

UNCLASSIFIED

THIRD MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CULTURAL COUNCIL
San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 22 - December 2, 1959
Report on the Committee on Culture

The work of the Committee on Culture comprised consideration of and action on five of the studies submitted by the Committee for Cultural Action and a number of other topics, the most significant of which was Cuba's resolution on culture and sovereignty. The following summary points out the significant items taken up by the Committee on Culture.

Committee for Cultural Action Studies

CCA-R-19: The Teaching of Literature. The U. S. objective was to eliminate an impracticable feature of the draft resolution submitted by the CCA; namely, the establishment of secondary school courses in the literature of the Americas (points 1 and 2 of draft resolution); and to substitute recommended actions that fell within the scope of the CCA, and might conceivably be realized in the foreseeable future. Specifically, we wished to recommend the inclusion in existing secondary school courses of lists of representative works, preparation by the CCA of the syllabus of the literature of the Americas to serve as a guide, and the completion prior to the holding of the Fourth Meeting of the Council of the Dictionary of Latin American literature already so successfully begun by the Pan American Union.

Since the United States position included substantial revision of the CCA's draft resolution, members of the present committee were provided with copies of our substitute draft for discussion purposes. This was adopted as a base for discussion, and approved with only one significant change: the inclusion of a recommendation by the Haitian delegate that

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Committee for Cultural Action Studies

CCA-3-19: The Teaching of Literature. The U. S. objective was to eliminate an impracticable feature of the draft resolution submitted by the CCA; namely, the establishment of secondary school courses in the literature of the Americas (points 1 and 2 of draft resolution); and to substitute recommended actions that fell within the scope of the CCA, and might conceivably be realized in the foreseeable future. Specifically, we wished to recommend the inclusion in existing secondary school courses of lists of representative works, preparation by the CCA of the syllabus of the literature of the Americas to serve as a guide, and the completion prior to the holding of the Fourth Meeting of the Council of the Dictionary of Latin American literature already so successfully begun by the Pan American Union.

Since the United States position included substantial revision of the CCA's draft resolution, members of the present committee were provided with copies of our substitute draft for discussion purposes. This was adopted as a base for discussion, and approved with only one significant change: the inclusion of a recommendation by the Haitian delegate that

the CCA compile an anthology of the works of representative authors. Efforts of the U.S. delegate to keep the CCA free from this obviously sizeable job, although receiving some support, were unsuccessful; the action was approved by simple majority vote.

Otherwise, the U.S. position was substantially maintained. The Panama delegate made an unsuccessful attempt to re-insert the provision to establish secondary school courses. The United States and Mexico pointed out the impossibility of implementing such a measure in their respective countries. Panama, in consultation with the U.S. and Mexico, settled for a "recommendation" that courses be established "insofar as such action might be feasible."

CAC-B-22: Periodic Inter-American Expositions. The U.S. position was one of agreement with the CAC's draft resolution except for titles 4 and 5, which called for the granting of customs facilities by the member governments and negotiations with transportation companies for assistance in the form of reductions in or exemptions from transportation charges for Inter-American exhibits. Uruguay defended the U.S. point of view, and the elimination of titles 4 and 5 was approved by simple majority vote.

CAC-B-23: The Promotion of Letters. The U.S. position called for a number of minor alterations and one major revision: elimination of the Inter-American literary prize recommended in title 3. Most of the minor changes recommended by the U.S., and others proposed by other delegations, were approved. The proposal to drop the prize stimulated prolonged discussion. Cuba was the strongest defender of the prize, recommending

not only that it be retained but that its title be the one proposed originally; namely, the Premio Rubén Darío. The U.S. proposal to drop the prize was, however, supported by a simple majority vote.

CAC-3-27: Study on Ownership of Artistic Property and Copyright.

This was one of a number of items pertaining to books and libraries which were turned over to a working sub-committee. The resolution agreed upon, and approved by the Committee on Culture and the Council, met the principal requirement in the U.S. position; namely, a recommendation that member states ratify the 1952 Geneva Universal Convention on Copyright. Although we would have preferred not to include adherence to the 1946 Washington in the recommendation, its inclusion was acceptable.

CAC-3-29: Study on Representative Books. The U.S. was in agreement with this resolution as drafted, with only one minor change. The resolution was approved, with the suggested revision.

Other Items

Cuban Resolution on Sovereignty and Culture. Discussion of this resolution, an obvious bid for publicity on the theme of independence for Puerto Rico, in the Committee on Culture marked the high spot of the one outstandingly political issue that came before the Meeting. The subject is well covered in the official minutes (Document 117: eighth session of Committee on Culture, Friday afternoon, November 27.) Following introduction of the resolution by Cuba, general agreement, with suggested revisions, by Uruguay, and categorical support by Venezuela,

U.S. alternate representative Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión made a superb reply combining force and tact and recommended that a sub-committee composed of Cuba, Brazil, the U.S. and some other country, work on a revision of the draft. Cuba refused, insisting on a roll call vote on the resolution as presented. The vote was taken, with the following result: 3 (Cuba, Honduras, Venezuela) in favor; 4 (Brazil, Panama, Nicaragua, the U.S.) against, and 2 (Mexico, Uruguay) abstentions. Argentina also abstained, because occupying the chair.

Costa Rican Resolution. The representative of Costa Rica, with the apparent motive of helping Cuba regain ground lost in the latter's effort to use the Meeting as a vehicle to discredit the United States, requested in the Saturday morning session permission to introduce a draft resolution although the deadline had passed. The document would call for correction of the damage done to the cultures of small, undeveloped countries by residence therein of large foreign colonies consisting of corporation employees and their families. Cuba reacted immediately in support, followed by Venezuela. Ecuador, without any apparent motive, went along.

(The subject was brought in at a later plenary session as an amendment to the resolution that came out of study CAC-E-20, on Prejudices. It was adopted in a much different form, quite favorable to the U.S., as title 11 of the resolution on that subject.)

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Resolution on Freedom of Information. Proposed originally by Cuba, with Venezuelan support, as a protest against improper emphases in reporting by the foreign press on events in those two countries, this resolution was modified by a drafting sub-committee consisting of Argentina, Cuba and the U.S. It was approved by acclamation in the Committee on Culture. Dr. Juan Marin observed with some enthusiasm that it might represent something of a milestone in Inter-American cultural relations.

Since this preceded consideration of the Cuban resolution on sovereignty, it may have been instrumental in Cuba's refusal to consider alteration of that document.

Exchange of Publications. A Mexican proposal for the exchange of publications provoked prolonged discussion. As submitted, it called for exchange on a scale that would represent a physical impossibility. Although a working sub-committee named to consider matters pertaining to books and libraries modified it, Mexico would not accept the watered-down version. The resolution adopted (XXXXI, page 73 of the Spanish version of the Final Act) transfers the subject to the Eleventh Inter-American Conference, still with the objectionable provision. Since the agenda of presentation to that Conference would be a study to be prepared by the Committee for Cultural Action, for which presumably insufficient time remains, there is reason to hope that the subject may die on the vine.

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Miscellaneous. Other subjects taken up in the Committee on Cultural Action were (a) agenda items as applied to this Committee; and (b) a number of additional non-agenda items, none of significance. The latter included Brazil's resolution on the teaching of official OAS languages, various topics on books and libraries amplified by the preliminary treatment of the working sub-committee named for the purpose; Chilean resolutions calling for (a) an annual literary prize (defeated) and (b) colloquia of learned persons (withdrawn); and tributes to a number of recently deceased individuals prominent in the cultural development of the Americas.

Sub-Committee on Books and Libraries. The working sub-committee on subjects pertaining to books and libraries referred to in the foregoing consisted of the United States (Cline), Mexico, Alcalá, Valderrama), Cuba (Tallet), Brazil (Moog), the Pan American Union (Daniels), and UNESCO (Pena).

Prepared by

James H. Webb, Jr., Delegate