NORTHEAST STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS FORM REGIONAL COORDINATING GROUP:

SET ACTION DATES APRIL 6-20, 1983

-Wednesday April 6 National Armband Day
-Simultaneous Divestment Demonstrations Planned For Friday April 15
-Follow-up Regional Meeting Saturday April 30 at Amherst College (Amherst Mass.)

On Saturday March 12, a major advance was made in the anti-apartheid movement with the formation of a Northeast Regional Coordinating group. The occasion for this advance was an all-day conference organized by the American Committee on Africa at Amherst College which was attended by 50 student and community activists from Maine to southern New Jersey.

As a first step towards regional coordination, the 18 groups represented at the meeting decided to actively mobilize for the April 6 National Armband Day which marks the 4th anniversary of the hanging of Solomon Mahlangu, a young African National Congress freedom fighter. On that day activists will distribute armbands in their communities and engage in educational and protest action in solidarity with the struggle in southern Africa. (Groups can buy black cloth and cut it in strips to make the armbands which can then be attached using safety pins).

One specific focus of April 6 will be the campaign to save the ANC Six who are condemned to be hanged for participating in armed action against the apartheid state. (SEE THE INFORMATION SHEET ENCLOSED WITH MODEL LETTERS)

On that day groups will also organize "Fasts For Freedom" which can be used to raise money for Namibian refugees.

We encourage all student and community groups to plan for the April 6 Armband Day and to organize a fast in conjunction with it.

Funds that are raised could be sent to the Africa Fund (associated with ACOA) which will ensure that the money is used directly for the shipment of medical equipment to Namibian refugee camps. (Enclosed is a pamphlet outlining the Namibia project of the Africa Fund)

April 6 was seen as only the beginning of Two Weeks of Action running through April 20. Friday April 15 will be another key day during which simultaneous demonstrations for divestment are planned at Dartmouth College, Williams, Amherst, Columbia and Harvard.

Other groups should target April 15 as an action date and stress the protests being planned at these major schools.

In order to carry forward ongoing regional coordination, a meeting of the Northeast Regional group will be held on Saturday April 30 at Amherst College at Converse Hall in the Red Room from 12pm-6pm. Free housing will be provided on April 29 and 30th but you must notify us in advance. (Call Joshua Nessen #212-962-1210 immediately leave message if necessary).

The meeting will cover the following: 1)Reports from individual groups 2)Assessment of April actions 3)Formalize principles and structure of a Northeast coalition 4)Larger meeting in early October.

That same weekend at Hampshire College (1 mile from Amherst College) there will be a conference on alternative investments and those of you at the April 30th meeting will receive materials and if you spend the night attend sessions of the Hampshire conference.
In addition to discussing coordinated action, activists at the March 12 conference gave reports which indicated the intensity and variety of solidarity work taking place in the region.

Students from Williams College spoke of the recent hunger strike on their campus which received wide publicity and was the catalyst to calling the regional conference. On their campus a faculty as well as student anti-apartheid coalition is active and a series of education events, one featuring ACOA projects director Dumisani Kumalo, will build to a protest calling for divestment on April 15.

At Rutgers University in New Brunswick NJ students spearheaded by the African Student Congress held demonstrations on March 9 and 16th calling for divestment of all South Africa-linked stocks and the resolution of other long-standing grievances. On March 9 over 350 students confronted the University Vice-President and staged a sit-in on the main street through campus when he stated that the school would not divest. The March 16 protest also mobilized over 300 students who marched through campus to the Administration building demanding divestment. The crowd was addressed by Richard Harmon, chairperson of the African Student Congress, who outlined the long history of Administration stalling on the issue as well as by Joshua Nessen of ACOA who stressed the growing momentum for divestiture (notably the Massachusetts pension divestment bill) and the key role played by students.

In the Albany area student and community groups, including the National Black Independent Political Party and the Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, have combined to demonstrate against Chick Corea who recently performed in South Africa. The recently formed American-South African Peoples' Friendship Association has played an important role in mobilizing students at Syracuse Univ, Albany State Univ, Russell Sage Junior College, Sienna College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. One major focus of Albany-area groups is the emerging legislative effort for divestment in New York and on March 20 a commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre was held that will build for the April 6th mobilization.

In southern New Jersey, Stockton State College has been the site of a sustained and varied anti-apartheid effort. In February the Student Committee Against Apartheid organized a week of activities that featured films in classrooms, representatives of the ANC, and a showing the South African play "For Better Not For Worse". On March 8 to mark International Women's Day a "Salute To Winnie Mandela" was organized and to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre a poster contest was held. The Committee is also focusing on divestment and opposing the planned opening of a South African owned casino in Atlantic City.

In New York City, Columbia University will be the site of an April demonstration for divestment & a conference on Namibia, and the Black Student Communication Organizing Network (a city-wide coalition with a strong base at Medgar Evers College) is mobilizing for the April 6 Armband Day and has held numerous forums on southern Africa. Activists at the University of Maine, where total divestment of $3.1 million took place, are focusing on state legislative divestment. In the Amherst-area 5 schools are coordinating anti-apartheid activities that will include an April 15 protest and appearances by Theo Ben Gurirab, the UN representative of SWAPO. At Dartmouth College the trustees will be greeted by anti-apartheid demonstrations on April 15 and 18 which will follow an April 6th mobilization featuring Dennis Brutus.
Information On the Campaign to Save the ANC Six

Six young members of the African National Congress are currently on death row awaiting execution. All six were accused of high treason for participating in sabotage actions and attacks on police stations in which several policemen died. They were convicted on the basis of confessions extracted by torture.

In one trial Marcus Motaung, Jerry Mosololi, and Simon Mogoerane were found guilty and sentenced to death by Judge D.J. Curlewis who ignored the fact that all three had been tortured into confessing. During the trial of David Moise, Anthony Tsotsobe, and Johannes Shabanga there was also extensive testimony presented of pre-trial torture including beatings and electric shock treatments. The court dismissed this evidence and, relying on the defendants' coerced statements, found them guilty of complicity in several police station attacks and the 1980 sabotage of the SASOL oil-from-coal complex.

The six are currently awaiting the result of a final petition for clemency to the State President of South Africa. The ANC is gravely concerned that unless the international community exerts immediate pressure the death sentences will be confirmed.

Besides the issue of torture the fundamental political and legal point to make in your cables and solidarity work is that the six defendants should have been accorded Prisoner of War status under the Geneva Conventions which in 1977 were extended to cover:

"armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination."

Prisoners of War are immune from criminal prosecution and hence execution for acts of combat which would be crimes under municipal law.

WRITE LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO: Editor, The Sowetan
And to the Defendants' families:
1)Motaung 3679 Zone Three Diepkloof, P.O. Khotso, Johannesburg
2)Mosololi 1796 Dube, P.O. Dube, 1800, Johannesburg
3)Mogoerane 198 Botshabelo Str, Vosloorus, Boksburg
4)Moise 3527 Zone 13, Sebokeng Vereeniging
5)Tsotsobe 2085 Dube Village, Johannesburg 2000
6)Shabangu 1008 Bhuda Str, P.O. Mhluzi, Middleburg, Transvaal

CABLE IN PROTEST TO: His Excellency Marais Viljoen, State President "Presidensia", Bryntirion, Pretoria (S.A.)

National Armband Day--April 6 (Solomon Mahlangu Anniversary)

The purpose of the April 6 National Armband Day is to maximize support for the campaign to save the ANC Six and to generally mobilize against U.S. support of apartheid. We suggest that:

1)Groups obtain cloth and make either black or black/green/gold armbands (the ANC colors) before April 6.
2)On April 6 groups distribute the armbands in their community from centrally placed information tables throughout the day.
3)Press releases be prepared about the Armband Day indicating that nationwide people are wearing the armbands to show their support for those condemned to death in South Africa and opposition to U.S. links to apartheid. Arrange media interviews also.
4)Combine armband distribution with vigils, marches or other actions (a fast is one possibility). Mobilize letter-writing, prepare a model letter people can sign on April 6.

SEE BACK...
MODEL LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS CONCERNING THE ANC SIX

- On the bottom of each letter or telegram leave space for people to sign their names so that it becomes a form of petition that people can sign at your information tables on April 6 (and for other days you choose beyond April 6th).
- Along with articles about the Armband day in your school or local paper, get a copy of the model telegram to be printed along with the addresses people should send them.
- Announce a target number of signatories before and during April 6th and as nearly as possible keep a running count that can be announced at your tables and through the media. Have people write in the city or town they live in.
- Publicize the number of signatures you have collected after the mobilization, along with the follow-up article to April 6 you should plan to have in the school and local papers.
- Publicity should generally stress that this is a National Mobilization, and that on April 15 as well there will be simultaneous protests at major schools in the Northeast (Dartmouth, Williams, Amherst, Columbia, Harvard).

(critical) - Copies of the protest letter/telegram should be sent to: Editor, The Sowetan P.O. 6663, Johannesburg 2000

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Protest Letter To:

His Excellency Marais Viljoen, State President
"Presidensia", Bryntirion, Pretoria SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Sir,

We strongly protest the planned execution of Marcus Motaung, Jerry Mosololi, Simon Mogoerane, David Moise, Anthony Tsotsobe and Johannes Shabanga. We call on you to heed U.N. Security Council Resolution 525 which unanimously calls for commutation of the death sentences imposed on these six men. Under the Geneva Conventions these men are entitled to Prisoner of War status and hence are not subject to execution. Moreover, their "confessions" were extracted under torture which negates their legal validity and is contrary to basic standards of human decency. We are being joined by groups nationwide on April 6 protesting these executions. Please be assured of our seriousness and long-term commitment.

Sincerely Yours,

Name

Address

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Letter of Solidarity To the Families of the Six Condemned ANC Members.

Dear friends,

We write to express our solidarity with you and your courageous son. This April 6 is a National Armband Day in the United States in which people from all walks of life will join in protesting apartheid and calling for a halt to the planned execution of your son and his comrades. Rest assured that the American people will always be with you in your struggle, and that the Reagan Administration does not speak for us. Freedom will come.

In Solidarity,

Name

Address

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Make 6 copies of each signed letter and send them to the Six defendants' families at these addresses:

1) Motaung 3670 Zone Three Diepkloof, P.O. Khotso, Johannesburg (SA)
2) Mosololi 1796 Dube, P.O. Dube, 1800, Johannesburg (S. Africa)
3) Mogoerane 198 Botshabelo Street, Boksloors, Boksburg
4) Moise 3527 Zone 13, Sebokeng Vereening
5) Tsotsobe 2085 Dube Village, Johannesburg 2000
6) Shabangu 1008 Bhuda Str, P.O Mhluzi, Middleburg, Transvaal

Send one copy to: Editor, The Sowetan, P.O. 6663 Johannesburg 2000

American Committee on Africa
198 Bway NYC 10038
(212)962-1210