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

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

*Authors should send with article a brief biographical note, indicating position, academic affiliation and recent publications, etc.*

*All correspondence -- manuscripts, subscriptions, books for review, inquiries, etc., -- should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief at the following address:*

AFRICAN ACTIVIST ASSOCIATION  
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## EDITOR'S QUILL

Two themes have dominated international news about Africa in 1984: the catastrophic famine which has engulfed 150 million people and political developments in South Africa.

By all counts, the famine which plagued 24 countries in 1984 ranks as the greatest human tragedy of the 20th century. Today, Africa faces a situation that is both desperate and perverse. Desperate because for the first time 150 million people are eminently in danger of starvation; perverse because we are told that there is abundant food supply in the world sufficient to feed everyone.

The tragic human and ecological crisis unparalleled in the history of Africa has finally captured international attention. However, the concern for the desperate plight of famine victims remains at a simplistic level with immediate reaction being at providing emergency relief aid. It seems that the drama of the drought has distracted Africa's underlying problems which emergency aid cannot solve.

The famine which struck Africa is the culmination of two decades of chronically poor agricultural performance. While per-capita food production actually increased in other regions of the world, Africa showed a decline over the last twenty years. Only eight of the thirty-nine countries showed rising agricultural production per capita. In the 1960's agricultural growth (by volume) was only 2.3 per cent but during the following decade production dropped by 1.3 per cent, less than half of the population growth.

A major problem associated with the decline in food production is the dramatic increase in food imports (wheat, rice and maize) which has leaped by 9 per cent since 1960. The International Food Policy and Research Institute (IFPRI) estimates that historical rates of growth in domestic food production in Africa, coupled with a constant 1975 level of per capita income, would produce in 1990 cereal import of 17 million tons -- roughly three times the 1979 level.

The structural crisis facing Africa and the poor performance of the agricultural sector embodies the wretched existence of the vast majority of the population. Despite two decades of "basic needs" and "reaching the rural poor" strategy, the appalling material condition of the Continent has worsened. Annual per capita income in 1980 has stood at about \$420, life expectancy the lowest and death rate the highest in the world. It is estimated that one-fifth of the children die before their first birthday and by many accounts less than 25 percent of the population has access to drinking water.

This alarming development and the human tragedy it has precipitated must be reversed. Priorities have to be changed and bold measures have to be taken to make Africa self-sufficient in food production. It is obvious that the Central resources of the Continent are its people. Only their organized political and social power will open new vistas of development and assure both the satisfaction of human needs and the protection of the fragile ecology of the Continent.

1984 also saw important developments taking place in Southern Africa notably the signing of the Lusaka Agreement and the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and its neighboring countries of Angola and Mozambique. The reelection of the Reagan Administration for another term has given additional life to the policy of "constructive engagement" which has aligned the U.S. more closely with the white minority government. As part of this closer and warmer relation, the Reagan Administration, despite public opposition has extended to South Africa political, economic and military support. Since the beginning of 1984, the Reagan Administration has lifted control of certain exports to the South African military and police totalling \$23.3 million between 1981 and 1983; allowed several critical nuclear exports; supported a \$1.1 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan to South Africa; set up a trade promotion office in Johannesburg; put heavy diplomatic pressure on Angola and Mozambique to sign "non-aggression" accords with South Africa; linked the settlement of Namibia's independence to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and vetoed U.N. Security Council condemning South Africa's flagrant violation of the sovereignty of its neighboring countries.

The close alliance between the U.S. and South Africa has exacerbated violence, unrest and repression. The white minority regime has unleashed terror in many black townships throughout 1984 killing many people. When the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) staged a two day strike on November 5/6, it was reported that as many as 800,000 black workers stayed away from work in support of both economic and political reforms.

The strike represented the first major intervention by all sections of the growing black trade union movement. In the wake of the strike, the regime imprisoned several trade union leaders and took other repressive measures.

In response to the growing repression in South Africa and the policy of "constructive engagement" the international anti-apartheid movement has significantly expanded its activities and influence.

It is clear that the white minority regime will not relin-

quish power to the majority of the blacks in South Africa. Whatever methods may be chosen by the people of South Africa to remove apartheid and its institutional violence, they will have the support of people who cherish freedom, justice and equality.

Fassil Demissie



# CALL FOR PAPERS

UFAHAMU IS PLANNING TO PUBLISH A SPECIAL ISSUE DEVOTED TO WOMEN OF AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA. THIS ISSUE WILL APPEAR IN THE SPRING/SUMMER OF 1985.

WE ARE NOW CONSIDERING ARTICLES, SHORT STORIES, POETRY, ARTWORK, ETC. FROM ALL DISCIPLINES PERTAINING TO AFRICAN WOMEN. WE ARE ESPECIALLY LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY AFRICAN WOMEN FROM THE CONTINENT AND THE DIASPORA.

**Deadline:** Papers, etc. should be submitted no later than April 30, 1985 for this special issue.

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