

Point of View

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

ANGOLA: "PEACE AT LAST"

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

All persons of African descent throughout the world, and all persons who are committed to justice and peace, are celebrating the fact that the struggle for peace in Angola has finally been won. The people and government of The Peoples Republic of Angola are to be saluted for their valiant and long lasting sacrifices to achieve a lasting peace without compromising their national sovereignty and right to self-determination.

After throwing off 500 years of Portuguese colonialism in 1975, the people and the government of Angola have had to

endure 16 years of brutal attacks from separate and combined armed forces of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa as well as attacks from so-called Unita rebel units led by Jonas Savimbi who is a client of the United States.

On May 31, 1991, in Lisbon, Portugal, Peace Accords were signed between the government of Angola and Unita. The United States and the Soviet Union served as observers and encouragers of the peace process. The government of Portugal served as the mediator. As of this date, the peace process appears to be holding and the

cessation of warfare in and on Angola has been halted.

In particular, the President of Angola, H.E. Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, should be congratulated for his successful and courageous leadership. During the signing of the Peace Accords, President Dos Santos stated, "This is an occasion of great joy and emotion because the formal signing of these Accords enshrines the beginning of a new era of peace and concord in Angola. I am sure that sentiments, which are being experienced by all Angolans, are shared by the international community as a whole, which

believes in the fundamental values of humanity."

President Dos Santos further emphasized, "At this solemn hour we pay a heartfelt tribute to the memory of those who sacrificed their lives so that the country could remain and integral entity, and the dignity and independence of the Angolan people could be upheld. Thanks to their example, we have overcome many domestic and external obstacles. We have brought together diverse goals and emotions and adopted a general strategy which led us to placing the Angolan case within the context of the existing southern

African conflict."

When news of the Peace Accords reached Angola, tens of thousands of Angolans danced in the streets of the capital city Luanda and in cities and towns throughout the country. The joy of peace is now being translated into a "democratization process." It is our hope that finally the people of Angola will secure this strategic African nation so that greater empowerment and stability will come to the entire southern African region.

We are aware that there are still some outside political, economic and military powers which are prone to continue to attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of Angola against the interest of the Angolan people and government. For those of us who live here in the United States, we must continue to raise our voices and energies in support of Angola's right to choose its own

future without intimidation from the West or East.

The victory of the people of Angola is a victory for peace and justice for all of the peoples of the world. The international community must now respond to the economic development needs of Angola. This nation not only has the potential to be "the bread basket" for all southern Africa, but also Angola has the potential, in spite of the devastation of war, to be one of the leading African economic forces of the 21st century.

Elections do not automatically bring democracy. The new spirit of peace with respect, dignity and sovereignty in Angola today is the fundamental formula from which Angolan democracy and prosperity will continue to evolve. We must do all that we can to help our sisters and brothers in Angola because their struggle continues to be our struggle.



By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

THE MOOSE

Last Saturday afternoon was a very scary and disappointing time for me. As I walked across the hall from my legislative office in the legislative building, I became sick as I watched the State's health officer work relentlessly to attach an oxygen tank to a dear friend. As I sat in shock in Moose's office watching him unable to breathe, and fearing for his life, it made me realize how important and how much he is a support system for me, and many others, whether they know it or not.

During those long fifteen minutes that was spent in his office trying to help him breathe, seemed like hours. As I sat at his desk I thought about how he had worked the last several weeks nonstop, twelve to eighteen hours per day. I thought about how since last January, he would get up at 5:00 a.m. each day to serve on the guel-

ing and tough ways and mean committee before most legislators even thought about breakfast. I thought about how he, during the last six months, just as he has done the last six years, served as chairman of the Assembly's Health and Welfare Committee. The committee that handles all of the states health about all the countless people that reside in his district that has no idea the things that he does and the sacrifices that he makes daily.

My thoughts were interrupted when the nursing attendant suggested that Moose should be rushed to the hospital. We notified the Carson-Tahoe Hospital nearby, and in a flash he was gone.

This is when the disappointment came. Disappointed because even though we have known each other for several years, it was not until this legislative session that we really

became close. With our efforts right across the hall from each other and living as roommates, I got to know the big guy that is often misunderstood. Disappointed because I feared the possibility of losing a friend who I had just began to understand.

As Moose spent the next 24 hours in intensive care, countless people quizzed me about his status, not one time could I find what I thought would be the right answer. I just continually said "He'll be fine." Now that I think about it, that was the right answer.

While Moose was hospitalized a strange but delightful thing happened. One of his dreams came to fruition. For the past six years Moose has worked to fulfill a dream to help those who need affordable housing. For six years Moose has tried to convince the legislature that without basic, decent and affordable housing, many families



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

just will not be able to flourish and expand into self-reliable and contributing citizens. Finally in 1989 he was successful in establishing the state's first low-income housing fund. Since that time he has tried various creative ways to place money in that fund.

Last Sunday after picking Moose up from the Carson-Tahoe Hospital, he ignored doctors orders to go home and rest, but instead came straight back to the assembly floor to vote on Assembly bill 147, which directs the housing division of the department of commerce to issue letters of credit to finance residential housing and transfer certain money to trust fund for low income housing. Clearly a victory for the people.

Congratulations, Moose and please breathe at ease and I'm glad you're back on the block.

TO BE EQUAL NEW ETHNIC REALITIES

By John E. Jacob

The recent violence in Washington, D.C.'s Mount Pleasant district awoke disturbing memories and signaled new realities.

The immediate cause of the civil disorder was a police shooting of a young Hispanic man under circumstances that have been disputed; the police say he used a knife in resisting arrest for drunkenness.

But incidents like that regretfully happen all the time and don't lead to civil disorder and trashing neighborhood stores.

For people to erupt in such a manner, there are deep, underlying causes and pervasive feelings of alienation.

Those causes were apparently present in abundance in Mount Pleasant, a heavily Hispanic area that includes large numbers of Salvadoran refugees and undocumented immigrants.

Many residents felt victimized by discrimination, exploited by employers, devalued because of their culture, and ignored by



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the city's power structure and government.

Such grievances are painful reminders of the violence that tore African American urban communities in the 1960's.

The lessons of that period include the hard reality that destroying our own neighborhoods was counterproductive, to say the least — some ghetto areas still bear the scars of the riots and many are still without the small shops and stores that used to service the neighborhood.

Another lesson was that violence got the attention of the people in power. It lit a bright

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