

# 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.

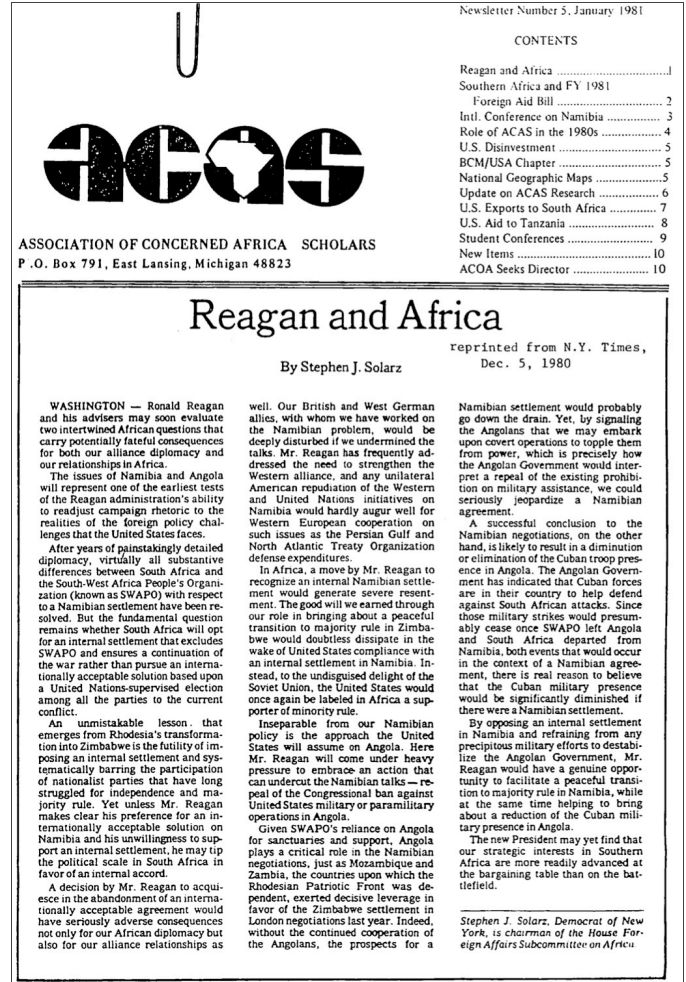


IMAGE: COVER, ACAS NEWSLETTER 5 (1981)

## 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.

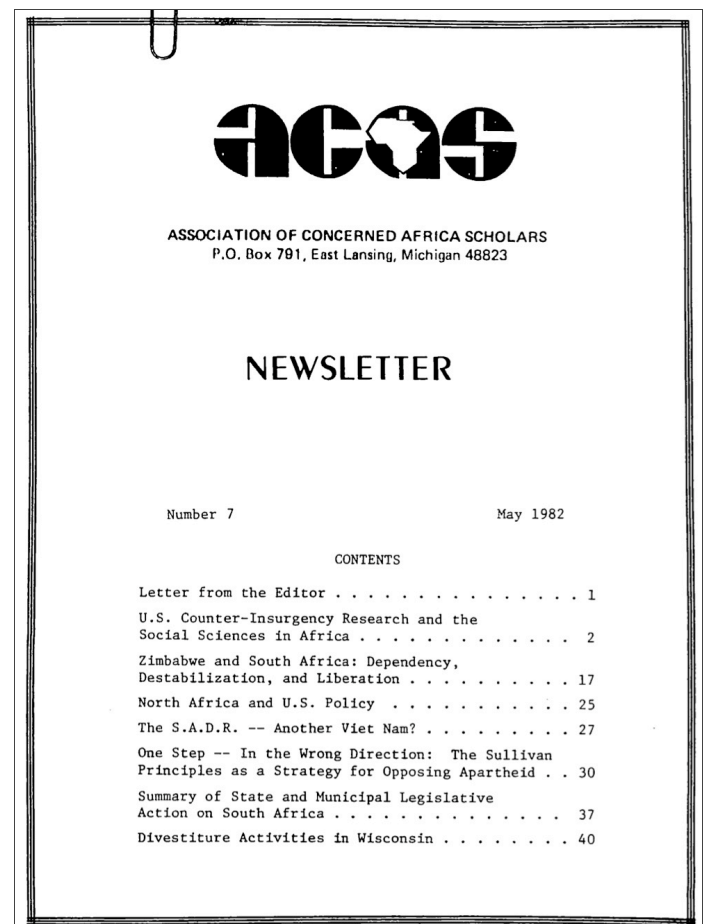
This is a critical time. In the current verbiage about the reassessment of U.S. policy toward southern Africa, there may be some potential for new directions, or at least an opening to challenge a reaffirmation of the long-standing commitment to neocolonial relationships. We need to organize and act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