

## EDITORIAL

1984, regardless of its Orwellian overtones, looks set to be a year when Africa is the focus of considerable attention in Britain. May sees the beginning of the Commonwealth Institute's Africa programme of exhibitions, performances, debates and discussions which will continue well into the following year. The Africa Centre in November will be staging a conference on 'New writing in Africa' in conjunction with the second Bookweek Africa. Further details appear elsewhere in this issue. The British Library also has under consideration a colloquium on African studies similar to those that have successfully been held on the USA, Canada and Australia and New Zealand, though if this materialises it may well be early in 1985 rather than late 1984.

1984 for SCOLMA sees the fruition of its current publishing programme. The new edition of the SCOLMA Directory, which covers Western Europe in addition to the UK, is now available, a supplement to *Periodicals from Africa* containing a further 7,000 titles is being published by G.K. Hall, and *UK resources for Southern African studies*, the proceedings of the 1983 SCOLMA conference, is about to be released. John Pinfold's bibliography and checklist of African census reports, which will cover important European holdings as well as those in Britain, is also expected to be published before the end of the year. All these publications will be available to members of SCOLMA at a substantial discount from their retail price, an incentive we hope to those organisations and Africanists who have not yet joined to consider the advantages of membership. For a very modest £8.50 p a the subscriber will receive three issues of *ARD* each year, notification of SCOLMA seminars and the annual conference, as well as the opportunity of obtaining our publications at a reduced price.

1984 is not however without its shadows, particularly so far as African studies, or indeed area studies in general, are concerned. The decline in Britain of African language teaching and research is currently being chronicled in *ARD* by David Dalby but reviews of other disciplines would doubtless reveal similar reductions in staffing, student members and library acquisitions. The outcome of the University Grants Committee review of area studies is therefore awaited by Africanists with a great deal of interest, though, I suspect, with little optimism.