

Proposal: SOMAFCC Declared as a Sister College

The struggle and fight against racial oppression is a concern for us, not only on the local level but also on the international level. We must connect our movement with the larger world movement against destructive systems. By doing this we increase our understanding of the local struggle and also educate and inform ourselves of similar movements, their goals, and their achievements. Positive and aiding communication between anti-racist movements is a way to attain our objective: the eradication of institutional and attitudinal racism.

In our struggle against racism here, we are inspired by our brothers and sisters struggle in Southern Africa. Our sacrifices are so little compared to theirs, but when we see their fight for freedom, we are even more vigilant in our struggle against racism. The repression in South Africa goes beyond just horrifying statistics that we often read about; it is a form of degrading systematic oppression that permeates the society politically, economically, and culturally, a repression that extends from the parliament, to the congregation, to the classroom. Nationally, \$1,115 per capita is spent on white children and conversely, \$170 per capita on Black children, there is an average of 1 teacher for every 18 white children and in contrast 1 teacher for every 48 Black children, education is free and compulsory for white students, but neither free nor compulsory for Black students. But we must also look at the intent of these policies to understand the impact of the inferior

educational system under which Black South Africans are forced to learn.

The racism in South Africa is economically based on a need for labor, and this economic hierarchy is reinforced by the educational system, which intends to keep Blacks ignorant, and unaware of their lack of political and economic rights. The educational system attempts to "keep Blacks in their place" and degrade them psychologically. A blatant attempt to strip Black South Africans of their cultural identity, the South African regime, since 1975, has implemented Afrikaans, the language of the oppressors, as the medium of instruction for Black students. This decision met with national protest and dissent, particularly in Soweto, where Black South African students addressed the problems of the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, and more importantly, the whole inferior policy of Bantu education.

Several hundred students left South Africa in the wake of the student uprisings. They left with a desire to better equip themselves so they might return home able to contribute effectively to the struggle of their homeland. Out of this desire grew the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, which was established by the ANC in 1979 to combat the Bantu educational system. SOMAFECO, in Tanzania, offers education from Nursery through professional schools. The course offering is extensive and designed to meet the students' needs of a well-rounded education that is denied to most Black South African youth. Because of economic and political reasons SOMAFECO functions as a self-sufficient community with its own hospital and agricultural section.

We propose that the University of Michigan declare the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College our sister school. SOMAFCO epitomizes much of what the University of Michigan strives for: quality education, non-discriminatory access to such an education and the preparation of the world's youth in building a better society.

SOMAFCO is constantly in need of material aid and we should help them in their battle. Due to the high cost of items in Tanzania, shipping certain material goods would be more effective than sending money. There are three different areas of possible supply: personal care products, school supplies, and medical supplies. A suggestion list follows of possible donations which could be purchased but that could also be found within the home:

<u>Personal Care</u>	<u>School Supplies</u>	<u>Medical Supplies</u>
toothpaste	pencils	gauze
toothbrushes	erasers	cotton balls
combs	pens	rubbing alcohol
sanitary napkins	crayons	aspirin
tampons	sharpener	bandages
towels	solar calculator	medical tape
washcloths	rulers	iodine
soap	compasses	
shampoo	protractors	
clothes	chalk	

A box for donations will be placed at Pronto Printing Center in the Michigan Union. Goods will be packaged and sent at the end of every month. Other possible locations for boxes are in the dorms, co-ops, and fraternity and sorority houses (going through Greeks for Peace). Another possibility to solicit donations would be through sponsorship by a radio station, or a radio-thon (perhaps WCBN).

Expansion of the drive to a national level is also a possibility. Other campus anti-apartheid organizations and quick printing centers across the United States can develop a list

relationship that we have with Pronto. Contacts can be made through national membership organizations of both quick printing centers and anti-apartheid coalitions.

Due to the high cost of shipping, fund raising will be necessary in order to pay shipping costs of the goods to SOMAFCCO. Donations from concerned faculty, students, and other organizations will be sought. Other financing possibilities are bucket drives and a concert benefit.

Another part of our campaign this year is to establish a student exchange program with SOMAFCCO and particularly, having students from the University of Michigan going to SOMAFCCO. This would be a symbol of the solidarity between our struggles and a concrete way for us to broaden our experience and understanding of the fight for freedom. Our understanding would be one of actual experience and increased knowledge which is unattainable here by reading newspaper reports or watching media coverage.

By a meaningful contribution that we hope to make to SOMAFCCO we can, in the words of Alfred Nzo the Secretary General of the ANC, "cease to be mere sympathizers and supporters and become participants in the struggle."