

ACTION MEMO

TO : Members of the Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa

FROM: Carole Collins, CLSA Coordinator

RE : Situation in South Africa - Massive bannings of black and other protest groups

DATE: October 20, 1977

Information on bannings: On October 19, the South African government cracked down on a broad range of black and liberal white protest groups. According to the New York Times article of October 20, over 50 individuals were arrested, many in pre-dawn raids by South African security police. An unknown number of people were served with banning orders barring all political activity or public speaking. At least 6 members of the Soweto-based Committee of Ten were arrested, as well as Percy Qoboza, editor of The World, the 2nd largest SA daily (130,000 circulation) and the principle black newspaper. Qoboza was arrested 10 minutes before a scheduled news conference where he was going to respond publicly to the closing of the newspaper. Donald Woods, a white editor and friend of Stephen Biko, was arrested at the airport as he was about to depart for a U.S. speaking tour at the invitation (according to diplomats) of the U.S. Ambassador to SA, William Bowdler. During this tour, Woods was expected to meet with Sec. of State Vance and Andy Young.

Banned organizations include not only political affiliates of the Black Consciousness movement but also black self-help projects like Black Community Programs, financed by business groups, which ran a network of medical clinics. Also banned were the South African Students Organization, South African Students Movement, the Soweto Students Representative Council, the Soweto Teachers Action Committee (which coordinated the recent high school teachers' mass resignations last month) and the Black People's Convention (an umbrella organization of other black organizations). Also banned was the Christian Institute of South Africa and its leader, Rev. Beyers Naudé (scheduled to tour the U.S. in the coming weeks). The Institute had taken a strong position opposing U.S. investments in South Africa.

Over 60 white students from the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg were arrested in a confrontation with police as they marched on a mid-town post office to dispatch a telegram of protest.

U.S. government response : Quick but not strong enough

The Carter Administration immediately issued a statement expressing that it was "deeply disturbed" at the actions of the So.African government and that these actions would have implications for future US-SA relations. However, as in the past, it has yet failed to take any substantive or concrete steps to end all US government and corporate complicity with the white minority regime in South Africa.

What we can do; demands to make on our government

In discussions with Coalition members around the country, it seems this should be the main thrust of immediate public response by individuals and organizations to the situation in South Africa.

In relation to the Carter Administration, we should demand:

- * an immediate break in diplomatic ties with the South African government; recall the U.S. Ambassador
- *
- * US government support for the imposition of U.N. sanctions against South Africa

In relation to the U.S. Congress, we should demand:

- * an immediate end to all nuclear cooperation with the South African government;
- * an immediate and effective arms embargo (and an end to So. African access to NATO information systems and other areas of cooperation);
- * An end to Export-Import Bank financing of corporate investments in So.Africa;
- * An end to all tax credits for corporations doing business or investing in So.Africa.

Coordinated demonstrations

Demonstrations will be most effective while this issue is still high re media exposure. Thus, I am suggesting, where feasible, that groups coordinate demonstrations for on or around October 29 and the following week, to protest the actions of the South African government and push the demands above.

What's happening elsewhere (very sketchy):

In New York, groups are stressing the demands for a break in diplomatic relations and the imposition of UN sanctions against South Africa. A special session of the UN will be held Tuesday, October 25, pushing for this. A meeting of black churchpeople is being held Friday, Oct. 21, to make a response. ACOA is circulating a 2 paragraph statement for endorsement by individuals and organizations.

In Washington, DC, The Washington Office on Africa is working with the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy to get a lot of signatures behind a statement of condemnation and advancing the four demands on Congress listed above.

In Philadelphia and Seattle, plans are moving ahead for demonstrations on October 29th.

Please communicate with the national office on what plans are developing in your area.

A luta continua ...A Vitoria e Certa!

Carole Collins, CLSA