

F - #1 - ACOA
The American Committee on Africa
Steering Committee Meeting
March 9, 1970

Present: Nelson Bengston, Elsie Carrington, Herschel Halbert, Dana Klotzle, Elizabeth Landis, Andrew Norman, Robert Van Lierop.

Staff: George Houser, Janet Hooper, Ken Butler, Karen Oswald

The meeting was chaired by Elizabeth Landis in the absence of President Peter Weiss.

1. Sharpeville commemoration at Town Hall, March 22.

Printed flyers announcing the event were distributed to Committee members. George Houser briefly outlined the program which will include Miriam Makeba, who cabled us too late to be included in the printed material. Other late additions to the program are two liberation spokesmen: Peter Molotsi (Pan Africanist Congress) and Bethuel Setai (African National Congress), and Ambassador Farah of Somalia, Chairman of the UN Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid.

Suggestions for additional publicity included:

- a table at Community Church after the service; mention by Donald Harrington in his announcements.
- ads in magazines which cater to music buffs: Downbeat, Rolling Stone.
- mention in The New Yorker - contact Ricky Hertzberg

2. US Consulate in Rhodesia

It was announced today that the US has decided to withdraw its consulate from Rhodesia. Presumably a statement to this effect will be made at the UN Security Council on Tuesday, March 10.

There was some discussion about the Committee sending a message to President Nixon in support of the decision to remove the consulate. Opinion on this ranged from the argument that we should make no contact whatsoever with the Administration, to sending a message. It was agreed that Charles Hightower should look into the dynamics behind the government's action.

3. Arrangements for promoting our work through May in public media

Referring to a preliminary discussion which took place at the previous Steering Committee meeting, George Houser reviewed that we had decided to explore possibilities other than the proposal made by Ofield Dukes Associates. Specifically, these alternatives were: 1) a public relations person who would work part-time as an ACOA staff member 2) proposals from other public relations

agencies/individuals. George reported that since the last Steering Committee meeting, he had spoken with three individuals with public relations experience. Two were not in a position to give the amount of time we need. The other individual had the time but lacked experience. He also spoke with a New York public relations firm (represented by Ed Samuels) which decided that it was unable to undertake such a project. Therefore, he said, it was the recommendation of the staff that ACOA should make arrangements with Ofield Dukes Associates to implement the media campaign. He emphasized that there was no question that the Committee would determine the direction and content of the material used.

As the target date for the publicity campaign is late April-early May, which coincides with a number of programs planned by the Pan African Solidarity Committee, it was suggested that an appropriate slogan for the publicity might be Freedom month.

Andrew Norman suggested that we prepare a packet of materials including photographs, fact sheets, a schedule of events, etc. which would be made available to the media just prior to Freedom month. While everyone agreed that this was a good idea, there probably will not be time to do it.

Elsie Carrington volunteered to contact blacks who write for the Amsterdam News and other NY area papers to write on Africa during May.

Some questions were raised regarding the specific timing of the radio announcements (during the day), and the effect of using one radio station as opposed to another (for example, WWRL instead of WLIB), and these questions will be taken up with Mr. Dukes.

The Steering Committee authorized the staff to meet with Ofield Dukes Associates.

4. Gulf Campaign

George Houser explained the rationale for this campaign as follows: Gulf Oil is more deeply involved in the exploration and refinement of this strategic material than anyone else in the Portuguese colonies. Almost 50% of the cost of the war against the Angolan people is taken care of by royalties Portugal receives from Gulf Oil.

Various organizations are ready to move with us on this campaign, including churches, the Committee of Returned Volunteers, and the University Christian Movement. The immediate focus will be the annual stockholders meeting in Pittsburgh on April 28. Actions will include people with proxies inside the meeting who will raise relevant questions, and as yet undefined action outside the meeting. We are awaiting a report from Prexy Nesbitt, who travelled to Pittsburgh last week to determine what support there might be in the black community there for the Gulf project. The staff is preparing background material now.

5. Hearings

Hearings on the Portuguese colonies which were to have been held by Congressman Diggs have been expanded to hearings on "Policy Towards Africa in the '70's." The Steering Committee authorized Charles Hightower to make a presentation on behalf of ACOA.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be Monday, April 6.