

# American Committee On Africa

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## NEWS

For immediate release

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### CAMPUS ANTI-APARTHEID PROTESTS TO ESCALATE

New York, N.Y. March 17....Anti-Apartheid protests will take place in cities and on campuses across the United States from the end of March through the first week of April. The activities will commence March 21--the 26th anniversary of the massacre of 69 unarmed South Africans protesting the pass laws in Sharpeville--and run through April 6--the date on which the South African government hung Solomon Mahlangu, a young armed militant of the African National Congress (ANC).

Actions on March 21 will focus on federal offices to protest U.S. covert aid to the South African-backed rebels in Angola known as UNITA. April 4th, the anniversary of the assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King, will be a National Divestment Protest Day to pressure universities, states and cities to sell their holdings in U.S. corporations aiding apartheid. Dr. King issued an appeal in 1962 to end U.S. trade and corporate investment in South Africa. To date, 16 states and 45 cities have taken divestment action that will affect over \$5 billion, and 84 schools have taken actions affecting over \$493 million.

The upcoming protests are part of the National Weeks of Anti-Apartheid Action called by the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). Founded over thirty years ago in response to the mass movement against apartheid led by the ANC, ACOA has been a leading group advocating divestment of public funds and coordinating campus protests against apartheid. The protests will be occurring in the U.S. at the same time as a national conference of South African students and parents who will be meeting to consider renewal of the school boycott which played a large role in precipitating the current high level of confrontation with the white minority regime in the black townships.

In addition to nationwide campus actions, protests are being organized in major cities including: Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Des Moines, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington DC. Joshua Nessen, ACOA's coordinator for the actions, said:

"Since Columbia University's decision to fully divest from South Africa, student activists have demonstrated that they will not rest until every U.S. school sells every penny linked to apartheid."

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In Honolulu the Hawaii Committee for Africa will hold a noon-time rally at 1 Kapiolani Boulevard on March 21 to oppose the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" with South Africa, particularly U.S. backing for UNITA in Angola. This will be followed by a benefit for Namibian and South African refugees on March 29 and culminate with an April 4 rally for state divestment legislation. In Washington DC, the DC Student Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism has also organized a rally for March 21 against aid to UNITA at 12:30pm outside the State Department which will involve students from Howard, George Mason, American, Trinity, John Hopkins, Maryland, and Georgetown Universities. On the Georgetown campus, a door-to-door petition drive throughout the Weeks of Action will build to a major divestment protest on April 4. That day the Columbia Coalition for a Free Southern Africa will be marking the anniversary of their successful divestment blockade by constructing a shantytown soup kitchen for the homeless on the center of campus.

Dartmouth College activists will also mobilize on campus April 4, following a March 21 protest in New York City co-sponsored by the United Steel Workers of America. At this noon-time action Dartmouth students will place a shanty structure in front of the Phelps Dodge headquarters (49-50 Streets on Park Avenue), demanding that Phelps Dodge chairman George Munroe resign from the Dartmouth Trustee Board because of his company's South African operations and hardline anti-unionism in this country. From 4-7pm that same day, an alliance of anti-apartheid and Central American support groups will protest at the Federal Building (in NYC at 26 Federal Plaza) against the Reagan Administration's support for UNITA and the Nicaraguan Contras. To mark the April 4 National Divestment Protest Day, New York groups will then rally at CITICORP headquarters starting at 5:15 pm on 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue. At the conclusion of the rally there will be a march to Mobil and Shell Oil company which, on March 22, will be targeted at its Rockefeller Center office by the AFL-CIO.

In Houston the AFL-CIO and Free South Africa Movement will also be rallying against Shell Oil on March 22 beginning at 11am opposite the Harris City Labor Council. This protest will be followed April 4 with a city-wide divestment rally on the University of Houston campus. At the University of Texas in Austin, the Steve Biko Committee will launch the action weeks with a March 20 forum featuring former CIA-member John Stockwell who opposes U.S. aid to UNITA in Angola. The weeks will culminate on campus with an April 4 divestment protest at which students will observe a 1pm minute of silence and distribute black armbands to commemorate Martin Luther King and victims of racism in South Africa.

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The Arizona Coalition Against Apartheid will also mobilize for campus-based protest on April 4 at the University of Arizona in Tempe followed by a city-wide rally in Phoenix on April 5. On that same day the Colorado Coalition Against Apartheid will hold a divestment rally from 12-2pm on the west steps of the State Capitol building in Denver featuring State Representative Webb and South African Nmonde Ngubo of the United Mine Workers, who will be touring Colorado from April 1-5. April 6th, the Solomon Mahlangu anniversary, will also be a Solidarity Sunday in which Denver houses of worship will take up collections for Namibian and South African refugees.

To kick off the action weeks, students at the University of California at Los Angeles will construct a shantytown on March 21 and the next day the AFL-CIO will hold a downtown anti-apartheid rally. On March 10 UC-Berkeley students prevented South African cargo from being unloaded in San Francisco--an action resulting in 60 arrests--and during the Weeks of Action activists will escalate campus pressure to force divestment of the University's \$2.4 billion in stock linked to South Africa. On April 4 at the University of Washington in Seattle students from all over the state will converge for a divestment protest that will involve the symbolic burning of "pass-books". This year the University of Washington partially divested of \$4.5 million in South Africa linked stock, while students won a total divestment victory affecting \$2.5 million at Seattle University.

As part of the action weeks, the Northeast Ohio Anti-Apartheid Committee will hold a divestment protest April 5 beginning at noon on the Cleveland State University campus. A march will then lead to the Public Square in downtown Cleveland for a 1pm rally with Bill Lucy, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and Shuping Coapoge of the African National Congress. In Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan, TransAfrica director Randall Robinson will keynote a March 21st evening program on U.S. policy in southern Africa to be followed by an April 3rd event with the ANC and SWAPO of Namibia. The weeks will build up to an April 4 Freedom March Against Racism and Apartheid beginning at 9am from the Student Union steps. Elsewhere in the state, the AFL-CIO will be rallying in support of the Shell Oil boycott in Detroit on March 22 and Michigan State University students will be spreading the Coca-Cola boycott in East Lansing.

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In Chicago the Free South Africa Movement will organize a mid-day protest against U.S. aid to UNITA on March 20 at the Federal Building and students at the University of Chicago, Northwestern, and the University of Illinois/Circle have targeted April 4 for major divestment protests. At the University of Minnesota students will also commemorate Martin Luther King on that day by rallying against apartheid and University of Wisconsin activists, who occupied the State Capitol in Madison last spring, are also gearing up their activity. Protests will be occurring in Iowa as well, including a March 23 rally in Des Moines opposing aid to UNITA in Angola and to the Contras in Nicaragua.

Organizers at the University of Florida in Gainesville, where 27 students were arrested in last spring's blockade, are focusing on April 4 for further protest and schools in the Miami area will also be active. On March 25 Florida State University in Tallahassee will host a South African and Salvadoran student as part of a Southern Speaking Tour sponsored by the American Committee on Africa and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) that will also appear in Birmingham, Tampa, Charleston, Montgomery, Durham, Charlottesville and Houston. At Vanderbilt University a divestment protest will occur April 4 and in Atlanta there will be anti-apartheid rallies on that day and March 21. Following a Southern Conference Against Apartheid and Racism held in Atlanta March 1, many southern organizers will also be initiating campus boycotts of Coca-Cola this spring.

Over a dozen Boston-area schools will join forces for a march to the Boston Common on April 4 initiated by a newly formed New England student coalition. Students at Boston University and Brandeis, where a shanty town stood for six weeks, have been spearheading the mobilization. That same day there will be a major protest at Harvard University, where 5000 people rallied last April 4, and action is planned at Wellesley College as well. In New Hampshire, shanties have been constructed at Keene College, the University of New Hampshire, and Plymouth State and escalated pressure for divestment is slated for April 4. Following a sit-in and nine day fast, Brown activists are targeting the same day for renewed protest, and Smith College students will use the action weeks to follow-up on their six-day building occupation.

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In Philadelphia the community-based Martin Luther King Coalition will organize a March 22 protest against U.S. aid to UNITA at the Federal Building. University of Pennsylvania students, who sat in the Administration Building for 15 days this semester, will focus in on the April 4th protest day along with Swarthmore and Bryn Mawr activists pressing for a firm commitment for full divestment. On March 21 University of Pittsburgh students will march for divestment and then join activists from Carnegie Mellon for an April 4 rally in downtown Pittsburgh.

In Baltimore daily divestment vigils at City Hall this month will help initiate a boycott campaign against Black and Decker on March 21. At 4pm that day a motorcade from the NAACP office at 25th Street will travel to the northern suburb of Towson for a rally at Black and Decker headquarters. On April 4 the Baltimore anti-apartheid coalition will then hold a major rally at City Hall during which black armbands will be distributed to commemorate Martin Luther King. At Cornell University, where over 1200 students have been arrested, organizers will use April 4 to intensify the divestment mobilization, and escalation is also planned at Hofstra, Yale, Wesleyan, and Johns Hopkins Universities.

The American Committee on Africa, which is coordinating the nationwide spring mobilization, produces a newsletter detailing campus protest and rapidly changing university investment policies.

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