

# LETTERS

For reasons of space, we have reproduced content only, editing out all salutations, introductory notes, titles and affiliations. The order in which the letters appear is alphabetical, according to the last names of the writers.

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We write to state our support for the Johnson-Cole resolution which was approved at the October meeting of the ASA in Boston.

In our view, the issues are clear. As "Africanists" we make very good livings studying, teaching, and writing about Africa. Yet the mass of Africans who are "fortunate" enough to live in independent Black Africa continue to suffer indignities of poverty, ignorance and disease never experienced by ourselves. Their brothers in colonial Africa and outside Africa suffer under the dehumanizing control of the most despotic and repressive regimes in today's world. Unquestionably, Africans are in revolt against underdevelopment and oppression. What are we to do?

Given that most of us have so clearly benefited from our professional activities in Africa and concerning Africa, it is morally right for us to give something back to Africans in addition to our scholarly products. The Johnson-Cole resolution asks us to make available one-half of our membership fees to further the "dignified survival and liberation of African people" and to revamp our organization so that authentic spokesmen and spokeswomen of Black liberation can effectively participate in the governance of our Association.

Money and influence mean power. The Johnson-Cole resolution requires that we find a way to use the limited power our organization possesses to further the legitimate goals of African development and liberation. We believe that no person who is genuinely devoted to African studies can be against these goals. Therefore, we wholeheartedly support the Johnson-Cole resolution and expect that our colleagues in ASA will do so as well.

Many ASA members are probably not completely satisfied with every paragraph and sentence of the resolution. Its implementation will require a complex and lengthy process of reorganization and readjustment. We believe that with sincerity and trust among all parties these problems can be overcome. Whatever the problems, they must be resolved; for if they are not, we believe that organized African studies in the United States will lose the support of future generations of students, scholars, Black Americans and Africans. Can there be African studies without the participation of such groups? We think not.

Robert G. Gregory  
Jeffrey A. James  
Roderick J. Macdonald  
Patrick J. McGowan

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I am writing to tender my resignation from the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association.

As you know, my disgust at the behavior of a large segment of the membership of the ASA in face of the intellectually bizarre and vulgar attacks at Montreal from the so-called black caucus -- more formally known as the African Heritage Studies Association -- caused me to consider resigning from the Board at that time. But I did not then resign, hoping that the membership would return to its senses.

Clearly a sizable portion of the ASA's white membership, profoundly sychophantic in its guilt-ridden relationship to the silly political posturing and bizarre intellectual antics of black militants within the ASA, has no intention of retrieving its common sense and returning to the first principles of an academic organization. No doubt it would be marvelous if the ASA, and other academic associations, could solve the ugly political problems of our world. But it is, I think, patently clear they cannot, and any attempt to make them endeavor such is sheer fantasy, or worse. Academic organizations should be asked to do only what they are best at; namely, to organize the maintenance and advancement of quality, standards and civility in academic pursuits. Problems of politics should not, as a matter of course, be their burden; there are enough organizations available for assuming political tasks.

Clearly, then, I am at such fundamental odds in this regard with sizable numbers of our members, including one of the members of the Board whose behavior at this year's conference I found utterly bizarre, that I prefer to part ways with the ASA. I am at bottom a loner anyway, usually eschewing organizational ties, in preference, to speak, to doing my own thing.

Yet I should like to express my respect for the men who founded the ASA and have kept it alive over the past decade. I should particularly like to express my respects to you, James, for without your patience and organizational skills the ASA would have died after the fiasco at Montreal. For me, at least, the ASA is now certainly dead; and lacking the sychophantic tendencies or needs so widespread among ASA members, I have little reason to continue membership.

Martin Kilson

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#### TWO REACTIONS TO THE MORGENTHAU PETITION

In light of the profound toll the masochistic virus has taken among white liberals in the ASA, I was most heartened to receive the petition for a ballot vote on the utterly bizarre and sick resolution that Willard Johnson put to the final business meeting and had adopted. The ASA's by-laws allow for such a ballot vote and the Board of Directors would be seriously remiss to follow the dictates of Richard Bates' resolution, thereby discarding its own procedures.

But, alas, I cannot sign your petition. My reason is simply that your suggestion that the ASA should be used as an agency for developing a political action group on African affairs violates my conception of the ASA.

For better or worse, I believe the ASA should be what it was originally designed to be: namely, a professional association of Africanist scholars who wish to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of scholarly standards in the study of African societies. Under the best circumstances the ASA, as you well know, will have enough trouble realizing this goal, let alone the trouble and conflict it would perforce encounter if it attempted to be a political action group as well.

I am, of course, very much in favor of a political action group on African policy, but such a group should be formed outside the machinery of the ASA, not within it. After all, those of us who are liberals and radicals and who would join such a pressure group have no monopoly on scholarship in African studies; but to form an action group within ASA would be to work on such an arrogant assumption, and those scholars who are middle-of-the-road or conservative or right-of-center would surely find it difficult, if not impossible, to remain within an ASA that was also a radical pressure group. Indeed, scholars, left or right or center in politics, should not have to face such a choice in their membership or professional academic associations. It is, then, for this reason that I cannot sign the petition.

Martin Kilson

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I take the liberty of responding to the letter of 6 November in which (Professor Ruth Morgenthau) asked for support for a mail vote by ASA members concerning the Willard Johnson resolution.

I was not even aware that a mail vote could be in question; my assumption had been that, as the resolution in question would require changes in the by-laws, it was mandatory that such a vote take place. All other persons connected with the ASA with whom I have spoken share this assumption; of course, few, if any, of us have seen these by-laws\* so I may be mistaken. One member of the AHSA whom I know, by the way, feels that the 'mandatory' mail vote simply provides a mechanism for feet-dragging on the motion and for its eventual defeat in comfortable anonymity. I might add that some of those most vehemently opposed to the motion at the Oct. 23 business meeting made valiant, though unsuccessful efforts to require that the vote take place by secret ballot.

Be that as it may, I would like to comment on the content of your objection to the resolution itself, which raises a problem that I felt very keenly at the convention but failed to respond to publicly. Many persons attempted to offer 'alternative' motions to the Johnson one, all proposing some sort of separate 'political' organization, to be created, structured and financed in various ways. I must tell you very honestly that I was extremely distressed by these suggestions. I wonder, in shock, if these respectable academicians really were not aware that these motions by-passed completely the core question, the question that has split the ASA once and threatens to do so again, that of parity on the board for members named by the AHSA.

To return to the objection you raise in your letter, I would say that if the ASA constitution demands a mail vote, then that's the way it has to be. But I cannot join in an effort to create a mail vote, which seems to be inspired by the hope that the Johnson resolution can thus be put back under the rug. It is understandable, though not especially reasonable, to wish to know in advance the policies to be chosen by the proposed political organization; I feel, however, that this is quite secondary, and can be fought out via the election of directors to the Liberation Fund. What is fundamental is that the members face up to the racial issue which exists within the ASA and between the ASA and the AHSA, and to its political implications. Here I completely endorse the statement of Robert Bates, to the effect that if the resolution is not passed, the organization will cease to exist in its present form (he also, by the way, takes for granted an eventual mail vote on the motion). The symbolic gesture of granting parity, and, secondarily, of creating a political fund, is in my opinion the absolute minimum which must be done in order to make possible, if it is not already too late, an eventual entente with Black africanist and with the AHSA.

\*copies of the ASA by-laws are available, at cost, from the Secretariat.

For all these reasons, Dr. Morgenthau, I beg you to reconsider your stand with regard to the Johnson resolution. If the kind of policy to be adopted in the future by the Liberation Fund is really all that bothers you, I can't see that you would be taking such a great risk in just waiting to see how it works out. If the Johnson resolution is not passed, however, there is a great risk that in 1971, alternative resolutions will simply lack an audience altogether.

Katherine Payne Moseley

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The convening of the African Studies Association meeting in Boston at the same time that the Black Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was holding its 55th annual meeting in Philadelphia spotlights one of the problems Blacks have with the ASA. Blacks had to decide whether to go to Philadelphia, whether to divide their time between Boston and Philadelphia, or whether to stay away from both. The leadership of the ASA seems not to have understood that such a problem existed.

When the ASA was formed in the late 1950's and large grants were made to this White-led organization, Blacks and Black organizations who had been interested in Africa were bypassed. The Journal of Negro History, an organ of ASNLH had published writings of Zik in the 1920's. Carter G. Woodson had written on Africa decades before Africa became fashionable. Thus it should not be possible for Whites who have written about the winds of change in Africa to forget that winds of change are blowing here in the U.S.

This question of structural racism is also tied to the question of Africanist constituency. Are Africanists to relate to the needs of students, Black and White, Africans and Americans, or to the needs of the U.S. government? It is clear that the government's policy is set in relation to Africa. Thus when scholars speak of objectivity and standards they are forces reflecting the status quo. The links grow tighter between White-skin privilege and political reaction.

At the Boston meeting, I predicted the choice that the ASA will make. The Old Guard will overturn the Johnson Resolution after the meeting. Blacks will leave the organization. Money will go to a White organization. The future seems clear.

William Alfred Payne

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I hope the membership of the African Studies Association will strongly reject the proposed policy changes which would put us into the business of direct political action. My reasons are as follows:

Africans should decide what they need for support, and not a collection of American scholars.

If individual ASA members wish to support directly this or that African political or military organization, many ways exist for them to do so, and they can send off their contribution right away. There is no need for another organization to enter this field.

To ask the ASA membership to choose between ideologically conflicting liberation groups, leaders in personal competition with another, or possibly antagonistic tribal groups, to see which should get ASA support, would be to divide this membership into ideological and political camps.

Both the long range interests of Africa and also American society are better served by maintaining academic institutions apart from day-to-day problem solving and the political arena. To politicize the ASA would be to deprive society of a useful asset.

If American scholarship in regard to Africa should become more radical, more basic, and I believe it should, its usefulness must be protected by adherence to the highest standards of rationality, integrity and quality. Ideological special pleading will only hurt the long range interests of Africa.

If the ASA membership votes by a 2/3 mail vote to take public positions on important matters within our professional competence, this should be a simple matter to arrange.

Our job is rational discourse, education, research; and not political action. Therefore, I believe we should reject the proposed changes.

Channing B. Richardson

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May I call your attention to a wrong entry under my name in the Biographical Outlines which accompanies the ballot of August 7, 1970.

As you can verify from the Bibliography which I sent to you, Explorations in African Land Tenure Systems (Oxford University Press, East Africa, for 1970-71) is not by joint authors. The Johnston/Jones/Anthony/Uchendu study (Agricultural Development in Tropical Africa: A Study of the Economic, Cultural, and Technical Determinants of Agricultural Change, Stanford University Press; contracted for 1970-71), has nothing to do with either "Land Tenure" or the Oxford University Press.

May I request that you correct this error which might be embarrassing to my colleagues and quite misleading to the uninformed.

Victor C. Uchendu

(We regret having made this mistake and hope the above information will clear up any misunderstanding.)

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Thumbing through some old issues I came across in Vol. I, No. 6 (Nov. 1968) on page 24, an announcement from Prof. Reader of the University College in Salisbury, Rhodesia. There it is stated with emphasis that "there is no let or hindrance in Rhodesia to the carrying out of scientific research by the University College."

In view of the false impression of "liberalism" which this may convey, the number of research scholars - granted not in the pay of the U.C. - who have been summarily forced out of their research areas and/or declared "prohibited immigrants"; and the fact that as long ago as 1964 (or was it 1965?) a full-time member of the teaching staff at the U.C. was brusquely told to stop his rural research at once - would it not be appropriate that this statement in Vol. I, be explicitly withdrawn or clarified either editorially or by Prof. Reader?

At the very least it should be pointed out that even if the University College or, at any rate, individual members of staff (like Prof. Reader?) would like to see research without "let or hindrance," the ultimate decision lies with the government, especially regarding field research in the social sciences which takes the research worker away from the campus. And, as I have indicated, there is every indication that the government is quite prepared to put every "let or hindrance" in the way of scholars whom for one reason or another it does not "trust." Prof. Reader knows this very well - or should know this!

It is these (minor?) inaccuracies, coverings-up of nasty, prejudiced situations, which no doubt contribute to the exasperation of Black scholars.

J. Van Velsen

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIAO NACIONAL DOS ESTUDANTES MOCAMBICANOS (UNEMO)  
REGARDING THE NEED FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUNG MOZAMBICANS

We have fifteen Mozambican students who just finished their secondary school education in Nairobi, Kenya, and the U.S. Section of UNEMO is trying to locate scholarships for them.

It is our understanding that the Africanists of the ASA are interested in Africans and their problems, that they understand the struggle now going on in the Portuguese colonies, and that they are in a position to realize how important such scholarships are for Mozambique. They know that we are not only fighting against Portuguese military hardware, but also against the ignorance imposed on our country by centuries of neglect and oppression.

It would be a great contribution if help could be obtained for these Mozambicans (listed below). If any individual or university is interested in such a project, we have addresses, transcripts, etc. and would be glad to provide them.

We would appreciate it very much if ASA members could be informed about our need for scholarships.

Sincerely,

Artur L.L. Vilankulu

The UNIAO NACIONAL DOS ESTUDANTES MOCAMBICANOS is seeking scholarships for the following students:

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Andre Massaité         | -Agronomy               |
| 2. Bonifacio Dewasse      | -Medicine               |
| 3. Carlos Caminho         | -Mechanical Engineering |
| 4. Cipriano Lingade       | -Mechanical Engineering |
| 5. Daniel Saene           | -Medicine               |
| 6. Douglas Kampanda       | -International Law      |
| 7. George Dickson         | -Civil Engineering      |
| 8. Ines Laurinda Dhlakama | -Medicine               |
| 9. Joao Focas             | -Economics              |
| 10. Joao Rajabo           | -Medicine               |
| 11. Salomao E. Liwate     | -Mechanical Engineering |
| 12. Tiago Olesse Marqueza | -Mathematics            |
| 13. Tomas Chagunda        | -Medicine               |
| 14. Vicente Zacarias      | -Economics              |

In addition to the above list, two young Mozambican women (the only ones in the United States) are in need of scholarships for higher learning. They are:

- Mrs. Marcela Amilcar Mafumo (graduate)
- Mrs. Maria Sabino Humbane (undergraduate)

For further information, contact: Artur Xavier Lambo Vilankulu  
President, The Mozambique National Students Union  
U.S.A. Section  
317 West 108th Street (#6)  
New York, N.Y. 10025

THE EDOUARDO C. MONDLANE MEMORIAL FUND at Syracuse University welcomes advice as to how it might be reorganized to include the provision of scholarships to students from Mozambique. Originally, proceeds from the Fund helped sponsor a Memorial Lecture Service. Amilcar Cabral (PAIGC) was this year's guest speaker.

The Program of Eastern African Studies at Syracuse is now eager to expand the functions and resources of the MONDLANE MEMORIAL FUND and requests that ASA members make an initial contribution in the form of comments and suggestions to:

The Edouardo C. Mondlane Memorial Fund  
Program of Eastern African Studies  
119 College Place  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, New York 13210

JOHNSON RESOLUTION IS THE SUBJECT OF A TASK FORCE PANEL: "NEW DIRECTIONS IN AFRICAN STUDIES"

On November 14th, Federal City College hosted the monthly meeting of the Washington Task Force on African Affairs. The impact of the Johnson resolution passed at the ASA's 13th Annual Meeting was the theme of a panel which included the following participants: Francis A. Kornegay, Jr. (Chairman); Chike Onwachi, Director of Howard University's African Studies Center and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the African Heritage Studies Association; Absolom L. Vilakazi, Professor of Anthropology, American University and a member of the Board of the African Studies Association; and Helen Quigless, a librarian at Federal City College and Communication Secretary of the newly formed Association of African American Bibliography. Each panel member spoke concerning the history of relations between the ASA and the AHSA. A general discussion between panelists and the audience followed.

In a section of its October Special Report entitled AHSA RESPONDS TO BOSTON RESOLUTION OF ASA, the Task Force writes: "Chief executive of the African Heritage Studies Association meeting in Washington on November 5, stated to Task Force officers that they 'agree in principle' with the Johnson Resolution. The resolution will be discussed in depth during a forthcoming meeting of AHSA's Executive Committee. John Henrik Clarke, president of AHSA, has tentatively agreed to attend WFAA's panel discussion on November 14th, to discuss his organization's stance on the resolution along with Chike Onwachi, chairman of AHSA's Executive Committee. In short, this agreement 'in principle' of the resolution clears the air for meaningful dialogue between AHSA and the African Studies Association on a number of important matters in African affairs after the voting on constitutional changes by ASA. The rumors and doubts in many people's minds concerning the number of 'if the AHSA so desires' in the resolution should be put to rest."

### NEWS AND NOTES

The International Library of African Music, an offshoot of the African Music Society, is a research organization wishing to make its resources available to those interested in African music. Its journal African Music is the only one of its kind exclusively devoted to this subject. If you wish to learn more about the work of the International Library of African Music in the scientific study of music and the oral arts in Africa, write to the director, Mr. Hugh Tracey, International Library of African Music, P.O. Box 138, Roodepoort, Transvaal, South Africa.