

American Committee On Africa

Executive Board Meeting

October 7, 1969

Present: Robert Browne, Lewis Carliner, Elsie Carrington, Winifred Courtney, Herschel Halbert, Farrell Jones, Dana Klotzle, Elizabeth Landis, Andrew Norman, Adelaide Schulkind, Hope Stevens, Robert Van Lierop, Grace Watson, Lydia Williams

Staff: George Houser, Blyden Jackson, Ben Peterson, Ella Wilson, Janet Hooper, Karen Whitmore, Karen Oswald

Guest: Sharfudine Khan, official representative of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) to the United States

In the absence of Peter Weiss, the meeting was chaired by Hope Stevens, Vice-President.

New Board members Grace Watson and Lydia Williams were introduced, and Karen Whitmore and Ella Wilson of the staff. Karen, a trainee with the Experiment in International Living, has assumed receptionist duties making it possible for Ella to concentrate on field work.

1. The minutes of the July 10 meeting were approved.
2. Mr. Sharfudine Khan, who has recently returned from Dar es Salaam, spoke about the struggle in Mozambique and gave a moving account of what it meant to FRELIMO to have its leader assassinated. He affirmed the determination of himself and the freedom fighters to carry on the struggle and expressed the hope that ACOA would continue its moral and material support. It was decided that there should be further in-depth discussion with Mr. Khan at a later date, including ACOA work and new proposals.

3. Finance Report

Ben Peterson reported that ACOA is in a more difficult financial situation than it has been in many years. He felt that this reflects, in part, a greater concern about domestic issues. Also, he explained donations are often received for specific projects, leaving the ACOA account lacking, if we are to respect the wishes of donors. He urged that Board members who might have suggestions for new approaches or sources contact him or George Houser.

The Finance Committee will meet in mid-November to draw up a draft budget for 1970.

4. Portuguese Colonies

George Houser stated that our general plan is to develop a campaign to break the US alliance with Portugal.

a) Research angle - Blyden Jackson reported that Research is attempting to pinpoint an objective in the Portuguese/US relationship which can serve as a focus. Our part-time researcher on American corporate investment in the colonies has documented 50 companies thus far, and an independent researcher on US/Portuguese military ties will be sending us his report in December. Blyden estimated that we could begin to formulate a program by the end of the year.

b) Washington angle - Gary Gappert 1) has arranged for Khan to visit Washington to meet with several Congressmen who are concerned with Portuguese colonialism 2) stressed the need for Congressman Diggs to hold hearings and 3) suggested that we arrange for Khan to appear on various TV programs such as the TODAY show.

Several Board members argued that rather than attacks on US corporate and military ties with Portugal, ACOA should run a positive campaign of support for the liberation movements.

As groundwork for a positive approach, Blyden Jackson outlined a proposal for a radio campaign using the two major Black stations in New York and Washington, perhaps coordinated with ads in the Washington Afro-American and The Amsterdam News. The campaign would consist of short messages inserted by the disc-jockey as part of his dialogue, related to the struggle for freedom and self-determination in Southern Africa. He stressed that this would be a valuable tool in preparing the black community for political action around southern Africa.

As a result of this discussion a staff/Board committee was established to concretize a program on Mozambique, the struggle there being the most advanced and therefore the obvious focus for a positive campaign. Robert Van Lierop will chair the committee consisting of Andrew Norman, Farrell Jones, Lewis Carliner, Lydia Williams and the ACOA staff.

Other suggestions from the Board included: 1) Eduardo Mondlane stamp to give visibility to the issue 2) meetings in 8-10 eastern cities with Khan and George for information and fund-raising purposes and 3) cooperation with the liberation movements to get physical evidence of US military presence in the colonies.

5. Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

A background sheet on Rhodesia and Washington, prepared by Gary Gappert was circulated. He reported that Washington is convinced that no one is concerned whether the US retains its consulate in Salisbury, especially Black Americans. He suggested we try to magnify black interest via:

- a) prominent leaders statement
- b) visits to Congress and the White House by Black Board members

He mentioned that Congressman Diggs has scheduled hearings on Rhodesia to begin October 17.

Robert Browne questioned the priority of the consulate issue. Lydia Williams concurred and urged that more time be spent working with the Black community both in New York and Washington.

6. Action on South Africa

a) Airways - both the City Commissioner and State Division on Human Rights are developing cases against SAA. Elizabeth Landis pointed out that the same questions can be raised with regard to Holiday Inns.

b) Bank Loan, Chemical at UN - George Houser noted that the consortium loan will be renegotiated in December.. ACOA has been pushing this issue at the UN and as a result, Chemical Bank is now being debated within the African Group. There is a possibility that the question may be raised on the floor of the General Assembly.

c) Sugar Quota - the Sugar Bills are due to come before Congress in the spring, and ACOA tactics will be timed for then. Gary urged that we try to coopt other sugar lobbies to go for the SA quota.

d) Research Report on corporate investment - Blyden reported that he has documented approximately 350 companies, subsidiaries, and branches in SA. The list will be available by Oct. 15.

7. Field Work

Ella Wilson is working closely with Black Student Unions in the metropolitan area on campus projects related to the liberation struggle.

8. Report on DA and AF expenditures was circulated

9. Search for Washington Director

George reported that while he has interviewed a number of candidates, we are still looking for someone to replace Gary Gappert who has accepted a teaching position at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee beginning in mid-January.

Hope Stevens expressed the need for ACOA to provide a high-level black staff member. He urged the Board to recognize that in this period of time, such an omission constitutes a serious weakness. He proposed that we raise extra funds if necessary for a black Associate Director. It was agreed that this question should receive further discussion.

10. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13th at 5:45 p.m.