
THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF AFRICANISTS

The First International Congress of Africanists was held from the 11th to 18th of December 1962 in the precincts of the University of Ghana at Accra. Cameroon was officially represented by a delegate of the Ministry of National Education, but was also represented by Dr. Bernard Fonlon, a member of the delegation from the "Présence Africaine" Review. We hope to be able to publish a report by the latter in our next issue.

Until now, Africanist Congresses have been organised by peoples other than the Africans themselves. It was on the occasion of the Congress of Orientalists, held at Moscow in August 1960, that the African group decided to africanise this kind of international get-together. An organising committee was accordingly set up under the chairmanship of the Principal of Ibadan University, Dr. Kenneth Onwuka Dike. It included the Principals of other African universities: Dakar, Addis Ababa, Ghana, Lovanium, Tunis and the representatives of Africanists in France, U. S. A., Great Britain and the U. S. S. R. and the Society of African Culture. The financing of this meeting was guaranteed, thanks to a donation from the Ford Foundation, U. N. E. S. C. O. and the governments of Ghana and Nigeria. The Congress was placed under the patronage of U. N. E. S. C. O.

More than sixty countries were represented, in particular all the African States and territories, altogether totalling 150 official delegates, without of course counting numerous observers from the entire world.

The congress was split into 9 specialised commissions :

- archeology and history,
- religion and philosophy,
- languages,
- economic and social problems,
- literature and folklore,
- arts,
- political and social institutions,
- science and technique in relation to African development,
- education and psychology.

Three plenary sessions were particularly devoted to the presentation of special papers by distinguished Africanists :

- The importance of Africanist studies, by Dr. K. Onwuka Dike.
- The Spirit of "Présence Africaine", by Alioune Diop.
- Africanist Studies in Europe and America by Professor M. Herskovits.

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