

Bill Cosby Leads Drive To "Unlock S. Africa Jails"

Special To The Post
By Larry A. Still

(Washington, D.C., NNPA) - Afro American leaders ranging from television star Bill Cosby to members of the Congressional Black Caucus, during demonstrations this week at the U. S. Capitol demanded the release before Christmas of hundreds of children now imprisoned in South Africa.

Crying "Unlock Apartheid Jails," Democratic Reps. Mervyn Dymally (Calif.), William Gray (Philadelphia) and Walter Fauntroy (D.C.), were joined by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (Md.) and Rep. Patricia Schroeder (Colo.) in delivering 30,000 keys and 20,000 postcards to the South African Embassy seeking the release of "detained" black children throughout the white ruled country.

The unlock the jails campaign was launched by entertainer Cosby in late September when the mayors of eight cities, including New York City, pledged their support by presenting Cosby with keys to their cities



Cosby

symbolizing their demand that South Africa unlock its jail doors. Recently numerous churches, synagogues and schools in more than 20 states have collected keys in support of the program.

The "Free South Africa's Children" drive directed by the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights

with the New York based American Committee on Africa, has included Cosby in their effort.

The Washington protests followed a week of ceremony and human rights demonstrations during the visit of Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev with President Ronald Reagan. However, no mass Black protests, for any cause were held here during the Russians' visit.

During the latest Washington demonstrations at the South African embassy this week, scores of American activists, including political leaders, celebrities and U.S. children pledged to be arrested.

Rev. Allan Boesak, a leading "colored" anti-apartheid activist in Capetown South Africa, said, "We feel this event is tremendously important coming at a time, when people outside of South Africa have tended to forget about those in detention."

The minister, who was scheduled to report on conditions in his country, said that the government has begun a new crack-down on opposition and is raid-

ing churches, trade unions and community organizations. Harsh government censorship...has made it difficult for any accurate information about detentions to be revealed, he added. However, it is reported by the Detainees Parent Support Committee in South Africa that approximately 1,500 people are in jail, including 100 to 150 children.

Media accounts of the jailed and beaten children were featured recently on a CBS-TV Report by commentator Walter Cronkite. And this reporter received an eye witness account of detainees during a recent visit to South Africa in November. "I talked with students and anti-apartheid activists in the KwaZulu and Capetown areas who told of beatings and jailing in their 'Townships' while protesting racist, apartheid practices. Ironically, some of the children attended a school named for

Mahatma Gandhi, the noted Indian leader who began his non-violent practices in South Africa before influencing Dr. Martin L. King.

The Africa Fund, with Bill Cosby as honorary chairman, may be contacted at 198 Broadway, New York City, NY 10038, 212-962-1210. Joshua Nessen and Dumisani Kumalo are co-coordinators.

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\$250,000. "When the action first occurred, I just wanted my job back. I didn't want to sue. But when nothing happened, filing suit was the only alternative I had," Blackmore says.

Ms. Blackmore's record as executive director speaks for itself. Based on a Hornets' Nest Girl Scout Council 1987 Annual Report, Ms. Blackmore made significant progress in diversifying the Council's funding by implementing a Council-wide calendar sale and an annual giving program.

Under her administration, actual expenses were \$150,000 less than budgeted expenses. The cash reserve had been raised to \$100,000 and total support and revenue exceeded expenses by \$10,000.

In areas of program, membership and community relations, Ms. Blackmore increased involvement of girls in national and international opportunities, increased community visibility to the Council and Girl Scouting through the 75th anniversary and increased membership and implementation of a new adult leadership appointment process.

If there was any shadow of doubt concerning Ms. Blackmore's performance, the criticism came in her management style.

Ms. Blackmore said that when she was interviewed for the position, she made clear the type of administrator she was. She also stated that during her interview she had expressed concern about the Council's affirmative action policies.

Before accepting the position, Ms. Blackmore said she knew she would be accepting an extremely challenging position.

"The material sent by the board of directors about Hornets' Nest told me that there were some challenges here. I was not foreign to challenges. I had met them in Memphis."

At Ms. Blackmore's first staff meeting she attests that she knew the institution of racism was alive and well. "I could see it in the body language. I could see it in the staff's grouping."

"My philosophy embraces a team approach. When I first arrived at Hornets' Nest, I assured the board and staff that their jobs were secure. I gave everyone a clean slate and everyone was given the chance to share my philosophy. Furthermore, I interviewed each staff member

Endorsement

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be defeated."

He also disputed the notion that most poor people are on welfare. The truth, he said, is that "they work every day. But when they get through working, they're still poor."

But, "It's not enough to have a job, you must get paid (enough) for what you do," he said.

He repeated his call for national health insurance and for a policy of helping Latin America by supplying tractors and grain rather than guns.

Also, Jackson criticized the news media for reporting that while he draws the biggest crowds and generates the most enthusiasm of any presidential candidate, he can't win the Democratic nomination.

"They should be saying, 'Therefore, he can't help but win,'" Jackson said. The election should be decided "not on race or sex or religion, but on direction," he said.

"If I can win, any American can win. If I cannot win, most Americans cannot win," he said.

When he was asked how he approaches a political system controlled for decades by white politicians, Jackson turned the tables and told the questioner: "You should not have a low estimate of white people. White people can change."

and encouraged them to bring constructive ideas to the meeting.

Because staff members voiced overwhelmingly the need for an officer manager and because an officer manager was a priority for Ms. Blackmore, filling that position was a top concern.

"I looked for a minority and found one that met my needs. Unfortunately she did not meet the desires of staff. Consequently some resignations came forth."

Another issue, affirmative action was important to Ms. Blackmore. "I strived to achieve parity. I felt that until a minimum of seven minorities were on staff, parity was not met."

Ms. Blackmore also initiated flex time, a service to benefit the council's volunteers. "So many of them (volunteers) worked and there was no time for them to be serviced if the council opened at 9 and closed at 5. This way the Council was opened from 8:30 to 8:30."

None of the voiced opposition to new ideas and formats has been cited as the reason for her dismissal. Ms. Blackmore commented that she hasn't been given a reason for her termina-

tion.

With that Barbara Bernhardt, past president of the Hornets' Nest Council agreed. Instrumental in hiring Ms. Blackmore, Mrs. Bernhardt said: "I have been given reasons, but nothing that is sufficient for terminating Ms. Blackmore. Personally, I think Argle is a very competent and able executive director. She was brought here to do certain things and in my estimation, during my term of office, she was doing what she was hired to do. She knows her Girl Scouts and she tries hard to live by the promise and law of Girl Scouts. I do not approve of the manner and method that has taken place in her expulsion and I think that it is a travesty that she no longer serves as executive director."

At the time Ms. Blackmore first considered the executive director's position at Hornets' Nest, she told her president then that the eight county council may not be ready for her. As she fights to do the job she has been doing for over five years and has done well, those who oppose her will find her to be a formidable opponent indeed.



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