

# TRANSAFRICA

BOSTON CHAPTER

The Black American Lobby for Africa and the Caribbean

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9 Feb. 1990

What a happy and proud time this is regarding South Africa, although many dangers still lie ahead. We in TransAfrica can all feel very proud of the marginal but significant contributions we have made to the struggle there by successfully promoting the divestment and sanctions campaigns here. In several very eloquent and inspiring presentations in the Boston area recently, the Publicity Secretary of the United Democratic Front of South Africa, Mr. Patrick Lekota, brought to us expressions of thanks from home for our contributions, and pleas that we keep up our efforts to maintain the international pressures on the South African economy until full and genuine democracy is clear to be the actual OUTCOME of negotiations. Even if all the pre-conditions demanded by Nelson Mandela are met, that would only allow the process of negotiations to get started. Stripped of the international pressures, the popular forces would be at a severe disadvantage, given the continued capacity of the government, at any time, to crack down with police and army units, if it thought it could get away with such action.

A letter from you to President Bush calling for maintenance of the sanctions until democracy has actually been fully WON would be useful. Such action is doubly important because the Administration has already dropped hints that it may soon review the sanctions policy. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen is reported to have said such in a television interview at about the same time President Bush was inviting Mr. Mandela to the White House -- what hypocrisy!

You should also continue to follow news about Haiti. At our February meeting we were privileged to hear from Dr. Marc Proux about events and trends in Haiti. He stresses the need to press for genuine elections there, which the government headed by Gen Avril is NOT capable of or willing to institute. The 1987 Constitution should

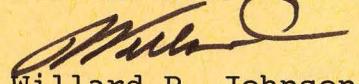
be fully restored and the present "state of siege decree" rescinded. U.S. aid should not be restored; the paramilitary units in Haiti should be fully disbanded; the international companies with plants there should stop working with the government. You could note that expressions of protest from citizens in the U.S. and elsewhere did result in the release last week of some of Haiti's imprisoned political leaders, most especially the three leaders of the grass-roots organization Peasant Movement of Papaye, Jean-Auguste Mesyeux, Evans Paul, and Marino Etienne. The U.S. should let the Avril regime know that this country is concerned about respect for human rights and the establishment of democracy. Attacks on, imprisonment or exiling of political opponents violates those values.

You can get more information or materials on Haiti from the Washington Office on Haiti, 110 Maryland Avenue, Northeast, Washington D.C. 20002 (tel 202-543-7095). This Thursday, Feb 15, at 2:30 Prof. Alex Dupay, of Wesleyan University, will speak on "The Struggle for Democracy in Haiti" at the Trotter Institute of the Univ. of Mass. Boston (Columbia Point) Wheatley Hall 2nd Floor.

Finally, note in your calendars that the national TransAfrica weekend will be June 1-2 in Washington. We hope to have a good contingent of people going from Boston. Special travel and hotel discounts are available. If you would like to join the Boston table, or arrange for the purchase of one or some part of a table for yourself or your organization, please contact us.

We hope to see you at our monthly meetings at the Tubman House, 7pm, on the first Wednesday of each month. At our next meeting, on March 7, Mr. Tesfay Aradom of the Eritrean Liberation Committee will talk to us about the present situation in that liberation struggle.

For the Board



Willard R. Johnson

Temporarily, our Chapter telephone number is 427-2711