To: ACOA Executive Board

From: Prexy Nesbitt

Subject: A Report on a Trip to Southern Africa

"Six years of war is neither a lot nor a little. We are no longer at the beginning but we still have a long way to go. We have proved that we cannot be beaten, we have yet to demonstrate that we can win. The mango does not become a huge tree in one day. But as with the growing mango tree we are profoundly rooted in the soil which is our people, and the first fruits are already tasted by the masses.

"We have come a long way, from division, uncertainty and ignorance. We have come from nothing and become a People, a People where before there were only tribes. Combatants have come from the rank of the peasants, industrial workers, and those working in the mines and plantations. From our illiteracy we have made schools, from our sickness hospitals. Where forced labor once reigned there now grow cooperatives, and production which formerly served the exploiters is now part of the people's strength."

(Editorial, Mozambique Revolution, 1970)

The May 4th raid on SWAPO at Kassinga, Angola by the South African fascists,* the FNLC uprising and the Western-initiated Pan African Security Force for Zaire, the acceleration of the armed struggle in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, the processes of consolidating "people's power" in Angola and Mozambique, all these events and others constituted a most historic moment in which to be traveling through southern Africa.

During the six weeks from mid-April until early June, I visited Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and Kenya. Additionally, I had meetings with anti-apartheid and solidarity organizations in London, Geneva, Lisbon and Rome. In the course of the trip I did various radio and newspaper interviews about anti-apartheid and solidarity activities in the United States. These were done for

*See Appendix I for text of SWAPO's "Kassinga Emergency Appeal."
both governmental and liberation movement stations in Tanzania, Botswana and Zambia. (Samples of some press coverage are attached to this report.)*

Throughout the trip I received invaluable assistance from the staff of the Canadian support organization, Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO). Unfortunately, an intended trip to Angola did not materialize—largely due to scheduling limitations.

If there is one overriding impression I have from my trip it is that an increased amount of political and material support to the liberation movements (SWAPO, the ANC, and the Patriotic Front) and the Frontline States is an imperative.**

The burden presently being carried by Mozambique in particular is a grave one. Though Mozambique does not see its support to the struggle in Zimbabwe as a burden but rather as an integral portion of Mozambique's own struggle, the reality is that the solidarity being displayed is costly.

"Mozambique-Zimbabwe, one struggle

By supporting the Zimbabwe struggle, we are defending Mozambique. Thus we say that support and solidarity are not charity or favour, but mutual assistance between forces fighting for the same objective..."

President Samora Machel

Between March, 1976 and March, 1977, 143 acts of aggression against Mozambique by the Smith forces.

Between May, 1976 and November, 1977, 1,763 civilians murdered; over 1,208 wounded.

People's Power magazine, Number 10, October-December 1977

On May 9th I visited Doeroi. Divided into seven different settlements, Doeroi has approximately 24,000 Zimbabwean refugees, the majority of whom are between 14 and 20 years of age. The camp is administered by two structures: a) the representatives of ZANU—the Patriotic Front and; b) personnel from Frelimo's Nucleo de Apoio aos Refugiados e Movimentos da Libertacao, the Center for Support to Refugees and Liberation Movements. In addition, UNHCR is involved in some of the logistics problems and is currently seeking government permission to open a sub-office in Beira to work with the Mozambique government's provincial refugee service.

There are problems at Doeroi. Many people arrive at Doeroi with acute malnutrition, anemia and pneumonia. There are over 100 cases of tuberculosis.

*See Appendix II.

**See my Some Specific Proposals for Africa Fund Support.
At one point people were getting sick from the maize meal kitchens. There is no pumped water for the kitchens or the clinic as the pump is broken, awaiting parts and a technician. In spite of the difficulties, people are both making bricks for a new clinic and making impressive desks, chairs and bowls in several carpentry shops.

Besides an urgent need for clothing and blankets at Doeroi additional items are needed in the following areas:

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In Zambia I visited Victory Camp. Twenty miles from Lusaka, Victory Camp is a former MPLA settlement. It contains one of the ZAPU-Patriotic Front schools. The overall camp, housing over 12,000 students, is divided into a boys section called JZ Camp (names after J. Z. Moyo) and Victory Camp which houses the women. It is expected that within the next year there will be 20,000 students at this ZAPU school.* In addition to the sections for the students, ZAPU also administers two maternity centers, one for 500 mothers with infants, the other for expectant mothers.

Transporting ZAPU cadre and others under ZAPU care from Botswana to Zambia continues to be a major problem. UNHCR currently says it has no funds to airlift even women and children.

Let me say at this moment that the camp at Selibi Pikwe is not a good situation. Viewed as a transit camp by all parties involved, ZAPU-Patriotic Front, Botswana government and UNHCR, there is a minimal structure with all efforts geared to just facilitation of the movement of people north as flights are available.

Items indicated earlier as needed for Doeroi are also needed for Victory Camp. However, an additional and urgent need is for a second concrete mixer to help speed up housing construction which is being undertaken.

*From ZAPU officials I learned that there are currently 33,000 Zimbabweans under ZAPU care in Zambia with another 11,000 in the Botswana transit camps at Selibi Pikwe. According to UNHCR and ZAPU, two hundred to three hundred Zimbabwean refugees are entering Botswana every day.
In general, both in Mozambique and in Zambia, for both Patriotic Front-ZANU and Patriotic Front-ZAPU there is a major obstacle which must be overcome. Simply stated it is the necessity to create an alternative society for what is at minimum over 100,000 exiled Zimbabweans—many of whom are not active cadre. No amount of planning could have anticipated the vast stream of people—especially young people—who are presently in both Zambia (via Botswana) and Mozambique. The challenge this task presents to solidarity and support groups is intensified support to the Patriotic Front and the Frontline States involved.*

Botswana and the South African Exile Community

"Every day becomes a burden."

Soweto student to the author
Gaborone, May 17, 1978

Between January 1, 1975 and February 25, 1977 1,146 South African exiles, the majority are students, were said to have entered Botswana.** Currently, according to UNHCR figures, South African refugees are entering Botswana at the rate of some 30 per month.

It should be immediately observed, however, that these figures in and of themselves mean very little. The Tswana-speaking people have long demonstrated a great deal of movement, legal and extra-legal, back and forth across the Botswana-South Africa border. In fact, the greater portion of the Cetshwana people live on the South African side. Thus, there should be a substantial margin of error attached to these figures.

The important point about the situation in Botswana is its explosiveness. On the one hand, gathered in Botswana is a highly volatile and politicized group of South Africans. Young men and women who, though in their early teens, have a demonstrated capacity for organizing mass struggle. They are angry and suspicious. Incidents like:

a large group of students being returned from Nigeria after an alienating experience there with the northern Nigerian school system; several of the students being arrested by the Botswana police after they had exposed, detained and beaten some South African government infiltrators; the 25 some odd cases of student refugees being deported back to South Africa; several students being offered scholarships to Danish universities only to be declared prohibited immigrants and sent back to Botswana upon

*On this I was singularly impressed that U. S. churches and their agencies seem to have done little to help in this situation. I was told by a leading ZAPU figure that the Victory Camp has received no support from any U. S. church body.

their arrival at the Copenhagen airport; the current plan of
the Botswana government to re-settle all South Africans into
a town to be constructed 180 kms west of Gaberone towards
the Kalahari.

These events and others are rapidly awakening these young students to
a reality that they term "the need to fight Seretse just as we fought
Johannes Balthazar."

On the other side, we have a Botswana government combined with the Council
of Churches and UNHCR into a Botswana Refugee Council structure, which is sin-
gularly inadequate to the task of serving as a host country to even well-organized
exiled political forces, let alone to multiples of political forces which are
still struggling to obtain some internal political cohesion. Add to this the
fact that the refugees' presence is clearly politicizing various sectors of the
Botswana population* and one comes up with some understanding of the political
dynamite steadily uncapping in Botswana.

On this particular Africa trip, various concrete things were accomplished.
Confirmation was made about Africa Fund shipment(s) of medical supplies to
Mozambique, excellent discussions were held with SWAPO, ANC and ZANU-ZAPU Patriotic
Front personnel. Additional funds were raised for the bank campaign.

Perhaps it was what I learned from people about the situation in southern
Africa—and hopefully what I shared with people on the frontline about our situa-
tion in the United States—which was the greatest aspect of the trip. Whether it
was learning about the extensive use of "native Americans" as mercenaries (because
among other reasons their tracking skills), or about recent fatal poisonings of
some seventeen ZANU commanders in base camps, or be it sitting with SWAPO and
MPLA "camaradas" as they learned about the horror of the Kassinga raid; these
are the experiences which fuel one's ability to continue concrete solidarity work.

If there is any one final (hopefully more useful) note which I would share
it is this. Those struggling in southern Africa, whether in the movements or in
the Frontline States, all desire much more information from those of us they view as
"friends" in the United States. The journalists, academicians, congressional
aides, researchers all of varying degrees of disrepute, are pouring into southern
Africa. What is desired is more well-organized and consistent contact with the
various solidarity groups in the States. (As well, people would like to become
better informed as to who is who, who the various solidarity groups are, what they
do, etc. Two concrete ways to do this were suggested: a) preparation of a who's
who in the journalism world; and b) an updated and complete cataloguing of and
commentary about various solidarity groups.)

*On May 16, 1978 carrying placards with Lenin's picture and slogans like "Our
bellies are empty," "Taxation is exploitation," "Workers unite," some 300
government manual workers marched to protest inflation and an unfair distribution
of the national income. They demanded that top civil servants be lowered in
salary and workers be better paid.
There is widespread recognition about the extent to which Africa is being situated on the front pages of government and multinational corporate drawing boards throughout the United States. Brzezinski's overt proposal that the U.S. should cause the Neto government "more trouble" and the controversy amongst "Africanists" over who was going to do AID's latest southern Africa study--both were followed carefully.

But there is a generalized cognizance as well about the disadvantage of not being within the portals of information generation and flow.* Therefore, everywhere and everyone in Africa requests information, be it books, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, monographs, films or tape recordings of speeches. All of these items--sent regularly and reliably--constitute additional weaponry, concrete solidarity for the continuing liberation struggle.

*Basil Davidson in his recent book, *Africa in Modern History: The Search for a New Society*, comments, accurately I think, that the quantity of information about Africa in this half of the twentieth century is "vast and will become larger." What he fails to point out is that much of this information is, ironically, not available to the subjects themselves, African nations and peoples.