

June 8, 1965

MEMO TO: The Steering Committee

FROM: George Houser

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place on Monday, June 14, 5:30 p.m., 26th Floor, 10 Columbus Circle.

This will be a very important meeting. Prior to the meeting a memorandum for proceeding with the employment of a Negro executive will come to you, as well as another memorandum on the plans for a summer research and information project on South Africa and a report on the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa and discussions I have had with Bayard Rustin, James Robinson, and Roy Wilkins.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Steering Committee

MINUTES

May 24, 1965

Present: Peter Weiss, Elizabeth Landis, Nelson Bengston, Stanley Levison,
Andrew Norman, Hugh Smythe

Staff: George Houser, Mary-Louise Hooper, Collin Gonze, Jim Robinson

1. George Houser reported on his trip to St. Louis at an initiating meeting to form a St. Louis Committee on Africa. Professor Alvin Wolfe of Washington University in St. Louis has been the prime mover in setting up the local group. There seemed to be about 30 people who were interested in joining this group. Professor Wolfe is the chairman and an executive committee of 7 people has been established. The ACOA will work closely with this group and will provide them with a list of all of our member-contributors in the St. Louis area.
2. It was agreed that James Baldwin be placed on the National Committee of the ACOA. He has found it impossible to attend meetings of the Executive Board. The staff will communicate with him to see if this meets with his approval.
3. Forthcoming meetings of visitors were announced as follows: On June 3 an evening meeting will be held at the home of William Scheinman with Kotsho Dube of Southern Rhodesia. Canon L. John Collins, Chairman of Christian Action and of the London Defence and Aid Fund will be in New York from June 6 to 10. The ACOA is helping to coordinate his schedule which will include a luncheon meeting at the UN Church Center on June 7, an evening meeting also on June 7 with Committee members to discuss the relationship between our Defense and Aid Fund and the British Fund, a session with the UN Special Committee on Apartheid, a day in Washington to meet some organizational people and government people.

Towards the latter part of June, David Grenfell, formerly of Angola but now working among the Angolan refugees in the Congo, will be in the United States. We will try to organize one or two sessions with him and hopefully will try to get him on a few radio and television programs.

4. The American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa was discussed. It was reported that a Committee of 15 had been established under the chairmanship of Roy Wilkins to report in six months time about the possibilities of establishing it as a permanent organization.

The Committee asked that the Executive Director prepare a memorandum for discussion at the next Steering Committee meeting on possible relationships between the ACOA and the Leadership Conference.

5. In further discussion of adding a Negro executive to the ACOA staff, it was agreed that the Executive Director should draft a memorandum for the next Steering Committee meeting outlining possible procedures and problems in moving ahead on this additional staff person as soon as possible.
6. It was decided to invite additional trustees for the African Aid and Legal Defense Fund. Mr. Allan Morrison of Johnson Publications and Dr. George Wylie of CORE were added to the list of invitees.

7. George Houser reported that the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs was holding hearings soon on African students in the US. Apparently there is no other focus than just the broad area of African students in the US. It was agreed that we should see if Cora Weiss would be able to speak on behalf of the Committee in these hearings based on her experience with the African-American Students Foundation.
8. It was proposed that the Committee should look into the possibilities of a "teach-in" on American relations with South Africa next fall. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea and the staff will contact a number of student organizations to see what plans would be practical. It was thought it would be best if arrangements could be made in Washington, DC. However, it was agreed that such a teach-in should take place where there was sufficient interest in the subject to get wide attention on a particular campus.
9. The Steering Committee approved the idea of setting up an ACOA study commission on South West Africa. With the decision of the International Court due to come sometime before the end of 1965 in all probability, the ACOA should give some careful consideration to what the US can and should do to implement a decision which hopefully will find that South Africa has violated its mandate in its administration of South West Africa. Elizabeth Landis agreed to work closely with this commission. It was agreed that Professor Thomas Franck of NYU be contacted as a possible member of it. Also it was agreed that it would be important to talk with Miss Jacqueline Yarrow of the United Nations about the procedure and work of such a commission.
10. It was noted that the African-Asian Conference would take place in Algiers beginning June 29. It was agreed that money should not be taken out of the regular ACOA account to send anyone to the Conference. It was noted that Robert Browne might find it possible to stop in Algiers if he takes a brief trip to the Far East. In this event the ACOA would want him to represent it.
11. George Houser reported on the formation of a group called the Alexander Defense Fund. This committee takes its name from a South African by the name of Dr. Neville Alexander who is presently serving a long sentence for his opposition to apartheid. Probably this committee will have a narrow political appeal and therefore will not detract very much from the efforts of our own Defense and Aid Fund.
12. It was reported that Mrs. Elizabeth Franklin has begun to do some part-time work with the ACOA. She will be dealing primarily with our work in South Africa. It is hoped that she will help to develop some new sources of funds for the Africa Defense and Aid Fund. She will work with Mary-Louise Hooper on the South Africa Bulletin and on other special projects.
13. The next meeting of the Steering Committee was set for Monday, June 14.