

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

Executive Board Meeting

November 13, 1961

MINUTES

Present: Donald Harrington (Chairman); Nelson Bengston; Daniel J. Bernstein; Winifred Courtney; Joseph Jablow; Sophia Yarnall Jacobs; David Jones; Farrell Jones; John V. Murra; Frank Montero; Adelaide Schulkind; Hugh Smythe; Hope R. Stevens; Peter Weiss. Staff: George M. Houser; Hazel Gray; Collin Gonze; Catharine Raymond; James Robinson; Deborah Kallen.

1. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting of September 12, 1961 were adopted as submitted.

2. Staff report: Copies of the report were distributed to Board members. Under the item "Activities and Projects" George Houser presented further details in the case of Dr. Jadwat. It now seemed unlikely that Dr. Jadwat would win his fight for waiver of Public Law 555.

Peter Weiss congratulated the authors of the Staff Report. He also pointed out that AFRICA TODAY had shown great improvement and that it is now an attractive, readable, well-written magazine.

3. Progress report on projects:

a) Angola commission: Work with the commission had been delayed because (1) the Sub-Commission on Angola had not yet submitted its report and (2) we did not know exactly what the military situation in Angola was. A report would be made to the Board on future developments.

b) Angola statement and pamphlet: About 100 signatures had been received for our Angola statement which would be released simultaneously with the opening of the debate on Angola in Plenary Session at the UN.

The Angola pamphlet, which will be offset and will be priced at \$0.25, will contain the two McVeigh articles, Robert Young's pictures, and an introduction including a chronology of events in Angola.

An expose of Selvage and Lee, the public relations firm which has been hired by the Portuguese Government, has been prepared by Dan Friedenburg for the January issue of AFRICA TODAY.

George Houser had written a letter to the Editor of the READER'S DIGEST concerning the two articles which appeared in its November issue. It was felt that some people who had signed our Angola statement might also be asked to write letters.

..//..

c) South Africa sanctions and pamphlet: Thomas Birkenhead's paper dealing with "The United States, South Africa and Sanctions" was passed around to Board members. Prof. Hovet's paper had not yet been submitted. A pamphlet on the case for sanctions was reported to be in draft form.

e) Speakers and Michael Scott: Hazel Gray reported that Michael Scott still had not arrived. There were 27 stand-by requests from groups which would be able to arrange for him to speak on short notice.

f) Visitors program: Hazel Gray reported that she would be sending out a letter to Board members to determine their interest in extending hospitality to visitors. The program would include both visiting dignitaries and speakers, and could be an important supplement to our work.

Donald Harrington turned the Chair over to Peter Weiss.

4. Program and budget for 1962: Nelson Bengston presented the Proposed Budget for 1962, stating that the staff was justified in assuming that there would be an upward trend in the coming year. George Houser pointed out that if funds did not come in as expected, a revision would have to be made in the budget and program. It was agreed that the budget should be gone over again in six months' time, and that if we were not doing well at that time, changes would be made.

With regard to fund-raising, Mr. Bengston reported that the Finance Committee was in agreement with James Robinson's plans and expectations. Mr. Robinson then presented a brief explanation of his proposed program to the Board.

The Budget was adopted with the stipulation that it would be re-examined by the Finance Committee in 5 or 6 month's time.

a) Declaration on South Africa: The Steering Committee had approved a project similar to the Declaration of Conscience; a Declaration of Action was presently in draft form, and would be sent to Board members for suggestions. The Declaration might be published on the anniversary of Sharpeville and be combined with a poster walk, an all-night vigil, and a meeting in New York.

b) Africa Freedom Day: It was generally felt that it would be difficult, in the light of the fact that 29 countries in Africa were now independent, to hold an Africa Freedom Day celebration along the lines on which it had been organized previously. Only if Kenyatta came to the United States would this be possible. It was agreed not to have a ball. The Board agreed that the idea of combining the Declaration of Action with Africa Freedom Day was worth consideration.

c) Conference of Negro leaders: It was felt that any conference held might deal with US policy as it relates to the Afro-American community and Africa, and that it would be unwise to limit participation solely to Negro leadership. Persons might also be invited from church groups and civil rights organizations.

Perhaps emphasis would be placed on what the public is doing and can do in regard to Africa, rather than on State Department policies. The Board agreed to refer this item to the Steering Committee, and requested that a memorandum be drawn up by John Murra, and perhaps one or two others, on the subject.

d) Regional conferences: The Board felt that not enough was known about the need for regional conferences, how much they would cost, and what they would mean for the Committee to come to any decision. It was agreed that the Steering Committee should study the question and report back to the Board with definite suggestions.

e) Speakers: Hazel Gray reported that a letter would be sent out describing the available speakers. When the requests were received a suitable schedule would be arranged. The speakers would fall into two categories: those arriving for short periods, and those who would be available over an extended period of time. The Board felt that we should ask for fees, and that these fees should provide a source of revenue. It would also be possible to utilize people at the United Nations.

f) Defense and Aid Fund: It was felt that the emphasis should be on Angola which has the best possibilities for raising money in this country. Work could be done with political refugees such as those now living in Dar es Salaam. The Board was opposed to a suggestion that we raise money to aid petitioners on a permanent basis, but agreed to continue helping them where possible, if they request help from time to time.

6. Frank Montero nominated David Jones for election to the Steering Committee. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

7. Internal developments in African States and ACOA policy: The question of the Committee's taking a stand on internal developments in Ethiopia was raised. It was felt, though, that if we decided to take any stand in the case, it would set a precedent for the future, and that therefore the Board might hold a special evening discussion to examine this problem.

8. Congo: George Houser felt that the Committee should formulate a communication on the Congo in which our basic position would be that some kind of police action must be taken in Katanga in order to implement previous Security Council decisions so that (1) the central Government will not fold and (2) the cold war is prevented from entering into the Congo situation a second time. This was agreed.

*
* *