

DARYLL FORDE 1902-1973: AN APPRECIATION

There is no single individual to whom African research owes so much as Professor Daryll Forde, who died on 3rd May 1973.

As Administrative Director of the International African Institute from 1944 he was for nearly 30 years directly promoting or indirectly encouraging practically every piece of research conducted in Africa: all the British work passed under his eye and to a lesser extent the work proceeding from Europe and America benefited from his interest. It was unthinkable to be going to Africa for serious research and not to have visited the African Institute. Amidst all the other work that he achieved as Professor of Geography and Anthropology in Aberystwyth from 1930-45 and as Professor of Anthropology in University College London from 1945 until he retired in 1969, his extraordinary creative influence on African research demands a special tribute.

The remark that 90% of all scientists ever born are alive today is specially true of Africanists. From a small trickle before the war, information about Africa has exploded and the ever-growing demand turns it into a flood. Daryll Forde was the man who supplied the initial demand and guided it. In doing so, he revealed entrepreneurial talent rare among scholars, a vision always 10 years ahead of pressure, firm in decision, with incredible energy and a marvellous talent for friendship. He had the charm to coax a manuscript out of the most reluctant author, and to insist successfully on amendments that would bring it to his high standard of editing. Above all he had the enthusiasm to make hard work seem infinitely worthwhile and possessed the more difficult-to-name virtues that make unwieldy committees into effective bodies. His own appetite for work was so great that he inevitably infected his colleagues. These will gratefully recall his ebullient personality, with the sympathies, loyalties and affections which were freely given. To these personal endowments were added a high order of scholarship and unusual breadth of interest. That such a person was appointed to the International African Institute immediately after the war explains why everything that was started by the Institute flourished.

In 1926 the first chairman of the IAI, Lord Lugard, described its purpose to be "a connecting link between science and life". It was to be international, non-political and engaged in research and dissemination of knowledge about African languages and cultures. In 1939 all its activities were suspended for the duration of the war.

In 1939 membership had been 900; by 1970 the circulation of the quarterly *Africa* had risen to 2,400. The Ethnographic Survey of Africa, which started with 6 volumes in 1951, totalled 59 by 1972. The first volume of *African Abstracts* came out in 1950 with 618 abstracts; the 1969 volume contained 1033 abstracts. In 1929 the first issue of the quarterly Bibliography had 620 entries; the 1970 number contained 2,300. The classified card index in 1970 had an estimated 75,000 titles. The Institute's own publications contributed significantly to this growth of information. By 1970 it had published 82 general monographs, 8 Handbooks of African Languages, 10 monographs on African Languages. One of its special concerns was to overcome the compartmentalisation of knowledge which resulted from colonial boundaries. The North Bantu language survey was achieved by international collaboration between the UK, France and Belgium; the African Marriage Survey likewise; the Fulani Research was a case of Franco-British collaboration.

Each of these ventures show the Director and Council of the Institute anticipating new needs. By 1959 the needs of the African Universities were felt. A series of International Seminars in Africa were organised for the next 10 years to bring their research and teaching staff together from different parts of Africa.

The journal *Africa* clearly bore the mark of its editor's hand. It was highly readable, but escaped the pitfalls of provincialism which await most regional journals. As it always carried articles of great importance, it was read and contributed to by professional linguists and anthropologists as a source of theoretical advances. Many of its best articles had to be bound and sold separately as memoranda. It was partly due to the scholarly excellence of this journal that problems and formulations on African work dominated the horizon of anthropology on an international scale during this period.

As the main architect of this fine record of scholarly publication Daryll Forde was undoubtedly the most influential sponsor of African studies. Several projects which the Institute started were laid aside when their scale grew beyond its scope and other institutions had appeared to take on its original functions. For example, from 1928 it had initiated competitions for essays in vernacular African languages. This project was ended in 1950 because other openings for vernacular writing had developed and African literature was well established. *African Abstracts* were closed down in 1969 because the number of articles on Africa had so vastly increased that a much larger organisation would have been needed to keep pace with the abstracting. This growth of African studies which testifies to the Institute's achievement of its aims, also explains why over the period 1939-70 it did little more than double its subscribing membership. In 1930 *Africa* was the only journal in the field appearing regularly; by 1970 over 100 other journals regularly covered some aspect of African studies. The very success of African studies in general constituted in the last decade problems for the Director of the International African Institute which must have matched in difficulty those which he faced in getting the expanding Institute funded and thriving in the first decade of his tenure.

When an institution meets a special need of the time, and when the stature of the man in office matches the need, marvellous things can be achieved. An indication of the special quality of the achievements outlined above

is the record of Daryll Forde's own contributions to African research, His fieldwork among the Yako of Cross River in 1935 systematically analysed the ecology and organisation of the hitherto unstudied type of social system. From that base have grown many other studies of double-unilineal descent. His special concern in fieldwork was to present quantitative validation of the analysis proffered. In the controversies of the period of the status of anthropology, Daryll Forde's commitment was unequivocally towards science, measurement, controlled comparison. It was ahead of his time to have united a strong concern for ecology, demography and economics with his work as a social anthropologist. Whereas it is an advantage to be one jump ahead in administration, in academic work the advantage is doubtful. If he were writing his own research material now, when the whole world accords priority to these very concerns, his intentions would have been even better supported and his influence on the growing subject even stronger. As it was, honours came to him for his work as a scholar as the brief summary of the development of his career shows.

All Africanists alive today have cause to be grateful for the life of Daryll Forde.

Daryll Forde was Lecturer in the Department of Geography, University College, London. He returned to University College in 1945 as Professor of Anthropology, to create a new Department of Anthropology there. The previous year he succeeded Sir Reginald Coupland as Director of the International African Institute, at a time when its future was in doubt, since its activities had virtually ceased during the war. He reestablished the international scholarly network of the Institute and obtained support from UNESCO and other organisations including the International Missionary Council, the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation for research projects and International African seminars.

He served on the councils or committees of many British and international organisation, including the Royal Anthropological Institute, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Social Science Council, International Congress of Africanists, and the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara. He held visiting lectureships at the University of California at Berkeley, at Yale and at Harvard. In 1970 he was awarded the Royal African Society's Wellcome medal for distinguished service to Africa.

Daryll Forde's major publications include:-

- 1934 Habitat, Economy and Society
- 1941 Marriage and the Family Among the Yako of S.E. Nigeria
- 1946 Native Economies of Nigeria (with Richenda Scott)
- 1950 African Systems of Kinship and Marriage (ed. with A.R. Radcliffe-Brown)
- 1950 The Ibo and Ibibio Speaking Peoples of S.E. Nigeria (with G.I. Jones)
- 1951 The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of S.W. Nigeria
- 1954 African Worlds (ed.)
- 1956 Efik Traders of Old Calabar (ed.)
- 1964 Yako Studies
- 1967 West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century (ed., with Phyllis Kaberry)

MARY DOUGLAS

THE DENNIS STANFIELD AWARD

The Dennis Stanfield Memorial Fund has been established to assist persons of scientific merit to undertake botanical research on tropical African plants. The first award of £100 will be made in June 1974. Applications should reach the Executive Secretary of the Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ by March 1974.

The award is to be used for such items as travel, equipment, books, computing time, research expenses and the like, in connexion with any aspect of botanical research. The award is open both to amateurs and professionals; preference will be given to work relevant to West Africa.

Applicants should state full name, address, age, present position, relevant qualifications and publications and the names and addresses of two referees. They should also give a brief statement of the proposed research and the purpose for which the award would be used, and should refer to any similar applications made elsewhere.