

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Executive Board

June 11, 1962

MINUTES

The agenda was accepted without revision.

1. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the April 9 meeting of the Board were accepted unanimously as submitted.

2. Staff Report: The Executive Director's report on the Committee's work is attached, except for the following item which the Board discussed:

a) Territories under Portuguese Administration and particularly Angola: The Committee had been approached by two persons, speaking in an unofficial capacity but presenting the views of the Portuguese Government and steps Portugal might be prepared to take in relation to her "overseas territories." Dr. Francisco Rendeiro, meeting in the office with a number of people who had been invited to attend, presented an 8-point program, which included self-determination as the seventh point. The discussion was not very satisfactory from Dr. Rendeiro's point of view, since all present stressed that recognition of the right of self-determination must be the first point. Nothing further had been heard on this.

Mr. Martin Camacho, head of the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs, had dropped into the office twice and telephoned once. In relation to Mr. Camacho, the Board agreed that in any further discussions with him, the Executive Director clearly state that he was talking as an individual and that any negotiations must be approved by the Board. The Board also agreed to allow the Executive Director the discretionary power of deciding what was purely discussion and what constituted negotiation. Mr. Camacho would have to carry out the following steps before the Board would agree to any negotiations: (1) withdraw the pamphlet "Communists and Angola," (2) make a public withdrawal of statements against the Committee and (3) write an apology to William Scheinman. It was further agreed that the Angolan political groups should be fully informed of these contacts and asked if there was anything which they wished communicated through these channels.

3. Signatures for checking account: The Board approved the following resolution on "Procedure for Signing Checks":

- (a) Two signatures will be required on all checks.
- (b) Three staff members are authorized to sign checks: George M. Houser, James R. Robinson, and Catharine Raymond.
- (c) Checks for amounts between \$300 and \$1,500 will be authorized by the Treasurer or his designate by phone, and a carbon copy of the check promptly mailed to the Treasurer, initialed by him, and preserved in a permanent book.
- (d) A Board member's signature must appear on all checks exceeding \$1,500, and a carbon copy thereof preserved as in (c) above.

.../...

4. Percy Sutton resignation: Because of his many commitments which prevented him from being an active member of the Board, Mr. Sutton had submitted his resignation. It was agreed to urge Mr. Sutton to remain on the Board.

5. Procedure on chapters: The memorandum prepared by James Robinson and approved by the Steering Committee was approved by the Board with these revisions:

- a) Under the heading, "Structural Relationships," (page 1) para. 5, the words "substantially similar" were amended to read "clearly in accord."
- b) Under the heading "Financial Relations" (page 2), para. 3, the sentence "Affiliates will therefore obtain the approval of national ACOA concerning the timing of their mail appeals," was inserted after the first sentence. The sentence "However, each affiliate will submit annually, an up-to-date membership and mailing list which will not be solicited without its express permission (the ACOA uses many lists from a wide variety of sources on which some of these names might appear)" was incorporated as the last sentence of the paragraph.

6. Discussion of ACOA program: The Board was in general agreement with the following opinions expressed during the discussion:

Despite rapid changes in the political situation both in the United States and in Africa, ACOA could continue through its program to be a source of leadership in the years ahead, particularly in the face of enormous problems posed in southern Africa. ACOA's value lay in its individual approach, its presentation of developments in Africa to the American public, and in its maintaining traditionally close ties with the leaders of the struggle for freedom in Africa.

In order to be most effective, the Committee must seek ways of mobilizing large sectors of public opinion such as church, labor and student groups, who would press our government to adopt an intelligent and humane policy with a view to avoiding catastrophe and human tragedy in southern Africa. Our natural allies, given the nature of the problem in this part of the continent, will be those groups involved in the fight for civil rights here in the United States. We must also seek to re-examine and strengthen our relationship with influential groups whose major activities may not be in the field of African affairs, but who can exert great influence on U.S. policy.

The Board commended the staff for its memoranda on specific projects, and accepted them as submitted.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

Executive Board

June 11, 1962

STAFF REPORT

- (a) See "Minutes."
- (b) The N.B.C. WHITE PAPER, "Angola: Journey to a War" had received one of the awards of the Sidney Hillman Foundation. ACOA had nominated the film.
- (c) George Houser had testified at the United Nations before the Special Committee on Territories under Portuguese Administration.
- (d) During the past few months, visitors to the office had included Colin Leys, formerly principal of Kivukoni College, Tanganyika; Mr. van der Ross, principal of a school in South Africa, and two visitors, Dr. Weeks and Dr. Baker, presidents respectively of the University of Liberia and Cutlington College, Liberia, who had been scheduled by the State Department. Other visitors of note included Noni Jabavu of South Africa, author of Drawn in Color; Reverend Enos Sekakane, minister of a large Methodist church in Durban, South Africa; and Clement Lubembe, Deputy General Secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labor.
- (e) Since the last meeting, two African visitors had come to the US under the Committee's auspices: Kenneth Kaunda and Oliver Tambo. Despite the great expense entailed, the Committee almost broke even.
- (f) We had for a long time been attempting to bring Jomo Kenyatta to the States. There were now conflicting reports that he had finally accepted an invitation from the African-American Institute. Considering the expense involved and the fact that he was planning to come in July, it was probably not the kind of trip the Committee could undertake. Nevertheless, we will try to get him for at least one large public meeting.
- (g) George Houser had filled a number of speaking engagements, including one at Oxford, Ohio. (This was a regional conference on Africa at Western College for Women.) He also lectured on Angola on C.B.S. TV's "Sunrise Semester."
- The Executive Director has been appointed by the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa to serve on the Advisory Council on Africa, a body composed of private citizens from around the country, about 50 in number, to advise the Bureau of African Affairs of the State Department on its policy toward Africa.
- (h) Defense and Aid Fund: An appeal for South and South West African refugees in Dar-es-Salaam signed by Julius Nyerere had not met with very great success. Other mailings in the near future will raise money for ERA. Nearly \$15,000 in medicines had already been shipped to the Congo under this program.
- (i) A committee meeting with James Farmer of CORE, John Morsell of the NAACP, Hope Stevens and Frank Montero, discussed plans for the Negro leadership conference on American policy toward Africa. It was agreed that further meetings should be held with other key Negro leaders represented, and that a conference should be planned for the fall.

.../..

(j) Mrs. Hazel Gray, the Projects Director is no longer on the staff. The Committee is now actively looking for a person to fill the position by September 1st.

(k) The visitors and hospitality committee has been activated, and last week, due largely to the efforts of Elsie Carrington, a highly successful tea was offered, attended by some 45 women of the Afro-American community and African students in the New York area.

(l) We are still looking for new office space, and it now appears likely that we will move to a location on 44th Street. The rent there will be lower than what we are presently paying, and the office will be air conditioned.

(m) The resumed session of the General Assembly will be dealing with possibly two questions. The General Committee has recommended that Southern Rhodesia be inscribed on the agenda. On the question of Ruanda-Urundi, it appears likely that the territory will become independent on July 1st as two separate states. The Commission on Ruanda-Urundi, under the chairmanship of Angie Brooks, has recently issued an excellent report on the situation in the territory.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

STATEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND AFFILIATED CHAPTERS

Mutual arrangements between the national American Committee on Africa and affiliated local, state, or regional Committees on Africa:

Name: The name of the affiliated group shall be _____ Committee on Africa.

As a condition of affiliation, the local group shall agree that the phrase "Committee on Africa" is the property of the American Committee on Africa. Should the group at any time disaffiliate or be disaffiliated by ACOA, it agrees to drop the phrase "Committee on Africa" from its name.

Structural Relationships:

Affiliation of a group does not entitle it to a seat on the Executive Board, but the Board may, in its sole discretion, elect a member of the affiliate to a position on the Board.

When, in the discretion of the Board, it is deemed that there are sufficient affiliates interested in a national meeting, such a meeting shall be arranged. Executive staff of ACOA shall be represented, but shall have no vote. The Executive Board shall be represented by at least two members. Each local affiliate may send one or more delegates and alternates, but there shall be only one vote for each affiliate.

Such national meetings of the ACOA and its affiliates shall be in the nature of a conference and not in the form of a governing body for the national organization -- as the Executive Board constitutes the governing body.

The decisions of such national meetings on relationships between ACOA and its affiliates shall, however, be seriously considered by the next succeeding meeting of the Executive Board.

Copies of all Board minutes, policy statements, etc. shall be sent by the national ACOA to each affiliate. Affiliates shall send copies of their minutes and policy statements to ACOA. Affiliates shall not publicize or promote their policy statements without prior written approval from ACOA except where the affiliate's policy statement is clearly in accord with a policy already enunciated by ACOA.

Affiliates shall consult the national office for approval before making representations to officials of the U.S., the U.N., or other governmental and international agencies.

.../...

Financial Relationships:

Affiliates shall raise and expend funds autonomously. National ACOA is free to raise funds in any way it sees fit. Except where special arrangements are made on joint fund-raising efforts, the finances of the affiliates and of ACOA are distinct and separate.

Financial arrangements may be changed by action of the Executive Board with the approval of sixty per cent (60%) of the affiliated groups.

It is understood that raising funds by mail is primarily the province of ACOA. Affiliates will therefore obtain the approval of national ACOA concerning the timing of their mail appeals. The membership and mailing list of ACOA is exclusively its property. By the same token, the membership and mailing list of each affiliate is exclusively its property. However, each affiliate will submit annually an up-to-date membership and mailing list, which will not be solicited without its express permission (the ACOA uses many lists in which some of these names might appear).

Where ACOA wishes to use the list of an affiliate, the affiliate may, but shall not be required to, send out the material or address envelopes for ACOA.

Where an affiliate wishes to contact ACOA members in its own area, ACOA may, but shall not be required to, send out the material or address for the affiliate.

Either group may require responses from its list to go through it and not directly to the other group.

No affiliate is obligated to accept into its membership any person simply because that person is a national associate member of ACOA, or vice-versa.

Affiliation and Disaffiliation:

Affiliation: A local group, consisting of at least ten full-fledged members may apply for affiliation upon a majority vote of the membership or its governing body.

The local group must explicitly agree to the above conditions of affiliation in writing. It must apply for affiliation by letter.

The national office staff shall then take the matter to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee must approve the application for referral to the Executive Board. If the Steering Committee does not act within two months, the application dies. If the Steering Committee refers the application to the Executive Board, it shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Board members present and voting at any regular

meeting of the Board. The application is rejected if it fails to get a majority of the votes. If it gets a majority, but fails to get the required two-thirds for final approval, the application shall be subject to further negotiation and referral to one of the next two succeeding regular meetings of the Board.

Disaffiliation: A local group may disaffiliate at any time by a two-thirds vote of its membership or its governing body and by, at the same time, dropping "Committee on Africa" from its name. Such disaffiliation can be voted on only after prior written notice to the members, or the members of the governing body, as the case may be, that the question of disaffiliation is to be voted upon at a specifically announced meeting.

Upon recommendation by the Executive Director and/or a majority of the members present and voting at a Steering Committee, the ACOA Executive Board may take up the question of disaffiliating any affiliated group. Written notice to the Executive Board members must be given that the question of disaffiliation is coming up.

Disaffiliation shall become final by a majority vote of those Executive Board members present and voting at the announced meeting of the Executive Board.

It is understood that affiliates are largely autonomous and that disaffiliation by the Executive Committee of the ACOA will not be considered except in cases where, in the opinion of the staff, the Steering Committee, or the Executive Board, continued affiliation is a detriment to ACOA.

- - - - -