

## NOTES AND NEWS

REPORT OF THE HONORARY DIRECTOR FOR 1985

The fifty-eighth meeting of the Institute's executive council was held at the Istituto Italo-Africano in Rome in June 1985 immediately following the conference of the Italian Africanists (for a report see below). We are deeply in debt to our Italian friends and in particular to Ambassador Luigi Gasbarri, to the Director of the Istituto, Senator Tullia Caretoni, and her colleagues for receiving us with such abundant hospitality. The executive council meeting was formally opened by Ambassador Gasbarri. A formal reception in honour of the executive council was also kindly held by the Somali Ambassador, H. E. Sheikh Abdulle, at the Somali Embassy.

### *The Institute's new home at LSE*

This has been a year of transition, reorganisation and consolidation of the Institute's resources. There have been significant achievements: our office running costs have been reduced while our research potential has been increased. However, this new impetus cannot be sustained without our attracting substantial new sources of income – either through research overheads or as a result of direct subventions. Indeed, without such developments the Institute's future cannot be guaranteed.

Following last year's council meeting, the Treasurer and I pursued our negotiations with colleagues in London University to secure accommodation for our London office. In the event, the most promising location proved to be in premises belonging to the London School of Economics. We now rent two rooms (with access to other facilities) in the Lionel Robbins Building, which houses a number of research centres and the editorial offices of several academic journals. Within this location we are also developing research ties with the Suntory-Toyota International Centre for Research in Economics and Related Disciplines, on whose steering committee I serve as an LSE academic governor. While retaining our independence and separate identity, we thus hope to benefit from this new arrangement which reduces our running costs and places us within a secure university context with colleagues who understand and share some of our research interests.

### *Fund-raising and research*

The appointment on 1 November 1984 of Mr Robert Dodd as Research Officer with the two-year grant from the British Government which I reported last year has given new impetus to our efforts to seek financial support for research and other projects. Mr Dodd's appointment is no automatic guarantee of success in securing the financial support we so urgently need. His presence does, however, greatly strengthen our capacity to develop initiatives and to follow up negotiations which are already under way.

In accordance with last year's experience, we have concentrated on existing government approaches rather than seeking to initiate new ones. Thus we were pleased that the continuing support from Nigeria and Ambassador Gasbarri's

Italian government initiative were followed by a commitment of support from Kenya contained in the Kenya Minister of Education's opening address to last year's executive council in Nairobi. We are now endeavouring to establish through our Kenyan executive council member, Dr B. E. Kipkorir, when we may expect to receive this grant. At the same time we are seeking to discover when (if at all) we may anticipate a resumption of French governmental aid. The encouraging indications last year from Portuguese governmental sources have still to bear fruit. Regrettably we have not received any support from any other governments of countries represented on the executive council despite the efforts which executive council members had undertaken to make to secure such help. As far as international support is concerned, we have maintained our effort to secure the upgrading of our UNESCO status from Category B to A. Collaborating with appropriate national UNESCO commissions enabled us to secure substantial support for the Nairobi seminar on 'The Transformation of African Marriage', establishing a pattern which we hope can be applied equally successfully in future international African seminars (including the forthcoming Cairo seminar). I have also continued to pursue approaches to various Arab sources of support (for example, the BADEA) and have some hope that these may eventually produce some positive results.

The Institute also provided Europe-based secretariat services for the International Congress of African Studies held in Ibadan in December 1985 and chaired by the Institute's Chairman. ICAS deposited funds with the Institute to cover these costs and we hope that this role can be recognised formally and financed on a continuing basis. This would provide ICAS with a much needed permanent secretariat and help the Institute to discharge its crucial international liaison responsibilities in the furtherance of African studies.

#### *Current and projected research*

**African Languages** This project is now complete and negotiations are under way to publish the report with Hans Zell of Oxford.

**West African Museums** This continues to make excellent progress under the direction of Dr Philip Ravenhill and the steering committee (Dr Alpha Konaré, Dr Joe Nkrumah, Mr Malcolm McLeod, Professor J. F. A. Ajayi and myself) which has met twice in London. Following visits to lusophone countries, Dr Ravenhill is to discuss with Dr Victor de Sa Machado how the project might be extended to Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. If the Gulbenkian Foundation becomes involved, the Ford Foundation is understood to be ready to consider continuing its support.

**History of African Studies** The Institute's archives are now stored in the LSE Library where they complement other important African studies archival sources. Using this and other material, it is proposed to undertake a historiographical study of the development of African studies. This would be directed by Dr Robin Palmer (formerly Professor of History at the Universities of Zambia and Malawi) and approaches for the necessary funds have now been made to the Gulbenkian, Rockefeller and Leverhulme foundations. We trust that this potentially very important project will secure the necessary financial support.

**African and Islamic Studies** This projected comparison of African studies in Arab countries and Islamic studies in African countries is now being developed as a research proposal by Dr Murray Last. Two Arab funding agencies (ALESCO, Tunisia, and the Muslim World League, Saudi Arabia) have indicated a readiness to contribute to the costs.

*Seminar programme*

**The Professionalisation of African Medicine** The edited papers from this seminar (Gaborone, 1983) are in press.

**The Transformation of African Marriage** The editing of this seminar (Nairobi, 1984) is well under way.

**Housing the Urban Poor I and II** Preparations for holding a first seminar at the Institute of African Studies, Cairo, with Professor Peter Lloyd of Sussex University as coordinator and Professor M. Seoudy as local host, are well under way. The costs of participation by African scholars is to be partly underwritten by the Canadian International Development Research Council (approximately £8500) and we anticipate some support from the World Bank, UNESCO, and possibly the Baring Trust. The provisional seminar date is April 1986.

A second linked seminar on the same general topic, but concentrating on the following themes – demographic problems in African cities; socio-cultural problems and cultural conflict; planning and urbanism in African cities – is being organised in Guinea Bissau in collaboration with the Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa and with Gulbenkian support. The expected date is September 1986.

**Other seminars** Projects for future international African seminars include one on social work in Africa, to be coordinated by Professor James Midgeley and probably to be held at the University of Zimbabwe.

Principally through our Research Officer, the Institute has helped to prepare, for the Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione, its seminar on rural–urban relationships in the Sahel to be held in Mali in December 1985.

*Other activities*

We continue to cooperate in the developing African studies programme of the Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa. Last year's joint lecture programme was followed this year by a conference on 'Education in Africa', held in Lisbon at the end of May. The Institute was responsible for providing participants from the Institute of Education (University of London), Professor John Turner (University of Manchester), and the Somali Minister of Education (Mr Abdirahman Abdulle Shuke) and his wife, the head of women's education in Somalia, Hawa Adam. This conference, supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation, included a lecture by Dr Victor de Sa Machado on the Foundation's role in educational development in lusophone Africa. Illuminating lectures were also given by Dr B. Haidara, Director of the Africa Regional Office of Unesco, and by Dr M. Thias of the World Bank. In the presence of the President of Portu-

gal, who closed the meeting, it was heartening to hear generous tribute paid to our collaborative role. The next joint CEPCEP/IAI conference is planned for late September 1986 and will be concerned with the changing rights of women in Africa.

### *Staff*

More than routine tribute is due to our Secretary, Jackie Hunt, and her colleague Belinda Okonweze, as well as to our Research Officer, Robert Dodd, who have all shown much appreciated devotion to the Institute in the difficult phase of relocation at LSE. We owe much to the energy, resourcefulness and commitment of our Honorary Treasurer, John Pike, and are particularly pleased to record that we have now also secured the expert accounting services of Brian Parkin (formerly accountant to the London School of Economics).

The Institute owes much to all those concerned with its publications over which Dr Elizabeth Dunstan has presided energetically. We are grateful to Dr Paul Richards, Reviews Editor, and to Professor J. D. Y. Peel, Editor of *Africa*, we owe a special debt of gratitude. After serving as Editor since 1979, he now feels it is time to hand on the baton. We are very sorry that he is relinquishing this key role in the management of the journal to whose reputation he has contributed so much. I am pleased, however, to report that Dr Murray Last, of University College, London, has agreed to be our new editor.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that our new home and Research Officer appointment give the Institute a better chance of survival. If that chance is to be realised, it will require a great deal of imaginative effort from all members of the executive council. We *must* secure more funds. It may be that this could be achieved in the context of a 1986 anniversary appeal focused on establishing our research officership on a long-term basis, possibly jointly with the Suntory-Toyota Centre at LSE. In the meantime, I welcome the formation of the new 'Action Group' of executive council members, consisting of Dr Anders Hjort, Professor John Paden, Professor Franz Rottland, Robert Dodd, John Pike and myself, which held its first meeting in London on 19 August under the chairmanship of Professor Frej Stambouli.

I. M. Lewis

### AFRICAN STUDIES IN ITALY

Professor Bernardo Bernardi writes:

From 25 to 27 June 1985 Italian Africanists – historians, anthropologists, linguists and others – took stock of the state of African studies in Italy over the last twenty-five years. The meeting was organised at the Istituto Italo-Africano, Rome, which, under its President, the Hon. Tullia Caretoni, and the competent direction of Ambassador Luigi Gasbarri, has grown into the major centre for Italian cultural interest in Africa. Each day was devoted to a particular branch