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*William Leo Hansberry, 1894-1965*

WILLIAM LEO HANSBERRY, who died in November 1965, was a pioneer in the field of African studies, who realized as early as 1921 that Africa had a past which in many respects rivalled Europe during the Middle Ages, and who taught that one of the primary destructive agents of Africa's past was the slave traders, who not only destroyed African civilizations but suppressed knowledge of them to support their contention that the institution of slavery was a civilizing factor. In 1922 Hansberry became Director of an African Civilization Section in the Department of History at Howard University, Washington, and in 1925 a two-day symposium was held under his chairmanship on 'The Cultures and Civilisations of Negro Peoples in Africa'. He gave three courses on African history and culture and by 1939 had prepared a detailed outline of a proposed five-volume study on the pre-history and history of Africa. In the post-war years he acted as adviser to African and other foreign students and in 1953-4 was awarded a Fulbright Research Scholarship for the study of African antiquities. In 1953 he co-founded the Institute of African-American Relations, now the African-American Institute, serving as Vice-President and Trustee. He was also the prime mover in the establishment of Africa House, a student hostel in Washington, and was instrumental in founding the All-African Students Union of the Americas. In 1960 his former student Dr. Azikwe conferred on him the University of Nigeria's second honorary degree, and at the same time inaugurated the Hansberry School of African Studies at the University. In 1964 Hansberry was selected by the Haile Selassie Trust to receive their first prize for original work in African history, archaeology, and anthropology. At the time of his death he was engaged on his multi-volume work on African history for publication in America.

(Abridged from 'Pioneer Africanist' [by Raymond J. Smyke], *West Africa*,  
20 November 1965)

## MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AN account of the meeting of the Executive Council, which was held in Paris on 20 and 21 June, will be published in the October number of *Africa*.