



ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICAN SCHOLARS  
P.O. Box 791, East Lansing, Michigan 48823

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NEWSLETTER

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RESEARCH

Asa J. Davis  
*Amherst College*

Ann Seidman  
*Brown University*

June 19, 1978

Dear ACAS Member,

The Executive Committee voted to send the attached letter to President Carter. We urge you to contact the President, Senator Clark, Rep. Diggs, and your own Congressmen to reinforce the sentiments expressed therein.

Sincerely yours,

James F. Turner  
Immanuel Wallerstein  
Co-Chairpersons

encl.





ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICAN SCHOLARS  
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June 15, 1978

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRPERSONS

James F. Turner  
*Cornell University*  
Immanuel Wallerstein  
*SUNY-Binghamton*

President Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

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Lansine Kaba  
*University of Minnesota*  
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Madison*

The Association of Concerned African Scholars is dismayed by increasing U.S. intervention in opposition to popular forces in southern Africa, and takes issue with the rhetoric used to justify such intervention, which in our view directs attention away from the real issues of African liberation and human rights.

MEMBERSHIP

Robert C. Johnson, Jr.  
*University of Massachusetts,  
Boston*  
George Shepherd  
*University of Denver*

The recent events in Shaba (Zaire), as well as the continuing guerrilla warfare in Zimbabwe and Namibia, are part of a single picture, which is the struggle to establish democratic, popular governments throughout southern Africa, a struggle which entered its accelerated phase in 1974 with the overthrow of Portugal's fascist regime. This struggle was launched by Africans and has been conducted by Africans. Non-African countries -- whether they be the United States, the USSR, France, or Cuba -- are judged in Africa by the positions they take on this struggle.

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To make the Cubans a bogeyman deflects American public opinion from seeing that the primary problem is the continuing oppression of the Black majority of the population in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia -- and in Zaire. The question is rather whether the United States, Cuba, or any other particular state is ready to support the African liberation movements or is instead trying to stymie their efforts, and support their opponents.

POLITICAL ACTION

Robert Cummings  
*Howard University*  
Willard R. Johnson  
*Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology*

The United States government is not well placed to complain about presumed Cuban indirect support for the FNLC in Zaire, when the United States government supported coups by Mobutu against legally-constituted regimes in 1960 and 1965 -- ten years before Cuban soldiers were invited into Angola. In any case, thus far, the U.S. government has declined to make available to the public its evidence for Cuban involvement in Shaba, and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who have seen the "evidence" evince skepticism as to its worth. What is not in doubt is that the U.S. has been sending Mobutu weapons, flying in troops from other countries to aid him, and coordinating efforts of various Western powers to support the Mobutu government.

RESEARCH

Asa J. Davis  
*Amherst College*  
Ann Seidman  
*Brown University*

Similarly, the United States government is not well-placed to complain about an Angolan foreign policy geared primarily to the liberation of southern Africa. The United States government persistently opposed the MPLA in Angola since 1961 -- supporting both the Portuguese colonial regime and its political rivals within Angola. Recent evidence, offered by the former head of the CIA team in Angola, John Stockwell, has demonstrated U.S. appropriated large sums of money to oust the MPLA before there were any Cuban troops. The U.S. encouraged South African and Zairian troops to invade Angola to overthrow its government, and alone among the major powers of the world does not have diplomatic relations with Angola.

We further take issue with the racist way in which our policy is formulated. We note that Europeans were killed in Kolwezi but not Africans (and neglect to point out that the Zairian army rather than the FNLC did much of this killing). We encourage rescue missions for whites but when, two weeks earlier, South African forces invaded Angola and killed 604 Namibians (including women and children), we did not speak of rescue missions. We organized along with the former colonial powers a meeting in Paris to decide issues such as the formation of an African military force and invite not one African state to that meeting.

The real problem in southern Africa is the existence of undemocratic regimes in these areas -- starting with South Africa -- and those external forces who sustain them. The real danger is that the United States has started once again on a path of involvement of economic, political and military aid to anti-popular, anti-democratic forces.

The interests of the American people do not lie in such involvement. This is the path of war, not peace; of oppression and repression (abroad and at home) and not of human rights and liberty; of U.S. government expenditures leading to hyperinflation and not economic revitalization; of antagonism to popular forces throughout Africa rather than friendship with them.

African peoples are kindred to a substantial portion of the U.S. population just as much as they are to the Cuban population. These historic social ties should create a genuine understanding of and support for liberation forces in Africa. Cuba's rising prestige throughout Africa results from its support for such forces. The foreign policy of the United States is now instead being linked to minority privilege in the South.

We call on the American people through your leadership, Mr. President, to join with popular forces in southern Africa. Their struggle for liberty is our struggle for liberty. To support them is to fulfil our ideals and to advance the long-term interests of our citizens.

Sincerely yours,

James F. Turner  
(Cornell University)

Immanuel Wallerstein  
(SUNY-Binghamton)

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