

Notes and News

The Institute of Race Relations

THE Institute of Race Relations (36 Jermyn Street, London, S.W. 1) was founded in 1958 'to promote, encourage and support the study and understanding of, and the exchange of information about, relations between different races and peoples and the circumstances and conditions in which they live and work' and 'to consider and advise upon any proposals or endeavours to improve such relations, circumstances and conditions'.

The Institute sponsors research and publications and acts as a centre for discussion and information. The Tropical Africa Study Project, on human problems arising from the impact of industrialization in Africa, has already been mentioned in *Africa* (April 1960, p. 186). The Institute has also published three historical works on the development of race relations in Central Africa, which it hopes to follow up with similar studies of other regions, and a two-volume history of the Congo is in progress. Race Relations paper-backs are written by experts for the general reader: recent additions to the series include: *South Africa—Two Views of Separate Development*, by S. Pienaar and Anthony Sampson; *Kenya—the Tensions of Progress*, by Susan Wood; *White Man*, by Gustav Jahoda; and *South Africa and World Opinion*, by Peter Calvocoressi. The journal of the Institute, *Race*, is at present published twice a year, and the monthly *News Letter* gives a brief résumé of world happenings with a more detailed treatment of South, Central, and East Africa, and endeavours to provide a clearing-house for information on lectures, books, and research about race relations. The Institute welcomes communications from all universities and other institutions with race relations programmes.

African Languages and Area Center at Michigan State University

A CENTRE for African Studies at Michigan State University, East Lansing, was established in July 1960 under the direction of Dr. Eugene Jacobson. The teaching of African languages is a major function of the centre and it is at present concerned particularly with Nigeria. Reading and speaking courses in Yoruba and Ibo are now being offered and courses are being prepared in Bini, Twi, and other West African languages. Language teaching is conducted by Dr. Roger Wescott and Dr. Hans Wolff. Other courses include: African Cultures, History, Political Systems, and Regions, and Economics and Geography of Africa, for which students enroll in the various departments of the University. Teaching is at both graduate and undergraduate levels and it is planned to make available in 1961-2 fellowships and graduate assistantships in African Studies. Additional information may be obtained from: The Director, African Language and Area Center, Room 10A, Wells Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Création d'un Centre Tchadien pour les Sciences Humaines

UN Centre Tchadien pour les sciences humaines a été créé en janvier 1961, relevant du Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale de la République du Tchad. Il est administré par un Conseil et la Direction Scientifique a été confiée à Monsieur Jean-Paul Lebeuf, Maître de Recherche au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique de Paris et Collaborateur Scientifique de l'Institut de Sociologie Solvay, Bruxelles.

Ce centre a vocation pour entreprendre les recherches et assurer les publications dans le domaine des sciences humaines, continuer les recherches commencées et en entreprendre

de nouvelles, rassembler les archives d'origine africaine, former les chercheurs spécialisés dans les sciences humaines, faire appel à des chercheurs scientifiques de tous pays. Il peut proposer toutes mesures concernant la sauvegarde des monuments naturels, des sites et des monuments de caractère historique, scientifique, artistique ou pittoresque, de même qu'il a à sa charge l'inventaire et le classement des objets d'intérêt préhistorique, archéologique, historique et ethnographique de la République du Tchad. Le Directeur Scientifique peut entretenir des relations suivies avec les autres Centres de Recherche Scientifique, afin de faciliter la coordination des recherches relatives aux sciences humaines en Afrique, et il est habilité à étudier la création du futur Musée Tchadien.

The First West African Languages Congress, Legon, Ghana

THE first of a series of three projected West African Language Congresses was held at the University College of Ghana from 26 to 28 March, in conjunction with the Institute of African Studies, University College of Ghana. These congresses have been made possible by a Ford Foundation grant to the West African Languages Survey, which began its work in 1960.¹ The meeting at Legon was attended by about one hundred persons, about a quarter of whom were professional linguists and phoneticians, the remainder being Africans associated with language work and missionaries who had made serious studies of various West African languages. The Congress was splendidly entertained at a cocktail party organized by Dr. Nana Nketsia for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ghana Government.

The meeting was attended by Professor Joseph Greenberg, who was Chairman, and Professor Welmers, from the U.S.A., and by Professor J. Berry, Dr. R. C. Abraham, and Mr. David Abercrombie, Head of the Department of Phonetics, University of Edinburgh, from the U.K.; Professors Alexandre and Lacroix of Paris, and Professor Köhler of the University of Cologne, came from Europe. MM. Houis, Sauvageot, and Manessy represented the linguistic section of IFAN, Dakar, and the University of Dakar. The Phonetics Department of the University College, Ibadan, and a group of students also attended. The Congress was divided into plenary sessions, at which papers were read, and working seminars—one each on the Chadic, Central Branch, Kwa, and Gur groups—in which the specialized problems of translation, orthography, and the classification of linguistic data were discussed.

Professor Greenberg presented a critique of glottochronology as applied to the study of the Bantu languages. Professor Welmers, now of the University of California, Los Angeles, led a series of discussions on the study of the tone systems of West African languages. Among the other papers given were: Professor Köhler on his classification of the Gur languages; Professor Robert Armstrong on the relation of Yoruba and Idoma; Professor Alexandre on the present state of African linguistic studies in France; M. M. Houis on the criterion of tonality in Soso compound nouns; and Mr. I. G. Wilks, of the Extramural Department, University College of Ghana, on 'Ghana and Mande: some historical and linguistic considerations'.

About a third of the papers were in French, and about a third of the participants spoke French. It must be said that the language problem was severe and reflected the relative isolation in which most workers in West Africa work. It is a prime objective of the West African Languages Survey to help in some measure to break down this isolation. It also aims to train Africans in linguistic work, to build up the West African Universities as repositories of knowledge and centres for the study of local languages, and to increase the knowledge of West African languages by regional surveys, by comparative historical studies on a restricted basis, and by descriptive and lexical studies of important but second-rank languages.

¹ See *Africa*, July 1960, p. 275.