

# **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACTION IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STUDENTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA<sup>1</sup>**

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Students and youth have played a significant role, often as the vanguard, in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

The ANC Youth League, founded in April 1944, played a key role in transforming the African National Congress into a mass organisation committed to the total eradication of racism and full equality for all the people of the country, rather than mere amelioration of the oppression of the black majority, and in promoting militant mass action to attain the objective. Three of the founding members of that League - Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela - continue to lead the movement for liberation, reminding us of the long and difficult struggle in that country. Many of the leaders of the liberation movement during the past forty years have come from the ranks of the ANC Youth League, the Youth Leagues of the Indian Congresses (which emerged from the Indian passive resistance campaign of 1946-48), and other youth and student organisations.

The resistance against the Bantu Education Act of 1954 and the subsequent measures for segregation in universities, including protests at the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand and Natal, are an important part of the liberation struggle. The National Union of South African Students helped keep alive the spirit of resistance when the liberation movements were struggling to recover from the massive repression of 1962-64 - and became the target of threats and intimidation by the Vorster regime. The University Christian Movement also played a significant role in the 1960s.

From the late 1960s, black students played a crucial role in uniting all the black people against apartheid and its collaborators - and helped bring about the renewal of mass resistance with greater strength than ever before.

The role of students in the period 1976-1980, following the Soweto massacre, when thousands were killed and injured, defying terror and death, is one of the epics of student struggle for freedom. Thousands of students then escaped from the country to join the freedom fighters, enabling the initiation and development of a new phase of armed struggle.

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Mass action by students, in which almost a million students at all levels participated, contributed greatly to the boycott of the diabolic constitution of 1984, the transformation of African townships into fortresses of resistance, and the revolutionary upsurge which began in 1984. The apartheid regime felt obliged in 1984 to send troops into African townships and one of their primary objectives was to intimidate students and force them to return to schools.

Since then, under conditions of extreme repression and brutality, students and youth have kept up resistance, even with the leaders forced to go underground and several killed by vigilantes. Resistance spread more widely at high school level and below, and many thousands of juveniles have suffered detention and torture. Students and youth are thus playing a significant role in armed struggle as well as in mass resistance. From their ranks have come many martyrs.

Students and youth have, of course, played a significant role in many national liberation movements around the world and in some cases, student action was crucial in ending colonial oppression or overthrowing corrupt dictatorial regimes. The courage and sacrifice of students in South Africa stands comparison with that in other countries. If their cause has not triumphed, it is because of the powerful and unscrupulous forces, in South Africa and internationally, arrayed against the South African liberation movement. That is why international solidarity with the struggle of students and youth in South Africa - and with the national liberation struggle of which it is a part - is of utmost importance.

This applies equally to Namibia where students have played and are playing a heroic role in the liberation struggle.

Given the nature of the liberation struggle in southern Africa and the forces ranged against it, solidarity cannot be confined to mere moral support. It must, on the one hand, seek to confront those who support or reinforce apartheid, in order to ensure the total isolation of the apartheid regime and its allies; and, on the other hand, provide all necessary assistance to those struggling for freedom. Students should not only mobilise for action on the campuses, but should promote action by all the people in their communities and countries. While students in countries which collaborate with the apartheid regime have a special role, students in African, Non-aligned and other countries too have their own responsibilities. Student organisations must develop and preserve broadest unity in anti-apartheid action in support of the united resistance by the oppressed people of South Africa, and overcome all moves to divide their ranks.

Solidarity is not only a duty to the students and people of South Africa and Namibia who are the victims of ghastly repression, violence and terrorism by a racist regime and its vigilantes, nor merely a duty towards the students and people of frontline States which are victims of aggression and subversion.

It is support to Africa which has emerged from centuries of humiliation and seeks the total emancipation of the Continent. It is an act of loyalty to the United Nations and its purposes, and a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is, moreover, action to rid other societies of racism and help build a new order of genuine international co-operation.

### ***A Brief Review of International Student Action***

International student action in support of the freedom movement in South Africa began in 1946 with the initiation of mass action against racial discrimination in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1946, the Indian community in South Africa launched a passive resistance campaign against the "Ghetto Act" in which over two thousand men and women - including many students - were to court imprisonment before the suspension of the campaign in June 1948. Many resisters were brutally beaten up by vigilantes and several juveniles were sentenced to whipping. The government of India broke trade relations with South Africa and protested to the United Nations so that the situation in South Africa became a matter of international concern.

Meanwhile, in August 1946, the African mineworkers' strike was suppressed with utmost brutality and a number of miners were massacred. African opinion began to favour militant action against racist oppression.

African and Indian organisations decided to co-operate in a common struggle and to build a wider unity. They agreed to fight for full equality, universal franchise and a democratic State rather than merely for petty concessions. India's initiative in the United Nations, and the support it received from a great majority of governments, encouraged them to seek international support and leaders of the movement were sent abroad for that purpose.

The years 1946-1948 thus represented a turning point in the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

Indian students took the initiative in solidarity action, because of the Indian passive resistance campaign. But following the lead of the Indian leaders in South Africa and of the government of India, they saw the Indian passive resistance as part of a wider struggle and denounced all racist oppression in South Africa and

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<sup>2</sup> Earlier there had been expressions of concern and sporadic actions. In India, where South African racism had become a national issue from the beginning of the century because of humiliating measures against people of Indian origin and the *Satyagraha* led by Mahatma Gandhi, students held protest meetings in 1913 and collected funds to support the struggle in South Africa. The ANC delegations and representatives visiting Britain and the United States in the years after power was transferred to the white minority in South Africa in 1910 addressed student gatherings. The radical student movement in the 1930s showed concern over the situation in South Africa.

the moves of the South African regime to annex South West Africa (now Namibia).

In December 1946, during the United Nations consideration of the Indian complaint, Indian students in New York joined a protest demonstration at the South African Consulate-General.<sup>3</sup>

On December 8, 1946, Indian students in London organised a demonstration in Trafalgar Square in support of the Passive Resistance Campaign. Among the speakers at the demonstration were representatives of the National Union of Students, the University Labour Federation and the West African Students' Union.

Students at Cambridge University organised a protest demonstration in 1947, especially as General J. C. Smuts, the South African Premier, was Chancellor of the University.

In March 1947, the British Student Labour Federation initiated a petition in the universities asking King George V to proclaim publicly, during his visit to South Africa that month, that racial discrimination was not in accordance with his desire for freedom and equal rights for all his subjects. It circulated a pamphlet entitled *The Black Side of South Africa*. Meetings were held on many campuses and over five thousand students in 53 universities and colleges signed the petition which was presented to Buckingham Palace.

The petition had little influence on the policy of the British government which lent full support to South Africa at the United Nations. King George V declared at Guild Hall in May 1947:

"... the mass of the African people have gained and are gaining immeasurably in health, happiness and prosperity by their contact with white civilisation, I am well assured."

But the petition could not be ignored by the South African government which felt it necessary to issue a 19-page reply in November 1947.

Students in London protesting against oppression of black people in South Africa picketed an exhibition on South Africa at City Art Gallery in June 1948.

In the United States, in November 1947, a meeting of students at Hunter College, New York, heard Mr. A. I. Meer, representative of the Joint Passive Resistance Council (of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses). It supported the struggle of the Indians in South Africa for full equality and condemned the policy of the

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<sup>3</sup> I was privileged to participate in this demonstration which was led by Paul Robeson and the Council on African Affairs.

United States, Britain and other Powers which had voted against the Indian resolution at the United Nations. The American Youth for Democracy, which organised the meeting, sent a message of support to the Joint Passive Resistance Council.

There were many student protests in India, and large meetings of students were held during the tour of the country by Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G. M. Naicker, leaders of the resistance, from March to May 1947.

Efforts by African Youth to gain international support also began at this time. V. T. Mboobo, a brilliant scholar and principal of an African school, attended the World Youth Festival in Prague in July 1947 on behalf of the ANC Youth League, and led the South African delegation at the Festival. He was given a warm reception by Indian and South African students in London on the way to Prague.

Mr. Mboobo spoke to many delegations at the Festival, gave numerous press interviews and made radio broadcasts. He was elected to the Council of the World Federation of Democratic Youth which organised a tour of European countries. His six-month tour in Europe helped develop contacts between the South African student and youth movement and its counterparts in Europe.

Student solidarity action continued since that time internationally through the great Defiance Campaign (1952-53), the resistance against the Bantu Education Act (1954) and other struggles in South Africa.

The international situation, however, became complicated with the cold war and the student movement was affected. Public action on South Africa came to be directed mainly towards assistance to the victims of repression in South Africa and publicity for the inhumanity of apartheid and for the non-violent resistance by the people.

The United Nations could give no lead to public opinion. South Africa withdrew from participation in the United Nations, leaving only token representation, and the Western Powers exerted pressure to avoid even condemnations of apartheid in order to persuade it to return. When South Africa returned in 1958, it was even elected Vice-President of the General Assembly.

Student solidarity became a significant factor when a focus for public action was provided by the appeal of Chief Albert Luthuli for a boycott of South Africa, and even more when the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960, outraged world public opinion. Around the same time, student resistance against segregation in the South African universities encouraged international student action.

Students and youth played a key role in initiating the boycott movement (later the anti-apartheid movement), especially in Britain, Ireland and the Nordic countries,

and in developing mass action. The linking up of student action with anti-apartheid groups - including leaders of trade unions and churches, Members of Parliament etc. - helped ensure continuity of action.

Beginning with protests against the violence of apartheid and consumer boycotts of South African products, the movement soon focussed its attention on the campaign for sanctions against South Africa, especially after the United Nations General Assembly called for sanctions in resolution 1761 (XVII) of November 6, 1962, which not a single Western State voted for. The sanctions campaign increasingly brought students into confrontation with the establishments in the Western countries which were the main trading partners of South Africa. Another focus for mass student action was provided by the appeal from South Africa in 1962 for the boycott of South African sports teams and for the exclusion of South African sports organisations from international sports bodies.

Student groups also initiated scholarships for South African students, as young South Africans began to go into exile to escape persecution and to continue their studies in non-segregated institutions. The first scholarship programme was initiated by the Swedish student organisation and the late Olof Palme helped them obtain the first government grant in 1962.

When the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid was established in 1963, and began to promote active United Nations encouragement of public action against apartheid, the international student community had already begun to play a significant role. The massive repression and torture in South Africa in 1963, and the efforts of leaders of the liberation struggle who had come abroad to secure international support, helped develop action. The solidarity movement, originating in support of the struggle in South Africa, soon extended its concern to encompass support for the liberation struggles in Namibia, Southern Rhodesia and the territories under Portuguese domination.

Although students have participated in all anti-apartheid campaigns, they have played a particularly significant role in action on two issues: (a) the campaign against collaboration with South Africa; and (b) sports and cultural boycott of apartheid.

In both these campaigns, it was essential to fight the misleading propaganda by the apartheid regime and its friends to confuse the basic issues, and to reject any compromise with apartheid. It often became necessary, to be effective in some countries, to undertake mass action with a readiness to suffer intimidation, imprisonment and even violence.

The new spirit which spread in the student communities during the civil rights struggle in the United States, the campaign against the war in Vietnam and the "student revolt" of 1968, enabled students to undertake such mass action against apartheid. In the 1970s, the militant actions of students in South Africa, the

Soweto massacre of June 16, 1976, and the indiscriminate shootings of students which followed for several years, led to wider student solidarity action.

Some of the student campaigns in a few key countries are noted below.

### *Campaigns against Economic Collaboration with South Africa*

In Britain, the student campaign against the Barclays Bank, parent of the largest bank in South Africa, was initiated in the 1960s. It was carried on year after year, especially at the beginning of the academic year, to persuade students not to open accounts with that bank. The number of student accounts at Barclays went down drastically. The persistent student campaign contributed to the recent decision of the bank to disengage from South Africa.

In the United States, students played an active role in the campaign against loans to South Africa - initiated by a Committee of Conscience against Apartheid, established by the American Committee on Africa and the University Christian Movement in 1966. The campaign was directed against a group of banks which had granted a revolving credit to South Africa, especially the Chase Manhattan Bank and the First National City Bank.

The Committee was able to persuade a number of churches, trade unions and individuals to withdraw deposits in the banks concerned, but these were not large enough in relation to the enormous resources of the banks.

Mass student action - involving arrests at a demonstration organised by Students for a Democratic Society at the headquarters of the Chase Manhattan Bank - broke the media silence and provoked public debate.

The South African regime then found it wiser to inform the banks that it did not seek the renewal of the revolving credit.

These initial campaigns were followed both in Britain and in the United States by campaigns to press the universities and colleges to withdraw investments in corporations involved in South Africa.

In Britain such investments were relatively small. But there was nonetheless great resistance by the academic institutions. The campaign had to be carried on over many years and student groups found it necessary to undertake militant action. At Manchester University in 1975, students organised a "human carpet" in front of the University Council Chamber and disrupted a Council meeting. In 1978, students at Aberdeen University occupied the administration building for two weeks. Students at Hull also occupied the administration building. The next year, students at the London School of Economics organised a hunger strike.

There was a difficult struggle at each university before the authorities could be persuaded to divest and the crucial decision at Oxford University could only be obtained in 1985. The sustained campaign had a great effect in making collaboration with apartheid a major issue of public concern and in involving tens of thousands of students in action.

In the United States, the campaign was even more difficult as the universities and colleges, many of them private, have large investments managed by boards which are often dominated by directors of companies involved in South Africa.

The "divestment" campaign became one of the greatest student campaigns in the country reaching numerous campuses. Student groups organised teach-ins, sit-ins, occupation of university buildings etc. In recent years, they built "shanties" on campuses to draw attention to the oppression in South Africa and defended the structures against university guards and in some cases against "conservative" attackers. Hundreds of students were arrested in these actions.

Student actions not only obliged many academic institutions to divest but were a significant factor in persuading state and city legislators to take action against corporations involved in South Africa. This divestment movement was responsible for the withdrawal of a number of United States corporations from South Africa in the past few years.

Students have also participated in wider campaigns outside the academic institutions against collaboration by transnational corporations and financial institutions with apartheid and for governmental sanctions against the apartheid regime. Student contingents have been prominent in demonstrations for that purpose.

In the United States, the "Free South Africa Movement" was launched mainly by Black and church groups in November 1984. It became a mass movement and was sustained over a long period largely because of the mobilisation of the students early in 1985. Many thousands of students participated in demonstrations and hundreds courted imprisonment. Student actions contributed to the enactment of partial sanctions by the United States Congress in 1986, overriding the veto by the President.

### ***Sports Boycott***

The British Anti-Apartheid Movement played a pioneering role in the boycott of apartheid sport, lobbying for the exclusion of South Africa from the Olympics in 1963. Student groups soon began demonstrations against all-white South African sports teams and this developed into a mass movement by the late 1960s.

Huge protest demonstrations were staged against the tour of the all-white South African rugby team from November 1969 to January 1970. The first match



against Oxford University had to be cancelled because of opposition. At the second match at Leicester, hundreds of demonstrators broke through linked-armed policemen and interrupted the match, and that set the pattern for the entire tour. Sports grounds looked like battlefields with the construction of barbed wire fences and the deployment of large contingents of policemen.

Because of these protests and the even greater mobilisation for action against the South African cricket tour, scheduled for 1970, the government was obliged to intervene and the British Cricket Council cancelled the tour. Boycott of apartheid sport was thus imposed by public action, largely by students and youth, six years before the Commonwealth Gleneagles Agreement.

The sports boycott was of lesser importance in the United States as there were much fewer sports exchanges between the United States and South Africa. There were, however, large-scale demonstrations by students on several occasions, as for instance during the Springbok rugby tour in 1980.

Sports boycott became a major issue in Australia and New Zealand by 1970 and students played a key role in both countries.

The campaign in Australia followed a joint decision by the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom and the National Union of Australian University Students in September 1970 to co-ordinate boycott of apartheid sports teams. The Australian Union established Halt All Racist Tours (HART) to lead the campaign and brought into its fold leaders of trade unions and churches, sportsmen and others.

Mass demonstrations were organised against the tour of the South African rugby team from June 26, 1971, following protests earlier in the year against the South African all-white Surf Lifesaving team. Playgrounds had to be protected by miles of barbed wire and thousands of policemen. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested and many suffered injuries from police violence. Queensland proclaimed a State of Emergency during the team's ten-day tour of the province.

Because of this public action, the Australian Cricket Board of Control cancelled a tour by the South African cricket team scheduled for 1972. The Whitlam government which came to power in 1972 decided that racially selected South African teams would in future be excluded from Australia. The protests against the rugby tour were a tremendous educational experience for the student community and the nation, and greatly advanced the movement against racism in the country.

In New Zealand, the campaign for the boycott of apartheid sport spread widely in 1970 with protests against the tour of the All Blacks rugby team to South Africa. Students played a prominent role in the campaign from its inception through their national union and Halt All Racist Tours (HALT).

Bilateral sporting contacts with New Zealand became increasingly important for South Africa as it was being excluded from international sports. New Zealand sports administrators, especially the Rugby Football Union, and right-wing politicians persisted in promoting the exchanges at the risk of dividing the nation.

The 1974 Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand was stopped by the Labour government of Norman Kirk which recognised the serious consequences of collaboration with apartheid. But the Conservative Muldoon government which came to power in the next elections precipitated a crisis by condoning the exchanges, despite the Gleneagles Agreement of 1976, and by demonstrating hostility to the anti-apartheid movement rather than to apartheid.

Almost a decade of struggle followed. It was climaxed by mass demonstrations against Springbok rugby tour of 1981 in which two thousand people, many of them students, were imprisoned or injured.

The struggle against collaboration with apartheid sport became an important event in the modern history of New Zealand.

### *Other Campaigns and Actions*

Brief mention may be made of some other campaigns and actions. Student groups in several countries have been active in collecting funds and supplies for assistance to the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia. The amount of financial and material assistance was perhaps not too large - except in Nordic countries where student organisations could obtain government grants and in Socialist States - but had a great value in educating and involving the student communities. Runs and walks for the benefit of the liberation struggles attracted thousands of people. Student groups have also contributed to scholarships for South African and Namibian students, and sent volunteers to frontline States and to institutions of liberation movements.

Honouring of leaders of liberation struggles, especially Nelson Mandela, by naming university buildings, awarding honorary degrees etc., has been an important activity to promote the campaign for the release of political prisoners and for publicising their cause. Students in the United Kingdom, in particular, have been in the forefront of this campaign and many university buildings etc., are named after Nelson Mandela. The student campaign helped encourage many local authorities to take similar action.

Student research has been an important aid to campaigns against apartheid. Research by student interns of the American Committee on Africa in the mid-sixties, for instance, greatly helped in initiating campaigns against economic collaboration.

Students have also played a significant role in the academic and cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa, and in securing the exclusion of South Africa from international scientific and cultural bodies and conferences. Student boycotts of artistes who have performed in South Africa have dissuaded many musicians and others from visits to South Africa.

### ***Some Organisational Matters***

Close co-operation between student groups and anti-apartheid movements has been essential to develop and sustain student action against apartheid.

In Britain, close co-operation was established between the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the National Union of Students. The NUS/AAM network of activists on southern Africa, initiated in 1971, consists of several hundred members in over a hundred universities and colleges. Annual national conferences of network members, frequent meetings at local level and mailings of network newsletter have helped promote co-ordinated campaigns.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has a student co-ordinator. It provides literature, campaigning material, speakers and advice to student groups. Student anti-apartheid groups have been established at several universities and colleges, and co-operate with local branches of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

In the United States, national co-ordination between the anti-apartheid movement and the national student organisation has not been practicable. Student anti-apartheid groups had to be built up campus by campus in the course of campaigns. The appointment of a student co-ordinator by the American Committee on Africa, responding to the upsurge of student activity after the Soweto massacre, has greatly helped in promoting student action and co-ordination.

It has been difficult to organise national conferences of student activists against apartheid without external financial support. (Modest support was provided by the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid on two occasions). There have, however, been many regional conferences and networking at a regional level from time to time. The observance of "two weeks of student action against apartheid" from Sharpeville Day to the anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has been effective in ensuring co-ordinated action.

### ***United Nations Encouragement of Student Action***

The Special Committee against Apartheid has, since its inception in 1963, welcomed and encouraged student action against apartheid.

It issued scores of public statements and sent numerous messages in support of student actions in many countries for divestment from South Africa, boycott of apartheid sport etc. These have been greatly appreciated by student groups, especially where they faced stubborn resistance and hostility from the authorities.

The Special Committee and the Centre against Apartheid have issued several publications on student resistance in South Africa and on student solidarity actions.

Already in the 1960s, the Special Committee granted hearings to leaders of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee, Students for a Democratic Society and the University Christian Movement in the United States to publicise their activities against apartheid and to express appreciation to them. The Committee also invited national and international student organisations to many of its conferences and special sessions.

The World Conference for Action against Apartheid, held in Lagos in August 1977, provided an opportunity for fruitful consultations with leaders of a number of student and youth organisations by the Chairman of the Special Committee<sup>4</sup> and the Director of the Centre against Apartheid,<sup>5</sup> as well as the President of the World Conference, Major-General J. N. Garba, who was himself to become Chairman of the Special Committee at a crucial time in March 1984. The Special Committee then undertook active efforts, beginning with the International Anti-Apartheid Year (1978-79), to promote conferences and meetings to enable student activists to meet with the Special Committee, and among themselves, to consider plans for co-ordinated student action at the national and international level.

In May 1978, it held a very fruitful consultation with United States student groups active in divestment campaigns. This was the first of several such consultations - the latest in March 1986. The Committee also assisted national conferences of activists and sent representatives to many regional and local conferences of students against apartheid.

The Committee co-sponsored and provided financial assistance for three international student and youth conferences:

- a. World Conference of Youth and Students in Solidarity with Peoples, Youth and Students of Southern Africa, UNESCO House, Paris, February 19-22, 1979;
- b. Consultative Meeting with Youth and Student Organisations, Sigtuna, Sweden, May 23 and 26, 1980; and

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<sup>4</sup> Leslie O. Harriman of Nigeria

<sup>5</sup> E. S. Reddy

- c. International Conference of Youth and Students in Solidarity with the Peoples, Youth and Students of Southern Africa, Luanda, November 13-15, 1981.

It also assisted a Seminar on Youth and Student Actions against Apartheid in South Africa, held in Hong Kong from December 28 to 30, 1982.

Other United Nations bodies and agencies - notably the United Nations Council for Namibia and UNESCO - have also encouraged and assisted student action in solidarity with the struggles for liberation in southern Africa.

### *Some Observations*

Student action in support of the struggles of students and people of southern Africa has a long history and has made a very significant contribution to the international movement of solidarity with the struggle for liberation in southern Africa. Students have pioneered many campaigns and won notable victories through mass action. They have been in the forefront in confronting collaborators with apartheid, often through "direct action", and thousands of students suffered imprisonment and made other sacrifices.

Many leaders around the world trace the beginning of their public activity to student anti-apartheid action. Student actions have had a significant effect in promoting anti-racist movements and changing national policies in some countries.

It is hoped that an account of student action for freedom in southern Africa and its repercussions can be prepared soon.

In this paper, reference could only be made to some of the most important actions in a few countries. Significant actions have been taken by students in a number of other Western countries such as Ireland, the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. Many foreign students who participated in anti-apartheid actions in British and American universities have led such action in their home countries after return. In some African and other countries, students have combated moves to erode opposition to apartheid by "dialogue" with the apartheid regime and other compromises. Students in Non-aligned and Socialist States have made their contribution, for instance through support of liberation movements and their student leaders. In India, all the national youth and student organisations, irrespective of ideological and party affiliations, have formed a co-ordinating committee for action against apartheid.

Student action, however, has been uneven. While it has been widespread and continuous in Britain and the United States, there has been little action in some other countries which are also among South Africa's major trading partners - e.g.

Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Italy and France. Student action, moreover, has been mainly at the university and college level, and has not been developed at high school level in most countries.

There is always the problem of ensuring continuity in student action, especially in support of a protracted struggle as in southern Africa, because of summer vacations, the turnover of students and changes in student concerns.

There has also been little co-ordination in action between student communities in Western countries and those in Non-aligned and Socialist States which have broken relations with South Africa. Despite differences in the nature of the issues and campaigns, greater liaison and co-operation could be helpful.

International student conferences and consultations organised or supported by the Special Committee against Apartheid have not met the high expectations in this regard. They have tended, to some extent, to duplicate United Nations debates. Even when concrete decisions were taken and responsibilities assumed, there was no follow up to ensure effective implementation.

While student groups have been effective in action against economic collaborations with South Africa, or boycott of apartheid sport, they have not found ways to be equally effective on some other aspects of the struggle which require urgent attention, for instance: (a) development of clandestine collaboration with the apartheid regime in violation of the United Nations mandatory arms embargo against South Africa; (b) lobbying of legislatures. In the United States, for instance, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 has been followed by a series of legislative measures and proposals hostile to the liberation movements and frontline States. Student activists have not found effective means to counter such moves.

Participants at this Conference will, it is hoped, give attention to these matters and agree on specific and effective measures for co-ordinated action as well as means to monitor implementation.

It would perhaps be useful if the Special Committee against Apartheid were to establish a task force on student and youth action in order to maintain constant liaison with a small international network of student activists, especially at the national and local level where action takes place, and to consider means to assist meetings of student networks, to produce and distribute literature and campaigning material specially suited to promoting student action, to publicise student action, etc.

Above all, it is essential to give attention to fundamental questions, as student movements can do best, in the light of the present confrontation in southern Africa and the imperative need for decisive action.

In the nearly forty years since apartheid was proclaimed the official policy of racist South Africa, millions of people in South Africa and Namibia have suffered deprivation, imprisonment, torture and even murder. Millions of people in the frontline States - including children - have fallen victim to the depredations of the apartheid regime.

Numerous resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations and other organisations during this period proclaiming that apartheid is a crime and that support to apartheid is an abetment of an international crime.

Yet, even now, powerful governments and interests continue "friendly relations" and "business as usual" with the apartheid regime. They stubbornly oppose action against apartheid and engage in clandestine collaboration with it. They are now even stepping up condemnations of the great freedom movements, while increasing support to terrorist bands in frontline States.

The heroic students of southern Africa, who are defying brutal violence by the racist regime, as well as murders by racist vigilantes, demand and deserve solidarity. What they need, above all, is the destruction of the bonds that have persisted between South African racism and international interests, and this objective is equally in the interests of other nations. But the attainment of this objective, regrettably, seems to require a determined and uncompromising struggle on many fronts as well as a willingness to confront powerful forces and make sacrifices as needed.