

EDITORIAL/OPINION



Rhodesia: Conference stalemate unresolved

by N. Fungai Kumbula

No junk food here

Congratulations are in order for Harvey Scott Elementary School and its principal, Harold Kulm.

The school has been on a campaign, since the beginning of the school year, to eliminate "junk foods" from the students' school diets.

The campaign is the result of Kuhns reading that too much sugar can make some children hyperactive, yet many children seemed to live mostly on candy. Of course the sugar also added to obesity problems and poor dental health.

Through a concerted effort, parents are cooperating by sending natural foods for class treats -- fruit, popcorn, juice, etc., rather than the usual candy, cake and cookies. The PTA is collecting low sugar recipes.

The School Board has wrestled for years with the problem of whether "junk food" should be sold in the schools' vending machines and student stores. Although some schools have attempted to provide a choice between sweets and more nourishing foods, the Board has been reluctant to act decisively on behalf of better nutrition.

Harvey Scott has demonstrated that -- with a

little inconvenience and much effort -- it can be done. The health of the District's children would be far better if the Harvey Scott program were extended to all of the schools.

Call out the Marines!

The Marines have landed at Guantanamo Bay to show Fidel Castro and the world that we are not afraid of two or three thousand Soviet troops stationed in Cuba. It almost makes one think of that old movie, "The Russians Are Coming", a comedy which depicts the panic caused the people of a Florida town by a stranded Soviet sub.

It's unfortunate that President Carter allowed himself to be pushed into such an empty maneuver by Senator Church and others who are seeking his job -- or just to keep their own.

The U.S. can hardly be endangered by a small number of Soviet troops stationed in Cuba, where they have stayed peacefully for the last seventeen years. Especially is this true when the Soviet Union is surrounded by U.S. troops in Europe, Japan, etc. etc.

A lot of money and energy that could be better spent.

At the end of last week, Britain, acting as the chairman to the prickly negotiations aimed at resolving the Rhodesian problem, gave the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance an ultimatum: accept the constitutional proposal offered or else...The PF was given first 24 hours, later extended to 48, in which to accept the pact they had rejected and which the Muzorewa-Smith clique had tentatively accepted. The "or else..." was never spelled out, but it was clear to all familiar with the situation, that Britain had very few if any options, to carry out any threat.

That same conference is scheduled to resume this week and still the PF has not "changed its mind or reconsidered" as ordered by Britain. While Britain still insists on PF acceptance of her draft resolution, the PF for its part, is insisting on the opening of the more substantial negotiations: control of the army and the question of pensions.

The constitutional draft Britain had presented skirted over the issue of control of the armed forces because both sides (Muzorewa and the PF) had put forth headline policy: the PF insisting on a complete dismantling of the present army to be replaced by a Peoples Army and Muzorewa and Smith just as adamantly insisting on the retention of the army in its present form. When Muzorewa "came to power,"

he inherited the army intact, complete with its white officers--the same people who have trampled the Africans underfoot for the last nine decades.

The other equally contentious issue revolves around the question of pensions. Britain is proposing that whites who have been in Rhodesia since 1964 (UDI was 1965) should be guaranteed "their" pensions. Under their system, white workers were entitled to pensions while Blacks were not. Britain claims to have inserted this condition in consideration of the contributions whites have made in Rhodesia. As was to be expected, Muzorewa accepted this condition and the guerrillas rejected it.

For one thing, what the whites have stolen from the country overweighs whatever "contributions" they are supposed to have made. For another, most of them came to Rhodesia empty-handed and made their fortunes in Rhodesia; particularly off exploiting the indigenous Africans. What of the contributions of the Africans? They actually contributed more to the development of the country because they did the actual work. Why are they not being offered any compensations?

Another argument against this racist condition, centers on the financial drain this would pose, for the fledgling nation of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe just cannot afford to pay off millions of dollars to people who will most likely not invest it in the country. More than likely, the bulk of this money would be spirited out to wherever they decide to flee. In 1975, then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, had proposed a \$4 billion fund to help whites who do not wish to live under a majority government set up elsewhere. The Africans rejected that plan then saying, this money, which was to be provided by the U.S., should instead be given to the government of Zimbabwe to help it along on its long road to nationhood.

These two issues: control of the armed forces and "compensation" for the whites, promise to doom the conference and there does not seem to be a middle road either. And all the time, the war is taking its toll: at this writing, there is an outbreak of measles brought about by the closure of nearly all health facilities in the rural areas. Thousands of refugees have set up shantytowns outside of the main cities and that is where the epidemic has hit the hardest. How do they spell RELIEF? The overthrow of the Smith-Muzorewa Clique.

STOP PRESS: The PF has finally rejected Britain's plan, so, now Britain is talking only to the Muzorewa group--a prelude to recognition of the bankrupt regime that can only mean more war.

Black opportunities sink with merchant marine

by Bayard Rustin

One of the greatest ironies of our so-called free enterprise economy is its seemingly inherent tendency to wipe-out more and more jobs -- jobs that once offered young people, especially non-college youth, the opportunity to enjoy a full life, and to support a family decently without the nagging uncertainties associated with unskilled, seasonal and service work.

No long ago, for instance, many Black youngsters turned to the merchant marine for a rewarding and challenging career. To be sure, the life of a seaman is far from easy; and there are few luxuries aboard typical merchant ships and tankers. Yet, a job in the merchant marine provided good pay, decent working conditions and a real chance for advancement to a higher-paying maritime profession.

Now, however, new job opportunities in the maritime industry have virtually disappeared. A look at a few statistics will graphically illustrate the enormous shrinkage in employment.

In 1950, American shipping companies employed over 56,000 seamen. By 1960, employment in the merchant marine fell to 49,000. Ten years later in 1970, another 11,000 jobs vanished. And at the end of 1978 only 21,000 seamen worked on American vessels.

What caused this rapid decline in jobs? For one thing, the owners of the ships followed the time-honored example of other businessmen: they discovered clever ways to increase their profits by hiring seamen who would work for shockingly low wages. Since American seamen, long protected by the National Maritime Union and the Seafarers International Union, refused to accept starvation wages, the shipping magnates turned to easily-exploited foreign workers.

American ship owners, of course, could not bring the thousands of low-paid foreign workers to our nation's shores. Instead, they did the next best thing: they brought the ships to the foreign workers by re-registering the vessels in countries like Liberia, Panama and Greece. Through re-registration, the ship owners -- including some of the richest oil companies in the world -- not only avoid paying fair wages, they also evade safety requirements, fair labor standard provisions, and last but not least, they escape many American taxes.

For most shipping companies, however a lower pay is the main advantage of re-registration under a foreign flag. As one might expect, the savings in labor of a 32-man tanker or bulk carrier flying the U.S.

flag amount to \$1.75 million. The same type ship crewed by seamen from a Third World country would have labor costs amounting to only \$3.33 million. To put it more simply, for every dollar an American seaman earns, his counterpart from Liberia, El Salvador, the Philippines, or Korea receives something like 18 or 19 cents.

In my view, this situation has two tragic aspects. First, thousands of merchant sailors from African, Asian, and Latin American nations are being mercilessly exploited by some of the world's largest and wealthiest multinationals. And second, this exploitation results in the destruction of worthwhile jobs for some of America's poorest people, most notably Blacks and Hispanics.

Since well over 55 per cent of all American merchant marine crews consist of minority seamen, Black people have a special responsibility to demand an end to industry and governmental policies that place exorbitant profits before the needs of Black and Hispanic workers. Unless Black organizations begin to focus some attention on this sometimes forgotten issue, I fear that we may be permitting thousands of desperately-needed opportunities for Black youngsters to sink with the already endangered U.S. merchant marine.

Employing Black youth

by Vernon Jordan

If we as a nation wanted to give all our young people the skills training and job experiences they need, we would do so.

Let's look at some of the supposed causes of youth unemployment. One is that the economy isn't creating enough jobs for all. That's true.

But it is creating enough jobs to provide work for many. And Blacks lag in getting that work -- with Black youth at the end of the line.

Another supposed cause is the minimum wage. I reject that absolutely. After the last hike in the minimum wage white youth unemployment declined while Black rates went up. If the proponents of the minimum wage argument were right one would expect rates for both races to rise. They didn't, which suggests that race is a bigger factor than the level of the minimum wage.

The minimum wage argument is not really concerned with Black youth; it is part of a general effort to restrain the gains of labor. A split-level minimum wage would be the breach in the wall of protective legislation that surrounds working conditions. I'm opposed to driving holes in that wall.

Another cause is the attitudes found among many young people today. It is hard to make a clear distinction between the negative attitudes of some and the experiences in the workplace that reinforce those attitudes.

The behavior patterns that pay off in status on the street are the opposite of those that pay off in the work setting. The schools have failed to assist those kids in making the

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Letters to the Editor

City hearing brings no-show

To the editor:

Why are certain Black persons continually identified as "leaders", within the Black community and for Black people? I have participated in many groups sessions and asked persons of other ethnic groups who were their leaders and spokes persons for them and the answer is always, *No one*. As long as we are tentatively categorized as having leaders, we will never integrate fully within the main stream of life.

True there are many outstanding Black people, but they simply are doing that which is the best thing for them to do to assist our future generations. There are many outstanding people who are not Black, who are equally assisting Black people and they are not leaders. They

are honest and sincere people who have an interest in helping. I am Black and the first person who steps up and indicates that he is "my leader" will be in for a surprise.

I am appalled at the lack of participation in the gut issue concerning education and employment. Some folk seem to make the headlines when little effort is needed to be a spokesperson i.e. school boycott. Where are those same people when *Quality and Effective* education and employment preparedness is the most important objective? Where are those same people right now when the schools need visible live people to assist with discipline and tutoring? For those who want Black History taught, why can't you offer your pert assistance voluntarily on the

weekends or after school at one of our churches? I'm sure those who are searching for identity can find it through the assistance of these volunteers?

On October 6, 7:30 p.m., at King facility, there was a forum on input for the revision of the City Charter.

One of the concerns was employment within the City for minority (Black) people. There were less than ten people attending the session. I saw no one there who voiced a concern for the hiring of Black people and ideas as to how our people could find employment within the City. However, everyone did miss seeing a very dynamic Black Female who is serving on the Advisory committee, Ms. Ethel McWilliams.

Walter F. Morris, Jr.



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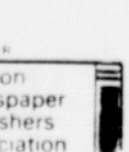
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