

Thousands to march to Remember Soweto: Marchers mourn 600 slain victims

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New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993); Jun 14, 1986;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: New York Amsterdam News

pg. 1

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By SIMON ANEKWE

Amsterdam News Staff

The stage is literally set for the "Remember Soweto" and "End Apartheid" Saturday, June 14 march and rally expected to be the largest anti-apartheid demonstration ever, bringing to New York City participants from as far away as Boston and Washington, D.C.

On the south side of the Great Lawn in Central Park, workers knocked and chipped away Monday to get the speakers' stand ready by Wednesday or Thursday.

And inside the "command post" at the District 65 headquarters, 13 Astor Place, the New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council staff and volunteers carried out coordinator Jim Bell's directions, putting all elements in place.

"Remember Soweto" is the rallying cry that the broad coalition of over 200 labor, religious, community, Hispanic, Asian and student organizations chose for the mobilization. It is expected to dwarf the historic demonstration of over 35,000 at the South African Mission to the U.N. last August.

The event will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising that

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JAMES BELL

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began in the Johannesburg, S.A. ghetto June 16, 1976. The day had started with thousands of Black school children peacefully protesting apartheid.

That long day that never ended saw the students being beaten, tear-gased, jailed and some 600 actually murdered. Many had bullets that entered their backs as they ran from the guns of police and security forces sent into action by the racist regime.

But the deaths of their loved ones only fired up the people's determination to struggle for equality as human beings in their own native land. Thus that struggle reached a high plateau when the minority regime granted a voice of sorts to other disenfranchised groups except the majority who owned the land in the first place.

Since that hated so-called new constitution went into effect Sept. 1984, some 1700 people have died. The majority of them have been Blacks killed by government forces, though the regime now has also resorted to using right-wing Black vigilantes whose leaders are on the white racist government pay-roll.

With applicable military power built and buoyed up by investments, military supplies and technology from the U.S. and Britain principally, lately joined by the State of Israel, the regime reigns supreme in that region.

And in the arrogance of that power, South Africa recently added Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the list of neighboring Black-ruled states that it

has attacked.

The aggression against those three states, which President Pieter W. Botha said was patterned after President Reagan's attack on Libya, took place May 19, at a time the (British) Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group was in Cape Town. It had been in search of a possible diplomatic solution to the crisis in South Africa.

The Eminent Persons Group, led by former Nigerian Head of State Sen. Olusegun Obasanjo, is in London this week preparing to report that it was giving up its mediation mission, because of the regime's determination to maintain its iniquitous apartheid domination.

So viewing what it terms "South Africa's intransigence to peaceful solutions to the escalating violence in the region," the Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council has urged a massive turnout at the June 14 march and rally.

"The struggle of the people for freedom in South Africa has been met by the most vicious response aided and abetted by the U.S. government," the Coordinating Council asserted. "This has left us no choice but to demand immediate and comprehensive sanctions against the racist government of South Africa.

"On June 14, we are calling on people of goodwill in the greater New York area to come together for a massive rally to demonstrate our support for the people of South Africa and to reiterate our demand for divestment, sanctions and boycotts to finally force an end to apartheid," the N.Y. Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council stated.