

We are again gearing up for the next ASA Meeting, this year in Denver, under the Chairmanship of George W. Shepherd, Jr. George has prepared a theme for this year's Meeting on the question of what academia has done, and can continue to do, towards the successful achievement of the goals of true independence in Africa. It is a question which we must all ask ourselves as we sit in our various offices and classrooms. The continued oppression of our brothers and sisters in South Africa is also an issue uppermost in our minds, and here, again, is a situation that needs our most strenuous efforts to influence those holding the reins of power in this country to assist in the process of a rapid and peaceful transition towards a fully democratic society.

I would like to personally thank the outgoing members of this year's Board of Directors, Carol Thompson, Bob Cummings and Syl Whitaker, for all their efforts on behalf of the Association. Let me also welcome our new Board members, Pauline Baker, Mario Azevedo, Allen Isaacman, and our new president-elect, Nzongola-Ntalaja, who will add a fresh perspective to the operations of the ASA Board.

Finally, let me mention that this is after all, your Association. As such, it was rather disappointing to see a very poor turnout for the Business Meeting held in Madison. While the Conference, itself, was very well attended, few members came to the Business Meeting. I guess we should take that as a compliment, as I assume that had you felt there were problems with the Association, these would have been raised at the Business Meeting. However, keep in mind that the Business Meeting is a chance for the membership to make their voices heard, and I enjoy you to take advantage of it to express your concerns.

We in the Secretariat look forward to an exciting and challenging year ahead, and hope for your continued support.

OBITUARIES

In Memory of Samora Moises Machel

(On October 19, 1986 a plane carrying President Samora Machel of Mozambique was returning home to Maputo after the conclusion of a meeting in Zambia between Frontline leaders on regional security and solidarity. It never reached its destination. The next morning, South African officials announced the fatal crash of a plane in the remote mountainous territory near Komatipoort, less than a mile from the Mozambican frontier. The casualties included President Machel, several members of his cabinet, and the Zambian and Zairean ambassadors to Maputo. We of the ASA regret yet another casualty in the struggle for African liberation and self-determination.

The following was prepared by Prof. Allen Isaacman and read at a special memorial during the recent Annual Meeting of the ASA.)

Samora Moises Machel loved life. Anyone who had the privilege of meeting him recognized how his eyes radiated and his smile beamed. There was something electric in the way he stepped to the podium and engaged enthusiastic crowds in song and banter. And there was something reassuring in the way he grasped your hand and, while acknowledging the many problems his young nation faced, reminded you that these difficulties were small compared to those the handful of poorly armed young men and

women had encountered when they began their struggle against Portuguese colonialism. Even his harshest critics acknowledged that he was a "charismatic leader."

But Samora Machel was more than that. His biography encapsulates the struggle of the Mozambican people for a more equal society, free from race and class oppression. He recounted with pride how his grandfather had played an important role in the 1895 Maguigane rebellion--the first of many attempts to dislodge the Portuguese. He recalled how his father and brother had no alternative but to work for meager wages in the South African mines--work which eventually took his brother's life. And he anguished as he described the hated system of *chibalo*, or forced labor and coerced cotton cultivation under which his parents and other peasants suffered. In a long interview, Samora emphasized that his own political education began "not from reading Marx or Engels, but from seeing my father and mother forced to grow cotton for the Portuguese and going with them to the market where they received prices which were appreciably lower than those paid Europeans."

Against all odds, he, along with Eduardo Mondlane, led the Mozambican people to victory against the fascist Portuguese regime. Victory did not come easily. He suffered the loss of his close friend and comrade in arms, Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO's first president, and saw many other compatriots die in battle. He watched helplessly as his father and brother were arrested, and he was devastated by the loss of his young wife Josina Machel, herself a leading militant in the anti-colonial struggle.

Independence brought new problems and little relief. Droughts, famines and the flight of virtually the entire skilled labor force left Mozambique's underdeveloped economy paralyzed. His commitment to aid Zimbabwean freedom fighters resulted in massive reprisals at the hands of the Smith regime and the MNR which the Rhodesian security created and the South African military sustains. His outspoken criticism of the apartheid regime and support for the African National Congress brought new attacks from South Africa and its MNR client. It was for these reasons that Pretoria wanted him eliminated. Although the exact cause of the fatal crash remains unknown, two weeks before his death he revealed that there had already been an attempt on his life.

And yet, through all these adversities, Samora's commitment to building a socialist society free from the grip of the apartheid regime never wavered. The energy and hope which he radiated inspired millions of his countrymen. His loss will be felt across the continent and among the progressive forces throughout the world.

So, too, will we mourn the deaths of all the other victims of this tragedy whose lives embodied the varied experiences which give strength and meaning to the Mozambican revolution. Among them are: Minister of Transport Luís Maria Alcantara do Santos, a middle-aged man of Portuguese descent, remained in Mozambique to rebuild the transportation and port system when most of his European compatriots fled to Portugal and South Africa. Deputy Foreign Minister José Carlos Lobo, born in central Mozambique, abandoned his studies in the United States to return to fight for his country's liberation and subsequently served effectively as Mozambique's Ambassador to the United Nations. Aquino de Bragança, a journalist and academic of Goan descent, gathered international support for the armed struggle and after independence played the role of maverick and theoretician within FRELIMO's inner circle. Fernando Honwana, from southern Mozambique, although only in his thirties, brought youthful energy and mature judgement to his position of senior advisor and confidante of President Machel. And there were many others who perished as well.

In death, they left behind wives, brothers and sisters, children and parents who not only mourn but, as FRELIMO members, continue to struggle for a just society. This commitment is personified in the life of Graça Machel who, as Minister of Education, has led the country for the past decade in its campaign to wipe out adult illiteracy and provide educational opportunities for a generation of Mozambique's youth--the continuadores.

As we grieve, we gain strength from an excerpt of a poem that Samora Machel wrote mourning the death of his first wife. It holds particular meaning for those of us who celebrate his life and share his dreams:

Josina, you are not dead because we have assumed
your responsibilities and they live in us.

You have not died, for the causes you championed
were inherited by us in their entirety.

.....

The blood you shed is but a small drop in the flood
we have already given and still have to give.

.....

The Revolution renews itself from its best and
most beloved children.

.....

This is the meaning of your sacrifice: it will
be a living example to be followed.

.....

Your life continues in those who continue the
Revolution.

And so too does yours, President Samora.
A Luta Continua.

William F. Pruitt, Jr., January 28, 1942-August 31, 1986

(Submitted by Sandra Greene, Director, African Studies, Kalamazoo College)

It is with deep sadness that we at Kalamazoo College must report the death of William F. Pruitt on 31 August 1986 in Canberra, Australia.

Dr. Pruitt was born on January 28, 1942 in Texas. From 1945-59, years that included much of his childhood and adolescence, he lived in Zaire as the son of American missionaries. He attended elementary and secondary schools in Zaire and then returned to the United States to earn his B.A. from Austin College in Sherman, Texas. His M.A. and Ph.D. were completed at Northwestern University.

In 1968, he joined the faculty at Kalamazoo College as Assistant Professor of History and Director of the African Studies Program. In 1974, he also assumed the position of Assistant Director of the Foreign Study Office. As an active Africanist, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association.

In 1981, he left Kalamazoo College to become the Director of the Peace Corps in Zaire. It was while there in 1983, that Bill Pruitt, a hemophiliac, contracted AIDS,

when given blood transfusions after the removal of an intestinal growth. Despite this, he returned to Zaire in 1984 and worked with USAID on projects to increase food production, marketing and distribution. Of these last three years, his wife wrote, "He decided that what he wanted to do was to...continue with the work that he enjoyed in Africa [and to work in the area that was always his first love].... Bill's position was that the blood products he got (in 1983) kept him alive and gave him three extra years of life.... He saw his son grow from a baby into a young child and he valued highly the extra life he got".

To remember Bill Pruitt is to remember a man who was a most sensitive and caring person; someone who had a remarkable zest for life; someone who sought to see both sides of an issue without compromising his own position; someone who had a deep love and appreciation for Africa; someone who was a real fighter for the causes he believed in. He could be depended on utterly for a good humorous response no matter what he was going through or thinking, and his uncomplicated joy in his work, as well as his skills in teaching, administering, and advising were wonderful to witness. Bill risked all doing the work he loved. We, at least, never heard him regret or lament his choices. In his last years he worked for a bigger understanding of the nature of AIDS, an understanding that was not tinged with hysteria or an ostracism of the people who had been in contact with the virus. He faced within himself the presence of the virus with the same integrity that he showed throughout his life.

He is survived by his wife Elizabeth Reid, two children, John-William and Marisa Isara, his parents, the Rev. and Mrs. William F. Pruitt, Sr. of Dallas, a brother, Robert, also of Dallas, as well as a host of friends throughout the United States, Europe, Africa, Australia and South America.

LETTERS

B.U. Faculty Responds to University President's Decision

Boston University's decision to award an honorary degree to Chief Buthelezi follows closely President Silber's Op Ed to the *New York Times* (on Oct. 9, 1986), in which he strongly condemned the African National Congress (ANC) for "strident Leninism" and the use of violence in its struggle to end apartheid, and argued that "we would be better advised to support such as Chief Mangusuthu Gatsha Buthelezi." On October 31, 1986, it was announced that Boston University had decided to award an honorary degree to Chief Mangusuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu, the semi-autonomous "homeland" of the Zulus of South Africa.

As Africanists on the the B.U. faculty, we wish to dissociate ourselves from President Silber's views on alternatives for bringing an end to apartheid in South Africa and the decision to single out Chief Buthelezi for an honorary degree. In the interests of promoting informed discussion on the crisis in South Africa, we would also like to elaborate on three particular issues raised by President Silber's recent statements.

First, it is not very meaningful to castigate the leaders of the ANC for advocating armed struggle against apartheid without even mentioning the long history of violent repression by the South African government against Blacks. To suggest that South