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WORKING CONFERENCE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

A REPORT

A working Conference on Southern Africa was held in Madison, Wisconsin, October 11-13. The African Activist Association was represented at this Conference by Gloria Waite, through the financial assistance of the UCLA University Religious Center and the Conference organizers.

The Conference was formed to outline matters of interest for national coordination of resources and energy. Participants from 38 liberation support groups in America and Canada met in discussion sections and workshops to consider the current situation in Southern Africa and America's increasing involvement there. Small informal groups also met with representatives of various liberation movements. Tactics used by organizations in support of liberation support work were shared in the workshops, and discussion centered on major issues encountered in local organizational work.

From the work done in the workshops the following activities were agreed upon as having high priority requiring national coordination in the coming year: 1) A consumer boycott of Union Carbide, the largest U.S. corporation in Zimbabwe; 2) a national campaign to stop U.S. intervention in Angola; 3) a national "hot line" using a regional phone relay for critical hard news and action-oriented news for which the traditional support news sources are not adequate. It was also recognized that there is a lot of work that can be done on a local level to further the struggle, and several groups volunteered to be responsible for initiating work on specific issues, with the aim of disseminating this work to the other groups.

In the coming weeks a steering committee, formed from among the groups that attended, will take responsibility for facilitating the work planned for the coming year and calling the next conference.

At the time of making her report to the AA, the representative to the Conference will open up the possibility of the AAA helping with the work required for organizing the boycott, and the possibility of AAA acting as a working group to investigate and disseminate a study of the structure and control of the U.S. media, with a view to support groups gaining access to these news sources. The AAA is strategically located for these tasks, as there is no other support group in Los Angeles, and because the South African government is using L.A. as a testing ground for much of its propaganda. The AAA was conceived to concentrate on the issues regarding Southern Africa, and it is not too late for it to order its affairs in keeping with the needs of today. We complain about being a tool of "neocolonial studies," and we should be working to counter this influence. We may not be able to do this through the traditional classrooms, but we can do this through the AAA.