

Charles Nixon and Herbert Weiss, under the direction of a political economist, Mr. Arnold Rivkin, are spending about eighteen months, beginning in November 1959, in Nigeria, Guinea, the Belgian Congo, and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland doing field research. The research will emphasize the patterns and direction of economic growth, the physical, political, and social limitations on growth, the allocation and use of resources, and the interaction of changing political relationships, institutions, and processes, on the one hand, and economic growth, on the other. Consideration will also be given to the newly evolving political and economic relationships between Africa and other areas of the world, the impact of external factors on African political and economic development, and the significance of developments in Africa for other areas of the world. An attempt will also be made to do some comparative analysis and theorizing on growth and change in Africa South of the Sahara, drawing on the four country studies and other Project research.

Each economist and political scientist, working on an interdisciplinary basis, will spend, on an average, nine months in each of two of the areas to be studied. The entire group will convene at the end of the eighteen months of fieldwork at M.I.T. for a period of discussion, analysis, and writing. It is contemplated that the Project will result in a series of monographs and books which will be interrelated by Mr. Rivkin in an overall volume on African change and development.

[Communicated by Mr. Arnold Rivkin]

Silver Jubilee of Western Nigerian Co-operative Movement

It was in 1935 that Nigeria passed the first law giving official encouragement to the establishment of co-operative businesses. Since then co-operatives have ranged from farm marketing types to consumer self-service grocery stores. Even handicraft workers are organized into co-operative marketing associations and in Oyo there are wood-carving, leather-working, and calabash-carving co-operatives. One of the outstanding successes in the Western Region has been the establishment of more than 600 farm marketing co-operatives, which, according to the Government's Registry, handle 20 per cent. of all agricultural products exported from Western Nigeria. The annual turnover is approximately £4,000,000.

The Co-operative Bank of Ibadan, which was formed in 1953 with the help of an interest-free loan of £1 million from the Western Regional government, has more than doubled its assets and has built the city's most modern skyscraper. The bank is operated along traditional co-operative lines of one member one vote. It lends money at comparatively low interest rates to farm marketing co-operatives during the peak marketing season, often entering the commercial market itself to borrow funds for its members. There is a Registry of co-operatives and a team of inspectors which calls periodically on the co-operatives to check their operations, advise on administrative problems, and, if necessary, conduct feasibility surveys. The education and information side of the movement, 'Co-operative Union of Western Nigeria' (CUWN), serves as public relations consultant to the more than 1,000 co-operatives in the Western Region, and broadcasts a fortnightly programme in Yoruba, English, and other dialects if necessary. It also publishes a quarterly and supplies informative material. One of its main current projects is the establishment of credit unions, and it is also considering a co-operative printing plant and a mutual life and property insurance company.

The Historical Society of Nigeria, Fifth Annual Congress

As reported briefly in the January number of *Africa*, the Fifth Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria was held in the Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology at Enugu from 20 to 22 December.

The following papers were read and discussed: 'Problems of traditional history in Nigeria with special reference to the history of the Eastern Region' by Professor K. O. Diké, Vice-Principal and Professor of History, University College, Ibadan; 'King Jaja of Opobo in exile' by B. H. Atkinson, Assistant Regional Director, British Council, Enugu; 'Urhobo traditional history' by the Rev. E. Arawore, St. Thomas's Anglican Parsonage, Uwheru; 'The problems of relative and absolute chronology in Benin history' by Dr. R. E. Bradbury, Anthropologist, Scheme for the Study of Benin History and Culture, Benin City; 'Preliminary impressions of Old Oyo' by F. Willett, Surveyor of Antiquities to the Federal Government and Curator of the Ife Museum, Ife; 'International relations in the Western Sudan during the nineteenth century' by H. F. C. Smith, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University College, Ibadan; 'Fowell Buxton and the British "civilizing" mission of 1841-2' by Dr. C. C. Ifemesia, Lecturer in the Department of History, University College, Ibadan.

Approaches to African Literature

THIS booklet, recently published by the Ibadan University Press,¹ contains the text of two papers read at the 1959 Annual Conference of the West African Library Association and reading lists of African literature. The first paper, 'Non-English Writings' by Janheinz Jahn, gives a brief survey of creative writing in the vernacular, tracing the beginnings of modern African literature from Thomas Mofolo in Basutoland to the modern poets and novelists, writing mostly in French, whose work expresses the concept of *négritude*. Mr. Jahn makes the point that the number and quality of African authors are in direct relationship to the political situation and the educational level in the different African countries.

In the second paper J. A. Ramsaran deals with 'English Writings in West Africa'. He emphasizes the need for a general bibliography of African literature, by which he means 'literature written in any language by anybody so long as it deals with Africa'. Specialized works such as indexes, abstracts of critical essays on African literary themes, and guides to books on African art and to background books that will supply historical and sociological data would also be valuable. He suggests also a 'Who's Who' of Africans and non-Africans who have contributed, or are still contributing, to African literature, a closer cultural liaison between English speakers and West Africans, more conferences of African writers and fuller reports of their meetings, and, finally, 'a self-conscious society of authors and their readers to express themselves through their own journals and little reviews'.

The reading lists are classified under two sections, Non-English and English writings. The first is subdivided into French Africa, Belgian Congo, South Africa, and East Africa: the second into anthologies, periodicals, special African literature issues, fiction, and miscellaneous. The majority of the books listed are recent, few of them being earlier than 1950.

African Authors' Conference

A CONFERENCE of 89 African authors from the Union, the High Commission Territories, and from the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was held at Atteridgeville, Pretoria, from 7 to 9 July 1959. It was also attended by educationalists, missionaries, and publishers, and had been convened at the request of the 1956 Johannesburg Conference on Christian Literature for the Bantu of Southern Africa to consider all aspects of African authorship and to devise means of assisting African authors.

The following papers were read and discussed: 'The Author' by the Rev. J. J. R.

¹ *Approaches to African Literature*, Ibadan University Press, 1959. 2s. 6d.