

ACAS Thirty Years On

Edited By William Martin

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ACAS Thirty Years On

William G. Martin (Binghamton University)

In 2008 the *ACAS Bulletin* celebrated its thirtieth birthday. ACAS emerged at a moment when radical African movements were capturing international headlines, inspiring activists around the world, and were firmly opposed by the US government. As national liberation movements in the early and mid-1970s scored significant victories against white minority and colonial rule, US overt and covert intervention across Africa accelerated. Blocked by traditional academic organizations from supporting and mobilizing on behalf of these struggles for majority rule, progressive scholars of Africa came together to form ACAS.

There were models for such work. ACAS' origins and early actions followed in the wake of other scholar-activist organizations which had emerged out of the long 1960s wave of anticolonial and anti-imperialist movements. The North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), for example, was founded in 1966 in response to the April 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars was similarly established in 1967 as part of the upwelling of protest against US expansion into Vietnam.

Founded in 1977, ACAS was thus a late arrival to the scene of organized scholar-activism. By celebrating its thirtieth birthday ACAS stands out, however, as one of the few surviving scholar-activist organizations, and one of the few surviving Africa solidarity organizations. Most local Africa-related groups have long since disappeared, while national organizations focused on other world areas have long ago narrowed their work to scholarly analysis and journal production--as in the transition of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* to today's *Critical Asian Studies* journal.

To re-read the early years of the *ACAS Bulletin* is to encounter an exciting period, when the possibility

of a new and liberated Africa, and a transformed US relationship with Africa, engaged scholars' imaginations. ACAS' aims were stated in the first sentence of its founding 1977 "Draft Statement of Principles": "We are a grouping of scholars interested in Africa and concerned with moving U.S. policy toward Africa in directions more sympathetic to African interests." The same first issue of the *ACAS Newsletter* (later *Bulletin*) advanced an agenda to promote scholarly analysis of US policy, develop alternative policy proposals, construct a communication network among progressive Africanist scholars, and coordinate with other national and local solidarity organizations.

These goals remained central to ACAS work over three decades. How they have been carried out has, however, changed over the years as three different generations of activists have grappled with US-African relations. The first generation's focus was openly stated in ACAS' 1977 "draft principles" statement: "For political and practical reasons, our emphasis for the foreseeable future will be on southern Africa." This reflected the strength of the southern African movements and the problems they posed for the US government in the preceding few years: Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau had just won independence in 1975 after long guerrilla wars; battles for independence were heating up in Zimbabwe and Namibia; and the 1976 Soweto rebellion presaged a resurgence of resistance inside South Africa and the strengthening of the ANC in exile.

At the same time President Jimmy Carter was moving to impose a solution in Zimbabwe and Namibia that would secure white interests. The first issue of the *ACAS Newsletter* led the charge against these efforts. As Co-chair Immanuel Wallerstein asked, "What can be done by Americans who think that African liberation in southern is part of human liberation?" The answer: "They can demand that their own government *cease* supporting the white regimes. But above all they can avoid being lured into the trap of supporting liberal interventionism." Four senior Africanists and ACAS members (Sean

Gervasi, Ann Seidman, Immanuel Wallerstein and David Wiley) jointly penned an article on "Why We Said 'No' to A.I.D.," rejecting a large project designed to support conservative policies on southern Africa. Co-Chair Willard Johnson, in laying out more practical steps for activists in the same issue, nevertheless put quite sweeping goals on the agenda: "We wish to have our foreign relations promote respect for the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to advance the liberation of oppressed peoples, and to achieve a more nearly equal distribution of power, productivity and wealth among the peoples of the world."

These were radical aims indeed and remain so. They reflected the times—and lived experiences. Many founding members of ACAS had been active in and carried forward the sentiments of the 1960s North American and African movements; these were now married to the expectation that Africa's national liberation movements could deliver a more radical solution to the process of decolonization, neocolonialism, and resistance to US imperial power. Many ACAS leaders had or would teach and work in southern Africa, as would their students who often became, twenty years later, ACAS' second generation members, co-chairs and executive board members.

Throughout its first two decades of work ACAS remained solidly focused on southern Africa. Members—through the *ACAS Bulletin*, their own published work, and activity on their many local campuses and communities—sought to unearth US cooperation with white rule while building support for southern African movements. This included, as it had for NACLA, Concerned Asian Scholars, and other anti-imperialist groups, tackling US multinational corporations' support for repressive regimes, covert US intelligence agencies' operations, US counter-insurgency and military interventions. It also led to long-term support for radical regimes opposed to apartheid, particularly Mozambique. This research and educational work did not take place in a welcoming climate given the

reemergence of Cold War "globalist" foreign policy analysts under Carter, and then policies of "constructive engagement" with white power and structural adjustment that accompanied Reagan's rise to power.

Offsetting these harsh conditions in the United States in the 1980s were actions inside South Africa which served to boost and expand antiapartheid activity across the US. ACAS members were particularly active on local campuses, where divestment and sanctions campaigns gained ground in the late 1970s and 1980s as revealed in successive issues of the *Bulletin*. New national campaigns emerged in the early 1980s, led variously by the Africa Fund/the American Committee on Africa, the American Friends Service Committee, the Africa Policy Information Center, the Washington Office on Africa, and TransAfrica (itself founded in the same year as ACAS).

The years surrounding 1984-1986, marked as they were by escalating rebellions inside South Africa, were the high-water mark for the US and worldwide anti-apartheid movement. By 1986 a national network of activists had built such pressure on Congress that it passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act—something long opposed by both the Democratic and Republican parties. It was Reagan's most significant foreign policy defeat. ACAS and the entire antiapartheid movement felt victory was near, as was well evoked by Co-Chair Jean Sindab in the *Bulletin* at the time: "This is quite an exciting time for those of us who have struggled so hard, for so long, to bring an end to apartheid and U.S. support for that racist system." (*Bulletin* No. 16, Winter 1986:21).

1986 would prove in many ways to be the zenith of the anti-apartheid movement. By the late 1980s ACAS members sensed major, uncertain challenges were coming. Mozambique's difficult accommodation with apartheid South Africa in the wake of destabilization, the Nkomati Accord (1984), and Samora Machel's death (1986), along with the region's and continent's accommodation

with the IMF, signaled that new challenges lie ahead. In a series on "ACAS—Ten Years On" in *Bulletin* No. 23 (Spring 1988), Co-Chair Immanuel Wallerstein flagged "present ambiguities" and "dilemmas" in the wake of successful divestment and sanctions; John Saul, founding member of the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa, noted the smashing of the "high hopes" surrounding the 1975 victories against Portuguese colonialism, most notably in Mozambique; and James Mittelman pinpointed the challenge of moving beyond targeting individual states and single-issue campaigns. While all called for greater commitment and more rigorous intellectual analysis, a period of difficulty for scholarly-activist work was clearly ahead.

Mandela's release and the unbanning of the ANC, PAC, and CP in 1990 and the ANC's electoral victory in 1994 opened up this new era as exiles went home and the ANC took over the reigns of state power. This transformation was propelled further on this side of the Atlantic by the election of Clinton in 1992, and a seemingly much more prominent position for Africa-America and even Africa. Still, as might have been expected, civic and community-based antiapartheid organizations in both South Africa and the US declined. Meanwhile both the ANC and the Clinton administration came to aggressively embrace neoliberal policies.

ACAS itself changed. In November 1992 ACAS reorganized with new Co-Chairs (Jean Sindab and David Wiley), moved from southern Africa to work on the entire continent, and launched a continuing presence in Washington with a paid staff member for the first time (Lisa Alfred). Thirteen "Issue Working Groups" were formed to chart a new vision for ACAS, and a national meeting of solidarity organizations was organized under ACAS auspices (see *Bulletins* 35, Spring 1992 and 38-39, Winter 1993).

The difficulties were starkly stated in Co-Chair Wiley's own assessment of the near future (*Bulletin* 38/39:9-13): geopolitically Africa was falling off

the Washington policy map, while economically Africa became subject to unrelenting pressure from the IMF, World Bank and the US. Aid from Northern governments was falling and attention of Western and Japanese economic interests declining. Meanwhile most academic Africanists, Wiley noted, remained "professionally dispassionate, and focused on occupational productivity and advancement, mirroring the turn to self-interest by many Americans in these insecure times" (11). If Africanists had failed so far address the continent's new realities, ACAS, Wiley argued, should try to do so: "Our major tasks in this period are to struggle understand the new situation in Africa and globally, to explore both those policy issues in Africa that merit our attention in this new period and what needs to be said about them to U.S. policymakers, and to redirect ACAS to become a more effective instrument of change."

Over the course of the next decade much of the agenda set out in the early to mid-1990s was pushed forward, which stood in stark relief to the collapse of most groups that focused on southern Africa and apartheid. Coverage of continental Africa rapidly expanded, featuring special issues on progressive approaches and debates on democratization, human rights, academic freedom, militarization, and conflict resolution. Coverage of key crisis areas grew as well, from the Congo to Nigeria, from Somalia to Africa/Iraq. Far greater attention was paid to health, women, and political violence, an effort led by Meredith Turshen who became a Co-Chair in 2001. Greater coordination with Washington groups also took place, and the board and membership became more diverse and somewhat younger.

Amidst all these changes there are also continuities as well with previous periods. One of these was the continuing struggle over the relationship of scholars and the U.S. government, particularly scholars' work with US intelligence agencies. Another concerned the balance between activism and traditional scholarship. And another challenge continually arose on the reverse side of this

equation: between scholar activists and social movements, particularly as movements changed over time.

No issue was more persistent from ACAS' first days than scholars who worked for or otherwise cooperated with US military and intelligence agencies. By the time of ACAS's formation, covert and highly repressive intervention by the CIA in Ghana (against Nkrumah), Zaire (against Lumumba and for Mobutu), Ethiopia (to reinforce the Selassie monarchy) and especially southern Africa (Zambia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa) were widely known. Here ACAS really made a difference, leading efforts throughout the 1980s and 1990s to constrain academic cooperation with military/intelligence agencies and counterinsurgency research. Successive *Bulletin* items and ACAS campaigns followed an early article by Dave Wiley in *Bulletin* No. 6 (February 1982).

In the early 1990s the Boren Bill, which later morphed into the National Education Security Program, led to another wave of work to secure African studies centers' and programs' adherence to a rejection of intelligence funding. ACAS members provided leadership in spreading and coordinating this effort with other area studies associations. This effort got much harder to sustain after 9/11 and the vast expansion of military and intelligence programs under Bush, when individual researchers and a few programs began to serve rapidly growing military and intelligence programs in Africa. But for more than 20 years ACAS has been a leader, and a successful one, in this area.

ACAS's relationship with academic associations has proved to be another source of continuing debate. In its earliest years ACAS struggled to maintain its independence from the African Studies Association which had continually distanced itself from any support for African movements or radical critiques of US foreign policy, and had correspondingly come under serious attack from black scholar-activists. Indeed much of the original impetus and

continuing support for ACAS was due to its being the home for engaged scholarship and support for African movements and activists. As the 1980s turned into the 1990s, the balance between scholarship and activist work became more difficult to sustain.

Direct support for African movements such as ANC, ZANU-PF, and FRELIMO waned, while the lure of more professional, dispassionate, and moderate work with government agencies grew. Alternative and more conservative organizations that would alongside the U.S. government and neoliberal agencies also emerged. The most notable was the National Summit for Africa, founded in 2001 through funding from the Ford Foundation and Carnegie Corporation and widely endorsed by leaders of the African Studies Association. Yet premised as it was on greater liberal and US government commitments to Africa, efforts like the Summit had little long-term success in attracting a base membership or effecting policy.

If the demise of the antiapartheid and African nationalist movements stilled activist scholarship and work, new movements in both the US and Africa nevertheless continued to fitfully emerge in the 1990s and the new century. The Afrocentric movement in the US in the late 1990s, resulting in the 1995 Million Man and 1997 Million Women Marches—the largest black nationalist and Panafricanist demonstrations ever held in the United States—renewed interest in Africa on US campuses and communities. One result was the creation of new organizations, such as the Black Radical Congress. The evolution of the ACAS board during this time reflected the emergence of a younger, more diverse generation involved in post-national liberation movement issues, movements and campaigns.

For Africanist scholars the black nationalist renewal was especially notable. It reopened the issue of black representation and support for African liberation in the largely white African studies community, an issue that split the ASA in 1969, and

indirectly led to the formation of ACAS itself given the ASA's adamant refusal to denounce US intervention in Africa and directly support national liberation movements. In its early years ACAS alternated its meetings between the annual conferences of the ASA and the alternative, post-1969 formation of the African Heritage Studies Association. ACAS has also maintained a continual succession of black co-chairs over the years (Willard Johnson, James Turner, Jean Sindab, Al Green, Merle Bowen, Michael West). When white scholars charged in the late 1990s that Africanist academic posts were closed to white applicants, and black scholars protested, it was members of ACAS that organized an open forum at an annual ASA meeting and published the presentations and dialogue in the *ACAS Bulletin* under the title of the "The 'Ghettoization' Debate" (no. 46, Winter 1996).

Many ACAS members also participated in new international movements that grew in surrounding debt, AIDS, the IMF/World Bank, fair trade, and Darfur. None of these revived, however, the degree of interest and coalitions that had existed in the 1970s and 1980s. Even the emergence of new local movements in South Africa in the late 1990s, as elsewhere around the continent, failed to stimulate broad and successful campaigns to link US and African activists. South Africa's most successful new movement, the Treatment Action Campaign, had many admirers in the North, but few sustained and wide relations with northern scholar activists. In all these areas ACAS members nevertheless worked assiduously to support African colleagues, as successive *Bulletins* reveal. Still, ACAS's attempt to seize the opportunities offered by the new movements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have been partial at best.

ACAS has not been alone in facing these difficulties. As the long-time activists and editors of *No Easy Victories, African Liberation and American Activists Over a Half Century, 1950-2000* argue in the conclusion of their volume (225-28), support for activist work now faces severe constraints as Africa has been increasingly

marginalized in the media, Congress, foreign policy circles, and the world-economy. Beyond access to oil and the militarization of US-African ties as part of the "war on terror," African-US work has often been narrowed to appeals for charity and humanitarian intervention. Africans in these campaigns are all too easily reduced to hapless, bewitched victims, predatory victimizers, or tribal warriors. For many long-term activists it does indeed seem--despite much current work on individual issues and states--that deepening the support for scholar-activism remains much more difficult than at any time in the past three decades.

Such a bleak assessment should not obscure real achievements and future possibilities. Looking back we can justly celebrate the major contributions scholar activists have made in the struggles against colonialism and apartheid. Looking forward, it may well be the case that too many anomalies exist to hope for--as is so common when old activists meet--a revival of the past paradigm for scholarly-activist work on Africa. The potential for and public visibility of activist work on Africa may not have simply declined; it may have indeed shifted elsewhere. Here in the United States, developments in both the academic and activist worlds may have undercut the principles and frameworks upon which past activity depended.

On the academic side, the scholarly enterprise known as area studies and its Africanist component has increasingly shrunk and fragmented amidst the rise of diaspora, Africana, ethnic, and global studies programs and degrees. This has undercut the potential for continental, Africanist-centered activism. Much higher levels of migration from Africa, including into the higher reaches of US academia, have also served to dissolve the secular missionary role that most white, mainstream Africanists played as interpreters of Africa for the American public. Multiculturalism, Afrocentric student activism in the 1990s, and neo-racist responses to these developments have further shattered the cohesion of the past African studies matrix—as has been so visible in recent years in the

emergence of black and continental African directors at major African studies programs and centers (e.g. Berkeley, Boston, Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan State, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Yale).

On the activist side, new movements have also undercut the divide between the US and Africa upon which old alliances were created. In part this is the *success* of the anti-neoliberal debt and structural adjustment movements of the 1990s, which exerted such strong influence in, and have so transformed, what is now tellingly termed the "Global South." In Latin America and Asia it is clear that the hold of the US and international financial institutions has markedly declined, and that new land, indigenous, and social justice movements are increasingly networked through new technologies across regions, states and continents.

The local expressions of these movements in Africa, including most notably in South Africa, have been equally marked. But as in the rest of the Global South, they have not evolved along the lines of past North-South solidarity, anti-colonial, panafrican or anti-apartheid models. Today's movements are far more interlinked across the South and have far less visibility and political impact in the North—at least so far. Personal experience and networks remain no less key to transnational organizing of course, but for today's growing movements these are often constructed outside the North/South lines upon which past solidarity movements flowed.

As ACAS moves toward its third generation, these changes promise to call forth different models of organizing, utilizing new technologies for the dissemination of educational materials and calls for action. ACAS' new Co-Chairs in 2006, Sean Jacobs and Chris Patterson, have been confronting and undertaking these tasks now, as can be seen in the new web site (<http://concernedafricascholars.org/>), new and action alert items, and recent *Bulletins*. As these activities show, what has not changed is the need for a continuing radical critique of US policy

and of the US's historic relation with Africa and its diasporas.

There are few signs that an Obama presidency will foster any substantive change in Africa policy given the appointment of Clinton-era veterans such as Susan Rice and Hilary Clinton, who have in the recent past and in their appointment hearings continued to promote Africa's forced "integration" into the world-economy, the war on terror and Islam, and a priority for military links with Africa through the US military command for Africa, AFRICOM. If there is a new element on the horizon, it is likely to be enhanced charity and the funding of liberal, humanitarian intervention by other forces—in large part a response to their embarrassment in failing to act in Rwanda.

These developments point to the very real need for more and not less activist work by scholars in the coming generation. Over the long run, significant dangers will arise as US financial, commercial, and political power declines, and US power may too easily come to rely upon the ultimate pillar of hegemony--military power. Yet resistance is likely to open up new opportunities as well. As activists in Africa, the Americas, and Asia already know quite well, policies based on neoliberalism and the projection of US power have been everywhere rejected. In the coming conjuncture, this reality will lead to alternative policies and centers of power. For those of us in the United States, these developments are likely to make progressive mobilization more possible and certainly more imperative. The struggle for liberation, for a post-imperial future, remains, as it was in the early days of ACAS, before us.

About the author

William Martin is a past co-Chair of ACAS and currently teaches at Binghamton University.

A Brief Note on the Beginnings of ACAS

Immanuel Wallerstein (Yale University)

As I recall, it was David Wiley's idea to convene a group of us at a meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in, I believe, Houston to discuss what we could do to promote an activist position on African questions. The context was double. On the one hand, the situation in Africa was difficult: deteriorating politics of the countries that had achieved independence (military coups, etc.); and blockage of liberation in southern Africa, aided and abetted by the U.S. government. On the other hand, there had just been the 1968-inspired split among Africanists, with the crisis at the 1969 Montreal meeting of ASA, and the creation of the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA).

We made two decisions right at the start. One was that we would call ourselves "Africa scholars" and not "Africanists." It was a moment of sensitivity about terminology. And the second was that we wanted ACAS somehow to bridge the split between ASA and AHSA. The way we would do that was twofold: We would hold our meetings neither during an ASA meeting nor during an AHSA meeting but separate from both. And we would have co-chairs at every level, in order that we could draw one person linked with each of the two organizations.

We did this for several years. It didn't really work. First of all, it was expensive and difficult to hold a separate meeting, and not too many people could come. So, after several years, when the hostility between ASA and AHSA had cooled down, we decided to meet during the ASA meetings, and have been doing that ever since. We continued to have co-chairs, but it lost the element of balancing ASA and AHSA.

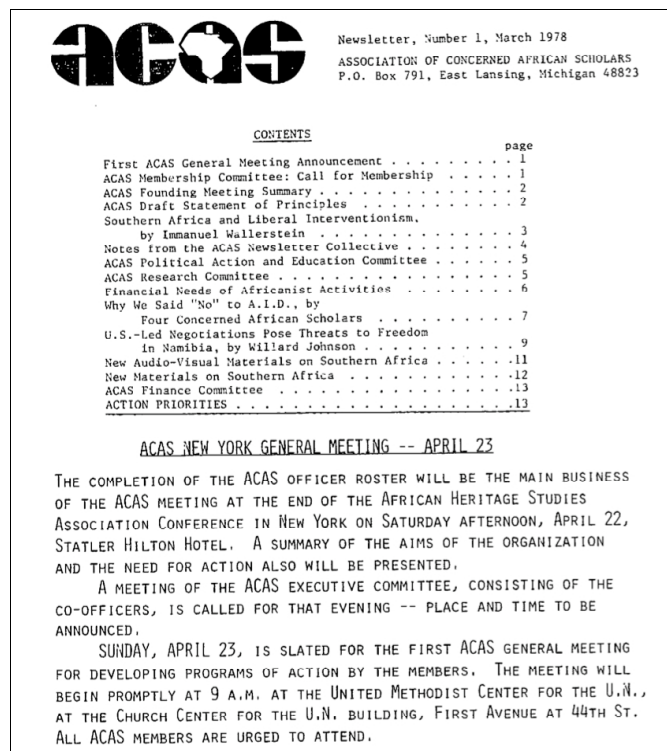


IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 1 (1978)

For a long time, ACAS concentrated on the issue of the liberation of southern Africa, which seemed the right priority. But once all that was finally accomplished, ACAS had to rethink its role and its activities, which was difficult at first, but has now, I think, been done.

Origins of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) as a pro-Africa voice among American Scholars

David Wiley (Michigan State University)

The major U.S. scholarly caucuses for “Third World” regions emerged on the national stage in the 1960s and 1970s at the height of the Cold War. Under the cover of a liberal ideology of “democracy and freedom,” the hidden, and sometimes not so disguised, hand of U.S. and other Western intelligence agencies eventually was comprehended by the scholarly community. The result was significant movements to mobilize scholarly opinion and action with the work of area specialists to oppose much of U.S. Cold War foreign policy toward Latin and Central America, Asia, the Middle East, and, beginning in 1977, Africa.

Founded in 1977-78, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) was the fourth and last of the pro-Third World movements of scholars specific to world regions. Born in the scholarly and broader progressive social movements of the U.S. of the 1960s and 1970s ACAS sought to end to U.S. support for apartheid and minority rule in Southern Africa and then for a more pro-Africa U.S. foreign policy more broadly. ACAS represented the scholarly side of the most successful people's movement in the U.S. that achieved a change in the foreign policy of a U.S. President, marked in 1986 by the passage over the Reagan veto of the *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986* signalling the end of U.S. support of white South Africa.

Founded in 1977, the ACAS is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of U.S. government policy toward Africa. ACAS seeks to develop communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars in Africa and the United States

and to mobilize support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.¹

Stirred by the leak in 1976 of the National Security Memorandum (NSSM) #39 of 1969, ACAS organized to support extant African activist organizations (especially the American Committee on Africa, Africa Fund, Washington Office on Africa, and Africa News) and to mobilize scholars, students, and the public to oppose the U.S. support of apartheid and racist governments in Africa.²

NACLA, CCAS, and MERIP

In the post-WW II era, the U.S. left Africa largely to the rule and interests of the Western European colonial powers, especially as NATO allies, while stronger U.S. commercial and military interests were being pursued more avidly in the “U.S. sphere of influence” in Central and South America.

North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)

In 1946, the U.S. Army School of the Americas opened in Panama as a hemisphere-wide military academy to “control internal subversion” as well as the 1957 Office of Public Safety. That doctrine of fending off communist organization and presence in Latin America was pursued in Costa Rica in 1948, Guatemala in the 1950s, Cuba in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as providing support for the dictatorships in Brazil, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Chile, and Central America, often with support or guidance from the CIA and the Green Berets. Perhaps the most open symbol of that U.S. policy was in the support of the dictatorship of the Somosas in Nicaragua. In that

¹ See the current website <http://concernedafricascholars.org>

² El-Khawas, Mohamed A. and Barry Cohen, eds. *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Study Memorandum 39 (Secret)*, Westport, Conn., Lawrence Hill & Company, 1976; and Lake, Anthony, *The ‘Tar Baby’ Option: American policy toward Southern Rhodesia* by New York, Columbia University Press, 1976.

context in 1967, the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) was organized by “a contemporary group of civil rights, antiwar and labor activists who came together to challenge elite conceptions of the ‘national interest’ as fundamentally opposed to the real interests of the majority of the American people.” NACLA activists sought “...a world in which the nations and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are free from oppression and injustice, and enjoy a relationship with the United States based on mutual respect, free from economic and political subordination.” Like so many of these pro-Third World scholarly movements, in a period of a great vacuum in media coverage of the region, the initial focus was on “information” through a newsletter that viewed policy and events “through a Latin American lens.”³

“...our mission is to provide information and analysis on the region, and on its complex and changing relationship with the United States, as tools for education and advocacy - to foster knowledge beyond borders.”⁴

NACLA has flourished in the intervening years with a bi-monthly magazine, an active website, and a continuing flow of analysis and campaigns for justice in Latin and Central America. Currently, these include a focus in Latin America on “Guns: The Small Arms Trade in the Americas,” HIV/AIDS, “Immigrants and the Homeland Security State,” and a new campaign on “Not Just Change, But Justice: Taking on Policy in the Obama Era,” seeking specific foreign policy changes beginning with the taking on the economic blockade and political isolation of Cuba, the U.S.-sponsored drug war, border security, and the continued functioning of the re-named School of the Americas at Ft. Benning in Georgia.

The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS)

CCAS was first organized in 1967 and formalized with an annual meeting in 1969 in response to the U.S. presence in Southeast Asia. With headquarters first at University of California-Berkeley, CCAS had affiliated chapters in 16 universities and four outside the U.S. with participation by Asianist scholars especially in the large Title VI National Resource Centers for East, South, and Southeast Asian Studies. The CCAS quickly focused on identifying U.S. AID and State Department initiatives on campuses in support of the Vietnam war as well as publications such as the substantial and peer-reviewed *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* and monographs and reports such as *The Indochina Story* (1970) and *China! Inside the People's Republic* (1972). Some were activist publications such as the *Indochina War Information Packet*, prepared by CCAS Committee at Cornell University in 1970.

As Mark Selden, professor of Asian Studies at SUNY Binghamton noted,

“For Asianists of my generation, the Vietnam War was the decisive moment defining the context of Asian scholarship and, for some, of American politics, at least until 9 /11 and the Iraq War. Questioning the relationship between thought and action led me to interrogate dominant state ideologies as reflected in scholarship. It also led me to aspire to find ways to stop illegitimate violence and contribute to social justice.”⁵

The presence of the Vietnam conflict daily on the evening news and the pressure on campus and on college students of the draft and draft resistance across the country increased the urgency for scholarly response in 1967. As with ACAS, the first arena for action of CCAS was the annual meeting of the regional scholarly association in 1968 (Ibid., p. 251). In 2009, the major presence of

³ <http://nacla.org/history>, Accessed 2/1/2009

⁴ <http://nacla.org/history>, Accessed 2/2/2009

⁵ Tani E. Barlow, “Responsibility and Politics: An Interview with Mark Selden,” *Positions* 12:1, 2004, Duke University Press, p 249.

the CCAS is through the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars.

Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)

The third of the pro-Third World scholarly organizations was the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), which produced copious publications in its *MERIP Reports* serial. Begun in 1971 by anti-Vietnam activists, the project, like NACLA, initially sought to provide information and critical analysis on the Middle East that would be picked up by the existing media.⁶ Substantively, MERIP sought “to connect U.S. policy of Southeast Asia with U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.” (Ibid.) MERIP has remained highly critical of those U.S. foreign policies.

“US foreign policy exacerbates the disastrous state of affairs in the contemporary Middle East. Although the political contours of the world have changed radically since the collapse of the USSR and the Gulf War of 1991, US goals in the region have remained remarkable consistent: to control the flow of oil, to prevent the growth of Arab nationalist and leftist movements and to protect Israel.”⁷

Over the years 1971-85, *MERIP Reports* (later *MERIP Middle East Report* 1986-88, then *Middle East Report* 1988-) gained authority, though establishment representatives saw it as too pro-Palestine. MERIP remained committed “to provide the most considered and accurate information and analysis on the Middle East and US policy there...”⁸ By 1981, it had published 100 issues over 10 years and became widely used and acclaimed in the Middle East where, West Bank Palestinians, for

instance, said it was their only reliable source of information on Iran.

In 2009, MERIP maintains a very active program with a lively website of *MERIP Reports Online*, an program of placing op-eds in many U.S. newspapers, and the Middle East Report, and a print quarterly with recent topics of Empire's Eastern Reach (2008), Displaced (2007), The War Economy of Iraq (2007), and The Shi'a in the Arab World (2007).

The Africa-focused Precursors of ACAS

The context for the formation of ACAS was quite different from its three predecessors with the development in the 1950s to 1970s of other organizations mobilizing support and publishing on African justice and democracy issues. By 1953, only five years after formal apartheid was established, George Houser⁹ and other civil rights activists from the Congress of Racial Equality and Fellowship of Reconciliation had formed the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) in New York among a collection of blacks and whites who sought to support the Defiance Campaign in South Africa. They were able to build on the earlier mobilization of the International Committee on African Affairs (formed in 1937 and later renamed the Council on African Affairs). In the late 1950s, ACOA brought a number of young African leaders, e.g. Kenneth Kaunda from Zambia, to the United Nations and U.S. in preparation for African independence in the 1960s. ACOA also built cooperation with the U.N. Unit on Apartheid and with the Southern African liberation movements. In the 1960s-1980s, ACOA, and the Africa Fund after 1966, became the main organizing agency for the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S., providing focus on apartheid policies in South Africa and Namibia, on Rhodesia, and on the Portuguese territories of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau.

⁶ <http://www.merip.org/misc/about.html>, Accessed 2/2/2009

⁷ *Middle East Report*.

<http://web.archive.org/web/19981206091952/http://www.merip.org/>, Accessed 2/2/2009.

⁸ Johnson, Peter and Joe Stork, *MERIP Reports*, No. 100/101, Special Anniversary Issue (Oct. - Dec., 1981), p 55, Published by: Middle East Research and Information Project, Accessed 2.2.2009, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/3012380>

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Houser

During the 1970s, the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) and the WOA Education Fund (later changed to the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC in the mid-1990s) were founded in Washington, DC to lobby Congress on African issues and to produce research, analysis, and education materials on the U.S. role in Africa and on a variety of African issues, including global and African economic policy, HIV/AIDS and treatment, democracy and elections in various countries, trade wars, oil, human rights, and peacekeeping.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the University Christian Movement's magazine in New York, *Southern Africa*, provided news and organizing bulletins for the growing anti-apartheid movement across the U.S. News about Africa and struggles for independence on the continent increasingly were provided by *Africa News*, initiated in 1972 in Durham, NC and now incorporated into allAfrica.com. (By the late 1990s, allAfrica.com was posting more than 1,000 stories daily from 130 African news organizations with an online archive of more than 900,000 articles.) These and other African liberation initiatives were supported by various civil rights and global justice agencies from the Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Disciples, Lutheran, and Methodist churches and the National and World Councils of Churches. Many of the founders of these initiatives came from overseas experience in Africa supported by these churches and from the Peace Corps. The latter were organized in the Committee of Return Volunteers, which was quite active in protesting the Vietnam War in 1967 and 1970s.

Also in the 1960s and 1970s, a number of anti-apartheid committees and organizations were being founded across the country in Madison, East Lansing, Ann Arbor, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Amherst, Boston, Princeton, Chapel Hill, as well as in churches, unions, and state and local governments. A number of the founders of ACAS had organized or participated in these local Southern Africa-focused organizations and movements for sanctions and divestiture. These

committees actively drew on the research and publications of ACOA, WOA, and the International Defense and Aid Fund (IDAFSA) based in London.

The combination of these African activist national news and information sources created a very different context for the formation of ACAS in the late 1970s because a broad national source of news on Africa and on activism on U.S. Africa policy was not needed so urgently as for Latin America and the Middle East. What was needed was critical content and analysis on the issues from legitimate scholars, which ACAS sought to provide.

Finally, a number of the Africanists who formed ACAS were participating in a marked change in the theories of area studies. Rather than ethnographic studies that were confined to a particular language or ethnic group, beginning in the late 1960s, younger scholars brought a new conceptualization of Africa as part of the "political economy of the world system." Such a perspective naturally looked at the global parameters of economic systems and world politics as the context for understanding Africa, for which U.S. and other Western foreign policies were a major force.

ACAS and U.S. Policy in the 1970s

In addition to these national and local African activist and anti-apartheid organizations of the 1960s and 1970s, three other developments shaped the beginnings of ACAS in 1977-78: 1) the mounting protest and violent armed struggle in Southern Africa, 2) the racial cleavages in the U.S. African studies community which made collaboration among scholars across racial lines difficult, and 3) the mounting role of U.S. security agencies in U.S. foreign policy toward Africa.

First, the Western support for the Southern African regimes was juxtaposed with the mounting uprisings in South Africa, the apartheid state's repression, and the armed struggle in Southern Rhodesia, Namibia, South Africa, and Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique. In 1976 a non-

violent march by 15,000 students in Soweto, resulted in days of rioting. The apartheid police opened fire on the crowd and killed 566 children, an event resounding around the world. Then in 1977 anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko was killed in police custody. With the mounting news of turbulence across the region and with the growing armed struggle via the military wings of ANC, SWAPO, ZANU, and ZAPU, the possibility of major race conflict across Southern Africa escalated.

In this context, the arguments that a “liberalized South Africa” and the U.S. companies there could ameliorate raw apartheid rang hollow; it was not a moment of ambiguity but of clarity about conflict across the region. In this context, the publishing of the NSSM #39 of 1969, which was not made public until 1976, with Kissinger’s clear siding with the whites and the defining the African liberation movements as the communist enemy, there remained little middle room for Africanists liberals. Simultaneously, the U.S. corporate sector was banding together to resist both sanctions against South Africa and divestiture from their corporate stock funds by universities, churches, and unions. Already by 1978, two major universities and one college had begun divestment from U.S. companies operating in South Africa,¹⁰ and the companies were mobilizing more actively to offer the Sullivan Principles¹¹ as a means to reduce segregation in the work place, improve worker relations, and, thereby, to justify the corporations remaining in South Africa. The combination of corporate mobilization and the increasing violent repression in South Africa seemed to offer few opportunities for a peaceful transition.

¹⁰ Michigan State University Board of Trustees in East Lansing and Hampshire College trustees in Amherst, MA voted for and accomplished full divestiture in 1977. University of Wisconsin-Madison followed after the State Attorney General advised on the possible illegality of investments in discriminatory corporations abroad.

¹¹ Sullivan, Rev. Leon. The Sullivan Principles, <http://muweb.marshall.edu/revleonsullivan/principled/principles.htm> Accessed February 9, 2009.

Second, the severe racial cleavages in U.S. African Studies had been given voice in the protest at the joint Africans Studies Association (ASA) and Canadian African Studies Association meeting in Montreal in October 1969. Many Black students and scholars disrupted the meeting protesting the exclusion of Black leadership from the association and from the resources and funding of African studies in general. In addition, the protestors also complained that many of the leaders of the ASA were deeply engaged with the U.S. government in the Cold War manipulation of African governments and leaders. Some of the ASA scholars had CIA connections, they alleged, and these were inimical to impartial scholarship and were aimed to undercut African autonomy and independence. (The African Research Group made a similar analysis at that time in its charges about the “U.S. imperialist penetration of Africa.”)

The early leadership of ACAS was committed both to bridging this racial gap in African studies and including African and African-descended researchers in ACAS as well as to advocate strenuously that studies by Africanists no longer should be used to oppress Africans and African states. As a result, ACAS made certain that its Board was inclusive and that one co-chair of the organization always was African-American. Originally, the ACAS leadership planned either to hold all ACAS meetings outside of the ASA or, alternatively, at the annual meetings of both the ASA and the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA). The AHSA was seeking to revive the earlier strong African American study of Africa in the International Committee on African Affairs (formed in 1937 and later renamed the Council on African Affairs), the Association of Negro Life and History, and other organizations and journals of the Black community. These organizations had disseminated information on Africa, provided scholarships to African students, and lobbied for colonial reform.¹² In addition, TransAfrica was

¹² Horne, Gerald and Mary Young, eds. *W.E.B. Du Bois: an encyclopedia*, Abingdon, UK: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001.

formed in 1977 “after the Black Leadership Conference convened by the Congressional Black Caucus ... concluded that the conspicuous absence of African Americans in high-level international affairs positions, and the general neglect of African and Caribbean priorities.”¹³ With several leading African American scholars on its Board of Directors, building this organizational voice for African American advocacy on U.S. Africa policy became a large priority. Holding meetings in both ASA and AHSA proved to be a great challenge, given little enthusiasm on the AHSA side, and ACAS meetings reverted to being held only at ASA annual meetings; however, the principle of multiracial leadership has continued throughout the life of ACAS.

The third major force shaping ACAS was the steadily increasing role of the Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense in U.S. relations with Africa during the Cold War, an issue that was to dominate much of the political action within ACAS for its history. As many African nations became independent in the early 1960s, John Kennedy’s U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, G. Mennen Williams (former Governor of Michigan 1948-60), made speeches in Africa about the U.S. siding with Africa, that “Africa was for the Africans,” and that the U.S. was the “first new and anti-colonial nation” and identified with Africa’s aspirations for independence and democracy. Many promises were made for supporting African development with experts, education, and U.S. economic assistance. Simultaneously, Western and Israeli intelligence agencies became more active in subverting African leaders and governments. In the mid-1970s, just before ACAS was organized, President Nixon (1969-74) and Secretary of State Kissinger (1969-77) with strong conservative support brought the U.S. to side with and arm Portugal with planes, herbicides, and napalm to use against the liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and

Mozambique. When the Portuguese colonial government collapsed in 1974, the CIA, provided active support for the FNLA and UNITA through Zaire (D.R.Congo) while South Africa, China, and Israel worked in various ways to support a civil war against the MPLA government in Luanda led by Agostinho Neto and the Cuban allies. Also clear was the direct attempt to subvert ZANU and ZAPU from coming to power in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the delaying of the independence of Namibia from South Africa, and the covert support by government and corporations for South Africa itself.

The founding of ACAS

In this tumultuous period in spring 1977, a number of scholars met for two conferences on Southern Africa at Michigan State University (MSU) and University of Minnesota. The combined conference papers, published as *Southern Africa: Society, Economy and Liberation*,¹⁴ voiced the support of scholars for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa and provided the *raison d’être* for founding ACAS. Many of those attending the conferences were the first members of ACAS, beginning with an informal assembly at the MSU Kellogg Center following the conference in April 1977, where the organization of ACAS was proposed. The formalization of ACAS as an organization then followed at the annual meeting of the ASA in November, 1978 at Houston, TX.

Over the years, ACAS dealt with dozens of political issues in its *ACAS Newsletter* (later becoming the *ACAS Bulletin*), supplemented in recent years with the ACAS website. In the first decade, the focus was almost exclusively on Southern Africa issues. Afterwards, the Political Action Committee and officers pursued: U.S. foreign policy across Africa, health, women’s issues especially women and war, AIDS, the debate over U.S. aid to Africa, the problems of Zimbabwe and Kenya, defending

¹³ “TransAfrica Forum: Our History”
<http://www.transafricaforum.org/about-us/our-history>,
 consulted 3/10/2009.

¹⁴ Wiley, David and Isaacman, Allen, eds. *Southern Africa: Society, Economy, and Liberation*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1981.

intellectual freedom and individual scholars under attack, children under apartheid, the geopolitics of oil, divestment and other sanctions on South Africa, the “ghettoization of African studies” debate, U.S. corporations and African economies, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, cancellation of African debt, political agendas for U.S. scholars of Africa, drought and water issues, democratization and civil society, World Bank and IMF policies, and civil conflict across Africa.

One issue moved to the center of ACAS concern in its first decade – the disorganization of African post-independence societies by foreign military and intelligence agencies. In a series of developments, ACAS learned early about the insinuation of the CIA and DOD into U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. The first of these cases, appearing in the first issue of the newsletter as “Why We Said No to U.S. AID” was authored by several of the inaugural leaders of ACAS, explaining how they had been invited to prepare for Zimbabwean independence by another ACAS member who had been appointed as head of U.S. AID’s Africa Desk in the Carter Administration. After they began to plan to participate, they discovered that the U.S. AID plan was being used by the CIA to engineer an Ian Smith government with Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa, an “internal settlement” that would bypass the ZANU and ZAPU liberation movements.¹⁵ In addition, the U.S. intelligence operations in Africa included the CIA-organized civil war in Angola,¹⁶ the revelations in *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa*,¹⁷ the U.S. intelligence identifying Nelson Mandela’s hiding place to the apartheid police,¹⁸ and the more open U.S. linkages with South Africa under the “Constructive

Engagement” policy articulated by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker after the Reagan election in the 1980s.¹⁹ Previously in the 1960s, both the CIA involvement in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and installation of Gen. Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire/Congo had been evident, as was the support for the Israeli installation of Idi Amin in Uganda, displacing President Milton Obote, and a later-revealed attempt to unseat and assassinate Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah.²⁰ After Reagan’s election in 1980, the U.S. opposition to the African liberation movements (including their representatives in the U.S.) was clear. ACAS had pushed through the ASA’s Committee on Current Issues, several of whose chairpersons had been ACAS member, to give a platform in the ASA annual meetings to the representatives of the ANC, PAC, FRELIMO, SWAPO, MPLA, ZANU, and ZAPU; representatives of COREMO and RENAMO in Mozambique and SWANU and FNLA had also come to meetings. In addition in 1984, Chester Crocker was greeted with a hostile reception by many in ACAS when he spoke at the ASA annual meeting. Since its founding, therefore, ACAS opposed the militarization of U.S. policy and the engagement of the CIA in operations against the independence and autonomy of African governments.

In this context, ACAS put a great deal of effort into building a consensus in the African studies community to oppose military and intelligence funding and sponsorship in any activities of African

¹⁵ See Gervasi, Sean, Ann Seidman, Immanuel Wallerstein, David Wiley, “Why We Said ‘No’ to U.S. A.I.D.,” *ACAS Newsletter*, No. 1, 1978, p.7-9.

¹⁶ Stockwell, John. *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*, NY: W.W. Norton, 1978.

¹⁷ Ray, Ellen, et al, eds. *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa*, Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, c1979.

¹⁸ South African History Online, “Nelson Mandela,” http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/special/projects/mandela/bio_4.htm, consulted 3/3/2009.

¹⁹ Bell, Coral “The Reagan Paradox” Edward Elgar publishing page 117 (1989); Crocker, Chester A., *An update of constructive engagement in South Africa*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Public Communication, Editorial Division, [September 26, 1984.]; Davies, J.E., *Constructive Engagement?: Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia & Angola*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007.

²⁰ Curtis, Adam, “Interview with John Stockwell on ‘Black Power,’” *BBC Two Series, “Pandora’s Box,”* (22 June 1992); and Gaines, Kevin *American Africans in Ghana, Black expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2006.

studies. In 1982, several officers of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) approached four Title VI African centers to explore their willingness to receive large annual budget supplements in exchange for being “on call” to develop unspecified reports and undefined services. The directors of the four centers, including several ACAS members, consulted and agreed to not accept the funding and that they should consult with the wider Africanist community about these policies. After that consultation, they concluded that it was not in U.S. interests to link with the DIA which could compromise their partnership collaborations and linkages in Africa with African institutions and scholars as well as potentially provide scholarly legitimacy to the broader CIA/DIA/DOD/NSA hostilities to progressive African governments. ACAS concurred with the decision and since then has opposed any mixing of military or intelligence funding with African studies. In 2001, the Title VI African center directors reaffirmed that stand:

...to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies. ... We believe that the long-term interests of the people of the United States are best served by this separation between academic and military and defense establishments. Indeed, in the climate of the post-Cold War years in Africa and the security concerns after September 11, 2001, we believe that it is a patriotic policy to make this separation.²¹

With a number of ACAS members and directors in the Association of African Studies Programs (AASP), that organization of more than 50 African programs in universities and colleges across the

country also passed motions in the 1980s, which in 1993 and 2002 reaffirmed,

... our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies or their contractual representatives - for work in the United States or abroad.²²

In 2006 and 2008, the AASP membership decided not to reconsider or change those policies. Finally, after substantial ACAS lobbying within the African Studies Association (ASA), the Board of Directors of the Association voted to support the stance of the Title VI directors and the AASP with a resolution renewed in 2001 and 2009.

In 1991, continuing this renewed national security focus on area studies, the Congress, with leadership from Senator David Boren (R-OK), passed the *David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991* (NSEA, Title VIII of P.L. 102-183) establishing the National Security Education Program (NSEP), providing “...aid for international education and foreign language studies by American undergraduate and graduate students, plus grants to institutions of higher education.” Most of the area studies and several scholarly associations, including the Social Science Research Council, immediately objected to this mixture of military and intelligence programs with academic area studies and urged that federal support for language and area studies be routed through the U.S. Department of Education and its Title VI Higher Education Act programs. In the end, this alternative failed, and Congress adopted the Act to provide DOD Defense Intelligence Agency funding for a) students to study languages abroad with a federal agency service requirement afterwards, b) projects to build U.S.

²¹ Text of Resolution by the Directors of Title VI Africa National Resource Centers, (Passed unanimously November 17, 2001, African Studies Association, Houston, Texas) in “The Africanist Positions on Military and Intelligence Funding and Service in the National Interest in African Research, Service, and Studies,” undated, circa 2008.

²² Text of Resolution by the *Association of African Studies Programs* (1993), in “The Africanist Positions on Military and Intelligence Funding and Service in the National Interest in African Research, Service, and Studies,” undated circa 2008.

educational competence in international affairs, and, in recent years, c) “language flagship” centers to advance U.S. students’ study of designated “strategic” less commonly taught languages to the level of advanced proficiency.

After Congress authorized the Act, ACAS led a vigorous campaign to review and oppose the Boren funding, with articles, web announcements, leaflets, and panels at ASA. Africanists, alone among area studies scholars, have continued to decline these fellowships, now administered through the Institute for International Education. A number of university administrators made clear to the African center directors that they disagreed with the Africanist policy and regarded this as bad decision-making to decline federal funding for student overseas study. In one case, an African center director was fired by his university president for joining this consensus position. (Later, he was returned to his position when the university president resigned.) In addition, African centers have been vigorously attacked in Congress by right wing congressmen and by conservative journalists, for their lack of patriotism and using federal funding such as “...some centers plowed the money into bogus ‘outreach’ — university-based programs that siphoned taxpayer money to off-campus radicals, who used it to propagandize K-12 teachers.”²³

In 2008-09, ACAS faces a new struggle to reduce U.S. military and intelligence programs focused on Africa with the establishment in October of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Stuttgart.

AFRICOM has almost 1400 employees pursuing U.S. military policy and planning for Africa, in addition to the military personnel stationed at embassies in Africa, in DOD Africa posts in the U.S., and stationed at the U.S. Camp Lemonier Base in Djibouti. This compares with the less than 250 members of the State Department focused on Africa. In articles and panels, various ACAS members have made it clear that the ACAS focus on AFRICOM is based on the great potential for the further militarization of Africa after a century of colonial and Cold War militarization of African societies and a belief that Africa urgently needs a demilitarization, including de-mining and reducing arms sales in Africa, effective peacekeeping in several areas of continuing instability, as well as economic assistance to clean up the wreckage of civil societies destroyed by the proxy wars of the Cold War era.

Undoubtedly, unless the Obama Administration makes a 180° turn away from a foreign policy focused on the Global War on Terror in Africa and the securing of African oil, this focus on U.S. foreign security policy will remain at the center of ACAS concerns for the decade ahead.

About the Author

David Wiley is Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University, where he was African Studies Center director 1977-2008. Previously, he was co-chairperson of ACAS and president of the African Studies Association.

²³ Kramer, Martin, “Title VI: Let the games begin!,” posted Tuesday, 14 February 2006, <http://www.martinkramer.org/>, Consulted 3/10/2009. Stanley Kurtz also commented on the Title VI program that “clearly the program isn’t working, and sad to say, some of this is intentional. Many radical professors actually boycott national security related scholarship programs. Thus, some of the very same academics who benefit from Title VI subsidies are actively trying to undermine the core purpose of the program.” “Taking Sides on Title VI: Middle East Studies reform goes partisan.” By Stanley Kurtz, *National Review Online*, December 12, 2007 7:00 AM, <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NzI2ZTJjZjk4MjZkZDMwMDhIOWZiMWMzNDZhZTgyZTg=>, consulted 3/10/2009.

ACAS Puts Health on its Agenda

Meredeth Turshen (Rutgers University)

At the 1991 ASA meeting in St. Louis, ACAS members made a number of decisions designed to move the organization forward to a new level of activism in the decade of the 1990s. ACAS established thirteen issue working groups: US Aid and US Foreign Policy; Scholar Activists; Academic Freedom in Education; Regional and Pan-African Linkages; Why Africa has fallen off the Policy Map; US Support for Authoritarian Regimes; Democratization: a Guise for Destabilization; Environment; Africa's Economic Crisis; South Africa's transition; Post-apartheid Development in Southern Africa; and the Financial Intellectual Complex. Doe Mayer and I coordinated group number 8, "Health: Whose Agenda?" (see ACAS Bulletin 35). Issue Working Group papers (including ours) appeared in Bulletin 38/39, "Proposed agendas for scholars of Africa" in 1993.

In 1995 I edited a special double issue of the Bulletin on Health and Africa (number 44/45), with significant African input on issues ranging from female genital mutilation to World Bank and World Health Organization policies for African health care. In 1998, a second bulletin devoted to health appeared, "Health and Political Violence" (number 50/51); based in part on panels at ASA in 1997, this issue covered events in Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Sudan.

Since then there has been a steady contribution of articles on health issues to the ACAS Bulletin and, in 2006, a special issue devoted to AIDS (number 74). I feel satisfied that this issue is now an established part of ACAS debates and permanently on the ACAS agenda. I want to extend my personal thanks to all editors, guest editors and contributors: ACAS Bulletins are great teaching tools, and in the era before the internet the Bulletin was able to get

topical material into circulation much faster than academic journals.

As Bill Martin notes in the overview (this issue), the work on health helped ACAS reach beyond the southern Africa solidarity model and changed the makeup of the ACAS Executive, Board, etc., bringing in new people with different expertise and interests. The work on health led and reflected changes in ACAS and the scholar-activist world more generally. With the consolidation of ACOA and the Africa Fund into Africa Action, Salih Booker undertook a major push to reorient US government policy on aid to the AIDS epidemic, and Bill Minter has maintained our interest with regular bulletins from Africa Focus excerpting policy documents on AIDS in Africa.

An interesting byproduct of the health issues, or so it seems to me, is the introduction of women's issues. In 1999, Ousseina Alidou and I edited a double issue on women and war (number 55/56). It remains the only ACAS Bulletin devoted to women's issues, although occasional articles have appeared (viz. numbers 62/63, 68). It is ten years since ACAS published a double issue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (number 53/54). Since 1998 over 5 million people have died in what some have described as Africa's first international war. An epidemic of rape has been reported—but not in the pages of the Bulletin. The issue on Africa's resources (number 75/76) does not link the plundering of Congo's mineral wealth to the vicious assaults on women. (For anyone interested in the connection, see *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo* (www.thegreatestsilence.org). It is my hope that in the coming decades ACAS will include an analysis of/by women in every special issue, whether the theme is Africa's resources, new politics, race, debt reduction, or . . .

Summary of the Founding Meeting of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars Houston, Texas November 3, 1977*

Concerned Africa Scholars

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Edris Makward, University of Wisconsin, Madison, who introduced the two main speakers: Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein and Mr. Edgar Lockwood, who spoke concerning "American Scholars and the Political Economy of Southern Africa" and "The Carter Administration and Southern Africa an Overview," respectively. (See summaries elsewhere in newsletter.) A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to establish the Association of Concerned African Scholars (ACAS) as an organization to achieve the following goals:

1. To facilitate the articulation of scholarly analysis and opinion with the process of national and international policy formulation with special focus on the policy of the United States government.
2. To formulate and communicate alternatives to U.S. Africa policies to the peoples of the United States and Africa.
3. To develop a communication network among concerned Africanist scholars in order to (a) mobilize support on important current issues, (b) provide local sponsors for public education programs, (c) stimulate research on policy-oriented issues and to disseminate findings, and (d) to inform and update members on important international policy developments.
4. To coordinate activities with other national and local organizations in order to facilitate each other's work and not to compete.

* ACAS Newsletter 1 (1977), p. 2


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| | | ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICAN SCHOLARS P.O. Box 791, East Lansing, MI 48823 | |
| ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICAN SCHOLARS 1979 ANNUAL MEETING The annual membership meeting of ACAS for 1979 will be held from Saturday, MAY 19 to Monday, MAY 21, 1979 at HOWARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C. Please keep this weekend free. Plan to attend for a full program including: | | | |
| Saturday, May 19 . . . panel sessions on current Southern Africa events and trends . . . address on U.S. Africa policy by prominent Washington spokesperson Sunday, May 20 . . . workshops on ACAS objectives vis-a-vis U.S. policy . . . ACAS business meeting including election of new officers and ratification of ACAS constitution Monday, May 21 . . . ACAS lobbying on Capitol Hill Hotel accommodation will be available at Harambee House, adjacent to the Howard University campus. | | | |
| Membership dues are now due from all ACAS members (old and new). ACAS MEMBERSHIP DUES are based on income: Income under \$10,000 \$10.00 Between \$10,000 - 20,000 \$20.00 Over \$20,000 \$30.00 Students/unemployed \$ 7.50 Please send dues for 1978/79 to: Tom W. Shick Dept. of Afro-American Studies University of Wisconsin Madison, WI 53706 | | join ACAS now! MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM Name Mailing address (zip) Affiliation Office phone Home phone | |

IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 2 (1978)

A motion was made to elect officers of ACAS for a period of one year, beginning with the completion of the officer slate at the New York Spring Meeting, 1978. Co-chairpersons were to be elected, one at this meeting and one at the Spring Meeting in New York. The offices and persons elected as the first co-officer in each case were:

Co-Chairperson: Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein, SUNY-Binghamton

Co-Chair, Committee for Research: Prof. Ann Seidman, U. Massachusetts

Co-Chair, Committee for Political Education and Action: Prof. Willard Johnson, MIT

Co-Chair, Committee for Membership: Prof. George Shepherd, Univ. of Denver

Co-Treasurer: Prof. Tom Shick, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

Co-Newsletter Editor: Prof. Michael Bratton, Michigan State Univ., on behalf of a group of persons at MSU who are cooperating.


An interim organizing membership fee of \$5 was established, pending establishing regular activities and annual dues. Approximately 80 persons paid this fee and joined at the end of the meeting.

We made two decisions right at the start. One was that we would call ourselves "Africa scholars" and not "Africanists." It was a moment of sensitivity about terminology. And the second was that we wanted ACAS somehow to bridge the split between ASA and AHSA. The way we would do that was twofold: We would hold our meetings neither during an ASA meeting nor during an AHSA meeting but separate from both. And we would have co-chairs at every level, in order that we could draw one person linked with each of the two organizations.

We did this for several years. It didn't really work. First of all, it was expensive and difficult to hold a separate meeting, and not too many people could come. So, after several years, when the hostility between ASA and AHSA had cooled down, we decided to meet during the ASA meetings, and have been doing that ever since. We continued to have co-chairs, but it lost the element of balancing ASA and AHSA.

For a long time, ACAS concentrated on the issue of the liberation of southern Africa, which seemed the right priority. But once all that was finally accomplished, ACAS had to rethink its role and its activities, which was difficult at first, but has now, I think, been done.

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| ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICAN SCHOLARS P.O. BOX 791, EAST LANSING, MI 48823 | |

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| ACAS CONSULTATION ON NAMIBIA April 20, 1979 Sarah Delano Roosevelt House, Hunter College, 47-49 East 65 Street (between Madison and Park), New York City | |
| The ACAS consultation will center around the theme "A Free and Independent Namibia." Discussions will be held on the various proposals for Namibian independence and their viability in terms of the interests of the Namibian people. If the U.N.-sponsored election is being held at that time, the meeting will consider the prospects of success of the electoral solution in the light of the past and the future. | |
| The format of the consultation will be built around three scholarly papers and two major addresses, with commentaries by the various parties involved, including representatives of the U.N., SWAPO, the United States and activist organizations. Some recommendations may be made from this consultation to the general membership of ACAS at its annual meeting to be held at Howard University in May. The papers and some of the commentary of the Namibia consultation will be published in a summer 1979 issue of <i>Africa Today</i> . | |
| The papers to be presented include: | |
| Professor Richard Dale, Political Science Department, Southern Illinois University <i>The Background to the Rise of Namibian Nationalism</i> | |
| Professor Ben Magubane, Sociology Department, University of Connecticut <i>The International Conflict Over Namibia</i> | |
| Professor George Shepherd, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver <i>The Basis of a Free and Fair Settlement</i> | |
| SWAPO and the Front Line States, as well as the views of South Africa and the Contact States, will be represented. Reservations should be sent to Dean Tilden LeMelle, College of Arts and Sciences, Hunter College, CUNY, 695 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. | |

IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 3 (1979)

Draft Statement of Principles*

Concerned Africa Scholars

This statement of principles is presented in draft form for the consideration of ACAS members.

'We are a grouping of scholars interested in Africa and concerned with moving U.S. policy toward Africa in directions more sympathetic to African interests. For political and practical reasons, our emphasis for the foreseeable future will be on southern Africa.'

We are encouraged by the overall direction of events in southern Africa, but we remain skeptical of U.S. government intentions in the area. We remember the crusading rhetoric with which the U.S. began its intervention in Indochina and the liberal image of the Kennedy administration during the time that intervention was expanded. We both recall and continue to be conscious of U.S. overt and covert intervention in Angola, of U.S. assistance to support Morocco's aid to Zaire, and of the legacy of U.S. and NATO support for Portugal in its former colonies. We note the de facto support provided for the system of white supremacy in South Africa by United States economic, military and nuclear ties.

The people of southern Africa have in recent years taken enormous strides in their struggles to liberate themselves. There is real danger, however, that the U.S. corporate and government involvement will hamper their full attainment of their goals. We as scholars have both the possibility of, and the responsibility for, preventing this danger from materializing. We particularly feel the need for emphasizing the long-term interests of the African and American peoples, and for clearly distinguishing these interests from those of the transnational corporations and the U.S. government.

* From ACAS Newsletter 1 (1977), p. 2.



IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 5 (1981)

WE WILL ACT:

1. To promote scholarly analysis and opinion vis-à-vis the process of national and international policy formulation.
2. To formulate and communicate alternatives to U.S. Africa policies to the peoples of the U.S. and Africa.
3. To develop a communication network among concerned African scholars in order to (a) mobilize support on important current issues; (b) provide local sponsors for public education programs; (c) stimulate research on policy-oriented issues and to disseminate findings; (d) to inform and update members on important international policy

developments.

This new organization is not intended to be in competition with other groups and organizations working on southern Africa but rather complementary to them. There is an important and distinct role that scholars can play in terms of research and analysis.

The scholarly community is both a forum for substantial debate and a constituency for action. And scholars' very position in their community permits them to add credibility and legitimacy to particular analyses and policy positions.

Why Scholars Ought to be More Directly Involved

As students of Africa, we have a responsibility to Africa. That responsibility requires that we be particularly sensitive to, and provide support for, African aspirations. Whatever our disciplines and areas of research interest, we ought by now to be clear about the nature and causes of injustice, oppression, and exploitation in southern Africa. We also ought to be clear that peoples throughout Africa give high priority to the ending of white rule in southern Africa. Since the U.S. government and corporations are contributing to the perpetuation of white domination and underdevelopment of Africa, we must act consciously to challenge them.

This is a critical time. In the current verbiage about the reassessment of U.S. policy toward southern Africa, there may be some potential for new directions, or at least an opening to challenge a reaffirmation of the long-standing commitment to neocolonial relationships. We need to organize and act while we can have most effect.

This is also a critical time because black South Africans have once again reminded us of the vitality of their struggle. Their actions have once again exposed as myths the notions of African acquiescence and of the invulnerability of apartheid. Zimbabweans and Namibians are on the verge of

genuine independence. We need to do what we can to remove the obstacles to their liberation.

Though our vision is broad, we do not expect to be able, quickly and by ourselves, to change the nature of world capitalism, or to initiate an entirely new U.S. foreign policy, or to overcome centuries of underdevelopment and racism. We do believe that on specific issues, at particular moments, we can employ our knowledge to exercise a positive influence. And we think that neither those issues nor our influence is inconsequential.

The image of a humane, peaceful, and just world, however distant, haunts and strengthens us; it clarifies what we have in common with the peoples of Africa. To have an effect at all, we must organize our strengths.

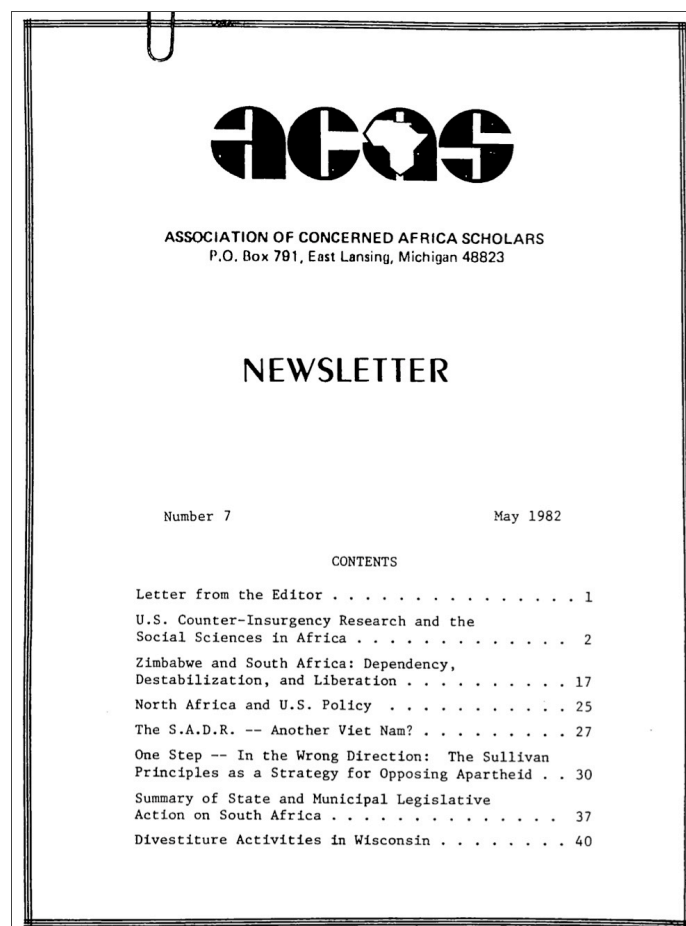


IMAGE: Cover, ACAS Newsletter 7 (1982)

Southern Africa and Liberal Interventionism*

Immanuel Wallerstein

The Carter administration has been asserting of late that it is seeking to bring about majority rule in southern Africa. It has put forward an image of liberal interventionism-on the side of the Africans. Yet Joshua Nkomo and Sam Nujoma have insisted that all they want is for the US not to help the white regimes. Liberal interventionism stands forward as the most dangerous enemy of African liberation movements in southern Africa, and the Africans know it.

Geopolitically, southern Africa has become, and promises to remain for some time, a world node of acute political conflict. The ending of the war in Vietnam brought into being a relatively stable situation in that region. The Middle Eastern conflicts seem to be winding their way, however slowly, to an arrangement that may or may not turn out to be stable. But southern Africa promises most clearly to be a center of increasing, not decreasing, armed conflict.

The difficult years for African liberation (1965-74) were precisely the years of intensive US involvement in Vietnam. The United States clearly felt that it could not "afford" another major trouble zone and threw its weight behind the status quo. After the coup in Portugal in 1974 the downward thrust of African liberation was resumed. The response taken by Henry Kissinger was to drop the status quo option represented by NSSM 39 and to replace it with the liberal interventionism initiated hesitatingly under Eisenhower, then pursued with a flourish under Kennedy. At that time the US had encouraged the European powers to 'decolonize',

provided the resulting African regimes were pro-Western or at least 'non-aligned', and provided -- even more important -- that economic links with the West were not cut. Basically Kissinger sought to revive the earlier US option of a 'deal' of decolonization and apply it to southern Africa in 1976.

Thus when Andrew Young or Walter Mondale or David Owen speaks of a 'last chance' for a 'peaceful transition' he means it is a last chance to install relatively tame African governments in Zimbabwe and Namibia, governments that would hold their own radicals in check and would continue to permit the same steady flow of products and profits as historically has been the case. Of course the 'deal' would provide a cut for local politicians and businessmen. But this is no skin off the back of the large corporations. The 'cut' for African cadres would simply substitute for the 'cut' now taken by the white settlers.


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IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 12 (1984)

*Excerpts from an address by Immanuel Wallerstein to the first meeting of the Association of Concerned African Scholars (ACAS) Houston, Texas, November 3, 1977. Originally published in ACAS Newsletter 1 (1977), p. 3.

Why we said 'No' to A.I.D.*

Sean Gervasi
Immanuel Wallerstein
Ann Seidman
David Wiley

In 1977, Congress authorized the expenditure of one million dollars for "the preparation of a comprehensive analysis of development needs of southern Africa to enable the Congress to determine what contribution United States foreign assistance can make." AID was instructed to present specific proposals on how to spend this one million dollars. AID seems to have approached several groups of scholars heretofore critical of U.S. policy in southern Africa on the possibility of serving as "consultants" to draft this analysis. AID in late November approached the four of us as scholars in contact with persons knowledgeable about the region (and not ostensibly because of our links to the Association of Concerned African Scholars)** to meet with them to discuss what kind of work ought to be done, could be done, and might be done by us. We agreed to meet with them in December in Washington.

The project was presented to us as one on "Constraints to development of greater self reliance within and among the economies of the independent states in the southern Africa region." AID said it wished to identify and analyze these constraints in such a way as "to permit derivation of action policies and projects." AID said it wished a genuinely new approach which utilized African and Africanist scholars to articulate African aspirations. In this connection, they said they were discussing a proposal to develop a consortium of universities and scholars in the majority-ruled states of southern Africa as the major locus of such research.


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IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 14 (1985)

We discovered in talking with some of them that there were, however, some constraints imposed on how one could discuss constraints. One could not "politicize the analysis" (although one could "recognize the political context"). One could not discuss policymaking or policy goals of the U.S. or other governments towards the evolution of southern Africa. One was supposed to assume a majority rule government in Zimbabwe and Namibia, *however that were achieved*, and of whatever political groups that might be composed. One was *not* supposed to talk about the role of trans-national corporations, but only about the flow of factors of production.

In the course of the presentation by AID, we learned that it is likely that during an anticipated interim government, but prior to elections, a large World Bank mission will be sent to Rhodesia to prepare a

* Originally published in ACAS Newsletter 1 (1977), p. 7-9.

plan to be implemented by the “transition government” and presumably afterwards by the government of a majority-ruled Zimbabwe. We were told that our task would be to present an analysis of “development needs” for the entire region that was so persuasive that whoever was in power (in southern Africa or in the U.S.) would wish to adopt an action program based on this analysis, and that this would be a major contribution to an ongoing dialogue and debate within the U.S. government.

We rejected the proposal categorically on the following grounds:

1. We could see no way of discussing “development needs” in the absence of discussing the political arrangements that are probable and preferable.
2. As far as we could tell, present U.S. government policy in the National Security Council and the State Department was moving in a direction contrary to the aspirations of the liberation movements, and we could not work within such policy assumptions.
3. We felt we were far more likely to affect U.S. policy along lines we favored by laying bare its premises and mobilizing opinion than by “working from within”, *a fortiori* since we doubted that any AID analysis would affect policy decisions at the level of the National Security Council; and that “working from within” would hamper our credibility as fundamental critics of present U.S. policy.
4. We rejected any effort to *conceal* the nature of the debate by pretending to “de-politicize” it.
5. We rejected the assumption that development aid was necessarily *per se* a good thing, and that more aid is always better than less aid.
6. We rejected the assumption that the United States should be planning strategies of development for southern Africa, even if the parties concerned were

not making such plans, since it might be for good reason (but of course we believed the leaders of the Patriotic Front and SWAPO were indeed making plans in the light of their own political perspectives).

Let us elaborate briefly on each of these points:

1. We asserted our view that the political economy is an integrated whole and that it was absurd to discuss development strategies, especially for the entire region, in the absence of political premises and choices. We cited an elementary example. The present Rhodesian government has an open border with South Africa and a closed one with Mozambique. How can anyone analyze what a Zimbabwe government could or could not do unless we had some idea if the borders were to remain as is, or if both borders are to be open, or if the situation will be inverted (open with Mozambique and closed with South Africa)? In short, it is not plausible to make an analysis (not to speak of its not being desirable) without knowing if we are talking of a Patriotic Front government, or a government arrived at by “internal settlement” (and presumably still coping with the offensives of the liberation movements).

We further said that we could not possibly leave out the role of the trans-national corporations (TNC's) from an analysis of the “causes” of underdevelopment (as was suggested) when we believed that the TNC'S were one of the prime causes. We said that inviting the World Bank to make proposals was itself a political decision of the greatest importance, since the World Bank represented a particular (and highly contested) view of political economy. And how could one discuss solutions to southern African economic dilemmas, including Mozambique and Angola, in the face of present Congressional strictures on U.S. aid to these two countries? In short, we felt it was not true that there were technological analyses that were ideologically “neutral”. We were not neutral, nor could AID be, nor did we think it had ever been.

2. We emphatically did not believe the U.S. government was presently being neutral. We were in fact appalled by the recent developments in U.S. policy towards southern Africa. We saw the U.S. government as breaking away from its prior commitments to the front line states to support the Patriotic Front. We saw the U.S. government as acquiescing in, if not taking a lead in, the creation of the so-called "internal settlement." We saw the U.S. as preoccupied by the creation of "moderate" regimes, the criterion of moderation being primarily how little such a regime proposed to tamper with the status quo. We saw the U.S. as having failed to take any serious measures against U.S. corporations (like Mobil and Union Carbide) that have systematically violated the Rhodesian embargo. We noted that the U.S. was taking no serious measures against the enrollment of U.S. citizens as mercenaries for Ian Smith. We were deeply concerned with the recently-confirmed transfer of Cessnas to Rhodesia from France, as well as their continued sale to South Africa. This was the type of U.S.-origin, dual-use, strategic material President Carter precisely promised would no longer be delivered, directly or via third parties. In short, the political context which we saw for this study was one of a U.S. effort not to promote the well-being of southern Africa as represented in the aspirations of the liberation movements of southern Africa. We remembered all too well the creeping involvement of the U.S. in Vietnam and we chose not to be party to repeating a similar kind of involvement in southern Africa.

3. We were told, in response, that we could best affect policy by doing such a report. It was implied we were letting down those who agreed with us within the Executive Branch or in Congress. We felt, however, that we could not in any way lend support to present policy objectives, and it seemed quite clear that consulting with AID in such a context would in fact do this. We could see no way in which our report would affect real policy: instead it might simply provide window dressing for continuation of current directions. We were not impressed by the receptivity of the Administration

to critical views. Earlier in 1977, a petition concerning U.S. southern African policy signed by 600 African scholars had been presented to officials of the State Department and the National Security Council. Thus far, there has not even been the courtesy of a substantive response. Nor has there been a significant change in policy: if anything, U.S. policy has deteriorated since.

4. The proposed emphasis of the consultative study was to be on the regional plans for development of southern Africa, and on economic and social constraints within each nation, without reference to either the nature or the constitution of these governments or the goals they set or will set for development. We were warned that if we insisted on "politicizing" the discussion on southern African aid, there were others equally eager to "politicize" it, but in ways we would not like. It was implied that groups like those opposed to ratifying the Panama Canal Treaty were sympathetic to Rhodesian white settlers as people who had "built up" their country. We said that we were very aware of such views and that the very best thing for all of us was to move the discussion out into the open, with the options clearly drawn. At the present, the discussion is often clouded in Aesopian language. A "depoliticized" discussion of development is inevitably Aesopian. Hence if we wrote a report in this form, it would only assist those within government who wished to push U.S. policy in the direction of maximally maintaining the status quo to get away with it.

5. We were told that it was the friends of Africa who had sought, and with some difficulty, to increase the size of aid to southern Africa, and that if ways to spend this money were not forthcoming, it might be reduced. Here we took the position that spending money on aid is not a virtue in itself, and that badly-spent money is far worse than unspent money.

6. Finally, we said, if there is to be planning for the future of southern Africa, obviously southern Africans should do it. It was one thing for the U.S.

to respond to the requests of independent majority-rule governments like Mozambique and Angola (and we noted the U.S. is precisely failing to do this), and quite another for the U.S. to make plans for not-yet-created majority-rule governments in Zimbabwe and Namibia. It was our view that the liberation movements would probably reject the whole idea of pre-planning by outsiders, not only on the grounds that it was a diversion, but even more strongly on the grounds that it was a negative political act. (At this point, we were astonished to be told that this was more or less what one of the AID planners had recently heard from Tanzanian officials about this very same project.) We also discovered that the plan to involve southern African scholars through a consortium of African universities was no longer being actively pursued. We said that nonetheless, if appropriate groups of African scholars associated with the liberation movements and the front line states were to engage in such a study, and thought our help might be in any way useful, we would be ready to do what we could. But to presume that this analysis should be done *for them*, for their own good, was part of the dangerous atmosphere that had infected U.S. policy since the second World War. We did not think it was morally or intellectually tenable.

We concluded by saying that we were very concerned with the well-being of southern Africa and with the lack of fit between U.S. foreign policy and the aspirations of the liberation movements. We would continue to do research on southern Africa, and continue to speak publicly in criticism of present U.S. policy, and in support of the liberation movements. That, it seemed to us, was the most relevant immediate contribution we could make.

—12/17/77

** There was a fifth person approached who was unable to attend the meetings.

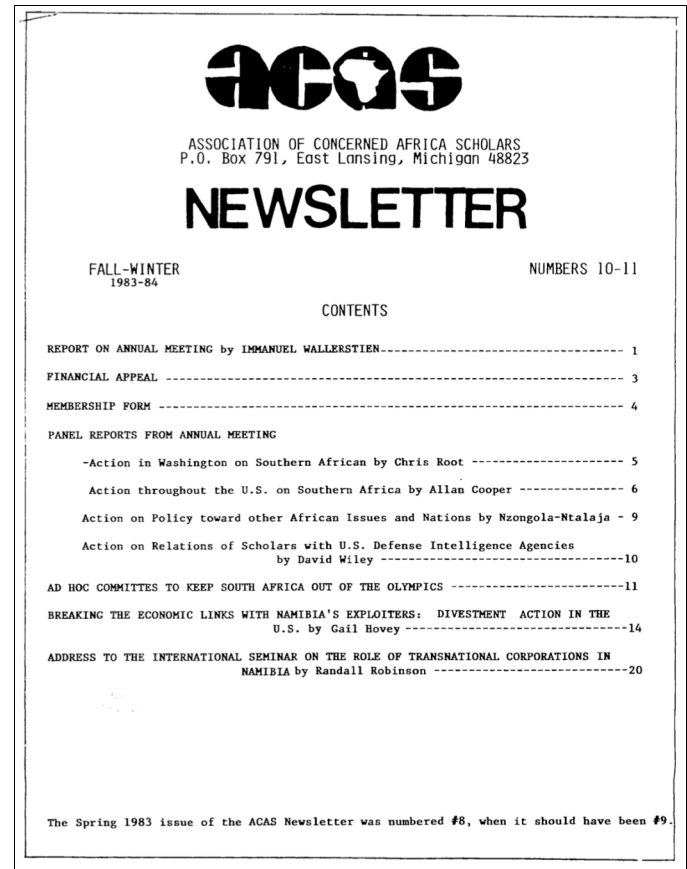


IMAGE: Cover, ACAS Newsletter 10-11 (1983-4)

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3. We were told, in response, that we could best affect policy by doing such a report. It was implied we were letting down those who agreed with us within the Executive Branch or in Congress. We felt, however, that we could not in any way lend support to present policy objectives, and it seemed quite clear that consulting with AID in such a context would in fact do this. We could see no way in which our report would affect real policy: instead it might simply provide window dressing for continuation of current directions. We were not impressed by the receptivity of the Administration

to critical views. Earlier in 1977, a petition concerning U.S. southern African policy signed by 600 African scholars had been presented to officials of the State Department and the National Security Council. Thus far, there has not even been the courtesy of a substantive response. Nor has there been a significant change in policy: if anything, U.S. policy has deteriorated since.

4. The proposed emphasis of the consultative study was to be on the regional plans for development of southern Africa, and on economic and social constraints within each nation, without reference to either the nature or the constitution of these governments or the goals they set or will set for development. We were warned that if we insisted on "politicizing" the discussion on southern African aid, there were others equally eager to "politicize" it, but in ways we would not like. It was implied that groups like those opposed to ratifying the Panama Canal Treaty were sympathetic to Rhodesian white settlers as people who had "built up" their country. We said that we were very aware of such views and that the very best thing for all of us was to move the discussion out into the open, with the options clearly drawn. At the present, the discussion is often clouded in Aesopian language. A "depoliticized" discussion of development is inevitably Aesopian. Hence if we wrote a report in this form, it would only assist those within government who wished to push U.S. policy in the direction of maximally maintaining the status quo to get away with it.

5. We were told that it was the friends of Africa who had sought, and with some difficulty, to increase the size of aid to southern Africa, and that if ways to spend this money were not forthcoming, it might be reduced. Here we took the position that spending money on aid is not a virtue in itself, and that badly-spent money is far worse than unspent money.

6. Finally, we said, if there is to be planning for the future of southern Africa, obviously southern Africans should do it. It was one thing for the U.S.

to respond to the requests of independent majority-rule governments like Mozambique and Angola (and we noted the U.S. is precisely failing to do this), and quite another for the U.S. to make plans for not-yet-created majority-rule governments in Zimbabwe and Namibia. It was our view that the liberation movements would probably reject the whole idea of pre-planning by outsiders, not only on the grounds that it was a diversion, but even more strongly on the grounds that it was a negative political act. (At this point, we were astonished to be told that this was more or less what one of the AID planners had recently heard from Tanzanian officials about this very same project.) We also discovered that the plan to involve southern African scholars through a consortium of African universities was no longer being actively pursued. We said that nonetheless, if appropriate groups of African scholars associated with the liberation movements and the front line states were to engage in such a study, and thought our help might be in any way useful, we would be ready to do what we could. But to presume that this analysis should be done *for them*, for their own good, was part of the dangerous atmosphere that had infected U.S. policy since the second World War. We did not think it was morally or intellectually tenable.

We concluded by saying that we were very concerned with the well-being of southern Africa and with the lack of fit between U.S. foreign policy and the aspirations of the liberation movements. We would continue to do research on southern Africa, and continue to speak publicly in criticism of present U.S. policy, and in support of the liberation movements. That, it seemed to us, was the most relevant immediate contribution we could make.

—12/17/77

** There was a fifth person approached who was unable to attend the meetings.

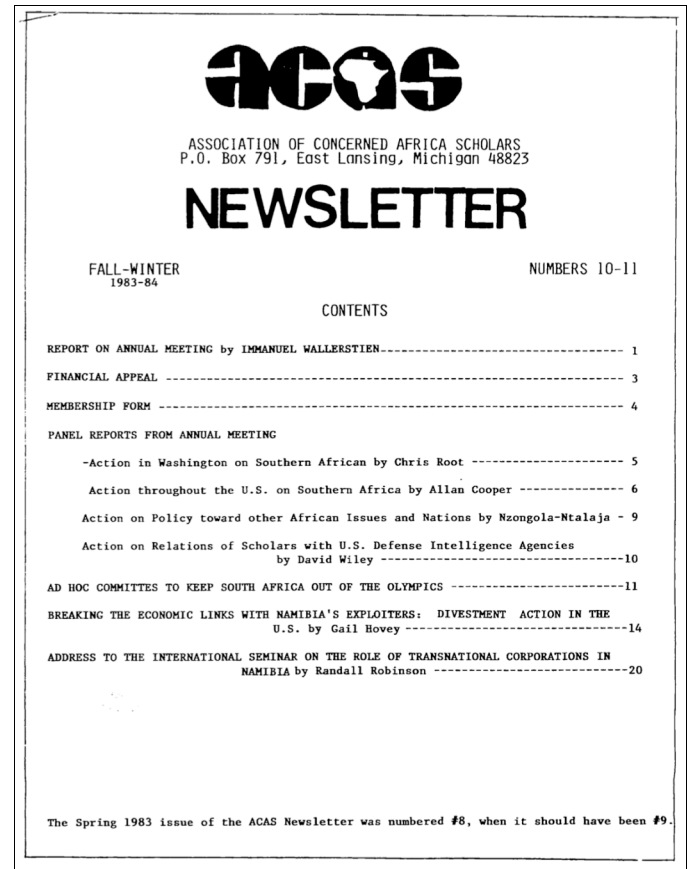


IMAGE: Cover, ACAS Newsletter 10-11 (1983-4)

Statement of Dr. Jean Sindab*

Jean Sindab (Washington Office on Africa)

I feel quite privileged and very honored to be asked to serve as the co-chair of ACAS. It is an organization which I have long admired and whose members have been particularly important in my intellectual, professional and personal development. Their commitment to the cause of peace and justice in southern Africa has been particularly heartening and encouraging to me and so many others over the years.

This is quite an exciting time for those of us who have struggled so hard, for so long, to bring an end to apartheid and U.S. support for that racist system. Last year, we saw a tremendous leap forward, both in the struggle inside South Africa and in this country. With the Free South Africa Movement building on years of anti-apartheid grassroots activity, it became the catalyst for igniting the spark of mass opposition to apartheid which has swept this country. Those loud protests succeeded in raising the visibility of the apartheid issue to force the international community to intensify its opposition to the Botha regime. Here in the U.S. we have dealt a death blow to the policy of constructive engagement by forcing Reagan to sign the Executive Order - no matter how weak - imposing sanctions on South Africa. Clearly, it is not enough, and we must go much, much further. Because of our success, our enemies have recognized our strength and our power and they are fighting back.

In fact, they are fighting back harder than ever.

However, the coming year offers us some of the best opportunities to keep the apartheid issue before the public despite attempts to put it on the back burner. Several important anniversaries will be observed this year: the 10th anniversary of the

Soweto massacre, in which close to a thousand school children were murdered, the 20th anniversary of South Africa's illegal control over Namibia and the 25th anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle by the African National Congress (ANC). We must use these anniversaries to further mobilize and educate the American people.

This also promises to be a very significant year for the struggle in southern Africa for other reasons as well. If 1985 was a pivotal time for South Africa, then 1986 will be even more of a watershed year. The formation of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) is an exciting development which will precipitate important events. Already the new federation has announced that it will call for the burning of pass-books in the middle of this year. Bishop Tutu also has announced that the churches will call for an economic boycott. What this means, of course, is that the struggle will intensify even further.

When these events happen, we must be prepared to take immediate action in support of our brothers and sisters in South Africa. This is where an organization like ACAS can make a valuable contribution. One of the major tactics the racist regime and their U.S. allies will attempt is to obfuscate the real issues in the southern Africa region in order to gain support for apartheid. The activist-scholar community can play a critical role in providing the information necessary to refute the South African propaganda machine. We must be in the vanguard of exposing the lies and misinformation that will be presented to the American public.

We must take the lead in focusing attention on how apartheid is affecting the entire southern Africa region. We must expose the continued exploitation and oppression in Namibia, the hunger in southern Africa and the activities of the "contras" in Angola and Mozambique. Most importantly, we must help shift the focus in this country back to apartheid

* Co-Chair, Association of Concerned Africa Scholars. Dated February 5, 1986.

terrorism as opposed to Soviet expansionism as the root cause for problems in southern Africa.

Jonas Savimbi's visit to the U.S. leaves us with a task to be done. We must intensify our lobbying efforts to defeat congressional bills to fund UNITA and to prevent covert aid as well. Our campaign cry must be "funding for UNITA is funding for South Africa." We must lobby for the passage of the Namibia bill introduced by Pat Schroeder and we must go back to push for stronger sanctions against South Africa. A comprehensive economic sanctions bill is the only viable option given the present level of the struggle inside South Africa.

We must seize this historic moment to make our contribution to the final phase of the struggle for justice in South Africa. The time is now. The task is at hand. The challenge is ours and I know that we will not fail. Onward to victory!

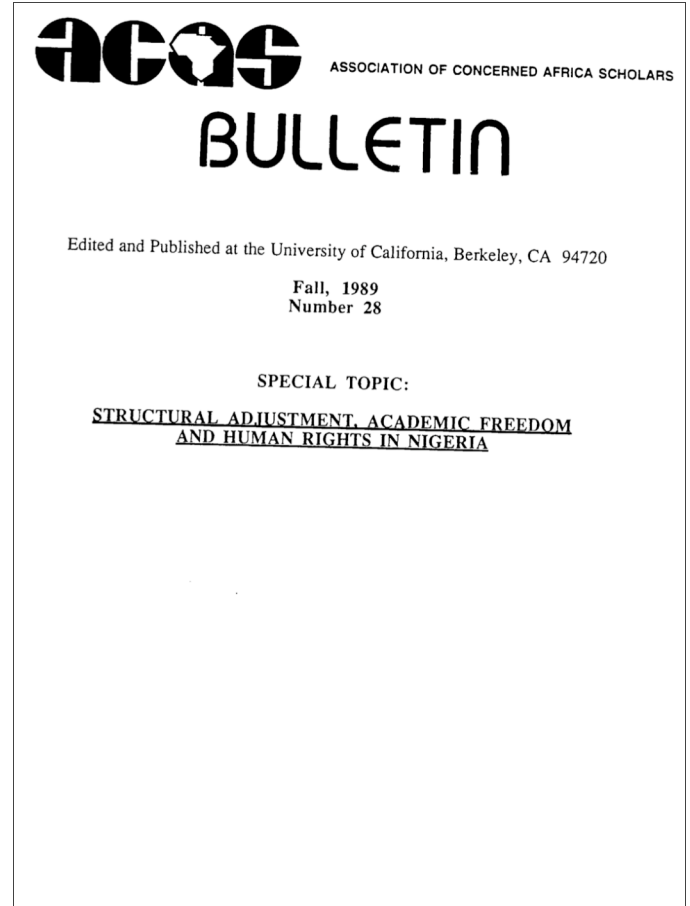


IMAGE: COVER, ACAS BULLETIN 28 (1989)

ACAS Ten Years On: Reflections on a Decade or so*

Immanuel Wallerstein

It seems that, at least since 1945, every decade has been “fast moving” in Africa. The period since 1975 has not been less so. We must first appreciate it by reference to the previous decade. 1965-66 was in fact a bad year for Africa: the rash of coups which toppled Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Ben Bella (the stalwarts of the old “Casablanca” powers), the closing-out (at least momentarily) of Congolese social revolution with the coup by Mobutu, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of the Rhodesian white settlers.

The bloom was off. The rosy optimism of 1960--”Africa's Year of Independence”--was over. The euphoria of the founding of the OAU in 1963 was now a memory. And Africa settled into the realities of enormous economic difficulties, political repression (including massively in South Africa after the Rivonia trial), and neo-colonialism seemingly triumphant. The main “action” was in the Portuguese colonies, where the movements had launched their wars for national liberation.

The Portuguese African struggles paid off, as we know. The Portuguese collapsed internally, and suddenly in 1975, all the former Portuguese colonies were independent states. We know too the further developments: independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the increased struggle of SWAPO, and the reemergence of a popular political struggle in South Africa coupled with an intensified pressure from ANC: the Durban strike, the founding of COSATU, Soweto, the merger of the UDF, the Dakar meeting, etc. We know also the other side of this coin: “destabilization” everywhere, beginning with the march on Luanda in 1975.

Yet we of course should not miss the difference between 1965-75 and 1975-87. Today South Africa tries to destabilize and forbids TV coverage of African funeral marches. Then they ruled with an iron hand. Today the U.S. Congress votes sanctions. Today they are compelled to release Govan Mbeki. Today they “merely” destabilize. Today they are clearly on the defensive.

The transformation is the result of African political organization, particularly in southern Africa. What role have outside solidarity organizations played in this? An important one. We should neither minimize it nor exaggerate it. The outside solidarity work has affected in important ways the constraints within which the U.S. and west European governments operate. This in turn affects the constraints within which the South African government operates. It is vital to tighten (and sometimes to alter) these constraints. And this has been done.

The campaign for disinvestment began in the late 1950s. It is today at last more or less successful. This is a very positive achievement. On the other hand, it points to the limitations of our possibilities. Disinvestment is more complicated in its consequences than we pretended, which is what our conservative opponents always predicted. As a result, everyone is “thinking” about it--the legal movements inside South Africa, the ANC, the Frontline States, the solidarity organizations. In a sense this shouldn't have been so. We should have anticipated the present ambiguities and have had a strategy ready.

It is of course not too late. And we will solve this one, with a little effort. But are there other such “pitfalls” or dilemmas awaiting us? The struggle in Southern Africa will still be long. We should look ahead.

* Originally published in *ACAS 10 years On – Now*, ACAS Bulletin 23 (1988), pp. 35-40.

On Scholar Activism*

John S. Saul (York University)

I remember vividly a conversation with the late FRELIMO President Samora Machel in my garden in Dar es Salaam in 1972. I had done a variety of odd-jobs for the Mozambican liberation movement during the seven years of my teaching tenure in Tanzania and a few weeks earlier Machel had arranged for me to accompany FRELIMO guerrillas on a trip into the liberated areas of Tete province. Now he had come to bid me and my family goodbye as we packed to leave Tanzania.

“You have now seen something of our struggle”, he said. “But for most Canadians their knowledge of it is at point zero. You must try to do something about that when you return home.” It was not an order exactly, yet I could literally feel his will galvanizing me into action, communicating to me personally the kind of drive and purpose I have seen him communicate to Mozambicans, singly and in large gatherings, both before and since that day. It was no accident that on my return to Canada I would soon find myself working with others to launch the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Portugal's African Colonies, TCLPAC (which, as the since renamed Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa, TCLSAC, celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 1987). No accident, either, that this kind of experience was to have a profound impact on my scientific work.

Like so many other “activist scholars concerned with Africa”, I thus discovered my vocation for political work around African issues — and, in my case, specifically around Southern African issues — in Africa itself. And certainly, “in the last decade (or so)”, those of us who have followed this path have been privileged to accompany a remarkable upsurge of popular assertion in the region — the

overthrow of the Portuguese colonial presence, the downfall of Ian Smith's Rhodesia, the revitalization of the resistance movement in South Africa. Self-evidently, the struggle for liberation which we now seek both to interpret and to facilitate is at a very different level than it was in the dark days of the 1960s when South Africa's first Emergency crushed hopes for significant changes for a decade and reduced the anti-apartheid constituency in western countries to a debilitating posture of mere moralizing about a seemingly static situation.

Of course, the situation in Southern Africa remains framed by the larger development crisis in Africa as a whole: no-one can now pretend, if ever they did, to have any very ready answers to the problems which confront the continent. More immediately, the regional conjuncture is marked by the continuing vitality of the apartheid state itself. This is a state contested in new ways — in ways that the more recent and on-going Emergency can only forestall although not, this time, crush — but it is strong nonetheless. Strong enough, unfortunately, to smash by means of its destabilization strategy the high hopes that accompanied Samora Machel and his colleagues into power in 1975. And strong enough, at least in the short-run, to stalemate the euphoria and the momentum which characterized the South African resistance movement's advances of the period 1984 to 1986. No-one can doubt that there is unfinished business in Southern Africa and if, as is obvious, the main protagonists of renewed advance must be Southern Africans themselves, there is also more than enough unfinished business for “activist scholars” to be getting on with.

But what is our “business”? We should not underestimate the extent to which it is, in fact, scholarship, scholarship shaped by our activism and our commitment to the struggle in Southern Africa, but scholarship nonetheless. Not that we need apologize for twinning the terms “activism” and “scholarship”. Quite the contrary, since scholarly preoccupations — the questions asked — do not spring spontaneously from the data but are themselves shaped by an on-going process of

* Originally published in *ACAS 10 years On – Now*, ACAS Bulletin 23 (1988), pp. 35-40.

“ideological class struggle”. As it happens, there are few fields of scholarly endeavour where radical intellectual work has had such a profound impact as in African Studies. This is precisely because an impressive level of *engagement* has encouraged as many “Africanists” as it has to ask the hard and searching questions that a more conservative and passive scholarship would obscure.

Engagement can only take us so far, of course. Once those “hard and searching questions” have been posed, adequate answers to them can only be found by doing full justice to the highest scholarly-cum-scientific canons — in elaborating arguments, pursuing data and weighing evidence. Needless to say, there will always be the danger of shaping our analyses to fit our preconceptions. We must work to keep each other honest as we continue to walk the tightrope of understanding regarding Southern Africa: scrutinizing carefully the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the various post-colonial and socialist projects in the region, for example, while never losing sight of the broader context of South African destabilization, the crippling impact of which so profoundly blights all development efforts there; evaluating the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the resistance movement in South Africa itself while never losing sight of the shifting mix of repression and pseudo-reform which defines the powerful drag of apartheid state and racial capital upon the drive for liberation.

Let me emphasize that something more than mere intellectual honesty for its own sake is at stake here. Analytical rigor is actually of direct and profound importance to the anti-apartheid movement itself. For an anti-apartheid movement built on mere enthusiasm and apolitical moralizing cannot easily survive the cruel vicissitudes inevitable in so difficult a struggle as the one for Southern Africa; those who stay the course, experience attests, are those who are least naive. Of course, the most salient voice itemizing those vicissitudes must be that of Southern Africans themselves. Yet the analyses we have produced as “scholar-activists” have, in western countries, percolated usefully

through the profession, through the anti-apartheid movement broadly-defined and even into the public arena, where — rather against the odds and without overstating the case — we can at least presume to assert (with Brecht) that “our rulers would have slept more comfortably without us”!

Engagement and scholarship, then. But a warning: militant sentiments manifested exclusively in the privacy of one's own study are unlikely to sustain themselves or to retain their relevance. At the very least we must be better publicists, forcing the pace of the percolation process just referred to by self-consciously developing, each and every one of us, additional kinds of communications skills crafted to reach a wider range of potential audiences. Even more importantly, we must sustain our involvement, alongside others approaching the Southern Africa issue from different angles and different life experiences, within the anti-apartheid movement itself.

This is essential, as I have suggested, because activism — including such apparent “shit-work” as licking stamps and pounding the pavements! — is not merely good for the scholar's soul but also for his or her brain. Self-evidently such activity is equally important for its more immediate and tangible impact on the struggle itself. Certainly, those of us who have been involved in the sanctions campaign — on-campus or off — have been active on a key front for both weakening the South African regime over time *and* for expanding the anti-apartheid constituency. At least as crucial, and rather less developed as an action front, is the building of direct support for the beleaguered progressive governments of Southern Africa (Angola and Mozambique, in particular) and for the progressive movements for change in South Africa and Namibia (the ANC-UDF-COSATU alliance and SWAPO, in particular).

Such support work for liberation is in many ways even more difficult to carry out than sanctions-related activity. Several factors produce a much less responsive and united audience for it in North

America. There is, in the first instance, the prevailing 1980s' atmosphere of Reagan/Thatcher-style global red-baiting and, linked to it, the promiscuous use in public discussion of the emotive charge of "terrorism". There is the sincere but too often misleading, selective and overly comfortable predilection for "non-violence". And there are the tensions and confusions still generated within the anti-apartheid movement itself by the manipulation of oversimplified "black consciousness" formulations. Yet in light of the intransigence of the South African regime and the consequent inevitability of escalating conflict, there will be an even greater necessity in future to support the ongoing popular struggle — including armed struggle — in South Africa. We must, as activists and as scholars, move to comprehend and seek to legitimate that struggle even more successfully than we have done to date.

I began this brief note by invoking the name of Samora Machel, so important in shaping my own commitment and that of many others touched by the Mozambican experience. Let me close by invoking another name, that of Ruth First, friend and former colleague at the University of Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, and a formidable exemplar of the "activist-scholar" role if ever there was one. Her substantial contributions to both the hands-on struggle in South Africa and to progressive Africanist scholarship are well known. But note something else. She was assassinated in 1982 when, as Director of Research at the university's Center of African Studies, she was using her formidable skills to design research and training programs extremely helpful to the Mozambican development effort. Moreover, only days before her death she had helped host a meeting of scholars drawn from all of the Frontline States of Southern Africa, a meeting designed to coordinate and focus research efforts the better to service the region-wide struggle against South African hegemony. There seems little doubt that her success in thus putting scholarship at the service of the Southern African revolution was the chief reason why the South Africans felt compelled to kill her.

Of course, few of us are as close to the front-line, either physically or spiritually, as was Ruth First — nor are we ever likely to be quite so dramatically at risk. Yet the urgency of the present situation in Southern Africa surely dictates that he attempt to be as committed as she was — and even that we be prepared to take a few risks. In short, her spirit is something that, as aspirant "scholar-activists", we must seek to emulate.


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|  | | ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICA SCHOLARS |
| <h1>BULLETIN</h1> | | |
| <small>Edited and Published at the Southern Africa Resource Project, University Religious Conference, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, 90024</small> | | |
| Spring 1988 | | Number 23 |
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IMAGE: COVER, ACAS BULLETIN 23 (1988)

Activist Scholarship*

James H. Mittelman (Queens College, CUNY)

What should Western-based movements do to facilitate African liberation? There are several important measures. One is opposition to military build-ups. Another is lobbying for the conversion of armaments expenditure to investment in genuine development efforts. Similarly, pressure on Western governments to adopt a non-interventionist policy in countries undergoing fundamental structural change is essential. But policy makers do not usually act against the interests of the groups that put them in power. To ask capitalists to refrain from expansionism is to ask them to cease being capitalists. This is not to suggest that tactical decisions are predetermined. Surely the anti-war movement influenced the U.S. decision to withdraw from Vietnam. Nonetheless, it is not enough to stop Western states from interfering in Africa.

Basic change must come about within African countries themselves. In this process, Western support for realigning the domestic divisions of labor in Africa should be linked more closely to the internal situations within the advanced capitalist countries. Just as production is increasingly international, struggles in various parts of the global political economy must be interwoven. As the struggles intensify, moralizing about the evils of exploitation should not replace thoroughgoing analysis of the crisis.

Equally important to contemplate is the question of what has not been done adequately at all. Although state actions must be continually challenged, it is wrong to allow those who hold the reins of power to set the agenda. Unfortunately, many opponents of their government's policies in Africa have largely been reactive, their strategies crisis-oriented. Typically, critics have formed single-issue

movements: anti-apartheid, nuclear freeze, pro-Sandinistas, and so on. What is required is an interlinking of movements that mobilize constituencies across such diverse issues as militarism, feminism, and intervention in different parts of the world. It is essential to bring home to workers, community groups, and intellectuals precisely how individuals are personally involved in Third World struggles.

Surely there is a long road to travel before liberation is achieved. Setting aside the exaggerated optimism of the early post-colonial period and the ensuing pessimism about Africa's prospects for development, it is a truism to say that massive struggles in earlier historical epochs, such as the passage from feudalism to capitalism, a transition which engulfed the entire globe, have spawned fundamental transformations. It is out of the crucible of crises and from hard-fought struggles that new social forces emerge and invent creative solutions to deeply embedded problems. Improvements do not come steadily; there are traps and confusions, followed by sudden breakthroughs. And even then it can be hard to measure progress.

If liberation requires a monumental feat, one can say that the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars has contributed modestly to the struggle. Political work and research by Africanist scholars over the last decade have helped to reformulate questions and provide vital information for educators. Now we must continue to expand our membership, form coalitions with like-minded groups, consider the merits of a broader publications program, seek new ways to alter U.S. foreign policy, and open additional channels for assisting the liberation movements. The task is no less than devising novel ways to abolish the grim conditions in which the majority of humankind has been condemned to live and charting strategies for the course ahead.

* Originally published in *ACAS 10 years On – Now*, ACAS Bulletin 23 (1988), pp. 35-40.

A Greater Voice for Africa in the United States: An Analysis and Proposed Agenda for Africanist Scholars*

David Wiley, ACAS Co-Chair

Introduction

Africa is in danger of being discarded as "the Fourth World," irrelevant to the global economy, and of being abandoned as hopelessly mired in insoluble problems. The continent has been utterly marginalized on the U.S. policy agenda by the end of the Cold War and by a new domestic fixation in the U.S. electorate. Yet Africa's human needs are real and its problems are not isolated. Rather they are linked to the world economic recession, a global glut in many African agricultural commodities, and the effects of years of regional militarization.

Never before have the peoples of Africa so strongly needed the support of their friends in the West, and especially in the United States. Food aid is urgently needed in the face of drought and famine. More important is the rebuilding of an indigenous agenda for development beginning with basic human needs, setting aside the simplistic formulae of the modernization models and the Cold War tolerance of minority and repressive regimes. Such an agenda cannot succeed without changes by the wealthy governors of the world economy.

The Clinton Administration does offer opportunities for a fresh dialogue about U.S. policy toward African nations. Despite virtually no attention to Africa during the campaign, the principles of Clinton's Africa statements merit support: attention to human rights and democratization, reform of

development assistance, strengthening of UN peacekeeping efforts, and retaining sanctions pressure on South Africa. It is important to grasp these opportunities in order to respond to the remnants of 30 years of U.S. Cold War policy in Africa including — the rejection of democratic elections by U.S. client Jonas Savimbi, the continued South African ploys to avoid democracy and to foment ethnic strife, the banditry residual from the U.S. and USSR arming of Somalia, the continued support of Mobutu in Zaire and the failure to provide necessary international support to contain the disastrous conflicts in Mozambique, Angola, and Liberia (and its neighbors).

Thus, there is an urgent need for a more articulate and powerful voice in the United States advocating a larger, more compassionate, and serious policy focus on Africa. U.S. citizens must muster support for the future of this sub-continent from which so many of our peoples and so much of our American culture, heritage, and products have been drawn.

This paper calls on U.S. Africanist scholars to mobilize more effectively as part of a broader constituency dedicated to these ends. The Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) has begun a number of new policy discussions to broaden and deepen the attention of U.S. Africanist scholars beyond Southern Africa to the entire continent. Organizationally, ACAS is expanding and re-organizing to respond to the new situation. We hope that these new directions will interest more Africanist scholars in participating in ACAS.

The African Crises and the World System

Like many Third World economies, most of Africa is in trouble. African countries are besieged by debt, further collapse of commodity prices (simultaneous with significant Won in the price of needed industrial goods from the North), devaluation, inflation, unemployment, political upheaval, some bad political leadership, erosion of the environment and infrastructure, food shortages, and massive health problems (the public health diseases of

* The author acknowledges the contributing comments and suggestions of Christine Root and William Martin. Originally published in ACAS Bulletin 38-39 (1993), pp. 9-13

cholera, hepatitis, and meningitis; HIV; and the resurgent six WHO-targeted tropical diseases, especially malaria).

These burgeoning crises are occurring in the context of major structural reorganization of the global system, its economy, polity, and military power. Because of the relaxing of East-West tensions, most of the nations of the South -both government leaders and various political movements within them -can no longer automatically use the Cold War polarities to gain access to aid and support from the big powers of the North. The Eastern European powers have turned to their own crises, and the wealthier West has become largely disinterested, excepting those rare cases such as Somalia in which there is an apparent congruence of public outcry against the famine and the disorder and of U.S. politicians to find a new role for the military.

Despite this geopolitical reorientation away from Africa, we believe that Africa actually is deserving of more, not less, attention. In the 1990s, we have comprehended more than ever before the depth of human heritage and culture that is owed to Africa, especially in the culture of the U.S. and the Americas. We also are more attentive to the many products from Africa which enrich the consumption and quality of life of America.

In recent years, economic attention to Africa has been limited mostly to pressure from the World Bank, IMF, and U.S. for the many aspects of economic structural adjustment and for democratization. These changes can correct some of the distortions of prices, the lack of economic incentives, the high cost of centralized bureaucracies, and the lack of popular participation in some African nations; however, many believe they do not hold the key to — and may even block — addressing the depth and breadth of African economic problems. A large number of African states that are politically fragile have acceded to these pressures.

Even while dealing with these economic pressures, many African nations are offering internal political transformations. Democratic elections, multi-party rule, new leadership, and a priority on the basic human needs of the population are taking hold in many places throughout the continent. Despite both these economic and political changes, little foreign assistance or serious political attention from the West has been forthcoming.

Indeed, foreign aid to African countries has been minuscule. In 1990-91, total U.S. economic assistance for the 47 nations of Sub-Saharan Africa only barely exceeds that of Nicaragua and Panama together and totals less than one-tenth of the combined assistance to Israel and Egypt. In the early 1990s, the period of Africa's most pressing crises, less than five percent (\$800 million) went to Africa of the \$17 billion total U.S. foreign development aid.

The Waning of Advocacy for Africa in the United States

Africa's political transformations should create new possibilities for calling on the U.S. to truly support the democratic principles it purportedly seeks in Africa, as was not possible under the Cold War ethos. Nevertheless, at this time of potential new opportunities, interest in Africa has fallen among diverse U.S. publics — mass and elite.

The interest of U.S. politicians has been eroded by Nelson Mandela's release from prison, the broad perception that apartheid is bound for the rubbish heap of history, and the "donor fatigue" at the seemingly endless parade of new African problems. Distracted by pressing domestic issues of jobs, housing, health, education, and racism on which few victories are being won, even the traditional friends of Africa in the Congress and the Congressional Black Caucus have failed to mobilize effectively on Africa's behalf, including on emergency humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution. Even some of the liberal politicians elected to the 1993 Congress campaigned on an

isolationist platform to "bring our dollars home" to bolster the U.S. economy.

The attention of the Western and Japanese corporate and investment communities has shifted to new opportunities in the Pacific and Europe as U.S. investments and trade with Africa declined since the 1970s. The U.S. foreign policy-making elites, likewise, are riveted to global competition among the economic powers and the transformation of the Eastern Bloc.

For masses in the U.S., attention is focused on declining job and economic opportunities. The concentration of wealth in the Northern Hemisphere. Indeed this decline is paralleled by the greatest concentration of wealth in U.S. history. Many people in this wealthy nation are caught in a new experience of impoverishment, decline in standard of living and quality of life, and the prospect of downward mobility. Ethnic and racial antagonisms are on the rise. As in Europe, this experience of personal insecurity accentuates national chauvinism and myths about the threats of foreign peoples.

The media coverage of Africa available to the mass "viewing market" continues to demonstrate gross disinterest in Africa (with the obvious exception of the images of anchormen — in the midst of U.S. military operations in Somalia). Images of starving African refugees flow into U.S. living rooms, leading most to conclude that Africa is but a caricature of endless problems, bad government, and incompetence — an undesirable continent with which to link and identify. This translates into an inadequate market for good educational and media materials on the continent, small enrollments in many college classes concerning Africa, and the continuing dissemination of gross racial and social stereotypes of the peoples and cultures of Africa.

Most of Africa's U.S. supporters have failed to mount any effective action on the pressing problems of the continent. Africa's friends have become demobilized on a broad front — among churches

and unions, on the campuses, and even among some Africa-focused organizations. The national organizations with which activist scholars have cooperated on legislative and pressure campaigns (Washington Office on Africa, American Committee on Africa, TransAfrica, and others) are suffering financially and organizationally in varying degrees in the post-Mandela release period. Simultaneously, while many major funders have focused even more of their resources on projects inside Africa, they offer little support for initiatives to build a constituency with a greater voice for Africa in the U.S.

The present political demobilization on behalf of Africa is particularly striking in juxtaposition to the success of the friends of Africa not so long ago. For 30 years, key African-American, student/faculty, church, labor, and liberal groups mobilized against apartheid, achieving one of the most remarkable changes in U.S. foreign policy of the century. Building from campus, local, and statewide actions, the divestiture and sanctions movement eventually overwhelmed the President, the State Department, and a great majority within the foreign policy establishment with the Congress' adoption of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. But after this important national victory, most Africanists and other friends of Africa have failed to maintain their activism on South Africa.

The Role of Africanist Scholars

Where do Africanist scholars fit into this picture? In the domain of mass education and culture, centers of African and African-American studies and teachers in African-American communities are making important efforts to give new attention to Africa's complex histories and cultures. The resources available for this task from African studies centers are very limited. Probably only four or five percent of the total U.S. public and private budget for foreign language and area studies is spent in research funding for the study of one-fifth of the global landmass with more nations, cultures, and languages than any other world region.

Most academic Africanists, however, remain professionally dispassionate, and focused on occupational productivity and advancement, mirroring the turn to self-interest by many Americans in these insecure times. Younger scholars in many disciplines face more difficult roads to academic advancement than did the previous generation of Africanists. While scholars by and large decry the broad disinterest in Africa, they have not raised an effective voice to demand a U.S. response to Africa's crises. Even those scholars who are politically engaged are largely geographically isolated and racially divided.

Why has Africanist activism waned? As with other segments of the constituency for Africa in the U.S., it is partly due to the loss of apartheid as a relatively simple target of U.S. support. Issues facing South Africa have become more complex and multi-faceted — democracy, ethnicity, jobs, affirmative action for correcting the discriminatory past, food production, and pent-up demand for social services and economic opportunity. These issues are similar to those confronted by the continent as a whole, and Africanists so far have failed to broaden their perspective or develop any strategy for addressing these multiple issues effectively.

Africanist scholars should be particularly suited for assisting the broader U.S. constituency for Africa to make the transition from focusing on apartheid to the various critical issues facing the continent. Many U.S. academic specialists on Africa have strong sympathies with the particular countries and people they know from their research and collegial relationships. They understand the impoverishment and fragility of the continent caught in a marginal position in the global system. The historic ambivalence in the scholarly community toward economic assistance should be translated into a cogent critique of those programs that hamper development for the majority of the people and strong support for humanitarian and longer-term aid that can be helpful. Scholars with experience in Africa's environmental issues and problems should

nurture the nascent environmental movements and groups in Africa. U.S. scholars should create opportunities for African experts to speak for themselves about the solutions to Africa's problems and should assist these scholars to acquire the resources they need for their research and communication.

A New Agenda for ACAS

The Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) has embarked on a plan to refocus the political attention of Africanist scholars, particularly among its own membership. Our major tasks in this period are to struggle to understand the new situation in Africa and globally, to explore both those policy issues in Africa that merit our attention in this new period and what needs to be said about them to U.S. policy-makers, and to redirect ACAS to become a more effective instrument of change.

ACAS has identified a number of policy issues to explore and has established Issue Working Groups (IWG) on each to address the problems and to recommend policies to advocate. Several of the IWGs have developed draft papers on their topic, which are published for the first time in this issue of the ACAS Bulletin. Earlier drafts and ideas were discussed at a Consultation held in Washington, D.C. in May 1992 and at a one-day ACAS Conference in November 1992. We now encourage discussion and comments from all ACAS members or prospective members as we seek to set our organizational policy course for the months ahead. (Send your comments to the Research Committee listed on the back cover).

In addition, we suggest the following policy priorities for ACAS efforts in the months ahead:

- Support for just and stable terms of economic exchange between Africa and the industrial nations
- Support for sustainable forms of majority rule and democracy in Africa
- Financial and political support for the peace-enforcing, peace-keeping, and peace-making

(conflict resolution) activities of a genuinely representative UN, OAU, and other multilateral agencies

- Support for appropriate development that gives primacy to the needs of children, women, and those who are socially and economically displaced
- Continued attention to achieving both non-racial democracy in South Africa and across the continent as well as peace and reconstruction in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and the conflict- and drought-damaged SADCC states
- Increased U.S. attention (research and assistance) to the health crises in Africa (public health, HIV, malaria, infant death, etc.) and the background nutrition problems in Africa
- Debt relief and investment capital for appropriate development work which serves the needs and interests of the common peoples of Africa
- Partnership with Africa to achieve environmental sustainability, based on an integrated social and economic development that does not harm the planet
- More attention to the increasing erosion of academic institutions and the academic capabilities and work of our colleagues in African universities under the assault of structural adjustment programs
- Support for individual African colleagues under attack by repressive regimes
- Proactively building linkages and coalitions with African peoples, especially African academic colleagues, who work for progressive change in the economy, government, and society at all levels of their societies
- As a means of affecting U.S. policy, collaborating with a broad spectrum of North Americans to build a more enduring and effective constituency in support of all African peoples and oriented especially toward the Congress and U.S. foreign policy-makers. To accomplish this, ACAS must address and join the wider U.S. constituency for Africa and especially African-American constituencies.

The Means for Achieving Our Goals

ACAS was formed in 1977 to activate scholars to use their academic skills to analyze U.S. policy toward Africa, to mobilize public critical commentary, and to provide scholarly knowledge and legitimacy for criticism and the alternative policies. ACAS was constructed as well to bridge the separation of scholars working in the African Studies Association (ASA) and the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSa).

ACAS has used several means toward this end. ACAS members have testified before Congressional committees and the organization has initiated legislative campaigns on issues including a broad array of Southern Africa concerns, harmful U.S. interventions in Africa (particularly CIA intervention in Angola), emergency assistance for victims of African drought and famine, protection of individual scholars in Africa, dislodging foreign interests in the Western Sahara, and funding through U.S. military and intelligence agencies—for African studies programs and research. Like many Africa-focused organizations, our focus in the 1970s and 80s was on the southern part of the continent

ACAS members have received regular commentary, information, and action-relevant articles, status summaries of key legislation, and news of the anti-apartheid movement in the *ACAS Bulletin*. The publications and network provided by ACAS has also given indirect guidance or resources to individual Africanists working on their campuses, Africanist programs and administrators seeking to be supportive of political change, and even administrators inside the government arguing for more progressive policies toward Africa.

The primary arena for communication with the broader Africanist community has been several panels organized by ACAS at the annual meetings of the ASA and twice at the AHSa. The panels, which have regularly been well-attended and well-received, have been on key topics concerning Southern Africa, human rights, repression against African scholars, other struggles in the Horn and

across the continent, and the potential uses of defense and intelligence agency funding in African studies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the panels often had liberation movement representatives.

The Issue Working Groups (IWG's) are a new mechanism to bring several ACAS members together to develop analysis and recommendations on policy issues that we have not previously addressed.

A Strategic Action Plan for ACAS at this Juncture

In light of the growing crises in Africa and the radically altered global parameters, the membership of ACAS made a commitment at its 1991 and 1992 annual meetings to seek to achieve a greater impact on U.S. policy-making in Washington by increasing our organizational capacity and our program and by expanding our membership.

ACAS has always been bedeviled by the lack of infrastructure to coordinate its willing membership in mobilizing to influence U.S. policy-makers. Until now, we have operated on a shoestring, partly by our intentional decision not to compete with the Africa lobbying organizations on which we and others rely. Now, when we need to diversify our political foci, we have decided that we cannot make an effective contribution without greater resources and staffing and that we must have an organizational presence in Washington, D.C.

Therefore, we have hired a part-time executive secretary in Washington, D.C., with the hope of eventually enlarging that position to full-time. A new staff person does not substitute for a network of active and informed members, but nor can scholars scattered across the country be effective without consistent information and mobilization.

ACAS has also established a closer working relationship with the African Policy Information Center (APIC), formerly the Washington office on Africa Educational Fund. We will also be

coordinating ACAS activities more closely with pro-Africa organizations in Washington, including the Washington Office on Africa, TransAfrica, and other groups such as Africare, Bread for the World, Development Gap, and Africa Development Foundation, and with the American Committee on Africa in New York. We plan to organize several seminars and colloquia on issues of current policy, possibly in conjunction with other actors in Washington. And we will continue to inform and mobilize ACAS members on selected current policy debates in the Congress. In all of these efforts, we will work to expand our capacity to address more diverse political and economic issues of the entire African continent.

In 1993, with new opportunity for Africa in Washington, we invite the wider Africanist community to join us in our effort to transform and expand ACAS. Scholars have a special role to play — in explaining African realities, developing policy recommendations and critique, and adding a certain academic legitimacy to Africa's constituency in the U.S. We believe that the new direction taken by ACAS in the past 18 months and the commitment of ACAS members to greater participation and financial support have positioned ACAS to more effectively assist scholars to make their unique contribution in the political arena. The problems of Africa which will be solved will be managed by the African peoples and institutions themselves; however, the pressing needs and challenges facing those people of Africa in a radically altered global system surely give us cause to seek a greater impact on U.S. policy.

The Africanist Positions on Military Funding and Service in the National Interest in African Research, Service and Studies

David Wiley (Michigan State University)

The concern about military and intelligence funding of African studies first arose in the African Studies Association in the late 1960s, coming to a head at the ASA's annual meeting at Montreal in 1969. As a result of alleged intelligence linkages of some ASA members and officers, the association distanced itself from Washington and security agencies of government.

In 1982, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) approached four Title VI African centers to explore their willingness to receive large annual budget supplements in exchange for being on call to develop reports and undefined services. The directors of the four centers consulted and agreed to not accept the funding until they had consulted with the wider Africanist community. After that consultation, they concluded that it was not in U.S. interests to link with the DIA which could compromise their collaborations and linkages in Africa.

In 1991, Senator Boren and the Congress established the National Security Education Program (NSEP), authorized by the *David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991* (NSEA, Title VIII of P.L. 102-183), providing "...aid for international education and foreign language studies by American undergraduate and graduate students, plus grants to institutions of higher education." Various area and scholarly associations objected to this act and urged that federal support for language and area studies be routed through the U.S. Department of Education and its Title VI Higher Education Act programs.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the **directors of African Studies Title VI centers** periodically reviewed their policy about not accepting military funding. In 2001, under challenge from the right, the directors passed a resolution on "*Military and Intelligence Money in African Studies*" in which they "reaffirm[ed] our previously stated position to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies." They continued to note that, "We believe that the long-term interests of the people of the United States are best served by this separation between academic and military and defense establishments. Indeed, in the climate of the post-Cold War years in Africa and the security concerns after September 11, 2001, we believe that it is a patriotic policy to make this separation." (see below)

The Association of African Studies Programs has supported the Title VI African Studies directors in motions passed in the 1980s, reaffirmed in 2002, and choosing not to review or change that policy in 2006 or 2007. On March 31, 1993, they adopted a position "reaffirm[ing] our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies or their contractual representatives - for work in the United States or abroad." At meetings of the AASP in most years since the mid 1990s and most recently in November 2006, AASP members and Title VI directors have been asked if they wanted to revisit, amend, or reconsider this resolution, and the membership declined to reopen the issue, allowing the 1993 resolution to stand.

A. Text of Resolution by the Directors of Title VI Africa National Resource Centers, 2001

We, the directors of the African Studies Title VI National Resource Centers, at our meeting during

the 2001 annual meetings of the African Studies Association, vote to reaffirm our previously stated position to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies. We note, too, that the African Studies Association has taken a similar stance.

We believe that the long-term interests of the people of the United States are best served by this separation between academic and military and defense establishments. Indeed, in the climate of the post-Cold War years in Africa and the security concerns after September 11, 2001, we believe that it is a patriotic policy to make this separation.

This separation ensures that U.S. students and faculty researchers can maintain close ties with African researchers and affiliation with and access to African institutions without question or bias. Such separation, we believe, can produce the knowledge and understanding of Africa that serves the broad interests of the people of the United States, as well as our partners in Africa. We continue to welcome, in our classes, language training, and programs where we promote knowledge about Africa, all students and visitors from all private and public organizations and all agencies of the U.S. government.

(Passed unanimously November 17, 2001, African Studies Association, Houston, Texas)

B. Text of Resolution by the Association of African Studies Programs (1993)

We, the members of the Association of African Studies Programs (AASP) at our 1993 Spring Annual Meeting, unanimously join the African Studies Association, Middle East Studies Association, the Latin American Studies Association, the South Asian Council of the SSRC, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, the Association of Asian Studies, the Boards of the Social Science Research Council and American

Council of Learned Societies, and other scholars in seeking to separate foreign language and area studies in the United States from military, intelligence, and other security agency priorities and programs. We believe that long-term interests of the peoples of the United States are best served by this separation.

Specifically, we reaffirm our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies or their contractual representatives - for work in the U.S. or abroad. We are concerned especially about the Department of Defense National Security Education Act (NSEA, "the Boren Act") and the new Central Intelligence and National Security Agencies Critical Language Consortium. We call on our colleagues to abstain from these and similar funding initiatives and consortia of security agencies. These military and intelligence programs violate the integrity of the scholarly process and will hinder our relationships with African colleagues and collaborators, embarrass African universities and governments, and, thereby, decrease U.S. access to scholarly information in African studies.

We also believe that the broader interests of the people of the United States are served best by Africanist scholarship and programs oriented to goals, issues, and regional foci which are determined openly using academic and broader public priorities, not in secret or for the narrower priorities of military, foreign policy, and intelligence agencies.

We are not opposed to U.S. government funding of African studies. Indeed, African studies by far is the poorest of the world area studies and urgently needs an increase of funding for activities in the U.S. and in Africa. Therefore, we urge the U.S. government to increase its funding for African

studies and linkages through agencies and institutions outside the security agencies.

(Passed unanimously by all members in attendance, March 31, 1993, Washington, DC and reviewed annually at meetings of the Association.)

C. The Board of Directors of the African Studies Association, which supported the stance of the Title VI directors and the AASP, formalized this position at a meeting at Rutgers University in April 2002, "...voted to support the language and sentiment of the Title VI African Studies Center Directors on November 17, 2001."

D. Michigan State University Faculty Guidelines for Scholarly and Professional Cooperation with Colleagues in Africa

We, the Core Faculty of the African Studies Center at Michigan State University (MSU), establish the following guidelines for collaboration with African colleagues. These guidelines are offered as a guide to all those from MSU who construct agreements for research and cooperation or who work in Africa, including faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and all persons under MSU auspices or associated with MSU projects and programs in Africa. MSU faculty and students are expected to respect the laws, regulations, and customs of the African and U.S. governments and of funding agencies governing research and administration of projects in Africa, including "human subjects" regulations. These guidelines are not legally binding and do not supersede other MSU, state, federal, or scholarly rules and regulations guiding external linkages and collaboration. Rather, these guidelines are an attempt to establish parameters for cooperation and trust, which we want to grow between our university, its faculty, students, and staff, and the peoples and institutions of Africa....

When we engage in research in Africa, we shall notify our African colleagues of the sponsors, funders, and potential uses intended for the information to be collected. We shall not engage in

any research which we know or believe is funded secretly, is likely to be used for covert purposes, or has potentially negative consequences for our colleagues. *We shall make every effort to keep all of our research, instructional, and service activities free of sponsorship, direct funding, or secret uses by military and intelligence agencies of all governments. We shall not knowingly engage or participate in projects which could be reasonably construed as sustaining or strengthening the powers of political leaders or states guilty of violations of human rights.* Furthermore, we are committed to keeping in the public domain all work completed under any government sponsorship. *(Passed unanimously by the Core Faculty of the MSU African Studies Center, 1992)*