OUTLINE OF REPORT ON FEBRUARY 9 ANTI-APARTHEID MEETING

INTRODUCTION ............................................................ pg 1
- Next Conference Planning meeting on Sunday March 2
  Columbia Univ Earl Hall 116 Str. Broadway 11am-5pm

I General Discussion .................................................... 2-3

- Current State of Student Movement
- Objective and Subjective Difficulties

- Areas we need to further develop
  1) Our goals
  2) Education
  3) Communication networks
  4) Linkages with other campus movements
     (anti-racist, anti-nuclear, anti-draft struggles)

II Plans For April 4-6 Conference at Princeton University .......... 4-6

  1) General Character of Conference
     - Strategy Development is central focus
     - One of 3 Regional Conferences
     - Will invite delegation from UN Special Committee Against Apartheid

  2) Specific Organization of Conference
     - Evening Rally on Friday April 4
     - Workshops on situation in southern Africa (April 5 morning)
     - Strategy Workshops--organized in two parts (April 5 afternoon)
     - Cultural Event and Party (April 5 evening)
     - Concluding Session (Sunday April 6)

  3) Division of Tasks for organizing conference

CONTACT AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA IF PLAN TO ATTEND MARCH 2 MEETING
  212-962-1211 (ask for Josh Nessen or Paul Irish)
Dear Friends,

This past Saturday (February 9) a meeting of student anti-apartheid activists was held at the American Committee on Africa in New York City. The meeting was attended by activists from about 10 Northeast campuses, and consisted of two major parts.

In the first half of the meeting we attempted to analyze the current state of the movement and generally suggest directions that the movement should take. On the basis of this analysis, we then discussed in some detail a regional conference to be held April 4-6 at Princeton University.

The next planning meeting for the Conference will be on Sunday March 2 at Columbia University at Earl Hall, 116 Street Broadway in NYC. It will begin promptly at 11am and last till approximately 5pm. We hope your group will send a representative.

On Saturday March 1 at Columbia University there will be a Conference on U.S. Foreign Policy in Southern Africa which you might find useful to attend. It is being organized by the Institute of African Studies and will run all day from 9am to 5pm. Registration is at the Kellogg Conference Center (118 str. Amsterdam Ave.) and is $5. For more information call 212-280-4033.

I mention this U.S. Foreign Policy gathering, because since our planning meeting is beginning rather early on Sunday March 2 you might want to arrive on Saturday anyway. If you need a place to stay on Saturday night, call ACOA at 212-962-1211 and ask for Josh Nessen or Paul Irish. A sleeping bag will get you a free night’s rest.

In order to orient you to the next meeting here is a summary of the discussion we had on February 9, and the decisions that have been made regarding the April 4-6 Conference:

CONTINUED...
I General Discussion

At the outset of the meeting there were reports given by each campus as well as an overview by Josh Nessen of ACOA. Several campus groups emphasized that they were in a "holding stage", at which it was difficult to advance the level of student involvement and confrontation on campus. Others, notably from Amherst College, pointed to an actual decline in their movements and that there were seemingly "more issues than activists". Counter-balancing this has been the resurgence of activity at Dartmouth College, where there have already been six pickets of corporate recruiters this semester. In addition, the People's Front at Princeton still has an active core of 20 people and plans a series of events culminating in a student strike on April 4, commemorating Martin Luther King.

Even taking this "uneven development" into account, it was generally felt that there had been two objective changes since 1977/8 that had slowed the pace of student anti-apartheid work: 1) On the one hand, South Africa is not as visibly in the news as it was after Soweto and Steven Biko's murder. 2) There are now other movements on campus--focusing on nuclear power and the draft--that are drawing new students away from divestment work.

In addition, to these objective factors, two other (more subjective) problems within the movement were noted. First was the narrowness of (and confusion about) our goals. Many activists tend to define "divestment" as an end-in-itself, rather than seeing the process of mobilizing students for divestment as a means to support the liberation movements and to help build a strong movement for change in this country. Secondly, as a result of this narrowness, activists have grown frustrated over Trustee refusal to divest stocks and failed to broaden the scope of their activities.

While recognizing these difficulties there are several factors that suggest possible ways of moving forward. The first point made was that U.S. anti-apartheid activity has not been directly dependent on massive coverage of events in Africa (though it obviously has an effect). For example, in 1969 there was a sit-in at Princeton University for divestment when little attention was being paid to South Africa. What was crucial was the generally high level of political activity in the late Sixties.

When the student divestment movement took off in 1977-1978, there was little activism on campuses. However, we are now entering a general period of renewed campus activism, encompassing such issues as the draft, institutionalized racism, and nuclear power. This general climate of activism combined with the existing campus roots of the divestment movement make us less dependent on media coverage than we might otherwise be. In short, there are possibilities opening up, but they depend on developing at least four major aspects/areas of our organizing:

CONTINUED...
1) In terms of goals related to Southern Africa we need to broaden our scope. One way of doing this is by emphasizing the pro-liberation aspect of our anti-apartheid organizing. Fund-raising for the liberation movements and refugees is one way of doing this, and Princeton and Williams are places where this has been done (at Princeton $5300 was raised). In addition, doing some work on U.S. foreign policy and holding educational/cultural events dealing with Zimbabwe can also be important. A related area, is current efforts being made to halt the execution of ANC activists James Daniel Mange. Ask your trustees to send a letter to the South African Consul on this matter. (Call ACOA for info).

2) There has to be a renewed stress on education in the movement. Given rapid student turnover and the changing situation in Southern Africa, activists have found it essential to stress educational events at this time. Such education is valuable in itself, and also sets a basis for more direct confrontations with Trustees.

3) Communication within the movement is especially important at a time when the media is ignoring events in South Africa. As the enclosed summary shows, there is no shortage of militant activity on the part of South African Blacks. We need to keep each other informed about the current situation and then through leaflets, newspaper articles and forums spread this awareness on campus. Our task is to develop networks of communication (Southern Africa magazine is one, the student newsletter is another) that do not depend on the established media.

4) Since divestment is no longer the only (nor necessarily the most immediate student issue) it is important that we link up with other movements and issues on campus. In many ways divestment organizing has succeeded in catalyzing student activism, especially in places like Amherst, Mass. By its nature and history, anti-apartheid organizing can link issues such as institutionalized racism, the draft and nuclear power. Here are a few of the "organic links" and some suggestions on how to deepen them:

a) Institutionalized Racism
The same profit-based economic/political system that produces racism in this country also sustains apartheid in South Africa. In stressing this link, we need to be much more explicit that we are struggling against racism by calling for divestment. Obviously, the economics are crucial but in order to reach Black students, the anti-racist aspect of our work needs to be highlighted more than previously. The most important way to make this link, of course, is to participate in struggles against institutional racism on campus. Anti-apartheid activists at Harvard have played a particularly crucial role in fighting to retain a Black studies program. Not only is this a worthwhile struggle in itself, but it is only through joining with non-white students (on issues traditionally viewed as theirs alone) that the anti-apartheid movement will get greater non-white student participation. Of course, we will initially alienate some racist white students who do not want to make the connection with campus racism.

b) Nuclear Power (and Weaponry)
The ongoing two way nuclear trade with South Africa and the recent A-Bomb explosion make linking with the anti-nuke movement an imperative. Our organizing experience and knowledge of a key aspect of U.S. foreign policy can help the political development of the anti-nuke movement (which has been rather narrow). In turn the mass character of the anti-nuke movement will help spread knowledge of U.S.-South African
4) Linking with other movements (cont.)

a) The Draft

Current efforts to revive the draft have so far been raised with the call to "Protect Mideast oil sources". Correspondingly, the anti-draft movement has focused mostly on the danger of a Mideast intervention. However, the draft's revival is part of building up overall U.S. capacity for foreign intervention. One area where such intervention is most possible is southern Africa, especially given its economic/strategic importance.

Anti-apartheid activists need to introduce their perspective into anti-draft work which has attracted people very new to political organizing. Doing joint programs and co-sponsoring demonstrations are two ways of making connections. More basically, there has to be an intensive dialogue on campuses to clarify what the linkages between the draft's revival and the U.S. role in Southern Africa are. The spontaneous aversion to the draft has injected new energy into the campus political climate. There is a danger however that this energy will be focused narrowly on the draft itself, and detract from rather than complement anti-apartheid organizing.

II PLANS FOR APRIL 4-6 CONFERENCE AT PRINCETON

On the basis of our general discussion, we rather easily arrived at agreement on the overall character of the conference and then moved on to its specific organization.

1) General Character of Conference

We need to above all avoid the pitfalls of the last two conferences and gear its organization to the needs of the movement.

In that light this conference will focus on strategy and develop ideas for making the three major linkages discussed earlier (to struggles against institutionalized racism, nuclear power and the draft). At this time it would not be useful to stress basic education on southern Africa (What is apartheid?, The U.S. corporate role, etc). An up-date on recent developments is certainly needed, but this should be seen as mainly a working conference for organizers and not one primarily geared towards people who have not yet gotten involved.

The emphasis of the Conference will be on student anti-apartheid work, though an important aspect will be community and U.S. foreign policy organizing as well. Our goals are generally to develop strategic perspectives that will be of use to grass-roots anti-apartheid organizers, and through this Conference further the process of building unity among different campus movements.

The Conference is one of three regional gatherings being held as part of a several week period commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre and the execution of ANC activist Solomon Mahlangu (March 21 - April 6). At all three conferences (Princeton, Western Michigan Univ, and Seattle) delegations are being invited from the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.
CONFERENCE (cont.)

2) Specific Organization of Conference

a) On Friday April 4 the People's Front for the Liberation of Southern Africa has called for a student strike at Princeton University, and an alternative day of classes in commemoration of Martin Luther King (who died April 4).

At the end of this day an evening rally is planned that would deal with U.S. complicity in apartheid, as well as other issues such as domestic racism. The one confirmed speaker for this program is Judge William Booth, president of the American Committee on Africa, who will speak on apartheid.

It was agreed at our meeting that this evening rally will be the kick-off event of the Conference and that we would consult with the People's Front about additional speakers.

b) On Saturday morning (April 5) there will be a brief initial orientation session for Conference participants.

c) Immediately following this session will be the first set of workshops which are mainly educational in character and designed to update recent events in southern Africa.

There will be four workshops dealing with:

1) South Africa (including discussion of intl' anti-apartheid efforts)
2) Zimbabwe
3) Namibia
4) Methods and Successes of campus anti-apartheid organizing (will discuss movement strategically)

d) In the afternoon there will be four workshops--divided into two parts--that will be oriented towards developing concrete organizing strategies. The first part of these workshops will consist of discussion and information exchange; while the second part will involve the actual drafting of proposals and consideration of papers presented by participants. These workshops will deal with the following subjects:

1) Linking anti-apartheid work to struggles against domestic racism.
2) US-South African nuclear ties and forging links with anti-nuke mvt.
3) Connections between anti-apartheid and anti-draft work (including some discussion of current U.S. foreign policy)
4) Community anti-apartheid work
   a) Linking campus and community organizing
   b) How can student activists stay involved once they graduate?

In planning workshops for the conference we will try to contact organizers involved in these other related areas.

e) Early Saturday evening there will be a cultural event, perhaps the play "Survival". Generally it was felt that there has not been enough stress on culture in the movement. That night there will be a party (Get Down!)

CONTINUED.....
2) Specific Organization of Conference (cont.)

f) On Sunday (April 6) there will be a final session involving all participants at the Conference. This session will consist of several parts:

1) Reports from Workshops
2) An assessment of how the Conference went
3) A concluding address by a delegate from the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.

3) Division of Tasks

At the end of the meeting we divided up preliminary responsibilities for workshops and other tasks in the following way:

a) Princeton activists would look into housing and logistics

b) ACOA would contact people for workshops on recent events in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia.

c) Harvard/Radcliffe and Williams activists expressed interest in working on workshops dealing with institutionalized racism.

d) Activists from the Amherst area would put in some work on workshops dealing with anti-nuke and anti-draft movements. (Dartmouth is another group people felt might be interested in these workshops).

e) Gibb Surrette agreed to do a preliminary mock-up for a Conference poster

f) It was agreed that at the next meeting each attending group would bring $25 in seed-money for organizing the Conference.

All in all it was a very successful meeting, and I look forward to seeing you at the March 2 planning meeting at Columbia University. By then I should have another student anti-apartheid newsletter ready. Call ACOA if you plan to send a representative to the March 2 meeting. Good luck till then.

Yours in struggle and friendship,

Josh Nessen

The number at ACOA is 212-962-1211.