

ALA 1996 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Draft Minutes from Stony Brook, New York, March 30, 1996

Present: Anne Adams, Omroniyi Afolabi, Folabo Ajayi, Patricia Alden, Iene d'Almeida, Chad Allenbaugh, Kofi Anyidoho, Diadre L. Badojo, Sandra Barkan, Carol Beane, Stephen Belcher, Faustine Ama Boateng, Debra Boyd-Buggs, Fahamisha Patricia Brown, Dennis Brutus, Neville Choonoo, Kathleen Corcoran, Maureen N. Eke, Arlene Elder, Rangira Bea Gallimore, Susan Gasser, Angeleita Gouridine, Dan Gover, Martha Grise, Thomas Hale, Kenneth Harrow, Roberta Hatcher, E. Anthony Hurley, Humna Ibrahim, Dan Izevbye, Siga Fatima Jagne, George Joseph, Kapanga Kasongo, Amanda Kemp, Angelita Reyes, Touria Khannous, Alfred Kiarna, Keiko Kusunose, Christine Loftin, Edris Madawad, Tom Maroukis, Joseph McLaren, Soraya Wekerta, Fred Michelman, Judith Miller, Julie Minkler, Donald Morales, Junko Motogi, Elisabeth Muimbe-Boyi, Karwiva Mule, Jonathan Ngate, Lee Nichols, Obioma Nnaemeka, Richard Pribe, Kim Rapp, Thelma Rawell-Pinto, Aaron Rosenberg, Reinhard Sander, Ann Scarborough, Mineke Schipper, Joyce Hope Scott, Raisa Simola, Aliko Songolo, Janice Spielh, Pia Thielmann, Peter Ukpokodi, Marie Umeh, Michele Vieler, Agam Wah, Catherine Woeber, Hal Wylie, Abdal R. Yusufi, Opportune Zongo.

I. CALL TO ORDER

President I. d'Almeida called the meeting to order at 2:20 pm.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

III. RATIFICATION OF THE 1995 MINUTES

IV. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

V. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. Correspondence with Executive Council: President reported that correspondence among ALA Executive Council was maintained over the summer via e-mail.
2. Human Rights: d'Almeida wrote to the Head of State of Nigeria and US President seeking clemency for Ken Saro-Wiwa.
3. 20% discount Subscription to *RAL* for ALA Membership: President announced that *RAL* had endorsed the Executive Council's request of a 20% subscription discount on *RAL* for membership.
4. Non-profit Status for ALA: The ALA is now a 501C-3 non-profit tax exempt organization. The President credited Louis Tremaine, Treasurer, with that achievement.
5. Collaboration with Presence Africaine: In response to a letter from Mime Diop of Presence Africaine about possible collaboration with the ALA, the President responded to Mime Diop to find out more details about how the ALA could work with Presence.

VI.

TREASURER'S REPORT

1. Louis Tremaine reported that the ALA was financially in good standing. Balance: At the end of 1995, the ALA had total assets of \$46,206.28; \$21,177.12 in the bank account and \$25,029.16 in the endowment fund. The endowment fund investment had a return of 29%. Revenue to the bank account in 1995 totaled \$26,645.78 and expenditures totaled \$31,960.99, resulting in a deficit of \$5,315.21.
2. The *Annual Series*: \$14,236.07 was spent to purchase an entire stock of back *Annals* from Three Continents Press. An additional \$396.75 was spent of shipment of back issues of the *Annals*. The *Annals* are now housed at HQ (Cornell).
3. Membership: total membership is now 403, about 26% higher paid individual members for the year than in the preceding year. There are 74 returning members from 1995 and 51 institutional members.
4. The constitutional amendment to make the ALA a tax-exempt organization was conducted by mail ballot, and passed unanimously.

6. Document Highlighting History of ALA: President indicated that she was still interested in producing a document highlighting the ALA's history, including a compilation of important decisions made @ ALA meetings. She would like to continue the project with two committees.
7. Changing the Length of Term for ALA President and Vice President: President announced that because of difficulty of finding willing candidates to run for the ALA Presidency each year, the Executive Council was proposing that the term of President and Vice-President be changed to two years. The changes would require a constitutional amendment.
8. New Business: (*Bulletin* editor): I. d'Almeida informed the membership that Stephen Arnold had communicated his desire to resign as editor of the *ALA Bulletin*. She thanked S. Arnold for his service to the organization and for doing a tremendous job. She informed the organization that the ALA was faced with the task of replacing S. Arnold. A description spelling out the job requirements will be published in the *Bulletin* in the future. After some discussion, it was suggested that S. Arnold be encouraged to stay through the summer till a replacement is found. The President then encouraged the membership to send in applications to the Council for the position.
- B. Election Results. Vice President Arthur Drayton announced that Sandra Barkan had been elected Vice-President for 1996-97. Anthony Hurley, René Larrier, and Carol Beane had been elected to the three-year terms on the Executive Council. Pamela Smith was elected to complete the remaining year of Samba Gadjigo's tenure. The Vice President apologized to the membership for the inconvenience caused by sending out the ballot a second time, and thanked all those who ran for positions.

5. Questions about payment of membership dues with credit cards were addressed and the method was considered impractical for the organization at this time. It was agreed that the method was not cost effective for the organization at this time.
6. Auditor's statement: Mimi Mortimer and Richard Priebe audited the books this year and found the accounts in order.

VII. ANNUALS

1. Hal Wylie informed the membership that two publishers (Africa World Press and Lynne Rienner) were being considered for future publications of the *Annals*: 1987 (Cornell), 1989 (Dakar) and 1990 (Wisconsin) *Annals* were ready to be published. Others were being prepared. He hoped that the publisher problem would be solved in May, 1996.
2. *Annals's* Editorship change of policy: Executive Council will regularize selection of editors for future *Annals*. Conference conveners will continue to be given preference as editors. Council, however, solicited nominations from the membership. Interested candidates should send a letter and CV to the *Annals's* General Editor, who would make the final decision about editorship. Wylie announced that Hurley had agreed to the 1996 *Annals*. Hurley had named two co-editors: Renée Larrier and Joseph McClaren.

VIII.

CURRENT CONVENER. Anthony Hurley indicated that the conference had progressed well. He apologized for the absence of Amiri Baraka and Sonia Sanchez at the scheduled writer's evening round table. He indicated that the conference had 216 attendees. The conference was sponsored for Shimmer Chmodya, no external funding was received for the conference. He thanked Patricia Alden for the funds for Chmodya. Hurley was congratulated for hosting a successful conference.

IX.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE TERMS OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

1. The President presented the membership with two models of unureship: a) President and Vice-President serve for two years. Under this term, the VP would not succeed automatically to Presidency; b) President will be elected for two (2) years and a VP for one year. The VP will automatically succeed to Presidency for a period of two years. Under this option, a candidate for VP will commit to a total term of three years.
2. After lengthy discussion of the various problems which a term change will cause, such as financial burden on candidates and lack of leadership continuity within the Association, the membership suggested that the Association keep current structure of the terms of the President and the Vice-President and encourage more cooperation between the two positions. It was also suggested that the selection of state of candidates for Executive positions be moved up one year in advance. This process will inform the membership of what the state will look like and will also

X.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

encourage members to propose names from the floor. A motion was made and passed to keep the terms of President and Vice President.

A. Research and Teaching

Patricia Alden reported that five panels were organized by the committee at ALA Stony Brook. The committee will propose a special panel for teaching film for ALA 1997. At future conferences, the committee plans to highlight certain teaching approaches or the teaching of particular texts as well as work with local teachers from the conference area. The committee also plans to videotape and archive interviews or readings by writers/artists who attend conferences for future use by ALA members.

B.

Human Rights. K. Harrow reported that he has a 25-page document listing the names of journalists, writers, and other political prisoners imprisoned or killed by various African governments. He mentioned the name of writer/activist Ken Saro-Wiwa who was executed by the Nigerian government in November, 1995. Other political prisoners included Zara Mahmoud (filmmaker, Chad), Christine Anyanwu (journalist, Nigeria), Koigi wa Wamwere (writer/activist, Kenya). Also accused and illegally imprisoned with Koigi were his brother, Charles Kuria Wamwere and G.G. Njuguna Ngenji. The membership was encouraged to write letters to the Heads of State of the various nations and to the press asking for the release of political prisoners. Letters were to be given to Lee Nichols to publicize these issues. A complete list of the names of political prisoners could be obtained from K. Harrow. Mineke Schipper encouraged people going to Africa to write to K. Harrow requesting information on human rights in the specific country they would visit. Richard Priebe presented two petitions for endorsement by the membership: i) petition directed at Royal Dutch Shell where the petition blames the company for immoral and irresponsible actions towards Ogoni people of Nigeria; ii) the names of journalists, writers and other political prisoners imprisoned or killed by various African governments petition to adopt a letter condemning execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni eight. It was suggested that a variation of the letter, modifying the language, might be drafted as a petition by the Association. Motion was made and passed to accept the Human Rights Committee's report.

C.

WOCALA. Fahamisha Patricia Brown informed the membership that WOCALA had a membership of 30. The group was involved in a project on African women with Greenwood Press. Tsisi Dangarambga had been invited as the Women's luncheon speaker for ALA 1997. WOCALA planned to sponsor two panels, one on literature and performance, the other on women and film at ALA 1997. A future topic being considered by the group was women in the profession. A motion was made to accept WOCALA's report, and passed.

XI.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Future ALA Meetings.

1. ALA 1997 will take place at Michigan State University, East Lansing, April 16-19, 1997. The conference will focus on African cinema. Panel and paper proposals on literature are also invited. The convener for ALA 1997 is K. Harrow.
2. ALA 1998 will take place at the University of Texas, Austin. The theme of the conference is South Africa, and Nelson Mandela has been invited to the conference. Conference hotel accommodations are being made.
3. In the absence of a bid from South Africa for 1999, Edits Makward presented a possible conference in Morocco as an alternative. Makward will pursue efforts to get a bid. Although he identified Rabat, Fez, and Marrakesh as possible sites for the conference, he favored Fez and Rabat.

XII.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Resolutions. Dennis Brutus presented three resolutions to be discussed and endorsed by the membership: 1) resolution to endorse a letter signed by 16 members of the ALA seeking clemency for African American writer, Mumi Abdul Janai; resolution passed. 2) D. Brutus moved to pass a resolution adopting a variation of R. Priede's letter condemning Royal Dutch Shell's treatment of the Ogoni people; resolution passed. 3) D. Brutus made a motion asking the ALA to prepare a press release on Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni eight. It was agreed that the organization had to take action on such human rights issues; motion passed. 4) Motion made to approve the original of the letter (presented by R. Priede) to Royal Dutch Shell concerning the treatment of Ogoni people; motion passed. The membership thanked and recognized Dennis Brutus for his work.

B. Announcements.

1. Internet. K. Harrow announced that the MSU H-Net had asked him to edit an international list on African cinema. He indicated that the list would include African literature and invited the membership to subscribe to the list. Messages for subscription to the list should be sent to: H-Afrlitcine@h-net.msu.edu.
2. Web Page. Dennis Brutus announced that a Web Page on African literature was being set up with the help of Chad Allenbaugh. Information on the ALA and African literature could be accessed using the page through Netscape. In response to questions concerning conflict with the H-Afrlitcine list, D. Brutus and C. Allenbaugh informed the membership that the two could be complementary. It was also suggested that K. Harrow and D. Brutus discuss these issues. It was also suggested that a standing committee on Communication Technology be created to address communication/information technology issues.
3. WARA. Edits Makward announced that WARA had a center in Dakar. The Center had been directed for two years by Eileen Julien. A Fulbright sponsorship would allow individuals to serve as directors.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

ALA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARIES

Meeting Held at Stony Brook, March 31, 1996

Present: Arthur Drayton (presiding), Anne Adams, Kofi Anyidoho, Sandra Barkan, Irène d'Almeida, Arlene Elder, Anthony Hurley, Frederic Michelman, Thelma Rawell-Pinto, Louis Tremaine, and Maureen Eke.

Various reports were presented to Council. The ALA now being a non-profit tax exempt organization, Sandra Richards, convener of the Fund Raising Committee, would be asked to identify purposes for which funds were needed. Several suggestions were discussed by the meeting. The Vice-President was designated to sit on the Fund Raising Committee. Kofi Anyidoho reported on progress with the Ghana Annual, including the problem of a Rockefeller deadline for commitment of grant funds for the African (Ghana) edition. Council learned that the Research and Teaching Committee was not yet fully constituted. The present members of the committee were urged to select its members. Tony Hurley reported on the success of the just completed Stony Brook conference, which had attracted 216 registrants. Hurley identified problems to be brought to the attention of future conveners. In the absence of any written guidelines for conveners, Council agreed to set up a Program Committee to draw up guidelines and offer suggestions for the benefit of future conveners. Members of the committee were to be the two past conference conveners (A. Hurley and Irele). Debra Boyd-Guss, Irène d'Almeida (convener), Anne Adams and Sandra Barkan. Some specific areas of action were identified, including a suggestion that in future conveners send formal letters to overseas attendees to help them solicit funding from their institutions. Council also recommended that the conference convener consult with the chair of the Program Committee and an ALA Member resident in the convener's area. Progress in arrangements for the next ALA elections was discussed, the ballot to be conducted by the incoming Vice-President, Sandra Barkan.

Meeting held at San Francisco, November 24, 1996, 7:15 a.m.

Present: Arthur Drayton, presiding, Anne Adams, Sandra Barkan, Carol Beane, Odile Cazenave, Arlene Elder, Kenneth Harrow, Anthony Hurley, Renée Larrier, Frederic Michelman, Pamela Smith, Louis Tremaine, Maureen Eke.

Progress reports were received on the proposed project of documenting ALA history (I. d'Almeida) and collaboration with Presence Africaine, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1997. O. Cazenave and I. d'Almeida were to discuss the latter further.

Council learnt that a call for papers for the Stony Brook Annual would soon be out with a deadline for submission. It was agreed that future conference conveners advise presenters that deadline for submission of papers for the Annual be June 30 of the conference year.

O. Cazenave reported that the Research and Training Committee was considering placing summaries of its activities on the Internet and the back cover of the ALA Bulletin. Video/audio-taping of interviews with African writers at the East Lansing conference and the videotaping of the plenary sessions with filmmakers were discussed and a motion to undertake this project, subject to economic feasibility, was moved and passed.

Council discussed the practice and principle of the conference conveners paying a subvention to the ALA out of registration fees, and noted that the Stony Brook conveners had paid \$1400 to the ALA. Upon an amended motion, Council agreed to fix the subvention at 5% of registration receipts excluding banquet fees. The various conference-related uses to which this subvention could be put were discussed.

Council received and discussed Hal Wylie's request to retire from the position of *Annual Series* Editor and unanimously passed a motion expressing its deepest appreciation of Wylie's contributions in this position. It was agreed to ask Wylie to continue to serve while the search for his replacement is conducted. Advertising for a new *Annual Series* editor who must be a member of the ALA, would be placed on the Internet and in the *ALA Bulletin*. Sandra Barkan would initiate the process.

Council heard from K. Harrow that the ALA had officially endorsed the H-Affiliate List-Serv provided through MSU, for which subscription is free. Affiliate is to be listed on the cover of the *ALA Bulletin*. A progress report on the East Lansing conference was presented.

Meeting Held at San Francisco, November 24, 1996, 5:45 p.m.

Present: Arthur Drayton (presiding), Anne Adams, Sandra Barkan, Carol Beane, Odile Cazeneuve, Ariene Elder, Renée Larrier, Frederic Michelman, Pamela Smith, Louis Tremaine, Maureen Eke.

Edits Madward visited with the Council to provide an update on the 1999 conference due to be held in Morocco, jointly hosted by the University of Fez and the University of Fez-Sais.

It was clarified that the Past President would be the convener of the Programme Committee.

Sonia Lee and Karen Keim were appointed auditors for 1996.

The deadline for nominations to the Executive Council was fixed as February 7, 1997.

Council was advised that in order for the ALA to receive 'associate affiliation' status in the ASA, one-third of the ALA membership must be paid-up members of the ASA. This is not presently the case, but Chris Koch had undertaken to communicate with the ALA President with a view to trying to bring it about. Until affiliate status is granted, the ALA cannot sponsor panels at the ASA.

Council was informed that the African World Press and the ALA had at last signed a contract for the publication of the *Annals*. Features of the contract include: a 12-month embargo on the publication elsewhere of any portion of an *Annual* (identified in the contract as a Work), whether revised, enlarge, abridged or corrected; royalties of 10% on all hardcover and paperback books sold, subject to certain exclusions; the publisher to provide the ALA with 20 copies of each work free of cost; the Publisher to provide free of cost up to 30 review copies to the reviewers and publicity agents recommended by the ALA; the payment by the ALA of a subvention of \$4000 for producing any additional Work in a given year and for each such additional work. The President, Vice-President and Treasurer met with Kassahun Checole earlier in the day and took the opportunity to discuss the qualifications that we should specify for the new *Annual Series* Editor in light of AWP's technology. Checole had assured the delegation that the first number should be ready for release at the ALA East Lansing conference, and it was agreed that the parties should seek to formally launch the new series and partnership at the conference.

There was a further update on the *Annals* under preparation. The Cornell and Madison volumes seemed almost ready to go, and the Ghana number was awaiting revision of some articles and the writing of the Introduction.

The meeting discussed problems which had arisen in the project for shipping *RAL* volumes to African universities, some libraries not receiving the shipments, several agreed not to include self-subscribed libraries. The Treasurer would also brief the membership with a view to obtaining assistance in identifying universities not benefiting from the project. Owing to the late hour, Council deferred discussion of three items relating to funding the shipment of books, a grant application for purchasing books from African publishers, and funding for graduate students conducting research or studying African languages there.