

entity should be gauged in the light of its real ability to bring additional support to international studies, to fill needs not currently addressed in the existing institutional structure, and to provide adequate safeguards against the political risks entailed.

The area studies associations, who agreed in Atlanta to call themselves CASA, the Council of Area Studies Associations, will meet again in mid-November to explore further the directions of CAFLIS and attempt to develop appropriate common positions to represent their 17,000 members.

Comments from the ASA membership will be conveyed to this meeting. Contact Edna Bay, African Studies Association, Credit Union Building, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322 (404) 329-6410.

LETTERS

The letter printed below was endorsed by members of the Executive Committee of the ASA Board, by several presidents emeritii of the Association, and by other distinguished Africanists. It was sent to the New York Times, the Washington Post, and Time magazine.

- Ed.

September 13, 1988

Dear Editor:

The renewed killings of Burundi are deeply tragic, but the way they have been reported is deplorable, misrepresenting the basic nature of the situation and appearing to rewrite African history. Tutsi and Hutu are terms applying to occupationally based castes associated with cattle keeping in the former case and cultivation in the latter. They speak the same, identical language -- Kirundi, and share a common culture. When the Belgian colonial administration hurriedly left the former territory of Ruanda-Urundi and split it into the two small nations of Ruanda and Burundi, the Hutu eventually gained political dominance in Ruanda while Burundi remained under predominantly Tutsi control. The continuing monopoly of power and privilege by the Tutsi minority is a recipe for inevitable disaster, which the new President of Burundi was evidently taking serious steps to avoid, steps which were not sufficiently radical or rapid. To report this as tribal warfare is grossly ignorant and patently absurd, while the fabrication of a false history in which the Tutsi "migrated into Central Africa more than 400 years ago from the Horn of Africa" (*Washington Post*, reproduced in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, September 4, 1988) compounds the misunderstanding and helps to perpetuate the situation that has led to these appalling massacres.

Media channels without expert advice on African cultures would be well-advised to avoid terms like "tribe" and "tribal" which are largely colonial in origin and meaning.

They are not only scientifically meaningless but an insult to African peoples. In most reports, these terms are superfluous and completely gratuitous. They can simply be struck out without in any way altering the meaning of the passages in which they occur. Burundi was a kingdom before the colonial conquest. It was hierarchical and stratified into castes of differing rank and privilege, the primarily pastoral Tutsi minority closely linked to the ruling group and the agricultural majority of Hutu under their domination. It is as ludicrous to refer to the Tutsi as a tribe as it would be to call the Brahmans of India a tribe or to refer to the Flemings and Wallons of Belgium as tribes. Indeed, such things are occasionally said in jest, but for the people of Burundi it is not a joke. It is a matter of life and death.

OBITUARIES

The death of **Joel W. Gregory** is a sad loss for Africanists the world over, and particularly for Canadian Africanists. Joel Gregory was Professor of Demography, Université de Montréal and an active member in the Canadian Association of African Studies. His contribution to the study of African demography was extensive. His most recent book (which he co-edited with Dennis Cordell) *African Population and Capitalism: Historical Perspectives* was published in Westview's series on African Modernization and Development. In addition, he compiled *African Historical Demography: A Multidisciplinary Bibliography*, in collaboration with Dennis Cordell and Raymond Gervais, and he has co-edited a collection of essays, *Démographie et sous développement*. At the time of his death, his research continued to focus on African historical demography and household strategies, both in Africa and the Caribbean. Joel Gregory helped make the Université de Montréal a major center in demographic studies. It is hoped that the work that was so important to him will continue there and that his memory will inspire those colleagues he has left behind.

Paul E. Lovejoy
President, Canadian Association of African Studies

The death of **Michael Crowder** on the 14th of August this year came as a profound shock to his friends and colleagues alike. He was at the height of his powers -- researching, teaching and writing with all his customary vigor. He was also an editor of the *Journal of African History* and an active member of the board of the International African Institute.

Michael's distinguished career as an Africanist, which was inspired by military service in Nigeria, 1953-54, led him through a series of appointments in African universities: Secretary of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, 1962-64; Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Sierra Leone, 1965-67; Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Ife, 1968-71; Professor of History, Ahmadu Bello University, 1971-75; Research Professor of History, University of Lagos, 1975-78; Professor and Head of Department of History, University of Botswana, 1982-85. Addition-