Mozambican author, economist, and agricultural organizer, Lina Magaia toured the U.S. and Canada during Jan. 21-Feb. 28. She came to share her book Dumba Nengue: Run for Your Life. Tales of Peasant Tragedy In Mozambique, and to inform North American audiences about the crisis situation in her country. She spent time in San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, Iowa, Atlanta, Washington D.C., New York, and Boston. In Canada she spoke in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. I was able to spend two days with Lina Magaia while she was in Chicago, and the following is a report and personal commentary on her visit.

Minutes before Lina Magaia was scheduled to leave Chicago for Iowa, she wrote the following in my copy of Dumba Nengue:

"Our struggle is your struggle, because apartheid is the enemy of all the world's free people. Though I may not live to see our victory, I believe that we will overcome."

This statement encapsulates the message and the conviction Lina Magaia expressed to Americans during her tour of the U.S.

Her first speaking engagement was on Jan. 31 a CCISSA-sponsored (Chicago Committee In Solidarity with Southern Africa) event."Message From Mozambique." Also present as special guests were Ambassador Ferrao, the Vice-Minister of Education Paulo Muilanga, and Anna Sithole, Director of Special Education. They contributed greatly to the program with their remarks and answers to the audience's questions. Following the Sunday night reception, Magaia had two very full days in Chicago. She spoke at four colleges, gave an interview at public radio station WBEZ, a newspaper interview at in These Times, as well as held a discussion and a book-signing at Women and Children First bookstore.

Audiences were stunned and roused when Magaia would invite someone to read "The Little Girl Who Never Learned To Dream," the first story in her book. There is an element present in Magaia's account of the bandits' deeds that can only be described as terrifying and disorienting. No matter how many gruesome stories one has heard of or read about, these have an ominous presence in them that could only originate within the darkness that is apartheid. Thus, apartheid and its connections to the supposed civil war in Mozambique became a major topic for discussion.

At the CCISSA reception Magaia stated:

"My country has rights. My country wants PEACE! We already have freedom... to Senator Jesse Helms I would say, if you really felt the suffering of my people you would abolish apartheid."

As with this message to Sen. Helms, she would often address her points as if she were speaking directly to those who support terror and banditry in her country. To President Reagan she explained how U.S. aid sent to Mozambique is being destroyed by the South African-backed Renamo.

In essence, as long as the U.S. continues to support S.A. we will be supporting the destruction of our own aid. (However, one can be sure that the profit the U.S. makes in business transactions with S.A. can easily make up for any losses in aid to Mozambique.)

Magaia asked, "Who do these Renamo supporters want to liberate? And will there be anyone left to liberate? If it is for the promotion of capitalism, I should like to tell them that these bandits are also killing private proprietors." She made it very clear that the problems Mozambique deals with day to day are not related to socialism or capitalism, but are directly related to the apartheid regime. Magaia spoke of the "double massacre" the bandits commit in the countryside. In doing so, she refers to both the physical death and the psychological scars it inflicts on the survivors, who must cope with the trauma of having witnessed such mutilation.

According to Magaia, the mother of the child in "The Little Girl..." went insane after her daughter was so brutally murdered. This "double massacre" is going to be the theme of her next book, which should be available later this year.

Lina Magaia asked many things of her audiences. She asked that we write letters to our Congressmen urging them to learn more about what is actually occurring in Mozambique rather than relying on the misinformation spread by an ignorant and biased few. She made a request for donations: paper for printing, pencils and notebooks, small cassette recorders and tapes, and anything else that might support better communication. Her hope is to set up a network of Mozambicans who are adequately supplied to relay information directly to supporters in North America. She also suggested that schools and universities set up "sister-schools" and exchange student programs.
(MAGAIA cont'd.)

Because of Magaia's tour, many more Americans are aware of Mozambique's crisis and supportive of efforts to spread information. Magaia often commented on how uninformed most Americans are about Africa as a whole, not to mention Mozambique. Nonetheless, her patience never ceased, and she was rewarded with freshly informed and eager supporters.

It would be difficult to not be moved by a person as courageous and warm as Lina Magaia. There is much to be learned from her perseverance, accomplishment, and humility. In heart and mind, she and her fellow Mozambicans have overcome barriers that we here in the U.S. are still trying to move beyond. She exclaimed at the outset of the CCISSA reception that Mozambicans are not only multi-racial but are more importantly anti-racial. Their pride in being Mozambican transcends the subtle barriers that racial consciousness promotes. These are precious words that we should set before us as we look towards our work with a more clear sense of what we are up against and what can be done.

Thank you, Lina Magaia; you have given us new eyes through which to see your country and ours.

new resources: The Children of War

Published by the Information Department of PRELIMO, this booklet has as its main source, ledgers, notebooks, and documents confiscated from Renamo bandits during raids conducted by the Mozambique Armed Forces in August 1987. Two young citizens and their experiences as bandits are also highlighted. The 15-page booklet is divided into three sections that describe how the South African-backed MNR is using Mozambican children to destroy their own people. The Children of War is informative and easy to read; it would be excellent material for high school and college students who are just beginning to learn about the crisis situation in Mozambique. Copies are available upon request for $2.00 each at the MSN office in Chicago.

TURN SORROW...

"The Mozambican people are steadfast and determined. We love freedom and we prize independence. Now, as in the past, we are making huge sacrifices to preserve our freedom and independence."
A delegation of Mozambican church leaders (Protestant and Roman Catholic) toured the U.S. from Feb.8-23 to describe their country's suffering from drought and widespread violence. They also asked for continued relief and development aid. The delegation was sent by the Christian Council of Mozambique, which represents 15 Mozambican Protestant denominations, and was sponsored by Church World Service and the National Council of Churches' Division of Overseas Ministries. The group spent time in New York City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kansas, and Michigan. While in Washington, they were able to meet with Congressman Dan Burton (R-Indiana), a long-time supporter of Renamo, to try to convey to him the reality of the situation in Mozambique and the truth about Renamo.

Across Iowa, churches, schools, community groups and individuals are being recruited to help gather one million pencils and other related supplies to help stop the South African-backed war against Mozambique. The pencil gathering is symbolic of helping to reopen schools in Mozambique which have been destroyed by wartime violence. The pencil is also symbolic of the written messages of concern sent by Iowans to this war torn area and its people. The campaign will begin on March 1, 1988 and will culminate on May 1, 1988.

Please help write peace into the future for the people of Mozambique by joining the Pencils for Peace in Mozambique Campaign. Study packets and speakers will be available to assist campaign sponsors. For more information contact:
Mozambique Support Network
American Friends Service Committee, Iowa Committee
Southern Africa Coalition
4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312
515/274-4851

Black History Month at the University of Michigan, Flint, organized by the African-Afro-American Studies Program. During a stopover in Detroit, Ms. Sithole and Deputy Minister Muianga appeared before the City Council of Detroit.

23 Feb 1988: Maputo:
Throughout Mozambique, former elements of the South African surrogate army of terrorists continue to respond to the Amnesty Law passed in December by the People's Assembly. During the month of January, over 100 terrorists turned themselves in to authorities along with a significant amount of assorted weapons.

In a related development, more than 400 men, women, and children turned themselves in to an army unit stationed in Inhaiminga, in the Sofala province, after fleeing their captors. With the arrival of the group the number of civilians rescued by the Mozambican army, along with those who managed to escape from their captors in the northeastern region of Sofala, climbed to 7,000.

IN TO NEW STRENGTH...

"We are one single will from the Rovuma to the Maputo in our determination to continue the struggle."

President Joaquin A. Chissano
NEWS RELEASE

PRETORIA'S SPECIAL FORCES BEHIND TERROR NETWORK IN MOZAMBIQUE

The London-based magazine AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL, asserted in its 2 December 1987 issue that "South Africa recruits and supplies...the terrorists in Mozambique...by air, sea, and land. South African Special Forces sabotage experts undertake missions inside Mozambique which are beyond Renamo's technical competence, and these are then attributed to Renamo."

AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL asserts, "The key to Renamo's political and even military strategy is to be found in the South African security establishment, in particular at military intelligence headquarters, at Special Forces Headquarters in Pretoria, and in the operation room of Five Reconnaissance Regiment at Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal." The publication states further, "The fact remains that according to South African sources, the terrorists' logistical nerve-center is at Phalaborwa, the garrison town on the edge of the Kruger National Park which is the home of Five Recce, the South African Special Forces unit which runs (the terrorists known as) Renamo." A.C. also reported that the northern terrorist group is supplied by South African air-drops from the Comoro Islands as well as by sea. "French intelligence sources...have confirmed South Africa's use of Comoro as a base."

"Renamo itself was...perfected by the Rhodesian intelligence chief, the late Ken Flower, as what he used to call a 'pseudo-terrorist unit' to report on the activities of ZANLA (the armed wing of Robert Mugabe's ZANU) operating out of Mozambique. In the Rhodesian establishment Renamo laised with the Selous Scouts, a dangerously maverick unit not above carrying out massacres which it could then attribute to its ZANLA and ZIPRA enemies."

"All these relationships now find themselves reproduced on a larger and more dangerous scale in South African clandestine operations. The relationship between Five Recce at Phalaborwa and the Renamo warlords is one which has existed for some 12 years. Often involving exactly the same people on each side. The question to be asked is whether the South African military establishment is out of control."

"...Frais against Apartheid. Support of the African National Congress in the struggle...support for organizations and individuals in order to send new and reconditioned mountain bikes to Mozambique. Beyond helping to supply all-terrain bicycles, they are making high quality carts. Bikes Not Bombs' Eric Schulman, now in Maputo, is also offering assistance to development and relief groups. He recently spoke with Ambassador Wells who was very supportive, and she said that she is going to make the bike project one of her top three priorities."

Through bike maintenance and widespread use, the bike project hopes to enhance mobility, increase productivity, income and jobs, and decrease capital outflow. Ken Hughes of the Bikes Not Bombs office in Washington, D.C. recently informed the Chicago office that fifteen bikes have just been sent via the American Jewish World Service to the Ministry of Health in Maputo.

"For more information write or call Bikes Not Bombs, PO Box 56538, Washington, D.C. 20011, 301-589-1810."

an upcoming event...

THE SECOND ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SYMPOSIUM ON SOUTHERN AFRICA discussing "Southern Africa: The Crisis Deepens. The Struggle Continues." April 7,8,9; Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund, this three day conference will focus on South Africa's regional aggression and policy of destabilization in southern Africa. The conference will begin on Thursday, April 7 with a Community Rally Against Apartheid and will end with a cultural presentation on Saturday night. Numerous workshops will be available on Saturday. Some of these will include: refugees and displaced persons, women under apartheid, support of frontline states, utilizing the media in the struggle, and the involvement of trade unions.

The cost for all three days is $20 general, $8 students, $4 unemployed. Housing, childcare, transportation, and sign language interpretation assistance is available. The conference will be held at Shiloh Baptist Church Family Life Center, 1510 9th St. NW, Washington, D.C. For more information call: 202-546-7961.