STUDENT ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT NEWSLETTER

April 1980
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Several years ago divestment was virtually the only visible movement on U.S. campuses. This is no longer so. Recently students have become very active on the issues of the draft and nuclear power, which have grabbed much of the media attention. Despite the inattention of the media to the divestment issue, the student anti-apartheid movement remains strong and on some campuses has never been more powerful.

In addition to activities on individual campuses, activists in the Northeast have been meeting regularly in preparation for a conference on April 12 in which the U.N. Special Committee Against Apartheid will take part. This is a strategy conference designed to explore the relation of anti-apartheid work to other campus struggles (against racism, nuclear power/weaponry, the draft, sexism) and will also involve a panel on the liberation struggle in southern Africa. A similar conference is being held at Western Michigan University which has been among the most active schools this year.

In contrast to the previous narrow concern with stock divestment as an end in itself, there is now an awareness in the movement that our activities are primarily means to support the liberation struggles of southern Africa. In light of this awareness, the overwhelming victory of ZANU in Zimbabwe has been quite encouraging to activists. Though their work has focused most directly on South Africa, widespread mobilization against apartheid on campuses, helped stall the lifting of U.S. sanctions against Rhodesia as well as limiting overt U.S. intervention in the region. Material aid drives and forums featuring the Patriotic Front were also important. As the struggle intensifies in Namibia and South Africa itself, activists will have to supporting liberation struggles even if the immediate focus is stock divestment. Especially given widespread anti-draft and anti-nuclear activity, liberation support activists will also have to link their work to other campus struggles. With the Cold War heating up and racism growing domestically, the need for unity has never been greater. As a look at recent campus activities shows, the groups that have taken a broad political approach to their work have tended to be most successful.
The Peoples Front for the Liberation of Southern Africa has consistently worked in support of liberation struggles. Earlier this year the Front raised $5300 for the liberation movements, and since then have had numerous educational forums and actions.

This semester was kicked off with a demonstration on January 26 when the trustees were on campus. Besides demanding divestment, the Front asked the Trustees to send a letter requesting a halt to the planned execution of ANC activist James Mange. This action was followed by a forum honoring Malcolm X that stressed the connections between struggles against racism in the United States and South Africa.

These events helped build for a sit-in on March 16 by 80 members and supporters of the Peoples Front. Alumni Trustee Oppit Webster (class of '79) and five professors joined the student demonstrators who remained overnight in the Firestone Library as planned, despite threats of disciplinary action. Peoples Front spokespersons said they had "no choice but to use unconventional methods" in view of Trustee obstinance on South Africa-related issues. Not only have the Trustees refused to discuss divestment, but they would not send a telegram calling for a halt to James Mange's planned execution. The demonstrators left the Library at 8:45am, and that morning a support demonstration of several hundred students took place.

The sit-in has set the stage for a student strike on April 4. On that day there will be alternative classes and several rallies, all in commemoration of Martin Luther King and in support of divestment. Already several hundred students have pledged not to attend regular classes April 4, and following the sit-in support continues to grow.
2) **Dartmouth College**

This campus has been a hot-bed of anti-apartheid activity in the past few months. During January and February alone, activists staged 6 pickets of corporate recruiters, including such friends of apartheid as Citibank, Morgan Guaranty and IBM. Each picket involved approximately 35 students, and was accompanied by massive distribution of leaflets on each company. Early in the semester, the recently-formed student government also came out in favor of divestment and a student poll showed that 80% of the campus was also behind the demand.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Upper Valley Committee for a Free Southern Africa has been its ability to link up to other campus struggles and groups. The committee is part of a larger coalition that has made 25 demands on the trustees, focusing on institutionalized racism and sexism as well as Dartmouth's links to the nuclear industry. Despite a snow-storm on February 23 40 Dartmouth students took part in a demonstration at the First National Bank of Boston, where their trustees were meeting. This demonstration also involved the anti-nuclear Clamshell Alliance and several community groups in Boston. It was followed by a larger action against First National, "the God-father of the New England nuclear industry", which was co-organized by Dartmouth activists, the Clamshell Alliance and the Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa. This action took place on March 27 and received substantial community support.
Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, Mich)

Last semester 12 activists were arrested while protesting their school's investment policy, and the struggle has intensified ever since. Most significantly, campus organizers have succeeded in mobilizing active community support for their demands.

At a January Trustee Board meeting, 50 WMU students staged a guerrilla theatre action highlighting U.S. corporate complicity in apartheid. A number of Black students entered the Trustees meeting-place bound in "chains" and surrounded by a circle of well-dressed white students, wearing signs denoting their corporate affiliation (IBM, GM, Citibank etc.). After a dramatic skit, the students then read a statement denouncing the Trustees refusal to divest apartheid-linked stocks. In February the struggle continued with a large demonstration outside a Trustee meeting that was addressed and endorsed by local trade unions and the NAACP.

The most recent event was a march commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21. The campus anti-draft coalition took part in this event as well as the local anti-nuclear group, the Valley Alliance. This march began on campus and then headed to the post office where a letter was sent to the State Legislature in support of a bill calling for divestment of state funds linked to South Africa. Already this bill has made it out of the House Civil Rights Committee, and is currently on the agenda for full consideration. One of the bill's strongest supporters has been U.S. Congressman Wolpe whose district covers Kalamazoo. During their march, activists thus paid a call on the Congressman's office and left him a letter of commendation.

All this activity is building greater pressure on the Trustees, and most importantly awareness in the community. The same day of the march, the only Black Trustee, Dr. Julius Franks called for withdrawal of all university funds in banks that lend to South Africa. In addition, the North Side Ministerial Alliance which has strong ties in the Black community came out in support of WMU's stock divestment.

Besides planning future actions, WMU activists are organizing a Mid-West student anti-apartheid conference on Saturday April 12. South African poet Dennis Brutus and Transafrica's Randall Robinson plan to attend and if you are interested in the conference call: Don Cooney at 616-383-0961 (701 Norton Drive Kalamazoo, Mich. 49001)
4) University of Tennessee (Knoxville)

"The University of Tennessee is the South Africa of American Academia", according to one U of T activist. But repression breeds resistance, and there's been a whole lot at this university. In Fall 1978, three anti-apartheid activists were arrested at a Trustee meeting and this helped spark the movement. Most recently 18 Black students were arrested by police in riot gear following a building takeover protesting Administration attempts to depoliticize the Black Cultural which has been the center of anti-apartheid and anti-racist struggles on campus. The takeover was sparked by the dismissal from the Cultural Center of Dennie Littlejohn, an important organizer, and a series of program cuts designed to hamper political activity. The occupation of the Black Cultural Center lasted five days, and was accompanied by support rallies of up to 500 students. Not only did these rallies mobilize campus support for the occupiers but they were forums of education on southern Africa, in particular Zimbabwe.

Following the occupation, the Administration appointed its own committee to run the cultural center but without much success. Activists have organized a boycott of the cultural center, and so far no one has crossed their picket line. In addition, there have been programs commemorating Malcolm X and supporting ZANU. On March 15 Ben Chavis also was featured on campus, and activists helped mobilize for the March 22 rally against the draft.

5) Indiana Central University

This university recently divested all its holdings in American corporations doing business in South Africa. Indiana Central thus becomes the eighth school to fully divest its apartheid-linked holdings joining: Antioch, Hampshire College, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, Michigan State University, Ohio University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Wisconsin. A LUTA CONTINUA....
6) Rutgers University (Newark, New Jersey)

Following intense student pressure, Rutgers University divested itself of seven out of 13 stock holdings linked to South Africa earlier this year. However, the university still has $12 million invested in firms that have investments there and activists continue to call and organize for full divestment. Throughout the semester petitions have been circulating for divestment and there have been several educational events. The first was in honor of Paul Robeson and stressed the links between racism at home and abroad. Following this there was a forum that featured a representative of the ANC and was attended by close to 200 people.

In addition, to on-campus work the Rutgers Committee has been very active in the New Jersey Black Student Alliance which has a network throughout the state of 20 schools. This alliance has held numerous forums on the relation of racism in the USA to corporate support of apartheid, and is planning a major demonstration on Friday April 18 in Newark. Another major school in the Alliance is Keene College where a Commemoration of Malcolm X drew 100 people and dealt with U.S.-South African ties.

7) Harvard University

On February 18 the Harvard Committee held a picket of recruiters from Citibank and later that month took part in an action at First National Bank of Boston, along with students from Dartmouth. Activists are also continuing with educational work and held a successful program on March 19 commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre.

8) Berea College (Berea, Kentucky)

In late January, the Berea Committee held a forum on southern Africa that attracted 250-300 students, out of a school population of 1300. In February the Tanzanian Ambassador to the US came to Berea to speak on southern Africa, as did Mike Morgan, a member of the South African Military Resisters Aid Fund. Activists are building for a rally against their Trustees in April and will also participate in an African Student Association conference dealing with the Organization of African Unity.
9) Georgetown University (Washington DC)

The Georgetown campus is the site of a branch of the Riggs Bank, one of the largest loaners to South Africa and a notorious red-liner of Washington's Black community. Early in the semester anti-apartheid activists had a joint film showing of "Last Grave At Dimbaza" and "Redlining Blues" that served to educate the campus about the links between oppression in this country and South Africa. This was followed by a well-attended talk by Dumisani Kumalo, an exiled Black South African journalist who is currently head of the National Campaign Against Bank Loans to South Africa. These events helped set the stage for a demonstration outside the Riggs Bank branch in late February.

10-11) Ithaca College and Cornell University (Ithaca, New York)

At Ithaca College have been building awareness on campus in preparation for a demonstration against their trustees later this year. The main event was a South Africa Awareness Week in February that featured films and lectures. The main forum dealt with the role of U.S. corporations in South Africa, and there was another focusing on Zimbabwe. Along with activists at Cornell University, the Ithaca College committee organized a panel which featured a representative of SWAPO who dealt with the struggle in Namibia, and Richard Knight (of ACOA) who discussed the liberation struggle being waged by Polisario in the Western Sahara. The event was attended by 150 students. At Cornell, the committee has been working in conjunction with campus anti-draft and nuclear groups, and had a film showing of "Nuclear File" which deals with U.S.-South African nuclear links.
12) University of Minnesota

Activists at this school have been involved in both campus and community anti-apartheid work. Along with the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (Minnpirg), they have been lobbying for a bill in the state legislature to take funds out of corporations and banks with ties to South Africa. On campus the committee organized a lecture by Donald Woods which attracted 400 students, and has been regularly screening "The Nuclear File". Anti-apartheid organizers have also helped with several anti-draft rallies of over 500 people, and started a local newsletter as part of their outreach effort in the surrounding community.

13) Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa

This Coalition has been extremely active this year, and acted as an important link between community and student anti-apartheid struggles. This past Fall the Coalition worked closely with Boston-area schools for the successful Cambridge Referendum that calls for an end to city investments linked to South Africa. More recently, the Coalition has worked with campus groups on demonstrations against the First National Bank of Boston and highlighted its redlining of Third World communities as well as its loans to South Africa. Another important area of work has been Zimbabwe. Coalition activists prepared a slideshow on Zimbabwe that has been shown on several campuses, among them Tufts, and in mid-February organized a successful benefit for the Patriotic Front. The Brandeis Committee has also been in contact with the Coalition, and on that campus there was a three-day teach-in on South Africa that sets the stage for a large rally that will greet the trustees in April. Over the next month the Coalition will be working with campus groups on a speaking tour of Dumisani Kumalo and a celebration of Zimbabwean Independence on April 17.