

the Association's annual meeting in October, 1984. The unused fund in the amount of \$1,092 was refunded to the Ford Foundation after the year end.

**NOTE 7 Prior Period Adjustments**

The following adjustments were made to correct errors made in prior years:

Inventory was overstated at December 31, 1983	\$13,605
Amounts due to customers were not recorded at December 31, 1983	3,886
Accrued expenses payable were not recorded at December 31, 1983	8,570
	<u>\$26,061</u>

Had the Association not corrected the errors described above, the net loss for the year ended December 31, 1984 would have been increased by \$26,061.

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## LETTERS

The Editors  
*ASA News*  
Kinsey Hall  
UCLA  
Los Angeles, California 90024

Dear Sirs:

I think the selection of Pauline Hountondji as a co-recipient of the Herskovits Award for 1984 ranks as one of the greatest ironies imaginable. Melville Herskovits' distinguished career served the cause of the emancipation of African cultures from the burden of comparative evaluations based on European normativeness, and I believe the Association named its prestigious award after him in recognition of his commitment to the ideals and purposes of the discipline of African Studies. My reading of *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* convinces me that Hountondji is of a different cast of mind from the late scholar's.

Hountondji, I grant, is welcome to his contempt of "ethnophilosophy" and to whatever assumptions he might have about what is or is not philosophy, and indeed about whether or not the European discipline exists in Africa. Many of us would consider such issues as academic. But Hountondji explicitly imputes devious motives to Africanists, reminding his readers that African Studies is a discipline devised by Europeans to serve European purposes, including the quest for exotica, the perpetuation of the image of the black man as the "absolute other" of the civilized man, and, in general, the exclusion of the African from the emerging (Europeanesque, of course) world civilization.

Moreover, Hountondji is particularly hard on the African who thinks it worthwhile to study his ancestral past. He is either a cultural exhibitionist playing to European exotic tastes, or a collaborator with malevolent foreign ethnologists, because he seeks an alibi from the obligations of political nationalism. And in a characteristically colorful turn of phrase, he dismisses assertions of distinctive Africinity as "garrulous negrism."

The Association should not by any means be petty or narrow-minded in rewarding meritorious service to the African cause and the African Studies cause, but I wonder if we may not have overdone openness in awarding our most prestigious honor to someone who seems to have a different spirit from us.

I will be glad to be proved wrong in my understanding of Hountondji's book.

Sincerely,  
Oyekan Owomoyela  
Professor, University of  
Nebraska, Dept. of English

Dear Oyekan:

Thank you for your interesting letter. You do recall that the Herskovits Award is designated by an independent committee appointed by the Board of Directors through its Publications Committee, and is not endorsed by the Board in any further manner. I think that it is within the tradition of Melville Herskovits to query the ends of African Studies as you, and Hountondji, have done, and in the spirit of that inquiry I am reprinting your letter for our ASA members.

Yours sincerely,  
Donald J. Cosentino

#### Open Letter to ASA Members on Mozambique Documentaion

Madame,  
Monsieur,

Je me permets de vous écrire, en tant que membre associé du Laboratoire "Tiers-Monde/Afrique" de l'Université de Paris VII, à propos d'une étude bibliographique sur le Mozambique indépendant.

Je suis, en effet, en train de travailler à la mise sur pied d'une documentation sur les "dix premières années de l'Indépendance" de ce pays, obtenue en Juin 1975.

Je ne vous écris pas à propos des livres, articles ou revues qui pourraient être déposés dans votre bibliothèque ou centre de documentation et recherche, mais surtout pour savoir si vous avez des mémoires, thèses, rapports, "working papers" *non publiés* (ou "semi-publié dans des séries ronéotées), mais disponibles pour consultation, et relatifs à la période 1974-1985.

Concernant l'histoire très récente d'un pays qui vient d'accéder à la souveraineté, et pour lequel la bibliographie est encore faible, la recension de ces travaux non publiés est de *première importance*, d'autant plus qu'ils sont souvent basés sur des expériences ou des missions d'experts ou coopérants et sont presque des sources primaires.

Je suis bien conscient de ce que le service que je vous demande représente pour vous un petit travail, ce dont je m'excuse par avance. Mais, si vous le pouvez, je souhaiterais donc que vous m'indiquiez:

- les références exactes (auteurs, titres, nature du travail, nombre de pages, etc. . . .) des travaux non publiés (mémoires, thèses, rapports de mission, témoignage, etc.) déposés dans votre bibliothèque et accessible aux lecteurs
- éventuellement, les cotes de ces travaux
- si votre fichier a un jeu de mots-clefs, les indiquer

Enfin, je souhaiterais savoir s'il est possible de demander, par la suite, des photocopies de certains de ces travaux, naturellement à mes frais (facture ou facture pro-forma).

Je vous remercie par avance de ce que vous pourrez faire. Si votre centre ne possède aucune documentation sur le Mozambique, pouvez-vous me le faire savoir également?

En espérant ne pas abuser de votre amabilité, je vous prie d'accepter d'agr er, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments respectueux.

Michel Cahen  
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75006-Paris  
France

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