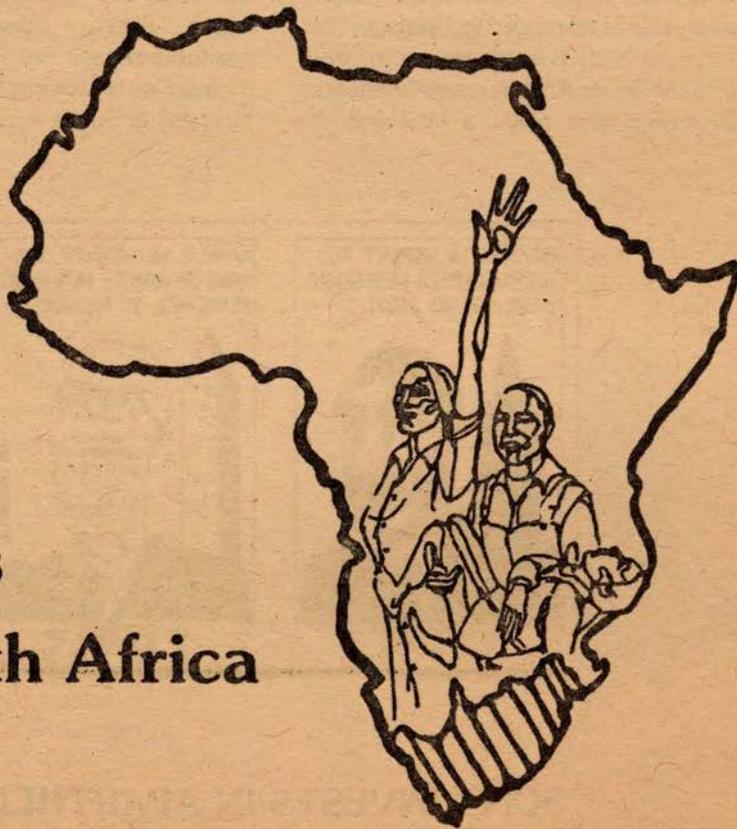


THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID

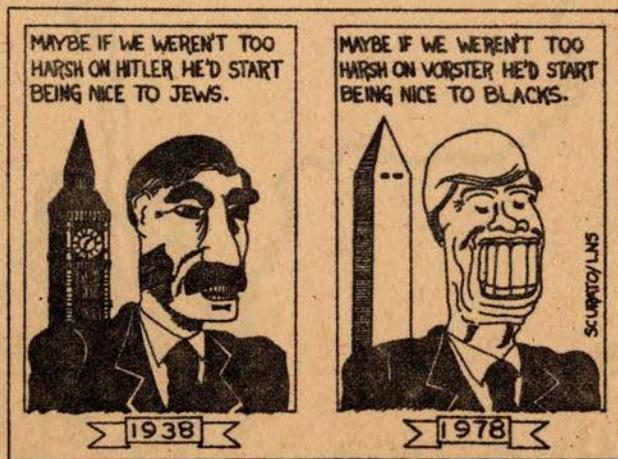
**SUNY
Invests
in South Africa**



**A Report by
The Committee on
Southern Africa, SUNY-Binghamton**

South Africa's notorious *apartheid* policy has come under attack from all sectors of the world community as a basic affront to humanity. Despite this, the white minority regime continues to benefit from growing U.S. business and financial involvement. U.S. business presence in the form of industrial plants, stock holdings in South African-based companies, sale of advanced technology, and bank loans to both the private sector and directly to the South African government and its state companies plays a vital role in

supporting and perpetuating one of the most barbarous and inhumane regimes in the world. The government's position of power and privilege rests on a system of legalized racism—*apartheid*. Over the past few years a large number of anti-*apartheid* groups in the U.S. have called for a withdrawal of all U.S. business and financial involvement from South Africa. Educational and other institutions have been called upon to divest themselves of stock in corporations still doing business in South Africa.



SUNY INVESTS IN APARTHEID

According to a *New York Times* report of December 21, 1978, the SUNY investment portfolio is valued at \$52 million and includes at least \$9 million invested in corporations that do business in South Africa. SUNY does not have to invest in these companies

because alternatives are available. We call for an immediate divestment of all stock in corporations dealing in South Africa and for a withdrawal of accounts from banks which have dealings with the South African government or South African companies.

WHAT IS APARTHEID?

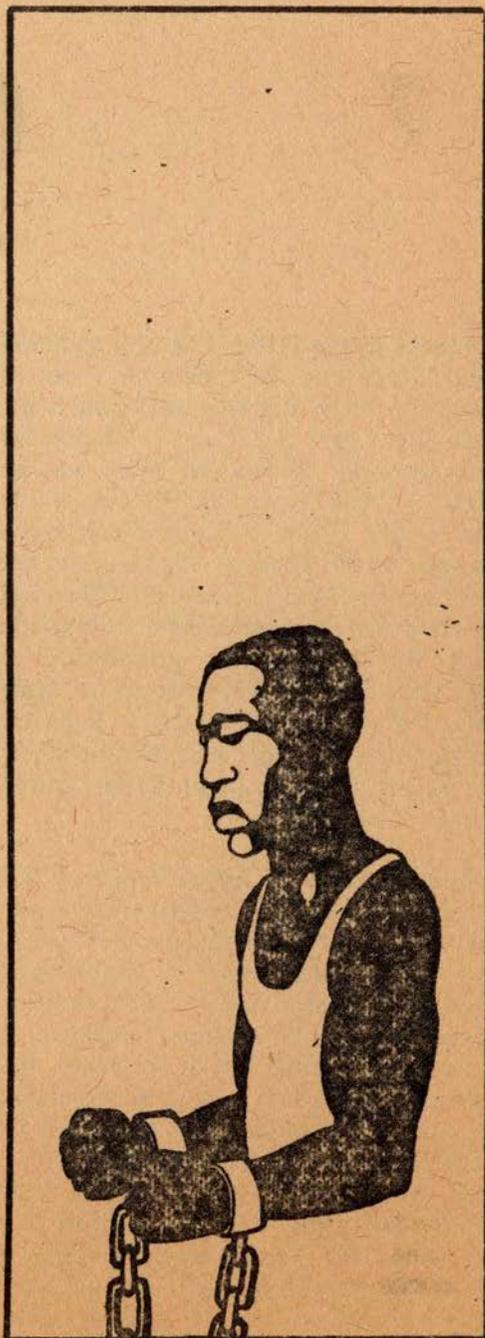
Apartheid is the South African government's doctrine which claims that all "races" must develop separately. This means that all Whites, irrespective of cultural and linguistic differences, constitute one group (presently 16 per cent of the population). Blacks, who constitute 84 per cent of the population, are divided by the South African government into twelve allegedly cultural and antagonistic "peoples" or "nations." In reality all Black people experience social degradation, political repression, and economic exploitation. Their human and political rights are denied and they are subject to military and police brutality, often at the cost of countless innocent lives. *Apartheid* is in fact, an intricate system of social control that the South African government, in collaboration with multinational corporations, has perfected to achieve two basic goals:

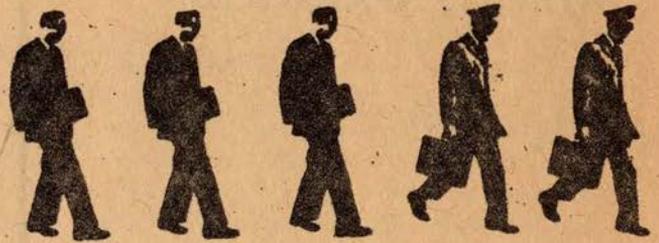
1-to provide a cheap labor force for the South African economy: and

2-to deny the black population any political rights that can be used to change the existing system of exploitation.

As the previous Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, said, "The fact of the matter is this: We need them because they work for us...but the fact that they work for us can never entitle them to claim political rights."

The *apartheid* system is generally based around six legally defined areas.





1) Access to the Land: The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts parceled out a mere 13 per cent of the land in South Africa for Black ownership, while 87 per cent of the land—including the most fertile and mineral rich areas—was set aside for White ownership. This means that Blacks have a right to own land only in the poorest and most overcrowded areas, called the “reserves” and “homelands.” They are thus forced to seek employment in the poorly paid and often harsh conditions of agriculture, industry, and mining in the “white areas.” While the Whites enjoy abundant access to the wealth of the South African soil, the majority of Blacks are legally pushed into a state of landless poverty.

2) Pass Laws and Influx Control: All Africans are legally required to carry a “pass” from the age of 16 years until the day they die. This booklet contains data on the bearer—photo, name, date of birth, I.D. number, ethnic group, tax receipts, employment record, magisterial district in which the bearer is compelled to stay, finger prints, etc.—and is processed by a centralized British computer system. Failure to have a valid “pass” results in a fine or jailing. 2,800 Blacks are arrested daily for pass law violations. The “pass” is used as means of controlling and distributing the flow of Blacks from the “reserves” to the white controlled areas. Only those Africans essential to the

economy are permitted into the cities and on the farms. This results in male migrants being forced to leave their wives, children, and parents in the barren reserves to live in penitentiary-like barracks in the cities for up to 11 ½ months per year. The shattering effect of this forced separation on the family and community life of Black South Africans has been repeatedly pointed out. This system of exploitation, however, pays little heed to the hardship, social dislocation, and grief it spells for the black masses of South Africa through its economic principles and drive for super profits.

3) Job Color Bar: There is a legalized system of job classification which keeps Blacks confined to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs while various skilled and supervisory jobs are exclusively reserved for Whites. These laws essentially arose out of compromise between big business and white trade unions. Under these laws, big business reaps high profits and white workers maintain a privileged position in the economy.

4) Labor Regulation and Unionization: Africans cannot form or join legally registered trade unions. Strikes by Blacks have been viciously suppressed and their leaders subjected to harsh retaliation. Black strikers can be fined up to \$1,400 or, more likely, sent to the wastelands of the “reserves.” All



Blacks must register with a labor bureau in order to get work. Failure to do so could result in arrest. A bureau can break workers' contracts and prevent them from being employed. Any Black who refuses work is labeled "undesirable" and can be sent to a work colony for up to three years. Hence the black worker in South Africa is reduced to a poorly paid forced laborer.

5) Political Rights: Only the white minority has the right to vote or participate in the government of South Africa. The disenfranchised (voteless) masses do not have any access to political power. The South African government has attempted to create ethnic "dummy" governing bodies—including the "independent" Transkei—in an attempt to divert the political aspirations of the South African masses. These bodies have no more than advisory status and have been renounced emphatically by the oppressed South African people, as clearly seen in the 1976-77 uprisings. The black "puppets" who chose to participate in these bodies have been rejected repeatedly as leaders of the disenfranchised people. They have been subjected frequently to open hostility by the very people they are supposed to represent.

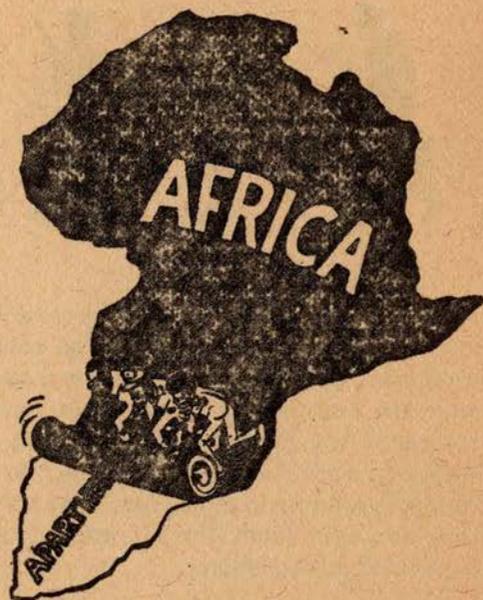
6) Political Repression: The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 gives the White minority government unprecedented powers

to repress all those who oppose it. Those accused of endangering the existing order can be arrested, detained, and placed in solitary confinement for any length of time. These prisoners are rarely allowed to see lawyers, doctors, or their families. Families of prisoners are not even informed of detainees' whereabouts. Harsh prison conditions and the brutality of the South African police mean that there are frequent "accidental" deaths of political prisoners. Steve Biko is only one of many people who have died at the hands of police in South Africa's jails. Numerous organizations and individuals have fallen victim to this draconian system of law. Bannings, detention without trial, torture, death in detention, and even the mowing down of unarmed school children is as much a fact of daily life in South Africa as are the huge profits of the multinational corporations which operate there. This total lack of political rights for Blacks is enforced by an immense and military apparatus which relies on multinational corporations for its technology and heavy weapons. Subsidiaries of arms manufacturing companies like Lockheed and Colt make huge profits as they provide the white minority government with the weapons it needs in its desperate attempt to hold onto political power. The majority of South Africans are forced to battle tanks and machine guns with sticks and rocks.

FOREIGN AND U.S. COLLABORATION

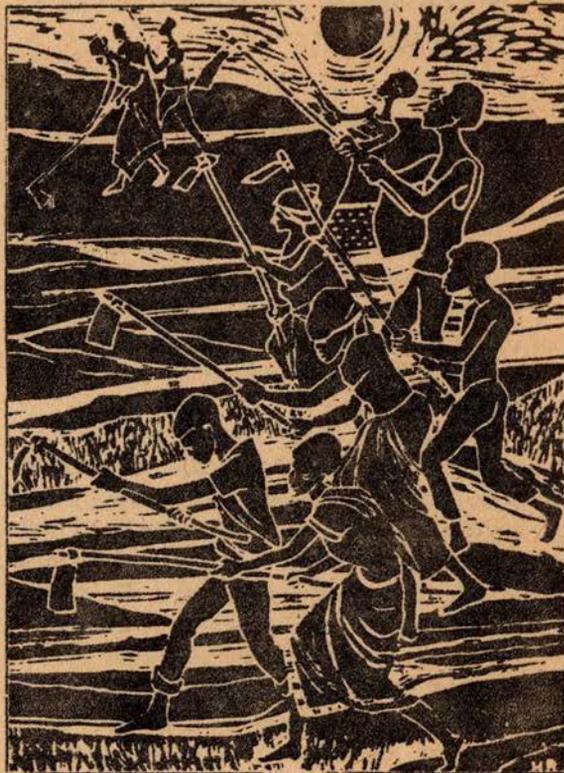
Although apartheid is a South African phenomenon, it is important to realize that apartheid is a particular manifestation of an international system that leads to collaboration between multinational corporations and militarized governments. Many of the largest companies in South Africa are jointly owned by Western Capital, the South African Government, and South African capital. The United States government (along with other Western governments) uses our tax money to guarantee the investments of U.S. corporations in South Africa. Through government organizations like the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, our taxes are helping the multinationals to set up productive facilities in places like South Africa. And this only adds to the unemployment problem here at home. It is time we realized that the same corporate/government collusion that makes super-profits in South Africa is responsible for unemployment, inflation, and environmental neglect here in the U.S.

The U.S. is now South Africa's third largest trading partner. About four hundred U.S. corporations are doing business in South Africa with investments totaling more than \$1.7 billion. This investment is concentrated in manufacturing and petroleum refining, which contributes to the military and economic strength of the apartheid regime. Private bank loans from the U.S. to the South African government are estimated at over \$2 billion. Many apologists for these corporate



interests have argued that their presence in South Africa will act as a "progressive force" for social change, and will gradually enhance the conditions of the black worker. South Africa's record clearly shows how the repressive apartheid system has continued to deny Blacks the most basic human and political rights while keeping their wages at consistently low levels. Hence, the authors of the South African Catalyst Project booklet *U.S. Investment in South Africa* conclude, "rather than acting as a liberalizing influence, economic growth has been accompanied by intensified repression of the black populace. Rather than serving as a constraint on industrialization and economic growth, apartheid has been a sophisticated mechanism for regulating a flow of cheap black labor upon which the dynamism of South African capitalism has stood. Rather than weakening apartheid, foreign

investment has reinforced it." Many U.S. corporations which operate in South Africa have become aware of the blood-stained assets which line their vaults and have embarked on various frivolous attempts to improve their public image. One such strategy is the adoption of the "Sullivan principles" which amount to no more than a token gesture at eradicating some aspects of "petty apartheid" (e.g., segregated washrooms, eating facilities, etc.) while basically leaving the fundamental structures of apartheid unchanged. Not one of the aspects of apartheid outlined above is challenged in any serious manner by U.S. corporate involvement. Even then, only 34 of the known 400 U.S. corporations have endorsed the Sullivan principles. South Africa is highly dependent on its foreign-based corporations and on investments and loans it receives from other countries. Although cutting off the flow of foreign investment may worsen the conditions of some Blacks in the short term, it is important that freedom-loving people throughout the world go beyond moral denunciations of apartheid and become involved in political activity that weakens the South African government. As the late Albert Luthuli, South African Nobel Peace Prize winner, once said, "The economic boycott of South Africa will entail undoubted hardships for Africans. We do not doubt that. But if it is a method which will shorten the day of blood, the suffering to us will be the price we are willing to pay." The tremendous sacrifices and commitment which the South African masses have repeatedly displayed in their struggle for their emancipation inspires us to play a greater part in contributing to the destruction of this inhumane and unjust social order.



ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVITY: OUR ROLE

The continuing resistance of the black South African people has generated a growing movement against apartheid in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Students, labor unions, church organizations; and political bodies have cooperated in placing increasing pressure on investors, corporations, and the U.S. government to withdraw their support for the South African regime.

During 1977, 33 Protestant and Catholic organizations filed shareholder resolutions with 15 corporations and banks, urging them to withdraw from, stop expanding in, or end loans to South Africa. The National Council of Churches has also ended a \$5 million payroll account at Citibank and a \$6 million pension fund at Morgan Guarantee Trust. Both are major creditors of the South African government. Numerous trade union branches have also executed similar measures. Colleges across the country have experienced growing student protest directed at university funds invested in corporations doing business in South Africa. Further, at some campuses, students have looked into the investments of the local community government or city council and have joined forces with community groups to make apartheid a local political issue. The Board of Trustees of SUNY has recently decided to "reassess" its investment policy for endowment funds, particularly those linked to South Africa. But Donald Blinken, the Board Chairman cautioned that the Board "has a very clear, legal responsibility to invest endowment funds in a manner which preserves principal and maximizes the production of income." It is up to us to see

that this maximization of income does not take place at the expense of the sweat and blood of black South Africans. We must not allow ourselves to enjoy these privileges while forsaking the most elementary principles of human rights. It is our committee's intention to pressure the Board of Trustees of SUNY to divest its funds from corporations doing business in South Africa. We also want to focus on university and community patronage of the local banks which play a role in making loans to private industry and the government in South Africa. We hope to educate the public of these aspects of the banks' activities and organize a withdrawal of accounts from these banks. We also wish to develop further a liason with workers at IBM who have shown a critical interest in that company's dealings in South Africa. We appeal to all those interested in these issues to join us in organizing and educating our society about the inhuman system of apartheid and what effective measures we can adopt to put an end to U.S. complicity with this system.

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