

so-called primitive peoples in small-scale societies. He pointed out that Christianity developed in a complex and advanced civilization and formulated ideas concerning man and the universe which people living within a narrow social orbit cannot readily grasp—for example, the Christian conception of the importance of the individual is often in discordance with ideas entrenched in the minds of primitive peoples. Furthermore, the traditional symbols which arouse socially and morally valuable responses among primitive peoples are derived from cultures and environments very different from those of the western world, which may have very little evocative power for members of less advanced societies. Harm can be done to the solidarity of a society by thoughtlessly or ignorantly destroying old values. For the Church, the problem arises of understanding the nature and the cultural background of native ideas and of expressing the values of Christianity in ways meaningful to such peoples. When members of primitive societies are subjected to the influences of western civilization and removed from the context of the old community life there is danger that intense individualism may replace a sense of responsibility and old accepted patterns of behaviour may be discredited. There is great need for Mission work to base itself on sound knowledge, otherwise the Church itself may unwittingly contribute to the disruptive process.

Director's Visit to France and Belgium

In September 1947 Professor Forde, Director of the Institute, spent some days in Brussels and Paris in consultation with the Belgian and French Directors. In Brussels he discussed with Professor de Jonghe arrangements for the collaboration of Belgian linguists in the Handbook of African Languages, with special reference to a study on the languages of the Belgian Congo, which could be included in the scheme of the Handbook and for which preliminary surveys were already in preparation. He also discussed with Professor De Jonghe and officials of the Belgian Ministère des Colonies proposals for a linguistic survey of the northern Bantu border area. Plans for this project, which the Institute hopes to carry out with the assistance of a team of British, French, and Belgian linguists, have been under discussion for some months, and it is now hoped that the project will receive favourable consideration from the Belgian authorities.

Professor Forde was able to inspect ethnographic material which is being assembled under the direction of the Commission of Ethnology at the Institut Royal Colonial Belge, and to consider means by which the work of the Commission might be related to the Institute's Ethnographic Survey project, and how the Institute might assist the Commission.

In Paris, Professor Forde had further discussions with Professor Griaule, the Institute's French Director, on the northern Bantu Survey project. Approaches already made to the French Government by Monsieur Charton had elicited a favourable response, and Professor Griaule undertook to submit further proposals in conjunction with Monsieur Charton. Arrangements for the prosecution of the Ethnographic Survey in French territories, with the collaboration of IFAN, were also considered.

While in Paris, Professor Forde was invited, as Director of the International African Institute, to attend a Conference on Philosophy and the Humanities held under the auspices of U.N.E.S.C.O. The Conference, under the Chairmanship of Professor Madariaga, was concerned with teaching and research in Philosophy and the Humanities as a means of furthering international understanding. Professor Griaule presented the case for the promotion of research and the dissemination of knowledge on indigenous African thought and social institutions. Professor Forde was given an opportunity to make the work and aims of the International African Institute known to the appropriate divisions of U.N.E.S.C.O. A resolution was formulated for submission to the general U.N.E.S.C.O. conference in

Mexico City embodying proposals for the promotion of researches in non-European areas. As an international organization, this Institute will welcome an opportunity to contribute to such developments in the African field.

The Language of the Pygmies

It has been commonly supposed that the Pygmies of Central Africa have now no language of their own but speak that of their 'patrons' or of the peoples with whom they live 'in symbiosis'. Father Trilles, on the contrary, was inclined to believe that the Pygmies in Gabon and southern Cameroons, whom he studied, have—or at least have had—a language of their own. Father Hulstaert, in his article in this number, shows pretty conclusively that the Pygmoid people in his area of Belgian Congo have adopted, with some variations, the speech of their patrons. Sir H. H. Johnston published in his book *The Uganda Protectorate* the vocabularies of several languages collected in the north-eastern region of Belgian Congo. One of these is Mbuba, spoken by a non-Pygmy people, and another 'Bambute' spoken by Pygmies. He was struck by the close similarity of these two lists of words and seems to have reached the conclusion that 'Bambute' is a dialect of Mbuba and adopted by the Pygmies. He also gives a short vocabulary of Lese. From the scanty material available it appears that these three forms of speech are very much alike, as can be seen in the words for 'two': Mbuba *agbe*; 'Bambute' *e'be*; Lese *ekpe*. What Sir Harry named 'Bambute' and Archdeacon Lloyd 'Lumbuti' is called 'Efe' by Father Schebesta. Of the people who speak it he says: they are 'by far the most numerous and purest tribe of pygmies and have, it would appear, retained their original language up to the present day'. He is inclined to believe that 'Efe' is a pygmy language by origin which was adopted by the Mamvu, the Balese, and the Bambuba who had penetrated into the eastern district; and further that Efe is probably 'the very language which was formerly spoken by all Ituri pygmies before the negro tribes penetrated into the Forest'. Father Schebesta is therefore diametrically opposed to Sir H. H. Johnston in this matter of the relation of Efe to Mbuba; the one holding that Mbuba and others have borrowed from the Efe, the other that Efe has borrowed from them.

Prompted by reading Father Hulstaert's article we were minded to ask Professor De Jonghe whether he had any further light to throw upon the Efe-Mbuba-Lese problem; and in reply he has kindly sent us the following note:

'Personnellement, j'ai toujours été très sceptique au sujet de l'hypothèse que l'Efe serait la langue originelle des Pygmées d'Afrique, ou plutôt de l'hypothèse du P. Schebesta que la langue originelle des Pygmées-Bushmen aurait dû être proche du soudanais. Cette hypothèse est hardie. Jusqu'ici le P. Schebesta n'a pas publié le matériel linguistique qui devrait venir confirmer son hypothèse.

'Les faits connus peuvent être résumés comme suit: Schebesta a constaté qu'à côté des langues véhiculaires, les pygmées de l'Ituri ont une langue spéciale qu'ils parlent entre eux dans leurs campements; et il distingue trois groupes parmi ces langues spéciales:

1. Les pygmées qui vivent en symbiose avec les Mombutu, Mamvu, Balese et Bambuba, parlent entre eux l'*Efe*;
2. Les *Bambuti* qui vivent en symbiose avec les Babira, Bakumu, Babali, Bandaka, Barumbi, Mabudu, parlent entre eux le *Kibira*;
3. Les *Aka* qui vivent en symbiose avec les Wangelima, Babeyru, Balika et Medji, ont comme langue de campement le *Medje*. C'est sur ces faits constatés que le P. Schebesta se livre à des interprétations et à des hypothèses subtiles.

'Le *Kibira* et le *Medje* sont éliminés, à juste titre, comme langues pygmées originelles possibles. Il reste l'*Efe*. On pourrait supposer que l'Efe serait la langue des Soudanais Mombutu, Mamvu, Balese, Bambuba (peuples de la savane, apparentés aux Balendu, Logo,