

Minutes of the Executive Board
of the
American Committee on Africa

November 10, 1958

Present: Chairman--Donald Harrington; Nelson Bengston, Max Berking, Walter Carington, Robert Clampitt, Edward Gray, George Edmund Haynes, Joseph Jablow, Gilbert Jonas, Elizabeth S. Landis, Frank Montero, Elliott Newcomb, Herbert Rose, Bayard Rustin, William X. Scheinman, Hugh Smythe, William Sorsby, Hope Stevens, Robert Trentlyon, Ben Wechsler, Peter Weiss; Staff--Dale Harrison, George M. Houser; Guest--Roger Wilkins.

New members of the Board were welcomed by the Chairman. The agenda for the meeting was adopted by the Board.

Minutes: The minutes of the September 22, 1958 meeting were approved by the Board.

Report of the Steering Committee: The general program for 1959 proposed by the Steering Committee was adopted by the Board. A motion that acceptance of the general program be conditional on further definition of the various points, particularly the Africa Freedom Fund, by the Steering Committee and on resubmission of the program to the Board was passed unanimously. Following is a brief sketch of the 1959 program. It should be understood that the items below are tentative, that the ACOA is not committing itself to carrying out this program in all its details.

Jan.-April 1959: Major emphases--Africa Freedom Day (April 15), Africa Freedom Fund to be launched on Africa Freedom Day (the South Africa Defense Fund would become part of this); minor emphases--Portuguese Africa, South Africa (Defense Fund, discrimination in sports, pass violations, treason trial); Algeria; Guinea.

May-Aug. 1959: Follow up on spring program, preparation for fall program, possibility of limited speaking tour for Tom Mboya.

Sept.-Dec. 1959: Major emphases--Multiracial Africa (public conference, speaking tour for Banda, Paton, etc., publication of pamphlet (an alternative program could be built around French Africa); Africa Freedom Fund; minor emphases--Portuguese Africa, South Africa, Algeria, work at UN on these three areas.

On-going aspects of the program: AFRICA TODAY, pamphlet series, visiting speaker, pamphlet and speaker service, some work with students.

New Member for Steering Committee: The nomination of Elizabeth S. Landis as a member of the Steering Committee to replace George Shepherd, Jr., was approved by the Board.

Letter from Banda on Chirwa: George Houser has received a letter from Dr. Hastings Banda, President of the Nyasaland African Congress, in which the writer gives his opinions as to why Mr. W.M. Chirwa backed out of his U.S. speaking tour. The letter is on hand at the ACOA office for the inspection of all Board members who may care to read it.

Report of the Finance Committee: Robert Trentlyon reported that through October 16 the ACOA had raised \$48,000 and spent \$42,000. He noted that whereas on January 1 the ACOA had a debt of about \$14,000, by the

by the middle of October this amount had been reduced to between \$7,000 and \$8,000. He pointed out that the proposed 1959 budget of \$66,000 had a smaller "cushion" in it (\$2,000--in 1958 it was \$5,000), and that there might be difficulty in making the magazine and the pamphlet series pay for themselves. He also noted the inclusion of a \$6,000 increase for salaries in the budget. (The "cushion" referred to above is for special programming and printing.)

There was a difference of opinion as to whether the 1959 budget was realistic. It was decided that the Finance Committee should make a more thorough study of the 1958 income so that it could be determined whether it is necessary to have agency assistance in raising funds in 1959. A motion to permit payment of up to 8,000 dollars a year for a staff person to raise funds, and payment of up to \$80 a week for a secretary to the fund raiser was approved by the Board. (John Williams has resigned from the staff.) Mimeographed copies of the job qualifications are available in the office. Salary increases for present staff members were also approved by the Board.

The Board gave authorization for changing banks.

The report of the Finance Committee was adopted by the Board.

Report of the Organization Committee: Immanuel Wallerstein and John Ball were nominated to the Executive Board by the Organization Committee. Both men were elected by official secret ballot.

The Organization Committee placed in nomination for the National Committee the names of new U.S. senators, congressmen, and state governors who were elected on Nov. 4. Board members with reservations regarding any candidates should communicate them to the Executive Director.

The Organization Committee recommended against the ACOA becoming a membership corporation for the following reasons: There is a clear indication that any attempt to transform contributors to memberships would result in an important loss of income, a membership organization tends to stress an inner orientation which would be likely to give disproportionate emphasis on internal affairs of the organization rather than concentrating on programmatic matters, and a mass membership organization would by law need to hold annual meetings or conventions during which elections of officers would take place and general policy established.

However, the Organization Committee felt that the desire for more intensive programmatic and fund-raising activities on local levels outside of New York--one of the factors giving rise to the membership investigation--might be implemented by the appointment of regional correspondents or representatives with authority to organize local committees on Africa to publicize ACOA policy, to promote and distribute ACOA publications, to organize meeting and speaking schedules for ACOA speakers, to organize special fund-raising functions, and to follow-up individual large contributors in their communities on the ACOA's behalf.

Ben Wechsler suggested that the chairmen of the various committees of the ACOA either be made members or ex-officio members of the Steering Committee. The Chairman asked the Organization Committee to consider this problem.

The report of the Organization Committee was accepted by the Board.

Report of the United Nations Committee: Elizabeth Landis, reporting for the UN Committee, said that the UN Good Offices Committee on South West Africa had been continued, but that their recommendation for partition of South West Africa had been defeated. The U.S. voted with the majority on this issue. Mrs. Landis noted that the U.S. had supported a resolution directed against the South African government's apartheid policies. She observed that the U.S. in the past has abstained from voting on such resolutions. The ACOA wrote a letter to Mr. George Harrison, U.S. representative on the Special Political Committee, commending the U.S. position.

She noted that in 1960 French Togoland will become the second U.N. Trusteeship territory to achieve independence. (A reception, sponsored by the ACOA, is being held for Prime Minister Sylvanus Olympio on the evening of November 12.)

Felix Moumie, President of the U.P.C. (Cameroons), has asked the ACOA's help for counteracting French propaganda that his political party is Communist. The future of the French Cameroons is uncertain (France has offered independence); the Cameroons may go the road alone or possibly unite with the British Cameroons if the latter does not join with Nigeria as this country achieves independence in 1960. A U.N. mission is now visiting the Cameroons.

Mrs. Landis said the ACOA had circulated to delegates of the UN's Fourth Committee a mimeographed report on conditions in Portugal's African colonies. AFRICA TODAY PAMPHLET #2 on the questions of labor and education in Mozambique will also be distributed to these delegates.

It was noted that the ACOA was sponsoring a meeting on the Algerian problem on December 1. Speakers will include Michael James, New York Times correspondent, Mohammed Yazid, Minister of Information in the Provisional Algerian government, and a third individual yet to be selected.

The Board accepted the report of the UN Committee.

New Editorial Board Member: On a proposal by the Chairman, Hugh Southern was elected to the Editorial Board.

Staff Reports: George Houser reported that Ronald Segal was now on tour of the country as a replacement for Mr. Chirwa, and that he is making a fine impression everywhere he goes. Out of the tour several drives on campuses on behalf of the South Africa Defense Fund may develop.

He reported that William Landis and he visited Washington, D.C. last week to consult with Treasury Department officials on the ACOA's tax status. He said that Mr. Landis had prepared an excellent brief on the ACOA's behalf, but that he could not predict with accuracy the outcome of the matter at this time.

He noted that the ACOA is in the process of getting signatures to a message of greeting to be extended on behalf of the American people to the delegates of the non-governmental pan-African conference in Accra, Dec. 5-12.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Executive Board will be on January 12.