

F

American Committee on Africa
305 East 46th Street
New York, New York 10017
(212) 838-5030

Minutes, Executive Board Meeting, December 8, 1977

Present: William Booth, presiding; Marshall Brown; Michael Davis; Dorothy Hibbert; Janet Hooper; Annette Hutchins-Felder; Leonard Jeffries, William Johnston; David Lampel; Elizabeth Landis; Edward May; Gail Morlan; Timothy Smith.

Staff: George Houser, Paul Irish, R. W. (Prexy) Nesbitt, Jennifer Davis, Raphael Gould, Richard Knight, Linda Grant.

1. The meeting began at the ACOA office shortly after 6:00 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting of September 15 of the executive board were approved.

2. Reports

George Houser reviewed items prepared by the staff with updates on the following activities: Krugerrand; Polaroid; the bank campaign; calendar sales; literature; the Emergency Coalition for Human Rights in South Africa; American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS); Molefe Pheto and a Steve Biko tape. The report is being sent to board members not present at the meeting. William Booth reported that in his meeting with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, no commitments were made, in contrast to a meeting the previous year in which Secretary Henry Kissinger promised much and delivered nothing.

The board also discussed the issue of a national conference, George Houser suggesting that a specific focus on corporate involvement in southern Africa and actions of universities; trade unions and community groups in relation to it could be effective. He will be meeting with Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers in December to further explore possibilities.

3. The finance report and proposed budget for 1978 were previously mailed to board members. George Houser reviewed some highlights, noting plans to drop our fundraising contract with Schneider & Rich Associates and expectations of no income in 1978 for shared office expenses from The Africa Fund, since the Fund has assumed a number of these directly (primarily telephone and electric, in exchange for ACOA's assumption of rent and postage costs.) A deficit was built into projections for 1978 which must be watched carefully. The board accepted the finance report and adopted the proposed budget on motion of Timothy Smith.

4. After discussion, the board voted to accept with thanks for his brief service the resignation of Michael Davis as treasurer and the resignation after long service of Andrew Norman as a member of the executive board. The board voted to accept the nomination of Marvin Rich to the ACOA executive board and to nominate him to be treasurer of The Africa Fund. George Houser noted that Marvin has left Schneider & Rich Associates to become director of development at the New School for Social Research and has helped in budget preparations. Tilden LeMelle has agreed to become ACOA's treasurer. Ballots were distributed and the secretary, Dorothy Hibbert, later announced the unanimous vote of Marvin Rich and Tilden LeMelle for the posts mentioned.

5. George Houser, Elizabeth Landis and William Johnston contributed reports to the board updating actions in Washington, the U. N. Zimbabwe and Namibia. Some items covered included new legislation in Washington to limit corporate involvement in South Africa; the implementation of the arms embargo voted in the U. N. Security Council; the issue of South African military, police and administrative presence in any possible elections in Namibia; continuing discussions between SWAPO and the western "contact group"; the failure of the so-called Anglo-American initiative, response of The Patriotic Front and Ian Smith's plans to negotiate with "internal" forces over the future of Zimbabwe.

6. Prexy Nesbitt reviewed his written report updating progress in the campaign for bank withdrawals and "backsliding" by a number of the church groups. He solicited ideas from board members on contacts for further work.

7. George Houser reviewed reasons why ACOA should adopt four points in support of the struggle for independence by Polisario in the Western Sahara. The board had previously received a background paper on this issue prepared by Richard Wright. The positions proposed were adopted unanimously. They are as follows:

1. Support Polisario as the only legitimate representative of the Saharan people.
2. Support U. S. recognition of the Democratic Saharan Arab Republic.
3. An end to all U. S. military assistance to Morocco and Mauritania.
4. End U. S. involvement in exploitation of Sahara natural resources until such time as the Saharan people control those resources.

8. George Houser reviewed a sheet of proposed guidelines (attached) or criteria for ACOA participation in coalitions and sponsorship of events. After discussion the board adopted the guidelines.

9. The board had previously postponed discussion of the issue of ACOA and affiliates in the country. It was noted that this would entail major re-shaping of our decision-making apparatus with an annual conference, etc. Other alternatives for groups with local autonomy claiming affiliation were deemed unsatisfactory at this stage. The board agreed by common consent to continue as at present.