REPORT ON OCTOBER 11, 1985 NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID PROTEST DAY

In over 30 major cities and 100 campuses nationwide, thousands participated in the largest ever coordinated protest day against U.S. investment in South Africa. October 11 coincided with International Day for Southern African Political Prisoners, and groups combined divestment protests with petitioning and silent vigils for the release of South African and Namibian political prisoners.

The significance of the Protest Day—which was initiated by the American Committee on Africa and student groups—was fourfold:

1) The organizing for the day fostered unprecedented coordination between community based and campus groups.
2) Previously inactive parts of the country have been mobilized against U.S. investment in South Africa.
3) By having a successful Fall mobilization, the momentum of spring campus protests was maintained setting the basis for a solid year of pressure.
4) The anti-apartheid pressure forced total divestment actions at the University of Minnesota ($21 million) and University of Miami ($17 million). This makes it 30 schools that have either totally or partially divested since the April 1985 protests affecting $140 million. The trend increasingly is towards total divestment: Columbia University ($33 million on October 7), State University of New York ($11 million after 3 students were jailed for a week), Ohio State University ($10.8 million), Arizona State Univ ($3.1 million), Rutgers Univ ($7.5 million), University of Iowa ($2.5 million), Barnard College ($945,000), California State Univ/Northridge ($2.3 million), University of Massachusetts, Stonybrook Foundation/SUNY, and Iowa State Univ ($250,000).

NEW SITES OF ACTIVITY

In Honolulu three days of activity culminated in an October 11 rally of 300 people at the Prince Kuhio Federal Building organized by a coalition of community and student groups with the support of John Norris of the Hawaii Council of Churches. The Honolulu City Council had declared October 11 as Anti-Apartheid Day in the city.

In Arizona, a coalition including the state-wide AFL-CIO and student groups held a 200 person rally for state divestment action at the capitol in Phoenix, and a similar coalition protested in Tucson.

In Nashville 450 students marched from Tennessee State University (a Black school) to Fisk University, Maharey Medical Center and Vanderbilt University leading to a rally with community groups at the Legislative Plaza calling for state divestment.

A newly formed coalition in Oklahoma City, including the YMCA, the Urban League, and student groups organized vigils at noon in solidarity with political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia.

REMINDER: Friday-Sunday Nov 1-3 National Student Conference on South Africa and Namibia. Hunter College, 68 Str btwn Lexington and Park Aves in NYC. Opening night 7:30pm Nov 1. Workshops Nov 2. $10 registr includes housing. FOR INFO: 212-962-1210

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CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ACTIONS

At 6am on October 11, several hundred students began a blockade of the main administration building at Wesleyan University demanding total divestment of the school's South Africa linked stock. The police arrested 130 protesters that morning who then returned to encircle the building and observe the minute of silence in support of political prisoners.

Following a mass rally, 30 protesters at Stanford University sat in at the Bursar's office on October 11. Nine people were arrested and a Black student, Robbie Perkins, was badly beaten by the police. In response on October 15 the Black Student Union organized another sit-in at the Bursar's Office in which 33 people were arrested. Weekly divestment protests will continue this Fall.

On October 10, 10 University of Minnesota students were arrested and maced in the course of an occupation of the President's office. The next day as hundreds of students rallied outside, the trustees voted for total divestment of the university's $21 million in South Africa-linked stock. Students also participated in a community based rally in Minneapolis later that day.

On October 10 at UC/Berkeley several hundred students began a blockade of Sproul (renamed Biko) Hall and two persons were arrested inside the building. The blockade led into a rally October 11 of 2000 people and a massive march on University Hall which was surrounded for several hours. Several hundred students then protested at Bank of America in downtown Berkeley.

At the University of Illinois/Circle campus 250 students rallied and disrupted a trustee meeting on October 11, leading to arrest warrants being issued for five students. Two have been arrested while three are being harbored by friends.

NORTHEAST REGION

In New York City a broad coalition of student, trade union, and community groups held a rally of several thousand people which targeted CITIBANK headquarters and culminated in a march to the South African Consulate. The rally kicked off a citywide deposit withdrawal campaign from CITIBANK initiated by Columbia University students. The campaign demands that CITIBANK close its branches in South Africa and end all loans to that country, including trade-related and private sector loans. The spirited event was addressed by youth representatives of the ANC and SWAPO of Namibia, American Committee on Africa, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Reverend Chabuku of South Africa, District 65-UAW, Black Student Communications Organizing Network, Columbia Coalition for a Free Southern Africa and was marked by a high level of participation from City University campuses and the East Harlem community.

That same day the American Committee on Africa hosted a Municipal Divestment Conference in NYC and rallies occurred at Fordham University and Hunter College.

In Washington DC a citywide student coalition organized a rally of 400 opposite the White House in opposition to the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" with South Africa. The rally followed divestment protests at George Washington, American, Maryland and Georgetown where 200 protesters defied administration efforts to bar their demonstration from the main campus green.

In Baltimore a broadly based Anti-Apartheid Day Coalition organized a day-long series of activities against U.S. investment and in support of southern African political prisoners. After a prayer breakfast and a 1PM silent vigil there was a march from the Federal building that targeted W. Bell Company (a marketer of Krugerrands) and culminated in a City Hall rally addressed by the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Metro Council of the AFL-CIO, Catholic Archdiocese, ANC and SWAPO.
At Cornell University on October 10 50 students were arrested for participation in a sit-in and the protests continued on the 11th when the Trustees met on campus. At least two students have been arrested every day since school began.

In Philadelphia students at UPENN held a vigil from October 9-11 and then joined with Swarthmore, Temple, Bryn Mawr, and Haverford students for a community rally at City Hall sponsored by AFSCME, the Postal Workers of America, Congressman William Gray, Martin Luther King Coalition, and April Actions for Peace, Jobs & Justice.

In Poughkeepsie, New York students at Vassar College and community groups began with separate rallies including the IPM minute of silence for southern African political prisoners. There was then a joint march into the County Executive's office to protest the deposit of county funds in Barclays Bank—a major lender to South Africa.

Students from SUNY/Binghampton targeted NY State Senator Warren Anderson's office for a protest given his refusal to support New York state divestment.

At the University of Buffalo students rallied for divestment of the campus foundation's $8 million in South Africa linked stock, and at Syracuse University a march took place.

At Boston University students began an encampment on October 10 which was disrupted by a late night police raid. BU students then rallied at noon on the 11th and later joined students from Tufts, MIT, UMASS/Boston, Northeastern and Harvard for a protest at the downtown IBM office and a vigil targeting local police brutality. From October 10-11, Harvard students had held a 24-hour vigil and rally outside President Bok's office and on Oct 9 Tufts students succeeded in blockading CIA recruiters off campus.

On October 11-12 Dartmouth College hosted a Northern New England Coalition Conference of 300 student and community activists from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine which was kicked off by a large campus rally for divestment. At Yale University a noon rally of 400 outside the Administration Building on October 11 was followed by a prayer service at the Divinity School and a candlelight vigil with community groups on the Town Common. Brattleboro (VT) and Bethlehem (PA) were also sites of protests that were combined with political prisoner vigils.

SOUTHERN REGION

The organizing for the protest day also sparked significant efforts in the South. On the eve of an October 11 protest targeting University President Foote, the University of Miami fully divested its $17 million in South Africa linked stock. Miami-area students from Florida International University, Florida Atlantic Univ, Miami-Dade, Broward Community, and Florida Memorial Colleges then held activities on October 11 and political prisoner vigils and petitioning occurred at inner-city high schools. In Orlando (FL) a late afternoon rally that day called for divestment of city pension funds which was achieved in Gainesville in September.

A regional October 11th Coalition encompassing New Orleans, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio held a two day conference in Houston which fed into a community rally of over 1000 people. In New Orleans the Free South Africa Movement held a rally focused on barring South African goods from the port, and students at Xavier University also marked the protest day. Rallies also occurred in Austin and Dallas. Atlanta University, Georgia State University and Savannah State College were also sites for October 11 actions and a shantytown was erected at the University of Louisville as part of a divestment protest.

Other southern schools where divestment rallies occurred were the Universities of North Carolina, Virginia and Duke.

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MIDWESTERN REGION

The Cuyohoga County Commissioners and Cleveland City Hall declared October 11 as Anti-Apartheid Day, and a rally at the United Food and Commercial Workers Hall featured Warren Davis, regional director of the United Auto Workers, Mylion Waite, associate director of the Greater Cleveland Interchurch Council and Nomonde Ngubo, a co-founder of the South African National Union of Mineworkers.

On October 11 a week of activity climaxed with a march of several hundred students from Wayne State University to General Motors' Detroit headquarters and the Burroughs Corporation. That day in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan students protested the school's refusal to adhere to a state law mandating divestment by state educational institutions.

In Chicago Northwestern University students held a mock funeral procession and on the 11th a divestment protest also occurred at the University of Chicago. On October 12 student groups then joined with the Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa (CIDSA) and the Free South Africa Movement for a march of 600 people to the South African Consulate. In Urbana, Illinois, a campus march from the state University culminated in a town meeting and mock funeral procession.

The Madison (WI) City Council declared October 11 Anti-Apartheid Day and University of Wisconsin students marched on the state capitol—which they had occupied for several weeks in April—demanding passage of a state divestment bill. At the University of Wisconsin at Stephens Point all day teach-ins were held and Marquette University was also the site of pro-divestment activity.

In Missouri, all state university campuses held divestment protests on October 11 and in St Louis a community based rally occurred on October 12. At the University of North Iowa in Cedar Falls, 400 students encircled the Administration Building while at Buena Vista College several hundred protested for divestment. In Iowa City 200 people marched from a community rally to the state university, and elsewhere in the state protests occurred in Des Moines, Iowa State University, Mount Vernon, Grinnell, and Cornell Colleges.

In Denver a community rally marked October 11 and students organized teach-ins at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Denver. At the University of Kansas in Lawrence students erected a shantytown in the course of a protest for divestment.

WEST COAST

On October 11 divestment protests occurred at all University of California campuses with major actions at UCLA, Santa Cruz, San Diego and Berkeley. On that day there were also community based rallies in Los Angeles and San Diego and on October 12 a large Bay-area wide march from Oakland City Hall to a community park.

In both Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon trade unions played a leading role in October 11 protests which focused on the closing of ports to South African goods and state divestment action.

INTERNATIONAL

On October 11 in Montreal, Jeunes Contre Apartheid (Youth Against Apartheid) organized a rally of 250 people and sit-in at ALCAN—a leading Canadian mining company in South Africa. 23 people were arrested and the protest was front-page news.

That day in Stockholm, the Isolate South Africa Committee held an anti-apartheid rally addressed by Prime Minister Olof Palme, the Archbishop of Sweden, the Liberal Party head, the African National Congress, and SWAPO of Namibia. Following the rally there was a march past the American, British, and West German embassies where formal appeals were made for these countries to support sanctions against South Africa.