

A M E R I C A N C O M M I T T E E O N A F R I C A

Steering Committee

January 31, 1962

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Chairman; Nelson Bengston, David Jones, Frank Montero, Hope R. Stevens. Staff: George Houser, Collin Gonze, Hazel Gray, Debby Kallen.

1. Utilization of George Houser's trip: George Houser gave a brief summary of his trip to Angola. He and John Marcum entered the northern part of the country on January 5th and returned to Leopoldville on January 17th. The countryside was clearly controlled by the Angolans, and any Portuguese propaganda to the effect that the rebellion was over had no basis in fact. There is a political and military organization in every village, travel is controlled by the UPA which issues passports in Leopoldville, and visas are issued at each village. Both he and Marcum had witnessed the distribution of arms to representatives of villages extending southward almost to Luanda. The medicines which they had brought were distributed at the same time and in some cases they arrived in villages after the packages so that they saw how the medicines were being utilized. They witnessed a bombing, and saw a number of villages which had been destroyed. The need for medicines is great. Clothing and education follow close behind on a list of priorities.

In Leopoldville, Mr. Houser talked with Ambassador Gullion and Vice-Premier Jason Sendwe. In Nairobi he talked with Kenyatta and taped an 18-minute interview; Mungai Njoroge, Kariuki Njiiri, and Ronald Ngala. There seemed to be general agreement that the territory which comprises Kenya at present must be maintained intact after independence. But within KANU itself there was a great deal of tension and disagreement over many other matters.

In Dar-es-Salaam he had talked with Nyerere three times and made a 10-minute taped interview; with Rashidi Kawawa and Oscar Kambona. Nyerere is in complete control of the situation and had decided to resign from his position as Prime Minister even before independence so that he could devote himself to TANU. He is pessimistic at this point about the formation of the East African Union.

The Committee must make every effort to distribute information about Angola as widely as possible. A press conference will be held on February 1 at the Overseas Press Club; both George Houser and Marcum plan to collaborate on the writing of a pamphlet based on their trip. The Steering Committee agreed that their information and experience was unusual enough to command good fees and the interest of important publications. With this in mind, they felt that it would be well worthwhile to get in touch with a top-notch agent and Ivan Auw was suggested.

Possibly next week Mr. Houser and Prof. Marcum will go to Washington to talk not only with people in the State Department but also with Congressmen. They might also request an opportunity to give testimony to the UN Sub-commission on Angola.

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2. New activities of the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs: Peter Weiss reported on past activities of this committee and added that we now have proof that they are employed by Selvage and Lee. The Steering Committee agreed to seek a legal opinion as to whether or not both Selvage and Lee and the Portuguese-American Committee were not violating the law requiring all foreign agents to register and to carry a label to this effect on all printed material. In view of the fact that the Portuguese-American Committee had probably contacted many, if not all, the members of our National Committee a letter should be sent to them about this committee. We should also ask Reinhold Niebuhr for permission to use the letter he had sent to Mr. Camacho, the head of the committee.
3. Emergency request for funds for Ruanda petitioners: George Houser, after consulting with Roger Baldwin, would use the staff's discretionary power to issue up to \$100 from the Defense and Aid Fund in this matter.
4. Africa Freedom Day and Afro-American Leadership Conference: This item was postponed until Tuesday's Executive Board meeting.
5. Jason Sendwe trip to the United States?: Before taking up this specific aspect of the Congo problem, the Committee wished to congratulate Peter Weiss for his part in N.B.C.'s program Open Mind in which the panelists discussed 'The Katanga Dispute.' The Committee also thought that we might obtain reprints of the ad which appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES on the Katanga issue for distribution to the National Committee.

After a discussion with Mr. Houser, Vice-Premier Sendwe had indicated his desire to come to the United States for a period of perhaps three weeks. Because of the protocol questions involved, this would be too expensive an undertaking for the Committee to handle alone. George Houser should determine whether the State Department would be willing to sponsor this trip in view of their desire to counteract Katangese propaganda and neutralize the effect of Tshombe's forthcoming trip to the United States. A final decision would be left for Tuesday's Board meeting.