MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
American Committee on Africa

January 30, 1961

Present: Peter Weiss, Acting Chairman, Nelson Bengston, Lewis Carliner, E.F. Gray, Sophia Jacobs, Joseph Jablow, Elizabeth Landis, John V. Murra, Adelaide Schulkind, Hugh Smythe, Hope Stevens, Staff: George Houser, Barbara Harrison, Dale Harrison, Catherine Raymond, Suzanne Seidman.

Minutes: The minutes of the December 6th meeting were accepted as circulated.

Follow-up of Dec. 6 meeting: a) Algeria Statement - George Houser reported that a statement urging U.S. support of an Algerian plebiscite, and signed by 82 prominent Americans was issued and received some coverage in the New York Times and foreign press.

b) Congo - Letter urging round-table discussion among Congo leaders including Lumumba, was sent to the President and the Secretary of State.

c) Governor Williams - George Houser reported on a trip taken by Peter Weiss, Frank Montero and himself to see Governor Williams in Lansing, Michigan.

d) Portugal and Security Council seat - George Houser reported that a communication was sent out to U.S. officials.

Staff Report: A Composite Staff Report for December 1960 - January 1961 was circulated to the Board members present. It was requested that, in the future, these reports be sent out to Board members prior to the following Board meeting.

Finance Report: An informal finance report was circulated to Board members present to give an idea of 1960 finances. Discussion of the Financial Report will be held at the Annual Meeting of the Executive Board. It was requested that, for the Annual Meeting, figures for 1959 and 1958 be available for comparative purposes. It was also requested that the Financial Report be sent to Board members in advance of the Annual Meeting

Letters from John Gunther and Maxwell Harway: Peter Weiss read a letter from John Gunther submitting his resignation as Honorary Chairman of ACOA and a letter from Maxwell Harway who has resigned due to the fact that he will be taking up residency abroad. It was decided that the Acting Chairman would respond to these communications, accepting the resignations.

Plans for Conference on U.S. policy: George Houser gave a brief summary of plans for the conference on U.S. policy toward Africa, to be held March 9 and 10. It was suggested that arrangements be made for thorough coverage of all discussions and speeches at the conference so that a detailed summary of the conference might be published.

Plans for Africa Freedom Day: Barbara Harrison reported on plans for Africa Freedom Day which will be held on April 17 in the Hunter College auditorium. A contract has been signed with a Mr. Carl Proctor who will act as publicity and promotion agent and assist in securing talent for the event.

Discussion of proposal for a mass mobilization and the role of ACOA: George Houser reported that in the spring of 1960, a meeting of 25 to 30 Negro leaders had been called together by A. Philip Randolph to discuss the idea of mobilizing, on a national scale, Afro-American interest in Africa so that such interest can be given some constructive direction. It was proposed that ACOA take a primary interest in this mobilization and that, to this end, A. Philip Randolph be invited to serve as either co-chairman or Honorary Chairman of ACOA. Preliminary work will be done toward the organization of a mass rally for Africa to take place sometime in the fall. It was also suggested that a series of Africa Freedom Days be organized in various cities, if possible, so that ACOA can begin to take on more of a national flavor. A. Philip Randolph will be asked to cooperate with ACOA in these undertakings. Lewis Carliner, E.F. Gray, Stanley Levison, Cleveland Robinson will serve as a committee to work with George Houser on the above projects.

UN resumed session and ACOA: A meeting, for members of the Executive Board, will be held so that the Board may discuss and formulate the Committee's policy on the Congo situation. This meeting will take place on Thursday, February 9, at 8:00 p.m. in the office of the UAW Region 9, 855 6th Avenue.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: March 13th at ACOA office, 5:45 p.m.