

To Hit Imperialism in Africa

March on White House African Liberation Day!

The tremendous upsurge of struggle in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Azania makes African Liberation Day this year an event of the highest importance. With the liberation forces drawing nearer to victory and the rulers of the two superpowers, the U.S. and the USSR, each trying desperately to wind up as the top plunderer of the peoples of southern Africa, the situation demands a powerful African Liberation Day. At the same time there is fertile ground for building an ongoing movement of support for African liberation—the sentiments of large numbers of Americans, especially but by no means exclusively Blacks, lie increasingly in opposition to the savagery of the system of white minority rule and with the masses of people in southern Africa.

This year African Liberation Day, May 28, will center on a march on the White House, called by the African Liberation Day Coalition. The demonstration is aimed at making ALD a battle against the ruling class, a battle involving the broadest possible numbers of people.

The central theme of the demonstration and the campaign to build it is "Fight Imperialism and National Oppression from the USA (Union of South Africa) to the USA (United States of America)." There are also three specific slogans designed to serve as rallying cries for the demonstration: "Victory to the People of Southern Africa!", "Down with White Minority Rule!" and "U.S. Out of Southern Africa—Superpowers Hands Off!"

The recently formed coalition already involves a number of revolutionary and anti-imperialist groups and individuals, many of whom have played an important role in the Black struggle in this country. Among them are the majority of active chapters of the African Liberation Support Committee; Ethridge Knight, poet and author; Abdul Alkalimat, Peoples College; Vicki Garvin, former co-chairman of the National Negro Labor Council; and Bill Hampton, brother of martyred Black Panther leader Fred Hampton. Tapson Mawere, chief North American representative of ZANU, and a representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania have committed themselves to address the rally.

Even though time is short and there are many questions to be resolved, African Liberation Day 1977 and the campaign to build it are being taken up as a critical part of a larger task, the building of a broad social movement in solidarity with the liberation struggles in southern Africa. The beginnings of such a movement have existed for several years as shown by the annual celebration of African Liberation Day since the beginning of the decade, the protests around Rhodesian chrome imports and similar actions. Now, with the growth of the struggle in southern Africa has come a corresponding development in the spontaneous sentiments of people here, manifested in demonstrations at banks selling gold Krugerrands (a desperate attempt by South Africa to bail out of its economic difficulties), actions against corporations and colleges with interests and investments in the *apartheid* system, protests at sports and cultural events with South African participation, meetings and conferences in schools and communities to learn about and pledge support to the South African struggle.

There are three important and closely related aspects to building a campaign and a movement in support of African liberation. The first is educational work among the masses, the second is the collection of material aid for the liberation forces and the third is hitting the imperialists with demonstrations and the like. The last task also contributes substantially to the first two. Struggle drives home the points made in various forms of educational work, and the best form of material aid people in this country can offer the liberation forces in Africa is cutting away the freedom of the capitalists and the government to maneuver in Africa, intervene militarily and so on.

Expose U.S. Imperialism

To build a broad social movement and bring into motion all progressive forces, it is necessary to carry on agitation and propaganda, particularly in conjunction with real struggle, in order to help the masses of people develop a good understanding of what is really happening in southern Africa. President Carter and his UN ambassador and fellow mouthpiece for the capitalists, Andrew Young, are trying to stand reality on its head by badmouthing *apartheid* and talking up the U.S. as the potential saviour of the people of the southern African countries. The seeming contrast with previous administrations' more or less open support of the white settler regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa



African Liberation Day has become an important part of the campaign to expose the imperialists' role in Africa and build support among the people of the U.S. for the struggle to drive the imperialists from the continent.

has spread confusion, causing many people to wonder if the U.S. can really play a progressive role there.

The fact is that U.S. corporations have raked in billions from their mines, factories, plantations and other investments in these countries and the U.S. government has been the most important international backer of the minority governments. Now when things look shaky and their profits and other stakes are threatened, they want to "bring stability to the situation"—preferably through some "negotiated" compromise that grants the African people a few more rights while keeping white minority rule intact. Failing that, they are seeking and grooming potential puppets with black skins to take the place of Vorster, Ian Smith and company.

Basis for Common Struggle

Key to exposing the real nature and plans of Carter, Young and the class they serve is bringing out the real relationship that underlies and gives rise to feelings of solidarity between American Blacks and the freedom fighters of southern Africa. Although historical roots play a role, they are far from everything. And it is definitely not the case, as some say, that there is an innate spiritual bond.

The relationship is based on the fact that the struggle of Black people in the U.S. and of the southern African people is against a common enemy—U.S. imperialism—and both suffer national oppression with certain similar forms—segregation and discrimination. But the situations are far from identical. There, the

overall struggle in its present stage is *national* in character—for liberation—and the struggles of the overwhelmingly African working class at this point serve the national liberation struggle. Here the overall struggle is a *class* one—for proletarian revolution—and the national movements are the closest allies of the *multi-national* working class. And it is only through the victory of this united struggle against capitalism and the establishment of socialism that the oppression of Blacks and all oppression in the U.S. can be eradicated.

Despite these differences, the bonds of facing a common enemy and national oppression are very real, and are the basis for a deeper understanding of imperialism and its role in southern Africa and in the U.S. For instance the life experience of the masses of Black people shows how the ruling class maintains and relies on national oppression in this country to increase its profits, divide the people and preserve its rule. It is not difficult to demonstrate that this is exactly what the ruling class is doing in South Africa and that it is no more likely to abandon national oppression there than it has been in the U.S.

Posing the question in terms of fighting imperialism and national oppression makes it possible to mobilize more people and forge a stronger struggle, not only in the Black community but in the ranks of all those who have reason to hate the ruling class and its crimes.

Hit Role of Both Superpowers

In exposing the U.S. imperialists and building the struggle against them, it is crucial not to let the New Czars of the USSR slip by. It is very dangerous to overreact to the repulsive example of the October League, the Workers Viewpoint Organization and others who use the formula "opposing both superpowers" to cover their fundamental agreement with the U.S. ruling class that the real enemy is the Soviet Union. Both superpowers are targets for the fire of those who want to support the struggle for African liberation—although it is necessary for us in this country to put particular emphasis on the U.S., both because it is the currently dominant superpower in white-ruled southern Africa and because this is the U.S., which means that the working class and its allies have both the obligation and the opportunity to do the maximum possible damage to "our own" bourgeoisie.

All the same, the situation in southern Africa today can't really be understood without understanding the contention of the two superpowers to control the area. While Europe remains the focus of superpower contention, southern Africa is where it is sharpest at this point, as shown by the recent events in Angola where U.S.-Soviet "detente" was thrown aside in favor of open armed conflict, with South African and Cuban troops used as proxies. Both superpowers are trying to pose as "friends" of the African people in order to gain influence in the liberation movements, ice out the competition and continue to plunder the area in the future. Powerful support movements in the U.S. and elsewhere are concrete aid to the liberation movements in hewing to the difficult path of self-reliance in their struggle, and raising slogans and doing propaganda which exposes the role of the superpowers gives this additional emphasis.

Unite All Who Can Be United

The point of the political line and slogans of the African Liberation Day Coalition is precisely to unite all who can be united in solidarity with the peoples of southern Africa and in struggle against imperialism and national oppression. The march on the White House will be built among all sections of the people, with particular

Continued on page 13



Volume 1, Number 2
May 1, 1977

the COMMUNIST

Theoretical Journal of the Central Committee
Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

- On the Relationship Between the Forces and Relations of Production and the Base and Superstructure
- Communism Not Pan Africanism is the Guide to Socialist Revolution and Black Liberation
- Reformist and Revolutionary Views of Capitalist Crisis A Critique of "New Marxism"
- Anatomy of a Puerile Leftist Sect
The Religious Disorder of the Workers Viewpoint Organization
- Living Socialism and Dead Dogmatism
The Proletarian Line and the Struggle Against Opportunism on the National Question in the U.S.

\$2

ORDER NOW

The second issue of the Communist is now available. Among others it contains timely articles on the Black national question. If you have not yet gotten a copy of Vol. 1, Number 1, copies are still available with articles on:

- Commodities, Capitalism, Class Divisions—and their Abolition with the Achievement of Communism.
- Social-Imperialism and Social-Democracy, Cover-Up of Capitalism in the USSR (or How Martin Nicolaus and the October League Have "Restored" Socialism in the Soviet Union)
- Bourgeois Democracy and the U.S. Working Class
- On the Character of World War 2
- Bourgeois Right, Economism, and the Goal of the Working Class Struggle

Order from RCP Publications, Box 3486, Chicago, IL., 60654\$2.00

ALD...

Continued from page 2

phasis on groups like youth and students who have already been in some motion around the question. It is natural that Blacks will tend to be most responsive to the campaign, but a clearly multi-national demonstration will not only make for the most powerful blow at the bourgeoisie, but also show in practice the possibility and desirability of multi-national unity.

The question of uniting all who can be united is particularly sharp because there are other forces with their own plans for African Liberation Day.

One such is a motley array of dogmatist forces clustered around the Workers Viewpoint Organization, which has been doing its utmost to split and wreck the African Liberation Support Committee for some time now. WVO's ambition openly stated in its press is to turn ALSC into a "propaganda organization of the advanced" where WVO can "discover and train" "advanced elements" and drag them out of the struggle to swell its scanty ranks.

It is in this spirit that WVO has addressed the question of African Liberation Day this year. First, they oppose the very idea of a broad coalition (and the sectarian practices they have promoted in ALSC have objectively hurt ALSC's reputation with other forces with whom unity might be possible). The main activity they propose for ALD is not struggle against imperialism,

but a two day conference to discuss why the Soviet Union is the main danger to the people of southern Africa and the whole world! WVO's aim is to establish this theory—which amounts to nothing but social chauvinism in the U.S.—as an ALSC principle and to use it as a lever to drive out of ALSC any forces which are not subordinate to them. The best answer to this attempted sabotage of ALSC and African Liberation Day will be a large and powerful demonstration which, as a byproduct, will further expose and discredit WVO's poisonous brand of "Marxism-Leninism."

Far more significant in this year's ALD are various Pan-Africanist forces, chief among them the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) headed by Stokely Carmichael. Pan Africanism is a bourgeois theory which holds that there is some common spiritual bond of "Africanness" among all people of African descent which is stronger and more real than bonds of nationality and class. To the extent to which it draws young Blacks into anti-imperialist struggle, there is certainly a basis for uniting with Pan-Africanist forces, while struggling for and developing the correct line, without which the movement will invariably wind up in a dead end.

The AAPRP has also called a demonstration for Washington on May 28th. Carmichael has thus far tried to keep ALD entirely in the grip of AAPRP and has not sought to unite with any of the other forces active or potentially active around African Liberation Day. The AAPRP wants one of the major themes of ALD to be that only with Africa "united under a socialist government" can blacks (throughout the world, including especially the U.S., have a "national home." This

nationalist appeal not only will tend to alienate many from other nationalities and by obscuring the actual relationship between the situation and struggle in southern Africa and the U.S., fail to mobilize the Black masses to the fullest, but it also does not concentrate the fire of ALD on the target of U.S. imperialism.

Carmichael's proclamation that the march is in support, among other things, of the "socialist countries," including the USSR, Cuba and so on, is a big obstacle to a united action. It is not only sectarian—it would be incorrect to make support even for the *genuine* socialist countries in any way a condition for taking part in ALD—but worse still it holds up as a friend one of the two main enemies of the African people.

Unity with the forces around AAPRP would contribute to a strong African Liberation Day, but it is by no means a precondition for a powerful demonstration. The campaign building up to May 28 is already well underway and will be escalating in coming weeks with stepped-up organizing, actions to turn the spotlight on the role of U.S. banks, corporations and schools in plundering southern Africa and supporting the white settler governments there. Hundreds of thousands of people will become aware of African Liberation Day, and deepen their understanding of the struggle in southern Africa. This will strengthen the base for building a broad social movement in solidarity with the liberation struggle there, while the core of such a movement is forged stronger in the actual ALD demonstration as thousands march to the White House, turning their anger and understanding into action, fighting a battle against imperialism and national oppression in Durban and D.C. alike. ■