

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT

1960

I. Nineteen-sixty was a year of tremendous importance for Africa. Even as late as the latter part of 1959 it was prophesied that only four states would become independent during 1960. Before 1960 there were nine independent countries (excluding the Union of South Africa) and it seemed that the year 1960 would end with only 12 independent states on the continent. Actually 17 new countries were born in "Africa's Year", and the nations in the African bloc in the United Nations rose to twenty-five in number, Mauritania having become independent, but not yet voted into the United Nations. Thus African countries became the largest single group of nations in the United Nations.

Both because of the number of African states in the United Nations and because of the urgency of developments on the African continent, the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly was almost dominated by issues relating to Africa and colonialism.

First, and of most importance, was the crisis that developed in the Congo following independence on June 30th. The power vacuum which developed in the Congo because of the lack of unity among the African leaders there, because of the divisions which existed among the African states, and because of the relative ineffectiveness of the United Nations to fill the vacuum, for the first time permitted the cold war to enter Africa in a significant way. Secondly, the killing of 72 unarmed Africans in the town of Sharpeville in South Africa by armed troops and soldiers brought the South African tragedy forcefully to the attention of the world and added urgency to the debates on apartheid at the United Nations. Thirdly, for the first time the United Nations debated and passed by an overwhelming vote a resolution against colonialism, and called for a speedy end to domination of one country by another. Fourthly, the increasing speed with which African territories were achieving independence in 1960 called special attention to the Portuguese areas where events were moving much too slowly. The United Nations called upon Portugal to recognize that her territories were non-self-governing and that she should make reports to the General Assembly on conditions in her territories. Fifthly, the Algerian war continued, and as the way seemed to be paved for bringing the hostilities toward a conclusion, the United Nations asked for the recognition of the right of self-determination of the Algerian people but refused to accept the idea of a UN-sponsored plebiscite.

Because the United States either abstained or voted negatively on so many of the key issues affecting Africa, American prestige in Africa sank to a new low. It was hoped by many Africans and people elsewhere in the world that the incoming administration would change this trend. It is still too early in the Kennedy administration to make a judgment as to whether the image of the United States can be effectively changed in the minds of the peoples of Africa. The United States' position was certainly helped by America's support of the United Nations resolution calling upon Portugal to make drastic changes in the administration of Angola.

In summary, the events of the last year which will be of decisive importance in reshaping a policy toward Africa are: the increased number of African independent states, the intensification of the struggle for independence and equality in those areas that are not yet free, the Congo crisis that has introduced the cold war into the heart of Africa and has reflected divisions among the African states.

II. Nineteen-sixty was a year of re-assessment of purposes and programs for the American Committee on Africa. This re-assessment was made necessary by the nature of the changes in Africa itself. The Committee was born several years ago when there were virtually no independent countries on the continent and the Committee had the unique role on the American scene of interpreting the nature of the struggle in Africa and of gaining sympathetic support for the aims of independence, equality and freedom in Africa. In 1960 the Executive Board of the Committee had to give lengthy consideration to the role of the Committee which now must deal with a continent composed of more independent than non-self-governing territories. The general policy decision made by the Board was that the program of the Committee must focus attention primarily on U.S. policy toward Africa. A statement which was adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting on December 6th had as its first directive on Committee policy the following: "Emphasis upon the issues which effect U.S. policy both at the United Nations and in Washington. This would mean continued emphasis, of course, on issues such as South West Africa, and Portuguese Africa. But it would mean, perhaps, more active work on U.S. policy toward the Congo, U.S. policy in regard to economic development and economic assistance to independent Africa."

Thus the emphasis which came out of the Board discussions was not that attention should be given exclusively to the problems relating to the non-self-governing areas of the continent, but that attention would be given also to independent Africa as U.S. policy relates to any of the problems in independent areas. This is the policy which should guide the organization in the future. Because of the traditional role the Committee has played in relation to the struggle in the not-yet-independent areas, greater emphasis has been given to the problems of the non-yet-independent areas, than to the independent areas.

III. Specific actions of the Committee to implement policy included the following during 1960:

A. After Sharpeville, following the massacre of 72 people and the wounding of more than 200, in March 1960, the Committee initiated a program of protest against the violence unleashed by the South African government and a program of support for the victims of the governmental attack. A poster walk and picket line were held in New York; the pickets marched up Fifth Avenue and then across to Madison Avenue, ending in front of the South African office. A considerable amount of publicity was given in the press to Committee representatives' delivering a note to the South African authorities in the South African office. A special drive was instituted to raise funds for the Africa Defense and Aid Fund to help the victims of the Sharpeville disaster and their families. The Committee supported the boycott movement against South African goods. To implement this position and other actions against apartheid, the Committee called a conference designated "An Emergency Action Conference on South Africa". Over 200 people participated in the two-day conference. Joining in the sponsorship of it were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the American Society of African Culture, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Local 23 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, Americans for Democratic Action, the Jewish Labor Committee, and the United Automobile Workers, Region 9. The proceedings of the

conference and the actions which were proposed by it were published in a pamphlet entitled Action Against Apartheid. The actions and suggestions received wide circulation among many groups concerned about South Africa's policies.

B. The Algeria statement. The Algerian problem received a great deal of attention during the latter part of the year. One action by the American Committee on Africa was to draft a statement calling upon Americans to support a UN-conducted plebiscite in Algeria, giving the people of Algeria an opportunity to express themselves on the type of self-determination they would like. Eighty-eight prominent Americans signed this statement, including Senators Jennings Randolph and Frank E. Moss, Congressmen Charles C. Diggs and Adam Clayton Powell, Mrs Kermit Roosevelt, Dr. Reinhold Neibuhr, Walter Reuther, Van Wyck Brooks, Rex Stout, Harry Emerson Fosdick, the Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, Atty. Sadie T.M. Alexander, and many others. This statement received considerable notice in the press, both in the United States and abroad.

C. Visa cases. The Committee was called upon several times in regard to the application of Africans to receive visas to come to the United States, and, in one case, to stop a deportation from taking place. The first such case was that of Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress in South Africa. Tambo had been originally scheduled to be a leader in the conference on South African apartheid and then to go on a speaking tour around the country, but his trip to the United States had to be postponed because his visa did not come through on time. Protest action of the Committee certainly helped speed up the granting of the visa.

Mbyiu Koinange had been denied a visa to enter the United States some years ago. He was a leader in the Kenya African Union for some time, but has been an exile from Kenya for a dozen years. He reapplied for a visa to come back to the United States, having had college work here years ago, and, following action taken by a number of individuals and groups, he was granted a visa.

The case of Dr. Cassim Jadwat is still pending. He is a South African of Indian origin. A doctor, he is a specialist in anesthesia. He came to the United States originally on an exchange basis, but as the situation became more oppressive in South Africa, did not wish to go back. He applied for an immigrant visa to the United States - where he had a good job - and it was not granted to him. A deportation date was set for early 1961; the date has now been extended until June 1, 1961. It is hoped that Dr. Jadwat's case also will be won.

The Reverend Michael Scott, Director of the Africa Bureau of London, and for a long time a petitioner representing the people of South West Africa at the United Nations, has for many years wanted a visa to travel freely around the United States. However, because of his conscientious scruples, he has always refused to comply with those regulations in the U.S. immigration law demanding information about any possible Communist affiliations in his background. The American Committee on Africa applied for permission for Scott to undertake a speaking tour across the country. This request was granted towards the end of 1960, and a speaking tour will be set up some time in 1961.

D. Hearings. Four times during 1960, representatives of the Committee appeared before Congressional committees or political platform committees to put forth proposals relating to African policy. Peter Weiss represented the Committee during the hearings on the Mutual Security Act conducted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. George Houser appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in special hearings that were conducted to re-evaluate American policy toward Africa. Homer Jack appeared before the platform committee of the Democratic Party to present suggestions for a U.S. policy toward Africa. Dr. Arthur G. Falls, a member of the Committee in the Chicago area, appeared before the Republican platform committee.

E. Governor Williams. Prior to Gov. G. Mennen Williams' taking on his new responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in Washington, three representatives of the Committee visited the Governor at his headquarters in Lansing, Michigan. Peter Weiss, Frank Montero, and George Houser spent almost two hours with Governor Williams discussing recent developments in Africa and proposing actions which the government might take in order to improve American relations with the African countries.

F. Communications to the Government. On several occasions during the course of the year the Committee communicated with the government on matters of concern. Among such communications, the following are perhaps representative: 1) A letter to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations urging that Liberia and not Portugal be backed for a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. 2) A letter to the President following the capture of Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister of the Congo, after his escape from house arrest in Leopoldville, urging that the United States take the strongest position possible in urging that Lumumba be physically protected. 3) A letter to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Ambassador to the United Nations, urging that the United States officially support a round-table discussion in which Congolese leaders would participate. 4) A communication to Ambassador Designate to the United Nations, Adlai E. Stevenson, analysing the United States' voting record in the United Nations and suggesting certain new emphases in the organization of the United States Mission to the United Nations that might improve American handling of African issues.

G. South Africa and the Olympic Games. The American Committee on Africa joined with efforts in other parts of the world to have the Union of South Africa team excluded from participating in the Olympic games in Rome because no non-whites were permitted to try out for the team. South Africa's action was in direct violation of the constitution of the Olympic games, which outlaws discrimination. The Committee activity took the form primarily of a letter-writing campaign to Avery Brundage, an American who is also the Chairman of the Olympic Games. Letters urged that action be taken by the Executive Committee of the Olympic Games. The ACOA responded with a good many Americans urging that letters be written.

H. Actions at the United Nations. In preparation for debate at the United Nations General Assembly, the ACOA prepared memoranda and pamphlets with background material. A pamphlet on Angola written by Homer Jack was circulated among all the delegates to the General Assembly. The pamphlet on South West

Africa was brought up to date and circulated among all the delegates. Three memoranda considering the advisability of declaring sanctions against the Union of South Africa were prepared and circulated among UN delegations. Thomas Hovet, Jr., Associate Professor of Government and Administration of the United Nations program at New York University, and Linwood R. Wall, Research Assistant, United Nations Collection, New York University, prepared a study of the legal aspects of sanctions. Mr. T. Bruce Birkenhead, Department of Economics, Brooklyn College, prepared a study of the economics of sanctions. A final memorandum circulated by the Committee related to the question of Portuguese policy in Africa and the transmission of information on non-self-governing territories. The memorandum pointed out that by no stretch of the imagination could Portugal's African territories be considered as self-governing or even as a voluntary grouping within a "Greater Portugal".

IV. Program.

A. Africa Defense and Aid Fund. The Africa Defense and Aid Fund was established almost two years ago for the purpose of giving legal assistance and welfare aid to those involved in the struggle for equality and freedom in Africa. This fund was the successor to more specialized funds, such as the South Africa Defense Fund and the Project Fund, all sponsored by the American Committee on Africa.

All monies for the Africa Defense and Aid Fund come through voluntary contributions, primarily from individuals from all parts of the United States, and to some extent through special support from church groups, trade union groups, or other community groups. A portion of the funds also comes from special benefit events sponsored by the American Committee on Africa. Office space and equipment, as well as staff time, is contributed by the American Committee on Africa. This means that overhead expenses for the Africa Defense and Aid Fund are kept at a minimum.

The following is a summary of the disbursements of funds to Africa during 1960:

1) South Africa (\$19,050 approximately) \$11,500 of the amount sent to the Union of South Africa was for the purpose of legal defense; and \$7,550 was contributed for welfare aid, primarily to the families of those who were on trial or those who were in prison.

The greater portion of the funds which went to South Africa during 1960 were used to defend those arrested under the emergency laws which came into effect after the Sharpeville massacre of March 21st. Some of the money was used to give direct assistance to African leaders who escaped from South Africa to one of the British protectorates and had no means of support. Several hundred dollars were given to make it possible for the children of one of the men killed in the Sharpeville massacre to continue their schooling. And a portion of the Fund went to the Treason Trial Defence Committee in Johannesburg that is sponsoring the defense of those who were arrested in 1956 and were still on trial for treason.

2) South West Africa (\$2,400 approximately) An increasing number of leaders from African organizations have escaped from South West Africa in order to come to the United Nations to present to the world the plight of their people. The Africa Defense and Aid Fund has been of assistance primarily to those leaders who are now refugees from South West Africa, and to their families.

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3) Central Africa (\$9,250 approximately) Of the money sent to Central Africa, approximately \$4,250 has been used for legal defense, and \$5,000 for welfare aid. There has been an acute need for assistance in Nyasaland, and in Northern and Southern Rhodesia during 1960 as a result of emergency regulations enforced more than a year ago. Under these emergency laws, major African political organizations were banned and key leaders were arrested. Assistance has been given to the families of those who have been imprisoned so that they could have food and clothing. Some funds have been sent through the Southern Rhodesia Detainees' Fund, located in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Some money has been used to make it possible for an African leader from Southern Rhodesia to get needed medical attention. Legal defense funds have been used to support the efforts of lawyers brought from London to defend African leaders for their legitimate activities in attempting to extend democracy to all the people of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

4) East Africa (\$2,580 approximately) The greater portion of this disbursement has been used for legal-defense purposes. The remainder has aided students from East Africa involved in special projects in the United States, who needed emergency help. Limited support has been given to petitioners from Ruanda-Urundi who came to New York to present their case to the United Nations and who ran short of money.

4) Angola (\$500 approximately) This contribution has been used primarily to aid petitioners from the Portuguese colony of Angola to present the case of their people before the United Nations.

Total: \$33,742.80

B. Literature Program. In March 1960 Africa Today made its first appearance as a 16-page monthly (except July and August) magazine. In the course of the year it doubled its subscription list from about 1500 to about 3,000. Income from Africa Today (including ads, sale of subscription list, as well as subscriptions) was \$6,046.39. Expenses were \$7,489.21. The average printing run of the magazine was 4,500 copies.

During the year ACOA published two new pamphlets, Action Against Apartheid (3,500 copies), a condensation of the papers presented and the resolutions passed by the Emergency Conference on South Africa, and Angola: Repression and Revolt in Portuguese Africa (5,000 copies). The former has been completely sold out. A second printing of Marvin Harris' Portugal's African "Wards" -- A First-Hand Report on Labor and Education in Mozambique (2,000 copies) was made, and a slightly revised edition of South West Africa: The U.N.'s Stepchild was printed (2,000 copies).

Also in 1960 the "Africa Packet" (a collection of educational materials plus a large full-color map of Africa) and the "South Africa Packet" (a similar collection concentrating on the Union) were launched to sell at \$1.50 each, and about 500 packets were sold.

ACOA income from its Africa Today Pamphlet series was at least \$1,278.39. This represented a diminished inventory, since no new pamphlet was added to the series, although Patrick Duncan had been asked to write a definitive pamphlet on South Africa for publication in December. ACOA also sold about \$1,500 of pamphlets published elsewhere and carried by the Committee.

C. Speakers Increasingly the ACOA has been called upon to help various groups procure speakers on African affairs. What the Committee does falls into three general categories. First, the ACOA plans speaking tours for some African leaders invited to the United States. During 1960, tours (of either a limited or a longer duration) were planned for Kenneth Kaunda, President of the United National Independence Party of Northern Rhodesia; Alan Paton, South African author and a leader of the Liberal Party; Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress of South Africa; and Vusumzi Make, one of the representatives of the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa. In addition, there are numerous occasions when the Committee called upon African representatives who are in New York City for specific meetings that needed speakers. On various occasions during 1960, Joshua Nkomo, President of the National Democratic Party of Southern Rhodesia; the Reverend Marcus Kooper of South West Africa; Jacob Kuhangua of South West Africa; and Mburumba Kerina, a leader of the South West African Peoples' Organization, were sent out to fill such engagements.

Secondly, the Committee receives frequent phone calls from various groups who want a speaker. It would be impossible to estimate the number of such phone calls that come in in the course of the year. But there must be well over a hundred. We give suggestions as we are able to do so.

Thirdly, a staff member or other representative of the Committee is frequently called upon to speak. Usually an honorarium is paid, plus expenses. During the course of 1960 approximately 55 such speaking engagements were filled by staff and Board members of the Committee and arranged through the office.

D. Students The ACOA helped approximately 25 African students find jobs during the summer of 1960. The Committee also answered hundreds of letters of inquiry from students both in Africa and here in the United States who wanted particular help, regarding travel to the United States or scholarship aid here. The Committee maintained a close working relationship with the African American Students Foundation. In relation to the student airlift during early September, the Committee handled press relations and also sponsored a reception for the students.

E. Special Events Among the special events that the Committee sponsored this year were the following: 1) A reception co-sponsored with the African American Institute and the American Society of African Culture on April 27th in honor of the independence of the Republic of Togo. 2) A large public meeting of approximately 1000 people at the Community Church at which Alan Paton spoke. 3) A reception in honor of Mason Sears, who had for seven years been the United States representative on the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. 4) On April 17, 1961 approximately 2400 people attended Africa Freedom Day at Hunter College Assembly Hall with Tom Mboya, Kenneth Kaunda, Senator Humphrey, H.E. Tucker of Sierra Leone, Oliver Tambo, Holden Roberto, Mburumba Kerina and James Baldwin. 5) On March 9 and 10, 1961, the ACOA sponsored a conference on "U.S. Policy Toward Africa". Among the speakers for this conference were Senator Frank Moss, Congressman Charles Diggs, A. Philip Randolph, Mrs. Zelma George, James Baldwin, Vusumzi Make of South Africa, and a number of Africa specialists. 6) A luncheon in honor of Garfield Todd of Southern Rhodesia held at the Community Church.

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F. Press Conferences The Committee held at least six press conferences during 1960 and early 1961: Frank Montero and William X. Scheinman on documents they brought out of Angola upon their return; Joshua Nkomo, President of the National Democratic Party of Southern Rhodesia; Oliver Tambo and Vusumzi Make of South Africa; Holden Roberto, President of the Union of the Populations of Angola; Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia; Dr. Hastings K. Banda of Nyasaland; and Tom Mboya of Kenya.

G. United Nations petitioners The Committee keeps closely in touch with petitioners and others coming to the United Nations from various of the trust territories or non-self-governing territories of Africa and occasionally from independent areas. The representatives are helped in a number of ways: The Committee finds accommodations on occasion, helps them financially through the Africa Defense and Aid Fund in emergencies, introduces them to United Nations officials and to other representatives of African states, helps them with material which they are preparing for use at the United Nations, and arranges medical care. During 1960, a great deal was done with representatives of the Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, South West Africa, Angola, and South Africa. The Committee organized a three-day orientation program for Congolese who came with Prime Minister Lumumba in July.

H. The All African People's Conference For the third successive year the Committee was represented in an observer capacity at the All African People's Conference. The third conference was held in Cairo. Very few Americans were in attendance, and George Houser was the only person from the American Committee on Africa. A separate report has been written with George Houser's observations about the conference.

V. Organizational Matters.

A. ACOA Mailing List There are probably two principal ways of measuring the growth of an organization. One is by the amount of money raised. This is indicated in the Financial Report prepared by our auditor. The report indicates that again the Committee raised more money than it had in any previous year. The second way is by the size of the mailing list. There are approximately 14,000 on the active mailing list of the Committee at the present time. During 1960 2,000 were added as new members and contributors to the Committee. It was necessary to drop from our active mailing list those who had not been in touch with the Committee or had not made a contribution for at least the last two years. Approximately 2,400 went on the inactive list.

B. Staff Early in 1960 all of the non-executive members of the staff joined the Community and Social Agencies Employees Local #1707 and a union contract was adopted. This contract has formalized such things as wage rates, holidays, over-time arrangements, etc. Staff relations have worked out quite well.

There have been eight to ten persons working on the staff during 1960, with eight being the number on the full-time staff during most of the year. Significant staff changes have been Homer Jack's leaving in October (he had been on the staff for approximately fifteen months as Associate Executive

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Director), and C. Sumner Stone's leaving (Mr. Stone joined the staff in August as an Associate Director, and left after only a little over three months to accept a position as Editor of a newspaper in Washington, D.C.). Re-adjustments were necessary as a result of these changes, but now, within the limits of the funds available to the Committee for salaries, there is on the whole a workable staff setup. More staff, of course, is needed to give the over-all efficiency which is ideally desired.

C. Tax Exemption. For the fourth successive year, the Committee waited for some decision from the Bureau of Internal Revenue on its application for tax exemption. The only new thing that happened was that the Bureau made a request for much additional information about the Committee workings over the last couple of years. This was sent in September 1960, and by the end of the year no new word about the application had come from the Bureau.

VI. The Look Ahead

Without doubt there will have to be continued reassessment of the role of the Committee and the direction in which it should go. The policy decision made by the Board in 1960 can continue at least for the time being to be the guide on general programs and activities for the staff. In line with this decision, if funds were available, perhaps one of the top priorities would be to establish an office of the Committee in Washington to be closer both to Congress and to the State Department. But there is also the possibility of establishing branches of the Committee in various parts of the country, and if finances were available, it would be most desirable to have an office in Africa that could represent the Committee particularly with regard to its Defense and Aid Fund responsibilities.