

# A new mood

There is definitely a new mood and reality in southern Africa that contrasts remarkably with that of the last decade or more. This was not difficult to catch even in a short three week trip. I visited only three countries - Zambia, Tanzania, and Zaire. These countries have been critical in the struggle for liberation in southern Africa, for they have served as external headquarters of the movements for freedom of Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia (South West Africa), and South Africa.

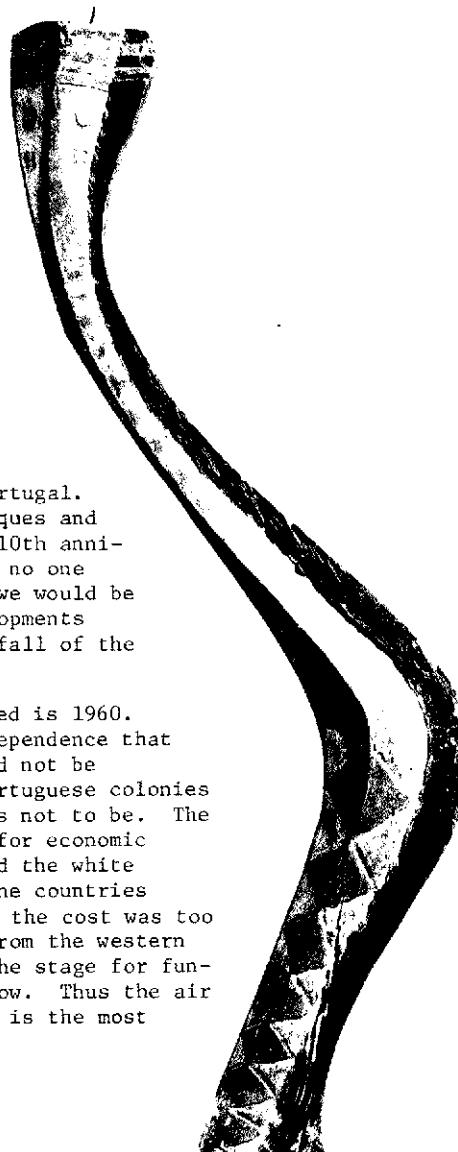
I talked with leaders of virtually every movement in southern Africa, as well as Zambian and Tanzanian government leaders. If I had been able to stay longer, I would, of course, have covered even more ground. Notable among those I talked with were President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; Samora Machel, President of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO); John Malecela, Foreign Minister of Tanzania; Herbert Chitepo, Chairman of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU); Jason Moyo, head of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU); and Sam Nujoma, President of South West African People's Organization, (SWAPO).

I will be preparing a longer memorandum for ACOA's Executive Board (which will be available to those friends of ACOA who request it), but here I want to outline some dominant impressions. As one who has been travelling to Africa over the last twenty years, I can testify that there is a difference between reading about what is happening, or even carrying on discussions with people from Africa who are at the United Nations, for example, and being on the spot oneself. Here then are a few of my observations:

(1) I cannot emphasize enough that there is a mood of expectancy in southern Africa unlike anything I have seen over the last fourteen years. This is a time of transition in southern Africa. This new atmosphere grows out of events in Africa following the April 25th coup in Portugal which set so many things in motion.

Guinea-Bissau's independence has been recognized by Portugal. FRELIMO dominates a transitional government in Lourenco Marques and Mozambique will have its independence June 25th, 1975, the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Liberation Front. There was no one with whom I talked who did not feel that Namibia and Zimbabwe would be independent within two or three years at most. These developments were unthinkable at the beginning of 1974, just as the downfall of the Portuguese regime was unthinkable in 1973.

The only period with which the present could be compared is 1960. I remember those months very vividly. 17 countries won independence that year. Many people expected that the "winds of change" could not be stopped and that South Africa, Rhodesia, Namibia, and the Portuguese colonies would in turn become free within a short time. But this was not to be. The Portuguese were much more dependent, both for prestige and for economic survival, on their colonies than other colonial powers. And the white settlers in southern Africa were not about to pull out of the countries they dominated. So violent struggle occurred. Ultimately, the cost was too high for Portugal even with massive arms and economic aid from the western powers, and the coup of April 25th, 1974 ensued. This set the stage for fundamental changes in southern Africa which are in progress now. Thus the air of expectancy. A South African leader put it to me: "This is the most hopeful time we have ever had in South Africa."



(2) South Africa is the key to what will happen next in southern Africa.

This is not a new reality. It has always been recognized that South Africa's military and economic strength makes her the least vulnerable to change. Essentially her intransigence is based on the presence of four million whites in South Africa who completely dominate the country and have no intention of leaving or sharing their dominant role with the African majority. But now South Africa is faced with new circumstances.

Just before I left Zambia, I had a call from the State House in Lusaka inviting me to see the President. Only three days earlier, Kaunda had made an important speech at the University of Zambia, in which he offered an olive branch to South Africa. He said African independent states were not planning to attack South Africa. He pointed out that the struggle for change will go on inside South Africa, and this will be supported by Africa, but that hopefully this change could be peaceful. "Time has come for the South African Government to make a choice," Kaunda said. "The choice is either the road to peace, progress and development or to the escalation of conflict in southern Africa." In this speech, Kaunda called on Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa to make some initial moves by pulling troops out of Rhodesia and by withdrawing from Namibia as the United Nations has so long demanded.

In my half hour of private conversation with President Kaunda, he said the new reality with which South Africa is faced is that she will soon be completely bordered to the north by independent African states. Here the critical fact making all else possible is the forthcoming independence of Mozambique. The white government of South Africa has recognized this reality and has seemingly responded to the peaceful overture of Kaunda by talking in a new way about the possibility of leaving Rhodesia and Namibia.

I should like to make two brief observations about the South African scene. First, the debate in the U.N. Security Council on expelling South Africa was taking place while I was in Zambia. There was excited interest in it. The veto by the U.S., Britain and France, although not unexpected, was met by wide protest. The whole episode pointed to the fact that Africa was in earnest about putting international pressure on South Africa. It is not accidental that both the pressure of the U.N. debate and Kaunda's "olive branch" occurred during the same week. The Vorster response seems to indicate that he understands this. Change in the international posture of South Africa will not occur in a vacuum.

Second, whatever road South Africa takes on Rhodesia and Namibia will not necessarily indicate a change of apartheid practices inside South Africa. Kaunda understands this. The point can be illustrated by South Africa's posture toward Mozambique. While I was in Africa, the South African Foreign Minister made a speech indicating they wished to have normal relations with the FRELIMO government. He said that no mercenaries would be permitted to go to Mozambique from South Africa to undermine the regime and that anti-FRELIMO elements from Mozambique would not be welcomed in South Africa. Yet at this same time, the South African government banned rallies in support of FRELIMO by the South African Student Organization and the Black People's Convention. When the rallies were held in defiance of the ban, they were broken up, leaders arrested and offices raided. This contradiction in inter-



national posture and internal action should tell us something of the struggle which lies ahead. The external realities are not making South Africa into a "liberal democracy" internally. The white minority will not give up their privileges without struggle.

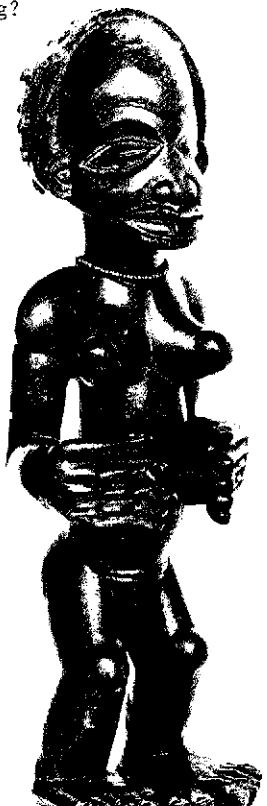
(3) This is a time for decision by the U.S. as well as South Africa. U.S. policy has generally been supportive of the white regime. The U.S. has never recognized the liberation movements. Now, as in the case of FRELIMO, they are forced to recognize the reality of these movements when they become the governments of new states. Is the U.S. to continue with the old policies of increased investments and profits in South Africa from cheap black labor despite the warnings of the liberation movements? Is the U.S. to continue to allow the sale to South Africa of planes that can be converted to military use; to welcome South African military figures to the U.S. for discussions in the Pentagon? This is nonsense! The U.S. must come to terms with a new reality. The American people should no longer be deluded into thinking that the dynamics of change will be accommodated by remedial wage raises for the black workers. As one Tanzanian government leader said to me, U.S. business interests will find out soon enough that investments in South Africa will cease being profitable as the internal struggle quickens. American business interests will stay in South Africa at their peril. They will be looked upon as the enemy and will suffer the consequences. American business will not be looked upon as an agent of change, but a supporter of the status quo.

(4) What about ACOA? The period we face is now critical for Africa. It is a time of decision for southern Africa and for the U.S. ACOA's role is two-fold. First, we must do what we can to help change U.S. policy so as to face the new reality in southern Africa. It is ridiculous that a final vote has not yet been taken in Congress repealing the Byrd amendment which allows the U.S. to violate U.N. economic sanctions. Will the U.S. be the only country openly trading with Rhodesia even while this minority regime is faltering?

We need to foster a new campaign to stop expansion of American business interests in South Africa. We need to open the way for U.S. communication, not with the white minority regime, but with the people of the voiceless majority, who are the hope for the future in southern Africa.

Second, we must work for a U.S. policy of giving assistance to the newly independent government of Guinea-Bissau, and soon-to-be-independent Mozambique and Angola. I spent about four hours in Dar es Salaam with Samora Machel, President of FRELIMO and future President of independent Mozambique. He described some of the tremendous current problems and needs of Mozambique after 10 years of armed struggle for independence. There is absolutely no bitterness toward the Portuguese. FRELIMO wants all the people to remain in Mozambique, to help build a new country. They would like our help too.

Samora Machel invited me to come to Mozambique soon, before independence on June 25, 1975, to see conditions and to assess in what ways we could be helpful. Our task will be to urge our government to give massive unconditional assistance. In addition, through the Africa Fund, we will continue to aid the educational and medical programs on a smaller scale. Perhaps ACOA will be able to accept Samora Machel's invitation and send a small delegation to visit Mozambique early in 1975 to investigate projects we might aid. We will be in touch with our friends on this again soon.





MEMO TO: Friends of ACDA  
FROM: George Houser  
RE: Difficulties growing out of trip to Africa  
Date: Nov 7, 1974

Produced: Schneider & Rich/Associates.

## AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

164 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

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I wrote this memorandum only a few days after my return from a brief trip to Africa. I was quite unexpectedly invited to Zambia as a guest of the government for the week-long celebration of Zambia's tenth anniversary of independence. Back in 1960 the ACOA invited Kauda to visit the United States just after his release from prison, and again in 1961 he embarked on a nationwide speaking tour under ACOA sponsorship. It was exciting to see the changes in Zambia since that independent ship. However, the purpose of this brief memorandum is not to talk of Zambia, but rather to make observations on the current mood in southern Africa.