

BOSTON COALITION FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

(with B.C.M.H.E.)

box 8791, boston, mass. 02114



April, 1980

UNITED ACTION AGAINST FNBB

PROTEST AT FIRST NATIONAL BANK STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

About fifty people braved the cold blustery winds on March 27 to protest the bank's support of nuclear power in New England and nuclear weapons development in South Africa. Through loans and trade financing, First National Bank of Boston has provided crucial support for Seabrook and Pilgrim nuclear power plants and South Africa's uranium enrichment process. The protesters were from the First National Bank Project of the Boston Clamshell Alliance, the Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa, and several other supporting organizations.

Speakers at the picket outside the stockholders' meeting drew the links between the bank's policies and the conditions which people of color and low income people face in Boston. Themba Vilakazi, speaking for BCLSA and the African National Congress of South Africa, pointed out that trade with the apartheid regime in South Africa legitimized and propped up the most racist system in the

Come to a Zimbabwe Independence Celebration. Culture, Education, Dancing and Refreshments. April 19, 9:00 at the Elma Lewis School, 122 Elm Hill Avenue, Roxbury. \$4.00 donation. Call 625-0433 for more information.

world. He also pointed out that the bank's investment policies hurt people of color in Boston through redlining and fueling inflation. David Rosenberg, speaking for the Anti-racial Violence Committee of the Boston People's Organization spoke of the cruel irony of Mayor White's naming FNBB Chairman Richard Hill to a special commission to review racial progress in Boston. He asked, 'Who is Richard Hill to advise anyone on racial progress', when the bank does not even have an affirmative action policy for its own employees. Finally, Dr. Martin Grossack, of Blue Shield Customers Alliance, explained his group's opposition to Blue Shield's \$6 million investment in FNBB.

The sponsoring organizations vowed to continue picketing and leafletting the bank in the weeks ahead.

SOUTH AFRICA: THE GROWING WAR

Recent events clearly indicate that the war for South Africa has begun. Mkonto weSizwe (which means 'Spear of the Nation'), the armed wing of the African National Congress has well-trained, armed personnel conducting military operations and recruiting inside the apartheid state. This war has yet to consistently capture media headlines abroad. But it has white South Africa deeply worried. The long oppressed black population is resorting to arms.

WHITE SECURITY THREATENED

In northern Transvaal, an area that borders on recently liberated Zimbabwe, white farmers are abandoning their large farms for safer areas in the interior. The government is making efforts to stem the tide by beefing up military security, and modernizing communication between rural farms and area army bases. Economic incentives and military training are also provided to keep the white farmer in place. South Africa's government would like to keep the white population from panicking.

The economic and military power of white South Africa has afforded the white population an extraordinary sense of security. White monopoly on political power has resulted in security laws which have assured whites of a privileged status. Whites have even insisted that the norm be that every white man/boy be addressed as 'baas' (boss) and every white woman/girl as 'missus'.

RECENT GUERRILLA ATTACKS

This sense of security is under attack. With increasing regularity, the South African press is carrying reports of military operations directed against military installations. Typical of these operations was an attack last November by freedom fighters on a police

station in Orlando, a section of Soweto. Two policemen were killed and police records were destroyed. But nothing has so alarmed the white population as the taking of a bank and fifteen hostages near Pretoria by three black gunmen in January, 1980. The guerrillas demanded the release of political prisoners held in various prisons. The South African security forces, after conducting preliminary negotiations with the guerrillas, stormed the bank and killed the three men, alleged to be ANC members. At least two hostages were also killed and several police seriously wounded.

The bank incident was the first to involve hostages in the South African struggle. It greatly increased the anxiety of the white population and sharply highlighted the contrast between the attitudes of the white and black populations. The black press referred to the three who took over the bank as guerrillas or freedom fighters. The white and government press referred to the men as terrorists. The burials of the men attracted thousands of Africans in Soweto to heroes' funerals while the government threatened to deal swiftly with 'terrorists'.

TILL VICTORY

Predictions that incidents such as those described above would escalate were made by both liberation movements and apartheid officials in the seventies. In early 1978, CBS aired a special program called 'The War for South Africa', in which South Africa's commissioner of police was asked about the extent of the ANC underground network within the country. His answer was: 'They are everywhere.' In the same program, Thabi Mbeki, an official of Mkonto weSizwe, was asked if the violence would increase in the coming years. His answer was unequivocal: 'More in '78, more in '79...' Till victory is won.

—Vukani Futhi

Strike Against Ford Forges Links

Since last fall, Port Elizabeth, an important port and industrial center in South Africa, has been the site of a series of strikes. These strikes have been especially significant in that they have linked workplace and community struggles.

HISTORY OF ACTIVISM

Port Elizabeth has a long history of political activism, including the Defiance Campaign of 1952 when over 2500 people were arrested in anti-apartheid demonstrations and general strikes in 1956 and 1961. More recently in 1976 when the Soweto uprising shook South Africa, workers in Port Elizabeth were among the first to come out in solidarity with the Soweto students. Port Elizabeth is of particular interest to us in this country because it is the South African home for a large number of American companies.

ISSUES IN THE STRIKE

The issues in the Ford strike were far beyond what was going on inside the plant. The forced resignation of a black worker, Thozamile Botha, sparked a wildcat strike in October. Ford claimed that Botha was fired because of absenteeism. Botha's 700 fellow workers felt, on the other hand, that he was forced out because of his leadership role in the newly-formed Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO). PEBCO is a mass organization fighting for direct political representation for blacks in South Africa. At the time of Botha's dismissal, PEBCO was organizing against the forced removal of 6000 black from what was recently reclassified as a 'white' area. The South African government plans to resettle these people in an as yet unconstructed township 13 miles away.

Ford tried to break the strike by firing the



Thozamile Botha

entire work force and hiring scab replacements. At one point Ford tried to use clerical workers to run the assembly line. In late November the Ford workers were joined on strike by 500 workers from the nearby General Tire plant. Inspired by their fellow workers at Ford, the General Tire workers demanded recognition of their union and the reinstatement of two workers who had been fired. Despite repeated attempts, neither plant was able to hire enough scabs to keep operating. This demonstrates the tremendous discipline and solidarity among black workers in South Africa even though the black unemployment rate is greater than 20%.

Both strikes were settled in early January. All workers, including Thozamile Botha, were rehired unconditionally. The day after the strike settlement was announced, the South African government arrested Thozamile Botha and 2 other leaders of PEBCO. These arrests led to mass protests in Port Elizabeth.

(cont. on p. 6)

As the results of the February 27-29 elections in Zimbabwe became known, jubilation spread in the hearts and minds of progressive people throughout the world. ZANU's landslide victory at the polls is a tribute to their practice and programs during the 7 year guerrilla war which has forced the hand of Rhodesian whites. The outcome of the election confirmed the sound judgment of the Patriotic Front (PF) in agreeing to the ceasefire and election despite the compromises they were forced to make. Defying even the most optimistic predictions, ZANU won an overwhelming majority—57 of the 80 black seats in the new House of Assembly. ZAPU, the party of Joshua Nkomo, won 20 seats, giving the PF a total of 77 out of 80 seats. Another 20 seats were reserved for whites in an attempt to protect their power in the new government. In the light of the clear-cut majority for the PF, this attempt has failed. 94% of the African people voted, a figure which reveals the breadth and depth of the people's mandate.

Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who 'won' last year's transparently meaningless election set up by the whites as a last ditch effort to maintain their power behind a black face, garnered only 3 seats. (Now he is reportedly considering an ecclesiastical appointment in the U.S.) Muzorewa's campaign, the most expensive in the election, was financed by South Africa, white Rhodesians and Western corporations. The ZANU and ZAPU campaigns were slandered by the Western press and obstructed by the British governor, Lord Soames. (For example, ZANU campaign posters and printing presses coming from Mozambique were seized by the British at the airport. In light of such practices and of the fact of the British failure to remove South African troops as agreed, a delegation from BCLSA and ZANU in Boston, presented a statement of protest to the British Consul in Boston on the eve of elections.) Muzorewa's loss and the PF's great victory prove that the people of Zimbabwe will not be deceived in their

LANDSLIDE VICTORY



movement toward independence and freedom.

CABINET APPOINTED

On March 11, Mugabe was formally appointed Prime Minister. He announced 23 cabinet members, at least half of whom had been in prison under the former white regime. Four posts went to ZAPU members. Nkomo was named Minister of Home Affairs and given jurisdiction over the police. Two women were appointed, Teurai Ropa Nhongo, Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation, and Victoria Chitepo, Deputy Minister of Education and Culture. Two whites were named to the positions of Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Agriculture Minister. The remaining 14 cabinet posts went to ZANU members.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

One of the first acts of the new government was the lifting of martial law, curfews,

ORY IN ZIMBABWE



FOR ZIMBABWE, March, 1980

The cock* is crowing
in the garden of Zimbabwe
Listen! You can hear it all over the world.
From the Zambezi to the Limpopo, the air
is resonant with the rooster's call.

For ninety years, the snake 'Rhodesia'
hissed and coiled across the land.
It squeezed out tears, tobacco, blood.
Shed skin today, it rattles like
an echo in a prisoner's empty cell.

Proud seed, Zimbabwe, has burst out.
Mugabe tends the garden. The people
are the soil, the sun and rain.
Zimbabwe, red flower of the South.
Zimbabwe, struggle's fruit
in freedom's mouth.

—Bonnie Bishop

*The cock is the symbol of ZANU.

and harsh measures, including death for anti-government activity. The dismantling of the concentration camp-like 'protected villages' maintained by Rhodesians during the war and the resettlement of their 600,000 occupants is another immediate priority.

Mugabe has emphasized the need for reconciliation and cooperation among all Zimbabweans. In a speech following the election he said, 'I would like to believe that within the country among both blacks and whites who may not have participated in the national struggle on our side, there are democratic forces as well. We want to insure that there is a sense of security on the part of everybody, both winners and losers.'

While the election victory is a tremendous advance, it is just the beginning of a long struggle toward the socialist transformation of Zimbabwe. The moderate statements put forward by the new government reflect the realities of the present situation and should

not be mistaken for a shift away from commitment to the building of a new social order. The new government needs both to diffuse the threat presented by the white-controlled army and to prevent a sudden white exodus, accompanied by economic sabotage, from Zimbabwe. At the same time, it has already started planning for a redistribution of land and the restructuring of social services.

DANGER FROM THE SOUTH

The U.S., Great Britain, and other Western nations have been forced, however, grudgingly, to admit that the elections were fair and free and that ZANU and Mugabe represent the will of the Zimbabwean people. However, Western imperialism's strongest ally in the area, South Africa, has been even more isolated by the outcome. The protective rim of white-dominated countries

(cont. on next page)

(Mozambique, Angola and now Zimbabwe) that once surrounded South Africa has almost been eliminated. Only Namibia remains, and the struggle for liberation there is well advanced. South Africa is literally backed into a corner. It can be expected to fight ruthlessly in order to maintain white privilege there.

While there is always a possibility of South African military intervention in Zimbabwe, intervention could take other less obvious, but still dangerous forms. For example, South Africa could interfere with the free flow of trade to and from Zimbabwe or fund right-wing opponents of the new government.

Mugabe has adopted a practical approach toward South Africa, for now. 'They are next door,' he said. 'We cannot get them away, even if we want to. The reality is that we have to coexist with them...We may condemn apartheid because it is inhuman, and because our conscience is revulsed by it. But that is a different position from taking up arms to rectify the position in South Africa.'

(cont. from p. 3)

Botha and the others were released from prison in late February and immediately served with banning orders, posing severe restrictions on their activities.

SULLIVAN PRINCIPLES: NO SOLUTION

Ford is a signatory of the Sullivan Principles, a code of corporate behavior towards workers. They were developed by Rev. Leon Sullivan, a black minister on the board of General Motors. These Principles are supposed to improve the working conditions of blacks in American companies in South Africa. For example, desegregation of toilets and lunchrooms are called for in the Principles. The Sullivan Principles, however, in no way challenge the overall policy of apartheid—a policy which can call for the

ENORMOUS SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the victory in Zimbabwe is enormous. Never before has a revolutionary government been elected by so clear a majority at the culmination of a guerrilla war. The momentum of change in Southern Africa has reached a new velocity.

Many difficulties await the new government—the threat of the racists in South Africa, the snares of a neo-colonial solution, the intricate and pressing problems of land redistribution and reconstruction, and the tightrope politics of non-alignment in the international community.

In spite of this, a giant step forward has been taken. The world will never be the same for it. The people of Zimbabwe have voted for a future free from injustice and exploitation and have swelled the ranks of those who will lead the world to that future.

—B.B.

removal of 6000 people from a white area simply because they are black.

Superficial measures such as desegregating toilets in the workplace are clearly not enough when workers' homes are being demolished. Ford and other American companies would like to pretend that the Sullivan Principles are a way to undermine apartheid. They are able to hide behind these principles, knowing that the South African government will attack any opponents of apartheid for them.

In Port Elizabeth, the struggles of black workers and the rest of the black community are linked together in the person of Thozamile Botha, a worker and community organizer. It is the forging of this link that presents the real threat to apartheid, not the cosmetic reforms that are embodied in the Sullivan Principles.

—D.M.

SECOND WILLIE SANDERS TRIAL SCHEDULED FOR MAY

The district attorney's office is going full speed ahead with plans to put Willie Sanders on trial in May on the second of four rape charges. Sanders, the victim of a racist frameup, was found not guilty in his first trial last November. Even though the prosecution admits that the first case was their strongest, they have refused to drop the remaining charges.

The work of the Willie Sanders Defense Committee to build political support in the communities and to raise funds (each trial costs \$20,000) has been continuing. On March 15, Clarence Norris, the last surviving member of the 'Scottsboro Boys', spoke in support of Willie Sanders at a fund-raising event at the Elma Lewis School. In 1931, 9 Black youths in Scottsboro, Alabama were convicted for the rape of 2 white women whom they had never seen. Norris spent 16 years in jail, and wasn't pardoned until 1976.

In another development, it was disclosed that the district attorney's office had secretly subpoenaed the phone records of Magnolia Sanders, Willie's sister and a leading member of the Defense Committee. The Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has sued the district attorney's office on behalf of Magnolia Sanders and the Defense Committee.

\$2300 FOR PF (ZAPU-ZANU)

\$2300 was raised at a benefit concert for the Patriotic Front (ZAPU and ZANU) on February 9. Abdullah Abraham (Dollar Brand), Semanya McCord and the Jim Bridges Trio and Tony Bird performed for a packed house of over 800 people at the Church of the Covenant. A message of greeting and gratitude was presented by Mary Mubi on behalf of the PF. The concert was organized by the Boston Southern Africa Alliance.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA?

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The BCLSA is beginning a 6 week educational series about Southern Africa on April 16. If you have considered working with the Coalition, but think you don't know enough about Southern Africa, this series may be just the thing for you. Call Melinda at 522-8699 for more information.



After the Zimbabwe elections.

RAFFLE DRAWING HELD AT BANK PROTEST

Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, the twenty month-old daughter of BCLSA members Melinda Tuhus and Rob Dubrow, assisted by another child at the rally, drew the winning raffle tickets in the Patriotic Front benefit raffle. There was one first prize winner (\$25 plus a record of South African music and t-shirt), three second prize winners (South Africa 'Freedom Songs' records), and five third prize winners ('Soweto' t-shirts). The raffle tickets were sold over the past four months and raised approximately \$500 for the Patriotic Front (ZANU and ZAPU) in Zimbabwe.

Write Us or Else

Dear Friends and Readers,

In the last newsletter we asked that, if you wished to remain on the mailing list, you inform us in writing. Thank you very much to those who responded. If you have not yet written please do so immediately. **If you don't write to tell us that you want to continue receiving our newsletter, your name will eventually be dropped from our mailing list.**

We also sent out 200 questionnaire postcards with the last issue, because we'd like help in evaluating our newsletter. Thank you to those who filled out and returned the postcards. If you haven't done this yet, please do so otherwise your name too will be dropped from the mailing list.

If anyone would like to write with comments and criticisms, we'd greatly welcome the feedback, which would help us strengthen future newsletters.

Newsletter Committee
BCLSA

VICTORY IN ZIMBABWE, P. 4



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