

BOSTON COALITION FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

(with B.C.M.H.E.)

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NEWSLETTER

October 1981

South Africa Invades Angola

• UPDATE

(Since this article was written, South Africa's invasion has intensified and become front page news in the press. Over 400 Angolans have been killed in the fighting, and the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution condemning the invasion and calling for the immediate withdrawal of South African troops.)

With the apparent approval of the Reagan administration, South Africa has recently launched several large-scale attacks into southern Angola. With the tacit support of the U.S. government, South Africa reneged last March on its commitment to UN-supervised elections in Namibia. Now, the South African regime is ruthlessly seeking a military solution to the conflict in Namibia — knowing that it has already lost politically to SWAPO.

In July and August, South African troops invaded Angola's southern

province of Cunene, murdering Angolan civilians and burning villages and crops. The number of Angolans killed and wounded is so far unknown. In the relatively 'normal' month of June, 43 civilians and 4 Angolan soldiers were killed by the South Africans. In the latest actions, the South Africans are using heavier weaponry than was used in their 1975-1976 attempt to unseat the MPLA government in Angola. Impala bombers, helicopter gunships, armored cars, and 155-mm long-range cannons (supplied illegally to South Africa by Space Research Corp. of Vermont) are all being used.

It is believed that this latest South African invasion may be part of a desperate attempt to create a South African-controlled buffer zone in southern Angola and to install counter-revolutionary Jonas Savimbia as a puppet ruler there. This would deprive SWAPO of its rear bases in Angola. South Africa would then be better able to force

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ANGOLA cont.

SWAPO to agree to a constitutional settlement for Namibia which would guarantee a South African military presence in the country.

U.S. involvement in this scheme is suggested strongly by the Reagan administration's continued attempts to overturn congressional restrictions on covert CIA operations in Angola, its refusal to recognize the Angolan government, and by a general tilt towards friendly relations with the apartheid regime in Pretoria. Reagan's personal views on South Africa, revealed in an interview shortly after his election, also lend support to the idea of U.S. approval of South African actions. Asked what he thought about South Africa and the U. S., he said "Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war that we have ever fought?" (In fact, South Africa has not stood by us in every war we have ever fought, and during WWII several prominent members of the present ruling party in South Africa were jailed for being Nazi sympathizers — one of them, Balthasar Vorster, would later become Prime Minister).

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS STEPS UP ARMED STRUGGLE

While the war in Namibia and Angola heats up, resistance to the apartheid regime continues to build inside South Africa. In mid-August, South Africa's largest military camp, just outside of Pretoria, was hit by a rocket attack launched by African National Congress freedom fighters. This was the most daring attack yet upon the apartheid state. It was carried out despite a government campaign to institute special foolproof security pre-



South African armored cars in Angola.

cautions at strategic installations.

The Pretoria attack was just the latest in a series of successful sabotage raids. A number of electric power stations have also been hit. In July, two power stations in the eastern Transvaal were rocked by 15 explosions. On the same day, a power substation was hit near Pretoria. Activists also bombed an East London police station and railway lines in Durban and Johannesburg (East London and Durban are major ports in South Africa). In June, a monument just opposite the security policy headquarters in Durban was successfully targeted.

PRETORIA TRIES TO CRACK DOWN

Embarrassed and threatened by these incidents and clearly alarmed by their increasing frequency, the South

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ANGOLA continued

African government has reacted with force. In August, practically under the eyes of a visiting U.S. congressional delegation, the government tried to evict thousands of black families from their squatters' camp outside Capetown. Besides bulldozing their shacks, the government tried to force the people to leave by refusing to allow food into the camp. The plan was to deport the squatters to their alleged "homeland," the Transkei. Most of the people in the camp had never lived in the already overpopulated and impoverished Transkei. In the weeks following their eviction, hundreds of squatters returned to the Capetown area in an attempt to reestablish their homes.

Labor unrest has also continued at a high level. Large-scale strikes at two gold mines over the imposition of wage deductions to pay for death benefits (South African gold mines are the deepest and most dangerous in the world) were answered by mass firings and the deportation of workers to their "homelands." Meanwhile, the New York Times reported that the South African government was encouraging private companies (including many U.S. firms) with branches in South Africa to promote white-controlled unions for their black workers and to keep blacklists of workers who try to organize independent black trade unions. New legislation was also passed making it possible for company managers to use teargas against their employees in the event of unrest.

PLAYING GAMES WITH APARTHEID

While people are struggling for their freedom in southern Africa, the

Eastern Rugby Union (ERU) of America insists on playing games with apartheid. ERU plans to host a tour by the South African rugby team in the U.S. in September. After the South Africans' disastrous tour in New Zealand where security arrangements alone ended up costing \$2.3 million and over 600 protesters were arrested, one might wonder why ERU would sponsor such a controversial tour. It has recently been revealed that just after agreeing to host the tour, ERU received a \$25,000 donation from a Johannesburg businessman, Louis Luyt, known to be a conduit for South African government funds.

Over 100 organizations have joined together to oppose the tour in the U.S. ERU was planning to hold matches in Chicago, Albany, Rochester, and New York. In New York, Mayor Koch was forced to cancel permission to use the city's Randall's Island Stadium due to mobilization by the Black United Front. The Rochester match was cancelled due to similar opposition.

In addition 51 nations have threatened to boycott the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles unless the remainder of the Springboks' tour is terminated.



Rugby football is South Africa's national game.

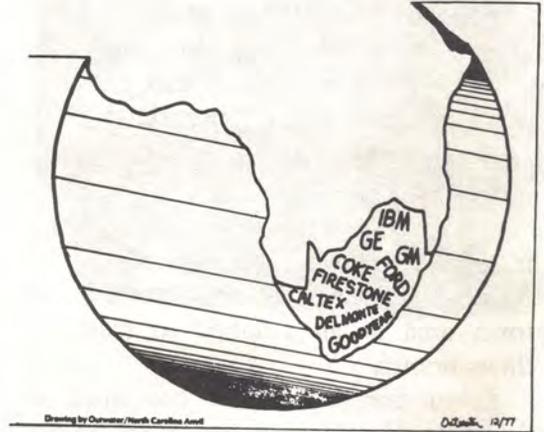
Mass. Divest Needs Your Help

Mass Divest is a coalition working toward the divestment of the Massachusetts state employees pension funds from companies doing business in South Africa. Mass Divest has made some important progress, but now needs your active support more than ever.

Senate Bill 1138, cosponsored by Representative Mel King and Senator Jack Backman will require that the state employees pension funds divest \$131 million which it has invested in companies doing business in South Africa. The bill also calls for reinvesting the money in companies doing business here in Massachusetts. Since part of the money in the state pension funds comes from state tax revenues, all residents of Massachusetts have an interest in this bill. Last Spring, after a public hearing at which 27 people, including church, labor, community, and academic representatives testified in favor of divestment, the joint legislative Public Service Committee reported out S.B. 1138 favorably.

The bill is now sitting in the Senate Ways and Means Committee awaiting action. Although the chairperson of that committee, Chet Atkins, has expressed support for the bill, he has yet to bring it up for a vote. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of writing, calling, or visiting your local state representative and senator, as well as Senator Atkins and Senate President William Bulger, and urging them to act on the bill. A personal letter or call from you can make a difference.

(See box for addresses)



The idea of our tax monies or pension funds being invested in South Africa — the world's most racist society — is intolerable. Investments in South Africa serve to bolster the government there. Former South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, put it quite clearly: "Each trade agreement, each bank loan, each new investment is another brick in the wall of our existence."

In addition, investments in South Africa are not in the best economic interests of people here in Massachusetts. U.S. companies that establish branches in South Africa often do so in order to reap the high profits which result from the low wages and repressive working conditions there. At the same time that some of these companies are expanding in South Africa, they are closing down

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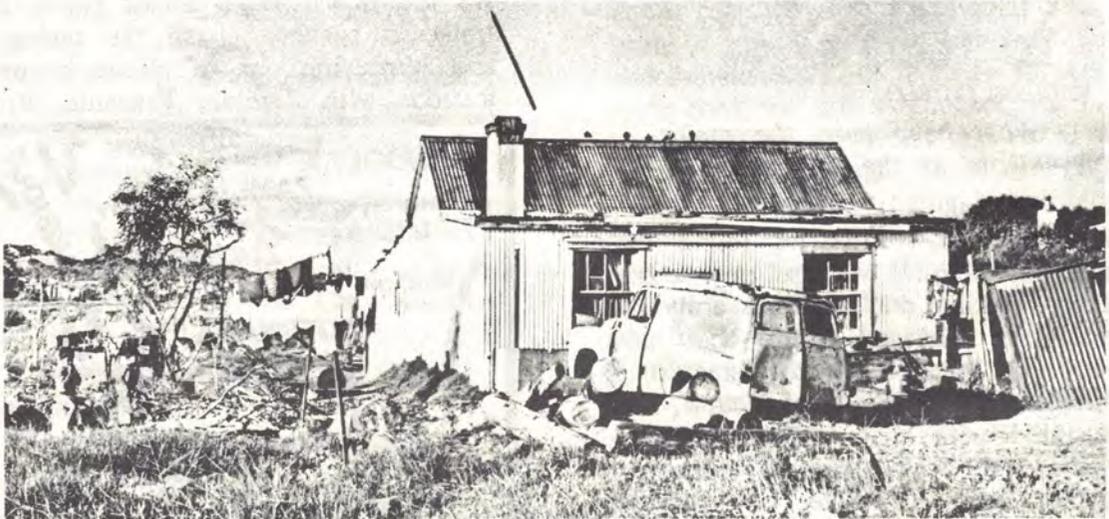
plants in the U.S. Locally, Goodyear in New Bedford, Westinghouse in Springfield, and American Can in Needham have closed Massachusetts plants. All three have branches in South Africa.

On a national level, SB 1138 is one of a number of legislative attempts to halt the investment of public funds in South Africa. A dozen states and ten cities (including Cambridge, MA) have passed or are considering such legislation. It should be remembered, however, that before such legislative action started, the issue of economic support for South Africa was raised through active campaigns in universities and by black activist associations, trade unions, church groups, and liberation support groups. These campaigns were inspired by the calls of the people of South Africa for support in their ongoing struggle for liberation.

To complement its legislative lobbying efforts, Mass. Divest is doing educational outreach on the bill. A slide/tape show of approximately 30 minutes

has been put together for showing to groups interested in learning about the bill and about South Africa. You can arrange for a member of Mass. Divest to come and show the slide show to your organization and answer questions on the bill by calling 354-0008 (days) or 522-8699 (evenings).

If you would like to help in the passage of S1138, address your letter to either Senator William Bulger or Senator Chester Atkins at the State House, Boston, MA 02133. Sen. Bulger's office in the State House is Room 330, telephone 727-2525. Sen. Atkins' office is in Room 312, telephone 727-2481. You should also contact your own state Senator and Representative about your feelings on the bill and find out what he or she is doing about it. If you want to find out how to contact your Senator or Representative, just call the League of Women Voters Information at 357-5880.



Squatters' shack outside Cape Town. / Africa News/S.A.

Boston-area solidarity activists may remember Eddison Zvobgo from when he worked on his Ph.D. degree at Tufts University and was a frequent speaker at demonstrations and rallies. Like many other Zimbabweans abroad, Zvobgo returned to his liberated country to aid in its revolutionary reconstruction. Joellen Lambiotte interviewed Zvobgo, along with other leaders, during her 1981 trip to Zimbabwe. We are pleased to present excerpts from that interview.



EDDISON ZVOBGO

Q: What have been the major achievements in the last year?

A: Several. It's been a tough twelve months. First we found three armies in place. We are now completing making one national army. And we've managed to do that in a year. For me, that's the greatest achievement. Second, of course, associated with that, is the stopping of the war. We do have spats of violence here and there, but take into account the fact that between 50 and 100 people are killed every week in Chicago. Here, in more than a year,

"All in One Year"

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH EDDISON ZVOBGO, ZIMBABWE'S MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

less than 200 people have died.

We introduced a very courageous free primary education for all our children, black and white. All in one year. Then, we've free medical care for everyone in receipt of less than \$150 a month, which works out to more than 90% of the population. All in one year. We have resettled a large percentage of displaced persons in the district council areas, the former tribal lands, and also in the urban areas. All in one year.

We have embarked upon a very vigorous agricultural program to ensure that this year's crop will be good, a very heavy one. And we have broken all previous records this year. We will have a surplus upward of 20 million tons, more food than the country has ever known. All in one year.

We started immediately consolidating our links with our neighbors. We are now talking about roads and transport systems in all the region, and improving our telephone communications with Zambia, Tanzania, Bots-



wana, and Mozambique. Now, to have come so far in one year after 17 years of war is for us quite something.

(After discussing the completion of democratic local elections, Zvobgo was asked:)

Q: Besides voting, how do people at the local level have a voice in government?

A: They own and manage all schools. They own and manage their own clinics. Nothing can happen in the district without their council, the democratically elected representatives of the people, first being briefed about it and then agreeing that the project be launched.

Q: How did the elections affect the ability of ZANU/PF to carry out its program?

A: It strengthened our hand considerably. After the national election we became the dominant political party in the legislature. But without going down to grassroots, your policy is a very difficult thing to carry out. This is why I introduced politics in local government. We invited other parties to compete and we beat them flat. In most of Zimbabwe, the councils are 100% ZANU/PF. Coordination, consultation, all that becomes very easy.

Q: Have the crown lands been redistributed?

A: They became state land. We have had a major problem in that the people have not waited to be resettled by the government. They simply proceeded to go on to state land, build

their houses, and start plowing. As far as some of the abandoned farms which the people moved on to, we take the position that this was land liberated during the war by the people and it would be immoral to go and say that what the people themselves liberated must be abandoned because farmer A who ran to Britain during the war now wants his land. It was never his land in the first place.

Q: What do you think is the role of South Africa in destabilizing or economically strangling Zimbabwe?

A: Our economy was designed over the years to be an appendage to South Africa. Take our mining industry. All the mining equipment is of South African patent and manufacture, which means that we must get spare parts from South Africa. And this is true across the board. We have had to take a very cold look at that, and come up with various strategies for disengaging our economy from that of South Africa. To a very considerable extent this is being achieved. What has been the major constraint, of course, is the fact that we are landlocked, and that transportation or outlet routes have always been through South Africa. We are cooperating with Mozambique to strengthen our communication links from here through Maputo and Beira. My colleagues dealing with those matters in transport are also looking at Zambia to see if they cannot intensify transport relationships via Zambia and the Tanzam Railroad to Tanzania.

South Africa's program to destabilize this area, this whole subregion, remains a threat to our peace and stability and our vision of peop-

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INTERVIEW cont.

le's democracy here. She still maintains 6,000 Zimbabwean auxiliaries [remnants of the short-lived colonialist Muzorewa regime — ed.] across the border in Rastenberg, a northern part of Pretoria.

Q: So how do you think that the Reagan/Haig policies on Southern Africa will affect Zimbabwe?

A: We don't know yet what that policy is [as of April 1981 — ed.]. Chester Crocker [then special U.S. envoy — ed.] was down here; I ate breakfast with him and we told him our concerns. The U.S. has been trying to torpedo the United Nations program for Namibia. Crocker told us that the U.S. prefers having a constitution agreed for Namibia by representatives. That would allay the fears of South Africa and whites in Namibia if they knew that their property was guaranteed prior to the election. Now that is the very converse of the United Nations program. We believe that the road to go is first to have elections. Then have a constitutional assembly which would draft a constitution, and the constitution would thereby derive its force from the people of Namibia. Crocker couldn't answer this: What would be the legal force, where would it derive its authority from, if a committee simply sat together and drew up a constitution? What would be the basis of the authority? They [the U.S. — ed.] can't answer that.

They have fears about Cuban presence in Angola and they're trying to tie the two together, that is, Namibia's independence and the Cuban presence in Angola should be looked at as one; if Cubans disengaged, or

Cubans left Angola, then it would make it much easier for South Africa to grant independence to Namibia. It's just the traditionalist imperialist tactic. The people of Namibia are entitled to their independence regardless of what's happening in any other country. There is no connection. The people of Namibia have the inalienable right to self-determination. And trying to point to Angola or someplace else are ruses which we would never buy. And as regards Cuban presence in Angola, we say: you go to Angola and discuss it with them. It's in the exercise of their sovereign authority that they invited Cubans, just like you Americans are present in South Korea and all over Europe and God knows where else. And nobody's ever alleged that West Germany's not independent because American troops are everywhere, from Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg, and all over the place. We haven't made a demand for them to be withdrawn so the German people could reunify. And the arrogance in the suggestion that you [the U.S. — ed.] now want to support the CIA agent in Angola, Jonas Savimbi, and subvert the legitimate government of Angola, is unacceptable to us. You said: Well, we really are not doing that. We said: Why did you want to repeal the Clark amendment? And that was that! [The 1976 Clark Amendment prohibited covert aid to forces trying to overthrow the Angolan government — ed.]

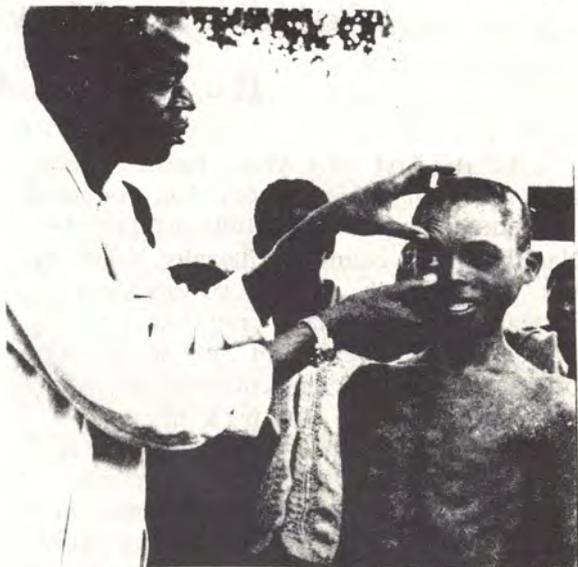
But we do feel that the Reagan/Haig vision of reality will improve as they understand the complexities of the international situation and the commitment of the people who

live there not to compromise. We hope Reagan will be wise enough to recognize that a cold war of sorts in the third world would never succeed.

Q: What do you think is the most important thing that U.S. solidarity groups can be doing now to support Zimbabwe?

A: We need some help in the training sphere. Technical skills are rather short here because the colonial regime never trained anybody in the crucial areas to eventually take part, because they never conceived of that happening. We would want volunteers coming over here, even in the teaching field or in the more complicated sectors of local government, and help fill the gap. Right now many of our racist officials here aren't attempting [to train anyone] and they've always attempted to hold us hostage by saying if you appoint an African mayor then we all quit en masse. So you go into your office and you ponder that one. But once they realize that our allies in the war are ready and willing to step in immediately and insure that the conquests of the masses don't collapse, then of course they will have to think twice. It's this feeling of indispensibility which breeds arrogance and subversion.

During the war, well, fine, very little could be done by solidarity groups other than, I suppose, collecting some shoes and trousers and so on. They couldn't give us arms. But now I think they could more than that, because we are not asking for people to collect shoes or trousers anymore. What we are asking is let's solidify, let's guarantee the irreversibility of victory together. And that's really my comment. And it can't be done from Boston very effectively, especially the training areas that I have suggested.



Zimbabwean health care officials draw on experience gained during the war to develop Zimbabwe's public health program.

Q: So, would you like to say anything to your friends in Boston?

A: I would like to say that I remember the days we were in the trenches together. We would go out to the Boston Harbor and demonstrate against ships bringing in Rhodesian chrome, and we used to go up on Beacon Hill in Boston to try and get Massachusetts to boycott the products from South Africa and so on. I would like to say, keep on! We are winning. The people are winning. They are winning everywhere. They won here. They won in Mozambique, they won in Angola. We will see the people winning in Namibia. We will win in South Africa. But the message to my friends is the climate in America may be discouraging, but the point is, the people all around the world continue to win and we will quarantine reaction and imperialism to North America ultimately.

Solidarity Movement Confronts Reagan's Africa Policy

In its first half year, Ronald Reagan's southern Africa policy has focussed on sabotaging the liberation struggle in Namibia. In Namibia, illegally ruled by the white South African government, Reagan puts the main emphasis on protecting the wealth of the white minority and the foreign corporations which are exploiting the country's mineral wealth. The Reagan administration is undercutting the United Nation's resolution that would lead to elections in Namibia. Like the South African government, Reagan is trying to prevent the liberation movement, SWAPO, from coming to power (as it surely would in any fair election). By his stand, Reagan encouraged South Africa to stonewall last March's negotiations on Namibia. Although most UN members wanted to punish South Africa for sabotaging these talks, the U.S. vetoed UN trade sanctions against South Africa.

Instead, Reagan would reward South Africa for agreeing to a settlement beneficial to both the U.S. and South Africa. The payoff for South Africa would include full exchange of military attaches, eased import restrictions, and full nuclear relations. Reagan's goal is to bring South Africa in as a full and *accepted* member of the Western alliance. To do this, the Namibia question must be settled first. As a step in this direction, South African foreign minister Pik Botha met with U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig in Washington in May. South African military intelligence officers also met with Pentagon and National Security Council officials.

In an ominous move, Reagan has pushed Congress to repeal the Clark amendment, which prohibits CIA secret operations in Angola. Angola, which borders on Namibia and supports SWAPO, has frequently been raided by South Africa. Repeal of the amendment would allow the CIA to join in the game. The U.S. refuses to deal with Angola unless its government agrees to send home the Cuban troops which help protect Angola from South African attacks.

While Reagan's Africa policy serves the same business interests as did Carter's, it is much more blatant. Reagan (like Carter's advisor, Brzezinski) sees all struggles for liberation in southern Africa as forms of "Soviet expansionism." The Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit meeting in June rejected this view and voted unanimously to condemn the U.S. for its collaboration with South Africa.

Resistance to Reagan

These policies are part of a general turn toward a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy. They are part of the conservative swing which has led to cuts in human services, greater tax breaks for the rich, and more open racism. Just as Reagan's attempt to repeal the Voting Rights Act here caters to white racism, so too does his focus on protecting the property rights of the wealthy white minority in Namibia.

Supporters of African liberation are finding that many of those who were at least willing to listen to them in Congress and the government have

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'You've done a terrific job...I guess we won't be needin' you anymore.'

now been defeated or removed. The Democratic Party, unable to soften Reagan's economic program, also has provided little opposition to his Africa policy. Only the Congressional Black Caucus and some members of the House Subcommittee on Africa have exposed and criticised the trend toward an open alliance with South Africa.

In this situation, the southern Africa solidarity movement has to move toward a stronger, more grassroots approach. In the words of Randall Robinson, head of TransAfrica (a black group that lobbies on behalf of African and Caribbean issues):

I don't think we should concentrate most of our efforts on the Congress. We have to make this a kind of absorbing social issue...So the important thing for us to do is to make this issue very public, and that's going to call for mobilization.

TransAfrica and other national organizations have stepped up public education and mobilization efforts. While there is no single organization to lead this work, different groups have worked together on conferences to pull the movement together. The upcoming Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the People of Southern Africa, planned for October

in New York, may lead to some national programs. We urge people interested in doing solidarity work to go to this conference (see announcement on outside back cover of Newsletter).

Closing Ranks

The issue of southern Africa is related to other issues affecting the American people today — like racism, declining real wages, social security cuts, military intervention in El Salvador, nuclear power and nuclear weapons; These issues are connected by Reagan's reactionary politics on each of them. The solidarity movement can be stronger if it links up with work on these other issues. The May 3 rally in Washington, which drew 100,000 to protest U.S. policy in El Salvador and South Africa, racism, and other forms of oppression, proved the effectiveness of this approach.

BCLSA supports these directions for the solidarity movement: mass mobilization, greater national coordination, and building links to other issues (especially those that affect working people and national minorities in this country). We look forward to working with others who are fighting the Reagan reaction.

—A.Z.

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LIBERATION STRUGGLES
Of The
PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

At the Riverside Church
122 St. and Riverside Drive, N.Y.C.

The conference will feature speeches by:
OLIVER TAMBO, President of the
African National Congress (ANC)
and
SAM NUJOMA, President of SWAPO
of Namibia

There will also be workshops and
discussions on U.S. involvement in
southern Africa and the role of
solidarity movements.

People interested in attending should
contact Themba Vilakazi at 426-1909
(days) for information about transport-
ation and accomodations.

B.C.L.S.A.
P.O. Box 8791
Boston, MA 02114

