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Untitled [Informational letter by CCISSA co-chairs]


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February 28, 1989

"Steel yourselves,
Intensify the struggle, you brave ones,
Our destination is close
(Our victory is certain)"

From Ananguikaza ("The Cowards Tremble")

This popular South African song, which sprang from the Soweto uprisings of 1976, is particularly appropriate as the Chicago Committee in Solidarity with Southern Africa prepares for the annual commemoration of June 16, 1976. We remember the thousands of brave children who marched peacefully to protest the racist education system. We remember the brutality of the South African police, who shot into the unarmed crowds, killing hundreds. And we will intensify our own commitment to the fight for a free South Africa.

We in Chicago will express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in South Africa by holding a Soweto Day walkathon on Saturday, June 17, in conjunction with Church World Services. The funds that we raise that day will be given in their entirety to independent legal and medical clinics in South Africa which aid people (including many children) who have been detained by the government. Proceeds will go to medical clinics for released detainees, staffed by NAMBDA, a nonracial alternative association of health care professionals. The legal and other services for those still in detention are organized by the South African Council of Churches Dependents Conference.

The Soweto Day walkathon is tentatively scheduled to start around 10 a.m. near 31st and King Drive and end on Hayes Boulevard in Jackson Park. In order for the walkathon to be a success, we need your participation, as a walker, a recruiter of other walkers, or as an active member of one of the planning committees. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 9, at 6:00 p.m., at 343 South Dearborn, room 317. Let's make this the largest Soweto Day commemoration that Chicago has ever seen!

There are several other events going on in the next few months. We invite you all to join Gracia Machel, Minister of Education for Mozambique--and widow of the late Samora Machel, President of Mozambique--at "Global Dimensions: Children and Poverty" conference on Friday, March 3 at 1:30 p.m., at Elmhurst High School, 355 West St. Charles Road, or on Sunday, March 5, at 1:30 at the Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 East Chestnut in Chicago. The conference, sponsored by Church World Services, has a \$15/day registration fee (\$10 for students).

As of this writing, over 1,000 people are still being held in South African prisons, without being charged with specific crimes, under the "State of Emergency" provisions. As the enclosed material explains, some of the detainees began hunger strikes last month. While some of the detainees have suspended their fasts as activists on the outside negotiate on their behalf, others have refused to eat. The demand is a simple one: to either be charged with a crime, so that they can be tried in the normal legal system, or release them.

To show our support for all the detainees, CCISSA is organizing a press conference and demonstration on Friday, March 10, at noon, in front of the South African consulate, on the corner of Michigan and Adams, in downtown Chicago (across the street from the Art Institute). Various anti-apartheid groups in South Africa have already designated Sunday, March 12, as an international day in solidarity with the detainees. We want to encourage everyone to observe this day, through prayers, letters to President Botha, or other activities. Although there is very little time, CCISSA may be able to provide a speaker for your church or other audience. Also, a number of films are available through Synapses (421-5513).

According to a recent memo from the Africa Fund, "After decades of bloody repression and diplomatic evasion, the apartheid regime seems finally ready to implement the UN plan for Namibian independence, Resolution 435..But according to Namibian church leaders, the national liberation movement SWAPO and local press accounts, South African violations of both the letter and spirit of Resolution 435 are threatening prospects for free elections." Bill Minter, a frequent contributor to Africa News Service and author of King Solomon's Mines Revisited, will be speaking on Sunday, April 16, at the United Church of Rogers Park, 1545 West Morse, at 6:00 p.m. He'll discuss the prospects for Angola and Namibia after last fall's accords. Minter will address the affects of South Africa on Mozambique the next night, Monday, April 17, at Northwestern University's Harris Hall, in Evanston, at 8:00 p.m.

Please plan to attend some of the upcoming events. Your involvement, as a member, a donor or as a volunteer, is critical if we want to provide visible support to our brothers and sisters in southern Africa. As one of the NAMDA leaders reminded us last year, "all one requires for evil to succeed is for good men to keep quiet and do nothing."

Amandla Ngawethu,

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312/427- [REDACTED]