

STATEMENT ON THE NEED FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMMATIC UNITY

We, the National Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa, issue this statement in the hopes that it will begin the kind of debate and discussion that can lead to a unified understanding of the importance of nationally coordinated work in support of the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa.

Throughout the world, struggles for independence, national liberation, and against imperialism are mounting a fierce threat to the control that the Western Corporate Monopolies hold. During the 1960's and early 70's the focal point for that struggle was in Southeast Asia. ^{As} ~~the~~ liberation was becoming victorious in Southeast Asia, the main battle front moved into Southern Africa. The liberation of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola set the stage for the continuing struggle to free Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. Now it is important that we all recognize that the Struggle in Southern Africa is indeed THE FOCAL POINT in the world struggle against Imperialism and Racism.

At this particular point in history, the struggle is intensifying and the forces of reaction are attempting to bolster their position. In opposition to this, in every country the forces of liberation are on the move. In Zimbabwe the unity of the Patriotic Front had the sharp rise in guerrilla activity has escalated the consolidation of offensive tactics on the part of the racist regime not only against the People of Zimbabwe but also against the People of Mozambique. In Namibia, the attempts to force a neo-colonial solution are being met with strong resistance from the people of Namibia and the leading liberation organization, SWAPO. And in the stronghold of Apartheid and Foreign Investment, South Africa, a year of unprecedented sustained struggle after Soweto has brought home the struggle against Racism and Imperialism in a way that has shaken the very backbone of the Racist Vorster Regime.

For those of us in the United States, this struggle has particular significance and particular responsibilities. U.S. Corporate investment in SA, NAMibia, and Rhodesia totals well over \$4.5 Billion dollars. There are

well over 256 major US Corporations in South Africa alone. In addition, US Banks have invested over \$2 Billion in direct aid to the South African Government and untold amounts to Rhodesia. To secure those interests, the US Government has basically always given their support to the minority regimes. Now while the tactics have changed somewhat, the same basic policy is being used. The main premise of this policy is maintain control over the region and secure the investments of the corporations. To do so a variety of ploys could be utilized: neo-colonialism, the end to petty apartheid, etc. To achieve these ends the US has had to employ all the resources available to it; for the Corporations and the Government know that this is the next stage of battle between the forces of national liberation on the one hand and Imperialism on the other.

While this has been the loud and clear response of the US Government, other voices are making themselves heard more and more loudly.

Whereas ~~the~~ just a few years ago, the movement in support of African Liberation in the US was characterized by very small and isolated groupings who were attempting to do education and some organizing, now, we see the emergence of the basis for a real mass movement. Whereas before, the work was fragmented, isolated, and completely divorced from city to city, today, throughout the country, from the smallest towns in the Southwest, to the cities of New England we see people taking up this struggle in remarkably similar although totally spontaneous ways.

Whereas a few years ago, there were small local groupings of between 5-10 individuals and a few organizations taking up this work, now we see broad city-wide Coalitions in most American cities, which are attempting to unite as many as possible into joint action.

Whereas a few years ago, there was no desire to really build national unity, now more and more forces are realizing the importance of national coordination and national organization.

We, in the National Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa, hail these steps forward in our movement as significant advances in the fight

ainst US support for the racist regimes.

However, we also recognize two very serious weaknesses in our work throughout the country.

First, there has been a definite tendency on the part of predominantly white groups to not take up the struggle against racism. There are two different manifestations of this weakness. First, in the internal and organizational levels, there has been a reluctance to take up a vigorous struggle against white chauvinism. The result has been, not only a limiting of the ability of the groups to raise the struggle against racism politically, but the necessity for independent Black organizations to work separately from the predominantly white ones. Multi-nationality must be based on a firm and resolute struggle to eliminate white chauvinism from our ranks. The prime responsibility for this lies in the hands of the white members of the movement.

The other aspect is programmatic. Central to our ability to win massive numbers of white and black workers to our movement is the necessity to link concretely the struggle against racism in our communities and factories with the struggle in Southern Africa. The examples are plentiful, from discrimination on the job, the cut-backs to racist attacks. The role of the Corporations in such situations let us draw concretely for the white workers how racism directly affects them also. The problem is not the lack of examples ~~nor~~ information, but the lack of understanding as to the importance of the struggle against racism and how to link that up between Southern Africa and the United States. This weakness takes on a particularly sharp importance ~~when~~ given the responsibility on whites to take this struggle to the white working class.

There have been some significant strides forward in some areas on both the two aspects of this point, but it is still the primary task confronting the African Liberation Support Movement.

Secondly, while the increase of local work around the country is on the whole a positive development it has some limitations that must be dealt with.

The narrow localism, spontaneity, and anti-national work tendencies still hold some sway in our movement.

The only way we will be able to maximize our contribution to the liberation movements of Southern Africa and really build our movement in this country is if we can come together in a solid fist to fight the US Corporate, Military, and Government's role. Many voices crying out alons cannot be heard, but one loud and claer voice could really shake up Washington. The necessaty for a unified and strong movement will be seen even more clearly in the winter of '77 and '78 when the deadlines for Zimbabwe approach. But should we wait until either the objective situation is at such a crisis point or until US advisors or military personnel go to Southern Africa to build national unity?

To call for organizational unity of the different forces active around Southern Africa at this moment would be premature. Given the history of the problems of white chauvinism in the movement (and in our own Coalition in particular) and the general political diversity of the various forces from students, to church groups to workers orggnizations, to Black Community organizations and political organizations, we feel now is not the time to call for ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY.

HOWEVER, WE FEEL THAT THERE MUST BEGIN ON EVERY LEVEL OF THE MOVEMENT A DISCUSSION AND DEBATE AS TO THE NECESSITY OF JOINT NATIONAL PROGRAMMMATIC COOPERATION AND UNITY.

From our own exxprience in this movement, we feel there are three principles that could be the foundation for PROGRAMMATIC UNITY:

1) That the focus of our work around Southern Africa must target US Corporations, Military, and Government (Imperialism). ~~It is our responsibility to attack these forces for it is they who are helpingxxxxxxxxx from the maintenance of~~ ~~---supporting-and-gaining---~~

2) That the task of our movement in this country demands active and working support for the existing liberation movements in Southern Africa.

3) That critical to our support to the struggles in Southern Africa is linking it up to the sturggles against racism in the US adn the fight of

all working people against racism and exploitation.

What this national programmatic unity would resemble in the way of actual work would have to be the result of intensive national discussion and planning. We would receive such a process openly. After a period of discussion and circulation of proposals, a national conference of all those who could support the basis of unity might be a possibility. At any cost, this question is a pressing one and demands the attention of all supporters of Southern Africa

Therefore, we call for a national debate and discussion on the need for NATIONAL PROGRAMMATIC UNITY IN THE US MOVEMENT. We hope that this statement can further the cause of this discussion in our movement and are open to responses from all who are interested

NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE LIBERATION OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA

submitted by: United Peoples Campaign Against Apartheid and Racism,
Philadelphia, Pa.

1410