Namibian Liberation Movement Representative to Speak in Boston

Mr. Eric Biwa, Deputy Secretary of Economic Affairs of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), will be the featured speaker at a rally on Thursday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. SWAPO, the liberation movement of Namibia, has been opposing South African rule since 1960.

Mr. Biwa will share the platform with the Rev. Charles Stith, pastor of the Union United Methodist Church in the South End where the rally will take place. Rev. Stith recently returned from a study tour of South Africa.

Mr. Biwa will update his Boston audience on the complex independence negotiations involving SWAPO and South Africa, in which the United States has been heavily involved. He was sent here from SWAPO headquarters in Luanda, Angola to represent Namibian interests at the Law of the Sea conference at the United Nations.

Mr. Biwa was active in the student movement in South Africa in the post-Soweto period. He then returned to his native Namibia to open the first SWAPO office in the southern part of Namibia. Since he was forced into exile, his responsibilities have included developing economic plans for post-independence Namibia, training labor leaders, and organizing economic projects for refugees. (See attached biography.)

Thursday's rally is part of the nation-wide "Two Weeks of Action in Support of Southern African Liberation Movements" coordinated by the American Committee on Africa. The local event is sponsored by the Southern Africa Conference Continuations Committee of Massachusetts.

Rally time: 7:30 p.m. Thursday April 1
location: Union United Methodist Church,
485 Columbus Ave.
Boston
Mr. Eric Biwa

-Deputy to Secretary of Economic Affairs, SWAPO

-Became politically active during High School. Involved in mobilizing against Bantustans, separate school systems and curricula in 1968

-Became card-carrying member of SWAPO in 1972. As struggle escalated necessary to define one's political position.

-Went to South Africa to study at the University of Zululand from 1974-76. This university was the first to respond to the Soweto uprisings, and on June 17, 1976 the school library was burned down and other actions taken. (Univ of Zululand is a government-run school). Mr. Biwa was active in post-Soweto mobilization.

-Left South Africa in 1976 and decided to become full-time organizer for SWAPO rather than return to the university.

-Took lead in mobilizing support for SWAPO in the south, where movement had least support. Convinced 5 main political and tribal groups in South, representing 80% of populace, to merge into SWAPO. Was founder of first SWAPO regional office in the South during early 1977 in Gibeon.

-Following major South African crackdown against SWAPO in 1977, Mr. Biwa went into exile. Worked for several years in the SWAPO Labor Department. Studied labor administration while attached to Labor Ministries in Zambia and Kenya. Labor Department activities also involved training of labor leaders in SWAPO settlements.

-Last year was appointed as Deputy to Secretary of Economic Affairs. General task involves collecting information on Namibian economy to be used for pre- and post-Independence development plans. Also involved in specific agricultural project in Angola, designed to produce food for refugees, and in training of technical cadres.

-Currently in the United States to participate in United Nations conference on "The Law of the Sea".