

The following papers were read and discussed: 'Problems of traditional history in Nigeria with special reference to the history of the Eastern Region' by Professor K. O. Diké, Vice-Principal and Professor of History, University College, Ibadan; 'King Jaja of Opobo in exile' by B. H. Atkinson, Assistant Regional Director, British Council, Enugu; 'Urhobo traditional history' by the Rev. E. Arawore, St. Thomas's Anglican Parsonage, Uwheru; 'The problems of relative and absolute chronology in Benin history' by Dr. R. E. Bradbury, Anthropologist, Scheme for the Study of Benin History and Culture, Benin City; 'Preliminary impressions of Old Oyo' by F. Willett, Surveyor of Antiquities to the Federal Government and Curator of the Ife Museum, Ife; 'International relations in the Western Sudan during the nineteenth century' by H. F. C. Smith, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University College, Ibadan; 'Fowell Buxton and the British "civilizing" mission of 1841-2' by Dr. C. C. Ifemesia, Lecturer in the Department of History, University College, Ibadan.

Approaches to African Literature

THIS booklet, recently published by the Ibadan University Press,¹ contains the text of two papers read at the 1959 Annual Conference of the West African Library Association and reading lists of African literature. The first paper, 'Non-English Writings' by Janheinz Jahn, gives a brief survey of creative writing in the vernacular, tracing the beginnings of modern African literature from Thomas Mofolo in Basutoland to the modern poets and novelists, writing mostly in French, whose work expresses the concept of *négritude*. Mr. Jahn makes the point that the number and quality of African authors are in direct relationship to the political situation and the educational level in the different African countries.

In the second paper J. A. Ramsaran deals with 'English Writings in West Africa'. He emphasizes the need for a general bibliography of African literature, by which he means 'literature written in any language by anybody so long as it deals with Africa'. Specialized works such as indexes, abstracts of critical essays on African literary themes, and guides to books on African art and to background books that will supply historical and sociological data would also be valuable. He suggests also a 'Who's Who' of Africans and non-Africans who have contributed, or are still contributing, to African literature, a closer cultural liaison between English speakers and West Africans, more conferences of African writers and fuller reports of their meetings, and, finally, 'a self-conscious society of authors and their readers to express themselves through their own journals and little reviews'.

The reading lists are classified under two sections, Non-English and English writings. The first is subdivided into French Africa, Belgian Congo, South Africa, and East Africa: the second into anthologies, periodicals, special African literature issues, fiction, and miscellaneous. The majority of the books listed are recent, few of them being earlier than 1950.

African Authors' Conference

A CONFERENCE of 89 African authors from the Union, the High Commission Territories, and from the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was held at Atteridgeville, Pretoria, from 7 to 9 July 1959. It was also attended by educationalists, missionaries, and publishers, and had been convened at the request of the 1956 Johannesburg Conference on Christian Literature for the Bantu of Southern Africa to consider all aspects of African authorship and to devise means of assisting African authors.

The following papers were read and discussed: 'The Author' by the Rev. J. J. R.

¹ *Approaches to African Literature*, Ibadan University Press, 1959. 2s. 6d.