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Press Section "
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A artheiai '? 13 April 1979
420th Meeting (PM) '

MUHAMMAD ALI, WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION, PRESENTS
ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE WITH PAINTING

Dedication Is to Freedom of the Black Peogle of South Africa;

Will Aggear on United Nations Namibia Stamp Cover

Muhammad Ali, the world heavyweight boxing champion, this afternoon
presented a painting to the Special Committee against Apartheid, which he
dedicated to freedom of the black peoples of South Africa.

In dedicating his painting, which is entitled "Freedom" and on which is
written "Let My People Go", Mr. Ali reau a poem he had written:

"Spread the word around the world,

Tell both friend and foe.

I'm fighting for freedom in South Africa.

Let my people go."

A friend of the heavyweight champion, Rodney Brown, said that Mr. Ali's
painting is to be the first day cover prepared by the World Federation of
United Nations Associations to accompany a United Nations stamp issue on a
free and independent Namibia.

Mr. Ali told the Committee that he would not talk about "the evils of
South Africa" for more knew about it than he did. He addressed the Committee
on the subject of "the heart". He said that in South Africa, one could not
change people with bombs and protesting; one must develop the "heart quality"
and to do that one had to become selfless, not selfish.

Mr. Ali also told the Committee that now that he was finished boxing he
was getting ready to form an organization called World Organization for
Rights, Liberty and Dignity (WORLD). This organization, which would probably
have offices in California and Washington, would be formed so that "all people
can get together and know one another". He was gathering together
entertainers to raise money to build homes for old people, and to build boys
camps, among other things. WORLD would be "a civilian United Nations", he
said.

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The Chairman of the Special Committee, Leslie O. Harriman (Nigeria), said that it was significant that Mr. Ali was the first major American athlete to speak out against apartheid and he called upon other athletes to follow his example. It was "a great blow to the racists of South Africa today that freedom has Muhammad Ali on its side", he added.

Mr. Harriman said that Mr. Ali's visit to the United Nations was the beginning of an intensified campaign to mobilize all athletes throughout the world against apartheid. It was in that spirit that the Committee was in the process of planning an International Convention against Apartheid in Sports which would give athletes an opportunity to voice their opposition to apartheid.

Mr. Harriman concluded by saying that Mr. Ali was at the United Nations to support a different kind of fight; a fight for human values and his "unswerving purpose and loyalty to his conscience make him a role model for the oppressed people of South Africa".

Statement by Chairman

The Chairman, LESLIE O. HARRIMAN (Nigeria), said that the Committee was meeting with "a man of international stature; a man whose name is loved and respected throughout Africa and the world; a man who is known not only as a great fighter in the sports arena, but more importantly as a great fighter for the rights of all oppressed people; a man who has not only great physical strength, but also the great moral strength to stand up for what he knows to be right -- even when such decisions may have been unpopular with those in high places -- that man is, of course, Muhammad Ali".

He welcomed Mr. Ali and said it would be a source of inspiration for the black people of South Africa to learn that in spite of the attempts of the racist regime to pay millions of dollars to Mr. Ali to box there, he had chosen instead to come to the United Nations and denounce and expose that racist system. He could think of no more fitting way to continue the International Mobilization against Apartheid than by having a man of the stature of Mr. Ali whose words had not only echoed around the world but also had guided others to success.

It was also fitting, he went on, that Mr. Ali had become still another American of African descent to condemn apartheid as part of leadership in the cause of humanism.

Throughout the International Anti-Apartheid Year it was his privilege to give well-deserved international recognition to great Americans of African descent, such as Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois and Martin Luther King, Jr., who had dedicated their lives to fight against racism. Often the "noble brothers" in America had been made to suffer injustices because of their commitment to eradicate the very sources of those injustices at home and abroad.

It was significant also that Mr. Ali had become the first major American athlete to speak out against apartheid in that way. He called upon other
(more)

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athletes to follow his example. Action of that type was all the more significant when one recalled that financial institutions in the United States were still the major contributors backing the apartheid regime.

"As South Africa daily escalated its military and nuclear capabilities, again with the backing of Western Powers; as South Africa continued to jail over 2,000 black people every day who commit no other crime than to try to obtain a minimal level of human dignity under this fascist system; as South Africa in full defiance of international opinion continues to murder African patriots, such as by the recent execution of Solomon Mahlangu, and other dedicated youths, it becomes important that those in opposition to this regime, black and white; take a firm stand now", he stated.

He congratulated the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States which had recently barred the participation of South Africans from the Boston Marathon. He also applauded the recent announcement by the International Olympic Committee that if France continued to collaborate with the racist Sporting events of the South African Government, its athletes would not be welcome in Moscow for the 1980 Olympic Games.

He condemned South Africa for not only persevering in utilizing international sporting events to win public support and recognition for the South African regime, but also for its efforts to prosecute the heroic attempts of those black South African athletes who had aspired to stultify the apartheid policies. He referred to the "mysterious shooting" into the home of Morgan Naidoo, who headed the Non-Racial South African Amateur Swimming Federation. The shooting had occurred within a few days after the Federation had announced that it would not co-operate in South Africa's so-called "multi-national sport" campaign which was designed to regain that country's entry in the international sports arena.

He said it was, therefore, a great blow to the racists of South Africa today, that freedom had Muhammad Ali on its side. He was aware that an integral part of South Africa's multi-million dollar propaganda campaign -- "an unethical campaign which has included interfering in the domestic affairs of other nations" -- had been to encourage celebrities from throughout the world to visit the regime. "What a blow then was Muhammad Ali's announcement last February after consultations with me, that he would not visit South Africa."

He said Muhammad Ali's visit to the United Nations as the beginning of an increasing and intensified campaign to mobilize all athletes throughout the world against apartheid. It was in that spirit that the Special Committee was in the process of planning an International Convention Against Apartheid in Sports which would give those men and women an opportunity to voice their opposition to apartheid in a manner which would receive the maximum international impact.

Muhammad Ali, he said, represented the "quintessence of excellence of perfection" in his own field and, significantly, he was a black man. As a professional boxer there was nothing about him resembling humility -- that was (more)

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part of the game. But in his relationship with Mr. Ali, he had found in him kindness and humility.

Concluding he said, that "today Muhammad Ali was here to support a different kind of fight, a fight for human values. He was experienced in more than one type of fighting. Years ago, he was denigrated for his beliefs and yet he was able to maintain his goal in sight, to be true to himself, and was thus able to overcome obstacles put in his path and to achieve greatness. His unswerving purpose and loyalty to his conscience made him a role model for the oppressed in South Africa and all over the black diaspora, he said.

MUHAMMAD ALI said he was sure that most knew his record on human rights.

The Viet Nam war had brought him much attention; he had risked his championship and years in jail to avoid taking part in "such a slaughter". Since then, he had been invited to South Africa to box but "I told \$12 million no thank you", he said.

Another time, he said, he was asked to address an Islamic Convention in South Africa but Mr. Harriman had told him it "would be bad to go".

He was not here to talk about "the evils of South Africa" -- most here knew more about it than he. He wanted to talk about God, religion and the subject of "the heart". Everything about a person was based on a person's heart; it was the centre of the person around which his personality was formed. A man was his heart. "A lying, cheating heart meant a lying, cheating man; a loving heart meant a loving man", he said. If the heart of a man was great, he could be great.

There were the golden, silver, iron and copper hearts, among others.

Those with the golden hearts showed their colour. Those with the hearts of iron were like the South African people.

There was also the heart of rock, which must be broken. There were many more different kinds of heart in life and all had different qualities.

Mr. Ali said the true meaning of love was life itself. Love was God and God was love. Love was sacrifice and service.

In the United States, as well as in South Africa, one could not change people with bombs or protesting; one must develop "the heart quality" and to do that one had to become selfless, not selfish, he said.

People talked about freedom, about protesting or about politics, but they rarely talked about God or the Supreme Being. God had sent Jesus, Buddah, Moses and Mohammed to various parts of the world to teach people how to run it. The world must be run God's way, he said.

Turning to his latest pursuit Mr. Ali stated: "I am a great artist. I have a little talent, I am going to develop it and I will soon be the greatest artist of all time." ' -

Mr. Ali then presented his painting to the United Nations.

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