



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

James F. Turner
Co-Chairperson
Africana Studies and Research
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14850

Immanuel Wallerstein
Co-Chairperson
Dept. of Sociology
SUNY-Binghamton, NY 13901

Joel Samoff, Chairperson
Committee on Research
SIDEC, School of Education
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

Nzongola Ntalaja
Co-Chairperson
Committee for Political Education
African Studies Center
Howard University
Washington, D.C. 20059

Chris Root, Co-Chairperson
Committee for Political Education
1532 Swann Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Anne Schneller, David Wiley
Treasurers
P.O. Box 791
East Lansing, MI 48823

Board of Directors:

Robert J. Cummings
Howard University

Robert C. Johnson
University of Massachusetts,
Boston

Willard R. Johnson
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Bill Minter
Africa News

Tom W. Shick
University of Wisconsin,
Madison

Ann Seidman
University of Zimbabwe

Allen Isaacman
Executive Secretary
614 Social Science Tower
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 373-2705

October 13, 1981

Dear Fellow Africanists:

An informed and concerted voice of opposition is essential if we are to challenge the Reagan administration's African policy. A policy which views events on the continent through the prism of the Cold War -- be it in the Sahara, Zaire, Angola, or the Indian Ocean. A policy which uses food as a political weapon. A policy which cuddles the racist regime of South Africa and vetoes U.N. resolutions condemning that country's expansionist activities. And the list goes on

While we as specialists in African studies are not likely to impact individually on American foreign policy, as a group of concerned scholars working together with other broad-based organizations (community and church groups, labor unions, Southern African support networks and peace groups), we can and, indeed, must vigorously make our voice heard. Toward this end the Association of Concerned African Scholars has begun a two-pronged campaign.

Our most immediate need is to revitalize the Association and to identify concrete actions in which we as scholars can make an important contribution. Quite frankly, our efforts in the past have not been sufficient and our objectives have lacked a certain clarity. As an initial step, we are undertaking a membership drive in which we hope to reach all Africanists in the United States. At the same time, we have identified a set of important and feasible projects and have organized a series of committees to coordinate them. Listed below are some of our objectives.

1. Background papers: To write and disseminate broadly a series of short "background" papers, drawing from your on-going research, on the current situation in key countries or regions of Africa, as well as in regional groupings (e.g. Sahel, Indian Ocean), on critical issues (e.g. U.S. policy in Angola or Western Sahara, hunger and drought), and on alternative formulations of U.S. policies. These will be distributed to key legislators and their aides a number of whom have already expressed interest in such material, to the national network of organizations concerned about Africa, including American Committee on Africa (ACOA), American Friends Service Committee, Trans Africa (TA), Washington Office on Africa (WOA), and the Inter-faith Center on Corporate Responsibility, to the media and to all ACAS members.

2. Policy Alternatives: To formulate quickly and distribute widely, analyses of "crises situations" in-the-making, policy alternatives, and articles for Op-Ed pages of national and local newspapers.
3. Research: To organize long-term research projects undertaken by localized groups of ACAS members. To date, our most notable success has been U.S. Military Involvement in Southern Africa, written by the Western Massachusetts ACAS and published by South End Press.
4. Information: To distribute to all ACAS members key articles and bibliography written by academics, journalists, U.S. and African government officials and lobbyists in an effort to keep well informed about the contemporary situation. We plan to send out on a regular basis publications of the ACOA, TA, WOA and significant papers from meetings such as the recent conference on Solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa.
5. Lobbying: To organize a national telephone network which would coordinate letter writing and telegram campaigns around urgent issues such as the recent Senate repeal of the Clark amendment and the Springbok tour.
6. Testimony: To coordinate the testimony of ACAS members before appropriate House and Senate committees.
7. Conferences and Seminars: To hold teach-ins and regional seminars as well as organize panels, discussions and debates in conjunction with the annual meetings of the A.S.A. and the A.H.S.A.
8. Newletter: To produce and distribute an ACAS Newsletter three times a year.
9. Local Chapters: To organize local ACAS chapters in various parts of the U.S. In the past, such chapters operated in Rhode Island, Michigan and Massachusetts, to name only a few.

With these objectives in mind, we have established three standing committees in addition to the Secretariat and Board of Directors.

1. The Research Committee, chaired by Joel Samoff (Stanford) with the assistance of Robert Cummings (Howard) will coordinate the writing and distribution of the "background" and "crisis" papers as well as long-term research projects. They will continue the work initiated by Ann Seidman before her departure for the University of Zimbabwe. It is imperative that ACAS develop a resource center to disseminate such research papers and thereby have some impact on the debates surrounding U.S. foreign policy. We are therefore enclosing a "tear sheet" in which we ask you to indicate your areas of expertise and interest, as well as your willingness to prepare background papers of five to ten pages, and, in crisis situations, shorter analyses and recommendations. In addition, there is a space to check if you would be willing to testify before an appropriate House or Senate committee or participate in a news conference. This form should be returned to: Joel Samoff, SIDEC, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

2. Political Educational Action (PEA): Time and again there has been a need to disseminate information quickly and to coordinate a national campaign on various issues. Needed action includes telegrams and letters to the State Department or critical members of Congress, teach-ins, demonstrations, etc. We hope to accomplish this through our Political Education and Action Committee which Chris Root (formerly of the Washington Office on Africa) and Nzongola Ntalaja (Howard) have agreed to co-chair. As a first step, we need to establish a national telephone tree which could distribute vital information and lay the basis for concrete actions. The second "tear sheet" should be returned to Nzongola Ntalaja, African Studies Program, Howard University, Washington, D.C. 20059, so that we can integrate you into the ACAS network.
3. The Conference Committee is planned with Tom Shick (Wisconsin) and James Turner (Cornell) as co-chairpersons. As indicated, we are hoping to organize panels in conjunction with the A.S.A. and A.H.S.A. We would appreciate any other suggestions that you might have. Please send them directly to Professor Tom Shick, Department of Afro-American Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

During this past month, ACAS has also taken several steps to become part of a growing national network concerned with African issues. We have been in contact and had fruitful conversations with ACOA, TransAfrica, and the Washington Office on Africa to determine what types of activities we can jointly undertake and how we, as specialists in African affairs, could utilize our research skills for this broader network. James Turner and I attended the Conference on Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa early in October where these matters were discussed and ties to other progressive organizations established. ACAS has also endorsed the Denis Brutus Defense Campaign and has offered to assist in any way to make sure that Professor Brutus is not deported from the country. Finally, we have contacted several people in Congress and their aides who have expressed interest and enthusiasm for our agenda.

For your information we are enclosing some of the types of information we plan to disseminate to our membership on a regular basis - including an Op-Ed article from the New York Times as an example of what scholars can contribute and a reprint from South Africa with details of the new offensive planned by South African corporations on U.S. politicians.

All this is only a modest beginning. We must do more, and we desperately need your help. If you have joined ACAS, please renew your membership. If you have not, please join us. Dues are on a sliding scale from \$10 for incomes up to \$10,000, to \$20 for incomes of \$20,000, and \$30 if you earn \$30,000 or more. They should be sent to: David Wiley/Anne Schneller, Treasurers, ACAS, P.O. Box 791, East Lansing, MI 48823. All of us who care about Africa and who are concerned about the direction of U.S. foreign policy must come together now so that our voice might be heard. We need your active support.

Thank you,



Allen Isaacman
Executive Secretary

Please complete these forms to indicate your interest to work on these committees:

R E S E A R C H C O M M I T T E E

Return form to Committee Chair: Prof. Joel Samoff, SIDEAC, School of Education,
Stanford University, Palo Alto, California 94305

Name and position: _____

Address: _____

_____ Zip _____ Phones: Home ()- _____

Office ()- _____

What are your special areas or topics of interest in Africa?

Are you willing to write background or issues papers for ACAS? If yes, what topics

Are you willing to testify as an expert before relevant Congressional Committees?
If yes, one what topics? _____

On reverse side of this half page, indicate other research interests.

P O L I T I C A L E D U C A T I O N A N D A C T I O N C O M M I T T E E

Return form to Co-Chairpersons: Prof. Nzongola Ntalaja, Ms. Chris Root, African
Studies Program, Howard University, Washington, D.C. 20059

Name and position: _____

Address: _____

_____ Zip _____

Telephones and hours to find you at each number:

Home: Area ()- _____ Hours there: _____

Work: Area ()- _____ Hours there: _____

Other: Area ()- _____

Are you willing to telephone five other ACAS members in your state or region?

Are you willing to participate in letter-writing or telegram/telex campaigns?

Are you available for local or regional conferences, symposia, teach-ins, etc.?

Please list other resources or channels of action for political education and
action with ACAS which you can provide or obtain - on reverse side of this half p