September 19, 1986

Dear Endorser/Supporter:

The Georgia Coalition for Divestment in South Africa and the American Friends Service Committee Southern Africa Program have sent out a press release (see enclosed) in response to Coca Cola’s announcement to "disinvest".

In light of the information available, we can only determine that this measure falls far short of our demand that Coca Cola totally disinvest. Coke's move is not actually disinvestment, but an attempt to cloud the issue and deceive the public. As a result of this, we have decided that the boycott of Coca Cola must continue.

We ask that all endorsers of the Coke Campaign now support us in the Coke Boycott. This boycott will need your commitment and support. The first public action as a boycott will take place on Friday, October 10, the United Nation's Day in Solidarity with the Political Prisoners of South Africa. This action should be of national significance, with press conferences and demonstrations held in every region of the United States. There will be a press conference and demonstration held in Atlanta at Coca Cola's headquarters. This concerted effort by all sponsors and endorsers of the Coke Campaign will give the Coke Boycott national attention. The impact and growth potential of the Coke Boycott is enormous.

We ask that you continue your support as we move forward in our effort to encourage Coke to cease its support of apartheid.

Toward Freedom and Justice,

THE GEORGIA COALITION FOR DIVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA
On Wednesday, September 17, 1986, the Coca Cola Bottling Company announced its intent to "disinvest" its holdings in South Africa. Company President Donald Keough states, "A decision to complete the process of disinvestment is a statement of our opposition to apartheid and of our support for the economic aspirations of Black South Africans." While this move by the Coca Cola Company has been hailed by several political & Black leaders as a positive example, and, "It's a departure from the status quo in the disinvestment debate that set a precedent for other companies."

But what is the real nature of the Coca Cola move? What is Coca Cola's real intent? It must be remembered that the object of the disinvestment campaign is not to change the color of people who finance apartheid, whether Black or multiracial, but to end all financial support for apartheid by cutting off all corporate taxes to the South African government: the apartheid economy. Before applauding Coca Cola's move too loudly, let us have some questions answered:

1. If Coca Cola is disinvesting, will Coke be removing its license and trademark and relinquishing claim to profit from its products?

2. What are the remaining tax liabilities of the Coca Cola Company to the South African government?

3. What is the position of other Coca Cola subsidiaries in South Africa? Will Coke still receive benefits from these subsidiaries and/or the new company?

4. What is the composition of the new entity purchasing the Coca Cola holding? What amount of money is necessary for the purchase? In light of the severe limitation on Blacks ability to purchase property and secure capital, how are they able to buy this company?

5. What will take place within the six to nine month timetable Coca Cola has set for disinvestment?

6. To what extent does Coca Cola see this move as a change from its previous policy in South Africa?

7. How will this new position effectively change the lives of the majority of the people of South Africa?
While we recognize this move by Coca Cola as an initial step and a partial response to public pressure, we feel that congratulations may be a bit premature. The above questions must be answered. For as Coca Cola says, "The company won't lose any money; its products will still be sold through the 15 independent Coca Cola bottlers in South Africa." Hence, Coca Cola will still be helping to finance apartheid. Any corporation that makes a profit from apartheid, regardless of the channel, participates in the destruction of the lives of the majority people in South Africa. There can be no reform of apartheid. Total disinvestment by Coca Cola or any other foreign company must mean the cessation of all economic operations and connections, including license, trademarks, factories, suppliers and distributors.
Coca-Cola out of SOUTH AFRICA

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS URGE COCA-COLA CORPORATION TO WITHDRAW TOTALLY FROM SOUTH AFRICA, UNTIL THERE IS "ONE PERSON - ONE VOTE". WE AGREE THAT $20 MILLION DOLLARS OR ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY, NOR REFORMIST MEASURES WILL TAKE THE PLACE OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE BLACK MAJORITY.

WE THE UNVERTISEMENT CALL UPON THE WORLD COMMUNITY TO DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN CORPORATIONS, INCLUDING COCA-COLA, FROM SOUTH AFRICA AS A STEP TOWARD THE DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID.

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With little money and a lot of mouth the Coke Divestment Campaign, now a National Coke Boycott campaign has caught fire all over the country. Students, peace and justice organizations, Civil Rights groups and anti-apartheid activists are joining hands to pressure Coca-Cola to totally withdraw from South Africa. Under the leadership of the GCDSA & AFSC the campaign has already been endorsed by 40 major groups, including The American Friends Service Committee, The National Black United Front, The Washington Office on Africa and The National Conference of Black Organizers.

With the current events in South Africa and the growing momentum of the campaign, Carl Ware, Vice President of Coke in charge of operations in South Africa, was heard to say off the record, "In six months, our policy might change in South Africa". Ironically, the comment was made at the opening night of "Asinimali" (meaning "We have no money"), a play written and performed by five South Africans, whose tour of the United States was sponsored primarily by Coca-Cola. Although the Coke Campaign is in the state of Asinimali - "We have no money", the newly formed national coalition of organizations and individuals is calling upon Coca-Cola to disinvest. The campaign is mobilizing people from all sectors (nationally and internationally) to embark upon a consumer boycott of all Coca-Cola products. The boycott is planned to continue until "one person - one vote" is law, and (open elections are held) or (apartheid is completely dismantled).

In South Africa the government is continuing to wage a relentless and violent campaign against those who are resisting and working for fundamental change. Without the continued presence of U.S. corporations the South African regime could not maintain power and control over the black majority. It is well documented that the apartheid economy is critically dependent on foreign investment --- especially U.S. investment - for its survival. Although Coca-Cola is not a strategic product, the company nevertheless is required to pay corporate taxes to the South African government. This tax money is then used by the government as a part of its revenues to conduct business --- and much of that business is the exploitation and oppression of 22 million black South Africans. This cannot be reconciled by the Coca-Cola Corporation (not even with a $10 million Equal Opportunity Fund). If U.S. corporations disinvest in South Africa, the South African economy would be crippled.

During Senate Hearings (July 21) on economic sanctions against South Africa Senator E. Kennedy restated the fact: "Withdrawal of U.S. economic support from the racist regime would aid in the collapse of its economy - causing another strike towards the end of apartheid".

To impose economic sanctions, to demand the disinvestment of U.S. companies would put the U.S. on the side of the South African majority and would demonstrate our true commitment to seeing an end to the system of apartheid.

Therefore the American people have no choice but to engage in campaigns against all companies doing business in South Africa - companies getting richer off the blood, sweat and death of black South Africa.
Citizens Coalitions must be formed to target various companies for consumer actions.

The Georgia Divestment Coalition calls on all people of the world to boycott all Coca-Cola products starting September 1. A national press conference will be held October 10, to formally announce the boycott. The press conference will coincide with the recognition of political prisoners in South Africa over the October 10-11, weekend. Simultaneous press conferences will be held in targeted cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Portland and Seattle.

A working steering committee will operate out of Atlanta, the homeland of Coca-Cola. A national advisory board will serve as a strengthening resource to the campaign. To help strengthen the campaign the AFSC has made the decision to join the GCDSA as one of the sponsoring organizations. As first steps in consumer actions the Urban League student body in Portland, Oregon requested that all coke machines be removed from their premises and the Antioch College student body banned Coca-Cola from the student owned machines on campus. The Festival of Life held in Philadelphia in June refused to serve free coke at their event.

Articles on the campaign have appeared in the following issues: the Atlanta Constitution, Newsweek, South African Report (Canada), the International Barometer and various student newspapers. In addition during the Soweto commemoration in New York, CBS carried a short story on the campaign over its national affiliates.

Apartheid and the resulting tragic losses of human life, mandate that we work together to strengthen and broaden a worldwide coalition dedicated to abolishing apartheid. TOGETHER WE CAN HASTEN THE DAY WHEN APARtheid IS FINALLY ERADICATED. PLEASE JOIN US BY ENDORSING THE "COKE BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN".

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

1. BOYCOTT ALL COCA-COLA PRODUCTS.
2. DEMAND THAT ALL COKE MACHINES BE REMOVED FROM YOUR PLACE OF WORK/STUDY.
3. HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS AT COKE FACILITIES.
4. WRITE TO COCA-COLA DEMANDING THEIR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH AFRICA.
   Carl Ware, Vice President
   P.O. Drawer 1734/ Atlanta, Ga 30301
5. CONTACT THE GEORGIA COALITION FOR DIVESTMENT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
   Makini Coleman (404) 586-0460

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I was once employed by Coca-Cola in Auckland Park, South Africa
I worked as a day worker—that is if I was lucky to be chosen from
50 or so other perspective workers vying to be chosen for that day.
Coke's management attitude, easily thwarted any sense of dignity.Bitter
were the uses of Coke in South Africa for us. Coke took advantage of
us—barely paying us enough to make a return trip to offer ourselves
as exploited labor.

Thabo Raputo

REMEMBER TO BUILD THE CALL TO CONSCIENCE NETWORK—-215/241-7169
Coca-Cola in South Africa

Coca-Cola operates in South Africa through the Coca-Cola Export Corporation, a company that arranges licensing agreements and sells beverage concentrate and other related products to distributors throughout the country. Through these companies, Coca-Cola products have come to dominate the soft-drink market in South Africa and the company has become one of the largest US employers in the apartheid Republic, with some 4500 workers employed by its subsidiaries and affiliates.

Over the last few years, faced with pressure to divest from activists in South Africa and in the US, Coca-Cola has begun donating small amounts of money to educational and humanitarian programs for blacks. Company officials have also begun speaking out against the most horrendous aspects of apartheid. But there is another reality to Coca-Cola's operations in South Africa: a reality determined by the company's 90% share of the soft-drink market and the hundreds of millions of dollars in sales revenues that the company earns each year off the apartheid system. (1983 sales, according to the Investor Responsibility Research Center, accounted for 5% of the parent company's worldwide sales.)

The forty-eight years in which Coca-Cola's operations have expanded throughout South Africa have also been the years in which the white minority government has instituted and entrenched its apartheid system. Coca-Cola's operations in South Africa, in fact, have been part and parcel of the development of that racist economic system. Apartheid and racism are integral parts of the South African economy, and Coca-Cola, by operating in the white minority Republic, is contributing to the perpetuation of the oppression in that country. It is for these reasons that people in South Africa and in the US have been calling for Coca-Cola to pull out of South Africa and to stop all sales of Coke products there.

Despite some recent changes, Coca-Cola continues to dominate the soft-drink market in South Africa and through its affiliate, Amalgamated Beverage Industries, the company remains one of the largest US employers in the apartheid Republic. Far from teaching the world to "sing in perfect harmony," Coca-Cola is today supporting the only society in the world where racism is enshrined in the law of the land. In South Africa, apartheid seems to "go better with Coke."

For all these reasons, black people in South Africa, including church, labor and community leaders, and their supporters in the US, have called for Coca-Cola to withdraw completely from South Africa.

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January 1986

NEWS BITS

Rev. Joseph Lowery indicated at the SCLC, 1986 Convention that the Coca-Cola Company may have to face a boycott if it does not leave South Africa.

The Board of Education in Camden, New Jersey has decreed that all Coke machines must be removed from BOE property.