

Association of Concerned African Scholars Board of Directors  
Conference Call Minutes-Monday, September 21, 1981, 10:30 a.m.

Participants:

Robert Cummings, Allen Isaacman, Robert Johnson, Nzongola Ntalaja, Chris Root, Joel Samoff, James Turner (Co-Chairperson), Immanuel Wallerstein (Co-Chairperson), David Wiley.

1. ACAS Recruitment Campaign:

The participants agreed that there was both a growing urgency to revitalize ACAS and a greater receptivity for such an action within the Africanist community. As a first step to attract and engage new members the Executive Secretary will send a letter to all ACAS members, A.H.S.A. members, and A.S.A. members outlining our immediate goals and longer-term objectives emphasizing the need for a progressive, active organization to help combat the Reagan administration's African policies. James Turner would try and get a copy of the A.H.S.A. mailing list. If this is not possible, he will ask the A.H.S.A. Board if ACAS could enclose its letter in their next mailing. Gerald Bender, who is both a member of the A.S.A. Board and of ACAS, is trying to secure the A.S.A. mailing list free of charge. Copies of the ACAS recruitment letter will be circulated at the forthcoming A.S.A. meeting in Bloomington.

2. Research Committee:

Joel Samoff has agreed to chair the Research Committee and Robert Cummings has offered to assist him. One of the Committee's first tasks will be to compile a list of progressive Africanists working on contemporary issues (Southern Africa, issues of political economy, etc.) who would be willing to write short background papers and "briefs" in crisis situations which could be distributed to all ACAS members, to other progressive organizations (TransAfrica, Washington Office on Africa, labor, church, and other grass roots organizations) and used in lobbying efforts. The letter from the Executive Secretary will include a card which members could send back to Joel indicating their willingness to serve as a resource person (including participation in workshops and testifying in Washington) and identifying their areas of interest and expertise. In the long run, the Research Committee might help to stimulate local ACAS groups to work collectively on more elaborate projects.

3. Funding:

Immanuel Wallerstein will telephone Prexy Nesbitt to clarify the prospect of financial assistance from the Program to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches. Dave Wiley reported that at the moment we only have about \$650 in our treasury and Allen Isaacman urged that the members of the Board pay this year's dues immediately so that we can have sufficient funds to cover mailing for our recruitment drive.

4. Political Action Committee and the Telephone Tree:

Nzongola Ntalaja and Chris Root have agreed to co-chair the Political Action Committee. Its most immediate and important task will be to establish a telephone tree which can be used to mobilize local action groups, organize national campaigns, and disseminate critical information. A card, included in our recruitment letter, will spell out the importance of the telephone tree and ask all prospective members to join. It was agreed that our "tree" would operate independently but that when necessary we should try to tie into a similar structure which TransAfrica is now organizing.

5. Dennis Brutus Defense Committee:

The Executive Board unanimously endorsed the Dennis Brutus Defense Committee and urges all its members to support it in all ways possible. The Executive Secretary will draft a letter to the Dennis Brutus Defense Fund Committee which will be circulated to all Board members for their signature.

6. Contacts with Other Progressive Organizations:

James Turner and Allen Isaacman will be attending the Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the Peoples of Southern Africa in New York on October 9-12. They will use the opportunity to meet with other activist organizations and deepen ACAS's relationship with them. Before the meeting the Executive Secretary will contact ACOA, TransAfrica, and The Washington Office on Africa to try and set such meetings up.

7. Next Conference Call:

The next Conference call will be in the end of November or early December at which time we will try and evaluate our initial efforts to revitalize ACAS, plan for a Spring meeting, and identify long-range organizational objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

*Allen Isaacman mrb*

Allen Isaacman  
Executive Secretary  
September 21, 1981

AI:mrb