SWAPO and SAMRAF to Visit Boston

From October 5th to 9th, BCLSA is sponsoring a visit to Boston by a member of the South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO—the leading liberation movement in Namibia) and a member of South African Military Refugees Aid Fund (SAMRAF—a New York based organization supporting South African war resisters). SWAPO and SAMRAF are touring the U.S., in order to update people on the situation in southern Africa as a whole and in Namibia in particular, and to raise material aid. The SWAPO representative is Pashukeni Shoombe, a member of the Central Committee of SWAPO Women’s Council. Formerly a teacher, she graduated from the United Nations Institute for Namibia, in Lusaka, Zambia, after she was forced to flee her country.

The SAMRAF representative, Mike Morgan, is a deserter from the South African Army in which he spent one year, including four months fighting in Namibia. During this time he became thoroughly disillusioned with the war, as he began to realize that he was fighting for an inhumane and racist system. As a result he deserted the army and was forced to flee South Africa. He is now working with SAMRAF in New York to support other war resisters as they leave South Africa, and to encourage further growth of the draft resisters movement in that country.

In addition to these two speakers, a film, ‘Generations of Resistance’ will be shown during their visit. This film portrays the history of the struggles against colonization and for liberation of the Black people of southern Africa.

A listing of some of the events that will be held is included in this newsletter. For more information call 522-8699.
For Your Information

Namibia

Namibia, formerly known as South West Africa, is a country the size of Texas, with a population of approximately 1½ million people, on the west coast of southern Africa. Under colonial domination since the mid-1800's—first by Germany and then by South Africa, it is now under the Trusteeship of the United Nations (UN). This means that the UN is responsible for bringing about the country’s independence as soon as possible. However, South Africa refuses to recognize this trusteeship, and forcefully maintains its illegal colonial domination there. For the past fifty years, South African and Western corporations, such as the U.S. owned Tsumeb Corporation, have been plundering the rich mineral deposits—diamonds, copper, lead, uranium—of Namibia. The coastal waters, once full of fish have been almost fished out by corporations like Del Monte. A system of contract labor is used to extract these resources. Under this system Namibians are forced to live in crowded reserves—specially designated areas made up of the most infertile land in the country. To survive they have to leave home and family to find work in the mines and fish canneries, or on the white owned farms. They earn one tenth of the wages whites earn, and one quarter of what’s necessary for basic, poverty level subsistence.

SAMRAF

South African Military Refugees Aid Fund is an organization of white South African ex-servicemen, draft resisters and North Americans working to support the liberation movements in southern Africa. For cont. on p. 4

SWAPO

Namibians have a long history of resistance to colonial domination. They fought fierce battles against the German and Afrikaaner (white South Africans of Dutch descent) invader-settlers. During one campaign the Germans massacred 60,000 members of the Herero group—80% of their total population.

South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO) was formed in the late 1950’s, out of a migrant workers’ organization. It rapidly became the largest liberation organization in Namibia, with popular backing from peasants and workers alike. In the late 1970’s, a number of other smaller organizations joined SWAPO, considerably enlarging and strengthening it. The UN recognizes SWAPO as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

While SWAPO is not banned in Namibia, its activities are severely restricted, and its leaders are often arrested. Therefore, the organization operates primarily from Angola. Its liberation strategy includes both armed struggle and the organization of workers and peasants, students and teachers into unions and associations that carry out mass protests and strikes. The People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) is the armed wing of SWAPO. PLAN operates from bases in Angola and Zambia, as well as from within Namibia. In addition to carrying out military maneuvers against the South African Army, PLAN provides essential social services, including health care and education, to the people in the areas where they have a strong base of support.
WAR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: 
ANOTHER VIETNAM?

Imagine this scenario:
There’s a massive people’s uprising in southern Africa which the South African army, for all its military might, cannot contain. The U.S. government, concerned with protecting Western interests, orders the Rapid Deployment Force to swing into action and crush the uprising. (The recently created Rapid Deployment Force can be anywhere in the world, ready to fight, within 24 hours notice). The people’s uprising is not easily crushed and it turns into a war. Young American men are called up to go and fight in southern Africa. Another Vietnam.

It is no coincidence that the draft is being re-introduced and military spending is being increased at a time when struggles around the world—especially in Central America, the Middle East and southern Africa—are intensifying. In southern Africa, the victories of the liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola, and now Zimbabwe have left the white minority regime that controls South Africa and Namibia surrounded. Like a cornered rat, it is defending itself from further advances of the liberation movements. (At the beginning of July it mounted a massive military campaign into Angola, the socialist country that borders on northern Namibia, in an attempt to destabilize the country and destroy SWAPO bases and refugee camps there.)

Big business, backed by Western governments, is equally concerned with defending its assets in southern Africa. Namibia and South Africa are rich in minerals—including diamonds, gold and uranium—and other important natural resources. Western corporations own or have major investments in companies that extract these resources. They make huge profits because the system of apartheid keeps the wages of the Black workforce extremely low. For example, Rio Tinto Zinc runs the largest uranium mine in the world in Namibia, from which some 5000 tons of uranium are exported each year. The U.S. owned Tsumeb mining corporation is the largest employer in Namibia and makes tens of millions of dollars a year in profits. These corporations will demand that the U.S. army protect their investments in the event of a significant threat to them by a rebellion of the Black people of southern Africa.

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WHY THE DRAFT?

But why the Draft? Isn’t the U.S. army already big enough to engage in a war in southern Africa? It may be big enough, but the military commanders are concerned about its racial composition. This society offers few employment and training opportunities for minority people, so many of them are forced, in desperation, to join the armed forces. But these are the very people who are most likely to have a strong identification with the liberation struggles in southern Africa (or in Central America or the Middle East). This would make it impossible to carry out a lengthy war. The reinstitution of the draft is clearly aimed at drawing more young white working class men into the army. In doing this the government is counting on the racist consciousness of many of these people who have learned to blame Black and other minority people for the problems of this society. Influenced by racist thinking, many of these people may be willing to fight for the interests of U.S. big business.

OUR INTERESTS ARE THEIRS

In fact, it is in the interests of all poor and working people to refuse to fight to defend Western corporate interests in southern Africa (or anywhere else, for that matter). Many workers in Boston have been victims of runaway shops—companies that, because of a union drive and/or rising wages, close up and move somewhere else, often to a part of the Third World where an oppressive government keeps the workers wages low. If we help to crush the struggles of people in southern Africa and elsewhere we would be forcing them to accept low wages and poor working conditions. On the other hand, if we support their struggles we will be strengthening their power to demand a better standard of living. With the option of finding greater profits in the Third World gone, companies would be forced to stay and bargain fairly with the workers here.

During the joint visit to Boston by SWAPO and SAMRAF people here will have a unique opportunity to hear about the struggle of the Namibian people for liberation from a racist system that forces them to live in below poverty level conditions. We will also hear about how white people in South Africa are beginning to realize that their interests lie in supporting this struggle, and are showing this support by becoming war resisters. The SWAPO and SAMRAF representatives will also discuss why it is in our interests to support these struggles and what we can do to help.

—Peig

SAMRAF continued

the past two years they have been organizing support in the U.S. for South African war resisters and mobilizing resistance to apartheid. They seek to educate white South Africans, showing them that their ultimate interests lie in supporting the struggle for liberation of the Black people of southern Africa. (For more information on the role of the South African army and the impact of war resistance in South Africa see the July issue of the newsletter.)
During the civil rights struggles of the 1960's, Selma, Alabama gained a reputation as the citadel of U.S. racism. Sheriff Jim Clark and his deputies in Selma were determined to keep black people 'in their place'. The police viciously (and illegally) beat and arrested demonstrators. The cops had little to fear as the courts time and again turned a blind eye to their misdeeds.

In South Africa there is not even a shred of pretense about equal rights for black people. Racism is enshrined in the law. The use of 'deadly force' against black people who challenge white supremacy and high profits is a necessary part of apartheid. During the 1976 uprising in Soweto and other South African cities, over 1,000 black demonstrators were shot and killed by the police. These demonstrators were 'armed' with placards, and sometimes with sticks and stones. Post-mortem later revealed that over one half of the people killed in Soweto had been shot in the back.

This pattern of police violence continues in South Africa. This May police gunned down two black school children—aged 11 and 15—allegedly for throwing stones at a car. This is just one example of many such killings this year.

To most people Selma and Soweto are symbolic of extreme racist oppression. Recent events have demonstrated, however, that police brutality against black people and racism in the courts are a major problem right here in Boston. On July 15th, after abandoning a stolen car, Levi Hart, a 14 year-old black boy, was killed by a bullet fired from the service revolver of Richard Bourque, a Boston policeman. Bourque claims that Hart shot himself during a struggle for the gun. An inquest into Levi Hart's death showed that his skull had been fractured before he was shot. A civilian witness testified that he saw Bourque grab Hart and 'deliver a crunching blow to the head with something in his left hand followed almost immediately by a gunshot'. A nitrate test, performed by a

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police chemist found no gunpowder traces on Hart’s hands. This contradicted Bourque’s testimony that both he and the youth were holding the gun when it went off. The judge at the inquest concluded that there was ‘ample reason’ to believe that the death of Hart was the result of an unlawful act or acts’ on the part of Bourque. Nevertheless, a grand jury convened by local District Attorney Newman Flanagan later decided not to indict Bourque for any wrongdoing. The lawyer for the Hart family called the proceeding a ‘bag job’ and ‘a cover-up as big if not bigger than the crime itself.’

The Hart case is just the latest in a series of cases to raise doubts about the treatment of black people in local courts. About 4 years ago three black men were convicted of murdering Andrew Puopolo, a Harvard football star, during a fight in the ‘combat zone’. They were tried and sentenced to life in prison. Later their attorneys challenged the jury selection process which was biased against black people. Finally in a new trial this year, two of the men were acquitted and the other convicted of manslaughter.

In yet another case, Willie Sanders, a black man accused of raping four women in Brighton two years ago is currently facing his third trial. In the first trial he was acquitted, while the charges in the second case were dropped by the state at the last minute because laboratory evidence pointed toward his innocence. Despite the fact that the prosecuting attorney in the first trial said that ‘after the first two cases the issue would be resolved one way or another’, the District Attorney’s office plans to go ahead with yet a third trial. Rather than admit that he and the police have the wrong man, the D.A. continues to try and make a scapegoat out of Mr. Sanders. Meanwhile the real rapist still walks the streets.

These cases reveal the racism that pervades our police and judicial system. One of the lessons of the civil rights movement of the 1960’s was that the courts and the police in the South could not be trusted to protect the rights of people of color. Voting rights and other civil rights for black people in the South were not gained through the courts, they were gained through organized mass political protest. Similarly, what justice has been won for black people in Boston has been won only through organized political action. The Willie Sanders Defense Committee has raised money and mobilized widespread public support for Mr. Sanders’ defense. The killing of Levi Hart prompted immediate action on the part of Boston’s black community. The Boston Black United Front organized a demonstration and maintained a vigil outside the court house during the entire inquest. In addition, the Boston People’s Organization, a citywide group, has mounted a petition campaign demanding among other things stronger measures against racist groups and the establishment of a community review board over the police.

In response to the uproar in the black community over the Hart killing, the U.S. Attorney has ordered a federal investigation to consider the possibility of civil rights violations in the case. It was during the civil rights struggles of the 1960’s that the federal courts became involved in cases where local courts had failed to protect people’s civil rights. The ‘feds’ only got involved because the demands of black people for equal rights in places like Selma threatened to tear the country apart.

The struggle for equal rights for black people continues in Boston and other cities throughout the U.S. In South Africa, the fight for liberation from racist oppression also is intensifying. BCLSA urges you to support these struggles.

—DM
SOUTH AFRICA: UP AGAINST THE WALL
(Let's Keep Pushing!)

With white minority rule defeated in Zimbabwe, South Africa is left as the chief bastion of racism in Africa. The South African government and big business are quaking in their boots from fear that the African majority in that country will follow the footsteps of their Zimbabwean brothers and sisters.

Now all the countries bordering on South Africa, except its colony Namibia, are under Black rule. Meanwhile, the peoples' victory in Zimbabwe has been a great inspiration to Black South African students and workers who oppose the system of apartheid (racial oppression). The struggle against apartheid has been moving forward on many fronts.

STUDENTS DEMAND EQUAL EDUCATION

In 1976, there were uprisings in Soweto and other South African towns. These uprisings began as protests against unequal education. The government spends ten times as much on the education of each white child as on each African. Education for Africans (as for most working-class and especially Black children in the U.S.) is designed to prepare them for the lowest level jobs.

This year, protests began again, this time among 'Colored' students (those of mixed white and African ancestry). The government has always tried to use the Colored people as a buffer between the whites and the Africans, by letting the Coloreds have just a little bit more. But when Colored students boycotted the schools, their parents supported them and the teachers struck in sympathy. The Colored people were showing that they would not be separated from their African brothers and sisters.

Meanwhile, since late last year, African workers have engaged in many militant strikes. Most of these strikes are led by unions or community organizations that are not recognized by the government. For example, a strike by 700 employees of the Ford Motor Company was settled in January after rallies by up to 10,000 community residents and sympathy strikes at nearby plants.

Since then, thousands of workers have struck in other industries. When meat packers went on strike, a consumer boycott cut meat sales by 30%. Armed police battled with 6000 textile workers who were fired for striking. In late July, 10,000 municipal workers struck in...
Johannesburg, the largest city, to defend 1500 other employees who were fired in a strike.

All these strikers have demanded higher wages, as most black workers' wages are far below the poverty line. Often they have demanded an end to the discriminatory policies of the companies they work for. Many of these are owned by American companies (like Ford, General Motors, General Tire, Colgate-Palmolive) who claim to have 'progressive' labor policies. These same companies discriminate here in the United States, placing Black workers in the hardest and worst-paid jobs. So it is only to be expected that Black South African workers, like Black Americans, should have to struggle for equality.

The Black workers joined with students in massive protests against the whole apartheid system on June 16, the anniversary of the Soweto uprising. In the Cape Town area, 80% of Black workers stayed home to mark the day. The protests went forward, although the police had arrested over 1000 leaders the week before, and killed about 50 protesters.

ADVANCES IN ARMED STRUGGLE

Although South Africa has spent tremendous amounts for the police and army (including nuclear weapons), this hasn't stopped the protests. There have also been many successful attacks on police stations and government offices, mostly by guerrilla soldiers of the African National Congress (ANC), the oldest African liberation movement.

On June 1, the ANC also set off bombs at oil refineries and coal-to-oil conversion plants, causing $7 million in damage. These installations are particularly strategic because, since the Shah was kicked out of Iran, no major oil producer will sell openly to South Africa. All of these events point out the growing unity and strength of the liberation movement in South Africa. Which side will the U.S. government support? As we have seen, U.S. corporations are heavily involved in South Africa, and they make tremendous profits off the poverty wages of African workers. The U.S. government will support the South African government that protects these investments, just as it protects big business here at home.

An example of this support is a proposed law to allow the CIA to resume secret operations in Angola. If this is passed, the United States will be helping South Africa, which has invaded neighboring Angola repeatedly to kill refugees and freedom fighters living there.

It is not in our interest to get involved in a war to protect racism and big business interests in South Africa. Working peoples' interests are not served by paying taxes to help finance the South African government and then getting drafted to fight future wars against South African or Angolan liberation fighters. Big business is taking advantage of the cheap labor produced by apartheid — taking production to South Africa and thereby weakening the ability of workers in this country to demand decent paying jobs. Similarly, U.S. banks (such as the First National Bank of Boston) are investing money in South Africa where profits are greater, while they refuse to loan money to rebuild our deteriorating cities. It's in the interest of the U.S. people to support the South African people's struggle for liberation, and to make the U.S. get out of South Africa. Only a strong movement of the U.S. people can force our government to get out.

(Thanks to For the People and A.M. for this article.)
WILLIE SANDERS’ CASE: THE FINAL ACT!? 

The second trial in the Willie Sanders’ case was scheduled to begin September 15th. Mr. Sanders, a black man, has been accused of raping a number of women in Brighton a year and a half ago. (See related article, ‘Boston is Selma’ in this newsletter.) All indications are that Mr. Sanders is innocent and yet the District Attorney, Newman Flanagan, continues to press charges—refusing to admit that the police have gotten the wrong man. (Flanagan is the same man who in 1974 prosecuted Dr. Kenneth Edelin, a black doctor, in the famous abortion test case. In 1976, Flanagan also tried to frame Ella Ellison, a black woman—whom he referred to in court as a ‘monkey’. Convictions in both these cases were later overturned.)

HOW YOU CAN HELP 

So far the Willie Sanders’ Defence Committee has raised over $35,000. This still leaves them an estimated $12-15,000 short of covering legal expenses. Contributions can be sent to the Willie Sanders’ Defence Committee, P.O. Box 175, Roxbury, MA 02119.

In addition, the presence in court of people sympathetic to the defence is crucial to assuring a fair trial. The trial will be held downtown at Suffolk Superior Court, near Government Center. It will probably last 3-4 weeks. To check on court times and the courtroom number call either 522-5128 or 445-2996.

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK IS ROASTED AGAIN 

At hearings before the State Banking Commissioner on September 4th, the First National Bank of Boston (FNBB) was once again attacked for its irresponsible investment policies. A representative of BCLSA testified about the banks involvement in financing trade in nuclear technology with South Africa. Other testimony included new data on FNBB’s activities. 60% of the bank’s $7 billion in outstanding loans have gone out-of-state. In 1979 less than 10% of the bank’s home mortgage loans were made in those Boston neighborhoods where the bank has branches. No mortgage loans were made in Allston, Brighton, Charlestown, the Fenway, Chinatown, Lower Roxbury, Mission Hill, South Boston, and South Dorchester. All these are minority and/or working class neighborhoods. We urge you to boycott the FNBB and to tell them to get our money out of South Africa and back in Boston.

DR. WALTER RODNEY IN MEMORIAM 

On June 13, 1980, a brilliant Caribbean and African Studies scholar was assassinated. Walter Rodney, author of How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, among other works, was killed in a bomb explosion which destroyed his car. Reportedly, he was killed by his political opponents in his home country of Guyana. BCLSA joins in mourning the loss of this distinguished leader. We echo the sentiments of his followers: ‘Walter Lives!’
The following events will be held in Boston during the SWAPO/SAMRAF visit here, from October 5th through October 9th. (See page one of this newsletter for further information on the visit.) Each event will have a similar program but a different focus. Pashukeni Shoombe (SWAPO) and Mike Morgan (SAMRAF) will describe the struggles in Namibia and South Africa, and how they relate to our lives here in the U.S.. There will also be a local speaker at each event, music, a bake sale and literature tables.

Sunday, October 5th, 7.30 (place unknown at time of printing)
SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.
Co-sponsored by BCLSA and African Liberation Support Committee.
Donation: $2.00.

Monday, October 6th, 7.30, at the Church of all Nations, 333 Tremont St (it's a round building at the junction of Shawmut and Oak).
SOUTHERN AFRICA AND WORKERS IN THE U.S.
Sponsored by BCLSA.
Donation: $2.00

Tuesday, October 7th, 7.30, at the Church of All Nations.
SOUTHERN AFRICA, RACISM AND THE DRAFT
Co-sponsored by BCLSA and Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft.
Donation: $2.

All funds raised will go towards paying for the SWAPO/SAMRAF tour and to SWAPO.

An additional public event will be held at Roxbury Community College at 10.15 on Monday, October 6th.

For further information on the events call 522 8699.