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Robin - 4881075

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John Jay

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I.S. SOUTHERN AFRICA FRACTION

BULLETIN #1

Notes From The Fracn Admistrator

Bulletin

This is our first fraction bulletin. I hope comrades will find it useful. All coments will be very welcome.

I'd like to get another bulletin out in about a month and a half. I'll solicit branch reports well in advance. All other contribution will be welcome. Anything for the bulletin must be typed on Gestetner stencils. We weren't able to use one branch report this time because it arived on an A.B. Dick stencil typed all the way down to the 8/12 x 14 line.

Many branches who have Southern Africa work didn't get reports in for this bulletin. Hopefully they'll make sure to get a report s in the next bulletin.

Newsletter

The Detroit Southern Africa Fraction has asked the Southern Africa Committee to provide articles for a newsletter. These would cover events in Africa and activities in other parts of the country. We can send these articles to other branches on a regular basis in a form that can be used to make an electro-stencil from. You can add your local events and have a local newsletter. Let me know if your interested.

J&B Scotch

We recently found out that J&B Scotch is ownwd by a South Africa multi-millionaire named Anton Rupert. Rupert's Rembrandt/Rothman group owns Ligget & Myers which owns J&B.

Several branches are considering boycotting J&B with picket lines at liquor stores in the Black community. I'll keep fraction convenors posted on what happens.

Sandy B.

Southern Africa Work Perspective

(Much of our work around Southern Africa began or developed during the faction fight. This meant that little of the work, or the political conceptions behind what we are doing or can expect, was discussed by the organization as a whole. The result has been a real lack of political clarity in the organization. Some comrades have seen the immediate possibilities around Southern Africa work to be much greater than they have proven to be. The result has been that some sections of the IS, and individuals question the real effect the issue has on the black community, the immediate possibilities for organizing around the issue and the realistic possibilities for IS recruitment out of the work.

The following perspective is a summary of what we can expect over the next period. Its purpose is to answer questions raised within the IS and discussed at the organizers council.)

Our present Southern Africa work is the beginning of a long term commitment. We are taking the very first steps toward building a movement to support the liberation of Southern Africa.

We do not expect spectacular immediate results. We will be very happy to be able to build a small periphery who will participate in Southern Africa activities and recruit a few new comrades through our activities.

There is a great deal of interest in Southern Africa in the Black community but as yet there is no mass response. Only a comparatively few people will actually get involved. Our job is to seek out those people and politically convince them to make the commitment to building a movement for the freedom of Southern Africa.

We believe the struggle in Southern Africa will continue and intensify in the years to come. As the struggle in Africa develops it will have an increasing impact on Black Americans.

If the next year or two bring Black victories in ~~Southern Africa~~ Zimbabwe and Namibia the focus will shift to South Africa itself. Here the stakes will be much higher both for the white settlers and for US imperialism. With \$2 Billion in US investment at stake the American government will become steadily more involved as the protector of the white minority regime. The liberation movement it will be attempting to suppress will probably be increasingly a Black working class movement.

At this point political issues like US imperialism, ~~and~~ the connection between national liberation and socialist revolution and the role of the African working class which are largely abstract today will take on a new immediacy and reality.

We expect that as the confrontation in South Africa becomes more intense the level of interest and involvement in the American Black community will grow enormously. But only groups that already have established consistent work around Southern Africa will be able to organize this new response. Just as in the anti-war movement groups that try to jump in when the mass sentiment ~~is~~ already exists will probably be ~~left~~ frozen out.

We have to see the work we're doing today as part of building this future movement. The people we are bringing around the SALC now will become the cadres of that movement. A large part of what we are doing now is training these people both politically and organizationally.

The Atlanta branch as everyone knows, has little roots in the community and next to none in the work places of Atlanta. As a consequence of this almost all of our attention has been focused around trying to pick up people to be in the SALC or in our periphery wherever we might find them. Our original assumption when we began Southern Africa work was that the films would be the easiest and fastest way to bring people around us. This, in fact was true, though the level of commitment that brought them to the movie was not enough to hold them.

The first film we showed was *Last Grave at Dimbaza*. We showed the film at Ara's college, (West Georgia) Morris Brown College (part of the Atlanta University complex and an all Black School) and at a major community showing. All three were limited successes because we were not able to hold on to those who came. The movie and the speakers were always dynamic and moving and the program well run. In retrospect however, now we can see that our mistake was to assume that on the basis of seeing a movie and hearing a speaker that people would immediately want to move on the issue. This is not to say that the issue is not a viable one. South Africa clearly points out CAPITALISM, RACISM, IMPERIALISM, OPPRESSION, AND the many other facets that are brought on by these four with only a short explanation.

What we did wrong is actually quite simple though we did not realize that we were doing it at the time. From the film showings we had lists of names phone numbers and addresses but we did not follow up on each and every one of these people and attempt to convince them politically that they should make a firm commitment to the south african struggle by joining the SALC and giving their time and energy toward building a movement. Instead we merely called each one when we had the next activity and asked them to come out and participate without having made any more commitment than just signing their name to a list.

We did a fair amount of work to try and build for all three of the movies. Public Service Announcements were placed on radio and in newspapers and we leafletted extensively at shopping centers, churches, and in neighborhoods. A few people came from each of our leafletting endeavors. We found leafletting not to be an easy way to draw a crowd, but the less roots a branch has the more important it becomes.

The high note of the first round of film showings is that we recruited two people out of it which made it well worth our while.

The second round of film showings was very similar to the first except for the fact that we felt much more confident about drawing a crowd. Consequently the crowd that we pulled in was next to none at our four major showings, Morris Brown, Spelman, West Georgia, and a jointly sponsored showing with the Atlanta SCLC. The truth of it was that after the first round of showings we were not able to form a real committee, so for the second round of showings we again had to do all of the work of building for it ourselves. This time though we only did half of the work thinking that the fact that it was being co-sponsored by the Atlanta SCLC would help to build the turnout. It did not and neither did the fact that we sold tickets to the showing in the neighborhood that surrounds the SCLC Headquarters. We sold approximately thirty tickets one Sunday afternoon and not a single person showed up. We plan to sell tickets to our next rally if for no other reason than to raise money to send our shoes and clothing to ZANU.

Following the second round of showing we still had an almost nonexistent periphery. We had a few people from the local Black University and few that we picked up from a daytime showing at the Atlanta Street Academy, a school for High school drop-outs. With these few people though we were able to pull off some fairly militant and spirited picket lines in front of grocery stores selling South African sardines.

At the meeting of the SALC fractions at the convention people were skeptical that this activity would bring any results. We were the first branch to try the boycott and the results were quite favorable. For one thing this was an activity that we and our periphery could do on a Saturday which is the big shopping day and actually feel like we had struck a blow against American Capitalism. Sardines, which are mainly eaten as a snack and are not a staple like lettuce, are an easy target because a grocery store manager is not about to have people not shop at his store just to protect the few cents that can be made on the occasional sale of a 57¢ can of sardines.

Not only were the boycotts uplifting to everyone involved but it was also an excellent way to meet other people and talk some politics to them.

We started our campaign by going after small independent stores where we knew that we would have the greatest chance of success. Then with a few victories behind us we ventured on to the only major chain in Atlanta that carried the sardines, Food Giant. Food Giant is owned by Alterman Bros. which is a big distributor of foodstuffs in the Atlanta area. They were the ones that had distributed the sardines to the independents. However, even Food Giant succumbed to economic pressure which was no surprise. After two Food Giants had taken the sardines off the shelves we got word from a store manager that one of the big shots at Altermans, Max Alterman, had been trying to contact us about negotiating some agreement so that they would not have to lose any more profits. Jack and a contact Bill from Morehouse College went to see Alterman just after we had knocked off another one of his stores. The arrangement that was made was that they would sell their stock and promise not to purchase any more. For the moment we are taking him at his word though sardines have already found their way back to the shelves at one store. We may be picketing again in the future.

The most major error we have made so far through out this campaign is to have no strategy and make no concentrated effort to talk hard politics to the people that we work so hard to bring around us. As a result of this and the fact that most of our student periphery have gone home for the summer, we have embarked on community sales of Workers' Power. We continually say in our discussions of WP that it is our best organizer so we decided to try and implement this as a policy since our sales at plant gates were quite low and were not building anything. Selling WP door to door seemed like a crazy idea since everybody hates a traveling salesman. But we have two things in our favor in selling door to door. One we can talk as long as the person standing at the door is willing to listen, and two it helps to sharpen up the seller because not only do you have to quickly gain the person's interest but you also have to have a knowledge of what's the person at the door will find interesting in the paper. Every week there are articles on Southern Africa and Carter. Both of these can be made into issues to the people that we talk to especially Carter because somehow many people had confidence in Jimmy. On this and Southern Africa the paper has been excellent. Many people are interested in what we have to say and paper sales are up to an average of about forty from a past average of about fifteen. One week by myself I sold twenty papers. Finally, in this way of selling WP we are also able to directly link up with our work of trying to build the SALC. From the way that sales have been going and the people that we have met there seems to be a good chance that the time that we put into selling will eventually pay off in a much bigger way than the mass leafleting that was our method previously.

DONT SHOP FOOD GIANT!!

INSTEAD

SUPPORT SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION!

Food Giant is one of several Atlanta grocery stores that still sells Delmonte sardines. The Southern Africa Liberation Committee of Atlanta is here today at Food Giant, picketing and asking you to support South African liberation by not shopping here until the manager of Food Giant removes Delmonte sardines from his shelves.

Here's why:

Delmonte suys all its sardines--\$1.4 million worth a year--from a company in South Africa called Overstone Ltd. The sardines are caught off the coast and then packed by Overstone in Namibia.

The people who work for Overstone packing these sardines are black South Africans, brought into Namibia as "contract laborers." These black laborers make about \$30 a month--that's about 15¢ an hour--for their work at Overstone. They have to live in Overstone dormitories to be able to keep their jobs. Sixteen men sleep in each small room, on the concrete tub-tiles. These black men are separated from their wives and families for 11 months a year, packing sardines for Overstone and Delmonte.

These conditions seem intolerable to us. Overstone does not think so. Making the biggest profit possible is what counts for Overstone and Delmonte, no matter what the cost in human freedom and dignity.

Apparently, the manager here at Food Giant agrees with Delmonte that profit is what counts. We've asked him to take the sardines off his shelves. He refuses.

Other grocery store managers here in Atlanta have already taken our suggestion and removed the sardines from their shelves--managers at two different Thriftown stores removed the sardines from their store and agreed not to sell them anymore. The manager of White's ABC Super Saver in the West End also finally agreed and removed the sardines after we picketed his store.

Now, it's time for Food Giant.

SUPPORT LIBERATION FOR BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS!!

REFUSE TO SHOP HERE UNTIL THE SARDINES ARE GONE!!

Sponsored by the Southern Africa Liberation Committee of Atlanta

For more information, call 753-3309 or 752-7624.

labor donated

BAY AREA SOUTHERN AFRICA K FRACTION REPORT

~~XXXX~~The following is a summary of Bay Area work around the Southern Africa issue to date.

In early October, we began internal education on the Southern Africa issue in the branch and women's caucus. On October 30, ~~we~~ we held a potluck dinner and showing of the film, Last Grave. The discussion following the film was fairly good, but there were no black or worker contacts at the event.

In February, we joined the March 19th Coalition, an SWP initiated national coalition formed to build for a series of rallies featuring the South African student leader Mashinini. The coalition here consisted of the SWP, NSCAR, LSM, several student groups, and a number of black community and church organizations. Our perspective was not to recruit from the coalition (there were no "independents" active in the group) but rather to use it as a ~~xx~~ vehicle for independently doing some high school organizing in the East Bay.

We contacted various sympathetic high school teachers we knew in the East Bay (mostly contacts from previous IS work in the AFT here) and asked if we could come speak to their classes about the situation in S.A. and invite their students to hear Mashinini speak. We prepared a 45 minute presentation for high school students, which included excerpts from a UN film, Apartheid: Twentieth Century Slavery, and a "slide show" (actually photos projected with an overhead projector) of the Soweto rebellion. We focussed on several key points: what is apartheid, how high school students in SA are fighting back, why the students had to turn to the workers to win their demands, how US companies are involved, and what you can do here to help. We then invited them to hear Mashinini and passed ~~a~~ around a sign-up list.

We gave this presentation in four predominantly black Oakland area high schools the first week in March, speaking to around 600 students. In general, we found that in each class there would be a few students who would express a lot of interest and stay around afterwards to talk with us.

On March 19, we participated as a branch in the Mashinini rally, with our own banners, ~~signs~~ signs, and lit table. We did a calling to the students who had signed our list. Unfortunately, the day of the rally only four showed up at the pick-up points we had arranged for rides to SF for the rally. However, one high school student, Kevin, was very interested and also involved his mother, who turned out to ~~work~~ work at Del Monte in Oakland (more on this later). The rally itself was only a moderate success (altho it was apparently the best one the SWP held in the country) - with about 600 people in attendance.

In general our evaluation of the SWP coalition was that 1) it was completely oriented towards a petty-bourgeois milieu (student groups and liberal community/church organizations) and 2) was not useful as an arena for recruitment (few independents) but 3) was useful to us in providing us with an "excuse" to do some educational work in the Oakland high schools around the SA issue and in this way helped us develop some contacts for our subsequent work. The coalition is currently trying to regroup and focus on another issue (they're still trying to decide which one). We are still in touch with them and would consider getting involved again if the group gets moving but are not at this point putting any energy into the group.

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On April 10, we mobilized the branch to participate in a picket line on the SF waterfront to block the unloading of a Dutch ship carrying South African goods. The picket line was called by an ad hoc coalition dominated by Prairie Fire. The event was very successful - 500 people showed up and prevented the ship from being unloaded (altho it was unloaded the following day). The real reason for the success however was not the size of the picket line but the fact that a rank and file group in the ILWU Local 10 had done excellent work in the local over the past year around the Southern Africa issue, and the longshoremen who came to work understood the issues and were ready to support the action. After standing by for an hour (required by the contract) some of them joined the picket line. We understand that the SF ILWU local recently raised a resolution at the international union convention to the effect that longshoremen would not unload SA goods. The resolution was passed almost unanimously (the Spart delegate from the SF local voted against it on the grounds that they are against boycotts!!!). Other branches ~~might contact~~ in port cities might find out if any activity is going on ILWU locals there (I don't know what's happening around this issue in the ILA).

In late April, we decided that we finally had the resources here to initiate a SALC. We formed an organizing committee for a SALC, consisting of two ISers (Anne and Chris) and a contact, a black woman named Pearl whom Anne knew from school and who had worked with us around the earlier high school presentations. Pearl is an experienced activist (with past involvement in YPSL, Civil Rights movement in South, and black student movement) ~~and~~ who also has good ties with the East Oakland community from several years as a public health worker there.

Our first project is a Del Monte sardines boycott in the East Oakland community. We ~~are~~ are now involved in several activities to build for our first picket line (to be held May 21st). 1) We are returning to all the high school classrooms we spoke in before and inviting students to join us for the picket line. 2) We are showing Last Grave at Laney College (a community college in Oakland) next week & will invite people to join the picket line. 3) We have involved Evelyn, Kevin's mother and a Del Monte cannery worker, who will be coming to the picket line. We are also trying to arrange a showing of Last Grave at her home ~~in~~ for her and some friends and co-workers (alth we probably won't be able to do this by the first picket line but it may happen later). 4) We are calling industrial contacts who may be interested 5) and various community activists Pearl knows from her work ~~in~~ ~~as~~ as a health worker in East Oakland.

Our perspective at this point is to try and expand the core of the SALC through the Del Monte boycott work - and then initiate other projects in the East Oakland community, such as a clothing/shoe drive, educational work, or other projects.

Although our core group is small, we have several advantages that should allow us to ~~grow~~ grow ~~quickly~~ quickly: 1) good contacts with teachers because of past AFT work - hence access to high schools 2) good contacts with East Oakland community groups and activists thru Pearl 3) a committed and inter-~~racial~~ racial core group to start the SALC and 4) some good possibilities for making connections between our industrial work and the South Africa issue. On this last point: 1) Del Monte has several big canneries here, which employ a high percentage of black and chicano workers and which are organized by IBT. One possibility would be for us to encourage the Del Monte workers we meet thru the SA work (such as Evelyn and her co-workers, and hopefully others) to raise the sardines issue in their local and also to go

Bay Area, page three

TDU for support in doing this. This would have the added benefit of pushing the TDU group here on a "political" issue and also help broaden the sexual/racial composition of the local TDU. 2) We would like to continue to develop ties with the rank and file group in the ILWU local. We interviewed the leader of the group for WP and also hope to get the group's endorsement for the sardines boycott. And we will also continue to support any ~~mk~~ of their efforts to block the importation of SAan goods into the SF port. We would like to see more discussion at the national level of how concretely the industrial work and the Southern Africa work can be tied together. ~~xxxx~~ Perhaps these two suggestions will be useful in that discussion. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ It would also be helpful if the New York, Atlanta, and other more experienced branches could prepare "how to do it" manuals for the various project areas that SALC will be undertaking, such as the sardines boycott.

Anne L.
for the Bay Area Southern Africa fraction
(sorry for the typing, folks, - This was a ~~fx~~ rush job!!)
May 14, 1977

REPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WORK - BOSTON

After several weeks of planning and preparatory work, the branch here in Boston will be kicking off the "Shoes for Zimbabwe" campaign with an organizational meeting (to which we hope to bring a number of contacts) on May 24. Because of the small size of our branch at present, Southern Africa work is our main outside activity, and it has not been necessary up to this point to form an official fraction around the work; Rob and myself have been responsible for co-ordinating the campaign, and all other branch members are considered to be "on call" as needed. With the arrival of a new comrade from Detroit and the possibility of two close contacts joining the branch in the near future, we may soon want to establish a formalized fraction.

Two initial target areas have been picked out for launching the campaign, those being Mattapan and the South End (both sections of Boston). These were chosen because they are integrated working-class communities, and the two contacts mentioned above (R. and I.) are living in the South End at present, and have been doing a very systematic job of checking out possibilities for a film showing in the area. There are a number of other neighborhoods that present possibilities for shoe collections in the future.

In Mattapan, a film showing was scheduled at a white church a few blocks outside the black community on 5/18, and we hoped that members of the black community would attend as a result of our leafletting and postering efforts...this did not occur. We are continuing to contact the black churches in the area, and there is a possibility of a showing at a black Baptist church sometime in June. An integrated community center in the South End has expressed interest in sponsoring a film in early July.

Joining us in the campaign is a coalition of groups in the black community (including the All-African People's Revolutionary Party) called Afrikans Working for the Liberation of Southern Afrika. They're handling the campaign in Roxbury and in some of the housing projects solely through community drop-off points; we were unable to convince them of the advantages of door-to-door canvassing. As a result, the level of collaboration between us and AWLSA is not what we'd like it to be; the fact that our branch is all white has put us at a disadvantage in this respect as well. However, we plan to organize a fund-raising event for July in order to ship the supplies down to Virginia, and this may provide us with an opportunity for closer contact with AWLSA.

Our closest collaborators on Southern Africa work are in the Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa. The coalition includes IS, a group of white independent leftists called the Southern Africa Solidarity Committee, the African National Congress, and a few individuals. The Young Workers' Liberation League (Communist Party youth group) was initially considered a member organization, but since their "representative" appears to have no real backing from her organization, that recognition will probably be withheld unless the League is prepared to commit more of its resources to the Coalition. It is quite likely that Youth Against War and Fascism will join the Coalition in the near future.

Although the Coalition supports the shoe campaign (on the condition that the freedom fighters be referred to as the Patriotic Front rather than ZANU) and provides some financial backing and access to political contacts, the actual legwork is being done by the branch. The SASC (the only other force in the Coalition with substantial human resources to draw on) is involved in a campaign around the First National Bank of Boston and its subsidiaries in and loans to South Africa. This campaign has potential for tying in to local issues involving the bank (the fiscal crisis, redlining, etc.) but lacks the concreteness and practicality of our strategy. We feel this will become increasingly clear to some of the SASC members, at which point we can begin to expect more of an emphasis on supporting the shoe campaign.

BOSTON SA REPORT (cont.)

I am presently functioning as a staff person for the Coalition. We have proposed a perspective for the coalition involving increased emphasis on forming local committees in various areas which could be involved in both the shoe and bank campaigns, with particular emphasis on integrated working-class communities.

We expect that the planning meeting will include about 5 branch contacts, as well as ten Coalition contacts - people who have attended Coalition events in the past and have expressed interest in being involved in the collection drive. This is an almost totally white periphery, however, and we anticipate that it will be necessary to mount a leafletting campaign in the areas under consideration before starting collections, in hopes of getting some local blacks involved in the campaign. This is particularly true if we hope to have successful drives in one or more of the black housing projects. If we find ourselves with more white contacts involved in the campaign than are needed for the collection drive itself, we can always plug some of them into working on the fundraiser.

We hope to come out of this campaign with a small but genuine periphery in the black community. Given the high level of racial polarization in Boston, the composition of our branch, and the bad taste left in the mouths of many blacks by the "organizing" activities of a number of white left sects, it is unlikely that successes will be as dramatic as those of some branches such as New York. But the shoe campaign can mark a substantial step in the direction of overcoming the branch's isolation from the black community and positioning us to play a concrete role in the continuing struggle against racism here in Boston in the future.

Bill Fravis
Boston

Since the convention our work has focused on two areas: first, the recruitment and training of several new members who joined as a result of the South Africa work; and second, a clothing and shoe collection for ZANU which we have just completed. We've had a very high level of activity and feel that it has been really successful. On the other hand, we've had to let the actual SALC Committee work slide, and our major job now is to get a real committee functioning again.

Most comrades probably know from our reports at the convention that several black comrades joined the IS in New York because of this work. Obviously, the number one priority for us has been to start building a real multi-racial organization in NY. The Bronx-Manhattan branch (which all the new comrades belong to) has put a tremendous amount of time into this work, as we all have a tremendous amount to learn from each other--but that's for another report.

What this has meant for the SALC work, though, is that almost all of its previous members are now ISers. And since we have been putting so much emphasis on bringing the new comrades into leadership in the work, the SALC in reality has become the IS under another name. We think this was the right thing to do--for a while. So this report is actually about IS work.

Anyway, here's what we've done: over the last 2 months we have run a really exciting drive for ZANU at a housing project in the South Bronx. The results, so far, have been over 2500 lbs of clothes & shoes, several regular WP readers, and a meeting of over 50 people with several people interested in doing further work.

We strongly recommend that other cities collect in projects if they can. It's the largest concentration of people in one place, and there is already a structure through tenants committees, security patrols, etc., as well as public rooms to hold meetings. In Mitchell Houses, where we have been working, there also seems to be a real feeling of community and willingness to talk to us.

The other big thing we recommend is to get a loudspeaker (if possible buy one) and do a lot of publicity with it. We collected two times: both times we distributed a leaflet under everyone's door a night or two before saying we were coming on Saturday, and then when we collected we went driving around making a lot of noise asking people to get their stuff ready and bring it down. The first time we collected door to door; the second time people actually brought most of the stuff down to our table because of the loudspeaker. Most of the leafleting, by the way, was done by children of members and friends, who had a lot of fun and saved us a lot of work.

When we collected door to door we had teams of two--either one black and one white, or one Spanish speaking and one not. We gave everyone the small Zimbabwe brochure and a copy of our

SALC newsletter (if they gave us stuff) and took their names for the mailing list. We also set up a table with a signup sheet, the same lit and WP.

The following week, when we got WP with the article about our collecting, we went back to the people who seemed most interested with the paper, and from that we are developing regular paper sales.

One other aspect of publicity that was really good was that we managed to produce one leaflet in Spanish as well (a first for us I think). The translation was done by a friend from the South Bronx (first time he had ever done a leaflet) which was also important.

The only real problem we ran into was packing up the stuff and getting it to ZANU. We wasted a lot of time here. We recommend that other branches make firm shipping arrangements or at least know what's involved before you start. And that you rent a trailer and buy some large boxes the day you collect, so you can pack up the donations right then and take them to wherever they are going. We still haven't managed to get our 2500 lbs of stuff out of the Bronx! (Tho we will soon!)

On Sunday May 15th we held a public meeting at Mitchell Houses to wind up the drive and start getting the SALC functioning again. Davis Mgabe from ZANU spoke and we showed Last Grave. We did the same kind of publicity as before and got an audience that ranged from 50 to 80, including many children. We had originally hoped for more but it was at 3 pm on a beautiful Sunday (the only time we could get the meeting place). The meeting was quite a success though. New IS members chaired and did most of the speaking, and several people signed up to come to a demo we are having this week on the Krugerrand. We will pick them up and bring them to the demo.

Now we plan to rebuild the committee, involve people from Mitchell Houses in it, do more Krugerrand work as the TV ads have started in NY again, possibly also a sardine boycott in a couple of local stores. We are also planning to open a SALC storefront in the South Bronx, which should really open things up. And one last point: the district is organizing an advanced class series (open to all) on Southern Africa.

THE POLITICS OF ZIMBABWE LIBERATION - SOME QUESTIONS

The CC resolution on Zimbabwe represented an excellent advancement for the organization's southern Africa work. It was especially valuable for those of us involved in direct support work for ZANU. The document was especially good in its discussion of U.S. imperialism, and our attitude towards national liberation and the struggle for socialism in southern Africa.

There were, however, certain sections of the resolution which were unsatisfying. This was partly due to a lack of evidence given for certain assertions, and partly to a vagueness or ambiguity in some formulations. What follows are questions that have been raised in NY which need to be cleared up.

One general point. We need either sources for certain arguments, or more evidence. Based on the resolution alone, members here would not be confident enough to defend the claim about significant differences between ZANU and ZAPU. This is especially important when it concerns issues such as this which have been hotly debated within the support movement.

1. U.S. POLICY - The resolution is ambiguous about exactly what commitment the US has to the white settler regime in Rhodesia. It appears that the US is willing to accept black majority rule, and is no longer committed to maintaining the white settlers in power. Its goal would appear to be to achieve the transfer of political power in as peaceful a way as possible, ~~while maintaining the white settlers in power.~~

in order to contain the struggle. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ It is even willing to buy off the whites in order to get a settlement. It would probably like to keep the whites in control of as much of the economy as possible, if for no other reason than to convince the South Africans that reform is possible.

2. ZANU VERSUS ZAPU ETC.. - we need more evidence. The assertions may be correct, but the arguments given don't prove it. Indeed, there is a tendency to glorify ~~in~~ ZANU when describing the differences. Neither movement is homogeneous, hence any claims about them should be qualified. Also, you appear to make too much of the difference of negotiations versus armed struggle. ZANU is not opposed to a negotiated settlement, but only to a negotiated sell-out, or a negotiated farce, where Smith agrees to negotiate only to buy time. You also seem to overemphasize the impact of a ZANU victory. Don't forget that one would have expected the same impact from the victories of Frelimo and MPLA, and yet today Angola is supporting ZAPU, not ZANU. The reason is that even ZANU in power will be subject to tremendous pressures from the front line states and the world market. This will inevitably temper its actions. Even ZANU will be subject to neo-colonialism.

3. NATURE OF THE REGIMES - we need more discussion on the nature of the regimes in Mozambique, Angola etc.. They may just be state capitalist rather than some form of stalinist regime, but it is important to expand on this to arrive at a fuller understanding of the liberation groups. The quotes you give do not prove that ZANU is pro-capitalist, but only ~~that~~ that it uses maoist rhetoric. And after all, Mao said the same things.... But even if they are stalinist, would it make ~~any~~ any difference?????

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK - why must we support ZANU in opposition to ZAPU? Why can't we call for support to all freedom fighters, and within that context support ZANU as the most consistent and best organized guerilla group? The implication is given that we give critical support to ZANU, while actually we give no support at all to its political program.

Mike U NY

Mike U 5-10-77

Mike's questions raise some useful points, some of them because they are questions which actually come up in the Zimbabwe liberation support movement, others because they relate to some of the most recent developments in southern Africa itself. Since I am committed to a brief reply I am not going to try to go into any detail on any of the history of the liberation movements, etc. Instead I will focus on the current political questions about (i) U.S. policy, (ii) the positions of the liberation movements and our attitudes toward them, and (iii) nature of the southern African regimes and their direction.

On U.S. policy, I have no differences with what Mike states in his point "1. U.S. POLICY". The U.S. is in fact willing to accept a form of "black majority rule" so long as it does not shake the stability of South Africa. This requires a "solution" in which white property is kept basically intact. This is the kind of settlement the U.S. believes can be worked out, if the U.S. plays a direct role in the negotiations and gives its own direct guarantees about the future to the white Rhodesians and South Africans. This is the essence of the neo-colonial plan for Zimbabwe at present. Both South Africa and to all appearances Rhodesia welcome American participation. Many African states, certainly Zambia and quite likely Mozambique, welcome it as well. The question then is: will the Zimbabwe liberation movements accept the American initiative?

This gets right to the issue of ~~the~~ ZANU and ZAPU, and how American policy relates to both of them. Many supporters of Zimbabwe liberation believe there is no difference between ZANU and ZAPU, i.e. no reason to particularly support either group rather than the other. The American and British governments, however, do believe there is a difference. The articles reprinted ~~here~~ in this bulletin from the British magazine THE ECONOMIST indicate this. For example, they say: "The Patriotic Front's present position (against U.S. involvement) is not necessarily either permanent or monolithic... The argument for an American role is convincing to anyone who genuinely wants a negotiated settlement, as most of the countries involved certainly do. This could eventually lead the Popular Front (a misprint--they clearly mean "Patriotic Front" -- DF), or at any rate the part led by Mr. Nkomo, to think again." The "part led by Mr. Nkomo" means, of course, ZAPU. Or, to take another example: "If Mr. Mugabe (leader of ZANU) eventually refuses to compete for power through the ballot box (this refers to elections which would be held under an American-written Constitution for Zimbabwe), this should not be allowed to torpedo a settlement."

What has clearly shaped up, is that the U.S. views ZAPU as the wing of the Patriotic Front which is open to a neo-colonial settlement. In other words, the U.S. hopes that when majority rule comes to Zimbabwe, it will be ZAPU and not ZANU who predominate in representing the Patriotic Front in the government, etc. Of course neither ZAPU nor ZANU are homogeneous, individuals can and do change sides, etc. But we are talking here about how the U.S. government sees the decisive elements of the two liberation movements. They expect they can make a deal with ZAPU, at the expense of ZANU. This certainly is strong evidence that we have been correct in our view that ZANU, or more specifically the guerilla fighters who the ZANU leadership speaks for, are far more committed to an armed struggle solution, and far more resistant to the U.S.-imposed neo-colonial option, than the ZAPU leadership.

~~Mike asks~~ Do we "support ZANU in opposition to ZAPU"? Not quite. We support both ZANU and the Patriotic Front. But we do not believe the Patriotic Front can be a stable political alliance, it is quite likely to split at some point (not necessarily immediately) over the issue of the American initiative. That split will carry with it the danger of a Zimbabwean civil war, with western imperialism (possibly Russia as well) giving its support to ZAPU for a neo-colonial solution. Therefore we hope that the military balance continues to favor ZANU, as opposed to ZAPU, because the victory of the ZANU army is the best safeguard against this.

Mike also states we tend to overemphasize the impact a ZANU victory would have, since "one would have expected the same impact from the victories of FRELIMO and MPLA, and yet today Angola is supporting ZAPU, not ZANU." On the contrary, I think Mike here is actually underestimating the impact of the MPLA and FRELIMO victories. Without the MPLA victory there would not have been a Soweto; or certainly, there would have been no nationwide South African rebellion following Soweto. The MPLA victory convinced people in South Africa that South African imperialism could be defeated! The question isn't whether ZANU will be subject to tremendous pressures. Obviously, it is and will be. However the MPLA and FRELIMO victories have made the victory of Zimbabwe armed struggle possible. It seems absolutely clear that a ZANU, as opposed to ZAPU victory, certainly as opposed to some even worse sellout in Zimbabwe, will be another huge blow to both South African and American power.

What about the nature of the front-line states. As far as Angola and Mozambique are concerned, the two facts that seem to stand out are: (i) the weakness of the new regimes, even after quite some time in power; and (ii) their attempts to avoid neo-colonialism in a certain sense, by establishing relations with both imperialist camps. In Mozambique, the apparent weakness of FRELIMO in power is shown by the fact it is expelling or sending to labor camps all social elements who might present the threat of political opposition. (Technicians, people with Portuguese passports, etc.). This is being done despite the fact it clearly has serious damaging effects on the economy. In Angola, it is even more graphic. Last week's fighting now appears to have reflected ~~an~~ fairly major revolt, including elements of the workers', women's and youth organizations. And the government required Cuban troops to suppress it and keep order afterwards. Evidently the MPLA, after well over a year in power cannot control even its own strongholds without this foreign aid. (This is a good illustration, by the way, of why we are opposed to the call for Cuban troops in Africa even when it is initially in support of a progressive liberation movement).

In terms of maintaining their independence, the Angolan and Mozambican regimes appear to be committed to further economic ties with the west, while simultaneously initiating "treaties of friendship", getting military aid and so forth from the Soviet Union. This balancing act, of course, becomes increasingly difficult with time, as the evolution of the political and economic crises in such "non-aligned" states as Egypt, Algeria, etc. show. At best it postpones for a while the need to make a decisive choice leading to incorporation into one or the other camp, unless a working class revolution in southern Africa intervenes. The fact that these regimes remain so weak, and at best only partially consolidated, means it is still too early to make a clear assessment of their bourgeois or Stalinist direction. For that matter, it is still too early to write off the possibility of new and more radical working class upheavals.

However, it is a little silly to ask: "Would it make any difference" whether a society becomes part of the capitalist west, or becomes Stalinist. It's not that we are "for" either of these courses ~~of~~ over the other. As we all know, however, it does make a big difference and would have important implications for the future direction of the struggle.



So try again

The shape of the next attempt at a Rhodesia settlement is starting to emerge from the dust

"No one has any confidence in the British", said Mr Andy Young, America's ambassador to the United Nations, talking about Rhodesia this week. Mr Young later said he hadn't quite meant it, but he was not far wrong anyway. The new administration in Washington wonders whether Mr Callaghan's government is willing to make yet another attempt at a settlement in Rhodesia. Many people in black Africa believe that Britain has given up in despair. In fact, a way out of the mess is still possible, and Britain will have to play a part in it.

There is some evidence that the Rhodesian prime minister, Mr Ian Smith, has had second thoughts since January 24th, the day he sent Mr Ivor Richard packing from Salisbury and in effect shut down the Geneva conference. He now talks of an "internal and external" settlement, not just an "internal" one, which implies a settlement with some degree of international acceptance. South Africa's prime minister, Mr Vorster,

appears to think Mr Smith's calculations have changed, and Mr Vorster is usually a shrewd judge. So what can be done to see if a new opportunity exists?

The main principle which should govern any new British and American search for a settlement is recognition of the fact that no conceivable formula can possibly win the backing of all shades of white and black opinion. It became clear at Geneva that the extreme white right and the extreme black left have no meeting ground either on the sort of multiracial government which should rule Rhodesia until it becomes independent, or on the constitution of the new Zimbabwe. The extreme white right may already be pulling away from Mr Smith. The next step, therefore, is to find out which of the rival black Rhodesian groups share enough common ground to take part in another round of talks.

One way of doing this would be to present all of them with a set of principles to which they would be invited to subscribe, and which could not thereafter be changed.

Half politician, wholly bishop

The key to what happens next in Rhodesia is in the hands of a most unlikely person, the black head of the United Methodist Church in Rhodesia, 51-year-old Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The bishop has to decide whether to take the African National Council (ANC)—he is its president—into direct talks with Mr Ian Smith's white government.

Mr Smith, after bringing the Geneva talks with four black delegations to a sudden end in January, promised to seek a settlement with "moderate" black leaders inside Rhodesia. Bishop Muzorewa was the man he had chiefly in mind. But the bishop, showing more political acumen than usual, is playing hard to get. He has said that he will take part in new talks only if Mr Smith "surrenders power to the majority" and agrees that the talks should be under British chairmanship.

The bishop's political strength lies almost entirely in his popularity among large numbers of black Rhodesians, particularly in Salisbury. They see the bishop as the only man capable of healing the divisions in the black nationalists' ranks. Until the African National Council was formed in 1971 to oppose the settlement then proposed, Bishop Muzorewa was unknown as a politician. At that time, the ANC had the support of the two banned political parties, Zapu and Zanu. Since then, Bishop Muzorewa has become a national figure in his own right.

After his election as Rhodesia's first black bishop in 1968, he proved himself to be a brave advocate of black interests. In 1970 he was banned from visiting the tribal trust lands, and in the following year the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique forbade his attendance at a church conference. His support of the black majority's political hopes is tempered by an earnest desire for peace and racial reconciliation, and his popularity is enhanced by the widespread belief that he has no overweening political ambitions.

His weakness lies in the fact that, unlike Mr Nkomo's

Zapu and Mr Mugabe's Zanu, the African National Council has no military wing. Many of the guerrillas now fighting the Rhodesian army were recruited in the name of the bishop, and some may still feel loyal to him, but he has no control over them. He also lacks a base outside Rhodesia. The decision in January of the presidents of five neighbouring African countries to give their support to the Patriotic Front—the alliance of Zapu and Zanu—was a deliberate attempt to undermine Bishop Muzorewa. The five presidents thought he had mishandled the politics of the black nationalist movement, and in particular that his leadership had proved inadequate to hold together the admittedly shaky alliance assembled under the umbrella of his ANC. First Mr Nkomo pulled Zapu out, and then Mr Sithole withdrew Zanu (and later Mr Mugabe challenged Mr Sithole for Zanu's leadership).

The bishop made a tactical error in exiling himself from Rhodesia between July, 1975, and October, 1976, a period when he could have been consolidating his claim to be the blacks' main leader. Further doubts about his political judgment were raised by the ANC's reaction to the five presidents' decision to support the Patriotic Front. This produced accusations that they were "launching a civil war", and Mr Nkomo was accused of being willing "to slaughter millions of Zimbabweans". True or false, not exactly tactful politics.

Bishop Muzorewa is small and modest, but on a public platform he can be an eloquent and persuasive speaker. At the 1974 congress of the African National Council his criticism of the Smith regime—coupled, however, with a call for racial reconciliation—moved his audience deeply. He is a reserved and serious man who genuinely cares for the future of Rhodesia-Zimbabwe. He will not be able to put off much longer the keenest test yet of his political skill.

These would include a commitment to a multiracial interim government for a set period of time; a British political presence to hold the balance between the whites and blacks in Rhodesia during that period; and shared control of the security forces. The various black groups would also be asked to agree that a general election should be held before independence, and to respect the result of that election. The same set of principles should be put to the black African governments concerned with the future of Rhodesia. But this time this group of consultees should be extended beyond the five "front-line" states (Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola) to include Nigeria and possibly Zaire, Malawi and Kenya as well, all of which would probably use their influence in the direction of moderation.

The extremes are weak without the middle
 The more extreme leaders of Rhodesia's guerrilla movement—the Marxists who believe their path to power lies through the gun and not the ballot-box—would refuse to sign. But most of the black politicians would not. Mr Joshua Nkomo has said nothing which would prevent him from signing. Even Mr Robert Mugabe, who claims the closest links with the guerrilla leaders, has not ruled out a democratically elected government for Zimbabwe. Mr Smith cannot do a deal inside Rhodesia with Bishop Muzorewa (see box) and the tribal chiefs alone because they represent too narrow

a strip of the middle ground. Mr Sithole and Mr Nkomo would almost certainly have to be included too. But, if the spectrum of black acceptance is wide enough, the omission of the guerrillas' wild men can probably be survived, because they would no longer have enough support to sustain a major war.

On the white right there is already division. Last week 12 of the Rhodesian Front's 50 members of parliament voted against Mr Smith's plan to allow blacks to buy land in white areas. This could yet lead to a split in the party, with Mr Smith leading the more moderate wing. If he came out on top, he might not feel it so necessary to keep looking over his right shoulder when negotiations start again. To push ahead without the approval of the outer wings of the white and black communities is risky, but the risk has to be taken.

If there is to be any hope of orderly progress towards multiracial democracy in southern Africa in the next few years, the Rhodesia quarrel has to be settled by negotiation rather than war. Mr Kissinger's attempt last year, and the Geneva talks to which it led, failed partly because Mr Smith could claim he had been misled by Mr Kissinger; partly because it was assumed that everybody, from far right to far left, had to be involved in the settlement; and partly because Britain proved a nervous and hesitant co-ordinator. The next attempt, for which the conditions may now be taking shape, should avoid all three mistakes.



Don't lynch Concorde, try it

New Yorkers will lose nothing by giving Concorde a chance to prove whether it is as awful an aeroplane as they (and we) say it is

There has never been much to be usefully said in

opposite. All are running headlong for absurdity.