

manchester connection no. 8

# COUNCIL EVADES THE ISSUE!

At a mass meeting of 400 students at Lins Grove yesterday a decision was taken to lobby University Council that afternoon in view of their refusal to discuss the principle of shareholder responsibility in respect of their South African investments.

Our representatives on University Council had been instructed to demand that the moral principle of disinvestment be discussed at the Council meeting and nothing else. The strength and feeling of the lobby, supported by the recent newspaper exposures of starvation wages for black workers in S. Africa, prompted the council to reconsider its position on the question.

Discussion in Council revealed that at least five members supported disinvestment, but after 1 1/2 hours no vote was allowed. A compromise statement was then prepared in some panic by the V.C. and Mr. Konyon, (see over for the statement)

## OCCUPATION

The lobby found the statement wholly unacceptable and therefore moved en masse into the council chamber for what was hoped would be constructive discussion with Council members. The V.C. refused, however, to participate in further debate by abruptly closing the meeting. Students occupied the Council chamber for 1 1/2 hours discussing their attitude to the Universities statement and formulating a reply (see over for this)

## LIBERALISM, NOT PATERNALISM

Essentially, the Universities statement is nothing but a further prevarication. It ignores the issue at stake, which is not the matter of whether black workers should be paid above or below an arbitrary starvation level (decided by an agency of the S. African regime itself), but the fundamental one of whether the University through its investments is to give material aid to the racist apartheid regimes. Time and time again the A.N.C. (African National Congress) has indicated that they want to see total disinvestment by the U.K., and their own experience refutes the argument that continued investment can force liberal reform in the racist state. Some members of the Council continue to press the latter view, that increasing investment can lead to liberalisation and this is implicit in the Council statement by now placing the emphasis on wage levels.

The apparently reasonable preamble disguises the fact that council continues to ignore the principle issue at stake. Talk of wage levels is purely diversionary from the fundamental question of continued support for the abhorrent policies of apartheid in S. Africa.

The only effective action open to the Uni org. is total disinvestment, not expressions of liberal sentiment. The struggle is one of national liberation, and the solution is not the white paternalism proposed by University Council.

## CAMPAIGN GROWS

During the occupation, there was considerable discussion for future action to be taken. The campaign is growing. A General Meeting on Thursday 22nd. March is being called. This is an opportunity for ~~everyone~~ to participate in the formulation of future plans. Yesterday we revealed the Universities vulnerability to our organized strength. They were forced into discussion in Council (which had previously been refused). The investments committee, to which the matter had been referred, has been by-passed and Council has been forced to deal directly with us. This must be seen as a victory for us which has been achieved by direct militant action and this must be continued. Pressure must be increased

be at the G.M. next thursday



to effect a decision on the true issue on May 2nd. To achieve victory everyone must be involved. COME TO THE G.M. NEXT THURSDAY.

#### STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The University council is totally opposed to apartheid. It recognises to the full its moral responsibility in relation to the firms in which it holds shares. It expresses the fullest concern about the allegations now being made about the wage practices of British firms in Southern Africa. It will itself take steps forthwith and will join with others to press firms in which it holds shares to fulfill their responsibilities by paying reasonable wages to Southern African workers, and to pursue liberal policies.

In the event of those measures not being effective Council will then consider divesting itself of investments in those firms. Council will discuss with interested parties the implications of this policy and will consider progress at its next meeting.

#### STATEMENT OF THOSE OCCUPYING COUNCIL CHAMBER

The University Council's statement is totally unacceptable; being based upon their political attitude to apartheid.

Our priority is not to bring the African population up to the Poverty Datum Line - a line set by the apartheid regime as subsistence and no more - but to see the regime as such brought down. Part of that policy is the removal of all British support for the regime.

The history of firms in South Africa, as revealed most recently in the Guardian newspaper, shows that they are flatly unwilling to raise the living standards of Africans. This unwillingness is a product of apartheid - of the regime itself - and inequality can only be ended by the victory of the liberation forces in Southern Africa.

We want liberation, not paternalism.

We will continue to campaign against Manchester University's support of apartheid.

# STOP PRESS

#### STAFF MEETING CALLED

MEMBERS OF STAFF ARE PLANNING TO CALL A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ALL STAFF MEMBERS EARLY NEXT TERM. THEY NEED 10% OF STAFF SIGNATURES TO CONVENE THIS MEETING WHICH PLANS TO DISCUSS STAFF ACTION IN SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENT CAMPAIGN. SUPPORT HAS ALSO COME FROM THE A.S.T.M.S. UNION, WHO INTEND PUTTING A MOTION OF SUPPORT BEFORE MANCHESTER TRADES COUNCIL.

action meeting today after G.M.