



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

Published on *Global Nonviolent Action Database* (<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>)

---

## Stanford Students campaign for divestment from apartheid South Africa, U.S., 1977

- South Africa Apartheid Divestment Movement (1970s-1980s)

9 May

1977

to: 10 May

1977

**Country:** United States

**Location City/State/Province:** Palo Alto, California

**Location Description:** Stanford University Campus

**Goals:**

Stanford University divestment from companies that did business in apartheid South Africa.

### Methods

**Methods in 1st segment:**

**Methods in 2nd segment:**

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in

**Methods in 3rd segment:**

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in

**Methods in 4th segment:**

**Methods in 5th segment:**

- 001. Public speeches
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in

**Methods in 6th segment:**

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in

### **Additional methods (Timing Unknown):**

- 037. Singing

## **Classifications**

### **Classification:**

Change

### **Cluster:**

Economic Justice

Human Rights

### **Group characterization:**

- Stanford University students

## **Leaders, partners, allies, elites**

### **Leaders:**

Stanford Committee for Responsible Investment Policy (SCRIP)

### **Partners:**

Not known

### **External allies:**

Not known

### **Involvement of social elites:**

Not known

## **Joining/exiting order of social groups**

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**

**Groups in 4th Segment:**

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

**Segment Length:** *Approximately 8 hours*

## **Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence**

### **Opponents:**

Stanford University Board of Trustees

### **Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

Not known

### **Campaigner violence:**

Not known

**Repressive Violence:**

Police arrested and removed students from the student union building

## Success Outcome

**Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

0 points out of 6 points

**Survival:**

1 point out of 1 points

**Growth:**

2 points out of 3 points

---

This campaign was part of a greater movement of international opposition to Apartheid in South Africa. The divestment from South Africa was advocated in the United States in the 1960s, but support for divestiture did not reach full scale until the 1980s. The Stanford student solidarity sit-in campaign of 1977 came early on in the rise of this economic pressure.

The financial ties the school held with South Africa sparked the students at Stanford University. The Stanford University board of trustees decided not to support a new proposal by a Ford Motor Company stockholder to withdraw from South Africa. The university held 93,950 shares of Ford stocks. Stanford University students, both black and white, urged Stanford to support the proposal.

Around 1 P.M. on Monday May 9, 1977, students began their sit-in at the Old Student Union Building at Stanford's campus. The police entered the building with bullhorns shortly after 6 P.M. the deadline given to the students to leave. 294 campaigners, most of them students, were arrested after they refused to end the sit-in. Most of the students walked out, while some limped and were carried from the building. It is not clear whether the police used physical violence on the students. About 500 supporters cheered as the students were led out of the building into buses to be transported to jail. The students chanted, "Apartheid means profit, Stanford won't stop it." They sang, "We Shall Overcome." The protesters called for non-segregation in eating, comfort, and work facilities; equal employment; equal pay; training program for blacks; more blacks in management posts and better living quality away from work. These demands reflected the Sullivan Principles, developed by Reverend Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia. The students' charges included interfering with a lawful business, unlawful assembly, failure to disperse, and participating in an unlawful assembly. Among the 294 arrested was Jill Ann Marshall, the daughter of U.S. Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall. According to a Labor Department spokesman in D.C., Marshall was aware of the arrest but had no comment.

The students' Stanford Committee for Responsible Investment Policy (SCRIP) organized the sit-ins, and they intended these sit-ins to be entirely nonviolent.

This was the largest number of students arrested at once in the university's history. It was the largest mass arrest since the anti-Vietnam war protests in late 1960s and early 1970s. All but three students were released without bail.

The police called the sit-in on Monday night a "peaceful" night, in which about 10 percent of the 11,000-student body participated.

The next day, an estimated number of 900 students gathered around at the union building—the same place as Monday night's sit-in. The students staged a rally at noon, in which speakers condemned the arrests of the previous night and re-occupied the union building. The university employees closed their office doors while the students walked around the hallways of the building.

After occupying the union building for most of the afternoon, the protesters held a voting session: 170 to 130 to end the sit in.

About 300 student demonstrators gave up their sit-in at the old student union building at Stanford, deciding not to face a second night of mass arrests. Later in the year, in August of 1977, six of the protesters were put on 6-month probation for their participation in the sit-ins.

Meanwhile, the board of trustees of Stanford issued a statement saying that each trustee held "a deep aversion to the practice of apartheid." The board said it had asked its university staff to look into the school's investments in corporations holding business in South Africa. It also agreed for three of its board members to meet with three members of SCRIP. The university did not agree to a divestment of its financial involvement in South Africa.

In December 1977, the Stanford University board of trustees adopted a South Africa-related ethical investment policy.

On June 14, 1985, the school adopted a revised selective divestment policy. A Commission on Investment Responsibility (CIR) was created, composed of faculty, students, staff and alumni representatives, to review the university's portfolio and shareholder resolutions that the university voted on. Not until June 14, 1985, did Stanford University create formal investment policies that explicitly set out guidelines for investing in South Africa-related companies.

Student groups continued to protest in the following years for Stanford to fully divest. Stanford University, however, had not fully divested even by 1986, meaning it did not announce that it had sold off, or was in the process of selling off, their investments in South Africa for ethical or political reasons. Rather, it took a case-by-case policy, requiring and allowing for a review of the policies and actions of companies whose equities may be divested.

## Research Notes

### Sources:

Coons, Christopher A. *The Response of Colleges and universities to Calls for Divestment*. Investor Responsibility Research Center: Washington D.C., 1986.

1977: Anti-Apartheid. [http://a3m2009.org/archive/1973\\_beyond/1977\\_anti-apartheid/1977\\_anti-apartheid.html](http://a3m2009.org/archive/1973_beyond/1977_anti-apartheid/1977_anti-apartheid.html).

AP. "294 Arrested at Stanford". *Tri City Herald*, 10 May 1977. pg 4.

<<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=hK8tAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=o4kFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6253,3356974&dq=stanford+south+africa>

AP. "Protesters Leave Stanford U Building". *Toledo Blade*, 11 May 1977. pg. 6.

<<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=Js4tAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=WAIEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=5715,5591885&dq=stanford+south+africa>

UPI. "Hundreds rally at Stanford to protest mass arrests". *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, 11 May 1977. pg. 12A

<<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=vj41AAAAIIBAJ&sjid=amcEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=3730,4882109&dq=stanford+south+africa>

AP. "Protestors arrested". *Gadsden Times*, 10 May 1977. pg. 12

<<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=9g0pAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=RtYEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=2860,1574255&dq=stanford+south+africa>

UPI. "Cabinet member's daughter arrested". *Lodi News-Sentinel*, 11 May 1977. pg. 9

<<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=O8MzAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=wjIHAAAAIIBAJ&pg=5395,1121809&dq=stanford+south+africa>

**Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:**

Jeewon Kim, 19/09/2010

**A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.**

Copyright Swarthmore College.



Global Nonviolent Action Database is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Original website design and artwork created by [Daniel Hunter](#).

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>.

Registered users can [login](#) to the website.

---

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/10/2020 - 23:11):** <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/stanford-students-campaign-divestment-apartheid-south-africa-us-1977>

**Links:**

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/wave-campaigns/south-africa-apartheid-divestment-movement-1970s-1980s>

[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-student-participants>