Cold War Sisterhood: The Women's Africa Committee, 1958–1968

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Abstract: During the late 1950s, prompted by the US State Department, an interracial group of national leaders of women's organizations in the United States formed the African Women's Committee to reach out to their African counterparts in the wake of successful independence movements throughout the continent. After consulting with numerous African women and leading experts on Africa, the committee initiated a program that brought groups of African women to the United States for short training programs designed to strengthen their leadership skills through both coursework and immersion in women's organizations. This article examines the assumptions both groups of women brought to their interactions and the ways the program changed during this period as a response to racist encounters in the US, new teachers in the classes and African women's evaluations of their experiences.

In late 1962, at the height of the Cold War, a Nigerian woman visiting the United States as part of a women's leadership training program wrote in her diary: "I have both shame and pity for the American Negro in this nation of America. And sometimes I blame the Negroes very much for allowing themselves to occupy such a poor place in a country rich like America. I believe white people no matter where you find them is [*sic*] most likely not to want to see the black man develop too far. The American Negro . . . has worked in this country and has gone to war as an American citizen. Why, then does he not have the same rights as any other citizen?"[1]

Her condemnation of racial injustice in the United States raised critical questions about American democracy at a time when freedom movements were sweeping across Africa, and Nigeria had recently become independent of colonial rule. "How can we expect them to help us with our problems and they can't solve their own problems?" the visitor asked. "America solving the colour bar that causes discrimination and poverty among the coloured people around them, this will be the things [*sic*] that will win the heart and respect of the black man."[2]

This censure of the United States came from a participant in a program sponsored by the Women's Africa Committee, a group launched in 1958 at the initiative of Illinois representative Marguerite Stitt Church and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.[3] Led initially by Anna Lord Strauss, a former president of the League of Women Voters, the new organization brought small groups of African women to the United States to strengthen their leadership skills and to compete for their loyalties with longstanding

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Soviet bloc initiatives. Shortly after its founding, the committee affiliated with the African-American Institute, a group funded by the State Department with support from the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to provide scholarships for African students studying in the United States.[4]

To promote this project as a model of interracial cooperation, a diverse group of prominent women, both white and Black, were tapped to lead the Women's Africa Committee as officers, advisers, and board members. Prominent among them were Zelia Ruebhausen, active in the League of Women Voters and the United Nations; Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women; Saralee Owens, a former official of the YWCA who had been an administrator at Howard University and Florida A&M University; feminist and peace activist Esther Hymer; and Jeanne Noble, an eminent Black psychologist.[5]

This committee was one of numerous government projects during the Cold War years that recruited private groups as partners in promoting anticommunism throughout the world. In relation to Africa, these programs were intended to compete with the radical pan-Africanist organizations of the late 1940s and early 1950s that regarded Black Americans as colonized peoples and tied the liberation of African countries directly to the civil rights movement in the United States. By establishing a separate Bureau of African Affairs in 1958, the State Department was also trying to catch up with civil rights, women's, and labor organizations with active connections to African anticolonial movements and the leaders of newly independent countries.[6]

Anticommunist fervor also swept up women's organizations. Historian Helen Laville argues that after World War II, an ideology of national loyalty replaced the international sisterhood of the interwar period, and US women joined the government in promoting a self-righteous American nationalism that reflected the "crusading zeal of the victors in a moral war."[7] Within this framework, women's groups were intended to compete directly with the Soviet-sponsored Women's International Democratic Federation and with Eastern-bloc influence in the UN Commission on the Status of Women.[8]

Although US women had little influence in the higher levels of the State Department during the 1950s, women's organizations, particularly the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the YWCA, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the National Council of Negro Women, joined willingly in these government-sponsored international women's programs. Rejecting campaigns for women's rights and "equal rights feminism" as outmoded, these elite women believed that membership in voluntary associations was the "ideal medium for the expression of the political interests and identity of women across the world."[9] Perceiving their organizations as a model for women's civic participation, they saw themselves as the leaders of the world's women.

In this anticommunist context, Laville argues, the international activities of US women became an expression "not of their sisterhood with women across the world, but of their commitment to the Cold War agenda."[10] In addition to the established women's organizations involved in these efforts, a new group called the Committee of

Correspondence (funded by the Central Intelligence Agency through a complicated network of organizations) was formed in 1952 in direct response to the activities of the Women's International Democratic Federation. Although the committee's conferences between 1956 and 1963 focused on South and Southeast Asia, fieldworkers were sent to Africa and Latin America to encourage women's participation in public life. Only during the late 1950s, as nationalist movements in Africa became increasingly successful in challenging and overturning colonial rule, did the US government begin to see African women as a possible—and potentially valuable—strategic asset.

The Women's Africa Committee offers insight into an understudied aspect of the interaction between the United States and newly independent African nations in their first decade of independence. In addition to new perspectives on American relationships with African women during the Cold War, it illustrates how a carefully chosen group of African women used their visits to the United States to challenge racist attitudes toward Africa and to engage with their US hosts and instructors on the nature of democratic leadership and the meaning of women's equality. While the new links the visitors forged with each other and with US voluntary organizations contributed a new chapter to Black women's internationalism in the 1960s, this was a layered and complex set of interactions. Although some of the visitors contested US-based ideas of democratic leadership, others tried to adapt these ideas to their own local organizations.

As the Nigerian diary demonstrates, Black visitors to the United States could not avoid the volatile issue of race relations. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, at a time when the Soviet Union featured US racism prominently in its propaganda, incidents of racial unrest became internationally explosive. After President Dwight D. Eisenhower had to call in federal troops to escort nine Black students into Little Rock Central High School in September 1957, both the president and the secretary of state were acutely aware that such incidents damaged the country's prestige and influence. Under both Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy, the government realized that each racial incident and each racist encounter experienced by an African diplomat in the United States produced negative reverberations throughout the world, particularly in Africa. This difficulty was amplified during the early 1960s as the civil rights movement used international outrage to pressure the Kennedy administration on its racial policies.[11]

This article argues that, although the seven community service programs for African women held between 1962 to 1968 began with a narrow Cold War approach to women's leadership, the program evolved during the decade.[12] The focus in the early 1960s on training democratically oriented individual leaders gave way to a broader, more Africa-centered emphasis on community organizing and social welfare, while the Cold War emphasis on women's voluntary organizations as an alternative to feminism yielded to a more open-ended discussion of women's place in African societies. Planning for the later programs also sought to shelter participants from the blatant racism experienced by the first group. Our understanding of the program and its transformations is mediated through the perspectives of those who wrote each report, however.

Bonita Valien, a civil rights activist, gathered the firsthand accounts of racism in the United States; Zelia Ruebhausen, with the League of Women Voters stressed democratic organizational leadership; and Sylvia Ardyn Boone, a radical pan-Africanist, emphasized grassroots leadership and encouraged debate about women's place in society.

Nonetheless, throughout the decade, the program's assumptions reflected a Cold War paternalism—the idea that African women (with a long history of collective activism) required instruction in American ways of bringing women together and running organizations. The program's initial focus on voluntary social service organizations also entrenched a 1950s approach to women's issues that was in process of becoming outdated by the end of the following decade.

Having embraced their mission to create a program for African women, committee members turned to their expansive political and academic connections to help them refine their objectives and design a feasible short-term experience that combined coursework with hands-on exposure to US women's groups. Over a three-year period, this intensive preparation included hosting conferences, sponsoring speakers, and interviewing visiting African women. In addition to specific programmatic suggestions, consultants warned repeatedly that discrimination came as a shock to African visitors and that advance warning was critical.[13]

The first major project of the Women's Africa Committee, a two-day conference held at International House at Columbia University in 1959, aimed to "seek the views of African men and women about the position and life of women in Africa."[14] Preparations for the meeting confirmed the group's ability to draw on an impressive range of knowledge of Africa at a time when US connections with Africa were relatively limited. Gwendolyn Carter, a political scientist at Northwestern University, served on the preparatory committee, and workshop chairs and consultants included Eduardo Mondlane, a Mozambican then on the UN Trusteeship Division and soon to become president of the Mozambican Liberation Front, and Nigerian diplomat Malam Isa Wali, an outspoken advocate of women's rights in Islam.

If attendees arrived with preconceived colonial notions about the passivity of African women, the keynote address by Edith Mai Padmore, wife of the Liberian ambassador to the United States, challenged such assumptions. Beginning her talk by citing the long history of Africans being misunderstood, Padmore described the Women's Africa Committee as a welcome effort to contest the view of African women as passive and downtrodden. As examples of their power and influence, she cited the "fierce" women warriors of the Dahomey empire, the militant women who opposed an unpopular British-imposed tax in Nigeria in 1929, and Matilda Newport, whose "daring" saved the newly settled pioneers in Liberia from attack and helped to create the Liberian Republic. In a more recent example, she praised the bravery of South African trade union activist Elizabeth Mafekeng, whom the apartheid government had recently banished to a remote part of the country. Padmore's talk stressed women's strong nationalist sentiments and their eagerness to play an active part in their communities as a new era of independence dawned.[15]

Shrewdly, Padmore reformulated the question of the conference—and in some ways undercut the organization's purpose—asking not what African women might learn from a US experience but what programs might facilitate African and American women sharing "experiences in growing community life," given that African women were already working actively through civic, educational, and political organizations.[16] She did, however, acknowledge the value of bringing African women to the United States to see American women at work in grassroots volunteer organizations. She also shared the prevailing sentiment of the era on gender equality, noting, "In trying to get the African woman to understand her role in the community, it is not that we should get her to the point where she wants to assume equal political status with men. . . . But we want women to feel that whatever role they play, it is just as important as the role that men play."[17]

Following the committee's intense preparation, a group of sixteen Nigerian women arrived in the United States on July 6, 1962, for a leadership training program led by Bonita H. Valien. Valien, who lived with the visitors and supervised all aspects of their program, was a distinguished Black sociologist who had studied with W.E.B. Du Bois at Atlanta University, earned a PhD from the University of Wisconsin, and, along with her husband, had documented the desegregation of schools and the struggle for civil rights throughout the South. Valien's blunt and detailed report to the Women's Africa Committee leadership provides rare documentation of how an elite group of African visitors to the United States experienced racism and ethnocentricity in the early 1960s. Through her lengthy quotations from the visitors' confidential diaries, written at her request, we hear their voices directly in a way unmatched in succeeding program accounts.[18]

Valien elicited such frank responses by promising that she alone would read the diaries. Although these accounts are mediated by Valien's selection, given her training as a sociologist, she made every effort to give a full and accurate report of the women's reactions. In addition, since Valien lived with the visitors on the Columbia campus, many of the incidents she reports were part of the group's direct experience, not simply replies to a questionnaire.

The issue of politics—both at home and in the United States—was foremost in the minds of the program organizers who sought to shield the visitors from potentially divisive or controversial issues. From the beginning they warned the group to avoid political discussions of either Nigerian or US internal affairs. Told that they represented "ONE Nigeria," not any specific "tribe" or region, organizers cautioned them against talking about either their own or America's internal affairs. What was "political" was variously described and interpreted during the ten-week period; but, in Valien's view, this warning became a "neat device" to keep themselves and others in line. Thus, each woman became "her sister's keeper," constantly on alert for anything that might negatively affect Nigeria's image at home or abroad.[19]

Nonetheless, the racism the visitors encountered often left them feeling on edge. As one member put it, "When I was shown the first night how to flush a toilet, honestly,

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I did for a moment wonder if lurking in the minds of some people there could be the feeling that we were a group of dressed-up savages let loose in NY." Or when another exclaimed after a weekend visit, "Imagine, can you, I was asked if I have ever seen a supermarket before. What should I say to such stupidity?" The Nigerians viewed most questions raised by Americans as "not for real information" but expressing "sheer curiosity born of stubborn ignorance of Africa" and a conviction that Africans are innately inferior. Valien observed, "Even the most innocent remark was interpreted as having some deep hidden meaning."[20]

If these women were apprehensive about how they were perceived, their reactions seemed justified. Valien explained that there was hardly a day when they did not experience an "unkind remark, a glance interpreted as disapproval," or "physical withdrawal on the part of some white person in their presence." Furthermore, she concluded that some remarks "no matter how hard I might try, I could not explain for I know they were thoughtless and intended to hurt." These comments included, "Our government (US) is spending too much money on you people"; "You people only one day out of savagery, want to get up and run the UN"; "Frankly, I think freedom for you people came too early and too fast; it is clear from all I read and what people who visit Africa say that you are NOT YET READY for freedom. It is all just a big political mistake"; and "We helped Ghana and look what we got in return, I say let you people remain with the monkeys or let the Commies have you."[21]

Given such blatantly racist experiences, the group agreed almost unanimously that Americans were woefully ignorant of Africa. When Valien tried to explain the puzzling behavior of people in a downtown office as just interest in their different and colorful dress, the visitors countered that only half of them were in Nigerian clothing. "It was simply that they had been told some Nigerians were coming and they wanted to see if we walked upright. We could see them gaping and whispering around their hands. We suppose they expect us all to be pygmies with tails." This observation lent credence to one woman's report of encountering a high school student who expected her to be short: "But you are tall; I thought Africans were pygmies."[22]

A class at Queen's College provided a welcome relief from such racism. According to Valien, the teachers had some knowledge and asked sensible questions, and the students were seriously interested in learning. She concluded: "It is not the curiosity and inquisitiveness of Americans which is resented so much, but rather the endless questions which seem to flow simply as an exercise." The Nigerian visitors felt that, for the most part, Americans only "hear" what they want to "hear," want reinforcement for their stereotypes, and anything that does not coincide with this existing knowledge or conception—"no matter how fallacious"—is dismissed.[23]

Primed to expect a general level of ignorance about Africa, the group initially found fault even with the program's academic component. In keeping with the focus on imparting American styles of "democratic" leadership, the classroom work was led by a social psychologist, Marshall Segall, from Columbia University, who had studied the Ankole area of Western Uganda. Despite Segall's research experience in Africa, his

film *Gentle Winds of Change: Uganda* produced an explosive response from a group already primed to feel insulted by the blatant misunderstanding of the continent. In Valien's words, "All the restraint they had exercised, and had been told they must exercise as ambassadors, was forgotten" as the women poured out their bitterness about the American race problem.[24] What they resented most of all about the film were the subtle inferences that Africa was becoming Europeanized but was still backward; that Africans were imitative; and that there was nothing in African culture in and of itself worth preserving. Furthermore, the film made no attempt to show the most advanced and better-developed of the continent. In Valien's view, "The fact that these comments did not accurately reflect either the content or intent of the film is not important. What IS important is what they FEEL or BELIEVE the film was doing and saying."[25] Despite this fraught introduction, Segall responded by engaging in a spirited discussion with the group—which, in the end, earned him their respect—and by admitting that some of their criticisms were valid.[26]

Unsettling encounters continued throughout the visitors' time in the United States, however. After a weekend trip outside of New York City, one member of the group made a trenchant comment on race relations in America that merits quoting at length: "Americans [unlike the British] . . . smile and treat we Nigerians all right, but you wonder. . . . What are these Americans really thinking about us? Suppose we did not come from Nigeria; suppose we did not dress differently, setting myself out from the American Negro, would the American white people shower attention on me, or would we be treated as an object of shame as the American Negro is. I hate to say this, but I just can't be really impressed that the American white people really care any more for the African than the Negro in his own country."[27]

In addition to critiques of the treatment of Black people in the United States, group members also responded to a feeling that Americans "always see the African as someone who is interested in becoming Europeanized," as "getting away from themselves and their culture."[28] One woman made these observations in her diary: "What beats me is the conceit of white people. They always imagine everybody wants to be like them. I had one to say to me, 'I hope you people won't give up all your habits and try to become like us; that is what the American Negro has tried to do without success.'"[29]

While the Nigerian visitors strongly identified with Black Americans, they "had every wish NOT to be thought of as an American Negro" given their position as second-class citizens; group members also wondered how Americans could claim to welcome Nigerians while mistreating their own Black citizens.[30] These comments are the program's most direct record of the visitors grappling with how they perceived this transnational kinship. One woman explained, "The most we can say about all of this is that it is politics; no black person in his right mind could believe white Americans could love us and hate the American Negro to whom they owe more than they do us."[31]

Further complicating the visitors' understanding of racial identity, they observed that, racism notwithstanding, Black Americans were distinctly American. In one woman's words: "While I feel more at home with a Negro, possibly because of the

color of his skin than a white person, I have found out that the American Negro is an American, and he thinks like an American, and, in spite of everything is loyal to his country."[32] Valien added that she also felt this attitude, even if expressed indirectly. She explained, "While, for the most part, I enjoyed the confidence of these women . . . there were still those moments when I was . . . considered an outsider whose loyalty was first to America. And this is the light in which I also chose to be seen."[33] She explained that to have presented herself otherwise would have created justifiable suspicion and a lack of respect in the minds of the visitors. Valien concluded, "I could be critical of our 'unfinished business of democracy' without being disloyal, just as I could see and discuss with them their country's shortcomings without, I hope, offense to them."[34]

Despite Valien's "constant uphill fight" to gain the women's confidence and introduce them to a more complex set of American attitudes, as the summer progressed, some Americans convinced the women of their sincere interest in Africa and Nigeria. By the end of the visit, "instead of ALL Americans being described as this or that, which was not pleasant, <u>all</u> became <u>some</u>."[35] Moreover, despite some "unhappy and anxious moments," some Americans passed "the rigid test of sincerity" and evoked feelings of real warmth and admiration from the Nigerian visitors.

In addition to racism, program planning and money management became additional sources of misunderstanding. Because the women perceived Americans as efficient and competent, they judged badly planned activities and confusion over the distribution of their weekly stipends as deliberate and racially motivated. Financial issues were particularly galling and, in their eyes, revealed a patronizing attitude on the part of program managers. The visitors explained that they were all mature women, accustomed to making and having their own money. To be put in a position of asking for money was a new and embarrassing experience, as were constant references regarding how to handle that money.

While responding with outrage to disturbing encounters, some of the Nigerian women gradually began to adapt culturally to their new environment. A few began to eat American food and expressed surprise that they liked it. Some also visited doctors when they were ill rather than relying on the home remedies of "dormitory doctors." Nevertheless, Valien concluded, "There were so many conflicting stories about America that they didn't know what to believe. So, to be safe, they believed the worse [*sic*] and tried to avoid situations that might prove embarrassing."[36]

To create a more positive experience for participants in upcoming programs, Valien recommended that, in the future, the classes should be more focused and skill-oriented and should involve the visitors directly in fieldwork activities. But suggestions related to race were perhaps most important: having more Black Americans involved as professionals in their fields, not to discuss the race problem; making more effort to show what the country was doing to confront racial issues; and continuing the practice of having an American, preferably non-white, living with them.

These suggestions shaped the planning and organization of the short-term visitors' programs in subsequent years. Between 1962 and 1968, the program brought

102 women from twelve African countries to the United States, including Nigeria (1962); Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (1963); Rhodesia and Zambia (1964); Ghana and Sierra Leone (1965); Madagascar and Senegal (1966); and the Republic of the Congo and the Ivory Coast (1967 and 1968). Unfortunately for historians, reports from the middle years, 1964–1966, are unavailable, and future reports were more carefully crafted, refraining from lengthy quotes from participants and avoiding reports of blatantly racist encounters between the visitors and their host communities. The only information available about the programs in 1964 and 1965 is that Marshall Segall continued to run its academic component.[37]

The East Africa program, which brought sixteen women to the United States from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, tried to turn the visitors' focus from racism in the United States to American concepts of "democratic" leadership, a major preoccupation of Ruebhausen, a national leader of the League of Women Voters who wrote the project report. Reading her account of this group suggests that in the Cold War era, "democratic" leadership had become the new "civilizing mission" of the United States. Like the Nigerian group, the East African visitors spent six weeks at Columbia University studying the psychology of group behavior and four weeks visiting smaller communities as guests of local organizations. Although committee members were satisfied with the allotment of time for each part of the program, they were not certain that they had found the right balance of academic and practical or fieldwork or the right teaching techniques to demonstrate what they deemed the two fundamental principles of group development in a democratic society: the need for continuous membership participation in policy decisions and leadership attitudes that foster broad participation and self-reliance. These concerns reflected the Cold War perspective that democratically run voluntary associations were the antidote to Soviet bloc women's initiatives.[38]

Women's leadership dominates Ruebhausen's report on the program, reflecting the equation of top-down leadership styles with authoritarianism and communism. Continuing to have a social psychologist run the academic part of the program reinforced this preoccupation. Although chosen for their experience in heading community organizations, the final report revealed a patronizing irritation that instructors had not successfully communicated their key message to the African participants—that top-down leadership was undemocratic. Ruebhausen observed that even the women who accepted the theory of engaging group members in planning and implementing projects were unsure about how to apply it. Asked how she would use her training to develop leadership skills in a group, one grantee said she would lecture them on various aspects of leadership—clearly not the "democratic" response the organizers favored.

Echoing the condescending attitudes of European colonial rulers, the report suggested that cultural differences between Americans and Africans explained the difficulties in communicating ideas and techniques of democratic group organization. To illustrate this point, it cited an experiment on leadership styles in Segall's class that contrasted groups with authoritarian, laissez-faire, and democratic leaders, concluding that groups with democratic leaders had the highest morals and were most

self-sufficient. The African participants countered that Americans responded best to democratic leadership because they were accustomed to it, saying the results might have been different in a country without such traditions.

The East African women were adamant in their defense of top-down approaches to leadership. Their newly independent countries, they argued, inherited a legacy of paternalism from colonial governments, European settlers, and the European women who introduced local women's organizations. Rather than taking the time to teach African women through trial and error, Europeans tended to lecture them on running a meeting, handling funds, and other organizational tasks. Given this background, the visitors accepted the lecture method in which experts promulgated rules from above and preferred "absolute answers" to the problems they discussed in class. The report concluded that, although program participants had resented colonial paternalism, they found the concepts of membership participation and democratic leadership "overwhelmingly difficult" to implement.

In view of their emphasis on democratic participation, American organizers took seriously Nigerian women's criticisms that they were passive observers in their fieldwork experiences. In the 1963 program, by contrast, the African women actively engaged with local organizations. They worked three afternoons a week with the professional trainer of the New York State League of Women Voters, Marjorie Stein, and visited community agencies as a group one day a week to discuss how they solved specific problems. Workshops examined the organizational structure, the functions of officers and committees, the preparation of budgets, and skills such as rules for public speaking, leading and participating in discussions, taking minutes, and raising funds. The second half of the workshop sessions used what social psychologists called "modified human relations demonstrations" to increase sensitivity to the relationship between individual and group behavior. Members who were designated as observers recorded group dynamics during exercises to use as a basis for discussion. In a continuing effort to create a "laboratory" for teaching democratic group behavior, the East African women participated in mock sessions where they formed a club, chose a project, and did the necessary research and reporting to implement their ideas.

Reports on the last two programs—for Congolese women in 1967 and the Ivory Coast in the summer of 1968—were less informative than those from the Nigerian and East African groups. Rather than critical appraisals of program experiences, the descriptions resemble advertisements for the project's funder—the Office of African Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State. No longer housed at Columbia University, both groups had a new academic component led by Sylvia Ardyn Boone, a young Black sociology instructor at Hunter College who had studied at the University of Ghana in the early 1960s and traveled extensively in West Africa. Critically important—since the visitors came from francophone countries, the groups' direct interactions with Americans were filtered through Boone and the other French-speaking translators who accompanied them.

The choice of Boone represented a significant shift in the program's orientation. While Bonita Valien's background exposed visitors to a scholar and activist steeped in the struggle for civil rights in the United States, the program's academic component was led by a social psychologist who shared Ruebhausen's concern with individual leadership styles. By contrast, Boone filled both roles; she lived with the visitors and led their academic program. More important, however, was Boone's background as part of the left-wing expatriate community that had gathered in Ghana after Kwame Nkrumah became president in 1957. This close-knit group included W.E.B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Maya Angelou. Boone's formative experience in newly independent Ghana reinforced her radical pan-Africanism but also forged her critique of women's exclusion from power as an impediment to Black aspirations in Africa and the United States.[39] Her master's degree in social work (from Columbia) also shaped her teaching and her concern with social welfare programs.

The introduction to the 1967 report reads more like a travel brochure about the wonders of America than a program evaluation document. The unidentified writer began: "On the morning of June 23 eighteen Congolese women community leaders saw American for the first time through a rainy, early morning mist. Perhaps the mist symbolized the haziness of their images of the United States and its peoples. By the end of their ten-week stay, much of the mist had evaporated and their view of the United States had taken definite form. They had seen Denver, Presque Isle, and Charlottesville; they had discussed racism, religion, and farming; they lived in families, hotels and on a college campus; they had eaten black-eyed peas, jello and corn flakes."[40]

The rest of the photo-filled document—and the account of the Ivory Coast group the following year—is equally celebratory, stressing respectively the idyllic settings of Connecticut College and the State University of New York College at New Paltz and the surrounding areas; the Americans they befriended in their respective dormitories from an Outward Bound program and the National Theater for the Deaf; their visits to organizations such as the YMCA, Head Start projects, the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, and the League of Women Voters; and overnight stays in people's homes. The trips also featured high-level consultations in Washington DC, invitations to embassy parties, and tickets to the Broadway productions of *South Pacific* and *Hello Dolly*.

Both reports also detail a careful and competitive selection process aimed at ensuring that participants could read and write in French or English, were actively engaged in community activities, and represented a range of occupations—an assurance to State Department funders that their support was going to women best positioned to spread the gospel of American democracy. The final Congolese group, for example, included a labor union leader, school supervisor, community development agent, social worker, radio announcer, midwife, and teacher.

Reflecting both Boone's political and academic background and social and political transformations in the United States, the 1967 and 1968 programs focused less on imparting idealized American leadership styles than on training participants to become

effective community organizers—following the model of the civil rights and antipoverty programs of the late 1960s. Teaching was also wider-ranging and more Africa centered. By contrast with the narrow social psychology emphasis of Marshall Segall's classes, readings were eclectic—from a social service textbook by Charlotte Towle titled *Common Human Needs* to selections by French writers Simone de Beauvoir and Stendhal. Once blacklisted, Towle's text emphasized the critical importance of social welfare programs to the modern state.[41] For African perspectives on urbanization, rapidly changing family structure, and the situation of women, students read contemporary novels by Chinua Achebe and Ama Ata Aidoo. Boone explained that, following the pedagogical ideas of Jean Piaget, she sought to account for the diversity of student backgrounds and the importance of the knowledge that people had discovered for themselves.

Rather than accepting Western models of social change or trying to impose US ideas of "democratic" leadership, Boone's classes questioned whether theories of Western social science necessarily applied to Africa. "So," she explained, "together we went on to develop our own ideas about what organizational methods would work best there."[42] She concluded that, using basic concepts of applied sociology, the women were able to gain new understanding of the social and economic forces in their own lives and communities. She described this method of work as guaranteeing that "the classroom is electric every day."[43]

Written for public consumption rather than program evaluation, the report contains little discussion of racism in the United States. However, it notes a few key issues. Program participants wondered why so few women held important positions in the national government. One woman surmised that if the United States were in the third world, Jacqueline Kennedy would have been elected president.[44]

Perhaps prompted by local hosts, newspapers in several cities carried stories about the African women's impressions of the United States and the misrepresentation of Africa they encountered. These interviews offered the visitors an opportunity to challenge prevailing US ideas about Africa and to project their self-image as independent, modern working women. Writing about the Congolese group, the *Chicago Daily News* underscored the persistent association of Africa with wildlife and poverty. The reporter quoted Agnes Pebu's observation: "I have decided that Americans think Africa is a country only of wild animals and native huts. . . . We have cities, too." Accordingly, Pebu found Chicago's high-rise buildings and superhighways less impressive than the city's women volunteers and leaders.[45]

Other newspaper accounts presented an opportunity to highlight positive features of African societies, including their attitudes toward women, and the modernity of young women. A *Plain Dealer* report on the Ivory Coast group's visit to Cleveland quoted Anne Allangba, director of the government's service for women's education: "Everyone who is more fortunate in Africa helps to support the ones who are not."[46] To illustrate this point, she described the norm of bustling households comprising women's own children and relatives from the countryside. Despite this practice, however, "young girls who come from villages to the big city" remained a major social problem. All

four women insisted that their husbands had no objection to their working and that, given the shortage of skilled workers, there was no discrimination against women in the labor market. After outlining the visitors' program, the reporter turned to their brightly printed long skirts and asked whether this fashion would continue at home. "No," Allangba replied, "we love the mini-jupe (mini-skirt). . . . If your legs are good, it's the best way to beat the heat."[47] Signaling the reporter's intent, the article was entitled, "From Africa . . . with Love: Cultural Exchange Can Teach Us Something Too." Also stressing the women's modernity, a Hartford, Connecticut, article announced: "Congo Women 'Dig the Beatles.'"[48]

The final report, *Ten Years of the Women's Africa Committee*, continued the upbeat assessment of the committee and its work.[49] These efforts included the committee's publications—*Women in Modern Africa*, *A Bibliography on Contemporary African Women*, and *The Role of Women in Africa*; the report of the 1959 conference held in New York; the community service program; the summer leadership scholarship program for women studying in US colleges and universities; and the resident wives' program, a monthly gathering for women from United Nations and other diplomatic families to share mutual concerns and to provide English classes and tours of New York.

Although this account is straightforward on the surface, it cannot hide the project's underlying Cold War agenda. Reflecting on the goal of helping African women involved in social, economic, and educational work to direct programs in their countries along "peaceful, constructive and democratic lines," the writer observes that, prior to these programs, "the African woman lacked the self-confidence and experience" to move ahead, whereas now she is rising to the enormous challenge of helping to create a new nation.[50] These observations suggest that the organizers were convinced from the beginning that there was a "right" American way to run social programs, not grasping Edith Mai Padmore's message that African women were already accomplished social and political organizers for whom the program offered new skills, insights, and experiences—but not inscribed on an empty slate.

Finally, although two of the three concluding statements come from women participants who valued their experience, the report ends with words of praise from a husband: "The main reason for writing is to thank you for all you have taught my wife. You have sent me back a more sensible, patient, considerate, obliging and on the whole, useful wife. She has learned something I cannot teach her for a life time. I also hesitated thanking you for fear the reformation might be temporary and on the surface, but after two months I still have the same new American wife."[51]

The emphasis given to this testimony as a way of highlighting the program's successes and the patronizing tone of some of the final remarks suggests that, despite Sylvia Boone's more Africa-centered teaching, the writer had not gone beyond the late 1950s gender prescriptions of the elite, well-connected women who initiated the project as a Cold War effort to demonstrate the superiority of 1950s American approaches to both social service programs and gender relations. By concluding with this statement from a participant's husband, the writer underscores the message that the project's social activism was not meant to challenge male dominance, either in society or at home.

If this official summary was brief and cursory, Sylvia Boone's report on her travel to the Congo in October 1968 provides a detailed evaluation of the program from the perspective of participants, illustrating the challenges they faced when they returned home, the breadth of the projects they initiated, and their frustrations with the committee. It also provides the only record of how program participants fared in their home countries. By the end of her two-week trip, she had met with ten of the Congolese women and interviewed each of them for at least two hours, despite the politically dangerous situation in the country when she arrived.[52]

Even with her extensive background working and studying in numerous African countries, Boone was not immune from colonial-era stereotypes. She wrote of being "shaken" to learn that the "strange, turgid river near the next street" was the Congo River of Stanley, de Brazza, and Livingston, a place that seems to have a "certain still, forbidding holiness, maybe for being so thought about, and fought over, and desired and ravished."[53] However, given the fraught political situation, her description of the country's "tense and sullen" mood was undoubtedly accurate. When Boone arrived in the capital, Kinshasa, Congolese rebel Pierre Mulele, said to be reconciled with General Mobutu, was on his way back from exile. Soon thereafter Mulele was executed by firing squad.

This dangerous political climate also shaped the gender politics to which program participants returned. Six months earlier, General Mobutu had dissolved the women's branches of the main political party, which forced women to integrate into the party machinery ostensibly on an equal level with men.[54] The results of this move were predictable. With feminine organizations dissolved, robbed of their natural constituency, and inexperienced in the ways of male political conflict, "women activists were divided and scorned . . . and not free to develop their own strengths" or to address women's issues.[55] Given this new political context, the women she interviewed all refused to take part in politics and were very cautious about forming new organizations.

The environment for religiously affiliated social service groups was equally fraught. Despite Congo's independence, European-run churches still had vast influence and continued to control huge land holdings and medical and social work institutions. According to Boone, the women involved with these organizations "see clearly that they themselves are not prime movers or policy makers. They resent this but are often resigned to the situation."[56]

Given these dangerous political conditions, Boone was impressed with the Congolese women's "ingenuity and dedication" in organizing social service and literacy programs.[57] Philomène Chirancho, who worked for the government Department of Social Affairs, brought exceptional energy to her position. She launched a project to provide disabled men with bicycles and skills to become self-supporting, a program for visiting older people to be sure they received food and care, and literacy classes for women that attracted sixty participants. In addition, using her US course notes, Chirancho organized a conference on the role of women in Congolese society and introduced classes for social service aides. She expressed the need for help in begin-

ning programs for the young girls flocking to the cities before they finished school. Boone described Chirancho as "beautiful, bright," and "gifted in work with people."[58] Equally successful, Suzanne Dungu's organization had grown from twenty to two hundred participants since her return from the United States. By relying on funding from women who pooled their resources, the group offered courses in cooking, sewing, and other domestic skills.

Another prodigious organizer, Elizabeth Mandiangu, gave Boone the chance to emphasize the committee's training in democratic leadership. During the year since her return, Mandiangu had raised money to build a large hall for classes, meetings, and receptions and to fund four scholarships for group members to continue their studies in home economics, child care, and social service work. She and her group also visited isolated villages to instruct women in hygiene, childcare, and nutrition. Mandiangu had stepped down as president of her organization in order to help others develop leadership skills. Praising her boundless energy and goodwill, Boone noted the "new dynamism" she had brought to women's work in the town of Kimpese.

Boone also admired the work of Elizabeth Ngoma. Among the most nationally visible group members, Ngoma was on her way to becoming "one of the most influential women in the country" through her work as a journalist.[59] After she wrote a scathing attack on an article that advocated the death penalty for unwed mothers, Ngoma became the women's page editor of the paper *La Voix du Katanga* and began using her position as an advocate for women. She personally answered women's letters about their difficulties and used them as a basis for her columns.

Other women in the group had organized literacy projects and French classes, trained young women as social service aides, and advised other women's organizations, all while navigating a dangerous political landscape. Some of the Congolese women took pride in applying the psychological skills they had learned to help the members of their groups get along better. Overall, the Women's Africa Committee won high praise from these community leaders. But they all agreed on one specific criticism: the lack of responses to their letters to the committee. Boone wrote, "Without exception, each one of the women button-holed me and complained (with surprising bitterness) about the way they felt neglected by the Committee."[60] Suzanne Vundowe went so far as to say that it would have been better <u>not</u> to have been invited than to invite them and not follow-up. What they wanted, Boone concluded, was communication and information—curriculum materials, articles, and books. They were also eager for follow-up seminars with participants from other countries, perhaps a "jamboree in Africa" with women from all the community service program groups.

These assessments of the Women's Africa Committee represent the most important source of feedback on the program, illustrating the impressive range of issues the returning women were inspired to tackle on their return and the efforts of a few to implement ideas of democratic leadership. But these reactions also highlight the limitations of the committee's vision. Caught in a paternalist Cold War narrative that US women's groups were the best source of training for African women, they failed to take up the next phase by facilitating connections among women in Africa.

These observations might have provided the Women's Africa Committee with useful suggestions for follow-up programs, but, as we now know, by the time of Boone's report, the State Department funding stream for the program had been exposed as coming indirectly from the Central Intelligence Agency. Although the women's project is not explicitly mentioned in a thirteen-day series of articles that made the front page of the *New York Times* in February 1967, the articles exposed both the Committee of Correspondence and the African-American Institute as recipients of covert CIA funding. The revelation caused shock and dismay among hundreds of voluntary organizations across the United States. The African-American Institute survived this disclosure, but the Committee of Correspondence—and the community service program of the Women's Africa Committee—did not.[61] These revelations are no doubt responsible for the brevity of the final report—and the absence of any explanation in the documents of why this ostensibly successful program was ending. They also may help to explain the sparse communication between the committee and the Congolese women.

Conclusion

Despite its controversial finances, the Women's Africa Committee deserves recognition for a major component of its operation—tapping the expertise and knowledge of numerous highly educated Black Americans, many of them women. At a time when the evolving academic infrastructure of African Studies often ignored and dismissed the earlier contributions of Black scholars, the committee drew widely on their expertise in formulating its goals, learning about African women, and sharing their knowledge with program participants, and—especially in the case of Sylvia Boone—relying on this understanding to create culturally sensitive programs.[62] Diverging from the committee's initially narrow focus on social psychology, Boone's teaching methods encouraged participants to combine their own background knowledge with a deeper understanding of community organizing, democratic participation in civil society, and the perspectives of newly published African writers on women's equality and social change. Through her pedagogy, participants became part of a pan-African intellectual and political conversation that encouraged the visiting African women to engage critically with issues of race and gender, to challenge narrow Cold War stereotypes about the meaning and exercise of democracy, and to question ideas about "democracy" coming from the United States, with its long history of racism.

In addition, although the Women's Africa Committee began as a way to promote what the US State Department saw as "democratic" leadership styles among African women, it achieved far more: forging new connections among women in participating African countries and connecting the visitors with US voluntary groups and social service organizations. Through news reports in local communities and public performances celebrating their local cultures, the visitors publicly contested racist stereotypes of Africans as exotic and primitive. The program also created links between participants and leading Black women in the United States, helping to add new con-

nections to the Black women's internationalism that Cold War repression of left-wing Black activists had sought to disrupt. The carefully chosen groups of women were all leaders of grassroots organizations. But their educational background and fluency in English or French marked their elite status in their home countries and influenced their reception in the United States by their embassies and by the highest ranks of Black and white women's leadership.[63] Although we can only make assumptions about what the visitors hoped to gain from the experience, the reports of Sylvia Boone's trip to the Congo to visit former program participants suggests that their goals were more practical than ideological—to gain new skills, resources, and ideas to bring back to their organizations. The evidence from the Nigerian group suggests that these women were interested in assessing their connections to Blacks in the United States, but they by no means assumed an automatic kinship with them.

If the disclosure of the CIA's involvement in funding the Women's Africa Committee had not ended the community service program, changes in the global women's movement would soon have made its Cold War, 1950s approach outdated. By the late 1960s a new feminist energy was gaining strength in the United States that would transform the objectives and tactics of voluntary women's organizations. With the emergence of second-wave feminism, women's rights would once again provide the intellectual and political momentum for new American women's groups. In addition, anger at the government's covert funding of private initiatives, combined with the growing outrage over the Vietnam War, would shift the focus of the transnational women's movement to the United Nations and to projects in Africa.

Although the approach of the Women's Africa Committee might have been outdated by the late 1960s, women involved in the committee did not fade into the background. Rather, they became leading advocates of these transformations. In 1970 Sylvia Boone organized a conference of prominent Black women to assess their connections to the new feminist movement;[64] Zelia Reubhausen helped to establish a Women in Development program in East Africa through the African-American Institute in the late 1970s;[65] and Margaret Snyder, who had been the East African representative for the Women's Africa Committee in the early 1960s, was one of the key figures to initiate and coordinate innovative new UN programs.[66]

Notes

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[1]Bonita H. Valien, "Leadership Training Program for Nigerian Women: Some Impressions with Recommendations," December 1962, AA010060001-1, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 6, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 7–8 (hereafter, Sophia Smith Collection).

[2]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 7–8.

[3]African-American Institute, "Background on Women's Africa Committee," Typescript, July 8, 1959, AA010080003-4, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 8, Sophia Smith Collection.

[4]Edward Berman, a specialist in international education, argues that foundation funding was a deliberate effort to mask Central Intelligence Agency involvement. Edward H. Berman, *The Idea of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 131–133.

[5]Other well-known participants included Dorothy Ferebee, a Howard University medical school faculty member and community activist in Washington, DC; labor and consumer affairs advocate Esther Peterson; playwright Lorraine Hansberry; African politics specialist Gwendolyn Carter; and Millicent McIntosh, president of Barnard College. This list is only suggestive of the hundreds of women involved during a ten-year period.

[6]Shirley Graham Du Bois and Eslanda Robeson were among the most prominent women in this group. Key sources on Black American involvement in African freedom struggles include Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); and Yevette Richards, *Maida Springer, Pan-Africanist and International Labor Leader* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

[7]Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organizations* (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Press, 2002), 8.

[8]Laville, *Cold War Women*, 112–113. The US affiliate, the Congress of American Women, was blacklisted and dissolved in 1950.

[9]Laville, *Cold War Women*, 59.

[10]Laville, *Cold War Women*, 118.

[11]The synergy between the US civil rights movement and the emergence of independent African nations is traced in Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Von Eschen, *Race against Empire;* Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*; and Munro, *The Anticolonial Front*.

[12]The committee also established a summer school program for African women students in the United States, but the project has left few records.

[13]"Consultation on Developing Programs for African Women Visitors to the United States," Women's Africa Committee, Typescript, May 3, 1960, AA010h010006-9, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee, Box 1, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection; and Zelia P. Ruebhausen, "Report to the Annual Meeting," Typescript, May 23, 1960, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection. The report to the annual meeting also stressed the interracial character of the group's meetings and social functions.

[14]Mary Craig Schuller and Elizabeth Hunting Wheeler, eds., "The Role of Women in Africa," Women's Africa Committee of the African-American Institute, Report of Conference Convened by the Women's Africa Committee at International House, New York, November 20–21, 1959, ix. Library of Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY.

[15]Schuller and Wheeler, "Role of Women in Africa," 25–27.

[16]Schuller and Wheeler, "Role of Women in Africa," 29.

[17]Schuller and Wheeler, "Role of Women in Africa," 13.

[18]Valien, "Leadership Training Program for Nigerian Women"; and "Final Report, 1962 Leadership Program for African Women," Africa Women's Committee, Preston and Bonita Valien Papers, Amistad Research Center, Box 64, Folder 3, 3. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

[19]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 1.

[20]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 2.

[21]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 3.

[22]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 3.

[23]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 4.

[24]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 4.

[25]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 4.

[26]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 4.

[27]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 6.

[28]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 6–7.

[29]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 7.

[30]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 7.

[31]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 8.

[32]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 8.

[33]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 8.

[34]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 8.

[35]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 8.

[36]Valien, "Leadership Training Program," 5.

[37]See E. Jefferson Murphy, *Creative Philanthropy: Carnegie Corporation and Africa, 1953–1973* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1976), 199.

[38]The account of this program comes from Zelia P. Ruebhausen, "Report on Visitors' Program," November 25, 1963, AA010090006-16, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 9, Sophia Smith Collection.

[39]Kevin K. Gaines, *African Americans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 16. This community scattered following the military coup against Ghana's president in February 1966. On pages 264–265, Gaines discusses Boone's letters to Julien Mayfield in which she criticized male domination in Black political movements in Africa and the United States. Following Boone's work with the Women's Africa Committee, she earned a doctorate in art history from Yale and became the first Black woman to become a tenured professor there.

[40]African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee, *Community Service Program*, 1967 (New York: African-American Institute, 1967), 5.

[41]Charlotte Towle's book *Common Human Needs* (Washington, DC: Federal Security Agency, 1945), was blacklisted in the early 1950s for using the term *socialized state* to refer to the social security and public assistance programs she was advocating. The book later became a standardized text for social work education.

[42]African-American Institute, *Community Service Program*, 12.

[43]African-American Institute, *Community Service Program*, 12.

[44]African-American Institute, *Community Service Program*, 26.

[45]Diane Monk, "Congolese Visitors Praise Female Generosity in US," *Chicago Daily News*, July 31, 1967, Women's Africa Committee of the African-American Institute, *Community Service Program* (New York: African-American Institute, 1967), 24.

[46]Mary Hutton Constant, "From Africa . . . with Love: Cultural Exchange Can Teach Us Something Too," *The Plain Dealer,* July 31, 1968, Women's Africa Committee of the African-American Institute, *Community Service Program* (New York: African-American Institute, 1968), 13.

[47]Constant, "From Africa . . . with Love." 13.

[48]Art Myers, "Congo Women 'Dig the Beatles,'" unnamed newspaper, Hartford, Connecticut, July 8, 1967, Women's Africa Committee of the African-American Institute, *Community Service Program* (New York, African-American Institute,1967), 25.

[49] *Ten Years of the Women's Africa Committee*, Pamphlet, April 1969. AA010010019-30, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Sophia Smith Collection.

[50] *Ten Years*, n.p.

[51] *Ten Years*, n.p.

[52]Sylvia Ardyn Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip to Congo Kinshasha, 3–17 September," Typescript, October 20, 1968, AA010050001-14, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 5, Sophia Smith Collection.

[53]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 3–4.

[54]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 4.

[55]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 5.

[56]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 5.

[57]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 5.

[58]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 9.

[59]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 13.

[60]Boone, "Report on Follow-Up Trip," 7.

[61]Richard M. Hunt, "The CIA Exposures: End of an Affair," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 45, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 211–229; and Helen Laville, "The Committee of Correspondence: CIA Funding of Women's Groups, 1952–1967," *Intelligence and National Security* 12, no. 1 (1997): 104–121. In 1963 foundation representatives had decided to underwrite the funding of the African-American Institute if the Agency for International Development provided financial support comparable to that from the CIA. The decision is documented in Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy*, 132; and dated in Murphy, *Creative Philanthropy*, 67. The Women's Africa Committee continued its program of hosting African women and children in the New York area associated with the United Nations.

[62]Among the most recent scholars to make this point about the contributions of Black scholars is Jean M. Allman, "Herskovits Must Fall? A Meditation on Whiteness, African Studies, and the Unfinished Business of 1968," *African Studies Review* 62, no. 3 (September 2019): 6–39.

[63]Photos of program organizer Zelia Ruebhausen with Margaretta "Happy" Rockefeller, wife of New York's governor, and Margaret Kenyatta, daughter of Kenya's president, illustrate the program's elite sponsorship. See "Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller and Zelia Ruebhausen Greet African Women at Fashion Show Luncheon," photograph, n.d. AA010100014-15, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 10, Sophia Smith Collection; and "Zelia Ruebhausen and Margaret Kenyatta (daughter of Jomo Kenyatta), 1964," photograph, 1964, AA0100800014-15, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 8, Sophia Smith Collection.

[64]In December 1970 Boone, then a Visiting Lecturer at Yale, organized the Chubb Conference on the Black Woman. Speakers criticized women's secondary role in Black organizations but, according to the *New York Times* on December 14, 1970, saw "women's liberation" as a white women's movement.

[65]Bonnie Schultz and Zelia P. Ruebhausen, "African-American Institute (AAI) Women in Development Trip Notes, 7 June–15 July 1978," Report, 1978. AA010070005-47, African-American Institute, Women's Africa Committee Records, Box 1, Folder 7, Sophia Smith Collection.

[66]For a brief overview of Snyder's career, see her *New York Times* obituary on February 7, 2021, which identifies her as the United Nations' "First Feminist."