November 21, 1977

Dear Friends,

Vorster is our best organizer, right?

Crackdowns that include black middle class organizations demonstrate clearly for all to see that no significant black organizations, moderate or not, will be tolerated. The death of Steve Biko helps many to understand for the first time the brutal determination of the Apartheid police state to crush black leadership. At the United Nations and in Congress, unprecedented actions take place.

Vorster is our best organizer? Wrong.

The South African crackdown is a sign that the struggle for freedom is becoming more effective inside the country, and that international opposition to Apartheid is growing stronger. While Vorster has made many Americans aware of South African totalitarianism, it is we who must organize popular revulsion into effective action. It is we who must act to press our government to stop supporting Vorster.

We at the Washington Office on Africa see our work as a critical part of the organizing process here in the United States. Our concentration on issues of U.S. policy toward southern Africa enables us to give you focused, in-depth analysis and timely action alerts. We have learned from our experience over the last five years how to get the sort of information that you need for your work, how to help other groups to get mobilized and how to work with Congressional allies. But we need your help if we are going to do the job well.

First, we need your evaluation. Are we helping you in the best way? Does what we write make sense to you? What could we do to make our work more useful to you? Does what we do help you to organize in your community against the Vorster regime and U.S. support for it? To help us, please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and send it to us as soon as possible. If you do not find our materials helpful and no longer want to be on our mailing list, please let us know that, too.

Second, we need your financial support more than ever. We believe that we must expand. We could use right now two
more full-time staff people, and we plan to move to four more in the next two years to deal with the sheer volume of work which comes our way. We ask you to be generous because of the importance of the cause and the critical nature of the times.

We would like to make a special appeal to you to become a Sustaining Contributor to the Washington Office on Africa by giving us $25 or more. In special recognition of such contributions, we will send you your choice of the following:

the striking 1978 Anti-Apartheid Calendar just published by the American Committee on Africa in cooperation with the U.N. Center Against Apartheid

OR

Window on Soweto, a moving, first-hand account of daily life in the Black township outside of Johannesburg, by Joyce Sikakane.

We ask that all of you who receive our materials send us at least $5, to cover the cost of production, printing and mailing our resources to you.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your help and support which sustains us in our work. Knowing that we are a part of a common effort in which more and more people are joining gives us strength to persist in what we do.

Sincerely,

Ted Lockwood
Christine Root