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MINUTES

ACOA Executive Board Meeting, October 5, 1978

Present:

William Booth - Presiding; Robert Brown; Michael Davis; William Johnston; David Lampel; Elizabeth Landis; Tilden LeMelle; Gail Morlan; Dorothy Hibbert; Edward May; Marvin Rich; Michael Simmons; Peter Weiss;

Staff: George Houser, Paul Irish, Jennifer Davis, Karen Rothmyer, Richard Knight

1. The meeting began shortly after 6:00 P.M. at the office.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as received by common consent.
3. Office space: Karen Rothmyer and Paul Irish reported on work to find new office space as our lease expires the end of November and will not be renewed. A number of possibilities are under active consideration. The real estate market is quite different from the time when we signed our previous lease--it will cost us approximately \$3,000 more per year to get adequate space in a less desirable location. The board ultimately is responsible for the financial and legal implications of the lease.
4. Finances: Paul Irish reported that the figures as of the end of August had been discussed briefly with Tilden LeMelle and Marvin Rich, treasurers of ACOA and The Africa Fund respectively. They showed ACOA running an operating deficit for the year of approx. \$8,000--though this might be made up to some extent by seasonal flows of funds. The Africa Fund also is in a deficit position--cash is tight for both.
5. Report from Frontline States: George Houser quickly reviewed impressions from his recent month-long visit to Geneva, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique---having met with important government ministers in all locations, particularly concerning the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, and with the leaders of all of the liberation movements. Announcement of previously held secret meetings between Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo was on everyone's minds that he met with. He reported how impressed he was with the sheer size of the external wings of the Zimbabwe movements from previous trips---the massive numbers of refugees, the major building programs, education programs, the numbers under military training, the efficiency of headquarters operations. He visited refugee centers for Zimbabweans in Zambia, but was unable to make it in time in Mozambique due to the bombings taking place by Rhodesian forces. He reported that the Smith-Nkomo meeting probably sowed greater distrust among the components of the Patriotic Front and the frontline states.

6. The board considered the issue of reports that the State Department would be granting a visa for Ian Smith and members of his government to visit the U.S. at the invitation of right-wing senators. The board authorized the staff to send a telegram of protest and to sponsor demonstrations protesting the visit. Elizabeth Landis also noted that a recent editorial in the Wall Street Journal encouraging the U.S. to support South Africa and drop plans for UN-sponsored elections in Namibia should be protested (Note a letter from Edward May appeared in the Journal).
7. George Houser introduced the subject of a recurring false innuendo which has taken a new and libelous form in a book published from the Soviet Union by Oleg Ignatyev entitled "Secret Weapon in Africa". In one chapter filled with inaccuracies, a strong implication is left that ACOA provided contacts for the CIA with Holden Roberto of the FNLA of Angola. Peter Weiss suggested the best strategy would be to meet the issue head-on, seeking to stop distribution of the book in the U.S. and a retraction from the publisher. The board authorized George Houser to take whatever steps are deemed necessary in consultation with Peter Weiss.
8. Ray Gould reported on progress being made for holding the 25th Anniversary celebration. A subcommittee of the board has met on occasion to review plans. Congresswoman Cardiss Collins of the Black Caucus will deliver the major address. African ambassadors are expected. \$5,000 has been received from 125 sponsors to date. Sculptures have been donated for raffle and sale. Board members were encouraged to take a multitude of tickets and be available to make phone calls to solicit ticket sales.
9. Namibia: Elizabeth Landis reported a number of impressions on her trip to Namibia as she was part of the surveying team sent with the Secretary General's representative, Commissioner for Namibia, Martti Ahtisaari. She reported favorably on SWAPO's support around the country, and raised significant questions about South Africa's motives and plans for maintaining control.
10. Brief reports were received, noting the 1979 South Africa Freedom Calendar was off the printers and available for sales--new series of publications ~~from~~ the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia were being distributed by ACOA, computer pieces and others were in progress.

Organizers from around the country in the bank campaign met in early August to plan actions for the fall and for mid November and December 1st--another session was planned for early December in Washington.

The UN will be holding its annual day of solidarity with South African political prisoners, inviting an ACOA representative to speak.