

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS 415-356-8383 x 244
Mary Lugo 770-623-8190
Cara White 843-881-1480

voleine_amilcar@itvs.org
lugo@negia.net
cara.white@mac.com

For downloadable images, visit <http://pressroom.pbs.org>

***HAVE YOU HEARD FROM JOHANNESBURG,
THE DEFINITIVE FIVE-PART SERIES ABOUT THE GLOBAL ANTI-APARTHEID
MOVEMENT, PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS IN JANUARY 2012***

Broadcast Marks 100th Anniversary of the African National Congress

“A staggering, panoramic film history of the forces that ultimately toppled the apartheid regime in South Africa.” – Vanity Fair

“Exemplary...a triumph of maximalist filmmaking. Field’s nonfiction epic is a monumental chronicle not just of one nation and its hideous regime, but of the second half of the 20th century.” – Melissa Anderson, The Village Voice

(San Francisco, CA) – Filmed throughout the world over the course of more than ten years, [Have You Heard From Johannesburg](#) is the definitive cinematic history of the worldwide effort to destroy South African apartheid. The five-part documentary series features astonishing archival footage and interviews with dozens of the major players in the movement, yet it belies the ordinary long-form documentary experience. Tension-filled, heartrending, and ultimately thrilling, *Have You Heard From Johannesburg* offers to a new generation the complete tour of an unprecedented global movement that forever changed a nation and the world.

From acclaimed filmmaker Connie Field, this epic five-hour, five-film history will provide viewers with a detailed account of the anti-apartheid fight. But perhaps more importantly, it showcases the power of a global movement for justice, and reminds us all that the fate of even the most entrenched powers can be forever altered by committed men and women around the world. *Have You Heard From Johannesburg* will premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Mary Louise Parker, on Thursdays, January 12 and 19 from 9-11 PM, and Thursday, January 26, 2012 from 10 -11 PM (check local listings).



--More--

To learn more about the film and the issues it covers, listen to music from the movement, and explore an interactive timeline visit the companion website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/have-you-heard-from-johannesburg/.

Producer/director: Connie Field

Series editor: Gregory Scharpen

Principal cinematography: Tom Hurwitz

Principal historical consultants: Dr. Gail Gerhart, Dr. Robert Edgar, Dr. Clayborne Carson, E.S Reddy

Principal funders: The Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The National Endowment for the Humanities

Have You Heard From Johannesburg Episode Synopses

“Road To Resistance” - Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 9 PM

In 1948, as the United Nations adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, South Africa heads in the opposite direction, implementing a rigid, racist system of laws called apartheid to segregate its people in every aspect of life. The black majority in South Africa, led by the African National Congress (ANC), mounts a nonviolent campaign of defiance, attracting the attention of activists in Britain, Sweden, and the United States — and sowing the seeds of an international movement. The world reacts with horror when protesters are gunned down in the town of Sharpeville, and the entire ANC leadership is forced underground or imprisoned. Nelson Mandela is jailed for life and the movement in South Africa is effectively shut down as hundreds escape into exile. The future of the movement is now on the shoulders of ANC Deputy President Oliver Tambo, who escapes into exile and embarks on what will become a 30-year journey to engage the world in the struggle to bring democracy to South Africa. He first finds allies in the newly independent countries of Africa and then approaches the U.N. for support, insisting that the apartheid government can be forced to the negotiating table if the Security Council will sanction and isolate the regime. But the western powers refuse to act, forcing Tambo to search for new support. He successfully petitions the Soviet Union for help in building a guerilla army, a decision that lands Tambo in the vise of the Cold War and haunts his global efforts for years to come.

But two individuals help to open crucial doors in the West: Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, and Bishop Trevor Huddleston, whose early support inspires Tambo to seek out strategic partnerships with faith leaders worldwide. As a new decade dawns, Tambo has financing from Sweden and from the World Council of Churches, which decides to support the liberation movement, and in so doing raises awareness about and support for the anti-apartheid movement in congregations around the world. With powerful new allies on his side, Tambo has the beginnings of a worldwide movement.

“The New Generation” - Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 10 PM

It is youth, both inside and outside, who next join the growing movement against apartheid. Buoyed by new support in western countries, Oliver Tambo returns to the United Nations to try to convince them to sanction South Africa. His efforts gain new public support as the brutal suppression of a youth uprising in the South African township of Soweto and the murder of

freedom fighter Steve Biko turn South Africa from a country into a cause, a worldwide emblem of injustice. A significant victory is won when the United Nations issues a mandatory arms embargo: the first in history. But South Africa's strongest trading partners in the West still will not sanction it economically and, as Tambo heads to Zambia to minister to the ANC's growing guerrilla army, a bloodbath seems inevitable. But even as the most powerful western governments refuse to heed Tambo's calls for cultural and economic boycotts, the citizens of those western nations will help turn the tide.

“From Selma to Soweto” - Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 9 PM

Long one of South Africa's most important and powerful allies, the United States becomes a key battleground in the anti-apartheid movement as African Americans lead the charge to change the U.S. government's policy toward the apartheid regime. Strengthened through years of grassroots organizing during the civil rights movement, black leaders and their allies take the campaign to corporate boardrooms, universities, embassies, and finally to Congress itself, where a stunning victory is won against the formidable opposition of President Ronald Reagan. African Americans alter U.S. foreign policy for the first time in history, and the U.S. — once the backbone of support for apartheid South Africa as its ally in the Cold War — finally imposes sanctions. European sanctions follow, and with them, the political isolation of the apartheid regime.

“The Bottom Line” - Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 10 PM

This is the story of the first-ever international grassroots campaign to successfully use economic pressure to help bring down a government. Recognizing the apartheid regime's dependence on its financial connections to the West, citizens all over the world — from employees of Polaroid to student account-holders in Barclay's Bank to consumers who boycott Shell — refuse to let business with South Africa go on as usual. Boycotts and divestment campaigns bring the anti-apartheid movement into the lives and communities of people around the world, helping everyday people understand and challenge Western economic support for apartheid. Faced with attacks at home and growing chaos in South Africa, international companies pull out in a mass exodus, causing a financial crisis in the now-isolated South Africa and making it clear that the days of the apartheid regime are numbered.

“Free At Last” - Thursday, January 26, 2012 at 10 PM

Diving into the heart of the conflict, South Africans tell the story of the most important effort in the anti-apartheid campaign of the 80's: the alliance that brought together freedom fighters in South Africa as never before. A mass movement gains unprecedented momentum when three generations of resistance fighters band together as The United Democratic Front (UDF). Faced with growing international isolation, the apartheid government tries to win allies and convince the world of the merit of its piecemeal reforms even as it struggles to suppress open revolt, at times using savage and secret tactics. The UDF protests climax in a fierce campaign of defiance, and internationally, Nelson Mandela becomes a household name as the campaign to free him ignites a worldwide crusade. Caught between an unstoppable internal mass movement and ongoing international pressure, the apartheid regime is finally forced to the negotiating table and at last lifts the decades-long bans on the ANC. After twenty-seven years in prison, Nelson Mandela is released, sparking a global celebration as he tours the world to thank all.

After 30 years in exile, Oliver Tambo is finally able to return to South Africa. But the struggle has taken a heavy toll on him and he will die one year before his comrade, Nelson Mandela, is elected the first black president of a democratic South Africa.

Director's Statement

I have always maintained a passionate interest in how society functions and the relationship of personal history to a broader story. Globalization has catapulted the world into a common arena, and this drama captures our coming to grips with the responsibility of building a global morality. I also think that the demise of apartheid was one of the greatest human achievements of the twentieth century. It should be acknowledged and passed on to younger generations who know very little about it.

It was also interesting that the struggle came to so many surprising venues: it was carried out in sports arenas and cathedrals, in embassies and corporate boardrooms, at fruit stands and beaches, at rock concerts and gas stations alike. And it involved not only political leaders but ordinary people — athletes, students, ministers, workers, artists, and entertainers. This was not just a political battle; it was economic, cultural, moral, and spiritual.

Many call the downfall of apartheid a “miracle.” But actually it was the result of an unstoppable rebellion inside South Africa — combined with the success of an international grassroots effort to isolate the apartheid regime from its allies in the West — that brought South Africa to the negotiating table in an astonishing nonviolent transition of power.

This story has never been fully told before in any medium, and it is unique: millions around the world came together with a common cause to fight injustice and racism. They faced incredible odds and prevailed. In a time when the global community of nations is divided about their goals, this story is a uniquely positive example of how individuals around the world came together to fight for a common human rights cause.

About the Filmmaker

Connie Field (Producer/Director/Writer) has worked on numerous dramatic and documentary films as well as independently producing her own work. Her feature documentary *Freedom on My Mind* (1994) is a history of the civil rights movement in Mississippi. It was nominated for an Academy Award®, and won dozens of awards including the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival. It was broadcast on PBS's *American Experience*. Field was also a member of Boston Newsreel Films, where she worked on productions and distribution. She was a director on *Forever Activists* (1990 Academy Award® nominee) and she produced, directed, and edited the feature documentary *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1981). *Rosie* earned fifteen international awards for best documentary, was named “One of the Ten Best Films of the Year” by a number of publications, was translated into ten different languages, and is listed in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. It was broadcast nationally on PBS's *American Experience*. Field's previous documentary *¡Salud!* (2007), on Cuba's role in the struggle for global health equity, won the Henry Hampton Award for Excellence in Film and Video from the Council on Foundations and the Audience Award at the Pan-African Film Festival. For her work as most outstanding social documentarian she is a

recipient of the John Grierson Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. She is also a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

###