

Black officials host African dignitaries

Rep. Harold James, chairman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus (PLBC), issued a statement on Aug. 19, hailing the success of the community forum on U.S. policy toward Africa, held on Aug. 9 at the Ayinde Cultural Arts Center in Philadelphia. The forum was sponsored by PLBC and the Pennsylvania Black Elected Officials, on behalf of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators/National Conference of State Legislatures Philadelphia '97. The event was part of a week-long tribute to the late state Rep. David P. Richardson, Jr.

"Over 100 of our community leaders and elected officials, including state legislators from around the country, heard the truth about Africa directly from three very important African statesmen," James said. "The people agreed that we should hold such an event again, and maybe have forums like this on a regular basis."

Introductory remarks were given by Elaine Richardson, mother of David Richardson. Addressing the forum were:

- His Excellency Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, Sudanese Ambassador to the United States;
- His Excellency Adogah Onah, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United States; and
- Honorable Godfrey Binaisa, former President of Uganda, and provisional chairman of the African Civil Rights Movement.

"I learned first-hand how the mass media can put out false information about Africa," James said, "in order to justify destructive actions like sanctions, designed to destabilize and fragment targeted African nations like Sudan or Nigeria. I visited Sudan in February of this year, and found that the negative accusations against that nation had no basis in reality. That's why it is so important for the people to meet and hear these African leaders face-to-face."

James pointed out that Ambassador Mohamed had publicly invited U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) to visit Sudan. Specter is the prime sponsor of S. 772, a bill that would impose sanctions on Sudan and other nations for alleged "religious persecution."

"I am willing to go with Senator Specter to Sudan, to assist him in any way I can to learn the truth about the situation there," James said. "I hope that he will accept the ambassador's generous proposal."

James said he plans to help organize a coalition of Pennsylvanians concerned about social and economic justice for Africa. "I believe that this type of link between Africa and

African-Americans could be one of the most powerful means of positive change in the world today," James said.

Representative James urged persons interested in working to develop such a coalition to call his district office at 215-462-3308.

The African Civil Rights Movement

Dr. Binaisa has been extremely active in attempting to educate Americans and Canadians on the current British genocidal gameplan in Africa. On June 30, he was the guest of Massachusetts state Rep. Ben Swan, at an event held at the legislature. Dr. Binaisa has also travelled several times to Canada, for well-attended meetings sponsored by the Schiller Institute.

Dr. Binaisa issued his call for an African Civil Rights Movement in April 1995, and he has declared his intention to hold a founding conference later this year. In his call, he says:

"Recognizing the right for development as the inalienable right of man, we call for a policy of rapid development of the physical economy of our continent. This means the large-scale development of continent-wide infrastructure (railways, roads, waterways, energy, education, and health), it means a perspective of rapid buildup of modern agriculture and industry, so that we will feed ourselves and manufacture from our raw materials. We demand that the existing foreign debt structure be frozen and any payments postponed until such a time as we have economically recovered and have separated out the legitimate from the illegitimate debt. We reject any of the IMF's [International Monetary Fund] SAPs [Structural Adjustment Programs] and privatization policies, and instead join forces with those in Ibero-America, in Russia and Ukraine, who demand a general bankruptcy reorganization of the collapsing world economy, and a 'New, Just World Economic Order.'

"We, the people of Africa, must finally throw off the yoke of the new colonialism and exercise our sovereignty by choosing '20th-century methods' for the most rapid economic development, which will enable 'all the men in all the lands of Africa to live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.' Thus, we lay the basis for lasting peace on our continent. Because, as Pope Paul VI said, 'Development is the new name for peace.'"

Shaking them up

The former Ugandan President, now a senior statesman, does not hold back in excoriating his audiences for their lack of concern for what is happening in Africa.

"Why don't you make a fuss," over the genocide in Africa? he asked his Aug. 9 audience. "You are brainwashed! Let's face it. You look at us like the world looked at Hitler. . . . You say it's not your problem. . . . You try to make excuses; you have to attend a wedding, or a funeral. Soon you will attend your own funeral without having done anything for Africa."