

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 Meeting

October 6, 1961

MINUTES

Present: Peter Weiss, Chairman, Nelson Bengston, Frank Montero. Staff: George Houser, Hazel Gray, Deborah Kallen.

2. Report on staff situation: George Houser announced that Mrs. Hazel Gray had joined the staff on September 26 as Projects Director, and that Deborah Kallen had replaced Suzanne Seidman as his secretary. The agreement with James Robinson was being concluded and it was hoped that he would be able to start working with us shortly as Assistant Executive Director for Finance.

3. Progress report on Angola Commission: The following people were contacted, and some had already indicated interest in participating in the Commission: Norman Cousins, Fowler Harper, Roger Baldwin, A. Philip Randolph, Gardner Taylor, Dr. Joachim Prinz and Mason Sears. Additional people to be approached were Dr. Harold Taylor and Richard Horchler. The Committee agreed that as soon as possible Commission members should apply for visas and receive the expected negative response.

4. Other Angola plans:

a) Public meeting: It was agreed that a public meeting be arranged when Holden Roberto arrived.

b) Pamphlet on Angola: Malcolm McVeigh was working on a draft outline report. It was thought that Basil Davidson's article might serve as the basis for the pamphlet if revised for an American public. The article could be used as written if prefaced by a prominent American or Malcolm McVeigh.

c) Public statement: A public statement with signatures of 50 to 100 prominent people should be drawn up and released when Angola is taken up in Plenary at the end of this month. It was suggested that the statement be combined with other action such as: three signatories taking up the subject with the Secretary of State; organizing a picketline or sit-in at the Portuguese Mission the day the statement is issued; issuing the statement at a public meeting at which Holden Roberto would be the main speaker; getting editorials in the newspapers. The Committee agreed that we should study the Negro press to see how we could use it in this regard.

d) Defense and Aid Fund drive: The Angolan refugee problem might be the center of our work during the year. After some discussion the Committee decided that a study of the present situation of the refugees and what other agencies are doing about it should be made, and that a plan should then be presented of how we could act effectively in this area. The importance of having someone in Northern Angola was recognized by the Committee.

5. South Africa:

a) Pamphlet on case for sanctions: A South African was presently drafting material for the proposed pamphlet.

b) Appeal to white South Africans: An appeal signed by prominent persons in the international community should be released in connection with an important event. It was felt that care must be exercised in choosing names that would have at least some influence on the South Africans, and that a way should be found to give the appeal as wide a circulation as possible in South Africa.

6. Speakers--Michael Scott: Hazel Gray announced that arrangements for Scott's tour were shaping up well, and that he was completely billed in the East. The Committee agreed to try to get Scott on national television and radio programs. The UAW had already declared its interest in having Scott make a television appearance in Detroit.

7. Tanganyika independence: George Houser had talked with Dr. Kyaruzi, representative from Tanganyika, about holding an affair here in New York. It was hoped that Julius Nyerere would be here for such an affair, and it was suggested that we consider holding it uptown.

9. Question of implementation of Steering Committee decisions: The Committee was agreed that if it or the Board made a definite decision which the staff found it was unable to implement, George Houser should report this fact back to the Committee or Board, or to the responsible officers of these bodies.

National City Bank: A telephone call had been received requesting our cooperation in action against the bank as a result of its loan to South Africa's Industrial Development Corporation.

Angie Brooks, Assistant Secretary of State for Liberia and Chairman of the Fourth Committee: Mrs. Brandt had said she would be glad to hold a reception in her home. Hazel Gray suggested that a luncheon be held in cooperation with women's groups such as the National Association of Negro College Women, the National Council of Negro Women and the National Association of Colored Women. The Committee felt that this suggestion should be followed up.

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