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COMMENTS ON THE TWELVE-MONTH REPORT OF FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA - 1961

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1961 was a year when the American Committee on Africa did not live up to its budgetary expectations. As you can see from the twelve-month report, both income and expense fell below the budget on most items.

However, the trend is strongly upward. About 20% of 1961 income came in in December. This income, of course, is traceable to two special activities: (1) the medical aid project for Angola and (2) the appeal to 54,000 people on other people's mailing lists - signed by Chief Luthuli.

This indicates that we can greatly increase income by a program of mass mailings and by developing new ways to serve in Africa.

It is perfectly true, of course, that both of these methods also imply increased expenditures. It is not surprising that December was the month of our highest expenditures as well as of highest income. But the income was greater than the incurred expenses for the month -- with the result that some payment on back bills was possible, a personal loan to the Committee was reduced from \$2,000 to \$500, and the loan from the bank of \$3,000 was renewed for \$2,000.

AFRICA DEFENSE AND AID FUND: It is clear that this fund suffered much more in 1961 than the regular budget of the Committee. While it did not run in the red, it gave less service than in previous years because relatively little was either raised or spent.

ANALYSIS OF WHY 1961 WAS A LESS SUCCESSFUL YEAR

The major reasons for the fact that 1961 did not continue the upward curve that had characterized the Committee's growth in earlier years (not forgetting that that growth was often accompanied by annual financial deficits) seem to me to fall into two major categories: (1) uncertainties about program; and (2) staff changes and vacancies.

Program Uncertainties

Program uncertainties are inevitable for organizations dealing with broad aspects of a varied continent emerging into the modern world with startling rapidity. As the Committee grew, its interests widened.

But, as countries achieved independence, their actions became debatable. The period when those struggling for independence clearly had the force of justice on their side passed into a period when that objective was obtained and the news filtering through the American press often presented a confused picture of conflict and disagreement.

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Result: complications in programming. What is the relevance of Africa Freedom Day; what format for the celebration? How can Defense and Aid be presented when there are many relatively small, unpublicized needs instead of a South African Treason Trial?

Staff Vacancies, Changes and Re-organization

Problems here related to program uncertainties in part, especially as to how the staff should be organized. A departmental set-up was adopted with an over-all director and three departments: publications, projects and membership (fund-raising).

The major difficulty, however, at least as far as 1961 was concerned, was caused by resignations and the inevitable time lapses before replacements could be found. After Ann Morrissett left, for example, there was no one person in the office responsible for Defense and Aid. Funds for this purpose fell off. Yet the West Coast operation under Mary-Louise Hooper continued to raise funds successfully. Contrariwise, the new AFRICA TODAY has already resulted in growing circulation.

Difficulties with Membership

When I joined the staff in late October, one fact stood out: a great many people give to the Committee once and do not renew. I think I know why.

They do not receive sufficient information about what the Committee is doing. With the exception of the Annual Report, most members and contributors have been receiving nothing except fund-appeals. About one-third of the list receives AFRICA TODAY, but that is truly a magazine and not a news sheet about ACCA.

THE FINANCIAL PICTURE FOR 1962

I am confident that income can be significantly increased and that a larger proportion of our members can be induced to renew. The recent mailing of our basic brochure and the Statement on the U.S., the U.N., and the Congo is a first step toward keeping in touch with members in mailings other than appeals. A news letter on the trip into rebel-held Angola should be ready by early March. Occasional mailings of this kind serve to inform and to make the Committee more effective (our statement on the Congo elicited significant membership response, was used in classrooms, etc.). And they help to demonstrate a reason for members to give again when an appeal reaches them.

Defense and Aid

Large mailings are planned. This source of funds, not utilized for the past year, must be used again. The first mailing may deal with political refugees, etc. If so, results cannot be expected to come up to those based on well-publicized events such as the Treason Trials.

But the Medical Aid for Angola project may have the potential for becoming our largest Defense and Aid appeal. Like aid to South Africans, especially during the Treason Trials, it can become not only exciting but clear-cut, with a definite channel for funneling help, and the ability to report on exactly what has been collected and distributed. I hope that we can do a great deal with this project during 1962.

Mailings for the Committee Itself

Mass Mailings Serve Two Purposes: Large mailings are done in order to raise more funds and to build a larger mailing list. The prime purpose is, of course, the money which can undergird a more effective program. But in a cause organization as distinguished from a charity, there is a second and most important purpose: informing the public so that it can exert influence on the direction of public opinion. This is most evident in a mailing such as the one recently signed by Eleanor Roosevelt and enclosing a statement on the Congo. Many persons -- including thousands who will not contribute financially -- will know some of the facts of the situation not easily gleaned from the newspapers. The build-up of our own mailing list is part and parcel of our educational function.

CONCLUSION: While the future will certainly not be easy from a financial point of view, present trends indicate that we can clear up past deficits and build constantly larger membership and financial support.