1984 was the year novelist George Orwell chose for his imagined state to complete its control over every aspect of its people's daily lives.

In the real world, South Africa's rulers had planned to achieve the same ultimate power over the black population. They hoped to put the final pieces of the apartheid structure in place in 1984, by the institution of a new constitution and the forcible imposition of "peace treaties" on all independent neighboring states.

Yet it is hard to imagine a year when the South African authorities were less in control. The government faced total black rejection of the new constitution, revolt in many black townships, a massive worker stayaway and black student unrest. It responded with repression at home and an intensified quest for international support, especially in the US.

In that context, the success of ACOA's divestment campaign generated intense concern in the ranks of South Africa's white leadership. The Financial Mail, a business magazine in Johannesburg, described the campaign as "a cutting edge of efforts... to isolate South Africa."

ACOA Treasurer Tilden J. LeMelle (right) at a demonstration outside the South African Consulate on Park Avenue in New York, where he and five other ACOA officers, including Executive Director Jennifer Davis and Director Emeritus George M. Houser (left), were arrested for blocking the consulate doors.
Public Investment

The issue of public investment in corporations aiding apartheid spread rapidly to decision-makers in many major cities in the US in 1984. Action in New York, Washington, Boston and Newark, NJ put the total to be divested by states and cities at over $1 billion. ACOA sponsored a press conference where Mayor Raymond Flynn of Boston released a statement unanimously adopted by the US Conference of Mayors endorsing divestment action. ACOA worked closely with the major proponents of the divestment action in New York, City Council President Carol Bellamy and Victor Gotbaum, who heads the city employees union, DC 37 AFSCME. ACOA also testified for the Newark ordinance and helped successfully lobby Congress to confirm the District of Columbia ordinance.

ACOA worked with legislators in over twenty states where divestment legislation was introduced, providing information through the Public Investment Newsletter, testifying at public hearings in states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania and Minnesota, and aiding local coalitions promoting divestment from Rhode Island to Texas. In New York, a public statement organized by ACOA, which brought together representatives of the Catholic bishops, the Council of Churches, the NAACP and the public employees union, helped a divestment bill emerge from committee in Albany despite heavy corporate lobbying.

Elections

ACOA helped local activists raise the issue of US policy toward southern Africa during the election campaign. ACOA produced a 58-page analysis of US involvement with South Africa for a UN conference of several hundred activists, highlighted by the participation of Rev. Jesse Jackson and Senator Edward Kennedy. ACOA joined groups meeting with legislators and candidates in many states, including Iowa, Georgia and Alabama, and mobilized supporters to lobby for federal legislation prohibiting new investment in South Africa.

Students

Thousands of students, from Harvard to Kalamazoo, participated in “Weeks of Action” coordinated by ACOA in March and April, calling for university divestment, commemorating victims of apartheid and building support for the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia. Fall regional conferences, organized in collaboration with ACOA in Atlanta, Detroit and New Haven, and a tour of California campuses by our student coordinator, helped student activists map out plans for the new academic year.

Challenging US Policy

As the year drew to a close, the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Bishop Desmond Tutu brought welcome media attention to the issue of apartheid and US policy. ACOA President William Booth praised Tutu’s achievements before a gathering of several hundred people in New York where Tutu was honored and Booth was among the first arrested in demonstrations outside the South African Consulate in New York. As demonstrations spread from Washington across the country, ACOA helped activists focus on key issues, and provided background on US economic involvement and the Krugerrand for protesters.
ACOA's work for divestment featured prominently in several lengthy articles in 1984 from the front page of The New York Times to the business section of the Detroit Free Press. The Washington Post carried a front page article on the exposure of South African lobbyists and the story was also featured on television and in newspapers in Pittsburgh and New York. USA Today carried an editorial by Executive Director Jennifer Davis arguing the case for divestment and the Village Voice ran a feature by ACOA Research Director Stephanie Urdang on forced removals. ACOA responded daily to requests for information from the press, radio and television around the country.

Information on arrests in South Africa and Namibia, quickly circulated by ACOA, helped draw attention to continuing repression under apartheid. ACOA protested the detention of over 30 leaders of the United Democratic Front who opposed the new South African constitution. Action alerts called for protest against increased South African psychological abuse of political prisoners, the arrest of 38 SWAPO supporters outside Windhoek in Namibia and the deportation of former prisoners to sub-human conditions in the bantustans. Thousands of signatures were collected by ACOA in a petition drive for the release of Nelson Mandela and other South African political prisoners.

ACOA expanded its work with unions, keeping in touch with leaders of the black trade unions in South Africa, helping introduce them to labor leaders in the US, working with unions to pass divestment legislation, and working with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers to organize a public statement signed by 31 international officers of major trade unions protesting the arrest of South African trade unionists. ACOA wrote a well-received report on the black trade unions in South Africa, "Workers Under Siege," which was jointly published by ACOA's associate The Africa Fund and DC 37 AFSCME, with over 10,000 copies distributed.

From the University of Southern California to the University of Maine, ACOA responded to numerous requests for expert speakers at campus forums. ACOA provided testimony to United Nations committees on US violations of the arms embargo of South Africa, on the cultural boycott and on solidarity work for the people of Namibia. ACOA representatives appeared at labor forums including locals of the state and municipal employees union, AFSCME, the United Food & Commercial Workers Union and the National Education Association.
MEMBERSHIP & FUNDRAISING

ACOA receives no government, corporate or foundation support. ACOA depends primarily on the contributions of individuals who believe in our work for a free southern Africa. All supporters receive ACOA Action News, the annual report, information updates and appeals.

GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION

A complete, audited financial statement is produced each year by an independent accounting firm and is available on request. Reports are also produced for the federal government, state and nonprofit monitoring groups. A financial supplement for New York residents is also available from the NY Dept. of State, Charities Registration, Albany, NY 12231.

1984 FINANCIAL RESULTS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions $100,862</td>
<td>Projects $55,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects 4,077</td>
<td>Information/Education 34,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel/Honoraria 3,854</td>
<td>Membership/Fundraising 8,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest 2,812</td>
<td>General/Administration 7,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total $108,609</td>
<td>Total $106,545</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Results are preliminary, subject to audit, and do not reflect income/expense of the Special Reserve Fund for deferred compensation.

THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

FOUNDED IN 1953, THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA is devoted to supporting African people in their struggle for independence. ACOA projects inform and mobilize Americans to work for policies supporting African freedom.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
William H. Booth

Vice President
Elizabeth Landis

Treasurer
Tilden LeMelle

Secretary
Dorothy Hibbert

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Beila Abzug
James Baldwin
Carleton Goodlett
Donald S. Harrington
John L.S. Hallinan
M. William Howard
Sophia Yarnall Jacobs
John Marcum
Howard Metzenbaum
Frank Montero

Executive Director
Jennifer Davis

Paul Moore, Jr.
Paul O'Dwyer
Frederick O'Neal
Sidney Poitier
Charles Rangel
Cleveland Robinson
Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr.
William Scott
George Shepherd
Wyatt Tee Walker

Director Emeritus
George M. Houser