SAN FRANCISCANS TO VOTE ON NEW SOUTH AFRICA BOYCOTT PROPOSITION

A proposition to declare a voluntary consumer boycott of companies that profit from South African Apartheid, has been certified for the November 1987 San Francisco city ballot.

Registrar of Voters Jay Patterson states that Apartheid Boycott Campaign petitioners filed well over the required 7332 valid signatures of registered city voters.

If passed, the Apartheid Consumer Boycott Initiative would make it official city policy to "call on everyone to avoid doing business with companies which profit from the exploitative economic conditions under South Africa's racist system known as 'Apartheid.'"

As to implementation, it would direct the Board of Supervisors to determine and publicly identify the worst offenders in each basic industry, so that the public will know who to focus the boycott on.

While the initiative would be binding under City Charter Sect. 9.103 as to the role to be played by the B. of Sups., the consumer boycott itself would be voluntary. The city's existing anti-Apartheid purchasing policy would not be altered. That policy only affects governmental spending; the initiative seeks to enlarge the boycott by getting the consumer public to join in.

The AFL-CIO, NAACP and numerous other groups have already called a public boycott of Shell Oil for its South African activities, and numerous cities, states and private organizations have sold off any investments they hold in companies tied to Apartheid. But consumers are generally not very aware of which companies are involved. By researching and identifying the worst offenders, the B. of Sups. would make it possible for many more people to join in and add their weight to the world movement for economic sanctions as peaceful pressure for South African reforms such as granting voting rights to blacks.

Chief proponent of the initiative is labor activist Robert McCall, executive board member, Local 2 (Hotel & Restaurant Workers). The co-proponents include: Lulu Carter of the Democratic Party S.F. county central committee; Atty. Terence Hallinan, also an elected member of that body; Terence Faulkner of the Republican county central committee; Willie Townsend of the Peace and Freedom Party; Muhammad Al-kareem, editor of the New Bay View newspaper; I-Claudine Eccleston-Boen, editor of the Reggae Calendar monthly; Bayview / Hunters Point Community Defenders attorney Nate Harrington; and Stony Gebert of Election Action, the multi-issue petitioners co-op which organized the signature gathering and which has also qualified a Nuclear Free Zone initiative for the November city ballot (organizations listed for identification purposes only).

This will be the third time that San Franciscans have voted on South Africa. In November, 1984, the city passed Prop J, mandating the sale of city-owned stocks in companies tied to South Africa. In June, 1986, the voters defeated Prop. C by a margin of 58% to 42%. That measure was intended to move the city from its Prop. J policy of divesting tainted stocks, to include a purchasing policy boycotting the goods and services of such companies as well. It also included
a consumer boycott similar to the one to be voted on next November.

After Prop. G qualified for the ballot, the Board of Supervisors passed Supervisor Willie Kennedy's similar purchasing policy, making the first half of Prop. G superfluous.

Prop. G passed in the city's black neighborhoods, but was defeated in the white community. Voters in liberal communities like the Haight, Castro and Mission, were split over the measure, largely because of rumors that it would somehow weaken the Kennedy ordinance (although Sup. Kennedy and Prop. G proponent Arlo Hale Smith agreed that there was no conflict between the two policies). The proposition lost heavily in the conservative areas such as the Sunset, because of a feeling (as expressed in an editorial in the Examiner) that the city was already doing enough.

Since the new initiative is purely a consumer boycott and states specifically that it is not intended to alter the city's existing governmental purchasing policy, its sponsors feel that they can avoid a repeat of last year's liberal split. Since the consumer boycott would be voluntary (and by definition could not aggravate the burden carried by the taxpayer), they also hope to do better than last year among the right-of-center voters.

The full text of the new measure is printed below.

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**TITLE: APARTHEID CONSUMER BOYCOTT**

**SUMMARY:** This initiative calls for a voluntary consumer boycott of companies identified by the Board of Supervisors as profiteering from South African apartheid.

We, the people of San Francisco, hereby adopt the following declaration of policy, as provided for under City Charter Section 9.108:

(A) WE CALL ON EVERYONE TO AVOID DOING BUSINESS WITH COMPANIES WHICH PROFIT FROM THE EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS UNDER SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIST SYSTEM KNOWN AS "APARTHEID"; AND,

(B) WE CALL ON THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE TARGETS FOR THIS BOYCOTT, INCLUDING THE WORST OFFENDERS IN EACH BASIC INDUSTRY, SO THE PUBLIC WILL KNOW WHO TO FOCUS ON.

This policy is based on the following findings:

(1) WHY THIS VOTE: Apartheid denies voting and other basic rights to most South Africans, solely because of the color of their skin; if all races could vote, South Africans would long ago have voted to end Apartheid; since they can't vote, they need us for us to vote on their behalf;

(2) WHY BOYCOTT: A Gallup poll found that 77% of South Africa's black majority favor international economic boycotts as a peaceful but powerful means of pressuring for abolition of Apartheid; such boycotts have been called for by Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the African National Congress, martyred Black Consciousness advocate Steve Biko, and many other victims of Apartheid;

(3) EXISTING POLICY: The Board of Supervisors has unanimously passed, and the Mayor signed into law, Supervisor Willie Kennedy's ordinance requiring city purchasing officials to avoid doing business with companies tied to South Africa whenever satisfactory alternatives exist; this policy has public support, and sets an example for all supporters of human rights;

(4) PEOPLE POWER: Consumer boycotts and voter initiatives are grassroots "people power" and allow the greatest number of participants to add their weight to the effort; boycotts have impact because they affect profits, which corporations consider to be the "bottom line";

(5) TARGET IDENTIFICATION: For most consumers, an effective boycott requires identifying of Worst Offenders or other appropriate targets, since so many companies have South African ties; this would focus on businesses motivated by commercial profit, and would not oppose humanitarian activities or contacts with the victims of Apartheid;

(b) CRITERIA: worst Offenders can be determined by comparing the amounts of profit gained, existing investments, outstanding loans, current contracts and sales, and other direct or indirect commercial ties to South Africa, though the Supervisors may also consider other factors; when one company terminates its ties to South Africa, a new Worst Offender can be named and targeted;

(7) INFORMATION SOURCES: The necessary information is available from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, public interest research groups, and other sources, and is objective and verifiable; the effort required for such research would be justified by the urgency of ending Apartheid without further escalations of the bloodshed;

(8) PUBLIC RESPONSE: A successful boycott would not require any significant spending of city funds or infringement of individual liberties, since people and organizations would voluntarily respond to news reports each time the Supervisors announce the identification of another target;

(9) NO CONFLICT: This Initiative is not intended to conflict with or alter the city's present purchasing policy, but would extend the same principle to the general public by calling a consumer boycott of Apartheid profiteers;

(10) IMPLEMENTATION: City Charter Section 9.108 requires the Board of Supervisors to pass ordinances to implement voter declarations of policy, while allowing the needed flexibility regarding practical considerations.