

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

AFRICAN LIBERATION SUPPORT COMMITTEE

During the summer of 1971, Owusu Sadauki, then director of Malcolm X Liberation University, made a trip into the liberated areas of Mozambique under the auspices of FRELIMO. During the few weeks he spent there, the FRELIMO leadership spoke about the need for a world wide movement for peace and freedom in support of African liberation struggles (like the anti-war movement concerned with Southeast Asia, especially Vietnam).

A meeting of movement leaders was held in Greensboro on his return. They decided to use May 25th as the key day, since the Organization of African Unity had chosen it as World Solidarity Day with freedom struggles in Africa. However, we would have demonstrations on the closest Saturday to the 25th in order that working people could participate fully.

ALD-1972 was organized as a national demonstration with the major mobilization in Washington D.C., and another in San Francisco. There was also a demonstration in Montreal. The day before in Washington D.C., the Congressional Black Caucus held a conference at Howard University and debated the role of the U.S. in Africa with State Department officials and movement activists. The discussions revolved around the capitalist and non-capitalist roads of development. (See

ALD-1972 mobilized people to protest U.S. policy toward Africa. The strength was the quantity of support, both mass participation and variety of endorsements and sponsorships.

ALSC met in Detroit on September 30, and formulated governing principles and objectives, and also adopted a national structure. The first national officers were elected and an ALSC office was opened in Dar es Salaam.

The next national meeting was on November 4th in Atlanta. The concern was reorganization and the committee structure and leadership was consolidated. A report was made of Cabral at Lincoln University when ALSC gave him a check for \$2,200.00.

During the December 1972 meeting of the National Steering

Committee, a major qualitative change occurred as expressed by an internal document drafted by Chairman Owusu, (presented in Washington D.C., December 23rd),:

" . . . the question of what we do in the U.S. comes at us from two perspectives;

1. That people have to be worked with in terms of their existing concrete reality. To work with people in a significant way, is to work with them on those problems that they see existing in their daily lives.
2. On the other hand, a correct analysis of racism and imperialism indicated that it must be understood in terms of its effect on the day to day lives of Black people. So, although Africa seems abstract and far away in reality what is happening there is as close to us as Harlem is."

On February 10, 1973, in Chicago the plans for ALD-1973 were finalized: (A) \$2000 goal for each committee, (B) goal of mobilizing 3% of the Black population of each state, (C) theme, "There is no peace with honor, there is still war on Black people here and in Africa.", (D) "it was agreed upon that local and state committees were to extend invitations to non-white organizations (who would, or have taken similar stands against imperialism) to participate in the demonstration under the guidelines devised by the support committee."

The next meeting was in Atlanta on March 31 - April 1. Concern focused on fund-raising (United African Appeal month of May 1973) and local organizing. There were 12 local reports, 15 other demonstrations were planned and 8 were tentative, (total of 35). This was the first meeting attended by NALC as the Tennessee delegation.

The last meeting before ALD-1973 was in Greensboro on April 28, 1973. The decision was made to allocate 80% of the funds raised to the liberation organizations and allocate 20% later under recommendations of an investigation committee. Groups chosen were PAIGC, FRELIMO, UNITA and the joint command of ZAPU-ZANU. Tennessee had a representative on the Investigations Committee, (total of 11). It was also decided to boycott Gulf Oil, all Portuguese Wines, and freeze-dried coffee from Southern Africa.

ALD-1973, MAY 26th, WAS A GREAT SUCCESS.

After ALD-1973, a national retreat was planned in order to deal with:

1. an evaluation of past years work,
2. formulation of an ideological position,
3. develop a program
4. reorganization of national organizational structure, and
5. elect national officers.

There were 21 locals and 5 regions represented, and over 70 people in total. 10,000 copies of the special newspaper supplement were distributed.

1. Generally all reports indicated a high level of consciousness among Black people. But, because of ideological problems ALSC had reached a crisis. The key seemed to be a lack of clarity - no national ideological document, no clear structure. The local committees needed to be pulled together;
2. Based upon documents submitted from Tennessee, California, (three different positions), Connecticut (later withdrawn), and North Carolina, a national position paper was unanimously adopted. Its summary statements are:
 - a. "The new unity of the Black Liberation Struggle must be anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist in character;
 - b. The struggle to unite Black anti-imperialist forces is our source of strength in building an ideologically advance movement.
 - c. Our unity must involve all social groups and class formations, but we propose that BLACK WORKERS TAKE THE LEAD."
3. Program, (inclose final program as adopted at Frogmore).
4. & 5. New structure consists of the National Steering Committee with an Executive Committee. Also, regional - state - and local committees. Our task is to build a solid united front build a state structure for ALSC work,

The new national officers are
 Chairman - Gene Locke, Houston, Texas
 Secretary - Brenda Paris, Montreal, Canada
 Treasurer - John Warfield, Austin, Texas
 Research & Development - Abdul, Nashville, Tn.

The new national officers continued:

Production & Distribution - Nelson Johnson,
Greensboro, N.C.

Fund Raising - Akosua, Boston, Mass. (tentative)

Investigation - Kwadjo Akpan, Detroit, Mich.

Southern Region - Owusu, Greensboro, N.C.

Northeast Region - Imamu Baraka, NewArk, N.J.

Midwestern Region - Don Lee, Chicago, Ill. (tentative)

Western - (vacant pending reorganization of region)