

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

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Introduction

The violations of human rights perpetrated by the Nigerian Government under General Babangida first and now under his successor General Abacha have received some publicity lately in the U.S. press, particularly after the decision of the Black Caucus to campaign in Washington for an embargo on Nigerian oil. However, there has been no mention of the abuses which the Nigerian Government has condoned or commanded on the country's campuses, where for years now a reign of intimidation and even outright terror has prevailed.

A welcome exception to this silence was the protest letter sent to General Abacha by the President of African Studies Association (ASA) in the latest ASA bulletin which, we hope, will contribute to make our North American colleagues aware of the degree to which our support for Nigerian teachers and students is needed. In this issue of the CAFA Newsletter we continue to document the troubled situation of Nigerian universities, focusing upon the University-wide teachers strike and the violent attacks by the police force on the students of Edo State University.

In this issue we also publish edited versions of two papers presented at the ASA conference in November 1994 in Toronto. The first paper is by Attahiru Jega, former head of the Nigerian university teachers' union, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Jega gives an overview of the Nigerian university system and faculty struggles for academic freedom and university autonomy against the government and its IMF/World Bank-inspired "vision" of university life. The second paper by Alamin Mazrui and Willy Mutunga discusses the Kenyan university teachers' union, the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU), and the vicissitudes of its bitter struggle for the registration of the union.

The last part of this issue presents our campaign for a World Bank-free ASA. Our campaign was inspired by multiple reasons. These include: (a) the nature of the World Bank as a profit-making organization; (b) its role in the decline of education in Africa; (c) its silence on the violations of academic freedom perpetrated by African governments to whom it gives loans; (d) its record of using ASA conferences for self-advertisement and self-promotion, while masquerading as a scholarly enterprise.

We must add, in this context, that we were badly surprised to see at the last ASA conference held in Toronto, that not only the World Bank was unproblematically invited; but so were representatives of the American military and intelligence agencies, who again participated not as individuals but as employees of these organizations. There should be no doubt that their presence is a violation of academic freedom since it can hardly be argued that the free flow of ideas is not hampered by the presence of institutions which can beckon armies in support of their views. Moreover, if the U.S. government and the World Bank can present panels in their names at the ASA what can prevent other governments and banks to use the ASA in a similar way? We urge, therefore, our colleagues to join our petition campaign to the ASA, to ensure that in the future the panels organized for the annual ASA conference are not instrumentalized to promote the agendas of these institutions.

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The Nigerian University Teachers on Strike

The Nigerian university teachers' union, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), ended its nation-wide university strike in January 1995. The strike had begun on August 17, 1994. ASUU called the strike to (a) ensure the implementation of the agreement it had negotiated with the government in 1992; (b) protest the violation of due process rights of the University of Abuja's students and faculty by the university's Vice-Chancellor; and (c) demand the conclusion and the release of the results of the presidential election which was held in June 1993 in which M.K.O. Abiola was widely claimed to be the winner. ASUU kept up the momentum of strike in the face of the government's decision to stop the teachers' salaries. This determination led the government to send different representatives to meet with the ASUU executive with a view to finding solutions to end the strike. A loose agreement was reached in January 1995 to create a favorable environment for the implementation of the agreement by government. This, however, is a temporary move, which should not be interpreted as a reconciliation with the government's position.

ASUU's main demand was that the government implement the agreement it negotiated with ASUU in 1992. The only part of the agreement that has been implemented has been the wage increase (although in several state universities lecturers had difficulties in receiving this increase, as state governments often claimed they had no money). As a result of the 1992 strike, the wage of Lecturer 1 was raised to 30,000 Naira. In addition, lecturers obtained a journal allowance (N3,000 for junior lecturers; N5,000 for senior lecturers and N7,000 for professors); a research allowance (N2,000 for junior lecturers). These increases were certainly welcome.

But the wage increase was only a part of the 1992 agreement (though it was the one the Nigerian Federal government most publicized, to give the impression that all the lecturers cared about was money). Other, equally important, parts of the agreement have not been implemented and it was to redress this situation that the new strike was called. The 1992 agreement had stipulated that the government would take a number of measures to increase the funding of the higher education system, which has been financially starved since the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program in 1986. Such measures were to include:

1. The establishment of a Stabilization Fund, initially of 1 billion Naira, to be held in a special account to compensate for university budget shortfalls.
2. An Education Tax that all companies would pay (2% of their profit). An Education Tax Decree was issued to support the tax but no funds have been disbursed to the universities.
3. The introduction (out of these acquired funds) of Restoration Grants to the Universities; which for three years prior to 1992 had received no grant to maintain or upgrade their infrastructure. Through this Restoration Grant, the government had committed itself to provide 1.2 billion Naira per year, for three years from 1992 to 1995, so that the universities could expand their facilities.
4. A review of the University Statutes, aimed at democratizing the university government. ASUU had asked that the composition of the university government councils be reviewed and their internal membership be expanded to include the faculty.

For ASUU the government agreement to fund the university system and expand academic freedom and autonomy, was all important, as it would directly affect the conditions of service and the quality of academic life both for teachers and students. However, the government reneged on its commitment from the beginning.

The strike was also called to protest the violation of due process by the Vice Chancellor of Abuja University, Isa Mohammed. The immediate cause for the grievance was the Vice Chancellor's decision, in 1992, to dismiss six students, who had invited to campus the president of the student union, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) after he was released from jail (he had been arrested in the course of a crackdown on human rights activists). The dismissed students tried to obtain justice through the courts, but the Vice Chancellor objected that Abuja University could not be sued because it was not a legal entity! The court agreed with this bizarre position and things came to a halt until ASUU took up the case, asking the government to clarify under what law had the university been funded, and how it could be funded if it was not a legal entity. In response, the government issued a decree and backdated it to give the operation an appearance of legality.

ASUU has demanded the removal of the Vice Chancellor of Abuja University. Isa Mohammed is notorious for his many violations of academic freedom and has operated so arbitrarily as to make Abuja University a case study in abuses of academic rights and mismanagement of public funds. For instance, neither teachers unions nor student unions are allowed to operate on the campus; the university has no Deputy Vice Chancellor; and arbitrary appointments and dismissals are common.

Who is CAFA and What Do We Stand For?

The Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) consists of people teaching and studying in North America and Europe who are concerned with the increasing violations of academic freedom that are taking place in African universities and who believe that it is crucial that we support the struggles our African colleagues are conducting to assert and preserve their rights.

The formation of CAFA is inspired by the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (November 29, 1990) and by the World University Service Lime Declaration of 1988, which states (Clause 16)

All institutions of higher education shall provide solidarity to other such institutions and individual members of their academic communities when they are subject to persecution. Such solidarity may be moral or material, and would include refuge and employment or education for the victims of persecution.

CAFA's objectives include:

- *informing our colleagues about the current situation on African campuses;
- *setting up an urgent action network to respond promptly to emergency situations;
- *mobilizing our unions and other academic organizations so that we can put pressure on African academic authorities and governments;
- *organizing delegations that will make direct contact with teachers and students and their organizations in Africa.

Coordinators

George Caffentzis
Department of Philosophy
96 Falmouth St.
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, Maine 04104-9300
Tel.: (207) 780-4332
e-mail: <CAFFENTZ@USM.MAINE.EDU>

Silvia Federici
New College
130 Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11550-1090
Tel.: (516) 463-5838

MASSACRES IN NIGERIA

(from the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights Newsletter of September 1994)

"Never in the history of Nigeria has any government deployed so much violence against the people" (CDHR September 1994).

While the nation is watching helplessly the ongoing ethnic cleansing in Ogoniland under the supervision of Major Paul Okutiimo, Abacha's angel of death, another gory incident, whose details are yet to be told, took place in the Plateau area of Edo State, in the quiet university town called Ekuma, anglicized as Ekpoma. The student community, perhaps the most enlightened in terms of appreciation of national issues, protested against the ongoing rape of the country.

The protest began at the University of Benin on August 17th 1994 and spread to Friday August 19th. Simultaneously EDSUITES (Edo State University Students) were protesting peacefully in Ekpoma from Ujemen to Uruwa, anglicized as Irrua. On Friday August 19th, between Ebhoakhuala and Idumebo, where former Vice-president Augustus Aikhomu has his residence, the carnage began.

A team of regular policemen in an ambush opened fire on the defenceless students, who were being conveyed in a convoy of buses and trailer lorries. Four students, including the driver of one of the lorries, died on the spot. In the ensuing stampede, the same team of policemen went wild, firing at the fleeing students. Those who sought refuge in the thickets of the surrounding bush could not live to tell the story. Hot lead was pumped into them and they died. The odor of their remains made possible the recovery of their bodies, which were deposited at Otibhor Memorial Clinic Mortuary, named after the late mother of Augustus Aikhomu.

The foregoing account is only a small part of the entire scenario, more killings took place in the evening of that Friday. Subsequently, killer squads of mobile policemen, non-indigenes from the far North, were deployed and the real carnage, cold blooded and blood curdling began in earnest.

As they invaded Ekpoma, that fateful evening, they opened fire on students who were standing by the sidewalks of the major roads waiting to board public transports home as a result of the closure of their campus. They fell in tens and their bodies were taken and deposited just like that in the morgue. After this, the mobile policemen laid siege on houses where students were lodging outside the campus. The students were shoved out of their houses and shot, while some were taken to nearby buses and shot and dumped in shallow graves. These killings continued for the most part of the week-end. In one instance, a woman of about fifty-two who was said to have opened her back-door for students to run into safety was stripped naked and given several strokes of the cane, while another was raped. This particular one, full of grief wept and ran to the traditional ruler of the town. His royal highness Macaulay Akhimen who in turn cried out and called for the evacuation of the occupation force. At the last count, on Sunday, August 21, those who had the guts to visit the Otibhor Hospital counted no less than 20 bodies at the Mortuary; while local farmers are still discovering by the day decomposing bodies of students in their farmland as far as Uhiele, the eastern stretch of the town. For now, Ekpoma has become a no-go area. One could feel the stench of death as you board a car at Ekpoma hill, Benin City, en route to Ekpoma.

The bereaved students of Edo State University are said to have sent a warning to their Vice-Chancellor not to touch the dead and that they would bury their dead when they came back. An army major whose son was killed by the marauding force has been knocked unconscious out of disbelief, while a police officer in charge of the Irrua division of the Nigerian Police Enade, who tried to be human in the face of the orgy of killings was said to have been taken to an unknown destination.

THE UNIBEN CARNAGE

On the 17th of August 1994 protest started at the Ugbowo Campus of the University of Benin and later spread to the center. Immediately armed policemen were drafted to the main gate of the university campus. They indiscriminately fired tear gas canisters at students inside the campus. The union president was arrested and seriously beaten before being released. A student was reported to have died on that day at the main gate when he was shot by the police.

On the 18th of August the students again resumed their protest. Still at the main gate, a non-student traveller from Lagos, who unfortunately alighted from a vehicle, was shot and immediately rushed to the hospital where he died later. A circular later emanated from the Vice-Chancellor demanding that the students vacate their campus within hours. Due to the transportation situation in Benin, occasioned by the oil workers strike, most students could not leave. The killing, raping and brutalization of students took place on the 19th of August when a special squad of anti-riot policemen was drafted down from Abuja to evacuate the students from the campus.

At 6:30 on that day, they surrounded all the hostels and demanded that the students pack out within 20 minutes. At the end of that period any student seen around was seriously beaten. They then proceeded to the women's hostels where several women were raped. One died on the spot, and many others were rushed to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The Bukateria operators (or fast food vendors) were also beaten. Similarly, residents of Ekosodin, including students and staffers of the university, were not spared from the carnage. The women were raped and their personal effect were stolen.

Thirty-four people, including students, politicians and human rights activists, were declared wanted by the Edo State Police Command in connection with the student protest, while thirty eight others have been arrested. Those arrested include Rev. Olu Aderibigbe, Chairman Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) Edo State; Odemu Odigie, student (UNIBEN); Brenda Adoni, student (UNIBEN); Kennedy Egbon, student (UNIBEN); Chidi Adekwe, student (UNIBEN); Samuel Edahor, student (UNIBEN); Efosa Ayanyo, student (UNIBEN); Austin Onoriode Abada, Secretary-General Students' Union (UNIBEN) 1992-1993; John Emurorhi, student (UNIBEN); Kennedy Ogbulafor, student (UNIBEN); Azike Chukwudi, student (UNIBEN); Pious Nziefa, student (UNIBEN); Steven Ehigiator, student (UNIBEN); Adeyinka Rasak Adebayo, student (UNIBEN); Jude Okoye, student (UNIBEN); Obi Uche, student (UNIBEN); Joseph Obika, student (UNIBEN); Omonago Ehinyameh, student (UNIBEN); Evelyn Nwoseh, student (UNIBEN); Stella Onyegbal, student, (UNIBEN); Yonne Salami, student (UNIBEN); Uyu Efeyinwa, student (UNIBEN); Lucky Momoh, student (UNIBEN) Aghoghor Enikor, student (UNIBEN); Ngozi Maduemezia, student (UNIBEN); Agan Ebajho, student (UNIBEN); Sologe Smith, student (UNIBEN); Ghenic Tobore, student (UNIBEN); Emeka Ekeri, student (UNIBEN); Eugene Hile, student (UNIBEN); Monday Eboigbe, student (UNIBEN); Akhabue Fidelis, student (UNIBEN); Akhare OPseghaie, student (UNIBEN); Charles Uduebholo, student (UNIBEN); Henry Ofeeimu Odigie, student (UNIBEN); Faith Osadolor, a lecturer in Law at UNIBEN and Edo State Legal Secretary of CLO. (From CDHR Newsletter, Volume 5, N.3, September 1994).

More attacks on Students (CDHR September 1994).

On the first of July 1994 the authorities of Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo, closed the institution and the students were given a one day ultimatum to vacate the campus. The closure ordered by the Rector, after consultation with the institution management, was to forestall an "imminent crisis".

On July 5th, the authorities of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro ordered the expulsion and rusti-

cation of sixteen students leaders for alleged misconduct following a peaceful protest in March to demand better academic and welfare conditions. The list of affected students include: Rowland Morakinyo, Sam Eke, Akeem Tihamiyu, Tade Ademola, Segun Soretire, Akeem Dauda, Airat Animasaun, Deji Ikuesan, Shina, Soji Bakare, Taiwo Shomoye, Rasheed Adigun, Adu Emmanuel, Raji Sanni, Ola Gold and Kunbi.

On the 18th of July, the University of Ibadan had its activities paralyzed by the presence of armed mobile policemen. Students, workers and vehicles passages were disallowed. It was not unconnected with the planned protest of the students' union against military rule and in support of democracy.

On the 19th of August four undergraduates of Edo State University (Ekpoma) were shot dead by a combined team of the police, army and SSS agents, who laid an ambush for the students during a demonstration in Edo State in which houses and property of the Labor and Productivity Minister Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia, Chief Tony Annenih, and Admiral Augustus Aikhonu were destroyed because of their perceived anti-democratic stands. On August 24, the authorities of the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, summoned forty four students before a disciplinary panel over an alleged participation in a demonstration over a lack of adequate learning facilities and a demand for the return of the country to democratic rule through the June 12, 1993 election. Some of the students include Lamidi Adekola and Bakare Kafat among others.

Committee For Defense of Human Rights (CDHR)
The Secretary-General
N.8, IMARIA ST. ANTHONY VILLAGE
P.O. BOX 7247,
LAGOS, NIGERIA
PHONE 496-6555

Ways to Help CAFA

***Become a Member or a sponsor (membership is \$25 a year);**

***establish a chapter of CAFA at your institution;**

***contribute to our newsletter;**

***gather, circulate, publish relevant information in journals, newsletters, newspapers;**

***organize workshops.**

NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND ACADEMIC STAFF UNDER MILITARY RULE

by Attahiru Jega
Department of Political Science
Bayero University (Kano, Nigeria)

The condition of African universities has recently attracted much attention not only from scholars but also from policy makers, including international aid agencies (Saint, 1993). A devastating crisis has swept over the continent, profoundly affecting the universities and their academic communities. Even the World Bank, which in the mid 1980s claimed that Africa did not need universities, has acknowledged that "Africa's Universities face a crisis at a pivotal point in their development" (*World Bank News*, January 14, 1993: 1). There has also been a growing concern with the crisis in the Nigerian university system. The universities are grossly underfunded, understaffed, overcrowded, and lacking in infrastructure and facilities. In addition, they have experienced many violations of due process, the suppression of academic freedom and the restriction of academic autonomy.

This paper outlines the main features of the crisis in Nigerian universities, what caused it, why it has persisted and how the academic world has responded to it. It focuses in particular on the impact of military rule on academic life. It argues that prolonged military rule, combined with economic crisis and structural adjustment, is the main problem faced by Nigerian Universities. Through the violation of academic freedom, the restriction of academic autonomy, underfunding and other adverse policies, military rule in Nigeria has hindered the functioning of the universities, and has drastically curtailed their contribution to positive national development. Confronted with marginalization and growing irrelevance many academics have left the universities. However, those who have remained have gotten better organized under the platform of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and tried to wrest concessions from the military controlled state. They have also championed popular resistance to the World Bank and the IMF-inspired policies which have caused so much suffering for Nigerians.

A Short History of the Nigerian University System

The Nigerian university system began in 1948 with the establishment of the University College at Ibadan, as a College of the University of London. It became a full fledged university in 1962, at the same time when three other universities were established. Since then, the Nigerian university system has grown phenomenally. There are today 37 universities of which one is exclusively for the military; 23 funded by the federal government, and 13 funded by state governments. They have a total student enrollment of about 300,000, with a staff strength of about 8,000. In a comparative perspective, Nigeria's enrollment figure represents more than half of the university students of Africa South of the Sahara (542,000), while the number of its universities represents one third (*World Bank News*, January 14, 1993: 2).

The initial impetus for the growth of the system in the 1970s was provided by the country's vast revenues from petroleum and associated products. But political considerations also came to play a significant role, leading to a great expansion of the university system in the absence, however, of any long-term planning (Jega, 1992).

The military has to a large extent, over the years, relied on the universities to maintain its rule. It has drawn its executive and administrative staff, at both the federal and state levels from the

academic community. This was part of a process of cooptation necessary to legitimize the regime. The academics drawn into the corridors of power proved ineffective in checking the excesses of military rule. Many used access to the state for self-serving objectives. Academics in government either watched helplessly while their military mentors wrecked vital national values, or actively connived in the process.

While using the university system as a fertile recruitment ground, the Nigerian military regimes also displayed intolerance and contempt for academic freedom and autonomy. They sought to control the system and in the process virtually destroyed it. The impact of military rule on the universities has been devastating. While the number of universities and students enrolled expanded rapidly, indeed spectacularly, especially since the 1970s, their capacity to make a positive contribution was seriously undermined. The universities have been allowed to decay, with antiquated, deteriorating and overstretched facilities, while the lecturers have been demoralized by the policies of successive regimes.

First, the military has tried to establish its control over the universities through the appointment of cronies to Vice Chancellor positions, in disregard for the university statutes. Consequently academic freedom and due process have been eroded, and a reign of terror and repression has become institutionalized on many campuses. Matters concerning appointments, promotions and discipline of staff have been single-handedly dealt with by Vice Chancellors with no regard to due process. Many university administrators have become despots, acting, in the spirit of their military benefactors, like garrison commanders. They have demonstrated extreme insensitivity to the welfare of the students and staff, acting primarily in the interest of the military rulers and their sponsors outside the universities.

There are many reported cases of university resources for capital expenditure being squandered through inflated contracts and dubious projects approved by administrators blessed with military patronage. Vice Chancellors have more or less surrendered the autonomy of the universities to the military authorities, and connived in flouting the university statutes by bending to ministerial directives or inviting the armed forces on campuses to prevent student demonstrations. In turn the regimes have removed Vice Chancellors as arbitrarily as they have imposed them on the academic communities. Thus, many Vice Chancellors, to protect their positions, have opted to become more responsive to the requirements of the State, regardless of whether or not they violate academic statutes, than to those of the academic communities over which they preside. Academics and students go to court quite often to seek protection against violations of basic rights. Sometimes they win a reprieve, but in most cases even the courts seem helpless in the face of executive lawlessness and military decrees annulling their jurisdictions.

The impact of military rule on the universities manifests itself also through chronic underfunding. Education in general, and the university system in particular, have been systematically underfunded under successive regimes. The military regimes have presided over a situation in which there has been a systematic decline of public spending on education (as indeed, on all social services) while military spending has increased. From 1960 to 1990, military spending, as a percentage of GDP, rose by 1 percent, while that of education rose by only 0.2 percent (UNDP, 1993: 39, 205). Worse still, the military has nurtured and entrenched a system in which most of what is purportedly spent on social services is actually stolen by state functionaries and their clients, as observed as follows: "what is ostensibly spent on education is not all used for education, but for the making of profits and super-profits for foreign business corporations and their Nigerian business and political partners and agents; and as commissions, fees, kick-backs, bribes and other legal and semi-legal and criminal earnings for those who control the very lucrative Nigerian education industry"

(Abba 1985:117).

Funding of the university system reached its peak during the 1976-1977 academic year, with public spending allocations totaling about four thousand naira per student (equivalent to about five thousand US dollars according to 1975 exchange rates). From then on, it decline swiftly, down to barely four hundred and nine naira (about fifty dollars) during the 1989-1990 academic year. As a result, by 1992, the situation in the universities was chaotic, as reflected in the high student-teacher ratio (up to 1:200 in some courses), the lack of adequate laboratories and equipment, poorly stocked libraries, over-crowded classrooms and staff offices. It was also reflected in the low quality of the graduates produced by the system and in the brain drain phenomenon.

Underfunding for the educational sector can be best understood in the context of the misplacement of national priorities by the military regimes. Critical to a proper definition of national priorities is the role assigned to the satisfaction of basic needs, especially education, by the state. In addition to being a basic need, education is a tool for national development. An illiterate nation is doomed in this modern age. Yet, comparative data illustrates how low Nigeria ranks among nations in this regard. Despite its vast national resources, Nigeria ranks 142 out of 160 countries on the Human Development Index, with an HDI value score of 0.0246 (UNDP, 1993: 14).

Nigeria ranks poorly on all indices of educational priorities, ranging from educational expenditure per pupil, to educational expenditure as a percentage of the GNP, to adult literacy rate. Also, as Kurain has noted, "Nigeria ranks 79th in educational expenditure per capita, and 114th in number of third level students per 1000 inhabitants" (Kurain, 1988: 951).

The misplacement of priorities in Nigeria is even more striking when placed in the context of other, less endowed, developing countries. For example, in 1990, Niger's and Mali's educational expenditure represented 3.1% and 3.3% of their respective GNP, while Nigeria lagged behind with 1.7%. Indeed, virtually every country in the world has significantly increased the proportion of its educational expenditure as a percentage of its GNP between 1960 and 1990, except Nigeria (Jega, 1994a). Significantly Nigeria is reputed to have "the poorest records in anglophone Africa for educational innovation and commitment to educational excellence" (Kurain, 1988: 951).

The cumulative effect of decades of misplacement of priorities by the Nigerian State and the impact of the military is such that the academia has faced a serious crisis of relevance. Underfunded, faced with inadequate facilities, overworked, academics have to struggle even just to survive, in a regime of structural adjustment. They have to battle with despotic Vice-Chancellors and they are also overwhelmed by the knowledge of the reckless abandonment with which those in power have vandalized social resources. Thus, they have had to choose between struggling to advance popular aspirations or doing nothing and becoming irrelevant.

Academia's response to the Impact of Military Rule

Confronted with this crisis, Nigerian academics have seen the need for collective struggles against the state's misguided policies which, under structural adjustment, have increased people's suffering and deprivation. Determined to be relevant, academics have assumed the role of a people's tribunal, under the umbrella of their organization, the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU). They seem to have been activated and recharged politically by the economic hardships produced by the economic crisis and the adjustment process. Those who did not want, or could not, escape the impact of the crisis by emigrating, regrouped under ASUU, to salvage themselves, the university system and the nation.

ASUU was registered as a trade union in 1978, when the desire for greater social relevance compelled academics to change their hitherto conservative and timid association, the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT). ASUU emerged at a critical juncture when

Nigeria's oil boom was on the brink of bursting, and the rentier state was resorting to the use of force and other corporatist strategies to contain the increasingly restive population (Jega, 1994a).

In response to a growing culture of repression, amidst deteriorating socio-economic conditions, staff and students' discontent grew and the atmosphere in the universities became charged and quite often rebellious. Beginning with 1978, when the military regime tried unsuccessfully to reintroduce school fees and other unpopular policies in the tertiary educational sector, the Nigerian university "campuses emerged as centers of vigorous protest and often violent confrontation against the authorities" (Kirk-Green and Rimmer, 1981:53). These protests and struggles intensified as military rule became entrenched, as the economic crisis deepened and as Nigeria experienced a stirring demand for democracy, from the mid-1980s onwards. It is in this context that the organizations of university teachers and students (notably ASUU and NANS, the National Association of Nigerian Students), came to assume a leading position in the struggles against military rule. In the absence of legal opposition politics, they advanced the popular cause, in addition to promoting their own demands relating to reforms in the university system (Beckman and Jega, 1994). ASUU in particular became the forum through which academics responded to military rule and the economic crisis it has engendered.

The more the academic community resisted violations of academic freedom and university autonomy, and championed the democratization of academia and popular resistance to military authoritarianism, the greater the backlash from the regimes. The harassment, however, merely intensified the resistance. Consequently, ASUU came to have running battles with successive military regimes and their appointed Vice Chancellors. For example, its operations were repeatedly suppressed and recruitment of membership was restricted by military decrees. Union leaders were either coopted, bought over, harassed, intimidated, incarcerated without trial through so-called "preventive detention". Quite often some of them were arbitrarily purged from the system. Many students and lecturers who were activists were either summarily dismissed or harassed in all sorts of ways, for exercising their rights to academic freedom or that of freedom of association and organization on the campuses. For example, at the University of Calabar, one Vice Chancellor arbitrarily dismissed 18 lecturers between 1977 and 1979 (ASUU, 1981:3). The Obasanjo regime set up the Anya Commission on Academic Freedom and university autonomy with the objective of establishing a "Code of Conduct" for staff and students which was "to enable them to function in ways supportive of the system" (ASUU, 1981:2). ASUU successfully resisted this move.

The worst period for the Nigerian universities and the academia was between 1985 and 1993, under the Babangida regime. The funding situation worsened. The regime perpetuated a culture of repression on the campuses, using its appointed Vice Chancellors to deal with those opposed to its policies, the so-called extremists, especially when it sought to consolidate the IMF and World Bank inspired Structural Adjustment Program. The conditions on campuses deteriorated. Staff and student unions were repeatedly proscribed and their leaders sacked and/or detained. At ABU (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) in the mid 1980s, expatriate staff had their contracts voided or arbitrarily terminated because of their political views. One of them was even deported because of his criticism of government policies. In the universities of Calabar, Zaria, Benin, Ife, Nsukka and Maiduguri alone, the number of staff and students victimized on political grounds between 1985 and 1993 was close to five hundred (Jega, 1994a).

The Babangida regime used cooptation, intimidation and harassment to contain mounting opposition from the academia. It tried to use some "professors in government" to contain restive colleagues in the university system. When these attempts failed to make ASUU ineffectual, resort was made to divide-and-rule tactics, invoking regional and religious loyalties, to break union solidarity and weaken ASUU's unity and cohesion. These methods have proven very effective on the

Nigerian political scene; but ASUU, although not immune to these influences, was relatively unscathed by religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism and regional loyalties. This added credibility to the union as a patriotic, organized interest group and it facilitated alliance with other progressive, pro-democracy forces seeking to end military rule and bring about a credible civilian democratic order.

In trying to act as a "People Tribune", university lecturers through their union, offered critiques of policies that they have perceived to be detrimental to the welfare and well-being of the majority of Nigerians. For example, ASUU has issued several press releases and communiques containing critiques of the Structural Adjustment Programme which has compounded the economic crisis and created immense socio-economic problems for ordinary Nigerians (ASUU 1987, 1993, 1994). The students have also pursued several strategies to oppose the military regime "anti-people" policies, including organizing and leading anti-SAP riots in 1988 and 1989. Even the Committee of Vice Chancellors universities responded to the economic crisis by organizing a National Symposium on the matter (CVC, 1987).

Through ASUU, the academics have tried to be relevant in the struggles for democracy. During the "political debate" launched by Babangida in 1987, which was supposed to pave the way for the transition to Civil Rule, ASUU issued a comprehensive statement analysing the situation and making recommendations which, though ignored by the regime, were widely circulated. ASUU has also actively participated in broad national coalitions and alliances, seeking to promote genuine democracy in Nigeria. It has contributed to the Campaign for Democracy's (CD) popular mobilization that compelled General Babangida to "step aside" in August 1993. ASUU is also involved with the democratic struggles currently taking place in Nigeria. One of the major issues giving rise to ASUU's 1994 strike (beginning in August) is the detention of M.K.O. Abiola, widely believed to be the winner of the annulled June 12 elections. ASUU has demanded Abiola's release and the immediate return to democratic rule, in addition to putting forward specific demands relating to the university crisis.

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The State versus the Academic Unions in Postcolonial Kenya

by
Alamin Mazrui (Ohio State University)
and
Willy Mutunga (The Law Society of Kenya)

In November 1993, the faculty of Kenya's four public universities went on a strike that was not officially called off until September 1994, in protest against the government's decision not to register their proposed union, the University Academic Staff Union (UASU). Despite many precedents from a number of other African countries, the Moi government has treated the idea of an academic union as an anathema to Kenya's body politic. Even after a long paralyzing strike he has refused to submit to internal and external calls, coming from the strikers, the opposition and several academic and non-academic unions from other parts of the world, urging him to register UASU. If this unprecedented strike in the history of Kenya's academia showed the extent to which academics had underestimated the government's capacity to withstand the pressure of their collective action (academics had no contingency plans in case the government decided to stop their salaries or evict them from government houses), it also demonstrated the government's resolve to prevent academics from organizing themselves into a trade union.

The question is why, then, has the Moi government been so uncompromisingly opposed to the idea of an academic union in Kenya. What factors and forces can explain this hostile reaction to the unionization of academics? If, under local and international pressure, the government changed the constitution of the country and allowed for the registration of political parties whose objective was explicitly to remove the Moi-KANU government from power, why does the same government object to the registration of an academic union which has a much narrower economic agenda? Before we turn to these questions it may be instructive to look at the history of UASU's registration in Kenya.

Historical background

When the Registrar-General rejected the application for the registration of UASU in 1993, he insisted that there is no provision in the legislation (establishing national universities) for the formation of an academic union. What the Registrar-General did not mention, however, is that in 1972 the same Registrar's office had registered the University Academic Staff Union (UASU), a body founded to cater for faculty members of Nairobi University, then the only public university in the country, and its constituent Kenyatta University College. Prior to 1972, the dons had a University Staff Association which was provided for under the University of Nairobi Act. The dons resisted this form of organization, however, because it was subject to administrative and political control by the university administration and the government. For this reason they took the initiative of registering UASU, whose main objective, in addition to improving the terms of the service, was to improve the relation between its members, the university council and the students.

Differences, however, began to emerge between UASU and the Moi government soon after it came to state power in August 1978. The issues ranged from UASU's demand for the reinstatement of Ngugi wa Thiong'o to his former professorial position at Nairobi University after his release from detention to its condemnation of how the government and the university administration handled student unrest, from its call for the improvement of the terms of service for the academics to its demonstration against apartheid in South Africa and the murder of Walter Rodney in Guyana. In

response President Moi issued an unconstitutional order disbanding UASU; concomitantly in July 1980 he deregistered the Civil Servants Union (CSU) for reasons that are not clear, given that (unlike UASU) the CSU never had a confrontation with the government.

July 1980 was the last period when Kenyan academics had a union. The revival of academic unionism in October 1992 was promoted by academics who, until then, had never had any political involvement, and who decided to strike only after the petition for the registration of UASU had been in limbo for one year, to then be finally denied. This decision sparked off a series of strikes on November 29, 1993, which ended without achieving any of the academics' objectives. As the academics continued the strikes, three other professional groups sought for registration of their unions: the Civil Servants Union (CSU); which had suffered the same fate as UASU some twelve years earlier; the National Union of Teachers of Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions (NUTSSTI), and the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists (KMPDU). These too were denied registration. Like UASU, members of the unregistered KMPDU also went on strike, from June to September 1994, to protest against the Registrar's decision, but the KMPDU strike too ended without any gain.

Against this historical background, how to explain the government's hostility towards academic unions? If UASU had a legal precedent, why did the government choose the path of non-registration? We suggest that this was partly a product of the prevailing conception of the state, the nature of trade unions, as perceived by the state, and the government's view of which class in Kenya most threatens the status quo.

The State as Employer.

The state in Kenya, as in many other nations of the "Third World," has been the largest single employer in post-colonial Kenya. Only recently, under the liberalization program of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has Kenya been forced to cut the size of its civil service—through ministerial mergers, retrenchment, and the lowering of the retirement age.

The majority of university academics in Kenya are state employees. There are now a few private universities like the United States International University (USIU) and Daystar University, but even these are highly dependent on adjunct professors serving as full-time employees in Kenya's four public universities. These public universities are not only funded by the government and come directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, but are headed by the President who functions as their Chancellor, and thus appoints all the Vice Chancellors of the executive heads, and the Vice Chancellors of these institutions. Like most presidential appointments in Kenya, the instatement of Vice Chancellors is more based upon political patronage than professional expertise.

But the problem arises not so much from the fact that the state acts as an employer, but from its conception of the state as an absolute power, having the right to control all those working for it; the right to be their only voice; and the right to demand complete allegiance from them (for example on the occasion of the first multiparty elections in 1992, circulars were distributed in government offices to remind civil servants of their expected allegiance to the KANU government in the conduct of their jobs and in their voting behavior). From the government's viewpoint, then, the idea that any group of the government employees may organize a trade union, to better bargain around the terms of service, is an anathema. The assumption is that the state must remain unchallenged, and must be thought incapable of mismanagement, oversight, or miscalculation. It is on this basis that Daniel arap Moi proclaimed that "his government was taking care of its employees well and they, therefore, did not need a union" when he banned UASU and CSU in 1980. (*Weekly Review*, January 21, 1994: 11).

An absolutist government is intolerant of challenge and dissent coming from any section of society; but it is likely to react with utmost intolerance when the challenge comes from its own

employees, as it regards them as custodians of its interests rather than custodians of the public interest. This is why, perhaps, the Moi government proscribed and later refused to register not only a union of academics but also a union of civil servants.

The Union: Economics versus Politics

In its attempts to deny the dons their constitutional right of association the government has invoked not only legal excuses, but extra-legal arguments. One of the more prominent concerns the very conception of what is a trade union. In its attempt to justify its decision not to register UASU, the government came to rely almost exclusively on a small group of pro-establishment academics who argued that unions, by their very nature, exclude white collar workers. Professor Mwanzi of Kenyatta University, now Executive Officer of the ruling party KANU, suggested, for example, that university academics are not fit for trade unions, which are for people like mechanics, tailors, sugar plantation workers (*The Weekly Review*, January 21, 1994 :8). And such arguments have continued to be proposed in government circles in oblivion of the fact that academic unions are the norm everywhere, in Africa, South America and Europe, and have a precedent in Kenya as well.

The government fears unions because it sees them essentially as political bodies. Accordingly, President Moi described, for example, the demand of medical practitioners for a union, as "a civil disobedience strategy orchestrated against the government by the political opposition" (*Daily Nation* August 30, 1994). The alleged political character of the unions is what led successive Kenyan governments to impose severe restrictions on union activity. Under Kenyatta, for example, the president had to ratify the appointment of the Secretary General of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU). The Moi government has gone even further; as it has virtually turned COTU into a wing of KANU. Ironically, in order to undermine the political potential of COTU, the government has brought it under its own political umbrella.

This conception of the trade union as a political body is a colonial legacy; for British colonial officers and British settlers for a time believed that Africans were not capable of seeing trade unions as non-political organizations. The recurrence of strikes that linked economic demands with the demand for self-rule was further evidence, in the eyes of the colonialists of the Africans' inability to distinguish between economics and politics. Settler employers in Kenya maintained, therefore, a strong stand against the registration of African trade unions.

An ordinance legalizing unions was passed by the Colonial legislative assembly in 1943, but very grudgingly and only because its passage was a condition for the eligibility for development and welfare grants from the British Colonial Officer on which the settler community had become quite dependent. When independence was imminent, however, the British Labor Department established a program intended to promote "responsible," i.e., non-political trade unions. Nonetheless, trade unions in Kenya continued to be a major political force campaigning for the good of the country. It is the memory of this colonial history that has continued to haunt Kenya's leadership to the present and to motivate legal and extra-legal strategies for controlling trade unions.

If the Kenyan leadership regards trade unions as political in nature, why then it has allowed certain unions to operate, while proscribing others? We suggest that the government has allowed those unions to survive which it regards as politically controllable, while it has banned those others which it regards as most threatening to its rule. At present, it seems that the unions that have the maximum of oppositional potential, in the eyes of the government, are the professional middle class unions.

Kenya is now engaged in its second liberation struggle, a struggle which is directed primarily against the autocratic rule that has characterized the three decades since independence. It is a struggle for "genuine" democracy, pluralism, greater freedom. It is, in essence, a middle class

struggle. This, in great part, is the reason why Moi sees the professional unions of the middle class as the potential source of greatest opposition. Under Jomo Kenyatta virtually all the victims of the dreaded Preservation of Public Security Act—the law empowering the government to imprison a person, without charge or trial, for an indefinite period of time—were opposition politicians and people suspected to be involved with the Somali nationalist movement. The only member of the professional middle class detained then was Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Under Arap Moi's rule, however, victims of the detention law have been largely members of the middle class (academics and university students, lawyers, journalists). For the Moi regime, it is the unions seeking to represent the members of the professional middle class that appear less likely to submit to political control. (The expansion of university education and the establishment of new universities in other Kenyan towns, have made the problem of control over unionized academics appear even more formidable than ever before). This factor possibly is a reason for the Moi's government persistent violation of the freedom of association in the case of teachers, civil servants and medical practitioners.

Unions and the Washington connection.

By all indications, the Kenyan government has won this round of trade union dispute with the academics. However, there is no reason to believe that we have witnessed the end of this struggle. The fate of this saga may depend not only on the local forces; but on external ones as well. More prominent among the latter may be the Washington connection, whose legacy (again) extends back to the colonial period.

As we have seen, the colonial government always strove to keep the Kenyan unions depoliticized and sharply separated economic and political objectives. It finally achieved this goal during the Emergency, when it effectively removed the militant leadership from the unions, including Makhan Singh, Chege Kibachia and Fred Kubai.

This left Tom Mboya, head of the Kenya Federation of Labor (KFL) and later Minister of Labor in the post-independence government, as the most prominent trade union leader. Though Mboya was quite a moderate—according to some, even reactionary—his union did maintain a degree of political activism that was not insignificant, especially in the climate of intense repression unleashed to crush the "Mau Mau" and radical trade unionism.

Mboya and his KFL came, however, quickly under the patronage of the American AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations) and later the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICTFU). As Kenya was gradually heading for independence, the AFL-CIO and ICTFU were to aid Mboya to preempt the spread of "Communism" in the Kenyan trade union movement. The Washington connection in Kenya's trade union history was established, therefore, at the peak of Kenya's first democratic struggle—the struggle against colonialism.

As Kenya is engaged in its second democratic struggle, the Washington connection is being reactivated, now through the African American Labor Center, a trade union organization sponsored by the U.S. State Department. In May 1994, for instance, the Center took the initiative of contacting the leadership of the unregistered UASU and organized a three days seminar at its expense, which included the cost of room and board in an expensive Nairobi Hotel, the New Stanley Hotel, and a handsome honorarium for the participants on top of it. The general theme of the seminar was leadership and organization in "responsible unionism" i.e. one that would be unencumbered by politics.

At this juncture, U.S. involvement with Kenya's trade union movement is no longer motivated by the Cold War agenda, nor is necessarily interested in propping up autocracy, as it has done so often in the past in many regions of the world (see Noam Chomsky, *Third World Fascism and the Washington Connection*). On the contrary, the U.S. government today postures as the champion of the pro-democracy movement.

But as much as the U.S. establishment may not be immediately concerned that the trade union movement may contribute to the downfall of the Moi regime, it still does not want the movement to challenge the present neo-colonial arrangement. It is noteworthy that whereas both the U.S. government and the World Bank/IMF have postured as supporters, and even sometimes as engineers, of the pro-democracy movement, they have been conspicuously silent on the issue of the right of academics to have a professional union. Thus the need to keep trade unions as apolitical as possible continues to feature in the U.S. trade union agenda for Africa.

Conclusions

As the government continues to undermine any possible unionization for academics, the need for such an organization is escalating. Kenyan academics need to be unionized, first because of the deterioration of their terms of service in the context of an economy that has been in decline for years. Academics in Kenya as elsewhere in Africa, have suffered because of drastic economic changes precipitated in part by global factors, local economic shifts and above all by IMF conditionalities and structural adjustment programs. An instrument of professional solidarity and collective bargaining has become indispensable for the protection of the basic economic rights of the academics.

Second, the conditions of work have also been deteriorating. Oduor Ong'wen has described the educational infrastructure in Kenyan public universities as lamentable. The infrastructural decline includes the depletion of library resources, as the library now receives just about one percent of the total budget allocation, the shortage of basic educational material like chalk and stationary, overcrowded classrooms, power blackouts, all in Ong'wen's view are a product of the massive cuts in educational subsidies imposed on the government by the IMF and the World Bank (Sunday Nation, June 26, 1994 : 7). These conditions are affecting the productivity of the academics and the quality of university education. This accelerating trend towards the academic and intellectual dispossession of Africa must be stopped and reversed. The empowerment of academics through unionization can be part of the strategy towards this end.

The deterioration of both the terms of service and the conditions of work have a bearing on the question of academic freedom. Unable to make ends meet and to carry on their work, Kenyan academics are increasingly seeking employment opportunities elsewhere or are turning to Western funding agencies, which often have their own agenda and their conditionalities for research support. This combination of factors is rapidly giving rise to a shrinking intellectual arena, that is, a state of intellectual deprivation which is bound to limit academic choice and threaten academic freedom.

Academic freedom in Kenya, however, is also threatened by the general political environment. The move towards political pluralism provided some hope for the promotion of academic freedom. But as the popular as well as institutionalized opposition continues to weaken, and as the regime of Daniel arap Moi continues to reconsolidate its power base, there are clear signs of mounting repression of basic freedoms. The Moi regime's sense of security and power and therefore its sense of the political space it has to repress has been expanded thanks to the backing it has received from the international community in particular the IMF, the World Bank, and the EEC. In this context, an academic union which can establish an international network with other academic unions elsewhere can be a potential source of challenge to and resistance against this erosion of academic freedom.

The World Bank at the ASA Annual Meetings

The Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa's campaign against The World Bank's cynical use of the African Studies Association (ASA) was largely inspired by our (the CAFA coordinators) reading of the Preliminary Program of the ASA's 37th Annual Meeting in Toronto. While leafing through the program for interesting panels and speakers we were suddenly struck by the number of panels that were monopolized by the World Bank. We counted three such panels. They were the following:

Capacity Building and Good Governance in Africa

Chair: Mamadou Dia, World Bank

Dustan Wai, *The World Bank, Creating the Enabling Environment for Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Judith Edstrom, *The World Bank, Capacity Building and Sector Investment*

Rogerio Pinto, *The World Bank, Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform*

Mehdi Ali, *The World Bank, Capacity Building and Donor Coordination*

Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: Issues and Actions

Chair: Ishrat Hussain, The World Bank

David Sahn, Cornell University, *Poverty and Policy Reform in Africa*

Jack van Holst Pellekaan, *The World Bank, The World Bank's Operation Focus on Poverty Reduction*

Kevin Cleaver, *The World Bank, Agricultural Development and Poverty Reduction*

Food Production/ Natural Resources Management: Issues and Challenges

Chair: Jean Doyen, The World Bank

Narendra Sharma, *The World Bank, Nexus: Agriculture / Environment / Population*

Graeme Donovan, *The World Bank, Economic Reform and Agricultural Development*

V. Venkatesan, *The World Bank, Research/Extension Services in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Harry Walter, *The World Bank, Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Discussant: Dunstan Spencer, The World Bank

These panels were clearly intended to be used by the World Bank as legitimization rituals. Since World Bank employees were presenting papers at an academic and scholarly conference, their presentations were meant to take on the scientific and objective coloring of their environment. But in actual fact these panels were little more than high-toned press conferences where the World Bank's "line" on African agriculture, politics and demography was unashamedly presented as if it was the product of disinterested research by disinterested academics.

We attended these panels at the ASA meeting and they proved to be as scandalous as we expected. It felt as if the Tobacco Institute had been allowed to present panels at the annual meetings of the American Cancer Association, proving once more that smoking had nothing to do with cancer and heart disease. But the scandal reflected more on the ASA than on the World Bank. For in this period when the Bank is beginning to receive some serious public criticism in the international press and in the Congress, it is not surprising that the Bank is trying to legitimize itself by claiming to be a neutral research institute instead of the financial agency that has squeezed out billions of dollars from the world's most exploited and wretched populations. We, however, as members of the ASA and participants of the Toronto meetings resented the fact that our dues and registration fees were subsidizing the World Bank's propaganda junket. At one of the panels we suggested to the World Bank employees that the Bank should rent a suite in the hotel where the next ASA meetings are to be held and hold a proper press conference instead of trying to keep up this charade of scholarship.

Many people signed our petition for a World Bank-free ASA at the meeting and saw quite clearly the intellectual and political scandal the World Bank's presence in the ASA implied, but a

number of others who normally would be sympathetic to CAFA were skeptical of our effort. They pointed out that the World Bank is increasingly the only source of research funds for Sub-Saharan Africa whether it be in economics, health, education or even in anthropological and cultural studies. Since most of the members of the ASA were inevitably going to have to rely on such funds, these skeptics concluded that our campaign would not go far, given the material involvement of the ASA membership with the Bank.

Our response to this skepticism was based on a historical analogy. We pointed out that scholars, intellectuals and scientists struggled for centuries in Europe and the Americas to disentangle their research from the control of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. The martyrology of academic freedom is filled with the relics of these figures. A similar struggle is beginning to shape itself now. The World Bank and allied agencies (e.g., the Africa Capacity Building Institute) are trying to monopolize and control all research and knowledge-production from and about Africa. They will only fund those hypotheses and research programs that are compatible with the structural adjustment theology. It is important that all scholars involved with Africa be aware of the consequences of this hegemonic drive in the field of Africanist knowledge and decide if they wish to become more or less formal cadres of the World Bank. For we believe that the World Bank's hegemonic drive will become the most important obstacle to academic freedom in Africa in the near future. Surely, we argued, the ASA must become one of the sites of the struggle against this form of intellectual repression whether the campaign immediately succeeds or not.

We were certainly pleased when we later learned that this analogy between the World Bank and the Churches has been given serious support by two recent books: Susan George and Fabrizio Sabelli, *Faith and Credit: The World Bank's Secular Empire*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) and John Mihevc, *The Market Tells Them So: The World Bank and Economic Fundamentalism in Africa*. (London: Zed Books, 1995)

BOOKS OF NOTE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

We would like to draw the CAFA Newsletter readers' attention to the following recently published books on academic freedom:

Mamadou Diouf and Mahmood Mamdani (eds.), *Academic Freedom in Africa*. (CODESRIA: Dakar, 1994).

Distributed by: ABC, 27 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HU, UK.

John Daniel, Nigel Harley, Yves Lador, Manfred Nowack, and Frederiek de Vlaming (eds.), *Academic Freedom 3*. (London and Geneva: Zed Books and World University Service, 1995).

Distributed by: Zed Books, 165 First Ave., Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716, USA.

THE COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

Dear colleagues,

Join with us in urging the African Studies Association (ASA) to not allow the World Bank to participate in its annual meetings. The World Bank is becoming a substantial presence at the ASA gatherings. For example, in the 37th Annual Meeting of the ASA held in Toronto in November 1994, there were three panels chaired and staffed by World Bank employees. These panels give the World Bank the false appearance of being an objective, scholarly organization. The ASA should refuse to provide a stage for this charade. The following are the reasons why this we think this initiative is appropriate:

(1) The World Bank is a bank: it is a financial institution and not an academic organization. The World Bank's ability to finance or defund academic projects, and to purchase the services of academicians does not give it academic status.

(2) The research of many Africanists and other social scientists has shown beyond a doubt that the World Bank is responsible for the untold suffering of millions of people on this planet. From Africa to Asia to South America, the vast majority see in the World Bank and its allied organizations, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, the powers that are condemning them to the loss of everything they have. The World Bank is guilty of forced resettlement and inhuman Structural Adjustment Programs whose only purpose is to uproot people from the land and force them to become cheap or even slave labor.

(3) The World Bank is responsible for the destruction of the educational systems in most countries of Africa, South America and Asia. Thousands of our colleagues worldwide have been forced to leave their countries and become permanent exiles because they resisted the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs devised and administered by the Bank. Others have had to leave their teaching and research, because they could not survive on the starvation wages the Bank prescribed. Even more thousands of students have been pushed out of the universities because of "cost sharing" plans demanded by the World Bank.

Considering this record, we should not make ourselves accomplices of these policies by accepting the presence of the Bank at this and future ASA meetings. Let us not be discouraged by the power of the Bank. It controls immense resources, but everywhere people are mobilizing against it, in the United States as well. Presently, the Rainforest Action Network, the Fifty Years is Enough Campaign, Oxfam among other organizations are making it clear that they consider the World Bank responsible for the growing planetary misery. Let us support their effort by demanding a World Bank-free ASA.

Please sign the accompanying petition and return it to either Silvia Federici or George Caffentzis, coordinators of CAFA, and/or write a protest letter to the ASA and send a copy to CAFA. Do ask your colleagues who are academics and/or are involved in African studies or affairs to sign the petition as well.

Yours,

George Caffentzis
Coordinators of CAFA

Silvia Federici

THE COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

Petition

We, the undersigned, urge the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association (ASA) to review its policy which allows the World Bank to hold panels at the ASA's annual meetings. The World Bank is a bank; it is neither a scholarly nor an educational institution. It has been especially responsible for the degradation of the university system in Africa. Therefore it is neither academically nor morally qualified to participate at the ASA. Please send signed petitions to the coordinators of the Committee for Academic Freedom at one of the following addresses. They will send the signed petitions to ASA's Board of Directors. CAFA coordinators' addresses are:

George Caffentzis
Department of Philosophy
University of Southern Maine
96 Falmouth St.
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300
USA
Tel.: (207)780-4332

Silvia Federici
New College
130 Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11550-1090
USA
Tel.: (516)463-5838

Name

Affiliation
