U.S. Banks Target of Apartheid Critics
Groups Urge Boycott Against Those Loaning Funds to S. Africa

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American critics of apartheid are mounting an ambitious nationwide campaign against 47 banks that have made loans to South Africa. Campaign supporters are urged to withdraw checking, savings, stock, certificate, payroll, pension and welfare accounts, and deposit the funds in banks that do not make loans to South Africa. Campaign supporters said their ultimate objective was to persuade seven giant and 40 smaller community and regional banks to declare publicly that they would not lend money or guarantee loans to South Africa until it changed its racial policies.

Those who withdraw their accounts from the targeted banks are asked to send coupons to Clergy and Laity Concerned, an interfaith group of Catholics, Protestants and Jews, and the American Committee on Africa, the two New York-based groups that are the boycott's main sponsors.

A spokesman for the Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa said the boycott is being combined with other campaigns, including large scale divestment by students and employees of large corporations, and a concentrated effort to persuade giant and 40 smaller community and regional banks to declare publicly that they would not lend money or guarantee loans to South Africa until it changed its racial policies.

The withdrawal campaign comes at a time when South Africa is under pressure to withdraw its investments or to use its economic influence to undermine apartheid. The South African system of legalized racial separation which keeps all political, economic, social and military power in the hands of the 18 million whites has become increasingly dependent on international banks in Europe and the United States.

According to Anis Siefman, a Massachusetts professor who is co-authoring a book on the South African economy, the country's indebtedness to international banks as of early this year was $3.9 billion, of which $2.2 billion is to American banks.

President Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal said in a recent speech, "The withdrawal campaign comes at a time when South Africa is under pressure to withdraw its investments or to use its economic influence to undermine apartheid. The South African system of legalized racial separation which keeps all political, economic, social and military power in the hands of the 18 million whites has become increasingly dependent on international banks in Europe and the United States."

The committee also has the support of about 150 other sponsors, including congressmen, other legislators, civil rights, and community organizations and student groups.

About 10 years ago, the American Committee on Africa launched a similar bank boycott. It ended in 1979 when a consortium of 10 major American banks, including some on the present withdrawal list, terminated a $46 million revolving credit to South Africa.

The present campaign is being combined with other protests against South Africa. Companies that sell the Krugerrand, a South African gold coin, have been picketed. American companies that do business or invest in South Africa are under pressure to withdraw their investments or use their economic influence to undermine apartheid.

Sheldon Golub of the American Bankers Association, said in Washington, D.C., these are among America's largest banks. Their combined assets as of last December were $300.2 billion. Bank of America accounted for $72.9 billion of the total.

Among the 40 smaller institutions, two of them, Crocker National, and Wells Fargo banks, are headquartered in California. Already a number of labor unions, including the United Auto Workers, the Furriers Joint Council of New York, and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, and church groups have pledged their support.