

THE STUDENT ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT
Summary of Statements
At Oct 19 Session of
UN Center Against Apartheid

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The United Nations should also examine the South Africa Foundation in terms of its role in defending apartheid, its role in propagating the pro-apartheid position of the corporations, and its appearances on university campuses in the United States.

Also, the United Nations should examine the strategy adopted by the universities in the United States of holding conferences designed to defend their complicity in apartheid.

In concluding the observance of the Day of Solidarity, B. AKPORODE CLARK, Committee Chairman, said that apartheid was a system that had no parallel anywhere in the world. Political prisoners should be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention, he said.

Consultations with Students

The Committee then began its consultations with students involved in campaigns against investment by universities in corporations operating in South Africa.

PAT BAKER, of the Toronto Committee to Liberate South Africa, said that many Canadian post-secondary educational institutions had substantial investment holdings in corporations and banks that were heavily involved in supporting the apartheid regime of South Africa.

An example of one educational institution with extensive holdings was Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia which had investments in some cases, of millions of dollars. The University of Toronto and the University of Victoria were known to own or to have owned shares in banks. The University of Toronto had invested nearly \$2.5 million in stocks in the Bank of Montreal, the Bank of Commerce, the Royal Bank and the Toronto-Dominion Bank. Those banks, along with the Bank of Nova Scotia, had participated in almost \$645 million worth of loans to the South African Government and corporations from 1972 to 1978. Virtually every university campus in Canada dealt with a local branch of one of these five banks, she said.

The university governing boards had expressed the concern that attempts to disinvest would have significant adverse effects on university finances, and that the financial presence of banks, corporations and their shareholders in South Africa had a "liberalizing" influence on the apartheid regime. There was reluctance by some university boards to admit that disinvestment was an effective way to express concern or to alleviate the conditions of black South Africans. And, they argued, due to the complex nature of corporate interrelationships, an individual shareholder had no control over how money was invested.

Two universities, the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg, had agreed to divest what they called "socially injurious" investments in apartheid.

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The National Union of Students (NUS), the national organization of English Canada's post-secondary students, was one of the first student groups to speak out against bank loans to South Africa and moved to boycott the banks, urging its members to do the same. Various student organizations across the country followed the lead of the NUS. The combined cash flow of these groups was more than \$1.5 million per year. Two days of action against banks, 21 March and 16 June 1978, were focal points for student activity in demanding an end to bank loans and of withdrawing funds from banks. Students had also taken part in country-wide South African liquor and food boycotts and information campaigns on South Africa. The over-all effect had been the growing awareness by students and other members of the academic community that the question of Canadian corporate and banking responsibility with respect to South Africa could no longer be avoided or ignored.

LINDA MILLER of the National Union of Students of the United Kingdom, said that her group included 1 million students.

She said that Britain was directly responsible for creating the system of apartheid and ensuring its continuance, and it was still heavily entrenched in South Africa. British investments accounted for 60 per cent of all direct foreign investment. Because of its vested interests, Britain had been unable and unwilling effectively to challenge the apartheid system. Successive British Governments had vetoed United Nations resolutions calling for economic sanctions against South Africa.

Many companies, institutions and organizations in Britain profited from apartheid, she said. Universities in Britain held investment portfolios which sought to maximize their investments. Some universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge and London had multi-million pound investment portfolios. "Students have identified these links and are attempting to break them", she said.

Some universities and university colleges had disinvested from South African-owned companies or partially disinvested from other companies with interests in South Africa. They included; London University, Leeds University, Aberdeen University, Birmingham University, the New University of Ulster, the University College of North Wales, and Kings College, Cambridge.

This February, students at the London School of Economics went on a hunger strike over their college's investments in companies with interests in South Africa. Although they failed to persuade the School's administration to disinvest, their campaign was continuing, she said.

University administrations had devised strategies to prevent disinvestment and frustrate student campaigns. They said universities were apolitical institutions and therefore were unable to take political decisions.

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Barclays Bank had been singled out for a specific campaign by NUS and the Anti-Apartheid Movement because of its immense importance to the apartheid economy, she said. It had made a number of major loans to government controlled corporations, and it sought government bonds. At the beginning of each academic year, students picketed their local or campus branch of Barclays, persuading students and academics to boycott the bank, she said.

In 1977, students at Warwick University managed to persuade their administration to disinvest and move their bank account from Barclays. That was particularly significant as Warwick University had a director of Barclays on its governing body and £12 million in its account.

Universities and colleges were regarded as important grounds for the recruitment of skilled immigrants for South Africa, she said. Student populations were asked not to seek employment in South Africa. Students picketed representatives of a South African company visiting a campus or organizing a local recruiting drive. "Such efforts have usually met with considerable success, since South African propaganda ignores many of the less pleasant facts of life in South Africa for whites." Students also sought to persuade their college authorities to ban the recruitment on campus or the use of facilities for employment in South Africa.

Students were also active in protesting all forms of cultural collaboration with South Africa. In addition a number of students refused to play against all-white sports teams from South African schools. Students in Britain had also provided concrete support both to South African student organizations and to the southern African liberation movements, she concluded.

JOSH NESSEN, American Committee on Africa, said that after SOWETO, the liberation struggle took a major step forward. A massive "sit-in" at Stanford University had spawned the organization of student groups across the country.

The pressure by those groups was aimed, among other things, at the divestment of corporations interests in South Africa. However, very few schools had been willing to divest themselves of such stock. The same men who sat on the boards of universities ran corporate America, he said. An immense amount of time and effort had been expended by those men to counter the student movements.

A new wave of activism on university campuses had been sparked, he said, which had spilled over into areas other than fighting apartheid.

He said the movement had to be "continually creative" to maintain its momentum. Material aid campaigns for the Patriotic Front should be pursued. On 28 and 29 October, there would be a major anti-nuclear action on Wall Street in New York City, that would also focus on the anti-apartheid struggle.

KAREN LOPITATO, of the University of California at Berkeley, said that the University had \$800 million invested in corporations which did business with South Africa and many regents held directorships on corporations that were involved in South Africa.

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Divestment activity had widened from a campaign aimed just at the University to the whole community of Berkeley. In April 1979 a measure was passed in Berkeley which released thousands of dollars from investments. She also related the drives being initiated in other campuses of the University of California and other communities in California.

BRUCE BOWERS, of the University of Oregon, said that Oregon was unique among all divestment cases in the United States for the legal challenge by the student government association, and others, of the prevailing public investment standards as represented by Oregon's State Attorney General.

The groups pressuring for divestment achieved their first major strategic victory with a student referendum favouring divestment by a five to one margin in May 1977. In November 1977, the State Board of Higher Education voted 8 to 3 in favour of divestment. But in May 1978, the Attorney General ruled that the State Board in fact had no legal right to divest. In fact, it had no legal right to invest, since that task legally belonged to the Oregon Investment Council, a body created a few years earlier to oversee the investment of all state funds, he stated.

In November 1978, the formal challenge to the Attorney General's 2 May opinion began. Efforts by the Attorney General to have the case thrown out of court had been successfully rebutted, and agreement was being reached on the "facts of the case" which meant the case should actually go to court within a few weeks.

Oregon law had created a situation that in all probability would not be replicated in any other state. But the Oregon case could have a direct and profound bearing on not only the divestment of southern Africa related stocks but also on the whole profit theory of investment that prevailed in the United States. One of the Attorney General's major arguments for retaining the southern Africa related stocks was that it would not be "prudent" to sell them. To be truly "prudent", the investor must also be socially responsible. In the case of southern Africa related stocks, that meant that divestment was the most "prudent" action to take.

In November 1977, Oregon was the first state whose entire system of higher education had decided to sell its southern Africa related stocks.

ROSITA FERNANDEZ-ROJO of Hampshire College said that the college had been the first college to divest itself of all common stock in companies dealing with South Africa.

However, in 1978 the college had bought shares in three companies dealing with South Africa and thus became the first college to reinvest. Student activity aimed at proving to the Board that the majority of the students were against investment. It resulted in the Board's divesting its stock in the three companies. However, she noted that the Board's policy did not prohibit all forms of investment in companies dealing with South Africa.

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MAGGIE KAISER, University of Minnesota, said that the Southern Africa Solidarity Committee (SASC) which she represented was formed one year ago to unite the efforts of a number of independent organizations. The purpose of SASC was to support the end of apartheid and minority rule in South Africa through the withdrawal of United States political, military, and economic involvement in southern Africa, to seek an end to the University's ties with apartheid, focusing on full and immediate divestment of stock in corporations doing business in South Africa, to organize campus and community action and education centering around the issue of South Africa and apartheid, to co-ordinate actions between the group and other divestment groups in Minnesota, and to link efforts with other anti-apartheid activists on a state, regional and national level, and to support the liberation struggle of the people of southern Africa.

The primary goal was full and immediate divestment of all University stock in corporations doing business in South Africa. A secondary goal was divestment of all state-owned stock in such corporations, she said.

The University held investments valued at \$22 million in corporations operating in South Africa, she said. In 1974, the University Senate Committee on Social Responsibility in Investments was appointed to advise the regents how to vote on share holder resolutions. It approved divestiture of all University-owned stocks in corporations operating in South Africa, she said.

The Solidarity Committee used a wide range of strategies to promote divestiture, including education, protest, and lobbying, she went on. Another strategy employed by SASC had been mass protest. Monthly rallies were held to coincide with the monthly meetings of the Board of Regents. Chanting had proved to be an effective means of involving spectators. Tactics such as guerrilla theatre, effigy-burning and a "sit-in" had been used.

The major problem facing the divestment movement in Minnesota was one of student apathy. The fact that apartheid was not an issue that directly affected students, such as nuclear power did, and that it was not visible, made it difficult to arouse concern about the University's investment policies.

MAKUSHA MUGABE, of Oberlin College, said that the trustees of his school claimed that they could not divest because it cost too much.

Oberlin, he went on, historically had been a leading voice for social change. It was the first college to admit women and to admit blacks. Some "hypocritical" recommendations had been made by a conference of Midwestern colleges that would only serve to "confuse" things, such as a student exchange programme. "The real student victims of apartheid do not get a chance to participate in such programmes", he said. It was only the national liberation movements in southern African countries that had access to the real student victims, he said.

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LISIMBA TAFIRENYIKA, of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, said that everyone knew what apartheid meant but what was more important was the support the regime got from the West through investment, trade and such like.

He outlined the activities undertaken by the anti-apartheid student movement at the University to try to achieve divestment of university funds in stocks of corporations involved in South Africa. Those activities had resulted in the arrest of some students which he claimed was aimed at demoralizing the movement. It did not succeed, he said, and the movement had grown stronger. "Long live the African revolution", he concluded.

TERRI ANN LOWENTHAL of Cornell University, said that the divestment movement there had begun in 1968.

The Board of Trustees in 1970 was "forced" to create a Committee to advise on social responsibilities, she said. To this day, the board had voted against management only twice, and that was only because of student pressure. In spring of 1978, "frustrated" students "held" the Board for three hours, and another Committee had been formed after that.

This past spring, the trustees again showed their unwillingness to act against corporate interests.

Most of the student population supported divestment, she said, but there was a "lack of unity" among students, mostly due to "racial tensions".

LEE COKORINOS, of Columbia University, said that the international movement against apartheid in South Africa had deep historical roots in the United States of America. The liberation struggles in southern Africa and the United States of America had strong ties, he said. Following the Viet Nam war, the anti-apartheid struggle in the United States of America took a downturn but was revived in the early 1970s.

In the 1980s the most violent upheavals would happen in southern Africa and the United States of America would use every means at its disposal to defuse this, he stated. "We must be prepared." A broad mass media campaign must be launched, a movement to counter the Government's war preparations, and a close collaboration between different movements. The struggle would be long and difficult but victory was assured, he concluded.

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SHAUN BROWN, of Brown University, said that her University supported apartheid, as did other universities that had money invested in the South African economy. "These universities finance the operation of their institutions by reaping profits from the exploitation of blacks by the white South African minority", she said. Brown University had investments totaling \$23 million in such companies as IBM, United Technology, Ford, General Motors, Shell Oil and others.

Brown University's overt participation in the South African Government's policy of apartheid must end now, she said. She offered concrete support to delegates from national liberation movements in reaffirming the call for United States corporations to withdraw from South Africa. Brown University, which was founded on slave trading, as well as all other holders of stocks and bonds of companies dealing with or in South Africa, must divest and stop supporting the South African oppression.

Brown students had been active in their campaign for divestment since March 1978. Rallies, "sit-ins" and marches held on campus had publicly expressed commitment to divestment, a goal of the liberation movement. A coalition of groups devoted to the liberation of all non-white South Africans had spent time educating the student body and the university community on the issue, she said. "Divestment by Brown University is not an end in itself -- but rather, as a means to our ultimate goal -- victory to the freedom fighters", she said.

STEWART MASSAD, of Williams College, said that he wanted to add the voices of Williams College to the international outcry against apartheid. Since 1977, Williams College students had held rallies, demonstrations and vigils, aimed at gaining divestment procedures. General Motors and IBM were the first targets, he said.

He believed the college movement for divestiture was part of the world struggle against apartheid.

NATALIE BYFIELD, of Princeton University, said that a demonstration had taken place today at Princeton while the University's Board met without even considering the issue of divestment.

The connexion between the liberation struggles in southern Africa and with the third world peoples in the United States had been emphasized in the work of her organization, the People's Front. Throughout the year the People's Front had carried on activities against racism. Racism, oppression and exploitation of all people was linked. Its alleviation for one people would help others, she said.

Divestiture was a standing policy of the People's Front which was also calling for a moratorium on further loans and investments. She added that an updated list of the University's investments in corporations in South Africa was not available and it appeared that the Board was not willing to make it available.

The demonstration today was aimed at protesting against Princeton's support for a nuclear South Africa, she said.

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She said the Front hoped to raise \$10,000 from a "liberation run" and her organization supported the liberation movements of southern Africa. "We choose to remain a fighting organization because we know we have truth on our side", she concluded.

ELIZABETH BIDDLE, of Amherst College, said the divestment movement had started in her university in 1976. Slide shows and distribution of literature, as well as "one-on-one" talks were part of the activities. The college had invested \$23 million in South Africa. The students wanted a total withdrawal of those investments. Four companies had been specified.

She expressed solidarity with the people of South Africa and condemned the "complicity" of Amherst College in the continuation of apartheid.

MARK OPPENHEIM, of Brandeis University, expressed solidarity with the political prisoners of southern Africa. For the last four years, the Brandeis divestment movement had put pressure on the Board of the University to divest its stocks and shares in corporations and organizations dealing with South Africa.

This year it had called for a boycott of classes to pressure for divestment, he said.

The boycott had lasted two days and 75 per cent of the student body had boycotted classes. That resulted in a policy statement from the Board which said it would divest "when all else failed". That was a standard type of response by all universities trying to take a "non-stance" on the policy of divestment. Universities were delaying a divestment policy into obsolescence.

"We are suffering from withdraw of support. We need your help and the help of groups stronger than the student movement. Without it, we are doomed to failure" he concluded.

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SETH FRAZIER, of Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges, said those colleges had both committed themselves to consider social responsibility in the management of their respective portfolios. The Boards of each college had set up committees to serve as the arena for discussion of such issues. The Bryn Mawr Investment Responsibility Committee had decided not to divest.

Haverford College's Committee on Investments and Social Responsibility in consultations with the Board had developed a charter which laid a procedural foundation for recommendations on divestment and shareholder resolutions on a case by case basis. Total divestment from companies in South Africa was rejected. This year, the Committee was considering divesting from bank and computer stocks and sponsoring a shareholder resolution with Newmont Mining.

The Political Action Caucus, a student group, was also sponsoring speaker movies and forums and beginning a petition drive. A Spring demonstration as well as pickets of corporate recruiters were planned. The Caucus was optimistic that it could be a real force in favour of divestment and that political action would move the Haverford Board to accept recommendations for targeted divestment and force the Bryn Mawr Investment Responsibility Committee to reconsider its stance.

ADHIMU CHANGA, of Princeton University, representing the New Jersey Coalition of Black Student Organizations, said that his organization was an association of black student groups from 20 colleges and several secondary schools dedicated to the struggle against racism and exploitation both in the United States and abroad.

The organization had been formed earlier this year as a result of a Conference held at Princeton University which had been organized to increase the awareness of black students about the atrocities being committed daily against the black people of southern Africa by the racist and fascist regimes of Smith and Botha and how their rule was, in fact, sustained by United States imperialism. The Conference also aimed at increasing awareness about racial oppression in the United States and its connections to the situation in southern Africa, under the conference theme, "Black America-Southern Africa: Same Struggle Same Fight".

The United States imperialist system, he continued, was a source of exploitation of blacks in the United States and southern Africa. The same multinational corporations that moved plants to South Africa to take advantage of the high rate of profit made possible by cheap African labour, were some of the biggest beneficiaries of the \$22 billion in "racist super profits" reaped yearly by the United States corporate elite as a result of the super-exploitation of blacks and other non-white workers in the United States. American multinationals and banks that had interests in southern Africa had been some of the biggest violators of anti-discrimination and affirmative action laws in the United States.

Despite what was shown in the magazine pictures, the majority of Afro-Americans were not rich and did not live like movie stars. The majority were poor and suffered from racism and inequality, he stated.

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"Any talk on the part of the United States Government about human rights in southern Africa is a sham. How can the United States talk about violations of human rights in South Africa when the human rights of millions of Afro-Americans are being violated here, and when de facto apartheid exists right here in America?" he asked.

The Coalition requested the Special Committee against Apartheid to provide the student organizations with more materials related to southern Africa, developing in greater detail the concrete connexions between the oppression and exploitation of people in the United States and southern Africa. It further requested the Committee to assist in any way possible the development of conferences similar to the one held in Princeton last spring. The key to involving more black students in the anti-apartheid movement was to connect the struggle against apartheid to the struggle against racism in the United States, he said.

SERGE ELIE CHARLES (Haiti), Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, said the efforts of the university groups that the students represented were valuable towards the struggle for national liberation of the people of southern Africa. He was satisfied that the efforts made by the Special Committee against Apartheid were being mirrored by the youth. Their testimony might be the greatest tribute that could be paid to the people languishing in jail in southern Africa, he said, and he hoped they would continue their efforts. The Special Committee totally supported them.

B. AKPORODE CLARK (Nigeria), Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, said the suggestions put forward in the meeting would be seriously considered with a view toward implementation. He said it had been a most moving afternoon and a memorable day for everyone who was concerned with the evils of apartheid and who was committed to its eradication.

Regarding the Sullivan Principles which some speakers had referred to, he said that at their face value there was nothing wrong with them but they should be examined more closely to find out what was behind them. It was not a question of more bread because the average African did not even share in the bread. As Vice-President Mondale had said in Vienna the question in South Africa was political -- one man, one vote and whether the people in South Africa belonged to one race, the human race.

"This afternoon was a reaffirmation of your commitment that apartheid was no longer acceptable to your generation", he said. He promised on behalf of the Committee that it would consider the proposals and work towards a better dialogue between the Committee and student bodies. "You come from powerful countries", he said. The United Kingdom, Canada and the United States formed the "bulwark of apartheid support in South Africa and if those countries and others refused to support apartheid today the system would collapse tomorrow. "It was as simple as that", he stated. He concluded by expressing the hope that this generation would see a change in South Africa.

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