

# BOYCOTT POLAROID

## LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa 15 million black people are completely ruled by 3 million whites. This system, called apartheid, means oppression and misery for blacks. The essence of apartheid is the super-exploitation of non-white labor. Laws are intended to create a permanent, disciplined, pool of cheap, black labor. In South Africa a black person:

-is required to carry a reference book (pass) containing his photograph, race identity card, official authorization to be in the urban area, current tax receipt, permit to be employed or to seek work, name, address, and monthly signature of employer, and various other particulars. Pass laws are intended to control every activity of each black adult.

-must accept that 13% of all South Africa's land is the "homeland" for all African peoples (70% of the total population). The remaining 87% has been allocated to whites. An African is, legally, a "temporary sojourner" in a white area.

-may be removed from any area at any time, whether he has been born there or has lived there all his life. The government plans to eliminate all residential rights and transform all African labor into migrant labor from rural reserves.

-is not entitled universally to live with his family in the urban areas. An employer may pay only enough for a single male worker to subsist, while his family tries to eke out a living on the poor land of the rural reserves, (homelands).

-may not vote, travel freely, own land.

Not following all of the huge mass of complicated laws results in long, hard punishment, often torture. This is in addition to the systematic violence of a life of poverty and degradation.

**Polaroid and**

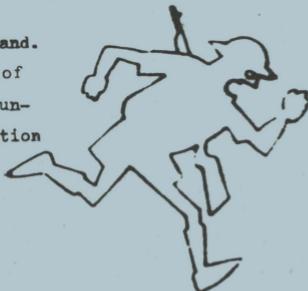
**South Africa**

**Partners in**

**Racism**

**Boycott 'Em**

**Both**



## WHY POLAROID?

Last October a group of black workers in Cambridge, Massachusetts, called the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers Movement (PRWM), came together to act and protest against the sale of Polaroid products in South Africa. In South Africa, Polaroid sells:

- film (20% of which has been used in the passbook system), sunglasses & cameras
- a sophisticated ID-2 system, which takes 2 pictures, and registers information in computers. The ID-2 is an efficient instrument of control of blacks by the white minority. Over 67 ID-2s, at \$7200 each have been sold to the army, air force, and industries in South Africa since 1967.

- lenses manufactured in the U. S. to a sunglass assembly operation, owned by American Optical, which exploits cheap black labor for high profits.

By demanding complete disengagement, the workers at Polaroid are acting in solidarity with calls by African liberation movements and United Nations General Assembly resolutions condemning apartheid and calling for action against it. The PRWM has called for a world-wide boycott of all Polaroid products until Polaroid discontinues all sales in South Africa.

Christopher Nteta, a South African, noted that:

"For the first time in the history of this country WORKERS have taken the initiative to raise questions about their company's involvement and complicity in the affairs of an African country."

We must support their initiative.

### POLAROID CAN GET OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA

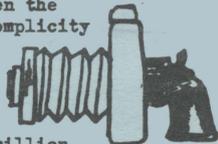
Polaroid's profits in South Africa are growing. Yet of its \$550 million annual sales, only \$1.5 million are to South Africa. Polaroid can afford to lose this business. Polaroid has been hiring blacks in its Boston plant, and has been actively trying to build an image of itself as a liberal corporation combatting racism. In a full page ad in many Eastern newspapers Polaroid stated:

"We abhor apartheid, the national policy of South Africa. The apartheid laws separate the races and restrict the rights, the opportunities, and the movement of non-white Africans. This policy is contrary to the principles on which Polaroid was built and run....We decided whatever our course should be it should oppose the course of apartheid."

Regardless of Polaroid's stated principles, Polaroid continues to profit from and support apartheid. Polaroid's "experiment" is meant to justify this.

### POLAROID'S "EXPERIMENT" IN SOUTH AFRICA

Polaroid stated that it would remain in South Africa and try to help black Africans by raising their wages, training them for "important" jobs, and donating money for the education of 500 African students. This "experiment" ignores the fact that any U. S. business in South Africa cannot bypass the mass of discriminatory



labor legislation that makes it illegal for any black man to occupy a position senior to any white. Polaroid also ignores the premise on which education for blacks is based:

"Natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans is not for them....Racial relations cannot improve if...the result of Native education is...people who have expectations in life which conditions in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled."—Henrik Verwoerd, former Prime Minister

Polaroid, nevertheless, states that the "key to change" is education and economic expansion.

#### U. S. BUSINESSES UPHOLD APARTHEID

The fact is that as the South African economy has been growing, repressive restrictions on the non-white population have increased, not decreased. American business involvement, by strengthening the economy, strengthens and stabilizes the political and military power of the South African government. Over 450 U. S. corporations have invested over \$800 million in South Africa. Earnings from these investments have averaged near 20% for the past ten years. Average returns for other parts of the world are about 10%. The reasons for these super profits are obvious; black workers are paid starvation wages and are forced by a web of laws and police brutality to work for white owned corporations.

#### U. S. BUSINESSES SHOULD GET OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA

The South African system will not change fundamentally unless it is forced to change. This intransigence is apparent in the comment by South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster, in April, 1968:

"They (black Africans) will continue to work for us for generations, in spite of the ideal we have to separate them completely....We need them...but the fact that they work for us can never...entitle them to claim political rights.... Under no circumstances can we grant them those political rights in our own territory, neither now nor ever."

The struggle is intensifying. Guerrilla warfare has begun in other parts of white-ruled Southern Africa. The U. S. must decide to either protect its vested interests or to support the African liberation struggles. So far, the U. S. verbally supports self-determination and equality, but has refused to abide by U. N. resolutions against apartheid. Actions of the U. S. government and corporations support a government which openly refuses to recognize basic human rights of 15 million Africans. This policy must be opposed.

APARTHEID ?



WHAT'S THIS ?  
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING!



African liberation movements and the U. N. have called for economic boycott to cut off the support given the South African government. The late Chief Albert Luthuli said:

"The economic boycott of South Africa will entail undoubted hardship for Africans. We do not doubt that. But if it is a method which shortens the day of bloodshed, the suffering to us will be a price we are willing to pay."

#### POLAROID IS ONLY A BEGINNING

Polaroid's withdrawal from South Africa would provide an important starting point and example for similar campaigns against other U. S. corporations. Business Week stated, "if such anti-apartheid protests spread, there could be repercussions for the 300 other U. S. companies that do business in South Africa." We must take a stand. Complacency amounts to condoning U. S. support of apartheid.

#### POLAROID WORKERS' DEMANDS

1. That Polaroid completely disengage from South Africa
2. That Polaroid announce its position on apartheid in the U. S. and South Africa
3. That Polaroid contribute profits earned in South Africa to the recognized African liberation movements

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- don't buy any Polaroid products. (Other companies make "polarized" sunglasses.) Tell store owners why you won't buy Polaroid. Urge them to do the same.
- urge organizations you belong to to take a stand
- do not allow yourself to be photo-identified by Polaroid ID-2 equipment
- tell people you know about the boycott, urge them to support it
- if you can contribute ideas, time, money for expenses,
- if you would like to help with informational leafletting or
- if you would like further information, contact:

MADISON AREA COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA (MACSA)

University YWCA, 306 N. Brooks Street, 257-2534 (255-3507 eves.)

**Boycott  
Polaroid**  
Until all sales  
to South Africa  
are discontinued.

