For Immediate Release: March 6, 1973

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ATTACKS STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

In the last few days the South African Government has taken severe steps to end student opposition to apartheid. First it banned eight white student leaders, barring them from all participation in the multi-racial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). Then, on Friday, March 2, it took similar action against the Black South African Students Organization (SASO), banning all six executive members of the organization and two others, raiding the office and confiscating a great deal of material. It is reported in the London Sunday Times that two of the SASO leaders have also been placed under twelve-hour house arrest.

Banning is a punishment enforced by the white regime without any recourse to judicial processes such as indictment or trial. Under the terms of the five-year bans imposed on them, the 16 students:

- Are restricted to the magisterial district in which they live;
- Are prohibited from belonging to any organization;
- Are prohibited from attending or visiting any educational institution;
- Are forbidden to attend any gathering;
- Are prevented from publishing any writings;
- May not be quoted in written or verbal form, even after death; and
- May not communicate with other banned persons.

Breaking any of the terms of the ban is a serious crime, punishable by imprisonment. These measures demonstrate the police-state powers the white rulers of South Africa wield constantly to silence and crush anyone who tries to organize popular opposition to apartheid, the enforced bondage of the 80% black majority.

This week's actions are the culmination of a long period of conflict between the government and the students who have rejected apartheid education in South Africa as an essential part of the Government's plan for maintaining white supremacy. The State spends $319.00 a year educating each white child; only $28.00 a year is spent on each black...
student. Bantu Education, the special educational system designed for Africans, is a carefully constructed, unified system of education for servitude - different in structure, content, control, and financing from that provided for whites. Education for whites is free and compulsory; education for blacks is neither.

The Student Struggle

Black students do not accept this position of inferiority. In 1969 African university students from some of the "tribal colleges", reflecting the increasing awareness of the need for independent black organization, formed the South African Students' Organization (SASO), separate from the multi-racial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS).

In May 1972 the expulsion of a SASO member from his University after he had made a strong speech criticising Bantu Education at a graduation ceremony sparked off nation-wide student demonstrations. Thousands of black students were sent home from their universities which were closed down - and thousands of white students demonstrating in sympathy were met by police batons and dogs. The Government banned all student protest gatherings, and threatened to take further action if the students continued their protests. The intervening months have seen a series of skirmishes, including the continual harassment of SASO members (the national organizer, for instance, was arrested at his office and charged under the "pass laws" as an "idle and undesirable Bantu".)

NUSAS responded to Government threats with considerable courage, declaring 1973 "Freedom and Unity Year". It pledged to continue its active public defense of its rights to free association and speech even if the Government proceeded against it. The Government has reacted to continued student activity with the mailed fist. It has the support of the bulk of the white population in those actions taken in the name of "the security of the state" which are seen as essential to combat the rising tide of black demands for a greater share of South Africa's wealth and a greater say in South Africa's future.

This week's bannings follow a wave of strikes by Black workers over the past several months, culminating in the walk-outs by over 50,000 black workers in Durban February. Although strikes are illegal for African workers under apartheid laws, which have institutionalized white affluence on the back of black poverty, African workers by their display of unity won some concessions and seriously disturbed the white population's dream of perpetual control. Six SASO members were arrested and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act with inciting hostility between the races because they distributed leaflets urging Coloured and Indian workers to join the African workers in united action. Prime Minister Vorster, reacting violently to the new mood of active protest growing daily in South Africa sought to place respons-
ibility for the workers' actions at NUSAS' door, and threatened reprisals. It is clear in fact, that while students supported the workers' actions, they were not responsible for them. But the white regime, increasingly anxious over mounting opposition throughout the society, has seized this opportunity to try to destroy the student organizations while the white population is still nervously remembering the recent display of black power.

The mass banning of student leaders is designed to weaken and destroy the organizations while avoiding the international embarrassment of actually outlawing them. The ploy has been at least partially successful - while the international press did report the banning of the white NUSAS students, it has largely ignored the actions taken against SASO and the black students.

U.S. corporations which justify their continued presence in South Africa by constantly detecting a "weakening in apartheid", all those who have recently claimed to smell the winds of change blowing over the South African veld would do well to take heed of last week's events. Once again the South African regime has shown that it will meet any organization of opposition to apartheid with merciless suppression. It is not seeking to foster change or avoid confrontations - and the winds that blow may smell of blood before they smell of change.

The banning of student leaders must be protested and condemned. Their cause, and the broader cause of all who struggle to end apartheid in South Africa must be supported, and those who believe in that struggle here, in the United States, must work to end all forms of U.S. support for the white regime in South Africa.

Responses in the U.S.

Several organizations and individuals have already reacted to the news of the attacks on the students. Several church organizations have sent messages of support to the students. U.S. student organizations have been alerted, and efforts are being made to encourage the U.S. academic community to speak out in defense of the South African students.

An emergency fund has been set up to assist the students now under attack. Contributions for this purpose should be sent to United Ministries in Higher Education, Room 1527, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027 and earmarked for South African Students.
Banned: SASO

Steve Biko...to Kingwilliamstown
Seth Cooper...to Durban
Drake Koka (Workers' Education) ...to Johannesburg
James Mafuna...to Johannesburg
Jerry Modisane (President)...unknown
Strini Moodley (Publications Director)...to Durban
Harry Nengwekhulu (Permanent Organiser)...to Sibasa
Barney Pityana (General Secretary)...to Port Elizabeth

Banned: NUSAS

Neville Curtis (past President)
Paula Ensor (Vice-President)
Clive Keegan
Sheila Lapinsky (General Secretary)
Philippe le Roux (past Vice-President)
Paul Pretorius (President)
Dr. Richard Turner (Adviser)
Christopher Wood (former Transvaal Regional Director)

Cables and messages of support can be sent to:
SASO: 86 Beatrice St., Durban, S. A. Telegraphic address: SASORG, Durban.
NUSAS: 202 Film Center, 17 Janieson Street, Capetown, S.A. Telegraphic address: NATUSAS, Capetown.

Protests can be sent to: Ambassador Taswell, South African Embassy,
3051 Massachusetts Avenue, N. U., Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Helen Suzman, the sole representative in the all-white Parliament to oppose arbitrary bannings might be urged to continue her stand:
Helen Suzman, House of Parliament, Capetown, S. A.