Labor Movement Takes On Apartheid South Africa

"We know the Reagan Administration will do nothing to close ports to apartheid ships with his so-called policy of quiet diplomacy which makes it impossible to stop scab cargo from being unloaded, like steel which throws U.S. steelworkers out of jobs."

—Richard Groulx, Alameda County Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO) Secretary, speaking to Oakland Port Commission, Jan. 22.

"We have a united labor front on this issue, and thousands of our members in Local 70 and the Joint Council 7 (representing 80,000 Teamsters) will persue this demand (against South African cargo) vigorously with other unions."

—Jack Sweeney, speaking for Chuck Mack, president of Teamsters Joint Council 7, Jan. 22 at the Port Commision

"South Africa is an outlaw nation. . ."

— John George, Alameda County Supervisor

The AFL-CIO has targeted the racist apartheid government of South Africa and the Reagan Administration's friendly policies toward that government.

While millions of U.S. citizens remain unemployed or underemployed, the Reagan Administration continues to support the racist, anti-union South African government, both morally and financially.

The same multinational corporations that have laid off hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers (particularly in the steel, auto and mining industries), continue to expand their investments in South Africa where they gain large profits from the enslaved Black workforce of that country.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

In December longshoreworkers in the San Francisco Bay Area took a moral position by refusing to unload South African cargo. For eleven days the heroic action of Intl. Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 10 dramatically gave the example of what every trade unionist can do to halt the apartheid government.

Trade unionists from the AFL-CIO, Teamsters and ILWU have carried on from the example of the longshoremen by daily picketing the Pacific Maritime Assoc. which contracts to shipping companies doing business with South Africa.

Under pressure from unions, community and religious groups, the Oakland Port Commission on January 8 declared as its policy that trade with Apartheid South Africa is "morally repugnant". Two weeks later the Port Commission was forced to "look into" the possibility of closing the Port to South African cargo and adopting an ordinance banning the Port from doing business with contractors, banks and financial institutions that do business with South Africa.

Wear a Red Ribbon, It Means: Stop Apartheid Now!

For more information, contact the Bay Area Free South Africa Movement:
653-0329, 752-7766 or 261-3094. 445 Bellevue, Oakland, CA 94610