

# POSAF News Letter

## POSAF GROWING

Portlanders Organized For Southern African Freedom (POSAF) was begun in September of 1983 as a community group dedicated to supporting all peoples in Southern Africa who are struggling to end the system of apartheid. The primary focus of POSAF is to expose and challenge U.S. cultural and economic ties with South Africa. The group is presently involved in a local campaign in support of the United Nations International Cultural and Sports Boycott Against Apartheid. To date thirty individual and organizational endorsements have been received for the local resolution, including

several city and county commissioners and state legislators. The O'Jays and Gil Scott-Heron have recently signed the resolution while in Portland for performances. John McEnroe, at a press conference, also indicated interest in signing.

Participation in POSAF is from the Portland Black United Front, the American Friends Service Committee Southern Africa Program and other individuals committed to supporting the struggle within South Africa for self-determination of peoples of color and an end to the apartheid system.

## SOUTH AFRICA WEEK

April 1 - 7 will be South Africa Week in Portland. The following activities have been planned in conjunction with National Anti-Apartheid Actions which will take place around the country beginning March 21st (anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre) through April 4th (anniversary of Martin Luther King's death and National Armband Day Against Apartheid/U.S. Racism). The weeks of action are an important means of putting U.S. policy in Southern Africa on the political agenda for 1984 as well as pushing forward the process of coalition building across the country.

Sunday, April 1st will be "South Africa Sunday." Films and talks highlighting the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa will take place in a number of Portland churches.

Monday, April 2nd will be "South Africa Out of Oregon" day. This day will include educational materials and events on the Krugerrand, the honorary South African consul of Portland and divestment.

Tuesday - Thursday, April 3rd - 5th will focus on the visit of Reverend Allan Boesak of Capetown, South Africa who is president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and of the Black Reformed Christians of South Africa. Dr. Boesak is also involved as an activist in the newly formed United Democratic Front. He will be speaking in Portland as the Collins Lecturer. On Wednesday and Thursday there will be workshops sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon: "The Role of the U.S. in South Africa;" "Prospects for the Future;" "Role of the Church in South Africa;" showing of the film "South Africa Belongs To Us."

Friday, April 6th will be a benefit for POSAF featuring a representative of the African National Congress who will speak at a location in the Black community. This day is also nationally recognized as Solomon Mahlangu Day. This is the 5th anniversary of the execution of Solomon Mahlangu, 21, a member of the African National Congress and the first freedom fighter to be hanged by the apartheid regime.

Saturday, April 7th will be the annual "International March Against Racist Violence." The March will begin at 12 noon at Alberta Park. That evening African Cultural Night will be celebrated at Portland State and will include a dinner and presentation by a representative of the African National Congress.

If you are interested in helping organize or participate in any of the activities during these days -- show a film in a church, leaflet on Monday, participate in a workshop -- call Avel Mayfield at 230-9427.

## FACTS ON SOUTH AFRICA

\*South Africa is the only country in the world where racial separation and discrimination is written into the constitution and the laws.

\*The white minority in South Africa benefits from the oppression of the black majority through a social and economic system known as apartheid. In this system, 87% of the land is reserved for the whites (16% of the population), while 13% is parcelled out to the Black majority (72% of the population.)

\*Over two million Blacks have been forced to resettle in the bantustans, which are barren and fragmented areas, also called "homelands" by the South African government.

\*Average income for 1982 was 4 1/2 times higher for whites than for blacks.

\*In mining and manufacturing wages were over 4 times higher for whites than for blacks.

\*Black families are systematically broken up by apartheid's migratory labor practices.

\*70 Africans were killed and 186 wounded by South African forces at Sharpeville on March 21, 1960 for nonviolent protest.

\*According to United Nations figures, over 1,000 students were killed in the township of Soweto in 1976 for demonstrating against the educational system.

\*In 1982 eighty-five people -- lawyers, trade unionists, clergy, journalists, students and community activists -- were made persona non grata through bannings.

\*Indefinite detention without charge or trial is a reality for anyone who speaks out or organizes against the system of apartheid.

\*Steve Biko and Dr. Neil Aggett are recent examples of death in detention due to torture or lack of safeguards during interrogation by the security police.

## ANTI-APARTHEID TOUR OF IOWA

Avel Mayfield, co-director of the Southern Africa Program of the American Friends Service Committee, was recently one of 18 national and international people who participated in a ten day whistle stop tour of Iowa. Raising the issue of U.S. government policy toward South Africa in preparation for the Iowa caucuses, the group, divided into five teams, visited over fifty towns and cities, speaking at churches, schools, television, radio and press interviews. The teams provided information on South Africa and the Iowa divestment bill while at the same time getting a resolution endorsed by thousands:

"We call on the next administration of the United States to: end all economic, military and nuclear support for South Africa until South Africa holds elections on a one-person-one-vote basis; implement United Nations resolutions on an internationally supervised election in Namibia."

## AFRICA NETWORK FORMED

On January 15, 1984, a meeting in Chicago formed an AFRICA NETWORK which will serve as a Resource and Information Center on Africa and especially Southern Africa.

The Network will initiate action and assist organizations working for the liberation of South/Southern Africa in the implementation of these goals.

The aims of AFRICA NETWORK include (a) Support for the people of South Africa and Namibia and their liberation struggles and (b) Relating struggles of people in Southern Africa to struggles for justice in the United States.

POSAF has accepted an invitation to join the AFRICA NETWORK.

For further information, please call: Africa Network (Y.B. Holly), 24-hr answering service (312) 677-7416, Dennis Brutus (Chairman), 492-5120, Jan Carew (Vice-Chairman), 492-5122.

## UNITED NATIONS AND THE CULTURAL BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICA

On 13 February 1984, numerous organizational representatives convened at the U.N., at the invitation of the U.N. Special Committee, for the purpose of focusing on the international boycott against artists and entertainers who perform in South Africa.

During the hearings the U.N. Special Committee heard testimony from such organizations as: the National Black United Front; TransAfrica; Patrice Lumumba Coalition; American Committee on Africa; American South Africa Friendship Association; Black Music Association; All African Peoples Revolutionary Party; and organizational representatives from Holland, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and France. Representatives from ANC, PAC, and SWAPO were also in attendance. Throughout the formal hearings remarks were heard from diplomats representing the Sudan, German Democratic Republic, Russia and Nigeria.

Upon conclusion of the formal U.N. Hearings, several organizations met to form a national coordinated action and clearinghouse in reference to the cultural boycott. More organizational development is to take place, but an outgrowth of such an historical meeting led to the following: (1) establishment of a toll-free number in Washington, D.C. for quick access information updating callers on issues related to the cultural boycott, (2) closer monitoring of South African newspapers for information on artists/entertainers performing in South Africa, (3) future reporting by local groups/organizations regarding their progress and victories related to the boycott (Reporting will be to members of the National Coordinating Committee that is composed of the Black Music Association, National Black United Front, Patrice Lumumba Coalition and TransAfrica.), and (4) an anticipated commitment on the part of any local group/organization involved on a national level with the cultural boycott to protest the appearances of at least three entertainers -- Chick Corea, Millie Jackson, and Stephanie Mills.

In addition, a tape for Public Service Announcements has been made of a number of artists and athletes appealing to their colleagues, asking them not to go to South Africa. Local radio personalities and/or DJ's are urged to contact Denise Nicholas-Hill (213) 466-5411 for a copy of this PSA tape targeted for airing at the end of February through 21 March 1984. Ben Priestley, POSAF member and Portland BUF representative, attended the UN Hearings and filed this report.



### ALLAN BOESAK ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UDF

To highlight the Rev. Allan Boesak's visit to Portland in April, we have excerpted portions of an interview held by Africa News in August 1983.

AN: You have said that the UDF (United Democratic Front) is the most significant development in South African politics in a quarter-century.

Boesak: I think its impact on South African politics in general and on black politics in particular will be felt in the very near future. The way people have responded has left me in no doubt that it was not so much I who did anything but simply an idea whose time had come. .... Now the front groups number more than 400 organizations - civic associations, student bodies, youth groups,

church youth groups, and so on. At this point it is estimated that the UDF represents close to one and a half million people.

AN: What are the aims of the UDF?

Boesak: They are basically threefold. The two most immediate aims are to create as far as possible a unity in the black community and a unity among all organizations committed to the struggle for justice, freedom, liberation and democracy in South Africa. That means black unity, of course, but we are also talking about white organizations who are willing to join us in this struggle.

The second aim is to use this broad coalition of groups to fight against the new constitutional proposals. And even if the government pushes through with these proposals, we aim to see that they remain without credibility because they will not have the support of the vast majority of South Africa's people.

The third aim, beyond the immediate struggle against the constitutional proposals, is to continue the struggle for a South Africa which will be undivided; to work for a country in which we will have a process of democracy from which no single South African will be excluded.

AN: What is your association with the UDF?

Boesak: Apart from the fact that I anticipated the idea, my association at this point is one of being a patron. They have done me the honor to put me on the list of patrons along with such people as Nelson Mandela, Helen Josephs and Beyers Naude. I assume that part of my responsibility will be to explain to people what the UDF means. I will speak for the movement whenever they want me to.

I have, however, made a decision not to make myself available for a position in the UDF. I honestly believe that I can serve South Africa's people better if I remain in the church, with my main responsibilities within the church.

## ACTION ALERTS

Johnny Mathis is scheduled to perform in Portland in June. Since he is on the United Nations list of entertainers to boycott, we urge you not to buy tickets, and to tell others about the boycott.

Reverend Boesak will speak at the Commissioner's Forum on Thursday, April 5th. Persons wishing more information should contact Anna Street in Commissioner Jordan's office at 248-4682. The Commissioners Forum is an informal luncheon, usually held monthly and provides an opportunity for citizens to exchange information and engage in dialogue on subjects of mutual interest. This speaking engagement was coordinated by POSAF with assistance from Ecumenical Ministries, Albina Ministerial Alliance and Commissioner Jordan's office. The Commissioner has been in the forefront of support against Krugerrand sales, for divestment and the local resolution in support of the cultural boycott of South Africa.



For more information on Southern Africa issues and activities, contact:

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