

AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY 1977: SOME STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL
CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING THE UNITED FRONT
AGAINST IMPERIALISM

Peoples College
for
African Liberation Day Coalition

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Brothers and Sisters
Comrades in Struggle

I greet you on behalf of the African Liberation Day Coalition, and I share with you the great expectation we all have for what promises to be a great occasion. We will protest and march here in Washington, D.C. We will not have a festival, and we will not be isolated from the masses, but as one great body, united with all the thousands who could not make it but who are here in spirit, we will march on the White House, the political symbol of Bourgeois state power, the territorial waters of smiling Jimmy "jaws" Carter. Our march is the only demonstration in Washington, D.C. on May the 28th that can give political content and direction to the fight against imperialism, and therefore we must struggle for political unity to better accomplish our task, sum up the general political position of the Coalition, and make clear lines of demarcation between what we are doing and what some others might be doing.

I will take up three major questions that are central to our Africal Liberation Day campaign:

- a. What is going on in the world today, especially in Africa, and with ~~the superpowers~~ particularly the USA.
- b. What are the political trends in the country?

What political stand makes the ALD Coalition correct and different from the others?

C. What can we do? How should we proceed from here?

In other words,

1. What's going on?
2. What's being said about it?
3. What are we gonna do about it?

Africa is a continent burning with the desire for freedom. Nowhere is it more true that countries want independence, nations want liberation and people want revolution. It has a history of oppression to cast aside. DuBois, that great Afro-American scholar, summed up the situation in 1959 when he identified the capitalist system as the root cause of this oppression, particularly the capitalist class that developed

...in Europe and America,
 Worshipping Greed, proclaiming God,
 enchaining His children;
 Preaching Freedom, practicing Slavery
 Making Africans the niggers of the World.

To be mocked and spit upon.
 To be crucified! Dead and buried!
 But Africa is not dead; she never died;
 She never will,
 She writhes in sleep; this third
 century of her degradation
 She struggles to awake.

This was in 1959. In 1960 17 African countries achieved independence, and a decisive shift in strategy was achieved in Southern Africa. The racist apartheid

system had signed its death warrant by murdering people in Sharpsville, South Africa, because from that point on armed struggle was taken up as the only road to freedom.

Over the last 17 years this has proven to be of great historical significance, as recently demonstrated in victories over Portuguese colonialism in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola, bringing the number of independent countries to 49. It continues to prove itself in the war of liberation going on in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Indeed it will destroy white racist settler rule in Azania.

But there are many complex questions to deal with in Africa today and regarding how we can fight here in the USA and make real contributions to the freedom and liberation of all the various African peoples and countries (particularly in Southern Africa). It is necessary that we have a good grasp of the international situation, the main trends in the world today.

It is clear that in the aftermath of World War II the United States emerged as king of the imperialist camp. Western Europe had been bombed out, its population demoralized, disorganized, and killed, and its factories destroyed. On the other hand, the US had grown in its productive capacity, even more so in its war production

to support Europe during the war and its subsequent investments and loans in Europe after the war.

But the post war temporary peace between imperialist countries is not the entire story. Two additional factors are key.

1. The Soviet Union, then a Socialist country controlled by the working class, had survived an invasion and was the decisive factor in defeating Hitler's fascist forces. Moreover, a Socialist camp existed that was greatly enhanced by the successful victory of Chinese revolution in 1949.
2. World War II, which began as an inter-imperialist war and changed its character once Soviet Socialism was attacked. This led not to peace but more war. This time, however, just wars of national liberation.

Indeed, the main blows for liberation and revolution in the world were being struck by forces in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I've mentioned 1960 as Africa year, when 17 countries got independence. Perhaps the high point of this post World War II period of third world revolution came with the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people against imperialism

led by the USA. Everyone in the world was involved, the anti-war movement was significant in the US, and in a real sense, contributed to their victory. They won, we all shared.

But the world is a dynamic place and things change, in fact, these days things are changing rapidly.

The major changes in the last decade or so have resulted in a new world situation.

- a. On the one hand, the capitalist system has plunged deeper into crisis. The dead end future of capitalism is dramatically brought home with attacks against the masses on all fronts, and the Bourgeoisie and its lackeys running to and fro from one scheme to the next.
- b. But the more unexpected and confusing development is the degeneration of the Soviet Union. The proletariat lost power to a new capitalist class that hides behind a socialist front.

This is an issue of grave importance, it requires a fresh approach to understanding world politics today.

In general these changes require an analysis that there are two contending trends in the world.

1. Trend toward revolution. In all capitalist countries working class struggle is on the

rise and revolutionary forces are fighting to give leadership, but the main center of this is in the third world.

2. Trend towards war → it is the recent rise in contention between the superpowers that is the source of war, it is the Soviet Social Imperialism and Imperialist USA that will be the major forces in the war. But as a world war, it will force nearly every country to come down on one side or the other.

Our reason for being here tonight is African Liberation Day, so it is imperative that we examine how these two trends interact on the African scene.

For the US imperialists let's look at Andy Young.

Andy Young is in South Africa today and yesterday to speak to South African businessmen. His main message to them was a lesson he claims he learned from the Civil Rights movement: "Don't get mad, get smart. My argument boils down to my conviction that the free market system can be the greatest force for constructive change now operating anywhere in the world." In other words, he says to the people of Azania, you have got to exchange that mess there for this mess here in the USA.

The key to understanding his visit is to understand his support of US imperialism in South Africa, especially

the role of imperialist corporations. As one newspaper put it recently, he is "being outspoken and very American --above all by defending (in private conversations) the virtues of multinational corporations for developing countries." And Young himself has been quite outspoken in his support of imperialism: "My notion is that if revolution is the transfer of goods and services and opportunities, then capitalism has produced a lot more in the way of revolution than communism." He continues: "Multinationals involve the US in the affairs of other countries. Why not incorporate a sense of political direction with the profit motive?" According to Young, American corporate power is a potential force for good in the world. So it is not hard to see why Andy Young would be welcomed in South Africa.

But how did Andy get to South Africa, given all of the controversy about South Africa's denying him entry? And what does his visit and his role in the UN mean for us as American people in general, and for Black people in particular. Why do we insist that Andy Young must be denounced as an agent of US imperialism, especially by Black people?

The charge is often made that we are attacking personalities when we denounce Andy Young as a servant of imperialism. "Give the brother a chance," many say.

"He's a good symbol of progress for Black people."
Others claim that no change could have possibly been expected from the old reformist shuttle diplomacy of Henry Kissinger. But still they argue that we should pin our hope on the new reformist "shuffle diplomacy" of Andy Young and Jimmy Carter.

We say that we must have a thorough analysis to demonstrate that both of these views end up--whether based on good intentions or not--serving the interest of imperialism against the masses of people. The question is not whether he's a nice guy, the question is who does he serve! We can understand Young's role by understanding the importance of South Africa to US imperialism (that free market system Young talks about). Let us briefly illustrate what we mean by focusing on one notable example--what we call IMPERIALISM AND THE GOLDFINGER CONNECTION.

Gold is essential to US imperialism and to South Africa for two reasons: (1) In general, many capitalists profit directly from its production and trade; (2) Most important, and in particular, it is the pivot of the South African economy and therefore is key to maintaining \$ billions of US investments in South Africa.

Andy Young's pro-imperialist stand can be made crystal clear in this context. First, Young was invited

to South Africa by Henry Oppenheimer, chairman of the largest mining finance complex in South Africa: the Anglo American Corporation. Seven corporations in South Africa organized as the South African Chamber of Mines, which is dominated by Oppenheimer's Anglo American Corporation, producing 99% of the gold, all of the uranium, 80% of the coal, and most of the diamonds in South Africa. Oppenheimer's company alone produced 40% of South African gold (229 tons) or one-third of the world's total. In 1966, 41% of Anglo American's earnings came from gold and 18% from diamonds.

What is the connection of the leading capitalist in South Africa--Andy Young's current host--to imperialism in the United States? The only American on the board of Anglo American for a long time, and a close imperialist partner, was the late Charles W. Engelhard of Newark, N. J., chairman of one of the largest mineral and ore companies in the world--Mineral and Chemicals Corporation. In 1957 he joined with Oppenheimer to take over one of the biggest South African holding companies and in 1958 set up the American South African Investment Corporation. Engelhard interests controlled directly 15% of the South Africa's production of gold, and through interlocking directorates plays a key role in the production of two-thirds of the gold and uranium. Engelhard also

sat on the board of the two organizations set up for the recruitment of migrant labor to work in South Africa.

In Newark, New Jersey--at home in the USA--Engelhard was a top operative in the Democratic Party, advising imperialist economic matters, and sitting presidents on/ on the New Jersey Democratic Committee.

He was also on the Port of NY Authority and the New Jersey Citizens Committee for Higher Education.

Thus Englehard and Oppenheimer are the Goldfingers of the real world in contrast to the one in the James Bond flicks. But there are two class realities involved in this Goldfinger connection: the side of imperialism and its profits and the side of those suffering exploitation and national oppression.

1. Gold is crucial to the South African Economy. It produced about 70% of the world's gold output in 1972 and 75% of South Africa's foreign earnings come from the export of gold. Gold profits rose by 88% during 1973 to \$1.46 billion.

These profits not only make the imperialists wealthier, but they increase the power of their repressive state apparatus: tax revenues paid to the South African government on this increased profit increased by \$398 million in 1973. This meant more dollars to buy IBM computers to monitor the passbook system, and to acquire advanced weapons from the US corporations like Colt Industries

and other imperialists for fascist South African military and police.

2. On the other hand, for the working class, South Africa does not recognize the right of African workers to organize unions, bargain collectively, or strike. This intensifies a brutal form of class exploitation and national oppression. About 662 thousand miners are employed in South Africa, and 90% of these wage workers are Africans. But this 90% earned only 31% of the total salaries and wages. In dollar terms, white miners in 1973 earned an average of \$6804 and Africans earned only \$403. The gap has widened since 1936 from 12 to 1 to 18 to 1 in 1966, and one estimate is that the cash earnings of African miners was lower in 1966 than in 1911.

So, the slogan "fight imperialism and all forms of national oppression from USA--Union of South Africa --to USA--United States of America--did not just fall from the sky. In 1969, about the same time Englehard's companies were consolidating and increasing their exploitation of African workers in South Africa--27% of Black people in Newark were below the poverty line in income. Unemployment in such cities among Blacks ran as high as 44%, when the national rate was below 8%. (Currently the president of Colt Industries, which supplies weapons to South Africa, is leading the drive by imperialists to take over control of New York City in this period of crisis.) Thus, imperialism profited from national oppression both in the USA and

in the USA, and imperialists like Englehard make money on both ends.

Also

Furthermore, the African Liberation Day Coalition's campaign against the South African Gold Coin--the Krugerrand --is symbolic of this Goldfinger connection of imperialism in the USA and the USA. South Africa is benefiting from the general crisis of imperialism since instability in the world currency system, runaway inflation, and the imperialism-caused oil crisis has resulted in speculation in gold and increased gold prices--forcing prices up from \$40 in 1971 to a high \$195 per ounce in 1974 and currently stands over \$140.

To increase its exports, South Africa has increased its production of gold coins from less than one metric ton in 1967 to more than 100 metric tons in 1974, and this Krugerrand coin accounted for one-fifth of all gold sold by South Africa in 1974. Because of the widespread media campaign and the cooperation of major banks and companies like Merrill-Lynch in the US, the South Africans are reaping big profits from this Krugerrand. These profits strengthen imperialism and national oppression in South Africa and makes our struggle against the Krugerrand even more important.

The USA has been pulling plenty of tricks.

- a. A phony appeal for human rights, as an abstract moralistic appeal, while negating the rights

of people to control and run their country in their own interests as they see fit.

- b. A phony Kissinger plan for majority rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) leaving the key posts of a transition government in the hands of the minority white settler regime.
- c. Putting a Black face in a high place to front for imperialism, attempting to confuse and mislead the masses.

Of course the US is not alone. The Soviet Union is aggressively playing a full hand of cards. In fact it's trying to grab the deck and become the dealer.

At the Mozambique United Nations conference three days ago the Soviet delegate exclaimed: "The Soviet Union does not seek advantage for itself. It is not hunting for concessions. It is not trying to gain political domination. It is not soliciting military bases."

If Moscow is not hunting for concessions, why has Guinea-Bissau been forced to charge the Soviets with creating severe shortages of fish in the country? Why does the Soviet Union buy coffee in Angola at 38% of the world price and sell it at higher prices in Europe? Why does it do the same with cotton textiles from India? Or make a 300 percent rate of profit from purchasing oil in the Middle East and selling it in Europe?

If the Soviet Union is not "seeking advantage for itself in Africa and the rest of the world, especially economic advantage in the third world," why can the Soviet press report that between 1976-80 \$4.5 billion will be transferred to the Soviet Union because of "joint enterprises"--a new cover for social imperialist domination and exploitation?

If Moscow is not after military bases why did a government official in Mozambique publically warn the Soviet Union against attempts to pressure it into granting a military base in Mozambique to exploit its deep water ports?

If Moscow is not seeking to gain political domination why is it aiding and arming to the tune of \$300 million the fascist military junta of Ethiopia and helping/to train thousands of peasants and troops to assault the just struggles of the Eritrean people? Cuban military advisers

But while we raise these examples as manifestations of Soviet social imperialism and contention between the two superpowers in Africa, we are not naive idealists nor are we dogmatists. There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing. Hence, the unfolding and working out of these many other contradictions in Africa will profoundly shape the future of the continent. While above we mention the warning by the Mozambique

official to Moscow, we recognize that the Soviet Union has just concluded a major long-term military and economic aid agreement with Mozambique. Egypt, after expelling the Soviets earlier this year, only last week suggested that there was a major breakthrough in reestablishing friendly relations with Moscow. We must point to a tendency toward interventionism by the front line states in the activity of the liberation movements, especially after the recent visits by Podgorny and Fidel.

All of these, of course, are manifestations of the class struggles going on within Southern Africa, within the independent front line states, and within the liberation movements in the general context of superpower contention. We must make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions, using the interests of the masses of people as a guide to action, and closely follow the situation in Southern Africa as it unfolds.

In sum, what I have said can be put into two statements, statements that lead to our slogans for ALD-1977:

- A. Imperialism is a world wide system that oppresses African peoples in all the different countries of Africa as well as /herein the USA /. We must fight it, and particularly see the connection we raise in our slogan,

Fight Imperialism and National Oppression
from USA to USA!

B. Imperialism is a two-headed monster--2 superpowers.

The USA is the main enemy at this time in Southern Africa and, of course, it is our main enemy.

We face this dialectical reality in our slogan,

US Imperialism out of South Africa
Superpowers Hands Off!

The movement to support the forces fighting for freedom and liberation and to defeat imperialism here in this country are debating the question of the international situation, and the role of the Soviet Union. There is unity that the USA is a superpower and a general danger to virtually all of the world's people. However, there is considerable disunity on the role of the Soviet Union. There is one line that says that the Soviet Union is a friend to the liberation forces, and points to Angola as the big example. There is another that says it is the most dangerous enemy of the world's people. Both of these positions look at only one side of the coin, and are mechanical abstractions from the material world, the world that everyone lives in and must understand in a concrete way, piercing through the apparent to the real, from what it appears to be to what the situation actually is.

The fact is that the USA is the most powerful imperialist force in Southern Africa. It is also true.

that the USSR is aggressively moving to challenge this hegemony. It's like the game king of the mountain: the USA is still on top and the USSR is the leading challenger.

Connected to this are two questions:

- A. Which is the main danger, which causes the threat of world war?

and,

Which should be the target for our struggle, the so-called "main blow?"

- B. How is it possible to fight imperialism and nation oppression from USA to USA?

Without much difficulty the first question can be divided into two parts:

- A. World war is not the province of one superpower but will result from and essentially represent the contention of both.
- B. USA is the main enemy (front door) with the Soviets close behind (back door). Moreover, it is our main enemy, one whose back we must break. Therefore it is silly at best but essentially confusion and outright class collaboration to say our main blow should be at the Soviet Union.

But let us take a moment to speak to the second question--how do we fight imperialism and national oppression from USA to USA?

The African Liberation Day Coalition is a concrete manifestation of a united front strategy.

It objectively represents one concrete and historically significant move to unite Black people fighting for full democratic rights, liberation, and the working class fighting to end wage slavery and all that this means. Together we realize our common enemy is imperialism, and further we realize that only when we are united together is there any hope of victory.

Among Black people, while the great masses of people desire unity--on Saturday they want one demonstration --some diehards are holding onto a self defeating nationalism, a go-it-alone sectarian approach. The All African Peoples Revolutionary Party is blind to the objective reality of imperialism, deaf to the masses of Black people calling out for unity, and dumb when it comes to their consistent refusal to speak out against and fight US imperialism in this country and their refusal to make support of the wars of national liberation in Southern Africa the key aspect of our relationship to the many peoples and countries in Africa.

The ideological and political line that leads to these errors and makes them an obstacle to the forward development of our struggle is Pan Africanism. Of course, we make a real distinction between the many people who will be at their demonstration and the many Black

people throughout the USA who are generally attracted to Pan Africanism. For people to get into struggle is a good thing, even when it initially means getting into a Pan Africanist thing. But to fully grasp its line and support it is backward and runs away from Black peoples' problems in this country.

- a. Pan Africanism says our main fight is in Africa, we say it is here in the USA.
- b. Pan Africanism says our fight is about land, all of the African continent. We say our fight is to destroy imperialism and all forms of national oppression from USA to USA, all this based on our struggle right here and support of freedom fighters in Africa.
- c. Pan Africanism says our objective is a liberated African continent under one unified Socialist government. We say that each African country and its people must be free and independent and it is the "right" of the people in each country to chart their own future.

In short, if they want to defeat imperialism and free Africa the way to do this is to destroy US monopoly capitalism and imperialism and free ourselves. This is our main contribution.

But what is the key meeting ground, why do we call for unity? We call for unity because the masses demand it, because only in this context can the legitimate feeling Black people have for the liberation of African countries be linked to the fight against imperialism and national oppression here in the USA, only with tactical unity in cases like this can struggle take place and lead more directly to the strategic unity of the United Front/

Against Imperialism.

Let me just sum up what we think needs to be done regarding Africa:

1. Educate the American people with the truth about Africa, superpower contention and the threat of war, especially the role of US imperialism, and the developments of the forces fighting wars against imperialism, and white settler apartheid rule in Southern Africa.
2. Give material aid to the forces fighting the revolutionary national liberation wars--food, medicine, clothes, etc.

But the most important is,

3. Struggle: the various peoples of Southern Africa are being held on the ground by imperialism with a pointed gun and a knife plunged into African flesh. We can't "just" educate those of the sidelines, nor "just" give supportive aid.

Since we, too, are fighting these daggers and knives we must make our principal point to fight the monster. Our main weapon is to intensify the struggle here, we are in a position to stab this cyclops in the eye, to plunge a stake into the heart of this vampire, to cripple this crippler, maim this maimer, and this our struggle is not only our possibility it is our responsibility--it is our duty not only to ourselves and our future generations but to the peoples of the world.

We stand united. We will march round the White House--it won't come right down, but we will be serving another notice, making another move closer to unity and unity of the masses of people guided by a revolutionary ideology, political line and organization is the road to victory.

Therefore, we say in full recognition of our responsibility to ourselves, to Africa and the entire world,

1. FIGHT IMPERIALISM AND NATIONAL OPPRESSION FROM USA TO USA.
2. US IMPERIALISM OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA--SUPERPOWERS HANDS OFF
3. VICTORY TO THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA!