

An organization in transition:

The Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism

CD-CAAR becomes CD-CSAAR

The Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism

Box 3002 Pine Hills Station

Albany, New York 12203

A project of the Social Justice Center

March, 1995



A Message from Vera Michelson... Remembering CD-CAAR

As we mark the one year anniversary of the April, 1994 elections in South Africa and the transition of the country from a racist apartheid regime to a non-racial democracy under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism (CD-CAAR) is undergoing a reorganization. The following CD-CAAR steering committee members - Vera Michelson, Mark Mishler, Mabel Leon, Debbie Maxwell, Eileen Kawola and Roli Varma - will be leaving. The new effort will be named the Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism (CD-CSAAR pronounced CD-CZAR). Members of the new steering committee are Josephine Burke Baptiste, Gail Byrnes, Tauheedah Madyun, Merton Simpson (Chairperson), Oswald Sykes, and James Wright.

But before we end this chapter of CD-CAAR, I felt it important that we pay tribute to the many people who played significant roles in the life of the organization and the anti-apartheid struggle. Some of these people are remembered for their continuous work in the organization and some are remembered for their collaboration on special projects. Of course, this chronology only touches on the highlights of the past 14 years. This is not an attempt to capture it all. I know that we are compiling this list at great risk as it is guaranteed that we will omit people and organizations in this impossible task. Comprehensive listings were not always available for all the projects and work we did over the years. For any omissions, I am deeply apologetic.

I hope that this journey through the past 14 years will bring back fond memories for all who have participated in this movement. We begin at the beginning.

Apartheid came to Albany, New York in 1981 when the South African rugby team, the Springboks, were scheduled to play a game at Blecker Stadium on September 22nd of that year. That summer of 1981 and the September Springbok rugby game is forever etched in the mind of most Albanians.

Never has there been such an exciting time - long meetings, discussions about march routes, civil disobedience, organizing buses, reports on the progress of campus organizing, the unions, Vets, the churches, trying to get the city council to stop the game, pressure on Mayor Corning to stop the game, legal briefs to get Governor Carey to stop the game and leafleting every single event in the Capital District. Countless hours were spent organizing forum after forum until apartheid and rugby became the primary media issues of the summer. Never had there been an issue which bound so many diverse people together so rapidly and with such great conviction. Out of that organizing effort, the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism was born.

Some names that come to mind as instrumental in pulling off the effort are: NAACP leadership E.J. Josey (moved to Pittsburgh), Mike Dollard, (E.J. Josey and Mike Dollard later continued in leadership positions on the steering committee during the early years of CD-CAAR) Clara Satterfield, Frank Pogue, and Harry Hamilton. Others like Nebraska Brace, Brian O'Shaughnessy, Japhet Zwana, Maggie Kirwin, Greg Bell, Liz Pearson, Tony Smith, Frank Fitzgerald, Pearl and Jim Campbell (deceased), Herb Crossman, Bob Rogers, Lillie McLaughlin, Boji Jordan, Irv Landau, Iris Berger, Liz Rifkin, Lester Wooten, Pat Beetle, Mike Kozak, Rev. Louis Brewer, Karen Brammer, Delores Kirkwood Brown, David Easter, Jim McCoy, Barry Sample, Dorothy Tristman, Howard Straker, Peter Thierung, Scottie Wexler, George King, Darby Penny, Nancy Flowers, Pat Purcell, a host of clergy and many organizers, some of whom we will mention later. Some of these activists remained involved with CD-CAAR as the years went on.

The organizing efforts culminated in an anti-apartheid rugby demonstration of 3,000 people, in spite of postponements and a pouring down rain and a changing schedule due to legal attempts to have the game cancelled.

**BLACK MAJORITY RULE
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

When (my) Vera Michelson's apartment was raided by FBI, state and city police the night before the rugby game and John Spearman, Michael Young, Aaron Estes and Michelson were arrested, attorneys Anita Thayer (long time steering committee member), Lanny Walter and Lew Oliver worked on the defense. The charges against Michelson and Estes were thrown out. Michelson and Estes pursued a civil suit against the city which was settled out of court for \$47,000. Prominent and controversial attorney William Kunstler was brought into the case and Spearman and Young were acquitted after a two week long trial.

Recently the Albany Times Union ran a front page story identifying Michael Fitzpatrick as the probable FBI informant who lied about an arsenal of weapons which were supposedly stashed somewhere in my apartment. Fitzpatrick is currently claiming that Qubilah Shabazz hired him to assassinate Minister Louis Farrakhan. (see enclosed article)

After the Springboks went home members of CD-CAAR met to discuss the future of the organization. Was it an ad hoc group? Should it continue? Clearly the decisions was reached to carry on and the rest, as they say, is history.

In the mid-80's the anti-apartheid struggle picked up steam internationally. The Free South Africa Movement, the cultural boycott of entertainers who performed in South Africa, the South African products boycott and the divestment campaign all took hold in the Capital District as CD-CAAR grew to national and international prominence.

In 1985, CD-CAAR joined the Free South Africa Movement by participating in nationally coordinated actions against U.S. Federal buildings. On Jan. 17, 1985, an anti-apartheid protest at the Leo O'Brien Federal Building resulted in the arrest of 10 civic and religious leaders as they disobeyed orders to leave the lobby. Among those arrested with much fanfare were Rev. Robert Dixon, Isaac Bracey, Rev. Alvin Porteous, Nancy Burton, Lawrence Wittner, John Funicello, Rev. Allan Delameter and Rev. Brian O'Shaughnessy.

On the cultural front CD-CAAR picketed almost every entertainer who came through here who had ever performed in South Africa in violation of the cultural boycott; Paul Anka, the Beach Boys, Mighty Clouds of Joy, Della Reese, Johnny Mathis. But the biggest "hits" for CD-CAAR, by far, were the Temptations, Ray Charles and Chick Corea. Charles and Corea were picketed several times by CD-CAAR. In some very important victories for the movement against apartheid and for CD-CAAR, the Temps and Chick caved in under the pressure and wrote statements vowing not to return to South Africa until apartheid had been defeated. (Because of the historical nature of these documents, we are attaching them to this newsletter)

It is impossible to discuss our participation in the cultural boycott without mentioning those with whom we actively collaborated on the national level: Ron Wilkins (Unity in Action - Los Angeles), Elombe Brath (Patrice Lumumba Coalition, New York City), Thandi Geobshi (ANC, Atlanta), Norman Otis Richmond (Toronto), Shikhulu Shange, and Georgia Urban (retired area jazz columnist), all of whom spent many hours on the phone with us mapping out strategy and assisting in discussions with managers and promoters.

Remember the many hours spent walking picket lines at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Heritage Park, the Palace Theater, and the Troy Music Hall? Local names immediately associated with the cultural boycott (as well as many other campaigns) are Donna Perry, Odell Winfield (steering committee), Barbara Henderer, David Mack, Pat Trowers (steering committee), George Mallory, Carol Hausen, Larry Mauldin, Mary Scott, Reszin Adams, Cleo Carter, Malcom Carter, Jim Wright (steering committee), Pat Malone, Martin Manley, Jabari Penda, Masani Penda, Shirley Lumpkin, Tony Scott, Ike Black, Naomi Jaffee (a tireless worker wherever she was needed), Mark



Mishler (steering committee), Mabel Leon (steering committee), Sue Ray, Thandi and Japhet Zwana (steering committee), Martin Manley, Reszin Adams, Fred Kakumba (steering committee), John Funicello, Fred Pfeiffer. (**Bulletin: CD-CAAR members Pat Trowers and Craig Johnson met at the Ray Charles/Saratoga Jazz Fest Boycott. They eventually tied the knot and now live in Indiana.**)

Names more closely associated with the OTB tennis boycott (as well as many other campaigns) were Doug Williams, Les Davis, Roli Varma (treasurer and steering committee), Bill Ritchie (steering committee), Mona and Mike Reddick (steering committee), Joe Allen (Schenectady NAACP), Gary Pavlick and many cultural boycott activists previously mentioned.

The divestment campaign to get NY State pension funds out of companies that were in South Africa took off in 1985 and involved thousands of people and hundreds of organizations around the state. Because Albany is the Capital of New York, CD-CAAR hosted several statewide divestment meetings and took part in many statewide committees. We remember Jim Bell (deceased), Mai Ngai, and Cleve Robinson from District 65, New York City and their hard work in this struggle. We salute PEF, CSEA NYPIRG, NYSUT, the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus and SASU for the roles they played...and John Funicello and for their tireless efforts to get labor involved. Also Bob Jaffee, Jane McAlevey, Rufus Collier, Jackie Ambrosia, Travis Plunkett, Linda Wistar, Paco Duarte, Everett Joseph, Doug Bullock. Joe Walker of PEF and past editor of **Muhammad Speaks** became an honorary member of the steering committee.

On June 25, 1986 CD CAAR erected a 24 hour mock Shantytown at the Capitol to symbolize the forced removal of Black South Africans from their homes and to highlight the divestment campaign.

CD CAAR grew to understand that the problems of South Africa had a direct effect on the southern region of Africa or what was commonly know as the "front line states." **Our work expanded to include Namibia, Angola and Mozambique.** CD-CAAR raised thousands of dollars for elections in Namibia and schools in Mozambique. At times our attention also became focused on U.S. foreign policy toward Haiti, Grenada, Cuba, Palestine, Zaire and Iraq as we became involved in various educational forums and anti-war efforts.



CD-CAAR was also co-convener of NESASN, the Northeast Southern Africa Solidarity Network. NESASN was a network of anti-apartheid organizations from nine surrounding states which took up many campaigns (Dollars for Democracy in Namibia) and organized many regional conferences.

The work of CD-CAAR was enhanced by a number of wonderful South African and other African students who attended colleges in the Capital District: Nathi Ncobo (teaching in Durban), Shobhna Gopal (steering committee - now living in New Jersey), Natasha Levenson, Keke Tloti,

Sipho Seepe, Motlagomang (Tlaks) Seepe, Theresa Williams (now working at Union College), Zaida Kajee, Fredual Offori Atta (back in Ghana), Yvonne Sackey (living in Maryland), Tebo Mogajane, Thuli Makahene and Yolande Chirwa (all now studying in South Africa), and Sean Lewis (who is back in Capetown after earning two Masters degrees - one from SUNYA and one from Pittsburgh - Sean is loving Cape Town by the way).

The African connections were also greatly enhanced by visits to **Southern Africa** by CD-CAAR members - Vera Michelson to an ANC conference in Arusha, Tanzania; Michelson and Eileen Kawola - educational/political trip to South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia with our friend Prexy Nesbitt; Barry Walston as CD-CAAR's representative to South Africa during the 1994 elections. Another international trip which added to our knowledge of anti-apartheid work was made by Les Davis and Michelson - **a conference on the Olympic sports boycott in Stockholm**. Attendance at **United Nations NGO meetings** by several CD-CAAR members and the opportunity to present testimony at the U.S. Special Committee Against Apartheid were other opportunities we took to broaden our participation at the international level. We also were fortunate to count among our members several who traveled to Cuba as part of the Venceremos Brigade: on one trip - Eleanor Thompson, Vicki Smith, Crystal Camacho, Pat Trowers, Celia Bess Cotton, Barbara Allen, Larry Mauldin, Vera Michelson. Other trips included Mabel Leon and Mark Morris. The return of these Brigadistas always meant that we would receive educational briefings.

Throughout the years CD-CAAR worked closely with several **national organizations**. We have depended on their expertise and resources to sustain our efforts. Some of these are the American Committee on Africa, The Washington Office on Africa, The Mozambique Solidarity Network, Patrice Lumumba Coalition, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Oppression and, of course, the ANC of South Africa and SWAPO of Namibia. We especially acknowledge the ACOA for its timely responses to our requests for information, ideas for campaigns, and the reams of instant press releases from South Africa.

On the local scene CD-CAAR was active on several fronts with a **concentration on police abuse**. When Jesse Davis was murdered in 1984, CD-CAAR joined with many other organizations in organizing protests, community meetings, and eventually pushing for a civilian police review board. Odell Winfield took an early role in police abuse work. The Community Police Relations Board, which was formed after many years of work, became the center of controversy for many more years when it became obvious that its scope and powers were limited. CD-CAAR's outspoken representatives, Mark Mishler and then Vickie Smith (steering committee) spent many hours trying to get the Board to be more responsive to the community it served. Merton Simpson (co-chair, steering committee) became a major voice against the way the Albany Police Department does business.

CD-CAAR also participated in **Anti Klan demonstrations** in Vermont and Albany (in coalition with the NAACP of Albany) and many other

peace and justice marches in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York City. We sponsored many well attended forums on racism, violence and the struggle for justice and co-sponsored and participated in numerous community events.

Let us not forget some of the many friends of CD- CAAR who came to speak in Metroland: Damu Smith, Jennifer Davis, Rob Jones, Vicki Erenstein, Elombe Brathe, Samori Marksman, Robert Chrisman, Imani Countess, Prexy Nesbitt, Paula Rogovin, Manning Marable, Ambassador to the U.S. Hippolito Patricio from Mozambique, ANC members Johnny Makathini (deceased), David Ndaba, Neo Mnumzana, Tebogo Mafole, Victor Mashabela, Susan Mnumzana, Solly Simelane, Curtis Nkondo, Jeannette Mthobi, Ben Magubane, Lyndall Mafole, Mujaki Thulo, the ANC cultural group - SECHABA, South African lawyer Johnny DeLang, UDF member Murphy Marobe, SWAPO members Helmut Angula, Monica Nashandi, Hingenerwa Asheeke, and Loide Shinavene.

CD-CAAR also worked closely over the years with the Black and Hispanic Legislative Caucus of New York State - in particular, David Patterson, Arthur Eve, and Roger Green.

In many of our efforts we collaborated with other organizations in the Capital District. Blacks in Government, the Urban League, YWCA, Capital District Labor and Religious Coalition, Interdenominational Minister's Conference, Solidarity Committee of the Capital District, Socialist Workers Party, Malcolm X Study Network, Democratic Socialists of America, NAACP Schenectady, National Lawyer's Guild, ASUBA, Capital District Builders of Educational Achievement, Capital Area Council of Churches, Arbor Hill Community Center, CISPES, The Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Delta Sigma Theta, Central America Solidarity Alliance, A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Critical Black Issues Conference, Siena College and the Neihbur Institue at Siena, College of St. Rose, Union College, Junior College of Albany, SUNY at Albany, and Women of Color: Kitchen Table Press.

Special mention goes to three organizations - the NAACP of Albany and the Social Justice Center of Albany amd the Center for Law and Justice, Inc.

The most vivid recollection of CD-CAAR/ Albany NAACP collaboration comes in the 90's when we remember the Anti Klan rally at the Capitol, drawing over 700 people and the demonstration to respond to the verdicts in the Rodney King trial when over 1,000 people rallied to express their opposition. We worked closely with NAACP President Anne Pope to pull people together in record speed. Anne's energy and positive outlook were fundamental to the success of these events. We are proud to have collaborated with Anne on so many activities. Under Anne's leadership the Albany NAACP continues to provide the community with a strong voice against injustice.

CD-CAAR has been a member of the Social Justice Center of Albany since our inception. The SJC is the umbrella organization for groups in the Capital District which work on issues of peace and justice. It is with their support that we



were able to do newsletter mailings and mobilize many in the community to take part in CD-CAAR events.

Our collaboration with **The Center for Law and Justice, Inc.** will also be remembered by the many activities we co-sponsored to raise awareness of police abuse in the community. We are sure, for example, that no one could forget that spontaneous and noisy demonstration at Mayor Whalen's house. Alice Green's work was key in insuring that Jesse Davis was not forgotten. With the founding of the Center for Law and Justice, Alice has given the voices of justice a vehicle to help focus community efforts around the criminal justice system. In spite of adversity she just "keeps on keepin' on." We cannot think of CD CAAR without thinking of the Center for Law and Justice.

Pastors who graciously hosted CD CAAR functions and were active over the years: Rev. Robert Dixon (steering committee), Rev. William Roland, Rev. Leonard Comithier, Rev. Alvin Porteous, Rev. Bob Lamar, Rev. Louis Brewer, Rev. Carl Taylor, Father Kofi Amisah, Elder H. Jeffress, Rev. Allan Stanley, Rev. Ernest Drake, Rev. Robert Graves, Elder John Johnson, Rev. Albert Newman, Rev. Joyce Giles (deceased), Rev. C.A. Everett, and Rev. Carl Ware. And in mentioning the religious community we also remember our dear friend, Art Mitchell, who passed away this year.

Other activists who have been involved from the mid-80's and the early 90's include: Anne Frazier, David Aube, Dick Melita, Joyce Rose (coordinated newsletter bundling and mailing for several years), Verena Diemer, Gladys and Jack Karlin, Ed Bloch, Frank Lownes, Leslie Wallace (deceased), Chris Townsend, Barbara Winters (former director of the Urban League and steering committee member), Linda Lisa and Larry Norville, Melanie Pores, Alice Brody, Masani Penda, Ann Mattei, Larry Shajuyigbe, Yvette Scarlett (steering committee), Vivian and James Mosley, Celia Bess Cotten (steering committee), Barbara Allen, Brian Brown, Carl Swidorski, Eleanor Thompson, Silvestre Wallace (living in New York, became a father), Tony Young (living in New York), Vijay MacWann, Janice Mwapagwa, Doris Robinson (moved to Springfield), Arlena Adams (moved to New York City), Jeff Jones and Rekha Basu (Metroland writers), Ethel David (remember all those summer nights when Ethel brought the circus to Arbor Hill), Barbara Smith, Gloria DeSole, Sandy Lamm (moved to Texas), Varsha Saxena, Suzy Persutti, Rad Anderson, Lisa Garcia, Joe Graham, Jim Bouldin (steering committee), Anju Kapur, Sanjukta Gosha, Victoria Santos, Peter Balint, Elba Matos, Richard Genest, Deborah Williams Muhammad, William Suggs, Ericka Wienman, Haziine Eytina, Dennis Nelson, Lorrie Robinson, Nii Narty, Gail Byrne (steering committee), Stacey Dawes, Marc Morris and Deborah Maxwell (steering committee).

We can also remember some joyous events - our five year anniversary, a reception-jointly sponsored with the Black and Hispanic Legislative Caucus- in conjunction with Nelson Mandela's release from jail (thank you William Kennedy and Ossie Davis for a wonderful day!), and our ten year anniversary with the Last Poets and Ade and Druis Knowles. And our dear friend Azzaam Hameed who

performed at both anniversaries and the party at Jazz R Us to raise funds for the elections in South Africa and has been there every time we needed him.

And everyone knows that most people who struggle know how to party. CD-CAAR has been no exception. We remember long- into- the- night parties with Bill Pendelton, Sir Walford and others at Dorseys', Page Three, Holiday, the Mason Hall on Madison Avenue, the Blue Nile, Gibbey's and Van Ness's.

Particular mention must be made of Eileen Kawola (steering committee) who over the years, in addition to working on almost every CD-CAAR project, has documented CD-CAAR's activities in a monthly newsletter which was distributed to over 1,000 readers. Many have told us that the newsletter was well put together, informative and was the key to maintaining a loyal network of committed activists for such a long time.

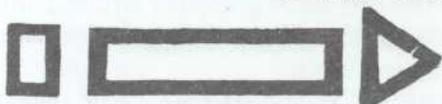
It has been a long time since all this began in the summer of 1981. Without so many people working so long and so hard it would have been impossible for CD-CAAR to grow into such a strong grassroots organization with national and international connections. The political work we have been able to accomplish has been solid and principled. And while the struggle for justice must certainly still continue, at this juncture in our organizational history it has been important for me to look back, reflect and be grateful.

Finally I want to thank my co-chair, Merton Simpson, who has worked with me over the years to pull all of this together. Merton and I were able to forge a comradely working relationship which carried us through the difficult times, which were many, and through the victories, which were sweet. I wish him every success in the difficult work ahead.



Merton Simpson

A Message from Merton Simpson about the New Direction of CD-CSAAR



Many of you have been asking "where is the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism (CD-CAAR?)" CD-CAAR has undergone a reorganization and is changing its name to the Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism (CD-CSAAR - pronounced "CD-CZAR").

There is a new South Africa. The democratic election of President Nelson Mandela is a significant milestone in South Africa's history. It now becomes important for us in our continuing support of South Africa to move from anti-apartheid activities to activities which support investment in the development of the country's struggling economy.

While Mandela's presidency is an important historical and political victory, it would be a mistake to assume that our work, as a part of the international community, is done. What is called for now is the very difficult and long-term effort to move from a liberation movement (the A.N.C.) to a government that is able to meet the basic needs of its population, as the majority of the people of South Africa continue to suffer the effects of the old apartheid regime.

Although South Africa, with its highly developed industrial base, has great potential for economic development, like so many other industrialized countries, its resources are not equitably distributed among the masses. A key part of the development of the Southern African region, under the leadership of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) rests with the rise of South Africa itself. The countries of Southern Africa are rich in strategic, jet age minerals such as vanadium, titanium, manganese, platinum group metals, chromium, as well as gold, diamonds and oil.

Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have all been involved with democratic success in terms of their electoral processes. Yet due to the legacy of colonialism, these countries are not in any position to fully exploit their economic resources and, notwithstanding the hypocritical support Western countries give rhetorically to the importance of supporting new democracies, aid to Africa is actually decreasing.

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), incoming chairman of the Sub-Committee on Foreign Operations, has suggested slashing the \$800 million package for 1994-95 year. The \$800 million for 650 million people (less than \$1.50 per person) is perhaps most disheartening in light of the shining democratic example just set by Nelson Mandela and the people of South Africa.

It must be understood that the situation in Africa is only a variation on the theme in the "New World Order." Despite the self serving claims by the United States about the western victory in the cold war, the plight of the average American under the "Contract on America" has never been worse.

In New York State we see the collapse of New York City. And the Capital District area, heavy with state employees, will soon learn the true significance of NAFTA and GATT as G.E., I.B.M. and other major corporations shift within the states and eventually out of the country entirely.

The false idea that it is the poorest members of our society who are responsible for our economic decline must be discredited. What the majority of people everywhere in the world are being subjected to is a carefully orchestrated plan to marginalize people and maximize profit. Divide and conquer is the oldest trick in the book but it still works.

So whether it is the "Contract on America," the assault on affirmative action, "Welfare Reform," the "War on Crime/Drugs," the death penalty, or anti-immigration laws, the message for the majority of the worlds population is that the economic elite no longer needs you and you are therefore expendable.

From the Bronx to Bosnia, from Haiti to Harlem, from Russia to Rwanda, or from Angola to Albany there is an unending assault on all of us.

The Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism sees our role as more vital now than ever before. In a technocratic age where information access approaches mindboggling dimensions, the ability to provide critical analysis is paramount. However, we see our role as more than just social commentators. In addition to educating, we feel it is critical that our knowledge be used to fuel an activism that is as dynamic as the problems we face.

It is not acceptable for the United States to use our tax dollars to place troops in Haiti, when there is a horrific holocaust in Rwanda and grossly inadequate peacekeeping forces and material aid. It is unconscionable to bail out the saving and loan companies but take children off welfare. We must focus our activism through direct lobbying efforts in conjunction with other organizations. Our history has shown us that whether it was democracy in South Africa or a \$500,000 settlement for the wrongful death of Jessie Davis, **people united through active and determined coalition efforts can achieve significant victories.**

We look forward to receiving the same level of support you have provided us in the past and we are confident that the even greater support to deal with the problems ahead will be forthcoming. We thank you for your support and look forward to working with you again.

A luta continua

Merton Simpson

**Merton Simpson
Chairperson CD-CSAAR**

The Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Apartheid

Steering Committee Members

Josephine Burke Baptiste - President of the Capital District Rwanda Relief Fund and an expert on the culture and traditions of Central Africa and various Francophone countries.

Gail Byrnes - Member of the steering committee of CD-CAAR, a key liason member and activist with the Center for Law and Justice, and a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee of Troy Area United Ministries.

Tauheedah Madyun - Long term political activist, a member of Masses United, the December 12 Coalition, and Roots Revisited.

Merton Simpson - Co-chair of CD-CAAR, Regional Council member of Blacks in Government and a member of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition.

Oswald Sykes - Northeast Regional Representative of the National Association of Black SCUBA Divers, Chair of the Shipwreck Committee (Current Project - Henrietta Marie, a slave ship), President of the Sea Drifters Albany, and former member of the United Nations Correspondents Association.

James Wright - Former President of the Albany Upstate Chapter of Blacks in Government and an expert in communications and mass media.

Note:

Our address will remain the same:

CD-CSAAR

Box 3002 Pine Hills Station

Albany, New York 12203

We also will be a member of the Social Justice Center of Albany

FROM THE SPRINGBOKS TO SHABAZZ

FBI snitch tells tall tales, critics say



INFORMANT Michael Fitzpatrick in this 1978 year-book photo from the U.N. International School.

■ 14 years ago, an informant lied about anti-apartheid forces in Albany; some say the same man is framing Malcolm X's daughter

BY JOHN CAHER
Staff writer

ALBANY — On a warm summer night 14 years ago, a group of activists met at a Central Avenue apartment to plot the biggest demonstration in Albany history.

The issue: the Springboks, a touring South African rugby team that had attracted the ire of anti-apartheid forces, black power groups, Communists and garden-variety activists across the country.

The crew gathered at the apartment and planned classic acts of civil disobedience — picketing, sit-ins, possibly storming the playing field. But one in the group wanted more action. He proposed sabotaging public utilities, a plan the group rejected.

Nonetheless, almost every person

at that meeting was arrested within days on various charges relating to terrorism. The arrests were based on false information supplied by an informant and eventually cost the city of Albany \$47,000 in legal damages.

The only person at the meeting to support violence, the *Times Union* has learned, was Michael Kevin Fitzpatrick, an FBI informant now at the center of one of the most explosive and divisive cases of the year — the alleged scheme by Malcolm X's daughter Qubilah Shabazz to assassinate Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Fitzpatrick's credibility is the central pillar of Shabazz's defense against charges that she plotted to murder Farrakhan. Black leaders claim that Fitzpatrick, who is white, is part of a government plot to undermine African-American unity. Defense attorneys for Shabazz describe Fitzpatrick as a liar and agent provocateur — or precisely the type of person that authorities and records indicate supplied police information in the Springboks matter.

The Springboks episode galvanized left-wing political activists in the Capital Region as no other incident before or since. It also came to represent an embarrassment of major proportions for the city, since the arrests of the activists turned out to be based on bad information from an FBI informant who had infiltrated the group. While the name of the informant has never been made public by authorities, an impressive body of evidence indicates that it was Fitzpatrick who supplied the police with faulty intelligence.

Fitzpatrick, a New York City native, was 21 when he came to Albany. He was already a veteran informant who had been in the government's

Please see **INFORMANT A-8**



Times Union
MARCHERS protest the appearance of the Springboks in Albany in September 1981.

witness-protection program. He was recruited by the FBI after being implicated in a 1970s bombing in New York City — for which he never served time, according to published reports. Fitzpatrick reportedly helped authorities prevent a Jewish Defense League bombing of the Egyptian tourist office in Manhattan.

Activists who recall the mysterious visitor to their Albany circle in 1981 say that on at least two occasions he attempted to expand the local protests from peaceful demonstrations to acts of violence and destruction. They now suspect that he was trying to entrap them into committing felonies, just as Shabazz's attorneys claim he entrapped her.

"He just wanted to escalate the whole thing," said Albany activist Vera Michelson, in whose apartment the protesters' key meeting was held. "He mentioned something about a 'power source' on Central Avenue. I told him he was making me uncomfortable."

Another protester who was at the meeting had similar memories.

"(Fitzpatrick) consistently tried to push things into another realm," the one-time Communist activist said, requesting anonymity. "Our sense of demonstration was to stop the game and run out into the field. His was to blow up power stations and use baseball bats."

Albany attorney Lewis B. Oliver, who was at an NAACP meeting the night before the match, said Fitzpatrick showed up and broached the subject of a violent response to the Springboks game. Oliver said members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People members and guests immediately scorned the idea.

Fitzpatrick's precise part in the local controversy is shielded by a federal court order. It cannot be stated unequivocally that he was the informant whose information led to the arrests of the Albany activists. However, old police and court records and interviews with law enforcement sources make this much clear:

■ At the time Fitzpatrick was in

Albany, he was indisputably an FBI informant. It was an FBI informant — only one informant, who was never publicly identified — who provided the false information that sparked the arrest of Michelson and several of her comrades.

■ Fitzpatrick was one of the people who attended the meeting at Michelson's apartment.

■ The Springboks snitch was feeding information to an FBI agent named James Rose, who, before he was transferred to Albany, worked on domestic terrorism investigations in New York City. While Rose was working in New York, Fitzpatrick was involved in a bombing there. Rose, now a state employee, refused to discuss the case.

■ The information provided by the snitch was inaccurate at best, and possibly a flat-out lie.

A confidential Albany police report obtained by the *Times Union* shows that in 1981 the FBI and city police, concerned about terrorism from both the anti-apartheid group and a Ku Klux Klan branch out of Connecticut, began collecting information on potential agitators.

Their investigation centered on a New York City man, John Spearman, leader of the Revolutionary Youth League, a militant arm of the Communist Workers Party. Fitzpatrick, a reliable source said, had joined the youth league and became friendly with Spearman, who ultimately brought him to Michelson's apartment.

Based on information from the unnamed confidential informant, police secured a search warrant for Michelson's apartment overlooking Bleecker Stadium. The informant told authorities that if they raided the apartment they would find "smoke bombs, sticks, knives, rifles, shotguns, handguns" and other contraband, according to a search warrant application.

Instead, they found some firecrackers, a little bit of marijuana and a loading device for a firearm, which the activists' attorneys argued had been planted. Michelson and others were acquitted and eventually won

\$47,000 in a civil rights lawsuit against the city.

Spearman was not in the apartment at the time of the raid, but he was picked up while driving a friend's car and charged with possessing an illegal gun that was found in the glove compartment. At trial, attorneys argued that the gun had been planted. Spearman and the man who owned the car were acquitted of all charges.

With most of the potential agitators in jail, there was little trouble during the game. However, several hours before the match there was a Springboks-related bombing in Schenectady that remains an unsolved crime.

Meanwhile, on the night of the game, authorities intercepted a vehicle making its way into Albany, a car in which Fitzpatrick was riding. Numerous weapons were confiscated — including a bayonet, tear gas, a hunting knife, clubs and a metal pipe — but all criminal charges were quietly dropped. Two high-ranking law enforcement officials said the charges were dismissed and records were purged to protect a confidential FBI informant.

In both the criminal and civil actions that stemmed from the Springboks affair, attorneys for the demonstrators fought hard to learn the identity of that informant, according to court records. Reason: The credibility, reliability and motive of the informant was in serious question because information that resulted in the search of Michelson's apartment — namely, that the residence was an arsenal — was flat-out wrong.

"Michael Fitzpatrick, if he was the confidential source, obviously was a total liar," said Oliver, who defended Spearman in the criminal matter and one of the plaintiffs in the civil rights case. "All of the information given to the Albany police and the FBI pertaining to John Spearman and Vera Michelson was a total lie, solely motivated to curry favor from law enforcement officials."

Defense attorney William M. Kunstler, who is defending Shabazz, was

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INFORMANT: Shabazz accuser lies, critics say

unaware of Fitzpatrick's Albany connection until contacted recently by the *Times Union*.

Fourteen years ago, Kunstler represented one of the defendants in the Springboks case and tried desperately, and unsuccessfully, to learn the identity of the informant.

In the Shabazz case, Kunstler contends that Fitzpatrick, who had recently been arrested on drug charges, is trying to land a big case for the FBI to save his own hide. Kunstler said he intends to pursue the Albany angle as he investigates Fitzpatrick's credibility.

Oliver, who worked with Kunstler on the Springboks case, said the recent allegations about Fitzpatrick perfectly parallel the concerns he had 14 years ago.

"It seems to me this is a pattern that is probably continuing," Oliver said. "If he lied to the Albany police and the FBI about Vera Michelson ... he is probably lying about Miss Shabazz."

STAR DIRECTION, INC.

THE FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT BY FAMED RECORDING ARTISTS, THE TEMPTATION.

At a meeting held on Friday, June 29, 1984, at the offices of our manager, Mr. Shelly Berger in Beverly Hills, CA, which we attended in the company of Mr. Berger, Mr. Ron Wilkins (Patrice Lumumba Coalition and Unity in Action/Los Angeles), Mr. Tony Hall (Coalition to Close the Racist South African Consulate and Unity in Action/Los Angeles), and Mr. Vusi Shangasi (African National Congress), the racial situation in South Africa and its relationship to the entertainment community was made crystal clear.

This meeting and subsequent agreement were preceded by communications among and between Mr. Shelly Berger, Ms. Vera Michaelson (Capitol District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism/Albany, New York), Mr. Elombe Brath (Patrice Lumumba Coalition and Unity in Action Network/New York), and Mr. Ron Wilkins.

When we performed in South Africa on May 25, 1979, we were unaware of the immense propaganda and economic value of our tour to this racist regime whose apartheid system stands condemned by the world's people and governments. We also did not realize that we were accepting an offer which had already been rejected by the Jacksons and, ironically, which coincided with African Liberation Day -- recognized internationally as a day of solidarity with oppressed African people.

After having discovered that our tour was counter-productive to the liberation struggle of the Black majority we refused South Africa's offer of one million dollars for a ten day return engagement last October.

We want it to be known that we condemn the apartheid system and vow not to return to South Africa until there is Black majority rule. In the future, where possible, we will lend our talents and resources to the campaign for the elimination of apartheid.

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA

June 29, 1984



SHELLY BERGER, MANAGER 6/29/84

July 2, 1985



CHICK COREA PROD.
2635 GRIFFITH PARK BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90039
(213) 660-5976
TELEX 67 4286 ARTISTS

To: Capital District Coalition Against
Apartheid and Racism

Atten: Vera Michelson

From: Chick Corea

This is to reaffirm and state my position in regards to the apartheid system in South Africa.

1) I'm definately against this system and would like to see it abolished.

2) I refuse to perform in any concert venue where there is any racial discrimination and therefore will not perform again in South Africa until the present apartheid system is abolished.

3) It should go on record that at the time I went to South Africa to perform, I was unaware of the existence of the United Nations' cultural boycott.

My wish is that we can bring the right pressures to bear resulting in the abolishment of the apartheid system; and see a return of human rights to the blacks in South Africa.

Chick Corea

c.c. Ron Wilkins, Unity in Action, Los Angeles
Special Committee Against Apartheid, United Nations
Elombe Brath, Unity in Action, New York City

**Capital District Coalition for
Southern Africa and Against Racism**
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