

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA
ANNUAL REPORT • 1980

ACOA



1980 was a year of major transition and upheaval in southern Africa. A wave of student boycotts and workers' strikes swept South Africa, demonstrating the defiant opposition of the black majority to white minority rule there. Zimbabwe was born as a nation after over a decade of bitter war. The armed struggle for independence in Namibia, led by SWAPO, reached new proportions.

In the U.S., however, the election of the Reagan administration raised somber questions about the direction of U.S. policy towards Africa. The racist regime in Pretoria hailed the election as the "triumph" of "Western Christian culture" over "Communism". Reagan selected as his National Security Advisor Richard Allen, who formerly represented Portuguese colonial interests in the U.S. What will be the new administration's attitude towards UN-supervised elections in Namibia, providing aid for Robert Mugabe's government in Zimbabwe, and normalizing relations with—rather than destabilizing—the government of Angola? We are faced with the very real possibility of a tilt toward South Africa in U.S. foreign policy.

Looking back on 1980, we believe that the efforts we made have laid the basis for continued and increased activity in 1981.

Legislative Divestment Campaign

In recent years, coalitions of citizens and elected officials have taken actions to divest public monies — pension funds (equaling \$178.9 billion in 1979), state educational funds, etc.—from U.S. corporations and banks doing business in South Africa. Many states and cities passed or introduced such legislation in 1980 similar to the Massachusetts bill which required divestment of \$90 million in teacher and public employee pension funds. In Michigan, Dumisani Kumalo, our field representative, devoted much time lobbying on behalf of three related bills introduced in the legislature, one of which became law. Increasingly, groups have supported divestment resolutions that also encourage socially responsible reinvestment in the U.S.

ACOA, in coalition with several other organizations, began to facilitate the national coordination of these state and local legislative divestment actions. In mid-July, the idea of coordinating the legislative effort was raised at a Pittsburgh conference on alternative legislation. More than a dozen legislators endorsed the campaign, which links liberal legislators, anti-apartheid groups and anti-redlining groups. ACOA and others on the coordinating committee have been providing sample bills, written resources and practical guides on how to run a campaign to beginning local and statewide coalitions. At year's end, preparations were being made for a spring (1981) conference to formally launch this important campaign.

Speaking Tours

Three major speaking tours organized by ACOA and reaching diverse groups of people increased awareness of the U.S. corporate role in South Africa and generated some divestment actions. From March to April, Dumisani Kumalo, exiled South African journalist and ACOA's field representative, talked with students and trade unionists throughout the midwest and east. After hearing Kumalo describe apartheid, members of AFSCME Local 1716 in Connecticut passed a resolution calling for divestment of Hartford's \$15 million in pension funds from companies doing business in South Africa.

Kumalo's second tour in the fall took him to 13 colleges and universities and to a convention of the American Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, where delegates voted 447-331 to divest \$20 million and for the U.S. to implement sanctions against South Africa. This victory was the culmination of grassroots efforts by the Lutheran Coalition on Southern Africa, for which ACOA acted as a resource organization.

The third speaking tour featured Tozamile Botha, an exiled South African who was president of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization and who led co-workers in a major strike against the Ford Motor Co. in South Africa in 1979-80. Paul Irish, ACOA's associate director, helped arrange Botha's seven-week tour through the U.S. and Canada, after meeting the black leader in Lesotho in July.

Botha spoke with many trade unionists, beginning with a labor press briefing in New York sponsored by ACOA. He also met with Marc Stepp, vice-president of the United Auto Workers (UAW); Leon Davis, president of District 1199, the hospital workers' union; members of several UAW locals, of the National Black Communications Workers Coalition, and of a San Francisco local of the longshoreman's union, among others. In addition, Botha addressed large audiences at 25 colleges and testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Africa to explain his opposition to the "Sullivan Principles" (a corporate code of conduct regarding workplace conditions).

Zimbabwe

On March 4, 1980, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in alliance with the Patriotic Front (ZAPU) won a dramatic election victory, which ushered in the independent government of Zimbabwe. ACOA, which organized a delegation of independent American observers, was present during the critical period of election campaigning in February following the ceasefire agreement. The observer team was comprised of representatives of TransAfrica and the NAACP, the Washington Office on Africa, ACOA's executive director, George Houser, and ACOA board member, Tilden LeMelle. Their report documented violations of the "free and fair" election principle, such as intimidation by the military forces of the white-minority Rhodesian government and media

bias against the ZANU-PF. When the new nation held its independence ceremonies on April 17, Peter Weiss, current ACOA board member and past president, attended on our behalf.

ACOA and the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church co-hosted a reception for Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's new Prime Minister, during his visit here in late August for Zimbabwe's admission into the United Nations. In his reception speech, Mugabe cited Judge William H. Booth, current president of ACOA, and George Houser, as some of those who had demonstrated longtime commitment to Zimbabwe's struggle for independence.

Paul Irish visited Zimbabwe during a five-week tour (June-August) through southern Africa. His visit provided the basis for plans to aid a rural healthcare program and other development projects in Zimbabwe through the ACOA and its associate, The Africa Fund. Last year, The Fund supported projects, including emergency assistance to individuals and medical aid to Namibian and Mozambican refugees, totalling over \$100,000.

Sanctions: Namibia and South Africa

The one consistent element in South Africa's response to the UN settlement plan for Namibian independence has been its diplomatic stalling. Pretoria's aim has been to delay UN-supervised elections for fear that the liberation organization, SWAPO, has the political strength to win against the South African-backed internal parties. At several conferences and UN hearings ACOA reiterated its position that the Security Council should immediately impose economic sanctions against South Africa to pressure her into implementing the UN independence plan for Namibia.

ACOA presented papers arguing for sanctions at three major international conferences held in cooperation with the UN in Europe. Jennifer Davis, research director, represented ACOA at an oil sanctions session in Holland, and Paul Irish presented two papers at a sanctions action conference in Geneva. George Houser and research assistant, Anita Pfouts, represented ACOA at a Namibia support meeting in Paris in August. The over 700 participants passed a resolution for mandatory sanctions and condemned multinational involvement in exploiting Namibian uranium.

At UN headquarters in New York, speaking on the Namibia issue before a committee of the UN General Assembly, George Houser stressed sanctions and the importance of the international community confronting South Africa for its delaying tactics. At separate UN committee hearings, Jennifer Davis argued that less than rigorous implementation of international arms and oil embargos had allowed South Africa to build itself militarily and energy-wise, and ACOA president William H. Booth presented a public statement signed by over 50 prominent Americans which criticized the Sullivan Principles for their failure to challenge the structure of apartheid.

Sports and Apartheid

The apartheid regime continued efforts to try to improve its international image through sports contacts. In cooperation with the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS), chaired by ACOA board member Richard Lapchick, ACOA's Tilden LeMelle met with the president of CBS Sports to protest coverage of a heavyweight bout in South Africa. In December, coordinated actions halted plans for a \$1.5 million tennis match in South Africa between American John McEnroe and Sweden's Bjorn Borg. Black American tennis star, Arthur Ashe, ACCESS, and ACOA convinced McEnroe to withdraw from the match, which was being used to promote the idea of so-called "independent" black homelands inside South Africa. Paul Irish testified at UN hearings on the issue of sports and apartheid in March, and ACOA actively participated in a meeting, involving groups from Africa, Europe, New Zealand and the U.S., to improve international coordination of anti-apartheid sports campaigns.

Information

The speaking tours were tremendously effective outlets for information and ACOA's analysis on southern Africa issues. They generated press coverage, such as the interviews of Tozamile Botha in the **San Francisco Chronicle**, **Chicago Defender**, UAW paper **Solidarity**, and other labor publications, and the articles on Dumisani Kumalo in numerous college papers. When ACOA released a press statement revealing that General Motors, Goodyear Tire and other American firms in South Africa would cooperate with the apartheid government's new security measures for designated "key point" industries, it resulted in an article in the **Journal of Commerce** and several radio interviews with our field representative.

Staff members published articles on the legislative action campaign in the **Black Collegian**, on prospects for independent Zimbabwe in **Christianity & Crisis**, and on Western Sahara's struggle for self-determination in **The Progressive**; and student coordinator, Josh Nessen, produced and distributed several issues of a newsletter covering anti-apartheid activities on the campuses. ACOA distributed new publications prepared by its associate, The Africa Fund, and by other groups, which included a 32-page study on South Africa's nuclear capacity, a piece on strategic U.S. investments in South Africa, and a guide for groups using films on apartheid. A literature list with other titles is available upon request from The Africa Fund.

Cover Photo (Tom Tuthill): Robert Mugabe is introduced by ACOA president, William Booth, at reception for the new Zimbabwean Prime Minister.

ACOA & The Africa Fund

The American Committee on Africa, founded in 1953, is devoted to supporting African people in their just struggle for freedom and independence. The Africa Fund was founded in 1966 as a tax exempt associate of ACOA to undertake humanitarian projects in Africa, research and publication.

ACOA and The Africa Fund have complimentary programs, sharing office space and staff, but have separate budgets and governing boards.

1980 Financial Results*

INCOME	ACOA	The Africa Fund
Contributions	\$ 78,467.87	\$ 247,544.10
Literature Sales	—	12,897.17
Travel & Honoraria	948.50	178.00
Interest	166.49	1,417.85
Total	\$ 79,582.86	\$ 262,037.12
EXPENSES		
Projects	\$ 45,268.94	\$ 159,859.13
Research/Education	31,038.83	67,533.12
Membership	8,051.00	17,286.68
General/Admin.	3,238.04	3,876.51
Total	\$ 87,596.81	\$ 248,555.44

*The figures above are subject to audit, copy of which will be available when completed on request.

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The Future and ACOA

Some who care deeply about the work of ACOA have made provision for it in their wills. These remembrances have helped generate growth and vitality in our ongoing work. For those who wish to provide for the continuance of their interest in the purposes of the Committee, the following form of bequest is suggested:

I hereby bequeath to the American Committee on Africa, 198 Broadway, New York, N.Y., for use in its programs, the sum of \$ _____