

# Staffing African Universities

by A. M. Carr-Saunders

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# Staffing African Universities

The Universities of Middle Africa need 3,000 non-African teachers during the next five years, and a further 2,500 till 1971. These are the numbers of posts that cannot be filled by locally-born teachers. Seventy per cent of this demand comes from English-speaking universities.

Assistance in filling these posts may be more valuable than economic aid to build colleges, or scholarships to train Africans abroad. More valuable perhaps—but also more difficult. For the universities of Europe and America are also expanding fast. There is no surplus of university teachers.

This pamphlet (which was made possible by the Carnegie Corporation) looks into the numerical need for expatriate university teachers in Africa, and suggests practical ways in which the problems of meeting the need may be overcome. Some of the ideas are novel—for example the suggestion that scholarships should be given to European and American graduates to study in Africa. Some, such as secondment, are being tried on a small scale already. In this case it is questions of salary, and length and type of contract, that are considered.

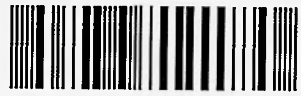
Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders has for long been closely associated with higher education in Africa. He is the author of *New Universities Overseas*, and he is well qualified both to analyse problems and to suggest solutions.

He feels that university teachers in Europe and America are perhaps a little slow to realise how stimulating an experience it can be to work in an African university. Old problems take new shapes and novel problems arise; it becomes necessary to re-examine beliefs and practices.

This pamphlet puts the needs, problems and opportunities into perspective. With its factual analysis and practical suggestions it is important to all those interested in the future of Africa.







# **Staffing African Universities**

## **by A. M. Carr-Saunders**

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# Preface

In preparation for the Conference on the Development of Higher Education in Africa, held at Tananarive in September 1962 under the auspices of Unesco, I was invited to direct a study of the staffing of higher education in Africa, in consultation with M. J. Capelle, Directeur-général of the *Organisation des Programmes scolaires* of the French Ministry of Education, and Dr. R. Weeks, President of the University of Liberia; M. J.-P. Lacour and Mr P. A. Wilson acted as research associates for the study. The study was made possible by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which provided the necessary funds. Unesco will publish a full report of the Conference, including the text of the study. In view of the widespread interest in the problems of African universities, it is thought that a brief summary of the facts disclosed by the study, followed by some discussion of the consequential problems of staffing and of the steps which might be taken to solve them, would serve a useful purpose. That is what this publication sets out to do.\*

The study was concerned with higher education, and institutions of higher education are of two kinds. First there are universities and equivalent institutions which offer courses leading to an academic degree. They are readily identifiable; normally they enjoy a considerable measure of constitutional independence, and within the particular academic tradition to which they belong they set their own standards, plan their own curricula and recruit their own staff. Secondly there are institutions offering courses leading to some kind of award or certificate, entrance to which is after the completion of secondary education; technical institutes, teachers' training colleges and agricultural colleges are institutions of this kind. This publication deals only with the first of these two types of institution; its subject is therefore the staffing of universities.

The study covered all continental Africa (except the Republic of South Africa and the Portuguese territories), together with the Malagasy Republic, Zanzibar and Mauritius. The universities found in this area fall into two groups. The first group includes

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\* It also appears in *Minerva* I, 3 (Spring 1963)

the universities in the United Arab Republic, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco; the second group includes all the remaining universities. In what follows the first group is referred to as the universities of North Africa and the second group as the universities of Middle Africa. Nearly all the universities of the second group were founded on European models under colonial regimes; they teach in English or French. The origin of the universities of the first group is different; teaching is mostly in Arabic; if a European language is used, it is usually French. The information obtained by the authors of the study was far less complete for the universities of North Africa than for those of Middle Africa. The paucity of information relating to the former had no serious consequences; as will become clear in what follows, the main problem which emerged from the study was how to meet the need of certain African universities for expatriate teachers from overseas. The United Arab Republic can supply its own teachers, and it is to the United Arab Republic that other North African Universities look when they need Arabic-speaking teachers; so far as they need French-speaking teachers, the demand, as will appear later, is far more easily met than when English-speakers are sought. In other words the problem of finding expatriate teachers hardly arises for North Africa, and in consequence, the study centred on Middle Africa, and it is with Middle Africa alone that this paper is concerned.

# Staffing Requirements

The assumption underlying the approach to the staffing problem which faces African universities is that they will fill all vacancies in their staffs from among their own nationals whenever fully qualified locally-born candidates are available. It is therefore necessary to estimate the supply of locally-born candidates in the years to come; the findings can be related to the anticipated number of posts, and the extent to which the supply falls short of that number gives a measure of the need for expatriate teachers.

It is convenient to attend first to the number of university teaching posts, and the first step must be to ascertain how many teaching posts now exist and what proportion of them is held by expatriates. The figures which follow relate to the year 1960-61. In the universities of Middle Africa there were 2,166 university teachers, of whom 594, or 27 per cent., were locally-born, and 1,572, or 73 per cent., were expatriates. Most of the expatriate teachers came from a small number of countries - 702 from Great Britain, 257 from France, 135 from Belgium and 107 from the United States. The next largest source of expatriates was India, which provided 50. South Africa contributed 48, Canada 29, Australia and New Zealand 26, and the Netherlands 22; there were 19 other countries which made some contribution.

The next step is to obtain some idea of the future number of teaching places. Information on this subject is derived from the expansion plans of the universities. The universities were requested to forecast the probable number of teaching posts in 1966-67, 1970-71 and 1980-81. About the figures so obtained three things must be said. First, they represent the hopes and expectations of the universities; they are not official estimates, though no doubt universities, when making them, believed that the expansion projected was in accordance with government policy. Secondly, while forecasts for 1966-67 can have a fairly firm basis, those for 1970-71 must be more dubious, and those for 1980-81 can be little more than guesses. Thirdly, the fulfilment of the expansion plans depends upon the availability of the necessary finance. From information so obtained it is estimated that the number of university teachers needed by the Middle African universities will rise from 2,166 in 1961-62 to 4,565 in 1966-67, to 6,185 in 1971-72 and to 8,485 in 1980-81.

In order to arrive at an estimate of the number of expatriate teachers wanted by the Middle African universities, it is necessary to make certain calculations. We start with knowledge of the present number of teaching posts and of the proportions held by locally-born and expatriate teachers. We know that during the next five years there will be losses through death, resignation and retirement. The wastage through such causes will be small among locally-born teachers, who are mostly young; it will be heavy among expatriate teachers, who will seek a post at home after a few years. Experience shows that the average length of tenure of a post in an African university by an expatriate teacher is about five years; in other words there is 100 per cent. wastage each quinquennium. Applying the wastage rates, we can find the number of places to be filled during the next five years if the total number of teachers present at the beginning of the period is to be maintained. We also know the total number of teachers required under the development plans five years ahead. The total number of places to be filled is therefore the difference between the present and the future establishment, plus whatever is required to replace wastage.

It remains to estimate how many of the places which must be filled for the development plans to be carried out will be filled by African graduates. From the development plans we can estimate the number of Africans graduating in Middle Africa each year; to them must be added the number graduating in overseas universities each year. In 1961-62 there were about 15,000 students in Middle African universities and about 11,000 Middle African students in overseas universities. We shall discuss later the probable number of African students frequenting overseas universities; it is enough to say here that for various reasons we do not think it will increase. Given the number of African graduates coming forward each year, the question is what proportion of them will take up university teaching. For certain African universities which have been in existence for some time, we know what proportion of their graduates have in fact become university teachers; it is about 4 per cent., and this proportion corresponds to that found in other countries. Using this proportion, we can estimate how many of the places to be filled will be filled by African graduates. The balance not so filled must be filled by expatriates.

Calculations on this basis show that the English-language universities of Middle Africa will need to recruit 2,200 expatriates between 1961-62 and 1965-66, 2,000 between 1966-67 and 1970-71, 900 between 1971-72 and 1975-76, and 300 between

1976-77 and 1979-80, or from 5,000 to 5,500 in the whole 19 years. The total number of expatriates serving in these universities would not exceed 2,250 at any one time; that would be the maximum requirement, and it would be felt about 1966-67. The corresponding figures for expatriates in French-language universities are 800, 600, 200, and less than 100. For all Middle African universities, the figures are about 3,000, 2,500, 1,000, and 400. The proportion of Africans among teachers will rise steadily, and will be nearly 100 per cent by 1980-81. The number of students in Middle African universities, which now exceeds 16,000, would rise to about 93,000 in 1980-81.

Such are the prospects for the speed of Africanisation of the teaching staff of the Middle African universities. But these prospects are based on calculations which take no account of such Africanisation of the staff of research institutes as there may be during the period. It must be the aim of the African states to replace by Africans the expatriates who are now serving in the research institutes. It may seem to be more urgent to Africanise the universities than the research organisations, because the former are more directly involved than the latter in the life of the country which they serve. Nevertheless the Africanisation of research organisations must come about. This has a bearing upon the Africanisation of the universities, because it is among the same group of graduates that universities and research organisations must seek their recruits, namely graduates of high ability who have a capacity and a liking for a career devoted to intellectual pursuits. The Africanisation of the staff of the research organisations has hardly begun; as it progresses, the research organisations will be in competition with the universities for much the same type of graduate, and this will tend to slow down the progress of the Africanisation of the universities.

## **African Students Overseas**

The speed at which Africanisation can proceed will depend upon the output of graduates. The Middle African universities have ambitious expansion plans, and it will strain national resources to carry them out. But African graduates also emerge from overseas universities; at present there are some 11,000 Middle African students studying in universities abroad. Could not that number be increased with profit to Africa, it may be asked? No doubt as producers of African graduates the Middle African universities must become relatively far more important than

overseas universities. Nevertheless could not the number of Africans working in overseas universities be increased by the offer of more scholarships to undergraduates?

The calculations made in the previous section were based on the assumption that, so far as African students studying overseas were concerned, there would be no increase in their number. Why was this assumption made? It was not because overseas countries have shown any reluctance to take more African students; indeed the United States is disposed towards generous help for them. It is because of the attitude taken by the African states as set out in a resolution adopted at the Tananarive Conference. That resolution stated that 'there is a strong feeling in favour of students completing their undergraduate studies in their home countries. It is essential for young Africans to acquire deep enough roots in their own cultural and social environment during their formative years before coming into contact with strong outside influences. However, certain African countries, which do not have institutions of higher education at all, or which have such institutions but not in all fields, or which have institutions which are limited in certain fields, will have to continue sending their undergraduates abroad for as long as necessary. Apart from these special cases it is desirable that outside aid in the form of fellowships for undergraduate study abroad should be transformed into scholarships for study in their home or neighbouring countries'.

These views are not peculiar to Africans; they are widely held by educationalists in all countries. There are additional objections to the indiscriminate offer of scholarships to African undergraduates for study overseas. African universities are still small, with consequential high overhead costs, and a policy which diverts students to other countries and so slows down the growth of African institutions is disadvantageous. Again overseas scholarships are likely to fall to the abler students, to the impoverishment of the student body at home. More generally it can be said that the urgent task is to build up African universities with all speed, for upon them so much depends; universities in other countries cannot be substitutes for home universities.

It is quite otherwise in respect of graduate study. Graduate study overseas can be a most stimulating and memorable experience. For a future university teacher it is of special value; for an African this is markedly the case because African universities are usually isolated, and a university teacher should know something of the academic world outside the confines of the institution where he graduated. A young graduate going overseas



usually works for a higher degree or other award, and in this way enlarges his standing and competence. For a potential research worker no more may be needed, but ability to research is only one of the qualifications needed by a would-be university teacher. The latter would benefit much if he were inducted into the university world as seen by the staff; overseas universities would confer much benefit on would-be African teachers if they offered them the opportunity to see the university and its work otherwise than as a senior student, as for example by affording them opportunities to undertake some duties such as those of demonstrator, supervisor, or tutor to undergraduates. Some African universities award scholarships tenable overseas to young graduates who show promise of becoming teachers; scholarships are also provided from overseas sources for African graduates, and more could be made available with advantage. For young graduates selected by their own universities as potential teachers, the special facilities just mentioned would be most appropriate; overseas universities might also have it in mind to keep an eye on all their young African graduate students with the object of discovering potential teachers to whom they could offer special facilities. In short, it is not by offering awards to Africans for undergraduate study that overseas countries can best contribute to a solution of the staffing problem facing African universities; what is needed is more awards for young African graduates, coupled with special attention to those among them who show promise of becoming teachers.

Facilities for advanced study overseas would also be of great value to established African university teachers, especially to those who have had some years of teaching. As already mentioned, African universities will suffer from isolation for some years to come, and if the African teachers of middle grade are to be fully equipped to hold chairs and to take charge of departments, they will need to acquaint themselves with recent developments in their special fields; for this purpose there is no substitute for close personal contact with fellow workers elsewhere.

There is another side to this picture. We have emphasised the urgent need to build up African universities, and we therefore deplore schemes which would draw away African undergraduates who could be educated in Africa. But universities need flourishing graduate schools, and if the suggestions just made were carried out, there would be a large flow of young Africans to overseas universities, with the consequence that growth of the graduate schools in Africa would be slow. This leads to the paradoxical suggestion that overseas countries would perform a most valuable

service to African universities by offering scholarships to their own young graduates for higher study in Africa. Later on we shall say something about the wealth of opportunity for research in many fields which presents itself in Africa. Such scholarships would therefore benefit the holders, whose advent would help to build up the graduate schools, and would at the same time help to introduce an international element within the student community, which is always an advantage.

## **French-Language Universities**

It is now time to take up the problem of which the magnitude was assessed in the first section: that is the problem of finding expatriate teachers to fill the teaching posts in Middle African universities for which no locally-born candidates are available. This problem takes one form in countries such as those of Continental Europe, where the universities form part of a national system of education controlled by the central government, and another form where, as in the United States and Great Britain and other Commonwealth countries, the universities, though in some cases financed by the central government, are not controlled by it.

In the first system the universities are under the Ministry of Education, and university teachers have the status of civil servants. There is a uniform scheme for appointments, promotions, salaries, pensions and other rights. The universities make appointments subject to the approval of the state. Though the state does not direct teachers to posts or transfer them from one post to another, it is obviously easy for the state, in collaboration with the universities, to facilitate the acceptance by a teacher of a post in a university overseas. Broadly speaking, all that need be done is to arrange matters so that a teacher who accepts an overseas appointment can be sure that he will regain his position at home, and will not lose any pension or other rights.

It was in France that advantage was first taken of the possibilities inherent in such a system. A French university teacher must be attached to a faculty if he is to enjoy full rights in such matters as opportunities for promotion. If he is so attached, he can accept an overseas post with the consent of the faculty, and subsequently regain his position at home, keeping all his rights unimpaired. He is encouraged to regard the offer of a post abroad with favour, because the tenure of an overseas appointment is in general regarded as a valuable experience in a teacher's record. Therefore, so far as teachers attached to a faculty are



concerned, no difficulties arise. It was otherwise in respect of those who aspire to become university teachers and who take their first post overseas, or who, after serving in secondary education, take an overseas teaching post. In order to meet their needs a class of teachers overseas was created. Members of this class are within the French establishment of higher education, and to this class can be appointed teachers serving abroad who fulfil the same requirements for appointment to a faculty as are demanded in France, namely, the possession of a doctorate and a place on the *liste d'aptitude*; the recruitment procedure to this class is that employed at home. These aspirants to the full rank of a university teacher are therefore not at a disadvantage if they serve overseas. Following upon the attainment of independence by the French African territories, various special arrangements were made, varying from territory to territory, affecting the appointment of French university teachers to universities in these territories. It is not necessary to describe these arrangements, because they do not affect the essential features of the French system under which teachers can accept overseas appointments without surrendering any rights or endangering prospects of careers at home.

About a quarter of the posts in Middle African universities for which expatriate teachers must be found are in French-speaking institutions. There is only one country outside the Continent of Europe which is able to provide French-speaking teachers in any number, namely Canada; in Canada, university organisation is akin to that found in the United States and Great Britain, and the problems raised for Canadian university teachers serving overseas can be considered along with those which are met elsewhere when there is no centrally-controlled university scheme. Apart from France, Belgium and Switzerland, university teachers from Continental Europe, if able to teach in a foreign language, are more likely to be able to use English than French, and it is interesting to learn that the authorities in a number of these countries, notably Germany, have recently announced that they are willing to make arrangements under which university teachers who accept appointments abroad will have their status safeguarded and their return home secured. This should open up a welcome new source of English-speaking teachers for African universities. Returning to the French-speaking universities in Middle Africa, it is the opinion in French academic circles that, in spite of the large plans for University expansion in France, the required amount of expatriate help for universities in former French territories can be secured, given the continuance of the present arrangements.

## English-Language Universities

Apart from Liberia and Ethiopia, the English-language universities of Middle Africa are either in territories which were formerly British, or, in the case of the Sudan, in a territory which was under British control. As a basis for a discussion of the problem of securing English-speaking expatriate teachers for their universities, it may be useful to recall their history up to the time when the countries which they serve became independent. University colleges were founded on the model of British university colleges; they were independent, self-governing bodies, which appointed their own staff. They differed from universities only by reason of the fact that they had no power to award degrees; the students worked for the degrees of the University of London. This arrangement was made because it would demonstrate to the world at large that academic standards were high. Salaries and conditions of service corresponded closely to those prevailing in Great Britain; except in the case of junior posts, appointments were permanent, that is to say to the age of retirement.

It was intended that standards should be in all respects equivalent to those in British universities, but it was hardly to be expected that many candidates with good qualifications would respond to advertisements issued by a college in a remote place of which few had ever heard, unless special steps were taken. Therefore the British universities set up the Inter-University Council, consisting of one representative from each British university; it is financed, as are the universities, from public funds. The Council had no power or control over the colleges; it was set up to help and advise when asked to do so. In particular it offered to issue advertisements of vacant posts at the colleges, to set up selection committees, to interview applicants, and to report to the colleges on the merits of candidates. When good candidates did not come forward, the selection committees would endeavour to stimulate more promising applications. The colleges took full advantage of this offer; because the Council had the weight of the British universities behind it, it was able, by its activities, to build up a picture in British academic circles of these new colleges as equivalent in standing to home institutions. The recruitment of teachers was not confined to Great Britain; applicants from other countries were welcomed. But it was not to be expected that applications from outside Great Britain would be numerous. The colleges were situated in colonies which were a British and not a Commonwealth responsibility; their organisation was on the British pattern, and their syllabuses were drawn up for the benefit of students working for a British degree.

With the coming of independence the situation has been transformed. It is important to grasp the nature of the transformation. The colleges attained university status at about the time of independence, but there was no necessary connection between the two events; it was always intended that the colleges should become universities when they had grown to a certain size and had attained maturity. The transformation is not structural; the constitutions of the institutions remain virtually unchanged, apart from the acquisition of degree-granting powers. The transformation is psychological. They have become among the foremost possessions of new national states, which repose in them much of their hopes for the future. To academic circles outside Great Britain they no longer figure as British responsibilities; they are seen as members of the international university world which happen at the present time to need help. There is a widespread disposition to provide this help, and we can turn to consider how the help needed in the shape of expatriate teachers can best be provided.

## **Recruitment of Teachers**

The English-speaking countries, whence most of this help must come, all have extensive plans for the development of their own universities. It is estimated that enrolments in United States universities and colleges will double or more in the next fifteen years, that the number of university students in Canada will increase at the rate of 10 per cent per annum between 1960-61 and 1970-71, and that the number of university students in Great Britain will increase by 70 per cent between 1960-61 and 1973-74. There is serious doubt in these countries whether the number of additional teachers can be found, if the high standards required of a university teacher are to be maintained. Therefore it will not be easy to find teachers of the necessary quality for work overseas. It is against this background of general scarcity that the problem of the recruitment of expatriate teachers must be discussed.

When African universities seek to take advantage of the recent great expansion of the possible field of recruitment of English-speaking teachers, they encounter serious difficulties. How are they to make their needs known, and how are they to assess the merits of such applicants as may answer advertisements? Advertisements issued by African universities, which, because they are recent foundations, are as yet little known outside the countries

in which they are situated, are not likely to attract many promising candidates, and there is no way of assessing the qualifications of applicants other than sending representatives overseas on time-consuming and expensive journeys. What are needed are channels of communication between African universities and the academic community of each country of possible recruitment. These channels could take the form of national agencies or bodies representing the academic community; it is essential that such agencies should be of high standing and should command the respect and confidence of the universities of the country. An agency would have a secretariat and would act as a repository of knowledge about African universities; it would spread information about African universities, and it would be in a position to inform a potential applicant for an overseas appointment concerning the range of work, the opportunities for research, conditions of living and other relevant matters at the university in question.

An agency would offer to advertise vacancies on behalf of any African university which desired to use its services; it would act much as the Inter-University Council does; that is, it would set up selection committees, interview candidates and report its views to the African university in question. If promising candidates were not forthcoming, it would endeavour to encourage well-qualified teachers to apply. A national agency in each English-speaking country would be a great advantage, and with such agencies African universities could be in direct communication. The existence of several countries in Continental Europe which are possible sources of recruitment of English-speaking teachers creates a difficulty. It might be possible for the Committee on Higher Education and Research of the Council of Europe to undertake to receive notices of vacancies from African universities and to transmit them to the agency in that European country judged most likely to have applicants. It would not be possible for an international agency to do this work effectively. To be effective an agency must emanate from the academic community which it represents; it must be part of that community, and only if it is such can it command its confidence.

## **Length of Contract**

When channels of communication have been opened, the terms of appointment offered to expatriate teachers come under scrutiny. As already noticed, it was until recently the practice to

offer permanent appointments to expatriate teachers in Middle African universities which use English. Offers of this kind are still made, but contracts of limited duration are becoming common. Though permanent appointments provide security, young graduates who have not held a teaching post at home are somewhat reluctant to accept them; they do not wish to spend their whole career abroad; they would like to obtain a teaching post at home in due course; and they fear that for various reasons – loss of touch with colleagues in their field, failure to hear of vacancies, or difficulty of presenting themselves for interview – they will not stand as good a chance of selection for a vacancy at home as if they had not gone abroad. Experience shows that this fear has been exaggerated; the average length of tenure of permanent posts by British teachers in Middle African universities has been about five years, those leaving having obtained similar or better appointments at home. Nevertheless this fear persists; there are young graduates who would make excellent teachers, but are unwilling to commit themselves to the possibility of a lifetime career in teaching overseas. As for a teacher holding a permanent post in his own country, he is seldom attracted by the offer of a permanent post overseas which involves the resignation of his present appointment.

In the new situation consequent upon independence, there is a tendency for African universities to offer to expatriates contracts of limited duration in place of permanent contracts. The motive behind this policy is the proper desire of African universities that the avenue of promotion for their own nationals should not be blocked by the presence of expatriate teachers holding senior appointments on permanent tenure. The new type of contract does not involve the difficulty, referred to above, which arises from reluctance to accept a possible lifetime commitment. But it brings problems of its own, some of which are relevant to African universities, while others have an impact upon the recruitment of expatriate teachers from overseas countries.

Let us take first the implications of the new type of contract for an African university. The essential need of any university is a teaching staff who will carry the full burden of the duties, teaching and administrative, attaching to their offices, and who have a sufficient knowledge of the university and its surroundings to enable them to play their part in formulating improvements in the programme, and laying down long-term plans. They must be committed to the service of the university and have no other loyalty. Even a junior teacher requires some time before he can settle down and play a fully effective role; a senior teacher, from



whom must come most of the initiative leading to new developments and upon whom rests the responsibility for planning, requires a still longer time before he can pull his full weight. This is so where teachers join a home university; it is far more so when they join an African university, which serves a community concerning whose structure and problems they are probably quite ignorant. All this means that the duration of contracts must be for a sufficient period; no rule can be laid down governing the length of a contract, but it is probably true to say that it should be for not less than five years.

In recent times, there has been a most welcome increase in the number of academic visitors from overseas countries to African universities. The visits are for very different periods – a few days, a few weeks or a few months. These visits are most stimulating, to guests as well as hosts; they help to build up relations between the new African universities and the older foundations elsewhere. Those on the shorter visits usually deliver some lectures, and such lectures are welcome as additions to the regular programme. The arrangements under which visits are made differ greatly; some teachers come under short-term contracts, it may be for six months or up to two years. Those who come under short-term contracts undertake to carry out specific teaching duties which form part of the regular programme. There is no hard and fast line between short- and long-term contracts, but there is a difference and it is important. Those who come on short-term contracts can give valuable assistance to the members of the staff who are on long-term appointments, but they cannot be among those who collectively share the full burden of the teaching programme, administrative responsibility and future planning; they are in a sense still visitors, and a university cannot flourish if any considerable part of its regular programme is in the hands of visitors. It is important to emphasise the adjective 'considerable'; there are arrangements between certain African and certain overseas universities under which lecturers from the latter come in turn to assist in the regular programme of the former; this has special value in that it creates a standing relationship between two universities, which become acquainted with each other to their mutual benefit. But it remains true that there is a limit to the amount of the regular programme which can be carried out by such arrangements without repercussions on the effectiveness of a university.

## Type of Contract

Let us now consider the impact of a system of contracts of limited duration upon the recruitment of expatriate teachers for Middle African universities that use English. Those who contemplate accepting such a contract will have their future career in mind. They may be young graduates who have not held a teaching appointment at home. For them the view taken by academic circles in their country of the value of African experience is most important; if teaching experience in an African university were regarded as a good mark for an applicant for a post at home to have in his record, they could look to the future with some confidence. In France the value of African experience is recognised, but this is seldom so in other overseas countries. Nevertheless, even if this were not the case, a young teacher who takes his first post in Africa knows that during his stay abroad he will be out of sight and mind of his colleagues at home, and may in consequence be at a disadvantage when he competes for a post on return home. An arrangement intended to meet this difficulty has been made between an African university, the University of Khartoum, and a British university, the University of Reading. On the recommendation of a joint committee representing both universities, a young graduate is appointed for five years to a post at the British university; he is at once seconded to the African university, in which he serves for four years; his fifth year is spent at the British university, during which he completes such research as he may have in hand, and looks for a post at home. This arrangement could be copied with advantage.

African graduates are now coming forward in larger numbers, and from among them African universities are able to fill an increasing proportion of junior posts. This means that African universities are looking chiefly for expatriates to occupy senior posts, and candidates for such posts must be sought among members of the staffs of overseas universities. Few teachers are likely to be willing to surrender a permanent post at home and accept an appointment of limited duration in another continent. Therefore the hope of African universities must be to obtain expatriate teachers on secondment; this means that leave of absence must be granted for the period, and also, if the terms of secondment are to be acceptable to a teacher, that there must be an undertaking to reinstate him at the end of the period, with the status and salary that he would have had if he had not been away. Secondment, when it is for so long a period as five years, presents obvious difficulties. The work of the absent member must be carried on, either by a substitute on a temporary engagement,

who may not be easy to find, or by transferring the duties to one or more other members of the staff. The difficulties are greatest when it is a question of secondment from a small department; they are less for a large department when there can be a reallocation of duties. The situation is easier when a university is expanding; if it can be foreseen that in five years' time there will be two senior posts where there is now only one, steps can be taken at once to fill the post held by the member to be seconded, who can return in five years' time to occupy the new post.

Secondment for so long a period as five years is certainly difficult for a university; in part the difficulty comes about because secondment for this length of time is a novelty. Universities have not hitherto been asked to consider such an arrangement and it is always difficult to see how something can be done for the first time. If the difficulties are faced, they may be found to be less formidable than now appears to be the case; there are excellent reasons for asking the universities to face them, having in mind the great benefits which they could confer on African universities if they overcame them.

## **Salary**

It is not only questions about future career prospects which will come to the minds of those who consider an offer of a post overseas; there will be questions relating to salaries and amenities of living. Before independence, the colleges situated in British territories looked to Great Britain as the country where they could best hope to recruit staff when local candidates were not available. Since it was sought to attract teachers with qualifications equal to those serving in British universities, salary scales were kept about equal to those ruling in British universities. There was no differentiation between the salaries of expatriates and of the locally-born. The salary was below that found in North America, but was above that which would probably have been instituted if the colleges had been set up by local initiative and staffed wholly by locally-born teachers. There were some departures from this system; a few teachers, whose salaries were paid from outside sources, had higher remuneration, and in some cases local salaries were topped up from such sources. Since independence, the situation has become more complicated; some African universities have introduced a superior salary scale for expatriates; and there are more cases in which higher salaries are paid, or local salaries topped up, from outside sources.



Where colleagues having equal status and responsibilities receive different remuneration, the situation is unsatisfactory; it offends against the sense of what is fair. What is in mind is the locally spendable salary; it is that which determines the style of living, and if certain members of the staff can afford a higher style than others of the same grade, there are grounds for uneasiness. It is widely recognised that the situation of some people is such that special expenditure falls upon them, and that arrangements can be made to compensate them for such extra expenditure without offending against the sense of what is fair. Thus it is a common practice to make arrangements for parents with dependent children to draw family allowances. This type of special expenditure falls on expatriates and it may be heavy. The principle that children and adolescents are best educated in their own country has been discussed in relation to Africans; it applies also to expatriates. Therefore there is a good case for children's allowances for expatriate parents. So too there is a case for the payment of passages for home leave, and there are other special expenses which can properly be taken into account when contracts are drawn up, without introducing undesirable discrimination between expatriate and locally-born members of the staff.

Even if contracts covered the payment of such allowances, it would still remain true that university teachers in certain countries who accepted a contract would be worse off than if they had stayed at home. To meet such cases, a suggestion has been made which deserves careful attention. The suggestion is that there should be a uniform salary scale; all teachers in a grade would receive the same locally spendable income; an expatriate teacher, however, would be credited with a sum representing not less than the difference between his local salary and that which he would have received if he had retained his position at home. The total sum credited to him would be handed over after completion of his contract. African universities which are prepared to pay more for expatriate teachers could use this procedure; where foreign funds are available for aid to African universities, they could be used to provide these credits. Under such a scheme there is equality of spendable income; at the same time an expatriate teacher does not ultimately suffer loss by accepting a contract.

The picture which emerges as a possible solution of the salary problem is therefore remuneration on the basis just described, together with allowances for such special expenditure as falls upon expatriates. There must also be provision for maintaining pension rights, insurances and other benefits. Where there is a national system of university education, as in Continental Europe,

it is easy to extend such provision to members serving overseas. Where there is no such system, there are many problems to be solved. These problems are of a technical kind; they raise no questions of principle and call for no discussion here. But it is important to realise that these problems must be solved; experience shows that inability to maintain insurance and other benefits on appointment overseas is a serious deterrent to the acceptance of contracts.

Questions will be asked about a number of other matters by those thinking of service abroad. In particular they will want to know about housing and health. Generally speaking, the housing provided by African universities for their staff is ample in size and good in quality. Health no longer presents a problem; children flourish, and adequate medical attention is available. In brief, those who think of service in an African university have no reason to apprehend material discomfort.

## **Opportunities for Research**

It is not enough to make the path smooth for those who go overseas; they must want to tread it. University teachers are perhaps a little slow to realise how awakening and stimulating an experience it can be to work in an African university. Old problems take new shapes, and novel problems present themselves; it is necessary to examine beliefs and practices afresh. Only a dull person could fail to learn much of value. This can be put to potential applicants for overseas posts because it may not occur to them. It will certainly occur to them to ask about conditions affecting academic work. African universities take the same view as universities elsewhere, and expect that their teachers will contribute to knowledge, and therefore take steps to ensure that the teaching burden will not be such as to leave teachers with insufficient time to follow their own lines of investigation. As to prospects of investigation, a distinction can be drawn between opportunities and facilities for research. In most fields the opportunities are immense; that this is so in the biological sciences and in the professional subjects of law, medicine, veterinary science and agriculture hardly needs stressing. The same holds good for social studies, such as economic, political and social organisation, linguistics and archaeology; it has recently been recognised by historians that there is much work in their field which can be profitably undertaken in Africa. In the physical sciences the opportunities are less striking, but are not absent,

as the contributions made by African universities during the International Geophysical Year have shown. As to facilities, it is not generally recognised how greatly they have been expanded in recent years; library holdings are impressive, amounting to over 150,000 volumes in some cases, and microfilm services are available. Laboratory accommodation and apparatus are sufficient for most purposes, though there may be some difficulty in obtaining the more expensive equipment. There is a shortage of laboratory assistants, but steps have been taken to train local people as technicians.

If it is asked how the situation about an African university can be made known to prospective applicants for posts, the answer is that this should be one of the functions of the proposed national agencies. These agencies could become repositories of up-to-date information about each African university, and could, if they did so, provide the information likely to be sought by those interested, relating to the range of studies, the opportunities and facilities for research, climate, housing, health and other relevant matters.

## **African Responsibilities**

Universities have been established in Middle Africa largely by initiative coming from overseas. They are now well rooted and have become national institutions of which Africans are proud. In common with other universities, they prepare young people for entry into the higher professions, and educate them to be of service to the community in many ways. Such activities are only a part of the task of universities; their responsibilities extend far beyond care for the younger generation. They safeguard the achievements of past generations, and especially the national tradition and culture, which they seek to refine and enlarge. In them the national intellectual endeavour is focussed; it is largely through its universities that a nation contributes to the world-wide intellectual quest, and becomes a member of the international circles which are concerned with things of the mind. There need be no increase in the number of African universities in the near future; they are still small in size, and could be greatly expanded and so made capable of admitting those qualified for entrance for some time to come. They have their development plans, involving financial problems which must be solved if the plans are to be carried out. With these problems we are not concerned. The

universities also have staffing problems, and it is these problems which have been under discussion here.

The attitude taken in this discussion has been that the most appropriate form which the help offered by overseas countries can assume is the finding of candidates for posts for which no suitable Africans are available; this is to respond to the needs of African universities as they express them. This is not the form which overseas help has always taken. International and other agencies have offered to finance large schemes under which the staffing and equipment of a department, a faculty, or even the major part of a university, are guaranteed from overseas. No one can doubt that such schemes have extended the facilities available for educating young Africans in an effective manner. But such schemes, largely devised outside Africa, are no longer necessary in order to make progress; African authorities have their own extensive plans. Moreover the operation of these schemes is hardly fully compatible with the autonomy and self-direction of African universities, especially when they include the selection of teachers by overseas authorities, and their remuneration at rates out of scale with local rates. Schemes of this kind may be fully in place for technical institutes and other bodies which have straightforward and limited aims for training in certain skills. But universities have wider aims and far greater responsibilities. These responsibilities must be shouldered by Africans; it is for them to carry out the plans. They have in fact formulated their projects, but to further them they need expatriate teachers, and it is by supplying teachers that overseas countries can render the best service to African universities.





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