

LETTERS

Dear Colleagues:

It has been a long-standing policy of the ASA to reject collaboration with government intelligence agencies. In 1982 the Board passed a specific resolution with respect to the Defense Intelligence Agency:

DIA RESOLUTION

April 2-3, 1982

The Board of Directors of the African Studies Association notes with deep concern the recent establishment of a program to support academic research in Africa and other Third World regions by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Both educational institutions and individual scholars have been invited to apply to the Agency for such support.

Believing that the credibility and integrity of American university-based scholarship in the African studies field depend upon arrangements which ensure the independence of academic research and

publication from the military and political interests of the government; and

Being convinced that the basis of such independence is undermined by direct patron-client relationships between the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Africanist academic community;

The Board calls upon Africanist scholars to refrain from participation in the Defense Intelligence Agency's program for research and support and to oppose participation in that program by their universities and research institutes.

It is in respect of this sentiment that I wish to call attention to a recent attempt of the CIA to involve our members in their activities. A letter of invitation to participate in "a colloquium of Africanists" sponsored by the CIA was sent to a number of American Africanists. The letter described a meeting to take place in McLean, Virginia, from April 1-3, 1990. The program was to include a briefing on the

Directorate of Intelligence, a tour of some of the CIA's facilities and introductions to some analysts. Several panel discussions on African topics were planned. Though the visiting Africanists were not expected to make formal presentations, they were invited to raise questions and make comments on issues raised.

The invitation included a copy of a 1986 speech by the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Robert M. Gates, pleading with the academic community to cooperate with the CIA in its research activities.

I recommend that at its spring meeting the Board again consider the issue of collaboration between the Africanist community and the intelligence community. Perhaps a general resolution similar to that of April 2-3, 1982 is in order.

Sincerely,
Mark W. DeLancey

To the Chair:

Archives-Libraries Committee, ASA

Your *Guidelines for Librarians Interacting with South Africa* [published in *ASA News*, vol. XXII, no. 3, Jul/Sep 1989] has come to the attention of local librarians and is at present being widely discussed. I am not sure whether our South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) will formally react. As a long time member of SAILIS I feel it my duty, however, to draw your attention to some aspects of the *Guidelines* which reflect unfavourably on SAILIS and should, therefore, be rectified.

In the first place I would like to state that I, like many colleagues in SAILIS, welcome your constructive support to promote the required positive change in our country. I am, therefore, generally in agreement with the *Guidelines* insofar as they aim to support developments promoting black advancement and particularly

developments in education and librarianship.

It is regrettable that, by naming in paragraph 2.2 only political or labour organizations, the impression is given that the many organizations on the cultural, educational or other levels engaged in positive change should still be boycotted.

However, I am even more gravely concerned that the reference to SAILIS in paragraphs 5.2 and 6.3 may be interpreted as singling out SAILIS as an apartheid institution which should be avoided.

I would like to point out to you that in 1980 South African librarians reconstituted the segregated South African Library Association into the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science as a professional organization with an open membership and renounced apartheid in a public statement...

Furthermore, on 18 September 1986, the Conference of SAILIS...

...adopted a resolution that...

We, the members of SAILIS, confirm that we regard SAILIS as a body above the political and ideological doctrine, which grants membership irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed and accepts and allows differing views amongst its members.

We strive to raise the standard of library and information services in all communities throughout the country...

Paragraph 5.2 states that the membership of SAILIS in IFLA is being challenged. I should like to correct this statement by pointing out that SAILIS is not a member of IFLA, but some South African libraries have institutional membership.

IFLA decided some years ago that it cannot accept membership of any institution which is attached to or is itself practicing any form of apartheid. All South African libraries had to provide information on their policies and had to twice sign declarations that

they do not follow any discriminatory practices in respect of either users or staff. In spite of this, some individuals in IFLA still persist in trying to have the membership of South African libraries withdrawn...

It remains, however, a matter of concern that the *Guidelines* document misrepresents SAILIS' endeavours to realize a free flow of information and commitment to an open library service. I would, therefore, like the Archives and Libraries committee to take cognisance of the positive steps which SAILIS' members have taken to dissociate the Institute from the creed and policies of apartheid.

I, furthermore, request you to consider giving SAILIS your active support to effect further positive change rather than taking any action which could have negative results...

Yours sincerely,
John Willemse
Chief Director, Department of Library Services
University of South Africa

GOING AWAY FOR A WHILE?

Let us hold your membership mailings while you're gone.

ASA members resident in the US who leave their permanent addresses for short-term research trips to Africa sometimes ask their local post office to hold their first-class mail. Alas, the postal service destroys ASA publications mailed to such persons, and we are charged \$.30 to receive a notice that they are "temporarily away."

If you plan to ask the post office to hold your mail, please drop us a line. Let us know when you will leave and the date you will return. We will hold your ASA mail for you, and send it along when you get home.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WEST AFRICAN FIELD OFFICE

Gretchen Walsh of the Boston University Africana Library and Edna Bay of the ASA Secretariat testified before the House Sub-Committee on Legislative Branch Appropriations February 8. Both spoke in support of a request by the Library of Congress for funding for the establishment of a field office to collect materials in West Africa. Walsh testified in the place of the ASA Archives-Libraries Committee Chair Phyllis Bischof of the University of California, Berkeley, who was unable to attend the hearings. Copies of Walsh's oral statement, Bischof's written testimony, and Bay's statement are reproduced below.

As of this writing, Congress is still deliberating approval of the Library of Congress request for the 1991 budget. Members of Congress appear particularly receptive to mail on questions such as this and we have received positive signals that the request may be approved this year (it was voted down last year). Thanks to the ASA's Archives-Libraries Committee, members of Congress have been receiving letters from individuals and universities. It is not too late for you to write.

Should you wish to write in support of the request, we have listed the names and home towns of the appropriate committee members below. Alternatively, the Congressional representative from your home district would be pleased to hear from you. Feel free to use words, phrases and ideas from the materials we've printed below. If you do write, please do so within a week to ten days of receipt of this newsletter.

**West African Field Office
by Gretchen Walsh, Boston University**

I would like to summarize the whole-hearted support of the librarians of the African Studies Association for the Library of Congress's proposed West African Field Office by posing answers to some questions you might well raise during your deliberations:

1. Why locate in West Africa?
2. Why obtain publications from West Africa?
3. Why establish an LC field office?

I won't elaborate the importance of West Africa, which is well documented in our written statements, beyond underscoring the strong human and cultural ties we Americans have with West Africa, and pointing out that despite serious current problems, countries in West Africa, and indeed the region as a whole, have potential for becoming significant players in global economics and politics. West Africa is a friend we may well appreciate having.

American experts write many books on West Africa—why bother acquiring publications from the region itself? Simply because our experts in all fields need primary sources of information—documents, local studies, etc—to support the research that goes into writing those books. They need, as well, the exchange of ideas with African scholars who publish their research in Africa. Perhaps most importantly, our students need the direct contact that African books, newspapers and magazines provide to place their studies in the human context of West Africa. Frivolous as it might seem, reading a political cartoon or advice column in a Nigerian newspaper can take Africa out of the abstract and make it real and understandable for our students.

Given our nationwide need for a broad spectrum of publications from West Africa, how do we expect LC's field office to help? Publications from West Africa are difficult to identify, locate and acquire—our professional discussions al-