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ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A rising tide

by

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The views expressed are those of the author.]

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Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa, Port Elizabeth, Fort Hare University, the black South African students' struggle, the black consciousness movement, the mass arrests, the death of Steven Biko, the school-children's continuing school boycott--all these moments of the continuous resistance of African people and their allies inside South Africa have ignited sparks which are now starting a bush fire in the United States.

Traditionally, there have been three galaxies of anti-apartheid protest in the United States: 1) the black community; 2) the churches; and 3) small single issue support groups such as the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). And in that mould we have seen, in recent years, each of these constituencies carrying on in their usually persistent manner.

Growing solidarity of the black community in the United States with liberation in Southern Africa

Twenty-eighth of May this year saw the African Liberation Day celebrated for the fifth straight year with demonstrations as large as 12,000 and more in cities like Washington, New York, and Chicago. Black organizations such as the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) and the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) will undoubtedly be mobilizing with increased fervor in the coming spring.

A further testimony to the perseverance of the black community was the February mobilization led by the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, which picketed the South African propaganda play, "Ipi Thombi," for over six weeks finally forcing it into an early closing.

A related event which, too, had its roots and drive within the black community was the fund-raising organized by the Mozambique Film Project. With premieres of the Robert Van Lierop film, "O Povo Organizado," in ten different cities in the United States and Canada, attended by nearly 10,000 people and viewed by television audiences of over 2 million, largely from black, Hispanic, and working class communities, the Mozambique Film Project raised over \$48,000 in less than one year for hospital construction in free Mozambique.

Watching the hundreds who came to see "Povo" in various cities and marching with thousands of black working people, we could not help but think of the prophetic words of the historic giant, Paul Robeson, when at Madison Square Garden on 6 June 1946 he said:

"The Negro--and I mean American Negroes as well as West Indians and Africans--has a direct and first-hand understanding, which most other people lack, of what imperialist exploitation and oppression is. With him it is no far-off theoretical problem..."

"The race is on--in Africa as in every other part of the world--the race between the forces of progress and democracy on the one side and the forces of imperialism and reaction on the other. And Africa, with its immense undeveloped and unmeasured wealth of resources, is a major prize which the imperialists covet and which we, the anti-imperialists, must defend."

So, too, have we seen other black American organizations begin to enunciate and assume their historical responsibility to Africa. The National Committee of Black Churchmen wrote its "Call to the Black Religious Community on Behalf of Justice in Southern Africa" (December 1976). The National Council of Negro Women began concerted work on the South Africa issue, launching a project for assistance to South African refugees in Botswana. At the meetings of the National Association of Black Social Workers, People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), and the African Heritage Studies Association, mobilizing to support liberation in southern Africa has been a major agenda item.

In its 1977 statement on United States corporate investment in South Africa, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) adopted the position of "opposing further investment in South Africa by United States corporations."

In its African-American Manifesto on Southern Africa, the Congressional Black Caucus took the following position:

"We totally support the liberation of southern Africa from white minority rule by means of armed struggle, where necessary, and affirm the right of the African liberation movements to seek necessary assistance from whatever sources available to achieve self-determination and majority rule..."

More recently, the Black Caucus has presented to the Carter Administration a series of recommendations which included one for "the elimination of United States Export-Import Bank guarantees for loans to United States companies trading and investing in South Africa." (21 October 1977)

A recent addition to the array of black American groups working on southern African issues is the Emergency Coalition for Human Rights in South Africa. Responding to the massive raids by the fascist Vorster regime on 19 October this year, a group of predominantly black Americans came together to begin to forge a common front in support of the southern African liberation struggle. The group includes, among others: Mr. Franklin Williams, Chairman, Phelps-Stokes Fund; Justice William Booth, President, ACOA; Mr. Clarence Coleman, Executive Director, the National Urban League; Mr. Bruce Llewellyn, President, 100 Black Men; and Mr. Denton Watson, NAACP.

Church action against economic collaboration

American churches, too, have been moving forward. During 1977, 33 Protestant and Catholic organizations filed shareholder resolutions with 15 companies and banks urging them to withdraw from, stop expanding in or end loans to South Africa. Though none of the resolutions gained more than 3 per cent of shareholders' votes, these actions were yet another way of baring South African apartheid to the eyes of the American people. The corporations with which the resolutions were filed were:

Kennecott
Phelps Dodge
General Motors
Ford
General Electric
Good Year
Union Carbide
Texaco

Standard Oil (California)
Mobil
Citicorp
Continental Illinois
First National Chicago
Manufacturers Hanover Trust
Morgan Guaranty Trust

Another area in which church groups have begun to work is on the campaign against bank loans. Both Roman Catholic orders and Protestant denominations working through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) have been vigorously campaigning to end bank loans to South Africa using a variety of strategies.

In 1973 the ICCR released the Frankfurt Papers documenting hundreds of millions of dollars of loans to South Africa co-ordinated by the European American Bank.

When a new series of loans were discovered two years ago, Protestant denominations and Roman Catholic orders immediately began pressing major United States leaders to adopt policies prohibiting loans to South Africa. They sent delegations to meet with top management, they sent letters as depositors and shareholders, they testified before Congressional committees, and last year, using their leverage as investors, they filed shareholder resolutions with five of the top lenders--Citibank, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Morgan Guaranty, Continental Illinois, First National Chicago--demanding an end to South African loans, in particular directly to the South African Government. This year eight banks are targetted for shareholder resolutions.

Recently a number of churches have committed themselves to join the campaign of withdrawal of funds, spearheaded by the Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa, of which ACOA is a part. In November the National Council of Churches unanimously adopted a lengthy policy statement which indicated a commitment to undertake to withdraw funds and close accounts with apartheid's banking partners. We expect that the hundreds of millions of dollars of church deposits, trust accounts, pension funds, etc. will be

used to exert pressure on banks.

In Europe the World Council of Churches (WCC) has played a major role in campaigning against loans by European banks. Along with Dutch churches and political groups, the WCC successfully pressed AMCO and the Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN) to stop their South Africa lending. In Britain the action group, End Loans to South Africa (ELTSA), was joined by the British Methodist Church in its focus on Midland Bank. Midland recently stated that it would no longer lend to the South African Government. Pressure on Barclay's Standard Bank and Hill Samuels continues.

Similar church actions are beginning in Belgium, Scandinavia, and Switzerland. In Canada, led by the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (TCLSA), churches and unions are campaigning against loans by the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the Bank of Montreal and the Royal Bank.

It is a sign of the importance of the financial support for apartheid that there seems to be a virtual consensus among major American church bodies that loans to South Africa must cease.

One of the current campaign problems is the difficulty in getting non-lending banks to clearly state their policy. One of the banks refusing to state its policy explicitly is the United Nations' own bank, Chemical Bank. We applaud the decision of the Chairman of this Committee to approach Chemical to get an immediate clarification of its policy.

Parenthetically, I should say that we understand that Chemical did participate in the purchase of a \$35 million bond in 1974 by ESCOM, a South African Government agency.

Campaign against apartheid by liberation support groups

So, too, do the single-issue and southern Africa support groups continue their good work. The American Committee on Africa continues to put out reliable information. Africa News (North Carolina) and International Bulletin (California) continue providing up-to-date information and excellent radio releases.

The sheer numbers of support groups have grown geometrically throughout the country. A catalogue of these groups is found in Action Guide on Southern Africa (1976), available from the American Friends Service Committee (Philadelphia), itself an active organization on the southern Africa front. Ranging in size from three or four people to caucuses of entire unions, there are too many of them at this juncture to begin to list here. Their contributions range from sending tons of clothing across the entire United States in rented trucks, then onwards from Virginia to Zimbabwean refugee

camps, to doing detailed studies of local business involvement with South Africa. These mushrooming small groups are a barometer of a changed situation in the United States.

Four campaigns against apartheid

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Committee,

There is at present, I would like to suggest, a momentous new stage in anti-apartheid work in the United States. The new Administration with its so-called human rights campaign policy--even if largely rhetorical--contributes to creating a different objective context for us to work within. But more than anything else it is the continuing resistance of the black South African people and their allies that have generated a quantitatively and qualitatively new situation.

Now, my friends, the people of the United States can begin to identify a chair at the long table of contributors for themselves as contributors to the world-wide movement of solidarity with South African freedom.

I would like, therefore, to draw your attention to four major campaigns and highlight some of the refreshing, positive developments therein. They are: a) the university divestiture campaign; b) anti-Krugerrand campaign; c) sports boycott; d) the anti-bank loans campaign. Necessarily this cannot be an exhaustive survey, but I hope to share some of the quickened pulse beat which is making organizations like mine strain to keep up with the demand.

a) University divestiture campaigns

In the spring of 1977, with the arrest of Stanford University students and 468 University of California students came a revival of the student movement in the United States. What regenerated this movement, at least in part, was the struggle of the South African people. It was on behalf of that struggle that first the students in California and now many others have donned the garb of struggle in order to have their schools sever their ties to any form of support for the South African apartheid system. Why the campuses?

The students have accurately perceived and analyzed the clear connexion between the investing patterns of United States universities and United States corporate profiteering out of South African apartheid. They demand that their institutions must divest themselves of moneys involved in companies investing in South Africa. Further, on some campuses (e.g., Columbia University, whose Board of Directors has members who are also directors of such firms as Ford, Kennecott, IBM, Chase Manhattan, Manufacturers Hanover Trust and Exxon), students are demanding that these trustees sever their ties with those multinational corporations involved in South Africa.

The impact of these campaigns can be measured in the fact that the Embassy of South Africa has gone to the expense of sending letters and a voluminous mass of misinformation to various university presidents in an attempt to counter them. Another indication of the extent of impact is to be found in the fact that administrations on some campuses are hiring investment firms and co-ordinating with each other in formulating strategies to avoid divestiture. Finally, the sheer number of campuses involved gives further indication of the substantial manner in which this movement is spreading to universities throughout the United States. The following is a list of campuses which my organization knows to be involved in anti-apartheid divestiture campaigns:

Successful divestiture campaigns

Oberlin College (Ohio)
Hampshire College (Massachusetts)
University of Wisconsin
University of Massachusetts
University of Oregon
Smith College (Massachusetts) - Firestone only
Antioch College (Ohio)

Past, current or pending divestiture campaigns or proxy withdrawal demands

Princeton University (New Jersey)
Brandeis University (Massachusetts)
Ohio State University
Duke University (North Carolina)
Haverford College (Pennsylvania)
Bryn Mawr College (Pennsylvania)
Columbia University (New York)
University of California
Stanford University (California)
University of Illinois
University of Michigan
University of Indiana
Harvard University (Massachusetts)
Yale University (Connecticut)
Amherst College (Massachusetts)
Connecticut Wesleyan College
Swarthmore College (Pennsylvania)
University of Connecticut
Macalester College (Minnesota)
Rutgers University (New Jersey)

b) Krugerrand campaigns

Sales of Krugerrand gold coins have been a major source of foreign exchange for the South African Government. Its original intention to spend some \$7 million to promote the marketing of Krugerrand during the fall of 1977 clearly meant that it hoped to keep the United States as the major market.

During the last year, however, various actions have slowed down the advertising ventures and the sales prospects for the Krugerrand. First, the city councils of Dayton, Denver, San Antonio, Portland and Chicago have passed resolutions opposing the sale of Krugerrand. Public demonstrations have stopped the sale of the "blood coin" at places like Carson Pirie Scott department store (Chicago), May Store (Cleveland) and Abraham and Strauss here in Brooklyn, New York. Letters and marches have pressured television stations to stop carrying Krugerrand ads in Boston and in New York.

Sales of the Krugerrand are up. This fact cannot be challenged. The recent revelation that the Indiana University football coach was conducting a Sunday morning religious show paid for with Krugerrand ads shows that there is much educating yet to be done. Still, as a leader of the Chicago New African Liberation Support Committee recently commented: "A lot of people are finally waking up..." (Chicago Defender, 29 November 1977).

c) Sports boycott

Led by organizations such as the Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the United States-South Africa Davis Cup Match and the American Co-ordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS), there is growing activity in the sports arena. It is this type of awakening that spurred the anti-South Africa Davis Cup demonstration last spring in Newport Beach, California, and the September demonstration at Forest Hills, New York. These mobilizations and others caused the United States Tennis Association to request recently the formal withdrawal of South Africa from the Davis Cup.

d) Bank campaign

What is happening today in the United States labour movement regarding anti-apartheid activities is one of the most positive and dynamic developments. One arena in which some working people in this country have begun to express their solidarity with the struggle in South Africa is in the campaign started recently to oppose bank loans to South Africa through organizing massive protest withdrawals.

The campaign to oppose bank loans to South Africa seems now to be gaining substantial momentum. It is having considerable impact. Recent articles in the South African press have cited with regularity the bank

campaign (see for example, the Johannesburg Star, 15 October 1977). The Financial Times reported on 7 October 1977 that the European American Banking Corporation, partly owned by Britain's Midland Bank, "will no longer grant credits to South Africa except for the financing of current trade." The First National Bank of Atlanta and the Wells Fargo Bank have both publicly announced "no more loans to South Africa." (An effort is being made to clarify and monitor the precise meaning of these announcements.) Chemical Bank in New York is considering making a new policy statement.

Clearly, added to the critical elements of continued internal resistance by the African people and South Africa's economic stagnation, these combined factors are making it hard for South Africa to find the capital it needs. This was conceded by the New York Times in an article on 4 December 1977. On the other hand, Africa News on 5 December 1977 discussed a recent roll-over of a \$50 million loan, which may have involved several major New York banks.

At present, 38 organizations are participating in the bank campaign and have joined the Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa (COBLSA). The list includes such national organizations as Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC); the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice (UCC-CRJ); the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) and the American Committee on Africa (ACOA).*

Bank campaigns are now underway in Rochester, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Cleveland, in addition to New York City. Campaigns are starting in Milwaukee, Madison, and Minneapolis. We hope soon to see some activity in Pittsburgh against the involvement of Pittsburgh National Bank (loans to ISCOR) and the Mellon Bank (trade loans). Inquiries on how to research the activities of local banks keep coming from places like Arizona, New Mexico, Nebraska and Georgia.

There is a good communication network between these centres. Through the various centres, there are over 1,000 people who are actively involved in either withdrawing and/or active campaign efforts. One goal of our work is to increase the size of this network.

A minimum of \$30 million to \$35 million has been withdrawn which can be identified. There are additional withdrawals whose amounts are simply not known; for example, a major health organization wrote a letter saying it was withdrawing but did not want to publicize it under any circumstances for fear of losing the space it rented from the same bank!

* See annex for a full list of participating organizations.

The special role of organized labour

But it was organized labour which really kicked off the bank campaign and has fuelled it. On 24 June the Joint Furriers Council withdrew an \$8 million-per-year payroll account and a \$16 million welfare and pension account from Manufacturers Hanover Trust.

The Fur, Leather and Machinery Workers (FLM Joint Board); the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE); the District 1199 of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees; the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Workers Union (ILWU), Local 6; and District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) have similarly withdrawn all their funds from banks providing loans to South Africa. In addition, the International United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) are in the process of withdrawing. And the International Association of Machinists and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union are presently deliberating about similar anti-bank loan, anti-apartheid steps.

Two quotations sum up this rising tide of solidarity of United States labour with the struggle to end apartheid:

"It is the interest and obligation of American unionists to fight the corporations' immoral support for the racist South African regime. In keeping with this, the UE has withdrawn its funds from the Chase Manhattan Bank, a major investor in South Africa." (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, 1977 Convention Resolution.)

"We have contacted other unions to do the same thing and they have reacted sympathetically. I think that the unions, by using their pension funds, which are a major source of investment funds in this country, can have a major effect on the banks." (Harold Shapiro, President, Furriers Joint Council, quoted in the Los Angeles Times, 30 September 1977.)

It is not, however, only in the bank campaign where one finds this growing militancy on the part of an increased number of American workers. There is an awakening realization on the part of a larger number of American trade unionists--black and white, rank and file as well as leadership--that what is happening in South Africa involves not only their moral interests but, more importantly, their material interests as well.

The 1977 ILWU Convention resolved "to implement means through which the union will stop all handling of goods to or from South Africa and South Rhodesia." The UAW has issued in their magazine, AMMOALERT, which is distributed to all members, a warning that wearing a Krugerrand is like wearing

a swastika. And in May this year members of United Steelworkers Local 1011, representing 8,500 workers at Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company (YST) in East Chicago, Indiana, put forward a local bargaining demand that YST not use or purchase products produced under non-union conditions in southern Africa, including but not limited to chrome from Southern Rhodesia and coal and coke from the Republic of South Africa. It further demanded that a monitoring system be provided to assure the union of company compliance.

There is, as we all know, a large part of the U. S. labour movement, certainly the majority, which has yet to be awakened (or re-awakened) to its historic responsibility. But revelations such as the one in Africa News in May this year that Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company of Durham, North Carolina, controlled by Afrikaner multi-millionaire Anto Rupert, had broken a strike by cigarette plant workers are hastening the process by which United States workers see the pervasiveness and dangers of the US-South Africa apartheid axis.

There is an exciting development taking place in the United States of America. A new informed consciousness about southern Africa is steadily spreading amongst the American people -an informal consciousness. New groupings are emerging: new forces are working in support of, in particular, the South African liberation struggle. They are forces which in most instances are carrying out activities consistent with the United Nations Programme of Action against Apartheid formulated at the Havana seminar in May 1976 and adopted by the thirty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. Not single-issue groups, these are constituencies which may not mobilize instantaneously but which, when they do commit themselves to action, achieve substantive results.

What is needed for these new galaxies of forces is more information, more materials. It is no longer to the traditional groupings alone that material should be provided. I suggest that the United Nations Centre against Apartheid consider the following to meet this need:

- special mailings to a key list of black, inner-city activist groups
- mobile United Nations libraries with Africa-oriented reading materials aimed at urban school and college populations and
- more visibility of the United Nations Centre against Apartheid to these new black, labour, university and religious forces.

It is not an entirely rosy picture. The racist and right-wing elements in this country are gearing up, too. The mercenary flow continues. Rumor has it that within the United States Congress there will soon surface a systematic effort to "Byrd-Amend" the recently-passed arms embargo against South Africa. As part of celebrating their "thanksgiving", over 130 United States multinational corporations recently opened a US Chamber of Commerce office in Johannesburg. (Perhaps an effort to respond to growing pressure,

to counter announcements such as those made recently--be they full of ambiguities--by Control Data Corporation and Polaroid Corporation.)

The anti-apartheid support struggle in the United States continues. I thank the Special Committee against Apartheid for providing me the opportunity to testify here today on that struggle. I also offer an apology for what must be countless acts and deeds which I could not recount in this incomplete testimony. I hope, however, that I have provided some insights with this brief incursion into a rising tide.

ANNEX

COMMITTEE TO OPPOSE BANK LOANS TO SOUTH AFRICA

Participating Organizations

Ad Hoc Committee against Bank Loans to South Africa, (Rochester, New York)
African Agenda
American Committee on Africa
American Friends Service Committee (National)
American Friends Service Committee (Midwest)
Americans for Democratic Action
Asociacion Puertorriquena de Artistas y Tecnicos
Black Students Organization - Columbia University
Black Theology Project
Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa
Center for International Education
Chicago Southern Africa Bank Campaign Coalition
Church of the Intercession
Clergy and Laity Concerned
Coalition of Concerned Black Americans
District 65, Distributive Workers of America
District Council 1707, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
District 1199, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFL-CIO
Furriers Joint Council of New York
Institute for Education in Peace and Justice
Institute for Sport and Social Analysis
International Longshoremen and Warehouse Workers Union, Local 6
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement
Workers of America (UAW)
Internews
Minnesota Committee on Southern Africa
Namibia Peace Center
National Lawyers Guild
Northern California Interfaith Committee on Corporate Responsibility
Pan African Students Organization in America (PASOA)
Philadelphia Namibia Action Group
Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ
Resist
Robert R. Moton Institute
Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center
San Antonio Committee against Mercenary Recruitment
South Africa Freedom Day Coalition
Southern Africa Committee
Stop Bank of America Banking on Apartheid Campaign
The East Organization, New York
United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)
Washington Office on Africa
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom