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ZIMBABWE: FREEDOM STRIDING FORWARD

1973 has been the year of a great leap forward in the struggle to liberate Zimbabwe from settler rule. The unity and momentum achieved in the early months of 1972 in the mass campaign to defeat the Smith-Home settlement proposals have been sustained in action. The armed struggle has for the first time won a secure base within the country, such that despite every effort of the racist troops, the guerrillas have not yet been rooted out of the northeast. Not only has the armed struggle scored a significant territorial advance, but it has also engaged the active support of far more people than at any previous stage in the nine years since its commencement, and actions have occurred in several areas hitherto unreached by armed cadres. These are important and heroic achievements, won against an enemy whose growing desperation is expressed in more brutality and more repression.. The homes, cattle and crops of local people thought to be sympathetic to the liberation army have been burned and demolished by the white soldiers.

In consequence of the unity and militance of the African opposition, the illégál regime has signally failed to lure into acquiescence any significant section of Black opinion. Smith has had to call up men over 40 years of age to swell the size of his army. He has boosted military pay in an effort to keep recruits longer.

Growing Unity

Behind this mighty upsurge of mass struggle, involving thousands of people in some of the more densely populated rural regions of Zimbabwe, lay key political developments which were the precondition of the new advances. First, there was the mobilization of the people in open resistance to the 'settlement' which was effected so successfully during the Pearce Commissions's visit. This gave a great new impetus to the movement, and its success inspired new efforts in other methods of struggle. Second, in the course of that same campaign early in 1972 the people found anew a unity of spirit and purpose such as they had not enjoyed since the days before the unhappy division of the national liberation movement into ZAPU and ZANU in 1963.

The militant unity of the people in Zimbabwe, together with external pressures from and other quarters, helped to bring ZAPU and ZANU together in March of 1972 in the formation of a Joint Military Command (JMC). The JMC suffers from lack of military participation, but the political leaders of ZAPU and ZANU continue to hold the organization together. The third precondition was the advance of FRELIMO forces in Tete province of Mozambique, and in particular, their success in mobilizing the people south of the Zambezi River. Despite the frightful and now internationally notorious massacres (reported by Roman Catholic press) committed by Rhodesian troops at Mucumbura and by Portuguese-led troops at Wiriamu and other villages in the same regions the people of the area--on both sides of the border--were completely won to the side of the liberation movement. The consequent ease of movement of FRELIMO cadres throughout the region opened up an avenue for Zimbabweans to penetrate the northease.

KHAN ON RECRUITING AFRO-AMERICANS FOR CABORA BASSA WORK

On December 2, 1973 the African-American Solidarity Committee and the Cook County Black Student Nurses Association co-sponsored a community forum in Chicago about the struggle in Mozambique. The guest speaker was Shaffrudine Khan, the United Nations representative from the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO).

Here are some of the questions asked of Mr. Khan:

Q. What about the African-American Affairs Association (AAA) memo concerning recruiting Afro-Americans to work on the Cabora Bassa Dam project in Mozambique? Was it an intra-organizational memo?

Comment: Yes, it was inside of the AAA. It was talking about the recruitment of specifically Afro-Americans to work on the Cabora Bassa Dam project as one way that they would try to use to cut off some of the pressure being exerted on the construction of the dam here in this country.

Khan: My reaction to the memo is this.... I see it as an insulting document to the dignity of the Black men in this country--to mobilize him on those grounds which the government mentioned--because it says the best way to avoid FRELIMO blasting the dam is to bring Blacks to work out there, because (the U.S. government says) FRELIMO is also applying a racist policy--it's against whites. Therefore, once Blacks are working there, FRELIMO will feel bound not to blast the dam. Second, they say if the Blacks in this country are supporting FRELIMO, it's because they have not been given the opportunity to work side by side with the whites. The U.S. government insinuates that the people here are supporting FRELIMO because you feel you are being discriminated against by the corporations that are building there; they're taking white technicians and not Black technicians. And, therefore, once the Blacks here are mobilized (to work in Mozambique) there will be no more grounds for you to stand and support FRELIMO. It's criminal, these ideas, since it has been criminal to force the brothers and sisters even to go to Vietnam. Some of them resisted because it was a criminal war. There was no justification for that war. Why should they now mobilize the Blacks here to go to Mozambique to build that dam, a criminal construction, which we call an economic aggression? Why should they have to use Blacks? Because the U.S. government does not indicate that their suggestion comes from the fact that they appreciate the quality and the grade of skill of the Black man and so on, capable of doing a good job. They say it simply as an element at avoiding something which they feel may come out as a result. The Black man is going to be used as a buffer, as a defense for their interests. There is no minimum contemplation of respect for the Black man as such, none....

----Reprinted from African Agenda, December-January 1974

LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN MOZAMBIQUE

In Mozambique the armed liberation struggle is being waged in four of its nine provinces. For nine years the freedom movement in Mozambique (FRELIMO) has made significant advances against Portugal's armed forces. One quarter of the country, with its one million people, has already been liberated. The freedom movement embarked on armed struggle in 1964, four years after its formation following the slaughter of 500 participants in a peaceful demonstration at Mueda in 1960.

The guerrillas are still gaining ground in spite of at least 10,000 military operations against them by the Portuguese forces. Portuguese desperation takes a high toll of African life. Last July a Catholic priest, Father Hastings, disclosed that at least 400 people were massacred at Wiriyamu and neighboring villages in December 1972. In June two Spanish priests, Father Joaquim Sampaio and Father Fernando Mendes, had declared they were eyewitnesses of a Portuguese commando raid in which villagers were burned alive. In one incident 200 men, women and children were murdered with machine guns.

These revelations aroused a storm of protest through Africa, in the Socialist countries, as well as among the democratic public in capitalist countries, especially Britain.

Within Portugal the popular struggle has developed on a wide front against the fascist regime and its colonial wars. It is leading to the creation of genuine independent trade unions and to the formation of broad democratic committees which bring together Communists, Socialists, Catholics and a wide spectrum of the population in opposition to the government.

Imperialist Britain is deeply involved in the military exploits of its 'oldest ally', for it is British capital investment which made possible the construction of 50% of the railways in Portugal's colonies in Africa, and half the capital invested in them came from Britain. Within Portugal itself even the telephone lines in Lisbon and the tram lines are British-owned. Though the capital inflow into Portugal from other imperialist countries has recently increased, Britain still has the biggest single stake of 25 per cent.

There is a growing recognition within the labor movement in Britain that it has common interests with the democratic mass struggle taking place in Portugal and the national liberation movement in the Portuguese colonies in Africa. When Portuguese Premier Caetano visited Britain last July, more than 10,000 protesters marched through the streets of London on the day of his arrival.

Many Portuguese people in exile in Britain have become active in the solidarity campaign. For 15 years a monthly journal, Portuguese and Colonial Bulletin, has made a profound political impact on many in the labor movement. ----From an article by Idris Cox, British writer, in World Marxist Review, December 1973.

A NEW WEAPON TO SMASH TRADE UNION APARTHEID

The International Trade Union Conference Against Apartheid held in the Plenary Assembly Hall, the Palais des Nations in Geneva, 15-16 June, brought together for the first time since 1948 the three great trade union internationals--The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and the World Confederation of Labor (WCL).

Three hundred delegates from 200 trade unions representing 180 million workers from 130 capitalist and socialist countries in Africa, the U.S., Australia, Europe and New Zealand participated in the conference.

The Secretary General of the UN was represented by Mr. A.A. Farah, Assistant Secretary General and up to last year chairman of the UN Special Committee on Apartheid, who made a valuable contribution to the holding of this conference. The UN Special Committee on Apartheid was represented by its present chairman, Ambassador Edwin Ogburn of Nigeria.

The remarkable feature of this unprecedented gathering was the unanimity of views expressed by all the sixty speakers. Delegate after delegate in this great assembly of the world's great labor leaders denounced apartheid as an anachronism, a relic of colonialism, a survival of an outdated imperialism and therefore a threat to the working people of all nations.

Labor leaders from Latin America, Asia and Africa compared the system of racial discrimination with the indignities and injustices suffered by their own people at the hands of colonial rulers, foreign investors and representatives of the great imperial powers. The reasons for this extraordinary consensus are to be found in the structure theory and practice of the racist regime in South Africa.

For the text of the resolution adopted by the participating groups, see The African Communist, Fourth quarter 1973.

CHURCH DOCUMENT DETAILS SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATE HOLDINGS

The most comprehensive report on the conflict between emerging nationalism in Southern Africa and the influence of American-owned multi-national corporations there has been released by the National Council of Churches' Corporate Information Center. It is a 240-page document titled "Church Investments, Corporations and Southern Africa", commissioned by the national agencies of several Protestant churches. In recent year these churches have put increasing pressure on corporations both through their own institutional stock portfolios and by urging similar action on private stockholders.

"Church Investments, Corporations and Southern Africa" lists for the first time the total number of U.S. corporations with Southern Africa operations, gives a brief summary of 53 of them and a complete profile on the largest fifteen.

The document quotes one British industrialist who went to South Africa on a fact-finding mission before investing: "The parallel between Hitler's treatment of the Jews and South Africa's treatment of the blacks today...was brought home most vividly to me when I saw blacks being literally herded like cattle through the Bantu Administration Courts. Just as I think with hindsight it would have been totally wrong to do anything to connive at nazism in those days, so also do I think we should do nothing what would help to perpetuate apartheid..."

However the American industrialists who have propped up minority regimes with their investments have had no such moral qualms, the report shows, but rather have strengthened, through taxes and sales, both those governments and their ability to further repress the majority. Statistics show that the gap between white and black wages has increased in the past five years.

In summary the report says: the whole of Southern Africa is in the beginning stages of a major racial war and through taxes and sale of products to the military, U.S. companies are bolstering white military might.

"Church Investments, Corporations and Southern Africa" is published by Friendship Press, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027 (\$3.95).

----From the Afro-American newspaper, week of January 29-February 2, 1974.