

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

NEWSLETTER NO. 9 AUTUMN 1995

Introduction

In this issue of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa's *Newsletter* we return to some of the major concerns that have motivated CAFA's work over the recent years.

First, we further document the state of academic freedom in Africa, with a report/interview about Burkina Faso and we update a chronology of students' and teachers' struggles different African countries against structural adjustment.

With this issue we also begin a "domestic window" on the structural adjustment of university education as it is being gradually implemented in the United States. We do so for a number reasons. First, we cannot speak of the violation of the right to study in Africa while being silent on the same violation in the USA. Second, by reporting on structural adjustment in an "advanced" industrialized country we dispell the myth that structural adjustment was necessitated in Africa, or other parts of the Third World, by some inherent learning disability or managerial incapacity (as is often implied in World Bank literature). Finally, by connecting the university budget cuts in the U.S. to the adjustment of Africa' educational system we hope to help build the type of international network and solidarity which is today necessary if education is not to be used *against* the majority of people on this planet as a means of discrimination.

In this issue we also continue our campaign for a World Bank-free African Studies Association (ASA), by reprinting our petition to the ASA and the names of some among our colleagues who have signed it. We do appreciate the fact that in the preliminary schedule of this year's ASA Annual Meeting in Orlando *no World Bank panels are listed*. We nevertheless think that the only way in which we can prevent the type of presence that the World Bank has had in recent years at the ASA is by maintaining our mobilization and by continuing to expose the fact that the World Bank's presence constitutes a violation of academic freedom. We should add that similar concerns apply to the inclusion among ASA panels of panels run by the U. S. military. In this case too, we must ask, what is the U.S.

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military doing in a gathering of scholars of Africa? If we are not mistaken, war is the end of dialogue, which presumably is the goal of scholarly discourse. Should we read in this acceptance of the U.S. military as one of the participants of the ASA meetings a tacit approval of its role in the financing of the NSEP? Does the ASA not know that allowing the U.S. military to instruct us at its annual conference sends a very poor message to all the students and teachers in Africa who are struggling against military presence on their campuses and interference in academic life?

Finally, some reflections are in order concerning the Plan for Action adopted at the Beijing Conference and in particular the part of it that concerns the question of the education of women. As is widely known, the Plan for Action calls on governments to promote the education of girls and women and even sets specific goals to be achieved such as the cutting female illiteracy in half and providing universal access to basic education by the year 2000. It does not specify, however, how this is to be achieved nor does it acknowledge that this program is embraced at the very time when member agencies of the UN system—the World Bank and IMF—are precluding, by their economic policies, such possibility.

Is it possible that the UN does not know that by the prescription of the WB and IMF, in practically every country of the Third World, governments are committed to cutting educational budgets and introducing fees even in elementary education. Are they not destroying the hope that educating females, or males for that matter, can make any difference, in the face of the mounting unemployment among even graduate males due to Structural Adjustment Programs?

And if the UN does know that its call for action on behalf of female education is an empty shell—in the context of the general debunking of the educational systems of the third world at all levels—then what can be the purpose of its pledges to promote female education? Could it be that such calls serve to deflect attention from its complicity with “adjustment”, “rationalization”—all nicknames for the most crass commercialization of knowledge—and suggest that only cultural backwardness is the root of the problem?

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 struggle our African colleagues are conducting to assert and preserve their rights.

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 government;
- *organizing delegations that will make direct contact with teachers and students and their organizations in Africa.

The annual fee for membership in CAFA is \$25. CAFA's coordinators are:

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Interview with Salif Yonaba, member of the Permanent Committee on Academic Freedom in Burkina Faso April 3, 1995

Dr. Salif Yonaba is a law professor at the University of Ouagadougou Law Faculty. He is currently an Associate Professor (Maitre de Conferences Agregé de Droit Public et de Science Politique). CAFA had the opportunity to meet him in New York on Monday, April 4, 1995, during his recent stay in the U.S. while he was doing some research as a Visiting-Scholar-in-Residence at the George Washington University National Law Center. His visit was co-sponsored by the West African Research Association (WARA) in Senegal and Fullbright Fellowship Program from March through April.

Q. Can you introduce us to the University of Ouagadougou?

A. Ouagadougou University is the only college in Burkina Faso; it originated in 1969 as a higher education center; then in 1974 the government decided to turn it into a university; but it is still fairly small. It has 9,000 students, about 250 teachers who are all considered civil servants, five Faculties (Humanities, Science, Health, Economics and Law) and four Institutes (Education, Training, Technology, Agriculture and Data Processing) all contributing to the University. We have also expatriate teachers, who come to Burkina Faso under a “cooperation program” sponsored by Holland and France; they are recruited and paid by their governments, though eventually it will be the Burkinabe people who will have to pay for the loans underwriting the “covenant,” as it is called.

Q. Does the faculty have an input in the recruiting of foreign teachers?

A. No, academics have no say in who is hired. We know that every year there is a meeting in France where it is decided who is going to come; and we know that many for-

eigners are interested in coming, because Burkina Faso is a beautiful country and life is pleasant there; but this is all that we know.

We also have many foreign students, from all over Africa. Many African universities are periodically shut down by the government, in response to student protests or teachers' strikes. Burkina Faso is considered one of the few universities that hold sessions regularly; as a result, we have students coming from Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and even from Central African countries, like Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Zaire. Many students come because of political repression in their countries, most of them are refugees who have High Commission Refugee status.

Q. What led to the formation of the Permanent Committee on Academic Freedom?

A. We too have had many problems, both with academic freedom and working conditions. Our freedom of speech has often been undermined. Students have been dismissed and denied their right to study as a result of strikes and anti-government demonstrations. In 1979, for instance, there was an important strike called by the students to demand better working conditions and to protest against the restrictions put on their freedom (students did not have freedom of association; they did not have the right to meet). As a result of the strike many were dismissed, and the ban against them lasted for over five years.

Restrictions on academic freedom are not new in Burkina Faso. During the Sankara regime (1983-1987) freedom of speech was restricted; teachers who taught law, history, philosophy were always in danger of losing their jobs or being denied promotion for holding “counter-revolutionary” ideas, or simply

because they refused to be involved in politics. But recently we have seen two teachers killed. Prof. Sessouma Guilleme was abducted from his house on December 23, 1989 and was never heard again. There is speculation that he was a member of an opposition party during the "transitional regime". During this same period, another teacher, Prof. Ouedraogo Umarou Clement, who was an important political member of the regime when the first colleague was kidnapped, had a fall out with the regime and he too decided to join the opposition. He came out in favour of a National Conference before the elections that were to be held at the end of the transitional regime. But on December 9, 1991 he was killed in an accident, and on the same day a member of the law school, also working with the opposition, was badly injured in another accident.

It was at this point that we decided we had to address the issue of academic freedom and drive home the point that we should be able to be involved in politics without risking our lives.

Q. Do you have a trade union in your university?

A. We have two main teacher unions and unions of administrative staff that are concerned with the question of academic freedom. It was these unions who decided to set up a committee for the defense of academic freedom consisting of four members. In March 1992 we had a small national seminar on academic freedom. It was not easy to organize it because the university authorities were very hostile. But people persisted and it was a success. Afterwards we decided to form a Permanent Committee, which is in the making. We hope this will help us to improve academic life. Now, academic freedom is not respected. When there is a student strike, for instance, the university authorities call the police or the military to come on campus.

Q. How much do poor working conditions influence academic freedom on your campus?

A. A lot. Basically it is very difficult for students to study. You have classes of 200, or

300 students which have no microphones, so many students cannot follow the class. And there are very few documents or books in the library; scholarships are fewer. Fees so far are not very high; but given the high cost of living, many students cannot make it unless they have scholarships allowing them to buy food, books and other educational material.

Burkina Faso too has been "structurally adjusted." The World Bank believes that our country does not need a higher education system, that primary schools are enough. Thus, students are no longer given scholarships as a result of the implementation of SAP. There is no longer any teachers' recruitment in the university; so all teachers are overworked and have no time left for research; and we are no longer given research leaves. Every two years teachers are supposed to be given leave money to go to France to do research for three months. The University gives them the travel ticket and a sum of money to cover their expenses. But now this money is so little that it is barely sufficient for a week, and certainly not enough to buy books. As a result, very few are able nowadays to go to do research and when they go they cannot afford to buy anything.

Monthly salaries are low; junior lecturers in particular have a difficult time making ends meet, and no teacher has money (particularly after the recent devaluation) to buy books. To give you an idea, a law book costs FCFA 20,000 (= FF 200, \$45) but a beginning salary for a university teacher is FCFA 100,000 monthly. To put it in other terms, a bag of 50 kilos of rice costs 10,000 (unfortunately we hear it is going to go up very soon), so a law book costs the same as two 50 kgs bags of rice and, with the large families we have, few teachers can choose one over the other. For us, life is very hard. Personally I have lived now for four years in a house without running water and electricity; this is because this is only way that I can have my own house and this now is a necessity, because it is very difficult to find a house with our salaries and in Burkina Faso tenancy rules are not reliable, so you can easily find yourself

put out of your apartment.

Q. Is there much resistance against SAP?

A. Yes, students speak against it all the time, and so do the workers. In 1993, for instance, there were many strikes in Burkina Faso as well as in neighboring countries; our academic year was about to be curtailed as a result of a strike initiated by our two teachers unions. Currently, a strike is going on on the campus of the University consisting in a refusal to organize final examinations so long as there is no change in working conditions. But so far nothing has changed. This is one reason perhaps why teachers can be coopted.

A current danger to academic freedom is that more and more academicians are getting involved in politics, to become ministers or deputies. After they get involved in government, they forget their colleagues and they put their interest before those of the university.

We also suffer from the fact that university authorities, the Rector included, are not elected but appointed. They too, after being appointed, cease acting as academics and begin behaving as political persons. They are more concerned with their political future than with academic affairs and in fact their acts in many cases jeopardize academic freedom. We are now fighting for a system where the main institutions and departments operate in a truly transparent way, rather than through the appointment system.

But having elections is not enough. We have had elections recently of associate deans for academic affairs, but the results were manipulated. Academics were asked to make a list of candidates, so those who were interested in getting involved were asked to agree on a list. This encourages the formation of cliques. Moreover, people were given money to vote in certain way; and some administrative staff was

threatened with dismissal if they did not vote for a certain list. We need to change this; we need to continue to fight, to do consciousness academic raising, because people today are so preoccupied with day-to-day survival that it is difficult for them to organize to stop violations of rights.

Q. We know that everywhere it is women who pay the heaviest price for adjustment and repression of academic freedom. What is the situation of women at Ougadougou University?

A. Let me say first that there are several female teachers at the university. The ratio is still low however; generally it is 5-1, although in some faculties it is much lower; in law there is one female teacher, in economics, none. There are also many female students on campus. There are female students in many faculties, particularly in the humanities, but even in law they are 50%. Still most women do not go for higher education. Parents want to marry the girls quickly, because it is still a stigma for a woman to remain without a husband.

Now with SAP it is harder for women than for men to pursue their studies. For instance, it is women who go to the market and have to care for the housework and the preparation of food, and this is where the day-to-day effects of SAP are felt most. At the same time, women are becoming more aware of their human rights and are not willing to tolerate any longer harassment from men. There are demanding equal treatment and as a result relations between women and men are becoming more equal. There has definitely been an improvement in male-female relations, thanks, in great part, to the dynamic activity of our local national NGO, the Burkinabe Movement For The Defense of Human Rights (MBDHP) that was created on February 19, 1989.

Chronology of Student Struggle in Africa: 1994 Update

The following chronology was compiled from the monthly, *African Research Bulletin: Social and Political Series* for 1994. Unless otherwise noted the citation is to the appropriate month's edition. This chronology is an updating of the "Chronology of Student Struggle in Africa: 1985-1993" printed in *CAFA Newsletter* 5.

Cameroon January. 73 secondary school teachers who had been on strike since November 24, 1993 had their salaries suspended, starting from January 1994.

Niger January 7. Fifty students were arrested and forty were injured after clashing with the campus police, following a demonstration organized the day before to demand the payment of several months of grant arrears and the improvement of working conditions. The Government decided to close the university for an indefinite period and to force the students to leave the campus.

On January 10 hundreds of secondary school students began a strike in solidarity with the university students and to demand five months of arrears of study allowances. There were also demonstrations in other parts of the country; the university student initiative also had the support of the union confederation USTN.

The school was reopened on Jan. 17; and on Jan 19 there was a demonstration to demand the release of the Secretary General of the Niger School Union who had been detained.

Cameroon February. 73 secondary school teachers who had been on strike on a wage dispute since November 24 were dismissed.

Mali February. Students went on strike to obtain higher grants. In response, President Konare ordered schools and colleges closed down and banned pupils' meetings after students attacked the house of the Minister of Education.

Malawi March 1. More than 25,000 teachers, demanding better pay and working conditions, went on strike throughout the country.

Nigeria March 12. The University of Lagos was closed down.

Togo April. 12, 000 students staged a 72-hours warning strike from April 19th to demand the payment of three months arrears and to demand improvement in studying and living conditions.

Niger May 18. There were violent clashes between students and police in Niamey. The students were demanding the payment of 20,000 CFA francs, which they usually get at the beginning of the term. One demonstrator was injured.

Congo June. President Lissouba announced the cancellation of the academic year because of the ongoing protest by students who, since April, had been mobilizing to demand the payment of 15 months of grant arrears.

Cote d'Ivoire June 20. FESCI (The Federation of University and High School Students) agreed to suspend the strike it had called.

Gabon June. After a day of violent students' protest on June 14th the Government decided to close down the University of Omar Bongo in Libreville. The students had been on strike since May 26th calling for a rise in their grants following the CFA franc devaluation. On June 6th, the students held a demo on campus. On the 8th, the police intervened to break up groups of students who were erecting road blocks. On June 9th, the Minister of Education announced that to help the students the government would reduce the monthly rent for dormitory rooms by CFA 2,000 and would increase the grants by CFA 3,000 bringing them to CFA 66,000 per month. He added the Government could not afford further increases since the grant was part of a total package negotiated with the International Monetary Fund.

Ghana June. Teachers throughout the country went on strike on June 1st to draw attention to their grievances. The Ghana Association of Teachers called for the payment of pensions on consolidated salaries and legitimate entitlements, that would mark a return to the Teachers' Pension Ordinance of 1955, and the re-establishment of the Ghana Education Service Council.

Kenya June 15. The main campus of Moi University was closed down. Students had gone on strike demanding the release of exams results.

Guinea June. In June trouble broke out during the end of year exams. Students were

demanding the settlement of their grants and the repayment of school expenses. The authorities refused, and student protest broke out, resulting in ten students been put under judicial inquiry for "inciting rebellion." (ARB November 1994 : 11662).

Benin July 12. One student was injured during clashes between the police and 2000 students trying to hold a general assembly at the Abomey Calavi campus. The students were demanding clarification about the time tables of end-of-year exams.

Burkina Faso November 16. Students boycotted classes to protest about University conditions.

Congo November. The academic year that usually starts in October was delayed because students and teachers demanded the payment of grants and salaries arrears before the start of classes—the teachers had not been paid salaries for 12 months. Meanwhile three civil servants unions called for an indefinite general strike that was to start on November 8, but called it off after an agreement was reached with the government on civil servants' pay.

On November 10th the student union called upon the 17,000 students of the University of Brazzaville to protest the government education policy. On the 11th the police in Brazzaville broke up a demonstration of about 100 students who demanded the payment of six months's grant arrears.

Academic Staff Unions and Structural Adjustment in Africa: Robespierre versus Newton?

C. George Caffentzis

Hear this: I have placed *Newton* at my side, to control enlightenment and command the inhabitants of all planets. Hear this also: the man who proved himself to be the greatest enemy of enlightenment (*Robespierre*) has been hurled into darkness, and is destined to remain there for eternity, agent and object of my vengeance. The assembly of the twenty-one elect of humanity will be called the Council of Newton. The Council of Newton will represent me on earth. It will divide humanity into four divisions: English, French, German, Italian.
-(Saint-Simon 1975: 78)

A dismal feature of African university life in the last decade has been the continual-banning of academic staff unions, and the harassment, arrest and even torture of academic union leaders by governments. What is at the cause of African governments' hostility to Africa's intelligentsia? I answer this question by showing that these attacks on academic unions are not spontaneous expressions of the authoritarian nature of the post-colonial African state. Rather, they are rooted in the World Bank's and IMF's fundamental antipathy to this intelligentsia, which can be explained by their geneology and their plans for Africa. The African governments merely act as a mediators of this antipathy.

First, the repression of academic staff unions in Africa is an instance of the repression of workers' organizations required by the implementation of World Bank and IMF-designed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). It is also motivated by the negative evaluation which the World Bank and the IMF have passed on the work of African academics and the threat which the existence of an African intelligentsia poses, at this juncture, for the policies promoted by these institutions. Finally, the position of the WB and the IMF with regard to African academic life can be best appreciated in light of their kinship with a long strand of autocratic utopias and international organiza-

tions, including the intellectual clubs which fed the bureaucracies of the British Empire, the Comintern and the "Brain Trust" that forged the New Deal. Though quite diverse, all these organizations were characterized by the same pretense of universalism, an elitist attitude and need for secrecy that inspire the the World Bank's and IMF's conception of knowledge-production and knowledge-diffusion as well as their recommendations for Africa's educational systems.

Part I: Academic Workers and Unions under Structural Adjustment

Academic staff unions are under attack today in Africa, because politically and economically this is what SAPs require. As it is by now well-known, the success of SAPs necessitate that wages and working conditions of all workers must be reduced to a level that is barely compatible with subsistence. For this to be possible any organization defending workers rights must be muzzled and this, in fact, is what has taken place in the case of every workers' union in Africa. Thus, it is no accident that since the late 1980s union membership has been falling as a consequence of SAP (ILO 1993: 48), and widespread retrenchment, both in the public and private sector, has become the rule

in all places of employment. Nor it is an accident that the banning of academic staff unions (e.g., ASUU in Nigeria) or the refusal to register them (UASU in Kenya) have become a common feature of political life in Africa in the last decade. (CAFA 1992, 1994)

Can we show, however, that the attack on the academic unions is the result of a precise will on the side of the World Bank and IMF?

The textual evidence in favor of this hypothesis is compelling. Consider *Adjustment in Africa*, a report summarizing the World Bank's evaluation of the impact of SAPs in Africa since the mid-1980s. Its purpose is to provide a rationale for continuing this policy. Thus, its concluding theme is the need for a social "commitment to" and "ownership of" World Bank/IMF-designed "policy reforms." Given the importance of unions in the history of decolonization and democratization, one would think that they would play an important role in this ownership narrative. But in the whole report there are only two references to them. They occur in a short section on "Relaxing Labor Controls," that laments "the rigidities in hiring and firing workers and the practices for setting wages" prevailing in some African countries, which are blamed as the cause of raising production costs, reduced productivity, and stifled investment and job creation (World Bank 1994: 92).

The unions' responsibility for the continuing economic crisis in Africa is taken as *a priori* and the section goes on to describe how in some "fixed exchange rate countries"—mainly those of the Francophone-CFA franc area—the unions resisted the attempt to change "restrictive labor laws". The example cited is that of Ivory Coast, where "adjustment" aimed at increasing the "flexibility in labor markets" (World Bank, 1994: 92):

Collective layoffs in Cote d'Ivoire are subject to priority authorization by the Ministry of Employment. A new law was drawn up to change this, but it has been challenged by the unions. (ibid : 94)

Nothing more is said about unions and even the term "worker" surfaces so sparsely in the text as to suggest that there are few workers in Africa. The closest one gets to any worker is in the more frequent reference to "the poor," a semantic regression to the 17th century, when "the poor" was commonly used to refer the bulk of the population, conjuring images of propertyless but costly dependents, as in "the Poor Law."

Labor unions in general are a conceptual non-entity in the World Bank's African SAP cosmos. If we take William Saint's Technical Paper *Universities in Africa* as an expression of the World Bank's views, we find the same oblivion with regard to faculty unions. All we have is a passing reference to "staff associations," (Saint 1992: 75, 78) in conjunction with student associations, despite the fact that, according to the author, "attracting and retaining talented staff has now become the biggest current problem for many African universities," and one of the reasons for the "brain drain" are "more attractive salaries and working conditions" abroad. (Saint, 1992: 23-24) Academic unions negotiating better wages and working conditions would certainly be an effective instrument in halting the academic exodus. But even when we come to the "Recommendations to the Donors" [sic] we find no mention of them, much less of the need to defend them from government repression. (Saint 1992: 116-119)

Unlike the *Adjustment in Africa* Report—which recommends that *all* workers salaries be decimated, Saint makes room for a well managed differentiation of rewards on the basis of merit. He recommends "greater flexibility in personnel management policies" and admits that a solution to the problem of staff retention "will probably necessitate a package of responses, including salary adjustments, performance incentives, professional development opportunities, improved pension plans, and research support." (Saint 1992: 118) This is not surprising. Academics have access to a global intellectual market; they can more

easily migrate than the average African worker; thus more must be done to retain some of them at least. Collectively, however, academics do not play any role in the solution Saint proposes for the problem of staff retention, nor in any aspect of SAP, other than—one presumes—the right to invite their members to “claim ownership” of the World Bank’s austerity plans.

This impression of the World Bank’s conception of academic staff unions is deepened if we look at a sample of the literature on universities produced by its Africa Technical Department in the last few years. For example, Mary Antionette Brown Sherman’s *Building Consensus for Higher Education Reform in Africa: Some Reflections* has no discussion of faculty unions. In her section of “Key Actors and Interest Groups” we find students, governments, graduates, other higher education institutions and international donor agencies, but the faculty and its unions have vanished. (Sherman 1993: 22-29) Similarly, in Robert Blair’s and Josephine Jordan’s *Staff Loss and Retention at Selected African Universities: A Synthesis Report* we find an elaborate account of individual faculty members’ attitudes to remuneration, university/government relations, living conditions, university facilities, organization/management of the university, and academic career. (Blair and Jordan 1994) But the authors of the report showed no interest in discussing the faculty union even though it was an important element in the academic life at a number of the institutions that they studied (including Makerere and Ibadan).

It is in Kilemi Mwiria’s *University Governance: Problems and Prospects in Anglophone Africa* that we find some positive discussion of the function of academic staff unions. He argues that these student and staff unions can fulfill “the role of buffers between staff and students on the one hand and the university administration on the other.” (Mwiria 1992: 13) But to be a “buffer” is to hardly the role that an academic staff union should play, if it is to protect the vital interests of the faculty.

Part II: Money, Secrecy and Power or, Why Banks are not Universities

Here, then, we have a mathematically precise proof why capitalists form a veritable freemason society vis-a-vis the whole working class, while there is little love lost between them in competition among themselves. (Marx 1966: 198)

Besides facing hostility or malign indifference because they are unions, academic unions also face repression, under the SAP regime, because their understanding of the nature of academic work is often in conflict with that of the World Bank and the IMF. Strangely enough, these institutions have arrogated the right to set the standards for the production of knowledge throughout the planet, and in this capacity have passed a negative judgment on the work of African academicians, as proven by the World Bank’s launching of the Africa Capacity Building Initiative (World Bank, 1991).

But how can the World Bank and IMF justify their aspiration to play the role of the educators? The World Bank and IMF are banks, they sell shares, approve loans, coordinate the flows of capital from many sources, collect interest and, indeed, make profits. Nevertheless, both are anxious not to be seen as banks. Thus, in the *Annual Report 1994*, when mentioning its 50th anniversary, the Executive Directors of the World Bank proudly quoted the following passage from one of the Bank’s founding documents written in 1944:

The creation of the Bank was an entirely new venture....So novel was it, that no name could be found for it. Insofar as we can talk of capital subscriptions, loans, guarantees, issue of bonds, the new financial institution may have some apparent claim to the name of Bank. But the type of shareholders, the nature of subscriptions, the exclusion of all deposits and short-term loans, the non-profit basis, are quite foreign to the

accepted nature of a Bank. However, it was accidentally born with the name Bank, and Bank it remains, mainly because no satisfactory name could be found in the dictionary for this unprecedented institution. (World Bank 1994b: 12)

Why are the world’s most powerful bankers shy about the purpose of their institutions? The answer to this question lies in part in the models that inspired the formation of the World Bank and IMF at the time of their inception.

The powers that presided over the founding of these institutions were the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Each country brought to the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 its institutional experiences. Around the table sat Keynes with his “Apostles,” a semi-secret academic discussion group that was deeply influenced by Sidgwick’s Comtian concerns forged in the latter part of the 19th century (Moggridge 1992: 56-68). Next to Keynes was Stepanov, the Soviet Union representative, who brought the organizational legacy of the Comintern which had just been liquidated by Stalin in 1943. In turn Morgenthau, the representative of the U.S., could rely on the experience of the New Deal “Brain Trust.” All these institutional legacies had a distinctive Saint-Simonian flavor, combining a propensity for elitist planning councils and a peculiar mixture of scientism, internationalism and secular Catholicism. This is how Durkheim described the ideal Saint-Simonian organization of industrial society that the Keynesian “Apostles”, the Soviet Comintern and the New Deal “Brain Trust” each reproduced in their own particular fashion:

...it would have at its head a council formed solely of the elite of producers. This body would have dependent on it what today constitutes the government, but would take its place without making use of its ancient dogmas, its traditional methods. It would not have to impose the ideas or even the mere whims of a dominant party, but merely declare

what is in the nature of things—and it would be voluntarily obeyed. (Durkheim 1958: 169)

Surely there were Left and Right models of this form of organization, as well as socialist, social-democratic, technocratic, fascist, Catholic variants of it, from the early 19th to the mid-20th century, including banking schemes like the *Credit Mobilier* of the Second Empire of Napoleon III (Taylor 1975: 54). Saint-Simon himself “dreamed of a gigantic bank whose revenue would serve to execute useful work for humanity” (Durkheim 1958: 86).

Banks are ideal way-stations to the achievement of the true Saint-Simonian form of industrial society; for they stand outside any particular branch of industry, manage the most universal commodity of the capitalist system, and shunt capital from one branch to another, helping to determine the average profit rate. Thus banks even inspired Marx to write some notorious hyperboles, concerning the role of banking in the abolition of capital itself; in a passage where he excoriated Saint-Simon’s credit and bank schemes materialised in the *credit mobilier*, Marx noted:

We have seen that the average profit of the individual capitalist, or of every individual capital, is determined not by the surplus-labor appropriated at first hand by each capital, but by the quantity of total surplus-labor appropriated by the total capital, from which each individual capital receives its dividend only in proportion to its aliquot part of the total capital. This social character of capital is first promoted and wholly realised through the full development of the credit and banking system....It places all available and even potential capital of society that is not already actively employed at the disposal of the industrial and commercial capitalists so that neither the lenders nor the users of this capital are its real owners or producers. It thus does away with the private character of capital and contains in itself, but only in itself, the abolition of capital itself. (Marx 1966: 606-607)

Fitting Marx's description, the World Bank and IMF were conceived in 1944 in order to both avert the recurrence of economic crises threatening the existence of capitalism and to represent at the institutional level the concerns of international capital. In the pursuit of this task, the form they adopted was that of a Saint-Simonian organization. As institutions, the Bank and the Fund are *universalistic*, insofar as they are reservoirs of international social capital; *elitist*, insofar as controlling large amounts of social capital requires capitalist loyalty and capacity; and they are *esoteric*, as the information their research generates is strategically and politically sensitive.

It is thus in the nature of these organizations to speak *ex cathedra* and appoint themselves as representatives of the General Will and the *Raison d'être* of the system. This is where the encroachment of the Bank in the educational field has its roots. To this role we must also trace the antagonistic posture the Bank and the Fund have adopted with regard to the African educational systems.

The formation of popular, indigenous academic institutions (for all their imperial vestiges, recorded with relish in Soynika's *The Interpreters*) was one of the achievements of decolonization, providing the basis for the "social contract" in the post-independence period. The growth of mass education in post-independence Africa promoted an educational model, which, although often contested, was based on the respect for *locality*, *egalitarianism* and the *exoteric*. One of its outcomes was the emergence of a new generation of intellectuals who (in Saint-Simonian terminology) could potentially play the role of Robespierres, i.e., of people cognizant of the secrets of the imperial powers and able to expose them to the African population. For the intellectuals who had been engaged in the anti-colonial movement often became academics and inspired the new generations to carry on sharp critiques of neo-colonial penetration of Africa, including a critique of the grip exercised by a Eurocentric culture on the mind of the former colonial

subjects. Understandably, this type of intellectual clashes with the Bank's conception of what academicians in Africa should provide.

The existence of an autonomously organized African intelligentsia has become particularly dangerous in the wake of the Debt Crisis, and structural adjustment, which have transformed the World Bank and IMF, all but in name, into the central banks in Africa, if not Africa's actual government. Central banks need secrecy in order for their operations to be successful. Even when laws are passed restricting this secrecy, they find ways to circumvent them and "become more secretive in other, less informative, ways." (Lewis 1991: 404) Putting aside the "social welfare" implications of this secretiveness, discussed in (Goodfriend 1986), and the moral aspects of government by secrecy, discussed in (Bok 1982: 171-190), it is clear that the central banks' need for secrecy is crucial for the imposition of SAP (Woolley 1984), and that any social group that might bring into full public light the implications of this program must be viewed as a threat. Here lies a further reason for the World Bank's and the IMF's hostility to the existence of autonomous academic unions. Academics, if backed by a union, can challenge the World Bank's and IMF's monetary order through overt political channels and by analyzing and publicizing the secret decisions made by these institutions. They can be whistle-blowers and can leak details of banking operations that raise eyebrows concerning the application of structural adjustment or even inspire general strikes.

It is not surprising, then, that the Bank and Fund (a) have not supported the right of academics to organize autonomously, nor have they ever defended academic unions when harassed by autocratic governments; (b) have dismissed the education provided by African academicians as pedagogically irrelevant, and launched, in its place, an "(educational) Capacity Building" initiative, that presumes that Africans are incapable of autonomous cultural production. (CAFA #6 1994)

By these moves the Bank and Fund have

attempted to stifle the voices of those sectors of "civil society" which were in the position to denounce SAP's failure and the Bank's and Fund's increasing control of economic policy making and political life throughout Africa—a control completed with the capitulation last year of the CFA franc countries to SAP. Thus, again, it is not an oversight if the World Bank and IMF are not interested in halting the repression of academic unions and the diaspora of African academicians. By the same token, halting this diaspora and exposing academic repression is of great significance in the contemporary African context and not for the well-being of academics alone.

(This paper was presented at the African Studies Association's Annual Meeting in Toronto, November 1994.)

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Structural Adjustment in U.S. Universities

African universities have been the target of the World Bank's and IMF's structural adjustment policies (SAPs) since the mid-1980s. Much of CAFA's work has been to analyze these SAPs and show how they directly and indirectly attack the academic freedom of African teachers and students. These policies are often presented by the World Bank and IMF as rational responses to the specific problems and conditions of African universities. However, these SAPs are not peculiar to Africa. They have been and are being applied to the U.S. university system and with the same deleterious effect on academic freedom here.

In this section we will simply list a few aspects of the consequences of SAPs in the U.S.:

*from 1980 to 1990, student aid increased by 47% while the cost of public education increased by 109% and a private education by a staggering 146%;

*college costs for the student have risen 54% between 1988 and the 1995, well ahead of the 16% increase in the cost of living;

*tuition costs in three of the largest state university systems Massachusetts, California and New York rose in the five years between 1988 and 1993 by 141%, 106% and 102% respectively;

*in just five years (1988-1993), higher education's share of the state general fund nationwide fell from 14% to 12%;

*the average full-time student now works 25 hours per week during school to cover the costs of education;

*average faculty real wages in 1994 were below their 1972 level.

Just as in Africa, the structural adjustment of the universities brings about an attack on academic freedom. The indirect attack arises from reducing access to education in the first place. But direct violations of academic freedom of students are also becoming especially problematic. The clearest example of this trend is the City University of New York (CUNY).

The *Hunter Envoy* of Sept. 12, 1995 writes: "With the cooperation of the New York Police Department, CUNY administrators, at the request of Chancellor Ann Reynolds, are compiling lists, scanning newspapers, attending protests and demonstrations, and building an on-campus police presence in an effort to monitor and discourage students activism and civil disobedience, rights protected by the First Amendment."

This climate of paranoia and surveillance will undoubtedly intensify on campuses as soon as new federal bans and restrictions on the use of financial aid by immigrants, prisoners and welfare recipients are put into place.

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Signatories of the World Bank-free African Studies Association Petition

The following are some of the signatories of the CAFA petition which urges the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association (ASA) to decide that the World Bank is neither academically nor morally qualified to participate at the ASA meetings. It was first circulated at the November 1994 ASA meetings in Toronto. This petition is reprinted on the next page and we urge you to sign it if you have not.

The ASA seems to have responded positively to our petition, since there are no World Bank panels listed in the Preliminary Schedule of this year's annual meetings. However, this is just a *de facto* response; we are continuing to urge a formal ban on World Bank panels.

Name	Affiliation/Residence	Name	Affiliation/Residence
Aliko Songolo	U. of Wisconsin-Madison	David Colapinto	Washington, DC
Louise Meintoes	University of Texas-Austin	Linda Nunes-Schreg	Tacoma Park, MD
Abena Busia	Rutgers University	Mary Jane Wolmoth	Washington, DC
Oga Abah	Colorado College	Vivian Mills	Accokeek, MD
Jack Mapanje	University of Leeds (England)	Herbert Ettel	Friends Meeting of Washington
Honore Vinck	African Studies/N.U. Evanston	Brian Holtzman	Frankfort, KY
Ola Rotimi	Obafemi Awolowo University	Alamin Mazrui	Ohio State University
Felix Hodonoi	African Studies/N.U. Evanston	James Lipton	Ohio State University
Micere Mugo	Syracuse U.	Martha Wheelton	Ohio State University
Caleb Dube	Northwestern U.	C. Magbaily Fyle	Ohio State University
Dennis Brutus	University of Pittsburgh	Linda James Mayers	Ohio State University
Lupenga Maphande	Ohio State University	Ali Skenda	Ohio Wesleyan University
John Mihevc	Inter-Church Coalition on Africa	Judy Abila	Ohio Dominion University
Eric Mathias	Joint Ministry in Africa	Ahmad Sikanga	Ohio State University
Dan Hoffman	Joint Ministry in Africa	Virginia Chande	Capital University
Sonja Taylor	Joint Ministry in Africa	Robert Stone	Long Island University
Lordes Garcia	UCBWC	Elizabeth Bowman	Lyme, Conn.
Carmen Nebot	UCBWM	V. Mudimbe	Duke University
Thomas Abraham	UCBWM	Carolyn M. Shane	U. of Cal. Santa Cruz (UCSC)
Patricia Rumer	UCBWM	Michael Rotkin	UCSC
Eric Gass	UCBWM	Patricia Zavella	UCSC
Linda Petrucelli	UCBWM	J.B. Child	UCSC
Diane Ciekawy	Ohio University	Herman Gray	UCSC
Ann Lee Grinstead	Ohio University	Dana Takagi	UCSC
Alex Liosatos	Ohio University	W.L. Goldfrank	UCSC
Caroline Irungu	Ohio University	Nancy Stoller	UCSC
Elizabeth Ulrich	Ohio University	Angela Davis	UCSC
Peggy Sandee	Ohio University	Aida Hurtado	UCSC
John Wilson	Ohio University	Laura Corradi	UCSC
Ira Levin	Ohio University	Ida Barnett	UCSC
Mike Polioudakis	Ohio University	Ana B. Fasardo	UCSC
Stephen Kohn	Washington, D.C.	Afia Thomas	UCSC
Elizabeth Nobbe	Washington, DC		

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:

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