The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m.

I. DISCUSSION OF BASIS OF UNITY FOR FUTURE WORK

A. Proposal of Congress of Afrikan People: The Congress of Afrikan People proposed that the following should be the basis of unity for future work on southern Africa:

"It is the view of the Congress of Afrikan People, that the struggle against colonialism can only be resolved through armed struggle. And that organizations involved in liberation support work, should principally support those Liberation Movements that are engaged in armed struggle.

Further, we think any talk of detente must be opposed, and a call be made for the superpowers and all Imperialism to get out of Ngola, Zimbabwe and Southern Afrika. By superpowers we mean U.S. Imperialism on the one hand and Soviet Social-Imperialism on the other. Which represent the main threat to the liberation movement!

We also raise the issue of support for the struggles in Ngola, Zimbabwe (ZANU), Namibia, Azania and Eritrea. And that we develop a broad united front to carry out this work, a united front that serves the needs of the people, the workers and peasants of Afrika, and that we not subordinate those needs to the liberal or petit-bourgeoisie of the Euro-American countries. That this front unify around a common program that finally serves the interests of the Afrikan masses."

Arguments for proposal included the following: U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism are the two main obstacles to liberation in southern Africa. The contention of the two superpowers for hegemony is demonstrated by the fighting inside Angola, and is being covered over by the smokescreen of "detente". We cannot ignore social imperialism because it is gaining strength in the world, and it needs to be opposed.

Arguments against the proposal: The southern African liberation movements themselves state that they have received useful support from the Soviet Union, so we are not in a position to say that the Soviet influence has been harmful. Our first task should be fighting U.S. imperialism, not fighting social imperialism. We should not take a position on the internal situation in the Soviet Union or the struggle in Eritrea because we have not discussed them together. Outsiders should not urge war on the people of other countries although it would be proper to accept and support the decision of the people of the country itself to wage armed struggle.

This statement of unity was rejected by a vote of 2 for, 22 against, 7 abstaining.

B. Five principles of unity from this conference: The Philadelphia Coalition to Stop Rhodesian and South African Imports moved that the principles of unity distributed to all those invited to the conference be adopted as the principles of unity for continuing co-ordination of the work of participating groups.

Arguments for the proposal: They serve as a minimum basis of unity that we can all agree on, without contradicting other political views that individual groups may take. As such, it can provide a basis for further discussion to
formulate a higher level of unity.

Arguments against the proposal: The statement is too weak. Part 2 should include a stronger statement reflecting a belief that a western form of democracy is not going to meet the needs of the people of southern Africa. Part 3 should take a stronger position on the importance of armed struggle.

The following amendment to Part 3 was offered by the Congress of Afrikan People: Add after the last sentence: "We think that the struggle against colonialism can only be resolved by armed struggle and that organizations involved in liberation support work should principally support those liberation movements that are engaged in armed struggle." At a certain point in the debate the mover of the amendment modified it by adding "... and that all negotiations be based on fighting."

Arguments for amendment: Colonialism came to power by the use of armed force; it therefore can only be defeated by the use of armed force.

Arguments against amendment: It is too restrictive; it should say "principally" by armed struggle rather than "only" by armed struggle. Other forms of resistance deserve support, such as the political struggles of FRELIMO before armed struggle and strikes of workers such as those in Namibia in 1973.

The amendment was rejected by a vote of 6 for, 17 against, 6 abstaining.

The Afro-American Information Service made the observation that Part 5 of the unity statement concerning broadening the constituency with whom we work should not be only a matter of words. If we are truly interested in expanding the involvement of working class people in southern African issues, those of us who work on southern African concerns must also become involved in working class struggles. This is the concrete way to move toward involving working people, and it has not been done so far.

The Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa proposed that Part 2 should be deleted.

Arguments for deletion: It eliminates wording on political solution in southern Africa which some people think is too weak. Arguments against amendment: If Part 2 is weak, it should be strengthened, not deleted.

The deletion was rejected, by a vote of 10 for, 12 against, 4 abstaining.

The Center for Social Action proposed that the following words be added as a preamble: "Liberation movements are in the forefront of the struggle in southern Africa and we pledge our support to them. We seek a working relationship with them in our solidarity work in North America."

Arguments for the addition: It makes explicit the belief that the liberation movements are taking leadership in the struggle in southern Africa.

The preamble was accepted, by a vote of 23 for, 2 against, and 0 abstaining.

/It was decided at this point to extend the time for debate on the basis of unity for 10 minutes./

Amendment offered by the Congress of Afrikan People: Part 2, substitute: "The
only just and viable solution in southern Africa is that solution determined by the African masses as well as full participation by all citizens, without manipulation by any form of imperialism or neo-colonialism. We reject the concept of bantustans as unviable and unacceptable."

The amendment was accepted, by a vote of 20 for, 5 against, 3 abstaining.

The question of adopting the whole text of the basis of unity, as amended, was then called and agreed to. The Congress of Afrikan People inquired as to whether several further amendments could be considered. The chair ruled that all time for debate had expired since the question had been called.

The basis of unity as amended was adopted, by a vote of 20 for, 4 against, 2 abstaining.  /See full text of basis of unity as adopted, enclosed herewith./

Statement by the Congress of Afrikan People on basis of unity: The Congress of Afrikan People cannot participate unless we can state our position on the principles of unity. There was not sufficient time to hear amendments, given the importance of the political issues involved in the basis of unity. We cannot agree with the statement as voted on, especially Part 3 concerning the use of armed struggle. Therefore we cannot continue to participate in any real way in the rest of the session, although we would like to continue to work with the groups present.

The Bay Area Namibia Action Group supported the Congress of Afrikan People statement. The Syracuse Committee on Southern African Liberation supported the concern for further discussion on these political questions, but recognized the time limitations we are working under. They suggested that more time be given to political discussion at future conferences.

/The Washington Office on Africa proposed that we drop 1/2 hour small discussion groups on structures and priorities from the agenda, since we were already 45 minutes behind schedule. The Congress of Afrikan People offered a substitute motion that this 1/2 hour be used for further debate on the basis of unity. The substitute motion was rejected. The original motion was accepted.

II. PROPOSALS FOR STRUCTURE AND PRIORITIES

Members of the planning committee made short presentations of possible models for national co-ordination:

A. National office in a central place with paid staff to strengthen local work, co-ordinate projects at a national level, and provide a clearinghouse for information and resources. Money would have to be raised by local groups if they felt it was an important priority.

B. National co-ordinating committee: To be composed of representatives from groups engaged in local action on southern Africa who wish to participate, based on the statement of unity as agreed on here. There could be some regional subdivisions also. Task Forces could be assigned to work on specific areas of practical work. The committee would also call future conferences, continue to take oversight of agreed-on projects, and co-ordinate information sharing.

C. Local group initiatives on different issues: Involves affirmation of autonomous groups, but with increased co-operation and a desire for groups to accept more responsibility to gather and disseminate information. This would be a step forward.
Some priorities could be implemented this way, although others would be left undone if no group took responsibility for them. While some projects could not be done, it has the advantage of being immediately feasible politically and financially.

D. Synthesis of local responsibility and national coordinating steering committee:* Given the wide variety of political, ideological and class position of the participating groups, a close unity is almost impossible. However, based on the basis of unity, there is a possible structure which would maintain the independent position of each group and also provide continental co-ordination of support work so urgently being sought. This structure would include both local groups assuming certain national responsibilities for projects closest to their current areas of concentration and concern, and, at the same time, the establishment of a steering committee to facilitate this assumption of responsibility and periodical review of progress.

These are the concrete possibilities: we have among us at least four groups with national programs and over 25 groups based locally. This provides a solid base to take up nearly every one of our proposals from Sunday's workshops. Local groups can - and indications are that they will enthusiastically - choose specific projects, i.e. Union Carbide boycott, constituency organizing packet on legislative action (especially U.S. intervention in Angola), proliferation of videotape use, corporate actions, popular pamphlets and other research, literature and "How to" booklets. One or more groups can combine efforts to do analyses of South African propaganda, the power structure of American media, co-ordination of material support for specific liberation movements, formation of a film and speakers bureau, and listing and critiquing of available resources.

Existing national groups can take up some of the specific questions of national orientation. Southern Africa magazine and Africa News can play a major role in developing national hotlines and in communication about research. Southern Africa magazine should now find enthusiastic distribution across the country by groups present.

The steering committee would assume the responsibility for checking up on follow-through by various groups and assisting their inter-communication and interaction. They would have to deal with priorities and projects not yet taken up by one or more of the various local groups. They would, of course, have to be concerned with the proposal for another conference like this one next year. It is obvious that this is a bold attempt. It is dependent on the degree to which the more than 30 groups here can find enough commonality in the principles of unity to work in close co-operation in the above program. If that expresses our sentiments, this proposed structure can, in struggle, overcome the numerous difficulties we will face.

CAUCUSES OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS for 1/2 hour to discuss structures and priorities

The Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa moved the approval of Proposal D, synthesis of local responsibility and national co-ordination steering committee, in principle.

Proposal D was approved in principle, by a vote of 20 for, 0 against, 1 abstaining.

* Note: Since this proposal was adopted in principle, it is written up here at full length rather than in summary.
The Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa moved that the Washington Office on Africa be requested to co-ordinate joint actions for a period of one year; also to seek funds for joint actions and to purchase the services of one staff person to enable to steering committee to function. This proposal was seen as a method of implementing Proposal D.

The Washington Office on Africa opposed this motion, on the grounds that this would constitute a radical shift in the focus of its work which had not be cleared with its own steering committee. Further, that it was premature because it was the responsibility of the steering committee to decide how and who should co-ordinate its functions. This did not preclude the Washington Office doing a limited amount of additional work as other groups were committed to doing.

The list of project priorities were voted on by ballot by each group in caucuses. The following projects received the largest number of "High Priority" ratings: Union Carbide boycott, national campaign to stop U.S. intervention in Angola, "Hot-Line" telephone news network. A full tally of the priority ratings is enclosed herewith.

Structure of the steering committee was approved as follows by consensus: The steering committee will be composed of one representative from each of ten groups. The membership of the committee will be chosen by ballot by all those groups which attended the conference and which wish to participate in this coalition on the basis of the adopted points of unity. The ballot will include all groups which nominate themselves to serve on the committee. Each group will have ten votes in the selection. Diversity of nationality, class, sex, geography and organizational affiliation are important goals in making such choices.

Participation in this coalition will initially be open only to those groups which participated in the conference and which accept the basis of unity statement. The steering committee will take responsibility for determining how to enable other groups to join the coalition or to be affiliated with its work.

The balloting procedure will be by mail. The first mailing will include a statement which groups can sign to indicate that they accept the basis of unity, and whether they would like to nominate themselves to be on the steering committee, and whether they would be willing to convene the first steering committee meeting. This mailing will also include a sign-up sheet for groups to indicate which projects they would anticipate taking a leadership responsibility for. The second mailing will be a ballot including all groups which were self-nominated. A run-off election is possible. If the steering committee which is elected feels that it is not sufficiently diverse, it can allow two additional groups who participated in the conference and who are in agreement with the points of unity to join. The Washington Office on Africa will take responsibility for conducting the balloting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.