

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ROSEMARY

Southern Africa Committee

Monday, May 24, 1976

Minutes

PRESENT: Frank Loescher (chairing), Kenneth Martin, David Richie, Ed Sanders, Jerry Silberman, Lyle Tatum, Matthew Wakatama, Charles Walker, John Yungblut; Staff: Jim Bristol, Rosemary Mealy, Patricia Hunt, Mike Simmons, David Sogge, Steve Thiermann.

REGRETS: Walter Lear, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Dick Taylor, James Cassell, Tina McAuliff, Mel McCaw, Zenzo Nhari, Dorothy & Douglas Steere, June Yungblut.

The meeting began with a period of silent reflection.

I. Agenda Review David Sogge asked that consideration be given, under agenda item number 6 (finances), to a proposal for the addition of a second field staff position in the Southern Africa Program; and that additional time be set aside for consideration of the Physician to Mozambique project proposal.

II. Minutes of April 16 meeting Approved as circulated.

III. Reports on Recent Conferences Lyle Tatum reported on a conference held May 8 - 10 at Yale University's Seven Springs Center, Mt. Kisco, New York on the subject, "Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, and Namibia: New Dimensions on Southern Africa," on behalf of the Southern Africa Committee. The conference brought together many luminaries and experts on southern African issues numbering close to 30 people in all, but the proceedings were undisciplined and poorly prepared for, the speeches long and unimaginative, and the overall results negligible. The setting and provisions were posh, the participants from the elite, and there were no creative ideas about where to go from here on the pressing problems of southern Africa. Lyle plans to write a longer report on this disappointing event.

Frank Loescher reported on a Johnson Foundation-sponsored conference on Namibia held at the Wingspread Conference Center, Racine, Wisconsin May 4 and 5. Frank said that the meeting was basically action-oriented, and had been composed in part of some people Frank had met at the Dakar Conference on Namibia in January. The Lutherans, who constitute a key group on Namibia, were represented; several Namibians attended, as did Sean MacBride of the U.N. Council for Namibia, several Washington DC activists, and our own Bill Sutherland. A written report on the Conference is being produced and will be sent to all members of the Southern Africa Committee. Frank Loescher asked the Committee for its suggestions of names of other organizations or individuals who might receive this report, and thus might take part in the publicizing campaign on Namibia to take place during the summer, leading up to the U.N. Security Council's "deadline" of August 31. Frank said that he thought it likely that South Africa would announce changes in its policies on Namibia which might "soften up" the U.S. and Britain in the United Nations proceedings, and which may mean acceptance of elections in Namibia under United Nations supervision.

IV. Letter to President Ford Steve Thiermann raised the matter of the AFSC sending a letter, presently in draft form, to President Ford regarding Secretary of State Kissinger's recent pronouncements on southern Africa. A letter had been drafted at the urging of Kale Williams of the AFSC Board, since this seemed to him an appropriate time to applaud a positive policy shift by the U.S. Government. David Sogge said that the draft does not note for approval the Secretary

of State's pledge to urge repeal of the Byrd Amendment, to warn the illegal Smith Government of Rhodesia, and to promise to consult with the leaders of the "front-line" black African states; but that it goes on to note the still great shortfall between U.S. actions and U.S. words on southern Africa, the critical omission of such topics as U.S. investments in South Africa, and the lack of any repudiation of foreign policy approaches such as the kind taken regarding Angola. Committee members were asked for their views on the contents of the letter. Several said that it would be enough to note the positive aspects of the policy recently enunciated, and to point out that failure to make good on pledges would put the U.S. in an even worse position than before those pledges were made.

V. Guidelines: The Committee's attention was drawn to the first approximations for a set of "guidelines" or a "philosophical framework" for an AFSC response to southern African issues, which were drawn up at the April 16 meeting. Several members criticised the use of the phrase "to avoid reverse racialism" in point number 4. Jerry Silberman said that point number 4 seemed to be mainly a concession to South African propaganda. He pointed out that there is no evidence from Mozambique or Angola, where self-determination has recently gone forward, that "reverse racialism" has occurred. Also, he noted that the "guidelines" did not deal with the elimination of inequalities which exist right now regarding property rights. Any type of greater equality in southern Africa implies confiscation from a privileged minority; this will be contested as a denial of human rights, but we must come to terms with it. Lyle Tatum said that he thought there had been an attempt to speak to this in point number 15. Frank Loescher then suggested that a subcommittee to examine the elements of a "philosophical framework", or the "characteristics of AFSC's southern Africa work", as Steve Thiermann put it, be formed. It was agreed that Jerry Silberman, Rosemari Mealy, Patricia Hunt and Frank Loescher would serve, and report to the Committee at its earliest convenience.

VI. Nonviolence Projects Charles Walker said that three hitherto separate concerns had recently come together in an inter The first was John Yungblut's concern, voiced at the April 16 meeting, that we look closely at the possibilities of assistance to Friends in South Africa in their efforts to bridge divisions and build responsiveness to change among whites. The second was the proposal for a library on nonviolence for use by refugees and other southern Africans, to be based in Lusaka, and to cost from between \$5,000 and \$20,000. The third was the suggestion from concerned people in Namibia that someone come there to discuss the implications of Gene Sharp's book on nonviolence.

Charles said that he is definitely contemplating a trip to southern Africa, possibly in regard to all three. He asked the Committee if it would endorse his exploring the possibility of a nonviolence library in Zambia, and express its interest in helping to arrange it should it seem feasible. He said that, following a stopover in Zambia, he would continue on to Capetown and Windhoek in his private capacity as a writer and lecturer, where he could consult with members of the Cape Province Friends, and then, in Windhoek, consult with people interested in discussing Gene Sharp's ideas.

In the discussion that followed, numerous specific places and names were mentioned. John Yungblut said that he liked the NV library project. He also urged that the AFSC seek ways to assist South African Friends, such as by providing the means whereby someone like Mark Povall of Cape Town could be released to weave a network of white support for those struggling for change such as Beyers Naude and Gatsha Buthelezi, and to interpret the possibilities of nonviolent solutions to South Africa's problems. There was general approval of the library idea -- which Charles Walker pointed out would not be merely books, but also periodicals, photographs, slides, and so forth -- and a suggestion that the possibility of UNESCO support for the project be pursued, possibly to be matched by funds raised in the U.S.A. or Britain by way of Quaker contacts.

The Committee agreed to endorse an exploration of the nonviolence library for southern Africa, hopefully by Charles Walker, in Zambia, at an appropriate institution, and expressed gratification that Charles Walker might find it possible to do this in the course of his other activities, which are separate from the library exploration.

Turning to the matter of South African Friends, committee members considered the "Report on Consultation on Reconciliation" from the Members, Attenders, and Friends of the Western Cape Society of Friends and a paper, "Reconciliation in Southern Africa" by H.W. van der Merwe; both had been sent to the AFSC by H.W. van der Merwe as Director of the Center for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town. It was pointed out that the "Report" explicitly mentions the AFSC's Southern Africa Program, and sets forth suggestions for action by South African Friends with AFSC's Program as background. In a sense, therefore, the "Report" is a communication to the AFSC that calls for a response of some sort. The Committee did not accept the idea that we should propose to South African Friends that we would like to help release someone like Mark Povall to travel in South Africa to build a network of concerned people; there was, instead, the feeling that we should express our interest in communicating with them about their concerns and action proposals, and not suggest that we have any idea to lay on them. It was agreed that Frank Loescher should write to Mark Povall, saying that the Southern Africa Committee was pleased to receive the "Report on Consultation on Reconciliation" and that it would welcome the opportunity to meet him in Philadelphia in mid-summer, around the time of a meeting he is attending in Canada, and would pay for any expenses incurred in coming from that meeting.

Several Committee members expressed strong criticisms of the van der Merwe paper, citing its contradictory hopes for the future order in South Africa, its apparent acquiescence to, if not restatements of, South African propaganda regarding black African rule, and its thinly-veiled racism. One member pointed out that, given that it was addressed to Friends, it is very counterproductive in changing ambivalent liberal minds, since it plays directly on fears, and not on trust or hope. Other members said that one must consider the audience addressed -- probably a very fearful and timid one already -- and the fact that the paper epitomizes an effort to find ways out of a difficult situation, and indeed suggests some fair modes of action, such as "conscientious refusal". It was also pointed out, however, that this version of the paper was probably a "liberalized" one as a result of the Friends Consultation at which it was presented; the original version, in other words, would probably be even more disturbing.

VII. Report on Bill Sutherland's tour thusfar. David Sogge reported that in the four weeks since beginning his second U.S. speaking tour, Bill has stopped in seventeen cities, met with several dozen local groups, and has had at least twenty interviews with media representatives. Still more are planned in the Pasadena and San Francisco areas, as well as with people on Capitol Hill and at the United Nations. Bill's appearances have ranged from lively sessions in the black communities of several cities (in^{at} North Philadelphia youth center Bill was kept talking until the building closed late at night) to classrooms and Earlham and from a tough give-and-take with Wall Street bankers and brokers to a meeting with Northern Cheyenne and Crow activists struggling to acquire rights to their lands in Montana. Bill reports growing interest in the issues of southern Africa and U.S. policy there, particularly where he has been able to draw parallels between economic and social patterns in the U.S.A. and those developing in southern Africa. Bill was not on hand to report his travels himself because he was in Cuba participating in a seminar focusing on South Africa, organized by the U.N. Committee against Apartheid.

VIII. Southern Africa Program Finances Steve Thiermann reported that the Budget and Priorities Committee of the International Division Executive Committee (IDEC) and IDEC itself, had approved an allocation out of general funds for the International Division to make up the large antici-

pated shortfall (\$18,167) for 1976/77. For this year's (1975/76) budget, IDEC had allocated \$10,000 from unexpended funds "internal" to the Division in order to keep the Southern Africa Program going, but at a cost of postponing and cancelling Divisional plans for educational outreach. Thus the Southern Africa Program continues to be supported by General Funds rather than specially-raised monies as per the original intention. Staff and fundraisers are pursuing some possible sources of funds for the program from outside the AFSC, but the picture is still not bright.

IX. Second field staff position Written into the budget for the coming fiscal year was an amount (roughly \$6,000) to cover the costs of a second staff person to work with Bill Sutherland in the field. This had arisen since the last meeting of the Southern Africa Committee, largely in response to Bill's expressed need for support staff not only to handle some administrative matters but to provide essential intellectual stimulus and psychological support. In the 18-odd months Bill has been on the job, his suitcase has been his office, and the work has been lonely at times. Staff had thought that perhaps a single, hopefully third world American could be found to fill this type of position.

Several Committee members questioned this proposal. It was suggested that a local person in Zambia be found to provide staff support, and possibly to travel, in reciprocal fashion with the Southern Africa Representative, to the U.S.A., despite the added cost this would entail. The Committee generally expressed support for the idea of strengthening of staff in the Program, but urged that a subcommittee be formed to look closely at the components of such a position and report to the Committee with something on paper. Jim Bristol and Ed Sanders were asked to form this subcommittee, which will meet with appropriate staff.

X. Peace Education Division's Proposed Expansion of Work on Southern Africa

Jim Bristol reported that the Nationwide Peace Education Division Committee had approved the proposed expansion of PED

work on southern Africa at its May meetings. The proposal, which has been amended slightly (to include references to the Kissinger trip and to add background information on southern African politics and economics) from the version which the Southern Africa Committee considered at its April 16 meeting, will be considered by the AFSC Board of Directors at their June meeting. If approved, this shift of PED emphasis will release Jim Bristol to work full time on southern Africa concerns, chiefly in support of regional offices, but also to provide liaison between the AFSC and other U.S. groups working on southern Africa. Financing this work presents no particular problem at the moment, since it means merely shifting the "Special Projects" allocation within PED to southern Africa. The committee noted this report from Jim Bristol with gratification at the increased attention to be paid southern Africa by the AFSC.

XI. Physician to Mozambique

David Sogge said that the proposal to send a physician to Mozambique had arisen out of Bill Sutherland's findings in Mozambique in March, the international call for aid to Mozambique (such as that expressed by the U.N. Security Council), and the availability of a medical doctor with the appropriate qualifications. What is missing at the moment is an invitation from the Mozambique Government; staff is hopeful of making direct contact with Government representatives soon, however. Steve Thiermann said that it would be important to adhere to correct procedures of appointment to staff positions such as this, and not to focus a proposal on one individual. Rosemari Mealy concurred with Steve Thiermann's comment, saying that there may be third world Americans qualified for such a position who should be considered. The committee approved the proposal, noting that a particular physician is available for this service, but assumed that the usual personnel procedures of recruitment and appointment would apply should the proposal come to fruition.

David Sogge, recording