

American Committee On Africa

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NEWS

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Recent stock sales by Universities Score Victories for Student Activists

New York, N.Y. March, 1981.....During the past several months at least six universities and colleges in the USA, from Harvard to Eastern Michigan to the University of California, have acted to divest well over \$80 million in stock and deposits in US corporations and banks doing business with racist South Africa. These actions come as the result of years of campus campaigning by groups of students seeking to cut US support for apartheid, South Africa's system of white minority rule.

A major target has been New York's Citibank subsidiary of Citicorp, involved in a recent syndicated loan of \$250 million to the South African government.

Since October, Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts has sold about \$5 million of Citicorp certificates of deposit and about \$46 million in intermediate and long-term notes. The decision to sell by the Harvard trustees follows several years of demonstrations and other pressures by Harvard activists, including a picket of a campus recruiting meeting by Citicorp representatives.

The action by Harvard came shortly on the heels of a decision by Colby College in Waterville, Maine to sell all its stock, worth approximately \$300,000 in Citicorp. Sale of the Citicorp stock was the major demand of campus organizers when 80 Colby students occupied the college president's office last spring. Colby also took action to divest holdings worth \$600,000 in Dresser Industries, for its South African involvement, and Englehard Minerals Corporation, a major dealer in South African minerals.

Recent Student Victories, cont...

At Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, trustees voted in November to sell \$2.5 million in shares of Manufacturers' Hanover Trust Corporation, which has participated in loans totalling over \$900 million to South Africa. Stock in Manufacturers' Hanover represented EMU's largest single holding, about 22% of the university's stock portfolio. Responding to student protests, the trustees adopted a policy of no further investments in banks doing business in South Africa.

Williams College, in western Massachusetts, where students engaged in a sit-in and hunger strike to support divestment, has also been the site of anti-South Africa moves. The college trustees voted in December to stop purchasing certificates of deposit in Citicorp and five other banks lending to South Africa: Morgan Guaranty Trust, The Bank of America, First National Bank of Seattle, Banker's Trust and Cleveland National Bank. At the same meeting, Williams trustees voted to sell the college's 14,000 shares in Newmont Mining Corporation, valued at \$700,000. Newmont is the largest US investor in Namibia, the territory illegally occupied by South Africa in defiance of the United Nations.

In January, 1981, trustees of Mt Holyoke College in Massachusetts voted to sell stock in First National Bank of Boston and General Motors. GM's South African subsidiary continues to sell vehicles to the South African police and military, and First National has been a major lender to South Africa. The trustee decisions followed demands by seventeen campus groups at Mt Holyoke to divest holdings aiding South Africa.

In California, the Associated Students of the University of California at Los Angeles transferred more than \$25 million in funds out of the Bank of America and Security Pacific Bank in July 1980 due to South African lending. As one UCLA student representative put it, "We perceive of this action as part of a statewide and ultimately worldwide campaign to break United States links with South Africa."

Student Victories, cont...

Since the growth of student actions following the major black student rebellion in South Africa in 1976, a number of colleges and university systems have responded to campus protest by taking action to sell all shares in corporations doing business in South Africa. These include the Universities of Massachusetts, Oregon and Wisconsin, Michigan State, Indiana Central and Ohio University, Antioch and Hampshire College. A dozen auxillary organizations of the University of California college and university system have divested, and many colleges and universities have sold portions of their portfolios relating to South Africa, including: Amherst, Boston University, Brandeis, Columbia, Smith, Tufts, the University of Michigan, Vassar and Yale.

"These actions will have a ripple effect in cutting off investments from academic sources the banks have come to take for granted. They should give any corporation considering a new association with South Africa pause", said Joshua Nessen, student coordinator for the American Committee on Africa. Founded in 1953 to support the struggle for African independence, the ACOA has provided background research and speakers to aid the network of campus activists pressing for divestment of South African-related stock.