



Anti-apartheid movement grows

By *Tricia Parker*
Co-editor

When Dr. Terry Anderson wrote "APARTHEID" on the board of his History 105 class last fall, three of his students knew what it meant.

"And one thought it had something to do with the Soviet Union," he says.

But thanks to the efforts of Students Against Apartheid, many can define it and more think it's wrong. This increased awareness, as well as increased activism and divestiture of the University's stock in companies that do business in South Africa, are the goals of the Texas A&M group.

The organization, with Anderson as advisor, was formed last summer. It is connected to a growing national network of anti-apartheid groups, according to president Norman Muraya.

"At A&M, it was basically, like Winnie Mandela had said, an idea whose time had come," Muraya says. "It really started in the summer when the rest of organizations were completely dead but we had regular meetings every two weeks."

Muraya says the organization grew rapidly. Equally swift was its plan of action — in August the group began picketing the Texas Coin Exchange which was selling Krugerands.

"They were taking out full-page ads in the papers advertising the coins," he says. "They immediately stopped the ads and they no longer sell the coins."

The organization continued to protest with a rally on Anti-Apartheid day in October. Later, it sponsored a Students Against Apartheid concert at

the now-defunct Dr. G's with a reggae band, The Killer Bees. Finally, it organized a march on Rudder Tower to draw attention to the situation in South Africa.

"We probably had the largest protest march in the history of the University," Muraya says. "We had about 200 (people) there."

More than 500 people attended last semester's concert, says treasurer Jack Purdue, the proceeds of which went to supporting the group and its "Free South Africa" t-shirt sales. This year, the group will sponsor a concert featuring I-Tex, scheduled for Friday night at Dr. G's.

But the marches, rallies and meetings are just a means to an end. The organization's goal, through their attention-grabbing activities, is to pressure the Board of Regents into divesting the \$2.95 million the University has invested in corporations doing business with South Africa.

The investments, which include \$250,000 in American Express Credit, \$125,000 in Interfirst Corporation and numerous other investments in Pepsico, Inc., Eastman Kodak, I.B.M., and Exxon, make up about one percent of the University's investment portfolio.

Muraya says he believes the University's money could be as profitably or more profitably invested in other companies without South African connections.

"Basically, what we're trying to show is that by divesting, the school would not be losing any money," Muraya says. "It would be an outstanding moral statement on the part of the University system, saying

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(left) Students Against Apartheid staged a protest march last fall to draw attention to the situation in South Africa. Goals of the group include increasing awareness about apartheid and getting Texas A&M to divest itself of investments in companies that do business in South Africa. The group plans to hold another march today which will begin at 4:30 p.m. at the College Station City Hall. Photo by John Makely.