

# 1968 REPORT

January 1, 1968 through December 31, 1968

**AMERICAN  
COMMITTEE  
ON AFRICA**

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NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016



**1968** was the year in which racist reaction took the offensive in southern Africa. South Africa moved troops into Rhodesia and Mozambique to support faltering minority regimes against rebellion at the same time that she moved toward showcase relations with surrounding client black regimes; she proceeded with the incorporation of South West Africa in defiance of the U.N., setting up the first apartheid "homeland" there. Portugal, under new leadership reaffirming old policy, asked for greater United States cooperation in the South Atlantic and offered bases in Portugal to replace three U.S. bases in Spain that are currently in dispute. Britain reneged on NIBMAR (no independence before majority rule in Rhodesia) and was saved from an immediate sell-out to the white minority government by the intransigence of Ian Smith. This was a year dominated by a presidential election in the U.S., and no new initiatives developed in Africa policy.

## PROGRAM AND PROJECTS

**ELECTION YEAR.** ACOA took full advantage of the opportunity of a presidential campaign to reach more Americans with urgent information about the situation in southern Africa. 50,000 copies of a position paper, *The United States and Southern Africa*, were distributed to candidates for local, state, and national office, and a questionnaire was sent to all Congressional candidates. Board member Arthur Waskow appeared before the Platform Committee of the Democratic Party, and presentations were also made before local platform committees. The position paper was endorsed by 130 prominent Americans.

**NIGERIA / BIAFRA.** An unexpected responsibility developed out of the famine crisis resulting from the Nigerian civil war. Many organizations and individuals newly concerned with Africa by the publicity given to the famine emergency turned to the American Committee on Africa for information and support. ACOA responded with a series of informational memos in addition to correspondence and direct assistance. Staff members have spent considerable time with relief organizations and other concerned groups. George Houser participated in a delegation which met with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and on October 4 he testified before the Sub-Committee on African Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. ACOA urged U.S. government initiative to help bring about negotiations, a cease-fire, and an arms embargo, and thus to make possible massive relief on both sides of the battle lines.

**SHARPEVILLE.** The traditional commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21 and the U.N. International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination were marked by a meeting at Community Church in New York and by others across the country and on college campuses. Speakers at the New York meeting included the Rt. Rev. C.

Edward Crowther, former Ambassador Marof Achkar of Guinea, Dr. Aaron Henry of Mississippi, and Mr. Peter Molotsi of South Africa. More than 200 responses from around the country were returned to an ACOA memorandum giving background information and program suggestions on Sharpeville and South Africa.

**1968 OLYMPICS.** 1968 was also an Olympic year, and activities centered around the fact that South Africa, after suspension from the 1964 Games because of discriminatory practices, had been readmitted. The decision was reversed and South Africa was barred from the Mexico City Olympics as the result of pressure from the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa and other organizations including the American Committee on Africa. Considerable publicity was secured from two press conferences in which ACOA announced support for an Olympic boycott by more than 60 American athletes. A leadership role was played by Jackie Robinson on behalf of ACOA.

In October, professional baseball pitcher Jim Bouton and South African athlete Steve Mokone represented ACOA and joined Dennis Brutus and Chris de Broglie of the South African Non-Racial Open Committee for Olympic Sports in Mexico City in an attempt to persuade the various international sports federations to suspend South Africa from membership. Several federations decided to investigate the situation and the International Amateur Boxing Association expelled South Africa from membership.

**DISENGAGEMENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA.** Representatives of ACOA attended several stockholders' meetings of businesses involved in South Africa to question and protest. The companies included Gillette Company and IBM in Boston, Chase Manhattan and First National City Banks in New York, and Texaco in St. Louis. ACOA helped organize protest demonstrations at the Engelhard Chemicals and Minerals meeting in Newark on May 1 and at the General Motors meeting in Detroit on May 24.

**SUIT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.** As a result of South Africa's refusal to permit the Committee for the Development of an Independent South West Africa organized by ACOA to land in South West Africa in 1967, the Committee initiated a claim for damages against the South African Government for \$750,000 through Attorney Robert Delson, ACOA General Counsel. Other plans for legal action against South Africa are under consideration.

**IMMIGRATION CASES.** The ambiguous legal status of many southern Africans here presents employment problems and travel difficulties for them. Students who have finished their studies or have been dropped from scholarship programs face an uncertain future, and a number of Africans with immigration problems come to ACOA for help.



Possible deportation of a Stanford graduate was prevented this year, and a current case is that of Ernest Cole, author of *House of Bondage*, whose application for third preference visa status may be approved.

**UNITED NATIONS.** At the U.N. ACOA continued its work for effective international initiatives on southern Africa. Background material was supplied to delegations on request. ACOA assisted representatives of the liberation movements who came to New York to appear before United Nations agencies. The Committee was in close liaison with a number of U.N. Committees including the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid, the Council on Namibia, the Committee of 24 on Decolonization, and the Commission on Human Rights.

## EXPANSION PROJECTS

**WASHINGTON OFFICE.** As the result of special contributions, ACOA was able to open an office in Washington in October, at the Woodward Building, 733 15th St., N.W. Its director, Gary Gappert, who had previously spent two years in the *Teachers for East Africa* program, has just returned from another year in Tanzania. He will serve as a liaison with Congressmen, government agencies, and other organizations in Washington. The Washington office will issue informational material and assist in program development.

**FIELD WORK.** Early in the year, Willis Logan worked with campus groups and community groups especially in connection with presidential campaign activities. In September, Blyden Jackson joined the staff to work particularly with black communities to build support for the liberation movements in southern Africa. Early in December a conference was held in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, and representatives of various southern African liberation movements participated. A six-man committee of community leaders was selected to formulate action projects to support the liberation struggle. These will include action in opposition to U.S. economic and military involvement in southern Africa.

## DEFENSE AND AID

**THE AFRICA DEFENSE AND AID FUND.** ADAF was established in 1958 to support special projects related to Africans and to developments in Africa through ACOA. It is affiliated with the International Defence and Aid Fund headquartered in London; George Houser serves as one of its Vice Presidents.

In 1968, ADAF expenditures totaled \$9,256.27 of which \$8,080.57 was allocated for organizational assistance to liberation movements. Movements in South Africa, South

West Africa, Rhodesia, Mozambique, and Angola were assisted. The variety of aid included: assistance for offices and activities of liberation movements in the U.S., maintenance of liberation leaders while visiting and traveling in the U.S., assistance to liberation leaders in attending important conferences in Africa, office equipment (typewriters, etc.) for liberation movements. Personal emergency assistance amounted to \$850.70. Expenditures for prisoners, dependents, refugees, and aid through legal defense accounted for the rest. Most of the assistance in these categories can be given through The Africa Fund.

**THE AFRICA FUND.** The Africa Fund (whose name was changed this year from the African Aid and Legal Defense Fund) was set up by ACOA in 1966 as an independent agency whose activities and grants were limited to those which made possible tax benefits for donors. It has its own Board of Trustees and is organizationally and financially separate from ACOA although there is some shared staff.

In 1968 the Africa Fund sent \$25,000 to help build the Mtwara (Tanzania) medical clinic for the Mozambique Institute. The Institute also received \$1,918 for books. \$10,030 was given to aid Rhodesian political prisoners and their dependents. Other allocations included \$1,500 to a school for Angolan refugee children in the Congo; \$350 for medical supplies and pharmaceuticals for an Angolan medical clinic in the Congo; \$700 to aid refugees in Africa, and \$600 for personal assistance to students in the United States.

The Africa Fund received special earmarked contributions which enabled it to take full-page advertisements in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in August to appeal for U.S. government initiative in relief for Nigeria/Biafra. Although the ads did not ask for funds, readers contributed so that the Africa Fund was able to send \$5,581.78 for relief purposes in Nigeria/Biafra.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

Thousands of requests for general information were filled, as well as specific orders for pamphlets from our literature list. During the school year we average ten requests daily from students of all ages.

ACOA literature was primarily related to specific action projects. Mimeographed memoranda were sent to the 500-name key mailing list, while printed material was widely distributed. Subjects covered included: South Africa and the Olympics; relief and famine in Nigeria/Biafra; Defense and Aid-oriented material on the Sharpeville massacre, the continued imprisonment of Robert Sobukwe, the South West Africa Terrorism Trial appeal case, the historic courtroom statement of defendant Toivo ja Toivo, and the Windhoek relocation story; and two items on the Portuguese in

Africa, an eight-page fact sheet and a memo on U.S. military bases in Portugal. One issue of the *Southern Africa Bulletin* was published.

Summer research, made possible by a special grant, was concentrated on the question of disengagement from South Africa. The material produced has been used by staff members and others for articles and papers. Material on U.S. economic ties with southern Africa has been directed towards groups on campuses and within organizations working on local disengagement campaigns.

## MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCE

Contributions resulting from mail appeals increased, but larger gifts were fewer in number. The competition for funds which always results from the financial needs of a presidential election year was at least in part responsible.

ACOA's expenses totaled \$5,500 more than income, and the year ended with accounts payable exceeding funds on hand by about \$800.00.

As indicated in the programmatic report, special grants for a variety of projects (Washington, famine relief, research) have enabled ACOA to increase its staff and its programmatic outreach. A summarized financial statement follows; more detailed information is available on request.

	Member- ship	Education & Information	Program & Projects	Adminis- tration	TOTAL
1968 INCOME	\$122,253.34	\$ 2,413.94	\$27,189.31	\$ 7,802.29	\$159,658.88
1968 EXPENSES	\$ 43,796.03	\$20,331.53	\$76,099.27	\$24,975.19	\$165,202.02

## IN CONCLUSION

The attempt to turn back the clock in southern Africa, summarized in the opening 1968 precis, will fail, but the struggle will be long and hard. The liberation movements are fighting on all fronts and are increasing the amount of territory under their control; but they need assistance that we can help give.

A crisis is coming in United States policy towards southern Africa as the attempt is made to deepen bonds with Portugal and extend the support given her; as pressure grows to back Britain in her retreat from principle in Rhodesia; as South Africa's "New Look" deceives the many who want to believe that all is well; as unforeseen crises of human suffering appear.

Never was an American Committee on Africa so needed — to stop the retreat, and to rally and inform the great majority of Americans who are committed to freedom.