SEKUNJALO! NOW IS THE TIME!

Soweto Day Walkathon to Benefit Voter Education in South Africa

In the three years since the release of Nelson Mandela, the drive for community empowerment in South Africa has been met with brutal violence unchecked, indeed often aided, by the South African police and security forces. Negotiations for South Africa's first democratic elections have moved slowly. Refusing to be put off any longer, anti-apartheid forces say “Sekunjalo - NOW is the time!”

A strong voter education campaign is essential to assuring the majority population makes its voice heard in the first one-person-one-vote election. Labor, church and community organizations throughout South Africa are gearing up for the election with a major voter education drive. The fifth annual Soweto Day Walkathon will raise funds for the voter education campaign of the Alexandra Civic Organization (ACO), Chicago’s sister community in South Africa. 100% of funds raised will be sent to support this campaign. Last year, the Soweto Day Walkathon raised close to $7,000.00.

Voter education organizers face the difficult task of working to convince people disenfranchised for generations that each person can indeed vote for the leaders of their country. They are countering the common association of registration with the hated apartheid regime. Dealing with the problem of high illiteracy, a legacy of apartheid, organizers are teaching voters to recognize symbols of various parties and candidates and to familiarize them with voting procedures.

Pro-apartheid forces have orchestrated random, violent attacks and assassinations of anti-apartheid leaders such as Chris Hani in order to derail the negotiation process and divide the majority community. In addition, they have a well organized political machine. As the election gets closer, violence, intimidation and misinformation are expected to escalate. Our sister community needs our support in this difficult stage of their long struggle for freedom.

The Soweto Day Walkathon will take place this year on Chicago's South Side. CCISSA and the Chicago-Alexandra Sister Community Project are joined this year by the Committee for Church in Society of Trinity United Church of Christ in sponsoring the Walk. The Walk will begin at the Trinity United Church of Christ, 532 W. 95th Street. Registration will begin at 9:00 AM and a short Prayer Service will take place at 9:30 as Trinity's Reverend Jeremiah Wright sends us forth to the beat of African drumming. The 10 kilometer (6.2 mile) Walk will step off at 10:00 AM, continuing through the South Side neighborhoods with rest stops at the office of State Representative Monique Davis and other neighborhood institutions. The Walk will end at the Third Baptist Church at 95th Street and Ashland Avenue where refreshments will be provided by Trinity members. Transportation back to Trinity will be provided for those who choose to park in that vicinity.

We invite you to walk with us on June 12th as an individual or with the banner of your organization to express your solidarity and raise material support for this critical stage in the struggle against apartheid.

Call CCISSA at 312-327-0545 to have a pledge form sent to you. If you cannot attend, please send a contribution to support voter education in Alexandra Township. Make your check out to Soweto Day Walkathon and send it to CCISSA.

THE PEOPLE SHALL Govern!
Moses Mayekiso Visits Chicago

In early April, Chicago welcomed Moses Mayekiso, the President of the Alexandra Civic Organization, Chicago's sister community in South Africa. Moses Mayekiso is also the President of the South African Network of Civic Organizations (SANCO), the national umbrella body representing seven hundred grassroots civic associations across South Africa. Mayekiso visited Chicago as part of his US fact-finding tour intended to stimulate new ideas for community controlled development in Alexandra and other South African townships. He was accompanied by his brother, Mzwanele Mayekiso who is currently studying in New York.

CCISSA and CASCP members and friends enjoyed meeting Moses Mayekiso at the April 1 Solidarity Reception at Malcolm X College. Over 200 people attended the reception and enjoyed the African buffet as well as an address by Mayekiso. In his remarks, Moses thanked Chicagoans for their ongoing support and promised better communication between the ACO and the CASCP. Mayekiso stressed the importance of organizing in the townships as being as vital to the struggle for freedom in South Africa as the negotiations for elections at the national level.

In addition to his role as a community leader, Moses Mayekiso also is the General Secretary of the National Union of Metal Workers, South Africa's largest union. The Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid coordinated a breakfast meeting with Moses and arranging for him to visit local United Auto Workers headquarters where he was received warmly. ILNAA also participated in the Solidarity Reception where their representative Rose Daylie of AFSCME eloquently expressed solidarity with the struggle in South Africa and the unity of our mutual struggles for freedom and justice.

While in Chicago, the Chicago-Alexandra Sister Community Project arranged a number of meetings between the Mayekisos and community organizers, development specialists and Chicago-based foundations. Mayekiso also met with Mayor Daley and Chicago Aldermen at City Hall.

Hamba Kahle Oliver Tambo, Go in Peace

CCISSA joins the international anti-apartheid movement in mourning Oliver Tambo, the National Chairperson of the African National Congress who died of a stroke at the age of 75. Tambo was a founder of the ANC along with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others. Tambo led the organization in exile for 30 years. He is credited with the development of ANC training camps in Tanzania as well as building the international anti-apartheid movement. We despair that Tambo did not live to see the first democratic elections in South Africa and rededicate ourselves to the struggle that was the focus of his life.
Chicago Mourns Chris Hani

Led by Chicago's South African community, Chicago expressed outrage and grief at the assassination of Chris Hani, ANC leader and South African Communist Party General Secretary. Over 150 demonstrators gathered at noon on April 12th to picket the South African Consulate, part of an all day vigil sponsored by the South African International Students Organization. On April 19th, CCISSA joined with over 20 anti-apartheid and human rights organizations at a Memorial Service celebrating Hani's life and mourning his untimely death.

Reverend Molefe Tsele addresses the demonstrators protesting the assassination of Chris Hani at the South African Consulate in Chicago.

South African musician Ndiko Xaba joins with Professor Elkin Sitholi in honoring Chris Hani at the April 19th Memorial Service at Malcolm X College.

South African students lead Chicagoans in calling for an end to violence in South Africa and for a date for Constituent Assembly elections.
Simon Sponsors Conference on Africa

On Saturday, May 1, 1993, Senator Paul Simon, chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, held a conference on Africa at the University of Illinois, Chicago campus. Senator Simon gave the keynote address, followed by Adwoa Dunn-Mouton, Staff Director of the US Senate Subcommittee on Africa, and Chris Mullard, Director of the Center for Race and Ethnicity in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The conference, lasting from 9 AM until almost 4 PM, included about one hundred participants and consisted of panels on the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa and Building a Constituency for Africa in the United States. State Senator Alice Palmer and her husband, Edward “Buz” Palmer, Executive Director of Comprand, were instrumental in organizing the conference.

Early in the conference, the tone was set when Senator Simon was challenged on his statement that there is no articulated constituency on Africa in Illinois. Panels investigated and discussed this premise, and several examples of constituency-building over the last several years were clarified and explained. What was made clear once again is the strong role of negative and/or uninformed African news by the major local media in Illinois, and its self-fulfilling function in creating the impression that citizens of Illinois are uninterested in news of Africa.

Join CC Issa and the Southern Africa Response Network

CCISSA has initiated the Southern Africa Response Network to consolidate the Illinois anti-apartheid constituency into a solid, consistent voice for change in U.S. policy in southern Africa. The Network will communicate with President Clinton and our representatives to pressure the South African regime to curb township violence, halt land transfers and other moves designed to cripple a future democratic government. The network will work to end U.S. support for destabilization campaigns in South Africa and the frontline states. The network will also be activated on behalf of Chicago’s sister community Alexandra Township in the struggle for decent housing, health and education for Alex residents.

CCISSA will work closely with the American Committee on Africa, Washington Office on Africa and TransAfrica in monitoring key legislation, hearings and issues that need our support. We expect the Network to be activated approximately once a month. Network members may choose to have Action Alerts sent to them for response or to have CC ISSA send letters/mailgrams in their names with copies of communications sent to them.

Join CC ISSA and become a part of this Response Network as we create a new era of U.S. policy toward southern Africa.

Response Network Update

US Recognizes Angola

Ending 2 decades of misguided U.S. policy, President Clinton has decided to recognize the Angolan government. Clinton Administration officials said the President was responding in part to increased criticism for failing to support the results of the 1992 UN monitored elections where rebel leader Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA party lost to the Dos Santos government.

Savimbi, who received support from the US and South Africa since 1975, has refused to accept the results of the election.

Thanks to all Response Network members who recently sent letters to Secretary of State Warren Christopher on this issue.