

Waters Leads South Africa Protest

(Story Column Six)

'Low Key' Protest Has High Priority

Several local civil rights leaders participated in what police called a "low key" protest at the Beverly Hills offices of the South African Consulate last week.

But those involved in last Wednesday's demonstration consider their efforts to bring attention to 1,100 Black Unionists being held in South Africa high priority.

Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, who spent her Thanksgiving eve sitting on the floor outside the consulate's offices at 9107 Wilshire Blvd., said the protest is a "...revival of the Civil Rights movement.

"We're prepared to sit-in, walk-in, cry-in, confront-in, to do what's

(Continued on Page A-13)

'Low Key....

(Continued from Page A-1)

necessary to end apartheid and free the (political) prisoners."

Waters was joined by SCLC Executive Director Mark Ridley-Thomas; Willis Edwards, director of the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch of the NAACP; the Rev. Frank Reid III, pastor of Ward AME Church and Danny Bakewell, who heads the Brotherhood Crusade for the three-hour protest.

Unlike a protest in Washington D. C. the previous day when U.S. Representative Walter Fauntroy, former U.S. Civil Rights Commission member Mary Berry and anti-apartheid activist Randall Robinson were arrested when they refused to leave the South African Embassy in the Capital, no arrests were made locally.

The Los Angeles protest was in response to a national call by the Washington D.C. protestors to demonstrate at South African consulates in all major cities until Black unionists held by that country are released.

According to the assemblywoman, Black members of Congress plan to go to the South African consulates in each city and go to jail on a one-day basis until the unionists are freed.

Asked if she were prepared to go to jail in the protest, she replied, "Oh sure, oh absolutely."

Along with her companions,

Waters called for other local Black leaders to join the protest, although plans for how to continue the protest has not been finalized.

Waters commented before leaving the consulate, "It could be that we come here once a day, it could be that we come here once a week, it could be that we line up people to go to jail every day for 365 days."

If Ridley-Thomas had his way, the four-year-old office would be closed down altogether. He said the group wants "this damn consulate closed. It is morally reprehensible."

The protestors said they had been in the building since 4:30 p.m. when they had an appointment to meet with Consul General Sean Carey, but he never emerged from his office.

Students at USC also recently staged a demonstration protesting the apartheid policies of South Africa.

Bernard Walker, one of the organizers of the protest, said the afternoon function on the school's campus was successful in "drawing attention and providing a platform to communicate our views on South Africa.

Those views, such as American companies relocating to South Africa because of cheaper labor, should concern all students at the traditionally conservative school, according to Walker.

"When companies like General Motors, IBM and others relocate to South Africa, it takes away jobs from not only Blacks, but whites as well," Walker said.

"It's like what Dr. Martin Luther King said, when you support racism anywhere, you support it everywhere."