

MARTIN LUTHER KING

ANTI-APARTHEID RALLY & ALL NIGHT VIGIL

January 10, 1985

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*Organization listed for
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*List incomplete

The offices of the Martin Luther King Anti-Apartheid Coalition (MLKAAC) have been deluged with inquiries from callers ranging from mothers concerned with changing babies to organizations who want to contribute food, blankets or whatever they can to the all night vigilers, who'll be out in temperatures predicted to be in the twenties. Thanks to Mayor Goode, the Northwest wing of City Hall will remain open throughout the evening for shelter and conveniences. The coalition now numbering more than 200 religious, community, labor and peace groups marks the beginning of the broadest cross section of Philadelphians working together to end racism to date.

Although, the rally and vigil is not the start of the anti-apartheid movement in Philadelphia, this event does bear significance to the work of Martin Luther King; in December of 1965 Dr. King, in a speech made at Hunter College, called for economic sanctions against South Africa "The time has come to utilize non-violence fully through massive international boycott (of South Africa)...Millions of people can personally give expression to their abhorrence to the world's worst racism through such a far flung boycott."

The MLKAAC's efforts to celebrate Dr. King's birthday with a rally and vigil includes five demands (see enclosed material). Those demands, presented to City Council by Council Angel Ortiz, January 10th, passed in a resolution unanimously, which in addition to endorsing today's event, called for the City of Philadelphia to not support the institutionalized system of apartheid in South Africa through its procurement policies.

Contact: Vanessa Watson
241-7237

Joining in today's rally and vigil celebration are countless Philadelphians; musicians, people representing community organizations, and Pennsylvania's leading legislators who have or are presently sponsoring divestment bills; Congressmen Wm Gray; State Representative Dave Richardson; Councilman at large David Cohen. Leading labor figures; Henry Nicholas of 1199C; Marvin Schuman, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. Joe Miller, SANE Catherine Blunt, CAFSAN(lobbying group); Sister Marie Lucey, All Saints Parrish and Rabbi Max Hausen who will open Tomorrow morning vigil with a prayer and Sister Nia with the help of massive numbers of vigilers at City Hall west will close the two day event with the South African national anthem.

It is important, from the perspective of the coalition planning the Martin Luther King Anti-Apartheid Rally and Vigil of January, 1985, that participants in the Rally and Vigil and the wider public understand what Apartheid is, and what lies behind the five demands of the coalition.

WHAT IS APARTHEID?

"Apartheid", an Afrikaner word meaning separateness, is used by the South African Government to describe its system of racial separation. It is a philosophical system based on ideas developed by Mussolini and Hitler, and effectively denies citizenship to the Black population of South Africa. Under Apartheid, only whites (less than 20% of the population) have full citizenship rights, including the right to vote for government leaders. Whites control 87% of the land, including all major cities, mineral resources, and agricultural land. Blacks can only live in isolated "homelands" (reservations), in shanty towns outside of urban areas, on the properties of white homeowners, or in crowded barracks near their jobs. Under the Bantu Education Policy, education is separate and unequal; Blacks are educated to fit only those basically menial jobs which the Government allots to them. There is one white doctor for each 370 whites, one Black doctor for each 45,000 Blacks; Black infant mortality in rural areas is as high as 50%.

FIVE DEMANDS OF THE COALITION

I RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA AND ALL OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS:

Nelson Mandela is the leader of the African National Congress, which was founded on January 8, 1912, to lead the Black struggle for equal rights in South Africa. In 1955 almost 3,000 delegates met to develop a program for a democratic South Africa, known as the Freedom Charter. During the 1950's the African National Congress moved from meetings and petitions to a campaign of passive resistance. In 1961 the African National Congress was banned and it became an act of treason to support the Freedom Charter. Nelson Mandela went underground to continue the struggle but was arrested in 1964 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Altogether, there are several thousand Blacks under arrest, with more than 250 Black political leaders now facing trial for their work for equal rights.

II RELEASE OF RECENT STRIKE LEADERS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

Whenever Black South Africans demonstrate for equal rights, the Government responds with mass arrests of leaders--political, religious, and union heads. In 1976, over 1,000 people were killed and hundreds jailed in response to the Soweto uprising, but the people continued to build new organizations. Black trade unions have grown and the United Democratic Front, a coalition of some 2,000,000 Blacks, was organized. Beginning in August 1984, mass opposition to Apartheid has produced a new wave of killings and arrests, and a strike in November 1984 by some 800,000 Black workers resulted in the arrest of union officials.

III SCRAPPING OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S "CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT" POLICY:

"Constructive engagement" is a policy designed to encourage South Africa to change its racial practices by reducing the level of U.S. criticism of Apartheid. It involves increased U.S. economic and political ties with South Africa, along with the shipment of military-related material to its police and armed forces. However, this policy has not had any effect in reducing or ending Apartheid; rather, South Africa has continued reinforcing its system of modern day slavery (as defined by the United Nations). Mass arrests and killings continue, and those who speak out for equal rights for Blacks are charged with treason.

IV GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATIONS WITH LEGITIMATE SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS, AS A START:

If there is to be peace in South Africa there must be justice. South Africa, under United Nations guidance, must begin negotiations with Nelson Mandela and other recognized leaders of South African Blacks.

V ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA:

Sanctions are an effective, non-violent method of effecting change in South Africa. U.S. corporations have \$14 billion invested in South Africa, and U.S. banks regularly make loans to the South African Government. U.S. companies are involved in many strategic industries, including transportation, computers, and South Africa's energy independence program. The U.S. also sells to South Africa material and equipment used directly in enforcing Apartheid. Withdrawal of economic support for the South African Government will weaken its ability to maintain the Apartheid machinery and bring closer the day when the South African Government will be forced to recognize the civil and human rights of its Black majority.

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General Government, Philadelphia Sisters
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Brandywine Peace Center
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Harriett Tubman Shule
Woodcrest United Church of Christ
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The Rev. Joan Martin, Church & World
Institute (at Temple University)
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Marian Tasco, Commissioner of Elections
Action Alliance of Senior Citizens
The Rev. Richard R. Fernandez
Community Concern Credit Union #13
John Hubbard, 2501 Primary Care Community
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22nd Street Business Association
Committee for Social Responsibility
Committee for Responsible Leadership
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Ethnic Labor Coalition
St. Barnabas Church
St. Francis Inn
Norris Square Civic Association

* Organization for identification purposes

LIST CONTINUED - SEE OTHER SIDE

RESOLUTION

Under the apartheid system of government in South Africa, Blacks, who comprise four-fifths of the population, have no freedom of movement, political nor human rights, and are oppressed and exploited by the White population.

WHEREAS, Eighty-seven percent of the land is set aside for Whites, while Blacks are forcibly removed and relocated to barren "homelands;" and

WHEREAS, Black South African workers earn one-tenth of the wages as the White workers who do the same job; and

WHEREAS, The South African government represses all opposition with violence and arrests without any regard for due process and/or trial;

WHEREAS, The South African government is condemned by the United Nations and countries throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Neither the City of Philadelphia, nor its procurement policies, should support the institutionalized system of Apartheid in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, A Council Ordinance was passed in 1982 calling for divestiture of City Pension Funds invested in companies or corporations doing business in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, dozens of religious, community and business groups and leaders, in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday and in keeping with his peaceful mission, have formed the Martin Luther King Anti-Apartheid Coalition and are holding a rally and all night vigil; and

WHEREAS, The demands for this occasion are the release of recent strike leaders, the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners, good faith negotiations with legitimate South African leaders, the scrapping of President Reagan's "Constructive Engagement" policy, and the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa; therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA hereby supports and endorses the efforts of the Martin Luther King Anti-Apartheid Coalition.

COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ

1/10/85



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

BOB EDGAR
PENNSYLVANIA

January 14, 1985

The Rev. Richard R. Fernandez
Northwest Interfaith Movement
Greene Street at Westview
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

Dear Rev. Fernandez:

We gather on this day to renew the faith of a Christian minister who carried America with him to the mountaintop to share his dream of an integrated society.

We gather on this day to honor the grandson of a slave who converted a guilt-stricken Nation to a real and effective Christianity.

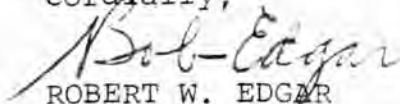
We gather on this day to dramatize, in his spirit, the appalling conditions in South Africa, and to awaken America to that country's "fierce urgency of now."

In the words of he who served for peace and brotherhood of all,

"Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children....and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

We gather on this day to draw strength from the leadership, the spirit, and the moral vision of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Cordially,


ROBERT W. EDGAR

Member of Congress

RE/lj

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