

Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the Peoples of Southern Africa
c/o United Methodist Office for the UN, 777 UN Plaza, New York, New York 10017 (212) 661-0176

UNITED METHODIST OFFICE FOR THE UN

During the 1970's, the following unions have undertaken some type of action in support of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, especially in South Africa. This representative list does not include all the unions that have shown their support.

POLSKO REVOLUCYJNY PRACOWNIKOW RUCH

During 1978-79 the workers of Polakoid Co. demanded that it pull out of South Africa because of the use of Polakoid equipment in the pass system. In 1977 Polakoid agreed not to sell its line and other equipment to the South African government.

COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS (CTU)

U.S. TRADE UNION ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID
Including A List of US Companies Trading in South Africa

A Working Paper prepared by

HAROLD ROGERS
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, United Food and
Commercial Workers, Chicago

for

Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles
of the Peoples of Southern Africa
Riverside Church, New York City
October 9-11, 1981

UNITED ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNION (UEW)

At their 1977 convention, the membership called for the freedom of Blacks in South Africa.

AF-CIO ILLINOIS CONVENTION

In 1977, the state convention of the AF-CIO was addressed by the leaders of SACTU. The convention acted on a resolution supported by local 5000 UECW calling for majority rule in South Africa and for the establishment of trade unions that represent the Black workers of that country.

UNITED AUTO WORKERS (UAW)

In 1977, the UAW issued a statement...

Hon. Ronald V. Dellums, President of the Preparatory Committee
Lennox S. Hinds, Esq., Chair of the Preparatory Committee Secretariat • Carl Bloice, Conference Coordinator

In co-sponsorship with the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) In cooperation with the International Committee Against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism in Southern Africa (ICSA).

Hosts: The Southern Africa Team/Outreach Ministry, Riverside Church; Dr. Carl Fields, Leader, and The Rev. George Thomas, Minister of Outreach, Riverside Church.

UNION ACTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID

During the 1970's, the following unions have undertaken some type of action in support of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, especially in South Africa. This representative list does not include all the unions that have shown their support.

POLAROID REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS MOVEMENT

During 1970-71 the workers of Polaroid Co. demanded that it pull out of South Africa because of the use of Polaroid equipment in the pass book system. In 1971 Polaroid agreed not to sell its film and other equipment to the South African government.

COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS (CBTU)

Since 1975 the CBTU has passed resolutions in support of SACTU of South Africa and for the U.S. government to break all cultural, military, economic political and sporting relations with the South African government. They have also called for support of SWAPO and for the support of United Nations resolutions on South Africa and Namibia. At the 1977 convention, the General Secretary of SACTU addressed the convention.

UNITED STEEL WORKERS OF AMERICA (USWA)

Local 65 of the USWA in a resolution called on U.S. Steel to stop operating in South Africa and to invest in the United States. Also during 1977 the local had a SACTU spokesperson address its union meeting. (Chicago)

Local 1011, also in 1977, made a contract issue of Youngstown Sheet and Tube's use of South African chrome. The union wanted to put it into the contract but the contract issue failed. (Gary, Ind.)

In the same year, District 31 USWA conference called on all locals to take out all local monies from banks doing business in South Africa. The district conference also took a stand against U.S. Steel Company doing business in South Africa.

UNITED ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNION (UE)

At their 1977 convention, the membership called for the freedom of Blacks in South Africa.

AFL-CIO ILLINOIS CONVENTION

In 1977, the state convention of the AFL-CIO was addressed by Zola Zembe of SACTU. The convention acted on a resolution submitted by Local 5000 UFCW, calling for majority rule in South Africa and for the establishment of trade unions that represent the Black workers of that country.

UNITED AUTO WORKERS (UAW)

In 1978, the executive board of the union issued a statement against loans made by the Export-Import Bank to South Africa. In

the same year, the union issued a statement against union bank funds in banks that invest in South Africa. The union has also opposed the selling of the Krugerrand in the United States. In 1980, the union sent some of its members to South Africa to check on the conditions of Black workers in the Ford motor plant. The UAW has also been active in anti-apartheid conferences in the U.S.

JOINT FURRIERS COUNCIL

In 1977, the Council in New York withdrew union money from banks that have investments in South Africa. They withdrew an \$8 million per year payroll account and a \$16 million welfare and pension account from Manufacturers Hanover Trust. Other unions that have followed the Council's lead are: The Fur, Leather and Machinery Workers; United Electrical Workers; District 1199 of New York; ILWU Local 6; District 31 of the USWA. The International Association of Machinists are also considering a similar type of action.

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN AND WAREHOUSE WORKERS UNION (ILWU)

In 1977, the ILWU convention passed a resolution "to implement means through which the union will stop all handling of goods to or from South Africa and Rhodesia."

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (AFSCME)

In 1980, AFSCME Local 1716 of Hartford, Conn, supported a city resolution prohibiting the investments of city pension funds in corporations operating in South Africa which have not signed the Sullivan Principles. In Massachusetts, AFSCME supported a bill in the State Senate calling for the withdrawal of teachers and public employees pension funds from banks that invest in South Africa.

UNITED MINE WORKERS UNION (UMW)

During the 1978 UMW strike, the union passed a resolution calling on the coal industry in this country to stop importing coal from South Africa. Coal was being imported and brought into the U.S. from Namibia and South Africa by the Peabody Coal Company. U.S. has also called for boycotts against Southern Power Co. for its importing of coal from South Africa.

AFL-CIO

The 1978 Executive Council statement supported the United Nations stand on Namibia and called for U.S. corporations to recognize trade unions in South Africa. Their statement also called for U.S. corporations to divest themselves of their South African affiliates and for the U.S. government to halt nuclear operations and to end all government contacts that promote the flow of credits and capital. The 1981 Executive Council meeting took a stand against the arrest of trade union leaders and called for their release from jail in South Africa.

STATE OF ILLINOIS AFL-CIO CONVENTION

The state convention meeting in September, 1981 was addressed by Maude Manyosi of SACTU and passed a resolution on South Africa that was the same as the recent AFL-CIO statement on South Africa.

FUTURE SUPPORT ACTIONS FOR AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS

1. Political Action

Trade unions can pass resolutions at local and national conventions calling on the U.S. government to break all cultural, military, economic, sporting, diplomatic, and nuclear relations with the South African government. Also, unions should pass resolutions calling on the U.S. government to support the United Nations resolutions on South Africa and Namibia. Unions could also support and send members to international conferences on apartheid and the struggle in Southern Africa.

2. Pension Funds

Billions of dollars are invested by unions in banks that are in South Africa and Namibia or that loan money to these two countries. Union activity should center around the pulling out of their pension funds from these banks and in investing pension funds in banks that are not investing or lending money to South Africa and Namibia. Also unions that have stock in transnational companies should withdraw those funds. A campaign in unions could be very successful since some type of actions have already taken place in this area.

3. Educationals

Unions should hold local and national educationals on the situation in Namibia and South Africa, including the invitation of leaders from ANC, SWAPO, SACTU and NUNW. Leaders from these organizations should be invited to international conventions of different unions. A direct contact should be established between SACTU and NUNW and the American labor movement. The newspapers of SACTU and NUNW should be sent to American trade union leaders along with the published materials of the liberation movements of Southern Africa. Unions should establish solidarity days in locals as a way to raise issues and educate the membership on the struggles of Southern Africa.

4. Financial Support

A solidarity fund should be established in unions that would fund the work of SACTU and NUNW. This could include the sending of office equipment or the funding of the newspapers of SACTU and NUNW. American trade unions could sponsor the work of one or several trade union leaders in South Africa or Namibia. Unions may take on the task of providing funds for legal work and for the defense of trade union leaders that are arrested. Clothing and food campaigns could be started by locals. Clothing for refugees in the Frontline States and others in exile collected once a year at Christmas is a good way to raise issues about the freedom struggle in Southern Africa.

5. Union Contract Issues

During contract time unions should raise the issue of South Africa and Namibia. Those unions in companies that are in South Africa and Namibia should include in their negotiations the issue of plant openings and the importation of natural resources in and from Southern Africa. These are important issues because they are not only harming the struggle of Namibian and South African workers but also cause the lay-off of American workers. Examples are found in the UMW and in USWA Local 1011 where the import of coal and chrome are important contract issues. Companies should not be allowed to move to Southern Africa, thereby causing lay-offs in this country.

6. Boycotts

The boycott of goods to and from South Africa and Namibia by trade unions, especially from the ILA and others, is a good way to bring economic pressure on the two governments. The issue of goods made by slave labor from Southern Africa and imported into this country is a good point to organize support for the workers in Southern Africa.