February 3, 1991

Mr. Bob Davenport
Op Ed Editor
Seattle Times
P. O. Box 70
Seattle, Washington 98111

Dear Mr. Davenport:

For three nights and three days on a wet, windy and cold weekend in Seattle last April, the Rev. Robert L. Jeffrey, Sr. prayed and fasted in a shanty outside Boeing corporate headquarters. Rev. Jeffrey's witness preceded a Boeing stockholders' meeting where Rev. Jeffrey urged Boeing to cancel its $500 million contract with South African Airways. Rev. Jeffrey's actions were public, courageous and principled.

How different were the actions of Boeing officials who entertained representatives of the apartheid regime recently at the Harbor Club in the Norton Building in downtown Seattle! As Erik Lacitis reported in the Seattle Times on January 29, 1991, Boeing officials held a private banquet at the downtown Harbor Club to host apartheid South African officials who were in town to accept delivery of at least one of the 747 jets. Then when Lesa Quale, who has worked as a server at the Harbor Club for two years, told her boss that she would forfeit her wages and tips for that night because she was an opponent of apartheid and did not want to compromise her principles, she was fired by the Harbor Club's general manager.

To make matters even worse, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service, financed by our tax dollars, provided strict security. Was the security to protect the South African officials or to protect Boeing from further criticism of their actions in going through with the sordid deal? As the peace community in Seattle rallies together to try to stop the killing in Iraq, Israel, South Africa and the United States, we all need to remember Boeing's principal purpose is not to provide jobs for people but to make money. War, killing and misery are profitable, and Boeing officials are aware of that. They must also be a little ashamed of it. Otherwise, they would publicly announce their partying with apartheid dignitaries.

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The Rev. Elaine J. W. Stanovsky
President-Director
Several things need to happen here. First, Lesa Quale's job needs to be restored. If Ms. Quale had been notified before her shift of the nature of the event, she could have asked her boss to schedule someone else. It is unacceptable that she be fired for having political views contrary to Harbor Club board members and Boeing top brass.

Second, Boeing, John Fluke, Paccar, the Robbins Company, and all the other locally-headquartered companies doing business with apartheid, contrary to the express requests of the South African Council of Churches, the African National Congress and all people interested in ending apartheid, need to take responsibility for what they are doing. Private events that are clearly of public interest and involving public money need to be announced publicly. Dissent cannot and should not be stifled by people who are afraid of a free press. Seekers of racial and economic justice as well as peace will continue to try to change both public and private policies that deny such justice and peace.

At last week's community rally launching Black Dollar Days, the same Rev. Robert L. Jeffrey, Sr. who kept vigil outside of Boeing early last year told the multi-racial crowd assembled that the African American community wants a report from all our elected officials, in Washington, D.C., in Olympia, and in Seattle about what they are doing to eliminate the inequality of opportunity faced by blacks in employment, business, education, health care, housing, and every other aspect of life. Part of that report must come also from members of the Harbor Club who collaborated with apartheid.

Part of that report also must come from churches, universities, pension boards, and other institutions that continue to have investments in companies doing business with apartheid. Black Dollar Days presents an opportunity for those institutions to do some affirmative investing in the African American community here in Seattle and in the State of Washington. This seems particularly important for companies such as Boeing and Paccar, for example, who have their corporate headquarters here. Black Dollar Days is a visible way to support existing African American businesses, but if we are concerned with simple justice here at home as well as internationally, we will all do well to urge both public and private investment in the African American community for the long haul.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Prince, Chair
Task Force on Southern Africa
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cc: Rev. Elaine Stanovsky
    Rev. Robert L. Jeffrey, Sr.
    Ms. Lesa Quale