

As part of the discussion of a political basis of unity, the question of the Republic of South Africa must be taken up very seriously; do we extend the boycott and how? First I would like to offer some information as to why we should, and some ideas of how.

With the accelerating withdrawal of Portugal from its colonies, RSA and Rhodesia are the only white-ruled strongholds in South Africa; and the role of RSA as a stronghold of imperialism and its record of oppression of black people are much greater and longer than Rhodesia. Although the emergence of Rhodesia as a racist power is much more recent and dramatic, and although the armed liberation struggle is continuing on a higher level than in RSA, similar UN condemnations and sanctions are on the books in regard to RSA, and the survival of Rhodesia has and does largely depend on RSA support.

The UDI was devised jointly by Smith, Verwoerd and Caetano. RSA openly subverted the embargoes on Rhodesia in the beginning, and publicly announced that she would aid any who wanted to use her as a cover for trade with the Smith regime. Rhodesia, despite white rule, is an underdeveloped country depending on the export of raw materials. Her industrial sector is owned from abroad, by RSA, U.S., Britain et al. RSA, by contrast is an industrially developed country, with one of the strongest international trade positions. For the white population of 3,000,000, more than the other 5 nations of S. A. combined, living standards are similar to Europe. Virtually independent in energy production due to massive coal reserves and oil-from-coal conversion plants, RSA is Britain's second largest trading partner, and has a national ruling class which owns a substantial part of domestic industry. It has the facilities to manufacture its own armaments, which Rhodesia lacks.

What is the policy of RSA toward Rhodesia and black Africa? Both guns and butter. So far, the Republic has been unstinting in providing men and arms to Smith, and to the Portuguese colonies, for the simple reason that they would like to prevent the armed struggle from reaching their borders or having a haven just across them. At the same time, RSA is engaged in a massive diplomatic and publicity campaign in Africa and the world to whitewash itself, and foster economic dependence on the part of reactionary African rulers. After all, the next best thing perhaps even a better thing than white rule, is a subservient and supportive black government, such as that of Banda in Malawi. Unprincipled military rulers such as Amin find RSA a prop to their positions against the people. In regard to Rhodesia, it is thought that RSA encouraged a settlement with ANC, and is perturbed at Smith's "extremism". Facing the reality of black rule, RSA may be putting more effort toward developing a puppet black government in Rhodesia, despite Smith's protests. The Vietnamization of the struggle.

In essence, Rhodesia is a hand of South Africa's arm and brain. To limit our struggle to Rhodesia because in certain superficial ways it is more obvious, is opportunist, and will certainly make us appear less worthy of support and less serious to that part of the community which seriously supports African liberation....

Tactically, expanding the boycott will be more difficult, because of the tremendous quantity of goods coming from RSA. The longshoremen will have to be involved in this discussion in a central way, but possibilities are boycotts of particular shipping companies which handle RSA freight, boycott of specific strategic items, or refusal to handle some merchandise originating in the US and bound for RSA. Any of these could be combined with massive demonstrations for (against) specific ships.

US investment in RSA is much more open and public than in Rhodesia, and our targets here are clearer and much more numerous.

I hope these ideas can provide a starting point and a recognition of the internal educational responsibilities of the coalition.