

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Steering Committee

June 20, 1962

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Daniel Bernstein, Hope Stevens. Staff: George Houser, James Robinson.

1. Report on Advisory Council on Africa: George Houser reported on his two days in Washington on June 13 and 14, as a member of the newly-formed Advisory Council on Africa set up by G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. About 50 specialists on African affairs had been invited to be in Washington for the two-day meeting, and of these about 40 were present. George Houser reported that it was very useful for him to be present, not only to get the views of other members of the Advisory Council, but also to get further insight into the position of those in the Bureau of African Affairs. George Houser reported that he was impressed with the openness of the discussion and the willingness of the State Department representatives to consider courses of action which might even include sanctions against South Africa. The meetings were not for publication, and therefore a report on the meetings cannot be put in writing.

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Peter Weiss suggested that the literature department should check the files to see if those who have been invited to be on the Advisory Council all receive AFRICA TODAY. Those who do not should receive letters asking for a subscription and maybe in some cases complimentary subscriptions should be sent.

2. The Steering Committee agreed that minutes of all Steering Committee meetings should be sent to all members of the Executive Board.

3. Report on plans for the leadership conference: George Houser reported on a planning meeting for the Negro leadership conference on American policy toward Africa. A meeting had been held at the home of David and Jane Jones on June 15. Also present at the meeting were James Farmer of CORE, John Morsell of the NAACP, Guichard Parris of the Urban League, Clarence Jones of the Gandhi Society for Human Rights and Hope Stevens and John Davis of the American Society of African Culture. There was enthusiastic agreement that the conference should be put on if possible in October and that it should be a three-day conference from Friday through Sunday morning. It was suggested that a letter of invitation should go out to all of the major Negro organizations asking them to join in the sponsorship of the conference. This initial letter should be signed by Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King, Whitney Young, James Farmer, Dorothy Height and A. Philip Randolph.

It had been suggested that those present at the meeting become the planning committee and that these organizations should initially contribute \$100 a piece in order to get a fund started.

The Steering Committee voted \$100 from the ACOA for the expenses of the conference.

4. Financial status: James Robinson reported that the financial situation of the ACOA was critical with a long summer in front of us. It was agreed that a Finance Committee meeting should be called sometime soon after the staff has prepared an analysis of where we are and what our problem is, and has outlined various things that can be done.

5. Invitees for writing position papers: George Houser reported that the staff was proceeding with the preparation of position papers on various territories of southern Africa. Malcolm McVeigh is being invited to write the position paper on Portuguese Africa, George Loft on the Rhodesias, Winifred Courtney on South West Africa, and George Houser and Collin Gonze on South Africa.
6. It was agreed that it would be a good idea for various African student organizations to join in the sponsorship of the next Africa Freedom Day. Representatives of these student groups should be brought in on the planning early.
7. It was suggested that the staff look into the possibility that the staff put on a subscription drive for AFRICA TODAY in the South. Suggestions on how to proceed with this should be brought in by the literature department for a meeting in September.
8. Peter Weiss expressed great concern about the forthcoming publication of Robert Ruark's book, UHURU, due to be the Book-of-the-Month Club selection for July. He suggested that the Committee should do what it could urging subscribers to the Book-of-the-Month Club to cancel their subscription. The Steering Committee agreed that it was rather obvious that Ruark's book had been chosen not because it was a fine piece of literature, but rather because it had a great potential sale. It was suggested that the ACOA do what it could to urge editorials in various periodicals on this publication that would call upon subscribers to the Book-of-the-Month Club to cancel. This should be given attention in AFRICA TODAY as well.
9. In line with the discussion at the recent Executive Board meeting, it was agreed that the ACOA should take the leadership in calling together representatives of the various organizations interested in international affairs to consider US policy on Africa. It was agreed that this could be done around the position papers which will be prepared during the summer. Perhaps this meeting of organizations can be established on a regular basis at least during sessions of the UN General Assembly.
10. The summer schedule for Steering Committee meetings will be one a month-- Wednesday, July 18 and Wednesday, August 15.