

4-1985

## CIDSa Update, No. 8

Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cjocidsa>



Part of the [African History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Custom Citation

Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa. "CIDSa Update, No. 8" (April 1985). Cheryl Johnson-Odim Collection, College Archives & Special Collections, Columbia College Chicago.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Cheryl Johnson-Odim Collection at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa (CIDSa) Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago.

APRIL '85 #8

# CIDSA UPDATE

Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa  
CIDSA P.O. BOX 578413 Chicago, Ill. 60657



## ILLINOIS DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT SWINGS INTO HIGH GEAR

New Bills Introduced in State Legislature,  
City Council

CIDSA Action Against South African  
Steel Imports: New Bill/New Strategy

CIDSA Anti-Apartheid State-wide Tour

Nelson Mandela's Reply to Apartheid...

South African Updates

The Schlemmer Report: Wrong Questions,  
Wrong Answers

(A look at the report they thought would slow down the divestment movement)

Also...

Who is CIDSA?

How to Join!

Our New Staff Person

Divestment Updates

Committee Reports

Anti-Apartheid Calendar

## The Next CIDSA Meeting

Future Meetings May 5<sup>th</sup> June 2<sup>nd</sup>  
and the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month

Sun., April 14<sup>th</sup>  
UE hall, 6pm  
37 S. Ashland  
Chicago

Table of Contents	
Steel Taskforce Report	page 3
City Taskforce Report	page 3
State Divestment Bills	page 3
State Wide Tour	page 4
Education Committee Report	page 4
ANC Visits Chicago	page 4

## Page 2

Study Group	page 5
South Africa Updates	page 5
Divestment Updates	page 5
Mandela Replies...	page 6
Calendar	page 6
The Schlemmer Report...	page 7

# Who is CIDSA?

# Why DIVEST?

U.S. investments strengthen the apartheid economy, thereby increasing the ability of the white government to preserve its power. The past twenty-five years disprove the claim that investments can be an agent for change because the apartheid government's repressive power has only increased during this time. Yet even if every U.S. firm in South Africa practiced commendable labor policies, apartheid would still not be threatened.

*The Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa* was founded in June 1983 to push for the passage of a divestment bill in the Illinois State Legislature. Over 50 organizations and 200 concerned individuals from across the state now comprise CIDSA's growing membership.

The companies must comply with South African law and coexist with disenfranchisement, population control, and forced removals, as well as detentions and bannings. The black community, from 1959 Nobel Peace Laureate Albert Luthuli to 1984 Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu, has continually said "we don't want our chains polished, we want them removed." The divestment of publically controlled Illinois funds from South Africa will be a significant contribution to the worldwide anti-apartheid movement and help create circumstances for the South African people to forge fundamental change in their country.

## New Staff!

## New Office!

CIDSA is happy to announce that we have hired a part-time staff person effective March 15th. The CIDSA staffer is Judy Hatcher. Judy has had organizing experience with the Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, the Rogers Park Tenants Committee, Physicians for Social Responsibility and various unions in the Chicago labor movement. Welcome aboard, Judy!

Our new office is located at 343 S. Dearborn, Room 919. The telephone number is 922-3915. Any messages or inquiries may be left at that number on our answering machine whenever Judy is not there.

## MEMBERSHIPS

### Enclosed:

Organizational Member Donation	\$15.
Individual Member Donation	\$10.
Amanda Club Donation	\$100.
Additional Contribution	

Please return to: CIDSA, Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa, P.O. Box 578413, Chicago, Ill 60657



CIDSA sounds great, but please send me some more information!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (home) \_\_\_\_\_ / (office) \_\_\_\_\_

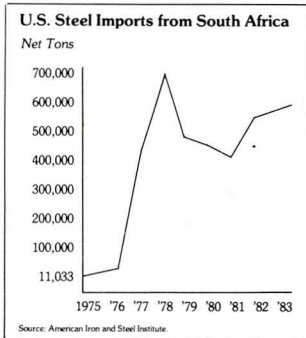
# CIDSA PHONE

# 922-3915

# Committees

Page 3

## STOP APARTHEID STEEL!



For further information contact

Ora Schub (922-3915).

**Alderman Danny Davis will soon submit a CIDSA divestment ordinance into The Chicago City Council.**

## NEW CHICAGO BILL

**Illinois Senate Bills #0045 and #0046 call for divestment on the state level.**

## NEW STATE BILLS

The Steel Task Force of CIDSA is proud to announce the introduction of legislation prohibiting the contracting of South African steel for use in the construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, improvement or maintenance of public works made by a public agency, until the United Nations certifies that apartheid is abolished.

This legislation was introduced by Representatives Carol Moseley Braun and Woods Bowman amending the present Steel Procurement Act whose purpose is to encourage the manufacture and production of steel by the United States. Our amendment absolutely closes any exceptions for the purchase of South African steel.

We were very encouraged by the warm reception we received from Representatives Braun and Bowman and the enthusiasm with which they embraced this legislation.

### **Continental Bank has participated in lending large sums to the Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa.**

As steel plants close and workers are laid off in Illinois, new plants are being opened in South Africa. Continental Bank has participated in giving over million dollars in loans to the Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa (ISCOR) while doing nothing to prevent our own South Works from closing. The importance of this bill both locally and internationally cannot be overstated.

We have worked long and hard to develop this legislation, but we know that our work has just begun. This is the first time this type of legislation has been introduced anywhere in the United States. We need your help to make it succeed.

The City Action Task Force has drafted an ordinance and resolution scheduled to be submitted to the Chicago City Council by Alderman Danny Davis and others on March 20, 1985.

The ordinance calls for the divestment of city operating funds from financial institutions doing business in or with South Africa. It would also prohibit the city from awarding contracts to any company doing business in South Africa. The resolution would direct the trustees of the various pension boards to divest city of Chicago pension funds from companies doing business in South Africa.

The City Action Task Force is beginning to do community outreach and education around these actions in sine with the Education Task Force. Your help is needed in this effort. Copies of the ordinance and resolution are available at the CIDSA office, 343 S. Dearborn, Room 919 (312-922-3915).

Last month saw the introduction of bills in the Illinois State Legislature which seek to prevent the investment of any state pension funds in firms which do business in, or banks which have any outstanding loans to, South Africa until apartheid is abolished.

Specifically, the Senate bill seeks to amend the General Provisions Article of the Illinois Pension Code by prohibiting such investment. It also requires the responsible officer (fiduciary) to file annual reports with the Illinois Secretary of State listing such investments to assure compliance. The Senate bills #0045 and 0046 were introduced by State Senators Emil Jones and Charles Chew on January 9.

State Representatives Carol Moseley Braun and Woods Bowman have introduced similar divestment bills in the house. It is expected that these bills will be called and debated in the next few months. CIDSA is currently mobilizing support state-wide for the passage of divestment bills.

# State Wide Tour

Anti-Apartheid groups join hands to  
Bring South Africa Home to Illinois.

Contact Persons for Regional Tour Circuits:

## Northern Illinois

Carol Thompson, CIDA  
P.O. Box 578413  
Chicago, IL 60657  
(312)327-0545

## North Central Illinois

Barbara Miller  
3724 Vincent Ave.  
Peoria Heights, IL 61614  
(309)-688-4178

## So. Central

## South Central Illinois

Steve Apotheker  
720 N. Market  
Champaign, IL 61820  
(217)-351-4584

## Southern

## Southern Illinois

Luke Tripp, Black American Studies Program  
Southern Illinois University  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
(618)-453-2243

Together with the American Friends' Service Committee, the American Committee on Africa and the Washington Office on Africa, CIDA is sponsoring a state-wide tour of South Africans and anti-apartheid activists, April 14-19, 1985. The tour will involve four teams of four speakers who will cross Illinois addressing church, labor, student and community groups on current happenings in South Africa and how to prevent Illinois money from being used to support apartheid.

Tour participants will include:

- Jerry Herman-National Coordinator of the Southern Africa program of the American Friends' Service Committee
- Jean Sindab-Executive Director of the Washington Office on Africa
- Christy Hoffman-prominent machinist trade union activist and leader of the Connecticut divestment movement
- Dumasani Kumalo-Projects Director, American Committee on Africa
- Two representatives of the African National Congress

## CIDA will welcome these speakers with a kick-off rally on Sunday, April 14...

CIDA will welcome these speakers to Illinois with a Kick-Off Rally on Sunday, April 14, 1985 from 6-8 PM at United Electrical Workers' Hall, 37 S. Ashland. This will give Chicago CIDA members and others a chance to meet tour participants who will spend most of their time in areas of Illinois often missed by similar national tours. The Kick-Off Rally will be an occasion for celebrating our educational campaign as well as the unprecedented simultaneous consideration of divestment legislation at the city, county and state levels here in Illinois. Indeed, one goal of the tour is to build vital state-wide support for these campaigns.

If you are interested in having a tour team address your group or if you would like to attend one of many events already scheduled across the state, please contact your Regional Tour Coordinator (listed below). Although the tour provides a special opportunity to meet with South Africans and activists from across the country, CIDA's Education Committee can also arrange educational, films and knowledgeable speakers for presentations across the state throughout the year. We hope you will join us in making CIDA's State Wide Tour a great success.

## THE ANC VISITS CHICAGO

Chicago recently hosted two representatives from the African National Congress (ANC), the liberation movement in South Africa which has been waging the struggle against apartheid since 1912. These guests were Solie Simelane and Neo Mnumzana. The latter is the new representative to the United Nations of the ANC.

## Neo Mnumzana is the new representative of the ANC to the United Nations.

Brother Solie spoke to a large gathering at Catfish Digby's Restaurant sponsored by the Black Press Institute and WBMX's Donald Palmer. Representative Mnumzana spoke at Northwestern University, Notre Dame, Roosevelt University, Malcolm X College and Faragut High School. He also met with the leadership of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and addressed a meeting organized by the All People's Congress.

Both men repeatedly stressed the message of ANC President Oliver Tambo that "1985 would be the year to render South Africa ungovernable."

*The Education Taskforce has been hitting the streets the past two months. Below are just a few of the many educational events taking place.*  
*Health Under Apartheid...*

A noontime program was held for Cook County Hospital employees in which a South African physician addressed the issues of health under apartheid. Another health-related program is being planned for the Illinois Black Nurses Association.

### Discussion at Daley College

For two days two Daley College Sociology classes focused on South African issues with two CIDA members. After viewing "Generations of Resistance" - a film about the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa - the presentation focused on developing some basic understanding of apartheid and its links with issues in Chicago. An educational program was also held with faculty from Olive-Harvey College.

### Anti-Apartheid Views on the Air...

CIDA was represented on WBZZ's Saturday morning "Youth and Justice", a call-in program directed towards high school audiences. Other CIDA members have done talk shows recently on WGCI, channel 35 and WBMX. CIDA members have also presented testimony to divestment hearings in Wisconsin, Iowa and West Virginia, as well as participating in New York's "Labor Against Apartheid Conference".

### Interested? For Further Information...

Many other educational events have been carried out by CIDA members, both Education Taskforce members and others. The time and effort given by many is crucial in building CIDA's membership and increasing the public's awareness on South African issues. Persons interested in having speakers or speaking should contact the chairperson, Harriet Parker at 684-3090 (evenings).



# News Briefs

## DIVESTMENT UPDATES

State Action: Spotlight on Alabama: Rep. James Buskey is introducing in February 1985 a bill to divest all state pension funds from corporations operating in South Africa within three years and to ban deposit of pension funds in banks making loans to the South African government, any South African corporations or to U.S. corporations investing in South Africa.

City Action: Spotlight on Oakland, California: In December 1984 the Oakland City Council voted to ban new investment of idle funds in financial institutions doing business with South Africa. Councilman Wilson Riles Jr. is continuing to press for a divestment ordinance, which is under consideration in the Council.

State Action: Spotlight on Maine: Rep. Harlan Baker introduced H.P. 368 in February 1985 calling for divestment of all state pension funds within three years. Hearings have been scheduled for March.

City Action: Spotlight on Boston, Massachusetts: On January 7th, 1985, Governor Michael Dukakis signed legislation which permits the divestment bill passed in Boston in July 1984 to take effect. The Boston ordinance prohibits investment of public funds in any bank with outstanding loans to South Africa or Namibia or any corporation doing business in South Africa.

City Action: Spotlight on New York City: As a result of negotiations between the City Administration and District Council 37 AFSCME Intro. 900 was introduced at the request of the Mayor with the support of the City Council President and the Council leadership on February 7, 1985. It will prohibit the deposit of city funds in banks which make loans to the South African government or advertise or promote Kruggerands. It will also ban city purchases of South African goods and severely restrict purchases from corporations which sell to the South African military, police, prisons, or the Ministry of Cooperation and Development. It is estimated that \$665,000,000 will be affected.

## CIDSA READING GROUP

In monthly meetings the CIDSA Study Group continues to examine and discuss the historical development of the Southern Africa region. Sessions normally last two hours every third Sunday of the month. The next study

**The next study group session is Sunday, April 21st. (Contact CIDSA for more information).**

group session is Sunday, April 21st. The liberation movements in former Portuguese Africa were discussed at the March meeting. A historic slide show on the US in Angola called A Vitoria e Certa, produced by the former Southern Africa magazine, was also shown at that meeting. All CIDSA members are cordially invited. Copies of the standard text, South Africa at War, are available from Guild Bookstore.

## SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE

Page 5

There have been several major developments in the internal struggle against apartheid since the publication of the last newsletter. January and February began with the well-publicized Kennedy visit to South Africa and culminated with the Crossroads massacre and arrests of the UDF leadership. The new year has also witnessed a mounting schizophrenia on the part of the South African government towards the obvious advances in the struggle. Concessions such as the offer of conditional release to ANC leader, Nelson Mandela, and a softening on the issue of limited political participation by urban blacks have been counterposed by the deadly violence at the Crossroads settlement.

Following is a brief summary of recent events:

### Kennedy Visit

Senator Edward Kennedy made a fact-finding visit to South Africa as the guest of Bishop Tutu. The trip increased world exposure to the repressive conditions endured by the black majority and afforded Kennedy an opportunity to suggest economic sanctions as a means of forcing change in apartheid policies. The denial of a visit with Nelson Mandela underscored the extent of political repression, while the protests by AZAPO pointed to divisions within the opposition movement.

### Jackson Refusal

Rev. Jesse Jackson's efforts to visit South Africa were curtailed by the Pretoria regime. Jackson's charisma apparently posed a potential danger for the state.

### Mandela Offer

After twenty-one years in prison, the ANC leader was presented with an offer that he could refuse. The apartheid government promised his release on the condition that he unconditionally reject violence. Mr. Mandela was previously offered release if he lived out his remaining years in the Xhosa tribal homeland, the Transkei. Offer came amidst gestures by Botha signalling a willingness to discuss limited black participation in politics, and perhaps negotiations with the ANC. Mandela's response was to set forth terms to Botha... (see box)

### Crossroads Massacre

In defiance of government's efforts to relocate them to Khayelitsha, a government homeland, black squatters at Crossroads resisted apartheid's enforcers. The resulting state violence left an estimated twenty Crossroads residents dead and scores injured. This brutality took place during the third week of February, and demonstrates a watershed in popular resistance towards the relocation and homeland policies of the state.

### UDF Arrests

On February 19, in a move coinciding with the Crossroads atrocities, the government arrested thirteen UDF leaders and indicted seven of them on treason charges. The seven are, Albertina Sisulu (a UDF president), Casim Saloojee (UDF Treasurer), Rev. Frank Chikane (a UDF Transvaal Vice-President), Prof. Ismail Mohammed, Sam Kikine, Isaac Ngcobo, Sisa Njikelana (S.A. Allied Workers Union). The UDF is a broad-based coalition of over 600 diverse groups and has spearheaded legitimate, non-violent protests, and boycotts against the recent non-black elections and racist constitution concocted by the regime. The detention of the UDF leaders will apparently last until a trial date which is tentatively set for March 20th.

### Other Developments

The Zulu Chief, Gatha Buthelezi, met on February 4th with Ronald Reagan and expressed his opposition to economic sanctions. TransAfrica head, Randall Robinson, labelled Buthelezi "a messenger for the South African government."

Evo Fernandes, secretary-general of the counterrevolutionary Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), visited the South African Foreign Minister. He was arranging peace talks between MNR and the Frelimo government, to be mediated by Pretoria.

The NY Times reported (January 28th) that South Africa's French-supplied nuclear reactor at Koeberg was being manned by U.S. personnel including atomic reactor operators. South Africa has refused to endorse the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The Americans are being paid a reported \$100,000 per annum.

# Mandela Replies...

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in 1918 in the Transkei, the son of a Chief of the Tembu Tribe. He was educated at Fort Harare and the University of Witwatersrand obtaining his law degree. As a student activist he was suspended from Fort Harare after a student protest.

In the early 1950's Mandela established a law practice in Johannesburg with Oliver Tambo, and he began to establish a reputation for being one of the most effective leaders of the African National Congress Youth League. For his activities he was banned from 1953 to 1961. In 1956 Nelson Mandela was placed on trial and charged with treason with many other anti-apartheid activists by the government authorities. All of the accused activists were acquitted by 1961.

After his release Mandela was active in the 1961 'Stay-Away on Republic Day Campaign' (a form of general strike). He later went underground, playing a formative role in the establishment (after the Sharpeville massacre) of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC.

In 1962 he was arrested by the police and eventually sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964. He has been imprisoned since that time, first at the infamous Robben Island and now at Pollsmoor Prison.

Nelson Mandela is President for Life of the African National Congress.

I am a member of the African National Congress. I have always been a member of the African National Congress and I will remain a member of the African National Congress until the day I die.

Oliver Tambo is much more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade for nearly 50 years. If there is any one amongst you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more, and I know that he would give his life to see me free. There is no difference between his views and mine.

I am surprised at the conditions that the Government wants to impose on me. I am not a violent man. My colleagues and I wrote in 1952 to Malan asking for a round table conference to find a solution to the problem of our country but that was ignored. When Strijdom was in power, we made the same offer. Again it was ignored. When Verwoerd was in power we asked for a national convention for all the people in South Africa to decide on their future. This, too, was in vain. It was only then when all other forms of resistance were no longer open to us that we turned to armed struggle. Let Botha show that he is different to Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd. Let him renounce violence. Let him say that he will dismantle apartheid. Let him unban the people's organization, the African National Congress. Let him free all who have been imprisoned, banished or exiled for the opposition to apartheid. Let him guarantee free political activity so that the people may decide who will govern them.

I cherish my own freedom dearly but I care even more for your freedom. Too many have died since I went to prison. Too many have suffered for the love of freedom. I owe it to their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and to their fathers who have grieved and wept for them. Not only I have suffered during these long, lonely, wasted years. I am not less life loving than you are. But I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free. I am in prison as the representative of the people and of your organization, the African National Congress, which was banned.

What freedom am I being offered whilst the organization of the people remains banned? What freedom am I being offered when I may be arrested on a pass offence? What freedom am I being offered to live my life as a family with my dear wife who remains in banishment in Brandfort? What freedom am I being offered when I must ask for permission to live in an urban area? What freedom am I being offered when I need a stamp in my pass to seek work? What freedom am I being offered when my very South African citizenship is not respected? Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts. Herman Toivo Ja Toivo, when freed, never gave any undertaking, nor was he called upon to do so. I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you the people are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated.

I will return.

## Anti-Apartheid Activities

Saturday, March 23

Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) Concert, South African jazz musician and his band, 11th Street Theater, 726 11th Street, Chicago. Call for details:

Sunday, March 24, 4PM

"Liberation In Africa: Power from the Barrel of a Pen", guest speaker: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, distinguished African novelist, playwright and political activist, Cross Currents, 3206 N. Wilton, Chicago

Saturday, March 23 - Sunday, March 24

Visitor from the United Democratic Front to Chicago. For more information call CIDA (312-922-3915).

Friday, April 12 - Saturday, April 13

Institute on the Church in Urban Industrial Society (ICUIS) Workshops on South Africa and Central America

Saturday, April 13, 9AM-6:30PM

Second Annual Southern Africa Conference, sponsored by the Anti-Apartheid Student Alliance (AASA). For more information, contact the Organization of Black Students at the University of Chicago (312-922-9733).

Sunday, April 14, 6-8PM

CIDSA State Wide Tour Kick-Off Rally, United Electrical Workers Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago

Sunday, April 14 - Friday, April 19

"Bringing South Africa Home", CIDSA state-wide tour

Wednesday, May 1

"Lawyers Against Apartheid" Law Day demonstration at the South African consulate, 444 N. Michigan, Chicago. For more information contact Ora Schub, 538-0733

Sunday, May 5, 6PM

CIDSA general membership meeting, UE hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago

Every Thursday 12-1. Free South Africa Movement demonstration, South African Consulate, 444 N. Michigan, Chicago.

# THE SCHLEMMER REPORT: WRONG QUESTIONS, WRONG ANSWERS JOHN COMAROFF

Page 7

For all those actively involved in the fight for a liberated South Africa, the Schlemmer Report has become a real thorn. The US State Department, which funded the research and takes every opportunity to disseminate its findings, truly is getting its money's worth. The document is being invoked, smugly and relentlessly, by those who would continue to profit from apartheid without moral, or any other kind, of scruple. Given the strong desire in conservative corporate and political quarters to find justification for uninterrupted investment in South Africa, Professor Schlemmer has provided grist for many mills.

On the surface, the Schlemmer Report has a lot going for it, and cannot be dismissed out of hand. It is the work of a competent senior sociologist with good liberal credentials - at least as such things are understood in white South Africa - and not of some willing Nationalist Party (or Republican) lackey. Nor, by all appearances, was the research done for personal profit. What is more, the fact that the US government paid for it might vitiate its bona fides among political activists and left wing scholars; but, for those at whom the Report is directed, that merely adds respectability. In short, as a mythical charter, dressed up in the language of "objective" science and widely distributed to a credulous world, the document has a rhetorical force that cannot be gainsaid. And it will not simply pass into oblivion either, however fervently we may wish it away. Being such a powerful ideological weapon, it will surely legitimize pro-apartheid activity, and involvement in South Africa, for a long time to come.

**All this makes it imperative that the report be revealed for what it is: namely a dangerous and misleading illusion.**

All this makes it imperative that the Report be revealed for what it is: namely, a dangerous and misleading illusion. But how do we actually begin to disclose its fallacy, to demonstrate its artifice? Note the absence of the slightest evidence to indicate that Schlemmer prejudiced or falsified his results - or that he used anything but absolutely standard survey methods; does it not follow that his findings have an unimpeachable empirical basis after all? Indeed, is it even possible to dispute the validity of these findings without actually replicating the survey?

The answer to the last question is an emphatic yes; it certainly is possible to refute the research upon which the Report is founded. And, as we go through the steps of refutation, we shall arrive at replies to the other question as well. Let us turn, then, to the scene of the research itself - urban black South Africa.

Try to conceptualize the following situation: a survey researcher - perhaps white, perhaps black, but certainly middle class - approaches a black worker, either at the work-place or in what passes for home, and asks him to answer some questions. "Of course," adds the interrogator (I use the word both purposefully and advisedly), "this has nothing to do with government. We from the University just want to hear what you think about some things." There are few other ways in which the approach could be made: soliciting in the name of social science, especially here, offers as limited a range of

come-ons as do other forms of pimping.

Now the worker faces a dilemma: he is fully aware what "questions" mean in this repressive society - for him, Big Brother is unlikely to be a mere Orwellian fantasy. And he has no means of establishing who his interlocutor may be, whatever credentials are presented. Past experience tells him that it is neither wise nor particularly healthy to appear intransigent, to refuse to submit to "interview." At the same time, such encounters are not exactly relished by black South Africans. Questions, like tape recorders and notebooks, are the haunting denotata of the police in a police state.

Add to this another possible consideration. The worker is about to be asked his views on the future of American participation in the country, and may well understand that it is a criminal offence to speak for divestment. But even if he is unfamiliar with the letter of the law, every minute of his life experience, every drop of his life blood, echoes the knowledge that commanding acts "against South Africa" - as the Nationalist Party styles all advocacy against its parochial policies - is to take a risk far in excess of minor infractions of the law. It is to advertise a commitment to activism, a preparedness to engage openly in the struggle against the modern African levathan. If one is to do this, as an exiled black poet once pointed out, one might as well choose a situation with real political impact.

Under these conditions, the most likely response to the worker's dilemma is to submit to interrogation, and to give the bland, compromising answers that the survey in fact elicited. Black South Africans have become very adept at saying what whites wish to hear; learning to do so, after all is just one lesson in their life-long socialization for survival. "No, American companies should stay." "Yes, it would be bad for us Bantu if they went away..." It is not difficult to envision the interaction. What is truly amazing is not that most respondents spoke in favor of the continued presence of these companies. It is that 25% actually expressed a pro-divestment view to the researchers. I find it difficult even to imagine what possessed them to do so - save the growth of a more overtly assertive, and perhaps more desperate, willingness at the grassroots to engage in the politics of confrontation without attention to personal risk. If so, what Professor Schlemmer has revealed, without realizing it, is a dramatic florescence of the mundane expression of revolutionary consciousness.

In short, it is the nature and contradictions of South African society, not black attitudes, that are reflected in the findings of the Report. Indeed, Schlemmer could have used the most sophisticated, the most rigorous and "unbiased" of techniques in his research; or he could have been sloppy and prejudicial in his methods. The outcome would have been much the

**For a survey of this kind presupposes a climate of freedom, a climate in which it is possible to debate...**

same. For a survey of this kind presupposes a climate of freedom, a climate in which it is possible to debate the questions as well as to reply to them according to conscience. In South Africa that freedom simply does not exist. All political discourse, of which Schlemmer's exertions are most definitely an instance, is entailed in a system that defines and sanctions both what may be asked and how it may be answered. Nor does the mere absence of direct coercion - that old panacea for those who pretend to the possibility of democratic process in



## THE SCHLEMMER REPORT: (continued)

John Comaroff

repressive societies - guarantee such freedom. For, as everyone knows - with the feigned exception of ingenues in the US State Department - the very structure of a repressive policy removes its possibility. In these circumstances, the liberal credentials or the professional competence of the researcher, however impeccable, mean absolutely nothing.

But let us say, for the sake of hypothetical argument, that the interviewees did feel free to answer according to the dictates of conscience. I know that many South Africans would dismiss this pretence as so far-fetched, so phantasmagorical, as to be pointless. Nonetheless, there is a moral in confronting the possibility. For it highlights the one issue that goes unremarked when we are told the findings of surveys like the present one: namely, what do the questions actually mean? If we look at those on Professor Schlemmer's schedule, they appear innocent enough. All they seem to ask, in essence, is whether people are for or against the withdrawal of American corporations, and whether they feel blacks would be materially served by divestment. But the very pairing of those two clauses has some not-so-innocent implications. First, it smuggles in - on no defensible ground - a causal link between the material well-being of blacks and the presence of these corporations. As a result, the question, as it presents itself to the respondent, seems to be whether he or she is for (or, which is unlikely, given the construction of the survey, against) the economic well-being of blacks. Of course, that is not the issue in terms of which the answer will be scored in the survey results. A positive response is coded not as a statement in favor of black prosperity, but of its putative cause, the presence of American firms. The sleight, witting or otherwise, is as insidious as it is transparent.

Second, and yet more serious, the phrasing of the survey leaves unstated the real issue involved in divestment: that the fabric of apartheid, and therefore the collective predicament of blacks would be fundamentally affected by US financial disengagement. In other words, to have posed a truly meaningful question in the situation, Professor Schlemmer ought to have asked: "in light of the fact that the withdrawal of American companies is liable to make a major contribution to the radical change of South African society, and to the removal of apartheid, would you support that withdrawal?" And, of course, employees of US firms should have been included in the research sample in exact proportion to their numbers in the total black population (.0005%?). Needless to say, the questions were not posed this way, and the sampling was not based on these considerations. In other words, the apparently scientific method used by Professor Schlemmer - even if his respondents had been free unto their consciences - formulated the problem in an entirely misleading key. As a result, in place of a valid accounting of black "opinion," it erected an artifice that could produce only the finding it did - a compendium of false confessions and wrong answers.

Nonetheless, the Schlemmer Report is, as I noted at the outset, a powerful rhetorical device. By posing seemingly innocent questions that obscure their own causal assumptions, it disguises a dangerous fallacy in the fictively disinterested terms of sociological enquiry. By asking about the welfare of blacks, yet not linking their predicament to the structure of apartheid itself, it distorts the very real problems that it was designed to explore. And by raising issues that free persons alone can be expected to discuss freely, it stifles the very voices it purports to hear.

As the ideological product of a repressive society, the Schlemmer Report is, finally, something of a masterpiece. It is difficult not to marvel, with as much horror as fascination, at the manner in which it succeeds in constructing verities in the image of the society that fathered it. Indeed, whether it be the craft of omission or commission, the Report manages both to invert a prevailing reality and, by appeal to social scientific method, to hide the fact that it has done so.

URBAN LIFE CENTER  
5004 South Blackstone  
Chicago, IL 60615

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Chicago, IL  
Permit #3695

Cheryl Johnson  
Trans Africa  
1612 1/2 Washington  
Evanston, IL 60202



A Member Since  
1980-1981 &  
1982-1983