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AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA: EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES, December 16, 1982,
@ ACOA, 198 Broadway, NYC 10038 (212)

Attendance: William Booth(presiding), Elizabeth Landis, Jennifer Garvey,
William Johnston, Tilden LeMelle, Dorothy Hibbert

Regrets: Isabel Cintron-Cintron, Edgar Lockwood, Josephine Buck-Jones,
Edward May, Jerry Herman, Richard Lapchick

Staff: Jennifer Davis, Paul Irish, Josh Nessen

I. The meeting commenced shortly after 6:00 pm at the office of the Committee. Minutes of the previous meeting of September 21, 1982 were approved on motion by Elizabeth Landis.

II. Namibia: International Seminar and Regional Meetings

Jennifer Davis reported on the successful international Seminar on multinational corporations in Namibia organized by ACOA with UN Council for Namibia support and SWAPO assistance. About 80 participants were present in Washington November 29-December 2 representing over fifty organizations from a dozen countries. Over thirty papers were delivered including many expert studies of the role of multinationals in the Namibian economy: fishing, mining, uranium, agriculture, etc.

With Ed May and Elizabeth Landis assisting, a Declaration was drafted and adopted along with a message to the American people calling for the U.S. to support Decree #1 and impose economic sanctions against South Africa's continued illegal occupation.

A meeting with editors of the Washington Post, with the deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa, a press briefing at the National Press Club and a Congressional briefing organized with the Washington Office on Africa's assistance, were all held in conjunction with the seminar.

Following the seminar, two traveling teams including a SWAPO representative, an ACOA representative and two European expert activists visited four US and two Canadian cities where local sponsors organized forums and media events. The project had generated extensive publicity focusing attention on the continuing struggle of the Namibian people.

III. Staff Engagements

Staff engagements noted included Jennifer Davis's appearance chairing a panel on Namibia and speaking on an action panel at the African Studies Association in Washington and Dumisani Kumalo's appearances at a number of locations. Kumalo was on a trip to Africa.

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IV. Publications

The Africa Fund has just published a major study of North American investments in Namibia, US policy and background by research director Gail Hovey. A feature article on the publication appeared in the Washington Post. It was helpful at the seminar and we expect a substantial order from the United Nations.

V. Divestment Campaign

Jennifer Davis reported that the divestment campaign was moving towards some key victories. Legislative updates included passage of the most comprehensive divestment bill yet by both houses of Massachusetts where a veto by the conservative Governor King is anticipated, and passage of a bill for university divestment in Michigan awaiting signature.

VI. Cultural Boycott

New actions in the cultural boycott were noted including a series of pickets by Unity In Action and the National Black United Front against black entertainers who have gone to South Africa and a picket of Frank Sinatra at Carnegie Hall.

VII. Material Aid

Over 1½ tons of medical supplies for Namibian refugees, which had been put together by a group working closely with Paul Irish was picked up in Minneapolis and loaded onto a 20 foot container now awaiting ocean shipment from New York to Luanda. UNHCR will assist The Africa Fund with transportation. Other materials sent in 1982 include a library collection to the Namibia Institute in Zambia sent through the UN Library and a consignment of women's underwear sent to the SWAPO Women's Council with assistance from the Commissioner for Namibia.

VIII. Play Tour

Josh Nessen reported that "For Better Not For Worse", a new political satire on South Africa by Selaelo Maredi will be touring 15-20 campuses and other community engagements through the country beginning in February.

IX. Jean Sindab was on temporary leave of absence from the Washington Office on Africa due to back problems.

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X. Finance

Treasurer Tilden LeMelle noted that staff and Marvin Rich and himself had met to prepare budgets for 1983. He presented the budget for 1983 along with ten month figures for 1982. He noted two items of interest notably a significant proposed increase in rent by our landlord amounting to a doubling in two years to \$15,000 per year with CPI increases thereafter. We paid \$7,500 in 1981, \$10,000 in 1982. It was agreed to request a figure between 10 and 15,000 for 1983. Board members with possible connections were urged to approach the landlord. Noting the recommendation to withdraw about half the remaining funds in the Special Reserve Fund for George Houser's retirement in 1983, the budget for 1983 was approved on a motion of Tilden LeMelle.

The meeting was adjourned.