

NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

REPORT ON AFRICA TRIP - NOVEMBER 18 to DECEMBER 9, 1968

George M. Houser

The trip to Africa from which I returned a few days ago was my thirteenth to this continent since my first trip in 1954. Although this trip only lasted three weeks, a lot was packed into it. Since I will attempt only a brief summary of some of my main observations, rather than going into detail on any particular conversations I had, I will only list here a number of the many people whom I saw. They included President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania; President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; Vice-President Rashidi Kawawa of Tanzania; Secretary General of the OAU, Diallo Telli; Ambassador John L.S. Malecela, former Ambassador of Tanzania to the United Nations and now Ambassador to the OAU in Addis Ababa; Executive Secretary George Magombe of the Liberation Committee of the OAU; U.S. Ambassador Robert Good, who has just resigned from his post in Lusaka; Henry Chipembere and Kanyama Chiume, formerly top men in the first cabinet of H.K. Banda in independent Malawi; representatives of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in the four centers of Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Lusaka; a number of professors at both the University College of Dar es Salaam and University of Zambia; top representatives of the following liberation movements; South West African People's Organization, African National Congress of South Africa, Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa, Zimbabwe African People's Union and the Zimbabwe African National Union, the Mozambique Liberation Front, the Revolutionary Committee from Mozambique, the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile; meetings with political refugees in Nairobi and with key representatives of churches working with refugees in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

My main observations can be outlined under the following topics:

1) Political Refugees. It was made abundantly clear to me in every place I stopped that the problem of the political refugee from southern Africa was increasingly difficult. In a sense, the same sorts of conditions which confront many of these persons here in the United States is reflected on the African scene, and indeed elsewhere in the world as well. Because of the unfavorable conditions these men, most of them young, face once they have left southern Africa, there are now far fewer political refugees leaving these areas. Because of these circumstances the African-American Institute has been engaged in negotiations with the Tanzanian government to turn over their Kurasini Refugee School to the government because, with the small number of new refugees coming in, it has become somewhat uneconomic to keep the institution running according to original plans.

The plight of these political refugees has become exacerbated by the change in pace of the struggle for independence and freedom in southern Africa. A few years ago, African leaders, United Nations' spokesmen, specialists in African affairs in various governments of the world, both East and West, and indeed the freedom fighters themselves, felt that it

was a matter of perhaps a fairly short time before majority rule would be ushered into the Portuguese territories, Rhodesia, South and South West Africa. This optimism began to change about 1963 with the realization that the struggle in southern Africa would be a long, drawn-out one. The white minorities and the Portuguese colonial regime, it was now clear, would be in control for some time to come. The scholarships which initially came from both Eastern and Western bloc countries began to be withdrawn. Formerly there was a mood of competition between these countries for the number of scholarships which could be offered to those who would soon be in positions of leadership in their own countries. As it became clearer that the day of independence under black majorities was a long way off, the desirability of having an increasing number of political refugees pouring into these countries diminished. From being looked upon as potential leaders in newly independent states in southern Africa, these students began to be looked upon as just political refugees with no place to go. The United Nations has been wrestling for more than a year with the problem of travel documents for South West Africans who should be their direct responsibility. Even here, agreement has not been reached as yet, primarily because there is no country or group of countries even in Africa which have said that in last resort any of these uprooted political refugees could come to their country. If this problem is true as yet for South West Africans, it is even more true for refugees from Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa. It is difficult for African countries to say they will take an unlimited number of political refugees because this further complicates the economic problem African states face.

The Republic of Tanzania and Zambia have more or less been the haven of these potential leaders in the liberation movements in southern Africa. However, these countries have had to develop policies defining who the political refugees are and who they will accept in their country. Tanzania on the whole operates on the principle that they will accept as a political refugee anyone who is connected with one of the liberation movements recognized by the Liberation Committee of the OAU. If a person is not so recognized, then he can have transit rights through Tanzania, but he cannot stay there indefinitely unless he goes to one of the rural settlement schemes where there are thousands of so-called "non-political" refugees from Mozambique, Ruanda, etc. Those who are accepted in Tanzania are expected to be not simply refugees but freedom fighters. They must be engaged in the movement and probably be involved in preparation for guerrilla warfare.

Zambia follows a little less strict policy. There are probably about 8,000 refugees there in settlements in three different parts of the country - one somewhere near the Mozambique border for Mozambicans, one near the Angolan border for Angolans, and a new center for South West Africans who have been pouring in from the Caprivi Strip. In addition, there is one agricultural training center at Mkushi where about thirty persons are being given special training for one year by Israeli experts in farming techniques. On the outskirts of Lusaka there is what is called a transit camp for political refugees which at any one time has twenty to thirty people in it. There are no military training camps in Zambia.

A new sort of political refugee problem has arisen relatively recently for those who are dissidents from recognized political organizations. Nairobi has become the center for these political refugees. So far, the Kenya government has just not recognized that they have any refugee problem and so have closed their eyes to the fact that a growing number of political refugees have come into their country. There are probably between 250 and 300 such refugees from southern Africa, mostly around the Nairobi area. The largest number are over 100 South Africans, while there are 70 Mozambican refugees and third in size are the South West Africans. Practically all of these people are "former" members of the ANC and PAC, FRELIMO and SWAPO. Many of them came out of their countries presumably and hopefully to receive scholarships, only to discover that scholarships are not available as they used to be. Thus they are confronted with the necessity of going back home, which would be dangerous because they escaped illegally, or going to military training camps to train for guerrilla warfare presently going on, or to escape from this situation and in effect become political refugees without even the home of a liberation movement. Newer and unrecognized liberation movements are now centered in Nairobi, such as the South African Liberation Front which hardly anyone has heard of, and the South West African National United Front.

2) The Liberation Struggle and the Movements. In discussing the liberation struggle and the movements involved I am exceedingly conscious of the fact that this is a very sensitive area. In spite of the fact that I have known many of the leaders of the various movements for many years, a person who is trying to look too closely into what is being done in the struggle or in the preparation for it can be looked upon with great suspicion. Questions rightly asked by anyone in the liberation movement is, who does such a person represent? Is he connected with the intelligence forces of some country? Might he give the information to other competing liberation movements? Might information not be leaked even if unintentionally to the white minority governments against whom the liberation movements are struggling? Knowing this, I am fairly careful how I talk even with old friends. I don't press for inside information on the military situation. I don't ask to visit military training camps. I don't seek information on the minutiae of tactics involved in the struggle. If any facts regarding these security matters emerge, I don't talk about them and I certainly do not put them in writing. If something is told me in confidence, I keep it in confidence. Nevertheless, certain impressions emerge which I can pass on for whatever they are worth. In general, the same thing is true now that was very obvious after my last trip to Africa of this sort in May and June of 1967. None of the leaders of the liberation movements are talking glibly about easy victories or a short conflict. They all see a decade or more perhaps in their struggle. A quick summary of the situation in the various territories of southern Africa is as follows:

Angola. Three movements are involved. UNITA has been banned in Zambia which had been its external base. The reason for this was that certain portions of the Angolan Benguela railway over which some of

Zambia's copper goes to ports on the Atlantic, were blown up. The Zambian government had warned UNITA previously that this could not be permitted because Zambia's lifeblood depended upon the copper getting to the sea. After repeated warnings, it was felt necessary to ban UNITA. Therefore, it is operating probably almost exclusively inside Angola in the Eastern and Southern areas. There are reports of its activities and reports, which others deny, that the leader of the movement, Jonas Savimbi, is inside Angola.

The MPLA, according to reports, is increasingly active in the Eastern area of Angola. They recently held their first Congress inside Angola, although I understand that it was disrupted by Portuguese bombings. Unfortunately, I was not able to see any of the MPLA leadership on this trip because neither in Dar es Salaam nor in Lusaka were the top leaders present.

The GRAE under Holden Roberto still is the only liberation movement with headquarters in Kinshasa. Several military training camps still are in the Congo. Activity continues in Northern Angola, although not at the same pace as a few years ago. GRAE lost its status as the recognized government in exile by the OAU, but is recognized as a liberation movement. One does not get the impression by any means that this movement is finished. The movement is planning to make a major effort through Katanga. Also it is planning to open up an office in Lusaka in January and hopefully in Dar es Salaam a little later.

Mozambique. The dominant movement is FRELIMO under Eduardo Mondlane. They held their second Congress (the first one having been held in 1962) inside Mozambique in July. All reports are that FRELIMO is very active inside Mozambique. Published articles have indicated that there are 8-10,000 men who have been trained. There are activities in the two northern provinces and a new front in the province of Tete. Both President Nyerere and Vice-President Kawawa are convinced that the liberation struggle in southern Africa will most likely be won through Mozambique. There was some trouble early in 1968 in the Mozambique Institute from dissident students. These students have now left the Institute and it is expected that the school in Dar es Salaam will reopen after being registered in the Ministry of Education of Tanzania in January. Other portions of the Mozambique Institute work on the primary school level and medical work have continued.

COREMO, led by Paul Gumane, has its headquarters in Lusaka. It is not recognized by the Liberation Committee of the OAU. It is difficult to know what strength it has. Most of their work and their training is done inside Mozambique itself according to their own reports.

Rhodesia. Both ZAPU and ZANU have their main bases in Lusaka and both are recognized by the OAU Liberation Committee. ZAPU has been more active than ZANU in recent months. The ZAPU-ANC alliance has led some incursions of guerrillas into Rhodesia. These attacks have been repulsed according to available reports. They have been suspended for the present, at least in the period prior to Zambian elections on December 19th.

Famine conditions due to an unprecedentedly drought in Rhodesia have also hindered the progress of the guerrilla movements.

South West Africa. The principal organization, and the only one recognized by the OAU, is SWAPO. It has headquarters in both Dar es Salaam and Lusaka. There have been incursions by guerrillas of SWAPO into northern South West Africa and also into the Caprivi Strip. These could not be described as a real offensive as yet. No other movement has entered a military stage it seems. My contacts with SWANUF were only in Nairobi and there the representative is seemingly spending all of his time on refugee problems.

South Africa. The PAC is going through a most difficult period. There has been a split in the top leadership, recognition by the OAU is under suspension at the moment and probably will be reconsidered at the meeting of the OAU Liberation Committee in Dakar in January. The leaders of one faction of the movement were jailed in Tanzania after a split in the leadership, but most of these persons have apparently now been released and have gone immediately to Nairobi. The PAC has been banned inside Zambia because they contested the authority of the Zambian government even with a show of force.

The ANC continues with its alliance with ZAPU and with its broad propaganda and military preparations program. As a disciplined movement, any disputes on the leadership level are not seen outside the movement itself. It gives the impression, therefore, of being a tidy and well-organized movement. While I was in Dar es Salaam, the treasurer of the ANC whom I was scheduled to see, Moses Kotane, suffered a stroke the day before I arrived. I saw him in the hospital and he was at that time paralyzed on his left side. This will be a blow to the ANC.

As a result of this trip, I feel more strongly than ever that the policy ACOA has followed of attempting to maintain a policy of neutrality in the competition between various liberation movements has been a correct one. I feel this for the following reasons: (1) we are not really involved in the ideological struggle. By and large, we can assume that all of the liberation movements are essentially nationalist in character. Some of them get their support from the Soviet bloc and some from the Chinese as far as the socialist world is concerned. Therefore, the publications and the language used by particular groups getting support from one of these sources or the other tends to be slanted appropriately. The United States government as a government does not seem to be involved. American private groups cannot hope to run competition with the kind of overwhelming support coming through governments. Therefore, we should act in accordance with what we are. Our commitment is to the struggle for freedom and not to any particular leader or particular faction. (2) we are not king-makers. We cannot act as if we were supplying overwhelming support either financially or materially. Therefore, we cannot really be a decisive factor in the internal struggles of the various movements. Why act as if there were any possibility that we could or should be such a factor. (3) if it were a question of our

wanting to back the winning movement, there is no way of telling at the present time who will be around at the finish. It is a long, hard struggle. There will be a change of fortunes many times and undoubtedly the rise and fall of a good many leaders. It is impossible to tell at the present time what the real strength of almost any of the movements might be. No one of the movements has the kind of overwhelming dominance that the FLN had in Algeria for example. There is no objective way of knowing what the military strength of the movements might be, how much control they really have over the territory inside the countries where they are working, what their financial resources are, how solidly their leadership has the support of their membership, etc. All of the movements make claims and counter-claims. All an outsider can get is a general impression. (4) We must maintain our own independence of action. We can do this only as we make clear not only to ourselves but to the liberation movements themselves that our policy is one of non-alignment and it is the only sensible policy an outside group such as ours can follow. This puts us in a position of being able to respond to any concrete request on an ad hoc basis from any source that makes sense. Naturally there will be some groups that for a variety of reasons we tend to prefer over others simply because we know their leadership better, because we have more objective information on particular projects they are asking us to support, or because of long-time association. Nevertheless, it must be clear to all concerned that we do not exclude support for any request which comes to us if it seems that our meeting this request will be helpful in responding to human need on the one hand or to help toward the long struggle for freedom on the other.

3) Miscellaneous Comments. (a) Projects we help support. One of the major objectives of this trip was to look more closely at some of the projects which we have been involved in supporting over the last several years in some cases. This is detailed in a separate report to the Trustees of the Africa Fund. In brief, I would simply comment that I was agreeably impressed by the work of the Mozambique Institute, both in its educational and its medical dimension. I visited its school at Bagamoyo where both a fourth-year primary group is studying and where a group of teachers are being trained for work inside Mozambique. I was not able to visit the major center for primary education at Tunduru because it was too far away and this is the rainy season. However, my discussion of the details of the program there convinced me that a good job is being done. A major effort of course is being done inside Mozambique itself. It is hoped that within a year's time all of the first two years of primary school will be taken care of inside Mozambique. There are some 12,000 children who are already involved in this program and some 7,000 who have not yet been able to get into the program because there are not enough teachers. Thus the teachers training program at Bagamoyo. As I mentioned above, the secondary school in Dar es Salaam is expected to reopen in January with the approval of the Tanzanian government. There is no other program connected with one of the liberation movements in Africa which is as well organized as the Mozambique Institute.

In discussion with some organizational people in Lusaka, a way of getting food into some of the drought-stricken areas of Rhodesia in such a way as to be of some assistance to the liberation movements was worked out.

I was impressed by the primary and secondary school programs of Emmanuel Kounzika in Kinshasa and in the lower Congo. He now has about 800 students in the schools for the first six years of primary school and five years of secondary school in Kinshasa. He hopes to build a new school on land which will be procured shortly and has already raised some funds for the building program from the people themselves.

A new hospital and clinic has been established by the Service for the Assistance of Angolan Refugees (SARA) at Franquetti, about 40 km. outside of Kinshasa. This is an impressive set-up with a full-time doctor and a staff of about 15 nurses and assistants. It is a 100% improvement over the clinic set-up which existed previously in Kinshasa at GRAE headquarters.

(b) Disengagement Strategy. I discussed the general strategy of economic disengagement from South Africa with Diallo Telli, Nyerere, Kaunda and a few others. I discussed this from the point of view of getting some joint action from African independent states against some of the larger American corporations involved in a strategic way in South Africa; such as American oil companies. The question is, are there some American corporations involved both in South Africa and in some of the independent states? Are these corporations expendable in the African states and therefore can some action be taken against them either independently or through the OAU? All of the people with whom I discussed this were very sympathetic and wanted to have the matter pursued through the OAU as well as looking at it through certain of the independent states. Nyerere felt that it would not be best for Tanzania to take a lead on this simply because Tanzania has led on so many similar issues. But Nyerere said that he would be glad to support whatever was done. A memorandum, it was agreed, should be sent to the OAU for consideration and hopefully for some action either by the Liberation Committee or by the Council of Ministers.

(c) Biafra. I did not get into a great deal of discussion on the Biafran issue on this trip. One of the reasons was that there are so many problems confronting the various groups with which I was in touch and the various countries which I visited that they are understandably preoccupied with their own pressing issues. I did discuss the problem with Diallo Telli, Nyerere, and Kaunda among others. Generally speaking, there was a rather pessimistic view of the outlook. I did not get the impression either from the Secretary General of the OAU nor from the Presidents of the two countries which have recognized Biafra that there was any end in sight. Both sides have been adamant in their negotiating positions and start at opposite ends in wanting some agreement either on the right of self-determination, or the sanctity of the

Nigerian Federation before serious negotiations get started. Kaunda did say that the reason that he and probably Nyerere had recognized Biafra was that they felt that it would strengthen the possibilities for meaningful negotiations to bring about a cease-fire. Both agreed that the necessity was some arrangement for a cease-fire. Nyerere said, after that is agreed to, let the discussions go on for two years or so, but at least the fighting and the starvation would be ended.

(d) Makonde Carvings. I spent several hours in Dar es Salaam talking with FRELIMO leaders and also specialists at the University College of Dar es Salaam on Makonde carvings. These carvings have attracted the attention of specialists in art, and some are done in Dar es Salaam by artists who go back and forth into the liberated areas of Mozambique. There are five carvers who are working with FRELIMO on the same sort of basis as any of the leaders of the movement. Most of the carvings which FRELIMO has, come from inside the liberated areas of Mozambique. ACOA is planning to have an affair sometime in the next few months to sell Makonde carvings for the benefit of FRELIMO. With the help of specialists in Dar es Salaam, particularly Mrs. Machelina Shore, I was able to pick out 46 fine carvings which should be coming to the United States soon and should make possible a fine display of this art.

(e) Aftermath of our Fly-in to South West Africa. Quite by chance while buying a newspaper in Lusaka I ran into the pilot who flew our group to South West Africa last year. We talked like old friends for twenty minutes. He told me that if he had known the purpose of our mission in advance, he would have been sure we could have landed. There were ways of guaranteeing this, he said, and he quickly outlined some of his ideas. I explained to him that we felt the charter company would have refused to fly us if they had known the purpose of our mission.

He told me of his being questioned by the police, particularly in Rhodesia (for he flew to Rhodesia frequently), because he had been our pilot. Also he said he was in Salisbury when the announcement came over the radio that we were suing South Africa for the expenses in connection with our trip. He was surprised when newspaper men tried to get a story from him knowing he had piloted us.

Before we left each other our pilot expressed interest in making another try at it. We were planning to keep in touch with each other.

The tragic aftermath is that just over a week later, this pilot, David Bobman, was killed when caught in a violent storm while flying near Lusaka. He leaves a wife and a child.