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An Evening with Omali Yeshitela

Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

James Anthony Schnur

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“An Evening with Omali Yeshitela”

Sponsored by Special Collections and Archives at Nelson Poynter Memorial Library and the Florida Studies Program, University of South Florida St. Petersburg

When: Thursday, January 21, 6:00 p.m.

Where: Campus Activities Center, USF St. Petersburg (corner of 6th Ave. S. and 2nd St.)

Contact: Jim Schnur, USF Librarian, 727-873-4094 or Uhuru House, 727-821-6620

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg hosts an evening of conversation with Uhuru Movement leader Omali Yeshitela to herald the recent acquisition of approximately 20 of Yeshitela's publications as part of the library's Special Collections and Archives.

Special Collections Librarian James Schnur will conduct an interview with Mr. Yeshitela that traces notable events in his life and work. Schnur will present a display of the collection, which includes recent publications as well as historic and out-of-print writings by the prolific political theorist. He will then take the stage with Mr. Yeshitela to share video clips and interview the controversial St. Petersburg native who has achieved international recognition.

As the Poynter Library's Special Collections Librarian, Schnur is determined to ensure that the direct first-hand accounts of life and struggle by community leaders and residents are preserved for future generations. "From his childhood in segregated St. Petersburg to his activism across the globe," Schnur notes, "Mr. Yeshitela has made an important impact in challenging the bitter legacies of our past." Schnur continues, "This collection of writings traces his work and offers present and future generations of scholars a better understanding of how experiences at different points in his life have shaped his views and his advocacy."

Omali Yeshitela was born and raised in St. Petersburg, once worked for the *St. Petersburg Times*, and was sentenced to 5 years on the Florida chain gang for tearing down a racist mural from City Hall. After working to register black voters throughout Florida in the 1960s, he built the Uhuru Movement with community centers and economic self-reliance institutions in several U.S. cities.

He founded *The Burning Spear* newspaper, which is the longest running "Black Power" newspaper in continuous publication since the 1960s, and has written several books and innumerable pamphlets on the struggle for African liberation. He has been the featured speaker at events at the United Nations, as well as at national conferences in South Africa, the U.K., Spain, Sierra Leone, and Kenya. He regularly addresses university audiences and community meetings throughout the U.S.

In recent years, Yeshitela has traveled regularly to Africa and established an international organization that works to dissolve the current state borders and create a single African government. The group is currently engaged in rainwater harvesting, fisheries and healthcare projects in Sierra Leone, and regional organizing in Kenya and South Africa.

The January 21 program is free and open to the public. The Campus Activities Center is located at 6th Ave. S. and 2nd St. in downtown St. Petersburg. For more information, call 727-873-4094.