

STATEMENT MADE BY GEORGE M. HOUSER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE  
AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA ON THE CHARGE MADE BY THE PORTU-  
GUESE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS - November 17, 1961

We understand that a newly-founded organization in Boston called the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs has called for a Congressional investigation of the American Committee on Africa because we supposedly are supporting communist goals in Africa. We note that this Portuguese American Committee carefully avoids calling us a Communist organization which would be patently libelous. The tactic which this organization is using is the old, familiar one of attack by innuendo, not by any examination of our program and purposes.

The reason they attack us is that we have specifically condemned Portuguese policies of domination and exploitation in Angola and other territories of Africa. We have pointed out in articles in our publication, AFRICA TODAY, in our pamphlets, and in public statements that the Portuguese system of forced labor is only one short step above slave labor; that the educational system for Africans in Angola and Mozambique is the least developed in Africa as statistics on literacy will prove, and that the Africans in Portuguese African territories are effectively removed from any political involvement in the machinery of their countries. Further, we have pointed to the brutal destruction and loss of life wrought by the Portuguese armed forces indiscriminately on the African people in northern Angola. We have not tried to justify particular acts of violence by Africans on isolated Portuguese individuals. But how can one equate the loss of 1,000 Portuguese lives since March 15 this year with 40,000 to 60,000 African lives?

Our Committee has always stood clearly within the American tradition of equality, freedom, and independence for all people. We do not believe that this democratic concept should be looked upon as the propaganda monopoly of the Communists, for whatever their purposes might be. We have applauded statements made by responsible officials in our Government who have clearly enunciated American sympathy with African people who desire independence. We are in full agreement with the United States House of Representatives resolution of 1955 which stated: "The United States should administer its foreign policies so as to support other peoples in their efforts to achieve self-government."

We are proud that our Government has, in recent months, seriously criticized the Portuguese policies in Africa.

We firmly believe that the apparent policy of the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs to applaud Portuguese governmental exploitation in Angola is a liability to the United States, to Africa, and to what we hope will be a future democratic Portugal.

Our Committee will be glad to cooperate with any responsible investigation of our activities and policies.

C O P Y

STORY RELEASED BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON, Nov. 16 (AP) -- A Boston lawyer heading the Portuguese American Committee on Foreign Affairs today demanded Congress investigate the American Committee on Africa (ACA) and displayed a purported ACA letterhead with the names of a Presidential aide, four US Senators and 13 Representatives in Congress. Martin T. Camacho, Chairman of the 3-month old Portuguese-American group said the ACA "in effect is ardently supporting communist goals" and he said Presidential assistant Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and other notables should "immediately resign."

His photographed copy of the alleged ACA letterhead contained the names of two Episcopal bishops, Baptist, Methodist and other religious leaders, writers, educators, judges and other widely-known persons.

Camacho said the Committee is supporting communist goals in Portuguese Angola and other parts of Africa and he contended the names of prominent persons were being used to further "the designs of the Committee." "If their names are being used without permission," he said, "they should denounce the deception and put an end to it. If they are members and do not know what has been going on, they should resign as quickly as possible."

Camacho said in a statement handed out at a news conference that the ACA has been one of the principal supporters of what he called a terrorist movement in Angola, Portugal's tropical West African province -- just south of the Congo. It has a population of between four and five million.

Camacho listed four persons who, he said, have been staff members of the ACA and, he said, have displayed support or sympathy for some communist aims.

He charged the ACA with backing Holden Roberto, leader of an African group which he said committed "atrocities exceeding any ever done by the Mau Mau in Kenya."

Camacho said the ACA urges immediate separation of Angola from Portugal "even though it is clear that Angola is even less ready for self-government than is the confused and chaotic Congo."

He said such separation would mean "a tremendous victory for the communists, both in Africa and Europe."

Camacho said the ACA doubtless has been a factor in shaping national US policy which has "resulted in the US siding with the Soviet Union against Portugal."

He said his Committee "strongly urges a Congressional investigation of the ACA, its financing, its connection with the terrorists in Angola, and its influence on policies which find the US working for the objectives of its mortal enemy, Soviet Russia."

On his copy of the purported ACA letterhead were these names among others: Chavez, Humphrey, McCarthy, Morse, Anfusio, Boland, Bolling, Corbett, Diggs, Halpern, Hayes, Holland, Machrowicz, Clayton Powell, Price, Thompson, Widnall.

Other prominent names on the purported committee list were former Asst. Atty. Gen. Thurman Arnold, Pike, Hobson, Niebuhr, Fosdick, Sockman, Martin Luther King, William E. Stevenson, Van Wyck Brooks, Gannett, Rex Stout, Van Doren, Gardner Cowles, Waring.

Camacho, a Portuguese-born and a naturalized American citizen, holds a Doctor of Political Science degree from Harvard U., practices law in Boston, and says he has been associated with labor unions and humanitarian movements.