

# ISSUE

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OF  
OPINION

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## Editor's Note

The articles in this Issue invite consideration of how diverse events can become politicized — learned gatherings, competition in sports, the tragic death of two Canadians at Victoria Falls, a natural catastrophe, travel for pleasure, a discussion of the Rule of Law.

In "Polemics and African Studies," James Mittelman examines the controversies which marked two winter conferences in Africa: the Third International Congress of Africanists and the Ninth Annual Social Science Conference of East African Universities. He suggests that the meetings in Addis Ababa and Dar es Salaam "dramatically reflect some of the major issues in African politics" and signal a further departure from scholarly proceedings characterized by "academic detachment." Intellectual freedom, at least in Africa, has ceased to take precedence over values such as national liberation and self-determination.

Political happenings less academic in origin are discussed in three essays by Gwendolen Carter, Tony Kirk, and Hal Sheets and Roger Morris. More than exposés of critical situations in Africa, the articles document recent developments of importance to South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Sahel. In each, the role of international agencies and foreign powers is taken into account, with the United States assuming a particular significance in "Black Initiatives for Change in Southern Africa" (Carter) and "Disaster in the Desert" (Sheets and Morris). The bureaucratic bungling on the part of U.S.A.I.D. — criticized in the Carnegie-supported study — finds a contrast in Mr. Kirk's description of the systematically devious behavior of the Rhodesian government toward the African National Council. Those familiar with Mr. Kirk's piece in the Spring 1973 Issue on the black pre-settlement groups fostered by Rhodesia's business community will find the account of the ill-fated negotiations between the Rhodesian Front and the ANC equally informative.

Juxtaposed with an enthusiastic review by Leslie Rubin of *A Traveler's Africa* is the analysis by Paul Jursa and James Winkates of "Tourism as a Mode of Development," wherein the effects of tourism on African economies and their segmented societies are accompanied by descriptions of how specific countries have reacted to a sudden increase in tourist trade. Professors Jursa and Winkates are led to question the application of Western modes to the underdeveloped world; the same theme predominates in the comments of a black South African lawyer in exile, Andrew Lukele, on a book by the white South African legal expert, A.S. Mathews.

Mathews' *Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa* was cited in the January 1973 issue of *Foreign Affairs* as a "success" for "demonstrating very quietly [through a] painstaking analysis of South African internal-security legislation that freedom is indivisible." A review which appeared in the September 1973 issue of the *African Studies Review* went further in extolling the Mathews work as "one of the finest studies ever written by a South African resident in South Africa (rather than in exile)" and as a "brilliant achievement ... demonstrating ... what the Western tradition of the rule of law is and how far, and in what ways [South Africa] has strayed from these noble norms." Mr. Lukele does not deny that the system which has deprived Blacks of their liberties has also made inroads upon the rights of the white population, but he does reproach Mr. Mathews for his "static view of the interaction between law and society." Mr. Lukele argues that law and the rule of law cannot be considered neutral in a situation where the law serves to entrench racial privilege and political domination. The very notion of law as an autonomous agency is intolerable in underdeveloped South Africa where the instrumental function of law should be to free the backward sector from this dominance-dependence relationship. Read in light of Mittelman's observations, the article by Andrew Lukele is indicative of the trend toward political confrontation in African scholarship.

Readers will note that this is the first Issue to include book review essays. We welcome the submission of such articles which — if not published here — will be forwarded for consideration by the editor of the *ASA Review of Books*.

PSB

# ISSUE

## A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion

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