

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Steering Committee

June 6, 1962

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Daniel Bernstein, David Jones. Staff: George Houser, Collin Gonze.

1. Report on Comacho's visit to the office and possible public statement to Salazar: George Houser reported that Mr. Martin Comacho, Chairman of the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs dropped in our office for a second time for a lengthy discussion. The fact that he has dropped in our office and also has talked with Malcolm McVeigh would seem to indicate that the Portuguese are trying to put feelers out for some way of neutralizing their opposition by proposing some new approaches to a solution of the problem of Angola.

George Houser had prepared a draft of a possible public communication to Salazar to be signed by a number of prominent Americans. After some discussion the Committee felt that the statement should be broadened so that it might include reference to various Portuguese African territories rather than simply Angola, that it should ask for a definite statement of the intention of Portugal to grant ultimate independence to her territories, and that negotiations should begin with nationalists leaders. More work will be done on this statement and will be presented again to the Steering Committee for consideration.

2. Plan for position papers on issues to come up before the 17th Session of the General Assembly: The Steering Committee accepted the idea of having position papers prepared on the major questions involving southern Africa that will come up at the 17th Assembly. This will be presented to the Executive Board and the staff will follow up on it.

3. Southern Rhodesia: George Houser reported that the resumed session of the 16th UN General Assembly will probably have as an added item (in addition to Ruanda Urundi) Southern Rhodesia. It was agreed that a letter should go to Ambassador Stevenson and to Secretary of State Dean Rusk urging that the United States support the debate on Southern Rhodesia in the Assembly and that a letter should go to the New York Times outlining the importance of the issue of Southern Rhodesia. It was suggested that one of these letters ought to be sent around to various organizations urging them to take some action on the issue.

4. Next Board meeting: In the discussion of the Board meeting for June 11, it was agreed that the major discussion should revolve around a program for the months ahead and that nothing else should be on the agenda unless it was very brief and very urgent.

5. Proposal from Colin Leys: George Houser reported that Colin Leys, until recently the principal of Kivukoni College in Tanganyika had been in the office with a proposal of a way in which the American Committee on Africa might help with the work of the college. Discussion on this was postponed until a written request came in from Mr. Leys.

6. Homer Jack: The question of money which Homer Jack claimed is owed him came up again for discussion. Homer Jack has written a letter to Donald Harrington suggesting that the matter be submitted to arbitration. The proposal would be that Homer Jack would choose one person, ACOA a second and the two of them a third to act as an arbitration board. The Steering Committee agreed to this procedure.
  
7. Washington meeting of the African Advisory Council: George Houser reported that he would be in Washington on June 13th and 14th for the first meeting of the Advisory Council on Africa called together by G. Mennen Williams. About 50 persons from around the country had been invited to participate in these two days of discussion on various aspects of American policy toward Africa. George Houser was reminded to bring up the policy of the State Department in seemingly not sending many of its visitors to visit the Negro community.
  
8. Report on Visitors Committee: It was reported that the visitors committee was holding its first gathering, a good number of women having been invited primarily through the work of Miss Elsie Carrington, for the evening of June 6.