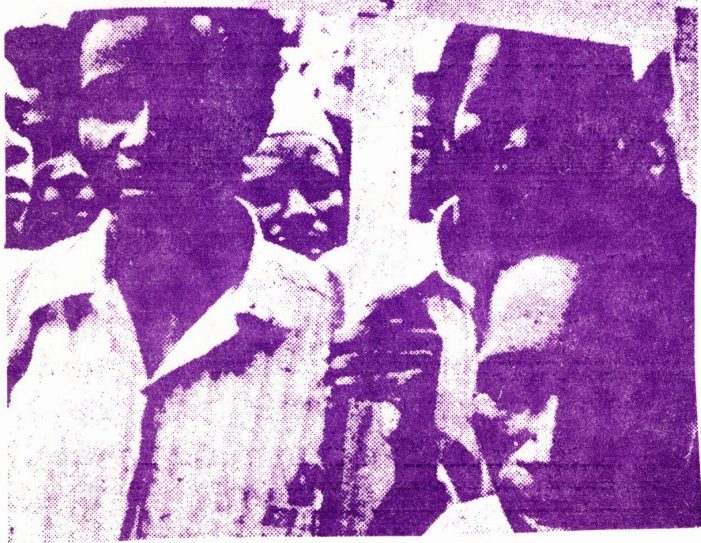


SOUTHERN AFRICA

ZIMBABWE
NOT
RHODESIA

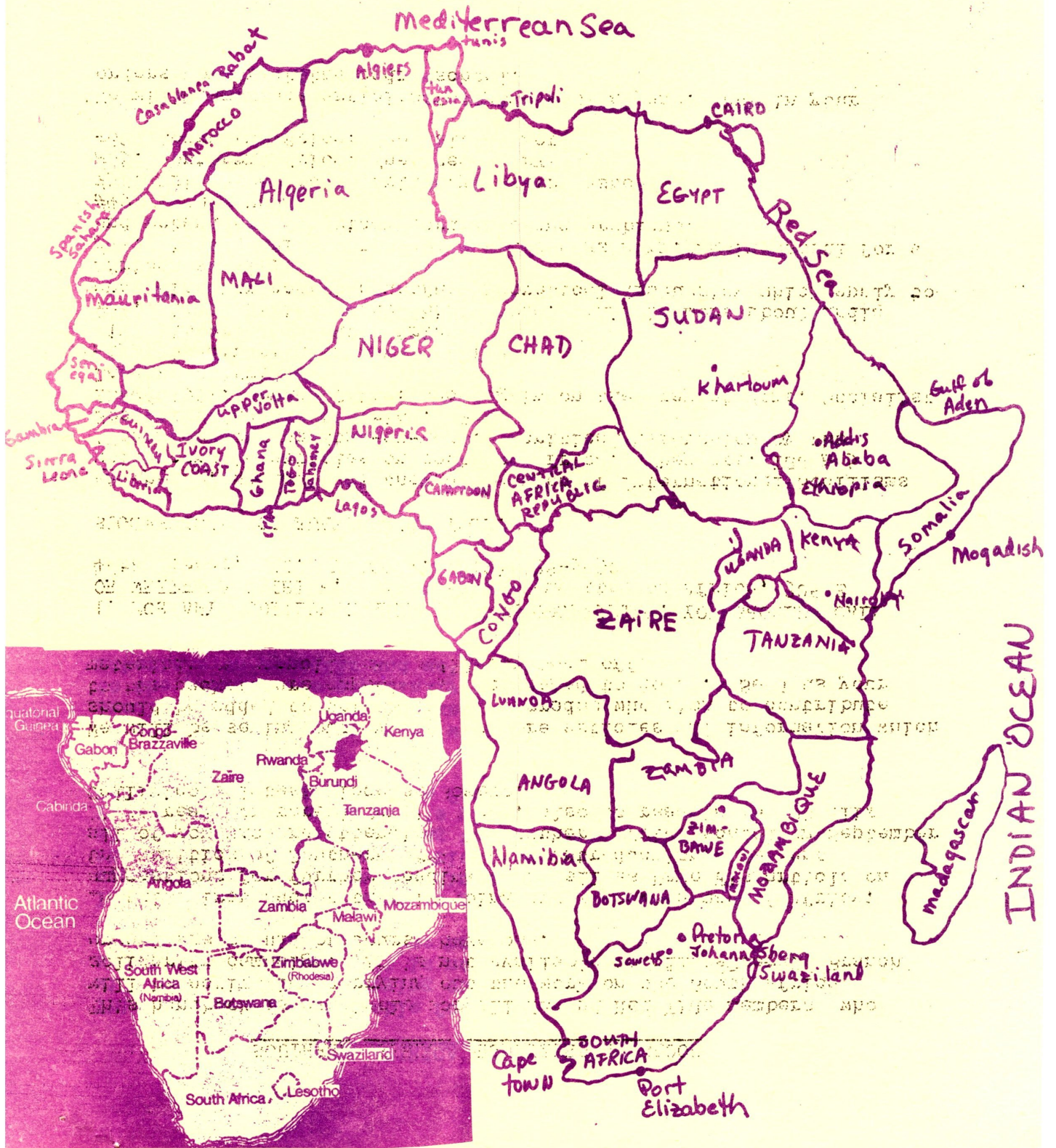


ORGANIZERS'
HANDBOOK

*for members of the
i.s. and red tide*

SEPTEMBER, 1976

MAP of Africa



SOUTHERN AFRICA ORGANIZERS HANDBOOK

This handbook is available for all IS and Red Tide members who will be active in carrying out the work on the South Africa solidarity campaign. It is not available to all members. Branch organizers should of course have one.

In this first packet that is going out we have a map of Africa, suggestions for further readings, as well as Dave F's article on the politics of Southern Africa - An introduction. We want all of you who are attending the Southern Africa school on September 11 to read or reread Dave's piece, also to read in ISJ 90 Alix Callinico's latest piece on Soweto.

We will be sending out every week more articles and information which should be added to this packet. Comrades who wish to contribute to the packet, are especially encouraged to do so. Send us your materials on stencils and we'll run them off.

1. FOR ANY ADDITIONAL HELP IN YOUR ORGANIZING, YOU SHOULD CALL OR WRITE PAUL IRISH, the American Committee on Africa, 305 E 46th Street, NYC, NY 10017, (212) 838-5030

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READINGS.

At the NO, we have all the back copies of International Socialisms which contain articles on southern Africa. They are: ISJ # 5 'Ten Years of the Stay-at-Home. A critical Discussion by the Socialist League of Africa. 1961
ISJ#6 1961, South Africa: Once Again on the Stay at Home, Socialist League of Africa
#151963 Editorial on South Africa
#17 Editorial on South Africa
#42, Nigel Harris on the Third World. This is more about India and China but contains useful theoretical discussion which apply to Africa as well.
#41. Nigel Harris on the role of the Peasantry. Again useful for a understanding of African struggles and problems.
#49 On the Sudan
#59. Crisis on South Africa by Basker Vashee
#85. Southern Africa: The Great Carve Up
#87. Southern Africa: The Melting Pot

We will xerox all articles for you at 3¢ a page. Put in your orders now or at the cadre school.

SOUTHERN AFRICA CADRE SCHOOL

On Saturday and Sunday, September 11th and 12th, there will be a school to educate the cadre around the politics of revolution in Southern Africa and prospects for revolution throughout the world.

Comrades who can afford to come are encouraged to do so. We especially want to have the Black comrades attend this school, and the National Black Organizer is also coordinating this.

The school is being organized not only to educate our cadre as to the politics of southern africa and world revolution, but also to organize our external work for the meetings, rallies and demonstrations we want to organize this fall. We would like the members who attend to leave able to speak, lead classes on southern africa as well as to organize the work in their local branches.

The agenda is as follows:

Saturday all sessions begin on time

9:30 - 10AM. coffee and donuts

10AM- 11:30 South Africa. Mike E. Springfield

11:30 - 11:45 Break

11:45 - 1PM Permanent revolution. Joel G,

1 - 2 LUNCH

2 - 3:15 Zimbabwe. Paul I. New York

3:15 - 4:30 Angola and the MPLA, Dave F. Detroit

4:30 - 4:45 Break

4:45-6 National Self determination Larry S. Detroit

6 - 8 DINNER BREAK

8PM Filmz Last Grave at Dimbaza, Trinity Methodist Church,
13100 Woodward Avenue, Highland Park, Michigan.

10PM to all hours, PARTY

Sunday.

10:30-11 coffee and donuts

11- 12:15 American imperialism in Africa, Barbara W.

12:15 - 1:30 Organizing the work.

We must need to know who is attending, how many children are attending etc by WEDNESDAY September 8th. If we do not hear from you, you will have to get your own bed, child care etc.

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The new period of revolutionary struggle internationally is now being fought on two main fronts. The first is southern Europe, where revolutionary upheaval has already broken out in Portugal, a new workers' movement is growing rapidly in the struggle for democracy in Spain, and a major crisis is also building up in Italy. The second front is southern Africa. Already this year a successful war of national liberation has been won in Angola, and a major new war is beginning over white Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

We must understand that at this point our knowledge of much of what occurs in southern Africa is very inadequate. The main reason why we know much less about most of southern Africa than we know about, say, Portugal is that in Portugal there is a revolutionary workers' party, the PRP, with roots in the main factories and all the regions of the country. It has a revolutionary Marxist analysis of the struggle as it unfolds every week and puts its theory into practice with a strategy, a political line for agitation in the factories, unions, workers' commissions, etc. Because of our links with the PRP we are able to get a rich understanding of week-by-week events in Portugal and why they are happening.

Nowhere in southern Africa does such a revolutionary workers' party yet exist. There is a very wide variety of national liberation movements, political currents and underground movements. But there is no group of working class revolutionary Marxists whose experience and analysis we can directly draw on. This necessarily means that much of what we know about the struggle itself is incomplete, abstract and very difficult to test in practice. But, from the struggle in Angola and Zimbabwe, and the role of various class forces in those struggles, we are beginning to understand how a revolutionary workers' movement and revolutionary parties will in fact come into existence.

There are three important articles and documents in print so far which comrades should try to read. They are: "Angola: Another Congo?" by Alex Callinicos, which appeared in I.S. journal #83 (from Britain) and reprinted in our pamphlet on Angola; "Southern Africa: The Great Carve-up" by Alex Callinicos in IS Journal #86; "Southern Africa: The Melting Pot" by Callinicos in IS Journal #87; and the document from the EC, "Imperialism, National Liberation and the war in Angola" which was recently sent out to all the branches.

The purpose of this article is to give some introduction and background on the politics of southern Africa which should help to make the more indepth articles clearer. Comrades should also read the centerfold in Workers Power #152.

South Africa: Political Background

South Africa is called the "Republic of South Africa" by its white rulers (black nationalists sometimes use the term "Azania"). This is a nation of 18 million blacks and 5 million whites. There are separate racial classifications for Indians and Colored. All except the whites are effectively stripped of all political rights.

The best way to understand South Africa is by imagining a system where the Ku Klux Klan holds total power. In addition to this, it must be understood that in South Africa racial oppression and class exploitation are almost one and the same

thing. The vast majority of proletarians are black.

In other words, in South Africa the instrument for racial terror against black people is not unofficial gangs of "night riders" who burn crosses or lynch people while police look the other way. Rather, the whole economic, legal and political structure is an institutionalized system of terror. It is a businessman's paradise as well!

The white South African population is divided into two different language groups: Afrikaaner (descended from Dutch) and English-speaking. The relations between these groups have at times been uneasy, hostile or even violent. It was the Afrikaaners who represented the most extreme, virulent and consistent racism. Eventually, organized in the powerful Nationalist Party (founded in 1914) the Afrikaaner whites won control of the government bureaucracy, police and practically all political power. All of international capital, especially British and American, are partners in maintaining this system.

It is important to remember that there has been no "slow reform" giving blacks a few more rights. Rather, almost interruptedly things have gotten worse as blacks have been more and more totally disenfranchised, and policies of total apartheid (racial separation) have been institutionalized. It is in some ways similar to what happened to blacks in this country between 1876 and around 1914, mainly but not exclusively in the South, where they lost most political rights and economic positions (like the right to practice various skilled trades) they once had. In South Africa these restrictions have been written into rigid law as the doctrine of racial separation - so that black doctors can only treat black patients; education is totally segregated; all blacks must carry "pass books" stating their tribal ancestry, job record, etc. They must have special permits to live in the main parts of the country, which are designated "white areas". If they lose their job, go on strike or engage in any kind of anti-government activity they can be automatically sent back to their "tribal homeland", where they cannot find work, and must either starve or live off relatives.

The system of total racial separation carries with it certain contradictions, which the regime is trying to resolve. As the South African economy becomes more advanced, there is a need for skilled black labor and even for a small black professional middle class. For example, the fact that blacks have been totally excluded from any jobs has created a shortage of labor and consequently higher wages in some skilled jobs for white workers than employers want to pay. Furthermore, South Africa is now extremely interested in creating economic and political ties with many independent black states in Africa. To build up these ties the white regime needs to create an appearance of "reform" and even a small layer of blacks who support it. To accomplish this some of the so-called "petty apartheid" laws in the major cities - such as segregated bathrooms, railroad stations, and the like - have been removed. Middle class blacks have also been given back the right to lease their own housing, which was taken away in the 1950's. This may create an atmosphere somewhat more comfortable for visiting black diplomats or for visiting stars like tennis player Arthur Ashe, but for the majority of black South Africans it is pretty irrelevant.

For most blacks in South Africa, the reality is what the government labels "separate development." The basis of "separate development" is to maintain an economy based on black industrial labor. In order to keep blacks from gaining any political rights in most of "white" South Africa, the plan is to turn the "tribal homelands" into phoney "independent republics" supposedly ruled by independent

black governments. The first such "black homeland republic", Transkei (on the east coast) is scheduled to be set up October 26, 1976.

Here is an idea of what this "independence" will look like. About 83% of all grown male Transkeians can find work only in "white" South Africa. Of the 47,500 who do actually work in Transkei, nearly half are in government service. Only 4,050 are in manufacturing industry! The political leader of Transkei is a stooge named Chief Matanzima set up by South Africa. His "legislative assembly" is made up of 64 appointed traditional conservative chiefs, along with 45 elected representatives. Over three-quarters of the territory's total revenue comes directly from the South African treasury.

There are already other black enclave states, Borswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, which are similarly totally dependent on South Africa. In other words, "separate development" has nothing to do with real political independence or power for blacks. It only gives a "legitimate" cover to a system where black men are forced to travel hundreds of miles from their homes, leaving their families behind, to work in factories or gold mines where they live in horribly overcrowded barracks.

The only significant politically powerful opposition to the South African Regime comes from the black workers. Especially in the last five years, huge strike waves have swept through gold and diamond mining areas. Blacks have often won wage increases of 100% or more. Tremendous violence is unleashed against these strikes - hundreds or even thousands of workers have been killed by police and soldiers. But the revolutionary potential of the South African black working class is as great as that of any working class anywhere in the world.

The Rest of Southern Africa: Political Background

After South Africa, the most important place is Zimbabwe - called "Rhodesia" by the 500,000 whites who live there. They make up 20% of the population, which means there are 2½ million blacks. The whites issued a "unilateral declaration of independence" (UDI) from Britain in 1965 to prevent any power being given to blacks. Rhodesia is set up on a system similar to South Africa, although the white population is English speaking, it is very closely tied to South Africa economically and politically. It has much less industry and manufacturing than South Africa - most of its economy is based on agriculture and chrome mining, with consumer goods luxuries for whites.

Whites in Zimbabwe are rich farmers, businessmen, officials and other assorted parasites. They are so unproductive, so totally over-privileged and unused to work for a living that one liberal opposition clergyman calls them "totally morally underdeveloped." In the countryside they live on their farms armed to the teeth while black farmhands do the work.

The white Rhodesians are so accustomed to the "good life" they have enjoyed under UDI that they are incapable of seeing it is about to be destroyed. They do not have a large enough army to patrol the border with Mozambique, where black guerilla forces are now training in large numbers.

The political currents in the Zimbabwe black nationalist movement are more complicated than in Angola. At the present time, there is a wing of the movement led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa which is committed to all out armed struggle to overthrow white rule. Another wing, led by long-time black politician Joshua Nkomo, has just been engaged in long drawn-out negotiations with white leader Ian Smith, the Prime Minister who heads the ruling white Nationalist Party.

These talks have now broken down. As a result all black nationalist factions at this point seem committed to a liberation war. However, when Nkomo and Smith broke off their talks Nkomo deliberately left an opening for them to be renewed. Joshua Nkomo clearly intends to be the future leader of Zimbabwe on the basis of a deal worked out among the forces of South Africa, Britain and the black African states. However, sentiment among black Africans and Zimbabweans is now so overwhelmingly for armed struggle for liberation that he cannot afford to continue his entanglement with Ian Smith. There are a reported 15,000 black guerillas trained under the auspices of Mozambique now ready for battle.

Namibia, called "South West Africa" by South Africa is illegally occupied by South Africa. South Africa's eventual strategy is to turn Namibia into another "black separate development republic." But with the victory of the MPLA in Angola, South African rule in Namibia is under growing pressure. The black organization, SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) is formally legal, but a major campaign of repression and political trials are underway against SWAPO under South Africa's "Terrorism Act."

Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique are independent black states that are sometimes called the "confrontation states" because in the confrontation between white South Africa and the black African continent, they are on the front line. Of course, independent Angola is now in the same position. The Presidents of these countries are, in order, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyrere, and Samora Machel. While there "confrontation states" are real enemies of South Africa, they are also economically dependent on it. This is particularly true of Mozambique and Zambia. Without the South African mines, Mozambique's economy would be shattered - 100,000 or so Mozambique workers labor in South African mines and a large portion of their wages are paid directly to the Mozambique government by South Africa. Zambia's economy depends on copper, the price of which has fallen to about \$1,175 a ton whereas it costs Zambia \$1,500 a ton to produce! As a result Zambia depends on credit from South African banks to avoid collapse.

Because of their poverty and narrow social base, the regimes of Zambia and Tanzania are extremely repressive - even though they claim to be based on the "philosophy of humanism"! Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia has just put in force new "emergency" restrictions because of growing dissent over the economic crisis, from both businessmen and workers.

As a result the trend of the past seven or eight years is for the independent black states to be pulled into the economic orbit of South Africa. South Africa saw in these countries a tremendous potential field for investment and markets. This is partly why South Africa has emphasized "separate development" internally and tried to make its image a little more acceptable. This developing relationship has now been thrown into crisis by South Africa's intervention and defeat in Angola and the war now breaking out in Zimbabwe. This war will shape southern African politics for years to come.

Political Developments Today and Beyond

Southern Africa has entered a period of very rapid transition. At the same time the remaining power of white rule is crumbling, many independent black governments throughout central and southern Africa are going into crisis. The transition period will be one that includes national wars in Zimbabwe and Namibia; political crises and sharpening class struggles in countries like Zambia, Zaire, Angola and Mozambique; and the possibility of working class revolution by the black proletariat within South Africa itself.

The war in Zimbabwe has now begun. This is not the first flare-up of armed struggle by black liberation fighters --they launched a guerilla offensive that failed in 1972. However, today the whole context of the fighting is different: Portuguese colonialism has been overthrown, Mozambique and Angola are independent, and South Africa has already suffered a stinging military and political defeat in Angola.

The key to understanding the future of the struggle in Zimbabwe lies in world politics. The truth is that every important ruling class in the world knows that white rule in Zimbabwe is doomed. Most of them also know that white rule in South Africa is also running out of time. The real decisions about the future of Zimbabwe cannot be made by the white Rhodesian rulers, much as they want to - rather those decisions are made in South Africa, London and Washington which control the Rhodesians' purse strings.

The United States has kept the white regime in power for ten years by importing Rhodesian chrome. Now Secretary of State Kissinger says the US government is "totally committed to majority rule in Rhodesia."

The black governments of Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique last year disarmed and even imprisoned Zimbabwean guerilla fighters who were organizing for armed struggle. One Zimbabwean leader, Herbert Chitepo was murdered in Zambia, probably on the orders of Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda himself. Now, however, all these states are committing themselves all-out to the "armed struggle" against Ian Smith's regime.

Even South Africa, Rhodesia's only hope for direct military support, has not decided to commit itself to rescuing white rule there. If South Africa goes to war in Zimbabwe it will be fighting on very unfavorable terms, take heavy casualties and destroy its "detente" policies with black Africa totally. At the same time, South Africa cannot allow black Zimbabwe to win an all-out liberation war - that victory would damage the internal confidence of South Africa and give tremendous new power to black workers' resistance and militancy.

As a result, all these forces are looking for ways in which to sacrifice the white Rhodesian ruling class, without shaking up the whole structure of capitalist power in southern Africa. Each of them have their own angle.

Henry Kissinger wants the kind of "majority rule" in Zimbabwe that would maintain "peaceful" conditions for the rule of white-owned South African and international capital throughout southern Africa as a whole. He hoped the talks between the "moderate" black politician Joshua Nkomo and Ian Smith would produce a sellout, a compromist to put middle class blacks in the government 10 or 20 years from now.

The black-African states want to remove the explosive issue of Rhodesia from the scene. All of them supported the Smith-Nkomo talks. They are also supporting the armed struggle against Rhodesia, in order to force Smith to offer better terms which Nkomo or another black negotiator could accept. Mozambique and Zambia, in particular, control the guerillas' funds and bases. They want to use the guerillas as a pressure tactic on white Rhodesia and South Africa to get better terms.

South Africa is in the difficult position of trying to save itself, Rhodesian white rule and "detente" with black African rulers - all at the same time! Its strategy could well become one of trying to use the pressure put on Rhodesia by the black nationalist countries to force the white Rhodesians to negotiate a settlement.

So far this has failed, as the white Rhodesian leadership sees nothing to gain by bargaining away its monopoly on wealth and power.

All these forces have one deadly fear in common - the fear that a "gradual power-sharing" deal will be worked out between white leaders and black politicians in Zimbabwe, and that the guerillas and the masses of black Zimbabweans will reject it. If that happens, the struggle for black national liberation could completely escape their control.

There is a good reason why the United States, South Africa and the leaders of black southern Africa - each of whom have their own separate interests - are afraid of the struggle of masses of black workers and semi-proletarians going too far. Once people begin fighting for themselves, it is very difficult to stop them.

The struggle for black control of the wealth of Rhodesia could stimulate black miners and dock workers in Mozambique to make demands for higher wages and workers' control, against their own black nationalist government. Similarly, black workers in Zambia could be inspired to revolt against the repressive measures introduced by Kaunda to keep his shaky capitalist economy afloat.

This is where the key importance of revolutionary socialist politics comes in. The most effective way to complete the liberation of Africa, smash white rule in Rhodesia and South Africa is with a united mass movement of blacks who realize they are fighting for common interests everywhere. The only force that can build that kind of unified movement is the black working class, which throughout southern Africa has tremendous power and no petty national privileges to protect.

The conditions of struggle in southern Africa today have created the conditions for independent working class parties to be created. The most important sectors are the South African heavy industrial workers. But they are not alone. Workers in the "popular power" movement begun by the MPLA in Angola, workers resisting wage controls and repression of unions in Zambia, dock workers in Mozambique who are forced to handle South African goods because the Mozambique government needs the fees from South Africa to remain solvent - all of them have the same interests in a total socialist transformation and unification of southern Africa.

Lenin pointed out that the whole process of socialist revolution is not a "one-shot" affair where workers seize power all at once. It involves long years of struggle for democracy, national liberation, partial economic battles and bitter class struggle before all the conditions for workers' insurrection and the seizure of power are created. There is no doubt that in southern Africa that process is now underway.