



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Department of History
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September 10, 1981

Bill Minter
209 1/2 West Trinity
Durham, NC 27701

Dear Bill:

I am sending this letter to all members of the Association of Concerned African Scholars to personally inform you that I have agreed to accept the position of Executive Secretary of ACAS immediately. After several long and fruitful discussions with James Turner and Immanuel Wallerstein I have decided that it would be best to do it on a trial basis for a year period and that, if we can collectively dynamize (a Mozambican term) ACAS, I would consider extending my commitment.

During the past week, I have taken several steps which I hope will help us to revitalize the organization at this very critical juncture. I have contacted the organizers of the Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the Peoples of Southern Africa (October 9-12) and have indicated that ACAS would like to be a formal sponsor and will send representatives. At the moment, James Turner and I are definitely going and I would urge those of you who can make it to do so. Secondly, I have begun to contact other organizations (ACOA, Trans-African, Washington Office on Africa) to make arrangements to meet informally with them at the Solidarity Conference. In this way, I hope we can strengthen ties to progressive organizations and become part of a national network forged to combat Reagan's African policy. Thirdly, I am, with the assistance of Gerry Bender (both an ACAS member and on the Board of A.S.A.), trying to get the A.S.A. mailing list so that we can send a letter to all members, outlining our accomplishments (and failures) as well as our objectives and urging them to renew or join ACAS. A similar letter will be sent out to all members of AHSA, plus any other organizations which you recommend. (The substance of the letter will be decided in our conference call (see below)). Finally, I have been able to secure the assistance of Christopher Gidigbi who is an intern at the Humphrey Institute and is both a very knowledgeable and deeply committed person. Christopher will be working with us for the next six months.

Let me turn to the question of the Conference call. It is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time on Monday, September 21. Unless I hear otherwise, I will make the call to your office phones. The Conference call is critical. There are a number of pressing issues which we must deal with, not the least of which are the steps we must take to revitalize ACAS and actions we need to undertake in light of the reactionary and racist policies of the Reagan administration. Several specific

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issues have been suggested in my informal conversations with several of the Board members.

1. How can we attract and engage new members?
2. Do we want to hold ACAS meetings at the same time and in the same general location as the A.S.A. and A.H.S.A. Conferences as a way of gaining visibility and new members?
3. Who will serve as Chair of the Research Committee? (This is a particularly important issue both because there is a good prospect of getting some immediate funding from the Program to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches and because this is one area where ACAS has been successful in the past).
4. Establishing a Telephone Tree (perhaps as part of a national network).
5. Using our expertise to impact on the Media.
6. Forming a Crisis Resource team--responsible for critical issues and critical areas of the continent, which could draft short papers in an emergency situation to be distributed through a national coalition, used for public education or in debates in Congress, etc.
7. Support and Endorsement of the Dennis Brutus Defense Fund.
8. Plans for future meetings of ACAS.
9. Other Items.

This is obviously a long agenda and one which we will not be able to complete in its entirety. If we are disciplined and to the point (qualities most academics seem to lack) maybe we can get through a good part of the agenda.

I look forward to speaking with you all on October 21.

With best wishes,

Allen Isaacman MRB

Allen Isaacman
Executive Secretary
ACAS

AI:mrB

P.S. In order to revitalize ACAS we will also need to enlarge our modest treasury. It would be very useful if, as a Board member, you could send your annual dues to Dave Wiley, who is serving as treasurer.