PRESS RELEASE

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MINNESOTA COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA
April 1, 1977

SUBJECT: CONTROL DATA URGED TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH AFRICA

At the request of Control Data, four members of the Minnesota Committee on Southern Africa met on Wednesday, March 30th, with Control Data executives Jim Bowe and Roger Wheeler, to discuss our position on the presence of U.S. corporations in South Africa, and our decision to focus at this time on Control Data's operations and involvement there.

It is our contention, a contention now shared nationally and most notably by major church groups, that the presence of Control Data and all other foreign corporations sustains the present authoritarian minority regime which rules South Africa.

We have therefore urged Control Data, and will be urging other Minnesota-based corporations, to withdraw from South Africa. While the Vice Presidents of Control Data acknowledge that the present apartheid regime denies all basic human rights to the majority non-white population in South Africa, they nevertheless contend that Control Data's presence provides good employment opportunities and benefits to their African workers and families. They therefore maintain that they are a progressive force for change in an otherwise totally oppressive situation.

This self-serving claim cannot be sustained. First, when pressed, Control Data admitted that they employed nineteen Black workers in their South African operations. The Black population of South Africa—a population denied all basic rights in the society—is roughly 19 million. That nineteen Control Data employees receive salaries slightly better than the majority of African workers
in no way alleviates the misery and exploitation of these millions.

Second, the ten or so Control Data computers are used in key South African industries, proping up an economy whose wealth is derived from the exploitation of cheap African labor and whose profits are used to build a vast military arsenal.

To this extent, there is a direct link between Control Data's operations and the continuing oppression of the people of South Africa. Moreover, Control Data constitutes part of the larger international community which collectively provides the financial life blood for this repressive regime, which has since June 1976 been responsible for the deaths of at least 400 men, women and children and the imprisonment of thousands.

The Minnesota Committee on Southern Africa is appealing to Control Data precisely because of their articulated commitment to social justice and human rights. We are asking them to withdraw, because whatever their good intentions to their small number of employees, the ultimate effect of their presence is to sustain a system of racial oppression condemned universally.