June 14, 1978

Open Statement of Chicago Students to James Carter, President of the United States and to Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State.

We, the undersigned, representing a diversity of students across Chicago, urgently call on the U.S. government to cut all ties with the South African government and close the South African consulate in Chicago.

The South African consulate exists solely to promote tourism, trade and investment by American corporations in South Africa. These all provide desperately-needed economic support for the white minority government to stay in power. The profitability of foreign investment in South Africa rests directly on the systematic denial of civil and trade union rights to those not born white in South Africa, a denial which perpetuates below-subistence wages and chronic problems of poverty. South African apartheid represents the most blatant system of racist exploitation and repression in the world since Nazi Germany. Many of its laws are duplication of Nazi laws with only 'white' substituted for "Aryan" and "Bantu" for "Jew." All who are not born white in South Africa are condemned to a permanently inferior social, political and economic status.

South African students have been in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and against the inferior Bantu education system which one black student described as "preparing us only to serve our masters." We feel a particular solidarity with these students, as with all who are oppressed inside South Africa, because of their immense sacrifices in the struggle for equality and justice for all.

As students, we are particularly concerned that many Chicago universities continue to invest in South African apartheid by continuing to hold stock in corporations and banks active there. These corporations have pursued capital-intensive investment in South Africa, thereby providing very few jobs for the under-educated and unskilled African majority and helping the white minority to maintain its economic dominance. Where our African brothers and sisters do work for these corporations, their wages are substantially below those paid to white workers doing comparable work. Job advancement for non-whites is crippled by a system of racial job reservation and by a racist educational system that maintains black workers in unskilled, menial, underpaid work.

The racism and economic exploitation of these American banks and corporations in supporting apartheid is an extension of their racism and exploitation here at home. The same Chicago banks, First National and Continental, which invest millions in South Africa and continue to sell Krugerrands, are "red-lining" local neighborhoods and denying financing to minority communities. The same corporations that have moved to South Africa are laying off workers here in the U.S. and raising their prices, contributing to the inflation which hurts black and other poor communities the most. The same U.S. government which extends nuclear cooperation to the South African government and opposes economic sanctions against South Africa at the United Nations refuses to strongly support efforts to desegregate the Chicago schools. The segregation of education in South Africa...
and the inferior education available to blacks there reflects the inferior and segregated educational experience of many Chicago students.

We ask President Carter and Secretary of State Vance to act on the following demands:

1. Cut all ties with the South African government and close the South African consulate in Chicago.

2. Support broad economic sanctions against South Africa at the United Nations—a total boycott of apartheid.

3. Prohibit all U.S. corporate and bank ties to South Africa.

Action Group on South Africa
University of Chicago

African History Club
South Shore High School

Black Student Organization for Communication
University of Illinois
Circle Campus

Steve Biko Memorial Committee
Northwestern University and Chicago Groups
June 15, 1978

TO: The Honorable James Earl Carter, President
    The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State

We, the undersigned, members of the U.S. Labor Movement, demand that all U.S. ties, whether they be economic, military or political, with the regime of the Republic of South Africa be broken. Further, we demand that the South Africa consulate in Chicago be immediately closed down.

We base these demands on the facts that African workers in South Africa constitute over two-thirds of that country's work force, that they number seven out of every ten workers, that they provide over 90% of the workers in agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining; over 65% in electricity, gas and water industries; 67% in service industry; and over 60% in construction; and yet they receive none of the basic rights that workers in most other countries of the world have.

For instance, these African workers earn one-eighth of the average wage earned by white workers in that country. Even if we were to use the skilled-unskilled differential (being aware that laws forbid African workers in most areas of industry), it would not change the injustice. The skilled-unskilled differential in the industrial countries is 1.4 to 1. In South Africa, the difference between the white workers and the black workers is 17 to 1 as of 1972. Latest figures indicate that it is now 20 to 1.

These conditions are enforced by a legal system that is both anti-labor and racist. For instance: a) There is a contract labor system for African workers; b) There is a reservation of the right of skilled employment in the mining industry for whites only; c) There is a bar on training opportunities for all non-whites. This closes off all apprentice-type programs for African workers; d) An "influx control" system and an "endorsement out" of the job market system are rigidly enforced by a use of the passbook system, which gives the government and the bosses complete control over whether an African worker works or not and whether he eats or starves. This is run with all the efficiency of the Gestapo of Nazi Germany; e) African trade unions are not allowed to be registered and, therefore, are unrecognized; f) The right to strike is punishable by prison terms and exorbitant fines or both; g) Mixed trade unions are forbidden.

These are only a few of the laws enforcing the degradation of the millions of African workers. Other laws enforce the separation of African families for years at a time, thus destroying family life. Job gradings are completely racist. An African nurse makes 45% of a white nurse. In the clerical field, whites make double that of blacks.

It is to the shame of this nation that as of 1976, U.S. trade with South Africa increased by 26%, giving the U.S. the second largest volume of trade with that country. U.S. banks have extended over two billion dollars worth of loans to South Africa. U.S. corporations (350 of them)
have over two billion dollars worth of investments in the apartheid regime. Ford, General Electric, ITT, Firestone, Mobil, and Goodyear make up 75% of this total, while Chrysler, Caterpillar, General Motors, IBM, and Caltex are leading investors. These corporations build their plants in South Africa while at the same time closing down plants here in the U.S. rather than yield to the just demands of U.S. workers. These runaway shops and their corporate owners prefer a country where the majority of workers are not allowed to organize, strike or work under human conditions. For instance, the average yearly income of a white worker at the Caterpillar Industries is $7,965 while the African worker makes $900 only.

WE ASK AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL TIES WITH THE APARTHEID REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA.

WE ASK AN IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT CLOSING OF THE SOUTH AFRICA CONSULATE IN CHICAGO.

Spencer Austin,* International Vice President
Seafarers International Union

Patrick Gorman,* Chairman of the Board
Amalgamated Meat Cutters-Butcher Workmen Union of N.A.

James Balanoff,* District Director, District 31
United Steel Workers of America

Frank Rosen,* District 11 President
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America

Harold Rogers,*
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Chicago Local

Leo Draper,* President
American Postal Workers Union, Chicago Local,

Jack Spiegel,* District Director
United Shoe Workers of America

Willie King,* Treasurer
Cab Drivers Union Local 777

Lester Williams, President, Local 1771
Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union - Textile Division
Sid Lens,* Director Emeritus  
Service Employees International Union Local 229

George Schmidt, * President  
Substitutes United for Better Schools (SUBS)

Jeff Sarles,* Chief Steward  
American Postal Workers Union, Chicago Local

Lynn Summers,* Grievanceman  
United Steel Workers of America, Local 65

Randy Potts,*  
United Steel Workers of America, Local 65

*Organizations listed for identification purposes only.

L. A. Dunnigan, President  
A. Phillip Randolph Institute  
Chicago Southside Chapter
June 15, 1978

Mr. Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In memory of the June 1976 massacre of black citizens in the township of Soweto, South Africa, we, the below signed community groups and individuals express our support of the just and humane struggle of the people of Soweto against the illegal, racist government of South Africa by the people of Soweto. Before these merciless killings occurred, U.S. banks and corporations were engaged in multi-million dollar economic relations with the minority regime that openly violates the rights of its black inhabitants. Since then, however, investments have continued in that country to the tune of "business as usual." To be sure, our own government has allowed the opening of foreign consulates which represents the decadent views of South Africa to go unopposed both in our city of Chicago and across the nation.

As concerned and responsible members of the Chicago community, it is our duty to take a stand alongside the Chicago Coalition on Southern Africa in its call to President Carter and to you to end all economic and political ties with the tyrannical white minority in South Africa.

We recognize the commonality that exists between our two separate communities in that unemployment is ever present, our schools are neglected, the prisons are filled with our children and our neighborhoods are overrun with police and secret agents who solve nothing. Without the aid from U.S. banks and corporations, the people of Soweto could very well have solved their dispute with the backward order in South Africa.

Therefore, we issue a direct protest to the banks and corporations operating in our city of Chicago that refuse to recognize the legitimate struggle of the Soweto people by their continued assistance to the white minority. An immediate end and closing of all consulates functioning under the banner of South Africa with its Apartheid policies, especially the one in Chicago, are forthrightly demanded.

Ms. Ruth Rogers
The Woodlawn Organization

Mr. Ben Pennington
Illinois Prisoners Organization

Ms. Deb Brewster
Chicago Committee for African Liberation

Mr. Robert Lucas
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization

Ms. Fannie Rushing
Amilcar Cabral Collective

Mr. Ronelle Mustin
NAIMSAL

Mr. Harold Baron
Campaign for a Democratic Foreign Policy
June 14, 1978

The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance  
Secretary, Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Vance:

Nearly every national church body in the United States has condemned the apartheid policy of the South African government. As church leaders in the Chicago area, we support these condemnations and join with our brothers and sisters in South Africa who are nonviolently resisting the repressive regime.

We are saddened that the South African government has failed to respond to international pressure in support of human rights. South Africa remains the only country whose constitution legitimizes racial oppression. We appreciate that the United States supported the United Nations arms embargo of South Africa. We believe, however, that more stringent measures are necessary to convince the South African government of our firm resolve.

We now ask that the South African Consulate, established only last year in Chicago, be removed from our city and state. We believe that a large population of Chicago finds the presence of this official representative from South Africa offensive to our people. We would appreciate your action on this matter and request your response.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Golda Basta  
Church Women United of Greater Chicago

Rev. Charles W. Dahm  
8th Day Center

Sister Kathleen Keating  
Chairperson  
National Assembly of Women Religious

Rev. Thomas Peyton  
Office of Justice & Peace  
National Federation of Priests Councils

Burton Nelson  
Professor of Ethics  
North Park Theological Seminary

Rev. Joseph O'Brien  
Chairman  
Association of Chicago Priests

Rev. David Chevrier, Pastor  
Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ

Rev. Jeremiah Wright,  
Vice Chairperson  
Commission on Racial Justice  
United Church of Christ

Ron Freund, Midwest Director-Clergy and Laity Concerned

Rev. Donald Wagner, Pastor  
First Presbyterian Church of Evanston