



UNITED NATIONS CENTRE AGAINST *APARTHEID*

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS*

Special issue

November 1987

FOR STEPPED-UP ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID

Hearing of United States student organizations
against apartheid, United Nations Headquarters,
11 September 1987

[Note: This issue is published at the request of the Special Committee against Apartheid, which devoted a meeting on 11 September 1987 to the "Hearing on the review of the grave situation in South Africa and student action in the United States of America against apartheid".

Statements were made by the Chairman of the Special Committee, representatives of the national liberation movements of South Africa and 22 representatives of student organizations in the United States.

The views expressed are those of the authors.]

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I. OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH N. GARBA (NIGERIA),
CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

On behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the leaders of student organizations from universities and colleges in the United States, who responded positively to our invitation to meet here to give testimony on their action against apartheid.

As you are aware, this is the third occasion in the past three years for the Special Committee to hold a hearing of student leaders. This is a testimony to the importance we attach to the initiatives of students in fostering the world public opinion for the eradication of apartheid as well as in mobilizing concerted international action for achieving that goal.

Aware of the pivotal role played by the world-wide student movement in the international campaign against apartheid, the Special Committee, as you may know, held an International Student Conference in Solidarity with the Struggle of the Students of Southern Africa just one month ago in London.

The Conference adopted a Declaration in which all participants reaffirmed their solidarity with the students and youths of South Africa and decided, among others, to intensify the international campaigns for the immediate imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa and for the total isolation of South Africa. The Conference also adopted a Programme of Action spelling out a set of measures to be taken by students at the international level. We are confident that the outcome of this Conference will give added impetus to the global anti-apartheid movement, which has gathered momentum in the past 12 months.

As the result of intensified international action, including the vigorous campaigns waged by hundreds of student and youth organizations, we have noticed some encouraging signs that several of the traditional and main economic partners of South Africa have decided to take selective restrictive measures against the racist régime. Although the effects of such measures are still quite limited in scope and degree, the Special Committee welcomes these initiatives as a clear shift towards the right direction.

On the other hand, it cannot be overemphasized that the Special Committee maintains that the total isolation of South Africa should be the immediate and imperative target of action by the international community as the only peaceful means left to induce Pretoria to abandon the abhorrent system of apartheid. The need for concerted international action to this end has never been greater than it is today, when the people in South Africa, as you are fully aware, are facing unprecedented repression under the extended state of emergency.

In this connection, I would be less than frank if I did not say that we have been most frustrated by the attitudes and actions of the Governments of certain Western Powers, including the permanent members of the Security Council, such as the United States, which still sustain the so-called "constructive engagement" with the apartheid régime and cannot agree on the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is against this apprehension that the Special Committee notes with great satisfaction the positive initiatives emanating from campuses throughout the United States in campaigning for divestment and other anti-apartheid measures.

As of June 1987, your words and action in public have been brought to 22 states, 14 counties, 75 cities and over 128 colleges and universities, which have adopted legislation prohibiting procurement contracts from and investment of public funds in companies "doing business" with or in South Africa.

Your campaigns in the campuses, streets, city halls and elsewhere have helped bring about a joint call for disengagement with racist South Africa by the Congress, state legislatures, city councils, universities, church groups and other institutions, which, in part, was reflected in the selective restrictive measure against South Africa adopted by the United States Congress in October 1986.

Likewise, your calls of protests added the public pressure that led a number of United States-based companies to announce that they had terminated direct investment in South Africa. Unfortunately, some cases of divestment leave much to be desired. Often companies maintain - through franchising, technology transfer, contracts and other arrangements - profitable links with the South African market. In spite of the shortcomings in the implementation of these anti-apartheid measures, we should see them as solid stepping stones towards effective comprehensive sanctions.

The Special Committee, therefore, will continue to encourage and support such students' endeavours in spearheading the anti-apartheid movement. You still have much to do.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that your voices in protest against apartheid echo those raised in the streets and villages of Soweto and elsewhere in South Africa. Your action is a powerful message to all opponents of apartheid and invigorates, in particular, millions of fellow students and youths who are gallantly standing today in the forefront of the legitimate fight for freedom, equality and dignity of all people in South Africa. You should be proud of your efforts and be ready to continue your work.

II. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES AT THE HEARING

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Institution</u> |
|------------------------|--|
| Ms. Anyika ALLEN | Children United against <u>Apartheid</u> , Houston |
| Ms. Lisa ANDERSON | Task Force on Human Rights, University of Northern Idaho |
| Ms. Danisa BALOYI a/ | Columbia University |
| Mr. James BRAME | Illinois Alliance of Black Student Organizations |
| Ms. Imani ELLIS a/ | National Association of Black Law Students |
| Mr. Patrick ERWIN | Coalition against <u>Apartheid</u> , Western Washington University |
| Mr. Michael FISHER | Earth against <u>Apartheid</u> Foundation and American-South African People's Friendship Association, Lehman College |
| Ms. Tanaquil JONES | Columbia University Coalition for a Free Southern Africa |
| Mr. John KAGEHIRO | Hawaii Committee for Africa, University of Hawaii |
| Mr. Dale MCKINLEY | Action against <u>Apartheid</u> , University of North Carolina |
| Mr. Charles MONTGOMERY | Steven Biko Committee, University of Texas at Austin |
| Ms. Pam NADASEN | University of Michigan Students against <u>Apartheid</u> and Racism |
| Ms. Florida NEGRON | University Student Senate of the City University of New York |
| Ms. Angela PARKER a/ | D.C. Student Coalition against <u>Apartheid</u> and Racism |
| Mr. Mike PITARD a/ | Tuskegee University, Alabama |
| Mr. Reginald RAMSEY | Atlanta Student Coalition against <u>Apartheid</u> and Racism |
| Ms. Paula SCHULMAN | Concerned Students and Faculty for Divestment, University of Montana |
| Mr. Hilay SHELTON a/ | Missourians against <u>Apartheid</u> |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Ms. April TAYLOR <u>a/</u> | Black Student Union, Fisk University at Nashville |
| Ms. Tawana THOMAS | Black Student Communications Organizing Network |
| Ms. Kim TYNAN | Committee for Justice in South Africa, Penn State University |
| Ms. Carla WEITZEL | Coalition for Divestment, University of Missouri at Columbia |

a/ Statements by these student representatives were not submitted to the Special Committee against Apartheid.

III. EXCERPTS FROM STATEMENTS BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

A. Ms. Anyika Allen

(Children United against Apartheid, Houston)

... We were alarmed that the repression in South Africa had singled out children as a special target, imprisoning and torturing thousands of youth. ... We know all too well that the bell tolls for the children of the entire planet when children are abused anywhere.

... Our local anti-apartheid and peace community was successful in having the licence of the South African Airways revoked before executive and legislative sanctions took effect in the United States. Additionally, we have won effective and binding divestment legislation in Houston.

... We are bristling with suggestions for activity:

(a) Build a coalition effort to force the South African Consulate out of Houston;

(b) Support the campaign of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) to "Unlock Apartheid's Jails";

(c) Support the United Nations cultural and economic boycott by identifying local businesses in defiance.

B. Ms. Lisa Anderson

(Task Force on Human Rights, University of Northern Idaho)

... Nowhere is there an understanding that people of colour must decide which path our people will travel without interference and representation by others who ignore basic questions of self-determination. The link between racism at home and racism in southern Africa must be clearly stated.

C. Mr. James Brame

(Illinois Alliance of Black Student Organizations)

In March 1986, we sent out a charge to the 44 black student organizations that we represent. ... It began with a state-wide day of prayer for liberation. Other components of this plan include the petitioning of elected officials to enact legislation against racism and the support thereof. We continued our plans with a protest in front of the South African Consulate in Chicago, Illinois; a boycott of companies and banks that financially support apartheid in southern Africa; and with awareness programmes to make our people strong in their knowledge and motivated to act against racism.

We will continue our efforts in working with the Anti-Apartheid Student Alliance and Coalition for Illinois Divestment in South Africa (CIDS) in a unified effort to call upon all people to divest in South Africa and invest in a better humanity for tomorrow.

D. Mr. Patrick Erwin

(Coalition against Apartheid, Western Washington University)

The Anti-Apartheid Coalition of Western Washington University has as its goals the following: to help end apartheid and to promote social justice in South Africa; to educate the University and the greater Bellingham community about South Africa and its relationship with the front-line States; and to provide programmes on the issue of racism in its national and international dimensions. To achieve these goals, the Anti-Apartheid Coalition has embarked and on regional networking with other campus and regional activists groups and on community involvement with churches and civic groups; political and material support for the front-line States; pushing for a state divestment bill; a campus radio show dealing with South Africa and racism; a possible film series on South Africa; and continuing efforts to attract speakers to the campus.

... It is time to double our efforts and to use the resources available to end apartheid, battle racism and give support to other movements in this area.

E. Mr. Michael Fisher

(Earth against Apartheid Foundation and American-South African People's Friendship Association, Lehman College)

The primary principle that both the Earth against Apartheid Foundation and the American-South African People's Friendship Association uphold is the lofty and time-proven principle of the right of nations to self-determination. This is a principle that has been upheld by the United Nations and its Special Committee against Apartheid ever since their inception.

... Students in the United States, and in particular African-American students, historically have played a most crucial role serving as one of the main catalysts and motors of the anti-apartheid movement. As a result, many advances have been made.

The Special Committee against Apartheid, in congruence with the correct principle of the right of nations to self-determination, correctly advocates that it is solely the right of the oppressed majority in South Africa to be the arbitor of its political future. ... it is highly incumbent upon the student movement as well as the anti-apartheid movement at large to follow the correct dictates of the Special Committee and actively to support both liberation organizations.

Overcoming sectarianism in the anti-apartheid movement at large and the student movement in particular is the key to effective struggle against the racist and murderous apartheid system in South Africa. It is paramount that we work together and united for the liberation of the oppressed African majority of South Africa, respecting the right of this majority to determine its own political, economic and social fate.

F. Ms. Tanaquil Jones
(Columbia University Coalition for a Free Southern Africa)

... It is not often that students are given the recognition they deserve. More often than not our voices are not heard willingly and our contributions are too often overlooked.

Last spring on the campus of Columbia University a racial attack occurred. It began on 21 March. ... For those of us at Columbia this date had another significance: two years ago on 21 March, Danisa Baloyi, myself and five other students began a fast which lasted 15 days to protest the University's holdings in companies doing business in South Africa. Ultimately this fast and our 21-day blockade of a campus building forced the University to divest, which sparked action on college campuses across the country that eventually led to divestments by about 60 colleges and universities between 1985 and the present.

Our success, however, was not the product of our efforts alone:

(a) It was the first action of its kind on a college campus, combined with the fact that Columbia University is located in New York, a major media centre;

(b) We received extensive and favourable media coverage;

(c) Events happening inside South Africa and the media attention they were receiving brought the atrocity of apartheid onto television and into the homes of many people in the United States who had previously been totally ignorant of the South Africa situation. ... Now that the events in South Africa are no longer being covered, because of the censorship of the press which has virtually gone unchallenged, people don't think about South Africa like they used to. This presents a problem for us as students: ... what do we do when we don't get favourable or any media coverage?

We, at Columbia, see ourselves as agitators for social change.

Over two and a half years ago, a call was given to the South African people "to make South Africa ungovernable". The people of South Africa have met the challenge put to them. We here in the United States have done our small part as well. We have petitioned, rallied, gone without food, been brought up on disciplinary charges, been suspended, expelled, gaoled and had our lives threatened but we have persevered. And, like our brothers and sisters in South Africa, our comrades, we will continue until victory is won at home and abroad.

G. Mr. John Kagehiro
(Hawaii Committee for Africa, University of Hawaii)

... Faced with a rash of student-led actions of steadily increasing frequency and intensity, the University Board of Regents voted to divest itself of some \$2.3 million in South Africa-related investments. The actions included:

- A 25-day fast by University of Hawaii student, Antonio Rosa, protesting University investment in South Africa;
- A 1,300-signature petition endorsed by every major student and faculty organization calling for divestment;
- Shanties on the front lawn of the administration building;
- A Halloween march to the home of the University president, a sort of mass trick-or-treat that was attended by the then Hawaii congressman Neil Abercrombie;
- The compilation of a 100-page document by a special faculty task force arguing for divestment.

With the University now South Africa-free, our attention turned towards the State Employees' Retirement Fund, which has over \$100 million invested in South Africa. Lobbying efforts continue at this level, and we are optimistic that this portfolio will soon be South Africa-free.

We have all given a good deal of time and energy to the anti-apartheid movement, and the movement gives back by deepening and broadening our understanding of racism and its effects on our society.

H. Mr. Dale McKinley
(Action against Apartheid, University of North Carolina)

... Only when apartheid is crushed and racist institutions and attitudes are overcome will true liberation come to the oppressed peoples of southern Africa, the United States and the world over. ... Our organization, along with many others, has sought to follow that commitment with a systematic programme of anti-apartheid/anti-racist action aimed at forging practical ways of expressing our solidarity with those seeking true liberation from apartheid. Visible acts of civil disobedience and public demonstrations aimed at these racist entities have served to highlight their duplicitous nature and involve all members of our communities in acts of solidarity. Practical programmes of pro-divestment and medical and material aid to the liberation forces, combined with active efforts to confront and challenge the oppressive economic, social and political conditions imposed on people of colour have been and must continue to be pursued as an effective tool in the struggle. ... of equal importance is a parallel programme of education aimed at strengthening our communities' knowledge of apartheid and the liberation

struggle and of the racism that pervades our institutions and social existence. ... Through the utilization of open forums and discussions, the media, concrete analytical literature and other means of furthering education, we have and will continue our attempts at creating a solid base from which an informed and effective struggle can be waged against apartheid and the racism that surrounds us.

I. Mr. Charles Montgomery
(Steven Biko Committee, University of Texas at Austin)

The fall of the inhuman system of apartheid is inevitable. However, we must realize that the illegitimate Government currently operating in South Africa is only one piece of the puzzle. It is the teamwork of the Western countries that assures the existence of apartheid, protecting the interests of a few at the expense of many. This is the struggle for truth and justice.

The Steve Biko Committee's programme of action is:

- (a) To disseminate information and educate the University community about the apartheid system in South Africa;
- (b) To struggle for the divestment of all University of Texas Permanent University Fund investments in United States companies with South African subsidiaries;
- (c) To oppose the University's expansion into black neighbourhoods in the East Austin community;
- (d) To call for the recruitment and retention of black students and professors at the University;
- (e) To support the programmes of black organizations in East Austin and the University community;
- (f) To support the struggle of black university workers;
- (g) To demand the establishment of a black cultural centre that would benefit all students;
- (h) To oppose white supremacy, sexism and national oppression;
- (i) To support the freedom of all political prisoners in South Africa and the elimination of apartheid by any means necessary;
- (j) To support the world-wide liberation of Africans and all oppressed people.

J. Ms. Pam Nadasen
(University of Michigan Students against Apartheid and Racism)

For decades the Free South Africa Movement in the United States has struggled in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in southern Africa. The recent iron curtain news black-out has separated us from the struggle inside South Africa, but we are more convinced and committed than ever to remain vigilant.

We have forced dozens of schools to divest, have raised funds for material aid to South African exiles and won symbolic recognition for southern African freedom fighters and political prisoners. We will continue these campaigns ...

We will not be closed out - we must fight the media black-out and question what's happening behind the closed doors of apartheid.

... It would trivialize the struggle in southern Africa to compare our sacrifices to theirs. But we've learned that without struggle there is no progress and it is the ordinary people of the world who have the ultimate power to forge that struggle.

K. Ms. Florida Negrón
(University Student Senate of the City University of New York)

The students of the City University of New York (CUNY) are proud to state that CUNY was the first university in the country to divest itself of any investments in financial institutions or companies that do business with the Republic of South Africa.

All investments in financial institutions and companies that do business with South Africa were divested by the first week of January 1985.

The University Student Senate followed the divestiture drive with a lobbying drive in Albany for the State to divest. We were successful in getting the New York State Assembly to pass the Green/Miller bill. However, the State Senate refused to pass the bill. We will continue using our office in Albany to guarantee the passage of this bill in the next legislative session.

Our lobbying efforts resulted in the sponsoring of a bill by Deputy Speaker Arthur Eve and State Senator John Marchi on an allocation of \$500,000 for South African refugees to enter universities in New York State. The bill passed both houses of the legislature. However, the money wasn't allocated because of a political manoeuvre by the Senate. Our organization will request that the legislature guarantee the passage of this most needed legislation. We will further request the administration of the City University to request funds from the legislature to allow South African students to attend the University at no cost. We are committed to the struggles against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia.

Our student governments on the 20 campuses of CUNY have used their student funds to educate students and the community about the evils of apartheid. Most of our campuses have dedicated a month in each year as an anti-apartheid month. Films, discussions and cultural events are held.

L. Mr. Reginald Ramsey
(Atlanta Student Coalition against Apartheid and Racism)

As history has demonstrated in virtually every struggle for justice and peace, youth have been at the forefront. Therefore, the importance of the United States student anti-apartheid movement cannot be overstated.

... As youth, we have accepted the challenge to combat apartheid and racial discrimination. We will continue to hold protests, rallies and marches against those companies doing business in South Africa, we will continue to educate our people about the struggle in South Africa and to apply pressure to government officials to prevent the escalation of war in South Africa... It is clear that the apartheid régime is destructive to the world society. We must not be responsible for permitting such an institution to continue to exist. We, the youth and students of the Georgia Black Student Association and the Atlanta Student Coalition against Apartheid and Racism, believe in and support the South African youth in their struggle.

... Therefore, we will continue to move against those forces of the United States that support the oppression of the people of South Africa and the African Diaspora.

M. Ms. Paula Schulman
(Concerned Students and Faculty for Divestment, University of Montana)

At the University of Montana, efforts have focused on the education of issues related to South Africa through a film series, forums and discussion groups. ... The faculty senate, the teacher's union and the Associated Student Union all passed resolutions for total divestment. ...

On the state level, since 1984, the Peace Legislative Coalition has helped introduce a bill into the Montana Legislature that would require the State to divest. Each time the bill failed by a handful of votes. ... In addition, direct appeals to the Montana Board of Investments to divest have also failed. ... One very positive outcome of the divestment effort has been a new set of networks of concerned citizens throughout Montana.

N. Ms. Tawana Thomas
(Black Student Communications Organizing Network)

Our major works in the area have centred around organizing forums, conferences and rallies to inform the public of the inhuman oppression that the South African administration has forced upon our brothers and sisters in that country and surrounding countries. We view the present system in South Africa as a system of white supremacy, that ... is based on genocide. ... The whites in South Africa know that they cannot continue to subjugate an entire people against their will and be at peace.

It is also our belief that South Africa intends to occupy not only Azania and Namibia, but also the entire southern Africa region. This intention has been made quite clear by South Africa in its relentless attacks on Angola and other nations surrounding its borders. We cannot focus on South Africa and pretend that it will become a good neighbour overnight, nor can we expect it to change its ways and become friends to the people it intends to annihilate.

We cannot negate the role of the United States in South Africa. ... We must be aware that the South African régime could not have existed thus far without the United States as one of its main allies.

... We must not discourage but support our brothers and sisters in using whatever means they deem necessary for their liberation.

O. Ms. Kim Tynan
(Committee for Justice in South Africa, Penn State University)

Institutional racism is rampant at Penn State. ... For example, during the two months that our symbolic shanty town stood on campus, racist propaganda emerged on campus bulletin boards, student anti-apartheid leaders received anonymous death threats, and the Ku Klux Klan became active on campus. ... Penn State's insensitivity to minority concerns, closely linked with its refusal to divest, has contributed to maintaining this racist atmosphere.

Currently pending in the Pennsylvania state legislature are eight bills that would bring about state-wide divestment, including at state-related universities like Penn State. ... 30 members of the Committee for Justice in South Africa marched over 100 miles to the state capitol last spring, and have continued in intensive lobbying efforts since then.

One of the major obstacles to divestment at Penn State has been corporate influence upon and within our Board of Trustees. Mellon Bank has been the primary obstacle ... The Committee for Justice in South Africa has gained state-wide support for our Mellon Bank Boycott.

In preparation for the event of Penn State's divestment, the Committee for Justice in South Africa is launching a material support campaign for the

National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa. Plans are also being discussed for the establishment of an African National Congress support group at Penn State, in addition to continuing the educational efforts in our community.

P. Ms. Carla Weitzel

(Coalition for Divestment, University of Missouri at Columbia)

On 10 October 1986, students of the University of Missouri built a shanty on Francis Quadrangle to bring home the effects of the University's South African investments ...

... Through networking efforts among students in the four campus system, shanty-building, forums, films, workshops, rallies, lobbying, cultural boycotts and ongoing educational efforts became successful tools in raising awareness about the realities of apartheid at home and abroad. ...

The dedication and persistence of student activists over the last three years also inspired and further mobilized city organizations and community groups state-wide to focus on the racism of apartheid, and to take a pro-active stance on divestment. ... Divestment supporters organizing in Kansas City and St. Louis successfully persuaded their city governments to divest funds tied to South Africa. With overwhelming majorities, the Missouri State Legislature voted to divest state pension funds. On 12 August, Governor John Ashcroft sided with divestment and signed Missouri House bill No. 342.

From the students' perspective, ... the struggle continues to commit ourselves fully to the lessons and organization of empowerment from the grass roots, to learn from the works of our courageous South African sisters and brothers, and to promote a global perspective in policy and practice that nurtures a deep respect for the beauty of racial and cultural diversity.
