



American Friends Service Committee

734 Hope Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906 • (401) 751-4488

CAROL BRAGG
Field Secretary

To: Rhode Island AFSC supporters

From: Carol Bragg

Date: May 31, 1988

Subject: Interfaith service, Southern Africa Building Blocks, South Africa speakers, letters and resolutions on sanctions, calendar items

Toward a New South Africa: An Interfaith Service

You are invited to join Rhode Island's religious community for an interfaith service, "TOWARD A NEW SOUTH AFRICA," **Sunday evening, June 12, 1988**, at the Episcopal **Cathedral of St. John**, 271 North Main St., Providence, beginning at **7:00 p.m.**

This service will bring together people of Rhode Island's different religious traditions to express their common concern about the evils of apartheid and their anguish over the tremendous human suffering it has caused. The service will also be an opportunity for people of faith to commit themselves to take action on behalf of the victims of apartheid.

The liturgy will include prayers, readings, music, and, we hope, a special message from Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Following the service, there will be a reception in Synod Hall.

Sponsors of the service, to date, include: *American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island; American Friends Service Committee; The Baha'is of Providence; Church in Society Committee of the Rhode Island Conference, United Church of Christ; Community Affairs Vicariate, Diocese of Providence; Community Relations Council Executives, Jewish Federation of Rhode Island; Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends; Rhode Island Divest; Rhode Island United Methodist Association; and Sisters of Mercy Peace and Justice Office.*

ACTION:

- Come to the interfaith service on June 12; bring your family or a friend.
- Make sure the service is announced in the weekly bulletin at your church, synagogue, or mosque.
- Distribute fliers about the service; call 751-4488 or 421-7833 for copies.
- Help the night of the service. We need volunteers beginning at 6:30 PM to usher, help with logistics, and set up Synod Hall for the reception. We need help with clean-up after the service and the reception. Call 751-4488 to volunteer.

Southern Africa Building Blocks

This is to remind you that AFSC is collecting school supplies, sewing materials, clothing, and blankets for refugees in Angola and Mozambique and South Africans who have been forced into exile. This material aid drive will continue through June 16, the 12th anniversary of the Soweto uprising.

Materials needed include:

School supplies: Pens, pencils, crayons, plastic bags for carrying books and papers.

Sewing materials: Pins, thread, scissors, metric measuring tapes, patterns, needles, thimbles, buttons, cloth (light-weight, preferably cotton, colors and white).

Clothing: Sturdy cotton, clean, immediately-wearable clothing in

young adults and children's sizes: underpants, polo shirts, blue jeans, sneakers, socks, walking or work shoes, some warm sweaters, no heavy coats.

Blankets: Preferably washable.

Drop-off points and hours

Interchurch Center, 734 Hope St., Providence (corner Rochambeau)

Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

St. Michael's Rectory, 239 Oxford St., Providence (corner Prairie)

Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM

Saturday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Sunday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

John Hope Settlement House, 7 Burgess St., Providence (between Cranston and Westminster Sts.)

Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

All materials should be carefully packed in sturdy, full boxes with a packing list taped to the outside of the box. Boxes should be labelled "Southern Africa Building Blocks." Boxes should be kept light enough for one person to lift.

ACTION:

- Donate items for the Southern Africa Building Blocks campaign.
- Encourage your religious group, school, or civic organization to participate in the material aid drive. This is an on-going effort; we welcome donations beyond June 16.
- Help the AFSC with picking up donations from collection points, packing boxes, or taking boxes to Cambridge for ment.

South Africa Speakers

A group of 5 or 6 South Africa/Southern Africa activists on will be arriving in Rhode Island on Saturday, June 11, for 3-4 days of speaking engagements and media work regarding the importance of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. The delegation, as of this writing, will include Jerry Herman, national Southern Africa staffperson for AFSC; Dorothy Thomas, of the National Council of Churches; and Donald Rallis, a white South African. The other members of the group, yet to be confirmed, will likely include one or two Black South (or Southern) Africans.

We are working on scheduling the group in teams of two in Newport, Woonsocket, Westerly, and Kingston, as well as in the greater Providence area. We would like to schedule meetings with the editorial boards of the daily newspapers; newspaper, radio and television interviews; breakfast and luncheon meetings with civic groups, labor representatives, clergy, educators, and business leaders; and public forums. Yes, we realize that it is late in the spring and quite short notice, but the issue is urgent and the delegation coming to Rhode Island represents a unique combination of first-hand experience and extensive organizing experience on the issue of South Africa.

ACTION:

- Call Joyce Katzberg-Grady at the AFSC (751-4488) if you are a member of a business, labor, educational, or civic group that would like to meet with one or more members of the speakers' delegation.
- Call Joyce if you have contacts in the media, with the business, labor, or religious community, or with civic groups,

especially in parts of the state outside of Providence. If she's not in, leave a message on the answering machine.

- Offer overnight accommodations (plus one or two breakfasts) to two members of the delegation, Saturday, June 11, through Wednesday morning, June 15. Call Joyce if you can help.
- Offer transportation for one of the teams while they are here in Rhode Island. You'll learn lots and will be of great assistance to the effort. Call Joyce at 751-4488.

Letters and Resolutions Needed on Sanctions

As the U.S. government debates what to do about South Africa, the denial of basic civil liberties to the Black majority population in that country continues. In February of this year, the South African Minister of Law and Order effectively outlawed 18 organizations that have been active in the struggle against apartheid, declaring that they are "prohibited from carrying on or performing any activities or acts whatsoever."

These groups include the 800,000-member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), the Soweto Civic Association, and the United Democratic Front. These new restrictions mean that COSATU cannot advocate boycotts, the DPSC cannot advise mothers about where to find their detained children, the Soweto Civic Association cannot call a rent boycott, and the UDF cannot issue public statements. None of the organizations included in this most recent crackdown on political activity has ever been charged with engaging in violence.

On February 29, after leading 150 church leaders in a march on the Parliament in Cape Town, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rev. Allan Boesak (President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches), and Roman Catholic Cardinal Stephen Naidoo were detained by South African riot police.

Meanwhile, the Botha government pursues a policy of destabilization throughout Southern Africa; refuses to end its occupation of Namibia; and continues to arrest, detain, and even torture those who participate in any form of opposition to its apartheid regime. Since 1984, some 11,000 children have been detained by the Pretoria government.

Apartheid, an ideology of racial superiority, is an outrageous affront to the values proclaimed by the world's great religions and to the commitment to racial equality now enshrined in the laws of the United States. Despite appeals from the international community, despite limited sanctions imposed by the U.S. Congress in 1986, the South African government seems unable to end its brutal oppression of the Black majority.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Southern Africa have lost their lives as a result of the policies of the South African government--either directly, through military intervention, police actions, or torture, or indirectly, through famine and disease caused by destabilization efforts against South Africa's neighbors. UNICEF puts the figure at 900,000.

The tragedy of apartheid has gone on too long. It is time for the U.S. to take decisive action against apartheid, to sever its economic ties with country whose political, economic, and social institutions are predicated on a belief in the racial superiority of whites over Blacks. For American citizens and U.S. corporations to profit from a system which so clearly condones and encourages racism and routinely violates human rights should be regarded as morally repugnant.

- ACTION:**
- Write a letter to the editor of the **Providence Journal-Bulletin** or to your local daily or weekly newspaper.
 - **Ask your union, school, civic organization, or the religious group you are affiliated with to write a statement or adopt**

a resolution calling for strong U.S. sanctions against South Africa. Additional materials about sanctions are available from AFSC.

- **Write or call Senator Pell and Senator Chafee.** Massachusetts residents should write or call Senator Kerry. Senator Pell has stated that he is "reserving judgment on comprehensive sanctions." We hope that he will be as committed to strong U.S. action against apartheid as he was to ratification of the INF treaty. Senator Pell's address is: 335 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; his local phone is 528-5456. Senator Chafee's address is: 567 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; his phone is 528-5294.
- **Come to Rhode Island Divest's press conference Thursday, June 16, at 10:00 A.M., at the Urban League, 246 Prairie Ave., Providence, with a copy of the statement or resolution your organization adopted.** RSVP to AFSC at 751-4488 or to RI Divest at 351-5000.

Calendar

Sunday, June 12 -- Interfaith service "TOWARD A NEW SOUTH AFRICA,"
7:00 P.M., Cathedral of St. John, 271 North Main St.,
Providence. Reception following the service.

Thursday, June 16 -- 12th anniversary of the Soweto uprising.
10:00 A.M., **RI Divest press conference**, Urban League,
246 Prairie Ave., Providence. RSVP 351-5000 or
751-4488.

7:00 P.M., special showing of "**Cry Freedom**" or other
films about South Africa. Call 751-4488 for information.

Saturday, June 18 -- RI Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. Assemble at 12:00
noon at Cathedral Square, Providence, for march to
State House and rally. Call 437-1925 (Marilyn or
Laurie) or 861-5427 (Charles) for more information.

**Tuesday, June 21 -- "Alternatives to Prison: Can They Work in Rhode
Island?,"** with Mark Corrigan, Director of National
Institute for Sentencing Alternatives, 7:30 P.M., State
House, Room 313.