

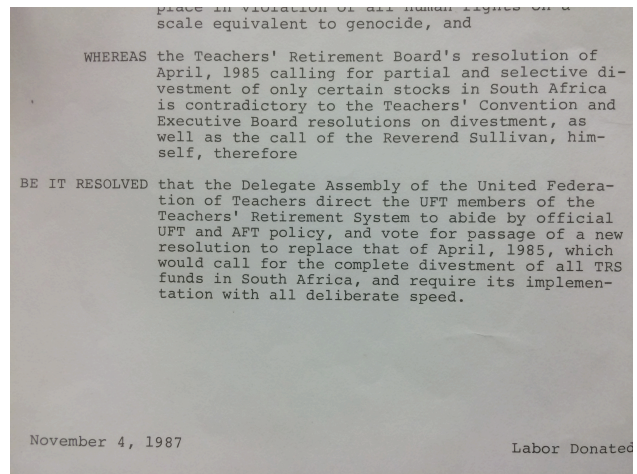
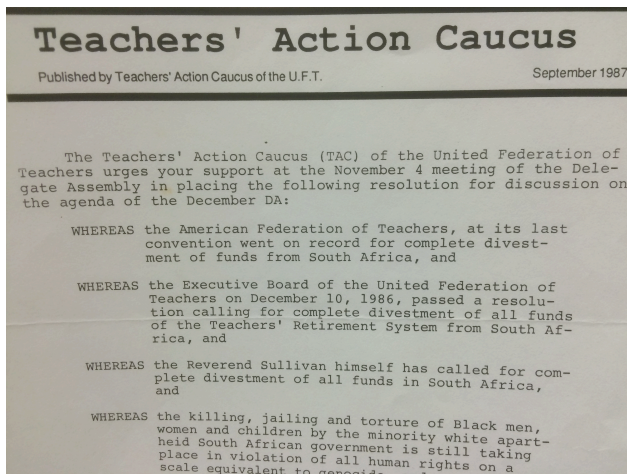
# New Action/UFT

November 2015

## The Fight to Divest Pension Funds

### from Corporations Doing Business with The Republic of South Africa

In 1984-85 one of the predecessors to New Action/UFT the Teachers' Action Caucus, initiated a postcard campaign directed at the UFT to urge our three Teacher Members on the Retirement Board to press for divestment of our pension funds from corporations doing business with the apartheid regime of South Africa. Although neither the union nor the three members alone could call for divestment, both could certainly have a major impact on convincing the Retirement Board to do so.



In January 1986, after six months of Unity Caucus refusing to seat Michael Shulman who had just been elected in May 1985 as V.P. for Academic High Schools, he took his seat. This only happened after Shulman and New Action agreed to a second election, which New Action won overwhelmingly. At Shulman's first Ad Com meeting, President Sandra Feldman was confused by what divestment was. She asked Michael, "What are these postcards about?" It was some time later that the UFT came on board with the anti apartheid, divestment movement.

The study to divest pension funds took another two years, after which the UFT joined the rest of the labor movement.

## The Fight to Divest Pension Funds from Fossil Fuel Companies and other entities that Contribute to Climate Change

On this month's Delegate Assembly agenda we have a resolution that calls for the teacher members of the Teachers' Retirement Board to request a study to review strategies to divest from fossil fuel companies without putting members pensions or investments at risk. This is a responsible approach.

However, such a study should not be extended for an undue period of time. Certainly, we do not want to repeat the experience from the 1980s, when it took two years to study whether or not we could divest from South Africa – it was the right thing to do, and we were able to divest responsibly. In 2015, a few months should suffice. Climate change needs to be addressed today.

### Abusive Administrators? Let us know

If you are in a school with a highly abusive administration, don't sit silently. Contact your District Rep, and your Borough Office.

And New Action wants to know. Call or e-mail, and if things aren't being resolved through normal channels, we can talk about steps to take.