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UFAHAMU

JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN ACTIVIST ASSOCIATION

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UFAHAMU accepts contributions from anyone interested in Africa and related subject areas. Contributions may include scholarly articles, political-economic analysis, commentaries, review articles, film and book reviews and poetry. Manuscripts must be between 20-30 pages, clearly typed, double spaced, with footnotes on separate page(s). Contributors should keep copies of their manuscripts. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit any manuscript to meet the objectives of the journal. Authors must submit two copies of their manuscripts and a brief biographical note, including position, academic affiliation and recent significant publications, etc. All correspondence - manuscripts, subscriptions, books for review, inquiries, etc. - should be addressed to the Editor - in- Chief at the above address.

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ISSUES

REMEMBER KASSINGA

May 4, 1978. More than 200 South African paratroopers invade a Namibian refugee camp in southern Angola and murder 600 men, women and children. An additional 611 Namibians are wounded.

It is appropriate that the survivors, the fighters, the toilers, the World, recognize the tremendous sacrifices the people of Namibia have made in their struggle against South African repression and that, on this day, we honor those who perished.

Sadly, the Pretoria regime maintains itself, arrogantly, through continued policies of state terrorism and oppression. Murderous raids into neighboring countries; South Africa sanctioned death threats and assassinations around the world; the recent banning of seventeen political, community and religious organizations; and the continuing detention and torture of men, women and children in South Africa and Namibia exemplify the cruel intransigence of that government.

In memory of the many who have died at the hand of racist South Africans, all individuals, organizations and governments worldwide need to raise their combined voices in adamant condemnation of P.W. Botha and his barbarous cohorts.

The African Activist Association vehemently denounces the latest examples of South African Tyranny and reiterates its position calling for:

- An immediate end to apartheid in South Africa and Namibia;

- The release of all political prisoners;

- Recognition of all legitimate political parties and movements struggling for economic and political independence in southern Africa;

- Immediate termination of the state of emergency in South Africa;

- An end to the killings, arrests and tortures occurring throughout Southern Africa perpetrated by the South African police, South African Defense Force and Pretoria's murderous dupes RENAMO and UNITA;

-Cessation of all destabilization policies towards the legitimate governments of Southern Africa.

-Recognizing that the South African government can maintain its stranglehold over the region only with complicity from the United States and other western nations, we once again call for termination of all economic and political ties to Pretoria;

-Finally, confident that individuals can and are willing to make a difference, we encourage all subscribers and readers of this journal worldwide, to initiate in all reasonable forms, efforts to extend and increase pressure on the South African government for political change and to aid and assist all legitimate opposition to apartheid in South Africa and Namibia.

The People of Southern Africa will be free.

REMEMBER KASSINGA! A LUTA CONTINUA!

EDITORIAL

In the past, women's issues and achievements have been systematically devalued or ignored by patriarchal institutions. In this light, this issue of Ufahamu is important because it includes a substantial number of contributions written by women, along with articles which specifically address women's issues. As well, this is the first Ufahamu editorial written collectively by women and which therefore expresses a collective perspective on the issues which concern us.

In Africa women have always played a major role in the lives of their communities, not only in the domestic sphere but economically and politically as well. The crucial nature of women's involvement is clearly visible today in the ongoing struggle for liberation in South Africa. There are, however, many realms from which women have been (and continue to be) excluded, for reasons which stem from many sources: traditional expectations, (post-) colonial oppression, cultural imperialism.

Chief among these problem areas is access to education. Margaret Ngau's article on the situation in Kenya is important, not only because it brings to light the troubling statistics on the numbers of girls denied access to education but also for its discussion of the result--the continued social and economic marginalization of women. The situation in Kenya is more the rule than the exception, and poses a great challenge in the efforts to improve the quality of the lives of all African women.

Education is also one of the many issues which are addressed in the novels of Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta, and which are discussed in her interview here. She also talks about her chosen craft--particular themes and characters--as well as the issues of language and audience. Emecheta's position, that of a well-known African woman novelist writing of contemporary issues in the lives of African women, is rare; as such, hers is an important (and sometimes controversial) voice.

The most recent novel by another African writer, Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah, is the subject of an insightful and detailed article by Hilarie Kelly. Her discussion of Maps includes, but is not limited to, Farah's portrayal of women, and is representative of the important contributions women are making in traditionally male-dominated academic fields.

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Giorgio Campanaro's article on Billie Holiday shifts the focus to African women of the Diaspora. Billie Holiday is in many ways symbolic of the struggle of African Americans; in her life, she personified the hardships of being a Black person in America. Her ability to transform her experience into the Blues--a uniquely African-American contribution to music--has never received due recognition. This article is one small but significant step toward correcting this unjust oversight.

Two of the remaining articles, Werner Glinga's piece on the figure of the Sengalese Ceddo and Tindigarukayo's on the current situation in Uganda, while not specifically by or about women, are nevertheless interesting and significant contributions in their respective fields. The seventh and final article, Balogun's "Devil on the Cross...", is an excellent and insightful analysis of the Marxist element in Ngugi's novel. Interestingly, this article has posed a dilemma for us in writing this editorial, as the gender of the contributor was not apparent from the name submitted. In the end, however, this problem highlights the fact that gender should not be an issue in the assessment of the value of an article. All worthy contributions to any forum for discussion should be judged on their merit; this is contrary to the situation as it has existed in the past, where gender has been used as a tool of exclusion and suppression. It should be noted that Ufahamu has focused on women's issues in the past; we salute these efforts and hope that other publications will take its lead.

Historically, approaches delineated by men and non-African women have been insufficient in defining and dealing with the issues which face African women, and this remains true of the present day. We expect that this issue of Ufahamu will not be the last of such issues which focus on women, but we also look forward to a day when such specialized volumes will no longer be necessary.