

OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR WILLIAM MILLER MACMILLAN

William Miller Macmillan died on 24 October 1974 in his ninetieth year. He was a distinguished pioneer in African Studies and a founder member of ASAUK. His father, a Free Kirk Minister, spent fourteen years in Madras but Macmillan was born in Aberdeen after his parents had returned to Scotland. When he was six years old, his father established himself in Cape Colony where he ran a house for students of Victoria College, later to become the University of Stellenbosch. Macmillan himself spent two years at the College but left in 1903 to become one of the first Rhodes Scholars at Oxford from which he graduated in History in 1906. (Considering that Rhodes died in March 1902, no time was lost in putting his benefaction to work.) After some years in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Berlin preparing for the Free Kirk Ministry, Macmillan did not follow his father into the church but in 1911 became Lecturer in a new Department of History and Economics at Rhodes University College Grahamstown, where he remained until his appointment to the Chair of History at Witwatersrand.

His years at Grahamstown set a pattern for all his subsequent work: the combination of historical investigation of the origins of contemporary social and economic problems with personal enquiry 'in the field', critical evaluation of official reports and discussion with civil servants and others 'in a position to know'—to use one of his own phrases. On this basis he then analysed possible remedies. No student could easily have found a teacher with a greater sense of 'relevance'. Beginning with studies of the 'Poor White' problem in 'Economic Conditions in a Non-Industrial South African Town' (1915), developed and extended in 'The South African Agrarian Problem' (1919) he soon moved on to what was then customarily described as 'The Native Problem', and perhaps as a result of a series of articles in the press was invited by Hertzog to investigate conditions in Herschel in the Cis-Kei. That report was not published by the South African government but its substance, with that of the earlier pamphlets, is to be found in 'Complex South Africa' (1930).

The chance of being entrusted with editing the papers of Dr. John Philip, the redoubtable Superintendent of the London Missionary Society's stations in South Africa in the early nineteenth century resulted in Macmillan's best known works, 'The Cape Coloured Question' (1927) and 'Bantu, Boer and Briton' (1929). Apart from their merits, not the least of which is their zest and readability, they have acquired an additional value owing to the destruction in 1933 of the Philip Manuscripts as a result of a fire in the University Library. More recent historians have, however, been less inclined to cast Philip in so central a role.

In England, in 1916, Macmillan had been in touch with some of the Round Table and much of the work in the two books had been done in 1926–7 when he was made an 'Associate Member' (what would now be called a Visiting Fellow) of All Souls College, Oxford, and saw more of Curtis, Coupland and Amery. John Hargreaves, in his Presidential address to ASAUK in 1973 (printed in *African Research and Documentation* no. 3, 1973) described the project of some of the Round Tablers (and the Rhodes Trustees) for the establishment of a Centre of African Studies in Oxford and its relationship to the decision to initiate the *African Survey*. Macmillan had made contacts with the Colonial Office through Amery and Ormesby-Gore and more especially Drummond Shiels and had favourably contrasted the officials with whom they put him in touch with his experiences in South Africa. Had also travelled in East Africa (and met Cameron and Philip Mitchell) and was increasingly drawn to African Studies outside the Union, where his public activities led in 1912 to a request from the Union Government to his Vice-Chancellor to bring him 'under control', which just failed to produce their joint resignation. His contacts with Curtis led him to hope that he might be chosen to carry out the African Survey—then apparently expected to result in an introduction to African problems suitable for the general reader. But it seems that his association with the project was considered certain to endanger South African co-operation. Lord Hailey, however, did offer a fee for the study of African problems on which with some help from the Rhodes Trust, Macmillan had embarked and this became the basis of 'Africa Emergent' (1938), a book which can still be read with profit by those seeking to understand the climate of ideas about British policies and practice in Colonial Africa in the thirties and forties.

Macmillan resigned his Witwatersrand Chair in 1933 and although dignified with the title Research Fellow received no salary in that capacity. He continued his travels in Africa (Rhodesia and the Gold Coast) and a visit to the West Indies in 1935 resulted in 'Warning from the West Indies' (1936) designed to highlight the depressing lessons the oldest British colonies offered to Africa. Three lectures on the Heath Clark foundation published, with others, as 'Europe and West Africa' (1940) reiterated some earlier points: the need to profit from South African experience in the taxation of West African mining, and the limitations of 'peasant' agriculture, but also offered in 'The Peculiar Case of the Gold Coast Colony' an example of Macmillan's insights at their brilliant best. This was, in fact, his last purely African publication. He worked for the B.B.C. in the early years of the war and from 1943 to 1946 was Chief Representative in West Africa of the British Council. For the next eight years he was Director of Studies at St. Andrews and after his retirement there returned to the West Indies for a final year as Professor of History at Mona. 'The Road to Self-Rule' (1959) took up again many of the themes of his earlier work and presented his rather individual version of the 'Empire to Commonwealth' theme. The posthumously published 'My South African Years'—edited from

reminiscences recorded on tape—contains some account of his public and political activities in South Africa in the twenties.

If a teacher is to be judged by his pupils, a historian who could number among them in the short span of 20 years University teaching in South Africa, Margaret Ballinger, Herbert Frankel, Dick de Kiewiet and Lucy Sutherland must surely have been a great teacher, however unorthodox. Macmillan was an attractive personality, with a fair share of Scots 'canniness' and insight as well as the impetuous temperament commonly associated with red hair. He sought above all to avoid dogmatic preconceptions and to my mind there is a freshness and perceptive insight in most of his work which makes it attractive and interesting to re-read today.

K. E. ROBINSON

PROFESSOR MAX GLUCKMAN

Professor Max Gluckman, Research Professor in Social Anthropology in the University of Manchester died on April 13th in Jerusalem, where he was Lady Davis Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University. He was 64. He was a founder member of the A.S.A. U.K. For several years Max Gluckman had endured a succession of illnesses which he combatted with such cheerful vigour that there was little diminution apparent in his publications, his passionate intellectual rigour and his capacities to stimulate and reciprocate friendship. The number, range and variety of his friendships were vast. His warmth, his generosity of mind, his interest in the work and problems of others and his desire to assist and enlighten converted professional or teaching encounters into personal relationships which thrived on creative discussion and argument. He propelled people into response. He had a remarkably accurate and retentive memory which stored, for appropriate recollection, the personal incidents of his friends' lives as well as their printed or spoken words. This capacity of his could be devastating in intellectual dispute but rewarding in friendship; he readily remembered some piece of sloppy expression or thought and one's children's birthdays.

Max Gluckman was born in South Africa and studied social anthropology, logic and law at the University of Witwatersrand. He came to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in 1934 and completed his doctorate there in Social Anthropology in 1936. He later assumed British citizenship but remained proud of his African origins, though he consistently loathed and worked against the segregationist policies of the South African government. He transformed his early social experience into one of analytical strength which pervaded all work—that in order to comprehend cultural differences and even apparent barbarities we must study the social systems in which they exist. Motivated by moral and intellectual conviction he was constantly active, in close partnership with his wife Mary, in the movements for colonial freedom, especially in opposition to the Central African Federation, for the independence of Kenya and against the present illegal regime in Zimbabwe. He demonstrated this, typically, not merely in speaking and in contributions but humanely. Several of Africa's leaders were welcome houseguests of him and Mary when they were unknown students. With good reason, he resented, and was engaged in refuting, the more ignorant canards about colonialist anthropologists which have recently marred scholarly debate.

After Oxford he returned to South Africa to carry out field research. In 1939 he joined the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute of which he became Director in 1941. At the Institute he not only carried out a great deal of research and coordinated more but he attracted round him a number of brilliant young researchers. This ability to attract and to stimulate others continued throughout his life. In 1947 he took up a Lectureship in Oxford. In 1949 he moved to Manchester to the University's first Chair of Social Anthropology as Head of the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology. He had had doubts about moving, because he had found the research orientation of the Institute at Oxford very congenial, but, in the event, he found a lifetime's full and happy interest in Manchester. He was also able to indulge his interests in hill walking in the Peak and Lake Districts and his enthusiasm for first class football and cricket. Certainly what are now the separate and much larger departments flourished under his guidance. He set out first of all to establish a research school. He attracted good students and enthused members of other departments especially through his use of the working research seminar. Max Gluckman utilised the seminar as a forge in which data and ideas were hammered and honed. He was at his exciting best in that context. He possessed the sociological and historical sweep of mind which could relate the particular to the general without losing the specificity of the particular. He could take a paper of jumbled field-data and extract a problem from it which generated creative discussion in such a way that the author's own understanding of his data was augmented. Many influential monographs and papers of the 'fifties and 'sixties owe their intellectual edge to the re-creation they underwent in Gluckman's seminars. Only the pretentious and pompous ever suffered.

In the mid-sixties he re-visited Barotseland and added a reappraisal to his study of 'The Judicial Process among the Barotse'. But, from then on, he diverted a great deal of his attention to directing a social anthropological study, financed by the Bernstein Foundation, of Jewish immigrants into Israel. Eight separate studies have been completed and he had just completed the introduction to one of the last of them before his death. He was a dominant influence on the creation and development of social anthropology in Israel.