

U F A H A M U

AFRICAN ACTIVISTS ASSOCIATION
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UFAHAMU will accept contributions from anyone interested in Africa and related subject areas. Contributions may include scholarly articles, political-economic analyses, commentaries, film and book reviews and freelance prose, art work and poetry.

Manuscripts may be of any length, but those of 15-25 pages are preferred. (All manuscripts must be clearly typed, double-spaced originals with footnotes gathered at the end. Contributors should endeavor to keep duplicate copies of all their manuscripts.) The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit any manuscript to meet the objectives of the journal.

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EDITOR'S QUILL

As promised, this issue is a 'double-decker', so to speak. It summarises and celebrates this editorial board's two-year term in 'service'. The celebration is actually a farewell. We are quitting.

But Ufahamu continues its indefinite lease of life under a new 'cabinet'. Some members of the old guard will serve in the new administration, with or without portfolio. Lest our readers be unnecessarily alarmed, it should be pointed out that the dissolution of the present editorial board is a seasonal affair. It has nothing to do with a 'crisis' or catastrophe of any description. Like a snake, once in a while Ufahamu sheds its old skin to allow for the development of a new one. But unlike the lizard, the journal does not remain quite the same again. And that is as it should be. For the ideological content, emphasis and direction of the material published in Ufahamu reflect the ideas of the editors during their term in office. That means only that an editorial board is likely to displease those who, for whatever reason, disagree with the ideas being expressed, or the manner of their expression. We are no exception.

Take our unapologetic condemnation of the U.S. invasion of Grenada in the last issue (vol. XIII, no. 1). We were attacked for being "a closed clique," for "the level" of our editorials," for "radicalism," etc, etc. Dubious apparitions haunted our cubicle and demanded information about the journal: who pays for it, who its subscribers are, how it manages to 'survive' and a whole lot of other such pellets of harassment. We challenged them to a rendez-vous of the mind to fight it out. But they never turned up!

We are under no obligation to supply any information about our function. Suffice it here to point out for the interests of Ufahamu sympathizers, that the journal is a Graduate publication of the University of California, at Los Angeles. It's financial support comes almost entirely from the University. A small fraction of this material support comes from the subscribers, but by itself, this financial source couldn't keep Ufahamu alive. What makes it possible for this journal to survive is in essence the dedication of its editors and full editorial freedom of academic expression guaranteed by Dr. Michael Lofchie, the director of the African Studies Center. The work is voluntary, demanding a bit of self-sacrifice and plenty of commitment to the just struggle of the African people against imperialism and neo-colonialism. And, as a journal of the African Activist Association, the publication executes the political behest of this organisation. In other words, we are "doing business" just like any other journal. We are open to

criticism and we respect the views of other people, unlike many a bourgeois publication. As to our political stance, well, we are anti-imperialist, anti-neo-colonialist and stand for peace and security of the human race on earth. More is superfluous.

As far as the contents of this issue are concerned, these fall into two parts, corresponding to the double reach of its intent. The first part carries articles on the Olympic Games, currently being held in Los Angeles. These articles analyse the nature of the Olympic ideal, showing how this ideal has been turned into a means of serving one or other political aim. The backbone of this analysis is borne by three main contributions. These are Carol Thompson's article on the power structure of the governing bodies of the Games, Ed Ferguson's interview with Dennis Brutus on the efforts made and the successes registered in the endeavour to expel South Africa from participation in international sport, and documents from the "International Conference on Sanctions Against Apartheid Sport," held in London, June 1983.

Carol Thompson's article: "The Broken Rings of the Olympic Ideal," reveals what goes on behind the *huis clos* of the Olympic committees, both international and national. We discover that the five rings making up the Olympic symbol, which are supposed to represent the five continents, are, in function only three. Europe and North America turn out to constitute the real power which determines the rules of the game, with the Third World, as always, relegated to the outskirts of the arena. The power structure of the International Olympic Committee, for example, is made up of 89 members, 57 of whom are either Americans or Europeans. Worse still, of these 89, only three are women. Now, that sounds familiar. Obviously, the composition of the IOC is only international to the extent that it represents western interests, which cannot, of consequence, be confined to sports for sports' sake. They "overflow" to inundate political, hence economic terrains. This explains the predictable commercialisation of the Los Angeles Games, involving all the general filth that characterises money-grabbing.

How are the political and commercial components of the Games to be accounted for? This takes us back to the very origin of the Olympic Games. The Games sprang from the ancient Greek initiation practices, one of which entailed sacrificing human beings. Greek myth has it that the gods used to boil and eat their own children in order to immortalise them. One such boiling and eating ceremony affected Pelops, son of Tantalos. At the invitation of Tantalos, the gods gathered to a feast. Now, Pelops was the sacrificial lamb. Among the invited guests was Zeus, the thunderbolt master. Zeus refused to partake of the flesh of Pelops and ordered Tantalos to put back the child's limbs into the cauldron. This done, Klotho, the goddess of

birth, resuscitated Pelops, and Zeus blasted Tantalos with one powerful thunderbolt. The child Pelops grew up happily ever after.

But no sooner had he reached maturity than he resolved to marry Hippodameia, daughter of Oinomaos, king of Elis. Now Hippodameia was not a cheap bride. Thirteen preceding suitors had perished in the attempt to marry her. What made Hipp's hand so difficult to win was the precondition her father made for her betrothal. The old man had declared that, whoever wished to marry his daughter must undertake a chariot chase. The suitor drove one chariot, with his prospective wife sitting beside him, while Oinomaos pursued him, overtook him and killed him. Well, Pelops discovered a clever way around the ordeal. He bribed the king's charioteer to remove one of the lynch-pins. Consequently, the king's chariot crashed and Pelops speared the king to death. Then he declared himself king of Elis. The event was celebrated every four years hence.

That may be only a myth. But the similarity of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games to the Greek story about the Games' origin, cannot escape an inquirer's attention.

Having eliminated serious competitors from participation, the U.S. team is assured virtual victory. But "victory" comes to an insecure competitor through tricks, lies and violations of the principles and agreements governing the Games. This is one of the statements we make on the cover illustration.

Ed Ferguson's interview with Dennis Brutus touches on the reasons behind the Soviet withdrawal from this year's Olympic Games. Brutus, an insider, and specialist in Olympic affairs, points out at the political motives behind the violations of the Olympic Charter, which resulted in non-participation in the Games by socialist countries. These violations reflect the general pattern of behaviour by the western powers in their control of the Olympic Games. The interview recounts the struggle by anti-apartheid movements to exclude South Africa from international sports. It transpires that, precisely because the Olympic governing bodies are western in emphasis, they have always worked to allow South African representation, with Avery Brundage at one time arrogantly declaring that even if he were the only spectator, and South Africa the only team, the Games would still be called Olympic.

Despite this western bias in favour of South Africa, anti-apartheid movements all over the world have fought timelessly to make sure that South Africa shall not be re-admitted into international sport until apartheid itself is eliminated from the African continent. As Mr. Shridath Ramphal, the Commonwealth Secretary-General says, the target of these movements is apartheid

itself.

The second part of this issue is interdisciplinary in character. Among the articles included in this section are studies dealing with the role of the Mozambican women in the liberation of their country, problems of development and social transformation, critiques and analyses of recent trends in African literature.

In vol. XII no. 3, we published an article by Professor Alpers on the role of art in the liberation of Mozambique. In response to that article Professors Allen and Barbara Isaacman have produced an extremely detailed and well-researched study on the active part Mozambican women played in the overthrow of Portuguese colonialism in that country. This victory meant women's liberation from the shackles of male domination. The authors show that, contrary to western concepts of women's liberation, the Mozambican women won their liberation through the armed struggle for the liberation of Mozambique. It is indeed ironic to read in this account that some men had to be pulled out from their hiding places at home by women, and challenged to fight for their liberation in the bush. The Isaacmans reveal how difficult it was for the women to be accepted by men as equals, even after they had proved themselves equal, and in some cases, more than equal to men. Evidently, ideological consciousness about the need for sexual equality is not enough. This important study indicates that much more remains to be done and accomplished before real equality between man and woman is achieved.

Two articles address the new phenomenon of political literature in Africa. From Oxford, Lisa Curtis writes on the writings of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the Kenyan novelist, and comes to the conclusion that, in his recent novels, Ngugi has diverged from art by a wide mark. The problem with Ngugi, says Ms. Curtis, is his inability to find an appropriate mode of expression to accommodate his ideological bent. Perhaps the novel is not a suitable tool for ideological declarations. Bertolt Brecht succeeded in the task, but only through theatre, reflects the author. This is an important argument and deserves respect. We publish Ms. Curtis' "The Divergence of Art and Ideology in the Later Novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o," not because we are in agreement with her, but because we think hers is a serious contribution to the analysis of African literature and art.

The second main article on African literature comes from Nigeria. Juliet I. Okonkwo explores the political activism in recent African fiction. She focuses on the African intellectual as a political activist, attempting first to define what is meant by the intellectual. And when it comes to definitions of concepts and their material forms, Africa asserts her right

to differ from western notions. So that an African intellectual, as depicted in African literature finds himself/herself called upon to justify his/her African-ness. But then this justification involves choosing sides between the needs of the African people and those of neo-colonial powers. The novels of Robert Serumaga, Ayi Kwei Armah, Legson Kayira and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, to mention a few, depict this dilemma of the African intellectual.

Still on literature, Micere Mugo points at the same dilemma facing the 'educated' African. In "The Battle of the Mind" Ms. Mugo analyses the neo-colonial character of most of the African intellectuals, those who have to turn to western philosophical traditions to explain away social problems. She emphasizes the need for the African intellectuals to base themselves on the African social thoughts as manifested in the African modes of self-expression and behaviour. Even if one disagrees with the interpretations of this African social behaviour, says Ms. Mugo, it is necessary to analyse it in order to use it as an anti-imperialist weapon that it already is. Only then will it be possible to delineate the needs of the African people and act accordingly to fulfil them.

The rest of the articles in this section cover different aspects of the problems of change in Africa. Nkeonye Otafor makes an essential contribution "Toward a Definition of Development," using the Nigerian example. Anita Pfouts writes on the "Social Structure in Precolonial Namibia" while Robin Kelley turns to the Congo to analyse the "Problems of Socialist Transformation in Africa."

Horace Campbell, once again, provides a fitting topic for the forum section. The subject of military coups and rule in Africa has yet to be addressed with the seriousness it deserves. Mr. Campbell finds military rule deplorable irrespective of its stated intentions or observed functions. In Africa where the niceties of "democracy" are ignored, the possibility of military dictatorships becoming pervasive is too real to allow more of these coups to continue taking place without making an effort to stop them. But the Nigerian coup is acceptable if only because the civilian rulers were corrupt and insensitive to the agonising cry of the people. How to resolve the dichotomy between the socially salutary effect of military coups in Africa and their propensity for dictatorship, that is the question. This is not necessarily Ufahamu's position, but Mr. Campbell raises an essential issue for discussion and analysis.

The totality of the material published in this issue amounts only to a small contribution for the general good of the African people. We do not pretend to have the final answers to the problems facing Africa today, but we are convinced of one thing:

live a million years, Africa will never develop under capitalism. The basis for the social development of Africa lies elsewhere: in socialism. How or when to arrive at this destination, only the future will tell. But will imperialism sit by and let Africa "slip away" from its grip? The progressive forces in the imperialist countries owe the human race in general and the people in the Third World in particular, a human service: to fight against this monstrous system in their own countries.

And with that note, we bid you all goodbye, good readers.

K.M.

A TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL ALFRED GRIFFIN

On May 15, 1984, Marine Corporal Alfred Griffin was court-martialled and sentenced to four months of hard labour. In addition to the imprisonment, Corporal Griffin was reduced to the rank of private, forced to forfeit \$395 a month for six months from his meager salary and given a dishonorable discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps. His crime? Anti-imperialist 'misconduct'.

First, he refused to go to Lebanon to participate in the genocidal acts of the U.S. "peace-keeping" force. Griffin, a Muslim, could not accept the idea of killing fellow Muslims. Secondly, as an African-American, he refused to play the role of executioner of the Grenadian people and destroyer of their revolution. To him, the very people who were kidnapped from Mother Africa, those who shared the same chains, the same oppression, and who produced the needed surplus-value to fuel American capitalism, . . . these are his countrymen.

Griffin's "crimes" are the very virtues of this nation. The American "Bill of Rights" promulgates freedom of worship. Therefore, when Griffin refused to "serve" in Lebanon, he was acting within his rights as a conscientious objector. His abstention from the Grenadian carnage was an act of patriotism in the larger sense of the African nation.

We, members of the editorial board of Ufahamu, in our capacity as the literary executors of the African Activist Association, fully stand behind Alfred Griffin's just stand against injustice. And in our support for this courageous brother, we

- Demand that he be immediately released, his honor reinstated and full material compensation made in his favor.
- Condemn the discriminatory practices against members of the minority groups within the U.S. armed forces. We refer to African-Americans, Mexican-Americans and Native (indigenous) Americans.
- Call upon all the military personnel to defend the rights of Corporal Griffin and follow his example in refusing to fight unjust wars.

R.K.