

Unlock Apartheid's Jails Campaign

Keynotes

Winter 1987

BILL COSBY LAUNCHES UNLOCK APARTHEID'S JAIL CAMPAIGN



- CAMPAIGN DELIVERS 30,000 KEYS TO SOUTH AFRICAN CONSULATE ON OCTOBER 13
- SECOND KEY DELIVERY SET FOR WASHINGTON ON DECEMBER 15
- CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES, SCHOOLS IN 20 STATES COLLECTING KEYS
- CAMPAIGN TO CONTINUE THROUGH SPRING OF '88



A campaign
initiated by
The Africa Fund.

Bill Cosby
Honorary Chairman

Dumisani S. Kumalo
Coordinator

Dear friend,

About two months ago, Bill Cosby wrote you on behalf of the Unlock Apartheid's Jails campaign asking you to join him in a major statement of conscience protesting the jailing of tens of thousands of men, women, and children in South Africa. He asked you to help free these political prisoners by collecting keys in your church and synagogues to symbolize our demand that South Africa unlock the doors of its apartheid jails.

Since then the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign has accomplished a great deal. In September, Mr Cosby invited the mayors of eight major cities to present him with the keys to their cities at a press conference in New York, thereby proclaiming both their personal support and the commitment of their citizens to seeing apartheid's prisoners freed. The press conference was covered by newspapers and television stations across the United States, Europe and South Africa.

This has encouraged people throughout the U.S. to get involved and demonstrate their concern for freedom in South Africa by joining our campaign. High school students in Denver, autoworkers in Detroit and church congregations in Houston were among the many people who came forward to collect keys to dramatize their determination to "Unlock Apartheid's Jails."

As a result, on October 13 we were able to deliver 30,000 keys to the South African consulate in New York - one key for every political prisoner held in jail in the last year.

I am writing to express our appreciation for your contribution to the success of this campaign so far. But as you know the detentions and repression are continuing. Recently, in a small town in the Orange Free State, the police came in the early hours of the morning and took away twenty-two young people. Many were between 14 and 16 years old. When their parents went to the police station to look for them they heard terrible screams coming from the building where the children were being held. But the police would not allow anyone to see these children, including their parents. Incidents like these are still a common occurrence in South Africa today.

It is for these people and so many others like them that our campaign must go on. On Tuesday, December 15 we will deliver more keys at the South African Embassy in Washington DC. And we need your help.

We ask that you again get a large fishbowl and place it in your church so that members of your congregation may contribute their keys as a demand that the doors of South Africa's jails be opened.

Please send us your keys with a note about your efforts before December 10 so that we can deliver them to the Embassy on December 15. And because the campaign will continue into Spring, 1988, there is still time for your congregation or group to participate.

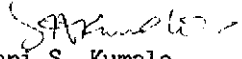
The prisoners of apartheid and their families are appealing to their friends in other countries for help. We are those friends. Our protests can make the difference between prison and freedom - even life or death - for the thousands of men, women and children who have been jailed by the white minority government.

Already, reports in South African newspapers reveal that Pretoria is worried about the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails campaign," because it turns the spotlight of world opinion on their jails. They know we are revealing what they have tried to keep secret --- the presence of thousands of prisoners, nearly half of whom are children, who have been held without trial, and brutally tortured for opposing apartheid.

I enclose some of the newspaper stories which show how successful our efforts have become in focusing the nation's attention on South Africa's prisoners of conscience.

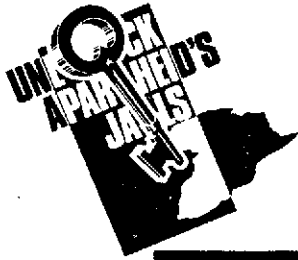
I look forward to your continued participation in this Campaign. If there are any questions you may have, please feel free to call me either in my office, 212-962-1210 or at home, 718-287-9651.

Sincerely,


Dumisani S. Kumalo
Coordinator



Religious, labor and government leaders join Unlock Apartheid's Jails campaigners at October 13 key-dumping event at the South African Consulate in New York.



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Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1987 The Philadelphia Inquirer



Cosby holds a fishbowl filled with donated keys, which will be sent to the South African government.

Cosby, mayors kick off campaign to help 'Unlock Apartheid's Jails'

By Rick Lyman
Inquirer Staff Writer

NEW YORK — When the ambassador from Nigeria described "Dr. William H. Cosby Jr." as the star of the show, the TV tycoon in the bright-red shirt and the yellow suspenders grinned a coy, pudding-pop grin and shyly hid his face behind a nearby curtain.

The cameras flashed like twilight artillery.

Bill Cosby told the assembled throng yesterday in the rose-tinted ballroom at the Grant Hyatt Hotel that he agreed to attend the kickoff festivities for the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign because he was convinced that his celebrity would give the event a little boost.

Which it did.

The ballroom was jammed with journalists and spectators. A long line of television cameras and snaking cords cluttered the back aisle.

"I am a celebrity," Cosby said. "But this is not about Bill Cosby. This is about people who are free in the United States of America. It's about a feeling we all share, a feeling of children going out to play, going to the store, going to visit Grandpa or Uncle and not coming back home. That's what this is about. Clearly, that's what this is about."

In South Africa, the comedian said, children are playing an increasing role in the fight against that country's racial separation policies and are, as a result, being

arrested, detained and tortured at increasing rates. South Africa's U.N. mission issued a statement last week denying this.

"We're not asking if this is right or wrong," Cosby said, "because there is no controversy."

The only question, he said, is what can be done to stop it?

Seated to Cosby's right were the mayors of eight U.S. cities who had come to take part in the ceremony — dropping keys to their cities in a glass fishbowl held aloft by Cosby.

Joseph N. Garba, the Nigerian ambassador and chairman of the U.N. Special Committee against Apartheid, will take the keys to rallies on the steps of the South African Consulate in New York on Oct. 13 and the South African Embassy in Washington on Dec. 10, "International Human Rights Day."

"Unlock Apartheid's Jails" is a consciousness-raising campaign, a spokesman said, to keep the issues of apartheid and political detainees in the news — to counteract South African censorship regulations, which have been effective in wiping the nation's troubles off the evening news and many front pages.

People all over the world are being urged to send their old keys — car keys, house keys, keys to who-knows-what — to President Pieter W. Botha in South Africa along with a demand that the nation "immediately free all detainees and political prisoners."

Initiated by the African Fund, the campaign is being financed by profits from "Sun City," the anti-apartheid pop song and video, which has raised about a half-million dollars, supporters say.

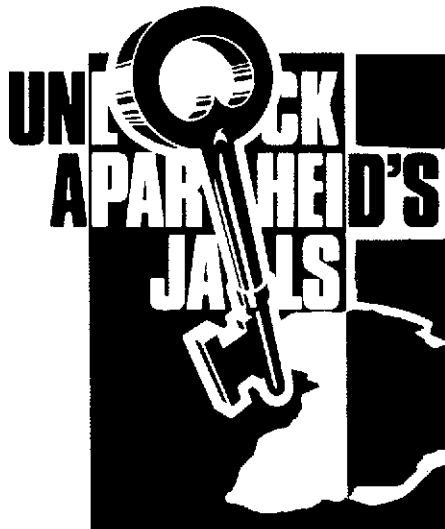
"I perceive the South African regime as the direct heir and descendant of Hitler's Nazi Germany," said New York Mayor Edward I. Koch, dropping his key in Cosby's fishbowl. "In South Africa, they are seeking to destroy their black citizens, and the rest of the world has been far too silent for far too long."

Wilmington's mayor, Daniel Frawley, said his was "a small city," but the "outrageous moral conduct of the government of South Africa calls for every voice to be heard." Wilmington's key came attached to a plaque that wouldn't fit through the mouth of the fishbowl, so Frawley yanked it off and thrust it inside to cheers from the audience.

Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland said his city had stopped handing out keys a long time ago. Fortunately, he said, a salesman had come to City Hall about a year ago and tried to persuade Holland to go back to keys, leaving a sample as an enticement.

"It's quite a key," Holland said, plunking the 6-inch monster in Cosby's fishbowl. "It's our one and only key. But I can't think of any better place for it."

Also attending were the mayors of Washington; Kansas City, Mo.; Boston; Hartford, Conn., and Providence, R.I.



It's 4:00 am, there's a knock at the door. Four men push aside the mother in the doorway and walk into the house. At the bedroom they pause, and then pull 13-year-old Cleopatra Molefe out of bed and take her away. Two months later, Cleopatra's parents had still not seen their daughter. . .

Every twelve minutes someone is imprisoned without charge or trial in apartheid South Africa. In the last year 30,000 people have been detained — men and women, children, religious leaders, labor leaders, community activists, journalists, teachers and countless others have all been swept up. Nearly half are children, some only five years old. The detainees are denied access to lawyers or family. Doctors report that over 80 percent of the detainees have been tortured. Many have died in police custody. Others have disappeared without a trace. **Their only crime is demanding full civil rights in the land of their birth.**

YOU CAN HELP SET THEM FREE

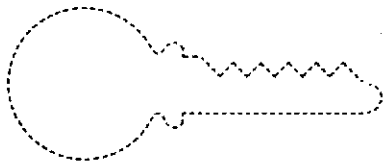
SEND IN YOUR KEYS TO UNLOCK APARTHEID'S JAILS

The Africa Fund will present these keys by the thousands to the South African Government to demand that they free the detainees and political prisoners.

TO:
President P.W. Botha.
South Africa

Here is my key. I demand that you Unlock Apartheid's Jails and free all detainees and political prisoners. Apartheid is a crime. I support the immediate end to the racist system of white minority rule and the establishment of a free, democratic South Africa based on one-person, one-vote.

SIGNED: _____



TO:
The Africa Fund
Please deliver the enclosed key
and statement to the South
African government

____ I will get my church, union or organization to collect keys
Here is my contribution of \$ _____ to support the campaign to mobilize Americans to Unlock the Jails of Apartheid and aid the families of South African political prisoners.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

RETURN COUPON TO: **UNLOCK APARTHEID'S JAILS**
THE AFRICA FUND, 198 BROADWAY, NYC 10038
(212-962-1210)

THE REPORTER DISPATCH ★★★

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1987

GANNETT WESTCHESTER NEWSPAPERS

35 CENTS

Hastings pupils lend support to 'Unlock Apartheid' drive

By Emily Laber
Staff Writer

Nicholas Winn sat on a Manhattan-bound school bus Tuesday, proudly holding a hand-decorated shoe box containing 202 used keys.

"These are to unlock the children in South African jails to freedom," said the Hastings-on-Hudson sixth-grader.

Winn and 38 classmates deposited hundreds of keys outside the South African consulate Tuesday afternoon as part of the national "on behalf of political prisoners in 'Unlock Apartheid's Jails Campaign."

"Every one key shows that one person cares," said Melissa Lee, one of the Hastings students.

More than 30,000 people — a third of them under the age of 18 — have been imprisoned without charge in South Africa during the last one-and-a-half years, according to the American Committee on Africa, the non-profit anti-apartheid group sponsoring the campaign.

The Hastings students were the largest single delegation to Tuesday's rally — which was attended by about 150 people — and the only one from Westchester. Spotlighted by the media, the children were photographed, filmed, and interviewed by at least a dozen cameramen and reporters.

"These children are having the experience of their lives," said Marcia Rivkin, the Hastings teacher who organized the trip.

Rivkin met actor Bill Cosby — honorary chairman of the "Unlock Apartheid" campaign — two weeks ago at a press conference. When she told her students about the encounter and the cause, they clamored to take part.

The children — most of them 11-year-olds — put up posters, collected keys, and made presentations to other Hastings students.

"Now that I know about (the South African children in jail), I think about them a lot," said Sarah Whitney.

"I imagine myself being in jail now. It's horrible," said Virginia Skrelja.

"If you were taken away from your family, how would you feel?" asked Lisbeth Whelan.

During the 45-minute bus ride to Manhattan, many of the children said they hoped to see Bill Cosby and other celebrities at the rally. But when Tuesday's guest speakers turned out to be much less glamorous — New York City Council President Andrew Stein and Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins — the Hastings children were disappointed but not disheartened.

"It would have been nice if (Bill Cosby) came, but we did a good cause,"



Gannett/Kathy Knochak

Keys and posters were placed outside the South African consulate Tuesday.

Sarah DeVita said afterwards.

Approximately 30,000 keys — donated by schools, churches, synagogues, and labor unions around the country — were deposited under the blue police barricade surrounding the consulate entrance at 48th Street between First and Second Avenues.

Speaking by telephone afterwards, Vice-Consul Duke Kent-Brown called the protesters' allegations "absolute nonsense." The vice-consul disputed the

group's figures, saying that just 69 — not 10,000 — South African children are currently in jail.

Kent-Brown said the Hastings school children were "innocently being duped into taking part in a demonstration they know nothing about."

But student Dara Steinberg seemed sure of her convictions. "They shouldn't be locking the children up just because they're demanding their rights," she said.



Gannett/Kathy Knochak

PROTEST — Hastings 6th graders Dena Rosenberg and Yuki Okada take part in the 'Unlock Apartheid's Jails Campaign' at the South African Consulate in New York Tuesday. See Metro, A15.



A campaign initiated by The Africa Fund.

Bill Cosby
Honorary Chairman

Dumisani S. Kumalo
Coordinator

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