

BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

Selections from the Minutes of the Oxford University Anthropological Society

Members Past and Present: 3. Professor Max Gluckman

For over 500 meetings, from the beginnings of the Society in 1909 until 1954, when it discontinued its affiliatory membership of the Royal Anthropological Institute due to lack of funds, the elections of new members were recorded in the minutes. Alas, this does not prove to be a perfect record, for there are a number of names missing, including that of Max Gluckman. The first record of his active participation in a meeting is as a discussant of Dr J.F. Nadel's lecture, 'illustrated with interesting slides', on 'Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft among the Nupe in N. Nigeria', at the 308th meeting on 13th June 1935. Presumably he had been elected as a member before this date.

His name had been mentioned at a Committee meeting just before this, in May, when he had been suggested as a possible speaker for the following Michaelmas Term. In the event, Sir Charles Harper (giving his Presidential Address), Dr B.G. MacGraith, Professor Le Gros Clark and Dr M. Fortes (see *JASO* Vol. XII, no.2, pp.114-115) spoke that term. Gluckman attended the next Committee meeting in November and again in February 1936. A little later, there seems to have been some confusion as to exactly who was on the Committee, for when at another meeting in November 1938 it was announced that Mr M.M. Rix was departing for Aden, and hence resigning his seat,

The question of replacing him on the Committee was discussed but it was decided to take no action until next term, the other three ordinary members being Dr E.E. Evans Pritchard (co-opted 18 November 1936), Dr M. Gluckmann (no record of election or co-option), and Mr Deric Nusbaum (elected 1937).

It may be puzzling that a Committee should feel it necessary to remind itself of its composition, though the frequent absences of anthropologists on fieldwork, as well as all the other movements of academic life, might be sufficient to explain this. Whatever the case, there was apparently no suspicion attaching to Gluckman's slipping onto the Committee (and indeed into the Society) unrecorded, for it was decided at the same meeting to approach him (or Miss

Blackwood), among others, to lecture to the Society the following term. This approach was successful, and Gluckman addressed the Society for the first time at the 348th meeting on 2nd February 1939, reading a paper on 'Black-White Hostility and Co-operation in the Zulu Church and State' (cf. his 'Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIV, 1940, pp.1-30 and 147-174). According to the minuter, 'Dr H.M. Gluckmann, D. Phil. [as he was referred to] presented very fairly both sides of the problem - the black and the white man's [*sic*] point of view - in this difficult case of acculturation.' Marett and Miss Hadow took part in the following discussion and, for the record, Schapera was present in the audience as a visitor.

At the end of the year, it was noted that the Committee accepted the resignation of 'Dr H.M. Gluckmann', who had taken up an appointment in Northern Rhodesia. After his return to England some eight years later it was resolved, in May 1948, to co-opt him back onto the Committee. On leaving Oxford one year later, however, Gluckman tendered his resignation for the second time, Dr Srinivas being co-opted in his place. During his periods of stay in Oxford, Gluckman had been a very active member of the Society, frequently noted among the discussants at meetings. For instance, at the Presidential Address of Mr D.B. Harden at the 448th meeting in November 1947 on 'The Phoenicians on the West African Coast', Gluckman, Evans-Pritchard and Fortes (of whom Gluckman had earlier said, 'My general debt is greatest', *ibid.*, p.2) were the discussants the minuter thought foremost to name.

Gluckman's second, and only other talk to the Society was thirteen years later, on 31st October 1962, at the second of two meetings both numbered the 594th. The second of these is now distinguishable as the Michaelmas Term Meeting, the other being Hilary. The subject was 'Gossip and Scandal', but unfortunately for the eager researcher, the minuter recorded no more about this meeting than a very straightforward account of Gluckman's argument familiar in its more sophisticated exposition from his article 'Gossip and Scandal: A Paper in Honor of Melville J. Herskovits' (*Current Anthropology*, Vol. IV, pp. 307-316). In 1964 and 1965, Gluckman gave two Marett lectures at Exeter, his old Oxford college, but he was not to return to the Anthropological Society.

It would seem that Gluckman was never in Oxford long enough to join the long list of eminent Presidents of the Society; but it is, I hope, worthwhile to record his involvement with it from the sometimes revealing but often disappointingly limited minutes.

JEREMY COOTE
Former Secretary
O.U.A.S.