

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Steering Committee

August 15, 1962

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Daniel Bernstein. Staff: George Houser, Collin Gonze, James Robinson.

1. Appeal for Action Against Apartheid: There was some discussion of the format and the wording of the first printed version of the Appeal, and some reactions and suggestions were given. Peter Weiss agreed to give some more thought to it and to put some of his ideas in writing.

A number of suggestions as to specific actions for December 10 were discussed, such as (a) having simultaneous delegations in various capitals of the world take written protests to South African embassies; (b) to get the cooperation of organizations in other countries to organize demonstrations, etc., around December 10; (c) to set up a coordinating committee of organizations here in the New York area to plan and support specific actions here such as picketing restaurants selling South African lobster tails, picketing of the South African Mission to the UN, picketing any ships coming in around that date carrying South African goods, demonstrations at banks doing business with South Africa and at the United Nations headquarters.

George Houser agreed to draw up an over-all plan of action.

2. The Financial Situation: Bernard Mazel met with Jim Robinson to discuss some aspects of the fund-raising program. One specific idea that came out of this discussion was that next year some of the fund-raising program could be built around the fact that it is the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Committee. It was agreed that a memorandum that Mazel has prepared, or is preparing, be sent out to the Committee and that there should be further discussion, especially of the 10th anniversary idea at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

3. New Office Space: Jim Robinson reported that the building on 44th Street where we may locate our office after our present lease runs out at the end of October is being renovated. The space is not quite as large as we thought it would be. A lease has not been signed as yet. It was agreed that at the September Board meeting, approval of the Board would be asked to have payment of the rent given as a priority, in as much as the owners of the building have insisted that we have guarantors for the rent payments.

4. Financial Situation and AFRICA TODAY: Jim Robinson reported that the financial situation was slightly better, although we do not have an up-to-the-minute report, in as much as Emma Thomas has been on vacation. An appeal letter signed by Chief Lutuli and requesting support for our Appeal for Action Against Apartheid, has been receiving a good return.

Peter Weiss reported on the meeting of the Editorial Board, regarding AFRICA TODAY. The Editorial Board made the following recommendations and these were

accepted by the Steering Committee: (a) AFRICA TODAY will be printed on newsprint to allow printing, cutting, folding and stapling to be carried out in one operation and thereby cut the cost per issue by some \$300; (b) subscription price will be raised to \$5 and the procedure of giving subscriptions to donors of \$10 or more will cease; (c) more aggressive promotional efforts will be undertaken both here and abroad and the magazine will be made "easier" to read, i.e. short snappy articles.

5. American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa: George Houser reported that Theodore Brown had been taken on as Director for the conference and that a Planning Committee has been at work. The conference is to be held the weekend directly following Thanksgiving Day at Arden House.

6. ACOA Position Papers: The papers on South Africa and South West Africa are proceeding relatively on schedule. There has been no definite word from Malcolm McVeigh about the paper on the Portuguese territories, and he is out of the city at the moment. A substitute will have to be found for the paper George Loft was to write on the Central African Federation. Professors Channing Richardson and Thomas Franck were suggested as possibilities.

7. Angola: George Houser reported that with the escape of Dr. Agostinho Neto from prison and his return to Leopoldville, the possibility of a united front has become greater. A letter has been received from Dr. F. Ian Gilchrist who is now connected with a hospital in Sierra Leone who has lived for many years as the son of a missionary in Angola. He is interested in going into Angola to work with the rebels in a medical capacity. The staff is following up on this communication.

8. Next Steering Committee and Executive Board Meetings: The next Steering Committee meeting was scheduled for 5 p.m. on Monday, September 10 in the conference room in Peter Weiss' office.

The next meeting of the Executive Board was set for Monday evening, September 17, at 5:45 at the office of the ACOA.