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ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVITIES IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A rising tide

by

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The views expressed are those of the author.]

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Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa, Port Elizabeth, Fort Hare University, the black South African students' struggle, the black consciousness movement, the mass arrests, the death of Steven Biko, the school-children's continuing school boycott--all these moments of the continuous resistance of African people and their allies inside South Africa have ignited sparks which are now starting a bush fire in the United States.

Traditionally, there have been three galaxies of anti-apartheid protest in the United States: 1) the black community; 2) the churches; and 3) small single issue support groups such as the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). And in that mould we have seen, in recent years, each of these constituencies carrying on in their usually persistent manner.

Growing solidarity of the black community in the United States with liberation in Southern Africa

Twenty-eighth of May this year saw the African Liberation Day celebrated for the fifth straight year with demonstrations as large as 12,000 and more in cities like Washington, New York, and Chicago. Black organizations such as the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) and the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) will undoubtedly be mobilizing with increased fervor in the coming spring.

A further testimony to the perseverance of the black community was the February mobilization led by the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, which picketed the South African propaganda play, "Ipi Thombi," for over six weeks finally forcing it into an early closing.

A related event which, too, had its roots and drive within the black community was the fund-raising organized by the Mozambique Film Project. With premieres of the Robert Van Lierop film, "O Povo Organizado," in ten different cities in the United States and Canada, attended by nearly 10,000 people and viewed by television audiences of over 2 million, largely from black, Hispanic, and working class communities, the Mozambique Film Project raised over \$48,000 in less than one year for hospital construction in free Mozambique.

Watching the hundreds who came to see "Povo" in various cities and marching with thousands of black working people, we could not help but think of the prophetic words of the historic giant, Paul Robeson, when at Madison Square Garden on 6 June 1946 he said:

"The Negro--and I mean American Negroes as well as West Indians and Africans--has a direct and first-hand understanding, which most other people lack, of what imperialist exploitation and oppression is. With him it is no far-off theoretical problem..."