

IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR IAN TAYLOR

Genuine Academic, Witty Soul and Friend of Central and Eastern European African Studies

When we were just about to send our new English-language journal issue (Vol. 14, No. 6, 2020) to the printing house, devastating news arrived and shocked all of us... It is still incomprehensible, and very difficult to cope with. Our great scholarly supporter, a global leading authority in China–Africa relations, and a personal good friend, Professor Ian Taylor has passed away. Although we had been communicating about his illness and struggle in the past months, I simply cannot believe this finally has happened. We were planning so many things for the coming years, including yet many more returns to Pécs, a place he had always enjoyed to the fullest, a jointly edited book, the upcoming conferences on African Studies at the University of Pécs, with the African Studies Association, and of course, ECAS – each of these events offering great opportunities for reunion and more discussions over numerous academic and personal matters.



We first met in June 2009, at the 3rd European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Leipzig, Germany. We sat on the panel “*Beijing Consensus*” versus “*Post-Washington Consensus*”? *China’s Impact on Africa’s socio-economic spaces* and enjoyed a very vivid discussion with other panellists and colleagues – then, obviously, continued it in other forms, even on the train to the airport. Ian was always keen on exchanging views also about the bipolar world, and he was very interested in Sovietized Hungary’s policy towards Africa. Many years later he introduced me to a good colleague of his, Dr. Gavin Bowd who edited a thematic issue for the journal *Twentieth Century Communism* (Vol. 15, 2018) in which both of us published a paper – Ian wrote about “Mao Zedong’s China and Africa”. Leipzig boosted his interest in Central and Eastern Europe, which he had followed with special care already for some time. We, then, agreed that he would visit us one day in Pécs. And he did! Many times, returning with great enthusiasm and advocating Hungarian, Polish and Czech scholarship in African Studies.

After we initiated the Pécs Conference on African Studies in 2010 – the year when the city was European Capital of Culture and South Africa hosted the Football World Cup –, I approached Ian and could easily convince that he accepts our invitation to be one of the two keynote speakers of our 2012 conference. Together with Professor Goran Hyden they were forming a fantastic pair as they were addressing the issue of the new, or second scramble for Africa. Ian underscored that “old and new actors such as China, Brazil, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea etc. are aggressively competing and seeking access across the continent. It is not a re-play of the 19th century, but Africa’s resources are being increasingly exploited by competing international actors all with the active complicity of African actors. Where this will place Africa in the Twenty-first Century is of foremost importance to the continent.” He kept returning to Pécs, in particular, after he had been introduced to



the fine products of the first brewery of the country and the famous wines of the Villány wine region. One of the most important ‘missions’ for him, as he told me the other day, was to help us position Central and Eastern European African Studies in a wider global context and to reach out to young scholars and students to converse with them, encouraging them to engage themselves in debates. We will always remain grateful for his support and all-time enlightening presence with his scholarly wit and enchanting humour.

Ian was never lazy or sluggish to introduce his colleagues, academic contacts, or to say a couple of nice words to some important scientists, diplomats, top university managers to support others’ efforts to get a boost in their research project, publication, or assignment as student. We frequently spent sufficient time at the annual African Studies Association (ASA) events to plan joint projects involving our students. The peak of this was realized in the spring of 2015 when a mixed group of MA students from the University of St. Andrews where he was a highly respected Professor of International Relations and PhD students from the University of Pécs, led by his former colleague, Dr. Hazel Cameron, carried out a field trip in Rwanda. Ian was never exhausted to explain to the students the complexities of the 1994 genocide and the geopolitics of the macro region.

He was a genuinely warm-hearted and open-minded person, who gladly invited our family to his home on our way back from Florida to Hungary. I will never forget when we arrived at their house in St. Monans on an evening hour early April 2014, and after having realized that we had over 14 suitcases for the forthcoming almost two weeks, he just sighed: “OMG, the Hungarians have invaded us.” During those mesmerising days in Scotland we certainly became closer friends, which I will value forever!

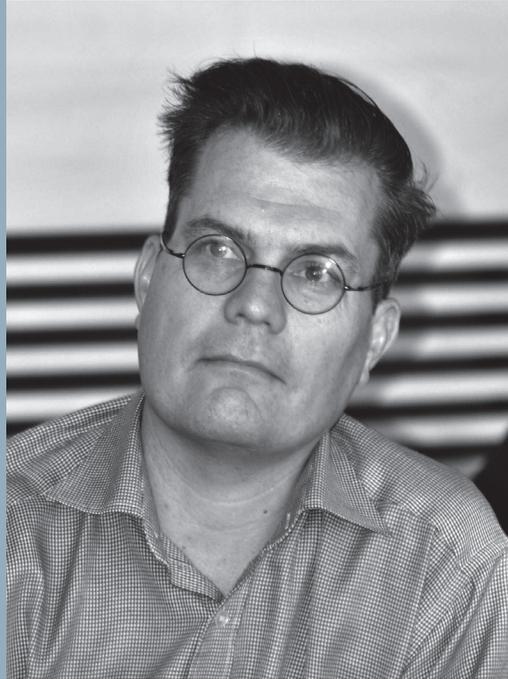
The entire China–Africa research community feels the pain and mourns as Ian Taylor has passed away. All the people who knew him, I am sure, will always remember his critical approach to African politics and the international relations of African countries. His seminal works, including *China and Africa. Engagement and Compromise* (2006, Routledge), *China’s New Role in Africa* (2009, Lynne Rienner), *The International Relations of Sub-Saharan Africa* (2010, Continuum), *Africa Rising?: BRICS – Diversifying Dependency* (2014, James Currey), or *African Politics. A Very Short Introduction* (2018, Oxford University Press) will stay with us and the upcoming generations of researchers, demonstrating also a humble and diligent, as well as innovative and well-versed scholarly attitude that is omnipresent in all his works.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee of the Hungarian Journal of African Studies, I would like to dedicate our present issue to our wonderful colleague and friend, Professor Ian Taylor, who will be deeply missed, but forever remain in our hearts and minds! May his soul rest in peace!

István Tarrósy
Editor of HJAS

Ian Christopher Taylor

Professor of International Relations



9 January 1969 – 22 February 2021

Earlier in February 2021, Ian was awarded a D.Litt. by the University of St Andrews. This was in recognition of his lifetime's academic achievements, based on a portfolio of his published works.

He was a Professor in International Relations and African Political Economy in the School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews and Chair Professor in the School of International Studies, Renmin University of China in Beijing.

He was also Professor Extraordinary in Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, a visiting professor at the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and an Honorary Professor in the Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University, China.

He considered himself lucky enough to have been invited to present his research in 55 different countries, ranging from Estonia to New Zealand, North Korea to Argentina.



He was serving joint editor of the *Journal of Modern African Studies*.

His h-index was 48 and his work has been cited by others over 9,500 times.

Before entering academia, he worked for the UNHCR in Hong Kong on the Vietnamese “Boat People” issue.

He earned a DPhil from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa and an MPhil from the University of Hong Kong. He also holds a teaching certificate from the International Language Institute, Cairo, Egypt and a certificate in Theology from the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Prior to joining St Andrews, he taught African politics and development in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Botswana for four years.

He also taught courses at Ben-Gurion University (Israel); University of Edinburgh; University of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia); Dalhousie University (Canada); University of Hong Kong; Mbarara University (Uganda); Renmin University (China); and Zhejiang Normal University (China).

Ian visited 44 African countries (plus Réunion) and was well-travelled in Europe, Asia, and North America.

His work has been translated into Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

Source: <https://www.iantaylor.info>