

NXM/203/2013/9

4.4.91

Friends of the Pathfinder Mural
191 7th Avenue
New York, NY 10011

April 4, 1991

Mr. Tabago Mafoli
African National Congress
801 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Mafoli,

I spoke to you on the phone today, inviting you or another ANC leader, to speak at a meeting on Saturday, April 20, in defense of the Pathfinder Mural and freedom of artistic and political expression.

As we talked about, the mural was vandalized for the second time a few weeks ago. Red paint was splashed onto the large portrait of Fidel Castro. The paint landed on the edge of his beard and spilled onto the portraits of other Cuban and Latin American leaders, including Jose Marti.

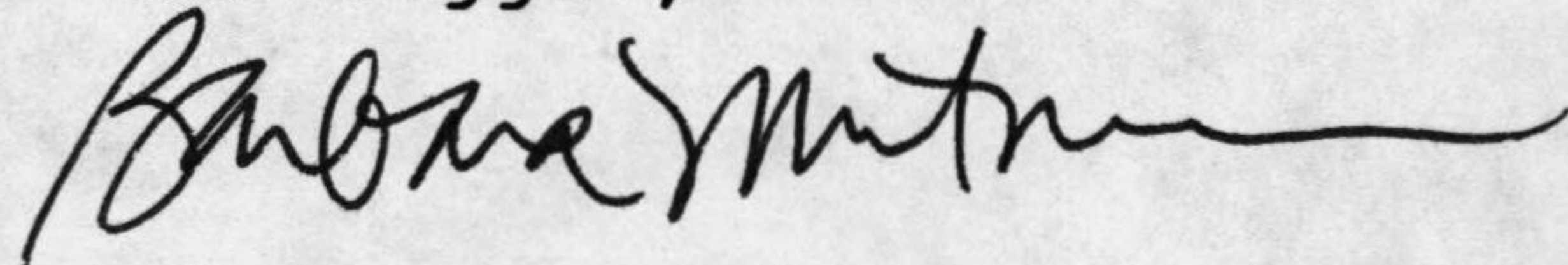
The April 20 meeting will begin at 7:30 P.M. The location has not yet been determined other than somewhere in New York City.

I've enclosed information about the mural that focuses on the previous attack as well as an example of the kind of statement others have sent. The response to the vandalism has been very good. Mayor Dinkin and the New York Council on the Arts sent a strong statement.

We are urging folks to show their concern by sending statements to the mayor's office (phone: 212-566-5090; fax: 212-791-9628). Please send any copies to our office at the address above.

Hoping to hear from you soon about the meeting on the 20th. You can call at our office (212) 727-8421 or me personally (718) 397-1112. A speakers platform of those in struggle which does not include the ANC is always lacking.

In Struggle,



Barbara Mutnick

News/

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT DAVID DINKINS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 21, 1989

Contact: Albert Scardino
212/669-8141

DAVID N. DINKINS
STATEMENT ON THE DESECRATION OF THE "PATHFINDER" MURAL

The act of vandalism against the "Pathfinder" mural depicting prominent figures in the struggle for social justice merely demonstrates the unbalanced mentality, pointless venom and cowardice of the anonymous perpetrators.

The mural, which is a result of the dedicated efforts of artists from more than twenty countries, was two years in the making. Its desecration points to a lack of respect for the diversity of opinion and creative expression that characterizes what it means to be American.

I urge law enforcement officials to do everything possible to apprehend the responsible person or persons and I call on New Yorkers of good will to join in rejecting acts of racial hostility, especially in this holiday season. I will try to assist in the restoration of this important work.

-30-

Pomp and pageantry mark Pathfinder mural unveiling

By CHARLES BAILLOU
Special to AmNews

Last Sunday the Pathfinder Mural was unveiled as a gathering accompanied a recording of "God Bless Africa," the anthem of the anti-apartheid freedom fighters of South Africa.

"This is the first non-abstract political mural (created in this city in recent memory)," human rights attorney William Kunstler, told over 200 shivering persons gathered at Charles and West streets, off the Hudson River, mid afternoon Sunday.

And former New York City Mayor John Lindsay welcomed this new artistic addition to the city he led for eight years. "Freedom of artistic and cultural expression is a hallmark of a genuinely open, democratic society," he said in a letter to the mural producers.

"The artists who have painted the Pathfinder Mural," the former mayor added, "have creatively put this freedom into practice, enhancing the diversity of public art available to all New Yorkers."

The Mural, which spans the south wall of the six story Pathfinder Press building on West and Charles Streets, has over 150 radical and progressive leaders and activists, past and present, from throughout the world.

Artists from 20 countries participated in the \$125,000 project, spokespersons noted.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN - Maurice Bishop (left foreground) and Malcolm X are prominent figures on the Pathfinder Mural in Greenwich Village. (Charles Baillou Photo)

Among contributors are the New York State Council on the Arts/Cultural Council Foundation, the Harburg Cultural Council, the Cultural Affairs Department of New York City; and private donors provided funds and materials, the project spokespersons said.

Malcolm McAllister, the mural site director, who painted a group portrait of V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and other founders of the Communist International, told the Amsterdam News recently that artists from countries of the chosen subjects were sought to paint their compatriots.

For example, South African artist Dumile Feni painted a portrait of Nelson Mandela. And Carole Byard, an African-American artist and teacher at New York's Parsons School of Design, painted a portrait of Malcolm X.

In a mural dedication message, Dennis Brutu, the exiled South African poet and teacher, put his view of the importance of the mural this way: "In a period of increased activity when many more are being drawn into active involvement in the political struggle...the unveiling of the Pathfinder Mural is a landmark event.

"It declares for all the world to see our commitment to a world where there is peace and justice for all. We salute our heroes, men and women, who have gone before and we pledge our determination to continue the struggle, in spite of temporary setbacks, until victory is won."



CAROLE BYARD

THE STAR-LEDGER, Monday, November 20, 1989

Marx, Lenin, Castro stare out from N.Y. mural

NEW YORK (AP) — A six-story-high mural featuring Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Fidel Castro, Malcolm X and other revolutionary leaders was dedicated yesterday in lower Manhattan.

Several hundred people sang along with folk singer Pete Seeger as several pennants which partially hid it were dropped to unveil the mural that covers the entire south wall of the Pathfinder building at 410 West St.

Known as "The Pathfinder Mural," its central image is of a press churning out publications with their authors depicted on sheets of paper that thicken into books.

Some of the portraits that appear include those of the leader of the Cuban revolution Ernesto Che Guevara, Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky and German socialist leader and writer Frederick Engels.

"It's a tremendous victory," said Steve Clark,

director of Pathfinder, which publishes revolutionary books and pamphlets. "There's no greater symbol of freedom than Fidel Castro and Che Guevara."

The 70-foot-high and 85-foot-wide mural involved the collaboration of artists from 20 countries over the last two years at a cost of \$125,000.

Clark said residents of the neighborhood did not oppose the project, but criticism came from others, including Patrick Buchanan, a columnist and former aide to President Reagan.

The New York City Tribune called it "a veritable Mount Rushmore to communism." It also questioned why the New York State Council on the Arts contributed \$500 "while the Communist world is disintegrating."

John Morgan, deputy director of the Cultural Council Foundation, which distributes the council's funds in New York City, said a committee of eight people was split in its decision.

"I think they felt the artistic merits of the project warranted funding," he said. The remaining money was raised through contributions.

The State Department had denied visas to two foreign artists invited by mural organizers. One of those artists produced sketches which were then copied by other artists onto the mural.

But the mural did not draw enough attention in two years for local elected officials to take notice.

Councilwoman Ruth W. Messinger, the newly elected Manhattan borough president, said, "It is not something I know anything about so I can't comment on it."

Councilwoman Carol Greitzer, whose district includes Greenwich Village, said: "If one building shows this kind of thing, I don't see it as a really hot issue. Who cares who's on it. It's not the kind of painting I would buy to hang up in my house."



Photo by Stephen Castagneto

A mural depicting revolutionary and civil rights leaders was vandalized this week.

Vandals Deface Mural In Greenwich Village

In an act decried by Mayor-elect David Dinkins, vandals have defaced a Greenwich Village mural that depicts revolutionary and civil rights leaders from around the world.

Vandals splashed white paint over large sections of the 6-story, 85-foot-wide mural on a wall of the Pathfinder Press building at West and Charles Streets. The attack occurred between 9 p.m. Wednesday and 7 a.m. Thursday, said Meryl Lynn Farber, New York coordinator of the artists group that painted the mural.

Dinkins said in a statement yester-

day that the vandalism "points to a lack of respect for the diversity of opinion and creative expression." He promised to support artists and activists in the restoration of the mural.

The mural, which conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan has called "Communism's Mount Rushmore," was dedicated Nov. 19. It includes portraits of authors published by Pathfinder, including the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., communist leaders Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, and Latin American revolutionaries Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. —Mitch Gelman

Paint Is Flung on Mural; Bottles Bear Swastikas

By DONATELLA LORCH

The Pathfinder Mural, a 70-foot-high Greenwich Village wall painting including portraits of Marx, Lenin, Fidel Castro, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others, was splattered with paint on Wednesday night.

Six bottles of white oil-based paint labeled with swastikas and the "SS" insignia were hurled against the mural on the building occupied by the Pathfinder Press, which publishes writings of working-class and civil rights thinkers and advocates.

Some of the portraits damaged were those of Dr. King and the antislavery advocates Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth.

The mural, which is 85 feet wide and

covers the south wall of the building at 410 West Street, has elicited opposition from the community.

'Attack' on Free Expression

Sam Manuel, the mural project director, said, "This attack on the mural is a serious attack on the freedom of expression and is part of the attack on the right of the freedom of expression of artists."

David N. Dinkins, the Mayor-elect, deplored the desecration of the mural and said the action showed a lack of respect for the "diversity of opinion and creative expression that characterizes what it means to be American."

He added that it "merely demonstrates the unbalanced mentality, pointless venom and cowardice of the anonymous perpetrators." Mr. Dinkins promised to assist in restoring the work.

William M. Kunstler, a civil rights lawyer who has been involved in the mural project from the beginning, said, "This is every bit as serious as the burning of the cross and the desecration of a synagogue, especially at a time when we are highlighting glasnost around the world."

Pathfinder Press said it had received a telephoned bomb threat after editorials in The Daily News and The New York Post criticized the mural.

24-Hour Guard Patrols

The work was completed in November and features portraits of those whose writings are published by Pathfinder Press. An international team of 80 artists from more than 20 countries painted the mural.

The project at one point was issued a building violation notice involving scaffolding, but the city eventually granted a permit. In December 1987, the Department of Sanitation issued 35 citations totaling \$3,500 for unauthorized



The New York Times/Fred R. Conrad

The Pathfinder Mural at West and Charles Streets in Greenwich Village was splattered with paint on Wednesday night.



The New York Times

A section of the mural that was hit with a bottle of paint.

posting of handbills advertising an open house for one of the artists. Pathfinder officials have said the State Department denied visas for two foreign artists. The State Department has denied any connection between its ac-

tion and the painting of the mural.

The police have made no arrests. Project officials said they would have their own 24-hour patrol guard the mural. Mr. Manuel said restoration would begin immediately.

Friends of the
**PATHFINDER
M·U·R·A·L**

I am outraged that the Pathfinder Mural in New York was vandalized for a second time on March 17. This attack, along with the vandalism in December, 1989, is a serious blow against freedom of expression, democratic and political rights.

A two year international effort by more than 80 artists from 20 countries produced this mural which features portraits of working class and revolutionary leaders. The portrait of Fidel Castro, the prime target of the recent attack, was painted by Aldo Soler Avila, a noted Cuban artist.

I wish to add my name with other supporters of democratic rights and artistic expression in condemning these acts. We demand that New York authorities fully investigate this crime, apprehend those responsible, and prosecute them to the full extent of the law.