HWR 231

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

EDWIN MADUNAGU

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INTRODUCTION

In this issue of the CAFA Newsletter we continue our practice of beginning with an essay on the general situation of academic freedom in Africa. Silvia Federici's "The Economic Roots of the Repression of Academic Freedom in Africa" is a assessment of the two major theories claiming to account for the increasing repression of academic freedom in Africa in the 1980s.

This essay is followed by a number of reports from the academic freedom "front." The last is a protest against the "Boren Bill," a piece of legislation passed in the U.S. Congress in 1992 that allocates funds for U.S. academics and students to study and research in Africa (and other "Third World" venues) on the condition that they report to U.S. military authorities.

In the middle are two pieces dealing with the action of African university teachers and students in Kenya and Nigeria to preserve and enlarge their academic freedom. The first is a precis of a history of recent academic freedom struggles in the University of Nairobi excerpted from the Kenya Human Rights Commission Report, "A Haven of Repression." The second is an update on the situation of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria since the end of its relatively successful strike in the summer and fall of 1992.

This issue therefore highlights a new era of threats to African universities and to the intellectual independence of African academics emanating from the World Bank and the U.S. government. It also shows continuing evidence of the tremendous powers of resistance to these threats rooted in Africa academics and students. But they need our help. We, as North American academics, are in a good position offer it by protesting the effort of the U.S. government and agencies like the World Bank to force African intellectuals into having only one viable career option: to be a cadre of neoliberal bureaucrats recolonizing Africa.

For more information about CAFA, contact C. George Caffentzis, Department of Philosophy,University of Southern Maine, Portland, ME 04103 or Silvia Federici, New College, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550.

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CAFA SPONSORS
Dennis Brutus
[illegible] Caffentzis
[illegible] Campbell
[illegible] Cleaver, Jr.
[illegible] Federici
[illegible] Ihonvbere
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link scholars with intelligence and military agencies. Printed below is a short statement to be published in the Chronicle of Higher Education and/or Black Issues in Higher Education (depending of the level of contribution). It will also be sent to all members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

We encourage all students faculty and professionals associated with Africa studies to sign it. Institutional affiliation will be listed only for identification purposes. Contributions to cover publication costs, at a suggested level of $10 or more per signature ($5 for students/low income) are welcomed but not mandatory. Signed copies of the statement, checks (made out of "ACAS"), and requests for further information should be sent to ACAS, PO Box 11694, Berkeley CA 994701-2694.

The statement reads as follows:

The CIA, the Department of Defense, and the Study of Africa

We scholars of Africa call upon our colleagues to reject the National Security Education Act of 1991. The Act supports undergraduate study abroad, graduate research fellowships, and international studies programs. Students must repay their grants or work either in a related education field or in a federal agency, with emphasis on national security employment. The program is to be administered by the Defense Intelligence College of the Department of Defense, and overseen by an Advisory Board chaired by the Secretary of Defense and includes among others the Director of the CIA.

We have long argued for expanded funding for African studies. Despite Africa's importance to the U.S. and especially to people of African descent, African studies has received minimal funding by comparison to other world areas. However, this Act provides defense and intelligence agencies with influence on the direction and priorities of international studies. The disastrous effects of earlier links between scholars and national security agencies and the lengthy record of the CIA and military interventions in Africa are well established.

Funding from national security agencies threatens the openness of scholarly inquiry and publication, the physical safety of scholars and students oberseas, and cooperation between African and U.S. scholars. Many area studies associations, Africa scholars, programs and centers have therefore opposed such funding.

For all these reasons, we call on

*our colleagues to express their opposition to NSEA 1991 as formulated and to all proposals for links with and funding from military and intelligence agencies, and

*the Congress to ensure the integrity of African studies by appropriating increased funding through civilian agencies.

Signature **Printed Name** **Institution**

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