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MINUTES; ACOA Executive Board Meeting, September 21, 1982

Attendance: William Booth, presiding; Elizabeth Landis, Gay McDougall, William Johnston, Jerry Herman, Josephine Buck-Jones, Isabel Cintron, Edward May, Richard Lapchick, Jennifer Garvey, Edgar Lockwood

Regrets: Dorothy Hibbert, Leonard Jeffries, Timothy Smith, Tilden LeMelle

Staff: Jennifer Davis, Paul Irish, Gail Hovey, Richard Knight

1. The minutes of the meeting of June 28 were accepted as received on motion of William Johnston.

2. Overview on Recent Developments:

Jennifer Davis opened the meeting with a brief overview of the political situation in southern Africa. Some highlights of her analysis included assertions that the bilateral discussions for Namibian independence with Angola were being exploited by South Africa, which did not appear serious in its desire to reach an accord. The South African economy was headed into recession and a simultaneous crackdown against opponents of apartheid was underway. New efforts were being made through pass law enforcement to divide the African urban and rural population.

In discussion, the recent shipment of "cattle prod" batons to South Africa was raised. William Johnston urged that Congressional hearings be held on the sales and the board indicated its approval to take legal action on the sales, if deemed appropriate.

3. Reports from Board Members:

In reports from board members, William Johnston indicated acts of terrorism against opponents had now become a regular part of the South African arsenal for survival: the car bombing of ANC representative in Swaziland and the letter bombing of Ruth First being prominent examples. There were also growing indications of harassment of individuals in the U.S.

Richard Lapchick reported on the successful trip of an all-star basketball team from the U.S. to Angola to build friendship, playing in a number of Angolan cities. The response within Angola and from the team was overwhelmingly positive. An Angolan team may come to the U.S. next summer.

Edward May reported on some impressions on Zimbabwe after a recent trip. Security was tight in the western region as the search for the abducted tourists was proceeding. He also reported on progress in Lutheran projects for development in the country.

Gay McDougall reported that about 80 political detainees were standing trial at the moment. Over the past year, about 300 of 700 detentions were trade union-related. Torture has been exposed in many cases. Calls for saving the lives of three ANC and three SWAPO members under Geneva protocols as prisoners of war were being made. The investigation of the South African Council of Churches was proceeding.

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Elizabeth Landis reported that negotiations on Namibia were "dead" and the DTA alliance was falling apart. Harassment of SWAPO under the foreign agents registration act was noted. Also mentioned, was the issuing of an exemption to SA Airways for landing rights in Houston which will be challenged in the courts.

4. ACOA Reports:

a) Jennifer Davis reported that the UN Council for Namibia had agreed to support ACOA in organizing an International Seminar on the Role of Transnational Corporations in Namibia, to bring together U.S. and international researchers and activists with SWAPO in Washington, D.C. A tour of participants would conduct meetings and panels in four U.S. and two Canadian cities. Elizabeth Landis commended Jennifer in particular for securing the Council's support for the regional panels.

b) Jennifer reported that following a meeting she attended with others organized by the NAACP, the Governor of Kentucky reversed previous announcements of trade relations with South Africa.

c) In other divestment actions, Dumisani Kumalo was invited to the Lutheran Church in America convention in Louisville where he played a helpful role in getting a resolution for a divestment option adopted, and the American Lutheran Church reaffirmed their divestment stand in San Diego. Other state and local actions were covered in the newsletter he issued.

d) Research staff was heavily engaged in preparation of a lengthy study of North American corporations in Namibia to be back from the printers in time for the Namibia seminar in Washington.

e) ACOA was circulating a petition for the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners as requested by Ambassador Sule, Chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.

f) On the Western Sahara, ACOA and TransAfrica issued a protest with prominent signatories against U.S. arms sales to Morocco. Since the issue was in serious contention at the OAU summit, some publicity was received for the statement.

g) A copy of an "Open Letter to Contact Group Countries", prepared in Britain, was circulated. William Johnston moved, and the board accepted a motion to support the letter.

5. Finances:

Paul Irish reported on the finances based on 8 months which indicated a serious financial crisis for ACOA and The Africa Fund. In particular, to date the Fund had expended about \$40,000 more than it had raised for the year. Bank balances reached the stage where some staff had to forego salary payments.

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While some of this could be attributed to cyclical receipts of funds, and some income could be projected, nevertheless major efforts would have to be made for the organization's survival. With the report accepted, a joint ACOA/AF fundraising committee was proposed with the following members:

The Africa Fund

Frank Montero
Marvin Rich
George Houser

ACOA

Tilden LeMelle
Peter Weiss
Annette Hutchins-Felder
William Booth

6. The date for the next meeting was tentatively set for December 16 and the meeting was adjourned.