

HONORARY GRADUATE

John Edward Spence

John Edward (Jack) Spence was born in Krugersdorp in 1931 and completed his school education at Pretoria Boys' High School. He proceeded to the University of the Witwatersrand obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1952 and going on to complete his honours degree in history, graduating in 1953. He then continued his studies overseas at the London School of Economics. His interests having shifted from history to political science, he qualified for the degree of Bachelor of Science (Econ) in 1955.

Spence returned to South Africa to occupy his first lecturing post, one in the Department of History and Politics at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. During this time he was an active member in Natal of the Liberal Party of South Africa. In 1961 he returned to the London School of Economics to take up a Rockefeller Junior Research Fellowship. A year later he moved to Swansea in Wales as a lecturer at the University College. He remained at Swansea for eleven years, being promoted, first to a senior lectureship and then, in 1971, to the position of Reader. In 1973 Jack Spence moved to Leicester University, having been appointed the chair in politics. He was Head of the Department from 1974 to 1981. From 1981 to 1987 he served two terms as a Pro Vice-Chancellor of the university. In 1987 he resumed the chair and headship of the Department of Politics, remaining in these positions until his retirement from the university in 1991. In that year he took up his current position as Director of Studies at Chatham House in London, headquarters of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Professor Spence has published extensively, in books and in numerous articles in scholarly and other journals, in the field of southern African political studies. His special interest is in the international relations of the Republic of South Africa but he has also addressed the domestic political scene and the wider regional situation as affecting neighbouring countries such as Lesotho. His contributions have not been limited to southern Africa. He has also shown interest in issues of global concern, such as the Cold War and the nuclear arms race. His publications include *Republic Under Pressure* (1965) and *The Strategic Significance of Southern Africa* (1970). His latest publication is a book which he has edited and to which he has contributed, entitled *Change in South Africa*, published in 1994 by the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

He has been a Visiting Professor at several universities: the University of California in Los Angeles, the University of Zimbabwe, the University of Cape Town and the University of Natal. He has also held honorary fellowships from Staffordshire Polytechnic, the University College of Wales in Swansea and Nene College, Northampton. Jack Spence is a past President of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom (1977) and has served as Chairman of the British International Studies Association of the United Kingdom (1985). He was a founding editor of the *British Journal of International Studies* (now *Review*) and the *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Currently he is editor of *International Affairs*, the Chatham House journal. He serves as a consultant for Oxford Analytica and the Economic and Research Council.

The most striking feature of Jack Spence's scholarship is his independence of mind. In a subject area that is highly charged ideologically and politically, he is able to grasp and empathise with many conflicting standpoints. His own approach is eclectic and pragmatic. It is an approach that has enabled him to engage with the realities of the changing socio-economic and political situation in South Africa through three distinct phases: under the apartheid system of the 'old South Africa', in the epoch of transition which began in 1990, and in the emergence of the 'new South Africa' since 1994.

Apart from handling these matters as a scholar, Jack Spence has been a willing and dispassionate publicist, discussing them in the columns of newspapers and weeklies in this country, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the English-speaking world. In particular he has made a contribution as an acknowledged expert on southern African issues for the British Broadcasting Corporation. On behalf of the BBC and the RIIA he monitored the national elections of April 1994 in South Africa and the local government elections of 1995. In August 1993 he gave evidence to the Goldstone Commission.

Jack Spence's services to Wits University have been considerable. While he understood the motives of the advocates of the academic boycott in the apartheid years, he shared the standpoint of the open universities, which was that, since they had shown their opposition to apartheid, it was unfair to include them in such a boycott. He returned to South Africa for regular visits over the years and was also willing to lecture, to teach and to address public audiences, persuading several of his colleagues to emulate him in those activities. Spence himself was particularly active in forums of the South African Institute of International Affairs, the headquarters of which are situated at Jan Smuts House on the Wits campus. In the United Kingdom at his base at Leicester University he also extended hospitality to visiting South African academics and post-graduate students.

More specifically, Jack Spence served as a member of the University's London Committee during several years of its existence. He was also Visiting Jan Smuts Professor of International Relations in 1980. He has regularly advised the University on academic appointments and staff recruitment, and has been of particular help to the department whose interests lie closest to his own, the Department of International Relations. He has recently visited and lectured at this university in three successive years - 1994 to 1996.

In honouring Professor Jack Spence the University would be honouring a loyal South African, who, despite his long domicile in the United Kingdom, has throughout retained his South African citizenship. The University recognises the achievements of one of its own graduates in the course of a distinguished academic career in the United Kingdom and his loyalty and service over the years to this institution, his Alma Mater, by conferring on John Edward Spence the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.