

XI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this North American Regional Conference is to intensify action against apartheid. This paper does not seek to pre-empt the fullest discussion of the means by which participants can carry through this mandate, as they seek to draw the masses of the people of North America into supporting the just struggle of the people of South Africa and Namibia for freedom.

This paper has focused attention on some of the major lifelines through which the South African State and apartheid society draw strength and nourishment from the United States through both public and private connections and policies.

It has shown that the current constructive engagement policy of the Reagan Administration is providing unprecedented psychological and material support to the South African regime, enabling it to expand and intensify a three-pronged policy aimed at the long-term preservation of the apartheid State. South Africa's policy is characterized by escalating internal repression and dispossession of the black majority population, an aggressive military cross-border onslaught against neighbouring States, aimed at undercutting their independence and preventing the independence of Namibia, and a worldwide propaganda barrage which seeks to perpetuate the myth of change and thus reduce international pressure against apartheid.

In the United States, there are many indicators that millions of Americans reject this policy and have begun to seek direct ways of choking off aid to apartheid. These include the dramatic growth of the divestment movement, particularly at the state and city level, Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson's focus on South Africa as an issue in his campaign, the passage by Congress of legislation to curb Administration's ability to allow IMF loans to South Africa, the recent formation of Artists and Athletes against Apartheid, and the formation of the New York Labor Committee against apartheid.

These initiatives should be supported and expanded. They are aimed at critical connections, both material and psychological.

Arenas which participants may wish to focus on will certainly include the following:

1. *Economic links.* Ways must be found to strengthen the movement to cut off investment in and lending to South Africa. An area which has generated little attention, and deserves more, is that of trade between the United States and South Africa.
2. *Arms embargo, nuclear links and high tech exports.* Work in these arenas is becoming increasingly important and would provide the basis for new

coalitions with sections of the Nuclear Freeze, non-intervention and peace movement.

3. *Sport, culture, academic and scientific exchanges.* The campaigns to implement the sports and cultural boycott have been able to generate widespread support. There is currently a weakness in the ability of anti-apartheid activists to monitor and thus act on academic and scientific exchanges and this area deserves some special attention.

4. *The secret war and South African propaganda.* While news of Contra activities in Central America is now treated as newsworthy in the Western media, South Africa has been able to carry out a campaign of military aggression and general destabilization against the Front-line States behind a protective wall of silence. This wall must be smashed, the story told, and at the same time, a vigorous campaign should be launched to expose the propaganda about change in South Africa.

5. *Liberation movement support.* The right-wing in North America and the Reagan Administration consistently seek to discredit those engaged in the liberation struggle as terrorists. It is vital that energies be invested in providing a clear picture of the goals and nature of the liberation movement, and in creating direct connections between the liberation forces in South Africa and Namibia and North Americans by material aid campaigns, speaking tours and other forms of improved public relations work.