June 10, 1975

Dear Dave,

It was so good to talk with you last week in Washington. You mentioned the possibility that the people who met in Madison recently might pool some money for constituency development on southern African issues, and suggested that we write down some thoughts about how such funds might be used through this office.

As we see it, there are two kinds of tasks which need to be worked on if we are to build stronger support for the liberation of southern Africa and stronger opposition to U.S. involvement in southern Africa. First, there are many "southern Africa" groups which have been in existence for a long time, but, to our knowledge, there has never been an effort to get people from these groups together to share experiences and ideas for strategies and tactics. Second, even these mostly unrelated groups are far too few in number, and there are many parts of the country where there is still no organization of local opposition to apartheid. So, if that opposition is to grow in this country, we need to strengthen the groups which already exist by providing ways for groups to benefit from each others' experiences, and to encourage more groups to form in different cities.

The strengthening of existing groups seems to come first, since it is on the basis of successful actions in some cities that people in other cities might be encouraged to act. This is the aspect we have been thinking about more recently, and we have come to the conclusion that the best way to move forward is to call a small working conference of members of existing southern Africa groups to share organizing and action ideas. We have written a draft proposal for such a conference, to be held this fall in the mid-west. (We have enclosed extra copies of this proposal for you to share with others in the group.)

/We are hoping that this conference can basically fund itself: that it will be organized on a low-cost basis, and that most people will be able to bear their own transportation costs. We do think that we could also raise some money to help with travel and organization costs from a few "project budgets" of churches and other national groups. We don't think we would need to use any additional money from other sources for this event./

Our view is that the conference will probably decide to strengthen the network of groups around the country in specific ways which we cannot anticipate at this time. We do not believe that it would be appropriate for this office to act as a national co-ordinator outside of the sphere in which we have been operating under our present mandate from our steering committee, namely to co-ordinate work designed to directly influence U.S. policy-maker...

However, we do think that we can take a part with others in carrying out some tasks which will help build a stronger local constituency prepared to take many forms of action. For your consideration, we therefore propose that the sum which you are thinking about providing be used as follows:

a. It would be useful to have one of our staff travel to several cities where anti-apartheid work has been minimal, ineffective or has "died on the vine" but where there would seem to be potential for new growth and political impact. The cities selected should be in the same general region and not impossibly far from Washington, so as to minimize costs. The purpose of the trip would be to see if it is possible to bring together individuals who have hitherto acted simply as individuals in order to form a self-sustaining group capable of acting as a center of activism in the area.

Our representative should, if possible, seek to include persons active in church, labor or Afro-American groups which have a potential or beginning interest in African issues. Where there are several groups in the area which have done some work on African issues, our representative should seek to interview them to see whether there is any basis on which co-ordination of their work could be improved. In some areas, collaboration may have been tried and have been unsuccessful. In others, it may be that the presence of an outsider could act as a "catalytic agent" to overcome isolation or fear. The primary task here would be to listen and to see if there are opportunities for new co-operation.

By bringing fresh enthusiasm, insights, resources and stimulation, some of which will be our own and some of which will be fostered by the conference, our representative should attempt to lay the groundwork for collaborative work with this office, with other national organizations and with other local groups within the region. We think special stress should be laid on the latter point, in order to see if there is a basis for breaking out of local isolation by encouraging regional collaboration.

b. We are often one of the first sources of news about developments in legislation or policy and the arrival of important visitors from South Africa. There is a need for us to confer more frequently than our budget presently allows with important groups around the country in order to co-ordinate a proper response to developments. For example, how should we have responded to the newspaper ad campaign by the South African Ministry of Information, the discovery of recruitment of mercenaries for Rhodesia or the trips of several members of Congress to South Africa in the last few months? If we had more money for postage and telephone calls, we might have been able to get a whole lot more thought and action going. One of our restraints, limited money for long distance calls, makes for the east coast "cliqueishness" about which midwesterners so rightly complain.

At this point, there are the two kinds of ideas which occur to us. If the local organizing conference works out in the fall, other possibilities would surely arise there. Some of the people in your group may have some other ideas out of your experiences of trying to work at the local level.

Thanks so much for initiating this discussion. We'll look forward to your reactions.

Sincerely,

Ted Lockwood

[Signature]

Chris Root