

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

November 1, 1961

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Chairman; Frank Montero; Nelson Bengston. Staff: George Houser, Hazel Gray, James Robinson, Deborah Kallen. Guests: Mary-Louise Hooper.

The minutes of the meeting of October 6th were accepted with the following clarification of Item 9: When the staff found it impossible to implement a decision of the Board or Steering Committee, it would report back to the responsible body in time for alternate action to be taken.

1. Houser trip to Africa: It was agreed that George Houser would consult with Peter Weiss about the proposed trip before the next meeting of the Steering Committee.
2. Report on Michael Scott: Hazel Gray reported that 26 engagements were pending Scott's arrival in the States. She thanked Mary-Louise Hooper for the work she had done on the West Coast in organizing the now-cancelled speaking tour.
3. Progress reports and projected plans:

a) Tanganyika independence: It was agreed that if Prime Minister Julius Nyerere did come to the United States, the best time to arrange a public meeting, perhaps in Town Hall, would be Sunday, December 17. It was also agreed that if Nyerere did not come, it would be unwise to try to hold such a meeting. If no definite date was received in time to organize a big public affair, it might be possible to hold an evening reception for him, inviting about 200 people.

b) South Africa:

(1) Memo on sanctions: The report on which Professors Hovet and Birkenhead were working would be ready next week.

(2) Meeting of organizations on sanctions: Representatives of interested organizations would be invited to meet on Wednesday evening, November 8; Hovet, Birkenhead and Oliver Tambo would speak.

In this connection, it was felt that the Committee should see what it could do in organizing unions to picket South African ships, refusing to unload those which arrived in our ports.

No action had as yet been taken protesting the loan of \$5,000,000 on the part of the First National City Bank of New York to the South African Government. A letter should be sent to the directors of the bank, and it, together with the names of the directors to whom it was sent, should be forwarded to the newspapers.

(3) Speaking programs for South African leaders here: If possible, something will be arranged for Oliver Tambo.

(4) Declaration of Action: A draft declaration was now ready, and needed revision. The Declaration should culminate in special observances on the anniversary of Sharpeville or on Africa Freedom Day.

(5) Pamphlet on Case for Sanctions: The pamphlet was being drawn up at present.

c) Angola:

(1) Public statement: Some 75 to 100 signatures had been received to date. The statement would be held for release until the item came up in the United Nations. It was decided not to incorporate Roger Baldwin's proposed changes. The importance of obtaining prominent Catholic signatures was emphasized, and in this connection, it was suggested that James A. Farley, Basil O'Connor, Edward Kennedy, Joseph P. Kennedy and Father Hesburgh should receive the statement.

(3) Commission of Inquiry: Further work on the project would have to await Holden Roberto's arrival and the presentation of the report of the Sub-commission on Angola to the General Assembly. When Roberto did arrive, the interested persons should be called to a meeting to work out strategy.

(4) Using Angola film: The film would be ready on Monday, November 6, and a number of groups would be contacted. Mary-Louise Hooper wanted the film for use on the West Coast. The money raised would go to the Africa Defense and Aid Fund.

The expose of Selvage and Lee, a public relations firm employed by Portugal, would appear in the January issue of AFRICA TODAY.

(5) Defense and Aid Fund: A number of groups were involved in raising money for the 200,000 refugees now in the Congo. Our funds should go directly into northern Angola.

(7) Parlor gatherings around Roberto: We will try to arrange some gatherings for Roberto when he arrives.

4. Other plans for speakers: It was agreed to put this item on the agenda for the next meeting. In connection with the decision to work with Southern Negro student groups, Hazel Gray had set up a meeting with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

5. Preliminary thinking on program next year: It was agreed to put this item on the agenda of the next meeting.

6. Other plans for African dignitaries or visitors: Members of the Board were being polled about their willingness to entertain African dignitaries in their homes.

Something should be arranged for Oliver Tambo before his return to London.