

Notes and News

The First International African Seminar at Makerere College, Kampala

THE first of the International African Seminars which are being organized by the Institute with the aid of a grant from the Ford Foundation was held at Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda, from 3 to 12 January 1959, under the chairmanship of Professor Aidan Southall, Director of the East African Institute of Social Research. It was attended by eighteen participants and three observers, fifteen from various territories in tropical Africa, three from Europe, and three from the United States.

These seminars are being devoted to research problems of significance for further social, economic, and educational development in Africa. An important aim of the seminars is to provide opportunities for research workers and other scholars holding posts in various parts of Africa to establish closer contact with each other and with their colleagues in Europe and America, and to exchange views on problems and methods of research.

The subject of this seminar was 'Kinship, status and neighbourhood under modern economic conditions in Tropical Africa'. The discussions were mainly focused on the restructuring of social relations in African towns. They included a review of the various factors affecting migration, resettlement, and the differentiation of occupations, incomes, and modes of living. Particular attention was given to the changing character of the domestic family and kinship relations in new occupational and neighbourhood settings, and to the interaction of traditional ties with new patterns of prestige and forms of association. Papers, based for the most part on their own field research, had been prepared in advance by the participants. These and other relevant studies were reviewed in sessions devoted to particular aspects and problems, which included extended discussions of the character, causes and effects of changes in kinship relations, authority in the family, marriage stability, the position of women, and status and prestige symbols. Other sessions considered the role of norms in social change, problems of demographic analysis, range and variation of extrinsic factors affecting social change, and problems of theory and method in research. A report, summarizing the papers presented to the seminar and the scope of its discussions, is being prepared for early publication.

Opportunity was afforded during the period of the seminar for its participants to meet members of the staff of Makerere College, of the Uganda Society, and many others interested in African social studies. There were visits to H.H. the Kabaka's Palace, to the Uganda Museum, to the Buganda House of Assembly, to African housing estates, to Jinja and the Owen Falls Dam, and to a County Chief's headquarters.

Arrangements are being made to hold the second seminar at Lovanium University, Léopoldville, Belgian Congo, under the chairmanship of Professor Daniel Biebuyck. It will be concerned with the study of the indigenous agrarian systems and their modern development.

The African Studies Association in the United States.¹

THE African Studies Association in the United States (see *Africa*, October 1957, p. 401 and October 1958, p. 365) has held its first annual meeting, at Northwestern University, Illinois—the campus of its first President, Professor M. J. Herskovits. It is a measure of the success

¹ An account of the Conference, with the text of Professor Melville Herskovits's Presidential Address, has been published in the *African Studies Bulletin*, vol. i, no. ii, November 1958.