



Soweto copyright 1976 Peter Magubane



Untitled copyright 1970 Jim Alexander

FACING SOUTH

A Photography Exhibit

by

Peter Magubane & Jim Alexander

March 15-30, 1988

Atlanta University Center

Robert W. Woodruff Library

The Virginia Lacy Jones

Exhibition Hall

111 James P. Brawley Dr., S.W.

Free and Open to the Public

Wheelchair Accessible

Sponsored by:

SOUTHERN AFRICA PROGRAM

American Friends Service Committee

For Information call: 586-0460

Exhibit made possible through grants from the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of
the Fulton County Arts Council

The lives and struggles of Black youth are examined in the photography exhibit, FACING SOUTH, by South African photographer Peter Magubane, and Atlanta photographer Jim Alexander.

Peter Magubane's photographs feature a pictorial account of the uprising in Soweto, South Africa where on June 16, 1976 about 20,000 students staged a demonstration against the abhorred Bantu education policy. A peaceful march and demonstration became an explosive situation when a thirteen year old boy was fatally wounded by police. Peter Magubane captures the incredibly moving events of this momentous time in the lives of the children of Soweto and their families in this unforgettable series of photographs.

FACING SOUTH also features photographs of Black children in the United States as they face the challenge of being Black in America. The photographs featured in this exhibit are part of a twenty year documentary project entitled, "Spirit/Martyrs/Heroes." The democratic process is examined in the documentary photography of Alexander. Through the photographs we are given glimpses of demonstrations against police killings of youth, aggression and intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan and rallies to free political prisoners. Through the photographs which focus on the youth, the cover is taken off a democracy that does not include all its inhabitants.

Special thanks must be given to Jim Alexander for committing himself to the execution of the project and serving as consultant and curator of the exhibit, Peter and Lenore Magubane for making his series available, and Malkia M'Buzi, associate director of the Southern Africa Program who coordinated the project. Special thanks is also extended to the National Council of Churches--Africa Desk, Tandi Gcabashe, director of the Southern Africa Program of the American Friends Service Committee, Elizabeth Enloe, K. Wanzu, Lucinda Headrick, and other staff of AFSC, Donna Clayton, Veronica Njoku, Louise and Kwame Alexander, David McCord, Ed Spriggs, the Development and Public Relations Staff of Clark College, and the staff of the Atlanta University Center Inc. for making this exhibit possible.

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Peter Magubane: Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, with 32 years of experience as a photographer and journalist, including work with "Drum" magazine and the "Rand Daily Mail" (a major Johannesburg newspaper), he has lived the struggle, not only from behind the lens of a camera, but from the experiences of arrests, solitary confinement, and banning orders. Magubane's work is acclaimed internationally. He is the author of two books, Magubane's South Africa, and Black Child. His photographs have been exhibited extensively. The present exhibit of his photographs was put together for the Africa Office of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. as part of "South Africa Agenda: '86." Of the pictures in this collection, Magubane has written:

"I am writing as a Black photojournalist very concerned about the plight of the Black child in South Africa. I had hoped that things would have changed for the better...but instead they have gone from bad to worse. It grieves me that I will not be singing praises of my country, South Africa, but must write instead about the sadness of my experiences involving Black children during the 26 years of my journalistic career. I will nevertheless try to give an unbiased picture.

To review the situation in my country is a nightmarish job, for no other nation is as troubled as South Africa today. A country that has been fighting oppression for the past three hundred years can only have very complicated and unique problems.

For the history of the Blacks in South Africa, the period from June 16, 1976, until now may have been the most important span of time since the arrival of the white man. On the one hand, the South African government sees it as the culmination of the Verwoedean dream of separate development, as "independence" has been given to Black tribal territories such as the Transkei. On the other hand, this period marks the beginning of an internal struggle led mostly by children from age twelve on. In the later stages, even younger children, in primary school, became involved. South Africa, bathed in blood, torn by riots, with deaths estimated as high as 1,000--or 'officially' at 575."

Jim Alexander, born in Waldwick, New Jersey, is a photojournalist, instructor and media consultant. He is a graduate of the New York Institute of Photography. He also attended Rutgers University where he studied business organization and management, and the New School for Social Research where he completed courses in communications, psychology and advertising. Since 1986, the beginning of the so-called Human Rights Era, he has traveled thousands of miles photographing marches, rallies, conferences, meetings, festivals and concerts, compiling an extensive collection of negatives and slides of Black people's struggles and their everyday experiences. Alexander's photographs have been exhibited extensively in America and abroad. In 1979, he was selected to represent African-American photographers at the 8th Annual Cultural Festival in Fort-De-France, Martinique. In February, 1981, Alexander was commissioned to do a photo-documentation on the Black Hebrew Israelites living in Israel. In 1985, his photographs were exhibited at the Sorbonne in Paris as part of the Atlanta in France Exhibit. In 1986, he exhibited in Lunds, Kunshall in Sweden. As a freelance photojournalist, some of Alexander's outstanding assignments were with Cable America and its Georgia subsidiaries, Current Affairs Films, NAACP, Yale University, Ampersand Advertising, Connecticut Commission on the Arts, Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Johnson Publications, UPI and AP. After completing a one year contract with the Federation of Southern Cooperative's Atlanta based office of Public Relations, Alexander began working for the Neighborhood Arts Center Inc. as photographer-in residence., where his photography training program was said to be one of the best in the city. Parallel with his photography, Alexander has worked for Yale University School of Arts and Architecture and several other institutions and organizations as a lecturer, curator, instructor and media consultant. He is presently serving as photographer in-residence at Clark College in the Atlanta University Center.

As part of what he considers "A ceaseless struggle to keep America and the world aware of the contributions and struggles of African people throughout the world", Alexander stresses the need to document and portray the Black experience from a positive perspective.