

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: DISMISSAL OF CHARGES AGAINST GENEVIEVE VAUGHAN OF CRIMINAL TRESPASS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSULATE, CRIMINAL COURT NO. 11, JUNE 5, 1985, 11:00 A.M.

Our government supports repression internationally and calls its justice. Repressive governments cooperate with our government in painting a positive picture of themselves while defining the opposition as negative, violent, and inhumane.

We had an example of this in our 1 1/2-hour conversation with the South African Consul, Mr. Van Rooyen. With courtesy to us as two white ladies, he tried to stretch a veil of harmony and good sense over his country's violent repression of the Blacks. Yet, in South Africa itself, imprisonment, torture, or death is the going price for criticism of the government such as we have exercised here. It is unusual to have had a first-hand opportunity to discuss with a South African official his pretty picture of his government's behavior and of the white supremacist ideology which sustains the domination of 20 million Blacks by 4 1/2 million whites, thrusting them economically into poverty and spiritually into fear and humiliation.

The death rate for black infants in rural areas of South Africa is 300 in 1,000, in urban areas 200, for white infants 27. But the Blacks are not allowed to protest the deaths of 1/5 of their babies. They may be killed in violent reprisal or put in prison under the Intimidation Act for influencing others to take a stand. They are not allowed to protest police murders and brutality and are thus rendered incapable of defending themselves or each other.

I am privileged and honored to take a stand in their defense, to hear their voice and refer it to others. I am sorry that Mr. Van Rooyen chose not to attend this trial, but as a feminist, I know men in authority sometimes avoid the issues, thus ignoring, belittling, and denying the truths of women and other oppressed peoples. On the other hand, I know he also has to avoid becoming a victim of the unjust system he is employed to defend.

Genevieve Vaughan