

## NOTES AND NEWS

### REPORT OF THE HONORARY DIRECTOR FOR 1984

Last year's Executive Council meeting at Gaborone, Botswana, endorsed the Institute's new programme of activities designed to re-establish our role as the major international forum for African studies, encompassing Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone interests, and transcending our traditional focus on sub-Saharan Africa to include Islamic North Africa. This new impetus would also, it was hoped, help the Institute to attract financial support and remedy its dangerous over-dependence for core funding on a handful of governments.

#### *The Honorary Treasurer*

Since Sir Banja Tejan-Sie's term as Treasurer had ended and the Hon. Financial Secretary, Mr Ian Mills, had been forced to retire because of his other commitments, it was urgently necessary to find a suitably experienced new Treasurer. After careful consideration, the Officers were delighted to be able to persuade Mr John Pike, CBE, who had recently retired as Financial Secretary of the London School of Economics, to assume this crucial role. Benefiting from the continuing advice and support of Sir Leslie Kirkley, Mr Pike's appointment brings much needed vigorous and academically informed leadership to the Institute's financial affairs. This has been particularly important in a year in which, despite Ambassador Gasbarri's initiatives with the Italian government, the Institute's main government sources of core support have virtually dried up. The adverse effects of this disappointing development have been only somewhat mitigated by our expanding research and other activities.

#### *The Institute's new London office*

Reviewing this situation of gravely depleted resources at their meeting on 26 April 1984, the Officers decided that to avert a serious erosion of reserves the Institute would have to vacate its premises at the Africa Centre in London at the end of 1984 and urgently seek less expensive accommodation. The Director was thus authorized to seek a new London base in a setting appropriate to the Institute's character and history. It was felt that an academic setting would be suitable and that London should be the first preference. Negotiations which were already in train led us to move to new premises at the London School of Economics at the end of December 1984.

#### *Fund-raising*

The initiatives with African and other governments undertaken last year have continued to be pursued, with major concentration on contacts corresponding to current or forthcoming Institute activities. Unfortunately, with the exception of Nigeria (Kaduna State), no other country represented on our Executive Council or Government Body has so far followed Ambassador Gasbarri's initiative of contributing regular annual subventions to the Institute. It is still hoped that, following encouraging discussions with Prime Minister Mario Soares, and the signing of an agreement of co-operation in African studies with CEPCEP in Lisbon, some Portuguese support may be forthcoming.

Last year's negotiations with the British government left, as reported, little

grounds for hope. However, the issue was again taken up this year, this time directly with the Foreign Office Minister, Malcolm Rifkind, and I am very glad to report that we have secured a two-year grant of £42,000 to enable us to recruit a Research Officer with the task of developing further seminars and research projects and raising the necessary funds. The post was advertised and attracted a strong field from which Mr Robert Dodd, a former public relations officer and LSE-trained anthropologist working for Oxfam in Zaire and Rwanda, was selected. Mr Dodd took up his appointment on 1 November 1984.

Efforts to interest Arab and Islamic organizations in the Institute's aims of facilitating co-operation between Africanists on both sides of the Sahara continue and, we hope, may soon bear some fruit in the context of organizing our future seminars and research projects.

We are also continuing our endeavours to obtain more sustained long-term support from UNESCO. Additionally we are seeking UNESCO aid for specific projects through the national commissions.

While these approaches are pending, it is pleasing to record that the Ford Foundation has made a further grant (\$193,500) to cover the second phase of our West African Museums Project and has also contributed substantially (\$30,000) towards the costs of our International African Seminar on the Transformation of African Marriage.

#### *Current research projects*

**African Languages Project.** Preparation of the final report is nearing completion and should be published in the course of the year.

**West African Museums Project.** Under its Director, Dr Philip Ravenhill, this project completed its initial eighteen-month phase with a month-long regional workshop at Bamako on textile conservation which attracted considerable local press attention. As noted above, the project will proceed on a further twelve-month phase with Ford Foundation support. A steering committee consisting of Professor Jacob Ajayi, Dr Alpha Konare, Dr Malcolm MacLeod, Dr Joe Nkrumah, Dr Philip Ravenhill, and the Honorary Director, held two meetings in the course of the year. Our colleague, Dr Victor da Sa Machado, of the Gulbenkian Foundation, has expressed interest in the possibility of collaborating with the project on museum training and development in Lusophone African countries.

**Housing the Urban Poor in Africa.** Dr Philip Amis completed his literature survey in April 1984. The report has been received with satisfaction by the ESRC, which financed this work and has provided the basis of a research-cum-seminar project, developed with the help of Professor Peter Lloyd, for which financial support is now being sought. Interest has been expressed in Egypt as a possible location.

#### *Seminar programme*

**The Professionalization of African Medicine.** This seminar, held at Gaborone with the generous co-operation of the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation and the University of Botswana, seems to have been widely appreciated. The papers have been edited by Professor Gor-

don Chavunduka and Dr Murray Last and will be published by Manchester University Press in autumn 1985.

**The Transformation of African Marriage.** This seminar, held in Nairobi with the collaboration of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, proved very timely and evoked much interest in Africanist circles in and outside Africa. We are particularly grateful to our Kenyan Executive Council member, Dr B. E. Kipkorir, and to Dr Chris Wanjala, as well as to Professor David Parkin, who, at short notice, assumed the role of seminar co-ordinator.

**Housing the Urban Poor.** Negotiations are in train for this seminar to be held, probably in Cairo in 1985. We understand that the International Development Research Center in Canada should be in a position to contribute part of the costs. The Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs has also indicated interest, as has the Afro-Asian Housing Organization. We are likely, however, still to require additional grants from other sources to bring the seminar to fruition (to say nothing of the linked research project).

**Other seminars.** The Institute expects to co-operate with the Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione in Rome in a seminar to be held in Mali in 1985/6 on urban-rural linkages in the context of development. There will also be participation by development specialists from the University of Malaya.

A seminar on African dispute settlement procedures has been proposed, to be organized by Professor Peter Worsley and Dr Simon Roberts, who are also seeking funds. Other possible seminar themes include Constraints on Front-line State Foreign Policy in Southern Africa; Informal Trade; and Social Work in Africa.

#### *Public lectures*

Under the joint sponsorship of the IAI, the Centre for African Studies at SOAS, and the Africa Centre, a lecture on 'Liberal Democracy in Black Africa: has it a Future?' was given by Professor Ali Mazrui on 21 March 1984.

#### *Other developments*

The lecture programme at Lisbon in collaboration with CEPCEP (Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa), inaugurated by President Leopold Senghor with later contributions from a number of scholars, has been a great success. An agreement for co-operation in African studies was signed and an Institute presence inaugurated by our Chairman, Professor Jacob Ajayi, on the occasion of his lecture in Lisbon on 'Protestantism in Africa'. Arrangements for the publication of this series are in train, and a further working seminar on African education is being organized jointly with the Institute. In the realisation of this new initiative we owe much to our Portuguese colleague, Carlos Medeiros, as well as, of course, to our Executive Council member Dr Victor da Sa Machado.

In the course of the year the Institute has received requests for co-operation from a number of other African Studies Centres in and outside Africa. Once we are securely installed in our new premises our Research Officer should be able to respond more effectively to such requests.

The Institute has also received a number of other approaches regarding research projects which might be conducted under its auspices or with its resources. These

include cataloguing and dating collections of African art, and making archival searches of the Institute's files for historiographical purposes. This highlights the urgent need to catalogue and properly conserve the many important items in our files and archives. These are now in the process of being transferred to the archive section of the British Library of Political and Economic Science, where they will join the Malinowski, S. F. Nadel and Audrey Richards collections and collectively constitute a unique resource.

#### *Other activities*

In November I went to Lisbon to attend the lecture given by President Leopold Senghor to inaugurate our joint IAI-CEPCEP series. Dr Victor da Sa Machado kindly introduced me to Prime Minister Dr Mario Soares, with whom I was able to discuss Institute affairs. At the end of March at the kind invitation of Professors John Paden and John Hunwick, I chaired the opening session of the Northwestern University Conference on Islamic Africa and went on to give a lecture at the Illinois Conference on Popular Islam in Twentieth Century Africa organized by Professor Charles Stewart. A selection of papers from the latter conference will form the basis of the next special issue of *Africa*, on 'Popular Islam'. A visit to Indiana University immediately afterwards provided a welcome additional opportunity to discuss Institute plans with Africanist friends and colleagues. It was heartening to find a great deal of sympathetic interest and warm support for the Institute's seminars, publications and research.

#### *Honours and awards*

Members of the Institute will share the Officers' delight at the honorary doctorate conferred by Birmingham University in July on Professor Jacob F. Ade Ajayi. It is also a pleasure to record that the Editor of *Africa*, Professor J. D. Y. Peel, was awarded the Amaury Talbot Prize, and was named co-winner of the Herskovits Prize, for his book *Ijeshas and Nigerians: the incorporation of a Yoruba kingdom, 1890s to 1970s*.

#### *Staff*

The Institute's staff now comprises Jacqueline Hunt, Secretary; Robert Dodd, Research Officer; Belinda Okonweze, Receptionist/Assistant; Elizabeth Dunstan, (part-time) Chairman of the Publications Committee and responsible for all administrative matters concerning publications; and Brian Parkin (part-time), Accountant and book-keeper. Dr Philip Amis left us on completion of his six-month research assignment. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the Officers, and not least our new Hon. Treasurer, who has generously put so much of his time and energy at the Institute's disposal, for their warm support and wise counsel. Thanks are also due to Dr Elizabeth Dunstan, whose dynamic leadership of the Publications Committee is appreciated. Their remarkable team spirit has enabled us to weather the rather difficult transition from our old to our new London base. As usual in this connection, special tribute is due to the Institute's resourceful and resilient Secretary, Jackie Hunt.

I. M. LEWIS