

**1957 Whitewash: Africanist and Black Traditions in the Study of Africa**

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## 1957 Whitewash: Africanist and Black Traditions in the Study of Africa

*African problems and developments are sources of news and interest in the United States to an extent not known before. Racial tension and the policy of Apartheid in the Union of South Africa, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, the Federation issue in British Central Africa, the dramatic emergence of new states in British West Africa, African trusteeship and colonial issues, problems involving strategic interests and economic development, and the growing uneasiness about possible Soviet Aspirations in Africa—these and other matters focus attention on the Continent.*

William O. Brown, "Report to the Ford Foundation," November 1953.<sup>1</sup>

*The coming of independence to Ghana, has I believe, had a profound psychological effect on some American Negroes. It has stimulated in them a sense of pride in their Africa past. Among these individual are intellectuals, professional men and women and business men. Their numbers are as yet small but perhaps no smaller relatively than the numbers of Americans of European descent who have a special interest in Africa.*

Alan Pifer, Carnegie Corporation foundation, Ibadan, 1958<sup>2</sup>

*"The [African Studies] Association, through its Committee on Research, would be happy to aid you in any way it can."*

Melville Herskovits, (first) President of the African Studies Association,  
To the Hon. John Forster Dulles, Central Intelligence Agency, February 20, 1958<sup>3</sup>

### Prelude: Unfulfilled Prophecies

Opening the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of a major African Studies Center a little over ten years ago, a young scholar stood up and boldly went where no elder Africanist expected:

"African studies, as constructed in the North American academy over the past four decades,"

Michael West proclaimed, "is dying."<sup>4</sup> Indeed it was time, he said, to celebrate the death throes

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<sup>1</sup> William O. Brown, "The African Situation: Proposals for an African Research and Training Program," private report to the Ford Foundation, November 1953, Ford Foundation archives (FFA), Report Files, Report #003184. Brown took the African threat to the white man seriously; his 1960 ASA Presidential Address was on the topic of "The Outlook for the White Man in Africa, Particularly as Settler," a group he deemed to be "a primary target of the African revolution, and may well be one of its victims" (*African Studies Bulletin*, 3, 3, 1960, pp. 1-11, citation p. 3).

<sup>2</sup> "American Interest in Africa, A lecture given before the Philosophical Society, University College, Ibadan, on 16 November, 1958. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1958). Filed in Columbia University Archives, Carnegie Corporation (foundation), Staff Files, Alan Pifer Speeches, 1958-1966, Box 15.14.

<sup>3</sup> Herskovits Papers, Northwestern University Archives, Box 75/5.

<sup>4</sup> Delivered by Michael West, this was a joint statement by the conference organizers, William G. Martin and Michael O. West; see their "The Decline of the Africanists' Africa and the Rise of New Africas," *ISSUE*, 33, 1, 1995, pp. 24-26, citation p.24.

of the field, and look forward to “something radically new in its place.”<sup>5</sup> This proved to be poor prophecy: the years since then have left this prediction quite unfulfilled.

The call for the reconstruction of African studies was hardly novel at the time. As elders among us may remember, US Africanists in the 1980s and early 1990s were regularly confronted by insurgent students who--to pick just one incident at random--would march on their campus’ international studies building and demand the total transformation of the “white colonial outpost” that was the African Studies Center. The anti-apartheid, radical hip-hop, and Afrocentric movements that fueled such protests were, moreover, but one of three such waves in the twentieth century: the 1920s and 1960s had seen similar outbursts against the professional traducers of African peoples. In each instance, the study of Africa was recast in the interregnum.

### **1957 and the Founding of the African Studies Association (USA)**

1957 would prove to be the most pivotal of these recastings in the last century: it not only created a dominant, Africanist paradigm in the US and increasingly across the world, but it displaced competing, transnational traditions. The hallmark event was the founding of the African Studies Association at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York on March 22-24—two weeks after the celebration of Ghana’s independence and six months before Sputnik. From this meeting would emerge a determinedly professional cadre of scholars and institutions dedicated to a new order for studying Africa and African peoples. For those involved this was an act without precedent. As Philip Curtin, the ASA’s president claimed in 1970, “At the end of the Second World War North America had no real community of scholars specializing on Africa.”<sup>6</sup> In the early 1980s Immanuel Wallerstein, another former ASA president who first went to Africa in the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.26.

<sup>6</sup> Philip D. Curtin, “African Studies: A Personal Statement,” *African Studies Review*, 14, 3, 1971, pp. 357-68, citation p. 358.

late 1950s, similarly recalled: “scholars in the United States, who prior to 1945, had virtually been one man--Melville Herskovits [the ASA’s first President]--now began to invade every remote corner of the continent.”<sup>7</sup>

By almost any measure these invasions had impressive results: between 1957 and the mid-1970s hundreds of new scholars of Africa been dispatched to Africa, received degrees in North America, and found employment. The number of full (voting) fellows of the ASA accelerated from 35 in 1957, to 291 fellows and 866 total members in 1960 (ASA 1960:36), to 1400 members in 1970.<sup>8</sup> (Real power was vested in the elite “Fellows” category, which was designed to bar any control of the ASA by “action groups, dilettantes, or faddists.”<sup>9</sup>) A national—indeed international—network of African Studies centers and programs shortly emerged, with the number of major programs<sup>10</sup> in the US numbering well over thirty by the early 1970s.<sup>11</sup> New journals dedicated to the study of continental Africa blossomed as well, with the first issues of *African Historical Studies* (later the *International Journal of African Historical*

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<sup>7</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Evolving Role of the Africa Scholar in African Studies,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines*, 17/1, 1983, pp. 9-16, citation p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Edna Bay, “African Studies,” in National Council of Area Studies Associations, *Prospects for Faculty in Area Studies* (Stanford, CA: American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, 1991, pp. 1-18), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> At its formation the voting rights and board membership were restricted to the College of Fellows. The view, as Carnegie’s Alan Pifer reported in recounting the meeting to his staff in a private memorandum, was that “bars to general membership should be low with real control vested in a college of fellows which would have stiff qualifications for membership”, with the credentials of aspiring fellows being screened by the board “to ensure the continued scholarly character” of the ASA and prevent its control by “action groups, dilettantes, or fadists” (Alan Pifer, Carnegie Corporation, Memorandum to Staff, March 29, 1957; Carnegie Corporation Foundation Archives, Box 386.1). The College of Fellows was only abolished in the wake of the 1969 revolt (see below).

<sup>10</sup> Definitions of what constituted “comprehensive centers” are highly subjective; the sources here follow the Africanist definition, with major programs by the mid-1960s being equated with university-recognized, multi-disciplinary, graduate programs with language and area courses and an administrative locus integrating research and instructional activities (see Richard D. Lambert, *Language and Area Studies Review* (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science (monograph no. 17), 1973, pp. 14-15). This excluded such pioneering efforts as those at Howard University (begun by William Leo Hansberry in 1923) or the work by St. Clair Drake and Lorenzo Turner at Roosevelt University.

<sup>11</sup> Lambert, *Language and Area Studies*, p. 15.

*Studies*) *African Studies Bulletin* (later *African Studies Review*), and *Research in African Literatures* appearing in 1958, 1968, and 1970 respectively.

If these developments were unthinkable in 1957, they were not without preparation or precedent. As US power expanded worldwide during World War II, the need for trusted and dedicated analysts of areas outside the Americas—of which Africa was but one—rapidly grew. Early postwar commissions tackled this problem by making the case for the creation of new units within universities dedicated to “non-European” areas of the world.<sup>12</sup> These calls fell upon deaf academic ears: neither faculty in the traditional disciplines nor university administrations saw any reason to construct new “areas studies” units. As Fenton recounted in 1947, “integrated area study threatens the regular departmental organization of the university since by its very nature it calls for a realignment of subject-matter fields and methodologies.”<sup>13</sup>

Given prevailing epistemological assumptions regarding knowledge, and ontological assumptions about Africa/ns, Africa was most difficult to accept as a legitimate object of study within the core disciplines. Colonized Africa had little history in the eyes of history departments, no modern states in the eyes of political scientists, and lacked the modern social-psychological characteristics that formed the subject matter of sociologists. There was one exception: anthropology, to which had been relegated the study of native peoples and cultures.<sup>14</sup> Yet even here, there was little concern with Africa in the United States’ leading universities during the 1920s, 1930s, and even 1940s—with the late exception as we shall see below of Melville Herskovits.

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<sup>12</sup> See W. N. Fenton, *Area Studies in American Universities: For the Commission on Implications of Armed Forces Educational Programs* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1947), and R. B. Hall, *Area Studies: With Special Reference to Their Implications for Research in the Social Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on World Area Research, 1947).

<sup>13</sup> Fenton, *Area Studies*, p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31, 1, 1989, pp. 134-161.

Against this background the initiative to father a cohort of scholars of Africa at leading universities came from forces outside the university and even the US government. First and foremost was the Carnegie Corporation foundation, which in 1925 had begun to fund projects in Africa under its British Dominions and Colonies program. By World War II grants had totaled over \$1.5 million (well over \$20 million in 2006 dollars).<sup>15</sup> As noted by E. Jefferson Murphy, the official historian of Carnegie's African program, at least two-thirds of this money went to the Union of South Africa, and "most of the grants to South Africa benefited whites."<sup>16</sup> The most notable project in the interwar period was the Carnegie Commission on Poor Whites in South Africa, followed by travel grants and support for the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). Where programs for Africans were established, these followed Andrew Carnegie's personal belief that Africans would benefit most from vocational training—following in the footsteps of Carnegie's support for Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes in the United States. This followed in turn from the prevailing presumption, as Murphy blithely notes, that black advancement, in Africa and America, was to take the path of "the acquisition of white, western culture," a path which "was expected to be vocationally oriented and gradual."<sup>17</sup>

African nationalists swept aside such expectations in the 1950s and the major US foundations responded. In 1953 Alan Pifer and Stephen H. Stackpole came to head Carnegie's British Dominions and Colonies Program. Pifer, who advanced to become Carnegie's President from 1967 to 1982, came to Carnegie from five years of heading the US Fulbright office in London. He would soon prove to be the driving force in coalescing US Africanists. In 1954 he made the first program grant to Melville Herskovits' program at Northwestern. By 1955 he had

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<sup>15</sup> Deflated by the consumer price index.

<sup>16</sup> E. Jefferson Murphy, *Creative Philanthropy. Carnegie Corporation and Africa, 1953-1973* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1973), p.20.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

formed an ad-hoc committee on Africa, drawn from scholars on the eastern seaboard, that met regularly in his office. From this group came the call to meet in March 1957 and create the ASA; the meeting was funded with a discretionary grant of \$6,500 (\$43,000 in 2006 dollars). It appropriately started with a cocktail party, with government, corporate, and foundation officials in attendance. Pifer was well pleased with the outcome. As he recorded privately to his staff, “After 12 years of discussion and several abortive attempts, a scholarly organization has been formed at last for the African field.”<sup>18</sup>

The Ford Foundation, with larger funds at its disposal and few ties to Europe’s colonial network, shortly took a more aggressive stance. In contrast to Carnegie’s early funding of Herskovits, Ford in 1953 chartered William O. Brown to survey the state of African studies in the United States. Brown had served in the OSS during the war, and had just left government service to take up a post as a Professor of Sociology at Boston University. He quickly started to create an African studies program at Boston and would be the ASA’s third President. His private report to Ford in November 1953 deftly painted the case for Africa’s accelerating importance to the United States, against which stood the pointed conclusion that “the United States might be termed the backward area in the field of African studies.”<sup>19</sup> This was an area where the US could, however, quickly lead, for existing centers, he assured Ford, “both in Europe and Africa, are poorly financed and practically all face uncertain futures.” Even in the United Kingdom, Brown reported to Ford, there were “not more than thirty-five professionals” working primarily on Africa and these were “confined predominantly to anthropological studies.”<sup>20</sup> His conclusions argued for the support of a small number of programs, primarily at the graduate

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Pifer, Memorandum to Staff, Carnegie Corporation, March 29, 1957, “African Studies Association Conference, Hotel Roosevelt, March 22-24<sup>th</sup>,” Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation files, African Studies Association 1957-1976, box 386.1.

<sup>19</sup> William O. Brown, “The African Situation,” p.7.

<sup>20</sup> William O. Brown, “The African Situation,” p.8.

level, and primarily in the under-represented social sciences. In 1954 Brown's own Boston program received a grant for \$200,000 (\$1.5 million in 2007 dollars).

Brown's assessment was clearly pitched against a major competitor: Melville Herskovits at Northwestern. Herskovits had begun his career as an anthropologist studying and measuring Native Americans and African-Americans;<sup>21</sup> in 1927 he was hired by Northwestern and became the first chair of its Anthropology Department. By the 1940s he had turned to the study of Africa, and in 1948 Carnegie had given him a grant of \$130,000 to establish courses and a lecture program related to Africa. Among the historically-white universities, Northwestern stood alone in such efforts, a fact that Herskovits pressed whenever expanded support for the study of Africa was mentioned nationally. Hearing in 1947 that the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils had recommended that support for centers for the study of Africa might be delayed until there was a "strong institution of African studies at some University," he wrote to the National Research Council (and circulated to others) a letter arguing that such a center was already "*a fait accompli* here at Northwestern, and I feel the fact should be made clear to all interested in development of the Africanist field."<sup>22</sup> As he proudly noted, Northwestern was not only offering courses and training students, it was recognized as a legitimate center by "Africanists in other countries" from the International African Institute of London to the Rhodes-Livingston Institute of Northern Rhodesia for whom Northwestern screened American

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<sup>21</sup> See William G. Martin and Michael O. West, "The Ascent, Triumph, and Disintegration of the Africanist Enterprise, USA," in William G. Martin and Michael O. West, eds., *Out of One, Many Africas: Reconstructing the Study and Meaning of Africa* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999, pp. 85-122); this chapter and volume provide a longer term background and assessment for the developments discussed in this essay; see also Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> Melville Herskovits to Dr. A. Irving Hollowell, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1947; Columbia University Archives, Carnegie Corporation Grant Files, Herskovits, Melville J, 1938-1963, Box 169.19.

candidates for research fellowships. In 1954 the Ford Foundation gave Herskovits \$235,000, and in 1957 he was elected as the first President of the African Studies Association

Herskovits was not however part of the core, white northeastern group that would subsequently forge the expansion of African studies programs across the country. Anti-Semitism lurked in the background; so too did a growing distrust of the domination of anthropology at Northwestern and in the study of Africa. Herskovits' Presidential Address in 1958 was carefully pitched to this broader audience; as Pifer privately noted to his staff, "[Herskovits's] address was marked by an objectivity not always characteristic of him in the past."<sup>23</sup> By 1960 the split between Herskovits and other Africanists at Northwestern was however open knowledge; the Ford Foundation was itself confronted by Northwestern Africanists organizing separately from Herskovits' operation. If the growing body of Africanists agreed on the necessity of anchoring and tenuring scholars in the disciplines, this did not prevent competition and conflict among scholars and their home disciplines. Indeed in these early years how Africa might be conceived, and how scholars would form an intellectual community, was yet to be worked out.

### **Competing Paradigms 1: The Colonial Frame and the Anglo-American Relationship**

African nationalist victories pushed the pace for marking these decisions, for independence immediately raised the geo-strategic importance of Africa for Europe and the US during the Cold War, and more concretely, the issue of the research and training of scholars of Africa—including on the continent itself. In these areas the United States stood in the shadow of the colonial powers, whose intellectual traditions remained quite strong in the 1940s, 1950s, and even into the 1960s. US scholars in 1957 recognized well their junior status. Indeed as the

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<sup>23</sup> Alan Pifer, 9/15/58 Memorandum to Staff, on "the African Studies Association-First Annual Meeting, Evanston Illinois-September 7-9," Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation files, African Studies Association 1957-1976, Box 386.1.

ASA's second President Gwendolen Carter recalls, at the New York meeting that created the ASA there was "vigorous" and "heated" debate over "whether American Africanists were sufficiently developed to run their own organization or whether it should be attached... to an already functioning British association like The International African Institute in London."<sup>24</sup>

Carter was an early founder of the ASA, became its second president, and eventually replaced Herskovits at Northwestern. She also was one of the very few women in the early, gendered, Africanist narrative. As late as the early 1970s, no more than ten percent of US Africanists were women.<sup>25</sup> As one Columbia-University, male professor put it in reviewing an early grant proposal of hers to Carnegie, gender should not be held against her: "I strongly favor support for Miss Carter's project.... Miss Carter is a cripple, but, on would say, completely unaffected by this, for she moves about in her car and elsewhere on crutches with complete good nature. She gets along easily with men."<sup>26</sup> Despite such a sterling endorsement, Carter did not get the grant, and Carter would much later publicly declaim on unpredictability of foundation support.<sup>27</sup>

In 1957 Carter shared however one key attribute with many of the younger men who became leading Africanists: she came to the study of Africa not from the study of native tribes, but from an interest in the study of nation-states—in her case as a student of international and Commonwealth affairs. In its original interwar and postwar formulation the Dominions and then

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<sup>24</sup> Gwendolen Carter, "The Founding of the African Studies Association," *African Studies Review*, 26, 3-4, 1983, pp. 5-9; citation p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Richard D. Lambert, *Language and Area Studies Review* (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science (monograph no. 17), 1973), p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation, Letter from J.B. Brenner, May 19, 1941. Box 90.2.

<sup>27</sup> Ford Foundation official Stackpole noted privately to colleagues that such public utterances "managed to instill hostility instead of sympathy" among audiences, for "other than the real whining she did regarding financial support and foundations... she had very little to say." Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation Grant Files, box 90.

the Commonwealth included of course only England, Ireland and the white settler Dominions of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Independence in Africa and Asia forced the issue of what would constitute an appropriate subject of study as colonial subjects became rulers of independent states. India and Pakistan became members of the Commonwealth in 1947, followed by Ceylon in 1948. For the older students steeped in the historically white, Anglo-American alliance, this was all too much: As Jan Smuts, Churchill confidante and Prime Minister of South Africa, put it at the time, "Ceylon a Dominion this year? Am I mad or is the World mad?"<sup>28</sup>

As this madness spread, both Britain and the United States were forced to confront the problem of training new Western experts and responding to African nationalist demands for the building of African universities. In the interwar period Carnegie had vetted its projects through the Colonial Office in London, and this continued after the war. As the African nationalist tide swelled, Carnegie sought to draw the new American interests into this network, organizing in 1958, for example, the first of several conferences that brought together American foundations, US university and government officials, and British aid officials. Following colonial traditions, no Africans were invited.<sup>29</sup> Successive conferences and meetings never led to any solid relationships: the British were too steeped, in Americans eyes, in defending the outdated colonial system and outdated conceptions of Africa, while the Americans appeared to the British as too rich, too aggressive, and too uninformed about the realities of Africa. As Britain withdrew from Africa and US interest in Africa accelerated, the study and funding of Africa passed into US hands—leading to even US funding of key British journals, scholars, and projects. With this went a sharp transition to the study of modernizing nation states and peoples, as opposed to a

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<sup>28</sup> Cited by James Barber, *South Africa's Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press), p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Murphy, *Creative Philanthropy*, 62.

British-centered paradigm formulated around the study of tribal societies or even ex-colonial societies.

## **Competing Paradigms 2: Decolonization and US-Settler Relationships**

As might be expected in an ex-colonial, white settler society with a large black population, US scholars and higher education officials had long debated the correspondence between their situation and those in other areas of white settlement. Among these South Africa stood out. This was not just a post-World War II phenomenon: felicitous ties had long linked the Carnegie Corporation, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and other US actors with settler officials and educators in southern Africa. Indeed one might award the title of being the first African studies center in the world not to the US claimant Northwestern (founded in 1948), nor even to the International African Institute in London (founded in 1926), but to the Center for African Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). As African studies emerged in the United States, this relationship with white scholars and institutions in Africa provided an alternative tradition and path to follow.

Carnegie had the longest ties with liberal white South Africa, and Ford would follow in its wake. In the 1920s Carnegie funded a historic commission into the ‘poor white’ problem,<sup>30</sup> and was a primary underwriter of racial social science research in South Africa, from the South African government’s own National Bureau for Educational and Social Research (under Columbia University graduate E. H. Malherbe)<sup>31</sup> to, more enduringly and celebrated, the South

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<sup>30</sup> See Morag Bell, “American Philanthropy, the Carnegie Corporation and Poverty in South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 3, 2000, pp. 481-504.

<sup>31</sup> See Brahm David Fleisch, “Social scientists as policy makers: E.G. Malherbe and the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research, 1929-1943,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 21, 3, 1995, pp. 349-372, which traces the racial science and policy making supported by Carnegie and the Bureau in this period.

African Institution of Race Relations (SAIRR) which received its first Carnegie Grant in 1929 for “research into the native problem and non-political activities.”<sup>32</sup> From the 1920s onward Carnegie (as well as even earlier, the smaller, black-oriented Phelps-Stokes fund) was a consistent supporter of the SAIRR.

While the SAIRR was focused upon supplying liberal English solutions to the racial “problem” posed by Africans and the Afrikaner regime, the rise of US funding about and in African institutions confronted two broader, intertwined scholarly paradigms in southern Africa: the study of native subjects in the formal colonial system tradition, and the comparative white Dominions tradition. These reflected the dual concerns of South Africa’s rulers: to claim membership among the white Dominions even as they dealt with their subject African population. Groups centered in different disciplines and even institutes came to have quite strong ties to the US Africanist enterprise as it emerged in the 1940s and 1950s.

The dominant tradition was anchored in the colonial concern with native tribes and their customs. This subject posed particular problems in areas of white settlement, and as colleges and universities were created for white students, departments dedicated to the study of local “native,” “Bantu,” or “African” life and languages emerged. The Center for African Studies at UCT would become the most prominent of these, leading to its claim of being the “oldest institution of its kind in the world,” having been established in 1920.<sup>33</sup> Its early directors reveal its social anthropology foundations: A. R. Radcliffe Brown (1920-1925), Isaac Schapera (1935-1950), and Monica Wilson (1952-1973). Accounts of the Center’s history trace its origins back to the

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<sup>32</sup> *Race Relations News*, June 1973; contained in Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation, Administrative Records, Box 15, Columbia University Archives.

<sup>33</sup> Nikolaas J. van der Merwe, “African Studies,” in Alan Lennox-Short and David Welsh, eds., *UCT at 150: Reflections* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979, pp. 62-66), p. 62.

1903-05 Milner Native Affairs Commission,<sup>34</sup> which fostered calls for the “scientific” study of the “natives” of South Africa. Post-World War I representations by the Royal Anthropological Institute to the local Coleman Committee on education led to the Committee’s recommendation that a school be established to tackle the “problems whose solution is necessary for the future safe development of a country in which and black live side by side.”<sup>35</sup> In 1920 the Smuts Government notified UCT that £3000 had been placed on the estimates for 1920-21, leading to the University’s establishment of the “School of African Life and Languages.” “The establishment of the school now provides,” the University Prospectus for 1921 noted, “the necessary correlation between University work and preparation for native administration.”<sup>36</sup>

If the British connection laid the foundation for local studies and institutes, separate channels to the United States opened up during the interwar and early post-World War II period. Between 1927 and 1959 Carnegie alone funded well over 200 visitors from South Africa to the United States. This endeavor was reformed and expanded in 1959 by Melvin Fox of the Ford Foundation, who deputized Vernon McKay to investigate and organize a conference in South Africa on the subject.<sup>37</sup> From these efforts would emerge the better-known US-South Africa Leader Exchange Program.

These visits deepened the US-South African network—and appeals for more financial support. On several visits in the late 1940s Isaac Schapera, for example, engaged Carnegie’s William Stackpole “at length” about upgrading the University of Cape Town’s School into an “African area institute.” Stackpole in 1948 asked in turn about merging UCT’s effort with those

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<sup>34</sup> Most notably by the President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in South Africa in 1905; see Leah Levy, “The School of African Studies, U.C.T.,” September 28, 1971, p.1 typescript (UCT library holding).

<sup>35</sup> Cited by Levy, “The School of African Studies,” p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> University of Cape Town, *General Prospectus 1921* (Cape Town: Townsend, Taylor and Snashall: 1921).

<sup>37</sup> Melvin Fox, Memorandum, January 4, 1960; Ford Foundation Archives, Box 002065.

of Stellenbosch University—something UCT did not pursue.<sup>38</sup> Schapera’s successor, Monica Wilson, had similar long ties to the Carnegie Corporation and other US foundations, and by the mid-1960s would be pursued by a US university for a highly-paid, distinguished professor post—by Binghamton University no less.<sup>39</sup> UCT for its part eventually gave Pifer an honorary Ph.d. in 1984. Wilson’s ties to the US reached much farther back to the time when her husband, Godfrey Wilson, was the first director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia in the late 1930s. The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was an even more direct colonial product: created and funded with government and mining company support, its stated purpose was to follow up on the work of “administrators, compound managers, and missionaries” who had “always made some study of the people among whom they work.”<sup>40</sup>

These ties solidified as US spending on African studies accelerated. A key role was played by white South African scholars who had settled in the US, from Professor C. T. Loran who left the Chair of the SAIRR and advised SAIRR from Yale in the 1930s on how to solicit American funding, to most notably C. W. de Kiewiet who played a pivotal, senior role in the early construction of African studies in the United States. de Kiewiet had received his B.A. from the University of the Witwatersrand and his Ph.d. at the University of London under William Macmillan, and became well known for his economic histories of South Africa that were solidly rooted in the comparative Dominion tradition.<sup>41</sup> In 1929 he left England for a post at the

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<sup>38</sup> Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation archives, Office of the President, Record of Interview 12/22/48, Cape Town, University of 1927-1955, Box 71.9.

<sup>39</sup> In 1967 Louise Sweet, Chair of Anthropology at Binghamton University, following informal inquiries by her colleague Nikolaas van der Merwe, wrote to Wilson to offer to nominate her for a distinguished professor post (\$180,000 in 2006 dollars). Carnegie Corporation files, BC880 B10-B12.

<sup>40</sup> Godfrey Wilson, “Memorandum to the Trustees of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute,” November 7, 1937, University of Cape Town (UCT) archives, Correspondence files, Rhodes Livingstone Institute, BC 880, B4.11.

<sup>41</sup> See Christopher Saunders, “The Writing of C.W. de Kiewiet's "A History of South Africa Social and Economic,"” *History in Africa*, 13, 1986, pp. 323-330

University of Iowa, and after World War II became a university administrator, eventually leaving Cornell University in 1951 to become President of Rochester University. From Rochester he worked closely with southern African scholars and US foundations, particularly with Melvin Fox at the Ford Foundation. When the Ford Foundation funded a critical committee to review who assess the state of African studies, in preparation for a series of major grants by Ford and other foundations, de Kiewiet chaired it (although Gray Cowan apparently wrote the final report).

The report, presented just before the first annual meeting of the African Studies Association in 1958, caused a major stir when it recommended that one major national center be established. While this proposal to create a US analogue to the British Institute of African Affairs in England was defeated, the recommendation matched the report's Anglo-South African perspective that "every Africanist should, of course... have a modicum of anthropological training." Scholars should nevertheless be trained in multiple disciplines, and be rooted in the disciplines rather than receive a degree from and work in a African Studies program or department.<sup>42</sup> In the report's view, "the established disciplines can provide standards or scholarship which are particularly valuable in a new field which otherwise might easily come to be dominated by charlatans and dilettantes."<sup>43</sup> The triumph of African nationalism and independence meant an even greater need for the new scholars and programs, since "after all, right now Africans have to recognize the realities of their own continent. To do this the best Western minds must still continue to serve them!"<sup>44</sup>

As for South Africa, the home to African studies on the continent, while it was "in some disfavor," this was "somewhat natural, yet not altogether sound. The distaste with which South

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<sup>42</sup> See L.G. Cowan, L. G., C. G. Rosberg, et al. "Report on the State of African Studies," Ford Foundation, 1958, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Cowan, "Report," p. 32

<sup>44</sup> Cowan, "Report," p. 36.

African policies are regarded should not lead to a scholarly boycott.” In the Committee’s view the real problem in 1957 was instead the possibility of “a fatal unrest amongst the Africans.”<sup>45</sup> In subsequent years de Kiewiet would work for and through the large US foundations, while keeping up extensive advice to British and especially South African colleagues, most notably Leo Marquard in Cape Town.<sup>46</sup>

In the end “unrest amongst the Africans” did prove fatal to these ties as South Africa was increasingly isolated, particularly after the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960. Even foundations began to withdraw, pressurized both by protestors in the United States and a recalcitrant South African regime that began to deny visas, for example, to even the most carefully chosen candidates for the US-South African Leadership Exchange Program.

USSALEP troubles were typical. It was administered by the African American Institute, which in the late 1950s came under attack in the black New York press for being

an organization, which, for all intents and purposes, had decided for itself what the American people should know about Africa and what Africans should know about America. By sending to Africa as part of the exchange program only white Americans... the Institute appears to have documented charges against it of being ‘a white folks organization to teach white folks about Africa in as safe a manner as white folks are prepared to learn.’<sup>47</sup>

After Sharpeville funders pulled the USSALEP from the African-American Institute, only to have the South African government stop issuing visas to many exchange candidates. The program officers professed puzzlement, since as they stated “we have not exchanged a single person whose visit to South Africa (or to America in the case of South African non-whites [sic]) has caused the South African Government the slightest embarrassment.” Indeed “if care is taken to guide carefully selected Non-White exchangees... Non-Whites can be trusted to visit the

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<sup>45</sup> Cowan, “Report,” p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> See the correspondence files contained in the UCT archives, Leo Marquard Papers, BC 587, C31.1-C49.

<sup>47</sup> “Gentle Imperialism for Africa,” *New York Age*, June 11, 1959 (contained in Ford Foundation files).

United States, and to remain tactful and discreet in their public utterances.”<sup>48</sup> While the white Americans sent to South Africa to consult their counterparts included not only scholars and even police Brigadiers (from the US south no less), black South Africans were invariably secondary school teachers, ministers, agriculturalists, etc. Even such careful attention could not salvage the legitimacy of such programs as the anti-apartheid movement grew in strength. As these pressures accelerated, and as US Africanists grew in number and stature, the advice and opinions of persons like de Kiewiet irrevocably withered.

### **Competing Paradigms 3: African-American and African Traditions**

The forging of African studies by British, South African, and US Africanist networks involved, by all official accounts, very few women and very, very few Africans or African-Americans. Certainly none existed among the academic and foundation elite that designed and drove forward the creation of the ASA and the major African Studies Centers that blossomed after federal funding gushed forth in the early 1960s. Made invisible by existing histories of the period, however, was a very real struggle to usurp rival past and potential black traditions in the study of Africa. Far from constructing something from nothing, the establishment of the Africanist enterprise would entail the deliberate displacement of transnational black scholarship—and with this the racialization and the parochialization of the study of Africa.

Obstacles to what can only properly be called the whitening of African studies came from many directions. As Michael West and I have argued elsewhere, following yet others,<sup>49</sup> the study of Africa had long been part of black intellectual life in the United States long before African studies was imagined at the historically-white universities and foundations. Redemptionist,

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<sup>48</sup> “Report on the progress and value of the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program Inc. 1958-1961” (marked “Confidential Not for Circulation”), p. 40; UCT Archives, BC880 J9.

<sup>49</sup> Martin and West, “The Ascent.”

vindicationist, and popular in its early orientation--and propelled from below by black student demands--the black study of an international Africa became steadily more widespread and sophisticated in the United States as self-trained historians gave way to university-educated scholars in the early part of the twentieth century.

Carter G. Woodson, a professional historian located outside the formal academy, led the way, and in 1915 he established the Association for the Study of Negro (now Afro-American) Life and History. The Association soon became the premier U. S. organization concerned with the study of the African American and other African-related experiences.<sup>50</sup> Journals published by these and other black intellectual networks, such as *The Journal of Negro History*, *The Journal of Negro Education*, *Phylon* and the more popular *Negro History Bulletin*, became the leading outlets for scholarly research on Africa in the United States.

It was the unheralded William Leo Hansberry, however, who led the charge inside the university. As Kwame Alford recounts, Hansberry arrived at Howard University in 1922 and against great odds, and with support of African American students inspired by the 1920s “New Negro” revolt, established an extraordinarily popular set of panafrikan courses.<sup>51</sup> Howard quickly became a center for such work, with Fisk and other historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) moving down a similar road. Indeed to study and teach about African in the first half of the twentieth century invariably meant working at black colleges and

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<sup>50</sup> See August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), and George Shepperson, “The Afro-American Contribution to African Studies,” *Journal of American Studies*, 8, 3, 1974, pp. 281-301.

<sup>51</sup> See Kwame Wes Alford, “A Prophet with Honor: William Leo Hansberry and the Origins of the Discipline of African Studies, (1894-1939), Ph.d. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1998; pp. 64ff., and Joseph Harris, “Profile of a Pioneer Africanist,” pp. 3-30 in Joseph E. Harris, ed., *Pillars in Ethiopian History, The William Leo Hansberry African History Notebook* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974).

universities—even Melville Herskovits and William O. Brown, to mention but two of the most influential early Africanists, found early employment at Howard.

In the 1930s Hansberry became however increasingly isolated within the University, having come under attack by scholars with better links to the historically-white universities, foundations, and increasingly powerful scholars like Herskovits and Brown. By the postwar period panafrikanists like Hansberry and his supporter Du Bois came under fierce attack even at Howard.<sup>52</sup> By the early 1950s E. Franklin Frazier dominated the Howard environment, and struggled to present his best case to private and public funders. Frazier was well known for his commitment to the separation of continental Africa and Africa-America; there was literally no room for Hansberry in the new African studies program being constructed by Frazier. Indeed Hansberry heard of the program's establishment from his students while he was in Liberia-- finding upon his return to Howard that the grant had been made under "arrangements which excluded my courses in African Studies from the program and therefore from any of the benefits accruing from the grant."<sup>53</sup>

Frazier was at this time the most prominent black scholar in the discipline of sociology and African studies; he would be elected to the presidencies of both the African Studies Association and the American Sociological Society. Still, Frazier--like Du Bois and others of his cohort—never held a permanent position in a white university.<sup>54</sup> With Frazier as head of its African program—surely the most extensive of any in the country across the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s--Howard might have been expected to be a strong competitor for the outpouring of private

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<sup>52</sup> See Alford, "A Prophet," especially ch. 4, pp. 59-101, and Martin and West, "The Ascent."

<sup>53</sup> Cited in Harris, "Profile of a Pioneer," pp. 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> Dan Green and Edwin Driver, "Introduction," in Dan Green and Edwin Driver, eds., *W. E. B. Du Bois on Sociology and the Black Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 1-48), pp. 44-45.

and public funding for African studies. Despite his best efforts, however, even Frazier faced insurmountable difficulties.

The problem was not that Frazier was a radical panafricanist or black nationalist. Indeed Ford Foundation officials recorded at the time quite strong impressions to the contrary. As was recorded in a 1954 review of a modest Howard request (\$15,000 per year over three years, shortly reduced to \$10,000/year), “Professor Frazier believes that a large proportion of the African students who come to Howard and a sizeable share of the American students there approach African problems on the basis of insufficient knowledge and from a biased emotional or political viewpoint. He deplores this approach.”<sup>55</sup> The aim clearly was to separate the new Howard proposal from Howard’s panafrican heritage represented by scholars like Hansberry and Chancellor Williams, among others. Thus “Professor Frazier declared firmly that Howard should eschew undertaking a flamboyant, highly publicized program under which it would loudly advertise itself as a great center of learning and research concerning Africa.”<sup>56</sup> Such an aim could hardly threaten the ambitions of Brown at Boston or Herskovits at Northwestern, particularly after they effectively defined the new field of African studies as a graduate-level endeavor from which Howard, with its focus on undergraduate programs, would be excluded by definition. Even Brown (who had been a classmate of Frazier’s at Chicago) could support a small grant, writing to Ford that Howard’s request “is a modest proposal and realistically focused within the framework of Howard University’s possibilities... the prospect is worth the small investment.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ford Foundation archives, Memo, From John M. Thompson, March 3, 1954, “Pre-grant Investigative Visit to Howard University, March 1, 1954,” Howard Grant file, PA54-49 file, reel 0402. Thompson was a consultant for the Division of Overseas Activities.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ford Foundation archives, William O. Brown to Leon Swayzee, Director Board on Overseas Training and Research, January 29, 1954, Report file 003340.

By the late 1950s the evaluations of Howard by northern Africanists and foundation officials turned harsher. Foundation officials like Pifer might speak in Africa of the importance of African-America in African studies, as our opening citation indicates; to encourage this at home was a very different matter. In a confidential supplement to the 1958 De Kiewiet “Report on African Studies,” the review committee of northern scholars laid out the Africanist position straightforwardly. Howard was, they noted, “the largest Negro University in the United States and, therefore, should have, according to Staff members, some special interest in Africa.” The report then proceeded step-by-step to refute any such claim. Thus “the members of the [Howard] staff, while evidently quite competent in their fields, particularly Frazier, did not appear to us to have any very strong drive nor were they particularly concerned with new fields.” Overall, “the whole impression of the program is one lacking in both dynamism and the realization of what is precisely going on in the field of African studies in the United States.”<sup>58</sup> The work being done at Howard “could equally well be done at any other university.”<sup>59</sup>

This conclusion applied, moreover, to all black universities: “the general conclusion about Howard would appear to resolve doubts in our mind about the prior claim of Negro universities to the preferred place in African studies in the United States.” Indeed, “the very existence of Howard as a Negro university is slowly disappearing.”<sup>60</sup> With Frazier’s passing in 1962, Howard was effectively deleted from the Africanists’ and foundations’ landscape. The panafrikan and transnational traditions that had been forged by black scholars like Du Bois, Hansberry, and Chancellor Williams had been cast out.

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<sup>58</sup> L. Gary [sic] Cowan, Carl B. Rosberg, Lloyd A. Fallers, and Cornelius w. de Kiewiet, “Confidential Supplement to ‘Report on the State of African Studies,’ August 1958, Ford Foundation archives, Report file 000625, p. 51-52.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p.53.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

#### Competing Paradigms 4: Africans and African Studies

One of the difficulties that Howard and other black universities presented to the Africanist agenda was the historic role of HBCUs in hosting African students; the historically-white universities welcomed very few African students throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Kwame Nkrumah, for example, was but one of many who attended and received a degree at a HBCU (in his case a B.A. from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1939). In the mid-1950s Howard alone attracted, as Ford Foundation officials noted in their own internal memoranda, “more native African students (50-60/yr) than any other American University.”

As African studies programs expanded, they sought to divert this flow to themselves. It had long been felt that African visitors had little to learn at black colleges. Herskovits in the late 1930s had even recommended that African visitors “should spend much more time on Indian [sic] reservations, since the Indian problem is much more comparable than our Negro problem.”<sup>61</sup> Under the new conditions of the 1950s Northern scholars, universities and foundation officials launched a steady campaign to reorient African students to the rising centers of African studies in the north. Studies by Howard scholars showing that African students faced considerable racism and adjustment problems in the United States were countered by studies contracted by the Twentieth Century Fund and the Social Science Research Council. The latter concluded that “adjustment problems” were few, and greater numbers of Africans should be brought to the US for study provided that “such candidates be placed in northern schools.”<sup>62</sup> New programs were subsequently set up and run through the Institute of International Education (IIE); as Herskovits had quite early advised the Ford Foundation, IIE it was far more reliable

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<sup>61</sup> Columbia University archives, Carnegie Corporation Grant Files, Office of the President, Record of Interview, September 1, 1938, Box 169.19.

<sup>62</sup> Africa Discussions, Melvin Fox Meeting with Mr. Alvin Zallinger, Boston University, May 28, 1956; Ford Foundation archives, Report file 003340.

than previous networks with ties to African-America, such as the Phelps-Stokes fund, which Herskovits argued still had a “missionary spirit and the conviction that ‘they know all the answers’.”<sup>63</sup>

US scholars and funders faced greater difficulties on the opposing side of the Atlantic as colonies became independent states, and new nations demanded control and expansion of their own institutions of higher education. Centers in the old colonial powers came under particular attack, most notably the International African Institute (IAI) in London. When Lord Hailey stepped down as IAI chair in 1947, the parting, paternalist words of his farewell address illustrated the nature of the affront to Africans: “we should use every endeavor to secure the collaboration of those Africans who attainments in scholarship may fit them to take a share in our work.” In the mid-1960s five former colonial governors, for example, still played prominent roles on the IAI’s Executive Council. As a confidential report by James S. Coleman to the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations noted at the time, the addition of a few Africans to the Executive Board did not prevent “strong resistance by many Africans scholars.” Vice Chancellor Kenneth Dike of the University of Ibadan might be Vice-Chairman of the IAI’s Council, but even he refused to attend any Council meeting held outside Africa—and thus attended none. Coleman interpreted this to Ford by saying that “to contend that all associations interested in African must be directed and centered in Africa, is sheer xenophobia” (this was not of course Dike’s position).<sup>64</sup> Most IAI critics were, in Coleman’s eyes, “Afrophiles and African nationalists” with a perverted belief in “inverted racism.”

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<sup>63</sup> Ford Foundation archives, Memo, Office of President, Record of Interview, June 4, 1948, Box 619.19 Grant files, Herskovits, Melville J. 1938-1963.

<sup>64</sup> James S. Coleman, confidential “Report on a Survey of African Studies,” October 2, 1966, p. 20. Ford Foundation archives, Report No. 000602.

US Africanists nevertheless expected to reap the benefits of coming on the African scene without the colonial baggage of Europe. Yet resistance by African scholars and institutions to domination by both Britain and the United States deepened over time, a story that remains to be written. Both vindicationist and panafricanist impulses were often carried back to Africa at new Centers or Institutes of African Studies in Africa itself. By the mid-1960s these included the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan (established in 1962), the Institute of African Studies at the University Ife (1962), the Institute of African Studies at the University at the University of Ghana (1962), the Institute of African Studies at the University College of Sierra Leone (1963), and the Center of African Studies at the University of Zambia (1966). At the vast majority of universities such units were never constructed, however, and by the late 1960s an open attack on the assumptions and practitioners of African studies, most notably anthropology, became very widespread.

Black South African scholars, banned for both racial and political reasons, played an important role in this process, with Archie Mafeje and Bernard Magubane publishing influential attacks in 1971.<sup>65</sup> Mafeje had been a student of both Monica Wilson at UCT who subsequently went to Cambridge where he received a PhD in Anthropology and Rural Sociology working with Audrey Richards. Attaining the Ph.d. was not without difficulty, for although Mafeje much later graciously wrote that Richards “never doubted my intellectual integrity,”<sup>66</sup> Richards was actually quite acerbic in her judgment of his dissertation in private. Writing to Monica Wilson in February 1968 she stated with exasperation that “I took a lot of trouble over Archie but reckon him as my most significant failure as a research student,” while he was specifically a “complete

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<sup>65</sup> See Bernard Magubane, “A Critical Look at the Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Central Africa,” *Current Anthropology* 12, 4–5, 1971, pp. 419-445, and Archie Mafeje, “The Ideology of ‘Tribalism,’” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9, 2 (Aug., 1971), pp. 253-261.

<sup>66</sup> “Conversations and Confrontations with My Reviewers,” *African Sociological Review*, 2, 2, 1998, online at [http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/asr2\\_2full/mafeje.pdf](http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/asr2_2full/mafeje.pdf), accessed October 19, 2007.

failure” in field work.<sup>67</sup> As for his dissertation, in July she told Wilson that it was “slight but very well written as are most of his things and as one of his outside examiners is an economic agriculturalist who does not know the material very well, I think it may be all right!”<sup>68</sup>

Mafeje’s reception in the North was not uncommon, and led not only to the rejection of anthropology at most new African universities, but a continuing effort, long past the period under review here, to escape the models and dictates of northern Africanists. As part of the global expansion of higher education in those decades, African universities often drew upon European or North American models--and indeed were often initially staffed by expatriates from England or France. Advanced training, particularly at the Ph.D. level and certainly in terms of theoretical and methodological advances, was, as the Mafeje case illustrates, was dominated by metropolitan centers for a very long time. Yet this only served to drive African scholars to establish their own research networks, agendas, centers, and perspectives. As Mkandwire has noted, the first, post-independence generation, "finding themselves scattered all over the continent, cut off from the research networks dominated by expatriates and isolated in small departments or institutions... strove to set up continental and sub-regional organisations."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, "this generation was self-consciously anti-neo-colonial and considered decolonisation of national institutions and even the intellectual terrain as major tasks."<sup>70</sup>

One facet of these endeavors was to close off local work and centers from the collection of exotica by visiting "academic tourists," as a common formulation put it. As a result, throughout the 1970s and 1980s African scholars and Euro-North American scholars often

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<sup>67</sup> Audrey Richards to Monica Wilson, February 24, 1968, UCT archives, Monica Wilson papers, BC880, B6.14

<sup>68</sup> Audrey Richards to Monica Wilson, July 16, 1968, UCT archives, Monica Wilson papers, BC880, B6.14.

<sup>69</sup>Thandika Mkandawire, “Three Generations of African Academics: A Note,” *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 1995, 3, pp. 9-12, citation p. 9.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

pursued their work quite separate from each other; key African research centers rarely engaged in collaborative research with northerners by choice. Yet as current discussions among African scholars note, this did not easily displace the domination of western concepts, units of analysis, disciplines, and epistemologies. As Paulin Hountondji has noted, "it would be enlightening to place the present state of affairs in Africa into its historical context and view present-day shortcomings and weakness in the field of knowledge as a result of peripheralization, that is, forced integration into the world market of concepts, a market managed and controlled by the North."<sup>71</sup> Kwesi Prah would go even further: "From the early beginnings of 'African studies' to the present, Western scholarship has dominated knowledge production and reproduction about Africa,"<sup>72</sup> with the result that "most of us have simply tagged on to these [European] traditions or eclectic mixtures of these. No robust or homegrown schools have been historically discernible."<sup>73</sup> The legacy of 1957 in this view has been very long indeed.

Others contest such assertions--as in Ife Amadiune's attack on Prah, where she uses the work of Cheik Anta Diop to construct an African sociological and historical tradition,<sup>74</sup> or Ben Magubane's titling of his latest work as *African Sociology*.<sup>75</sup> Whatever these differences, a broad consensus by scholars on the continent clearly emerged after 1957: the production of knowledge needed to take place in continental Africa, by Africans. And this inevitably reduced the panafrican impulses and conceptions present in 1957.

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<sup>71</sup>Paulin J. Hountondji, "Producing Knowledge in Africa Today: The Second Bashorun M.K.O Abiola Distinguished Lecture," *African Studies Review*, 38, 3, (December 1995), pp. 1-10; citation p. 5.

<sup>72</sup>Kwesi Prah, "African Scholars and Africanist Scholarship," *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 1998, 3/4:25-31; 25.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, 27.

<sup>74</sup>Ifi Amadiune, *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion and Culture* (New York: Zed Press, 1997), pp. 5-15.

<sup>75</sup>Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2000.

### **Reprise: hegemony and the parochializing and racializing of Africa**

On the US side of the Atlantic, Federal support quickly came to displace the formative efforts by foundations and the early white Africanist elite that surrounded 1957. NDEA fellowships and, especially, the significant and recurring funds that sustained the handful of major African Studies Centers, would create a cohort of faculty entrenched in the core disciplines at major public universities, and cohered by the African Studies Association. As the Africanist model consolidated, it led directly to the parochialization and racialization of the study of Africa. The very different paradigms practiced by colonial, settler and black scholarship had at least one trait in common: the study of colonial systems, settler dominions, and, especially, the global black world, all rested on the conception of a larger, transnational unit than the nation-state that modernizing Africanists embraced and that severed continental Africa from the world to the north and west. The construction of African studies also marked the racialization of the study of Africa, as academic resources were explicitly diverted away from black institutions and scholars to white ones. By the mid-1960s the trend was clear in both the US and Europe: Orientalism had been supplanted by white Africanism.

This state of affairs did not go unchallenged. Africanist scholars, institutions, and conceptual models would be challenged from below by radical panafricanists in the late 1960s, most famously at the 1969 ASA annual meeting in Montreal, where black scholars stormed the stage and demanded that African studies and the ASA be decolonized, and support the panafrican struggle against apartheid.<sup>76</sup> This was, as the Mafeje Affair at UCT and the Rodney riots in Jamaica illustrate<sup>77</sup> --to take but two widely separate examples--part of a broad, black international protest at the recolonization and racialization of the study of Africa in the postwar

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<sup>76</sup> See Martin and West, "The Ascent."

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

period. In the late 1980s and early 1990s echoes of these protests would be heard in yet another, minor, wave of black nationalist protest.

What 1957 created, however, would not be easily displaced. The events and maneuvers of the 1940s and 1950s did not simply reorient scholars and scholarship, but created a new paradigm suited to a post-independence, post-panafricanist, American century, a paradigm that managed to undermine and defeat rival traditions. The end of the colonial-anthropological and the settler African studies models is easy to understand retrospectively: they remained far too wedded to explicit colonial control and far too rigid to adapt to the demands for political much less intellectual decolonization. Growing African and African-American protest in the 1960s also largely bypassed, rather than captured, Africanist institutions, as new academic units and associations were created in continental Africa and in the new Black studies programs in the US. While a few black directors were briefly hired at US African studies programs after the 1960s protests (as would happen again 25 years later), African Studies thus entered the 1980s and 1990s fundamentally unchanged.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a more direct threat to the Africanist enterprise appeared from above: a decline in the interest and funding of African area studies on the part of foundations, universities, and even the Federal government. The increasing demand for African resources and the effects of 9/11, like Sputnik and the scramble for African commodities a half-century earlier, have more recently served to both mitigate the withering interest of the US in Africa and breathe new life into area studies. As our collective considerations demonstrate in other areas suggest, the models and paradigms produced in 1957 have thus had a more enduring power than might have been expected even ten years ago.

In unexpected ways however, 2007 mimics 1957: the power that led the world in the preceding century is in clear decline, the geo-strategic world is being rewritten, and rival, transnational projects and paradigms, more suited to contemporary conditions, are advancing. Under these conditions, another reconstruction of the study of Africa remains an open prospect. Prophecies of radical change, so prevalent in 1957, may yet bear fruit.