Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa

Political Position: MACSA is an organization of individuals in the Madison community who are concerned to publicize the conditions of colonial, imperialistic, and racial oppression in Southern Africa, to offer material assistance to those peoples who are fighting against the oppression which daily confronts them, and to press for elimination of U.S. governmental and corporate support of the repressive white minority regimes in the Southern African states. We see our activities as inherently anti-imperialistic and we recognize the necessity in all of our work to relate the conditions of oppression in Southern Africa to those of our own society. We view the world capitalist economy as an integrated network through which systematic exploitation of peoples both here and abroad is promoted and perpetuated. In focusing on a geographically defined portion of that network - Southern Africa - within which the practice of liberation groups is directed toward the elimination of imperialistic relations, we understand that our support activities contribute to a worldwide struggle against the dominance of capital.

Practice: Our activities during the past year included two fund raising campaigns (one still in progress), publication of a newsletter, some (limited) use of local media, sponsorship of speakers on the progress of the Southern African liberation movements; self-education sessions during which we concentrated on history, stance, and state of specific liberation movements, and numerous speaking engagements. Early in the year we offered our assistance (primarily in the form of speakers and newspaper articles) to the Madison Young World Development group whose walk raised approximately $16,000 for FRELIMO in Mozambique. Also during the fall we carried through a fund raising campaign which raised over $1200 for FRELIMO and MBLA, a portion of which was channeled through LSM in Vancouver for the purchase of medical supplies for the Angolan struggle. In evaluating this campaign, we came to the conclusion that its primary focus on the university was probably misplaced. Solicitation for funds at tables set up at strategic locations in the university did not result in the donation of very large amounts; neither did it allow us to integrate education with fund raising since it did not offer a suitable forum for discussion. (Its one rather unfortunate result was to bring our organization to the attention of a state agency which subsequently informed us that if we were to be soliciting for funds we had to be duly registered.) We decided that our energies would be more satisfactorily put to use if we concentrated fund raising activities on community groups rather than relied on the liberalism or humanitarian tendencies of passers by of strategic locations. Thus in our spring and current fund raising campaign (which is directed at the situation in Namibia) we are approaching local churches and unions. It is too early as yet to evaluate the success of this approach. We are not sure how successful we will be in actually raising money, but we believe that we are getting information into channels which we have previously neglected.

Projections: Since MACSA is a community organization, we feel that it is important to continually work to establish a connection between social and economic conditions in Southern Africa and the Madison area, specifically to show that the conditions of oppression in Southern Africa are supported and aggrevated by the economic involvement there of companies with a home base in the Wisconsin area. We feel it important that community groups be made aware of the very
concrete tie which they have to liberation struggles, mediated by
the activities of profit seeking companies (and by the larger frame-
work of governmental policies which support the overseas extension
of capital and management of those companies). With this concern
in mind we published two years ago a pamphlet entitled Is Southern
Africa Wisconsin's Business? During the coming year we wish to
further concretize this basic concern by focusing a campaign on a
local company (one of the largest employers in Madison) which has
economic ties with South Africa (as well as a military contract
which links it directly to the war in Southeast Asia). We intend
to begin by following up on some contacts with the union represent-
ing workers at this company. Our subsequent strategy will be depen-
dent upon the outcome of this preliminary work.
Additionally we have decided to continue with two major fund rais-
ing campaigns during the coming year. The fall campaign will focus
on PAIGC and will emphasize U.S. military involvement in the Portu-
guese colonial wars. We hope to cooperate with other local groups
in this endeavor. In the spring our fund raising activities will
focus on Zimbabwe and South Africa, with money raised to go through
the OAU for the liberation struggles in these two areas. Addition-
ally we will continue our political education activities (newsletter,
selling of literature, research, speaking), hopefully on a more sys-
tematic basis.

Relationship to NAAIC: MACSA clearly agrees with the general pol-
itical statement which binds all members of NAAIC to the coalition.
We fully affirm the necessity of maintaining communications links
between member groups of NAAIC and believe that the function of the
newsletter should be maintained and extended to this end. We have
found our participation in NAAIC not only to have brought us into
somewhat closer contact with other North American groups with an
interest in Southern Africa, but also to have facilitated our inter-
action with other anti-imperialistic groups in our own community
with different geographical foci. MACSA would approve of more co-
ordinated action being taken by members of NAAIC; yet we recognize
the need for all groups to concentrate on their local communities,
to build up a strong base with local organizations, to be respon-
sive to local needs. We are willing to participate in joint pro-
jects with NAAIC members which might serve to strengthen the coal-
ition and to solidify the links between politically cohesive groups
throughout North America if those projects may be feasibly inte-
grated with our ongoing activities and are relevant to the interests
to our local constituency.