

UTAFITI NOTES

Early in the academic year, Mwalimu Nyerere in his capacity as Chancellor of the University visited the campus to speak to all members of the University community. This visit was most welcome in view of the events on the main campus towards the end of the 1977/78 academic year - the students' unauthorized demonstration culminating into a clash with the police, the "death" of the DUSO government and its replacement by the CCM Youth League, the suspension of 367 students and final expulsion of 40 students. These events somewhat left the campus puzzled and perplexed.

In a meeting with the University Community in the Nkrumah Hall and its grounds, in a question-and-answer dialogue, Mwalimu covered a number of questions, ranging from International affairs, national affairs to matters specifically related to the University. His replies to campus matters helped to clear some tensions which were clearly evident on the campus. Commenting on events leading to the expulsion of the students and the controversy surrounding the students' government, he believed that the students had virtually abdicated their responsibilities and rights to elect their government and the government had no alternative but call on the CCM Youth League to fill the "power" vacuum.

On alleged fevers of "victimization" among students and staff, Mwalimu assured his audience that as Chancellor, he would do all he could to ensure that the University performed its traditional functions as a University to do research, teach and "argue". Educated in the bourgeois democratic liberal tradition, he was for a situation in which all contending academic viewpoints had a fair hearing.

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As part of an effort to establish legitimate extra-bureaucratic channels of communications between academic members of staff on the one hand and the administration and government on the other, the University proposals for a draft constitution to establish an Academic Assembly, a kind of staff association, has been widely discussed in the faculties. The proposed draft constitution envisages a Chairman assisted by an Executive Committee and elected representatives to various organs of the University, all the way to the council.

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Iddi Amin's invasion of Tanzanian territory in West Lake Region took the Community by surprise. The members have done all they can to contribute to the war effort materially and morally. However, the whole situation has been received with calculated maturity characteristic of the Tanzanian political environment.

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The Faculty has responded to the University's concern about "Teaching - Learning effectiveness" by assisting to launch the Communication Skills Project and the Staff/Student Evaluation Programme, the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics has hosted a new Unit consisting of three Staff members, in the first instance. The task of the Unit is to plan and teach courses in Communication skills for students in different Faculties. This has been planned in response to the concern expressed generally as to the degree to which students may be hampered in their studies by linguistic problems. It is hoped to develop course materials which will be of maximum relevance to the students' work in their different disciplines.

Pilot courses started in the second term of the 1978/79 academic year with the first year and the responses have clearly indicated that their is need for such a programme.

Individual Departments are administering questionnaires to undergraduates with a view to finding out the degree of communication between teachers and students, the way courses are organised with particular reference to reading materials, and the extent to which courses are integrated. It is hoped reports coming out of the exercise will help to bring to light such problems as may require the immediate and long term attention of the departments and the Faculty. The responses of the teachers and students are so far encouraging.

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The departments continue with their long tradition of vigorous seminars which for one new to the "tradition" are a little too serious, but highly rewarding academically. In the department of Political Science, among those who presented papers were professors Takeshi Ishida (Tokyo University) Margaret Bates (University of South Florida), R.I. Retberg (MIT). In the Department of History the seminars mainly focussed on the peasantry and proletariat in Tanzania. Also of interest were Prof. Dan Nabudere's paper

on Closer Union of East Africa; and "Women in production", jointly given by Prof. Mbilinyi and Mrs. D. Brycesson.

On the research front, the Department of Political Science continues with the Decentralization Project started in 1976. The project mainly concerned with three themes - effectiveness, popular participation and socio-economic changes arising out of the implementation of the Policy of Decentralization in Tanzania. Data have been collected computerized and are at the analysis stage.

The Department of Geography will be working on "The Rufiji Basin Multipurpose Project" for the next three years. It is concerned with population and settlement in Rufiji Basin, the market system, and agro-climatic conditions for crop production. The Economic Research Bureau has launched the "Rural Incentive Project" which may go on for about a year, covering three regions.

The first International Seminar of Kiswahili writers was held at the Institute of Kiswahili on the 16th Sept. - 7th October, 1978. Sponsored by UNESCO, the conference was attended by experts from a number of African countries. The major concern of the conference was to work out ways of promoting the Kiswahili language as it has all the potentials for being a lingua franca in Africa.

To reinforce the international reality of swahili an Association of swahili writers was proposed which would help members share research findings and know who has doing what.

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With the collapse of the East African Literature Bureau, the Faculty is facing some problems in producing some of its, by now famous, publications but every effort is being made to keep them afloat. Among them are the African Review, Utafiti, Umma, and Taamuli. The University authorities are in the process of establishing a University Press which, we believe, will go a long way to lighten our publication problems. Otherwise departments have continued with their mimeographs.

Departments have continued with contacts with colleagues abroad through international conferences. The Department of Political Science is the Secretariat for the African Association of Political Scientists. It is organising

the fourth biennial conference in Maputo from April, 9th - April 12th, 1979. The theme is "Liberation and Development", Participants will be mainly from Africa, outsiders have been invited. The Department of Geography recently took part in the Regional Conference of the International Geographical Union held at the Universities of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello in Nigeria.

The Department of History has revised some aspects of its Syllabi introducing some new courses - "capitalism and imperialism" "The Philosophy and Method of History", "Socialist Revolutions and Neocolonialism".