SPECIAL BRIEFING #1: SOUTH AFRICA

U.S. ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIONS, 1985-1986

Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986

Both Houses of Congress have overwhelmingly rejected President Reagan's advice and voted significant sanctions against South Africa, the Senate by 84-14 in August and the House by 308-77 in September. The passage of this landmark legislation caps two years of debate on Capitol Hill and puts an end to the Administration's failed policy of "constructive engagement" and his sidetracking of the 1985 anti-apartheid legislation with the issuance of a weak Executive Order.

The 1986 measure bans new investments in South Africa and the export to South Africa of petroleum products, weapons and computers used by agencies that enforce apartheid; prohibits the importation of such African exports as uranium, coal, textiles, steel and agricultural products; and cuts off landing rights for South African airlines.

The 1986 Congressional anti-apartheid legislation is a political milestone which represents strong bi-partisan support. The measure was passed by the Republican-controlled Senate and approved by 90 Republicans in the House, a sign that the Administration is out of step with both public and Congressional opinion. A two-thirds vote is needed in each chamber to override a Presidential veto. Public pressure to override such a veto, should it occur, is essential so that the U.S. is no longer perceived as the ally and supporter of the racist Botha regime. Action against apartheid has become both a central foreign policy and a domestic civil rights issue for both parties, an issue that will not go away.

We have included the remarks of Senator John Kerry (D-MA), an eloquent advocate of this legislation in Appendix B.

The growing anti-apartheid movement, directed at persuading American corporation to shed their South African operations, has gained strength and credibility, and has moved from university campuses, religious institutions and state and municipal legislatures to corporate boardrooms.
Economic Pressures on South African-Related Corporations

Divestment is the act of selling shares of stocks in South African-related companies. Disinvestment is the pulling out from South Africa of companies which have closed or sold their South African operations. During 1986 anti-apartheid activism increased and became more effective resulting in far more divestment and disinvestment action. Divestiture measures have been approved by 19 states and 65 municipalities.

The political momentum for divestment at the state level is best reflected by California's passage this August of legislation requiring the divestment over the next four years of more than $8.3 billion of investments in state pension funds. In its scope and amount, this measure dwarfs previous efforts to exert economic pressure on the multi-national corporations to improve conditions in South Africa. The bill was supported by conservative Republican Governor George Deukmejian, who in July still opposed the bill.

Selective purchasing laws, already passed by thirty cities, represent a new strategy which curtails awards of contracts to corporations operating in South Africa. Los Angeles, which passed its ordinance in July, estimated that this act would affect more than $100 million in contracts yearly. The Fluor Corporation, for instance, has lost a $2.5 million contract with the city because of its South African involvement.

The latest concern is that the rising number of pension funds selling off shares in South Africa-related companies will drive down stock prices. A top analyst at the United States Trust Company in Boston feels "you can make a case for staying away from South African-related stock issues. The fact that we are in the midst of a rising tide of divestment has got to be a negative for the price of those stocks."

Escalating violence and a declining South African economy continue to make business in that country less profitable and less desirable. Since 1984, some 55 American companies have disinvested or sold their South African operations. At least 18 American companies have pulled out of South Africa during 1986, and many of the remaining 250 are re-examining their options.

The Coca-Cola company, one of the largest American employers in South Africa, is the most recent company to pull out, forthrightly, stating that its disinvestment expresses its opposition to apartheid. Its departure is planned to create significant multi-racial equity participation, improving the prospects of black South Africans. Other South African-linked companies are closely monitoring Coca-Cola's approach which may set a precedent for socially responsible corporate behavior.

WHAT UAHC HAS BEEN DOING

Resolution on South Africa

At its 1985 Biennial in Los Angeles, the Union adopted a landmark resolution on South Africa (see Appendix A). Provisions include the banning of new business investments and bank loans in South Africa and of all sales of U.S. and Canadian equipment usable for military and police purposes to the South African government. It calls upon the U.S. and Canadian governments to reduce diplomatic recognition of South Africa and, if substantial progress toward the abolition of apartheid does not occur within a year (by November 1986), further calls on the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament to mandate disinvestment on the U.S. and
Canadian firms from South African and to institute a total trade embargo between the U.S. and Canada and South Africa. Finally, it urges UAHC congregations and the CCAR and HUC-JIR to disinvest from corporations doing business in South Africa.

With the passage of this resolution, the UAHC took the strongest position against apartheid of any of the major Jewish organizations. It has since been using its influence within umbrella organizations (NJCRAC, The Synagogue Council, etc.) to enlist the larger Jewish community to join it in playing an effective, visible role in the struggle against apartheid.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, addressing UAHC's 1985 Biennial, declared: "Apartheid is a first cousin to the Nuremburg laws...Racism cannot be countenanced in this world of ours, for any reason whatsoever, and never by Jews."

**UAHC President**

This August, Rabbi Schindler joined with major religious, civil rights, union and other organizations in a public statement addressed to the U.S. Senate, asking its adoption of comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa. This message, sponsored by the American Committee on Africa and The Africa Fund, appeared in The Washington Post. Rabbi Schindler has also joined with 26 church leaders in a call to U.S. corporations targeted by the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility to leave South Africa by the end of 1986.

**Commission on Social Action**

Through the Religious Action Center in Washington, the UAHC and the CCAR have supported strong legislation in the Congress, testifying on the Hill, helping to mobilize coalitions and publishing Chai/Impact materials on the growing crisis in South Africa.

The Religious Action Center is sponsoring The Prisoner of Apartheid Project modeled on The Prisoner of Conscience campaign for Soviet Jewry. The Project will provide moral and material support for South African political prisoners and their families. This project, adopted by the entire "Free South Africa Movement" calls on congregations, organizations and individuals to adopt a prisoner and lobby for his/her release. Supporters will write regularly to their adopted political prisoners and families and widely publicize their efforts to bring national and international pressure on their behalf.

The Commission on Social Action is preparing ENDING APARTHEID: A MANUAL FOR INDIVIDUAL AND CONGREGATIONAL ACTION, co-authored by Dr. Rita Kaunitz and Rabbi David Saperstein. This comprehensive guide for organizing and programming social action against apartheid in the synagogue will be issued this Fall.

**Interreligious Affairs**

Interreligious Affairs maintains close liaison with religious organizations which seek to enlist their congregations in the fight against apartheid, in particular, the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) and Clergy and Laity Concerned (CCAR).

The ICCR has developed a number of anti-apartheid strategies which place economic pressure on corporate America to withdraw from South Africa stating that apartheid is offensive to a major tenet of religious faith: the innate indignity of human beings. These strategies include "No Buy" campaigns to boycott stores which sell South African merchandise, selected purchasing legislation, and targeting of 12 corporations and banks with substantial involvement in South Africa. Corporations and banks targeted by ICCR have received letters from key religious leaders, followed by a massive postcard mailing.
UAHC's Department of Interreligious Affairs co-sponsored an Interreligious Consultation on South Africa with the ICCR which convened the meeting, "Economic Pressure Strategies to End Apartheid." Co-sponsors were the Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ Board for World Ministers, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. The U.S. Catholic Conference was represented on the Planning Committee.

This August, the Roman Catholic bishops in the U.S. for the first time endorsed economic sanctions against South Africa emphasizing that this issue is primarily a moral issue and only secondarily an economic issue. The Archdiocese of Baltimore, also disclosed it would divest its holdings in companies that do business in South Africa, the first such step by an American Roman Catholic Diocese.

CALC has invited UAHC congregations to join a new program to mobilize congregations across the U.S. to combat apartheid. As COVENANT CONGREGATIONS, they become part of a religious network which will receive packets containing materials for worship, education, action and service. Rabbi Gunter Hirshberg has prepared "a Jewish Perspective on Apartheid" for CALC's organizing packet.
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BACKGROUND:

In Jewish religious tradition, as well as in Jewish historical experience, racism is an ultimate evil. Our prophets and rabbis taught that all human beings are created in the image of God and have an equal claim to equity and justice. Throughout its history, the UAHC has spoken with vigor and clarity against racial segregation and discrimination in the United States and everywhere else in the world.

South Africa is the only country in the modern world which constitutionally establishes white supremacy and racial oppression. Accordingly, the apartheid regime poses a moral challenge to all who cherish liberty and decency. Apartheid is a system which affronts the most profound values of humanity and democracy and violates the teachings of our religion.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

1. Reaffirms its condemnation of apartheid.

2. Calls upon the government of South Africa to:
   A. Release immediately Nelson Mandela and all other prisoners because of their opposition to apartheid.
   B. Enter into negotiations aimed at eliminating apartheid with the bona fide representatives of the victims of apartheid.

3. Calls on the Canadian Parliament and (recognizing the need to strengthen the President's Executive Order implementing South African sanctions) the United States Congress to enact legislation which will do the following:
   A. Ban new business investment and bank loans in South Africa.
   B. Ban the importation into the United States and Canada of all krugerrands and other gold South African coins.
   C. Ban all sales of United States and Canadian equipment usable for military and police purposes, including sales of computers and computerized equipment to the South African Government.
   D. Ban all sales of nuclear material, equipment and technology and the transfer of nuclear know-how to South Africa; and
   E. Ban United States and Canadian contributions to South Africa through the International Monetary Fund.
APPENDIX A

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4. Calls upon the governments of the United States and Canada to reduce the level of diplomatic recognition of South Africa.

5. Further calls on the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament to enact the following legislation if substantial progress toward the abolition of apartheid does not occur within one year.

   A. Mandate disinvestment of United States and Canadian firms from South Africa, and

   B. Institute a total trade embargo between the United States, Canada and South Africa.

6. Directs the Board of Trustees in a manner it deems appropriate and responsible to boycott firms which engage in business in South Africa and which have not accepted the Sullivan Principles.

7. Directs the Board of Trustees to divest the UAHC of all investments in corporations doing business in South Africa, in accordance with the spirit of the 1971 resolution on corporate responsibility.

8. Urges organizations affiliated with the UAHC, as well as the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and congregations and their members to initiate a process of divestment in corporations doing business in South Africa in accordance with the spirit of the 1971 resolution on corporate responsibility.

9. Further recommends that UAHC congregations and their individual members cease the purchase of krugerrands and other South African gold coins as an immediate, direct, personal and symbolic protest against South Africa's racist and repressive regime.

10. Strongly affirms its fraternal support for the Southern African Union for Progressive Judaism, the Southern African Association of Progressive Rabbis, and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in:

    A. Their support for fundamental reform of South African life and institutions.

    B. Their condemnation of violence, and

    C. Their complete rejection of apartheid.