To: Southern Africa Committee Members  
From: Bill Winter, Chairman  

Sept. 20, 1965

Where do we go from here? - some thoughts and questions.

During the last year we of the Southern Africa committee have met for study and discussion of the situation, have prepared or passed on bibliographies, articles, or other resources, have helped plan and have attended conferences, have participated in pressure on Chase Manhattan through demonstrations and conversations, have worked with other groups already involved and tried to pressure some not involved to become so. Our action has been less than systematic, but it has helped to open up to us the dimensions of what needs to be done. We need early in this school year to establish priorities and directions - not that these cannot later be modified, but simply in order that we may not rush off in all directions at once and accomplish nothing.

There are two types of action which, in a sense, are prerequisites to any other action. One is study and discussion. The other is communication with African groups, primarily Southern, here - and there in Southern Africa. This latter we have of course done to some extent, but in order to be able to act intelligently in terms of any direct aid, and simply for the sake of the communication itself, we need to take this much more seriously than we have. Two specific programs going on - the Africa conference planned by the CCWAMS, and the UCF seminar in Southern Africa - both fit into this concern. In terms of study and discussion, we need to give more attention to the other parts of Southern Africa, both for their own sakes and for their direct connection with the fate of South Africa.

For any action planned here within the U.S. there is an additional prerequisite. That is the continuation of and expansion of contacts and cooperation with other groups concerned with Southern Africa. Although SDS seems to be almost entirely concerned with Vietnam at this time, there are still possibilities for relationship with various direct action groups, Groups within USYC, ACCA are also still quite concerned.

For the goal of action within the U.S. I think the realistic one may be stated as creating such a climate of opinion that when a crisis comes in South Africa the U.S. will at least not intervene on the wrong side. Within this context one may press for various limited goals within the economic and political fields, as well as promoting awareness of the problems in student and other groups, but one must always realize, for example, that the major purpose of a demonstration may not be an immediate change in policy but a certain impact on public opinion.

Therefore for this committee I see two primary foci of action:


It is also important to keep up communication with white liberal groups - particularly churchmen - in Southern Africa, but more important not to let ourselves be distracted by this from more urgent tasks.

These comments are very general and perhaps for that reason open to misunderstanding. My question to both old and new members of the committee is: Can these concerns form a point from which we can begin our work this year? If not, what is our common understanding, and what priorities do we set for our common action?

Our first meeting of the year will be Friday September 24, at 12 noon, in the Fifth floor conference room at 475 Riverside Drive. Bring a sack lunch if you wish. Please come, and bring any new people that might be interested in working with the committee.