

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Coalition has its place

Does the Community Coalition for School Integration still have a role to play? With the advent of the Black United Front, the drive for equitable school desegregation has passed from the Coalition to the Black United Front.

The Coalition is rather late in deciding to support and assist the BUF. It should have been the first. No other organization understood so vividly the injustices suffered Black children in the Portland Public Schools and had the facts to support their findings. But rather than come forward in that time of crisis the Coalition remained silent.

Some of its members chose to make their move through a new coalition: Schools for the City, the League of Women Voters, and Ecumenical Ministries. Through these groups they will attempt to educate the white community. This is a proper role for those groups -- and an effort that is needed -- but it is almost like the blind leading the blind -- the white leading the white.

True, many of the same people are involved -- the same little Schools for the City group was a decision making element in the Coalition. But in

the Coalition they were exposed to the few Blacks who did regularly participate -- like the light in the darkness or the voice crying in the wilderness.

Those who are left in the Coalition intend to make their voices heard -- to support the work of the BUF and to assist where possible. With some of the more conservative (or reserved) element out of leadership roles, the Coalition may find it has work to do after all.

The Coalition has established credibility over the past two years. It has earned the right to be heard. As the only truly inter-racial group on the scene, it will have a role to play, both in educating the white community and in supporting the Black community.

The recommendations the Coalition made to the School Board were largely rejected by the district, but the real culmination of the Coalition's work will be seen in the victory of the Black United Front. Those members of the Coalition who are willing to take a subordinate position to the Black United Front and support its efforts will be richly rewarded.

## The drink you take . . .

from the Atlanta Inquirer

You wouldn't get a child drunk, would you? No. Well, how about an unborn baby? Would you let it get drunk?

Of course you wouldn't. Yet, many unborn babies are overloaded with their mother's alcohol. Not just to the point of getting tipsy, but also to the point of developing birth defects.

The startling facts are these: Studies have shown that heavy drinking by the mother can result in a definite pattern of physical, mental and behavioral abnormalities. So definite is the pattern that researchers have named it the "fetal alcohol syndrome". The babies produced with this syndrome have birth defects and are, among other symptoms, shorter and lighter in weight than normal, and didn't "catch up" even after special postnatal care was provided.

The full-bloom syndrome has only been identified in offspring after heavy drinking by the mother. Heavy drinking is described as three or more ounces of absolute alcohol per day. That's equivalent to six average-sized drinks.

But, recent research has shown that drinking in lesser amounts (starting at about 1 ounce of absolute alcohol) during pregnancy can harm the unborn baby, resulting in some of the syndrome's symptoms. "Binge" drinking, particularly at a sensitive time for the fetus, can also have negative effects. Can overtoppling at just

one party have some adverse effects? A definite possibility.

What is known, aside from the fetal alcohol syndrome, is that if the expectant mother becomes drunk at a party, her unborn baby becomes drunk as well. But, of course, the tiny developing system of the fetus is not nearly as equipped handle alcohol as the system of the mother.

The unborn baby becomes drunk because the alcohol digested by the pregnant woman readily crosses the placenta to the fetus. But the undeveloped liver in the fetus can burn up alcohol at less than half the rate of an adult liver. That means that the alcohol remains in the fetal system longer than in the adult system.

Unfortunately, the unborn child can't say "no" when it's had enough.

While the risks of moderate and binge drinking are just beginning to be appreciated, the effect of smoking and diet deficiencies tied in with drinking are relatively unknown. Of course, any drugs being taken by the pregnant mother may interact in various negative ways with any alcohol that is consumed. Pregnant mothers should consult with their physicians about mixing drugs and alcohol.

Until all the facts are in about the effect of alcohol on the unborn, it makes sense to exercise caution.



## Rhodesia; Stalemate at London Conference

by N. Fungai Kumbula

All along, the question has been when rather than if the conference would bog down. Now it has. The conference was called by the new Conservative government to try and resolve the 14 year old Rhodesia deadlock. It brought together the currently warring factions: on the one hand Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith representing the "government" in Salisbury that supposedly was installed after the holding of the March "elections" and the guerrillas represented through the Patriotic Front.

The guerrillas have all along maintained that the so-called elections were a fraud and a sham and that it did not change anything at all in Rhodesia except the face of the enemy. The enemy no longer works directly but through puppets. That is why, with this in mind, it was easy to see that the conference was doomed before it got off the ground.

They have been negotiating since September 10th and over the weeks, some "progress" was reported. It was considered significant that they came together at all. However, each side came with a hardline policy: Muzorewa refusing to yield to new elections as proposed by the British while the Patriotic Front, insisting that the Muzorewa regime was illegal, indicated it would accept nothing short of a total dismantling of the Smith-Muzorewa clique.

Britain, chairing the negotiations, had managed to sidestep these earlier difficulties by getting both sides to negotiate on a new constitution which would be the basis for new elections and, consequently, a new government. While initially both sides had rejected this with Muzorewa claiming his government was "elected by the people of Zimbabwe" and the PF insisting on negotiating the mechanism of the transfer of power first, they had later on talked about a constitution first.

Britain then drafted a constitutional proposal which did not altogether eliminate the dominant role of the whites but curtailed it somewhat. In the old document, they had held 28 of 100 seats and effective veto power; in this new one they would hold 24 of 120 without the veto proviso. Though initially adamant over this, Muzorewa, decriing the cutting back of whites' privileges, had finally been forced to accept it. So as not to be left out, the PF had also tentatively accepted the proposed document.

Last Friday, Britain pushed for final acceptance of the constitutional draft by both sides. Muzorewa and Smith had accepted but the PF said "No!" insisting that it did not make sense to discuss a constitution before discussing the most important issue of all: control of the armed forces. Apparently, the constitutional draft

had avoided all mention of this prickly issue. Exasperated, Britain supposedly has given an ultimatum to the PF: "Accept this document or else..." What the "or else..." is no one really knows.

What options does Britain have? Recognize the current Smith regime and eliminate sanctions as Muzorewa has begged for so long? What would Britain do about stopping the war? Send in British soldiers to bolster the sagging Smith-Muzorewa alliance? The first two options she might undertake, however, the warning from the Lusaka conference that came from Black Africa not to sell their brothers and sisters is still too fresh and cannot be taken too lightly. Accepting Rhodesia would almost immediately alienate all Africa.

The second option is not even worth considering. Britain abdicated her role in 1965 when she failed to show up with the necessary troops to quell the Smith rebellion. By rejecting this constitution, the Africans are only acting in their own best interests. They have to have control of the army before there can be any transfer of power at all. It is also the first time I have heard of when one country not only writes out an entire constitution for another but also actually tries to force it on the people concerned. Smells of a return to slave days to me.

## Africa: Losing freedom to dependence

by Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu\*

(PNS)—While the white minority-ruled nations of Southern Africa continue the struggle for freedom from colonialism, the people of Black-ruled "liberated" Africa are losing their independence. Just as they were once slaves to foreign governments, they are now shackled to foreign debts.

This new form of enslavement is not only economic. Many Africans are also losing their hard won political and civil liberties. For the greater the popular discontent over economic problems, the greater is the intensity of social control and repression coming from Black African leaders struggling to stay in power.

This pattern has plagued Africa, and indeed all developing countries, ever since independence. The 300 million people of Africa currently owe more than \$600 billion—or \$2,000 for every man, woman and child—contracted on their behalf but without their consent.

The young generation passing through its formative period in post-colonial Africa is getting increasingly restless, finding itself without any role to play.

In colonial Africa, these young people would be among the leading cadres of political movements, trade union organizations and women detachments, mobilizing their people in the struggle for independence.

Now all these movements are under firm central control, bowing to governments which do not tolerate divergent opinion. The frustrations of military or one-party states leads more and more young people to ask: Independence for whom?

Independence has indeed lost its meaning and direction. An extreme example is the Bokassa syndrome in the Central African Empire. A colonial corporal raises himself to an emperor with a colossal and costly fanfare paid for in borrowed foreign currency, forcing millions of his underfed subjects and their offspring to bear the burden of servicing and repaying the debt. Emperor Bokassa may be dismissed as an eccentric, but he is a reflection of a trend that has sadly become universal in Africa, to the delight of its detractors.

Most of the countries in Africa are virtually insolvent due mostly to decisions which made no sense politically or economically. Not all leaders go to the extent of installing themselves as emperors, but many act and spend like emperors.

International banking institutions, ambitious foreign investors out to exploit the abundant national resources and cheap labor force, and political novices combine to lead the African people into a hopeless economic quagmire.

The process of impoverishment is happening under our very noses, overtly in Zaire, covertly elsewhere. International lenders mandate abolition of what little social welfare programs exist, and decontrol of prices of food and other necessities. At the same time, they impose severe

restrictions on wage increases, harsh penalties for workers and student strikers, continuous devaluation of national currencies, and as a final national humiliation, direct control of financial and monetary policies right down to the level of revenue collection.

The reliance on foreign lenders affects all types of economies, whether they are categorized as socialist, capitalist, or humanist. The countries that encourage private enterprise are confronted with a lack of export outlets, balance of payments crises, and urban unemployment. But the so-called socialist and humanist countries that have nationalized some private enterprises have devastating problems as well.

As Prime Minister Manley of Jamaica laments, "We still produce what we do not consume, and consume what we do not produce."

Almost without exception, the socialist and humanist countries are affected by economic stagnation—becoming poor men's welfare states. This is partly a result of distortion of internal trade, scarcity of basic necessities, over-organization that obstructs production, and a large public bureaucracy. But the stagnation is even more a consequence of ill-conceived policies misunderstood by both the initiators and the people for whom they are made.

The characteristic weakness of these economies is that they emulate socialist organization only superficially without the guidance of the theory which makes socialism a distinct world outlook. Socialism is a totality and it cannot be extracted in bits here and bits there.

This lack of socialist totality—such as socialist planning and worker control of state power, makes pretenses to socialism ridiculous. What is worse, it ideologically disarms the people and leaves the country extremely vulnerable to internal and external pressures.

Increasingly, the peasants of Africa are opting out of commodity production and the cycle of dependency by producing food only for their own subsistence.

Under direct colonialism, the peasants were forced to produce for the world market to satisfy import needs of the colonial power that

dominated them, and to earn cash for the maintenance of the state which oppressed them.

After colonialism, the peasants see the same situation, only now intensified by nationalist fervor. They see their standard of living falling, both absolutely and relative to the bureaucracy and the military. They see their children "educated," which too often means turning them into useless material for a rural economy, and unemployable in the urban enclaves. They see prisons for their sons and prostitution for their daughters. The peasants are deciding that the game isn't worth the candle, and they are opting out of it.

In retreating to subsistence, however, the peasants not only cease to produce for the world market, but they also narrow the home market still further. Faced with virtual economic disintegration, more and more African states have reverted to the use of force to maintain production.

The retreat to old forms, dictatorial and despotic, needs neither effort nor ingenuity in the ex-colonies. The state and its coercive apparatus are all there, inherited from colonialism which the post-colonial leaders never bothered to "smash" as they came to power.

Thus, while we are fighting to end colonialism through the front door, a new colonialism comes in through the back door. The old colonialists came in with the connivance of the old chiefs; the new ones connive with new, better-educated political leaders.

Just as in the 1880s Africa was divided, carved up and offered for sale, so in the 1980s Africa may experience a new auction. The pity is that while our predecessors were forced into colonial bondage as free men, we enter the new bondage totally bankrupt—already half enslaved by an enormous debt that our future generations can never hope to repay.

\*Babu has served in numerous high-level posts in the government of Tanzania. He was imprisoned for six years for political crimes which he denies, and was released last year following pleas from Amnesty International and other human rights groups. He is currently a correspondent for New Africa magazine.



IT LOOKS AN AWFUL LOT LIKE JUPITER!

### PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-880) is published every Thursday by Erie Publishing Company, Inc. 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$7.50 per year in Tri-County area, \$8.00 per year outside Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

The Portland Observer's official position is expressed only in its Editor's column. Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Portland Observer.

283-2486

National Advertising Representative  
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.  
New York



ALFRED L. HENDERSON  
Editor/Publisher

1st Place  
Community Service  
ONPA 1973

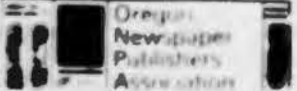
1st Place  
Best Ad Results  
ONPA 1973

5th Place  
Best Editorial  
ONPA 1973

Honorable Mention  
Herrick Editorial Award  
NNA 1973

2nd Place  
Best Editorial  
3rd Place  
Community Leadership  
ONPA 1975

3rd Place  
Community Leadership  
ONPA 1978



## Subscribe Today

\$7.50 per year — Tri-county  
\$8.00 per year — Other

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

283-2486

Mail to:  
Portland Observer  
P.O. Box 3137  
Portland, Oregon 97208