

American Committee on Africa
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Minutes, ACOA Executive Board Meeting, March 11, 1976

Present: Elizabeth Landis presiding until relieved by William Booth; Elombe Brath, Robert Browne, Michael Davis, Janet Hooper, Jay Jacobson, Leonard Jeffries, William Johnston, David Lampel, Gail Morlan, David Robinson, Adelaide Schulkind, Timothy Smith, Robert Van Lierop, Peter Weiss
Staff: George Houser, Paul Irish, Jennifer Davis, Raphael Gould, Richard Knight, Seana Blackman

Apologies: Winifred Courtney, Moe Foner, Collin Gonze, Edgar Lockwood, Herbert Shore, Donald Wilson

1. The minutes of the December 11, 1975 meeting were accepted as received.
2. Finance Report: George Houser noted that we did better than expected in 1975, taking in over \$102,000 while reducing expenses below projections to approximately \$95,000; thus helping to offset the deficit. George noted that the response from the ACOA list to the end of year appeal could be considered a "vote of confidence" in ACOA's future role. Michael Davis suggested that, since so little was expended on the move from the old office on Madison Avenue to the new location, we hire someone temporarily to finish off unpacking.
3. Nominating Committee: The Committee appointed was Dorothy Hibbert, Chairman; Tilden LeMelle, Elsie Carrington, David Lampel, Gail Morlan, William Booth and George Houser, ex-officio.
4. Brief Reports:

Paul Irish reported on a meeting of the steering committee of 11 groups of the Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa, which emerged from the Madison meeting in the fall. He reported that an evaluation of Angola work and a Zimbabwe bibliography would be circulated, ACOA taking initiative on the latter. Also processes were established for broadening the coalition and a hotline "telephone tree" were set up. Chris Root of the Washington Office was designated interim administrative secretary for the coalition.

George Houser reported that the Mozambique Foreign Minister, Joaquim Chissano, would be arriving in New York shortly to appear before the Security Council on the incursions by Rhodesian forces into Mozambique. We would try to arrange a meeting with Chissano.

George also reported that Goler Butcher informed him today that import of seal skins was temporarily halted as a result of court action. Senator Thurmond was meeting with Commerce and State Department officials to pressure them to accept the Fouke Company's application for importing Namibian skins. ACOA had issued a release on the temporary halt in the application. Peter Weiss urged quick action to urge groups to counter the pressure from Senator Thurmond.

David Robinson reported the formation of a southern Africa committee in New Haven, calling a conference April 2-3.

5. Namibia: There was a discussion of pressures within the United Nations to oust the Commissioner for Namibia, Sean MacBride, and the implication of this for the liberation of Namibia. It was agreed that ACOA should look into the matter, discuss it with SWAPO, and key UN delegations, help in publicizing the problem at the appropriate time, and give our support to MacBride.

Dakar Conference - Michael Davis, who represented ACOA at the international conference on Namibia and human rights, began discussion of the outcome, Elizabeth Landis and William Johnston contributing. It was a broadly based conference that backed initiatives for action taken by the Commissioner. International legal action to implement the decree prohibiting resources from Namibia being exported, were supported. Most important contacts were made informally, however the conference issued a declaration supporting the issue of human rights and calling for implementation of Security Council decisions relating to Namibia; and supporting SWAPO; the church caucus issued a particularly strong statement on actions to be taken.

6. Angola: George Houser reported briefly on his impressions from the MPLA seminar held in Havana February 26-29. Two other board members were there: Robert Browne and Edgar Lockwood. A summary of the Seminar was circulated to the board including the proposals for future action. Three proposals were made for a) a campaign for the recognition of the Peoples' Republic of Angola. b) a national tour of a delegation of the MPLA; and c) a national conference to be held in late May in Chicago to acquaint a broad section of persons with the MPLA and the problem of Angola in the southern Africa context. Discussion followed on these proposals, Elombe Brath adding critical information about his brief stay in Luanda, and meeting with Lopo de Nascimento, Prime Minister of the government. The proposals were approved for ACOA support and action.
7. Zimbabwe: George Houser led off discussion of this item by noting that ACOA had received requests from different groupings in the national liberation movement for assistance. No firm criteria were set for policy. Decisions are currently made on the basis of the legitimacy of the request, the ability of the group to follow through, and our ability to assist effectively. Janet Hooper suggested that priority not be given to refugees in Zambia. This could be better handled by others.
8. Corporate Issues: Timothy Smith led discussion of this item, reviewing the planned actions and corporations for concentration during the spring proxy season. He noted that ACOA and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility would continue to cooperate on information and actions. Discussion followed on the implications of the massive new influx (increased by 30%) of U.S. capital to South Africa when South Africa is in a weak position financially and politically following events in Angola. Tim drew particular attention to a proposed investment by Seagrams in the KwaZulu Bantustan based upon a study by a consulting firm with which Dr. Kenneth Clark associated, and possible roles for ACOA in exposing and stopping this project. As a first step, ACOA was to request a copy of the Clark report, and then bring this matter to the concern of others.

Next meeting: It was agreed at the outset that Janet Hooper's and George Houser's memorandums on ACOA's future could not be adequately discussed except through the other items at this board meeting. A meeting to concentrate on this item was set for Wednesday, April 21st. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for June 17th.