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Forum Denounces U.S. Policy in South Africa, Central America and the Caribbean

by Cheryl Graves

On February 2, 1986, CIDSA jointly sponsored “ONE STRUGGLE,” a community forum which sought to connect the issues of U.S. foreign policy in South Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. The main focus of the forum was to provide information on the current struggles in these areas, and illustrate the connection and explain the implications for communities in Chicago. The forum was organized so that the same forum was presented on February 2nd in two Chicago communities: first, in the afternoon at St. Pius Church in the Pilsen neighborhood, a Latino community, and later that evening at Bethel AME Church, in a black community on the city’s southside.

The forum’s four speakers provided critical information as well as concise and thought-provoking analyses of the struggles in the three regions and the role undertaken by the U.S. in these regions. Dr. Jean Sindab, Executive Director of the Washington Office on Africa and expert on the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, kicked off the forum discussions with a rousing appeal to the communities present to utilize their collective power to change U.S. foreign policy in these areas. Dr. Sindab, having had years of experience as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill, informed those in attendance that ten letters received by a representative on one issue could change a vote. She went on to characterize U.S. foreign policy in South Africa as a pattern of economic destabilization, citing hunger and support to contra groups as key components.

Further, Dr. Sindab made reference to U.N. reports which designated six countries in crisis because of hunger, three in Southern Africa—Angola, Botswana and Mozambique. The root cause of famine in Africa, she stated, is not climatic conditions, but the wars which have resulted in billions of dollars in damage in Angola caused by South African attacks and millions of deaths in both Angola and Mozambique. Through its policy of constructive engagement in South Africa, the U.S. has entered into an alliance with South Africa. Dr. Sindab informed the communities of the U.S. administration’s recent attempt to paint anti-communist hysteria. “The spotlight in the U.S. media has shifted,” she stated, “from apartheid terrorism to Soviet expansionism as a way of diverting our attention and dividing our energies.” She cited the recent visit of Jonas Savimbi of UNITA and his warm reception in Washington as the peak period for this current “red scare” in effort to reap covert aid for UNITA and eliminate debate on the topic.

Dr. John Saul built upon the information provided by Jean Sindab and further described the nature of the struggle in Southern Africa. Dr. Saul is an expert on Southern Africa, who lived in Mozambique for a number of years, and has written extensively on the area. Presently, he is a Professor of Political Science at York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He discussed the liberation movements, stressing that the wars in Southern Africa are not being waged from Moscow but by the Southern African peoples themselves. Dr. Saul characterized the role of the U.S. supported counter-revolutionary guerrillas as an attempt to “kill the dream, not just the revolution.” He described the “low-intensity” warfare as an effort to destroy everything, social and political, and to make the people believe that they cannot win.

Following the theme of the destabilization of these regions, Dr. Jan Carew explained the U.S. involvement in Grenada, his home of Guyana, and gave an in-depth historical perspective of the struggle in the Caribbean. Dr. Carew is an expert on the Caribbean and is currently at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois teaching in the African-American Studies Department. Dr. Carew noted that every single government that emerged in the Caribbean expressed solidarity with the people struggling in South Africa.

Dr. Charles Clements, the final speaker, spelled out exactly how U.S. foreign policy in these regions critically affects our daily lives. Dr. Clements is an expert on Central America, a former officer in the U.S. Airforce in Vietnam, author of Witness of War: An American Doctor in El Salvador, and Executive Director of continued on page 4

Next CIDSA Meetings: U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.
State Task Force Report

The next two months are critical to the successful passage of Illinois divestment legislation. First, the primary campaigns provide a major forum in which divestment must be raised. Second, the success of Illinois divestment legislation will depend on the work individual institutions, unions and organization are doing now within their bodies to divest or to officially support state divestment. This groundswell of support behind these bills should obtain their passage.

CIDS A’s State Task Force is thus focusing its efforts in three avenues:
1) The gubernatorial campaign—We are currently implementing strategies towards both Thompson and Stevenson re their public support for HB 330 and 317. (HB 330 is the 3 year divestment bill; HB 317 is the Steel Bill, see Steel Task Force report).
2) The legislators—We are working with the bills’ sponsor Rep. Carol Moseley Braun and with Rep. Wyvett Younge, chairs of the Urban Redevelopment Committee in which the bills are currently in interim study, to proceed with the necessary steps in order to get the bills to the House floor. The delay factor at this point is the House leadership. Word is that Speaker of the House Michael Madigan has put a hold on this bill awaiting the primaries.
3) Our constituency—We are producing literature for use by our constituency as they organize support for the legislation and speak to the issue with legislators and those on the campaign trail.

How can you be part of this strategy?

a) Raise the issue at campaign meetings. Contact CIDS A for literature.
b) Call Speaker Michael Madigan at 312/581-8000 or 217/782-5350 to ask that these bills get voted out of committee immediately and that he do all he can to see they pass on the House floor.
c) Get your organizations to distribute CIDS A literature to their membership and to take official action endorsing the bills.

Steel Task Force

The Steel Task of CIDS A is pleased to announce the imminent introduction of House Bill 317 by Rep. Carol Moseley Braun. H.B. 317 is the legislation on which our Task Force has been working for the past two years. It amends the Illinois Steel Procurement Act to stop the importation of South African steel for use in public buildings in Illinois.

The Task Force is in the final stages of preparation of a brochure on the imports of steel and steel products from South Africa. We expect to have the brochures available within a month.

Additional good news has been the preliminary interest of the steel union with whom we hope to be working in the near future.

There is much work to be done to get our legislation passed this spring. We encourage all who are interested to contact Ora Schub through the CIDS A office at 922-3915.

City Task Force

The South Africa sanctions ordinance, sponsored by Alderman Danny K. Davis, before the Chicago City Council has moved to center stage on the Council floor. Proponents expect it will be brought to a vote before the end of February, 1986.

On December 30, 1985, Alderman Davis presented a substitute sanctions ordinance to the Finance Committee for passage by the City Council. The substitute ordinance was the product of months of cooperation between the City Law Department and representatives of CIDS A. It had also been submitted to the Purchasing, Economic Development, Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs departments for their review and comments.

The new ordinance has three main components affecting depositories of city funds, purchasing and short term investments by the City. The first section prohibits

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CIDSA UPDATE BOOK REVIEW:
Part Of My Soul Went With Him
by Winnie Mandela
New York: W.W. Norton, 1985
$5.95, 164 pp.

by Sahotra Sarkar

In the West Winnie Mandela is sometimes regarded only as Nelson Mandela's wife, representative, or surrogate. But here at least is a document that establishes her for what she is—one of the most important South Africans of our time; not a representative of Nelson Mandela, but, like him, of the South African people. Part of My Soul Went With Him is an account of Winnie Mandela's personal and political development, not a conventional autobiography but an edited collection of her taped reminiscences occasionally interspersed with those of some family members and friends. All of these have been edited by Anne Benjamin and the present volume is an English translation of a Dutch original published in 1984. The caliber of the editing is superb. The text reads as a continuous narrative in spite of the wide variety of sources represented.

In Winnie Mandela's life it is impossible to distinguish the personal from the political. She was born and grew up in the village of Bizana in the Transkei, also the home of Oliver Tambo, current President of the exiled African National Congress (ANC). Her mother was a domestic science (cooking, embroidery, etc.) teacher and a religious fanatic, perhaps the source of her daughter's subsequent disenchantment with religion. Her father was a history teacher who inspired in her a deep sense of the injustice of racist white rule in her own land. In 1953 she went to Johannesburg to study social work in college. This was right in the wake of the famous Defiance Campaign of the ANC during which thousands of South Africans defied the apartheid laws and courted arrest. In this charged political atmosphere Winnie Mandela's real political education began as she started attending work-ers' meetings. In 1955 she met Nelson Mandela during a break from his treason trial, and in June 1958 she married him.

Then, in 1960, came the Sharpeville massacre during which police killed 69 and wounded 176 peaceful and unarmed anti-apartheid demonstrators. The ANC organized massive protests throughout the country and was promptly banned—made into an unlawful organization. Nelson Mandela went underground and a new phase began in Winnie Mandela's life, one filled with constant police surveillance, clandestine meetings, and continuous worry. On August 5, 1962 Nelson Mandela was captured and, finally, on June 12, 1964 sentenced to life imprisonment. For the Mandelas family life was over almost before it began: even the years before Sharpeville had rarely afforded them the leisure of normal family life. As her autobiography unfolds, Winnie Mandela returns time and again to the dream of a few quiet evenings with the husband, which she has yet to experience. For her this might very well be an impossible dream: in South Africa such is the price of political commitment.

To some extent Nelson Mandela's imprisonment is responsible for Winnie Mandela's emergence as an independent political figure, though through these years of enforced separation her personal and emotional life remained tied to his. From the point of view of the apartheid authorities she was, from the beginning, no ordinary woman: as the wife of apartheid's most respected foe her mere existence was a constant threat to the regime. But being black and exceptional in South Africa only means more harassment, more attempts at degradation, and increased financial hardship. In a psychological war of attrition the regime constantly tries to wear down resistance and thereby establish the ultimate superiority of the white race. Winnie Mandela's life exemplifies this pattern, and what comes as a shock is how little the international anti-apartheid movement does to accomplish the one thing certainly within its reach: an alleviation of the economic hardship of the political prisoners of apartheid.

Over the years, however, Winnie Mandela began to earn the fear and concomitant respect, that the regime had already accorded to her. To every insult, every attempt at degradation, she offered uncompromising resistance. Banning orders were continually violated. A white policeman who illegally invaded her privacy had his neck broken, literally though not fatally. A major part of this volume consists of account of such incidents, of harassment, continuous bannings, and recurrent imprisonments. From all these tribulations Winnie Mandela emerges triumphant, her integrity uncompromised, her dignity intact, and her commitment unshaken. In its war of attrition apartheid did not have a single victory to boast of.

As the volume progresses, the political analysis becomes more extensive and probing. From an ideology of resistance it moves on to a deep consideration of the not-so-distant future when, as Winnie Mandela correctly notes, white South Africa will have to figure out how it will dispense favors to the black majority which comprises that nation. Divestment and divestment find their place, too, as she indict foreign companies and their role in financing the crime of apartheid. The mildness and compassion with which she views the future of white South Africa comes almost as a surprise: there is no demand for justice. Over all, this volume remains as moving an indictment of apartheid as has ever been published.
Bishop Tutu Urges Chicago To Continue the Struggle

On Friday, January 28, Bishop Desmond Tutu urged Chicagoans to continue pressing for sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa. Although the Nobel Prize winner was in the city less than a day, thousands got a chance to hear him speak at a variety of events. Tutu’s visit, part of a national “Family, Unity and Peace” tour of several U.S. cities, was primarily a benefit for the South African Council of Churches; SACC will channel the money toward aid for political prisoners and students.

Chicago events were arranged by City Hall and an unlikely conglomerate of churches, anti-apartheid activists, businessmen, community-based organizations and local gadflies. Tutu was hustled across town in a special bus, led by a motorcade of police. He was honored by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, the Chicago Theological Seminary and the Mid-America Committee. He spoke at the South Side’s Liberty Baptist Church and at a large rally in the Loop. Everywhere, Tutu charmed his audiences with warmth and jokes while calling for increased activity by Americans against Pretoria.

“I think that your State Department must be under pressure” to come down harder on South Africa, Tutu told reporters at an airport press conference. Pointing to the Reagan administration’s controversial embargo and aid to the Nicaraguan contras, Tutu said, “If your country were to apply the policies it uses toward Nicaragua in South Africa... apartheid would be over yesterday.”

Tutu endorsed anti-apartheid on the local level, saying that without it, Washington would not even have imposed the minimal sanctions against South Africa that occurred last fall. He criticized constructive engagement as “absolutely ineffective.”

Tutu was joined on various occasions by Mayor Harold

“One Struggle Forum” continued

Americans for Peace in the Americas. Dr. Clements explained the U.S. strategy behind “low-intensive” warfare; that it kept visibility low and consequently has not caused Americans to feel the effects of the war here at home. Dr. Clements cited numerous statistics relating to 1985 budget cutbacks which will in fact affect Americans, including: 28%—maternal & child care, 22%—low income housing, 44%—job training, 17%—low energy loan, 55%—community block grants. However, Dr. Clements reported that while there are severe cuts to domestic and social service programs, the military budget is being increased by 66% and that 45 cents of each U.S. tax dollar is used to buy weapons. Further, he emphasized that 40% of U.S. combat-ready forces are comprised of black and Hispanic youth. The goal of the forum was accomplished. A significant number of groups participated in the sponsorship and extensive community outreach which preceded the “ONE STRUGGLE” forum. The outreach extended to churches, trade unions, political organizations and community-based organizations. The organizing effort forged new coalitions which served to further elucidate for the participating sponsor groups the theme of the forum. As one of the organizers said, following extensive outreach efforts in both the Latino and black communities, “from Cottage Grove to Johannesburg, Blue Island to San Salvador, it is truly one struggle.”

ANGOLA ALERT—Savimbi Visits the U.S.

As reported last issue, the Reagan Administration and various groups of the right wing have decided to make a major push to legitimize Jonas Savimbi and his South African-backed rebel group UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) (See CIDSA UPDATE #12, November/December, 1985). In furtherance of this goal, Savimbi himself arrived in the United States in late January and made the rounds seeking support for material aid here.

CIDSA urges you to write your senators and representatives to stop all efforts to provide aid of any kind to UNITA. Specifically, write and express your opposition to the following legislation:

HR 3475 sponsored by Rep. Pepper (R., Fla.) Seeks to provide $27 million in humanitarian aid to UNITA.
HR 3598 sponsored by Rep. McCullom (R., Fla.) Seeks to provide sanctions against the government of Angola.
HR 3609 sponsored by Rep. Siljander (R., Mich.) Seeks to provide $27 million in military aid to UNITA.
HR 3725 sponsored by Rep. Doorman (R., Calif.) Seeks to provide $27 million in humanitarian and $19.1 million in military aid to UNITA.
SR 280 sponsored by Sen. Dole (R., Kan.) Seeks to commit Congress to aid UNITA "in early 1986 if the Angolan government does not negotiate" with UNITA.

In your letter, urge your representatives to vote for the legislation introduced by Rep. Ted Weiss (D., N.Y.) which seeks to prohibit covert or overt aid to any rebel group in Angola. This legislation, HR 3690, effectively restores the Clark Amendment which was repealed last August.
the deposit of city funds in banks or financial institutions that: (1) have loans or lines of credit to South Africa; (2) sell or promote the sale of the krugerrand; (3) underwrite securities for South Africa; or (4) enter into loans with third parties where they know the money is to be used for military, police, prison or relocation purposes in South Africa. This section of the ordinance would take effect immediately.

The second section of the ordinance prohibits the awarding of city contracts to (1) the Republic of South Africa or any of its national corporations; and (2) companies that provide goods or services to South Africa for military, police, prison or relocation purposes. [Note: this differs from the earlier ordinance which would have prohibited entering into contracts with any company doing business in South Africa.] This section also prohibits the purchase of goods that have been assembled or wholly manufactured in South Africa. It is scheduled to take effect sixty days after passage.

The third section of the ordinance prohibits the investment of public funds in (1) financial institutions that have loans or lines of credit to South Africa; and (2) the stocks of companies doing business in South Africa. There is a two year lapse before this part of the ordinance would take effect.

A major breakthrough in the progress of this ordinance came when Mayor Harold Washington agreed to meet with concerned community leaders and representatives of CIDSA on December 27, 1985. Meeting with the Mayor were Rev. Kenneth Smith of the Chicago Theological Union, Prof. Timuel Black, Heather Booth from the Midwest Academy, Msgr. Jack Egan of the Catholic Archdiocese, Prexy Nesbitt, Basil Clunie, and Mary Rita Luecke of CIDSA.

At the meeting, the Mayor stated his concern about conditions in South Africa and said it was “embarrassing” that the city had not yet passed any kind of sanctions or divestment measure. He promised to put the weight of his administration behind this ordinance and the divestment resolution pending before the City Council. The resolution urges trustees of the pension funds for city employees to divest themselves of holdings in companies that do business with South Africa. Both the ordinance and resolution were referred to the Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Committees of the Chicago City Council.

On January 17, 1986, Ald. Pucinski called the first joint meeting of the Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs committees to consider the ordinance. Of the ten persons who testified regarding the ordinance only one spoke against it.

The Purchasing Department did put forward two amendments to the ordinance at that time. The first would allow the city to buy replacement parts for existing city equipment where no comparably priced alternative supplies could be found. The second would exempt airlines from coverage under the ordinance, allegedly to prevent the denial of landing privileges to international carriers who also service South Africa.

Because of the short notice given before the January 17th hearing, a second hearing was scheduled for February 14, 1986. This hearing was specifically scheduled to invite comment by Chicago banks on the impact of the ordinance. Witnesses from the proponent’s side will also be allowed to testify.

While proponents expect some late amendments to the ordinance, every effort is being made to prevent a piecemeal erasure of the measure. A strong showing of community support is critical to its passage. Phone calls, letters or a visit to your alderman are the most effective ways to keep up the pressure.

For more information about the ordinance or ways in which you can help call Mary Rita Luecke at 263-7731 (days) and 679-6776 (evenings).

Why Divest?

U.S. investments strengthen the apartheid economy, thereby increasing the ability of the white government to preserve its power. The past twenty-five years disprove the claim that investments can be an agent for change because the apartheid government’s repressive power has only increased during this time. Yet even if every U.S. firm in South Africa practiced commendable labor policies, apartheid would still not be threatened.

The companies must comply with South African law and coexist with disenfranchisement, population control, and forced removals, as well as detentions and bannings. The black community, from 1959 Nobel Peace Laureate Albert Luthuli to 1984 Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu, has continually said “we don’t want our chains polished, we want them removed.” The divestment of publicly controlled Illinois funds from South Africa will be a significant contribution to the world-wide anti-apartheid movement and will help create circumstances for the South African people to forge fundamental change in their country.

Who is CIDSA?

The Coalition for Illinois’ Divestment from South Africa was founded in June 1983 to push for the passage of a divestment bill in the Illinois State Legislature. Over 65 organizations and 300 concerned individuals from across the state now comprise CIDSA’s growing membership.
South African Update

Dec. 21, 1985  South African police forceably removed Winnie Mandela from her home in Soweto. They arrested her for violating the ban restricting her from living in her Soweto home. In Capetown she was released and is scheduled to return to court in late January.

Dec. 22, 1985  A bomb blast in a shopping center near Durban killed 6 people and wounded 45. No one took credit for the bombing.

Jan. 6, 1986  20,000 striking mineworkers were fired by the South African government.

Jan. 15, 1986  South Africa pressured Lesuthu into "security talks" by imposing a trade embargo on that country. South Africa said Lesuthu allows anti-apartheid refugees to hide in that country and military attacks on South Africa have been launched from Lesuthu according to South Africa.

Jan. 21, 1986  Two white policemen killed when intruding into and trying to break up a coal miners meeting near Johannesburg.

Jan. 30, 1986  Botha’s opening speech before Parliament offered vague educational reforms; a new strategy for urbanization which included supposed relaxation of the pass laws; a multi-racial council with Blacks having an advisory role; and an exchange of Nelson Mandela’s freedom for two Soviet dissidents and the South African army captain held in Angola where he was captured during an aborted military move in Angola.

Feb. 7, 1986  Opposition Progressive Federal Party leader resigned from Parliament after Botha’s speech confirmed that no meaningful change was to occur within South African government. Botha has now aligned with the “conservatives” in Parliament.

Early Feb., 1986  In Mutsi, a township at the edge of new Bantustans, 80 families were forceably removed on buses by the South African government. The families signed documents under pressure saying that they were willing to be moved. The government denied that people were being forced from their homes although armed soldiers arrived in buses to move the people.

Anti-Apartheid Calendar

Every Thursday, Free South Africa Movement Demonstration. South African Consulate, 444 North Michigan, Chicago, at noon.

March 29—CIDSA and the United Nations sponsor a conference on Namibia, 9–5, at the Lutheran School of Theology, 1100 East 55th Street.

April 6—CIDSA General Membership Meeting, U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

April 25—Program on Israel and South Africa. Speakers include Jeanette Ndlovu of the ANC Women’s Section and Camilli Odeh of the Nov. 29th Committee for Palestine, YWCA, 37 S. Wabash. Contact Camilli Odeh 769-4371 for information.

May 4—CIDSA General Membership Meeting, U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

June 1—CIDSA General Membership Meeting, U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

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