

Morales - Carrion

Agenda Topic No. I-2-b-(5)

Doc. No. CAC-E-12

UNITED STATES DELEGATION  
TO THE  
SECOND MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CULTURAL COUNCIL  
Lima, Peru, May 1956

POSITION PAPER

Subject: Coordinated Services for Indian Communities

PROBLEM:

What position should the U.S. Delegation take with respect to the report of the Committee for Cultural Action on Coordinated Services for Indian Communities, drawn up in response to Resolution VII of the First Meeting of the Inter-American Cultural Council.

U.S. POSITION:

1. The Delegation should favor acceptance of the report by the Second Meeting for informational purposes only, and should oppose any effort either to criticize or to give specific approval to the "Coordinated Services for Indian Communities" in Mexico or similar projects elsewhere:
2. If a majority at the Second Meeting is interested in further action on the basis of the Study, the Delegation should favor limitation of such action by the Second Meeting to referral of the matter to the Inter-American Indian Institute.
  - (a) If the study is referred to IAI, it should be clearly established that the "pertinent suggestions" called for by Resolution VII of the First Meeting are to consist of factual observations on technical aspects of such projects that would be of interest to other countries.
3. If an attempt is made to carry through the original proposal in Resolution VII of the First Meeting, that the CCA Study be submitted to the Council of the OAS, the Delegation should favor referral to the Inter-American Indian Institute for further consideration, rather than to the Council of the OAS, in view of the division of responsibilities established in the OAS Charter.

DISCUSSION:

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General Considerations

This report provides a description of the nature and operation of Coordinated Services for Indian Communities under the Administration of Indian Affairs of Mexico, based upon Mexican official releases and one day's observation by a working group of the Committee in one operating center. Though no final judgment of the experiment is reached, certain limitations of the undertaking are mentioned as observations.

Commentary on U.S. Position

Position No. 1. - The brief Committee study, which hardly gives a comprehensive picture of the Mexican experiment, should not be endorsed but may be "noted" or otherwise accepted for informational purposes. In view of the nature of the report, it seems that its acceptance for informational purposes would be sufficient.

Position No. 2. - The Inter-American Indian Institute, a specialized organization of the OAS, having fifteen of the American republics as members, is fully empowered by its treaty (Convention on the Inter-American Indian Institute, 1940) to make a technical study of this subject. In accordance with Resolution VII of the Tenth Inter-American Conference, introduced by the United States, the Cultural Council is to "utilize, as fully as possible, the resources and programs of the specialized organizations such as... the Inter-American Indian Institute". Though the Charter in Art. 74 (d) specifies that a function of IACC is to "promote...the adoption of special programs of training, education and culture for the indigenous groups of the American countries", the IACC should not attempt to discuss what action the OAS might take on technical matters relating to Indian populations when an inter-American specialized organization exists for such purposes.

(a) The Committee for Cultural Action was asked to make a study "with the idea of making pertinent suggestions to the Council of the OAS". It is evident from page 7 of the study that the Committee for Cultural Action believes that Resolution VII requires a "final judgment" or "final evaluation" of the experiment in Mexico "for the purpose of making definite recommendations..." This interpretation appears to exceed the scope of the original resolution, and the Delegation should resist acceptance of such an interpretation by the Second Meeting on grounds that it would be inappropriate for an international body to do more than exchange information and make observations of a technical character, stopping short of anything resembling "pronouncing final judgment".

Position No. 3

Position No. 3. - For reasons similar to those cited above in relation to Resolution VII of the Tenth Conference, the United States can see no point in the referral of the Study to the Council of the OAS. It is not necessary for the Cultural Council to address itself to the inter-American specialized organizations in the cultural field through the Council of the OAS, or for the latter to report to the COAS on matters referred to them by IACC. The project itself does not seem to be significant enough to justify the Inter-American Institute's making recommendations at a later date to the Council of the Organization of American States, as suggested by GCA (last paragraph on page 7).