

1/26/61

ACOA

MINUTES OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING, JANUARY 23, 1961

Present: Peter Weiss, Chairman; Elizabeth Landis; Staff: George Houser, Dale Harrison, Barbara Harrison.

1. There was a discussion of Joshua Nkomo's request for secretarial help in Southern Rhodesia; Nkomo wishes to borrow an ACOA staff secretary for six months. It was agreed that Houser would get further details from Nkomo and explore the matter further with him.
2. There was a discussion of Vusumzi Make's cabled request to William Scheinman for \$7000 for airlifting Philip Kgosana (and presumably others) out of the British protectorate to which they have escaped. The Committee did not feel that ACOA could act immediately upon minimal information. Houser, therefore, is to obtain further information from South African United Front and other sources.
3. Africa Freedom Day. The Steering Committee discussed tentative price scales for tickets, and suggested other possible meeting places, should Hunter College auditorium not be available for this event. Program and speakers were discussed. Staff was urged to try to secure Kenyatta, Abbas, Banda, or an African of similar stature and reputation, as principal African speaker. Houser was asked to invite the following prominent Americans to speak (listed in order of priority): Humphrey, Morse, Church, Moss, Magee. It was suggested that Robert Weaver also be asked to appear. Negro speaker: Levison to be asked to contact Martin Luther King. Houser was authorized to employ Carl Proctor (a promoter associated with Progressive Talent, Inc.) for an 8-week period preceding AFD to do publicity and promotion; Proctor to start immediately to secure talent for program.
4. Plans for an ACOA-sponsored conference on American policy toward Africa were discussed. Modifications of the "Call to the Conference" were suggested. The basic formula of the conference was discussed. It was agreed that the conference discussion groups should revolve around basic, continuing questions of policy, and not narrow, specific issues: Instead of groups considering separately such questions as Portugal's colonies, Algeria, Congo, etc., there would be three discussion groups, each considering important, basic policy questions, i.e., the cold war in Africa, and America's attitude toward African neutralism (suggested title: The Red and the Black); the remaining colonial areas of Africa: South Africa, Portuguese territories, Central African Federation, Algeria (suggested title: The Bitter-Enders); economic policy. Houser to follow up suggestions with conference planning group (representatives of NAACP, churches, unions, etc.) meeting January 24 in ACOA's offices.

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