

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Executive Board

June 15, 1964

MINUTES

Present: P. Weiss, Chairman: R. Browne, E. Carrington, W. Courtney, A. Norman, F.A.O. Schwarz, Jr., M. Sears, H. Smythe.

Regrets: N. Bengston, D. Harrington, S.Y. Jacobs, F. Jones, G. Lawrence, C. Robinson, J.H. Robinson, B. Rustin.

Staff: C. Gonze, G. Houser, D. Kallen, C. Raymond, J.R. Robinson

Guest: Dr. F. Ian Gilchrist

1. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as circulated.

2. Reports and Staff Items:

a) Finance Report: Income had been larger than expenditures during the first part of 1964. Through June 10th an additional \$13,000 had been received. The budget appeal mailing was running ahead of 1963, and the Sophia Yarnall Jacobs appeal mailing had been more successful than similar appeals in the past. Despite all this, we were not as well off as we had been last year at this time. The income listed in the finance report under Program and Projects was almost entirely money received for the Africa tour which is immediately spent.

It was announced that the United Automobile Workers had given the Committee a gift of \$7,100.

b) Literature Report: The most significant thing to note during the first half of the year was the publication of the March issue of Africa Today devoted to American financial involvement in South Africa. 12,000 copies were printed, and in addition to regular subscriptions, 1,160 had been sold and well over 1,000 given away. Jim Forman will be taking an additional 600 for distribution to SNCC members. The response has been extremely enthusiastic, and we know of a number of people writing letters to companies in which they have investments, asking them to pull out of South Africa. The legal counsel for Crane Company had written, saying that inclusion of the firm's name in the list of companies investing in South Africa could be damaging to their reputation, that in any case their outlets had been closed two years ago, and asking that their name be excluded in any future printings of the March issue.

Africa Today had finally received a second-class mailing permit, and this would save about \$1,200 a year.

c) Mary-Louise Hooper: Mrs. Hooper had thought it might be more useful if she could work out of New York. Arrangements were therefore made for her to come toward the end of the summer and to work as a staff member with special responsibilities on the South African part of our program, such as preparing bulletins, helping with conferences, demonstrations, etc.

3. Project Reports:

a) Gilchrist: Mr. Robinson's comments on the speaking tour were distributed and further expanded upon orally. It was stressed that a speaker who projects well can make a tour a success even though he is not personally well-known before the tour starts, and especially where he represents an on-going project; that to cover initial high travel costs from Africa an extensive trip with many appearances is essential; and that to raise money, fund-raising must be stressed from initial letters to final appearance.

The tour had grossed somewhere between \$5,300 and \$5,500. This income was exclusive of individual contributions, and it should be noted that since the tour, ERA income generally had risen.

Dr. Gilchrist, in evaluating the tour, thought it was generally good, but made the following criticisms which he hoped would be helpful in planning future tours: (1) stops were too short and there was therefore insufficient time to consolidate the interest and concern aroused; (2) visual aids which would have been helpful both for meetings and TV programs were lacking. He urged that the Committee keep in touch with those people most intimately involved in the planning in each city and that a letter be sent to each of them. He was convinced that the most important area that could fruitfully be exploited was Canada where, for a variety of reasons, interest and concern was very great.

Dr. Gilchrist then summarized and analyzed developments in the Angolan situation over the past months.

Peter Weiss expressed, what he said could only be inadequately conveyed, the deep appreciation of the Board for Dr. Gilchrist's work.

b) Africa Tour: The tour, with 27 participants, was leaving on June 22nd. We would not know absolutely how much money it had made, or if indeed it had done so, until the group returned in mid-July. Barring unforeseen developments, though, something over \$3,000 should come in.

c) June 4th Demonstration: 12 organizations had joined in sponsoring the largest demonstration ever held on the South African issue. 11 people who staged a sit-in in the South African Mission to the United Nations were arrested, and their trial had been carried over until September 10th.

d) Touch of Gold: After having seen "Touch of Gold," a 20-minute propaganda piece made by the Hamilton-Wright organization under contract to the South African Government, Peter Weiss had, together with Donald Harrington, sent telegrams to the Skouras and RKO theater chains. Skouras executives viewed the film and withdrew it immediately; RKO was more difficult, but after much pressure and the threat of a picket line of CORE and ACOA people, they too agreed to withdraw "Touch of Gold" from their theaters. The success of these pressure efforts was announced at a press conference, and was carried in a number of South African newspapers.

e) Consultative Council on South Africa: The Council, now comprising 34 organizations, would be very useful, as was demonstrated by the June 4th action and by the numerous telegrams sent to

US government officials on the Rivonia trial. At its last meeting, the Council had elected officers and a Steering Committee. The Honorary Chairman is A. Philip Randolph and John Killens is serving as Chairman of the Steering Committee. Carl Soule of the Methodist UN Office is Treasurer, and George Houser, Executive Secretary.

4. Elections: The entire slate of officers and committee members (enclosed) was elected unanimously.

5. Items for Action:

a) Open Letter to Corporations: The draft of a letter to corporations with investments in or generally dealing with South Africa was circulated. The idea was to get it signed by civil rights, labor, church and community groups. The letter was approved with some additions and revisions.

b) Statement on Rivonia Trial: The draft had been drawn up with a view to having something on hand which could be sent out or quoted when queries on our position are received. The statement was generally approved, with the suggestion that the second paragraph be expanded to state that whenever the people are denied access to the political organs of the country, whenever they are unable to exert control over those bodies that rule their lives, they have no alternative but revolt, and that this is in the American tradition. A suitable quotation might be culled from Thomas Jefferson, and the Sunday Times editorial likening Mandela and Sisulu to the heroes of our Revolution and the fathers of our country should also be cited.

c) Plans for Washington Conference: The idea of a conference on the South African issue which would be held in Washington had been approved by the Steering Committee. It had come up originally during the meeting of the Consultative Council following the London Conference. The idea was to get a broadly sponsored conference which would have an effect on the Executive branch, the State Department and the Congress. Its theme might be "The South African Crisis: A Challenge to United States Policy." The Executive Director felt the conference should take place over three days, and that it should be held some time in February. A committee of three people (P. Weiss, H. Smythe and R. Browne) was appointed to work with him in drafting plans for the conference. The committee will meet before he leaves for Africa.

d) Malawi independence: The Executive Director will be attending the independence celebrations at the invitation of the Prime Minister, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda. A presentation will be made on behalf of the ACOA.

e) Current Security Council Meeting: Although no resolution has as yet been tabled, a Norwegian draft which has the support of the US will be submitted. It would establish the Security Council as a Committee of the Whole to study measures available to bring pressure to bear against the Government of South Africa.

f) Presentations Before Political Conventions: The ACOA should immediately contact civil rights organizations and urge them to include a statement on South Africa in their presentations to the platform committees of both parties. A number of suggestions for contacts at the Democratic convention were made, and the Executive Director and President will follow up on this.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: September 21st.

OFFICERS ELECTED AT JUNE 15, 1964 MEETING

Co-Chairman : A. Philip Randolph
Donald S. Harrington

Vice-Chairman : James A. Pike

President : Peter Weiss

Vice-Presidents : Sophia Yarnall Jacobs
Hope R. Stevens

Secretary : Farrell Jones

Treasurer : Nelson Bengston

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

1964 - 1965

Steering Committee

P. Weiss, Chairman
N. Bengston
R. Browne
D.S. Harrington
D. Jones
S. Levison
A. Norman
H.H. Smythe
H. Stevens

Finance Committee

N. Bengston, Chairman
S. Levison
F.A.O. Schwarz, Jr.
H. Stevens

Hospitality Committee

E. Carrington, Chairman
Phyllis Allen

Publications Committee

R. Browne
Mary Benson
M. Cohen
S. Diamond
St. Clair Drake
E. Landis
C. Legum
H.H. Smythe
S. Weeks
P. Weiss

(above will have title of
"Contributing Editor")

UN Committee

W. Courtney, Chairman
N. Bengston
F. Johnson
R. Kasdan
A.M. Stokes