

'US' AND 'THEM': THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE AND THE CURRENT CRISIS OF IDENTITY IN AFRICAN STUDIES

A PUBLIC LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE IWALEWA HAUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BAYREUTH ON SATURDAY, 19 JULY 1986, TO MARK THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE INSTITUTE

Michael Crowder

In April 1986 British Africanists met to discuss the crisis facing African Studies in their country. The crisis was easily defined as one of lack of resources in universities where current cutbacks have particularly affected area studies; of the limited funds available to libraries specialising in African Studies; and of the severe reduction in the number of publishers willing to take on monographs relating to Africa, with the result that many scholars are 'giving up all hope of being published'.¹ Furthermore, lack of travel funds has meant that many Africanists teaching in Britain have not been to the continent of their study in seven years. So few new appointments have recently been made in the field of African Studies in British universities that, unless something drastic is done to reverse the trend, in fifteen years' time there will be a sharp decline in the numbers actually engaged in African Studies as generations grow old and are not replaced.² Students can see no future in pursuing African Studies at the postgraduate level and their teachers are in no position to advise even their most brilliant students that doctoral research will lead to an academic appointment. These developments have taken place in a context where those who run the government have lost or are losing interest in Africa, a continent which is seen increasingly as one of unending problems which they just wish would go away. Indeed, the whole crisis in African Studies, as described by some of the leading British Africanists that April, invited headlines in the respected weekly magazine *West Africa*: 'African Studies in peril. Is the study of Africa in British universities dying?'³

Only one delegate to that symposium, however, pointed to the more fundamental crisis that faces African Studies, not only in Britain but in countries like the United States, which still have the funds to employ Africanists and support their field research. And that is the very real danger of the creation of two separate and compartmentalised worlds of Africanists: African and non-African. As Lalage Bown put it so vividly with respect to British Africanists, 'We've reached a stage when we are like the Soviets used to be, when there were Africanists who had never set foot in Africa and never met an African.'⁴ But to those few Africanists from Europe and America who still teach in African universities it is only too clear that the compartmentalisation of Africanists into two worlds of the rich Europeans and Americans on the one hand and the poor African scholars on the other is a general phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that is a matter not only of increasing mutual isolation but also of disparity of resources. Africanists in Britain and other countries of the First World may complain about the lack

of finance and facilities available to them, but these are infinitely greater than those of all but a very few African universities, where today lecturers are overburdened with teaching, do not have access to the latest books and journals, cannot obtain funds to travel to conferences outside their country, even when they are being held in neighbouring African countries, and are unable to find funds even for local research. To take a recent striking example, when the fourth International Congress of African Studies was held at Ibadan last December, very few Nigerian universities were represented, because they could not afford to travel to Ibadan from Kano or Calabar even by road. The number of foreign scholars who obtain funds for research in Africa may be fewer these days than in the heyday of African Studies in the 1960s; even so, from the perspective of the teacher in an African university like Legon, the rawest doctoral student from America is usually better financed than the most eminent professor in his country. It is little wonder, then, that some of the most distinguished African scholars seek refuge in international organisations or take posts in overseas universities, rather than stay at home, where often the salary of a full professor does not match that of a new appointee in a Western university. In Zambia, for instance, the annual salary of a professor and head of department is worth little more than 7000 Deutschmarks a year.

But perhaps the worst development of all is that the practice of African Studies internationally is once more, as in colonial days, dominated by non-Africans. The editors of the key international journals publishing in the field of African Studies play a crucial role in developing Africanist disciplines, as a result of the decisions they make as to whose work shall be published and what topics or themes are of current importance. Yet the editors today are still non-Africans. Many journals will have token African scholars on their boards, but the crucial decision-making process is in non-African hands. Similarly the lists of the few publishers still prepared to bring out monographs on Africa are dominated by non-African scholars. Indeed, the annual catalogues of some major publishers in the field of African Studies contain not a single work by an African author. The two most recently published volumes of *The Cambridge History of Africa*, nos. 6 and 7, covering the scramble for Africa and the heyday of colonial rule respectively, have not one African contributor, even though a great deal of the most distinguished work on this period has been undertaken by African historians. Not surprisingly, a library research essay on developments in African historiography since 1960 which I examined earlier this month at the University of Malawi contained not a single reference to an indigenous African historian. A scholar come fresh to the study of Africa might be forgiven for thinking that little had changed in the way African Studies are practised over the sixty years since the International African Institute was founded in July 1926, when Africa was firmly under the rule of the European colonial powers.

When I was asked to give a lecture on 'Sixty years of Africa – the International African Institute and the development of African Studies, 1926–86' to mark the occasion of the sixtieth birthday of this major force in African Studies, and to deliver it at a symposium on 'Identity in Africa' to be held at one of the youngest and most dynamic centres of African Studies in the non-African world, I felt it would be inappropriate to burden you

with a history of the Institute as such. Rather, I decided to use the occasion, at which many distinguished Africanists drawn from both within and outside the African continent are assembled, to discuss the crisis in African Studies as I perceived it, and to ask how, in the context of its central role in the development of African Studies over the past sixty years, the International African Institute can help solve what is nothing less than a crisis of identity within the Africanist community. Put bluntly, this crisis is one in which our community has once more been divided into two, with 'us', the comparatively well-off non-Africans, increasingly dominating the field, and 'them', the African scholars, feeling that they have less and less control over the means of production in African Studies. There is a very real danger that the reaction of African scholars will be (or has already been) to accept this compartmentalisation of African Studies and draw up defences around themselves whereby they can protect themselves against what they increasingly see as academic neo-colonialism. There was a vivid illustration of this at the second conference of African Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning, held in Swaziland in February 1985, as delegate after delegate advocated 'delinking' from the American or European universities with which they were associated or on which they were modelled.⁵ The general consensus was that African universities had to devise models of their own, co-operate among themselves rather than with overseas universities and generally become more self-reliant. As one delegate put it, 'it was time that the African institutions of higher learning shed their dependence on institutions of the North for evolving theories of development issues in Africa, and began generating ideas based on the realities of the continent.' Another criticised the use of foreign experts by some African governments in preference to qualified staff in their own national institutions.

We are all aware how difficult it now is to obtain permission for non-African scholars to conduct archival research or fieldwork in African countries. My belief is that if we do not heal the growing rift between 'us' and 'them', we in Europe and America risk being largely cut off from the very continent that is meant to nurture us, having to restrict ourselves to research in the archives of the erstwhile colonial powers and producing studies of a continent which fewer and fewer of 'us' will be able to visit except as tourists. Of course, what I see as the present crisis in African Studies, with non-Africans apparently dominating their development and certainly dominating the dissemination of research results, has always been implicit in the way they have developed over the past sixty years.

When the International African Institute was founded in 1926, African Studies were still seeking an identity in that they had not yet really emerged as a distinct or recognised field of scholarly activity. The idea of founding the International African Institute was a result of the concern shown by missionaries and others who, in the words of a foundation member of the Executive Council, Edwin W. Smith,

saw the need for an application of scientific method to a solution of the questions arising from the contact of Western civilisation with African culture and particularly from the attempt to educate Africans on modern lines. The rapid opening up of Africa to all the influences of Europeanism, they were convinced,

called for an advance in the education of the peoples of Africa through the medium of their own forms of thought. The linguistic question was seen to lie at the root of the problem.⁷

Above all, the founders wanted to solve what they saw as the 'prevailing confusion and lack of co-operation between governments, missionary societies, and scientific experts'.⁸ It was for these reasons that the Institute was at first known as the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures* and had as its main purpose the bringing together of scholars, missionaries and administrators of the colonial powers – though it must be emphasised that these three categories were not mutually exclusive. Its main achievement in those early years was to franchise the frontiers of colonial Africa and bring together students of Africa from the French, British, Belgian, Spanish and Italian colonial empires. Despite the recent loss of its own African empire, Germany was well represented on the original Executive Council of the Institute in the persons of Professors Meinhof and Westermann, while one of its earlier meetings was held in Berlin. In its formative years the Institute was essentially a European one, reflecting the political situation in Africa, which was, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, entirely under European rule. But what it did do that was new was to emphasise that Africa had to be studied as a continent, not as a series of compartments arbitrarily defined by the frontiers laid down in the wake of the Berlin Conference of 1884–85.

Despite the new Institute's colonial infrastructure, it was made clear by the Executive Council from the outset that members were welcome whatever their provenance, and within a few years what was later to become a dominant element in the development of African Studies, the United States of America, had forty-one of the nearly 900 members of the Institute. There was no discrimination in the Institute, as there was in so many of the African colonies it was setting out to study. The Institute was at pains to emphasise that 'Africans have always, it goes without saying, been welcomed to membership.'⁹ Its most important influence on those Africans in the early years was its insistence that Africans should in the early stages of their education be instructed in their mother tongue. To this end at the first meeting of Council it was decided to develop an international African orthography under a committee in which Westermann would confer with Meinhof, Alice Werner, Daniel Jones and Lloyd James. Meinhof eventually refused to put his imprimatur on the resulting orthography, which was nevertheless adopted for a large number of African languages. Of course, this commendable initiative was an example of 'us' undertaking development for 'them'. But the Institute was not as paternalist as its organisation may at first seem. Apart from implicitly recognising the cultural values of African languages as a medium of education in their own right, the Institute sought to promote writing by Africans in their own languages so that there would be materials for children to read written not only in their own languages but by African

*This was the name adopted in June 1926 by the governing body of the Bureau of African Languages and Literature formed in September 1925. In 1946 it was renamed the International African Institute.

authors. As Smith again put it, 'if literature is to take its right place in the life of Africa it must be an indigenous literature.' To this end in 1928 the Institute established a prize for works in African languages by African authors. And during the first four years 207 entries were received, although few were actually published. Parallel with this endeavour, the Institute established two series of publications entitled African Studies and African Documents. It is significant that the first volume to be chosen for publication was by an African, a translation of Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*,¹⁰ originally written in Sesotho. Continuing its encouragement of African participation in the work of the Institute, W. A. Cardinal's *Tales Told in Togoland*¹¹ contained a section on the history of Dagomba by E. F. Tamakloe. The Institute's journal, *Africa*, which first appeared in 1928, published few articles by Africans during its first fifteen years, though it carried notable essays by Jomo Kenyatta and Z. K. Matthews. Nevertheless, in its early years the Institute, as the major centre for African Studies of its time, went out of its way to encourage African scholarship and to publish the results – an attitude which one would wish informed more of our contemporaries who now control the principal international outlets of African Studies. Here the Institute's journal *Africa* is something of an exception, as the first number of Volume 56, published in the Institute's diamond jubilee year, makes clear.

The first years of the Institute were concerned with the search for and establishment of its own identity. The initial emphasis was on languages and linguistic research. The cultural element, however, soon became equally important, and, given the broad interpretation that the Executive Council gave to culture, it was in the 1930s that the Institute became truly a centre for African Studies as distinct from a language institute. The Institute set about finding funds for anthropological research, which was, as Malinowski put it, to be 'the anthropology of the changing Native'.¹² The Council seems to have been uncannily prescient of the type of criticism that would be levelled against anthropologists in later years, and, indeed, at one time against the Institute itself, when it wrote in its five-year plan that in establishing its programme of anthropological research 'there is no presumption in favour of the maintenance of existing conditions or against change.'¹³ The Council also determined that in carrying out its programme it would seek the collaboration of Africans. To implement its programme the Institute secured funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, and the list of its fellows and recipients of grants for linguistic and anthropological research reads like a roll of honour of early African Studies: Nadel, Meyer Fortes, Hofstra, Blohm, Monica Hunter (Wilson), Audrey Richards, Lukas, Perham, Schumacher, A. N. Tucker, Ida Ward, de Cleene, Margaret Read, Hilda Beemer (Kuper), Crazzolaro and Melzian. Among the early Fellows of the Institute was one African, Z. K. Matthews, who conducted research on the Barolong, while later Jomo Kenyatta was to be given support for his research on the Kikuyu. The Rockefeller grant enabled the Institute to undertake what Audrey Richards described as the 'first large-scale experiment in practical anthropology',¹⁴ with Institute Fellows like Schapera advising the Bechuanaland Protectorate government on land tenure and customary law,

Fortes the Gold Coast government on Tallensi marriage law, and Read the Nyasaland government on the effects of migratory labour on village life.

The second period of the Institute's history may be identified as an era of fundamental research and publication. Between the inauguration of the research programme in the early 1930s and 1940, when the work of the Institute was interrupted by the war, some of the great works in African anthropology and linguistics were published. Indeed, some would say that the Institute's publication programme has been its most enduring contribution to African Studies. It will suffice to name but a few of the great publications of the 1930s: Baumann's *Schopfung und Urzeit des Menschen im Mythos der afrikanischen Volker*,¹⁵ E. W. Bovill's *Caravans of the Old Sahara*,¹⁶ Charles Monteil's *Une cité soudanaise: Djénné*¹⁷ and an English edition of Meinhof's *Grundriss einer Lautlehre der Bantusprechen*,¹⁸ Monica Hunter's *Reaction to Conquest: effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*,¹⁹ Schapera's *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*,²⁰ Nadel's *A Black Byzantium*²¹ and the Kriges's *The Realm of a Rain Queen: a study of the pattern of Lovedu society*,²² as well as Westermann's *The African Today*²³ and Audrey Richards's *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: an economic study of the Bemba tribe*.²⁴ The Institute was at all times conscious of its founders' injunction that they bring scientific knowledge to bear on the practical issues of Africa, and in the mid-1930s one of the major interdisciplinary projects of the Institute was its Committee on Nutrition, which worked in conjunction with the Medical Research Council with a pilot study in Nyasaland. A final note on this second phase of the Institute's history concerns its efforts to provide a service for the exchange of information from its various offices. In 1938 it was reported that 5218 letters were received and 9682 dispatched by the London office, where callers numbered 175. In the Berlin office 1145 letters were received and 1062 dispatched, while in the Paris office 597 were received and 625 dispatched.²⁵

The third phase of the Institute's history coincided with the main period of African decolonisation from 1944 to 1964 and reflected many of the concerns of both parties with the problems involved in the transfer of power. Thus volume 14 of *Africa* of 1943 devoted much of its 'Notes and news' section to a discussion of various aspects of 'indigenous arts and industries, their development in modern industrial and economic conditions and some of the problems likely to arise in the course of such development' in the context of similar experiences in Russia, Poland, China, Palestine and the USA.²⁶ It was also a phase whose direction was guided by the Institute's longest-serving director, Daryll Forde, who was appointed to the position in 1944.

The Forde years, which covered more than a quarter of a century, from 1944 until his death in 1973, coincided with the decolonisation of the greater part of the African continent and with the great flowering of African Studies both within the continent and in Europe, and especially in America, which henceforth was to play an increasingly prominent role in their pursuit. The years immediately following the Second World War were accompanied not by the withdrawal of the colonial powers but by a second colonial invasion, this time of experts and technocrats, engaged in

preparation for the transfer of power and the development of what had often been long-neglected colonial estates. More money than ever before was made available for colonial research, and research institutes like IFAN in Dakar, the East African Institute of Economic and Social Research at Kampala and its West African counterpart in Ibadan were founded. The Institute was quick to respond to this new development by ensuring that it was used as the agent for any linguistic or anthropological research that was required. Thus the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund underwrote the Institute's Handbook of African Languages series, while funds were sought from various colonial governments to support its massive project of publishing an ethnographic survey of Africa, of which nearly sixty volumes had been published by the time of Forde's death in 1973.

As Daryll Forde made clear soon after his appointment, in a paper read to a joint meeting of the Dominions and Colonies Section of the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal African Society under the chairmanship of Lord Hailey in November 1944:

The assumption which now underlay all proposals relating to colonial administration was that colonial peoples should themselves take over responsibility for their economic and political destiny. ... Such a policy, however, implied the social development of African peoples on a scale hitherto scarcely realized, in order to enable them to assume control of their legal, financial and economic affairs. ... European administration in Africa, however beneficent, had tended to stunt the spontaneous adaptation of African societies to new conditions.²⁷

This apparently enlightened approach to decolonisation was in fact underpinned by a paternalism that echoed the thirties and was not untypical of attitudes among most of those then championing decolonisation. In obtaining the necessary detailed knowledge of the conditions of life in African communities of all types and for developing the necessary educational facilities, Forde declared:

It was not possible to adopt a policy of non-interference, leaving the Africans to meet new needs and develop new political institutions their own way. The European had to take responsibility and, because of the methods of inquiry open to him, was in a better position than the African to know the real needs of the latter.²⁸

This breathtaking arrogance, which unfortunately still informs the thinking of so many Westerners dealing with Africa today,²⁹ was tempered two years later when, in 'Notes and news', *Africa* reminded its readers that 'Our minds are so preoccupied with plans for a New Africa: are we not in danger of forgetting the Africans?'³⁰ This soul-searching was prompted by an editorial in a long since defunct Nigerian journal called *Farm and Forest* which reminded readers that 'It is almost forgotten that if there were no people, there would be no need for any plans or any development, there would be no acceleration erosion to be prevented, no shifting cultivation to be converted to stabilized farming, no insanitary villages to be remade.'³¹ Nevertheless, at the three-day conference on African Anthropological and Linguistic Research held in London in July 1947 to map out future action by the Institute only one African made a presentation, Mr Letele, of Fort

Hare, who spoke about the contribution made by Africans to linguistic research.

Full of confidence, the Institute made its contribution to the research that was seen as fundamental to decolonisation. It also made sure that this research was properly disseminated. *African Abstracts* made available to researchers an easy guide to recent publications in a wide range of scholarly journals. If *Africa*, the flagship of the Institute, was less and less concerned with 'practical anthropology' under Forde's editorship, it compensated by providing readers with some of the most important articles published in the field of African anthropology and sociology anywhere in the fifties and sixties. Nevertheless, the Institute was at pains to emphasise on its twenty-fifth anniversary that it was still as thoroughly international and its researches still as related to practical needs as when it was founded.³² It continued its vital function as a clearing house of information about African Studies, epitomised in its *Current Africanist Research* and *International Register of Organisations undertaking Africanist Research*. It also played a major role in the development of UNESCO's initial African programmes.

But the Institute was still, in the composition of its Executive Council and its administration, very much a European enterprise. Africans had no voice in its councils. Responding, if a little hesitantly, to the wind of Africanisation abroad in the colonies, in April 1952, ironically at a meeting of the Executive Council held in Brussels, where that wind had not even puffed along the corridors of the Colonial Ministry, Dr K. A. Busia, at the time a lecturer at the University College of the Gold Coast, was co-opted on to the Executive Council in place of Professor Hancock, who had resigned. Busia, incidentally, was also the first African scholar to have a major work of anthropology published by the Institute, his *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of the Ashanti*.³³ It should be noted, however, that during the war a tentative precedent had been established for Busia's appointment when a research student at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Rotimi-Williams, joined the interim committee that ran the wartime Institute. Rotimi-Williams was to go on to a distinguished legal career in Nigeria.

By and large during the 1950s and early 1960s the Institute sponsored research and publication by European scholars. There were no Z. K. Matthews in the distinguished list of scholars who owed their start in African Studies to the Institute. A list of their names reads today like an exclusive list of the major anthropologists and linguists working in Africa in those days: among others, John Middleton, Mary Douglas, Godfrey Lienhardt, Paul Bohannon, M. G. Smith, Carl Hoffmann, Bernardo Bernardi, Robin Horton and our current Director, Ioan Lewis.

The Institute continued to emphasise its international character by rotating its meetings around the European capitals, and in 1957, for the first time since 1933, the Executive Council met in Germany, at Bonn, where it was the guest of the recently formed Deutsche Afrika Gesellschaft. It thus renewed contact with its strong German roots laid down by such scholars as Meinhof and Westermann, who had been the first Director of the IAI from 1928 to 1939 after sharing the appointment

briefly with Maurice Delafosse, and whose death was announced shortly after that meeting of the Council.

Perhaps the most significant scholarly contribution made to African development by the Institute was that begun on the eve of Nigeria's independence: the series of International African Seminars which were funded by the Ford Foundation, and which tackled problems of burning intellectual and practical concern to Africans and their outgoing colonial administrators. Above all, these seminars were held not in the metropolises of the European capitals but in the new university institutions of sub-Saharan Africa. The first seminar, whose proceedings were edited by Aidan Southall, was held on 'Social Change in Modern Africa' at Makerere University.³⁴ These seminars ranged over such topics as African agrarian systems, urbanisation, migration, African law, pastoralism, the role of Islam and of Christianity. They brought together scholars from all over the world, though, still reflecting the state of African Studies at the time, there were few African participants. Thus in 1961 at the seminar on 'The Historian in Tropical Africa' only two African scholars were present – Ogot and Nketia.

In the wake of decolonisation the Institute became increasingly, if not a little belatedly, aware that it was not enough just to hold seminars in African institutions of higher learning. If this was not to be just window dressing, and if the Institute was to continue to deserve its name as both International and African it would have to Africanise itself. The first Executive Council meeting to be held on African soil, that at Ibadan in 1964, elected an African, Kenneth Dike, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, to the post of Vice-Chairman of the Council. Thereafter more and more Africans were included in the membership of the Executive Council. This development corresponded to the relocation of African Studies on the continent. The new sensitivity of the Institute to the changing climate in African Studies was underlined by the important conference held simultaneously with the Executive Council in Ibadan on 'Tropical African Studies' which brought together directors of research institutes in Africa with those concerned with the administration of African research in institutions located outside the continent. During the 1960s and early 1970s there was no doubt that the main engine of African Studies was to be found in the African Studies Institutes of Ghana, Ibadan, Ife, Dakar and Makerere. Ibadan and Dar es Salaam rivalled SOAS and Wisconsin as centres of historical excellence. It seemed as though African Studies had returned home, and that the Institute recognised it. These changes of attitude were signalled in many ways. The prestigious Lugard Lecture was delivered for the first time by an African scholar, Dr Nana Nketsia IV, at the Museum für Volkerkunde at Hamburg in June 1965 on the topic of 'Cultural Revival in Africa'. The next few years were spent in consolidating what for the Institute marked its transformation from an essentially colonial organ into one with which Africans could at least begin to identify. This was no mean achievement for a man whose post, as Max Gluckman put it, was 'on an allegedly part-time basis'³⁵ and who had to deal with an Executive Council comprised in the early years mainly of former colonial administrators. Indeed, the

incumbent Chairman when he took up his appointment was Lord Lugard, who, as Nigel Barnicott recalled in his address at the memorial service for Daryll Forde, appeared to find 'it difficult to remember that he was not still governing a large slice of the British Empire'.³⁶

The death of Daryll Forde in 1973 ushered in what was to be a troubled decade in the Institute's history. The heady years of African independence had been succeeded by disenchantment on the part of the former colonial powers, as in their former possessions coup followed coup, and corruption and misuse of funds were revealed by the successors of overthrown regimes. Money for African development and research became more difficult to obtain. In the colonial period many African colonial governments had an item in their budget for support of the Institute, and in most cases this was not at first questioned by the successor states; but soon shortages of foreign exchange made it impossible to pay even the small sums hitherto set aside for the Institute. The British and French governments, hitherto major sources of funding, began to reduce their contributions until in 1982 they were cut altogether.

Under the new Director, David Dalby, a concerted effort was made to give the IAI a truly African image, both in the composition of the Council and administration, and in its concerns. In 1975 Professor J. F. Ade Ajayi, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, was elected to the chair previously occupied by such proconsuls as Lugard, Hailey and Moeller de Laddersous. The Africanisation of the Institute was, however, more fundamental than that. In the financial crisis that nearly brought about its closure in 1982 it was only funding from the Nigerian government that kept the Institute afloat.

When Dalby entered on his controversial directorship the Council had already determined that one of his major concerns should be to develop closer relationships between anglophone and francophone Africanists. Himself an excellent linguist, Dalby made great efforts to emphasise the bilingual nature of the Institute. Further, he made determined efforts to involve German colleagues more closely with its work. It was sad that it should have been in the wake of an Executive Council in Marburg in 1979 that it became apparent that the Institute was nearly bankrupt. In part this was the logical consequence of the reduction in contributions from both European and African governments. In part it was due to a change in policy over publications, whereby the Institute tried to be a publishing house in its own right, and in part, and probably most important of all, it was because the Institute, in trying to serve the practical needs of Africa as its founders had insisted, embarked on a series of ambitious programmes through its Environmental Review Unit. To its credit, it was one of the first agencies – national or international – to raise the alarm about the consequences of drought for Africa.³⁷ But in so doing it saw a drying up of its own funds, so that by the time Dalby retired it was far from clear that the Institute would survive.

Dalby has been criticised for allowing the Institute to reach such a stage of near bankruptcy. But, on the credit side, it was his determination to have an African Chairman and a Council which was at least half African in composition that was to prove the salvation of the Institute. The fact that

the Institute was effectively resurrected and has survived to this day was in very great measure due to its current Chairman, who even in the darkest days and in the face of doom merchants – and I fear I was numbered among them – was determined to see the Institute survive. With the tenacity and determination of the founding Chairman, Lord Lugard – and I hope he will forgive me for this comparison, for I am aware Lord Lugard is not Nigeria's favourite hero – he has ensured that we are able to meet here today to talk about the future of the Institute.

It is in the context of the unhappy prognosis of the present state of African Studies and the still gloomy financial outlook of the International African Institute that I would like to suggest that it can have a crucial role in helping to heal the rift that is developing between the 'us' in the non-African world and the 'them' in Africa. To do so it will need funds. These, as the Institute knows from recent bitter experience, are not easily forthcoming. Aid-giving agencies and foundations, however parsimonious they may be in giving money to Africanist research, do, however, seem still responsive to appeals for funds to meet crisis situations. What we need to do, therefore, is to make clear that what we face in African Studies today is tantamount to a crisis for Africanists both in the continent and here in Europe as well as America. We need to persuade potential donors that the Institute, with its long record of service to Africa, and its development of truly African roots and support in the past twenty-five years, is the one organisation that can help bridge the gap which has unhappily developed in the past decade between the Africanists of the African continent and those of the rest of the world. With the revival of its seminars, jointly directed by African and European scholars, with its journal *Africa* making deliberate efforts to involve scholars from all parts of the continent in its pages (as a recent issue, volume 56 (1), so clearly demonstrates), with its widespread and long-standing contacts, and with its Publications Committee determined to seek ways of bringing to the attention of the world at large the very considerable work being undertaken by African scholars, I would suggest that the IAI is the only organisation with the credibility on both sides of the frontier between Africa and non-Africa to recreate an international Africanist community. But, apart from the funds that this will require, we shall need a determined effort by all African Studies programmes within and outside Africa and recognition by them that the future lies in co-operation. We cannot afford a situation which would be unthinkable in a European context where the course of, say, German studies was determined by non-German scholars based in institutes of higher learning outside the country and indeed outside the continent. But this is in many ways the case in African Studies today. How can it be remedied?

First, there is need for much more exchange of information as between African universities and non-African universities about what research is being done in Africa. Following from this, there is the need to make that research available to the international Africanist community. Too often major research being undertaken in African universities is unknown in other African countries and is also ignored by the Africanist community outside Africa because its results are published in Africa in a national

journal. This can affect non-African scholars still working in African universities just as much as it does African scholars. Thus Robin Horton's seminal article on the early history of Ife, published in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*,³⁸ is largely unknown outside Nigeria. Now one of the earliest functions of the IAI was to serve as centre for the exchange of information about African Studies and this is a function that should be straightway revived. What is needed is a new *African Abstracts* which would specialise in journals and books published in Africa. This function is in part being fulfilled by the new annual *Africa Bibliography*, but much important research in Africa is still overlooked by the international Africanist community through ignorance of its existence or lack of access to it.

Second, there is a need for exchanges between scholars from non-African and African universities both in research and teaching, such as the African Studies Programme which the University of Bayreuth runs so admirably.³⁹ African scholars need access to the record offices of the former colonial powers and the better equipped libraries of the richer European and American universities, while Africanist scholars in those universities equally need to refresh themselves by teaching and research in Africa. The IAI with its contacts and experience is in an ideal position to operate such a scheme, which would then not appear to be tied to one government or country.

Third, there is need for a much more determined effort on the part of overseas researchers who have access to funds to plan and operate research projects with African partners. A good example of such collaboration was the recent Botswana Election Survey, jointly funded and staffed by researchers from the University of Botswana and American, British and Australian universities. There was, however, a residual element of 'academic imperialism' on the part of First World members who wanted, against the protests of their Botswana colleagues, to ship all the results to Britain for processing on a computer there rather than put them on the locally based computer in Gaborone. In such collaborative projects, whatever the source of funding, there can be no question of the colonial horse-and-rider syndrome continuing to operate. But all too often research projects are drawn up in America or Europe without taking into account indigenous academic talent, and sometimes the results of the research are not even communicated to the country where it was done. Again, the International African Institute could serve as an advisory and validator agency for those planning research projects, in particular by putting scholars in touch with appropriate counterparts in Africa.

Fourth, there is a need to accept African priorities rather than those conceived in European or American universities. Too many research projects are presented to host countries as *faits accomplis* and no effort is made to seek the opinion of relevant local academics. Again, the IAI could help serve as a clearing house for the appropriate preliminary consultation that will make research relevant to the needs and priorities of the country in which it is to be conducted. Indeed, this is already partly the aim of the IAI's new series of International Seminars, which draw on research by Africanists in Africa and seek through seminar discussions to establish

Africa-oriented research priorities. The Institute through its Executive Council also acts as a forum for African research proposals and publications.

Fifth, if African academics are to compete on equal terms with their European and American counterparts, the present book famine in Africa must be assuaged. Most African universities are starved of current journals and books in every field. This is the subject of a paper which is being published as the introduction to the 1985 *Africa Bibliography*. The IAI, which held a one-day symposium on 'The Book Famine in Africa' in 1985, is actively engaged in seeking ways in which this problem can be alleviated.

Finally, all Africanists who are involved in the publication of journals and series should go out more determinedly to solicit work from African scholars than clearly has been the case in the past decade, especially with the demise of such series as that on Ibadan history. In this again the IAI can take the lead. There is a determined policy in the Publications Committee to seek out manuscripts by African authors, but funds available to the committee are limited.

With determination these goals can be realised. And I believe that they can be realised no more effectively than through the IAI as a truly international organisation with a proven track record of genuine co-operation between African and non-African Africanists. Something must be done urgently to achieve these goals, for if this division between 'us' and 'them' is reinforced rather than bridged then we shall all be the losers. It would be truly ironical if the International African Institute, the best-equipped agency to tackle these urgent tasks, were forced to close its doors for lack of financial support in its jubilee year.

NOTES

¹ James Currey, reported in Kaye Whiteman, 'African Studies in peril', *West Africa*, 14 April 1986, p. 781. See also James Currey, 'The state of African Studies publishing', *African Affairs*, 85, 341, October 1986, 609–12.

² Richard Hodder-Williams, *A Directory of Africanists in Britain*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 1986; 'African Studies: back to the future', *African Affairs*, 85, 341, October 1986, 593–604.

³ Whiteman, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Lalage Bown, reported in Whiteman, *op. cit.*

⁵ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Report of the Second Conference of Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa*, Mbabane (Swaziland), 18–22 February, 1985, Addis Ababa, March 1985.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷ Edwin W. Smith, 'The story of the Institute: a survey of seven years', *Africa*, 7 (1), January 1934, 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ Thomas Mofolo, *Chaka: an historical romance*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1931.

¹¹ A. W. Cardinal, *Tales Told in Togoland*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1931.

¹² B. Malinowski, 'Practical anthropology', *Africa*, 2 (1), January 1929, 36.

¹³ 'A five-year plan of research', *Africa*, 5 (1), January 1932, 2.

¹⁴ A. I. Richards, 'Practical anthropology in the lifetime of the International African Institute', *Africa*, 14 (6), April 1944, 299.

¹⁵ H. Baumann, *Schopfung und Urzeit des Menschen im Mythos der Afrikanischen Volker*, with the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1936.

¹⁶ E. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara: an introduction to the history of the western Sudan*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1933.

¹⁷ Charles Monteil, *Une cité soudanaise: Djénné, métropole du delta central du Niger*. Paris: Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales for the Institut International des Langues et Civilisations Africaines, 1932.

¹⁸ Carl Meinhof, *Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages* (English translation of *Grundriss einer Lautlehre der Bantusprachen*). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1932.

¹⁹ Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: effect of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1936.

²⁰ I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1938.

²¹ S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: the kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1942.

²² E. Jensen Krige and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen: a study of the pattern of Lovedu society*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1943.

²³ Diedrich Westermann, *The African Today*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1934.

²⁴ Audrey I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: an economic study of the Bemba tribe*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1939.

²⁵ 'Annual report: the work of the Institute in 1938', *Africa*, 12 (1), January 1939, 94.

²⁶ 'Notes and news', *Africa*, 14 (4), October, 1943, 214–17.

²⁷ 'Notes and news', *Africa*, 15 (2), April 1945, 88.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁹ See Paul Richards, *Indigenous African Revolution: ecology and food production in West Africa*. London: (Hutchinson Education, 1985), for a perceptive discussion of this question with regard to agricultural development.

³⁰ 'Notes and news', *Africa*, 16 (2), April 1946, 113.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² 'Meeting of Executive Council: London, 28–30 March 1951', *Africa*, 21 (3), July 1951, 224.

³³ K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1951.

³⁴ Aidan Southall (ed.), *Social Change in Modern Africa: studies presented and discussed at the first International African Seminar, Makerere College, Kampala, January 1959*. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1961.

³⁵ Max Gluckman, 'Daryll Forde, 1902–73', *Africa*, 44 (1), January, 1974, 1.

³⁶ Nigel Barnicott, 'Address given by Professor Nigel Barnicott at the thanksgiving service for Daryll Forde held at the University Church of Christ the King, Gordon Square, London, on Tuesday, 26 June 1973', *Africa*, 43 (4), October 1973, 284.

³⁷ David Dalby et al., *Drought in Africa 2*. London: International African Institute, 1977; Abdul Mejid Hussein (ed.), *Rehab: drought and famine in Ethiopia*. London: International African Institute, 1976; I. M. Lewis, *Abaar: the Somali drought*. London: International African Institute, 1975; Phil O'Keefe and Ben Wisner (eds.), *Land Use and Development*. London: International African Institute, 1977; Paul Richards (ed.), *African Environment: problems and perspectives*. London: International African Institute, 1976.

³⁸ Robin Horton, 'Ancient Ife: a reassessment', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2, 1979.

³⁹ See *Schwerpunkt Afrikanologie and der Universität Bayreuth: Tätigkeitsbericht; Sommersemester 84 bis Wintersemester 84/85*. Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth, 1985.