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University of Dar es Salaam
Academic Staff Assembly

FREE WAMBA CAMPAIGN

The Academic Staff Assembly is sad to announce the detention of one of our colleagues, Ndugu Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba.

Ndugu Wamba joined the University in January, 1980 as a Lecturer in History. Since his arrival he has stimulated considerable debate especially on philosophy and methodology, in the history seminar series which he has coordinated. He has proved himself a very competent teacher, a talented scholar, and a very useful addition to the staff. In recognition of his contribution he was re-categorised as a Senior Lecturer in August, 1981.

When Ndugu Wamba joined the University he already had substantial professional experience, having taught in a number of reputed American universities between 1972 and 1980, including Harvard and Brandeis, teaching a broad range of courses, such as the Political Economy of the Third World, Black Studies, African Religions and Philosophy.

Wamba has been a prolific writer of the contemporary African scene, his main interests being Political Economy and Philosophy. He was himself a "committed intellectual," and shared with the lamented contemporary Walter Rodney concern for the broad masses of the people, particularly in the newly-independent African countries.

This concern arose out of his personal experience in thinking and dealing with the peoples' problems. From 1968 to 1971 he was cabinet advisor to the Zairean Ministry of Labour, Housing and Social Affairs. Ndugu Wamba resigned from this post in protest against the brutal suppression of the student movement in Zaire in 1971.

During the Christmas vacation he, with his family, went to visit his parents. The very day he stepped on his native soil he was arrested by the Zairean authorities. His wife and children were subjected to intense interrogation for several hours before being allowed to stay with Ndugu Wamba's parents.

Ndugu Wamba was arrested on 18th December, 1981, and it was not until 1st January, 1982 that we learnt of his detention when his wife finally succeeded to inform his employers. No further information about his whereabouts and his health has filtered to the outside world.

The arrest was apparently based on possession of "subversive" or "contraband" literature, a broad category that could include anything including materials he may have collected on his vacation to help him teach and do research for his Ph.D.

We, members of the Academic Staff Assembly, and other interested individuals, are extremely concerned about his fate and about the intolerable anxiety under which his wife and his three small children currently live.

We therefore ask the Zairean Government to respect elementary democratic and human rights of Ndugu Wamba by releasing him immediately, and allow him to rejoin his family and his colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam.

We also call on all the democratic minded people round the world to do all in their power to ensure his safety and his release. As a start they could write to the Zairean Embassy and Head of State, and inform other comrades.

We cannot talk of democracy and human rights without protecting the rights of individuals committed to the cause of the people.

We cannot have a free society without having freedom to think and speak and write.

The cause of Wamba is at the very core of the cause of freedom.

U.D.A.S.A.
P.O. Box 35050
DAR ES SALAAM
January 7th, 1982.