

Coalition Against Apartheid

6763 Yale Station New Haven CT 06520

Matthew Walker (203) 776 0417

Mia Lewis (203) 865 6110

March 22, 1984

PRESS RELEASE:

The Coalition Against Apartheid is continuing its drive for University divestment by joining in a nation-wide protest against American financial involvement in South Africa being coordinated by the American Committee on Africa called "Two Weeks of Action." Founded in 1953 to support African independence movements, the American Committee on Africa currently has been promoting the nation-wide drive underway in state legislatures and on university campuses for divestment from South Africa.

The Coalition Against Apartheid, a student organization started last fall at Yale University, has been conducting a series of educational and protest activities to communicate the nature of South Africa's racial policies to the University community and to call for an end to Yale's investment in American banks and companies whose ventures in South Africa lend support to apartheid. Last December the Coalition sponsored a Senior Class referendum which succeeded in banning the investment of funds contributed to Yale by the Class of 1984 in any corporation doing business in South Africa.

The Coalition Against Apartheid will hold a Week of Action in New Haven to focus attention on the plight of Africans living under apartheid and to raise money for relief projects run by the African National Congress (ANC), the movement fighting against apartheid in South Africa.

Beginning on April 1, 1984 at 10:00 AM there will be a "Run for Freedom" starting at the New Haven Green. The runners will have their sponsors make pledges per mile, and the proceeds from the run will be donated to Freedom College, a school for children of South African exiles in Tanzania run by the ANC.

Following the run there will be a Rally Against Apartheid on the New Haven Green starting at 1:00 PM. Featured speakers included State Senator John Daniels, State Representative Bill Dyson, ANC representative to the United Nations, David Ndaba, and Prexy Nesbitt, Co-Chairman of the Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa. Mr. Nesbitt, a former Associate Director of the American Committee on Africa, previously worked as Research and Program Secretary for the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism.

Musical groups participating in the Rally include the local black groups Children of the Sun, with Jahmes Findlayson and Michael Mills; Leo Smith and the New Delta Ahkri; and Third World and his Africa Beat Disco. There will be a special appearance by the ANC singing group Sechaba.

On Wednesday, April 4, 1984 there will be several educational and cultural programs sponsored by the Coalition. At 4:00 PM at Yale's Afro-American Cultural Center, 211 Park Street, the Rev. Sipo Mzimela, an exiled South African Episcopal Minister, will speak on "The American South African Link." Following his talk at 5:00 PM Matthew Walker will present a slide show about forced removal of Africans to the "homelands" established by the South African government for each tribal group. Then at 10:00 PM on April 4, the film "Last Grave at Dimbaza" will

be shown in Room 263 of Street Hall, 56 High Street, New Haven. * This documentary, composed of footage smuggled out of South Africa, shows the debilitating conditions Africans face after being forced to live in the black reservations set aside as ethnic "homelands" by the South African government.

The Coalition will conclude its week of action in New Haven on April 6, 1984 with a memorial service for Soloman Mahlangu, the first African National Congress freedom fighter executed by the South African government. Five years ago on April 6, 1979 Soloman Mahlangu was hanged in Pretoria. The memorial service will be held at 7:00 PM in the Yale Art Gallery Lecture Hall (use High Street entrance.) ** Dennis Brutus, the exiled South African poet now teaching at Northwestern University, Rev. Sipo Mzimela, Tandi Gcabashe, an exiled South African now working in Atlanta, Georgia with the American Friends Service Committee, and ANC Regional Chairman Fred Dube will be the main participants in the memorial service. The Heritage Theater Ensemble of Yale University will present a dramatization of Dennis Brutus' poem on the execution of Soloman Mahlangu, and numerous visitors will present messages of support to the ANC.

Prior to the Memorial Service there will be a press conference at 6:00 PM at the Afro-American Cultural Center, 211 Park Street, New Haven to allow participants in the program to meet with the press before the program begins.

The Coalition Against Apartheid has gained considerable community support in New Haven for its week of action, and received endorsements for its program from a spectrum of community organizations, churches, unions, and peace groups. The events during this Week of Action will provide an opportunity for people in New Haven to take a stand against apartheid at the same time that others across the country will also be demonstrating their opposition, and will in addition enable people to generate desperately needed material support for those fighting against apartheid directly in southern Africa.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Matthew Walker 776-0417

Mia Lewis 865-6110

Brooke Baldwin 432-4104 office
562-9709 home

* This location will be changed to the Common Room in Dwight Hall in the event of a strike at Yale by Local 34.

** This event will be moved, in the event of a strike, to Trinity Church, corner of Chapel and Temple Streets, New Haven.