

# ANC leaders to visit Fredericton

Fredericton - Walter Sisulu, deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC) and second in command to ANC president Nelson Mandela, will speak at St. Thomas University on Tuesday, September 24, as part of a six-city, cross-Canada tour.

Sisulu and his wife Albertina, deputy president of the ANC Women's League, will discuss the ANC's continuing struggle against apartheid in their native South Africa. The Sisulus' talk, set for 8 p.m. in the Ted Daigle Auditorium in Edmund Casey Hall, is being co-sponsored by St. Thomas University, the Atlantic Human Rights Centre and the South Africa Education Trust Fund. The public is invited to attend and admission is free.

The Sisulus arrived in Canada on September 14. They have met with municipal officials, native leaders, anti-apartheid activists and federal and provincial politicians in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. After their visit to Fredericton, the couple will go on to Halifax before departing for the United States on September 27. Abdul Lohdi, director of STU's

Atlantic Human Rights Centre, says the Sisulu visit will help raise public awareness of continuing human rights abuses in South Africa.

Says Lohdi, "We've seen some changes to South Africa's apart-

heid laws, but apartheid must be completely dismantled. The disparities in education, health care, housing and basic human rights continue. In a few weeks leaders of the Commonwealth countries will be debating whether to lift

sanctions against South Africa. The Sisulus' visit is well timed. It's important that Canadians know how much needs to be done before we can think about normalizing relations with the South African regime."

The Sisulus' talk will be followed by the world premiere of "A Darker Side" - a short film by Fredericton writer and director Errol Williams. The film, shot on location in Fredericton, follows the life of a young anti-apartheid activist in exile in small-town Canada.



Walter Sisulu on his release from prison after twenty-five years behind bars. With him are his wife Albertina Sisulu, Vice-President of the ANC's Women's League, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

## Walter Sisulu: A man with a mission

The story of Walter Sisulu, and the entire Sisulu family, is one of imprisonment, persecution, exile and suffering. However, it also is one of strong familial love, of determination to overcome apartheid and of personal and political triumph. Walter Sisulu's rise from a poor peasant in the Encobo area of the Transkei to become Deputy President of the African National Conference is a tribute to the human spirit and to the struggle for justice and democracy in South Africa.

Walter Sisulu was born in 1912 in Encobo to a peasant family. He left school at the age of fifteen to find employment to help support his family and moved to Johannesburg where he first worked in a dairy. He held several other labourial jobs in East London and Johannesburg over the ensuing years while becoming increasingly involved in union and political activities. These activities led to Mr. Sisulu's being branded early on as a "troublemaker" by employers and the authorities and these activities led to his joining the ANC in 1940. Mr. Sisulu's organizational talents, and his militant politics, earned him first the position of treasurer of the ANC Youth League and later, in 1949, Secretary-General of the ANC.

In 1950, Mr. Sisulu became co-chairman of the coordinating committee bringing together the ANC with the Indian Congress and the Communist Party. He spearheaded the organization of the Defiance Campaign in the early 1950's and was detained, arrested, banned and finally imprisoned in 1952 under the Suppression of Communism

Act along with Nelson Mandela and others. Up until this time Mr. Sisulu's political philosophy was one of racially exclusive nationalism; he was ardently anti-white. However, following a visit to the USSR in 1953 where he was repelled by the authoritarianism of the Stalinist regime his views mellowed and he returned to South Africa more interested in creating a multi-racial Congress alliance. Mr. Sisulu played a leading role in organising the 1955 Congress of the People but was unable to attend as he had been forced to resign from the ANC in mid-1954 because of the tightening of his ban-

ning orders.

Mr. Sisulu secretly continued to work for the ANC and was one of 156 people arrested for high treason in 1956 and subsequently acquitted in 1961. During the 1960 State of Emergency, Mr. Sisulu was detained for several months and following the banning of the ANC and the PAC he was placed under house arrest. From 1961 to 1963, Mr. Sisulu was arrested on numerous occasions for his support of the ANC until he finally went underground to join Umkhonto we Sizwe. On July 11, 1963 Mr. Sisulu along with Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan

Mbeki and others were arrested at the ANC's secret headquarters at Lilliesleaf Farm. Those arrested were charged at the Rivonia trial and Mr. Sisulu was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 12, 1964 for planning acts of political sabotage. Walter Sisulu was incarcerated on Robben Island until 1982 when, along with Nelson Mandela, he was removed to Pollsmoor Prison. On October 15, 1989 Mr. Sisulu and six of his colleagues along with one PAC member were released from prison.

The prisoner releases in 1989 were followed by the unbanning of the ANC on February 2, 1990 and

the release of Nelson Mandela one week later. Mr. Sisulu subsequently met with the external wing of the ANC in Lusaka and was asked to assume the position of Internal Leader of the ANC. This involved re-establishing ANC structures within the country and preparing for a national consultative conference in December 1990. Mr. Sisulu was a member of the ANC delegation which met with the government in May 1990 at Groote Schuur and was involved in numerous other meetings with the Government.

## Albertina Sisulu: A dignified and resolute freedom fighter

Albertina Sisulu is the matriarch of one of the most famous families in South Africa which have struggled against apartheid and struggled under it. Albertina Sisulu was born in the Tsomo district of the Transkei in 1919. Orphaned as a teenager she had to help care for her family and abandon her plans to become a teacher. She eventually moved to Johannesburg to train as a nurse.

Mrs. Sisulu's political involvement began in the early 1940's through the influence of her husband-to-be, Walter Sisulu, who was then active in the ANC Youth League. She was married to Walter in 1944 and became totally immersed in politics alongside her husband in what has been described as an unusual and unique marriage. Mrs. Sisulu demonstrated

complete devotion to her husband, and they produced five children between 1944 and 1958, but she was active politically in her own right and was involved in the ANC Women's League from 1948. She also was very involved in the Defiance Campaign of the early 1950's, the 1956 women's protest against passes and the campaign against bantu education.

Mrs. Sisulu had to endure the numerous arrests, bannings and trials of her husband between 1953 and 1964 while trying to raise her family and support the struggle. The imprisonment of Walter Sisulu in 1963 after the Rivonia trial was the most difficult moment in Mrs. Sisulu's life. Mrs. Sisulu was detained for 90 days herself in 1963 and for the next twenty years was placed under banning orders in-

cluding ten years of house arrest. Mrs. Sisulu was sentenced to four years of prison in 1984 for furthering the aims of the ANC but her conviction was set aside on appeal. In August 1983, while in custody, Mrs. Sisulu was elected President of the United Democratic Front in the Transvaal.

In 1985 Mrs. Sisulu and fifteen others were charged with high treason but the charges against her and eleven others were dropped for lack of evidence. In February 1988 the South African Government restricted the activities of seventeen organizations including the UDF and placed severe restrictions orders on Mrs. Sisulu. Mrs. Sisulu was part of a UDF delegation which met USA President, George Bush in June 1989 and, following the unbanning of the ANC in February

1990, she became active in re-establishing the ANC Women's League. She was elected Deputy President of the ANC Women's League in May 1991 at the first National Conference of the League held in over thirty years.

Albertina Sisulu has endured countless hardships in the course of her life including long separations from her husband and children. Nonetheless, she has maintained her dignity and spirit and her sense of humour. Mrs. Sisulu celebrated with great joy her husband's release from prison in October 1989, and her own unbanning the day before. An even greater occasion for celebration was March 30, 1991 when there were no more Sisulus in jail.