

sent out to 600

The Africa Working Committee
Committee of Returned Volunteers
2 Washington Square North, Room 34
New York, New York 10003
April 3, 1967

Dear Returnee:

The Africa Working Committee has decided to bring the issue of Rhodesia to your attention. Our concern emanates from the following developments: 1) on January 5 President Johnson signed an Executive Order implementing the economic sanctions recommended by the UN Security Council, 2) bolstered by extraordinary right wing activity, mail to Congressmen has been overwhelming against this Executive Order, 3) the rightist Liberty Lobby in Washington and throughout the country has distributed an insidious variety of propaganda in support of the Smith regime.

Initially we wrote to many of you urging you to write your Congressmen. Since that time we have tried to do some serious in-house thinking. We have concluded there is no more pressing an issue in Africa today than Rhodesia. We have concluded not only that much can be done about Rhodesia but also we can do something significant. We have gained concurrence in this matter from the membership of the Committee of Returned Volunteers. Our ideas have begun to attract the interest of some of the 26 groups known to us which are currently concerned with racist southern Africa.

Rhodesia as a foreign policy issue offers unique possibilities for action or redirection or pressure.

-- U. S. public opinion has not yet hardened and yet an urgent need exists for the correction of right wing influence. Letters to Congress at this time will matter.

-- Washington has agreed to participate in UN sanctions against Rhodesia. In the first instance we can help to support this minimal position (Undoubtedly for some, Rhodesia provides a rare opportunity for us to back the present administration!). The next step could be to press for a far more effective enforcement of sanctions.

-- A number of Africanists tend to regard the geographic area of southern Africa as a circumstantial monolith. To successfully loosen away Rhodesia now may be the most effective way to begin to achieve basic human rights for all southern Africans.

What do we intend to do about Rhodesia and how can you join us? We intend to establish contact with more groups and individuals concerned with southern Africa (foundations, churches, universities, civil rights, labor, etc.) We feel we may have a role to play in prodding them to act now, and when appropriate, to act together on Rhodesia.

Minimally we hope you will write your Congressman and let us know you have done so. We recognize that your time is limited and we respect the fact that your personal interest may be Latin America, Vietnam,

Good to see you

city slum and urban sprawl, air pollution, quality education or civil rights. Until proven wrong, however, we maintain that the Rhodesian issue is easily digestible. By the time you finish reading the enclosed Rhodesia Fact Sheet, you should be sufficiently informed of the stakes and ready to express a point of view. From time to time we expect to send you select supplementary articles and documents (Please tell us if you are not interested). It is our hope that you will want to do more. Let us know if we can make suggestions or be of assistance.

This outlines our current thinking. We have chosen to endorse a statement by a South African friend, that, "The quickest way to the heart of South Africa is through Rhodesia". We welcome information on other groups and individuals concerned with southern Africa. We welcome your reactions.

Yours sincerely,

Tarna Bunce (PC Ghana '62-'64)

Newell Flather (PC Ghana '61-'63)

For the Committee of Returned Volunteers