

In 1971 the Forum entered into an arrangement with the Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts, to accredit its African Studies programs. The Forum regularly publishes its own *Newsletter*. [Excerpted from the Forum's *Annual Report*, 1974. For a description of this summer's institutes in Africa, see the "Programs Abroad" section in the March-April 1975 *ASA Newsletter*.]

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

June 2, 1975

Dear Editor:

The Washington Task Force on African Affairs has noted with interest a letter published in the March-April 1975 issue of the *African Studies Newsletter* and your reply on the subject of Africanists and the mass communications media.

WTFAA's Communications Liaison Committee, in conjunction with the African Bibliographic Center, has developed a program to deal with the projection of African affairs by the mass communications media, which has had an unexpected and immediate impact through *Habari*, our telephonic information and news service. The service, which is rebroadcast in whole or partially by radio and television stations across the U.S. and abroad, now reaches well over a million persons per week. In short, *Habari* is now a member of the mass communications media establishment.

Members of the African Studies Association throughout the country with an interest in media coverage of African affairs could perform a valuable chore by monitoring their local media and reporting results to *Habari*, which is in daily contact with other media. Specific information as well as periodic news releases or publications, when received by *Habari* staff, reach not only Africanists around the country and internationally, but news media and governments as well.

Habari news is available on a 24-hour basis without cost—seven days per week (with a three-day tape on weekends)—except for the price of a telephone call. Rebroadcasting and use of *Habari* news is welcomed, as long as credit is given.

A considerable number of WTFAA's members and the staff of the African Bibliographic Center are also members of the African Studies Association with a vested interest in ASA becoming more active in this growing area of concern. However, it is my understanding that little coverage of the above noted activities have been discussed in length either in ASA publications or as a topic during the annual meetings of the Association. This is an unfortunate circumstance, since there can be little doubt about the impact of the mass communications media on American views of Africa and, in turn, on the African views of America.

Linda Fink, Coordinator, Communications Liaison Committee,
Washington Task Force on African Affairs (P.O. Box 13033,
Washington, D.C. 20009)

Dear Ms. Fink:

Thank you for your ideas in connection with the *Newsletter* exchange regarding media coverage of Africa and the concern of ASA members that this be improved.

I can assure you that I do try to report activities and publications of the Washington Task Force and African Bibliographic Center as extensively and accurately as time and space permit. *Issue* and the *Newsletter* are received by all members of the Association, and our first announcement of HABARI in its new role as a telephone information service appeared in the December 1973 *Newsletter*. I had also hoped that members would be alerted to Task Force projects through the statement by Francis Kornegay which appeared last year in *Issue* (Vol. III, No. 4). Announcements of conferences and publications will always be welcome.

In the event that ASA members remain unfamiliar with the transcripts, cassettes, and telephone news service provided by HABARI (through the African Bibliographic Center), I hope they will take the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the informative briefing just a phone call away: (202) 659-2529.

I should also like to remind readers that Africa News (P.O. Box 3851, Durham, N.C. 27702) provides a twice weekly bulletin, *Africa News*, and beginning June 1, 1975, an audio service (by phone). A more complete description of this information service appears in the March-April 1974 *Newsletter*.

Sincerely,
Paula S. Barker