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Southern Africa Committee Minutes for meeting of March 26, 1965 - Interchurch Center

Dave Robinson reported on the Sit-in at Chase Manhattan Bank, March 19. Dave was a member of the delegation that met with Mr. Marshall and Mr. Nolan. Dave and Sharon Garmon were arrested, they appeared before night court that night, and along with all the other people who sat in, were paroled. Sharon appears in court April 2nd and Dave April 8th.

Dick Van Horn and Peter Brooks reported on their meeting with Mr. A.C. Koon, Vice-President in charge of foreign accounts at Chase-Manhattan. They found there were in complete disagreement with him on the possibilities for future developments in South Africa. Mr. Koons hoped that students groups would continue to demonstrate but on a changed platform, the new one being "increase investments in South Africa but down with Apartheid." He feels that greater investment will result in an expanding economy which in turn will mean a gradual increase of black African participation. He sees this as an alternative to rapid change leading to tyranny of a different type. His suggested practical goal was to help elect the United Party.

(Peter reported an encounter with a newspaper reported who had seen correspondence between Chase and Nazi Germany, in which Chase expressed a desire for increased investments in Nazi Germany, told of their policy of investment in other Nazi countries, and indicated their policy of not hiring Jews. In this country, Drew Pearson was the only one who tried to bring this issue to public attention, but he was stopped by pressure.)

The Chairman briefly summarized the origin of the NSCF Committee on South Africa and indicated three possible directions for the committee in the future. The committee began in response to a presentation by Ken Carstens to the Commission on World Missions. Ten responding members formed the NSCF NSCF Committee on Southern Africa which has no direct tie to CMA as such. The committee expanded to include others with a specific concern in South Africa, becoming a group bound by a common concern not by a common faith. A previous attempt to draw up a creed for the group failed; instead a statement of common concerns was made. The implications of the NSCF relationship remain to be explored, there being practical advantages in the material resources available through NSCF. The theological foundations of the group - i.e. the nature of man, the nature of social change, etc. - also must be raised, but without curtailing the action orientation of the group.

There are three possibilities open to the group now: 1) to cease to exist, 2) to remain as it is, concerned but undisciplined, participating in what others are doing but not initiating, 3) to become a group whose members make their concern for South Africa one of their primary responsibilities. Possible implications of the latter are a full-time or part-time chairman for the committee and a commitment by group members to self-education and theological reflection which will grow out of action.

Peter Brooks listed five alternatives in South Africa as he sees them and their related implications of action for this group. He indicated that the conservative alternatives tend to become less realistic as time passes. 1) Internal social reform containing no political changes but an internal amelioration of apartheid. 2) Internal political reform, involving a mobilization of liberal whites. This could be done through contact with the Anglican Church and pressure on the U.S. government to support liberal groups. 3) Reform through American Industry, i.e. smaller wage differential, better housing, etc. Negotiation and demonstration are possible tools here. 4) Economic sanctions. The effective possibility here would
pressure on the U.S. government to confirm and comply with U.N. statements. 5) Internal violence, which could have many forms. The group must decide its stand on this issue. Possibilities for action here include giving students aid, bringing students here, sending money to refugee centers, sending people to refugee centers.

Sharon Carsten reported on other groups that have exhibited an interest in South Africa. NSA has agreed to co-ordinate any student projects in the U.S. and to function as an information clearing-house. They plan to hire a full-time staff person for the coming year and to hold a conference for the concerned at the end of the year. The commitment of other groups to South Africa on a long range basis is unknown. Most of them have other major commitments, i.e. SDS, SNCC, CORE. According to Sharon, some sort of co-ordinating leadership is needed. The question is whether or not the NSCF Committee can provide this. In the action spectrum, there are huge differences of opinion as to why and how, but an action affiliation with others doesn't necessarily mean we accept their ideology.

With the demands and possibilities before them, the Committee members each stated their plans for continued involvement in the committee, including the amount of time that will be given this year and next. Notes were taken on this. At the April 2nd meeting definite decisions will begin to be made about the future of the Committee. By then, the time commitments of the members will have been tallied so that we really know what we have to work with.

(Ken Carsten reported briefly on the Washington Conference. The group was divided into three discussion sections: students, civil rights groups, and churches and synagogues. The civil rights group, in reaction to the Washington Conference, proposed a meeting for the 10th in New York and the 17th in Washington at CORE headquarters. Ken further indicated two forms of action that are open in this country now, counterparts to the British movement: 1) defense and aid movement and 2) anti-apartheid movement. It was suggested that the Africans concentrate on the first, while the Americans emphasize the second with its political implications. Another problem, according to Ken, is the relationship to the American Committee on Africa.)

The NSA and the South West Africa Students Union are holding a demonstration on Monday, March 29th, at the UN Plaza from 2 - 6 p.m. Members of the committee will participate.

On Friday, April 2nd, at 8 p.m., the NSCF Committee is invited to be the guests of Mr. John Tomlinson at 445 E. 86th St., apt 121. After this, Sharon has invited the committee to a "freedom party" at her apartment, 332 East 90th St. Apt 1w.

The next meeting will be April 2nd, 12:15, 7th Floor of the Interchurch Center.

Respectfully submitted

Alice Simpson.

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