May 1991 Newsletter

Next General CD-CAAR Meeting
Thursday, May 23, 1991 at 7:00 p.m.
Albany Public Library
Washington Avenue, Albany, New York

Agenda:
Call for Civilian Control Board of the Police
Follow-up from the Capital District Community Conference on Crime and Criminal Justice
Update on Southern Africa Now
what is happening inside South Africa and the Angola peace prospects.
The Last Poets are coming...
(In September, 1991, CD-CAAR will celebrate its Ten Year Anniversary. We have already booked The Last Poets to be part of the event. At this meeting there will be a video of The Last Poets - to help us get the word out into the community about their coming in September! - also, see a sample of their work in this newsletter)
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STRUGGLE

Blessed are those who courted death,
who offered their lives to give,
who dared to rebel rather than serve,
to die so that we might live.
Blessed are those who took up arms
and dared to face our foes:
Nat Turner, Vesey, Gariel, Chinque
to mention a few names we know.
Blessed are the memories of those
who were there at the Harper's Ferry Raid,
Strong were their hearts, noble their cause,
and great was the price they paid.
Blessed are the voices of those
who stood up and cried out, "Let us be free!"
Douglas and Garvey and Soujourner Truth,
Dubois and Drew Ali.
Blessed are the giants that we have loved
and lost to the bullet's sting:
like Malcolm and Medgar and the Panthers who fell
and Martin Luther King.
And blessed are the bodies of those who were hung
from the limbs of a sycamore tree.
Who found end to their hope at the end of a rope
'cause they dared to attempt to be free.
Blessed are the spirits of those who have died
in the prisons all over this land,
who committed one sin, they stood up like men
and got iced for just being a man.
Blessed you all who will join with us now
in this struggle of life and death
so that freedom and peace will be more than a word
to the offspring that we have left.

THE LAST POETS
Will violence torpedo Pretoria talks?

By SOUTHSCAN

JOHANNESBURG—The South African peace process is not likely to be derailed, despite the hysteria that has greeted the African National Congress' threat to break off negotiations unless political violence ends.

Events in the next few weeks will determine whether things are going to get a lot worse before they get better. But there is little doubt that President F.W. de Klerk will ultimately meet the ANC's key demand for an end to violence. Dazed but otherwise unharmed, the talks will then resume.

In essence, the ANC has demanded no more than that de Klerk act decisively to end the worst political violence in South African history and, with the ANC and other parties, ensure that it cannot resume. The ANC has issued an open letter to de Klerk that lists seven actions the liberation movement believes can most rapidly achieve this goal. Included among these demands are the dismissal of Defense Minister Magnus Malan and Law and Order Minister Ariaan Vlok and of police and military officers responsible for hit squads; the disbanding and disarming of hit squads; the establishment of an independent commission to investigate activities of the security forces; and the suspension of police and military personnel identified as responsible for the March 1990 massacre at Sebokeng and the March 1991 massacre at Daveyton.

ON THE PEACE TRACK

The ANC is not likely in the short term to have its demands met for the sacking of Vlok and Malan, but observers here feel this should not divert attention from the key issue. ANC leader Nelson Mandela said in mid-April that "if the government shows a reasonable response to our reasonable demands, we on our side will not be found wanting."

And despite the tough talk from de Klerk, his ministers and Inkatha's Gatsha Buthelezi, with a European tour looming and black confidence in the efficacy of negotiations plummeting, the president will have to deliver.

And there is no doubt that de Klerk can do so. While his 80,000-member police force has not been directly responsible for the violence, it has by inaction or partisan intervention frequently fueled the conflict. De Klerk, or elements in his government— for tactical reasons the ANC speaks of "third forces"—have in addition encouraged Inkatha, providing weaponry and refusing to act against Buthelezi supporters openly carrying and using lethal weapons.

With some justification the ANC sees itself as the target of a sustained military campaign. Those of the 3,000-plus victims of violence since the ANC's legalization last year who have not been ANC members or supporters, have in the main been residents of communities demonstrating significant ANC support.

The liberation movement's efforts to establish itself organizationally have been seriously hampered by the violence. This dangerous climate renders the ANC unable to transform the massive pool of political sympathy that greeted the movement upon its legalization in February 1990 into organized, signed-up support.

In Natal the ANC has been forced to launch some new branches in secret or risk mass slaughter by Inkatha supporters, despite Buthelezi's routine public endorsement of political tolerance. In key industrial areas around Johannesburg, trade unions are seeing their membership slip slowly away as the threat of attack by Inkatha makes it impossible to hold meetings.
Racism Kills: The Tragic Death of Raymond Stallings
by Alice Green, Ph.D
Center for Law and Justice, Inc.

Troubled by Raymond Stallings's death, The Center for Law and Justice issued a press statement on April 12, 1991. That statement read in part:

Although we are not privy to any official information surrounding the unfortunate death of Mr. Raymond Stallings and do not wish to accuse or indict the police officers involved, we believe it appropriate to comment on the preliminary information we do have. We do so believing that such comment can help our community understand the impact of the criminal justice system on persons of color in our community and our country.

It is significant that Mr. Stallings was under suspicion long before he entered his car. This confirms the claim by many African Americans that they are monitored closely when in suburban white communities. Often times such observations are prompted by widely held stereotypes that Blacks are innately criminal and hence worthy of heightened suspicion. Such monitoring also grows out of the belief that Blacks do not belong in such communities.

Furthermore, it must be understood that African Americans, males in particular, are often fearful of contacts with law enforcement officials due to a collective historical experience of abuse. That fear has been exacerbated by the national viewing of the video showing the disgraceful beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles.

We are left to believe that Raymond Stallings was a victim of racial stereotyping and may have been frightened to death by those who symbolize oppression and control to many in our community and country.

Followed, chased, and tackled by police, Raymond Stallings of Albany died of a heart attack at the age of 30, leaving behind five lovely children.

Update: Since the call for an independent investigation, the FBI has taken over the investigation into William Imhoff district.
According to Bethlehem police, Mr. Stallings was spotted during the noon hour on April 11, 1991 leaving the Grand Union in Elsmere. Detective Wilson, sitting in an unmarked car, noticed that Stallings "appeared nervous and ill-at-ease"; so he followed him into Albany. Wilson ran a check on the car and discovered that the license plate and car did not match. Continuing to follow Stallings into Albany, Detective Wilson contacted Albany City and County police who joined in the "chase" with flashing red lights. Near Route 787 and Broadway, Mr. Stallings fled on foot with police from the three departments in pursuit.

Media reports over the next 24-hours were used to justify police response to Mr. Stallings. It was suggested that he was driving a stolen car, was chased by police at high speed, did not pay for the groceries he carried from the store, and had a felony criminal record.

According to his family and widow, Vivian Stallings, something quite different happened. Raymond Stallings, ex-marine and correctional officer, went to the Grand Union after cashing his paycheck to purchase groceries for his wife's birthday celebration (A clerk remembers scanning his groceries that day). He left the store and got into his sister's car which he had borrowed from her a week ago. The car had never been reported stolen. Raymond drove into Albany at speeds as low as 25 to 30 mph (This is consistent with police reports). He panicked when he realized that a large number of police were pursuing him. Mrs. Stallings declares that "I believe that my husband was frightened to death. He gave the police no cause to follow him in the first place."

Update: Since the above press release was issued, Vivian Stallings called for an FBI investigation of the death of her husband. The FBI has taken the first step in what could become a civil rights investigation. At present, the case is in the "inquiry" stage, according to William Imfeld, assistant special agent in charge of the FBI Albany district.
Two steps forward...

April's newsletter contained information about the police brutality case of James Lunday. Lunday has brought charges that two white police officers in Albany beat him and goaded him with racial slurs after he was mistaken for a drug suspect in May of 1989. His lawsuit charges that the police conspired to cover up the incident by bringing trumped up charges of disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and second-degree assault. All of the charges were dismissed in Albany City Court after the D.A.'s office took no action in six months. Terence L. Kindlon, Lunday's lawyer, demanded a special prosecutor in the case. On Thursday, April 18, Albany Country Judge Thomas W. Keegan, acting at the request of the Albany Country District Attorney, appointed Richard A. Kohn, a lawyer and former Albany City Court judge to be special prosecutor in the case. The FBI has already begun an investigation in the Lunday case.

In August, 1990, Stephen and Tina Marie Adams, an interracial couple in Gansevoort, a small community north of Albany, were subjected to racial slurs and taunts and had crosses burned on their lawn. All five men who were brought up on charges in the case have been found guilty and sentenced to time in jail. On April 12, The federal judge, Thomas J. McAvoy, sentenced the last of the defendants to 48 months in a federal penitentiary. Other defendants had received terms ranging from six months to 46 months. The judge said he wanted to send a strong message that racial injustice will not be tolerated. The case, prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Henry M. Greenberg and George A. Yanthis, marks the first time that authorities have pursued criminal sanctions in a civil rights matter. Greenberg had urged strict sentences, saying there is no place in our society for crimes of racial bias.
Some CD-CAAR Business...

Don't pass up an historic opportunity!

What historic opportunity? You still have time to be a member of CD-CAAR in this, the year of the tenth anniversary. When you look back over things you wish you had done, don’t let this be one of them. Join today, there is still time. Fill in the membership form below and put in the mail – you will receive a much sought after membership card and the satisfaction of knowing that this time you have done the right thing!

Make checks payable to:
Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism

Please send five dollars (or more!) Receipt of your dues will insure continued receipt of this newsletter and we will also send you a '91 membership card.

Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism
Box 3002 Pine Hills Station, Albany, New York 12203

Enclosed is $ ______ Yearly membership dues are $5.00. MORE IS BETTER!!

Name ____________________________________________

Street ___________________________________________

City ___________________________ State ______ Zip ______
Next General CD-CAAR Meeting:

Thursday, May 23, 1991

Save these dates:

May 31st - Charlene Mitchell will be speaking in Albany. The topic will be "How many videotapes will it take?"

June 8th - Ron Daniels will be speaking in Albany. The topic will be "All guns and no butter - the impact of war, racism and economic crisis."

Both of these events are being co-sponsored by CD-CAAR. We urge our readers to attend - both speakers are nationally recognized leaders in the struggle for a more just and more equal society.

Please read the flyers inside this newsletter for more details and then pass on or post - get the word around.

There is still time to send your membership dues
RON DANIELS
President, Institute for Community Organization
Deputy Director, Jesse Jackson '88 Campaign
1992 Independent Presidential Candidate

RECEPTION FOLLOWED BY PROGRAM:

"ALL GUNS, NO BUTTER"
War, Racism & Economic Crisis
SAT., JUNE 8, 6:30 P.M.
WILBORN TEMPLE
Jay & S. Swan Streets, Albany

Sponsored by: Emergency Committee to End US Intervention in the Middle East;
The Brothers; Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism

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FOR INFORMATION, CALL 434-4037
HOW MANY VIDEOTAPES WILL IT TAKE?

Q. Is there a solution to racist violence?
A. Civilian control of the police and enforcement of the new federal anti-genocide law.

A talk by:
Charlene Mitchell
Exec. Dir., National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Board member, Communist Party, U.S.A.

Friday, 7:30 p.m.
May 31, 1991
$4.00 (unemployed - free)

First Presbyterian Church
Willett and State Streets
Albany, New York

Sponsored by: the Capital District Friends of the People's Weekly World, P.O. Box 6811, Fort Orange Station, Albany, N.Y. 12206 and the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism (a project of the Social Justice Center of Albany) Box 2003, Pine Hills Station, Albany, N.Y. 12203