

SUMMARY REPORT ON AFRICA TRIP - NOVEMBER 18 TO DECEMBER 9, 1968

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The trip to Africa from which I returned recently was my thirteenth in the past 14 years. My primary purpose was a first-hand look at projects which The Africa Fund is helping to support, but the trip was also an opportunity to renew old contacts with African leadership and to check on developments and ideas which are impossible to follow close enough from New York.

I visited five centers:

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where I spent most of my time with officials of the Organization of African Unity and with representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, both of which have headquarters there;

Nairobi, Kenya, where I spent time with South West African refugees, the office of the United Nations, and the offices of the World Council of Churches and the National Christian Council of Kenya through which so much work with refugees is done;

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where many of the southern Africa liberation movements have headquarters; I talked to their leadership as well as to President Nyerere and Vice President Kawawa of the Republic, and to U.N. officials;

Lusaka, Zambia, where I was able to consult with President Kaunda, and again meet representatives of liberation movements and of the United Nations; and finally,

Kinshasa, Congo where the primary concern was with educational and medical services for the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Angolan war.

Refugees. We had sensed here in the U. S. that the plight of the political refugee from southern Africa was increasingly difficult. The refugees who are members of movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity find a favored place as "freedom fighters" or elsewhere within the movement, but the unaffiliated or dissident individuals have a hard time. In the years when all Africa was gaining freedom they were welcome everywhere; scholarships and other aids were available, for the whole prospectus was short-range and it was expected that they would soon be in a position to return favors as leaders in their soon-to-be independent countries. But countries outside Africa have now cut down on scholarships and other aid. Most countries within Africa have unemployment problems of their own; their educational facilities are inadequate for their own people and their resources limited. It is understandably hard for them to help.

I found a concentration of some 250-300 of these unaffiliated refugees in Nairobi, where they come both because Kenya is willing (although she has no aid program) and because UN and church agencies there offer some hope of assistance. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has

very limited funds, only for critical emergency situations. Aid through the World Council of Churches, administered through the National Christian Council, Kenya is also limited. Recognized refugees receive about \$2. a week for food and \$4. a month for rent, and only by sharing do they manage to live at all. The unemployment situation makes it virtually impossible for any to obtain work. We must find ways to help these people who have nowhere else to turn, and nowhere else to go.

Mozambique. The rest of the trip was less depressing. For though the plight of the refugees is apparent all over Africa, and the situations in their home countries not apt to change soon, as one goes south and meets the liberation movements in action, hope grows stronger.

What one can see of the Mozambique liberation movement in Tanzania is impressive. (It has been at war in Mozambique for 4 years now and controls large sections of these provinces where a million people live.) And indeed, in my discussions with the most knowledgeable people in southern Africa, I found they shared a belief that the liberation of Mozambique would lead the way, with the others following. Even so, there is no thought of short or easy victory, but a long, hard struggle still ahead.

The Mozambique Institute, centered in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania but with various branches, is perhaps the best organized effort, not simply to aid refugees, but to prepare them for responsibilities in an independent country. I was able to visit the Institute program in the historic village of Bagamoyo on the Indian Ocean about 40 miles north of Dar. Directly across from Zanzibar, it was once a slave market, and was the site of one of the mission churches where the body of Livingstone was brought on its way home to England. The inviting beach and perpetual summer weather at the Institute site make it look like a vacation spot which, of course, it is not. Bagamoyo is presently used for two purposes. One is fourth grade primary school education. The other is to train teachers for work inside Mozambique where, under Portuguese rule, illiteracy is more than 90 percent. The Institute's future plan is that Bagamoyo be used only for teacher training; the first two grades of primary school will be handled entirely within Mozambique, and the third and fourth years at the primary educational center for Mozambicans in Tanzania, Tunduru.

The Institute provides teachers, books, chalk, blackboards, etc. for rudimentary schools in liberated areas inside Mozambique. About 12,000 pupils are registered in various schools under the Mozambique Institute program, and there are approximately 120 teachers. Facilities are not adequate to handle an additional 7,000 children who have registered.

Unfortunately, I was unable to visit the new hospital our funds have helped to build at Mtwara in Tanzania near the Mozambique border, but I did get a first-hand report from the head of the Institute's health work. The hospital is now functioning, using local doctors, and staff houses have been built for nurses. The hospital services a constant flow of refugees from across the border, as well as wounded from the fighting.

Angola. My only contact on this trip was with the Angolan movement in Kinshasa, Congo, Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) which is still recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as a liberation movement although it has lost its status as government-in-exile. The other two movements are reported to be increasingly active inside Angola. National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) operates in the eastern and southern areas and its leader, Jonas Savimbi, is reported to be inside. It has been banned in Zambia, its former external base, because it continued, after repeated warnings, to bomb the railroad over which Zambia's copper must be carried to reach the Atlantic. Popular Movement for Angola (MPLA), active in the eastern area, recently held its first Congress inside Angola, though it was reportedly disrupted by Portuguese bombing.

GRAE'S activity continues in Northern Angola, though not at the same pace as before (many of the original refugees, whose number ran into the hundreds of thousands, have settled down among kinsmen in familiar agricultural surroundings to become part of the life of the Congo). It still has several military training camps in the Congo and is planning a new offensive through Katanga.

My particular interest was two refugee institutions which we have assisted before: the Service for Angolan Refugees (SARA), a medical program; and the Angolan Secondary Institute, an educational program. SARA has recently moved from a crowded Kinshasa slum to a twelve-acre country property at Franquetti. Seven buildings have now been erected, the largest a hospital with 27 beds and a well-equipped operating room. A full-time Angolan doctor has 15 helpers including nurses, technicians, and general laborers. An operation was in progress while I was there (a leg amputation of a man who stepped on a Portuguese land mine inside Angola). At least 250 were standing in line at the clinic which treats, I was told, 700 a day. There were three or four women in the maternity ward and a few men who had been wounded in Angola. No charge is made for services to the Angolans but there is a minimum fee for Congolese. The major needs now are for hospital equipment and drugs.

I visited two schools of the Institute in Kinshasa, where there were 800 students in the primary and secondary schools. A third school has 300 students in each of two shifts. Each of the seven classrooms I visited was crowded beyond belief, and the tropic heat without ventilation was unbearable. The schools run on a shoestring - the minimum salary is \$10 a month and the maximum, \$40. and they need everything.

Angolan villagers in the Lower Congo have contributed \$3,000 of the \$10,000 needed to put up a new school building which, it is hoped, will take care of 2,000 children. In addition, the Institute tries to service rudimentary schools inside northern Angola, which have registered about 6,000 pupils. Chalk and slates are sent in and teachers come out for brief training periods.

All the refugee schools teach Portuguese, although the children are growing up in the French-speaking Congo. This is because their function is to prepare for the future in Angola; they are, indeed, training what may be the future leadership of a free country.

And this is why, despite the poverty and loneliness of some refugee life, the overcrowded and primitive conditions of refugee institutions, the splits and tortuous politics of the liberation movements, one still comes away with a feeling of hope. The present is grim, and not much change is expected for many years. But the future, they feel, belongs to them. And they are preparing for it with persistence and dedication.

They need help desperately, and those who help them now have a share in shaping that future. It is a privilege, and a responsibility.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

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