

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Steering Committee

September 17, 1964

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Hope Stevens, Robert Brown, Nelson Bengsten. Staff:
G. Houser, J. Robinson, C. Gonze, M.L. Hooper.

1. The American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa: The committee agreed that the ACOA should be a sponsoring organization for the conference being held in Washington September 24th to 27th and should pay the \$250 involved. The ACOA should have its full complement of five delegates. So far, those planning to go include Hope Stevens, Hugh Smythe, George Houser, Mary-Louise Hooper. David Jones, Bayard Rustin, Elsie Carrington should be contacted to see if they are planning to go.

2. The Sponono Cast: Twenty three South Africans originally came over in the cast of "Sponono." The musical lasted for only a little over a week on Broadway. On September 9th eleven of the group returned to South Africa and twelve decided not to return. Their visa ran out as of August the 28th. They do not wish to return to South Africa.

It was agreed that if the "Sponono" group is still here plans to stay regardless of the outcome, that the ACOA should help to raise bail if they are picked up by immigration. Further, that the ACOA should take the view that the group should be protected in their right not to have to go back to South Africa. The ACOA should be careful not to take sole responsibility for the support of the "Sponono" cast members who stay, but to do whatever possible in conjunction with others.

3. Staff matters: It was announced that Mary-Louise Hooper had come to N.Y. and has joined the staff to give particular emphasis to South African projects.

George Houser announced that he was still looking for a secretary and would appreciate any help that members of the ACOA could give in finding someone.

4. Board Membership: It was announced that Elizabeth S. Landis had returned from a couple of years in Paris and it was agreed that she should be recommended for Board membership again.

Inasmuch as this would increase Board membership beyond thirty permitted under our bylaws, it was proposed that a couple of members of the Board who have not attended any meetings should be contacted to see if they are prepared to resign.

It was announced that Congressman Seymour Halpern had written to the committee to inquire why his name no longer appeared as a member of the National Committee. He asked if his name might be reinstated. It was agreed that the staff should check on Mr. Halpern's present status and that he should be reinstated.

5. Washington Conference on South Africa: The plan presented to the Steering Committee will be discussed by the Executive Board at its meeting on Sept. 21st. It was agreed that it would be important for something pretty definite to come out of the conference. One possibility is that papers prepared for it might appear in a pamphlet or in some other printed form.

6. ERA and the Angola Situation: There was some discussion of the present difficulties in the Angolan problem and the effect of this on the work of

Emergency Relief to Angola. It was agreed that there should be some discussion of this at the September 21st Board meeting but that no definite action was required by the committee at the present moment.

Mr. [Name] [Title] [Address] [City] [State] [Zip]

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