

CIRCULAR LETTER TO SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE  
LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN THE PORTUGUESE COLONIES

CHICAGO COMMITTEE FOR THE  
LIBERATION OF ANGOLA, MOZAM-  
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Since the Easter Conference, we have been involved in two major actions:

- 1) In April a representative of PAIGC, Gil Fernandez, visited the Chicago area. We were involved in setting up speaking engagements and meetings with key groups in the area. We hope he will be back again in the States in the Fall. We felt a good reception to his visit, even on three days notice.
- 2) In May we coordinated the showing of "Behind the Lines", the excellent film made with Frelimo. The copy belongs to Liberation Support Movement and was part of an audio-visual packet on Angola and Mozambique which was circulated to several other groups, in an effort to raise money for a printshop for MPLA, which LSM is preparing to send. About 20 Chicago-area groups, mostly workers and Black high school students,

Other activities include:

- 1) some members doing research on Continental Illinois Bank (which has agreed to loan the South African government \$48.6 million to purchase General Motors locomotives to modernize the railways).
- 2) Literature distribution through the New World Resource Center, in which we cooperate with other anti-imperialist groups. (see literature list enclosed)
- 3) Several members attended the conference of the North American Anti-Imperialist Coalition in July, which was held in Colorado. The Africa caucus of the Coalition decided to work cooperatively on raising funds for the printing press for MPLA, and sending a teacher-technician to train cadre.

Future Projects

- 1) Preparation of a political stance, an articulation of how Southern Africa relates to the world-wide imperialist system, support work as an anti-imperialist action, and our own group and individual action, specifically in relation to the struggle in the Portuguese colonies. We will also re-evaluate our on-going structure and membership.
- 2) We are working on reproducing a button (lapel pin) for the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) of MPLA, to be sent to them, with some being used outside Angola (Europe and North America) to raise money and as a propaganda tool. We would like to distribute them to your groups. Please let us know how many you want. We will take responsibility for sending the money to OMA. (25¢ each)
- 3) Preparation of an "Africa Day" conference, to be held in October, in cooperation with the United Front Against Imperialism (a local Chicago coalition). It will be an educational day, culminating in a benefit for the Organization of Angolan Women and launching the button sale. We hope this will be a means of involving local women's groups in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Events to Note

- 1) On May 27, a demonstration of 20,000 Black Americans took place in Washington, D.C. in support of the Southern African liberation movements, and in opposition to U.S. policy in that area. Simultaneous demonstrations took place in San Francisco, Toronto, and the Caribbean. This was the first demonstration of this size, and represents a turning

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point in the awareness in this country, especially among Americans of Africa decent.

2) In June the Africa Research Group notified us that they have decided to disband, and to re-group into new directions of work. A new group led by Black Americans will be taking over their files, international contacts, and research - located in New York (name and address not yet available). Some of the white members of ARG will be working on more local issues in Boston, using their anti-imperialist research skills in new ways. They will communicate their analysis and reasons for change to their international contacts, so we will not elaborate.

3) The Gulf Oil Boycott is continuing, and needs all the international support it can get. We decided at the Lund meeting to give support to the Boycott by local actions where appropriate. The Boycott committee would appreciate any newspaper publicity or notices of actions. Address: Gulf Boycott Coalition, 123 DV Station, Dayton, Ohio 45406).

### Suggestions for Next Easter Conference

Although it would be difficult for North American groups to send representation each year, we hope that several groups will continue to be invited, and that amongst ourselves, one or two peoples would be selected (perhaps on a rotating group basis) to represent the various groups here. In our immediate area, we would suggest inviting the following groups which have shown active support for MBLA, Frelimo, and PAIGC from an anti-imperialist stance:

Black Workers Congress (Detroit, Mich., and Gary, Indiana)  
African American Solidarity Committee (Chicago)  
Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (Madison, Wisconsin)

We would suggest fewer plenaries, and more workshops, dealing both with items of theory and practice. Little can be accomplished in a group of 75 people, especially when certain individuals/groups tend to dominate this discussion. It would be better to have smaller working groups on problems, then come back into the plenary to make decisions or share findings. We think that more coordinated actions (campaigns, research, etc) could be planned at the conference, and more commitments made to follow-through. Perhaps more of structure needs to be developed, and some kind of "membership" so that groups feel more of a commitment to do what they say they will do.

REPORT OF THE "EASTER CONFERENCE"  
Lund, Sweden, April 1-3, 1972  
by Eileen Hanson

The Easter Conference was the third annual meeting of Western European groups supporting the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies of Africa - MPLA, FRELIMO, and PAIGC. For the first time this year, four North American groups were invited: Committee for a Free Mozambique and Africa Research Group (not attending); Liberation support Movement (represented by Don Barnett) and Chicago Committee for the Liberation of Angola, Mozambique and Guine (represented by Eileen Hanson). Twenty-seven western European groups were represented, out of 40 invited groups.

The liberation movements each sent two representatives: FRELIMO - Oscar Monteiro and Janet Mondlane; MPLA - Antonio Neto and Manuel Jorge; PAIGC - Onesimo Silveira and Fernando Cabral.

The purpose was to learn about the progress in the liberation movements; to discuss mutual problems and exchange ideas, information, strategies, and experiences; and to improve communication and cooperation among support groups, and between the support groups and the liberation movements.

General format: (highlights of discussion follow)

- I. Discussion on Africa
  - A. Reports of the liberation movements
  - B. Portugal
  - C. Neo-Colonialism in Africa
  - D. South African Imperialism
- II. Discussion of Principles of Anti--imperialist work
- III. Practical cooperation: working groups
  - A. Material Aid
  - B. Propaganda and information
  - C. Campaigns: - EEC/NATO  
- Coffee, Gulf, etc.
  - D. Study and research
  - E. Coordination and communication

I. DISCUSSION ON AFRICA

A. Reports from the liberation movements

1. FRELIMO:

The struggle in Tete has been very successful, has extended over the whole province. Access roads to Cabora Bassa are cut off, sabotage on railway lines continues (11 trains blown up in 5 months between Beira and dam site). Civilian population suffers heavily from increased Portuguese repression, especially close to dam site. South African and Rhodesian forces also concentrated in area.

The political consciousness of the population in Tete is very high, due to a long history of extreme exploitation (forced labor to S.A. and Rhodesian mines, plantations of Portuguese). Civilian population is successfully using pick-axes on the newly-aved roads which the Portuguese have laid in an effort to stop Frelimo from mining roads.

In the liberated areas there is emphasis on consolidation, development and political education. The liberated areas are a result of the struggle on the economic, military and political level. A free Mozambique is being built according to the concrete situation of the country and the popular character of the war. The medical situation has improved, but more supplies are greatly needed. Production is increasing, a key factor in the struggle. New crops and methods of cultivation are being developed.

International aspects: the large imperialist powers are lining up more solidly behind Portugal (eg. US agreement on Azores; Western Germany, France and Britain supplying more arms to Portugal). However, international solidarity with FRELIMO has also increased.

Frelimo delegations have visited several countries. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE THREE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ARE RECOGNIZED AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

#### CONCERNING MATERIAL AID:

*In our struggle the humanitarian and "noble" aspects ( i.e. non-military) cannot be distinguished from the military and violent aspects. Our struggle is a coherent one, and full commitment is necessary to obtain victory. Support groups must work to lessen the distinction between "humanitarian" and "non-humanitarian" aspects of the struggle. Without fighting there would be no schools, no hospitals, no economic development in the liberated areas. Groups and governments should be urged to give directly to the liberation movements as representatives of the people, and not through secondary channels (eg. OAU, WCC, neighboring countries). The concrete action of support groups shows that the movements are not fighting white people, but the whole imperialist system throughout the world.*

#### 2. PAIGC

PAIGC is entering a new phase of the struggle. The first Popular elections for a National Assembly will be held in a few weeks. Significance:

- need to create social and political institutions for people can exercise elementary democratic rights
- N.A. will answer political and institutional problems
- NA will act as organ for a free state; will facilitate international recognition

The Military struggle is now centered against the urban areas. Attacks on Bissau in June, 1971, were militarily indecisive, but were psychological and strategic victories for PAIGC. Civilian populations are now organized to defend their own villages in case of attack. PAIGC organization exists in the towns, and there is free communication between cells in Bissau and the headquarters. Recently PAIGC was able to set free a Guinean (Conakry) pilot who had been captured by the Portuguese and imprisoned in Bissau since 1969. Spínola (Portuguese commander) recently went to Cape Verde Islands, and there is a possibility that the Portuguese might move their air-bases and military command from the mainland to the islands.

Cape Verde: the struggle is more difficult there, because of logistic reasons. But there has been great political advances, with many Cape Verdians fighting with PAIGC already. Western interests have increased, with Portugal trying to convince the western world that the islands are "strategic" for NATO interests. South Africa, Rhodesia, Brazil and recently France have called for the Cape Verdes to be "saved," thus admitting that Portugal cannot keep control of the mainland. But PAIGC stands for the liberation of Guine and Cape Verde. Any talk of negotiations without Cape Verde is propaganda.

The medical situation is improving, with 9 field hospitals, each with one doctor. The use of herbicides has not yet begun, but PAIGC knows of the presence of Portuguese spraying planes in Bissau, and promises severe punishment if they begin to spread depollutants.

#### 3. MPLA

In this 11th year of armed struggle, and the 15th year since the founding of MPLA, important successes have been reached. Portugal has suffered serious defeats on the political level. There is vigorous opposition within Portugal. The "fourth front" has been opened up in this anti-colonial war within Portugal.

Catetano is fooling nobody with his plan for "autonomy", it is a last desperate attempt to hang onto the colonies. Agostinho Neto said: "The proposal of autonomy is of no use. Modification in the administration structures and new methods in the production and distribution of material goods are merely palliatifs which solve nothing."

Military progress: The enemy has not been able to organize any offensive operation during this year's dry season. Enemy troops have been forced out of many barracks. A sixth region - Huila and Cunene - has just been opened in the far Southwest of Angola, strategic because of the new Cunene dam project.

More than 500,000 Km<sup>2</sup> are under MPLA control, with a population of 1 million. Herbicides are being used against the people in the third region, in Bié and Lunda. Problems of food and transportation are considerable. Health services are being improved.

Agricultural cooperatives have been formed, and new schools created.

Agostinho Neto pointed out: "Support from abroad is an important factor in our struggle. In recent years the international support for our people's struggle has increased. Practicing an independent policy our movement is not subordinated to the policy of any other country or bloc of countries. Because of this line we are able to maintain friendly relations with different countries in the world, both socialist and capitalist. One of the principles guiding our relations with other countries and political organizations is that each one respects the other's independence and right to follow the road suitable for the defence of the interests of their respective peoples."

B. PORTUGAL (from a paper by Eduardo Perreira)

- increasing emigration from Portugal to rest of Europe, widening gap between the industrialized and agricultural sectors
- about 30% investments come from USA
- US loan (Azores) important because Portugal needs gold reserves to cover arm imports
- Britain has said it is willing to provide the same amount as the US loan, so as not to lose its place in Portugal's economy
- 15-20,000 African (90% Cape Verdians) have been imported to work in Portugal (articles in Africasia, Jan 1972)
  - provides cheap labor
  - removes dissidents from the colonies
  - trying to show Portugal is "non-raical"

C. NEO-COLONIALISM (from a paper by Peter Meyns)

- most African countries belong to the imperialist system, although in some the anti-imperialist forces are stronger than in others (eg. Tanzania, Zambia, Guinea-C, Congo-B)
- liberation movements have policy of peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the internal affairs of friendly neighboring countries. However, their presence helps strengthen the anti-imperialist forces
- necessary to recognize that the contradictions remaining within these countries represent a permanent potential threat to the hinterland of the liberation struggle in Angola, Mozambique and Guine.

D. SOUTH AFRICAN IMPERIALISM

- the "outward policy" of the Nationalist government is imperialistic
- need to extend trade and other African countries, need for markets and source of cheap labor.
- the collapse of the Portuguese colonialism does not mean the liberation of the rest of Southern Africa.

II. DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPLES OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST WORK

- why do we support the liberation movements?
- how do we see their struggles as part of a world-wide struggle against imperialism?
- what is the relationship between theory and action?

These questions were raised for the groups to respond to. Unfortunately, the groups was too large for a very meaningful discussion. Some groups/individuals did not want to get into this discussion; others were not prepared for it.

- Some groups see their work primarily as solidarity work, limited to Southern Africa, with the goal of developing a mass movement against apartheid and colonialism. Others see the movements in Southern Africa as part of a world-wide anti-imperialist struggle. One problem hindering development of an anti-imperialist movement is that people in the West are not politicized. Also, capitalist countries (even so-called "progressive capitalist countries") are seeking a neo-colonial solution to the struggle in Southern Africa. Some Western countries will support anti-colonialist wars, but not anti-imperialist.

Short papers on the principles of anti-imperialist work were presented by LSM and the League Against Imperialism (Berlin). (available on request)

No agreement was reached on theoretical issues. Principles were not clearly articulated in most groups, and were set down as "the correct line" by others. Therefore, it was difficult to come to a fruitful discussion. However, most groups are by definition actively working against imperialism in Southern Africa. Therefore, it can be assumed that all have some underlying "world view" or reasons for what they're doing. Hopefully this discussion will be continued in the future, with more groups asked to prepare papers.

### III. PRACTICAL COOPERATION: WORKING GROUPS

#### A. MATERIAL AID (my group, therefore the most complete report)

(summary of statement by FRELIMO rep)

- Survey of non-military aid needed from Western countries:

1. Education: school supplies, clothing food
2. Health: medicines, equipment, special food, clothing
3. Social welfare: food, clothing, equipment
4. Economic development: agricultural equipment, clothing, fishing nets, hooks, seed, transport vehicles
5. Information and propaganda: paper, films, ink, printing press

In all categories, CASH is needed for transport, subsidy of workers to administer aid, and emergencies, and also for major construction projects.

- Problems of receiving material aid faced by the movements:

1. the economic situation in Africa, particular problems of host countries
2. transport from port of entry to liberated areas, poor roads are extremely hard on transport vehicles; inside liberated areas all goods are carried on foot
3. administration and control of aid: planning done once a year, limitation on amount of control that can be exercised, difficulty in finding personnel with adequate training to administer aid
4. many kinds of equipment cannot be purchased locally and movements are obliged to get materials from abroad
- \*\*\*\* 5. materials should be of the BEST QUALITY - poorly made things wear out too fast in the difficult conditions (eg. one good radio is better than 2 mediocre ones)

- Types of aid-giving agencies:

1. Governments: (4 Western government give direct aid - Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Netherlands): massive material aid - clothes, food, medicines, construction materials, vehicles, school supplies, agricultural equipment. Governments are inflexible, however, and cannot respond to emergency needs.
2. International Organizations: (eg. U.N., Churches) - more fluidity, some give money directly, other only materials. Often bureaucratic. Important that these organizations deal directly with the liberation movements.
3. National Organizations: trade unions, foundations, special funds
4. Support Groups: most fluid group, can be asked to aid in emergencies, rapid contact with the movements. These groups vitally important for putting pressure on governments and other organizations on national level. Important in educating public about movements, shaping public opinion about the wars.

Some governments and organizations refuse to send money because of a fear it will be used to buy arms. However, weapons and ammunitions are received in kind, FRELIMO does not buy weapons. Last year the non-military section of FRELIMO (Mozambique Institute) had to

Comment from PAIGC rep: difficult to make distinction between military and non-military aid. School children have weapons to defend themselves from attack. Everyone is a soldier; no army, but only "armed civilians". No distinction is made between military and civilian status. Support groups can also help by paying expenses for movement representatives in their countries or regions.

- Suggestions for work of support groups:

1. act as pressure groups on governments, union, churches, foundations
2. reach people in key positions
3. work on political parties sympathetic to movements
4. always work to have aid given directly to movements
5. understand the needs and difficulties of the movements
6. understand the home situation in which you work, evaluate what is possible to do within your countries
7. remember that things change - keep working on potential sources of aid
8. present a true picture of the movements as representatives of the people and stress that they should have relations directly with other governments
9. support groups should act as liaison with national groups - contacting them and putting them in touch with the liberation movements; know the organizations and what they do.

- Possible sources of aid:

1. factories (used equipment)
2. hospitals (out-of-date instruments, equipment, bedding, blankets - could be arranged through sympathetic doctors and nurses)
3. public auctions, government sales, army surplus

- transportation:

1. MPLA and the Polish authorities have an agreement to ship materials from Poland to Tanzania, free of charge. (about once a month) Groups could send goods to Poland and thus get free shipping. MPLA rep was asked to investigate if this service could be extended to the other movements.
2. The French group proposed that they would coordinate a campaign to fill a ship (from a socialist country), which would stop at many different European ports to pick up material aid for the three movements. A big campaign could be made of it. Several tactical and security problems were raised.

It was decided that the movement reps would send out some guidelines for materials aid to all the groups.

It was decided that the groups doing support work would write up some tactics and procedures of successful projects to circulate to the other groups.

*\*\*\*\*\*suggestion for North American groups: CASH donations would be more practical than material goods because of high shipping costs. Money could be raised and sent to a third country (eg. in Europe) to purchase and send goods (perhaps via the Polish ship). Thus we could combine efforts with other support groups on a common project.*

B. Propaganda and Information

It was decided that one person or group in each country/region will receive information regularly from the movements (especially emergency communiques), and distribute to other groups in that country/region. (LSM WILL BE THE GROUP FOR NORTH AMERICA - Canada branch) This will facilitate rapid and steady flow of information, encourage quick response, and increase national cooperation

- liberation movements were asked to take up the question of films, and urged to recommend those which reflect the political position of the movements. This would help support groups in selecting films to buy and promote.

- FRELIMO asked groups to help distribute their new record, "Mozambique Revolution", and a new frelimo button (all available from the Dar office)

## C. Campaigns

### 1. NATO/EEC

NATO: - Angola Comite has a revised edition of "Nato and Portugal", in English (order through New World Resource Center/Chicago; or LSM/Canada)

- increasing NATO support for Portugal
- Portugal is largest receiver of Puma helicopters, an official NATO project
- need to put pressure on whole NATO machine
- need to trace origin of weapons captured by the movements
- push for statements in parliaments/congress against use of NATO arms in Africa
- countries giving support to lib movements should be urged to push for isolation of Portugal
- action at NATO ministerial conference in Bonn, May 1972, is being planned
- need for campaigns in France and North America; need to devise ways to stop shipments of arms.

EEC:- Portugal is actively seeking membership, asking for privileged position

- Portugal's economy is already integrated with EEC countries
- Portugal seeking separate relations for Angola and Mozambique within EEC
- groups from countries already in EEC will be working on this via governments, opposition parties, trade unions, etc.
- Angola Comite will send out report on what they know to date

### 2. Other Campaigns

Cabora Bassa : Siemens (W. German) may withdraw, campaigns continue in Britain, West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland

Cunene: W. Germany has withdrawn a guarantee for a uranium prospecting project in Namibia  
need campaigns in Germany and France

Coffee: the international coffee agreement is up for renewal in 1973. Research going to be done (ACOA/NY and Angola Comite) on possible action against Angola coffee

Gulf: The conference voted to give support and assistance to the Gulf Oil Boycott taking into account specific situations in different countries.

## D. Research and Study

- need for analysis of economic, educational, technical, and military problems in Portuguese colonies
- need to share research in progress and that already published
- need for more study of imperialist powers in Southern Africa, and class struggle within imperialist countries

it was decided to produce a detailed bibliography and list of research to progress. One group in each country should collect and distribute at next Easter conference.

## E. Coordination

it was decided that each group would prepare a circular letter three times a year (June, October, February) and send to the other groups. Letter should focus on materials aid projects (aims, strategy, success or failure), political actions, other information.

- groups are urged to send clippings and news items to "Facts and Reports" (Angola Comite)

EVALUATION

The main benefits from attending the conference are 1) factual information gathered which could be useful in North America, 2) making direct contact with other support groups, with possibilities of more cooperation on an international level, 3) better contact with the Liberation Movements, their programs and needs.

Unfortunately the conference did not achieve the kind of unity of principles and commitment to common action that one might have hoped for. Ideological and national barriers seemed to prevent this from happening. Hopefully future conferences will lead to more concrete cooperation. I was disappointed that more international project/strategies did not emerge. More time should be spent in small working groups - either on theoretical discussion or strategies. We are a long way from achieving real practical cooperation, even among groups which are fairly similar in outlook.

However, there is now a network of communication set up - among groups and between the movements and the support groups. It is up to us to make the best use of these channels.

Even though all groups were from Western countries, it was clear that our national situations are very different. We in North America face the most difficult problems - a government clearly committed to the maintenance of the status quo, a public uninformed or mis-informed about the liberation movements, and an internal race contradiction which we must deal with. However, this makes whatever support and public opinion we can raise even more essential. Cooperation with Western European groups can help us see more clearly the international nature of the imperialist structure (the U.S. has lots of help in this area!), and can help us to realize the necessity for international support for the liberation of Southern Africa and the defeat of imperialism.

In relating to future conferences, I think it is important for North American support groups to be represented. However, the financial burden is too large for each group to bear, given our smallness. Therefore, I would suggest that groups alternate in sending representatives (maybe two groups each year), and that the other groups help in raising the necessary travel money. (the next conference will probably be in Britain)

I also feel the necessity for the North American groups to cooperate more fully on a regional level. Perhaps the NAAIC conference this summer will provide that opportunity. We might consider meeting a day before or after to be sure we have enough time together as Africa support groups. At present our links are primarily personal - through years of association. But with new people and new groups becoming involved, we might think of something similar to the "Easter Conference" on a North American level. However, this needs to be done carefully, with representation by invited groups, rather than a mass meeting (à la Washington) in which little concrete work can be done.

Eileen Hanson  
Chicago Committee for the Liberation  
and Angola, Mozambique and Guinea

P.S. Decision about the next Easter Conference, 1973:  
(after a long debate)

- 1) The Finnish Committee will contact the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committees in the socialist countries to discuss their interest for a common conference and their views on an agenda
- 2) Proposals should be sent by all support groups; the British committees take responsibility for summarizing results and making conference proposal, at Easter 1973 or later. A condition for a successful conference is the full cooperation of all groups.