

OBITUARY

William O. (Bill) Jones, professor emeritus and former director of the Food Research Institute, died on June 17, 1993, in Palo Alto. He was 82. Jones was an authority on African marketing and farming systems. His specialty was manioc, also known as cassava, a root crop that forms a major part of the food economies of West and Central Africa, Southeast Asia, and Brazil. His book, *Manioc in Africa*, was published in 1959 and remains the classic in its field.

Jones was a pioneer in African economic studies. Perhaps his single most important article was "Economic Man in Africa." This essay helped change the way an entire profession thought about smallholder farmers in Africa. His views on the rationality and price responsiveness of African farmers were radical in 1960; 30 years later, his views had become the conventional wisdom.

Jones was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1910. He received his BA in anthropology at the University of Nebraska in 1932. After graduating he spent several years in industry and was a preflight instructor for the Army Air Corps during World War II. In 1947, he earned his doctorate in economics from Stanford and joined the Food Research Institute. From its inception in 1921, the Institute has described itself as "a body of cooperating scholars" engaged in the study of worldwide problems of food supply, distribution, and consumption. As scholar, teacher, and administrator, Jones contributed immensely to making that description a reality. Jones served as executive secretary of the Institute between 1955 and 1962. He became director in 1964 and held that position for eight years.

More than anything in his professional life, Jones was a writer and editor. He set the standard in the agricultural ec-

onomics profession for clarity of written communication. He was a great promoter of the Institute's journal, *Food Research Institute Studies*, which first appeared in 1960. From 1970 to 1975, he served as editor of *Studies*. Thereafter, he was an always-eager consultant to the journal. As an editor and writer, Jones was simply the best. The final issue of the journal, which ceases publication 1993, is dedicated to him.

Jones received many awards and acknowledgements for his contributions to the profession. Among others, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, was Stanford's representative to the governing body of the International African Institute in London, and served terms as president of the African Studies Association and the Western Economic Association. He received a Sc.D. degree (*honoris causa*) from the University of Nebraska in 1965. Jones also served as a consultant to the World Bank, the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the US Agency for International Development.

Jones and his wife, Kay, had a long and happy married life on the Stanford campus with their three sons—Stephen, Peter and Brian—all of whom survive him. They were remarkable parents who helped develop their sons' abilities, breadth of views, and love of nature and the outdoors. Jones will be missed sorely by his family, by his friends and colleagues at the Food Research Institute, and by development economists all over the world.

Walter P. Falcon, Stanford University
Bruce F. Johnston, Stanford University
Pan A. Yotopoulos, Stanford University

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

The recent essay, "American Students and Researchers in Nigeria: Relationships with Host Institutions, Academics and Communities," by Lillian Trager and LaRay Denzer, raises a number of important issues with regards to American students and researchers coming to Nigeria. The authors strongly articulate their sense of discomfort regarding recent trips by Americans to Nigeria. They are concerned that some Americans have placed undue strain on Nigeria's academic community because they lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of Nigerian society and appear insensitive to their research site. If the observations made by Ms. Trager and Ms. Denzer are accurate then they have done us all a great service in writing their piece.

I strongly suggest that Trager and Denzer have provided a one-sided picture and that their description of "the harsh realities of the current Nigeria" is inaccurate.

They begin their essay with a brief discussion of how to affiliate with a Nigerian University and gain an entry visa for the country: "It is relatively easy for anyone with a legitimate project to be granted affiliation with a university department, and with such affiliation, to get a visa for Nigeria." Perhaps this was true in the past. Dealing with Nigerian universities and the Nigerian embassy and consulate in the US has now become particularly difficult. It has been my experience, and also that of others I know, that written requests for basic and general information commonly go unanswered and that passports and visa applications are lost for long periods of time. Moreover, official

information is sometimes countermanded by other official information, not because policies have changed, but simply because the application of standard operating procedures is inconsistent.

Once one arrives, the authors tell us that there are "various bureaucratic procedures which can be time-consuming and frustrating. The key to dealing with these is often the personal assistance which colleagues and others in Nigeria are usually willing to offer." As in all countries, temporary visitors must follow certain rules in order to make their stay both pleasurable and, importantly, legal. In the Nigerian context, however, navigating immigration's bureaucratic maze can be a nightmare.

On a typical day, early in the morning, one can go to the immigration office and be sent to three or four other offices, irrespective of what the office nameplates state (if there are any). At each office, one must repeat the purpose of the visit. At each office, one is then directed to the next office, where one finds yet another group of three people, or more, engaged in varying amounts of activity. At some point in this office-hopping, one finally lands in the appropriate one, where, again, you state the purpose of the visit. At this juncture, you are told to wait since the (one) person capable of answering your questions is out of the office. After an hour, or two, or longer, the office worker advises you to "Exercise patience" and "He will soon come." Eventually, she will tell you to come again the next day.

Arriving the next day, early, one proceeds to the appropriate office where one waits. If one is fortunate, the official will see you, answer your questions, and you will be told to return with the appropriate number of photocopies, forms, and photographs. (If one is not so fortunate, and the official is habitually out of the office, then bring a book because the wait could be one of hours or days.) Returning, now on day three, with the appropriate documentation, you are required to leave all of your paperwork with the immigration office, along with your passport. No receipt is given for your passport which, as I have already noted, may well get misplaced. Only when you ask are you then told to come back the next day, at noon, and everything will be ready. Day four: You return at noon only to be told that your passport is not ready and that you should come back again tomorrow. On day five you return, collect your passport, and try to comprehend this week-long process.

Trager and Denzer rightly call attention to the generosity of Nigerians who are willing to lend their assistance. Typically, this is exemplified by an academic colleague who has personal ties to someone who works in the bureaucracy. All societies, including the United States and Nigeria, however, Nigerian 'connection' (or assistance, as Trager and Denzer prefer), is a pervasive element in almost all aspects of life. Thus, one needs the personal assistance of a friend, otherwise immigration arrangements and

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other necessities of life, can be held up for considerable amounts of time. Nigerian society is very much hierarchically organized. The combination of this hierarchical order, the pervasiveness of connections, and the unfortunate economic problems of Nigeria can result in members of the bureaucracy to exerting their influence over foreigners, simply because they can.

Central to Trager and Denzer's essay are issues of money, time and respect. The authors alert us to the economic disputes between American researchers and their Nigerian hosts. Moreover, they allude to an underlying parsimonious characteristic in the Americans that come over: "Thus, for an American researcher, funded by Fulbright or Carnegie or SSRC, to seek certain scarce resources, pleading that they have little money—and we know several instances of this—insults the intelligence of everyone they deal with." First, whose business is it to know the amounts of grants? Second, in a society in which connectedness is so integral, so too is money. It goes without saying that the more money one has in Nigeria, the more people expect you to dole it out.

On the issue of time, Trager and Denzer state the following: "Regarding inquires as to the status of affiliation or admission, it is important that students and researchers realize that this takes time and follows the procedure and calendar of the host institution, not the American funding institution or university." Herein, the difficulties of time and requests for information have already been dealt with. Now, the simple question must be asked: Specifically, which academic/research institutions in Nigeria consistently use standard procedures or a regular calendar?

I have tried in this essay to provide a balancing perspective to the one given by Trager and Denzer. While they raise important points they fail to truly appreciate the difficulties to which they allude. Absent from their description, among other things, is a real understanding of the importance of an established network for visiting scholars and students. Life and research in Nigeria can be fulfilling but it can also be very difficult, particularly for the first-time visitor.

Oddly, many of us who have traveled to Nigeria, in spite of its difficulties, do seem to find ourselves back there, or at least intensely following events there. Go figure!

Sincerely,

Rodney D. Cunningham

The following letter was shared with us by ASA President, Edward A. Alpers.

Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC.)
125 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hollings:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the more than 2,500 members of the African Studies Association, which is the largest professional association of Africanist scholars in the world, I must vigorously protest your remarks as reported by the Los Angeles Times (December 16, 1993) regarding African leaders attending the GATT talks in Geneva, Switzerland. According to this report, you stated: "Everyone likes to go to Geneva.....I used to do it for the Law of the Sea conferences and you'd find these potentates from down in Africa, you know, rather than eating each other, they'd just come up and get a good square meal in Geneva."

The insensitivity revealed by this stereotypical aside cannot go unchallenged, both because it is explicitly racist and because it reflects so negatively on the United States at a time when those of us who have devoted our professional careers to promoting the study and appreciation of African society and culture are seeking increasingly to reach out to and support the educational goals of our colleagues in Africa on a collaborative basis. Our responsibility as Africanist scholars is to promote research and the dissemination of knowledge about Africa. Your responsibility as an elected official of the United States is to comport yourself in a manner that respects the cultures of all the peoples of the United States and the world community. In particular, as Senator from a proud state with one of the strongest African traditions in this nation, you should be especially sensitive to the negative impression that your ill considered remarks carry.

I would appreciate an apology from you to both the people of Africa and the people of the United States.
Sincerely,

Edward A. Alpers
President. African Studies Association

Open letter to the members of the African Studies Association

The chairpersons of the Task Force for Sustainable Development in Africa, together with members of the advisory board, initially established by the ASA Board of Directors, wish to report the completion of their initial task, and propose a way forward.

The Task Force book, *21st Century Africa: Towards a Vi-*

sion of Sustainable Development, (ASA Press and Africa World Press) presented chapters that summarized the state of the debates concerning alternative approaches to sustainable development in Africa in the fields of economic development, regional integration, gender relations, environment, education, health and the nature of the state. An extensive bibliography provided background readings. In addition, in each of these seven areas, the book proposes a problem-solving participatory process by which researchers can work together with those affected to address the obstacles that have blocked sustainable development.

Copies of *21st Century Africa* have been sent to all the African libraries. We understand, both from the publishers and reports at the Task Force workshops at this year's Annual ASA Meeting, that a number of Africanists have been using the book in their classes here in the United States.

At the 1993 ASA meeting, however, it became increasingly evident that, as an umbrella organization covering seven quite diverse areas, the Task Force had little further role to play. Several of the task groups have developed various forms participatory projects in which together with researchers from African universities, US Africanists have worked with those most affected by the interrelated and yet distinctly different problems in each of the specific fields. It seems more appropriate, now, for the participants in the task force subgroups to engage with the colleagues in Africa in developing more extensive in-depth participatory projects, reporting on them to ASA members through panels at the annual meetings.

A few examples serve to illustrate the way ideas and projects suggested by task force subgroups have acquired a life of their own. These have contributed to a spread effect as people have begun further activities that reach far beyond the possible scope of the Task Force as an umbrella group. In so doing, they have, as suggested in *21st Century Africa*, incorporated new approaches to gender and the state and law to create more equitable, democratic institutions.

A project on "Community Perspectives on Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa" has engaged rural inhabitants of three South African regions in a participatory study, generating a series of proposals for building the new institutions required to restructure a post-apartheid rural South Africa. In cooperation with the Land and Agricultural Policy Centre, a workshop structured along the lines of the methodology outlined in Chapter 8 of *21st Century Africa*, "On Research on the State, the Law and Processes of Development" facilitated the efforts of representatives of several South African rural civic groups to begin the process of translating their policy proposals for institutional change into specific laws which the democratic movement could present for passage by the Interim Government.

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In the field of environment, using the Participatory Rural Appraisal methodology outlined in Chapter 6 of *21st Century Africa*, task force members have worked with members of rural communities throughout Africa, from the Gambia and Senegal to Madagascar, facilitating their efforts to map out and plan the improved use of their own resources. Those interested may obtain reports of those projects from Clark University's International Development Program. To facilitate their work, the Ecogen Research Project has prepared a valuable booklet, *Tools of Gender Analysis: A Guide to Field Methods for Bringing Gender into Sustainable Resource Management*.

At the ASA Annual Meeting, task force members made available an extensive annotated bibliography relating to environment, copies of which may still be obtained from the Director, the International Development Program, Clark University, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The gender task group had proposed two projects, one on the spread of AIDS as a metaphor for the way existing institutions in the area of health disadvantage women; and a second relating to ensuring the incorporation of gender issues in all research projects. The first project, now funded, has already stimulated the preparation of a manual directed to assisting women and women's groups to deal with AIDS. To implement the second, the task group joined forces with the ASA Women's Caucus which continues to emphasize the importance of integrating gender issues in all fields of African research.

The other task groups have been working with African colleagues to develop and obtain funding for participatory research projects on critical areas which, as the relevant chapters in *21st Century Africa* indicate, have tended to remain neglected. With researchers from Nigeria, Cameroon and Zimbabwe, the health task group has initiated a proposal for engaging community women in analyzing the reasons why existing institutions at the national and local level fail to adequately address women's and children's health problems. On this basis, they propose to recommend institutional changes likely to ensure implementation of health programs more likely to meet the needs of women and children.

With colleagues in the universities in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, the education task group has formulated a proposal for a pilot project to engage parents, teachers, and students in analyzing and proposing improvements in the role of existing schools as development catalysts in rural and urban communities.

Finally, the regional integration, economics, state and law sub-task groups have focused their attention on the balkanization of Africa which has thwarted the African peoples' utilization of their continent's rich natural resources to attain self-sustainable development. They have been working with African colleagues in West and Southern Af-

rica and the Horn to propose a problem-solving participatory research project relating to the way national institutions, inherited from the colonial past, have blocked efforts to coordinate regional development programs. In each of the three regions, they have begun to seek appropriate fora for bringing together university researchers and policy makers to study the reasons why central national institutions—ranging from national ministries concerned with industry, trade, and planning to private (domestic and foreign) enterprises—have failed to contribute to better use of regional resources. Perhaps using the approach suggested in *21st Century Africa* for analyzing how the state and law shape institutions, they aim to lay a sound basis for the revised national legislation required to restructure those institutions to realize African heads-of-states' proposals for regional cooperation. Already, in the Horn, policy-makers and researchers have met to discuss possible measures for regional resolution of the problems that have torn at the fabric of that troubled region. Discussions are underway to advance proposals for on-going participatory research into the particular features of existing national and regional institutions in the other two areas.

It has become increasingly apparent, however, that the Task Force, as an umbrella group has neither the resources nor the will to orchestrate these mushrooming initiatives. On the contrary, Africans themselves have already developed extensive participatory networks in almost all of the seven fields. What remains in all fields is for individual US Africanists to find the most effective ways of working with their African colleagues to contribute to advancing the quite different kinds of participatory problem-solving research as the basis of the institutional changes required to achieve sustainable development in Africa.

As always, the panels of the ASA Annual Meetings provide both US and African scholars the fora for reporting their future progress.

Sincerely,
Ann Seidman, Chair

Dis a only de gri-gri, de gra-gra deh behin'.

This is only the smoke, the fire is yet to come.

Jamaica proverbs, collected by Martha Beckwith, Vassar College Field-work in Folk-lore, No. 4, 1925.