

# THE COALITION TO STOP RHODESIAN IMPORTS

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2

STRIKING SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS MARCHING IN DURBAN



## THE COALITION

The Coalition To Stop Rhodesian Imports has a very clear goal: to end U.S. support of Rhodesia and to close the port of Philadelphia to Rhodesian goods. We seek to do this in support of the Zimbabwean people in their struggle for freedom against the racist oppression of the white minority settler government. By its continued imports of Rhodesian goods since 1971, the U.S. government has been in open violation of international law since the U.N. imposed embargo of 1968. Only through action in the U.S. can a complete boycott be maintained and pressure be put on the government to reinstate the embargo.

The building of solidarity and close relations with longshoremen in Philadelphia, who are the people who directly handle and can stop the imports, is one of two priorities in the campaign. At the same time we are trying to educate people from the total Philadelphia community to build a base of support that can bring pressure upon the U.S. government to end its support of racism and oppression of Zimbabwean people.

The Coalition includes in its membership, the American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, Life Center Collective, Black Economic Development Council, Black United Liberation Front, Philadelphia Resistance, People's Fund, Free Press, Revolutionary Union, Venceremos Brigade, community people and rank and file longshoremen.

Our successful blockade of Rhodesian cargo will greatly bolster the international solidarity of workers and struggling peoples of the world and make a strong blow against racism and imperialism. The Coalition is one of many organizations in the U.S. which is actively engaged in support of struggles against imperialism and in support of southern African liberation movements.

## ON THE DOCKS — FRIDAY, MARCH 22

While coalition members picketed on the street on Friday, March 22, longshoremen inside the gates were discussing whether or not to unload the ship. Some had not been directly contacted by the coalition, and were not sure of the importance of the campaign. No formal position was taken by gang leaders or the union. The company officials argued that it was not the longshoremen's concern what the cargo was, and that the whole idea wasn't worth losing pay over. The company never argued that there were no Rhodesian goods — the line they offered to pickets on the street. One crew of longshoremen finally agreed to load cargo on the boat, but refused to unload.

On Saturday, the *African Neptune* was brought into dock late, in a clear attempt to avoid the pickets. This time, however, the dockworkers were united in refusing to work.

That longshoremen recognize the importance of this campaign is clear; but the work that is yet to be done by the coalition and the longshoremen in developing tactics and communications between the dock, and the street and the city of Philadelphia is equally clear.

## Nationwide Movement to Stop Rhodesian Imports

Philadelphia is only one of many ports of entry for Rhodesian goods. Boston, N.Y., Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Baton Rouge, San Francisco, and Seattle are among the others. Although Baltimore and Philadelphia are the leaders and the first roganized, the *African Sun* was picketed in six east coast cities on it's last visit. Baltimore longshoremen have turned away three ships. An East Coast conference, scheduled for the weekend of May 11-12 in Philadelphia will bring together coalition members and longshoremen from most major Atlantic ports, and should go a long way toward consolidating the boycott.

## INSIDE RHODESIA

The political situation in Zimbabwe today is characterized by two main trends — the deterioration of conditions for the Ian Smith regime and the white racist economic structure, and increasing power and legitimacy for the armed liberation movements. News reaches the U.S. only slowly and unreliably due to distortions by the Smith regime and the U.S. press.

The biggest problem now facing the racist administration is a manpower shortage. While among blacks unemployment is approximately 50%, the whites can no longer adequately run the government and economy with the available supply of white males. To counter increasing white emigration the Smith regime launched "Settlers '74" a massive international public relations program aimed at bringing 1,000,000 whites to the country in a year, almost doubling the white population. In January net immigration was 44 people, and homes built for the settlers stand empty while Africans are evicted from their homes or crowded in substandard dwellings at the whim of the government. Few are willing to accept the government's demands for military service, or the uncertainty of living in the countryside where guerilla action continues to increase.

If the carrot is used to increase white population the stick is used to decrease the "African threat" — a forced birth control program has been introduced, and the Zimbabwe African National Union, one of the armed liberation movements which is strongest in the northwest, has blamed the government for introducing the cholera epidemic now raging there; all white Rhodesians have recently been inoculated against cholera.

The armed forces of Rhodesia now stand at 4,000 regular soldiers, 7,000 South African soldiers on duty, and the African Rifles, a segregated troop of 1,000. Reserves include 8,000 Rhodesians and 28,000 South Africans. Portuguese troops are reported to freely cross the border with Mozambique.

Nevertheless ZANU and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union) which are operating together militarily, continue to gain support in the countryside, where in addition to fighting the Smith government they are providing badly needed social services to Africans.

Morale is lagging among the whites; more and more are asking for a negotiated settlement; the Catholic Church in Rhodesia has condemned the racist policies of the government; tourism is declining sharply — but Smith remains adamant and is becoming more and more isolated from the white population.

Rhodesia is an underdeveloped nation; it exports raw materials to obtain the foreign exchange desperately needed to purchase arms and other manufactured goods. Our boycott can significantly reduce Rhodesia's income, and speed the progress toward liberation.

### AFRICAN SUN Goes East with Rhodesian Ore

On March 21, the *African Sun* arrived at Parker Marine Terminal carrying, according to our information, Rhodesian asbestos. Although it was raining too heavily for longshoremen to work, 15–20 pickets distributed leaflets and carried signs. Both the *African Sun* and the *African Neptune* had been picketed before in Philadelphia, but although unloading was delayed, it was accomplished. Groups represented by the pickets included the October 4th Organization, Philadelphia Free Press, People's Fund, Revolutionary Union, Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, and the African Liberation Support Committee.

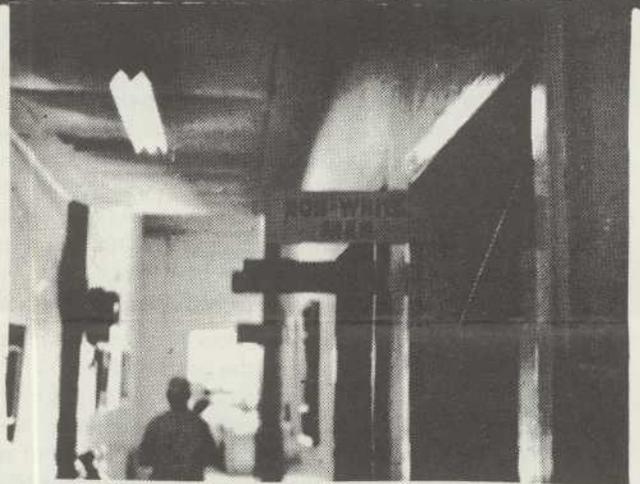
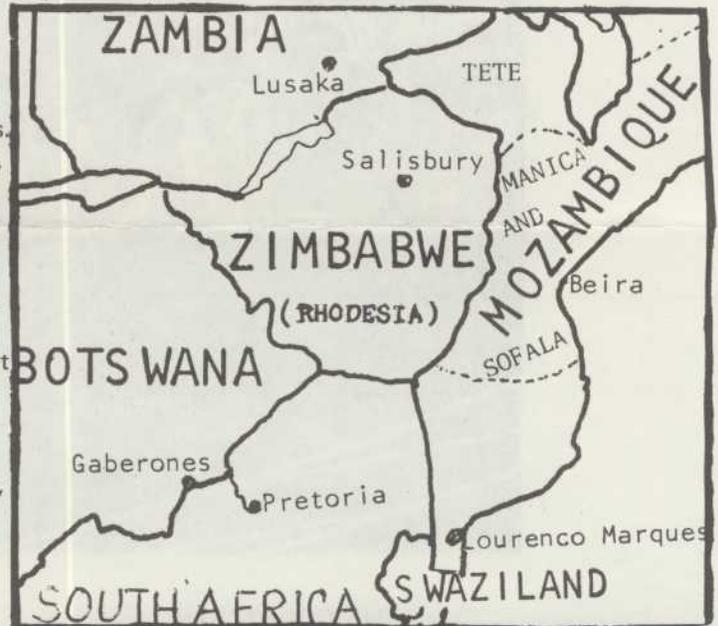
On the 22nd, five pickets showed up, and we were reassured by longshoremen that the cargo wouldn't be unloaded. A company official showed us what he claimed was the manifest, which showed no Rhodesian goods, and asked us to remove the picket line. We told him we didn't trust him, and would stay. Company police prevented us from approaching the docks to talk the matter over with longshoremen.

At noon we received definite word that the ship was not being unloaded; one of four crews assigned has agreed to load cargo only; the others had refused to work. We were encouraged however to form a picketline on the 23rd, Saturday, because of a possible third attempt by the company to have the ship unloaded.

Saturday we arrived to find the *Sun* gone, without having been unloaded. The *African Neptune* arrived that morning, and longshoremen asked us if it should be unloaded. We told them we had no advance information, and removed our picket line.

Later that afternoon, we were informed that the *Neptune* had been carrying Rhodesian goods, and that they were not unloaded, despite removing the boat to another pier which had not been picketed.

A clear victory for the Coalition, this was only a beginning!



The Coalition will be presenting its second public informational support meeting (Sunday, May 19, 1974, 7:30 PM) at the Friends Meeting House, Fourth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia. Featured speakers will be:

- CHAI GWISHIRI** —A member of ZANU, Zimbabwe African National Union, will be speaking on the present situation and conditions in Rhodesia.
- MIKE MAYBANK** —A Philadelphia rank and file longshoreman will speak on the longshoremen's solidarity with the struggle in Rhodesia.
- SAM MOSEA** —A South African will be speaking on the current situation in the Union of South Africa.

We encourage you to come and learn about conditions in Rhodesia, how the U.S. supports this racist colonial regime and what we in Philadelphia can do about it.

For more information call: LO3-9372 Ext. 207