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McGill, Concordia University students withdraw Bank of Montreal accounts

MONTREAL (CUP) — Students opposed to the racist policies of the South African government withdrew their accounts from the Manfield and Sherbrooke Street branch of the Bank of Montreal as part of an anti-apartheid demonstration on November 13.

Concordia and McGill University anti-apartheid groups joined forces to protest the bank they say has the most dealings with the South African apartheid regime.

Shouting "Don't bank on racism, divest now!", and carrying placards, about 150 students marched through the McGill campus to the main gates of the university, just across the street from the Bank of Montreal branch with which the McGill Board of Governors deals.

About 35 of the protestors then crossed the street and lined up inside the bank to close their accounts in "symbolic protest" of the bank's investment policies.

The bank management had been notified in advance of the protest, and had stationed extra security personnel and tellers to deal quickly with the protestors.

Meanwhile, the other protestors circled back through the campus. When the withdrawals had been completed, the two groups met and formed a rotating picket line across from the bank.

Leaflets distributed by the McGill South Africa Committee explained that the Bank of Montreal loaned \$85 million to the South African government and its subsidiaries between 1973 and 1974.

In response, J. Cote from the Bank's public relations department said, "We will not willingly support apartheid or oppression on the part of any government through our investment policy."

"I would like to see proof that we have lent money to the South African government", he added.

Michele Sheppard, co-chairperson of the McGill SAC, said McGill's campaign was joining a world-wide movement, involving many universities and social groups calling for divestment.

"This demonstration has three main goals", said Sheppard. "First, divestment of McGill holdings from South Africa.

Second, disengagement by Western transnationals from the regime and the imposition of effective economic and other sanctions against the minority government.

"Third, the long-term goals which only the blacks can achieve: the overthrow of the government." Francesca Worrall, internal co-ordinator of the Concordia anti-apartheid committee, and herself a white native of South Africa, said, "The more white South Africans that are against apartheid, the better, because they have the political power. Blacks in South Africa have no access to the channels of political expression."

Concordia and McGill students have been discussing the possibility of creating an inter-university committee against apartheid, Worrall added.

The McGill Students' Society divested its funds from the Bank of Montreal three years ago, while the Concordia University Students' Association has just recently begun the process of moving its funds to the Toronto Dominion Bank, which does not have investments in South Africa.

Employment: "Canadians Only" rule blasted by UBC profs

VANCOUVER (CUP) A group of professors at the University of British Columbia, fighting a new "Canadian first" hiring policy for faculties, claim the quality of education for students will be jeopardized if the regulation is enforced.

Federal employment and immigration minister Lloyd Axworthy announced the regulations in July, intending to force universities to consider Canadian candidates for vacant posts before looking at other applications. Every Canadian candidate must now be rejected for a lack of qualifications before any foreign academics can be considered.

And if no suitable Canadian is found the university must provide Employment and Immigration Canada with a file of evidence documenting the recruitment work before it gets permission to hire a foreign academic.

"Gradually it will mean that the universities will get filled up

with people whose strongest recommendation is that they are Canadian."

The faculty letter said work towards teaching and research excellence and encouraging students to remain at UBC for graduate programs, is "frustrated if nationality becomes a significant qualification."

"We don't want people who are qualified -- we want the best," said Scott. "There's a difference between meeting qualifications and being excellent."

He said the faculty's rejection of the policy did not imply doubt about the quality of Canadian professors. Instead he said he opposed guaranteeing jobs for Canadians at the expense of a quality education for students.

UBC arts dean Robert Will said that although there are

some academic areas in which only Canadians should teach, such as Canadian studies, he feels the new regulations which apply to all areas of the university, are unwarranted.

"I don't like constraints," said Scott. "We know better than government bureaucrats.

A letter to Axworthy opposing the rules has been signed by all but two members of UBC's economics department. The department is now asking other faculties to follow their lead.

"The new regulations are giving nationality a higher priority and general excellence a lower priority," said economics professor Anthony Scott. "It's a worthy thing for Axworthy to be concerned about, but finding Canadian jobs is not the most important thing about universities."

Political fringe

(PNS/CUP) Before Ronald Reagan rides off to conquer world communism, he might be interested to know the world's largest communist bloc is headquartered in Washington D.C. has two-thirds of the world's communists under their wing.

Stone also points out the United States is a lot more lenient with its communist friends than its so-called "free world" allies.

If Poland were in Latin America, he says, the U.S. would be pressing for a crackdown on trade unions. Instead, they have showered Poland with 25 billion

That startling revelation comes from political columnist I.F. Stone, who points out five communist nations - China, Poland, Cambodia, Somalia and Yugoslavia - now look to the United States for protection.

Moscow controls twice as many communist governments, but, thanks to China, the U.S. dollars worth of hard-currency loans -- more than they've loaned any other country -- any other country, that is, except their supposed arch-rival, the Soviet Union.



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