Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid & Racism; Records apap011

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English
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Summary Information

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<th>M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections &amp; Archives</th>
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<td>1981-1995</td>
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<td>Founded by a group of Albany area residents who organized to prevent the Springboks, the all-white South African national rugby team representing the apartheid South African government, from playing a game against the American all-star rugby team in Albany scheduled in 1981.</td>
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Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, 1981-1995. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism Records).

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Administrative History

The Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism (CD-CAAR) was founded by a group of Albany, NY area residents who organized to prevent the Springboks, the all-white South African national rugby team representing the apartheid South African government, from playing a game against
the American all-star rugby team in Albany scheduled for September 22, 1981. "Out of that organizing effort, the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism was born". [1] Originally known as the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid (CD-CAA), the organization added Racism to their title in the months following the Springbok game to emphasize that their fight was against racism, both domestic and international, as well as South African apartheid.

CD-CAAR became a member of the Social Justice Center after its formation as an organization in 1981. The Social Justice Center, "an umbrella organization for groups in the Capital District which work on issues of peace and justice,"[2] encouraged members of the community to participate in CD-CAAR events. CD-CAAR also worked closely with the Albany chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) presidents including E.J. Josey and Anne Pope, as well as with Alice Green, Director of The Center for Law and Justice, Inc. and other prominent community leaders. CD-CAAR was an informal organization and kept few minutes of meetings. According to Eileen Kawola, CD-CAAR newsletter editor and a steering committee member, the committee structure was very fluid.

In the early to mid-1980s, CD-CAAR's campaign to isolate the apartheid South African government took the form of picketing and boycotting entertainers who performed in South Africa in an attempt to convince them to issue public apologies and to stop performing there until apartheid ended. The first cultural boycott demonstration instigated by CD-CAAR occurred in 1982 when Chick Corea was scheduled to perform at the Troy Music Hall in Troy, New York.[3] CD-CAAR also took part in picketing state and federal buildings in an effort to block investment in South Africa. In 1985 CD-CAAR participated in a divestment campaign to remove New York State pension funds from companies operating in South Africa. The group also joined with the Free South Africa Movement by participating in nationally coordinated actions. On January 17, 1985 CD-CAAR conducted an anti-apartheid demonstration at the Leo O'Brien Federal Building in Albany.[4]

In a further attempt at fighting apartheid, CD-CAAR erected a 24-hour mock shanty town at the Capitol in Albany on June 25, 1986 to symbolize the forced removal of black South Africans from their homes. CD-CAAR co-founded the Northeast Southern Africa Solidarity Network (NESASN) circa 1988. NESASN was a network of anti-apartheid organizations from nine surrounding states, working with the other groups to end apartheid and racism.[5] CD-CAAR also collaborated with and relied heavily on the resources of three national organizations: the American Committee on Africa, the Washington Office on Africa, and the Mozambique Solidarity Network.

CD-CAAR expanded its focus to include a variety of areas relating to apartheid and racism. Recognizing that apartheid affected areas other than South Africa, beginning circa 1984 CD-CAAR attempted to help the southern region of Africa, especially the "frontline states" of Namibia, Mozambique and Angola. Among other things, CD-CAAR raised money for the elections in Namibia and for schools in Mozambique. As CD-CAAR became active in educational forums and anti-war efforts, the group became increasingly interested in United States foreign policy. In 1986 CD-CAAR began sponsoring programs and distributing educational materials in opposition to the United States' foreign policy in areas such as Cuba, Grenada, Haiti, Iraq, Nicaragua and Zaire.[6] There are few records relating to this activity in CD-CAAR's records.

CD-CAAR fought racism at home as well as abroad since its founding in 1981. Shortly after its formation, CD-CAAR participated in anti-Ku Klux Klan demonstrations in Albany and across Vermont in cooperation with the Albany chapter of the NAACP. The organization was particularly active in
targeting racial abuse by the Albany Police Department. After the 1984 death of Jesse Davis, an African American killed by police officers, CD-CAAR protested the police action and joined in the demand for an Albany Police Review Board. The Community Police Relations Board (occasionally referred to in the press as the Police Community Relations Board) was formed by Albany Mayor Thomas M. Whalen III in 1986. The goal of the board was to form a cooperative spirit between the Albany Police Department and the community. CD-CAAR held one of the fifteen seats on the Community Police Relations Board and chose Albany attorney Mark Mishler, a steering committee member of CD-CAAR, as its first representative.[7] CD-CAAR subsequently criticized the Community Police Relations Board contending that the board did not have the power or authority to investigate police abuse and deal with officers who abused members of the community. The group also sponsored forums on topics such as racism and violence.

The release of Nelson Mandela, and the subsequent 1994 elections in South Africa which brought an end to the apartheid regime and introduced democracy, altered the mission of CD-CAAR. In 1995, CD-CAAR reorganized in recognition of the new conditions and focused its efforts on supporting the new South African government. The new organization changed its name to the Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism. None of the new organization's papers are present in this collection.


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Scope and Contents

The bulk of the records of the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism documents the organization's involvement in the fight against apartheid in South Africa, while a smaller amount details its struggle against police abuse in Albany, New York and around the United States. Due to the chronological organization of most records, references to topics are scattered throughout the collection. CD-CAAR records consist of correspondence, police and court documents, fliers, announcements of meetings, newsletters, pamphlets, handouts, a few minutes from steering committee meetings, and newspaper clippings. Most of the newspaper clippings, and many of the police and court documents are photocopies of the original papers, therefore the quality of the microfilm image may be inconsistent.
Almost all of the early records relate to CD-CAA's fight against the rugby demonstration in September, 1981, and the legal repercussions stemming from the protest. CD-CAAR promoted the isolation of South Africa by advocating cultural, financial and sports boycotts beginning in 1981 and continuing throughout the organization's existence. Included are police surveillance records of groups participating in the rugby demonstration such as CD-CAAR. Also included are police records of the 1981 raid on Vera Michelson's apartment conducted by the Albany Police Department as well as records relating to the arrest of Vera Michelson and three of her colleagues: Aaron Estes, Michael Young and John Spearman. The court records include trial testimony in the unsuccessful prosecution of Michael Young and John Spearman. Young was represented by noted attorney William M. Kunstler. The court records also contain documents relating to the successful 1982 countersuit by Michelson against the FBI, the New York State Police, the Albany Police Department, members of the Albany County District Attorney's Office, the County of Albany, the City of Albany and individuals in these organizations. Documentation of CD-CAAR's educational programs dealing with apartheid and racism is concentrated in the Coalition Activities series, but may also be found throughout the collection.

CD-CAAR's records contain substantial documentation of the organization's struggle against police abuse and efforts to establish and secure an effective Albany police review board. CD-CAAR's fight against domestic racism began in 1981 and included targeting racial abuse by Albany Police Department officers and racial hatred advocated by the Ku Klux Klan. Small in quantity, documents relating to anti-Klan activities can be found throughout the collection including some newspaper articles in the Rugby Demonstrations Clippings series. Many of the records relating to the organization's fight against police abuse can be found in the series titled Police Abuse, 1987-1994. The newsletter editor's files contain documents relating to CD-CAAR's Committee on Police and Racial Violence (1987-1989). Most of the other documents relating to police abuse are located in the Coalition Activities file beginning in 1984 and continuing throughout the series. Records documenting forums sponsored by CD-CAAR in a continuing effort to educate the community on topics such as racism and violence can be found throughout the collection.

Most of the records documenting CD-CAAR's campaign to isolate the apartheid South African government by picketing and boycotting entertainers who performed in South Africa (1982-), as well as those referring to CD-CAAR's participation in picketing state and federal buildings in an effort to block investment in South Africa (1985-) are located in the Coalition Activities series. The rest of the records are scattered throughout the collection.

Records documenting CD-CAAR's interest in the "frontline states" of Namibia, Mozambique and Angola beginning circa 1984 are scattered throughout the collection. Documents on Namibia (1984) and Mozambique (1991-1994) can be found in the newsletter editor's files since Eileen Kawola, CD-CAAR newsletter editor, had a special interest in the frontline states around South Africa. The files include information about raising money for the elections in Namibia and for schools in Mozambique.

The correspondence file consists mainly of letters sent by the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism. There are some letters received by CD-CAAR which include correspondence from New York State politicians such as Assemblywoman Cynthia Jenkins regarding divestiture and Albany Mayor Thomas M. Whalen, III, regarding Albany's position regarding the issue of apartheid, organizations involved in the fight against apartheid such as Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Transafica, and copies of letters sent out by the law firm of Walter, Thayer and Long.
There are only a few documents from 1995. There is a newsletter from March, 1995 announcing the reorganization of CD-CAAR and the renaming of the organization to Capital District Coalition for Southern Africa and Against Racism which can be found in the Newsletters, 1983-1995 series. The only other documents from 1995 are found in the Coalition Activities series. They consist of newspaper clippings relating the 1995 case of the People vs. Quibilah B. Shabazz to the arrest of members of CD-CAAR in 1981 and a subpoena for Vera Michelson, one of those arrested in 1981, to testify in the Shabazz case.

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection is organized into 10 topical file series.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Converted to EAD with EADMachine Encoded in EAD by Sara Rohfeld 2016 December 1995 August 7

Processing Information

Processed in 1995 by Sara Rohfeld.

Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were transferred to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, for microfilming in by Vera Michelson, former co-chair of CD-CAAR. Two of the series, a complete run of the newsletters (1983-1995) and the newsletter editor's files (1984-1994), were donated by Eileen Kawola, CD-CAAR newsletter editor. 1995
Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Athletics and Sports
- Apartheid -- South Africa.
- Blacks -- Social conditions.
- African Americans -- Segregation.
- African Americans -- Social conditions.
- African Americans -- Social conditions -- New York (State) -- Albany.
- Neighborhood and Community Associations
- Social Activists and Public Advocates
- Albany, New York
- Africana Studies
- African Americans and Civil Rights Organizations
- Ethnic Groups
- Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid. Albany Chapter.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
Collection Inventory

Rugby Demonstration Clippings, 1981-1983

**Date [inclusive]:** 1981-1983

**Physical Description:** 0.175 cubic ft.

**Scope and Contents**

This series includes photocopies of newspaper clippings which detail the activities of CD-CAAR when the group organized a demonstration to protest a rugby game between the Springboks, the South African national rugby team, and the American all-star rugby team scheduled for September 22, 1981.

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Rugby Demonstration Legal Papers, 1981-1988

**Date [inclusive]:** 1981-1988

**Physical Description:** 0.5 cubic ft.

**Scope and Contents**

This series includes copies of police investigation reports, court papers, testimony, and photocopies of newspaper articles. The legal documents stem from the demonstration organized by various groups against the rugby game scheduled for September 22, 1981 between the South African national rugby team and the American all-star rugby team. The bulk of the documents relates to the arrests of Vera Michelson, Aaron Estes, John Spearman and Michael Young on September 21, 1981. The police surveillance records and the court documents were obtained by CD-CAAR through the Freedom of Information Act. The police surveillance documents come from the Albany Police Department, Albany's Police Court and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The records include proposed plans for security at the anti-apartheid demonstration, police reports, photocopies of articles regarding groups expected to participate in the demonstration, arrest reports, court arraignment papers and investigation reports. The court records are from Albany's Police Court, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York and the State of New York Supreme Court Appellate Division. The records include some correspondence, papers for the case of the People versus Vera Michelson, Aaron Estes, and Michael Young, testimony in the government's unsuccessful case against Michael Young and John Spearman, and a motion to suppress evidence involving Michelson and Estes. The court records also include papers involving the successful case launched by Michelson and CD-CAAR in 1982 against named and unnamed officials in the FBI, New York State Police, Albany County District Attorney and Assistant District Attorneys, Albany County, Albany Police Officers and the City of Albany. The court records also include documents relating to a 1988 appeal to the Federal Court of Appeals pertaining to the civil case started by Vera Michelson and CD-CAAR in 1982.

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Correspondence, 1983-1994

Date [inclusive]: 1983-1994

Physical Description: 0.25 cubic ft.

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence, minutes and reports relating to the activities and interests of CD-CAAR and consists mostly of copies of letters sent by CD-CAAR to others. Topics of correspondence include fund-raising, the cultural boycott of entertainers who had performed in South Africa and had not vowed to stay out until apartheid ended, the campaign beginning in 1983 to divest New York State pension funds from businesses operating in South Africa, letters to pastors requesting support, requests for participants in demonstrations, announcements of meetings, arrangements for conferences, requests to institutions not to sponsor pro-South African speakers, letters to legislators supporting or opposing proposed legislation especially relating to divestiture, and letters regarding testimony given by Vera Michelson in front of the United Nations. Although Michelson testified twice before the United Nations, the collection contains only a copy of her November 5, 1984 appearance in which she spoke about the frustrations and concerns of CD-CAAR and other anti-apartheid groups and expressed gratitude to the United Nations for assisting the groups in their work. Includes letters sent to political figures both in the United States and abroad such as Albany Mayor Thomas Whalen III regarding Albany's place in the fight against apartheid, Schenectady Mayor Karen Johnson, NYS Assemblywoman Cynthia Jenkins (with reply) regarding divestiture, President P.W. Botha, Lindwe Mabuza, African National Congress chief representative to the United States, Namibian Minister Helmut Angula, and Ambassador Hipolito Patricio from Mozambique supporting the ANC and the frontline states. Also included are letters to pastors such as Reverend Robert W. Dixon; academics such as President Hines of Siena College, President John S. Morris of Union College, Professor Warren Roberts of the University at Albany, and Martin circa Barell, Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents protesting pro-South African speakers, writing letters of recommendation for professors, and thanking those who aided the anti-apartheid movement; and with people at other organizations with similar goals such as Solly Simelane of the African National Congress, E.J. Josey, President of the Albany NAACP, and Richard Dillard of the Public Employees Federation Black Caucus. Includes a typescript diary written by Eileen Kawola detailing a July 1992 visit to Mozambique. Arranged chronologically.

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Coalition Activities, 1984-1995

Date [inclusive]: 1984-1995
Physical Description: 0.5 cubic ft.

Scope and Contents

Includes fliers, photocopies of newspaper clippings, pamphlets and papers, CD-CAAR newsletters, steering committee minutes for June 2, 1993, programs, statements and press releases, and copies of letters written by the Civil Service Employees Association, Inc. in 1985 to South African authorities protesting unfair arrests of South African trade unionists. Issues covered in the activities file include the campaign to divest New York State pension funds from companies doing business in South Africa, 1985-1986, and information about the cultural boycott of entertainers who performed in South Africa including a list of names of the performers with notations by the names of those who vowed not to return until apartheid had ended. CD-CAAR was also interested in the problem of local police abuse including the long running case of Jesse Davis, a retarded African American man who was shot five times and killed in his apartment by five white Albany police officers in 1984. There is some mention of the creation of the 1986 Albany Community Police Relations Board. Included is a transcript of a speech given by President Ronald Reagan on South Africa and apartheid circa 1986. Also in the records is a copy of a 1995 subpoena for Vera Michelson to testify in the case of Quibilah B. Shabazz (Malcolm X's daughter), charged with attempting to hire an assassin to kill Louis Farrakhan, with photocopies of newspaper clippings relating the Shabazz case to the Springbok demonstration in 1981. Written histories include two chronologies of major coalition events, 1981-1986 and 1981-1991, a "Journal of Quotes" from community leaders (September, 1986) in recognition of the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, and a history of CD-CAAR written by Vera Michelson and published in the March 1995 newsletter. Arranged chronologically.

Title/Description

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News Clippings and Coalition Events, 1982-1985

Date [inclusive]: 1982-1985
Physical Description: 0.1 cubic ft.

Scope and Contents

Contains photocopies of newspaper clippings, newsletters, fliers, and programs relating to the cultural boycott of entertainers who performed in South Africa (1982-1984), racism in the United States including police abuse and abuses by the legal system in general (1983-1985), interest in
southern black African countries, especially Namibia, Angola and Mozambique (1984-1985), the divestment campaign to get New York State pension funds out of companies doing business in apartheid South Africa (1984-1985), and the anti-apartheid campaign waged against South Africa (1983-1985). This series is very similar to the Coalition Activities series. Although there is no exact duplication of materials, the two series cover the same types of issues. Arranged chronologically.

### Police Abuse, 1987-1994

**Date [inclusive]:** 1987-1994

**Physical Description:** 0.175 cubic ft.

**Scope and Contents**

Includes newspaper clippings, conference programs, pamphlets and reports regarding the incidences of police abuse in Albany, New York as well as other areas around the United States.

### Northeast Southern Africa Solidarity Network Papers, 1986-1990

**Date [inclusive]:** 1986-1990

**Physical Description:** 0.13 cubic ft.

**Scope and Contents**

Includes a mailing list, minutes for NESASN meetings (1988-1989), correspondence (1989-1990), and funding information such as a Peace Development Fund grant application and a copy of a 1986 article from the Grassroots Fund-raising Journal (1986-1989). Also includes information on fund-raising campaigns, lists of potential congressional supporters for sanctions bills, and lists of companies for potential boycotts circa 1988-1989. The series is divided by subject. Issues include boycotts of companies operating in South Africa, fund-raising, and lobbying for support of bills in Congress that would impose sanctions on South Africa. The NESASN minutes are brief, mentioning topics discussed at meetings with little elaboration. Issues covered in the 1988-89 minutes include the Shell Oil Company boycott, a bill in Congress for sanctions towards South Africa, the sending of delegations to frontline countries in southern Africa, fund-raising for the organization, and building a network to fight apartheid. The correspondence file contains letters from the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, the New Jersey Anti-Apartheid Mobilization Coalition, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and mailings from the NESASN.

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<td>NESASN Minutes</td>
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Date [inclusive]: 1989-1994

Physical Description: 0.175 cubic ft.

Scope and Contents

Includes reports, a newsletter, photocopies of newspaper articles, and ANC documents explaining how the South African government should be reconstructed. Included are constitutional principles and procedures for drawing up a constitution (1991-92), a declaration of intent issued at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, a proposed economic policy for South Africa written by the ANC, lifting of sanctions against South Africa by European countries (1991), and ANC policy guidelines for a Democratic South Africa (1992). Also included is the August, 1993 issue of The Corporate Examiner which covers a July, 1993 meeting held by the South African Council of Churches where the topic of a "Code of Business Conduct" was discussed.

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<td>&quot;Statement of Nelson Mandela&quot;</td>
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Newsletter Editor's Files, 1984-1994

Date [inclusive]: 1984-1994

Physical Description: 0.13 cubic ft.
Scope and Contents

Seven folders from the files of CD-CAAR's secretary, Eileen Kawola. The subject files include press clippings, correspondence, information about the CD-CAAR Committee on Police and Racial Violence (1987-1989), the diary kept by Eileen Kawola on her 1992 trip to southern Africa which includes four photographs, and a brief history of Namibia circa 1984. The series also includes information about Mozambique gathered in preparation for the 1992 trip taken by Eileen Kawola and members of CD-CAAR to Mozambique as well as other countries in southern Africa, and information about educational programs conducted in the Albany schools after the trip. The file on Mozambique also includes information about financial support for Mozambique schools and churches. Included are copies of two CD-CAAR newsletters (October, 1991 and November 10, 1992), correspondence including letters of introduction, educational information about Mozambique, and the Albany Public School Teachers Association (APSTA) Bulletin dated October, 1992 containing a resolution in support of the Mozambique government.

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<tr>
<td>Diary of trip to southern Africa with 4 photographs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CD-CAAR educational information on Namibia</td>
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CD-CAAR Newsletters, 1983-1995

Date [inclusive]: 1983-1995

Physical Description: 0.2 cubic ft.

Scope and Contents

A complete run of Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism newsletters edited by Eileen Kawola. The newsletters contain information about the activities and interests of CD-CAAR and events the organization sponsored.
Many of the newsletters are in other parts of the CD-CAAR papers, although they are not represented there completely.