still suffering from negative images that "anything Black must be second-rate," the BEC attempts to teach that Black people must work in unity to build a better community.

**International Perspective.** Black history, traditions and current world struggles are essential for young Black children to understand. This does not mean mindless indoctrination, but a realistic presentation of Third World conditions and

**Respect for Work.** The BEC "promotes in the student a respect for, appreciation for, and participation in all forms of work." Students are given homework daily, and it is expected that every assignment will be done. Parents are expected to make proper arrangements for their child's study. Through work, education is achieved.

The Black Educational Center is a unique example of what Black people can do for themselves. Its existence offers a choice. Its achievement stands as an undeniable vision of the quality Black people can demand of one another.

She's pregnant. She's deserted. She needs help. She should call 221-0598 Birthright



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friend to friend help



ALFRED L. HENDERSON  
Editor/Publisher

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