August 9, 1980

Dear Ben,

I am pleased to enclose herewith a copy of the "Statement on the South African Medical and Dental Councils Decision on the 'Biko Doctors'," issued on behalf of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Witwatersrand, by Dr. Phillipp J. Tobias, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy and Dean of the Medical School, under date of June 23, 1980.

Also enclosed is a clipping describing new honors received by Dr. Tobias. He has been elevated to the Deanship since I received the honorary LL.D. from Wits in 1977.

You will recall my citation for this degree carried the statement: "His work for the betterment of the living and medical condition of the black population and for the elimination of segregation from everyday life; his advancement of medical education and his strivings for equality of opportunity for black doctors—all find a bond in the beliefs and policies of the Witwatersrand University."

This citation was published in full in the official bulletin of Wits, in the Crisis for

Then you will remember the thoroughly researched and documented report "Apartheid and Medical Education: The Training of Black Doctors in South Africa," which was published in the Journal of the NMA, v. 72, pp. 395-410, 1980, after it had been presented to the Social Action Group of the Medical Students Council of Wits on June 7, 1979, by Dr. Philip V. Tobias.

Now comes the June 27, 1980, resolution by the Board of the Wits Faculty condemning the action of Medical and Dental Council on the "Biko Doctors," released over the signature of Dr. Tobias as Dean of the Wits Medical School.

Mindful of the precipitate haste with which the NAACP invited Donald Woods to Portland, in recognition of his actions on the Steve Biko case, I think that certain responses are presently indicated with respect to the Wits resolution on the Biko doctors.

I seem to recall that Donald Woods was a de facto exile and that
he had written a book on the case and his publisher's representative was at the Portland meeting with him. Certain questions about this arose, not all of which were pleasant and I do not remember hearing answers.

Dr. Tobias has not run anywhere. He has remained at home all the time and obviously his courage, integrity and scholarly excellence continue to bring increasing evidence of the respect in which he is held despite his government's attitudes and actions.

When our NAACP Task Force's South Africa Team under the chairmanship of Dr. Broaders Rucker returned, I said that there was a larger body of liberal white opinion, including many Afrikaners, in South Africa today, than there was in the whole of the Confederate South at the time of our Civil War. This opinion is resolute and courageous and deserves our support. I repeat that statement now three years later.

In our own beloved country with all the civil rights laws in the books do we find universities in
Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee and Kentucky giving honorary degrees to outstanding Negroes while stating that their universities' beliefs and policies form a bond with their honorees?

I am sending copies of this communication including the resolution on the Biko doctors to Mr. Marr, Mrs. Wilson and Dr. Butler with the hope that

1. Mr. Marr will print the full text of the Tobias release in the next issue of the Crisis to go to press, making room for it, if necessary.

2. The Executive Director, the Chair of the Board and the Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs will each write a strong letter to Dr. Tobias commending the actions and positions of the University of Witwatersrand and ask so kind as to send your President a copy of their letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Montague Cobb, M.D.
President