

Annual Meeting
of the
Executive Board
of the
American Committee on Africa

March 9, 1959

Present: Chairman--Donald Harrington; Nelson Bengston, Max Berking, Walter C. Carrington, Robert H. Clampitt, Edward F. Gray, George Edmund Haynes, Sidney Hertzberg, Joseph Jablow, Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, Gilbert Jonas, Elizabeth S. Landis, Robert J. MacAlister, Frank Montero, John V. Murra, Elliott H. Newcomb, Herbert Rose, Bayard Rustin, William X. Scheinman, Adelaide Schulkind, George W. Shepherd, Jr., Hugh H. Smythe, William Sorsby, Hope R. Stevens, Phyllis Susskind, Robert S. Trentlyon, Immanuel Wallerstein, Ben Wechsler, Peter Weiss; Staff-- Dale Harrison, George M. Houser.

Agenda and Minutes: The agenda for the Annual Meeting and the minutes for the January 12, 1959 meeting were adopted by the Board.

Reports from the Executive Director and from Mrs. Mary-Louise Hooper: The Executive Director submitted the Annual Report to the Board. He observed that the reference to 10,000 contributors to the Committee at the beginning of 1958 should have been 7,500 instead. It was suggested that the Annual Report be used as the basic enclosure for a fund-raising appeal. A vote of thanks to the Executive Director and entire staff for the year's work was unanimously passed by the Board.

Mrs. Mary-Louise Hooper, West Coast Representative for the South Africa Defense Fund, noted in her report that among other things she had raised \$4,725.60 during a fifteen month period (January 1958 -- March 1959), that she had given over thirty lectures, gathered nearly 450 pounds of clothing for treason trial defendants and their families, and sent several antique art objects to a Johannesburg auction held to raise money for the Treason Trial Defence Fund. The Board voted unanimously to send a vote of thanks to Mrs. Hooper in appreciation of her work. The suggestion that she be presented with a scroll from the ACOA was referred to the Organization Committee along with the request that the Committee consider the relationship between Mrs. Hooper and the ACOA and report its recommendations to the Board at its next sitting.

Finance Report: It was reported that ACOA income increased during the first two months of 1959, but so did expenses, over the same period of 1958. However, the net debt on February 28 had been decreased by \$1,000 since the first of year. The small Ballet Africaine benefit for the ACOA (about 75 people) netted the Committee approximately \$200, it was noted. The Treasurer stated that \$730 of pledges by Board members to raise over \$2,800 among themselves and from others had been received by the Committee. The Finance Report was accepted by the Board.

Annual Elections to the Board: The Teller Committee consisting of Hugh Smythe as Chairman, Robert MacAlister, and Nelson Bengston, was appointed by the Chairman of the Board (Walter Carrington was later appointed to replace Mr. MacAlister). The following were elected to two-year terms to the Board: Max Berking, Robert Clampitt, Ed Gray, Donald Harrington, George Edmund Haynes, Elizabeth S. Landis, Stanley Levison, Frank Montero, Bayard Rustin, George W. Shepherd, Jr., Hope Stevens, and Peter Weiss; Gilbert Jonas, Elliott Newcomb, Ruth Schachter, Phyllis Susskind, and Robert Trentlyon were

~~accepted.~~ *not elected.*

Homer Jack Question: The Steering Committee recommended that the decision on the addition of Homer Jack to the ACOA staff be delayed until after the Africa Freedom Day celebration at Carnegie Hall, April 15, in order to have a more realistic assessment of the Committee's financial position. Dr. Jack for the past ten years has been the minister of the Unitarian Church of Evanston, and is one of the oldest Africa-hands in the U.S. (he has written a great deal about African affairs, and has traveled to the continent several times). He is a founding member of the Chicago Council against Racial Discrimination, and in 1953 was the first un-paid Executive Director of the ACOA. After close consultation with both Dr. Jack and George Houser, the Steering Committee suggested that the new division of responsibility be: George Houser--Executive Director, liaison to staff, financial responsibility for the ACOA, main U.N. representative. Homer Jack--Associate Executive Director, public relations and publications, assistance in fund raising, Washington liaison. Starting salary for Dr. Jack would be \$8,500 with an additional \$2,000 to \$3,000 guaranteed to him by the Community Church for services rendered to that organization. It should be noted that the \$8,500 represents a decrease of over 30% from Dr. Jack's present salary.

A motion passed in which the Board (1) stated its desire to retain the services of Dr. Jack if the Committee can afford it, (2) requested that the Personnel Committee continue exploratory talks with him, and (3) deferred a final decision on the matter to the next meeting of the Board.

Africa Freedom Day: George Houser reported that the Committee was setting up a significant program for Africa Freedom Day. Gov. Williams of Michigan had been lined up as the keynote speaker, he noted, and Harry Belafonte, Langston Hughes, and William Warfield had agreed to participate in the program. A cocktail party for about 125 people is to be held shortly to aid the promotion of ticket sales, he added.

Africa Today: The report on Africa Today was accepted by the Board. It was suggested that any change in the publications program await the outcome of the decision on Homer Jack's addition to the staff.

Tom Mboya: The Executive Director reported that Tom Mboya had cabled his availability for coming to the U.S. under ACOA auspices, April 8 -- May 15. He will be the main speaker at the Carnegie Hall rally.

Statement on Central Africa: The following steps recommended for easing tension in Central Africa were approved as ACOA policy by the Board: (1) That in preparing for the Constitutional discussion in 1960, Africans be well-represented by delegates of their choice not excluding representatives of Congress movements. (2) That immediate steps be taken by the British Colonial Office toward ending racial discrimination in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. (3) That Britain make no compromise on granting Dominion status to the Federation while European control is dominant and that before any such move is contemplated the desires of all the "inhabitants" -- not just the "electorate" -- be sought. (4) That the proscribed organizations be re-enstated and discussions take place between government representatives and African organizational leaders to define the problems which exist, and a plan for achieving both equality and democracy. (5) That Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia have the right to leave the Federation if they choose.

New Fund: A proposal that the Committee explore the possibility of transformation of the South Africa Defense Fund into an Africa Freedom Fund was accepted by the Board. X

Cameroons Question: The Board voted that the ACOA stand in support of the African position at the U.N. Special Session on the question of the Cameroons, which calls for free elections in that country under U.N. auspices and total amnesty for all political prisoners prior to independence.

Interim Committees: The Board voted that the Chairman be given power to appoint ad hoc working committees to expire at the next session of the Board.

Letter: The Board moved that the Executive Director send to former Board members letters of appreciation for past services.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board will be on Monday, May 4.