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TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND BLACK WORK DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The following is a report on developments within the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) which will have an effect on the national march on Washington planned by ALSC for May 25.

There are two main political groupings within ALSC, with different views about how to build it. These are 1) the forces around the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU), whose main political leaders are Owusu Sadaukai and Nelson Johnson, and 2) the forces around the Congress of African People (CAP) led by Imamu Baraka. The YOBU grouping is presently in the ALSC leadership, although CAP predominates in some local areas.

During the past year the main leaders of YOBU have gone through a political evolution which will affect their ability to help build on-going actions in support of African liberation struggles. Up to now, it has been the people around YOBU who have been largely responsible for the success of the African Liberation Day actions. They helped initiate the 1972 African Liberation Day action of 20,000 by setting up the African Liberation Day Coordinating Committee (ALDCC) as a broad non-exclusive coalition, made up of all those who supported the action. After the action they let the ALDCC dissolve and set up in its place the African Liberation Support Committees. These committees were more narrow than the ALDCC, composed mainly of students and ex-student radicals. But despite this, some of the 1973 African Liberation Day actions were quite large because broader forces were drawn into the actions through ad-hoc committees or other means.

Last July at the ALSC Steering Committee meeting in Frogmore, S.C., certain steps were taken which began to define the ALSC in a much narrower way than previously. The YOBU forces drew up and pushed the adoption of a Statement of Principles for the ALSC which defined it as an "anti-capitalist" and "anti-imperialist united front." In this Statement of Principles the question of building support for African liberation struggles was barely mentioned. The passage of the statement occurred in conjunction with a turn by some of the YOBU leaders in the direction of Maoism. It now appears that the objective of these leaders is to transform ALSC into a new Black "anti-imperialist" organization with Maoist views on issues facing Black people.

The forces around the Congress of African Peoples (CAP) are opposed to the new Statement of Principles and at the most recent ALSC National Steering Committee meeting in February in Chicago,

they called for its rejection. CAP's political stance is both anti-Maoist and anti-Marxist. They generally deny a role to non-Blacks in revolutionary struggles to change society and have at times red-baited YSAers and SWPers in the ALSC. Although the Statement of Principles was reaffirmed by a majority at the Chicago Steering Committee meeting, the leadership decided to hold a two day conference before the May 25 action to further discuss the differences.

As things stand now, there is general agreement within the ALSC on support to the May 25 national action, although we can be sure that the evolution of the debate will have an effect on the size and effectiveness of the action. Despite the fact that the debate has not been made public, the factionalism has already undermined building activities in many areas. In addition, the turning away of the YOBU leaders from the concept of building a broad coalition to carry out actions in solidarity with African liberation struggles can be seen in the fact that they have proposed that during African Liberation month leading up to the May 25 action, the ALSC should also focus on the issues of the energy crisis, police repression and the impeachment of Nixon.

Nevertheless, the May 25 action is still focused on the issue of support to African liberation struggles and many independents continue to be attracted to it on this basis. There also continue to be groupings in the ALSC who support May 25th and who are independent of either side in the debate.

Our activities in support of the May 25 African solidarity action will have to take into account these changes in ALSC. Where possible, we should continue to draw in independent forces to build the action. Depending on the local situation, this can be done through ALSC or through ad-hoc committees. We can also help build campus or citywide forums on the role of the U.S. in Africa.

We should also attempt to educate people on the issues being debated within ALSC. In discussions with ALSC activists we should point out the lessons of past ALD actions, explaining that they have been successful precisely because they have drawn in broad forces who can unite in opposition to U.S. complicity with Portuguese colonialism and the white settler regimes in southern Africa, despite differences over other issues. Where appropriate, we should also continue to discuss with individuals in ALSC our Trotskyist views and our opposition to both Maoism and the ideas of Baraka.

Comradely,

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