Building an online archive – The African Activist Archive Project is building an online archive of historical multimedia materials and written and oral memories of 50 years of activist organizing in the United States in solidarity with African struggles against colonialism, apartheid, and injustice. This is a “people’s archive” focused primarily on local organizations that supported African struggles against colonialism and white minority rule. The digital archive also includes materials from national organizations that provided research and reports for and about local organizations.

The racially diverse U.S. African solidarity movement was a significant part of the continuing struggle against racism in the United States. The movement involved many types of organizations across the country, and this project seeks to document as many of them as possible. The primary (but not exclusive) geographic focus is Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

The anti-apartheid movement of the 1970s-1994, in particular, was unprecedented. Campaigns by community activists, students, faculty, churches, unions, and city, county, and state legislators led to divestment from U.S. companies doing business in South Africa by 90 cities, 28 states, and more than 150 colleges and universities. This movement culminated in passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 that changed U.S. foreign policy over a presidential veto. These campaigns offer important lessons about popular organizing for social justice.

Many local African solidarity groups no longer exist; coalitions often were formed around campaigns and then disbanded. The archive already contains some materials from 60 local and national organizations. We are eager to work with individuals who have preserved any records and memories of these groups. For the online archive, we are seeking:

- **Documents:** Newsletters, statements of purpose, leaflets, educational pamphlets, press releases, articles, event programs, meeting minutes, and testimony

- **Other objects:** Photographs, artworks, posters, buttons, T-shirts, audio, and video

- **Written or recorded remembrances:** Reflections of activists about their work and the movement

The African Activist Archive Project is creating digital files to be accessed on the Web and for preservation. We also will accept digital files from people who wish to make materials available for the website but do not wish to donate or lend original materials.

Locating and preserving historical material – The project will help individuals with historical material deposit their collection in a library or other public repository so it will be preserved and be available to researchers. The Michigan State University Libraries has created an African Activist Archive in its Special Collections and welcomes donations of activist multimedia materials. Also, the project website lists collections in public libraries or archives.

Please contact Richard Knight, Project Director, if you would like to contribute materials to the online African Activist Archive or would like assistance in placing your materials in a public repository.

Contact information: rknights1@juno.com - (212) 663-5989

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