REPORT OF THE
FIRST ANNUAL MIDWEST CONFERENCE AGAINST APARTHEID

Held at Wayne State University (Detroit)
November 2-4, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

From November 2-4, 1984 a pivotal and highly successful Midwest Conference Against Apartheid was held in Detroit at Wayne State University. Close to 300 student, community and trade union activists from Kansas to Ohio were involved in the three day event which was initiated by the Wayne State Pan African Student Union working with a Detroit-based coalition and the American Committee on Africa.

The Detroit City Council gave its full support to the conference whose importance was underscored by the active participation of the African National Congress and SWAPO and key national and local anti-apartheid organizations. Among the prominent participants were: Mr. Shola Omoregie (Political Affairs Officer, Office of the UN Commissioner for Namibia)--Mr. Hinyangwa Asheke (Deputy UN Representative of SWAPO)--Mamazane Zule (Women's Section), Godfrey Sithole (Philadelphia Representative) and Professor Bernard Magubane (of the African National Congress)--Mr. Dumisani Kumalo (Projects Director) and Joshua Nessen (Student Coordinator of the American Committee on Africa)--David Scott (Legislative Liaison of Transafrica)--Erma Henderson (President), Barbara Rose-Collins (member) and Clyde Cleveland (member of the Detroit City Council)--Nelson Saunders (Michigan State Representative)--and Bill Roundtree (All People's Congress).

The conference also featured the dynamic anti-apartheid play, FOR BETTER NOT FOR WORSE, by noted South African playwright Selaelo Maredi who performed the play with fellow exile Seth Sibanda.

The conference was equally as notable for its deliberations and major decisions which have concretely raised the potential for effective coordinated action throughout the Midwest.

The major decisions were:

1) The formal establishment of "The Midwest Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa". The purposes of the coalition, its principles of unity and organizational structure are outlined on page 7 of this report. The principles of unity emphasize five general points: 1) Support for the Liberation Movements 2) Opposition to U.S. economic links to South Africa and Namibia 3) Opposition to all forms of U.S. governmental support of South Africa 4) Support of the sports, cultural and academic boycott of South Africa 5) Commitment to link anti-apartheid organizing to related struggles, particularly against domestic racism.

The coalition is open to all campus and community-based groups accepting the principles of unity. The organizers of the conference working with the American Committee on Africa were given the task of convening the next meeting of the newly established coalition. The meeting will be organized for December and likely be held in Detroit. All those interested in the Midwest Coalition can contact: Pan African Student Union (#313-869-8383 and 342-5678) or American Committee on Africa (212-962-1210, 198 Bway NYC 10038).

2) Endorsement of the Coordinated Weeks of National Anti-Apartheid Action (March 21-April 6, 1985). It will be the task of local groups and the Midwest Coalition to concretize plans for these weeks of action which are outlined on pp. 5-6 and were initiated at a June 1984 North American Anti-Apartheid Conference held in the UN.

3) The development and acceptance of workshop summaries and proposals that can usefully assist grass-roots organizing efforts.

There was a high degree of unity around the workshop proposals and all were accepted except for the "Resolution For Working Class Action Against U.S. Intervention/Aid to Apartheid" on p. 13 that was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting of the Midwest Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa.
GENERAL CONFERENCE STATEMENT

The Midwest Conference Against Apartheid expressed solidarity with and support for the legitimate and just struggles of the oppressed and exploited peoples of South Africa and Namibia against apartheid repression and colonial domination. This heroic struggle is being waged under the leadership of their liberation movements, the African National Congress (ANC) and SWAPO of Namibia.

The Conference strongly condemned the racist regime of South Africa for its ever increasing brutal repression of the South African majority, its continued illegal occupation of Namibia and its military aggression against the Frontline States and other states in southern Africa.

The Conference specifically:

1) Denounced the so-called new constitution in South Africa.

2) Condemned the U.S. "constructive engagement" policy pursued by the Reagan Administration with the apartheid regime.

3) Demanded an immediate end to the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa, and called for the immediate and unconditional implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (which was adopted in 1978).

4) Strongly condemned and rejected the attempts by the U.S. Administration and South Africa to link Namibia's independence to irrelevant and extraneous issues, in particular the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.

5) Called for the immediate release of Nelson Mandela and all South African and Namibian political prisoners.

6) Expressed its commitment to continued support for the peoples of South Africa and Namibia and their national liberation movements, the African National Congress and SWAPO.
WHEREAS The practice of apartheid is still prevalent in South Africa, preventing the harmonious co-habitation of its citizens, as well as threatening peace in surrounding regions, and

WHEREAS The Midwest Coalition Against Apartheid and the Pan-African Students Union of Wayne State University will co-sponsor a midwest regional conference against apartheid, November 2-4, 1984 at Wayne State University, and

WHEREAS The purpose of the conference is to educate people about the current escalating unrest in South Africa and the role of United States based multi-national corporations in South Africa and Namibia, and

WHEREAS The conference is expected to bring together people from all walks of life in an effort to assess the current situation and discuss the responsibility of Americans in bringing about the abolition of the apartheid regime in South Africa. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED That the Detroit City Council hereby supports the Midwest Conference Against Apartheid and the efforts of the Midwest Coalition Against Apartheid and the Pan-African Students Union of Wayne State University to call attention to this inhumane practice of segregation and discrimination.
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING FOR MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE DIVESTMENT ACTION

DATE AND TIME: Saturday November 17, Noon-4PM

PLACE: Wayne State University Student Center, Room 752.2

CONTACT: Pan African Student Union #313-869-8383 and 342-5678

PURPOSE: To begin to consolidate a statewide coalition to organize for passage of a state bill mandating divestment of all Michigan pension funds linked to South Africa through U.S. corporations and banks.

STRATEGY:
- Legislation has already been passed in Michigan that effects divestment of: a) Public educational funds linked to South Africa through U.S. corporations and banks. and b) Removal of State deposits in banks lending to South Africa.

- Despite strong legislative sponsors--and very strong student action--a bill affecting pension funds has stalled for lack of a systematic broad coalition effort as in Massachusetts pulling together not only mass but strategic support.

- In organizing for this meeting and in building the statewide MichDivest coalition priority must be put on assuring the active participation of the key public-employees unions and church groups. Needless to say all effort should be made to continue attracting mass student and community support.
COORDINATED WEEKS OF NATIONAL ANTI-APARTEIGHT ACTION
(March 21-April 6, 1985)

The American Committee on Africa calls upon individual organizations and coalitions to endorse and mobilize for the Spring 1985 coordinated anti-apartheid action outlined below. We are specifically asking you to:

1) Contact the American Committee on Africa to formally endorse the action weeks at: 198 Broadway NYC 10038 #212-962-1210

2) Distribute this action plan immediately to your contacts.

3) Work with the American Committee on Africa on a mutual contact mailing (for late Fall 1984 or early 1985) in which:
   a) Your spring mobilization information would be sent to anti-apartheid activists nationwide.
   b) Your organization would send information prepared by ACOA on the Weeks of Action to your contacts.

Background to Weeks of Action

From June 18-21, 1984 over two hundred activists from the United States and Canada participated in a North American Regional Conference held at the United Nations. At this conference it was unanimously agreed to mobilize for Coordinated Weeks of Action in Spring 1985.

The 1985 Weeks of Action are scheduled from Thursday March 21, the 25th anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, through April 6, the anniversary of the execution of ANC freedom fighter Solomon Mahlangu, and include April 4, the day set aside to commemorate the assassination of Martin Luther King.

The basic political principles underlying the Weeks of Action are:

1) Support of southern African liberation movements and the front-line states.

2) Opposition to all U.S. ties (military, nuclear, economic, cultural, sports, academic, diplomatic) to South Africa with an organizing emphasis on economic divestment and support for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa.

3) Linking the struggles against apartheid to organizing against racism in the United States.

4) Coordinating opposition to U.S. support of apartheid with mobilizations against other U.S. interventions—notably in Central America.

OVERALL PROPOSED PROGRAM OF ACTION (See page 2)
OVERALL PROPOSED PROGRAM OF ACTION

Thursday March 21: Groups hold local commemorations of the Sharpeville Massacre during which police killed 69 unarmed people protesting South African pass laws.

Sunday March 24: Anti-Apartheid activists join with Central America solidarity groups in marking the anniversary of the assassination of El Salvador's Archbishop Romero.

Saturday March 30: Groups hold programs to raise material aid for southern African refugees—for example through Runs For Freedom (for info contact ACOA 198 Bway NYC)

Thursday April 4, Anniversary of Martin Luther King's death: This will be a Day of Action in Washington DC involving:
1) Protest rally outside the South African embassy

Saturday April 6, Anniversary of execution of ANC's Solomon Mahlangu: This will be a National Armband Day against U.S. U.S. complicity with Apartheid and in solidarity with southern African political prisoners. Groups distribute black armbands in their community and highlight ongoing petitioning efforts for the release of political prisoners.

Day of local lobbying in city and state legislatures during the Weeks of Action for divestment legislation.
A list of pending bills with legislative schedules will be available from the American Comm. on Africa.

Anti-Apartheid Play: During the Weeks of Action the highly effective anti-apartheid play, FOR BETTER NOT FOR WORSE will be on tour. This two-person play written by black South African exile Selaelo Maredi has toured over 20 states, Europe and the Caribbean and played a dynamic role in raising awareness about apartheid as well as being a critical success.

Contact: American Committee on Africa immediately to schedule 198 Bway NYC 10038 #212-962-1210

See: Review of play on next page.
PROPOSAL WHICH CONSTITUTED THE MIDWEST COALITION FOR
THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

General Statement of Purpose

1) Increase the effectiveness of local actions through facilitating regular communication between local groups.
2) Heighten the impact of the anti-apartheid movement in our region through organizing joint events at which we can come together against particular targets or do actions in our own localities at the same time.
3) Provide through our meetings a regular forum where grass-roots anti-apartheid organizers can exchange strategies and material face to face.
4) Encourage by our example and concretely aid by our pooled resources the formation of sub-regional coalitions as well as regional coalitions in other parts of the country.
5) Consolidate the strongest possible united front to ensure that U.S. policy in southern Africa becomes a major factor in national politics.

Principles of Unity

1) Support for the Liberation Movements of Southern Africa and total opposition to the many faces of apartheid. In particular, a call for U.S. support for the immediate independence of Namibia. Linked to this support for the Front-Line States which are bearing the brunt of South African aggression—particularly Angola.
2) We demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. corporations from South Africa and Namibia and an end to all bank loans. Linked to this we call for the immediate divestment of university stocks and bank deposits linked to South Africa, and support the state and local legislative campaigns mandating divestment. Furthermore, we fully back the imposition of mandatory UN sanctions against South Africa, particularly an oil embargo.
3) We oppose all forms of U.S. Government support for South Africa in the military, nuclear, economic, diplomatic fields and condemn U.S. collaboration with South Africa's destabilization of neighboring countries.
4) We fully support the cultural and sports boycotts against South Africa and oppose all forms of academic cooperation with the regime.
5) We recognize that the anti-apartheid movement must support both in theory and practice related movements against injustice and inequality at home and abroad. Given the integral relation between U.S. support for apartheid and the racist character of American institutions, we will make the struggle against racism in this country an integral part of our anti-apartheid practice.

Structure of Coalition

1) The coalition is open to all student and community groups who accept the principles of unity. The general geographic boundaries would be from Nebraska and as far east as Ohio (with flexibility shown).
2) In the interests of efficient work and fairness to more geographically remote areas at most meetings groups should send no more than two representatives to meetings.
3) If voting is necessary, in the course of the meeting each community group and individual campus would have one vote. Decisions would be by simple majority vote.
4) There would be a minimum of 3 meetings of the coalition per calendar year to ensure continuity in the work and encourage new groups to join.
RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS

Whereas, the apartheid regime in southern Africa could not have developed into the industrial state that it is without the influx of western capital,

Whereas, the U.S. based multi-national corporations have over 6 billion dollars in direct investment and loans involving the apartheid regime,

Whereas, the U.S. government has actively assisted the apartheid regime economically, militarily, and diplomatically,

Whereas, five states, twelve cities, and over forty U.S. schools have divested a total of over 500 million dollars from U.S. corporations and banks involved in South Africa and Namibia,

Whereas, the cultural boycott of the apartheid state was created in an effort to further isolate the apartheid state from the international community,

Whereas, the United Nations Security Council has recently passed a resolution calling for the abolition of apartheid, therefore, making the apartheid regime a violation of international law,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Mid-West Conference Against Apartheid goes on record in support of the cultural boycott and all other forms of economic and military sanctions against the apartheid regime.
DIVESTITURE WORKSHOP

Resolution proposal:
(Phelps Dodge)

WHEREAS, the workers at Phelps Dodge Mining Corporation have been locked in a bitter strike for more than a year now, with Phelps Dodge employing the most vicious union busting tactics, and,

WHEREAS, Phelps Dodge owns two mines in South Africa, and has made more new investments in that country in recent years than any other U.S. firm, and,

WHEREAS, Black South African workers at the Phelps Dodge fluorspar mine earn less than 40¢ per hour working in the most dangerous deplorable conditions, and sleeping 12 to a room in migrant labor camps, and

WHEREAS, Phelps Dodge has also supported and invested in the racist regime through its ties to Manufacturers Hanover which includes on its Board of Directors Phelps Dodge Chairman George Munroe, and

WHEREAS, Manufacturers Hanover is the 2nd largest U.S. lender to South Africa, and

WHEREAS, Phelps Dodge Chairman George Munroe has also publicly campaigned against U.S. divestment in South Africa, and

WHEREAS, the labor movement and progressives here in the U.S. have an opportunity through the Phelps Dodge strike to link the fight against union busting and the big corporations here at home to the struggles of our Black sisters and brothers in South Africa by exposing how Phelps Dodge, Manufacturers Hanover, and others profit from racism and exploitation abroad, and,
WHEREAS, this is an opportunity to broaden and strengthen the support for the struggle against apartheid, and to draw more working people in the U.S. into that struggle,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this conference go on record supporting the Corporate Campaign of the United Steelworkers of America which will be aimed against the links between Phelps Dodge, Manufacturers Hanover, and the racist South African regime.
WORKSHOP: MASS STRUGGLE - STUDENTS AND WORKERS

Panelists: Ben Magubane, Joe Briggs (RWL), Tracy Jordan (NAAPR), Emily Phillips

Following presentations by panelists, the following represents a summation of the workshop specifying areas of agreement.

1. That this workshop supports the coordinated Weeks of Action proposals of the American Committee on Africa as contained in their flyer dated Fall 1984.

2. That this workshop support the Michigan State University/African Liberation Committee Petition to "Dissociate the McGoff name from the Festival Stage of the Wharton Center for the performing arts.

3. This workshop agrees that the solidarity that American workers give to South African workers should not be seen as an act of charity but as an affirmation of the unity of workers all over the world. To this end we support the launching of a campaign to raise the consciousness of the American worker to that reality.

4. This workshop urges this conference to actively organize for political strikes and labor boycotts to stop U.S. aid to or support for apartheid.

   Conference union members all organize within their unions and especially their locals, for the election of rank and file supporters of the South African liberation struggle.
This proposal suggests that the Midwestern Conference Against Apartheid advocate the following actions in garnering student support in the U.S. against the Apartheid regime:

1. Launch an educational and consciousness raising campaign working with existing student organizations and founding others to disperse accurate information via films, panels, presentations to American students about the oppression and enslavement of Black South Africans.

2. To stimulate action and political protest and mass movement against U.S. investment in perpetuating the racist South African regime.
RESOLUTION FOR WORKING CLASS ACTION AGAINST U.S.
INTERVENTION / AID TO APARTHEID

I. The Conference will actively organize for political strikes and labor boycotts to stop U.S. aid to support for Apartheid.

a) Conference union members will organize within their unions and especially their locals, for the election of rank and file strike committees to organize political strikes and labor boycotts including:
   i. demands and resolutions at union meetings
   ii. demands for political strikes
   iii. calls for political strikes in union literature that conference members might publish.

b) Union members should try to broaden this work to include as many locals and unions as possible. Dates for city, region, or nation-wide actions should be proposed.

c) The perspective for general strike action should not stop at strategically important locals (i.e., longshore locals), or stop any one local from acting alone.

d) All conference members and chapters will raise the call for political strikes and labor boycotts in demonstrations and rallies.

e) Specific efforts should be made to attract workers to all rallies and demonstrations of the coalition.

NOTE: This resolution was tabled for consideration at the next meeting of the Midwest Coalition For the Liberation of Southern Africa.
WOMEN UNDER APARtheid PROPOSAL

Close to 25 women and a few men attended this workshop. Presentations were made by Mamazane Xulu of the ANC women's section on the role of South African women in the struggle against the apartheid system, some of the organizations founded by women and the conditions that especially oppress South African women and children. Other presentations were done on the need of raising political consciousness in the U.S. on apartheid through education and the need for mass solidarity in the U.S. for our struggling brothers and sisters in South Africa.

Two areas of concern were raised in the workshop for discussion: education and mass action.

As for education -- due to the fact that the media in the U.S. lies and even ignores the momentous developments and struggle in South Africa and due to the fact that the majority of people in the U.S. do not control or have easy access to the media, we want to propose that letters be sent to major T.V. and radio networks like ABC, NBC, and CBS to protest the racist censorship of the struggle in South Africa. There was a special request that we especially reach out to senior citizens on their proposal. Proposal 2 - There is a need for more education within the educational system, especially among Black youth on South Africa - guest speakers, literature, films, video tapes and so forth are excellent creative resources for raising the political consciousness of the youth as to why South Africa should concern them. The ANC
is a primary resource of these materials: their address was
given to the workshop participants as a resource.

Proposal 3 - the ANC raised that they are in dire need of
materials in the refugee areas especially day care and medical
supplies and also clothing such as underwear for men
and women, shoes, socks, etc. are needed. All of these materials
should be forward to the ANC in New York. People who know other
people or organizations who have access to such materials should
forward the information to the ANC. This could be an excellent
project for students who want to do something concrete to
support the people of South Africa.

MASS ACTIONS:

Participants stressed the importance of linking up the
struggle for jobs, housing, food, education and against racism
with the struggle against apartheid in a massive, visible way.

Proposal 1 - Continuation of the cultural boycott against
artists and athletes who perform or visit South Africa.

Proposal 2 - Need to reach out to workers in the unions
on why plant shut-downs here, leaving thousands unemployed,
are the result of corporations seeking cheaper labor in
South Africa. Need to have labor resolutions passed and
labor sponsored demonstrations and meetings on South Africa.
Proposal to Conference on Media and Material Aid

In realization of the media's traditional neglect of Southern African affairs, the following suggestions were made for local organizations' more effective use of local print and electronic media.

- Since media seems to respond to track record, consistency, and personal contact, we recommend that local groups engage in efficient dispatch of periodic news statements mailed to an up to date press list. Whenever possible they should attach commentary from local officials who are supportive, local scholars who may carry in the press' eyes greater credibility. Accuracy must be assured by a more communicative relationship with the national anti-apartheid groups.

- For small local groups, a successful media campaign will be linked to the development of a cohesive coalition. Resource sharing will enable small groups to maximize their time and energy in their media approach. Local groups must share media contacts, and resources along with those of national anti-apartheid organizations. Coalition development will most importantly aid media strategy by producing compatibility in statements on current events which helps in the projection of unity and sincerity. A system of communication beginning with a list of organizations both local and national and contact names.

- Where confrontation and display are necessary for media coverage, the entire network local and national should know about the event and be able to publicize it in their respective realms. Again, such communication relies upon close and frequent contact and an efficient and responsive list of network people willing to cooperate.

- We recommend such a list be immediately developed by this conference.

The material aid workshop determined the most important aspect of this work to be the relationship between liberation movements, A.N.C. and S.W.A.P.O., and local and national organizations. Because of
the sensitive political situation of liberation movements, material aid projects must be consistent above all else, with policy set down by A.N.C. and S.W.A.P.O. offices.

- Financial aid is a form of material aid. Local groups should consider selling official t-shirts and publications of liberation movements, forwarding proceeds from these sales.

- Other materials should be collected and sent to S.W.A.P.O. and A.N.C. offices in the Frontline states. The goods can be delivered through organizations to be provided by S.W.A.P.O. and A.N.C. or mailed to official Stations (i.e. Angola, Zambia).

- Material aid has educational value and publicity value here in this country as well as the value of the goods themselves. Groups should exhaust these important aspects as well. We recommend annualized collection efforts and the organizational, neighborhood, town, or city adoption of S.W.A.P.O. / A.N.C. communities as brother communities, making as public as possible this relationship.

- All groups must carefully study, and we recommend the national groups provide updates on the Reagan anti-terrorist legislation which would make it illegal for Americans to support actively organizations and nations deemed terrorist by the Secretary of State.

Respectively submitted for resolution,

Workshop on Media and Material Aid

David Scott  

Brian Gibbons  

Mr. Asheke