

Committee for a Free Mozambique
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New York, N.Y. 10016

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Statement for the Second Conference of the North American Anti-Imperialist Coalition

Origins and Purposes of CFM

CFM was founded in the fall of 1970 as a support group for FRELIMO, the Mozambique Liberation Front. Our aims are to:

- Support the work of the FRELIMO representative in the United States;
- Provide material and financial support to FRELIMO. CFM has organized a monthly pledge system which has contributors from around the country. We have also carried out a number of specific material aid projects aimed at both providing needed supplies to FRELIMO and increasing peoples' awareness of the struggle in Mozambique. These have included a campaign to buy transistor receivers for use in the liberated areas of Mozambique, production of a "FRELIMO VENCERA" poster, and the collection and shipment of a half ton of used clothing to FRELIMO;
- Educate the U.S. people about FRELIMO and Mozambique, and to point out the connections between peoples' liberation struggles in Mozambique, as well as in the other Portuguese occupied countries of Angola and Guinea-Bissau, and the revolutionary movements in the U.S. This has included the production and distribution of a monthly newsletter and a 10 page booklet on FRELIMO and Mozambique; demonstrations at universities, Portuguese offices, and the U.N. We are also distributing a new film on FRELIMO, "Behind the Lines", and a FRELIMO slide-show.

Structure

CFM's nucleus is a small, voluntary New York-based working group. Two people, chosen by lot every three months and a chairperson chosen monthly make up the executive committee, which is responsible for communication within the group and with other groups, making decisions between meetings, and making sure that work gets done. The division of tasks, newsletter topic selection, self-criticism, and planning are done at monthly meetings of the working group. In addition there is a work night each month devoted to mailing out the newsletter, which has a circulation of about 400, and fund-raising appeals. We also have a system of rotating responsibility for the ever-growing amount of office work, which includes requests for literature, speakers, the new FRELIMO film and slide-show, and answering specific questions from groups and individuals, among members of the working group. We have also tried to participate in monthly political education meetings with other groups in the area relating to southern Africa, but attendance has not been encouraging.

The Future of CFM

Like other movement support groups, our future course seems rather uncertain. On one hand we are encouraged by the rapidly growing awareness of the Mozambican struggle and the similarly increasing workload of CFM, while we are also aware of our limitations. Being a voluntary, part-time group, we do not have the resources to reach large numbers of people. We also feel that we cannot and should not be the FRELIMO support group in the U.S.; being a primarily white, university-oriented group, our constituency and political activities are circumscribed. Like FRELIMO, we believe that peoples' liberation is a new front struggle; we support the formation of other CONCP support groups in this country. We will probably keep our present structure; we have discussed hiring a part-time office worker, but we have been concerned about the effects on the collective nature of the committee. We have chosen to remain small and un-bureaucratic, but we realize that this may not be the most effective way of doing movement support.

CFM's formation as a support group for FRELIMO is mainly a reflection of personal ties among some of the organizers to FRELIMO. We also support the liberation movements of Angola (MPLA) and Guinea-Bissau (PAIGC). Although we are ideologically committed to these movements, we have not worked out the meaning of our support in terms of time, effort, and material aid. At the present time we do not have the resources to provide material support to all three movements.

CFM's political orientation is anti-imperialist. There is a tendency to regard the Portuguese presence in Africa and the actions of the liberation movements as being within a traditional colonialist framework. This hides the essential nature of the struggle. It is the western imperialist powers, notably the U.S. and West Germany, along with substantial support from South Africa, which enables Portugal to fight a three front war in Africa, while maintaining a fascist state at home. To a certain extent we have fallen victim to this illusion by not focusing enough on connections between the roots of imperialism and imperialism abroad. Similarly, we have not fully explored the significance of the African peoples' liberation movements for revolutionary movements here. Our efforts in the future will be directed towards making these connections. Anti-imperialist research and action within the context of liberation support and developing educational materials based on our analysis of imperialism will be the focus of our future work.

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