On January 22, 1978, representatives of the campaign to end bank loans to South Africa met in New York City. One of the decisions of the body was to carry out major demonstrations around the country on March 21, anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, and June 16, anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, to push forward the campaign. During the March demonstrations, hundreds of people protested in cities across the country, including Minneapolis, Boston, Chicago, Rochester and New York as well as in several Canadian cities and in London, England.

For the June demonstrations, we, the Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa (COSLSA), called together a small group of bank campaign activists and supporters based here in New York for a preliminary work and planning meeting on Thursday, April 20. Those in attendance represented a cross-section of black community, southern Africa support, and anti-imperialist groups.

The body felt that the purposes of the campaign and the historic significance of June 16 would be best served by two days of demonstrations:

1. Friday, June 16-- Capitalizing on the fact that New York is the home base of five of the six largest US banks, all of which are major lenders to South Africa, we felt that we should mobilize for a broadly based, massive demonstration. Since all five banks have either their headquarters or a major building on Wall Street, the nation's financial center, we agreed to sponsor a noon march through that area which would converge on one of the five as the "target" bank. For March 21, the "target" bank here was Chemical which responded to the demo with a ban on loans to the South African government.

1See accompanying sheet, "Bank Campaign Builds Strength" paragraph 2

2The NY Five: Chase Manhattan, Citibank, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, and Chemical Bank. The sixth and largest US bank, Bank of America, is in California.
2. Saturday, June 17-- We felt that because of some logistical drawbacks with Friday's proposed demo (during the work day, distant from most work places, etc.) and because of the special need to address the black community's relationship to the issues of the day, we would have a special day of demos and activity based in the black community. During the meeting and from subsequent discussions, the idea has taken shape as two demos, one in each of New York's largest black communities--Harlem in Manhattan and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn. The slogans would likely be "Harlem-Soweto; Same Struggle, Same Fight" and "Bed-Stuy - Soweto; Same Struggle, Same Fight."

To concretize the ties of these black communities-in-struggle, we want to:

a) emphasize the conditions and struggles of black youth, especially because in its inception, Soweto was a rising of black youth against the conditions of their oppression. In this regard, we would speak to the massive unemployment of our black youth, police harassment and brutality,* victimization by the drug traffic and the various rip-offs by the fantasy-escapism merchants, the struggles in the city colleges where open admissions, financial aids, black studies, and various other gains of students are increasingly under attack, and other such issues.

b) emphasize the negative activities of the NY banks in our communities, particularly those that invest in South Africa (and/or particularly the "target" bank), vis-a-vis redlining, affirmative action, loans, student aid, etc.

We agreed to seek wider community participation before defining Saturday's activities further. However, we all favored as at least a part of that day's activities strong cultural-political-educational presentations on the meaning of Soweto and the liberation struggle in South Africa. But here again, we agreed to follow the leadership of the community, raising their demands as well as our own, reinforcing the fact that we are all involved in the "same struggle" and the "same fight."

*This is a particularly poignant issue for the black Brooklyn community because many of its leaders and residents are presently engaged in a struggle with the business community which stemmed from protests over the murder of black youth, Randolph Evans, by a white policeman.