

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

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December 23, 1980

To: Professors Robert Cummings, Bill Minter, Nzongola Ntalaja, Diann H. Painter, Joel Samoff, Tom Shick (Members of the ACAS Board of Directors)

From: David Wiley, ACAS Treasurer

Concerning: Developments in ACAS Plans

During a brief period of Immanuel Wallerstein's return to Binghamton, the Executive Board of the ACAS Board of Directors held a conference call to plan for the organization's future.

In general there was a resolve to seek to invest more vigor and energy in the organization in the face of impending changes in U.S. foreign policy under the Reagan Administration and its expressed intentions.

To that end and in the face of difficulties in activating our various committees, we have decided to seek an Executive Secretary of the ACAS who shall function to enliven our various committees, to coordinate the activities of the Board and the whole organization, to maintain contact and communication with TransAfrica and the Washington Office on Africa, to seek articles for the ACAS Newsletter (whose production would remain at MSU), and generally to raise the activity level of the organization.

The Executive Board, feeling the urgency of some action, unanimously decided to ask Allen Isaacman, African historian at University of Minnesota, to accept the post now that he has returned from Mozambique. I have communicated with Isaacman, who is willing to consider this post; however, the formal invitation will be sent by Jim Turner on behalf of himself and Immanuel Wallerstein. If you have any reservations about establishing this position or inviting Isaacman to serve for an initial 18 month period, please phone Turner at once (c/o Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14850; 607-256-5218). If we do not hear from you, we will assume you share in our conviction of the need of some rapid and decisive action in ACAS at this time.

Ann Seidman has accepted the Acting Chair of the Department of Economics at the University of Zimbabwe; therefore, we also are asking Joel Samoff to assume her position in ACAS as Chairperson of the Committee on Research.

I enclose a copy of the meeting minutes for your attention and comment.

cc: Professors Turner, Wallerstein, R. Johnson, A. Seidman, W. Johnson, and Chris Root.

Association of Concerned African Scholars - Executive Board of Directors

Conference Call Minutes - Friday, December 5, 1980, 11 am

Presiding: James Turner and Immanuel Wallerstein

Participating: Robert Johnson, Willard Johnson, Christine Root, David Wiley

Absent: Ann Seidman (on leave in Zimbabwe)

1. The participants agreed at the need for an executive secretary for ACAS in order to activate the organization in the 1980s, especially in light of the defensive action that will be required in response to the Africa policies of the new administration in Washington. Allen Isaacman, Gayletha Cobb, and Mohammad el-Khawas names were discussed. It was agreed that the individual should be a U.S. citizen. It was agreed that the position would be offered to Allen Isaacman. If he turns it down, it will then be offered to Joel Samoff. If one accepts, the other will be offered the position of Chairperson of the Committee on Research to replace Ann Seidman. Samoff already has been given the materials by Ann Seidman.

2. Newsletter: Wiley reported that an issue of the Newsletter is about to be printed and distributed in early January.

3. Treasury: Wiley reported that Anne Schneller (the functional treasurer!) reported that there was ca. \$1,510 in the treasury, minus the costs forthcoming of this phone call and of the next Newsletter.

4. Political Action: It was agreed that a substantive priority of the organization for the next year should be to defend against Western re-entry into Angola to support further destabilization of the Angolan government through UNITA and possibly via South Africa or other client states.

5. Relations with TransAfrica and Washington Office on Africa - It was agreed that Willard Johnson would initiate conversation with Randall Robinson (TransAfrica) Chris Root with Jean Sindab (Washington Office on Africa) concerning greater cooperation between ACAS and their offices in the following areas a) their identification of political targets for ACAS action, b) receipt of all their analyses and bulletins by all ACAS members, to be paid for from ACAS dues, and c) cooperation in a common telephone tree to quickly contact members for various political actions. It was agreed to pursue this closer tie while not actively publicizing the ties in order to keep the nominal "independence" of ACAS so that it is not viewed as the scholarly wing of these activist organizations but as an organization which speaks with the "independence and wisdom befitting a scholarly organization"!

6. ACAS Meeting - Jim Turner proposed that the organization should begin mobilization for a large meeting to demonstrate the concern of progressive Americans and scholars for a pro-Africa foreign policy. It was agreed to tentatively plan that mobilization for the fall, preceded by the ACAS annual spring meeting in Washington to prepare for that meeting. Jim Turner and Willard Johnson agreed to contact Mohammad el Khawas about organizing that meeting (202-320-4710, lives in 301 area code are). Willard Johnson will call Bob Johnson with the results of that negotiation. Bob Johnson will contact Howard and arrange physical details of the meeting. Jim Turner will continue to plan for the executive on the longer term mobilization, in coordination with TransAfrica and WOA.

7. Membership Reinvigoration - Chris Root agreed to draft some text to be incorporated into a letter from Turner and Wallerstein as Chairpersons to the membership. The letter will alert the membership to the dangers in U.S. Africa policy and the possible utility of ACAS in mobilizing responses to that policy in the years ahead - for inclusion in the next Newsletter and membership appeal.

8. Telephone Tree - Chris Root agreed to phone Nzongola Ntalaja, who has agreed to help construct the ACAS Telephone Tree, in order to get the project moving. It was suggested that there might be 10-15 zones or nuclei of membership for which one person should be designated as the activator. Dave Wiley agreed to send Nzongola the membership list to help him in that task.

9. U.S. Africa Policy - The participants discussed developments in the U.S. funding for Mozambique and the Namibia Institute, the continuing Freedom House support for UNITA, Solarz' rumored stepping down from the African subcommittee chairmanship in the House of Representatives - possibly to be succeeded by Michael Barnes or Cong. Grey, and the general proclivity of the new administration to target Angola for further attention.

10. The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes recorded from his notes by David Wiley, December 23, 1980.