December 1981

Dear Friends,

On December 5 an important meeting took place at the American Committee on Africa that focused on plans for the Two Weeks of National Action in Support of the Liberation Movements (March 21 to April 4, 1982). Most of those in attendance were from the New York City area, but there were also several activists from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In addition, the meeting was attended by Pius Asheke, Deputy UN Representative of SWAPO, and Salaelo Maredi, a South African playwright and member of the ANC.

Your attendance is urgently requested at a follow-up meeting to be held: 1:00-5:00PM Saturday January 16 at: House of Lord Church 415 Atlantic Av Bklyn (Blck United Front HQ)

Since most of those attending the December 5 meeting were from NYC discussion dealt with general and specific plans for the Weeks of Action in the city:

1) First of all it was agreed that the Weeks of Action should involve both student and community activity. In building for the activities then, it will be necessary to include community groups from the start. There was also agreement that our main organizing focus should be on the campuses. This is the case because in the NYC area, students are the group whose potential for activity around Southern Africa has been least developed.

2) Since the Weeks of Action will be over an extended period of time the key strategic question is how to maintain activity throughout the March 21-April 4 time-period. Discussion of this question led to the following plan of action to be discussed Jan 16:

a) A major city-wide event would be planned for March 21--anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre. The likely focus will be on the Namibian liberation struggle and a speaker from SWAPO would be available in NYC as part of a nation-wide tour for the Weeks of Action. This major event would unify campus and community forces and give impetus and publicity to the next two weeks' action.

b) A large cultural event--featuring the current play by Salaelo Maredi. Whether staged on campus or in the community his play "For Better or For Worse" would broaden the audience for the Weeks of Action.

c) During the Weeks of Action a major demonstration would be held on a NYC campus that other schools would build for as well. One possibility is Columbia Univ which has extensive apartheid-linked holdings & where a divestment group is active.

d) On every campus there should be at least one event during March 21-April 4.

e) A schedule of all southern Africa-related activities around the Weeks of Action will be made available ahead of time.

f) The Weeks of Action are not ends-in-themselves. Following the Weeks it should be possible to form an ongoing student coalition in the NYC area. Since the lack of existing communication and coordination between different campuses has hurt efforts at individual schools, such a coalition would fulfill an important role.

It was agreed at the end of the December 5 meeting to organize a larger planning meeting for Saturday January 16. The key to the Weeks of Action will be building a broad base early in the year, and this meeting is important in reaching campus as well as community groups. Since the December 5 meeting was attended by representatives of the Black United Front (student section), the All People's Congress, as well as student anti-apartheid groups, the prospects of a broad and powerful coalition for the Weeks of Action are excellent. This potential will only be fulfilled, however, if you attend the upcoming Sat January 16 meeting at House of Lord Ch, Bklyn. There is a great deal to be done and very little time.

In Solidarity, Joshua Nessen (Student Coordinator, ACOA)

If Plan to attend Meeting Call: (Day) 962-1210 (ACOA: Joshua Nessen or Rich Knight) (Evenings) 294-5758 Walter Knox of BUF or 526-7056 Willie Terry

To Get to Meeting: Take A train to Atlantic Avenue---House of Lord Church at 415

Joshua Nessen (Student Coordinator, ACOA)