lower strata, an alienation which has been reflected in an increasing propensity to strike among the urban proletariat and violence among the rural masses. These, increasingly, are tending to radicalise the politics of the peasantry and to give to their protests a new dimension and significance.

The elders and traditional leaders led the first protests against colonial domination. They were followed by the new elite which colonialism thrust forward and whose protests were oriented at ensuring that they became the inheritors of the pomp and privilege enjoyed by the erstwhile colonial masters. To the urban proletariat and the rural masses who watched the elite assume the mantle of power at the time of independence, independence was portrayed as the beginning of the millennium. Over the years since independence, the millennium has tended to recede further and further into the future. At the same time, the material conditions of the masses have tended to worsen, or at best, not to improve. The stage is thus set for a different play of the dialectics of protest, the working out of the 'master-slave' relationship in a manner which transcends what is 'intimated' by the society. The prolegomenon to this may perhaps be found in the Nigerian General Strike of 1964 (described by Robert Melson in the collection) and in the Agbekoya (Agbe ko iya = the farmer rejects suffering) Revolt of 1969. But in the unfolding of this logic of protest neither Rothenberg nor Mazrui has much to say. In this respect, both men are pre-Fanonion. They have attempted to interpret Africa but their interpretation suggests an insufficient concern with the necessity for radical change. One is left with the feeling that they hardly understand what Protest and Power in Black Africa is about.

3. The Ordeal of Africa*

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"...The independence we all fought for is the beginning of African troubles.

RENE DUMONT
False Start in Africa

The "African giant" has awakened from a deep sleep of slavery and humiliation in which freedom and dignity were her dream and economic development her nightmare. In the jungle of twentieth century technology, Africa seems helpless. Her experience in serfdom, slavery and colonialism poorly prepares her for the agonies she faces and her insatiable desire to enjoy the fruits of twentieth century development. Her hallucinatory behavior, of course, is part of a psychodrama, in which the Western world is an active participant. The coup virus that Africa has contracted, deposing civilian leaders and re-

placing them with military men, seems to puzzle and confuse Africa’s once eager “protectors” and “benefactors”. Her detractors are vehement in alluding to African savagery and rhetorically asking, “what can you expect from these African savages?” In spite of the compassion with which Africa is discussed, few have attempted to understand the mishaps that Africa is experiencing. Even though it is becoming more and more difficult to keep up with the output of works on Africa from the printing presses, understanding is vitiated at many levels by serious errors. The work of Abdul A. Said of American University is a good example of this.

The fact that the author prides himself on being a “Rockerfeller research scholar,” an “American specialist for the U.S. Department of State” and on having “lectured in almost every major institution of higher learning in independent Africa,” makes one appraise The African Phenomenon as a worse piece of scholarship than one would judge it were it written by someone lacking all these illustrative qualifications. One does not have to be a “scholar” with a “background of non-Western education and American academic training in political science” to write such a terrible book. Because the points raised by Said about Africa seem to be the obsession of many writers on Africa, a review of The African Phenomenon is not a futile exercise. It might be a worthwhile effort to use this volume as an example of how a book on Africa should not be written.

The author could have written a cogent and very interesting book devoted to an explanation of the African phenomena. Under a pseudo-academic facade, he professes to examine “the extent of Africa’s preparation for the task of adapting to contemporary revolutionary conditions, the underlying assumptions and postulates of contemporary African revolutionary thought, African attitudes toward the process of change, the problem of direction in African history, and the concept of the nature of African personality”. An ambitious and highly admirable task indeed, but the book fails to contribute anything of positive value to an understanding of the major issues it raises not only because we disagree with an American academic training in political science which subscribes to the view that “The form and substance of international political life are no longer dictated by Washington, Moscow, Paris or Bonn. Cairo, Accra and scores of other capitals now figure prominently in the conduct and direction of international life,” but because the author fails to take into account many factors that could serve to explain the phenomena he is attempting to describe. Like many commentators on the African scene, Said does not venture beyond simple narrative statements and enumeration of African problems to probe more deeply into an analysis of the problems he is at pains to enumerate.

Is Africa prepared “for the task of adapting to contemporary revolutionary conditions?” Said, like numerous writers, looks at Africa and argues that “the lack of economic self-sufficiency”, the predominance of alienated elites, prevalence of religious heterogeneity, and ubiquity of corruption, cast a dim light on Africa’s capacity to adapt to “contemporary revolutionary conditions.” First, there is a general unfairness on the part of writers of Western orientation – this reviewer included – to judge Africa as if she has been independent for at least fifty years. What Africa is going through, in most instances has been experienced by many western countries. It was not until recently that France, for example, overcame her political instability. It took a series of wars to create