

New Interest In Cultural Boycott Seen In New York

[AN] The long-standing effort by anti-apartheid forces to mount an effective cultural boycott against South Africa generated fresh interest in New York last month, as a number of artists and activists gathered at the United Nations to focus attention on the issue.

South African-born musician Hugh Masekela and African-American poet Amiri Baraka were among those on hand for special sessions March 18 and 19 at the UN's Dag Hammarskjold Library auditorium and at the Harlem State Building, commemorating with the UN a day of "Solidarity with Peoples Struggling Against Racism and Racial Discrimination."

There, in speech after speech, UN officials, African diplomats and anti-apartheid activists put forth the argument that tours by foreign entertainers lend support for apartheid by legitimizing the government and going against efforts to further isolate the white regime.

"The people of South Africa are unequivocal in their condemnation of all those who provide aid and support for the vicious and destructive system known as apartheid," said Dennis Brutus, a poet living in exile from South Africa. "They have been clear for many years — beginning in the 1960's with Chief Albert Luthuli, president of the African National Congress — in their call for a boycott of apartheid in all spheres, including the cultural and sporting spheres."

Coinciding with a special nationwide mobilization by anti-apartheid forces in the U.S., the United Nations rallies are seen by boycott organizers as an important spark for future actions.

Given South Africa's equally persistent efforts to lure top American entertainers, however, the cultural boycott remains at best a leaky embargo. In spite of the activists' campaign, performers such as Frank Sinatra, Millie Jackson, supper club singer Shirley Bassey and folk artist Janis Ian have performed in South Africa in recent months.

According to published reports, Diana Ross has signed a contract to appear in Bophuthatswana, one of the ethnic reserves that South Africa has declared independent. Contacted last week, however, Ms. Ross' agent refused comment on these reports.

Nearly all performers who accept offers from South African promoters are paid extremely well. Sinatra became the world's highest-paid entertainer with the \$2 million purse he received for performing in Bophuthatswana's Sun City resort.

In a statement delivered through agent Lee Solters, Sinatra explained his appearance as "an effort to make known to the world, especially those concerned with civil rights, the importance of the independence of Bophuthatswana — it is the right step for [South Africa's] future development."

In an interview, however, Solters dismissed as irrelevant the objections of black South African political groups, saying, "I couldn't give a s--- about the African organizations' opinion."

Some black artists have been equally strident in rejecting activists' pleas. "I'm here for the dollars," rhythm and blues artist Millie Jackson told a South African reporter. "I'm not interested in the black struggle. Afro-Americans are lazy and have criminal tendencies."

There are others, however, who have embraced the idea of a cultural embargo. Phyllis Hyman, star of

Broadway's "Sophisticated Ladies," turned down an offer of \$100,000 to play South Africa. "I could not tour there under any circumstances," she said. "I have been asked how I can pass up that kind of money, but I never gave it a thought. I am disappointed that some black artists are going to South Africa."

Jazz great Max Roach, whose recording "Tears for Johannesburg" on his *Freedom Now Suite* was banned by South African authorities back in 1960, and Gil Scott-Heron, who recorded "Johannesburg," are two other well-known performers who have taken a stand against apartheid.

One American celebrity who has been on both sides of the issue is tennis star Arthur Ashe who, despite advice to the contrary, visited South Africa several years ago. After some involvement

in South African tennis, Ashe changed his stance. Recently he advised John McEnroe, who was offered huge sums to play tennis in South Africa, "Don't go there — you will be giving racism a good name."

Sathima Ibrahim agrees. A school teacher before she and her husband Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) left Cape Town to pursue a singing career, Sathima says: "There was a still is, no such thing as a professional musician in South Africa. Whenever we did work in white night clubs, we were exploited for very little pay — no musicians' union to protect us; and at intermission we sat in the kitchen until it was time to perform again."

"There are thousands of other artists there," recalls trumpeter Hugh Masekela, who now lives in the U.S. "Most of them die in South Africa, frustrated."

Reprieve But No Solution For Nyanga Squatters

[AN] The inquest into the prison death of trade unionist Neil Aggett opened last week, only to be suspended until June 1 while the Transvaal Supreme Court considers an appeal from the police lawyer.

Attorney Piet Schaborn is arguing that an affidavit by the dead man alleging assault and the use of electric shock by his interrogators should be excluded from evidence. The affidavit was reportedly signed about fourteen hours before Aggett's death on February 5.

The inquest's first day was also marked by the serving of a banning order on witness Maurice Smithers, recently released from detention along with seven others. Smithers earlier this year smuggled out a note to parliamentarian Helen Suzman describing police mistreatment of Aggett that he had observed. Smithers will still be able to testify, but his banning order will prevent him from moving outside the Johannesburg area, being quoted, or being with more than one person at a time.

The delay of the Aggett inquest comes amidst other evidence of a continuing hardline by the government toward opponents. In early March officials rejected outright the proposals by the Buthelezi Commission in Natal on a compromise form of "power-sharing". In late March military call-ups were increased. And this week the trial under the Terrorism Act begins of Hannichen Koornhof, a niece of Minister of Cooperation Pieter Koornhof. She is charged with having passed on instructions for the banned African National Congress.

In Cape Town, the end of a 24-day-long hunger strike by squatters after a meeting with Minister Koornhof, though averting the death of any faster, is not seen as a signal of any basic change in government policy, Barry Streek reports.

CAPE TOWN — A dramatic hunger strike in a Cape Town cathedral by 54 squatters ended on April 2 after the South African government promised to review the demand by 900 other squatters for the legal right to remain in "white South Africa."

The compromise, promoted by a group of church leaders, terminated the strike before any of the fasters had died. But the incident once again highlighted for many South Africans the painful effects of the Nationalist government's policy of racial separation.

Although eleven of the

protesters had been born in Cape Town and 72% had lived in Cape Town for at least ten years, all were "squating" at the Nyanga township — that is, they were technically illegal, with no rights to either accommodation or employment.

Under South African law, most are obliged to reside in the "homelands" of Transkei and Ciskei, ethnic reserves declared independent by South Africa but not recognized as sovereign states elsewhere. Instead, however, the squatters risked arrest to find employment and escape the poverty in the rural areas. The 54 protesters between them had amassed 252 arrests for pass law violations, an average of 4.5 arrests each.

These people are legally regarded as citizens of the homelands, where in terms of the official policy, they are meant to exercise their political rights. Provided they have guaranteed employment, they may be permitted in the so-called white areas of South Africa. Their families do not have such rights, however, and most able-

bodied men sign eleven-month labor contracts under terms of which they are meant to return home at the end of the contracts.

The government's grand master plan, which is seen as the answer to majority rule over the whole of South Africa, is that black and white people should not live together in the same area and that black people have no right to stay in those parts of South Africa designated for white control unless they hold jobs.

In this basic policy there is no difference between the ruling National Party and the right-wing breakaway group, the Conservative Party.

While the principle of racial separation appeals to many whites as the viable alternative to black rule, the effect has been to divide families and to exacerbate conditions of poverty in the rural areas.

The life history of some of the protesting Nyanga squatters reflects this grim struggle for survival.

Mrs. Nowinara Ionyeni, 40, the mother of

six, came to Cape Town from Transkei in 1972. Her husband has worked

in Cape Town on contracts since 1958. She says before she joined

her husband she saw him two weeks a year.

32, mother of five, came to nd has worked in



Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society awarded Ms. Celia A. Crudup of Saint Augustine's College the George W. Gore, Jr. Graduate Scholarship for Academic Excellence. From left to right: Dr. Lucy Rose Adams, AKM adviser; Ms. Celia Crudup, scholarship recipient; Colonel J. Larry Green, ad-

viser; and Ms. Jacqueline Wilder, delegate. Ms. Crudup, a senior accounting major from Franklinton, was recognized for achieving the highest academic average during an AKM convention held at Florida A&M University.



RALEIGH—David Gill, left, a sophomore humanities student from Raleigh, presents Dr. Prezell R. Robinson, president of Saint Augustine's College, a portrait in memory of the three Liberian students fatally injured in a car accident in November, 1981. The 20th Century African

American painting was done in Paris by Henry O'Tanna. President Robinson accepted the painting on behalf of the College, and acknowledged that it will be housed in the Archives Room of the Library at St. Augustine's.

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