LEGISLATURES TAKE ON DIVESTMENT

by Gail Morlan
Research Associate

1980—a year of student protests, labor strikes, and sabotage in South Africa. Tens of thousands of students boycotted classes in the most significant student protests since the 1976 Soweto uprising. Meatpackers in Cape Town, auto workers in Port Elizabeth and municipal workers in Johannesburg went out on strike. On June 2, African National Congress cadres bombed two of South Africa's strategically vital SASOL (coal-from-oil) plants in the most sophisticated act of sabotage in South African history.

This increased resistance calls for support groups to double their efforts in the U.S.

Divesting public funds

A new development in anti-apartheid work is the initiative being taken by state and local legislators to prohibit the investment of public money in banks and corporations involved in South Africa. A Coordinating Committee for the Campaign for State and Local Legislative Action was recently formed to facilitate and give new impetus to this work. The members of this committee are the American Committee on Africa, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, TransAfrica, the Washington Office on Africa, and the American Friends Service Committee.

The concern over investment in South Africa is part of a new and broader interest in the use of public money including educational funds, trust funds and pension funds. People are beginning to ask, "Why should state employees' pension funds be invested in South Africa rather than in the state where the money is earned?"

Bills of differing strength which discourage or forbid financial links to South Africa have passed the legislatures of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Nebraska. In 1980, the Massachusetts legislature required the divestment of state pension funds from banks which make loans to the racist government, and from corporations which employ more than 500 workers in South Africa or have investments of $10 million or more in South Africa.

Cities involved in the same campaign have included Gary, Indiana; Berkeley, Cotati and Davis, California; Madison, Wisconsin; Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Hartford, Connecticut.

New constituency reached

For workers in the bank campaign and other anti-apartheid actions, this new interest in the use of public money presents the opportunity of reaching a whole new constituency, of supplying that constituency with information about South Africa and documenting the ways in which U.S. economic involvement supplies much needed capital and technology to the South African regime.

Although different strategies have been followed, the interest in legislative action on South Africa has brought together coalitions which include trade unions, churches, black organizations, students and other progressive groups and individuals. In most cases, a combination of the commitment of one or more legislators, backed by these new coalitions has been necessary for success.

Action guide prepared

Over the next several months, the Coordinating Committee is preparing materials and building contacts. A Legislative Advisory Panel is in forma-

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Tozamile Botha Interviewed

Tozamile Botha is the impressive leader of the strike against the Ford Motor Company in South Africa at the end of last year. ACOA associate director Paul Irish met with Botha in July during a brief stay in Lesotho, that small, mountainous, black African country bordered on all sides by racist South Africa. Last spring Botha was forced to go into exile in Lesotho because of his pivotal role in the strike and in the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (Pebco).

During several fruitful hours of conversation, Botha discussed the role of Pebco in organizing against rent increases, for more teachers and other improvements in the black “townships”; and Pebco’s role in joining all people of color (Africans, “Coloureds” and Indians). He also talked about the failure of the Sullivan Principles (corporate code of conduct) in the apartheid setting, and the work done in the U.S. to support the liberation struggle in South Africa. The following are excerpts from Botha’s comments on the role of trade unions in representing black South African workers:

“I regard trade unions as the sole body representative of the workers in the South Africa situation. [But] they must fully address themselves to the problems of the workers inside and outside work. I firmly believe the problem of the worker does not end at the workplace [and] it is the employer that creates the problem. . . For instance, if the worker is underpaid at work—that problem does not end at the workplace. He is unable to pay his rent and as such he is evicted from his house. . . his child loses school because he can’t afford to pay school fees and [for] books and [the] school uniform. This is not only the problem of the worker now, it becomes the problem of the community. . .

“The trade union has got to put pressure on companies and also address itself fully to the political problems of the workers. Because the very existence of a trade union in the workplace is a political one. The mere fact that . . . no trade union can register with more than one racial group. . . that black trade unions in order to go on strike have got to apply for permission from the Manpower Authorization Body—[those are] political reasons.”

Field Report: ZIMBABWE RECONSTRUCTS

by Paul Irish
Associate Director

A remarkable atmosphere of peace and calm has settled over Zimbabwe just three months after independence. It would be inconceivable for a nation emerging from over a decade of bitter war not to face difficult problems. But after visiting many parts of the country for two weeks in July, I find the reporting in the U.S. suggesting a country “slipping back to civil war” to be exaggerated and seriously misleading.

For the 70 percent of the people who live in the rural areas, the victory of Robert Mugabe’s ZANU(PF) has made the most noticeable difference. I visited one of the former “protected villages,” an unsanitary location in the Chiweshe reserve, where 3,000 people had been herded by Rhodesian soldiers to deny support for “the boys” fighting for independence. No longer do the hated wire fences encircle the village, the curfew is abolished, and people are returning to replant their fields with vegetables, cotton, even tobacco, without fear of detention or harassment. They reopened a nearby school that was closed during the war and hailed the announcement of the Minister of Education, Dixingai Mutumbuka, that tuition and books for primary education would be free as of September. They were already constructing a new classroom themselves.

“They destroyed everything”

The problems of reconstruction faced by the new government are staggering and the level of international aid has been disappointingly low. “They destroyed everything and called it peace” was how a Catholic priest described the actions of the Rhodesian... (continued on p. 3)

Film Review

by Gail Moran

ABAPHUCIWE — A new documentary about population removal and labor control in South Africa. 40 minutes, color. $600 purchase price. Produced by Gavin Young, 1980.

Abaphuciwe is Zulu for “Those who have had everything taken away from them by force.” The title is apt because the film demonstrates that apartheid is not merely segregation and discrimination. Apartheid is a rationalized system which aims to “take everything away,” creating a powerless labor force that will be reduced to accepting work at any wage. Again and again, in different parts of the country, people repeat versions of the same story: “We were poor before but never this poor.” The new poverty is created by the removal of people from cities and workable subsistence farms to “homelands” which cannot support them, where they are housed in tin shacks and forced to accept contract labor to survive.

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security forces in the war-torn area along the Mozambique border near Chisumbanje. A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) landrover took me out to St. Peter’s mission located along the border. Virtually every building made of cement had been blown away by the Rhodesian forces.

An Oxfam doctor from Britain who came to the mission in April, was running a nearby clinic from a roofless, bombed-out building which a local committee was immediately beginning to patch. Scores of refugees drifted across the fluid border with Mozambique, receiving UNHCR food aid before they could plant their own crops. Three hours to the north, just outside Umtali, there were 500 students at a UNHCR transit center. Many of them, having left Zimbabwe at a tender age five or more years ago, literally did not know where their families were. They wished to continue their studies together as they had under the trees with ZANU in Mozambique.

White civil servants stay
At this stage, the suggestions of a white exodus are simply unfounded. More whites left from January to April 1979 under the previous regime than in the comparable period for 1980. In fact, with only six percent of the white civil servants departing there is real difficulty in opening up top places for the thousands of highly qualified black Zimbabweans. The government is faced with something of a dilemma: each white who departs contributes to a drain of the country’s foreign exchange, since the Lancaster constitution guarantees pensions paid overseas.

The new Zimbabwe government is not satisfied either with the pace of creating the new national army. There are inherent problems as over 40,000

The second concerns the continuing theft of Namibian natural resources from the Namibian people, by multinational and South African corporations. In July, at a week-long hearing organized by the UN Council on Namibia, many international experts testified about the current massive despoliation of Namibian uranium, illegally mined and secretly transported to and refined in Europe and the U.S.

Witnesses revealed a network of British, French, U.S. and West German corporate and official interests involved in this operation, many of which also collaborate with South Africa’s whole dangerous nuclear program. Material presented at these hearings will be included in a forthcoming ACOA study which probes the impact of a growing U.S. corporate presence in Namibia.

The strange case of “Space Research”, our other work in progress, involves the sale of an estimated $50 million in long-range artillery shells to South Africa, from the company’s plant, which is conveniently straddled across the U.S.-Canadian border. Some of the more than 50,000 shells sold were shipped via SRC’s testing facilities in the British-ruled Caribbean island of Antigua, where vigilant dockworkers blew the whistle on the operation.

SRC also supplied technicians and advanced cannons, a version of which has now been unveiled as South Africa’s “own” G-5. Happy with the Space Research operation, South Africa eventually bought a 20 percent interest in the company!

Remarkably, deals this size escaped the eyes of all U.S. and Canadian officials for several years. Despite a recent U.S. grand jury investigation and the prosecution of SRC officials, there appears to have been a serious “cover-up” involving collusion with the operation inside the State Department, Pentagon and CIA. Further digging should help expose these links.
**Film (continued from p. 2)**

Equally dramatic is the film-makers’ depiction of the use of force. The strength of the South African military is shown. Homes are destroyed by bulldozers. Police with attack dogs terrorize the population.

However, there is another force in this film that gives it its greatest significance. The viewer sees the strength of the people of South Africa who have no illusions about what is being done to them. Whether it is the black woman in the textile factory whose job is to inspect 200 sweaters a day remarking ironically that she is not paid enough to buy a single sweater herself, or the man on the unemployment line speaking of their months of waiting for work, these people know the score. They are not taken in by the government’s “separate development” policies. And they stand in firm opposition to a small co-opted black middle class and to the “homeland leaders” who have agreed to work with the government. One of the film’s strengths is its inclusion of footage of the black middle class and “independence ceremonies” for Bophuthatswana, thereby giving a sense of the complex pressures on blacks to escape the hard struggle for genuine independence.

But two women at the large squatter camp of Crossroads articulate for the majority of blacks their growing understanding of the strength of community solidarity. They speak of sending a message to the world; they want the world to know what is going on. Their word for themselves and for their audience outside South Africa is simple: Resist! It is this strength one feels at the end of the film.

This strength makes the film a powerful resource to mobilize support for the struggle against the South African regime, a struggle that must be fought on many fronts.

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**CITIBANK MAKES NEW LOAN TO S.A.**

It has just been learned that Citibank has ended its moratorium on loans to the South African government by agreeing to participate in a $250 million loan. The loan is for housing and education for blacks, but obviously frees up funds for other purposes, including the police and military. George Houser has written to the president of Citibank, Walter Wriston, protesting the loan in the strongest terms, thereby launching ACOA’s campaign against the loan. Already the National Council of Churches has telegraphed eleven U.S. banks asking them not to participate.

**Books on diplomacy, political economy and the problems of underdevelopment are currently being purchased by The Africa Fund for a diplomatic library in Mozambique. The 200 books in Portuguese and English, and valued at $5,000, were especially requested by our Mozambican friends. On the other side of southern Africa, Namibian refugees in Angola have received $20,000 worth of antibiotics, also through The Africa Fund.**

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**CBS has signed a contract with Bob Arum of Top Rank Inc. to telecast the WBA heavyweight championship fight between black American Mike Weaver and white South African Gerrie Coetzee to be held in Bophuthatswana on October 25. Bophuthatswana is one of the South African Bantustans which the South Africans are calling independent countries.**

The fight will be a publicity bonanza for South Africa, to create a false picture that apartheid is ending and blacks are being given their own independent “homelands.” Such publicity is badly needed in the wake of the strikes and demonstrations by black students and workers which have swept the country.

In a letter to CBS President Thomas Wyman, ACOA director George Houser said “for CBS to choose this time to do image lifting for South Africa in order to make a profit is to show . . . disdain for the plight of millions of black South Africans who suffer under the present system.” ACOA will be joining with ACCESS (the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sports) and other groups to protest CBS’s decision to televise this fight.

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**Prime Minister Robert Mugabe:**

“... We remain non-aligned and we cherish dearly the right to self-determination, the right to independence which we have achieved after a long struggle which cost us so many lives. And so we feel that whatever aid is given us, must be given us in order to enable us to become masters of our own destiny. I hope we are understood.

“We wish to remain in amity and friendship with all those countries which have shown themselves as our friends and allies, but we treasure the friendship of the ordinary man in the street, the ordinary United States citizen, more than we treasure friendship at government and administrative levels, because that is more meaningful — the friendship at the top has no heart; the friendship at the base with the people has a heart and a soul.

“That is why we value the aid you gave us more than we value the millions that might have come by way of the food program the United States gave us through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Not that we are not grateful; grateful we indeed are, but it is the human element . . . that makes us find a greater forum of friendship and alliance that we value....

“I promise you that we for whom you raised so much aid, we for whom you have struggled, shall always reciprocate your hand of friendship with our hand of friendship... Long live our solidarity.”