



ACOA ACTION NEWS



Josh Nessen

Executive Director Jennifer Davis (center) delivering an opening statement at the ACOA sponsored press conference with the US Conference of Mayors. To her left, Mayor Raymond Flynn of Boston. To her right, Mayor Hernan Padilla of San Juan, president of the Conference.

MORE DIVESTMENT VICTORIES

August was a hot month, and some of the heat was directed against apartheid, with four cities taking action to divest from US companies operating in South Africa.

On August 3rd the trustees of the New York City Employee Retirement Fund unanimously adopted a divestment resolution which will affect over \$600 million worth of holdings in US corporations investing in South Africa. The resolution mandates immediate divestment from US companies who contract with the South African police, military or other key sectors of the government enforcing apartheid, and will eventually bar investment in all companies not seen to be working against apartheid.

ACOA worked closely with the Retirement Fund's most active trustees press-

ing the divestment proposal—City Council President Carol Bellamy and Victor Gotbaum, executive director of the largest city employee union, DC 37 AFSCME. ACOA also prepared documentation for and met with the members of the panel appointed by Mayor Edward Koch to study city policy toward South Africa. That panel concluded that the City should use its financial strength to challenge the "evil and unjust apartheid system." It recommended that a divestment program begin promptly, and that the city also develop a selective purchasing policy.

On August 6th the Boston City Council adopted a comprehensive divestment bill, introduced by Councilman Charles C. Yancey. This was signed into law by Mayor Raymond Flynn, who immediately

wrote to 100 mayors asking them to initiate their own city divestment. In September Mayor Flynn was instrumental in organizing a statement supporting divestment unanimously adopted by the mayors of major urban centers attending an Executive Council meeting of the US Conference of Mayors.

The statement was released at a press conference in New York sponsored by ACOA. Speaking out against the new wave of police killings in South Africa, Mayors Flynn, Koch and Hernan Padilla of San Juan, the President of the Conference of Mayors, all urged divestment action as a way of demonstrating active condemnation of apartheid. Major media, including the national wire services and *CBS Evening News*, covered the

continued page 2

ELECTIONS 84

The issue of US involvement in South Africa has received new prominence nationally in the past few months. One key element in this is the expanding national campaign for divestment, with legislation being debated in Congress and more than half the states. The Jackson presidential campaign dramatized the issue in completely new ways, as issues of major concern to black voters were placed on the agenda for national political debate and attention. At the same time activists have worked energetically at the grass-roots level, confronting candidates from both major parties with questions about their position on issues affecting US policy to South Africa and Namibia.

For the first time, references to South Africa by national political figures at the Democratic Party convention were frequent, and Vice-Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro has spoken out strongly on the issue in campaign speeches around the country. In Port-

land, Oregon on September 5th, speaking on the issue of war and peace, she told her audience:

"First, our longterm security will be denied as long as freedom is denied to people in other countries. Today black South Africans are demanding their rights and yesterday 29 of them died for their rights—but this Administration doesn't hear them . . . Fritz Mondale and I . . . will tell the South African government that if they want longterm friendly relations with the United States, then at last apartheid must end."

The 1984 Democratic National Platform records a commitment to "reverse the Reagan Administration's failed policy of constructive engagement and strongly and unequivocally oppose the apartheid regime." Specific policy set out includes enforcement of the arms embargo, a ban on all new loans to the South African government, and on all new investments and loans to the private sector, a ban on

the sale or transfer of sophisticated computers and nuclear technology, the withdrawal of landing rights for South African aircraft, and progressively increasing effective sanctions against South Africa unless it grants independence to Namibia and abolishes apartheid.

VICTORIES

continued from page 1

event. The press conference sparked feature articles on the issue of divestment on the front page of the *New York Times* and in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

August also saw divestment action in Newark, New Jersey and Gary, Indiana.

ACOA continued to testify through the summer for divestment legislation. Projects Director Dumisani Kumalo addressed hearings of the Newark City Council and testified in Trenton for a New Jersey divestment bill introduced by Assemblyman Willie Brown. That same day Executive Director Jennifer Davis was testifying in Philadelphia for divestment legislation proposed to the Pennsylvania legislature by Representative David Richardson.

Corporate lobbying against divestment has become more public in the past six months, and the South African government and right wing lobbies, like the American Legislative Exchange Council have also joined in mounting a vigorous counter-attack, including a glossy 10-page advertisement in *Fortune* magazine and flying legislators on expense-paid trips to South Africa.

In Albany this spring, a Ford Motor Company lobbyist was heard to boast that the New York divestment bill introduced by Assemblyman Herman Farrell Jr. was "dead" in the Ways and Means Committee. But the bill had support from the state Council of Churches, the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the largest union of state employees, CSEA Local 1000 AFSCME, and the state NAACP. ACOA organized a public statement by representatives of these and other organizations supporting the bill, and it was passed by the Committee with an overwhelming majority.

The impact of the campaign is clearly being felt inside South Africa. An August article in *The Financial Mail*, the country's leading business magazine, reported that "the divestment campaign is now a cutting edge of efforts by anti-apartheid activists to isolate South Africa," adding "to many people outside South Africa, and a good many within, it seems to be the idea whose time has come."

UN SPONSORS ACTION CONFERENCE

Anti-apartheid organizing in the United States and Canada was the focus of a well attended June conference organized by the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid. ACOA played an active role in workshops for students, trade unionists and groups seeking to develop state and city divestment campaigns.

Keynote presentations from SWAPO President Sam Nujoma, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Senator Edward Kennedy and Mayor Andrew Young all underscored the importance of the Conference theme—the strengthening of anti-apartheid organizing at a time when the US administration is accelerating support for the apartheid regime. Supporting President Nujoma's call for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa, Jesse Jackson said "Disenfranchisement such as exists on a mass scale in South Africa today justifies disinvestment . . . Don't adjust to apartheid," he told a cheering audience, "resist and rebel."

Emphasizing that "nothing has changed for the people who still bear the pain and oppression of apartheid," Senator Kennedy called for a ban on all new US bank loans to the South African government and urged that US companies "that violate United Nations Decree 1, which prohibits foreign

exploitation of Namibian minerals until Namibia attains independence, should be fined heavily and should have their other international trading licenses suspended."

A significant outcome of the conference was the call for a year-long program of action against apartheid, to begin with a protest day in solidarity with southern African political prisoners on October 11th, and culminate in co-ordinated weeks of actions in the US and Canada in 1985. The two week period from March 21, the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, through April 6, the anniversary of the execution of ANC freedom fighter Solomon Mahlangu, has already seen co-ordinated campus action for several years. The proposals for 1985 would broaden that action.

During the conference ACOA Student Co-ordinator Josh Nessen and student organizers from Canada, Oregon, Louisiana, California, Michigan, Iowa and many northeastern states shaped plans for coalition building for the 1985 actions.

ACOA Director Emeritus George M. Houser prepared a comprehensive 60 page summary of US-South African relationships for the conference which is available from the office.

CHALLENGING REPRESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Despite promises of a "new dispensation," the South African regime continues to systematically violate and deny all basic human rights. In the first eight months of this year, at least 572 people have been detained without trial, over 100 more than the total for the whole of 1983.

A wave of detentions preceded the elections for the "Coloured" and Indian chambers for the new tri-cameral Parliament. Leading opponents of the undemocratic, constitutional fraud were seized by police in an unsuccessful effort to cripple a country-wide boycott of the elections. ACOA responded immediately to the detention of over 30 Black leaders, including many from the United Democratic Front, a coalition of 600 organizations opposing the elections. Information received by ACOA directly from South Africa was channelled to numerous organizations to facilitate protest, and a press release was issued. Condemning the arrests, ACOA President William Booth underscored US culpability, saying, "The South African regime believes it can act with impunity because of the strong support being given it by the Reagan Administration."

In July ACOA drew attention to deteriorating conditions for detainees. An *Action Alert* called for protest of the installation of closed-circuit TV monitoring of detainees in the notorious John Vorster Square police station in Johannesburg. Scores of opponents of apartheid have been held there in solitary confinement, without charge or access to lawyers or family. Some, including trade union organizer Neil Aggett, have died as a result of torture within its walls. 24-hour TV surveillance means stripping



UPI/Bettman Archive

At least 60 people were killed and more than one thousand arrested in recent protests in South Africa. Human rights advocates inside the country put the death toll much higher.

detainees of the last shreds of their privacy, after hours of harsh interrogation and torture. Commented one ex-detainee at a press conference in Johannesburg: "A detainee's survival is dependent on how many stupid things he can do in the cell so that he can keep his sanity."

Other Actions

- In August, ACOA alerted concerned people and organizations to an important South African treason trial in which Roland Hunter, a former clerk for the Army Intelligence Office, is charged

with supplying stolen security documents to the ANC. These documents apparently contained concrete proof of South Africa's support for the Mozambican National Resistance Movement which has carried out acts of terror and destruction against the government and people of Mozambique. The South African government, hoping to prevent publication of this information, sought to hold the trial *in camera*. Unlike the British press, which gave the case considerable notice, the US press has ignored the trial.

continued page 4

SOUTH AFRICA VERSUS THE AFRICA FUND

ACOA's associate The Africa Fund has successfully defeated efforts to challenge its tax exemption by winning a suit filed by agents of the South African government in federal district court. Significantly, US District Court Judge Kevin Duffy also ordered the South African agents to pay The Africa Fund attorneys' fees, as a sanction for initiating what he termed an "obviously groundless action" which was "frivolous, a sham and intended only as harassment."

The suit was initiated by the US-Namibia (Southwest Africa) Trade and Cultural Council, based in Washington, a registered foreign agent funded by the

South African government's Administrator-General in Namibia. The suit against The Africa Fund was the third initiated by the Council in efforts to block support for Namibian refugees and harass the liberation movement of Namibia, SWAPO.

Commenting on the outcome, Africa Fund Executive Secretary Jennifer Davis said: "Judge Duffy's ruling will mean that the South African government, which created the problem of Namibian refugees initially, and then has harassed Americans helping those refugees, will now be forced to pay the costs incurred in defending ourselves against this harassment."

The Africa Fund vigorously defended the suit while continuing its humanitarian support for Namibian refugees. The case was argued for The Africa Fund by the

Center for Constitutional Rights.

Earlier this year, The Africa Fund sent a new shipment of trousers and women's underwear to Namibian refugees in Angola with UN support. The Fund is now shipping 10,706 reading textbooks which were secured by a Lutheran church in Moline, Illinois and requested by the SWAPO Secretary for Education, Nahas Angula. Angula wrote to The Africa Fund, "... these English books will greatly contribute to the communication skills of our learners, hence increasing international communication and hopefully international understanding and peace." The Fund will also be using proceeds raised at "Runs for Freedom" held at Stockton State and Swarthmore Colleges to purchase children's dictionaries requested by Angula for the refugees.



Projects Director Dumisani Kumalo keynoted a rally for divestment at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in September. The event received considerable press coverage. Kumalo was also interviewed on the local NBC affiliate.

BRIEFLY NOTED

- "In South Africa the struggle for trade union rights and the struggle for freedom are the same fight," says Victor Gotbaum, executive director of District Council 37, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in a preface to a new report on the black trade union movement in South Africa written by ACOA's Sandy Boyer. Titled **Black Workers Under Siege: The Repression of Black Trade Unions in South Africa**, the eight page study was jointly produced by ACOA's associate The Africa Fund and DC 37. It documents the growth and repression of the black trade unions which "pose a deadly threat to the apartheid system." Copies are available for \$.60 each and \$.30 each over twenty.

- Outrage by city employees over the use of South African canned pineapples in a shelter for homeless men has sparked the introduction of legislation to ban the purchase of all South African products by New York City. The pineapples were discovered by members of AFSCME Local 371. The bill that followed, introduced by City Councilmember Ruth Messinger and Council President Carol Bellamy, would also bar city deposits from banks lending to the South African government and establish preference in bidding for con-

tracts to corporations not aiding apartheid. ACOA mobilized many groups to support the bill, Intro 619, and Projects Director Dumisani Kumalo testified at hearings June 28.

- The largest national union of teachers is urging its members "to lobby their state legislatures for divestment of public monies in the Republic of South Africa." The National Education Association passed the divestment resolution at its annual convention in July. ACOA resourced the NEA's Massachusetts affiliate, which introduced the resolution.

- ACOA joined international efforts against the death sentence passed on Malawi's former Minister for Justice, Orton Chirwa, and his wife, lawyer Vera Chirwa. Supporters of the Chirwa family claim that they were abducted from exile in Zambia. The sentences were commuted in late June, but they are still being held in detention.

- Trustees of the City University of New York system voted unanimously in September to sell holdings in corporations aiding apartheid totalling about \$10 million. Students at Hunter College and ACOA Treasurer Tilden LeMelle, Provost at Hunter, were instrumental in achieving the decision.

REPRESSION

continued from page 3

- In June, ACOA protested the arrest of 37 SWAPO members by the South African police on the premises of a Roman Catholic seminary near Windhoek, Namibia. Charges were dropped after a month.

- In another June action, ACOA circulated detailed information about three ex-Robben Island political prisoners, who on release were shipped to sub-survival conditions in the bantustan of the Ciskei. Others suffering under similar conditions were "deported" to Bophuthatswana and Lebowa.

- ACOA is working with a group of medical professionals opposing plans for a meeting of the World Medical Association in South Africa in 1985. The AMA is backing plans for the meeting, despite the pleas of the nonracial South African National Medical and Dental Association to boycott the location in protest against segregation and discrimination in South African health.

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