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**Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies**

**Title**

Front Matter

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**Journal**

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 8(1)

**ISSN**

0041-5715

**Author**

n/a, n/a

**Publication Date**

1977

**DOI**

10.5070/F781017393

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# U F A H A M U

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AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
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U.S. and Canada	\$5.00 per volume (3 issues)
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UFAHAMU

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

Recently we received a most interesting inquiry from a major university that has forced us to stop and look back before resuming our headlong rush into history. The inquiry read in part:

*In order to evaluate fairly the scholarly work of some of our faculty who are being considered for promotion we would like to learn a little more than I know now about your journal.*

While we do not know how much or how little the inquirer *does* know about *Ufahamu* (we answered the specific questions that were asked in the latter part of the letter) it strikes us that there may be others, and this includes our most 'ardent admirers' who do not know a great deal about us. For them, and in a way for us too, this little history will serve as a reminder and record of how we came into being. Beginnings are more often than not shrouded in mystery.

*Ufahamu* is the journal of the African Activists Association of U C L A. It is basically inter-disciplinary in scope, with an undisguised bias for progressive and innovative approaches. Conceived at the Montreal ASA Conference in October, 1969 it is wholly managed by graduate students who, in spite of the usual academic and institutional pressures, have volunteered their time and effort as a reflection of their serious commitment.

Volume I, number 1 (which is now out of print) was published in Spring 1970 and included an interview with Gil Fernandez leader of Guinea Bissan's P A I G C , an overview of Marxist approaches to African history and a discussion of international law as it relates to Black people. Subsequent issues, in keeping with the idea of *Ufahamu* (a Swahili word which means 'understanding') have included interviews with Bernard Magubane, Basil Davidson, Janheinz Jahn, John Khani and Winston Ntshona (Serpent Players of South Africa), Nana Mahomo (Director of "Last Grave at Dimbaza") and Mazisi Kunene, and articles by Edward Alpers, Samir Amin, Gerald Bender, late Amilcar Cabral, late Henry Chipembere, Christopher Ehret, Ruth First, Omolara Lesle, Imamu Abdul Malik, Donatus Nwoga, Emmanuel Obiechina, Simon Ottenberg and Walter Rodney. Several articles originally published in *Ufahamu* have been reprinted in other journals and books; some are required reading in classes; and all are regularly listed in current and cumulative bibliographies.

The other objectives of *Ufahamu* should not be forgotten - to furnish a forum for new approaches to Africa, to serve as a base for re-evaluating old approaches, and to provoke sharp discussion of both. Since we can not say how well we have been carrying out these objectives, we will leave it to our readers to tell us. But if the inquiry we just received is any thing to go by, we think we are getting there. To be all of eight years old, and not be that well known in *established* circles must mean that we are doing something right.

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We would like to draw the attention of all graduate students in African Studies and related fields, to the fact that *Ufahamu* is meant to serve as a proving ground for those of them that want to break into print. No original idea, approach or methodology is frowned upon so long as it is backed by in-depth research. In fact we give priority to articles from students when deciding what to publish.

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In this issue we have tried to make up for the unfortunate mutilation of Bede Ssensalo's excellent article on the poetry of Dennis Brutus in the ISSUES section of our Volume VII, number 2., by running it again in its entirety. Those who noticed the missing page of text and footnotes in our Volume VII can now see the complete article in this issue. We apologize to Bede Ssensalo and our readers for our slip up.

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We are glad to note that our constant call to our "school educated Africans" to redefine the terms used for Africa, is beginning to draw some response. We hope Mr. Marenin's article in this issue is the beginning of a sharp discussion from which a solution will emerge. Sometimes it is necessary to ask questions, even if flawed, to generate meaningful dialogue.

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 \* *Ufahamu* takes seriously what you would  
 \*  
 \* like the world to know  
 \*  
 \* about Africa  
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