

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting  
American Committee on Africa  
December 6, 1960

Present: Peter Weiss, Acting Chairman; Adelaide Schulkind; Elizabeth Landis; Lewis Carliner (for Victor Reuther); Joseph Jablow; John Murra; Frank Montero; William Scheinman; Nelson Bengston. Staff: George Houser; Chuck Stone; Dale Harrison; Barbara Harrison; Catharine Raymond.

I. Minutes: The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

II. George Houser reported on his trip to Africa, which he undertook when the Nigerian government invited him to the swearing-in ceremony of Dr. Azikiwe, in Lagos. George Houser reported fruitful visits to London, Accra, Leopoldville and Lagos. George Houser spoke to representatives of Tanganyika African National Union, of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa, of the Union of the Populations of Angola, of the United National Independence Party, and of the South African United Front. Two things on which there is possibility of ACOA action figured prominently in all these discussions: an international conference of non-governmental agencies (to be held, probably, in Lagos) for coordinated action against South Africa; and the problem of refugees from South Africa, South West Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique, who have fled, by means of the underground railway, to Dar es Salaam, where TANU, with limited funds, is providing for these student and political refugees. It was announced that George Houser would give a more detailed report on his observations in the Congo at Roger Baldwin's home, Thursday, December 15th.

III. Chuck Stone: Peter Weiss read Chuck (C. Sumner) Stone's letter of November 28th, in which Mr. Stone announced his resignation from ACOA to become managing editor of the Washington edition of the Afro-American. The Board congratulated Chuck Stone on his new position, and expressed its regrets that he would no longer be with the ACOA. Mr. Stone informed the Board of his desire to continue to help the Committee in Washington. The extent to which he will be able to work with ACOA in an informal relationship will be determined after he is established in Washington.

IV. Algeria: ACOA's statement on Algeria and the list of signators were discussed. It was agreed to try to get a delegation to see Ambassador Wadsworth with this statement. Means of publicizing the statement were discussed.

V. Congo: George Houser spoke to some extent on the situation in the Congo, discussing the power vacuum and the forces that are contending to fill it. Houser proposed sending a message to the Secretary of State, calling upon him to act publicly for the safekeeping of Lumumba and all other imprisoned political leaders, and urging him to use U.S. influence to bring about a round-table discussion of all Congolese leaders, including Lumumba. It was suggested that this message be sent to President Eisenhower and G. Mennen Williams as well, and that it be followed by a news release, copies of which would go to African delegations and to African newspapers.

VI. G. Mennen Williams: George Houser proposed that a message be sent to Gov. Williams expressing the Board's best wishes on his appointment. It was agreed that the Executive Director, together with Board member or members, visit Governor Williams in Lansing. It was suggested that a message go to President-elect Kennedy congratulating him on his choice of Williams as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.



VII. Portugal: George Houser announced that a letter had been sent to Ambassador Wadwoorth (with copies to African delegations) urging that the United States back Liberia rather than Portugal for the seat vacated by Italy on the Security Council. Several possibilities for dramatic publicity on this issue were suggested.

VIII Policy and Program: George Houser read the Board a statement, a copy of which is attached, outlining ACOA policy and program for the coming year.

After a prolonged discussion of ACOA's future policy and programs, the following resolution was passed, with one abstention: that ACOA will have an expanding role in a contracting area, i.e., the parts of Africa that are not yet independent. This was, in effect, an endorsement of the Executive Director's policy statement. It was agreed that while ACOA would maintain friendly relations with the independent areas of Africa, these would be limited, and the Committee would focus on the areas of Africa which are still under colonial domination. The Committee would have five major points of emphasis: expansion of Defense and Aid; U.S. policy; literature programs; speakers programs; and special events. George Houser, in consultation with committees concerned, will implement this program appropriately. The programs of economic development and special services, which other organizations are equipped to handle, will be de-emphasized so that the Committee may concentrate on its major concerns.

Communications from absent Board members Harold Isaacs, Cleveland Robinson and Hugh Smythe were read.

It was requested and the Board agreed that the Board be kept informed of implementation of all decisions of the Executive Board. Items discussed at Board meetings on which follow-up action is required will appear on the agenda of the succeeding Board meeting and the Executive Director will report on action taken.

IX. Budget: Dale Harrison read his financial report on the literature program. The budget for 1961 was discussed and approved by the Board. It was noted that approval of the budget did not preclude the possibility of a raise for Executive Director or staff.

X. Next Meeting: January 30th, 5:45 p.m., offices of ACOA.