DIVESTMENT WORK IN NEW YORK STATE

On March 20, 1984, Boji Jordan of ASAPPA, Irv Landa of the NAACP, Rev. Joyce Giles, Executive Director of the Albany Area Council of Churches, Lars Isaacson, Vice President of the Student Association of the State University and Anita Thayer of the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism met with Kenneth Shapiro, counsel to Assembly Majority Leader Fink to discuss the issue of divestment of public pension funds from businesses investing in South Africa. Mr. Shapiro indicated his support for the principle of divestment and promised to work closely with Assemblymen Herman Farrell and Arthur Eve on this issue.

The Civil Service Employees Association announced its support of divestment. If you are a member of a public employees union and want to work through your union on this issue, call Coalition member Gary Pavlic at 462-1509.

All Coalition members should write to Senator Warren Anderson, Senate Majority Leader, and to your own state senator to express support for the divestment of public pension funds from South Africa. There is significant support for divestment in the Assembly, however, we must develop support in the Senate. For more information on divestment, call Anita Thayer at 462-6753.

SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

On March 17, 1984, the Coalition held a very successful fundraiser at Otis' in Albany. Everyone enjoyed the music and fashion show and the chance to talk with friends. Special thanks to Otis, Cindy Robinson and Milton Marshall. Congratulations to Shirley Lumpkin and Tony Scott presented an interesting and very informative talk on Angola at our March meeting. He will follow it up with a talk on other front line states at the April meeting.

ELECTION HELD

At the March meeting of the Coalition, a chair and a steering committee were elected. The chair is Vera Michelson and the steering committee members are Anita Thayer, Tony Scott, Rev. Robert Dixon, Eileen Kawola, Jim Wright, Shirley Lumpkin and Bill Ritchie. Barbara Hendler will continue to serve as Treasurer.

COALITION AND CHURCHES JOIN IN JOINT EFFORT

As part of the "Two Weeks of National Anti-Apartheid Action" the Coalition made available to several local churches copies of a speech made by Dr. Martin Luther King in 1965 calling for an international boycott of apartheid South Africa. Churches which worked with us in this educational effort are Mt. Calvary Baptist, Metropolitan Baptist, Wilborn Temple, St. Joseph's, Mt. Pleasant Baptist, Westminster Presbyterian and First Church in Albany.

Education of the public about the apartheid system is an important first step in the struggle to end this racist evil. We are grateful to the churches for their cooperation.

EDUCATION

Tony Scott presented an interesting and very informative talk on Angola at our March meeting. He will follow it up with a talk on other front line states at the April meeting.
Today, Namibia's population, settlement patterns and economic development reflect the decades of colonial exploitation and the later, more brutal enforcement of the South African apartheid system. A recent study for the United Nations Institute for Namibia places the population at about 1,250,000 comprised of at least 1,035,000 Africans, 115,000 Coloured (people of mixed descent) and 100,000 whites of European descent. In addition, there are approximately 70,000 personnel of South Africa's illegally occupying armed forces. The whites make up less than 10 percent of the population but occupy the most productive 4.3 percent of Namibia's land for agriculture and grazing. The African majority has been confined to "homeland" or "bantustans" on the most impoverished 4.0 percent of the land. On the remaining 17 percent of the land are the vast mineral reserves, copper, uranium and diamonds. The uranium and diamonds are under the control of the South African government.

Many black Namibians who cannot eke out a living in the homelands are forced to migrate to the so-called white areas in order to seek gainful employment, a situation like that which exists in South Africa. The white and foreign-owned economic enterprises are thereby provided with a plentiful and cheap labor supply.

On April 19, 1960, SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) was formed. SWAPO's constitution, adopted in 1976, defines SWAPO. "SWAPO is a national liberation movement rallying together, on the basis of free and voluntary association, all freedom-inspired sons and daughters of the Namibian people. It is the organized political vanguard of the oppressed and exploited people of Namibia. In fulfilling its vanguard role, SWAPO organizes, unites, inspires, orients and leads the broad masses of the working Namibian people in the struggle for national and social liberation. It is thus the expression and embodiment of national unity, of a whole people united and organized in the struggle for total independence and social liberation."

Throughout the 1960's, SWAPO struggled to liberate Namibia from South Africa's illegal occupation of their country, its fragmentation of their land into "bantustans," and its depletion of their natural resources and exploitation of their labor. South Africa responded with ruthless measures of repression beginning with the illegal arrest, deportation and trial in Pretoria of 37 South West Africans in 1967 and the imprisonment in 1968 of Herman Tolvo, the founder of SWAPO. In addition, South Africa extended its apartheid legislation to Namibia, proclaimed three "homelands" as security districts, which, in effect, placed 50 percent of Namibia's population under martial law. South Africa also built up its military presence in the area. Through these, and other repressive measures, South Africa has been able to maintain its illegal hold over Namibia.

In 1973, the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the national liberation movement of Namibia, SWAPO, as the authentic representative of the Namibian people, and supported the efforts of the movement to strengthen national unity. SWAPO is also recognized as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

In the face of the South African repression, a military wing of SWAPO was formed - the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Because of South Africa's tightening of the grip on economic and political internal activities of SWAPO, armed liberation struggle has become a major form of SWAPO's campaign to bring about total and genuine independence to the people of Namibia.

E. Kawola


Special Note: The Social Action Center, of which the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism is a member, is sponsoring a Walk-a-thon on April 28, 1984. Several members of the Coalition have signed up. If you can join this worthwhile benefit, call SAC 434-4037 for further details.