

ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE FOR SELECTIVE PURCHASING

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NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACTION ON ANTI-APARTHEID CAMPAIGN

Last week, A.U. Student Confederation President, Paul Rothstein, announced initiation of a campus effort to end university purchases from four U.S. corporations charged with complicity in South African apartheid. The announcement resulted from the Student Confederation's passing of a resolution supporting a related city-wide campaign.

The corporations involved are Control Data, IBM, ITT and Motorola. These corporations, whose South African operations have been studied and targeted by the D.C. Anti-Apartheid Committee for Selective Purchasing, are the focus of a city-wide effort to stop future contracts with them by the D.C. city government. On June 2nd, City Councilman James Coates introduced a resolution in the City Council calling for an end to city business with these corporations, who "for the sake of profit continue to aid South Africa's...practice of apartheid." Council consideration and official hearings are expected in October or November.

The efforts of the D.C. Anti-Apartheid Committee for Selective Purchasing have already drawn considerable attention. On June 23rd, U.N. Ambassador Edwin Ogbu of Nigeria, who then headed the U.N. Committee Against Apartheid, made an unusual international diplomatic gesture when he visited the D.C. City Council and called on them to take this economic action against U.S. corporate supporters of apartheid.

The anti-apartheid campaign has also drawn the attention of the corporations. IBM, under increasing attention to their South African operations, has reportedly been quite concerned with the potential municipal economic sanctions by a city with such national and international visibility as Washington. Sources have reported that IBM's Board Chairman, Frank Cary, personally visited several D.C. Council members who had announced their support of the anti-apartheid effort.

In past years somewhat similar issues and tactics have surfaced in Dayton, Ohio, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, but never before has a major city government taken serious economic action against multinational corporations involved in international human rights violations. It is the contention of the D.C. Anti-Apartheid Committee that such selective purchasing can be implemented by the D.C. government without serious impact on operational efficiency or competitive bidding standards.

In December, 1974, the Council of Churches of Greater Washington proclaimed their initiation of a non-purchase policy regarding Control Data, IBM, ITT and Motorola, and called on other city organizations to do likewise. More recently the campaign has been growing to mobilize labor, social, civic, tenant, and university groups in support of the effort.

The opening of the American University effort marks the beginning of the D.C. campus response.

The Anti-Apartheid Committee's university coordinator, Roland Robuck of Federal City College, recently stated, "We hope to soon have active efforts also at Howard, Federal City College, George Washington, Georgetown, and Catholic. The development of a united D.C. university front to lobby the City Council and college administrations is also being planned. We can see united student input being important in the City Council campaign, as well as opening the door for action on other campuses across

the nation. If D.C. universities take a united stand, they could activiely press the National Student Association to take up the issue, and then potential would be unlimited."

Robuck also noted that the Black South African university students in SASO (South African Students Organization) are actively resisting apartheid now, at much danger to their lives, and are presently fighting South African police efforts to silence them. A number of their leaders are now being tried on "subversion" charges for organizing a pro-Frelimo rally last year.

"We must remember," Robuck stated, "that as we sit in our classes and student meetings here, many of our counterparts in South Africa sit in jails - because they dared to act."

Reports and documentation on the D.C. anti-apartheid campaign are available from the Anti-Apartheid Committee for Selective Purchasing, 1500 Farragut St., NW, or phone ~~723-8273~~
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