

MINUTES OF THE ACAS GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Madison, WI, Inn on the Park, October 31, 1986

The meeting was opened at 3:30 pm by co-chairperson, Immanuel Wallerstein, who called on ACAS officers to report on the organization's operations over the past year.

I. POLITICAL ACTION (Chris Root)

(1) TIAA-CREF: The TIAA-CREF Divestment Campaign remains the top priority. Several developments occurred during the year:

- Last December the TIAA-CREF board announced that it would begin calling on companies with holdings in South Africa to sign the Sullivan Principles and promised to divest from any company that failed to do so.
- On July 23 the board announced it would carry out stockholder actions calling on companies to disinvest from South Africa. It cited the current economic situation in the country as its main reason for adopting this policy change.
- The chief executive officer resigned. His replacement is Clifton Wharton, the former president of SUNY. Although Wharton has called on companies to withdraw from South Africa, he remains opposed to divestment.
- Petitions containing 7000 signatures have so far been sent to the TIAA-CREF board.
- Donna Shalala, a board member from Hunter College, has shown herself to be generally supportive of the campaign.

A question came up from the floor concerning the possibility of TIAA-CREF establishing a separate, socially responsible pension fund. In recent years a number of colleges and universities have sought to provide their faculties and staffs with the option of placing their pension funds in such funds. Chris said that TIAA-CREF has not taken any steps in this direction. Even if it were to do so, this action would not lessen the need for the campaign. The point of our efforts is not to provide "pure" investment opportunities, but rather to bring maximum pressure to bear on the South African government.

(2) Opposition to Administration and Congressional Efforts to Aid UNITA and RENAMO: At last year's ASA conference, ACAS collected 650 signatures on a petition opposing U.S. aid to UNITA. This and other efforts notwithstanding, congress approved funding for the Angolan contra group. Now there is a move afoot to provide similar assistance to RENAMO in Mozambique. It is imperative that we find effective ways of opposing this move. While there are now many groups providing leadership and information on South African issues, we are one of the few that can serve this function for the lusophone countries.

There then ensued a general discussion of the above two areas of action and related matters of concern to the members. Some of the points raised in this discussion were:

--The recent announcements by GM and IBM of their plans to disinvest from South Africa raise questions concerning our criteria for assessing the nature and level of corporate involvement in apartheid. Bill Minter pointed out that the basic issue remains whether or not a company's involvement bolsters the regime. Immanuel Wallerstein noted that the explanations offered by GM and IBM for their recent decisions to sell off their assets undermine their longstanding and oft repeated argument that politics play no part in corporate policy making.

--With regard to aid to RENAMO, one member suggested that we should emphasize three points in our efforts to educate the public: we should connect RENAMO to the Contras; we should link it to South Africa's overall program of destabilisation in the region and we should argue that a RENAMO victory would result in the expansion of apartheid.

--SWAPO and ANC are concerned about the failure of the international arms embargo. Some Stinger missiles sent to UNITA via South Africa inevitably end up in the hands of the South African Defense Force.

--Several members argued that we must take the long term view of the situation. This involves building a grassroots movement that can successfully link southern African and Central American issues. However, one member noted that we must be careful in pushing this linkage since a single issue focus can provide a more effective basis for organizing. Transafrica's picketing of the South Africa and the TV coverage it

attracted are cases in point.

--One member called for a time line on pending congressional actions on southern Africa.

--Another member called for the mobilisation of sympathetic celebrities like Stevie Wonder and the formulation of more catchy slogans. This appeal elicited the following suggestion from the audience: "Put the onus on Jonas."

Several members mentioned efforts currently underway:

-- Robert Cummings announced the formation of a PAC, "Americans Against Apartheid," that will mobilize funds to support our political friends and oppose our foes. In the latter category are those congresspersons who vote to aid UNITA and RENAMO. Claude Pepper (D-Florida), in particular, has been singled out. Efforts will be made to mobilize his senior citizen constituency to press for a change in his pro-UNITA position.

--Bud Day announced that Carol Collins of AFSC is putting together a book on South Africa's efforts to destabilize its neighbors. Contributions from ACAS members are welcome.

--Bill Minter invited members to view the new video cassette on RENAMO, "Killing the Dream," which will soon be available for local educational efforts.

II. THE NEWSLETTER (Bill Derman)

More contributions from members who have recently been in Africa are needed. Articles summarizing research findings or offering general observations would be most welcome.

Future editions will report on ACAS events such as Ann Seidman's recent conference on the future of southern African agriculture.

Comments from members:

--Jackie Willis of Washington Office on Africa noted that she and her

colleagues at W.O.A. like the newsletter's brevity and accessibility.

--More bibliographies geared to the needs of activists would be helpful. Ned Alpers used to include them.

--The newsletter should reprint op-ed pieces written by members for their local newspapers.

--Articles exposing pro-Apartheid lobbying groups are needed.

III. MEMBERSHIP (Ed Ferguson)

Substituting for Ed who was unable to attend this year's meeting, David Groff reported that the current membership, including persons joining in Madison, is 245. 53 people have joined ACAS since the ASA meeting in New Orleans. This represents a 27% increase in the membership, the same percentage increase as the previous year. About one half of the current members need to renew their memberships.

IV. FINANCES (David Groff)

I. Income

Balance 12/1/85	\$2146.00
Membership dues	3594.25
Gifts	50.00
Total	\$5790.25

II. Expenditures

Executive Secretary's Stipend	\$1500.00
Newsletter	1461.39
TIAA/CREF Campaign	500.00
Miscellaneous Operating Expenses	658.53
Membership Recruitment	370.91
Political Action	226.01
Total	\$4726.84

Current Balance \$1063.41

V. RESEARCH COMMITTEE (Ann Seidman)

ACAS has two ongoing research concerns:

1. The long range prospects of the political economy of southern Africa in the light of the experience of the independent, black-ruled countries of the region. The conference last May at Brandeis on southern agriculture grew out of this concern.
2. Immediate public policy issues. On these issues the committee seeks to form a liaison between members and ACOA, WOA and Transafrica. There is a great need for improved networking in this area.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Willard Johnson will replace Jean Sindab as one of the co-chairs.

David Groff will replace Henry Bucher as executive secretary.

Candace Goucher will replace David as treasurer.

Bill Derman will be the sole editor of the newsletter.

Bill Minter and **Ann Seidman** will co-chair the research committee.

Carole Thompson and **Chris Root** will co-chair the political action committee.

Jim Mittelman will coordinate panels at next year's Denver meeting.

Pearl Marsh, Betsy Schmidt and **Kassahun Checole** will replace Carole Thompson, Willard Johnson and Bill Minter as board members.

MISCELLANEOUS GENERAL BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

ACAS panels have been well attended at this year's conference. Ideas for next year's panels include: regional destabilisation by South Africa, the role of churches in the struggle in southern Africa, teaching about African issues at the secondary school level, and rightwing political networks active on southern African issues.

A one hour memorial meeting for Samora Machel and the others killed in the recent airplane crash in South Africa is scheduled for November 1 at

11:30 am in the Capitol East Room of the Inn on the Park.

David Wiley: Michigan State will be hosting a conference on U.S. training and education initiatives for southern Africa.

Sharon Sofer: The video "Witness to Apartheid" is available for community education programs. It should be used as an organizing tool.

Bud Day: OXFAM will sponsor a nationwide fast on November 20. This year's theme will be southern Africa.

ANC T-shirts and caps produced by the Zimbabwe cooperative movement are available for purchase. Interested parties should contact Bud. A photo book on the movement was circulated among the audience. There is possibility that materials produced by the movement will be combined into an exhibit and sent on a nationwide tour.

Marylee Crofts: Bill Pruitt, former Peace Corps Director in Zaire and longtime activist on African issues, recently died of AIDS contracted from a contaminated blood transfusion. A memorial fund is being organized.

Kenneth Simmons: In Berkeley a new organisation, U.C. Faculty Against Apartheid, has been formed by veterans of the divestment movement. Its purpose is to raise funds for the ANC. It has called on U.C. faculty and staff to pledge monthly contributions. Contributors can make either unrestricted gifts or else specify that their contribution go to the ANC Foundation.

David Wiley: At Northwestern an annual lecture on decolonization has been established. It might provide an opportunity for some of our South African colleagues to come to the U.S. In general, we need to consider ways of providing greater support for our colleagues in South Africa. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Groff, Executive Secretary