

# Unions oppose boycott

By Peter Kuitenbrouwer  
of Canadian University Press

**OTTAWA (CUP)** — Union leaders, a brewery president and even some anti-apartheid activists strongly oppose a boycott of Carling O'Keefe beer and Rothman's cigarettes that is spreading across Canadian university campuses.

Students on at least seven university campuses have voted to ban the beer from their pubs and take the cigarettes out of their vending machines, in protest of the beer company's ownership by a South African conglomerate.

McGill University and University of Prince Edward Island students recently joined the boycott, also in place at Carleton University in Ottawa, MacDonald College in Quebec and the University of Saskatchewan, University of

Toronto, and University of Victoria.

Thirteen university newspapers and one college newspaper also boycott the products' advertisements.

A recent prospectus of Rothman's International provided by David Cohen, an investment analyst for Wood Gundy in Toronto, shows the Rupert Foundation holds the controlling 44 per cent of Rothman's shares. Carling O'Keefe is listed as a Rothman's subsidiary.

The Rupert Foundation, the prospectus says, is "deemed to be controlled by Dr. Anthony E. Rupert." The 1985-86 International Who's Who lists Rupert as a "South African business executive ... founder and chair, Rembrandt Group of Companies (tobacco)."

Carling O'Keefe president

Donald Twiner played down the South African connection. "This is a widely held public corporation. They bought the shares on a free and open market in a democratic society," said Twiner.

He protested the boycotts saying Carling O'Keefe is a Canadian company providing jobs for Canadians. "This corporation is governed by the laws of Canada and pays over \$325 million in taxes here," Twiner said.

"We buy over \$1/2 billion in packaging in Canada," he said. "We probably employed 1500 students at our seven breweries over the summer. So it is strange that these actions would come back and hurt our corporation."

Gordon Blanderleith, president of the Canadian Brewery Workers Union which represents most Carling O'Keefe employees, is furious about the boycott.

"It doesn't make any sense to cut off jobs from Canadians workers," Blanderleith said. "This (beer) isn't imported from South Africa. These were Canadian jobs before someone for South Africa bought into the company."

"Why doesn't someone smarten up and worry about what's going on here?" asked Blanderleith. "Like with the Inuits, native Canadians, the poor and needy...?"

Scott Burke, president of the Student's Administrative Council at the University of Toronto, defended his school's boycotts, saying "It's a statement of our displeasure and awareness of the situation that exists in South Africa."

"I sympathize with them (the brewery workers) because most of the money stays in Canada. But a lot of the profits go back to South Africa. The money then goes to the regime which has huge military expenditures," Burke said.

"Are domestic jobs more important to you than basic human rights around the world?" Burke asked. "I think basic human rights are more

important."

Joanne Naiman, chair of Canadians Concerned about Southern Africa in Toronto said Canada is the only country where there are boycotts of Rothman's products (Rothman's also owns Dunhill, Jordan wines and Cartier watches).

"Our goal is to squeeze the economy so much that (President Pieter) Botha has no choice but to dismantle apartheid," Naiman, who teaches sociology at Ryerson, said. "Don't buy South African products, and get your campus to pull out investments in South Africa."

But she said a boycott of Carling O'Keefe "is not hitting the real target," since the product is made in Canada with Canadian labour.

Profits for Rothman's Inc. including profits from Carling O'Keefe were \$115 million for the nine months ending Dec. 31, 1985.

The Rembrandt Group, which Rupert chairs, reported \$170 million Canadian in net income in 1984.

The University of Saskatchewan and Carleton have been prevented by provincial law from carrying out the Carling O'Keefe portion of the boycott.

Laws in those two provinces say bars must stock the brands of beer that are "commonly in demand." Burke at U of T said nonetheless, the bars there don't stock the brands.

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