

Trade Union Imperialism in South Africa: US Labour Relations with the Trade Union Council of South Africa – 1960 - 1973

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The aim of this study is to examine US policies towards the South African labour movement through the American Federation of Labour - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and US official institutions, such as the State Department and the Labour Department of the United States, US universities etc. with particular focus on the period between the 1960s and mid-1970s.

The reason for choosing such a research topic is the idea that the capitalist classes of advanced capitalist countries have periodically used labour organizations, which have not opposed capitalist relations of production, to guarantee the profitability of their investments. In the post Second World War period, the most powerful agent in the implementation of such policies was the United States because of its huge production power and hegemonic position.

These policies always followed the US investments and aimed to create labour organizations which would not oppose capitalist relations of production and the US investments. These policies were introduced under the auspices of with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in 1949 and continued with the establishment of the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) in 1962 and the African American Labour Center (AALC) in 1964 following the expansion of US investments in the Latin American countries and African continent. Significantly, in parallel to the increase in US investments began in South Africa in the sixties, US overseas labour policies also intensified in the country through AFL-CIO, the US State Department, and the US Labour Department. During the period, the AFL-CIO and official departments of US established important collaborative relations with the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA). In other words, in the study, the labour relations between the US and South Africa in the beginning of the 1960s and the middle of 1970s are examined by specifically focusing on TUCSA.