Capital District Coalition
Against Apartheid and Racism
Box 3002 - Pine Hills Station
Albany, NY 12203
A Project of the Social Justice Center

MARCH 1989

NEXT REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1989 at 7:30 p.m
URBAN LEAGUE - CORNER OF LIVINGSTON AND TEN BROECK, ALBANY, NEW YORK
AGENDA:

- Destabilizing Angola:
  South Africa's War and U.S. Policy

This is a 15 minute video and will be followed up by a discussion of the current situation in Angola, Namibia and South Africa with special emphasis on the chances for real peace in Angola. The recent invasion 40 kilometers into the Angolan province of Kuando Kubango to aid a group from the UNITA counterrevolutionary organization shows (although the racists have denied it) that even though South Africa was brought to the negotiating table in December, Pretoria can't be trusted. 40 Angolan dead and wounded from that incursion are proof that the paper accords are no guarantee to an end for South Africa's war against the countries of Southern Africa.

- REPORT FROM THE COALITION'S POLICE ABUSE AND RACIST VIOLENCE COMMITTEE (see article inside on the Coalition response to the dismissal of assault charges against Albany police officer James Turley)

- UPDATE ON COMMUNITY POLICE RELATIONS BOARD

VIVA SWAPO
FREE NAMIBIA

VIVA ANC
FREE SOUTH AFRICA

VIVA MPLA
RECOGNIZE ANGOLA
Anti-Racism Coalition Wants Probe Continued

BY CATHY WOODRUFF
Gazette Reporter

ALBANY — Representatives of the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism are calling on local authorities to continue pursuing departmental and misdemeanor charges against a police officer accused of beating a woman in the city lockup, despite the refusal of a grand jury to indict him on felony assault charges.

Turley was suspended by the department on Jan. 6 after he was arraigned in Police Court on a misdemeanor reckless assault charge. His arrest followed an investigation by the department's Internal Affairs Unit, responding to a formal complaint made by 28-year-old Peggy Ruffin of McCarren Avenue.

Turley allegedly dragged Ruffin by her hair while she was handcuffed, pushed her against a wall and knocked her to the floor of the Division II lockup. Ruffin's eye was hurt when she allegedly fell against Turley's knee during the incident.

Ruffin was among five people arrested Oct. 9 during a fracas on Second Street involving more than 15 people. The fight reportedly began after a group of whites calling out racial slurs against Tawana Brawley forced a car carrying several black people to stop.

Ruffin, who is black, was one of the passengers in the car and was charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. A grand jury investigating the case returned "no bill" against Turley one week ago. Christopher Rutnik, a special prosecutor appointed for the case by District Attorney Sol Greenberg, said that action effectively put an end to criminal charges against Turley. He said he expected to ask that the initial reckless assault charge brought against Turley in Police Court be dismissed.

The Coalition urges its members to attend these public meetings which will occur every fourth Monday of each month. See the newsletter and the local newspapers for the time and place.

Representatives of the coalition gathered outside City Hall yesterday to urge city and police officials not to let their investigation of accusations against Officer James E. Turley drop with last week's conclusion of a grand jury investigation.

"We want them to know people are watching who are concerned about the outcome," said Merton Simpson, co-chairman of the coalition. He and other members of the group also said they will push for more public disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the case.

Turley, 32, remains on suspension without pay, Sgt. Robert Wolfgang, police department spokesman, said yesterday. "As far as our departmental charges, they're still in effect," he said.

"By processing this case through a grand jury, the public and the victims and their attorneys, as well, are prevented from knowing how the evidence was actually evaluated," Simpson said. "This is but another mechanism by which race-related violence perpetrated by the police is whitewashed."

Simpson also criticized the "haste" with which Rutnik decided to seek the dismissal of the previous assault charge.

Mark Mishler, a lawyer and member of the coalition, even suggested that his group also could reach the conclusion that the charges against Turley are unfounded if the misdemeanor charge were to go to trial in Police Court. But because of the required secrecy surrounding a grand jury, he noted, the testimony of witnesses in the case is not public.

Alice Green of the New York Civil Liberties Union, who also attended the news conference, compared the case in some ways to the case of Jonnes Duvon, a 35-year-old former mental patient shot in his Arbor Hill apartment in July 1984 after allegedly twice lunging at police with a knife and serving fork.

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Simpson yesterday criticized the handling of the case through the grand jury. "The decision to impanel a grand jury at the behest of Rutnik was not warranted for the intentional and reckless assault charges, both misdemeanors, and harassment, a mere violation," Simpson said in a prepared statement.
Police ultimately were cleared of blame in the Davis shooting, but a grand jury did issue a report recommending changes in police procedure and training.

In the Turley case, Green said, "there are some of the same kinds of suspicions that were raised in Jessie Davis because the community never knows what happened." Rutnik could not be reached for comment on the case, but previously has asserted the need for a grand jury investigation in the Turley case, saying there were several "questions of fact" surrounding accounts of the incident.

Simpson also called for increased support of Albany's Police-Community Relations Board by Mayor Thomas M. Whalen III "so that patterns of police abuse and bias-related violence can be identified and incidents of bias-related violence, particularly by the police, can be stopped."

Rutnik also asserted that Whalen could throw his support behind a public relations campaign designed to encourage residents to report suspected incidents of police racism to the board.

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Turley and Krasher were found to have taunted the students with racial slurs and placed plastic handcuffs too tightly on the students' wrists. The city was ordered to pay $235,000 in damages, and Turley and Krasher were ordered to pay $1,000.

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Approximately 75 people from area organizations gathered in front of Page Hall of the downtown SUNYA campus in Albany to protest against a lecture by Rabbi Meir Kahane. Signs were carried reading "Kahanism is Racism," "Albany Opposes Kahane" and "Kahane doesn't speak for this Jew." It was a great example of the unity in the Capital District to confront and isolate avowed racists.

Meir Kahane has espoused a doctrine of violence, hate and racism. He and his followers pose a threat to the life and liberty of Palestinian Arabs, to fabric of Israeli society, and to prospects for peace and justice in the Middle East.

Many organizations protested in the demonstration - the Capital District Committee for Palestinian Rights, Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, Student Committee for Palestinian Rights, New Jewish Agenda, Albany State Black Alliance, SUNYA Peace Projects and Minority Affairs Council.
Contra: A USA financed and controlled puppet army, established for the sole purpose of overthrowing a legitimate government of the people. The term was first used to describe the band of soldiers, recruited by the CIA in an effort to overthrow the Nicaraguan government and its revolution. The term Contra means counter-revolutionary. They perform the function of keeping American businessmen rich and powerful and the people poor and embattled.

Angola: has been under constant attack by South Africa. UNITA: a band of Angolan contras led by Jonas Savimbi, financed by the US and South Africa. UNITA is portrayed as a group of Black freedom fighters. They are not. They are contras. They attack roads, railway lines, women, children, farmland. The Cubans, at the request of the Angolans, are in Angola to help the Angolan govt. stave off the combined onslaught of SA, USA and UNITA.

Namibia: has been illegally occupied by South Africa for over 20 years. Over 100,000 South African troops are enforcing apartheid in Namibia......... homelands......shanties......no Black voting rights, etc.

Mozambique: is also under attack by South Africa and RENAMO: (or Mozambique National Resistance - MNR) is the contra group in the country. Renamo is financed and run by South Africa and is responsible for the massacres of thousands of Mozambicans. At this time Renamo is not being openly funded by the US but there are moves in Congress to get this to happen.