

Sit-down protest at McGill

OTTAWA (CUP) Twenty students occupied the McGill University administration building Friday, Oct. 11, leaving only when they were assured McGill's divestment from South Africa-tied firms would be the on agenda of the next board of governors meeting.

The same day, police arrested hundreds of American students protesting apartheid, and three U.S. universities announced full divestment.

Carrying placards and a large banner reading "Fight Racism in South Africa," the students sat down in the office of Nathan Moss, secretary to McGill's board of governors.

"After 15-20 minutes he (Moss) came out," says Brendan Weston, a third-year economics student and one of the demonstrators. "With badgering we managed to get him to agree to have a (divestment) motion put on the agenda for the Oct. 21 board meeting."

Moss also agreed that the meeting would be open. Most board meetings are closed to students and media.

McGill has investments totaling \$8.5 million in 26 companies which are "directly or indirectly" linked to South Africa, according to a report the school released Sept. 4, 1985. These include \$1.54 million in the Bank of Montreal, \$700,000 in CIL Incorporated, \$1.74 million in the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, \$2 million in General Motors, \$1.12 million in the Royal Bank of Canada, and \$1.02 million in Seagram's Inc. The chairpersons of Alcan and the Royal Bank of Canada sit on McGill's board.

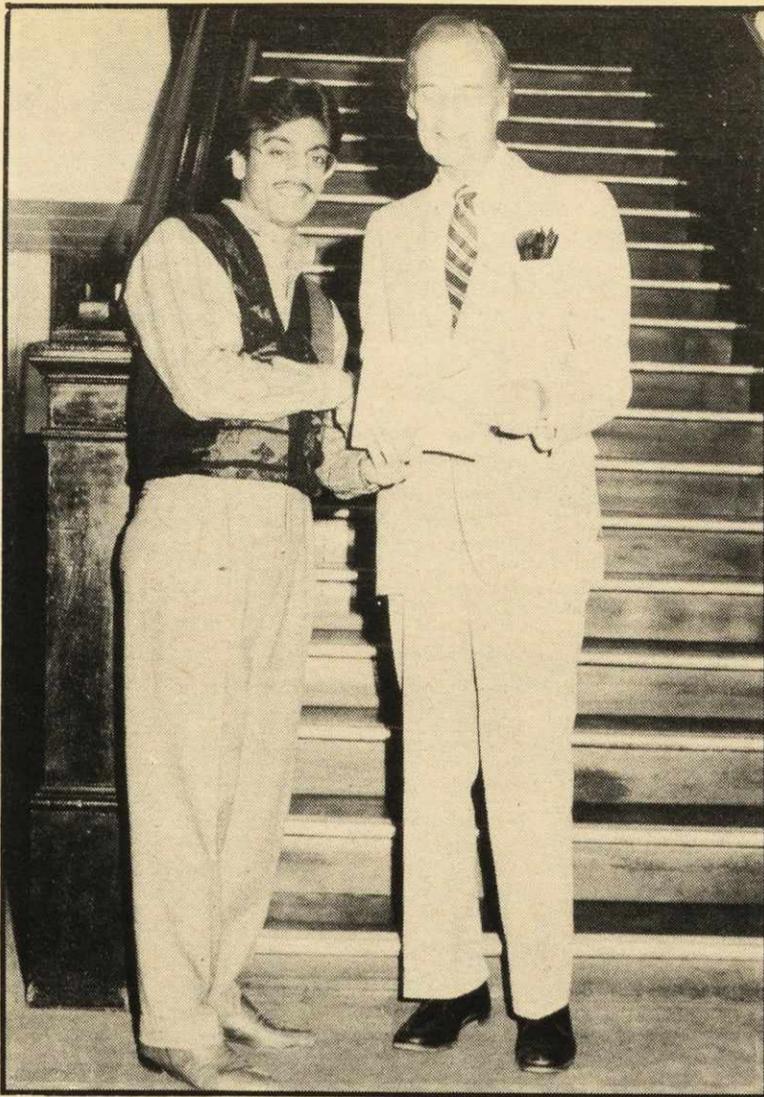
In the United States, students at about 100 campuses in 30 cities protested apartheid Oct. 11. Apartheid is the official policy which guarantees supremacy to five million South African whites denies rights to 24 million blacks, and restricts the rights of almost four million Asians and people of mixed race.

After ten students occupied the president's office during a trustees meeting, the University of Minnesota announced it will sell off all \$21 million it has invested with companies which do business with South Africa. The University of Miami announced full divestment of \$17 million in South Africa-tied funds. Iowa State College is also divesting its \$3 million in holdings.

At Cornell in Ithaca, New York, 100 students have been arrested this term for protests against apartheid. At Westlayen University in Middletown, Connecticut police arrested 130 students taking part in protests against white rule in South Africa.

Marie Bloom at the American Committee on Africa in New York calls the protests "great. There's a lot of creativity," she says. "And there's very strong coalition work between campuses and community."

Sixty-eight U.S. universities have fully divested, and since April this year \$200 million has been withdrawn from companies which do business in or with South Africa, Bloom says.



Hanwart Benaura hands Mayor Ron Wallace a proclamation declaring Oct. 21-28 International Students Week. Photo by Suzan Ketene, Dal Photo.

Civil servants fight for rights

By **LEANNE SCOTT**
and **SUSAN LUNN**

NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT employees have begun fighting for their political rights.

Being employed in Nova Scotia by the civil service means facing major restrictions involving partisan political activity. Apart from voting, these thousands of workers are virtually excluded by law from any political activity.

"The Civil Service Act varies from province to province, and Nova Scotia has been deemed to be one of the worst, ranking with Prince Edward Island," says a representative of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union (NSGEU).

The representative asked not to be identified.

"In British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario the civil servants enjoy unlimited freedom, making Nova Scotia one of the worst," the representative says.

The restrictions were laid down in 1930 in response to charges of political patronage within the civil service. Unrest about the restrictions within the NSGEU has led to a proposal to challenge the Act in court under the provisions of the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"The main argument is that the laws are considered to be archaic and out-of-date with today," says the NSGEU representative. Under the Act, no civil servant may put a sign on their lawn that may connect them to a political party, canvass or collect money for a party.

The NSGEU believes those in the non-managerial positions of the civil service should be allowed

to engage in partisan politics. "This would cause no great upheaval in the government, and there would no longer be an imposition on anyone's rights and freedoms," the representative says.

The New Democratic party has spoken out in favour of changes to the Act. Bob Levy, MLA for Kings South, says "there is no danger to the government." Levy says he believes there would be no increase in patronage.

The NSGEU representative says the court challenge is important because if the government can restrict the political rights of its employees, it could conceivably extend those restrictions to any segment of the population.

Ron Russell, provincial minister in charge of the Civil Service Commission, was not available for comment on the proposed court case.



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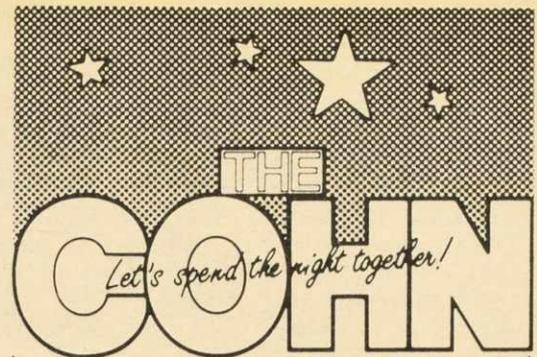
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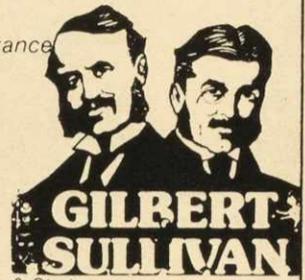
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