ASAUK
African Studies Association of the UK

NEWSLETTER

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ASAUK26 Conference

The 2026 biennial conference, 'Narrative, Power and the Making of African Worlds', at the University of Durham was a richly enjoyable experience. With over thirty streams and close to 140 panels packed into the three days of, the conference, there was plenty of opportunities to renew old acquaintances and make new friendships across academic disciplines and countries. There were a wonderful range of participants: some starting or deep into their doctoral studies, those seeking their first book deal or news about possible fellowships, as well as university lecturers, development practitioners, policy-makers and seasoned conference goers.

All this positive atmosphere was aided by the conductive environment provided ay the central Teaching and Learning Centre, where an array of booksellers and journal publications lined the main floor of the building. The conference was further enhanced by the fact that many participants stayed at the same hall of residence and made old and new connections over breakfast, the well-organised refreshment breaks and lunches.

The award of prizes at the conference dinner allowed for a significant recognition of notable scholars of Africa through the doctoral thesis, best monograph and two lifetime achievement awards.

Those who participated were very grateful to the monumental task of hosting the ASAUK conference, with ASAUK President Louisa Egbunike being singled out for special praise, as well as the university's Events Team and volunteers.

The next few pages illustrate the strength and diversity of the ASAUK Conference's streaming format, which holds a series of panels on a specific theme. The range of topics brought together in Durham is also noteworthy, and we should all thank the stream organisers for their efforts.

See you at the University of Leeds in September 2028!

Summaries of Streams of Panels at ASAUK26

The Contested Narrative After Violence stream at ASAUK offered an opportunity to focus on the topic of transitional justice through narrative power. Across the panels, the presenters demonstrated how communities actively negotiate and reinterpret official accounts of violence and how they reimagine memory and justice from below as an everyday struggle.

This stream brought together scholars from literature, poetry, law, anthropology, history, political science, and cultural studies, generating interdisciplinary conversations on survivor-centred counter narratives of injustice, survivor reparation demands and everyday memorialisation. This focus aligned closely with the conference's overarching theme on Narrative Power.

Another key strength of the stream was its emphasis on everyday, community-driven and local approaches to justice and memory highlighting oral storytelling, women's stories, local grassroots activists, and memory work as vital sites of resistance and repair. Presenters showed how transitional justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, Truth commissions, Reparations programmes, Memorialisation and judicial processes often reproduce hierarchies that marginalise the very voices they claim to elevate including ordinary people, women, children and marginalised groups. The stream's critical questions were: who gets to tell the story of violence, whose pain is recognised, whose stories are remembered and how do communities challenge the state when it imposes narratives of past violence from above. The panels included: Contested Memorialisation, Contested Transitional Justice Narratives, Art and Countermemories, Migration, Humanitarianism and Contested Justice.

This stream deepened the understanding of justice after violence but also demonstrated the centrality of narrative after violence in shaping African political and social worlds.

Dr Njoki Wamai, USIU-Africa, Nairobi

AFRICA stream

AFRICA: journal of the International African Institute sponsored 15 panels, bringing together scholars from the UK and Europe, Africa, the USA and China, on topics including Chinese informal economies in African urban centres, inequalities in African studies, interrupted development, living biographies, plural views of crisis, and histories of commodities and capitalism. Six of the panels were on the theme 'Wealth in Africa' with the sub-themes of property, inheritance and redistribution. Across all the panels, there were strong papers and feedback has been very positive.

The two panels I co-chaired (with David Mills) titled 'How unequal is African studies', brought together researchers from anthropology, cultural history and

academic law with those in higher education and publishing. Isaac Stanley's paper, drawing on his research on early contributions to social anthropology in Senegal, asked: 'who gets to write the anthropology of Africa?' Anita Sackyi spoke to the notion of gendered epistemic alienation in the study of Africa. Ambreena Manji talked us through her new work on indigenous land claims, experimental feminist law, and epistemic disarticulation. A double hybrid panel on 'plural views of crisis' brought together francophone Cameroonian and UK scholars. The final session of the conference featured a panel on 'Histories of Commodities and Capitalism' with book-length studies of tea, coffee and pyrethrum from the US-based scholars Muey Saeteurn, Paul Ocobock, and Emily Bronwell, in conversation with Harry Cross's historical paper on the political economy of money and exchange rate regimes across the continent. There was so much more, and it is difficult to select these highlights (based simply on what I could attend).

The more difficult aspects were in the organisation. The International African Institute agreed to sponsor or part-sponsor 10 participants across the stream. Three participants had visas refused, including a Sudanese refugee scholar living in France, and a Cameroonian scholar on a year-long fellowship in France. Two participants from Ghana were denied permission to fly to Newcastle via Amsterdam which meant they had to be re-routed at the last minute at considerable additional cost and missed the first day of the conference. Whilst the conference has unquantifiable benefits for individual scholars it does place a great deal of strain on organisers. These issues need to be taken into consideration for future conferences.

Max Bolt, who organised the 'Wealth in Africa' sub-stream, and Anna de Mutiis, Outreach and Administrative Officer at the IAI, are particularly thanked for ensuring the success of the stream.

Stephanie Kitchen, International African Institute

The **African Judiciaries** stream brought together an exciting mix of early career and more established scholars from different countries to discuss judicial actors, evolving jurisprudence, and interconnected alternative justice systems. Presentations and discussions focused on a wide range of issues = from the importance of judges' backgrounds and off-bench activities to the opportunities and limits of progressive jurisprudence and the factors that help to shape how various justice mechanisms are understood and perform. The stream was organised by the African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN; https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/ajrn/) and British Institute in Eastern Africa (https://biea.ac.uk/). To join the AJRN please contact ajr-network@warwick.ac.uk

Gabrielle Lynch

Social and Cultural Histories in African or African Diaspora Print Culture and Print Networks stream. My initial call for abstracts was deliberately wide so that I could determine the discussions people were having and research people were working on in this field. I don't label printed matter as ephemera, I view Black print as evergreen as even when it unavailable or rare, its content sheds light on aspects of society that are often hidden and cannot be found anywhere else.

There were three panels presented: Print histories in 19th and 20th century South Africa, Discovering Black Britain (No Windrush here) and Staging Africa in varied formats. Panellists were from the UK, South Africa and USA, attracting different audiences for each distinct panel, creating vibrant discussions in each.

The South African papers highlighted the social and political history of what had taken place in the publishing world of South Africa. Lloyd Maphosa and Veronica Klipp's presentation on how the ownerships and operation of publishing houses in the continued interest shown in print cultures and how the ownership and operation of the publishing houses underlined the oppression of apartheid. The three papers cross referenced each other even though they were submitted as separate papers.

The South Africa papers attracted an informed audience and interest has been shown in publishing a series of papers on South African print culture and networks which will continue to be investigated.

The three papers presented in Staging Africa in various formats, could have constituted a stream in themselves. They all provided engaging visuals with fascinating politics behind them. Bianna Ine-Ryan showed us how to access the Africana Historic Postcards Collection quickly on the Library of Congress website: https://www.loc.gov/collections/africana-historic-postcard-collection/about-this-collection/

Daniel Hammett presented an alternative look at West African independence through the work of cartoonists. In talking of the journal *Negro Story*, Amber Kirwan highlighted, as with the Nadal sisters in France that it was often women who were behind literary and creative movements.

For the Discovering Black Britain (no Windrush here) panel, two panellists were unable to make it and so Olive Vassell, and myself took the audience on a historical journey of the early days of the Black Press in Britain and the USA and of Black British magazines post World War II. Vassell's experience of working within Black British press was particularly informative. The discussion ended on our talking of our timely discussion with the 200th anniversary of the Black Press in the USA being marked by a conference at Howard University in March 2027.

But what was clear, was the growing interest energy and excitement that is currently taking place into this field of research, such as cartoons, postcards and periodicals.

Kadija George

The **Uncertain Futures: Ecological Anxieties in Sub-Saharan Africa** stream at this year's ASAUK 2026 specifically examined who narrates environmental crisis, from what positions, and with what consequences. Papers on Sudanese gold mining, peri-urban Lagos, and conservation territories in south-eastern Africa challenged reductive narratives of catastrophe and vulnerability by foregrounding everyday social relations, intra-community tensions, and uneven experiences of environmental change. Across the stream, media and narrative emerged as contested sites through which environmental knowledge is produced, circulated, and reclaimed. A related cluster explored the temporal, affective, and imaginative dimensions of ecological anxiety. Historical studies of Lake Victoria and Southern African societies situated contemporary uncertainties within longer histories of colonial intervention, drought, disease, displacement, and environmental transformation, while studies of Cyclone Freddy, Niger Delta pollution, and flooding in Mozambique foregrounded grief, gender, spirituality, and political memory. Artistic practices – including Osundare's climate poetry, sonic counter-maps of Africa's oceans, and Phalafala's poetics of mining memory – were presented as forms of world-making and epistemic intervention that recover silenced histories and challenge dominant modes of environmental knowledge.

Taken together, the stream positioned ecological uncertainty not merely as a condition to be managed but as a field of struggle over knowledge, representation, and futurity. The discussions therefore shifted attention from the occurrence of environmental crises to the ways they are narrated, whose experiences and knowledge are recognised, and what alternative ecological futures can be imagined.

Nick Tembo

The *Journal of Southern African Studies* was delighted to have the opportunity to organize a stream for the ASAUK 2026, following our excellent experience at ASAUK 2024 in Oxford. This year we were able to offer fifteen panels spread across the three days of the conference. General themes focused on economics, politics, literature and narrative, gender studies, and archives. The robust offerings included two panels each for the topics of History Fiction and Narrative Form in Southern African Politics, and Mining. JSAS also sponsored a roundtable book discussion of *Clawing Back* by Deborah James, as well as a roundtable on Taking Spirits Seriously, which was part of the Spirits of Peace Project, of the University of Liverpool in association with the British Academy.

It was wonderful to have many colleagues from Africa participating in the JSAS stream. We regret that visa issues also meant that not everyone who hoped to participate in the conference was able to do so. We thank Durham and the ASAUK for hosting a stimulating and collegial conference."

Professor Pamela Scully

Narratives of Power and Electoral Integrity in African Regional Organisations, Dr Innocent (Ib) Batsani-Ncube is Principal Investigator for a Leverhulme-funded project, *Regional Organisations and Electoral Integrity Peer Review Mechanisms in Africa*. The project traces and interprets the history, contemporary practice, and political contestations surrounding electoral integrity peer review mechanisms (EIPRMs) within African regional organisations (ROs). It seeks to understand the inner workings and politics of these mechanisms and, in doing so, to develop contextually rich explanations of how power and influence operate within African regional organisations. As part of this project, Ib and Co-Investigator Dr.Anna Kapambwe Mwaba convened an ASAUK stream, "Narratives of Power and Electoral Integrity in African Regional Organisations." The stream generated a number of submissions and resulted in two panels: "Elections and Democracy in African States and Regional Organizations" and "Ensuring Electoral Integrity."

Although travel challenges meant that each panel ultimately featured a single presenter, both papers offered important insights for the project's broader questions about electoral integrity, political stability, and the role of regional organisations. Bella Nininahazwe, a doctoral candidate at Queen Mary University of London and part of the larger grant project, presented "Regional Organisations and the Evolution of Political Settlements: Evidence from Burundi's Arusha Peace Process" examining regional engagement with Burundi's peace process and the ways in which regional actors shape political settlements over time. Esther Akintewe, a doctora; student at Achievers University, Owo, in Nigeria, presented "Religion and its Influence in Nigeria's Presidential Elections: A Study of the 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections," exploring the role of religion in Nigerian electoral politics. Taken together, the papers highlighted the challenges involved in promoting electoral integrity and political stability and underscored the importance of regional organisations and other critical actors in creating space for political inclusion, managing conflict, and supporting electoral processes.

Narrating Health Sovereignty: African Agency, Power, and Global Health Governance. The stream brought together scholars examining how African actors are reshaping the terms of global health governance. The discussion moved beyond narratives of African dependency to explore how agency is exercised across regional, international and domestic arenas. Nelson Evaborhene examined African agency and the ways in which African actors navigate and shape changing global health governance arrangements, while Kingsley Ogunne explored an Afrocentric approach to bilateralism, raising questions about how bilateral relationships can be understood from African perspectives rather than solely through established accounts of global power. The contributions collectively highlighted the growing importance of African institutions, political

actors and coalitions in shaping debates around pandemic preparedness, vaccine access, pathogen sharing and health sovereignty.

A particularly productive discussion concerned the meaning and limits of decolonisation and the emergence of new forms of health sovereignty. Participants considered whether decolonisation provides a sufficient framework for understanding contemporary African agency, or whether greater attention is needed to the ways African actors are building institutions, negotiating rules and pursuing political strategies within a changing global order. Daniel Krugman presented an emerging model of health sovereignty in Kenya, illustrating how sovereignty is negotiated not only through international relations but also through domestic institutions and political processes. The discussion further considered how bilateralism and geopolitical fragmentation can create new spaces for African agency while also generating new pressures and dependencies. Across the stream, a central theme was that African agency is neither linear nor uncontested, but is continually produced through negotiation, institutional experimentation and struggles over power and knowledge.

The stream "**Global Africa: Lives, Afterlives, and the Power of Things**" convened by Ana Lucia Araujo (Howard University) and Mariana P. Candido (Emory University) brought together nineteen scholars in history, anthropology, literature, archaeology, and art history from universities in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, and the United States. The five multidisciplinary panels covering various geographical regions and periods sparked lively discussions and attracted a strong and engaged audience. The fourteen papers challenged the ways we think about visual, material, and economic histories of global Africa and how these histories are addressed in past and present scholarship, in the global museum, in university curricula, and in public debates about memory, restitution, and reparations.

Presenters discussed ivory objects, the memorialisation of weavers, land imaginaries, the history of lacemaking, movie posters, sacred manuscripts, African biographies, and refugees' objects and storytelling, spanning the Kingdom of Kongo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, today's Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, India, St. Vincent, and Sudan. The stream also featured a roundtable providing information about the journal *African Economic History*, in which editors Mariana P. Candido and Ana Lucia Araujo, along with editorial assistant Rene Odanga (Emory University), explained to attendants how they can submit and publish their work in the journal. Candido, Araujo, and Odanga emphasized how the journal and its editors approach economic history from a broad perspective, including its connections with other disciplines. The journal is committed to publishing African-based scholars and seeking African scholars as reviewers as well. The journal publishes papers in English, French, and Portuguese, and is also now publishing book reviews in these languages as well.

The ***Journal of African Cultural Studies*** stream brought together conversations on dynamic and inter-connected ideas around cultural productions in Africa. While the core theme was cinema narration and commentary as a popular practice in East Africa, there was also room for art and culture from other parts of Africa whose texture and performance reflected on the everyday experience of life. This was a wide focus but here we direct our lens on three of the seven panels that developed a conversation around local film screening practices in East Africa as both popular art and also as an extension of cultural and socio-economic adaptation. The presentations in the three panels explored different contexts, forms, and functions of the oral performance reconstruction and representation of film screening and audience reception. The emergent discussion traced at least three patterns of adaptation of cinema and narrative in East Africa. The first and self-evident one is the adaptation of film in the shadow economies of low income neighbourhoods where screening is part of local geographies and entrepreneurship in such places as Kibera in Nairobi and Buguruni in Dar es Salaam. The second strand was about the mainstreaming of cinema narration where it is mobilised to serve a variety of functions including advertising events in cultural centres such as Goethe Institute in Kampala, Kiswahili language instruction to foreigners in Tanzania as well as the marketing regimes of ethnic TV stations ingrained in soap operas targeted for specific audiences. The third strand develops from the second but is more focused on how cinema fandom and audience extension have become an important mobilizing tool in specific social contexts such as a refugee camp in Kenya known as Kakuma and informal job seekers forums in Dar es Salaam known as kijiweni. In these spaces, narrative reconstruction of the fandom experience feeds into and shapes the experience of life in the margins of society.

Solomon Waliaula and Rebecca Jones

Outstanding African Studies Awards for William Beinart and Margaret Busby

The African Studies Association of the UK has awarded its 2026 Outstanding African Studies Award to two individuals who both have made highly remarkable contributions to the field of African Studies, both in the UK and beyond. These are Professor Emeritus William Beinart and Margaret Busby, CBE.

The prizes were awarded at the ASAUK conference at the University of Durham, and we are very grateful that both awardees could be present at this occasion.

William Beinart

William Beinart, formerly Rhodes Professor of Race Relations (1997-2015), is Emeritus Professor at St Antony's College and the African Studies Centre. He served as chair of the Board of the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Director of

the African Studies Centre at Oxford and President of the ASAUK (2008-2010). In 2009 he was elected as a member of the British Academy.

At the award ceremony, Stephanie Kitchen (from the International Africa Institute) red the following citation in honour of William:

It is impossible to do justice to William's lifelong contributions to our fields in a few short words, but I will try. William's own research includes 11 authored or co-authored books, 15 co-edited books and journal special issues, and over 80 journal articles and book chapters.

William edited the *ournal of Southern African Studies* in various capacities from the early 1980s. He has written hundreds of peer reports. In 2024, William chaired the ASAUK monograph prize.

In putting together this nomination, I received at least eight statements of support, an indication of how much William means to so many people. I've chosen to quote from two of them this evening.

Dr June-Bam (AfOx Fellow 2025-2026; Director: Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, University of Johannesburg) wrote:

> I came to know and work very closely with William Beinart around 20 years ago. I had by then only known William from our undergraduate reading lists in courses at the University of Cape Town and from the 'underground' reading circles. William formed part of a radical group of white scholars on South African history and historiography much admired then by the anti-Apartheid left who frequently cited his work and those of others from faded overused photocopied pages of articles and chapters. This was a group of notable radical black intellectuals in underground reading groups of the time who frequently read and cited (amongst others) the work of Beinart, Bundy, Dubow, Marks, Fanon, Samir Amin, Walter Rodney etc.

Of his term as President of ASAUK, June says:

> I was the honorary secretary of the ASAUK from 2008 to 2010 and William was the President… William delicately and very astutely mentored and supported me as most likely the first African female scholar in this role in its then close to 50 years of existence. William's astute strategic oversight laid the early foundations for a profoundly transformed ASAUK from a predominantly white and male organisation to a more African representative organisation.

> Under William's directorship, we embarked on a long bus journey across the UK to universities far north and far south to recruit African scholars to the ASAUK and to break down the exclusionist barriers that existed for close to half a century. I was delighted to observe the long-term transformed demographic outcome at the ASAUK conference of 2024. Today, with WhatsApp and social media such slog to campaign and recruit is simply unthinkable. Under William's directorship it was indeed thinkable!

Andrew Bank (Dept. of Historical Studies, University of the Western Cape) writes about William's contribution to History and African Studies, and how he supported his own career:

> In 1995 William nominated my Cambridge University doctoral thesis for an Audrey Richards Dissertation Award. In 2017 he arranged an Oppenheimer Fellowship for me at Oxford University African Studies Centre, offering to accommodate me at his house should the last-minute accommodation for which I had applied fall through. In the period from 2020 to 2026, he has effectively supervised my current monograph-near completion titled Audrey Richards and the Making of British African Studies. Without his guidance, this study would never have been produced. He is undoubtedly the most generous scholar I have ever worked with.

It is hard to capture why William's contributions have been so compelling. He combines unwavering progressive commitment and institutional vision, with calm gentle wisdom. William: we wish you a well-deserved retirement. It's for the rest of us to take forward your legacy.

Margaret Busby

Margaret Busby, CBE, is known for her contributions and commitments in the world of publishing, particularly for writers, publishers and cultural organisations of African descent. She exudes patience and generosity as a literary activist and is herself, a remarkable creative talent in the genres of creative non-fiction, drama, (stage and broadcast) and writing as activism. Margaret Busby is frequently and rightfully cited as a pioneer in the history of Black publishers in the UK.

At the award ceremony, Kadija George read the following citation in honour of Margaret:

Known to be the youngest woman publisher and the first Black woman publisher in Britain, Busby is a benchmark in her fields reflected by the numerous accolades that she has received since graduating.

Margaret Busby co-founded the publishing house, Allison & Busby with Clive Allison. Despite being a general publishing house the success which came with their first writers were of African descent, with some of those works being classics today, and republishing others like the icon, CLR James, so that they did not fall into obscurity. Yet her resilient character is obvious as she tells the story of turning down a book of another icon, I *Know Why the Caged Birds Sing* by Maya Angelou, and adds that she and Maya, herself an activist, later became good friends. After leaving Earthscan publishers, her freelance work allowed her again to publish what she wanted and it was whilst doing so, that she established another part of her legacy with the publication of *Daughters of Africa* in 1992, a celebration of pioneer women authors. It was so groundbreaking that for the next 20 years other African women writers were still cajoling her to produce the next volume so that they could be part of the legacy of the next generations of African women writers until *New Daughters of Africa* was published in 2019. The royalties from this anthology established the 'Margaret Busby New Daughters of Africa Award', a scholarship at SOAS for an African woman writer from the continent which is now supported by the Hawthornden Foundation and private donations.

By default, on the other side of her publishing career, Margaret became a literary activist, supporting publishers with advice, knowledge and patronage, particularly women, and particularly Black publishers. One of the first roles she became involved in was as a founder of GAP (Greater Access to Publishing), supported by the Arts Council in Britain which started by providing four women of African and Asian descent mentoring with publishers in the mainstream industry. Her activism includes writing for the community, both as an avid contributor to Wikipedia, particularly contributing to profiles on women, and Black organisations. She writes many obituaries for the *Guardian* too, ensuring that people of note of African descent are noted and remembered for their contributions to society. She also chronicles this history herself, as she is rarely without her camera when she is at events. She also supports local Black literary events in her area, whenever she can, whether it is with an in-person appearance and or public and private words of support and encouragement. She has judged major literary prizes which include Chair of the Booker Prize 2020 jury and the Caine Prize for African Writing as well as being the Founding Patron and on the advisory board of the Etisalat Prize and Founding patron for the SI Leeds Prize for Black and Asian women in Britain.

Margaret Busby is responsible for bringing us so many important voices, as well as of a long-continued commitment to volunteering her expertise to emerging writers – whether in offering her editorial skills, her critical guidance, or her unstinting encouragement. She continues to give, generously and without fanfare, to those who are still finding their way. In a time where writers and other artists are under threat from AI and controlled by neocolonial corporations, this is a crucial time to celebrate and show our gratitude to a publisher who has promoted the art of those who push back against those exploitive structures.

Her many awards which include honorary doctorates from Exeter University and the Open University, recognise her for this and more. Her Lifetime Achievement Awards are from African centred organisations and national organisations, with one of her highest accolades being, Commander of the Order of the British Empire which was bestowed upon her in 2021. Other Lifetime Achievement Awards have been bestowed upon her from the Royal Society of Literature, and the London Bookfair. The latest award she has received which speaks directly to why she is being nominated for the Outstanding African Studies Award is the Honorary Doctorate from the University of Johannesburg, "for her dedication to critical African scholarship and publishing."

We are very grateful to Margaret for her unwavering commitment to enriching African life, and we wish her many more healthy years in which she can see the fruits of her labour.

About the prize

The Outstanding African Studies Award (formerly known as the Distinguished Africanist Award) was inaugurated by the ASAUK as a way of paying tribute to individuals or teams who have made exceptional contributions to the field of African studies, i.e. scholars who have in one way or another expanded and disseminated knowledge of Africa, and interest in Africa.

ASAUK Dissertation Prize 2026 Awarded to Dr Lena Reim

ASAUK is delighted to announce that Dr Lena Reim is the winner of the Best African Studies PhD Dissertation Prize 2026. She receives the prize for her Ph.D dissertation, titled *Politics and Postmemory in Zimbabwe: Second-Generation Narratives of the Gukurahundi Violence* (University of Oxford, 2024).

After careful consideration of the ten submitted nominations, Dr Reim's work was chosen out of a shortlist of four. Although each nominated dissertation has significant strengths and makes original and important contributions to various sub-fields of African Studies, the prize committee found Dr Reim's work the strongest in the light of the criteria for the prize, which are scholarly excellence,

original contribution, ethical research practice, the engagement with African contexts, and the significance for African Studies at large.

According to the committee, Dr Reim's dissertation is grounded in excellent scholarship and rigorous, extensive, and ethically sensitive fieldwork in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, concerning politically sensitive issues. It offers a rich account of political storytelling about a foundational period of violent state repression in post-independence Zimbabwe, widely known as Gukurahundi, by second-generation survivors of that violence whose activism has recently broken through decades of state silencing. As such, the work advances the theorisation of 'postmemory' and the 'afterlife' of periods of violence, demonstrating how intergenerational memory becomes entangled with dynamics of citizenship, ethnicity, competing visions of nationhood, and the ongoing quest for justice. Its insights and arguments speak well beyond the Zimbabwean context and have substantial relevance to major debates in African Studies and adjacent fields, such as politics, international relations, law, and development studies.

The three other nominated dissertations that made it to the shortlist are:

- Bethlehem Bayuh Attfield, *Translating Indigenous African Literature: A Case Study of Adam Reta's Amharic Fiction* (University of Birmingham, 2025).
- Lisa Kwaleyela, *Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Mine Areas: Improving Community Participation in Zambia's Copperbelt* (University of Oxford, 2025).
- Patricia Tshomba, *Exploring African Women's Agency in Land Access in Urban Agriculture: The Case of Women within Kinshasa's Urban Agriculture, DR Congo* (University of Leeds, 2025).

As an Association, we congratulate Dr Reim, as well as the other finalists, on this recognition of their work, and we look forward to their further contributions to African Studies!

About the prize

The ASAUK's Best African Studies PhD Dissertation Prize is a biannual prize awarded to the best doctoral thesis in African Studies which has been successfully examined in a UK institution of higher education during the two calendar years immediately preceding the ASAUK Conference. The prize was inaugurated in 1993, and from 1996 to 2023 was named the Audrey Richards Prize for African Studies. Dr Audrey Richards, CBE (1899–1984) was a pioneering British social anthropologist who worked mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, notably Zambia, South Africa and Uganda. She held lectureships and directorships at LSE, Witwatersrand, Makerere and Cambridge. She was the Second President of ASAUK. In 2023, ASAUK Council made a decision to name all our prizes simply as ASAUK prizes, and so the prize is again called the ASAUK Dissertation Prize from now on.

This year's prize (covering the period 2024-25) was awarded during the conference at the University of Durham, 10-12 September 2026. The prize committee consisted of Dr Zaynab Ango (University of Abuja), Dr Innocent Batsani-Ncube (SOAS University of London), Dr Benjamin Kirby (University of Bayreuth), and Dr Tolulope Osayomi (University of Ibadan), and was chaired by ASAUK Vice President, Professor Adriaan van Klinken (University of Leeds).

ASAUK Best Book Prize, 2026

Judging committee: Ola Uduku, University of Liverpool (Chair), Hazel Gray, University of Edinburgh; Iain Jackson, University of Liverpool; Taibat Lawanson, University of Liverpool; and Abisoye Eleshin, University of Lagos.

Thank you for giving us this really difficult task of choosing the ASAUK best book award for 2026, which recognises the best book on Africa, as sent in by the publishers in the two years up to the ASAUK biennial conference. This has been a challenging but ultimately enjoyable task.

Amidst E-copies, book deliveries and various timing schedules we took as our guiding principles a few key issues. As with the REF which UK academics will be conversant with, we did take into account rigour, originality and depth. We also felt that the accessibility of the selected prize text to the average layperson interested in Africa was also a category that we would expect of the chosen book. With this in mind, the committee have unanimously come to the decision to award ***Nigerian Hip Hop: Race Knowledge, and the Poetics of Resistance*** **by Tosin Gbogi, published by Oxford University Press, as the ASAUK best book prize winner.**

We found this text entirely engrossing in its critical examination and engagement with the Nigeria hip hop scene. This was from an academic but also very accessible viewpoint for the general Africanist reader.

We particularly valued his intensive analysis of Hip Hop and 'rap' in Africa, from historic-anthropological origins through to the early 1970s to the present day. Gbobi has a particularly engaging style in which he invites the reader to become part of his inquiry into this music genre, considering not only the historical, but also the socio-economic and political context to Nigeria situated in a wider, Americo-Western contextual world view. He also considers key themes such as gender, race, and from a cultural theory perspective, 'roots' colonisation and decolonisation.

This was a rich, and constantly challenging read, with its interdisciplinary angle, one encountered journalistic reportage, entangled with post-colonial theory, and both African and American histories of music and musical culture. As he says, …his work provides

> a broader view of hip hop that… takes us completely beyond the narrow conflation of the culture with a bedlam of postmodern idiots straightforwardly accepting the neocolonial takeover of Africa's futures.

We'd like to conclude with further words from him, where he rightly claims that *Nigerian Hip Hop* contributes to:

The lively debates that the culture fosters on the terms of Africa's insertion into the modern world
In these rhymes of resistance memory mounts remembrance
Asking for a world without the violence of Empire
Can't you see the ground is shifting?

The other books shortlisted for the award, and deserving of special mention, are ***Africa Pharmakon: The Asylum as Shrine from Slavery to Return*, by Nana Osei Quarshie, published by University of Chicago Press and *The Gift*, by Ana Lucia Araujo, published by Cambridge University Press. The committee names both as joint runners-up.**

Both books for different reasons we feel deserve this award. African Pharmakon is a close and original interdisciplinary study investigating mental health, its treatment and location in Africa, specifically Ghana. Taking on an ethnographic and anthropological focus. This text is highly original in its use of these devices to both understand what mental illness is within different contexts. This takes us from its historical genesis in traditional cultures, to post-colonial understandings and uses as a vehicle to frame local-national socio-political activity. Quarshie weaves an intricate narrative which engages with the different strands of his scholarship, including use of archival material and more current literature and events analysis in his text. This text unlocks a hitherto unexplored framework for the analysis of mental health systems in Africa and arguably across other continents and cultures in the global 'South' . This is an assured debut academic monograph from an author we hope to read more from in the coming years.

Araujo's monograph by contrast is a magisterial opus from a seasoned academic who has produced a trans-African study on the movement of 'gifts' from the giver to the receiver across continents, time and empires. It provides a detailed history of movement through different Africa, middle eastern and Western cultures of objects of value and is a good contribution providing a different lens and study of debates related to objects ownership and restitution in today's academies both in the global North and South. This book is extensively researched with significant archival research and referencing. The calibre and level of scholarship this monograph presents and also the wide reach and breadth of Africa it covers is to be commended. This again is a volume that we highly commend.

Ola Uduku, Chair of the Committee

Conferences Future. . .

INTERNATIONAL

'(Re)generation in African Studies: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Activism', The 11th Annual Lagos Studies Association Conference, Trinity University (Sabo/Yaba, Lagos) and Zoom, 15th–19th June 2027. Over several decades of scholarly research and intellectual activism, different generations of scholars and practitioners, representing diverse chronological eras, pose new questions about how to conduct and disseminate research, what constitutes knowledge, how to frame research problems, or even who should be part of knowledge and scholarly creative activities. These questions respond to different intellectual climates, broaden the field of engagement in African studies, and redefine scholarship, pedagogy, and intellectual activism.

How do different moments generate "new" and "revolutionary" questions and practices that constantly reimagine the field of African studies? Over time, "new" and "revolutionary" questions and practices of a generation become stale and anachronistic, either because their exponents and the ideas they advocated for have refused to evolve with the tide of time, or they became self-absorbed and rigid. New cycles of (re)generation emerge only to be supplanted or sidelined by another wave of people and ideas, challenging the status quo.

Conversations about cost, location, theme, and composition of academic associations and their gatherings and the notion of crisis in different fields, which gave birth to new professional networks, are part of this long-standing tradition of querying dominant wisdom and practices of the past and the present. Such questions are asked again by a newer generation of scholars and practitioners who want changes, whether radical or subtle, fast or slow.

The organisers invite participants to reflect on what (re)generation means in the diverse and diversely located fields of African studies. We encourage presentations that reflect on how shifting questions and practices (or epistemological, pedagogical, ideological crises) serve as a force of (re)generation in African studies. We welcome submissions that grapple with (re)generation as the propellant of new ways of knowing, of intellectual activism, and of a new beginning, that draws inspiration from the old or the past. What makes (re)generation fascinating is not just the reference to chronological age and generational difference among scholars and activists, all of which shape reception towards technology and other kinds of adoption that frames research and intellectual culture, but because it could be elusive. The concept of (re)generation organically builds new perspectives and protocol; it is regenerative because it does all these through a rebirth or redirection of the same norms it critiques.

Individual Submission: individual proposals should include a 250-word abstract, a short bio, and the email and phone contacts of presenters. Please do not submit more than one abstract. Abstracts cannot have more than two presenters. You cannot present more than one paper, either solo or joint. Submit your abstract;
Local participants/Nigeria-based: https://forms.gle/3J59nMciyLw5vwS79
International participants: https://forms.gle/ActFkZboRpnYZEb77

Panel Submission: panel, roundtable, and workshop proposals should comprise a 250-word summary, and the email and phone contacts of all panellists. Panel proposals to LSA: lagosstudiesassociation@gmail.com

Submission Deadline: 1st December 2026. Notification of acceptance of abstracts on 1st January 2027. Payment Deadline: 1st February 2027.

Registration Fee:
Local (Nigeria-based academics and practitioners) (N10,000)
International Graduate Students ($100)
International (full-time academics and practitioners) ($150)

Registration fee is required, whether presenting physically or virtually. The registration fee covers 15 full meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) throughout the five-day conference. Everyone listed on abstracts must pre-register by paying the registration fee after acceptance of an abstract.

For any questions about the conference, contact LSA at:
Email Address: Info@lagosstudies.org, lagosstudiesassociation@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/431357430001497
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/lagos-studies-association/?viewAsMember=true
Twitter: https://twitter.com/LagosStudies
Website: Lagosstudies.org

Theses Recently Accepted at UK Universities

Julia Hampton (2026), 'Between "Success" and "Failure": The Making of a Special Economic Zone in South Africa', D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor Max Bolt; https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:b21bebf0-7523-4c47-8e76-07a3a13f11/files/d794070z13s

Leila S. Strelitz (2025), 'Social Justice Lawyering in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Rules and Ideals in Everyday Legal Practice', D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor Max Bolt.

Adefolatomiwa Toye (2026), 'Nation-Building and Tropical Modernism: University Architecture in Post-Colonial Nigeria (1950-1967)',, Ph.D thesis, University of Liverpool. Supervisors: Professor Iain Jackson, Dr Patrick Zamarian, Dr Juliette Desplat and Olivia Gecseg.

Recent Publications

Moleti Kete Asante (ed) (2026), *Africology and the African Diaspora: Agency, Culture and Change*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 288pp, 9798765152713, £63.

Karin Barber (2026), *Much Matter in a Penny Paper: Early Yoruba Print Culture in Lagos, 1910-1930*. Ohio University Press, 276pp, 9780821426845, £27.99.

Sandra T. Barnes (2026), *People in Motion: Flexible States and Porous Boundaries in the History of Coastal West Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press, 288pp, 9780299356903, £72.

Bruno Jim Braak (2026), *South Sudan's Azande during Colonialism, War, and Displacement: An Ethnography of Rupture and Rejuvenation*. Leiden University Press, 304pp, 97890872844800, £119.

Anis Ben Brik (ed) (2026), *Governing in a Pandemic: Democratic Backsliding in the Middle East and North Africa*. New York University Press, 288pp, 9781479844753, £22.99; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9781479844753/governing-in-a-pandemic/

Doyle D. Calhoun, Alioune Fall and Cheikh Thiam (2026), *The Essential Senghior: African Philosophy and African Aesthetics*. Duke University Press, 406pp, 9781478038603, £26.99.

Dwight Carey (2026), *The Island of Bound Masters: Slavery and Construction Labor in Mauritius*. University of Virginia Press, 312pp, 9780813955452, £35; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9780813955452/the-island-of-bound-masters/

Domenico Cristofaro (2026), *Marginalising Colonialism: The Politics of Urban Growth in Bolgatanga*. Ohio University Press, 264pp, 9780821427101, £31.

Christopher R. Conz (2026), *Environment, Knowledge, and Injustice in Lesotho: The Poverty of Progress*. Boydell & Brewer, 282pp, 9781847013996, £26.99.

Alex de Waal and Willow Berridge (2026), *The Sudans: Africa's Search for Peace, Democracy, and Two Viable States*. Cornell University Press, 9781501786587, £25.99; available from Mare Nostrum Group: http://www.MNGBookshop.co.uk

Andrew Denning (2026), *How Cars and Roads Fueled European Colonialism in Africa*. Cornell University Press, 366pp, 9781501786761, £26.99; available from Mare Nostrum Group: http://www.MNGBookshop.co.uk

Annie Devenish, Sophie Dulucq, Marie Opplert and Brenda Schmahmann (eds), (2026), *Needlework in Africa: Stitching Identities and Histories*. Wits University Press, 308pp, 9781997461005, £35; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9781997461005/needlework-in-africa/

Marco di Nunzio (2026), *Unjust Developments: Building Inequalities in Ethiopia's Capital*. Fordham University Press, 288pp, 9781531513566, £26.99.

Jane Duncan (2026), *Rogue Spying: South Africa's Crisis of Accountability in the State Intelligence Sector*. Wits University Press, 224pp, 9781997461098, £18.99; available from Mare Nostrum Group: http://www.MNGBookshop.co.uk

Toyin Falola (2026), *Decolonization and the Future of African Studies*. University of Rochester Press, 516pp, 9781648250507, £130.

Nelly Hanna (2026), *Empires in Friction: Egypt in the Sixteenth Century*. Syracuse University Press, 344pp, 9780815612292, £31; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9780815612292/empires-in-friction/

Lotte Hughes, Mark Lamont, Katy Newell-Jones and Darmaris Parsitau (eds) (2026), *FGM/C in Africa and the Diaspora: Issues, Debates, and Challenges*. Boydell & Brewer, 390pp, 9781847014245, £115.

Raevin Jimenez (2026), *Gather Your Ancestors: Gender, Language and Belonging in Southeast Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press, 300pp, 9780299358006, £72.

Nathalie Arnold Koenings (2026), *Mystical Power and Politics on the Swahili Coast: Uchawi in Pemba*. Boydell & Brewer, 310pp, 9781847013989, £26.99.

Lea Lacan (2026), *Forest Politics in Kenya's Tugen Hills: Conservation Beyond Natural Resources in the Katimok Forest*. Boydell & Brewer, 272pp, 9781847014085, £26.99.

Henry B. Lovejoy (2026), *Becoming Sarah Forbes Bonetta: A Yorubá Woman in Queen Victoria's Cour*t. University of Toronto Press, 240pp, 9781049804767, £47; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9781049804767/becoming-sarah-forbes-bonetta/

Erik Meinema (2026), *Regulating Religious Coexistence: The Intricacies of Interfaith Cooperation in Coastal Kenya*. Ohio University Press, 276pp, 9780821427071, £31; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9780821427071/regulating-religious-coexistence/

Luke Melchiorre (2026), *Comrade Power! Student Activism and the Kenyan State, c.1978-2002*. Boydell & Brewer, 186pp, 9781847013590, £85.

Francesco P. V. Miguel and Marc Epprecht (eds) (2026), *Queer Mozambique: From the Mines to the Manas*. Wits University Press, 256pp, 9781997461043, £31; available from Mare Nostrum Group: http://www.MNGBookshop.co.uk

Ayodeji Ogunnaike (2026), *Forms of Worship: How Orissa Worship Became Religion in Nigeria and Brazil*. Duke University Press, 366pp, 0781478039020, £23.99; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9781478039020/forms-of-worship/

Sanya Ojo (ed) (2026), *The Military Ecosystem and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Economic Growth and Security Developments*. Bloomsbury Academic, 328pp, 9781666981230, £95.

Trishula Rachna Patel (2026), *Becoming Zimbabwean: A History of Indians in Rhodesia*. University of Virginia Press, 258pp, 9780813954483, £26.99.

Zainab Usman (2026), *Economic Diversification in Nigeria: The Politics of Building a Post-Oil Economy*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 312pp, 9781786993953, £29.99.

Adriaan van Klinken (2025), *Decolonizing Christianities in Contemporary Nigerian Literature*. Penn State University Press, 240pp, 978-0-271-10040-1, An Open Access edition is available through PSU Press Unlocked; https://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-10039-5.html

Rachel Lara van der Merwe (2026), *We are Not South African: Mediating National Identity in a Postcolonial and Postapartheid State*. Rutgers University Press, 198pp, 9781978842977, £24.99.

Mesrob Vartavarian (2026), *Privileged Minorities: A History of Wealth Concentration in South Africa*. Ohio University Press, 230pp, 9780821426753, £14.99.

Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo (2026), *Beyond the Tribal Cocoon: Cultural Identities Between the Particular and the Universal in Cameroon*. Spears Media Press, 352pp, 9781957296722, £35; www.africanbookscollective.com/books/beyond-the-tribal-cocoon

Marco Wyss (2026), *Félix Houphouët-Boigny*. Ohio University Press, 232pp, 9780821427125, £14.99; https://mngbookshop.co.uk/9780821427125/felix-houphouet-boigny/

Call for Papers: *Journal of West African History*

This is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary research journal dedicated to publishing high-quality scholarship on West African history. Positioned at the forefront of new research, JWAH addresses representation gaps by fostering critical scholarship on topics such as women and gender, sexuality, slavery, oral history, popular and public culture, and religion. The editorial board invites submissions that engage diverse topical, theoretical, and methodological approaches. Committed to rigorous analysis and international in scope, JWAH offers a critical intervention in knowledge production. Each issue includes scholarly book reviews, and articles are published in English, French, and Portuguese, with African-language abstracts. JWAH is published by Michigan State University Press.

The editorial board invites scholars to submit original article-length manuscripts (up to 10,000 words including endnotes) accompanied by an abstract that summarises the argument and significance of the work. Review essays should engage the interpretation, meaning, or importance of an author's argument for a wider scholarly audience. See what we have available for review on our Book Reviews page. Contact the Book Review Editors at mark.deets@aucegypt.edu *or* madina.thiam@jhu.edu *or* nkesse@clarku.edu for more information.

Manuscripts should be submitted at https://lnkd.in/eDBDg6fX. In order to submit an article, you will have to create an account, which the site will guide you on.

ASAUK Council Member Kadija George has just completed 9 months as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar Fellow in Washington, DC. My Fulbright Visiting Scholarship ended in September 2026. I was based in Washington DC with co-hosts Howard University and the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, a space of bliss for a researcher! Of course, they have books on tap and as a Research Fellow, you have your own office with the capacity to hoard 250 books until the end of your fellowship plus the support of an intern. The Library of Congress has one of the largest map collections in the world and a respectable sound archive too.

My initial Fulbright proposal was based on four objectives: to undertake research of my final chapter for a book to be published by Africa World Press on 'Black Publishers and Pan-Africanism', the second was to experiment with the Public Collective Memory Interview, a method of oral history data collection which I am developing, sto organise a display on the publications I was researching, some of which have not been digitalised and finally, to teach Black British Literature at Howard during the Spring semester. However, as Howard U do not allow Visiting Scholars to teach courses, we are required to do guest lectures instead as part of the courses on the curriculum of their professors. My host at Howard University was the Chair of the English Department, Professor Carole Boyce-Davies, recently conferred with the new endowed chair in Caribbean Studies, named in honour of Eric Williams. Just to name her as my host is an honour and a privilege in itself.

I used my published poet status to give as many performances and to be involved in as many presentations on poetry around the country as I could! And so I was the featured poet for April's poetry month at the Furious Flower Poetry Center at JMU and was the inaugural reader for the HU African Diaspora Literature Chair's Reading Series at Sankofa Bookstore, opposite the University at the end of the spring semester.

I used the time to undertake as much research and reading as possible, particularly in respect to interviewing elders as their memories and experience provided context to the backstory of my project. I also gave presentations on my work in progress. Now all I have to do is write! But the work has extended and I will be there again in March 2027 for the conference on the 200th anniversary of the Black press being convened at Howard University. I hope to be organising a PCMI which I propose to do around the same time, outcomes which will be presented as a chapter in my book.

Work on The PCMI has emerged as a strong factor to write and present on aside from the primary content which it generates. I will be presenting updated outcomes on the PCMI as co-chair on a panel, 'Unsettling the Archive: African

and African Diasporic Memory Work, Methodological Rupture and the Afterlives of Empire' at the ASA conference in New Orleans in December 2026.

Here are links of some of the presentations during my Visiting Scholar Fellowship.

The Poet and the Poem (Podcast) recorded at the Library of Congress with Grace Cavalieri:
https://www.gracecavalieri.com/poetLaureates/featuredpoet_kadijasesay2026.html

Furious Flower Reading Series Presents Kadija George Sesay at James Madison University (video)
https://youtu.be/gKNkSQfPdzw?si=3kk_jm_h1H1a9LK0

HU African Diaspora Literature Chair Series (Inaugural event) at Sankofa Video Books and Café (video), What does 'Home' Mean to You?
https://www.facebook.com/SankofaDC/videos/hu-african-diaspora-literatures-chairs-series-at-sankofa/2386851998386843/

HU Department of Literature & Writing: Black British Poetry : Radical and Unapologetic at Howard University, Undergrad Library (Audio)
14 April Black British Poetry Radical and Unapologetic audio .m4a

August 2026: University of Virgin Islands – President's Newsletter
https://presidentscorner.uvi.edu/fullbright-scholar-poet-dr-kadija-geroge-sesay-returns-to-uvi-with-a-powerful-reminder-tell-our-stories/

The deadline to apply for a Fulbright Visiting Scholar for UK=based applicants: 2nd November 2026. (Applications from persons up to the age of 79 are welcolmed).
https://fulbrightscholars.org/non-us-scholars/fulbright-visiting-scholar-program
The Kluge Center Fellowship applications open in the spring

Rethinking How African Literature Is Studied: Azzeddine Tajjiou Wins Inaugural Kassahun Checole Prize. Azzeddine Tajjiou, a researcher, translator and academic from Morocco, has been named the inaugural recipient of the *Third World Quarterly (TWQ)* Kassahun Checole Award in African Studies, an initiative dedicated to recognising and championing the work of emerging African scholars and writers.

Tajjiou received the award at the ASAUK 2026 Conference in Durham, marking an important moment for a prize established to amplify African scholarship and literary work, bring it to wider audiences, and strengthen the place of African voices, ideas and intellectual traditions within global academic and literary conversations.

Tajjiou, whose research focuses on African and postcolonial literatures, is a university adjunct lecturer and is currently completing his PhD at Mohammed First University in Morocco. His article 'Rethinking comparative African literatures: inward comparison and the reorientation of method' (*Third World Quarterly*, Volume 46, 2025) asks us to reconsider how African literature is studied and compared. Rather than simply bringing more African writing into existing academic frameworks, he argues in this article that African literary traditions should help shape the ways in which literature is understood and analysed.

The three judges, Chair of the Prize Committee, Professor Beth Le Roux (Publishing Studies, University of Pretoria, South Africa), *TWQ* Academic Editor, Samson Opondo (Associate Professor of Political Science and Africana Studies and Chair of Political Science, Vassar College, USA), and *TWQ* Editorial Board Member, Abebe Zegeye (Centre of Research and Development in Learning, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) commended the article which positions African literary production as the central node for understanding comparative world literatures, rather than applying other models to Africa:

> We felt the article stood out for its sustained critique of the framing of African knowledge production in terms of centre and periphery, and for its insistence on the centrality of African epistemologies. Azzeddine's piece displayed innovation, rigour and critical thinking that the award seeks to encourage.
>
> It is a tribute to Kassahun's vision of foregrounding African authors, narratives, and voices, making their knowledge production visible and engaging with global discourse on their own terms. Kassahun worked as a traiblazer in publishing the work of emerging and established African scholars to prioritise the African perspective, considering not just who is is being published, but also from what perspectives, to "know Africa through African eyes.

The runners-up for the award are also examples of valuable research being conducted across the African continent: 'From Conflict to Cooperation: Pathways Toward the Resolution of Resource Conflicts in Agropastoral Communities in Ghana' by Tobias Tseer (a Lecturer at Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies in Ghana); Promise Frank Ejiofor (doctoral candidate in Development Studies at the University of Cambridge); and 'Aid Sanctions and Constitutional Order: The US and France's Responses to Military Coups in sub-Saharan Africa by Inesta Brunel Lendzoumbou (Ph.D candidate at Nankai University, China).

African Critical Inquiry Programme Announces 2026 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. The African Critical Inquiry Programme has named Lari Chanel Hallowes-Welman, Motselisi Edith Khabo, and Jackline Maina as recipients of the 2026 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. Hallowes-Welman, a South African student in the History Department, is working on her PhD at Rhodes University. Khabo is studying History at Stellenbosch University and is from Lesotho. Maina is a Kenyan student pursuing a PhD in Music at University of Cape Town. Support from ACIP's Ivan Karp Awards will allow each of them to do significant research for their dissertations. Hallowes-Welman will do archival work in Cape Town to supplement research in other archives for her project, *Writing the Dead: Colonial Representations of Death and Cultural Identity on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1760-1878*. Khabo will do oral histories, interviews, focus groups, and archival work in Lesotho for her project, *Margins of Belonging: Negotiating Memory and Identity among the Baphuthi in Lesotho, c. 1966-2025*. Maina's project, *Reframing Contemporary Rurality through Musical Insights and Practice from Migori County, Kenya*, will include ethnographic research and artistic inquiry in Migori County as well as creating a musical composition based on Migori's diverse musical forms and practice.

Founded in 2012, the African Critical Inquiry Programme (ACIP) is a partnership between the Centre for Humanities Research at University of the Western Cape in Cape Town and the Laney Graduate School of Emory University in Atlanta. Supported by donations to the Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz Fund, the ACIP fosters thinking and working across public cultural institutions, across disciplines and fields, and across generations. It seeks to advance inquiry and debate about the roles and practice of public culture, public cultural institutions, and public scholarship in shaping identities and society in Africa through an annual ACIP Workshop and through the Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards, which support African doctoral students in the humanities and humanistic social sciences enrolled at South African universities.

'African Pedagogies of Restitution: Return, Repair, Rehumanisation', 2027 African Critical Inquiry Workshop. The project was proposed by organisers Koni Benson, Aidan Erasmus, Robyn Humphreys, Asher Gamedze, and Bianca van Laun, all based in the Department of Historical Studies at University of the Western Cape.

African Pedagogies of Restitution will be hosted at the Iyatsiba Lab of the Centre for Humanities Research in Cape Town, South Africa in March 2027. African Pedagogies of Restitution: Return, Repair, Rehumanisation In recent years, the global discourse on restitution, reparation, and return has gained renewed urgency across academic, cultural, and political arenas. Emerging from a longer history of anti-colonial struggle, restitution today signals not only the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects, but the critical process of rehumanisation

in response to African dehumanisation through colonial and scientific exploitation. Rooted in the work of scholars, artists, and activists, restitution has become a transdisciplinary, international movement. South Africa's post-apartheid intellectual tradition and Namibia's engagement with Germany over the Nama-Herero genocide offer distinct yet intertwined contributions, emphasising restitution as repair rather than mere return. African Pedagogies of Restitution: Return, Repair, Rehumanisation will be a 3-day workshop between the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of Namibia (UNAM), to map this shared intellectual work on the question of restitution towards pedagogical goals.

The workshop will consolidate and extend current work by facilitating engagement on important aspects of restitution in our shared context and their implications for joint research, curriculum development in African heritage, restitution, museology, and capacity building, building on the idea of restitution as both scholarly inquiry and activist practice and driven by a collective community of practice. Both institutions have shared ongoing anti-colonial commitments and ongoing restitution efforts to repatriate and reclaim African ancestral remains, archives, and cultural objects from colonial-era holdings. Ultimately, the project seeks to reimagine Pan-African restitution politics and practices by creating a sustainable community of practice across national and disciplinary boundaries. It aims to connect fragmented efforts, foster pedagogical and policy innovation, and contribute to the remaking of African futures grounded in justice, memory, and dignity.

Information about applying to organize the 2028 ACIP workshop and for the 2027 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards will be available in November 2026. The deadline for both workshop applications and student applications is 3rd May 2027. For information, see https://gs.emory.edu/guides/students/acip.html *and* https://www.facebook.com/ivan.karp.corinne.kratz.fund

Aluta Continua: Art Law Constitutionalism

University College, London, is honoured to host the UK debut of selected works from the South African Constitutional Court Art Collection. The collection gives visual expression to South Africa's constitutional values of freedom, dignity and equality, exploring themes of transition, identity, social justice and reconciliation, Private viewings, must be booked in advance, 19th October – 18th December 2026.

Obituary

John Iliffe (1st May 1939 – 20th August 2026)

Professor John Iliffe, who died in August 2026 at the age of eighty-seven, was a leading figure in a generation who pioneered the study of African history in the UK. His scholarly output leaves us with an extraordinary body of work, remarkable in so many ways, but especially for its explanation of large-scale historical change through the experiences of real people in the past. The depth and breadth of John's research meant that he wrote with great authority, although he wore it lightly. His signature style was pithy, uncomplicated prose, which conveyed so much meaning with so few words. But shining through John's oeuvre is a sense of shared humanity, particularly a deep respect for the resilience and resourcefulness of African peoples in their daily lived struggles. Empathy and sensitivity shaped all of John's history writing over the many decades of his academic career.

Born in Luton on the eve of the Second World War, John attended school at Framlingham College in Suffolk. He took up a place to read History at Peterhouse at the University of Cambridge in 1958. As the winds of change blew across the African continent with the coming of decolonisation, John went to Uganda and studied at Makerere University. He returned to Cambridge for his Ph.D, where he was supervised by the eminent imperial historian, Ronald Robinson. Submitted in January 1965, John's doctoral dissertation was a closely detailed study of the rule of Governor Freiherr von Rechenberg in the German colony of Tanganyika. Subsequently, it was published as his first book, *Tanganyika Under German Rule, 1905-1912*. Fittingly, the opening sentence announced it 'as a contribution to the reappraisal of European colonial rule in Africa which has accompanied African independence.' By this time, John was teaching at the University College, Dar es Salaam, and was fully immersed in the intellectual project of making a 'usable past' for newly independent African nations.

Central to Iliffe's study of Tanganyika was a reassessment of the 1905 Maji Maji rebellion against German colonialism, which sought in particular to understand and explain African initiative. This was a theme that John was to carry through his entire life's work. He returned to Cambridge from Tanzania in 1971, joined the History Faculty, and took up a Fellowship at St John's College, where he was to live and work for the rest of his life. His magisterial *A Modern History of Tanganyika* was published in 1979, the output of such meticulous and dedicated archival work that, still today, most files in the Tanzanian archives emerge with John Iliffe's signature as the first recipient. He carried out additional research in the former East Germany, surviving on a diet of dry biscuits and black tea, and once declared that this book took more work than all his others put together. Without ever eschewing complexity, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* told a story

of a state emerging through multiple layers of colonial conquest, layers that were constituted by vividly recreated human lives that were simultaneously ordinary and exceptional. A central theme was the 'enlargement of scale'; one to which he was to return in later works. Almost five decades on, the book remains widely acknowledged as the best national history of an African state.

Iliffe's subsequent work moved to address themes on a continental scale, such as the histories of capitalism and poverty in Africa. His 1982 Anstey Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent appeared as *The Emergence of African Capitalism*, a slim volume of less than 100 pages. Here, John grappled not only with the challenge of defining an indigenous African capitalism but with also tracing its transformation through colonialism and independence. He asked rhetorically whether African capitalism would be able to establish itself as a 'creative force', a question that had particular resonance at a time when the doctrine of structural adjustment was beginning to reconfigure many African economies, and when other African states were experimenting with socialism. His next book, *The African Poor: A History*, extended from thirteenth-century Ethiopia to Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. Its extraordinary breadth belies the detail of personal histories that enrich the narrative: from Adeola, a slave woman in Victorian Lagos, to Elizabeth Morake, a pensioner queuing in the freezing Soweto winter of 1982. Astounding for its ambition, *The African Poor* offers up both a regionally specific history of what it meant and what it felt like to be poor in various parts of Africa over a broad span of time while also conveying the flavour of a culture like *marabi* in interwar South Africa: 'The atmosphere was alcoholic, sometimes criminal … But *marabi* meant more. It meant youth and modernity. It meant the freedom of towns not yet in the grip of the state. It meant hope and ambition not yet crushed.' Much acclaimed, *The African Poor* was awarded the 1988 Herskovits Prize by the African Studies Association of the United States. Never keen to be celebrated, John declined to attend the Annual Meeting to collect his prize and asked his friend John Lonsdale to do so on his behalf. Indeed, John Iliffe was famous for never attending conferences. He also notably turned down the ASAUK's 'Distinguished Africanist' award, stating that he had not contributed enough to the organisation.

In the 1990s, John turned his attention to writing what might be called a textbook, except it was so much more than that. The first edition of *Africans: The History of a Continent* appeared in 1995. 'Africans have been and are the frontiersmen who have colonised an especially hostile region of the world on behalf of the entire human race', he wrote, in a particularly audacious sentence. He argued that a unique population history lay at the heart of the African past linking 'the earliest human beings to their living descendants in a single story.' In this way, John constructed African history as an epic tale unified by the theme of demography and presented a new way of understanding Africa across the long durée. It is a masterclass in explaining the broad patterns of social and political change in

Africa from the origins of humankind to present-day struggles in what was then a recently liberated South Africa, whilst never losing sight of actual people, their limitations and their triumphs. Two more editions followed, in 2007 and in 2017, carrying the narrative forward to the Arab Spring which, as John memorably put it, 'had become an Egyptian Winter.' John sustained work on the fourth edition until very recently, with the disciplined rigour of hard work for which he was renowned.

John Iliffe dedicated his life to African history. There are still more of his dozen published books not yet mentioned: *Famine in Zimbabwe*, *East African Doctors*, *The African AIDS Epidemic*, *Honour in African History* and political biography from *Modern Tanzanians* to Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo. One simply cannot pay justice to the oeuvre in such a short tribute as this.

John's prolific output is all the more memorable because of the manner in which he worked: not with a word processor but with index cards and a typewriter. His legendary shoeboxes of index cards were active ingredients in meetings with doctoral students, stimulating many a conversation. John was also a devoted teacher of undergraduates, and generations of Cambridge students benefitted from his kind and thoughtful intellectual guidance. Thankfully, the treasure trove of scholarship remains for all of us, animated and inspired by deeply felt human stories embedded in 9African lives.

Dr Ruth Watson
Associate Professor of African History
Clare College, Cambridge

Note to Contributors

Send items for inclusion in the January 2027 *Newsletter* by 30th December 2026 to the editor, Dr Simon Heap: effaheap@aol.com

Any opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the ASAUK.

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