

Briefs

1. **Caiphus Semanya** and **Letta Mbulu** were in Lusaka to give a benefit concert on August 23rd and 24th in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Institute for Namibia.
2. England had never seen anything like it. Over 100,000 protesters marched in the blistering sun of the hottest June in 10 years, from London's Hyde Park to Clapham Common. There they gathered in the largest ever anti-apartheid rally to listen to an all-day-long concert. Under a massive banner saying 'No to Apartheid' top artists, such as **Hugh Masekela, Sting, Sade** and **Peter Gabriel** sang free of charge. ANC officials held aloft our banner and the thousands stomped and clapped and cheered.
3. As 'Bulldog' Margaret Thatcher continues to resist sanctions, British artists are letting their voices be heard. The **British Artists Against Apartheid Movement**, launched on April 15th in solidarity with the US based **Artists United Against Apartheid**, now have well over 100 signatories. They have already embarked upon street concerts and plan a benefit record and a number of large concerts as well as a re-recording of 'Free Nelson Mandela' with a new version featuring some of the artists and musicians who have signed up. 'We aim to increase British public awareness as to the nature of apartheid', they state and plan through cultural means to support the cause of a 'free, non-racial and democratic South Africa.'
4. *A Changing South Africa* — an exhibition of news, photographs and cartoons from the *Weekly Mail* ended on June 27th. The exhibition was staged to celebrate the June 14th birthday of the *Weekly Mail* and also marked the day SADF squads attacked and killed ANC supporters and Batswana, in Gaborone a year ago.
5. A photograph in a recent issue of *Paratus* shows musician **David Kramer** with a 'Bushman soccer team from 201 Battalion'. We hope

Mr Kramer is not intending to make a habit of lending himself to such blatant SADF propaganda pitches which would surely prejudice his once trenchant, lately limper satire. We hear '*Baboon-dogs*' marks a return to the social concern of the much younger, fresh from Worcester, Kramer; however *RIXAKA* did not receive a review copy.

6. Again in *Paratus*, this time **Pierre de Charnoy** gives the pro-SADF soliloquy. We hear him waxing nostalgic for the creative times on 'the Border'. *RIXAKA* hopes that democratic cultural workers of all kinds will take appropriate steps to isolate this gentleman.
7. Against vehement opposition from monopolistic distributors, Ster Kinekor and UIP, this year's **film festivals** in Durban and Cape Town made an effort to be relevant to South African audiences by screening a number of South African films. After appeals, bans were lifted on 3 documentaries — '*I Talk About Me — I Am Africa*', '*Last Grave at Dimbaza*' and '*No Middle Road To Freedom*' — but for one screening only, leaving only **Ken Kaplan's** drama '*The Hidden Farm*' to be banned outright. Speaking at the screenings, he said: 'There can be no freedom of any kind in SA while censorship exists as it does. The only option left to film-makers in SA is to make films which do not show a little and ignore a lot in the hope of not being banned.' Years of being banned had unfortunately eroded much of the initial impact of films such as '*You Have Struck A Rock*' (1981), '*South Africa Belongs To Us*' (1980) and '*Last Grave At Dimbaza*' (1974). Johannesburg was notable in that it did not screen one South African made film; coupled with inaccessible venues and over-priced tickets it is patently obvious that it has become a self indulgent escape for the White liberal establishment, ignoring the role it should be playing in the development of SA cinema by screening films made by South Africans for the majority of South Africans.
8. In the wake of the success of '**Rock Against Apartheid**' five of the artists and its main organiser **Tommy Rander** visited in March the ANC Headquarters in Zambia, SOMAFSCO and the offices in Tan-

zania as well as Zimbabwe to discuss further support to the ANC. A TV Video was made of their visit which was shown all over the Scandinavian countries.

9. On the weekend of June 6th in Copenhagen more than 16,000 fans rocked **Against Apartheid** in an impressive show of solidarity with the ANC. All top Danish stars performed alongside the specially invited **Amandla Band**.
10. Among speakers at the **Culture Against Apartheid Seminar** in Dublin, Ireland on the 25th and 26th April was **Robert Arden**, renowned playwright, who explained why he has consistently supported the Cultural Boycott.
11. During the week of 11th — 17th April famed African writers met at the **2nd African Writers Conference** in Stockholm, culminating in a public discussion on '*What is the Role of the Writer in National and Cultural Liberation*'. Topics including the Women's Role, Protest, Neo-Colonialism and Nation-building in Africa were discussed by such writers as **Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Ama Ata Aidoo, Eldred Jones** and **Emmanuel Ngara**. With participation of **Mongane Serote, Njabulo Ndebele, Siphosiphiso Sepamla** and **Miriam Tlali** there was considerable focus on South Africa.
12. **AMANDLA TOURS CANADA AND ITALY**
ANC's Cultural Ensemble, Amandla, participated at the **Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival (TAAAF)**. Other participants were **Caiphus Semanya, Letta Mbulu, Harry Belafonte**, Nigerian singer **Sonny Okosun**, Reggae star **Leroy Sibbles** and many other musical groups. **Amandla's** performances were met with enthusiasm from record crowds. This multicultural extravaganza, according to **TAAAF** organisers has not only succeeded to draw the largest ever crowd in anti-apartheid activities in Canada, but has also 'created a permanent anti-apartheid consciousness amongst Canadians'. The presence of Bishop Desmond Tutu and senior ANC activists at this 8 day cultural feast (from June 1st to 8th) added an impetus to the struggle against apartheid. **Amandla** proceeded (on a freedom train) to Ottawa, performing at the rousing 10th Anniversary of June 16th

organised by Oxfam, Canada. From Ottawa the group flew to Newfoundland and throughout the week were received with tremendous enthusiasm and show of solidarity.

In Italy the **Festival in Solidarity with the Peoples of South Africa, Namibia and Western Sahara** was organised by the Young Communist League and the Italian Communist Party. **Amandla** performed with overwhelming response in Viterbo and Naples, the latter being the main centre of the Festival. The presence of the Secretary General of the ANC, Cde Alfred Nzo, other distinguished guests and members of the Italian Communist Party highlighted the importance of the Festival.

13. The first of a series of jazz shows featuring top South African musicians, opened on May 25th, 1986 at the Diepkloof Funda Centre. The show and subsequent others has given a resounding welcome to a reawakening of our jazz scene. Other big names featured at these shows included **Mankunku Ngozi, Duke Makasi, Tete Mbambisa, Victor Ntoni, Lulu Gontsana, Barney Rachabane, and Count Judge.**

14. **Steve Kekana, Abigail Kubeka and Blondie Makhene** came out with some absolutely ridiculous justifications for participating in the South African Bureau for Information's *'Song For Peace'* in the beginning of September. These three puppets along with the other sell-outs in the cast have accepted blood money at R8,000 per day for the 10 front singers and R4,000 per day for the 40 chorus singers. In justifying their participation Kekana argues that:

- a) this was the first big chance for musicians to promote racial conciliation and
- b) that he prefers money being spent on 'Peace' than on rubber bullets and teargas canisters.

Conveniently with R8,000 per day in his pocket Kekana heartfeltdly says that he would not forgive himself if he did not try every avenue to bring peace to South Africa. **RIXAKA** joins the people's voice in protest at this blatant betrayal and paper thin justification of these collaborators. Mr Kekana the people will not forgive you. We will allow you no peaceful avenue in SA where you and your kind can spend your blood money.

15. Calling SA an 'uncivilised nation', American singer **Harry Belafonte** has warned that there will be a bloodbath in Africa if apartheid is not abandoned. Ending a visit during which he held talks with the ANC and President Kaunda, Mr Belafonte said there was the risk that violence in SA would spill over into the Front Line States 'killing millions of people'. He said he had found support in Zambia for a \$15 million six hour film on SA. The film would be shot in Zambia and Zimbabwe and would feature prominent anti-apartheid campaigners such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu and President Kaunda.

16. **HAMBA KAHLE BESSIE HEAD** On April 17th, **Bessie (Emery) Head** died of hepatitis in Botswana. She was 48 years old. Bessie was an untiring writer who captured those realities of life which often passed others by. In looking at her own life one can easily see how she could write as she did. She wrote from deep experience, using her talent and observing those around her in that

way which only the rough side of life can teach one to do. Bessie was born in a mental asylum to which her mother was committed and where her mother died. She was brought up in a mission orphanage and went on to become a teacher. Later she joined DRUM and worked as a journalist. Since 1964 she was exiled in Botswana, a country she loved dearly. In 1969 she wrote her first novel, *'When Rain Clouds Gather'*. Since then she has produced *'Maru'* (1971), *'A Question Of Power'* (1974), *'The Collectors Of Treasures'* (1977), *'Serowe Village Of The Rainwind'* (1981) and *'A Bewitched Crossroads: An African Saga'* (1984). At the time of her death she was researching into the Bama Ngwato archives in Gaborone and she was also working on her autobiography. **RIXAKA** salutes the passing of Bessie Head and will feature a more extensive article on her life and work in a future issue. **Hamba Kahle daughter of Pietermaritzburg, daughter of Botswana.**

