Coalition to hold divestment rally

To the Editor:
The MIT Coalition Against Apartheid has decided to escalate the anti-apartheid movement on campus due to the MIT administration's consistent advocacy of "constructive investments" in South Africa. Apartheid, the ruthless murder and attacks of the blacks by the South African army and police, and the administration's refusal to tell us when and where the Institute Committee and the full Corporation will be meeting.

Why is the administration afraid to tell us where they are meeting to review their apartheid investment policy? Because they are afraid that the students, faculty and staff will show up to force them to show support for the black people's liberation struggle by divesting from US corporations which operate in racist South Africa.

Over the past several months the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation has been reviewing its investment policy in US corporations which operate in racist South Africa. Skeptics that the administration might attempt to use its "constructive engagement" policy to divest without seeking student input, six students with both President Paul E. Gray '54 and Secretary of the Corporation Constance B. Simonides on Feb. 13. Gray said that he believes US corporations in South Africa are "more today that ever before" a constructive force.

The students asked Gray why they should support the MIT Corporation to divest considering that the leaders of IBM, Citicorp/Citibank, Exxon, etc., which profit from black slave labor in South Africa, also sit on the MIT Corporation. Gray said that these gentlemen will act, as required by law, in the most profitable long term interest of MIT.

Gray then proceeded to tell us that neither the faculty resolution last December nor student opinion would play much of a role in the decision of whether or not to divest. Clearly, the time has come for us to escalate our pressure on the MIT administration and corporation.

In the past several weeks the racist South Africa government has surrounded the black township of Alexandra near Johannesburg with the army and police, murdered over 26 people to suppress the mass insurrection against apartheid.

The event mentioned above is only the latest of a never-ending series of killings by the racist government over the past decades. While the black workers and youth fight bravely in the streets to destroy apartheid, here in the US we must do whatever we can to assist their struggle.

To assist the economic destabilization of the racist regime so that the people can overthrow apartheid, the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid calls for a full economic embargo on racist South Africa. For years the US corporations, such as General Motors and IBM, have profited from black slave labor in South Africa.

To show our support for the black people's struggle in South Africa, we demand that the Institute divest over $150 million in all US corporations which operate in South Africa.

We call on all students, faculty and staff to help build a shantytown in the Kresge Oval starting at noon on Sunday, Mar. 2. Bring hammer, nails, wood and friends. The shantytown will serve to remind us of the black people's struggle. The shantytown will serve to remind us that apartheid will not go away until Friday.

The MIT Coalition Against Apartheid is going to take a step toward cutting the ties between the United States and the South African government. This group of students, faculty, and staff is attempting to pressure the Institute into considering not just the economic, but the moral aspects of its investments. They are planning to begin construction of a shantytown Sunday on the Kresge oval, where they will live until Friday.

In South Africa there are shantytowns outside of every white city and town. These shantytowns are constructed out of US corporations. Some of these communities have only a few electric lights, and more in 13 underdeveloped countries which have already divested. Large international investors, including universities, trade unions, churches, and state and local governments, have the economic power to force companies to divest. It is time to use that power.

One day apartheid will crumble. On that day, we may look back on MIT's role. Will we be proud of our courageous and creative actions helped hasten that day? Or will we be ashamed of our hesitation in challenging the last outpost of constitutional sanctions? Leaders of US corporations will be judged, by us, on their actions this week.