

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

November 11, 1957

Present: Chairman--Donald Harrington, Nelson Bengston, Elizabeth Landis, Elliott Newcomb, Bayard Rustin, William X. Scheinman, Adelaide Schulkind, George W. Shepherd, Jr., Robert Trentlyon, Peter Weiss; Staff--Dale Harrison, George M. Houser, Gilbert Jonas.

Day of Protest: George Houser announced the following in regard to the Day of Protest, Dec. 10th: A picketing demonstration will be held from noon to 2 p.m. in front of the Consulate of the Union of South Africa. Mrs. Roosevelt, Sen. Javits, Roy Wilkins, and Dean Pike are among the speakers for the Freedom Rally at Manhattan Center in the evening. The Committee is still trying to get hold of a Democratic senator for the occasion, he said. 10,000 tickets and 5,000 fliers are being printed to promote the Rally. On November 7th 23 people representing over a dozen organizations attended a meeting at the Committee office at which help in advertising the meeting and in getting out people for the picket line was arranged. A special, 64-page issue of AFRICA TODAY is being devoted to the racial situation in South Africa, he added.

Loan Fund: Adelaide Schulkind announced that the response from ACOA Ex. Bd. members for pledges and deposits for the Loan Fund to aid African students was very good.

Reception: It was reported that a reception would be held on Nov. 19th for the Togolese petitioners at the U.N. at the home of Mrs. Zelma Brandt. Representatives from 34 U.N. delegations are coming.

Fund Raising by Ex. Bd. Members: George Houser said that fund raising by members of the Ex. Bd. had been held up because letters of introduction have not been sent out from the office. If there are ways of getting letters done outside of the office it would be very helpful, he added.

Resignations: The resignation of Keith Irvine from the Ex. Bd. was unanimously accepted. A.C. Thompson has submitted his resignation as the ACOA's U.N. representative, and the Board moved that the resignation be accepted and that a letter of appreciation be sent to him.

Finance Report: It was reported that \$3,600 of an expected \$10,000 or \$11,000 has so far come in as a result of the Gunther-Declaration of Conscience mailing. \$2,500 more is expected as a result of an additional mailing of 22,000 letters. It was noted that a good many people have complained about being dunned every 5 or 6 weeks with ACOA appeals.

A motion was passed unanimously that the Finance Committee advise Catharine Raymond on the form for presentation of the Finance Report. It was recommended that a simple summary be given in each report.

At the next meeting of the Ex. Bd. recommendations of the Finance Committee on future ACOA financing will be reported.

Program Committee Report: Elliott Newcomb submitted the report of the Program Committee (See attached copy). George Houser read proposals on programing for Ex. Bd. consideration (See attached copy). A move was informally adopted that the Program Committee make recommendations on Houser's proposals.

Weiss' Proposals: Peter Weiss suggested that the Committee set up machinery for receiving money from foundations. "We have the projects, but not the organization," he said.

He felt that the ACOA was too slow in learning about the arrival here in the U.S. of prominent Africans with whom it is very important to make contact. He proposed that a committee of 3 be set up to arrange social functions for the Africans when they are in New York City.

Chirwa Tour: It was moved that George Houser commence making arrangements for Manoah Chirwa's speaking tour of the United States.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Executive Board will be on December 16th at 5:30 p.m. in the Committee's offices.

11/11/57

A REPORT ON THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

The Program Committee has met four times over a period of about three months. I would like to report that we have, in the course of our short life as a Committee, come up with a solution to the question of where the American Committee on Africa should go from here and how it should get there. It will not surprise you, perhaps, to have me tell you that we have not yet come up with what even we think are the answers.

We have, however, made some progress. Structurally speaking, we have understood our role to be that of advisory committee to the Board of Directors. Our job is to advise the Board on the best ways and means of implementing the policy of the Committee as determined by the Board.

Towards accomplishing this mission, we have first tried to make sure that we understand our role. We understand it to be as we have just described it. Secondly, we have gone on a mental tour of Africa starting with our December 10th project concerning the Union of South Africa issue; we have taken a look at many of the other most pressing issues in such places as Algeria, the Camerons and Ghana. We have concerned ourselves with the potentialities of helping in the direction of a better African press, better medical facilities, better schools and the various means of influencing American public opinion. We have come to the following general opinion:

1. We have such huge responsibilities by comparison with our Committee strength that the general trend of our program should be to concentrate our energies on those high priority targets where we have a chance of having an accomplishment rather than to spread our energies too thinly on so many activities that we fail to accomplish any in particular. There is no thought, however, of eliminating any of the Committee's present activities but rather to point them more to whatever major target or emphasis should be decided by the Board.
2. There is no single issue in Africa, at the moment, that we can recommend should become a primary focal point in the Committee program after the December 10th project. It was felt, however, that we should emphasize most heavily in the Committee's program the activities concerning Africa that are being aired at the United Nations. Not so much that we can be an effective lobby with the United Nations concerning these issues, but that the United Nations can be the most effective sounding board for the Committee's influence on American opinion and policy.

The best guess that the Program Committee can now make is that Algeria is likely to be the next best target of opportunity but it's still too soon to be sure and we must continue to watch it closely and think through the most effective means of approach before any more specific recommendations can be made.

The Committee will meet with greater regularity now that the shake down period is over and concern themselves not only with the over-all targets of major emphasis but also the specific activities that the Committee program consists of. Once we have given you our best advice on the present elements in the Committee program, we will try our hand at long range planning.

Elliott H. Newcomb

Some Thoughts on ACOA Program

Partly to clarify my own thinking and partly, I hope, to help focus the discussion on our program for next year, I am putting a few of my thoughts on paper. Obviously, our program must be an implementation of the basic purpose for the organization. In our flyer "Meeting Africa's Challenge," the purpose is stated this way: "The purpose of the ACOA is to meet the challenge of Africa's strivings -- to support African people in their struggle for freedom, effectively and responsibly, consonant with the best traditions of American liberty; and to relate African events to the American people."

With support of African aspiration for freedom as a starting point, therefore, the following would be methodological implementation:

1. A working relationship with the responsible, democratic African organizations;
2. A working relationship in the multi-racial areas of Africa with organizations committed to racial equality as well as representative democracy;
3. A program which will move American policy in this direction;
4. An education program which will keep the American people informed in line with the above purpose;
5. Support of educational, political, or welfare projects which will further the above purpose.

These program purposes are so very broad that with our small staff we cannot hope to develop too many major projects of implementation. We should have at least three tests for any major projects we undertake:

1. Is the project important and in line with our basic purpose?
2. Is the project practical for us; have we staff to carry it out?
3. Is the project financially feasible?

Everything we have been doing in the last couple of years has more or less been in line with the aims outlined above. Our work at the UN, our literature program, our conferences and speakers, our special Funds -- all have been an implementation of our overall aim. Although we have not made a major of our work with students, to the extent that we have done a few things through arranging for part-time jobs, or advisory help on loans or scholarships, it has been from the point of view of helping to train the kind of African leadership which will hasten the process of equality and independence in Africa.

But now our task is one of deciding in what direction we should put our major time and effort in the year ahead with our limited staff and resources. The proposal of the Program Committee is that we focus particular attention on the issues being debated at the United Nations and on U.S. policy in relation to these issues. With the understanding that this would not be the exclusive focus of the Committee program, the

reason for this emphasis is that just about our only opportunity for a direct political approach to African questions including U.S. policy is at the United Nations. Many (although by no means all) of the key African questions do come before the United Nations such as Algeria, South Africa, the various Trust Territories, and in some ways the non-self-governing territories. Furthermore, many of the key African leaders come to the U.N. in order to present their cases and we have the opportunity for a direct relation. Leaders from Algeria, Togoland, the Cameroons, and Tanganyika are cases in point.

And finally U.S. policy is seen overtly at work in relation to these questions at the U.N. The opportunity for constant discussion with State Department representatives on key points of policy is always before us at the U.N.

Of course we must always leave ourselves open for action on obvious issues of major importance whether or not they come up at the U.N. For instance, if there was to be a campaign by the Africans in Kenya for broader representation in the Legislative Council, and if this campaign took the form of mass action, we would have to relate ourselves to it in some way in spite of the fact that the item would not be on the U.N. agenda. This kind of elasticity in program is taken for granted, I would assume.

In line with all the above, here is a proposal for specific program:

I. Winter and Spring

- A. Prepare for and hold a conference on "U.S. Policy in Africa."
- B. Prepare a special issue of Africa Today on U.S. Policy.
- C. Publish a pamphlet on the Algerian situation. No such pamphlet is currently available on the American scene.
- D. Work in relation to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations and the issues coming before it.
- E. Prepare for a lecture tour by W. M. Chirwa to take place in the fall.
- F. Some effort on the South Africa Defense Fund.

II. Summer -- prepare for Fall session of the U.N.

III. Fall.

- A. Conference on the UN issues.
- B. Work at the UN.
 - 1. U.S. Mission contacts.
 - 2. Coordinate work of U.S. organizations on issues relating to U.S. policy.
 - 3. Get wide circulation for UN Bulletin.
 - 4. Press conferences for petitioners and some appearances for them on radio and TV.
- C. Chirwa's tour.