REPORT ON THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ACCOUNTS FROM
CHASE MANHATTAN and FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANKS

BACKGROUND

The major thrust of the Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid's campaign for the withdrawal of accounts from Chase Manhattan and First National City Banks ended on December 9th with a large demonstration at the banks' Wall Street headquarters. Although the Committee is still receiving withdrawal pledges in protest over these banks' involvement in apartheid and is continuing to encourage such withdrawals, the primary phase of this campaign for American disengagement from South Africa in relation to the banks has closed. Thus the new year demands that there be an examination of the events of the bank campaign, its successes and failures; and this juncture encourages reflection in order for the Committee of Conscience and its friends to be better prepared for the development of new phases in the strategy for disengagement. This report will therefore describe the various aspects of the campaign for withdrawals during the autumn of 1966.

The early months of the formation of the Committee of Conscience were spent gathering sponsorship and putting out initial publicity on the bank campaign through the leaflet entitled, "An Appeal to the people of New York." On August 3, 1966 A. Philip Randolph, as Chairman of the Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid, held a news conference to announce a city-wide boycott of Chase Manhattan and First National City Banks. Initiated by the American Committee on Africa and the University Christian Movement, the Committee has acquired 123 prominent sponsors who represent the major segments of American society. By September when the campaign coordinators, Ford Johnson and his assistant Richard Courage, returned to their universities, the early stages of the effort were well underway.

Mary-Louise Hooper, Director of the South Africa Program and Wendell Foster, Associate Director of the American Committee on Africa, took over the job of coordinating the campaign and organizing the actual means of urging people and organizations to withdraw their funds on or before December 9th. This task was accomplished through numerous mailings, meetings, publicity, and personal contacts. Students from the metropolitan area and nearby colleges met to discuss the campaign at New York University on October 2nd, and a meeting of community and church leaders was held on October 27th at the Community Church. Emphasis was placed on encouraging church and religious groups to withdraw as well as local unions, peace organizations, civil rights groups and students -- and by November pledges for withdrawals were coming into the office.

WITHDRAWAL OF ACCOUNTS

Over $22,200,000 have been withdrawn as part of the bank campaign in savings, checking and custody accounts. Although according to bank sources only $15,000 have been withdrawn from Chase Manhattan and less than $22,000 from First National City, it is clear that the banks' claims contradict the amounts indicated on the
over 200 signed withdrawal pledges and personal verifications which the Committee has obtained. There is moreover no doubt that more money than claimed has and will be withdrawn, as the Committee has in its files signed pledges for withdrawals considerably exceeding the number of completed withdrawal cards. The confusion of figures probably stems from two factors: first of all, some of the withdrawals connected with the campaign have occurred without informing the banks of the specific reason for withdrawal, and secondly, some institutions have wanted to withhold identification from fear of reprisals by the banks and other related concerns which might have adverse effects on the business or organizations making the withdrawal.

In spite of these very real fears, particularly on the part of large organizations, and the concomitant inability to use their names in publicity, there are a number of organizations, companies and institutions which have acted publicly in withdrawing accounts. These include: the Ad Hoc Committee on Human Rights and Genocide Treaties, Bishop and Lord Company, Burton Lasky Associates, Inc., Christianity and Crisis, the Committee for Nonviolent Action, the Jane Addams Peace Association, the Methodist Office to the United Nations, the Missionary and Young Matrons' Association of the United Pentecostal Church, Montmoot Corporation, Mother A.M.E. Zion Church of New York, the New York/New Jersey region of the National Federation of Catholic College Students, St. Marks in the Bouwerie Episcopal Church, the student governments of Barnard College and Union Theological Seminary, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the World Student Christian Federation.

Some of the individuals who have removed their funds from either Chase or First National are: Theodore Bikel and Pete Seeger, well-known entertainers; U.S. Congressman Jonathan Bingham and New York State Senator Basil A. Patterson; author Arthur Miller and journalist Nat Hentoff; Rev. Donald S. Harrington, Pastor of the Community Church of New York; Henry P. Van Dusen, President Emeritus of Union Theological Seminary; Reinhold Niebuhr, the renowned theologian; Eugene G. Eisinger, Attorney for District 65 of the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union; Frederick A.O. Schwarz, Jr., a Wall Street lawyer; Arthur W. Dana, Financial Consultant; Immanuel Wallerstein, Associate Professor of Sociology at Columbia University and Thomas Franck, Professor of Government and International Relations at New York University; as well as many other clergymen, university professors and doctors.

The success of the campaign, and its effect in the growing realization on the part of the bank officials of the grass-roots base of the concern, has been the result of not only the action of the above organizations and individuals, but the cumulative effect of many persons -- with both large and small accounts -- who have acted on their principles. As one withdrawer wrote to the bank upon withdrawing his funds, "this gesture is the only one I can actively make to impress on a rather faceless business the need for some individual thinking on a moral question." The difficulty of this type of campaign was of course the basic inconvenience caused by asking people, in withdrawing accounts, to sever convenient and long-standing financial relations, and to often undertake less handy banking arrangements. But, as one woman commented, the 7 blocks which she must now go to her new bank are her "personal march against apartheid."

In addition to the direct withdrawals from the banks there were several people who sold their stocks in the banks. Others are holding their securities until the time of the annual stockholders' meetings in the spring, when they will voice a protest.
As mentioned above, the culmination of the campaign occurred on December 9th, the day before Human Rights Day, with a large demonstration at 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza and 55 Wall Street, the headquarters of Chase Manhattan and a large branch of First National City.

Several weeks prior to the 9th, the Chase Manhattan Bank's legal representatives, the law firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley and McCloy, demanded that the proposed picket be cancelled by the Committee of Conscience with notification of the cancellation to be submitted to the bank by noon, December 5. The bank warned the Committee that if this were not done it would "have to take appropriate steps to protect its property rights . . . ." The demand for the cancellation of the picket was tacitly revoked when the Committee sent a Police Department receipt to the bank for the use of a sound device at the demonstration meeting (held on the sidewalk in front of the bank) accompanied by the statement that the Committee had "never intended or proposed that the demonstration be held on private property." It was obvious that the bank had misinterpreted the announced demonstration site as Chase Manhattan Plaza proper rather than the sidewalk located at the street address, 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza.

The demonstration was held as scheduled. Approximately 300 people came from throughout the metropolitan area representing student associations, labor, church and civil rights groups. They walked, at first in a single line and later in pairs, carrying signs such as "Apartheid has a Friend at Chase Manhattan" and "First National City - the only bank apartheid ever needs (except for Chase)." Bank employees craned their necks out of 15th-story office windows and at least a thousand Wall Street workers on their lunch breaks gathered on the Plaza steps or across the street to watch the orderly demonstrators. A handful of Nazi sympathizers cheered the name of Hitler and passed out literature depicting Dr. Martin Luther King in a Communist training school, which simply pointed up the fact that these right-wingers did not have the foresight or the funds to produce up-to-date propaganda on South Africa. Except for this group of hecklers, the rest of the crowd seemed interested in the purpose of the picket and 5,000 Committee of Conscience brochures were distributed. New York City policemen were in full force to keep potential haranguers at bay. Members of the press stood on the rim of the saw-horse barricades which surrounded the marchers and interviewed the organizers of the campaign, while one of two of them, such as a fellow from WBAI radio station, entered the picket line and circled round and round questioning the participants.

At the close of the forty-five minute picket at Chase, a short rally was held on the sidewalk. A. Philip Randolph called on Americans of conscience to withdraw their accounts from Chase Manhattan and First National City, and appealed to people to recognize the relationship of American support for apartheid abroad and the continuation of racism here in the United States. Other speakers were Peter Weiss, President of the American Committee on Africa, who reviewed the history of American banking involvement in South Africa after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960; Father Harry Keeton of the N.Y.U. University Christian Foundation, who read from a statement issued the same day by Concerned Communicants of the Episcopal Church in support of withdrawals from the banks; and Morley Nkosi, a South African student at N.Y.U., who recounted the oppressive conditions in his country and expressed his regret over U.S. accommodation to this situation. Rev.
Wendell Foster presided over the rally. The speeches were constantly interrupted by hisses and boos from the pro-Nazi group standing across the street, but this obvious racist reaction did not arouse the cooperation of the rest of the crowd.

After the rally Mr. Randolph led the marchers from Chase Plaza down the narrow street to the First National City branch at 55 Wall Street. At approximately 2 P.M. the picket line broke up, with a consensus among its participants that it had been valuable not only for the publicity value but also for the sense of solidarity it created for those few people who are concerned about American partnership in apartheid.

The participants in the demonstration included students from Union Theological Seminary and General Seminary, the University Christian Movement, and the United Federation of Catholic College Students; members of the clergy of the Episcopal Church, A.M.E. Zion Church, Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Roman Catholic Church, and members of local congregations. Other organizations represented were: Local 1199 of the R.U.D.S.U., C.O.R.E., Students for a Democratic Society, Committee for Nonviolent Action, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Students were present from Brooklyn College, Columbia University, Hunter College, Iona College, Manhattan College, Pace College, New York University, Yeshiva University, Wesleyan College in Connecticut, and others.

The December 9th demonstration was the largest but not the only picketing connected with the campaign. For the six weeks preceding this event members of Bronx CORE, Union Theological Seminary's Social Action Committee, and the N.Y.U. South Africa Committee had lobbied their local branch banks at least once a week, while some groups, including these and the American Committee on Africa, sponsored demonstrations in front of local banks. As part of the attempt to reach a wide range of people there were also over a dozen meetings and rallies on the bank campaign held at colleges and churches. These activities, in conjunction with publicity resulting from more direct action, led to the success of the final demonstration and the large number of withdrawals.

On December 10th, Human Rights Day, a 'sympathy' picket was staged in Baltimore at the site of an American company which has a subsidiary in South Africa.

CAMPAIGN PUBLICITY

The Committee of Conscience issued nine press releases during the course of the campaign, which included the reports of two press conferences held by Mr. Randolph. The amount of actual press coverage was moderate. There were short articles in The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, while out of town coverage occurred in the Washington Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, Detroit Free Press, Miami Herald, San Francisco Chronicle, and no doubt others. These latter papers carried more favorable and complete releases, most of them based on a UPI report which was a composite of information derived from Mr. Randolph's press conference on December 7 and an Open Letter to the Banks signed by 50 prominent Americans. The story about the withdrawals was also printed in the Times (London) and Observer. Major articles and editorials occurred in Christianity and Crisis, The Christian Century, Catholic Worker, New Republic, and Village Voice. The demonstration was carried over CBS-TV news, and the announcement of funds withdrawn and the picket were mentioned on local AM and FM stations, including WINS, WNEW, WNYL, WLIL, and WBAL. More extensive interviews were held on WLIB and WVNJ.
INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OTHER PRESS COVERAGE NOT MENTIONED ABOVE WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE BANK CAMPAIGN

Various groups in the city and on campuses have shown interest in extending the campaign against the banks and of expanding it to include a wider effort to encourage stockholders in American firms investing in South Africa to investigate their securities.

CAMPAIGN COSTS AND DEFICIT

The cost of postage, paper and other supplies for the campaign has been approximately $4,500, not including staff time and wages. Receipts to date are $1,803. A special letter was sent out appealing for help in this area of finances several weeks before December 9th, with only a slight response from the recipients. THEREFORE, THE COMMITTEE AGAIN EXTENDS THIS APPEAL TO OUR SPONSORS AND FRIENDS IN ORDER NOT ONLY THAT THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE NOT INCUR THE WHOLE BURDEN OF THE BILL, BUT THAT THE EFFORT FOR DISENGAGEMENT BE CONTINUED.