



Tell Congress:

FREE ZIMBABWE

**Maintain the Embargo
Against Racist Rhodesia**

On April 20, elections will be held in Zimbabwe [Rhodesia], supposedly to transfer power to the black majority. These elections are in fact a sham, but moves are being made in the U.S. Congress to use them as an excuse to lift the trade embargo against the racist regime of Ian Smith. We oppose the racist regime and call for support for the freedom struggle of the Zimbabwean people. Join us in a national campaign against the lifting of economic sanctions!

ZIMBABWE — THE CENTER OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Zimbabwe (called Rhodesia by the British colonizers who settled there) is today the focal point of a fierce struggle which is shaking all of Southern Africa. At stake in this battle is the right of the region's black majority to control their own countries, and determine their future development.

RACISM IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia are the last countries of Africa where the black majorities are denied their basic human rights by white minority governments. In effect, all three countries practice apartheid — a systematic policy of racial discrimination and enforced segregation, maintained by brute force.

In Zimbabwe, this means that the 250,000 whites (3% of the population) have control over the lives of 6.5 million blacks. The African people have been forced off their lands and put to work in the farms, mines and factories of the white settlers. Black workers often receive less than poverty-level wages, but are prevented by law from organizing trade unions.

Prime Minister Ian Smith's ruling Rhodesian Front party has imposed a State of Emergency, providing the government with fascist, police-state powers. Blacks are subject to "pass laws" which restrict movement, and they are denied such basic rights as freedom of speech, press and assembly. All African political organizations except loyal "puppet" groups are banned, and the Rhodesian jails are crowded with political prisoners who have been detained, many tortured, without trial.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE SMITH REGIME

In 1965, Rhodesian whites under Ian Smith's leadership unilaterally declared independence from British colonial rule, rather than grant political rights to Zimbabwe's black inhabitants. Since then, Rhodesia has existed as an outlaw nation. U.N. sanctions passed in 1966 forbade any country from trading with, or providing aid to, the illegal Rhodesian government.

Yet, Rhodesia has survived. Why? Because the governments of the U.S. and the European nations have continued to allow trade with Rhodesia, in defiance of the U.N. ban. From 1972 to 1977, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation which permitted Union Carbide Corp. to import hundreds of millions of dollars worth of chrome ore from Zimbabwe. Five U.S. and British oil giants continue to supply Rhodesia with its total fuel requirements, through South African subsidiaries.

The Western powers have bolstered Rhodesia's military capabilities through sales of advanced-technology war materials. Over 1,000 U.S. mercenaries, many of them recruited by U.S. Armed Forces personnel, are presently selling their grisly services to the Rhodesian army.

And in return? The apartheid policies of the Rhodesian government allow U.S. and European corporations to extract an incredible profit rate of 20% or more from the sweat and blood of black workers. The theft of Zimbabwe's natural resources provides the West with minerals essential to industrial technology.

This relationship is duplicated in the other apartheid regimes. In South Africa and Namibia the U.S. and its allies prop up fascist governments where low wages for black laborers are guaranteed by law. South Africa, with its developed economy and greater mineral wealth, is the economic center of the region and the principal source of super-profits.

The liberation of Zimbabwe would inspire the freedom struggle in all of Southern Africa, and offer a rear support area for South African guerrillas. For all of Jimmy Carter's talk about "human rights" and majority rule, it is clear that the overriding concern of the U.S. is to maintain a pro-Western government in Zimbabwe, which will protect U.S. investments in Southern Africa as a whole.

THE PATRIOTIC FRONT FIGHTS FOR LIBERATION

Even prior to Rhodesian "independence" in 1965, Zimbabwean nationalists had organized in opposition to racism and foreign domination. In 1966, after years of futile efforts to achieve majority rule through legal means, the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) turned to armed struggle as the only way to win freedom. The liberation forces began to unite the Zimbabwean people around a program of racial equality, fair distribution of land and an end to foreign control of the country's resources.

Despite severe repression, and the arrest and murder of many activists, the liberation movement has steadily grown. In 1976, ZANU and the Zimbabwean African Peoples Union [ZAPU] formed the Patriotic Front to co-ordinate the war against the Smith regime. The Patriotic Front has been recognized as the only legitimate representative of the Zimbabwean people by the Organization of African Unity [OAU].

Thousands of Zimbabweans, men and women, young and old, have made their way to the ZANU and ZAPU camps in Mozambique and Zambia. All of them seek shelter from the murderous attacks of the Rhodesian armed forces; many come to join the liberation army. In addition to military training, ZANU and ZAPU are educating Zimbabweans in the political and technical skills they will need in governing a free Zimbabwe. A significant number of whites, especially missionaries, give active support to the liberation fighters.

Today the Patriotic Front controls most of the countryside, and even the cities face increasing attacks, such as the devastating destruction last December of the major oil depot in Salisbury, the capital. The Smith regime is clearly losing the war, a reality that reflected in last year's record exodus of over 1,200 whites per month.

RHODESIA'S PHONY "ELECTIONS"

The response of the Rhodesian government has been two-fold: stepped-up military attacks on the liberation movement and the general population, and a call for elections to improve the regime's image.

Martial law has been imposed on 3/4 of the country, bringing with it mandatory curfews, the confinement of Zimbabweans in "protected villages" (barbed-wire enclosures similar to the Strategic Hamlets of Vietnam) and terrorist attacks by government troops — often disguised as guerrilla fighters. Air and ground raids on the refugee camps in Mozambique, Zambia and Angola, while killing and injuring many people, have only inspired the liberation forces with greater determination to carry forth the struggle.

Elections have been called for April 20 by the Internal Settlement [a transitional government consisting of Smith and three black appointees], supposedly to transfer power to the black majority. But these elections, racist in their very structure, would actually retain all real power in the hands of whites and their U.S. backers. Under the new constitution, whites would control the military, the police, the judiciary, the civil service, finances, education, elections, medical service and other vital areas. Of a 100-member assembly, 28 representatives would be white, elected by whites only, providing them with veto power on all constitutional issues.

Not leaving anything to chance, the Rhodesian authorities will conduct the elections under the guns of the military, and no genuine nationalist candidates will appear on the ballot! The Smith regime is "preparing" for April 20 by conducting a systematic campaign of "shooting and burning", as one observer described it, in areas where the Patriotic Front has popular support. The Patriotic Front has denounced the elections, and the U.N. has declared that the whites-only referendum which adopted the new constitution and set elections, is "null and void."

Smith hopes, however, that this pretense of democracy will lead to lifting of the economic sanctions and Western recognition of the Internal Settlement. He is also soliciting direct military intervention to bail out his sinking ship.

CONGRESS MOVES TO SUPPORT SMITH

U.S. Congressional conservatives representing business interests are now trying to push the U.S. towards open support for Smith and his Internal Settlement. Senators Helms and Hayakawa and 27 other Senators sponsored a visit to the U.S. last fall by Ian Smith, during which time Smith met with influential politicians and businessmen. A bill to lift sanctions was narrowly defeated last year, but Congress did pass legislation requiring Carter to end the embargo if the Rhodesian regime holds "free elections."

Senators Hayakawa and McGovern are now sponsoring a bill which would send an official team to Zimbabwe to observe the April 20 balloting. A favorable recommendation from these observers would allow Congress to insist that Carter drop the trade ban and recognize the Internal Settlement. If Carter refused, then a new bill to lift sanctions would undoubtedly be introduced.

All of these measures have extremely dangerous implications. Sending observers to judge an already-rigged elections is a step towards recognition of the Internal Settlement, and the lifting of sanctions would commit the U.S. to supporting the minority government in a protracted and genocidal war against the just struggle of the Zimbabwean people.

WHY WE SHOULD OPPOSE U.S. SUPPORT FOR RHODESIA

The U.S. people have no interest in perpetuating racist minority rule in Zimbabwe or the rest of Southern Africa. Only multinational corporations profit from the exploited labor of Southern African blacks.

Working people in the U.S. **do** have a basis for supporting the liberation struggles of the African people, because their fight weakens our common enemy — the companies that are responsible for inflation, unemployment and attacks on working people and minorities here in the U.S. The banks which are currently loaning billions to the South African government are the same ones that "redline" and refuse loans to poor communities here. Large corporations would rather "run away", seeking cheap labor in Southern Africa, than pay decent wages to U.S. workers.

We should also support the liberation movements because they are committed to defeating racism, which divides working people in the U.S. and weakens our ability to defend the rights of all. This is particularly important now, as we face the re-introduction of legalized racism, through the Bakke and Weber cases. A victory over the racist Rhodesian government will strike a blow at racism everywhere in the world.

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

If we want to support the Zimbabwean people, and halt U.S. support for Rhodesia, the time to act is now. In the days immediately following April 20, U.S. policy towards Zimbabwe will be determined.

We must put pressure on Congress and let them know that the American people oppose any kind of support for Ian Smith's racist regime. To be effective, this protest requires a nationally-coordinated campaign which can involve all those who support self-determination for the Zimbabwean people.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- * Sign the petition demanding that Congress maintain and enforce economic sanctions against Rhodesia, and that it refuse to recognize the sham elections.

- * Join a delegation to visit local Congressional representatives on April 20, to present petitions.

For more information on local activities, contact:

WHO WE ARE

This brochure was produced by the Southern Africa Organizing Committee. SAOC is a recently-formed organization in the Bay Area, committed to building a national movement in opposition to apartheid in Southern Africa and U.S. involvement there, and in support of the Southern African liberation movements.

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