

Labor *Against* Apartheid

Summer 1988

S.A. Unions Battle New Crackdown

What does it take to stop a labor movement? Apparently, the South African government thinks it takes the suppression of all political activity, the elimination of all basic union rights, and massive doses of violence. South Africa's black workers — who operate the country's mines, factories, shops and services — know better.

Apartheid's 1988 program for labor was initiated on February 24, when the government made it illegal for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to engage in any political activity. The government also banned 17 anti-apartheid organizations from "performing any activities or acts whatsoever." The banned groups include the United Democratic Front, which in the last five years had gained over 800 affiliates and 1 million members, along with community, church, education and human rights organizations.

In addition, the apartheid regime has introduced legislation to outlaw foreign funding for organizations "with political purposes." Anti-apartheid groups in South Africa received \$250 million in international support last year. The bill is seen as an attempt to hamstring those organizations not cited in the recent bannings, including local labor support groups and churches.

The restrictions on COSATU prohibit the federation from speaking out against the bannings or the funding bill. COSATU is not allowed to campaign for the release of members detained under the State of Emergency. COSATU is not allowed to endorse international divestment or sanctions efforts or call for democratic reforms.

As an opening response, COSATU has challenged the restrictions in an appeal to the Supreme Court, arguing that the edict is absurdly vague and sweeping. Federation attorney Halton Cheadle pointed out, for example, that

the restriction on COSATU commemorating the death of any person was so wide it would prohibit union members from observing Easter.

New Labor Code

While the government tries to curb the labor movement's growing political involvement, it is also trying to strip the unions of their rising economic power.

The most serious attack is the Labor Relations Amendment Bill, now pending in Parliament. The bill would eliminate most of the labor reforms won in the last ten years, and, as a COSATU leader put it, "further undermine what democratic institutions are left in this country."

The proposed amendments would:

- make it virtually impossible to conduct a legal strike;
- outlaw sympathy and solidarity strikes;

- allow companies to sue unions for damages, and confiscate union assets, to recover strike-related losses;
- allow employers to recognize "sweetheart" unions that don't have a majority of members;
- make it an unfair labor practice for unions with majority members to claim sole representation rights at a workplace;
- make it an unfair labor practice for a union to incite a consumer boycott;
- make it a criminal offense to commit an unfair labor practice;
- give the labor minister the power to define an unfair labor practice or change the definition without warning or parliamentary action;
- legalize the employer's right to dismiss legal strikers, selectively rehire legal strikers, and dismiss a worker without a disciplinary hearing;
- establish a special labor court which can override the present industrial relations court.

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Hector Petersen, the first child killed by the police in Soweto, June 16, 1976.

REMEMBER SOWETO

RALLY THURSDAY JUNE 16

- 4:30 pm Rally at Mobil HQ
150 E. 42nd St.
(betw. 3rd & Lex)
- 5:30 pm March to Shell HQ
Rockefeller Center
(5th Ave. at 49th St.)
- 6:00 pm Rally at Shell

BOYCOTT SHELL,

imMOBILize APARTHEID!

US Labor Campaigns Grow



The March 25th Justice for Mayekiso Rally was addressed by John Christensen, International Affairs Office of the United Auto Workers. New York union leaders Jim Bell, John Hudson, Cleveland Robinson, and Sam Meyers look on. Folksinger Mat Jones provided songs of solidarity.

New York

Over 500 union members gathered on March 25 at a Justice for Moses Mayekiso rally, organized by the NY LCAA and co-sponsored by the NY Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council and the United Auto Workers. The rally launched a post-card drive and educational campaign among union locals.

The NY LCAA is also working with church and community groups to commemorate Soweto Day on June 16. New York unionists will participate in a national lobby day, urging local members of Congress to support the Dellums/Cranston sanctions bill. The day ends with a march from Mobil Headquarters to Shell headquarters at Rockefeller Center, demanding that the oil companies withdraw from South Africa.

Chicago

The newly formed Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid has gotten off to a rousing start. In March, the Network greeted South Africa's ambassador with a 100 pickets as he arrived on a tour of Chicago. On March 18, over 800 unionists staged a Free Mayekiso march and rally at the South African consulate, where eight people were arrested for sitting in.

Pressure from Chicago alderpersons, church and union leaders has persuaded the American National Bank to pledge its voting shares of Shell Oil to the Shell stockholders campaign. The campaign is



calling for a special, international Shell stockholders meeting to vote on pulling out of South Africa. The American National Bank is the largest Illinois stockholder in Shell, with nearly 1 million shares. Other banks are now targeted and the Network will push for a City resolution to boycott Shell.

On June 11, the Network will host a conference, "From Soweto to Chicago: The Fight for Union Rights and Human Rights" to build its ongoing work around the Shell Boycott and Justice for Mayekiso.

Mayekiso Update

The treason trial of union leader Moses Mayekiso enters the summer with no end in sight. Observers feel the prosecution is dragging out the proceedings to wear down the defense and drain union funds.

However, a correspondent found Mayekiso in good spirits in the courtroom and fully aware of the international campaign to secure his release. Mayekiso has been imprisoned since June 1986, when the State of Emergency was first declared. He is being tried with four other members of the Alexandra Action Committee: Obed Bapela, Richard Mdakane, Paul Tshabalala, and his brother, Mzwanwele Mayekiso.

The National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), which Mayekiso heads, sent this message: "The solidarity shown here has been very gratefully received by Comrade Moss and the whole union. The material support has been shared with the dependents of all those involved. We call for further efforts, especially by the labor movement, in this crucial, precedent-setting trial."

The trial tests the rights of union activists to organize at both the community and workplace levels. It tests the rights of black township residents to organize for their own basic welfare.

Moses Mayekiso is a symbol of thousands who are detained, with and without charges, under apartheid's oppressive rule. Letters urging the release of Mayekiso and all other political prisoners can be sent to the South African Ambassador Dr. Pieter G.J. Koornhof, Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

Msane Released

Amon Msane, a leader in the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA), was released from prison in February, after 50 weeks in detention.

Msane is chief steward of the 3M plant near Johannesburg where workers staged a walk-out to protest the closing of a 3M plant in Freehold, New Jersey, in 1986. Msane was arrested, for a second time, on returning from a labor speaking tour in the U.S. in 1987 to promote union solidarity in fighting multi-national corporations.

Labor, anti-apartheid, and human rights organizations mounted a campaign to free Msane, putting special pressure on 3M to intervene. Msane credits the international campaign with securing his release.

HOW TO STOP APARTHEID

Workers Make a Difference

One night last October, Margaret Jackson was watching a television program on apartheid and noticed that behind a scene of South African police violence stood a Hewlett-Packard building. It stuck in her mind because Ms. Jackson is an EKG technician at New York City's Bellevue Hospital and the hospital had recently ordered eight new E.K.G machines from Hewlett-Packard.

Ms. Jackson called her daughter, an anti-apartheid activist in college, who confirmed that Hewlett-Packard is indeed operating in South Africa. Ms. Jackson then informed her ten co-workers in the EKG technicians unit, members of Teamster Local 237.

The entire unit was outraged and went directly to the administration, asking how could they purchase from a company doing business in South Africa and requesting that they cancel the order. They were told that City policy allowed the purchase because the machines were "life-saving equipment."

Not satisfied, the workers pressed further up the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) hierarchy. At one meeting, the City walked in with a lawyer, personnel manager, and Bellevue officials. They insisted that Local Law 19, the City's anti-apartheid purchasing law, didn't cover medical equipment and besides, "the machines were made in the U.S."



The workers pointed out that it didn't matter where the machines were made if Hewlett-Packard's profits were invested in South Africa. The HHC set ethics aside and the order went through. The persistence of the EKG technicians was not in vain, however.

As a result of their efforts, the Health and Hospitals Corporation has just issued a new purchasing procedure stating that a company's connection to South Africa must be checked prior to approval of the purchase. And anti-apartheid groups in the City are check-

ing the loopholes in Local Law 19 and will push for tighter legislation.

The EKG technicians at Bellevue plan to save lives in Johannesburg as well as New York.

Workers in a repair shop of the Detroit Department of Transportation started their own campaign against apartheid when they unpacked bus windshields that were made in South Africa. The windshields had arrived in a box marked "made in Norway." The workers immediately went to the City in protest.

It seems that Detroit's anti-apartheid law doesn't cover the windshields, but the workers pressed the issue anyway, with the help of their union, AFSCME Local 312. The City then tried to shift the windshields to another DOT shop, but workers discovered the attempt. Eventually the City returned the windshields to the supplier in Chicago.

If you think your employer may be using goods from South Africa, please contact the Labor Committee Against Apartheid right away. We can help you check on the companies doing business in South Africa and on laws which restrict trade with South Africa. Call our coordinators: Kate Pfordresher at 718-768-1756 or Vicki Williams at 212-242-0700.

JOIN US! THE NEW YORK LABOR COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

The LCAA, sponsored by 35 labor organizations in the New York area, welcomes your personal support in building the anti-apartheid movement. We need your help to organize rallies, educational meetings, exchanges with unionists in South Africa and the distribution of our newsletter. Contact LCAA coordinator Kate Pfordresher at 718-768-1756 or mail in this coupon.

NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ (work or home?)

UNION OR ORGANIZATION _____



YES, SIGN ME UP!

- Newsletter mailing list (\$5/yr.)
- Bulk copies of newsletter
copies _____ (\$25 per 100)
- "Free Mayekiso" buttons
buttons _____ (\$1 each)
- Contact me for LCAA activities
- Contact me to arrange an educational program at my local/organization
- Donation to LCAA \$ _____

(checks payable to NY Labor Committee Against Apartheid)

MAIL-TO: VICKI WILLIAMS, c/o ACTWU, 15 UNION SQ. WEST, NY, NY 10003



A Living Wage for Women

Last year, COSATU launched a Living Wage campaign to raise pay and benefits for South Africa's black workers, who earn one-tenth the wages paid to white workers. This year the campaign has placed special focus on improving conditions for women workers.

In South Africa, women are the sole breadwinners for 30 percent of black households and almost all families rely on their earnings. As elsewhere, they are paid less for the same or comparable work, and are also concentrated in low-skill, low-wage occupations. Most employed women have the double burden of working full-time on the job and at home.

In addition, black women in South Africa face unemployment three times higher than men. Married women pay a higher tax rate than men or single persons. Many women leave school early so their brothers can be educated. It is particularly difficult for women who are

single, widowed or divorced to get housing, because only men are treated as household heads.

Addressing women's concerns, COSATU's Living Wage program specifically focuses on the demand for six-month paid maternity leave. Several unions have already won major advances. The Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA), with a large female membership, bargained the country's first full maternity agreement with the OK Bazaars retail chain in 1984, gaining 12 months' unpaid leave.

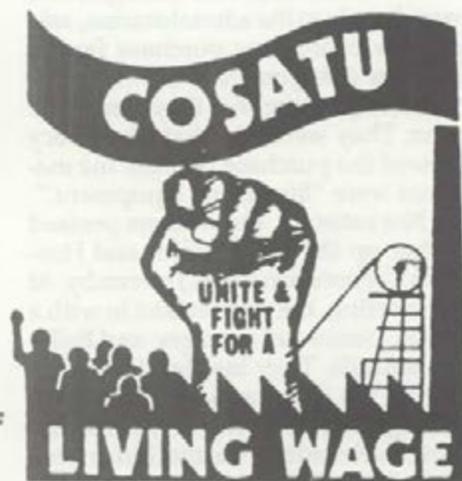
In 1985, CCAWUSA won a stronger parental leave agreement with Metro Stores, which included 12 months' maternity leave, seven months' paid leave at one-third salary, three days' paid paternity leave, and time off for breast feeding and pre- and post-natal care. The union is currently negotiating parental rights policies with Pick'n Pay and Checkers' stores.

In 1987, the Chemical Workers (CWIU) won a contract with Caltex Oil providing six months' maternity leave, with five months' paid leave, and one

paid paternity day. Unions in the metal industry won an industry-wide maternity leave policy.

Today, the demand for maternity leave and parental rights is a basic part of all COSATU wage negotiations.

COSATU also stresses the importance of other Living Wage demands in promoting equality, safety and a higher standard of living for women workers: a 40-hour work week without loss of pay, job security, an end to the hostel system and creation of decent housing near to work, and the right to a decent education and on-the-job training.



New Crackdown on South African Unions

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In sum, these proposals would obliterate the most important labor rights—to withhold work and to take collective action. If passed, the bill would destroy any legal arena for union activity in South Africa.

Capping a Volcano

The Labor Relations Amendment Bill is in part a response to the tremendous upsurge in union activity over the past year. Unions in South Africa now represent roughly 40% of the economically active workforce.

COSATU represents 800,000 members, including 20,000 shop stewards, in every basic sector. Although South African employers have taken a harder line against the unions, and vigilante violence against union activists has intensified, workers have been joining COSATU unions at the rate of 500 a day.

The COSATU Living Wage Campaign has especially fired workers' aspirations and fighting spirit. In 1987,

the number of strikes increased five-fold over 1986. While political strikes rose, industrial actions rose even faster. A larger portion were multi-plant or industry-wide strikes, often in solidarity with other shops. And for every walkout, there were two slowdowns, overtime bans or work stoppages.

The South African government is also responding to an economic crisis marked by high inflation and chronic unemployment. President P.W. Botha recently proposed economic austerity measures, which include freezing public employees' wages, cutting government jobs, deregulating industry, and selling off state-owned services—from the energy company to the post office to the highway system.

The attack on the unions, particularly the Labor Relations Amendment Bill, is an integral part of restoring profitability to South African companies as the noose around apartheid tightens.

COSATU fiercely opposes the labor relations amendments, as does the

smaller National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). Workplace protests against the legislation have already occurred among the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), the Chemical Workers (CWIU), and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

COSATU is also reminding South African employers that the amendments could well escalate industrial strife and economic chaos. Already, a number of employer associations have expressed uneasiness with the harsh legislation, which they fear will spur international divestment and sanction campaigns.

Labor in South Africa is prepared for a long haul, even the prospect that it may have to function without any semblance of legal protection. Labor activists are well aware that the unions are now the only democratic organizations that operate openly and that they carry the future of the anti-apartheid struggle with them.

NAMIBIA:

Apartheid's Other Country

Namibia is a country occupied by South Africa in defiance of the United Nations and international law. The occupation provides the South African regime with both a military and an economic backyard.

From Namibian bases, South African troops mount regular incursions to overthrow the the Angolan government. Namibia also provides wealth from mining, farming and ranching to corporations in South Africa, Western Europe and America. Uranium is the country's most vital resource. Namibian exports fuel the British nuclear power program and, through British processing, reach the U.S., Europe and the Commonwealth.

South Africa's apartheid system has been imposed on Namibia to supply cheap, highly controlled labor. Two-thirds of the wage workforce are contract laborers. Nearly half are migrant workers, drawn from the northern reservations where black people must live. The largest reserve is Ovamboland, where a major labor uprising occurred in 1972.

Conditions for black workers remain desperate. Today, Namibia has 30 percent unemployment and 15 percent inflation. The average annual income for a black family is \$450, compared to \$9,000 for whites. Africans, who are 84 percent of the total population, receive just 22 percent of the Gross National Product. Over 90 percent of Namibian blacks live in abject poverty, the majority below subsistence levels, according to Oxfam.

Migrant workers live in single-sex hostels at the worksite, without their families, under 30-month contracts. Travel is controlled by pass laws. Employment is contingent on having an identity document, which also facilitates forced conscription into apartheid's colonial army, the South West Africa Territory Force.

Unions Reborn

In the face of these conditions, and military rule by South Africa, the Namibian labor movement has been reborn over the last four years. The National Union of Namibian workers (NUNW) was revived in 1984 and serves as the country's labor federation, headed by Ben Uulenga. NUNW was founded in 1977 by labor leaders in the South-west Africa People's Organization

(SWAPO), which leads the political struggle for Namibian independence.

In 1984-85, workers' committees in the mines began organizing, encouraged by the bold advances made by the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa. The Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) was formed officially in 1986 and is the leading union. Since then, three other NUNW affiliates have formed: the Namibian Food and Allied Workers Union (NAFAU), the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU), and the Namibian Public Workers Union (NAPWU).

Dismantling the migrant contract labor system remains the central goal of the labor struggle. Recent strikes focus on wages, but also on the right to family life and decent housing.

The NUNW is also committed to the independence struggle. As Ben Uulenga states: "It is impossible to divide workers' problems from the colonial oppression." Uulenga, who also heads the MUN, was held prisoner by the South African government on Robben Island from 1977-85 and was arrested again during the Tsumeb copper strike in July 1987.

On May Day 1987, the Namibian labor movement mounted an impressive general strike, as did their union brothers and sisters in South Africa. Since that time, NUNW has faced much more severe repression, including the dismissal of 5,000 miners following the Tsumeb strike.

A Brief History

1884—colonized by Germany as South West Africa.

1915—annexed by South Africa during World War I.

1920—made a colonial mandate of South Africa by the League of Nations.

1960—South West Africa People's Organization formed.

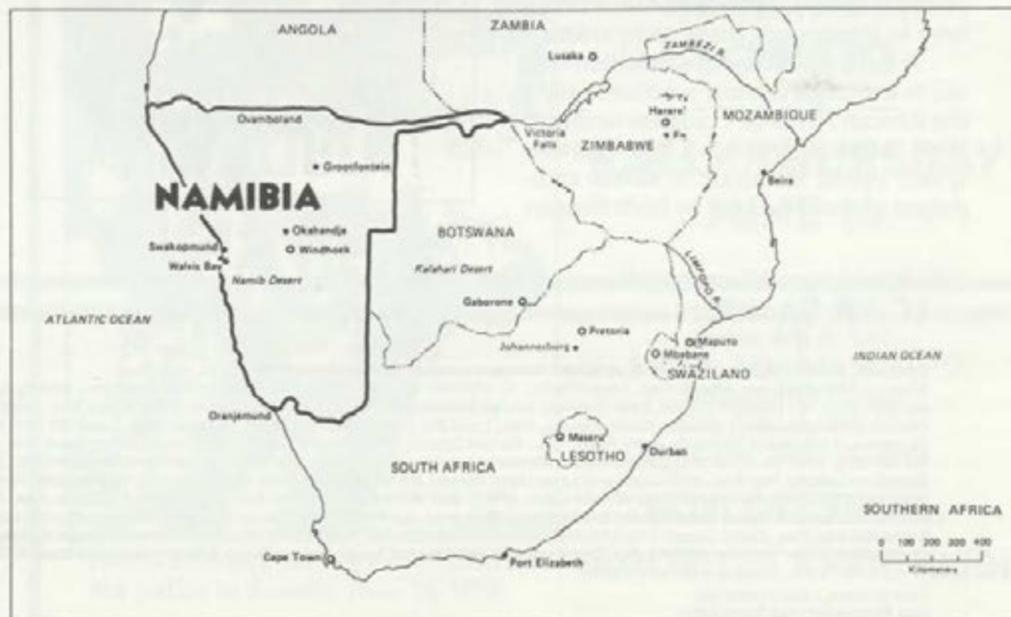
1966—UN withdraws colonial mandate and occupation is declared illegal under international law.

1974—UN Council for Namibia Decree 1 bans removal of any resources or minerals before independence.

1978—UN Security Council Resolution 435 sets forth plan for Namibian independence; US, UK agree.

1988—South African occupation continues.

International solidarity with the NUNW and its affiliates will be crucial to the survival of these unions in the coming period, especially as the South African labor movement faces new attacks. Equally important will be international work to force South Africa out of Namibia. A critical step will be to reverse the Reagan policy of supporting Namibia's occupation in order to fuel civil war in Angola.



U.S. SANCTIONS BILL GAINS

The Comprehensive Sanctions Bill (HR 1580/ S 556) is gaining support in the House and may reach the Senate this June. The measure, also known as the Dellums/Cranston bill, is the toughest legislation yet proposed against apartheid and closes many loopholes left by the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. If passed, the new sanctions would:

- impose a total trade embargo on South African goods.
- require the complete withdrawal of U.S. companies doing business in South Africa, including a ban on subsidiaries, licensing agreements, and franchises.
- exact stiff penalties on multi-national corporations (including Shell), as well as American corporations, providing oil or petroleum products to South Africa.
- exact penalties on multi-national corporations that take advantage of disinvestment by U.S. corporations to move into South African markets.
- require that corporations must negotiate the terms of their withdrawal with their South African workforce and provide 90 days' notice of their intention to leave.

The bill has received a strong endorsement from the AFL-CIO and meets many of the concerns about responsible disinvestment raised by South African unions. Its passage seems likely in the House, but more difficult in the Senate.

In addition, there are several amendments that attempt to weaken the bill. One provision would exempt the export of U.S. agricultural products. Another would exempt wholly black-owned subsidiaries in South Africa, creating the potential for U.S. and South African business to manipulate these companies.

A third amendment would ban U.S. aid to any organization associated with the African National Congress or South West African People's Organization, which opens the door to smear campaigns and red-baiting by both Reagan

and Botha camps. Efforts are underway to remove these damaging amendments.

Overall, the Comprehensive Sanctions Bill represents a giant step forward for the anti-apartheid movement. The prospect of its passage has inspired real panic in South Africa. Between 150 and 160 American corporations are still trading in South Africa, with assets close to \$1 billion.

The *Weekly Mail* in Johannesburg reports that the oil companies will quickly withdraw from South Africa if sanctions are passed. Oil industry sources were quoted as saying, "the bill is the

death knell of oil capitalism in South Africa."

Adrian Botha of the American Chamber of Commerce (South Africa) believes the worst news in the bill is the provision to retaliate against companies taking advantage of American companies' withdrawal. He is quoted as saying: "This means, in short, that America can turn around to Toyota and say, 'You sell one more car and you can forget about our market.'"

"It's probably the most devastating clause because we do not have a single trading partner who would not be directly affected. For all of them, America is definitely the biggest market."

Americans need to prove that we are not only the biggest market, but the staunchest foes of apartheid. Passage of the Comprehensive Sanctions Bill will take a grassroots effort.

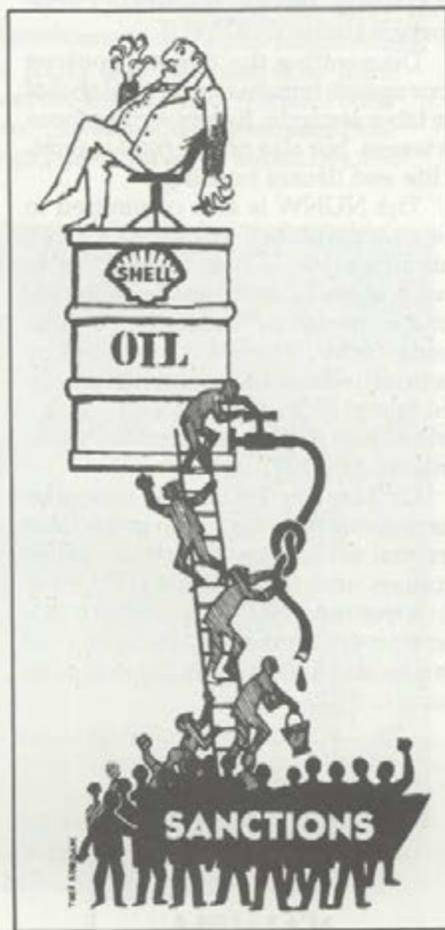


What You Can Do

As of late May, neither Senator Moynihan nor Senator D'Amato of New York had endorsed the Comprehensive Sanctions Bill (S 556). We urge union members who live or work in New York State to immediately contact the offices of Moynihan and D'Amato to express your concern. Call or write:

Senator Patrick Moynihan
Senator Alfonse D'Amato
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-224-3121

New Jersey Senators Bradley and Lautenberg have endorsed S 556. For more information, contact the NY Labor Committee Against Apartheid: Kate Pfordresher at 718-768-1756, Miriam Thompson at 212-966-1920, or Vicki Williams at 212-242-0700.



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