**CALL TO THE CAPITAL DISTRICT TO FREE SOUTH AFRICA**

On this, the 56th anniversary of the birth of America's greatest proponent of freedom and justice -- Dr. Martin Luther King -- the N.A.A.C.P. and the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism call on the Capital District to join in the Movement to Free South Africa, the last bastion of state orchestrated racial hatred and oppression. We call for a Day of Community Outrage!

Twenty years ago -- on Human Rights Day 1985 -- Dr. King reminded us that civilization has come a long way, but it still has far to go, and cannot be set back by resolute, wicked men. Black people were dispersed over thousands of miles and over many continents, yet today they have found each other again. Blacks and Whites have been separated for centuries by evil men and evil myths, but they, too, have found each other. The powerful unity of Black with Black and Black with White is stronger than the most potent and entrenched racism. The whole human race will benefit, he prophesied, when it ends the abomination of apartheid which has diminished the stature of the human race for too long. This is the task to which we in the Capital District are called by the suffering in South Africa, and our response should be swift and unstinting.

The N.A.A.C.P. and the Coalition first came together four years ago to protest the appearance in the Capital District of Ambassadors of Apartheid. That protest against the Springbok rugby team made headlines around the world, and brought the name of Albany to the lips
and consciousness of the Apartheid Masters of Pretoria. That protest -- part of the world-wide sports boycott -- moved South Africa closer to freedom. Closer, but not close!!

There are forces in the world that would preserve the status quo in South Africa, would preserve Pass Laws and Bantu Education, would preserve midnight raids on Black Labor Leaders, would preserve the second class status of South Africa's Black majority. One of the strongest of these forces is Ronald Reagan and his policy of "Constructive Engagement."

"Constructive Engagement" is not a policy of opposition, is not a policy of containment; it is a policy of collaboration! Pretoria's masters bridle when people of the Capital District take to the streets, they bridle when a divestment bill is introduced into the New York State Legislature, the bridle when a bill is introduced in Congress to stop importation of Krugerrands -- they do not bridle when Ronald Reagan talks of "Constructive Engagement." They know that "Constructive Engagement" means "business as usual": it means more loads of American cattle prods sold to the South African police for "crowd control," it means more investment in South African businesses created to exploit cheap Black labor, it means approval of the so-called "homelands," it means continued support for the illegal South African occupation of Namibia, it means continued support for the on-going South African invasion of Angola.

As Dr. King demanded as early as 1962, the Coalition and the N.A.A.C.P. demand that the government take action, that the government invoke sanctions -- both economic and social -- as part of the world-wide movement to end apartheid.

Since November when the first American protests over the jailing of
Black South African labor Leaders took place in Washington, there has been a rising tide of opposition to South Africa's policy of apartheid, and the supporting American policy of "Constructive Engagement." Swelling beyond the traditional anti-apartheid and civil rights movements, it has engulfed the religious community, political leaders from right to left, the labor movement, and community organizations of all kinds. These leaders, groups and individuals have pledged themselves to support the ever increasing daily struggles and battles of South Africa's Black majority for freedom.

Here in Albany — in the spirit of Dr. King and of Nelson Mandela (imprisoned leader of the banned African National Congress) — the entire community is rising up in support of their Black brothers and sisters in South Africa. We have called this Thursday — January 17th — a Day of Community Outrage: a day for the Capital District to publicly show their outrage with the government of Ronald Reagan and its policy of "Constructive Engagement." To this end we are calling for a demonstration at the federal building on North Pearl St. for 5:30 p.m. We ask that all people of conscience join us in this demonstration.

We recognize that parades in the street are not always enough. Therefore a number of Capital District political, religious, labor and community leaders have pledged to put their very bodies on the line in order to convince the government of the seriousness of our demands. The Reagan government has ignored our petitions and our protests. We therefore feel compelled, as Ghandi and King before us, to escalate the struggle to the level of non-violent civil disobedience.

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