

F

American Committee on Africa  
Executive Board Meeting  
April 20, 1970

Present: Robert Browne, Winifred Courtney, George Daniels, Herschel Halbert, John L. S. Holloman, David Jones, Elizabeth Landis, Frank Montero, William Scheinman, Adelaide Schulkind, Frederick Schwarz, William Scott, Hope Stevens, Richard Stevens, Lydia Williams

Staff George Houser, Ben Peterson, Janet Hooper, Prexy Nesbitt, Sue Berman, Charles Hightower, Ken Butler, Karen Oswalt

The meeting was chaired by Vice-President Elizabeth Landis in the absence of President Peter Weiss.

1. The minutes of the January 13, 1970 Board meeting were approved.

2. Staff report-NY office

a) Arrangements during George Houser's absence - Janet Hooper will be in charge of the office for the period May through August, with increased project responsibility for Byden Jackson in addition to his research.

b) Gulf Oil - Janet Hooper explained briefly that there are several facets to the Gulf protest which will culminate in action at their stockholders meeting in Pittsburgh on April 28: the "Gulf Action Project", composed primarily of Pittsburgh resistance people, is stressing the Mellons; ACOA and NY churches are focusing on Gulf operations in Angola; other groups are talking about the entire imperialist world of Gulf. Specific actions initiated by ACOA include: 1) circulation of a statement protesting Gulf exploitation of Angola for signatories which will be released to the press late this week and 2) organization in conjunction with church people, of a group to attend the stockholders meeting. Janet mentioned that Gulf is aware of the plans and has been attempting to intimidate people not to give us proxies; they have also sent spies to various meetings, notably a meeting of the "Gulf Action Project" held earlier this month.

Richard Stevens said that Lincoln University holds approximately \$17,000 Gulf stock and suggested that the Committee contact Dr. George Cannon, Chairman of the Board of Trustees to inform him of Gulf's activities and ask him to sign the statement. Mr. Stevens will bring the matter of the Gulf stock to the attention of the University. William Scott mentioned that Princeton also holds Gulf stock.

c) Portuguese emphasis - 1) includes the Gulf project outlined above; 2) support for the PRELIMO office in the US - funds will be given to Sharfudine Khan, who has just returned from Dar; 3) radio spots; this project was originally planned for early May, but because of staff limitations has been postponed until later this year. George Houser reported that we have in sight approximately \$7,000 of the \$17,000 budgeted for the program.



d) Memo - Discussion was postponed on a memo circulated by George Houser on the nature and political alignment of the Committee.

### 3. Finance Report

Frederick Schwarz reported that ACOA has received \$52,000 and expended \$39,000 during the first quarter of 1970. However, he stressed that these figures are deceptive, because 1) we have been underspending vis-a-vis the budget and 2) \$38,000 represented special gifts, which are always lumped at the beginning of the year. At this rate, he projected a possible \$15,000 deficit for 1970. He also noted that the church groups are making significant cutbacks this year. While this will not affect us this year, there may be substantial cutbacks for ACOA next year, particularly for the Washington office, which has been almost entirely funded by church groups. It was pointed out by one of our church friends on the Board that many of the national bodies are trying to decentralize and we might therefore have better success approaching churches in local areas for funds, as in the cases of the Chicago, New Jersey and Washington offices.

### 4. Elections

Robert Browne presented the report and recommendations of the Nominating Committee. The report was approved in its entirety, and a unanimous ballot cast for all nominees. The Board expressed its appreciation to all those who will be going off the Board for their help.

### 5. Visa Case of Mrs. W. E. B. DuBois

Richard Stevens reported that Mrs. DuBois, widow of Pan Africanist and scholar W. E. B. DuBois, has been trying for a year to come to the United States, having given up her citizenship some years ago. She was scheduled to close the W. E. B. DuBois memorial lecture series at Fisk University and had many other speaking engagements, but has been formally advised by the Department of State that she is excluded from entering the United States. Mr. Stevens has protested this action to Senator Scott and Congressman Conyers, and has enlisted the help of a Washington lawyer who will investigate the matter.

Suggestions for action from the Board included:

- 1) have the United Nations invite her to speak (some Board members felt strongly that ACOA should confront the issue more directly as opposed to circumventing the visa denial by having the United Nations invite her)
- 2) enlist the help of Senator Brooke, and State Department official, Barbara Watson
- 3) enlist Black press
- 4) enlist supporters of the Massachusetts DuBois park monument
- 5) ACOA statement to be made available to interested groups
- 6) Letter to the New York Times
- 7) have Charles Hightower seek a joint declaration by Black Congressmen



It was agreed that ACOA should go on record as protesting. We will follow up on the suggestions listed above.

Mr. Stevens also suggested that the Committee contact the Black Priests Caucus of the National Catholic Bishops Conference, which will be meeting soon, for articulation of the southern Africa issue. Robert Browne has the name of the Chairman of the Caucus, and will forward it to the Committee.

#### 6. Washington Report

A report was circulated outlining the activities of the Washington office under the direction of Charles Hightower. In his remarks to the Board, Charles stressed the desirability of a student internship program for the Washington office, where volunteers would work on the ACOA program. His has found in his various speaking engagements that the student community is "fertile ground". He emphasized that the Committee must be sensitive to which projects are relevant to the Black community; for example, he felt that the denial of a visa to Mrs. DuBois is of much greater concern to Blacks than the Gulf project.

According to his information from Congressman Bingham's office, the sugar quota bill will come up early in 1971.

There were many compliments from the Board on Washington Notes.

#### 7. Field Work

a) Prexy Nesbitt in Chicago - A written report was circulated which described Prexy's efforts to create an informed constituency in Chicago (which he described as a "media wasteland" on southern African issues) to support the liberation movements. In his eyes, the primary task of ACOA in Chicago is the dissemination of material and information. He has found that black and white young people are ready to move, but ACOA must press to heighten the vague awareness of southern Africa, particularly in the black community. He emphasized that in order to do this, ACOA must develop new modes of communicating our information, i.e., popular literature vs. the technical papers we have been producing. Over the summer he is going to be working on a multi-media light show in an effort to reach young people.

He has organized a 1 day seminar for June 1 for social studies teachers in Chicago high schools. The Chicago public school system per se does not want to relate to southern Africa, and he must rely on invitations from particular teachers. He suggested that the availability of cheap material from ACOA may be an incentive to the educational system to use our material. Richard Stevens offered to send Prexy a report and teaching materials put out by the Philadelphia World Affairs Council on southern Africa.

#### b) Ken Butler - New Jersey

Ken reported that all his activities are leading up to the Engelhard stockholders meeting to be held on May 6 in Newark. He is anticipating approximately 200 people for the demonstration outside the hotel. Robert Browne will send Ken his two proxies. A flyer is in preparation using Blyden Jackson's research as a base.

Ken outlined that he has been utilizing two organization bases: 1) students - he has created a southern Africa committee at Rutgers and 2) trade unions - the UAW Newsletter is carrying information on the Engelhard demonstration.



## 8. Blood Campaign

Dr. Mike Holloman and George Houser are exploring the possibility of a blood campaign for the southern African liberation movements. Technicalities involved include the following: 1) PAIGC is the only movement we know of at this time which has facilities to receive blood. The other movements have been contacted to see whether they are equipped. 2) There is a question whether we could use the blood banking facilities of domestic groups - the procedure is usually to deposit blood in a bank and withdraw when you want to send it. We would send plasma because it lasts and can be administered under the most rural conditions. It is possible that liberation hospitals could distribute.

### Support

It was the feeling of several black Board members that drastic work would have to be done in the black community to gain support, i.e. blood, for the campaign. Further inquiries will be made on all these feasibility questions.

## 9. Defense and Aid Fund Expenditures

The report of D. & A expenditures was circulated. Some questions were raised as to why so little has been spent. George explained that with the creation of The Africa Fund, much assistance which was formerly channeled through D & A is now taken care of by the Africa Fund. It was agreed that a report of Africa Fund expenditures should also be made to the Board in the future.