

Minutes, ACOA Executive Board, March 3, 1977

Present: William Booth, presiding; Elombe Brath; Robert Browne; Michael Davis; Lawrence Henderson; Dorothy Hibbert; Janet Hooper; Leonard Jeffries; William Johnston; Elizabeth Landis; Tilden LeMelle; Edgar Lockwood; Edward May; Gail Morlan; Andrew Norman; David Robinson; Peter Weiss.

Staff: George Houser; Paul Irish; Prexy Nesbitt; Jennifer Davis; Raphael Gould; Richard Knight.

1. Minutes of the meeting of December 9, 1976 were approved as received on motion of Gail Morlan.

2. Brief Reports

- a) George Houser introduced Prexy Nesbitt, who has joined the staff and recently relocated from Chicago to New York with special responsibilities for the bank campaign and Africa Fund projects.
- b) George Houser called attention to the assassination of Jason Moyo, second vice president of ZAPU. ACOA sent a cable of condolences. Moyo's death removes an important figure in the effort for greater unity between ZAPU and ZANU.
- c) An excellent reception for the new UN Commissioner for Namibia, Martti Ahtisaari, was held at the Landis' residence on February 16, 1977.
- d) George Houser noted that a telegram was sent to Senator Sparkman, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee urging that the Committee apply its virtually unique resolution condemning Ugandan human rights violations to South Africa as well.
- e) Peter Weiss reported that the case against the New York Times for discriminatory advertisements from South Africa had been dismissed by the New York State Court of Appeals. A meeting of lawyers will decide whether to pursue the matter to the U.S. Supreme Court, though Michael Davis expressed reservations that the present composition of that court might rule adversely, setting a bad precedent.
- f) Ray Gould reported that things were moving along with the poster competition - a few excellent entries have arrived and the staff has word that many schools will be assigning the competition to their classes.
- g) Ray Gould reported that meetings were held at Actors Equity, proposing a demonstration around June 16, the Soweto rebellion anniversary. Our support was sought and the board approved a motion to endorse the efforts on motion of Elizabeth Landis.
- h) George Houser reported on developments concerning the tour in the United States of Tsietsi Mashinini and his successor Khotso Seatoloho, exiled presidents of the Soweto Student Representative Council. Practical and political questions had prevented the staff from co-sponsoring the tour with the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR). Mashinini has been quoted as urging exiles not to

join the South African liberation movements, ANC and PAC. William Booth and George Houser were contacted about being a signatory to a statement to be issued by NSCAR to "clarify" the issue. They will study the draft when it is received.

i) A brief presentation was made by Richard Knight on the research and literature work, noting that new publications being issued include a list of corporations in South Africa, an analysis of the U.S. voting record at the UN in 1976 on southern Africa issues; an update of the piece "Voices for Disengagement", and a chronology on the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia struggle, as well as a fact sheet on conditions in South Africa. Peter Weiss recommended a pamphlet produced by a Transnational Institute affiliate in London, "Black South Africa Explodes", which is being distributed by ACOA with an introduction by Jennifer Davis.

j) Ray Gould reported that Marshall Brown requested the board to consider protest of South Africa's upcoming participation in the Davis Cup in Newport Beach, CA. The Supreme Council for Sport in Africa recently threatened to boycott all play with any nation competing against South African teams, which would include the United States after this event.

k) Conferences: A number of conferences in the planning stage were reported on including one March 18-20 co-sponsored by the Black Political Assembly and the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ in Washington, D.C. ACOA attended planning meetings for a "People's Congress Against Racism and Apartheid" called by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the World Peace Council set for April. Another conference mentioned was to be held in April in Atlanta; while David Robinson mentioned that Dave Wiley would be sponsoring a consultation at Michigan State University on Zimbabwe.

3. A nominating committee was selected with the board's approval consisting of Dorothy Hibbert, Tilden LeMelle, Elsie Carrington and William Booth, to meet and report back to the next board meeting.

4. Finance Report: The finance figures for 1976 were presented to the board. For the second year in a row, we received more funds than we spent by a few thousand dollars, thus reducing the size of the deficit carried from previous years. George Houser noted that since arrangements were made with Prexy Nesbitt right after the last board meeting that an adjustment, adding approximately \$5000 to \$10,000 to the budget would be necessary. (Additional expenses will be covered by the Africa Fund.) Some commitments to cover this amount have been made.

5. Washington Report: Edgar Lockwood gave a lengthy report on the new Carter administration plans for southern Africa, distributing some sheets which for the first time explain that the United States was seeking massive contingency funds under AID security supporting assistance to be used as a "carrot" for a peaceful settlement in Zimbabwe and Namibia. No details about how the possible \$140 million fund would be used were available, but hints that it could be for a revived version of Kissinger's compensation plan and other uses. Ted did not see major forces on the hill opposing the administration strategy; Senator Clark working closely with the State Department and the Congressional Black Caucus talking a "wait-and-see" attitude.

Ted outlined what he thought should be the major legislative priorities: repeal of the Byrd amendment; opposition to the financial schemes; and legislation to deny tax credits to corporations doing business in South Africa.

Ted's report led to considerable general discussion of the issues and specific recommendation for a conference on the Carter administration approach to southern Africa and legislative action. George Houser had previously raised the idea of such a conference in a letter to the Washington Office on Africa.

6. Projects

Banks: A meeting of organizational representatives was recently held to outline the campaign seeking withdrawal of accounts. A draft brochure being sent to a list of over 300 persons for sponsorship, possible demonstration to be held around the Soweto anniversary, June 16th.

Corporation Action: Paul Irish reported that ACOA issued a memo outlining the shareholder resolutions on southern Africa filed by churches coordinated by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. The focus was to stop bank loans to South Africa, stop expansion plans by a number of corporations in South Africa; cut off Mobil's supply of oil to Rhodesia and South African coal imports by The Southern Company; and seek withdrawal of major corporations from South Africa including Ford Motor Co.; Goodyear; Texaco, etc.

Ipi Tombi: Elombe Brath reported extensively on the successful demonstrations responsible for the closure of the South African-sponsored theater production. The producers took a significant loss. Elombe said a written report on the actions was in preparation. Half the cast chose not to return to South Africa and is hoping to produce a production called Soweto Review.

Krugerrand: Paul Irish reported briefly on city council actions adopting resolutions urging citizens not to purchase the gold coin from South Africa and calls for action around the Sharpeville massacre date, March 21. Demonstrations are occurring in places like Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Detroit, San Antonio.