

**The story of
The American Committee
on Africa**

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In the early 1950s when the American Committee on Africa was formed, American interest in and knowledge about Africa was something of a joke. There was a Tarzan mentality in the US about the continent. Few books about Africa were known even by the reading public. Gunther's *Inside Africa*, when it came out in 1956, served as a reference book for years for those Americans who wanted to get a perspective on the continent. I remember listening to Chester Bowles, who served as Under Secretary of State briefly in the Kennedy administration, speak about his own attempt to find relevant material about Africa in a Connecticut town. He told about his visit to the town public library, where he culled through the card catalogue. To find books on the Congo he said he had to search under "B" for "Belgium." In searching for material on Ghana (then the Gold Coast) or Nigeria, he had to look under "Great Britain." He found books about Liberia and Ethiopia under "Miscellaneous." Knowledge of Africa was minimal, and the continent was on the whole looked upon as an extension of Europe.

What, then, led to the beginning of ACOA? South Africa provided the spark. Bill Sutherland (who has lived in Africa since 1953), a good friend of mine with whom I had worked closely in both the peace and civil rights movements, returned from a trip to London in late 1951 and told me of contacts he had had with the editor of the *African World*, a newspaper primarily for blacks in South Africa. He reported that the African National Congress (ANC) was planning a nonviolent campaign against the unjust racial laws of South Africa. He felt strongly that we ought to do something about it. I was at the time working with the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) as race relations secretary and also served as the executive secretary of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). My most immediate associates and I were excited about the prospect of being in touch with this campaign, for we strongly believed in the struggle for freedom, both at home and abroad. We had actively supported India's struggle against British colonialism. We were well acquainted with nonviolent campaigns against racism in the United States, having worked through CORE for a decade. Further, we were familiar with civil disobedience projects and the penalties of arrest and imprisonment. We had organized the first freedom rides in the South (in 1947 against bus and train segregation). We did not recognize any national border as a limit, either upon our interest or our activity. The plans for what was called the Defiance Campaign in South Africa struck a responsive chord in us. "Apartheid" began to form as easy a part of our vocabulary as "Jim Crow" had over the years on the American scene.

We wrote to Walter Sisulu, the secretary general of the African National Congress, and Y.A. Cachalia of the South African Indian Congress, the organization leading the Defiance Campaign. They responded eagerly, and in New York we decided to set up an ad hoc organization, which we called Americans for South African Resistance, in support of this campaign. I served as secretary of this organization. The cochairmen were the Rev. Donald Harrington of the Community Church of New York and Charles Y. Trigg, the pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church in Harlem. Other sponsors included people with whom Bill and I had worked, such as Roger Baldwin, the founder of the ACLU; the author Pearl Buck; Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker Movement; James Farmer of CORE; Congressman Adam Clayton Powell; Norman Thomas, the old socialist campaigner; A.J. Muste, the pacifist leader; and Canada Lee, who had played the lead in the filming of *Cry the Beloved Country*; and others.

The first acts of civil disobedience in the Defiance Campaign were initiated on 26 June 1952. At almost the same time, Professor Z.K. Matthews arrived in New York as a visiting professor of world Christianity at Union Theological Seminary. He was the president of the Cape branch of the ANC in South Africa, and in his position as one of the leaders of the ANC, he was kept constantly informed of progress being made at home. Armed with this information, Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR) issued a series of bulletins. Our aim was to acquaint Americans with what was happening in South Africa and what we in the US could do to support the campaign. Over the six months that the campaign proceeded (with over nine thousand arrests), AFSAR managed to build up a mailing list which approached one thousand people around the US and raised several thousand dollars which, through Z.K. Matthews, was sent to the ANC.

The Defiance Campaign came to an end early in 1953 as the South African government passed legislation which made penalties for civil disobedience very severe. AFSAR had to reassess its purpose. A meeting was held at the Community Church to discuss what we should now do. Many of us felt that we should broaden our role. We had started by relating exclusively to the campaign in South Africa. Now we felt that significant changes would be taking place within the next few years throughout Africa as the challenge to imperialism and colonialism spread. We wanted to be able to support the African nationalist moves toward independence. Thus the decision was made to set up the American Committee on Africa. Virtually the same executive committee continued as we had had for AFSAR, with Trigg and Harrington remaining

as the cochairmen and myself as the secretary. ACOA came into existence with no funds, a small mailing list inherited from the AFSAR work, and with a group of people who, although well acquainted with and active in the civil rights struggle in the US, had virtually no experience on the African scene.

For almost two years the infant ACOA functioned as a small working committee. In 1953 George Shepherd, who had worked as an advisor to an African farmers' group in Uganda and had been declared a prohibited immigrant after two years there, returned to the US. Anxious to continue with his African interest, he agreed to become the part-time executive director of ACOA. He, working with Keith Irvine, Robert Browne—now director of the Black Economic Research Center—and a few others, kept the committee alive. They organized an occasional seminar around a visiting African personality. Also, they started a mimeographed bulletin called *Africa Today*, which subsequently became a magazine and is still being published as a quarterly at the University of Denver. Efforts to find substantial funds from some interested source to give the committee a beginning toward a real budget proved rather fruitless.

In the meantime my own new-found interest in Africa grew. I decided that I wanted and needed to visit Africa. I took a leave of absence from my work with FOR and CORE and traveled extensively in Africa from April to October 1954 with funds which were raised among contacts built up over the years in the US in race relations and peace activities. I traveled from Dakar to Capetown, visiting most countries along the way. Even at this early date, I was refused admittance to all of British East and Central Africa. I still find this intriguing, but inexplicable, especially since I was able to spend three weeks in South Africa with a transit visa obtained not in New York, but in the Congo. Upon my return to the US, I spoke rather widely on Africa and the struggle against colonialism. I increasingly felt drawn to work in African affairs. I was still the secretary of ACOA. Discussions were held with the executive committee and with George Shepherd, who could still work only part-time, and it was decided that I should become the executive director in September 1955. No one is more surprised than I that I am still, after twenty years, working with the organization.

The work of the ACOA has responded to developments both in Africa and in the US. The period from the early fifties to the mid-seventies has been an era of tremendous change. There have also been significant shifts in atmosphere in the US which obviously have affected the work of the committee. On the African side, I find it useful to think of several stages of development and change: Stage 1: Africa quiescent; 2: Africa dynamic; 3: Africa maturing; 4: Africa—the unfinished struggle; 5: Africa after the Portuguese coup. These stages may provide useful headings for looking at the work of ACOA.

QUIESCENT AFRICA

At the time ACOA was organized, Africa appeared on the whole silent. Everything was potential. Perhaps things were not as quiet as our perception of them. What we perceived as quiescence was the end of a long period of European domination before the full launching of the struggle against colonialism. Only four African countries were independent. The area of most nationalist activity was North Africa. Pressure was being put on the French by movements in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. The FLN was just launching its war for

independence. In West Africa, both French and British, movements were arising—the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) in French West Africa, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) in Ghana, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and the Action Group in Nigeria, the Union of Populations of Cameroons (UPC). The Mau Mau revolt was just beginning in Kenya, and Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in Tanganyika was just getting organized. But for the most part, British East and Central Africa were quiet. In the Congo, the Belgians still talked in secure terms—"Oh yes, some day the Congo will be independent—maybe fifty years." This was like saying "never," or "not in my lifetime." The Portuguese colonies had no movements to take seriously. At the United Nations, decisions were made by the Western club of countries, and anticolonial issues were no problem.

Many Americans were still able to think of Africa in terms of the personality and work of Albert Schweitzer, who, of course, was irrelevant to political developments on the continent. Eisenhower was president. There was no Bureau of African Affairs nor any assistant secretary of state for Africa in the State Department. There were simply a few officers who gave some attention to developments in Africa from the government perspective. There were very few American business interests in Africa, just some enterprises in places like Liberia, or in North Africa. Investment in South Africa at that time was below the \$100 million mark. Some of the church groups had missionary enterprises in Africa. There was the remnant of the Garvey movement in the black community, which, however, related more to cultural than to political dynamics. Virtually the only organization on the American scene attempting to do anything to relate to the actual and potential struggle for freedom was called the Council on African Affairs, which was driven out of existence as a communist front organization by actions of the Department of Justice.

At its very beginnings, therefore, ACOA had very little to relate to regarding Africa on the American scene. A few petitioners were coming to New York for the UN General Assembly from the then trust territories. Julius Nyerere was one of them. In its formative period, ACOA sponsored a large public meeting for Nyerere at one of the Harlem churches, and smaller meetings were organized in the homes of interested friends. Sylvanus Olympio, the first prime minister of independent Togo (later senselessly assassinated) was also an early petitioner, and ACOA sponsored events around him. The Rev. Michael Scott came representing Chief Hosea Kutako from Southwest Africa, and ACOA cooperated with him. In my first full year with ACOA, we sponsored our first conference on "Africa, the United Nations, and US Policy." *Africa Today* was made into a printed offset bimonthly. The Project Fund was organized. It raised a few thousand dollars to help support Father Trevor Huddleston's school in Johannesburg, which was refusing to bow before the Bantu Education Act and subsisted for a while without government funds. ACOA also supported a school in the then Gold Coast, working through Bill Sutherland, who lived there until 1959. About thirty thousand dollars was raised in the first year. More than a third of this went through the Project Fund to the work we were helping to support in Africa, and the rest was used to cover office expenses, travel costs, publications, and salaries. The Community Church of New York contributed office space in the basement of the John Haynes Holmes

House. Two of us were on the staff, as I was joined by Lydia Zemba, who left a job with Doubleday, and then by Catharine Raymond, who had worked with me in FOR and CORE and stayed for ten years.

In order to help establish the organization, a real effort was made to have well-known Americans associated with our work. For several years John Gunther, whose book *Inside Africa* had just come out, was the national honorary chairman of ACOA. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Dean James Pike of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Martin Luther King, and many others became part of a sponsors' group which we called the national committee. But our existence was marginal.

Two decisions were made which affected the style and program of the committee. The first was on fund-raising. The life blood of any organization is its source of funds. Program and funding have an intimate relation to one another. ACOA made an early working decision in this respect. The program and policy of the organization were geared entirely to support for independence in Africa and to aid for the independence movements. This limited our fund-raising options. Since the target of much the committee would be doing was government policy in relation to Africa, there was never a suggestion in the executive board that we seek government assistance. Likewise, American business institutions were not looked upon as a source of potential help. The interests of big business were not those of the liberation movements or the ACOA. Finally, we recognized that major foundations, tied to the American establishment, would not offer a possible source of funds. The only hope for financial growth and viability lay in the ability of the committee to attract the support of a few organizations and a large number of individuals with anticolonial sentiments. The real fund-raising emphasis, therefore, was to expand the mailing list so that a growing group of Americans would contribute to the efforts of the committee.

Another early decision was on organization. It was decided not to try to set up local affiliated groups. The feeling was that, with limited staff, too much time would have to be spent in organizing efforts to make the effort worthwhile. Thus a pattern both of fund-raising and organization was established at an early date in the life of ACOA.

DYNAMIC AFRICA

Between 1955 and 1963 the struggle against colonialism and for African independence reached a climax. In 1956 Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco became independent. In 1957 an independent Ghana emerged from the colony of the Gold Coast. In 1958 French Guinea voted against the DeGaulle constitution and literally overnight became the Republic of Guinea. In 1960 seventeen independent African states were born.

The independence of Ghana was particularly symbolic and exciting. The Convention Peoples Party, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, inspired leaders and movements throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the struggle against colonial domination. The first conference of African independent states was held in Accra in April 1958, with just eight countries present. In December of that same year, also in Accra, African liberation movements from all over the continent met at the All African Peoples Conference. Here for the first time many African leaders, who may not have known each other's names, met. Lumumba was there; Nkomo, Banda,

Mboya, Kaunda, leaders from the ANC of South Africa, leaders of the revolution then in progress in Algeria under the banner of the FLN were there. This was truly an inspiring gathering, followed by second and third conferences in Tunis and Cairo in 1960 and 1961. I was part of an ACOA delegation at all these conferences, with observer status. An effective Pan-African organization was functioning for the first time on the African continent. The discussions and decisions reflected considerable optimism about the end of colonialism and imperialism in Africa.

It was during this "dynamic" period that 156 mostly nonwhite South Africa leaders were put on trial for "treason." The Algerian war spanned much of this period, beginning in 1954 and lasting until 1961. The Sharpeville Massacre took place on 21 March 1960. Armed struggle began in Angola a year later, in February and March 1961. The founding conference of the Organization of African Unity took place at the end of May 1963 in Addis Ababa. The Central African Federation, which had been formed by an agreement between the British and the white settler minority in southern Rhodesia, northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland, collapsed in 1963 following effective African nationalist campaigns.

This was an exciting time. Africa was beginning to speak for itself. It was no longer just an extension of Europe. The US made some small adjustment to the new situation by setting up a Bureau of African Affairs within the State Department and appointing the first assistant secretary of state for Africa. Nevertheless, one of the last actions of the Eisenhower administration, even in the face of all these developments in Africa, was to abstain in the voting on the resolution at the United Nations in support of granting independence to colonial peoples. Something of a change of style took place with the coming of the Kennedy administration. G. Mennen Williams, the liberal governor of Michigan, became the assistant secretary for Africa, and his deputy was Wayne Fredericks, also a man of liberal views. An Advisory Council on African Affairs was set up within the Bureau of African Affairs. It met occasionally to discuss African issues, but had no power at all. A representative of ACOA was even invited to be on this council.

The ACOA responded to this dynamic period with a variety of programs and projects. It emphasized then, as it always had, its support for liberation movements and their representatives in the US. Many movements responded by seeking assistance in unexpected ways. For example, in December 1958 a package came into the ACOA office with a Capetown postmark. In the package was a copy of the book *Treasure Island*. The book had a tape embedded in it. The tape was from Ja Toivo, one of the leaders of what was then the Ovamboland Peoples Organization (later SWAPO), with a message for the Fourth Committee at the UN dealing with colonial questions. The subsequent playing of the tape in the UN building set a precedent and helped to pave the way for direct testimony of liberation movement representatives at the UN.

ACOA was able to play an important role in introducing African leaders to the United States and in providing these leaders with a platform from which to speak to Americans about the struggle for independence in Africa.

Kwame Nkrumah was probably the single most exciting leader that we had contact with in this period. I had met him in 1954 on my first trip to Africa, through introductions from

George Padmore, the Pan-African theoretician and historian, and Fenner Brockway, the Labor MP who led anticolonialist activities in Britain. ACOA's first big public event was on the occasion of Ghana's independence, 6 March 1957. Hundreds of people were turned away from New York's Town Hall as eighteen hundred gathered for the celebration of the independence of the first sub-Saharan country to win its freedom. ACOA had sent a "message of congratulations" to Nkrumah signed by five hundred Americans and delivered by Homer Jack, the committee's representative, at the Accra celebration.

A little over a year later, Nkrumah made his first trip to the United States since his years of study at Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania. On 29 July 1958 the ACOA, joined by the NAACP and the Urban League, sponsored a dinner in his honor at the Waldorf Astoria with eleven hundred present. In his address, Nkrumah paraphrased one of his famous statements: "The independence of Ghana cannot be complete as long as large parts of Africa continue under colonial rule."

Two years later in 1960, when a large number of heads of state converged on the United Nations, Nkrumah came to New York again. When several ACOA executive board members met with him, he indicated he wanted to visit Harlem to speak to a street rally. Our then vice-president, attorney Hope Stevens, took the lead in organizing a motorcade and a large street-corner meeting at 125th Street and 7th Avenue.

Tom Mboya, the young leader from Kenya (tragically assassinated in 1968), was another African leader who made a great impact. He had come to the US for several weeks in August and September of 1956, under ACOA auspices, as a virtual unknown when he was secretary general of the Kenya Federation of Labor. This gave him entry into trade-union circles. He was invited back by ACOA in 1959, after he had been chosen chairman of the All African Peoples Conference and was the most visible Kenya leader while Kenyatta was in detention. From 8 April to 15 May he crisscrossed the country, making as many as six speeches a day. Twenty-seven hundred came to hear him at Carnegie Hall at the first Africa Freedom Day rally in New York. Fifteen hundred heard him in Rackham Hall in Detroit, with an estimated one thousand turned away. At Northwestern University, a meeting planned for two hundred was attended by nine hundred. Shortly after the tour, Mboya's picture was on the cover of *Time* magazine. He was a guest on such national television programs as NBC's "Meet the Press."

One of the outgrowths of this tour was an airlift of east African (mostly Kenyan) students to American universities. The African-American Students Foundation was set up. The first airlift was in 1959, and about fifteen hundred students came to study in the US. A grant of one hundred thousand dollars from the Kennedy Foundation helped make the program possible.

Other leaders made their impact too. ACOA invited Kenneth Kaunda, president of the United National Independence Party of northern Rhodesia, to the USA a few weeks after he was released from prison. He traveled all over the country for a month in April and May 1960. At the same time in April, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, who had also just been released from prison, came under ACOA auspices. He and Kaunda were the principal speakers at the second Africa Freedom Day rally at New York's Town Hall. Banda was the

exiled president of the Nyasaland (later Malawi) Congress Party and had the reputation at that time as the most outspoken and bitter opponent of the Central African Federation.

Other public gatherings we organized included a large reception in honor of Tunisia, Morocco, and the Sudan on the occasion of their independence in 1956; a dinner in honor of Sekou Toure, president of the Republic of Ghana when he visited New York in 1959; meetings around visiting personalities such as Alan Paton (fifteen hundred in attendance). Garfield Todd, Trevor Huddleston, Ambrose Reeves. Several well-attended conferences were sponsored on "Africa, the US, and the UN." Of special importance were Africa Freedom Day rallies from 1959 to 1963 in large halls including Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, Hunter College Auditorium, and with outstanding entertainers such as Miriam Makeba, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Mann contributing their talent.

The United Nations was a focal point of action internationally against colonialism. Many liberation movements sent delegations to New York to present their case, and ACOA was often able to be helpful to these men and women. After the police violence against demonstrations in the Old Location of Windhoek in Southwest Africa on 10 December 1959, in which eleven Africans were killed, leaders of both SWAPO (Southwest African Peoples Organization) and SWANU (Southwest African National Union) came to the United Nations, where they joined Mburumba Kerina, who along with Michael Scott had represented SWA for many years. ACOA cooperated in giving emergency financial assistance, mimeograph facilities, and other aid to representatives such as Sam Nujoma and Jacob Kuhangua of SWAPO and Jariretundu Kozonguizi of SWANU.

We helped in as many ways as we could—some with travel expenses, others with accommodation; our staff was always there when long manifestos and statements had to be typed and mimeographed in a rush. We gained much understanding from our contact with the many freedom fighters we met in this way.

An important priority for the committee from 1955 to 1962 was the Algerian struggle for independence. ACOA worked closely with Muhammed Yazid and A.K. Chanderli, the FLN representatives in New York and at the UN. Numerous public meetings were sponsored to call attention to the Algerian struggle and to condemn the support the US was giving France. ACOA first displayed the flag of the Provisional Government of Algeria at public gatherings in New York years before independence was recognized by France. On 4 December 1960, the committee statement signed by about fifty prominent Americans was circulated widely, calling on the US government to support negotiations for independence. ACOA paved the way for the first discussions the FLN representatives held with members of Congress at a time when this was looked upon as politically risky. Sixteen congressmen signed an ACOA statement circulated in the Congress. ACOA also published one of the first studies on Algeria, entitled "War in Algeria: Is Confederation the Answer?" by Lorna Hahn, a specialist on north Africa.

Apartheid has been a major focus of the committee during its entire life. This dynamic period was no exception. An organizational effort which was to last several years began in December 1956, when 156 South Africans (mostly black, but

a scattering of Coloureds, Asians, and whites) were arrested on the charge of treason. Among those arrested were Albert J. Lutuli, president of ANC, and Professor Z.K. Matthews, both of whom were well-known "moderates."

The ACOA immediately set up the South African Defense Fund. Over a period of the next three years, while the case was being fought in the courts, ACOA raised some seventy-five thousand dollars for legal defense. The accused were finally all acquitted. Subsequently this fund was merged into the Africa Defense and Aid Fund, which still exists. When the treason trial began, ACOA raised the funds to send Erwin Griswold, dean of the Harvard Law School, as an observer, although, for obvious reasons, ACOA sponsorship was not made public.

While the treason trial was still prominent in the world press, the ACOA sponsored a major education campaign called a Declaration of Conscience against Apartheid. The campaign culminated on Human Rights Day, 10 December 1957, as a day of protest against South African racism. One hundred twenty-three leaders, representing thirty-eight nations from every continent, signed the Declaration of Conscience. The declaration was mild in language, stating that "Freedom and human dignity are in grave jeopardy in South Africa today," and called on governments and organizations "to persuade the South African government, before it reaches the point of no return, that only in democratic equality is there lasting peace and security." Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was the international chairperson of this campaign. Among the signers were Martin Luther King, Pablo Casals, Alan Paton, Bruno Walter, Arnold Toynbee, Walter Reuther, Trygvie Lie, Bertrand Russell, Toyohiko Kagawa, Julius Nyerere, and John Gunther. The South African government was so disturbed by this campaign and the worldwide support it received that the minister of foreign affairs, Eric Louw, was instructed by the South African cabinet to go on national radio program to reply to it on 13 December. He said, "I have been requested by the cabinet to address you this evening on a matter of grave national importance, and in regard to which it is felt the public should be fully informed. An organization known as the American Committee on Africa, acting through an international sponsor committee, published a document entitled Declaration of Conscience. Its object is to propagate what is termed a worldwide protest against South African racism." The headline in the Cape *Times* was "Louw Blames Leftists for Attack on South Africa."

Perhaps the most significant turning point in the struggle against white minority rule in South Africa came on 21 March 1960—the date of the Sharpeville Massacre. Sixty-nine were killed and 180 wounded as police fired on a nonviolent gathering of demonstrators. The African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress were banned. The struggle in South Africa moved toward violence as a result of this event. On 4 April 1960 ACOA ran an ad in the New York *Times* entitled "The Shame of South Africa," calling for contributions to the Africa Defense and Aid Fund. An emergency action conference on South Africa was held on the weekend of 31 May. Oliver Tambo, deputy president of the ANC, had left South Africa shortly after Sharpeville and was invited to be the principal speaker at this conference. The State Department delayed Tambo's visa just long enough so that he didn't make the conference, but arrived a week or so later to embark on a nationwide speaking tour. Jackie Robinson served as chairman of the conference, which

supported the boycott and called for an end to American investment in South Africa. A pamphlet entitled "Action against Apartheid" came out of this conference. ACOA ran another ad signed by some two hundred individuals committing themselves to boycott South African goods "until such time as the South African government abandons its racist policies and conforms to United Nations resolutions on these issues."

Shortly after this, the ACOA took the lead in convincing the international longshoremen in both New York and San Francisco to support a one-day symbolic action in support of sanctions against South Africa. In Brooklyn and San Francisco the representative unions refused to unload ships with South African goods. Although the action was short-lived, it received considerable public attention.

Another critical development was the beginning of the armed struggle in Angola in 1961. ACOA organized a program which was called Emergency Relief to Angola (ERA). Under this program, a few thousand dollars worth of medicines and humanitarian equipment, raised entirely from private sources, was sent to support those engaged in the struggle. Subsequently, in January 1962, Professor John Marcum (then of Lincoln University) and I went into the liberated areas of northern Angola with the forces of the UPA. We spent two weeks walking through the forests where the guerrillas were located and there the village people were living in uncomfortable but relative safety from the bombings of Portuguese planes.

Portugal began a large public-relations campaign in the US financed by overseas companies of Portugal to win support for its continued domination in Angola. A Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs was established. One of the principal activities of this committee, with professional public-relations assistance from the firm of Selbage & Lee, was to publish a widely circulated pamphlet entitled "Communists and Angola." Most of this publication was devoted to an attack on the ACOA for being "a communist front." This Portuguese-American Committee attempted to get the Department of Justice to make ACOA register as a foreign agent, which ACOA refused to do, and the case was dropped. Following hearings on the Foreign Agents Registration Act held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs was required to register as a foreign agent, since its financial needs were being covered by foreign companies.

ACOA played a little-known role in initiating the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa. This was a body set up in 1962 as a coalition of Negro and civil rights organizations to initiate a program of action on American policy in support of freedom in Africa. The ACOA called together the initial list of organizations to talk about the setting up of such a conference, with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the NAACP, CORE, the Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women, and others actively participating. Three national conferences were held. One of the concrete actions which ACOA and the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa joined in was pressure on the government to stop an aircraft carrier from visiting Capetown, because black sailors would encounter segregation when they went ashore. It is still US government policy not to have American naval vessels visit South African ports.

The period of dynamism in Africa was also a time of

relative expansion for ACOA. The office moved from the contributed basement space on East 35th Street to an office on 40th Street and then to 801 Second Avenue, just a block from the UN. The staff grew from two in 1955 to seven by 1963. The budget did not grow dramatically, but by the early sixties was above one hundred thousand dollars. The mailing list grew from something less than one thousand to over ten thousand. There obviously was a growing interest in African freedom from a section of liberal America.

MATURING AFRICA

In the early 1960s the reality of Africa's situation underwent some change with the independence of a large number of former colonial countries. A whole new set of problems emerged on the African scene. The European colonial powers could no longer be held solely responsible for what was happening, although they were responsible for helping lay the groundwork for many of the problems which were to come. Now the newly independent countries of north, west, and much of sub-Saharan Africa had to assume direct responsibility for economic development, international relations, education, health services, and political stability. Africa began to speak with a somewhat united voice on the international scene, and its words were frequently not to the liking of the US and the western European powers. During the early sixties Africa became one of the arenas for the cold war between the US and the Soviet Union. In some African countries conflict between ethnic groups came to the fore. Military coups occurred. A conflict developed in some countries between foreign and domestic interests.

As many independent countries emerged with complex problems, relating to Africa was no longer a simple question of anticolonialism. The attitude toward Africa changed. Those liberal Americans who had been opposed to colonialist policies were not sure how to deal with the coups, the domestic strife, and the cold-war realities in Africa. A mood of disillusionment set in.

Although all through its life the ACOA has related primarily to the struggle for freedom, it could not entirely ignore the problems in independent Africa, particularly where United States policy was deeply involved. But ACOA has not emphasized problems of aid and economic development in independent Africa, nor has ACOA sponsored scholarship programs, although small emergency assistance to students has always been a part of the work. Furthermore, ACOA has never attempted to act as an international civil liberties organization to protest infringements on the rights of citizens in independent African states. There have been issues which have tempted the organization to shift focus, and some ACOA supporters have pressed for such change. For example, ACOA did not develop an active program related to the struggle between the Ethiopians and the Eritreans, nor to the conflict of southern Sudan against the government in Khartoum. If ACOA had wanted to pursue a policy in support of economic development projects, or of refugee aid, or scholarship assistance, etc., it would have had to go a much different route than it had chosen. It would have had to seek large foundation grants and government subsidies. It would have had to de-emphasize policies and actions critical of government positions supportive of white minority regimes and continued Portuguese colonial domination in southern Africa.

The crisis in the Congo after independence in 1960 symbolized the new reality in Africa. The mineral-rich Belgian Congo became independent at the end of June. In a six-month period from the end of January until the end of June, the Belgians allowed a certain amount of political activity in a country where politics had been denied for decades. Chaotic conditions resulted. The Congo became the arena not only for a conflict between African movements and personalities, but between the great powers. I had personally met Patrice Lumumba at the All African Peoples Conference in Accra in December 1958. We had had an exchange of a few letters from that time until the independence of the country barely a year and a half later. US policy opposed Lumumba. (In fact, Senator Frank Church's committee investigating covert intelligence activities by government agencies revealed in 1957 that the CIA not only opposed Lumumba but actually laid plans for his murder.) US policy at this critical period supported what it regarded as the more moderate leadership of Joseph Kasavubu. But the US did not support the secession of Katanga under Moise Tshombe. Nevertheless, there was widespread support among right-wingers in the US for Tshombe. I had visited the Congo twice in 1960, first in January while the round-table discussions about the form of government for an independent Congo were taking place in Brussels, and second in November while Lumumba was virtually held prisoner in the government headquarters. I maintained contact with one of his key advisors, Thomas Kanza, and talked with Lumumba on the telephone when I was in Leopoldville. This was only a few weeks before his "escape" was engineered and he was captured and killed.

ACOA's position during this critical period was to support the central government headed by Lumumba. We joined with other organizations in opposing the well-publicized position of the right-wingers working through the American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters. This group, whose most prominent spokesman was Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, backed Tshombe in his effort to lead Katanga secession from the Congo. The ACOA initiated a full-page ad in the *New York Times* opposing this effort and backing the UN force whose purpose was to forestall a big power clash in the Congo (the Soviet Union did not back the UN effort) and to try to preserve Congo unity. Peter Weiss, then president of ACOA, appeared opposite a spokesman for the Katanga lobby on a national television program. He also prepared testimony for Senate hearings on the Congo crisis in April 1962.

Two years later, in 1964, the Congo issue again came to the forefront, this time involving a secession threat from Stanleyville. American planes were sent in for the announced purpose of evacuating missionaries there. But the threat of US forces being used was involved also. ACOA joined with others in calling for US withdrawal.

The absence of a secure central government in the Congo and the fact that the US and the Soviet Union backed opposing leaders (the US—Kasavubu; the Soviet Union—Lumumba and later Gizenga) introduced the cold-war conflict into the heart of Africa. The United Nations peace force in the Congo helped to ease the conflict, although it confronted the United Nations with a major problem. This crisis in the Congo, which became a major international issue, dramatically ushered in a new period in Africa. The romance of supporting the struggle against colonialism was tarnished.

The growth of ACOA was somewhat slowed down, but not

stopped. The emphasis was increasingly directed toward the southern part of the continent, where the struggle against colonialism and white minority domination was the key issue.

AFRICA—THE UNFINISHED STRUGGLE

The struggle for freedom in southern Africa—the Portuguese colonies (including Guinea-Bissau in west Africa), Rhodesia, Southwest Africa, and South Africa—had always been a focus for the committee's work; after the mid-sixties it became our major area of concern and action. Increasingly world attention was drawn to the Portuguese colonies. The strongest liberation movements were organized there. The armed struggle began in Angola in early 1961. In 1963 under the inspired leadership of Amilcar Cabral, the PAIGC opened guerrilla warfare. FRELIMO, led by Eduardo Mondlane, followed a year and a half later in Mozambique. The emphasis in the struggle in southern Africa shifted increasingly to armed struggle, the Zimbabwe movements adopting this as their strategy in 1965, and SWAPO in Namibia in 1966. The South African movements (ANC and PAC) were banned and in exile, but also built their ultimate strategy on force of arms. This was only slightly dulled by the Lusaka manifesto of 1969, which appealed to South Africa, the Portuguese, and Rhodesians to enter into discussions for an end of minority rule, but said that if negotiations did not produce results, African states would support the liberation movements in armed struggle.

There was no sign of change in the resolve of the white minorities to maintain control by all the political, military, and economic measures available to them. Arrests under the Terrorism Act continued in South Africa. The UN terminated South Africa's mandate over Namibia (as Southwest Africa was now called at the UN). Rhodesia unilaterally declared itself independent in 1965, and the UN supported sanctions. Increasing emphasis in the UN, the OAU, and in liberation movements was placed on the economic ties and alliances between the US (and some western European countries) with the Portuguese and the white minority regimes of South Africa and Namibia. The NATO alliance was one focus. Another was American investments in southern Africa, particularly South Africa.

For the most part, the liberation movements gained in strength during this period. However, splits took place and differences grew in some cases. FRELIMO and the PAIGC were virtually uncontested in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. SWAPO was the only movement recognized by the OAU in Namibia. In Rhodesia ZAPU and ZANU were both recognized, as were the ANC and PAC in South Africa. In Angola, both MPLA and FNLA were recognized, while UNITA was not.

As the interest of white liberal Americans lessened after the Congo crisis and the internal problems of the independent African states emerged, other sections of the American public increased their activity. The period of the focus on southern Africa coincided with a new situation in the civil rights movement and in the development of black consciousness among the more active elements of the black community. Furthermore, it coincided with the development of a period of student activism against involvement in Vietnam. The mood in the black community made it increasingly difficult for white or interracial organizations to work closely with black organizations. The Congress of African People, with a strong

Pan-African orientation, was organized. The African Liberation Support Committee, identifying itself from a black perspective with the liberation struggle in Africa, organized some sizable demonstrations and raised funds for the liberation movements. The American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa, with its rather elitist, nonmovement approach in Africa, was eclipsed. The congressional black caucus, with Congressman Diggs taking the lead, spoke out continuously on Africa. The student activist and the white radical community, although most involved with the Vietnam issue, began to discover Africa. Small volunteer and mostly localized committees sprang up, such as the Committee for a Free Mozambique, the Southern Africa Committee, the Madison (Wisconsin) Area Committee on Southern Africa, the Chicago Committee for Liberation of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea.

Southern Africa concerns became central to the US State Department too. But policy under the Johnson and Nixon administrations was constant in maintaining the alliance with Portugal, a continuing economic relationship with South Africa, and as little relationship as possible with liberation movements.

During the middle sixties our mailing list continued to grow, reaching twenty thousand before the cooling enthusiasm toward Africa of the seventies began to make itself felt. ACOA had occasional large public rallies, the last one in Town Hall in 1969 to raise money for liberation movements.

The largest national conference ACOA organized dealt with southern Africa and took place in Washington in 1965, with a national attendance of over six hundred people and some thirty organizations cosponsoring. During this period the committee sponsored a nationwide speaking tour for Robert Resha, one of the leaders of the African National Congress of South Africa, and for Dennis Brutus, the South African poet who had spent two years in prison on Robben Island and had been the head of the South African Nonracial Olympic Committee, whose aim was to keep South Africa out of the Olympics.

ACOA campaigns during this period were numerous and attracted considerable support. We tried to maximize the impact of campaigns we initiated by seeking to broaden their base and participation, urging other organizations to adopt and expand on the issues we had raised.

Among the campaigns and the activities of this decade were the following:

1. **US economic involvement in southern Africa.** This campaign began with the effort to stop Chase Manhattan and First National City Banks from lending funds to the South African government. In the spring of 1966 a group of students at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, in consultation with ACOA, entered a campaign against the First National City branch of 112th Street and Broadway. Depositors were urged to withdraw their accounts in protest against the bank's loan to the South African government. During the remainder of 1966, ACOA enlarged this campaign and organized a committee which was called Committee of Conscience against Apartheid. More than one hundred sponsors, under the chairmanship of A. Philip Randolph (who with Donald Harrington was cochairman of ACOA for most of the sixties), called upon the First National City Bank and Chase Manhattan Bank in Manhattan, as well as eight other American banks, to terminate a \$40 million loan to South

Africa. The campaign focused on 10 December, Human Rights Day in 1966, as the day by which people should withdraw their accounts if the two key banks had not indicated their intention of ending the loan. From written responses coming to the committee office, it is estimated that almost \$31 million was withdrawn in protest, either by individuals or organizations. Although this was a very small portion of the banks' resources and did not significantly hurt them from a financial point of view, the campaign worried their public relations departments. Considerable publicity was given to the annual stockholders' meetings of both Chase and First National City Banks. Some depositors and stockholders went to the meetings, or gave their proxies to ACOA representatives, to protest the loans to South Africa. This was the beginning of an effort which rapidly expanded to include investments not only in banks but in large American corporations doing business in southern Africa, particularly South Africa.

Of all American institutions, the churches were the most receptive to this campaign. They were subjected to pressures, particularly from their black membership, to withdraw their investments from those corporations involved significantly in South Africa. This led to organized efforts within the denominations to look into their investments, and to take action which could influence corporate policy. In the period of the formation of these committees, ACOA played an important role.

The first publication which pointed to American economic involvement in South Africa was a special issue of *Africa Today*, which for more than a decade had been the magazine of ACOA. Edited by Gollin Gonze, now in the International Affairs Department of the United Automobile Workers, this study, entitled "Partners in Apartheid" (March 1964), documented the size and importance of US corporate involvement in South Africa. It pointed an accusing finger at Charles Englehard, the New Jersey financier, who was more involved than any other single American in the South African economy. When Englehard received the annual brotherhood award of the New Jersey Conference of Christians and Jews in February 1966 at a special dinner in a Newark hotel, ACOA was instrumental in organizing a picket demonstration with hundreds of people participating. Englehard had to be ushered into the hotel surrounded by more than a dozen policemen.

Subsequently, ACOA published other studies researched and edited by ACOA research director, Jennifer Davis, on US economic involvement in southern Africa. Three of these also appeared as special issues of *Africa Today*: "A Special Report on American Involvement in the South African Economy" (January 1966); "Apartheid and Imperialism—A Study of US Corporate Involvement in South Africa" (September-October 1970); and "Allies in Empire—The U.S. and Portugal in Africa" (July-August 1970). In 1972 ACOA published "Namibia: U.S. Corporate Involvement."

In 1971 the Polaroid Corporation announced that it was going to put special effort into bettering working conditions in its operations in South Africa, rather than withdrawing. ACOA opposed this. In cooperation with black workers at Polaroid in Massachusetts, a public campaign was launched to expose the fraudulence of the Polaroid policy. It did not lead to a change in Polaroid's policy, but helped to make this policy a national issue.

ACOA's research on American economic involvement in the

Portuguese territories was instrumental in bringing to light the importance of the Gulf Oil Corporation activity in Cabinda. Publication of the facts helped in the national boycott campaign against Gulf Oil Company for its role in supporting Portugal in the Angolan struggle.

2. Several campaigns were developed to isolate South Africa. These included:

(a) A campaign against South Africa's participation in the Olympic games of 1968 in Mexico City. The ACOA enlisted the support of Jackie Robinson to head a campaign for American athletes to boycott participation in the Olympics if South Africa was allowed to participate. Some of the outstanding figures of the sports world, mainly black, supported this effort, including Wilt Chamberlain, Calvin Hill, Oscar Robertson, Maury Wills, Arthur Ashe. As a result of his participation in this effort, Ashe was refused visas on two occasions to enter South Africa. In all, sixty-four athletes signed the statement calling for a boycott of the Olympics if South Africa participated.

Jim Bouton, then a pitcher with the New York Yankees, and Steve Makone, a South African soccer player studying in the US, represented ACOA in Mexico City, working with Dennis Brutus in the effort to exclude South Africa. Combined with African pressures the campaign was successful.

(b) "We Say No to Apartheid" was a campaign which ACOA initiated to encourage artists, writers, and entertainers not to visit South Africa or allow their works to be used there "until the day when all its people—black and white—shall equally enjoy the educational and cultural advantages of this rich and lovely land." Mrs. Mary Louise Hooper, who had worked in South Africa with the ANC and Chief Albert J. Luthuli until she was deported, worked on this campaign in 1965. Among the signers of the pledge were Tallulah Bankhead, Leonard Bernstein, Victor Borge, Harry Belafonte, Diahanne Carroll, Sammy Davis, Henry Fonda, Julie Harris, Langston Hughes, Burgess Meredith, Arthur Miller, Sidney Poitier, Ed Sullivan, Eli Wallach. This campaign still continues, as the ACOA has worked hard to discourage Arthur Ashe from going to South Africa and has protested vigorously visits of such outstanding singing groups as the Supremes.

(c) South African Airways. When it was announced that South African Airways, by agreement with the US government, was inaugurating flights to Kennedy Airport in 1968, ACOA organized a campaign against this. Protests were made to the Civil Aeronautics Board, and public demonstrations were carried on in front of the South African Airways office and at Kennedy International Airport. An ad was carried in the *New York Times* signed by 161 black Americans who would not have been welcomed in South Africa and who declared: "S.A.A.—the tourism you promote is racism and racism is not welcome here." The case subsequently was taken to court, where it still is at this date, and it may eventually go to the US Supreme Court. In this effort we have been supported by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law.

3. Africa Defense and Aid Fund activities. There is not a major liberation movement in southern Africa which has not received some support from ACOA. Much of this has been done through the Africa Defense and Aid Fund. Sometimes the assistance given is to cover the emergency needs of visitors to New York at the UN, or to liberation movement leaders traveling in the US. It may help with travel expenses,

accommodations, telephone bills, etc. In the case of some of the liberation movements, notably FRELIMO, ACOA has taken major responsibility for raising the funds to make it possible for the organization to have an office and a full-time representative here. On occasion, special fund-raising events have been sponsored. An example was the benefit sale of Makonde art objects for FRELIMO which ACOA organized in New York in the late sixties. Through the Africa Defense and Aid Fund, ACOA sometimes supplied jeeps, land rovers, Volkswagon buses for the use of liberation movements in Africa. The amount spent has varied from one year to another but has usually been between ten and thirty-five thousand dollars. The Defense and Aid Fund, as a part of the committee, has received its funds from voluntary contributions, whether from individuals or sympathetic organizations.

At times ACOA has been faced with the difficult problem of deciding which of competing liberation movements to support. The decisions of OAU in recognizing some movements and not others has helped. But when, as in the case of Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Angola, more than one movement has been recognized, there has been no simple answer. For the most part, the committee made ad hoc decisions based on funds available, the amount required to meet a request, how practical the reason for the request seemed to be. Usually it has been fairly simple to decide where the priorities lay. In the case of Angola, a lengthy discussion was held in 1970, and the decision was to recognize the "primacy of the MPLA" at that time. ACOA has never had a policy of cutting off contact with any movement, although this has not implied willingness to assist all movements.

4. The Africa Fund. In the early sixties the ACOA briefly sought a tax-exempt status. Before a final ruling was made, an advisor in the Internal Revenue Service told ACOA's lawyer that there was no chance that ACOA would receive a tax-exempt status as long as its anti-apartheid activities continued. The seven-page letter in summary called ACOA "an action organization." The efforts for tax exemption were dropped. It was decided that an effort should be made to establish an associated group that would meet tax-exempt requirements. Thus the African Aid and Legal Defense Fund was organized in 1966, and application for exempt status was successful. The same name was simplified in 1968 to The Africa Fund. Through the Africa Fund, programs for refugee assistance, for aid to hospitals and schools in liberated areas of Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique have been carried on. An increasing number of publications have been distributed and an expanded research program has been sponsored by the Africa Fund. The Africa Fund has its own trustees, who are responsible for its policy and direction.

5. Legal cases in the US. The ACOA was first involved in legal action when South Africans were threatened with deportation. In 1959 a South African medical doctor of Indian origin, who had been active in the South African Indian Congress, was threatened with deportation back to South Africa by Immigration. The case was fought through immigration service hearings. Through the intervention of members of Congress and others in Washington, deportation proceedings were finally dropped and the case was won.

Another case, which received quite wide public attention, arose in 1964. It involved the case of the South African musical *Sponono*, which had had a successful run in South

Africa, but lasted only seventeen performances on Broadway. There were twenty-two African members of the cast, half of whom decided that they did not wish to return to South Africa. Of this number, five managed to get student visas, and one married an American. That left five who were subject to deportation proceedings. In cooperation with the Workers Defense League, ACOA fought this case before the Department of Immigration and Naturalization, and the government finally dropped the case in April 1965. We did not win the legal point which we wanted to establish, namely, that political refugees from South Africa should have the right of political asylum, but a precedent had been established that no one would be returned to South Africa who might suffer penalties there.

Although legal action has not been a major strategy of the committee, some ACOA concerns have inevitably led to the courts. With legal advice coming from lawyers associated with ACOA (Peter Weiss; Elizabeth Landis, ACOA vice-president for over a decade; Michael Davis; Joel Carlson; Robert Delson); the committee has initiated or cooperated with others to try to stop imports of chrome from coming into the US from Rhodesia (in violation of UN sanction which the US supported), to stop import of seal skins from Namibia, and to end South African Airways routes to Kennedy Airport.

Special attention has been given to ACOA's case to stop the New York *Times* from carrying ads for jobs in South Africa, on the ground that the jobs are not open to black Americans and therefore violate New York City antidiscrimination legislation. ACOA took the issue to the City Commission on Human Rights. In June 1975 the City Commission supported the action. The New York *Times* appealed this decision, and the case is still in the courts. The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law handled most of the legal work.

6. Washington action. Implementation of ACOA policy has frequently centered in Washington. The ACOA has consistently opposed US policies supportive of white minority rule. ACOA representatives have appeared innumerable times before the appropriate Senate and House committees in Washington. Statements by the ACOA on legislative objectives have been varied: US policy in the Congo, refugee questions, an end to the sugar quota to South Africa, stopping military aid to Portugal and South Africa, opposition to the Byrd Amendment (allowing strategic materials to come in from Rhodesia), an end to intervention in Angola. The committee has maintained a working relationship, first, with late Congressman Barrett O'Hara of Illinois and later with Charles Diggs of Michigan, who have been the two very active chairmen of the House Subcommittee on Africa.

Not until 1967 did ACOA establish part-time representation on the Washington scene. A full-time office was opened in 1968, with Gary Gappert as the representative. He was succeeded by Charles Hightower. In 1972 the ACOA's Washington office was transformed into the independent, jointly-sponsored Washington Office on Africa, with Ted Lockwood and Chris Root as the executive staff. Funds for ACOA's office had come primarily through contributions of three or four church organizations. These churches (Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Episcopalian) finally decided they would like to participate more actively on African issues in Washington. Thus the Washington Office on Africa became a jointly-sponsored effort between ACOA and church groups. The Washington Office has been increasingly

effective in coordinating work on southern African issues in Congress. A major effort from 1972 to 1975 was devoted to stopping import of chrome and other minerals from Rhodesia. The campaign has gained strength, in spite of a lackadaisical attitude by the White House, but has not yet been won.

7. Boycott action at the docks. When the Byrd Amendment was passed by Congress in 1971, allowing chrome to be imported from Rhodesia into the US, ACOA took a leading role in urging action at the docks. Primarily through the efforts of one of our staff members, Henry Lieberg, ACOA found out when the first shipment of chrome was to come into a Louisiana port in March of 1972. Nationwide attention was given to action at the docks carried on by students at Southern University and other universities in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas. Subsequently action groups sprang up at such port cities as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to protest any shipments which came in. Furthermore, ACOA was successful in urging the International Longshoremen's Association to agree not to unload any material which they knew was coming in from Rhodesia. If this has not stopped chrome from coming in, at least it has raised the issue and made it essential for the shippers to use covert methods in order to have the chrome imported undetected.

8. Namibia action. In 1967 when the UN terminated South Africa's mandate over Namibia, ACOA took the lead in organizing a special project to both highlight and to test this decision. A group of five Americans (Dr. John L.S. Holloman, now president of the Health and Hospital Corporation in New York City; Professor Flemmie Kittrell, chairman of the Department of Home Economics of Howard University; Lyle Tatum, executive secretary of Farmers and World Affairs; Samuel Ashelman of the International Cooperative Development Association; and I) planned to fly into Windhoek and spend several weeks in Namibia exploring projects which might be supported by nongovernmental organizations working for the independence of the territory. The project was carried out under the name of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of an Independent Southwest Africa. The project had the support of SWAPO, Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda, and the newly-formed Council for Namibia at the UN. The group was frustrated in its plan to land, in spite of the fact that the two small chartered planes had flown from Lusaka almost to Windhoek, when the South African police by radio threatened the pilots with dire consequences if they landed. The pilots had not been informed about the project nor that the group members were without South African visas, because if they had known in advance it would have been impossible to charter the planes. The group was accompanied by four journalists representing the African and American press, and the action received wide attention. Headlines appeared in the South African press: "American group turned back." The Information Service of South Africa had a headline: "South Africa will not tolerate it—Vorster." The prime minister said: "The whole move was merely an attempt to revive the Southwest Africa debate in the UN . . . Nobody will be allowed in South Africa or Southwest Africa without the proper documents and Houser will definitely, with or without documents, not be permitted."

In 1970 I applied to the UN Council for Namibia for a visa to visit the territory. This application was granted. To date I have the only such UN visa. My effort to fly to Namibia was

again, not surprisingly, frustrated. The South African government told Pan American Airways, on which I had a reservation to fly from Kinshasa to Johannesburg en route to Windhoek, that they would take action against the airline if they allowed me on board. I was refused entrance to the plane at the Kinshasa airport.

Many other kinds of action have been taken on the Namibian situation. Among them were Judge William Booth's (now president of ACOA) two trips to southern Africa in 1971 and 1972, one to Johannesburg and the other to Windhoek, to be an observer at the terrorism trials of Namibians. Another was a 1966 conference of lawyers, which ACOA sponsored in cooperation with Tom Frank of the law school at NYU, to discuss what legal options would be open on Namibia with the expected termination of the mandate.

AFTER THE PORTUGUESE COUP—THE LOOK AHEAD

The situation in southern Africa changed dramatically with the fall of the Caetano Regime in Portugal in April 1974. Almost overnight a policy was reversed which the Portuguese had clung to for centuries. The groundwork was laid for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola, and other Portuguese colonies. This was to affect not only what happened within those countries, but in the deepest sense was to change the prospects for liberation in South Africa, and more immediately in Rhodesia and Namibia.

The reality of an independent Mozambique and Angola has affected the policy both of South Africa and of African states. First, a so-called policy of detente emerged in late 1974, with President Kaunda and Prime Minister Vorster taking the lead. Kaunda was backed by Tanzania, Mozambique, and Botswana, and by resolution of the OAU. The objective of this detente, as outlined in a Tanzania statement to the OAU in early 1975, was to get South African troops out of Rhodesia so that the problem of continued white minority rule could be liquidated as peacefully as possible there. From South Africa's perspective, an objective of detente was to normalize relations with African states and particularly with Mozambique.

Second, a result of the new reality in southern Africa was to speed up activity in Rhodesia. The problem was compounded by a split in the African movement, but activity proceeded in two directions simultaneously. One was more serious negotiations for constitutional changes moving toward majority rule. The other was vigorous preparation for armed struggle. The two strategies affected each other, but there was no sign by the end of 1975 that the white minority government was giving up.

Third, another result of the new reality was to strengthen opposing strategies in Namibia. On the one hand, South Africa proceeded with its grand strategy of balkanizing the country through its Bantustan policy, beginning with its plan to create an independent Ovamboland. This strategy dictated maximizing the role of the traditional chiefs. On the other hand, led by SWAPO, preparation proceeded for independence in a unitary state, backed by the United Nations and with armed struggle as a basic ingredient.

Fourth, in South Africa itself a result of the new reality was the facade of slow change. Some features of so-called petty apartheid (elimination of separate park benches, opening up some hotels for the use of foreign black visitors, easing up on restrictions on black visitors from abroad, some movement

toward better wages for Africans) were moderated. This was designed to create a new image of South Africa abroad without making any basic changes in the grand design of apartheid: the creation of Bantustans, the restrictions on African political activity, etc.

The question which ACOA faced at the end of 1975 was whether its role of supporting the liberation struggle in Africa was reaching a termination point. Was the struggle in Africa, specifically in southern Africa, reaching an end? The ACOA perception was that the end was not yet in sight. There was undoubtedly a new situation, but one in which the committee had an important function, as it viewed the direction in which things were moving. The white minority in Rhodesia was not giving up, and the probability of growing violence seemed likely. The strategies of South Africa on the one side, and of the UN and SWAPO on the other, were in radical opposition in Namibia. Again the probability of increased violence was likely. In South Africa the government was moving to create "independent" Bantustans in the Transkei and in other "homelands" if possible. This would conflict with the aim of African nationalists and also with the positions of the OAU and the UN.

But the new dominating development at the end of 1975 was the struggle for control in Angola. From ACOA's perspective this conflict, with its international involvement, reflected the dimension of things to come in South Africa itself. In Angola three movements, backed by opposing international forces, fought for control of the country. This was not a black against white issue. Nor was it a communist versus anticommunist issue, as it was being portrayed by many US policymakers. At stake were differing concepts, by opposing Angolan movements, on how to construct an independent country, with big powers backing contending sides.

ACOA, for many years had been pointing out the dangers of increased American investments in South Africa. The case was made again and again that these investments were

strengthening the white regime there, were not really changing the pattern of apartheid or diminishing the liberation struggle in South Africa. The conflict in Angola was seen as an example on a small scale of the struggle that would shape up in South Africa, where the stakes were so much greater. From ACOA's perspective, the US had laid the groundwork through investments in South Africa, through encouraging communication with South Africa—not for change, but for a stake in perpetuating the status quo there. The African nationalists will not look to the US for support in their struggle. The white government and the conservative African forces that are constructing Bantustans will.

With this perception the ACOA has a continued task in trying to keep the US out of Angola (without at the same time encouraging other big powers to get in), to work for an end to big investments in South Africa which can only forestall change, and to work for a continued strengthening of African nationalists in their struggle for independence. This is not an uncomplicated agenda, but nevertheless an essential one for the years ahead.

George Houser has been the Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa since 1955. He is also Executive Secretary of the Africa Fund, a tax-exempt organization associated with ACOA. He has traveled extensively in Africa, on an annual basis since his association with the Committee. He attended all three of the All African Peoples Conferences which represented the Liberation movements of Africa—Ghana 1958, Tunis 1960 and Cairo 1961. He attended the founding conference of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa in 1963. George Houser has written numerous articles on African developments, and pamphlets and booklets on both African and race relations subjects, including: "U.S. Policy & Southern Africa" and "Mozambique: Dream the Size of Freedom." He has been an invited guest to independence celebrations in numerous African countries.
