

This violence was quite un-Nigerian and its sudden explosion was indicative of the intense feeling of the country's youth on African problems. Lumumba was seen as a symbol of the new Africa, murdered by the colonialists. Otegbeye took a leading part in the demonstrations and he has recently been bound over to keep the peace for 18 months by a Nigerian magistrate.

While he was in prison Dr. Otegbeye had a son. He called him Lumumba. He took a leading role in the All Nigeria People's Conference held at the end of August. The conference was called by Sir Abubakar largely to test the reaction of the intelligentsia to his foreign policy.

Characteristically Sir Abubakar did not try to pack the meeting to secure a government majority. He wanted youth and intelligent people everywhere to have a chance to criticise. They criticised all right! Dr. Otegbeye led the majority who wanted realignment with the Casablanca powers. He felt that Nigeria should be more militant and should back the immediate formation of an Africa High Command of military forces.

Towards the end of the historic conference the brilliant intellectual and personal adviser of Sir Abubakar, Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe, had to make unorthodox manoeuvres to get the conference to support the political union of Africa *in principle only*. He also got the conference to support in *principle* the formation of an

Africa High Command. Since that time Sir Abubakar has not shown that he is prepared to change his policy in any way.

But the opposition at the conference had made its mark. Prominent voices were Dr. Otegbeye, Mr. Dapo Falashe, leader of the Ibadan University Students' Union, and Femi Okunnu, N.Y.C. Secretary.

On the credit side Sir Abubakar can say that his government played a leading role in getting South Africa expelled from the Commonwealth. Nigeria also broke off diplomatic relations with France over the French hydrogen bomb tests. Still more constructive, Nigeria has played a leading part in supporting the United Nations in the Congo. It has backed the central Congolese government throughout, though it has favoured Kasavubu-Mobutu rather than Lumumba-faction. Nigerian troops have taken full part in the Congo operation and the country has borne its share of the expenses involved.

The most hopeful thing about Nigeria is that it is a democracy which is susceptible to popular pressure. Its leader Sir Abubakar is a genuine liberal. He is the kind of man who weighs issues profoundly before making up his mind, but this is precisely because he is liberal minded, scrupulous and fair. Under his leadership Nigeria is certain to progress in the right direction. ●

REVIEWS

Autobiography Unadorned

ALAN PATON

Let My People Go by A. J. Luthuli (Collins, London)

ONE OF MR. LUTHULI'S famous countrymen, the poet Roy Campbell, wrote thus of his own determination not to write obscurely.

I will go stark, and let my meanings show
Clear as a milk-white feather in a crow
Or a black stallion on a field of snow.

That is Luthuli—the black stallion. His standing on a white field is an image not to be laboured. But the other part of the image is perfect—the blackness, the strength, the pride that makes him no man's plaything, and a certain solitariness, partly imposed by the harsh bans of authority, partly a quality of his own nature.

Mr. Luthuli understands deeply the dominant role that white fear plays in South African politics, and the way in which the Christian Afrikaner has become more a believer in historical determinism than in Christian redemption. He writes

the tendency to see oneself perpetually as a victim will lead to the evasion of responsibility and the condoning of evil.

That goes right to the heart of it. Many Africans

today are no longer willing to believe that the evil actions of authority are inspired by fearful motives. Mr. Luthuli is still willing to believe it, and he states that this belief has possibly protected him against hatred and bitterness. But under no circumstances does he say to white South Africa, "I know you are afraid, I know you want to do justice, therefore we shall wait upon your conversion." On the contrary, he expects no such conversion, although he always notes and welcomes the conversions of individual white South Africans and speaks warmly of the white Congress of Democrats and the nonracial Liberal Party, even though he thinks the time for nonracial parties is after liberation, not before. As for his own demands for his own people, he does not modify them by one jot or tittle; his demand is full participation in government, that cry of *one man one vote*, which is both the pride and the terror of the West.

Mr. Luthuli describes a meeting with Mr. Harry Oppenheimer who after declaring that he understood the African point of view, took Mr. Luthuli and his friends to task, because the extreme nature of their demands (the vote) and their methods (the boycott) made it difficult for him, Mr. Oppenheimer, to convince others of the justice of such demands. Mr. Luthuli's reply was characteristic; he said they were real demands, and that

it was far better that white South Africa should here and now know their nature than be constantly taken by surprise by being admitted to our thoughts instalment by instalment.

That says a great deal about the South African situation in which there is no provision for political concession and adjustment. It also says a great deal about Mr. Luthuli himself. What he is in fact saying to white South Africa is this: "our democratic ideals are

as high as yours, and you will have to trust yourself to them, for power will be in our hands; but we cannot wait for your change of heart, because you will not have one."

To this he adds grave words

... we should have no illusion about the price which he (the white man) will exact in African blood before we are admitted to citizenship in our own land.

Mr. Luthuli demands one qualification of white South African co-workers; they must believe unreservedly in African liberation. It would be misleading to say he is uncompromising in this goal; it would be correct to say he cannot conceive of any other.

Is Mr. Luthuli an African Nationalist? Of course he is. His love of Africa and all things African is manifested in these pages. But he states categorically that the slogan *Africa for the Africans* means Africa for all those who love her and make her their home. This reassurance is sometimes nullified because he speaks of "my people," meaning his own indigenous fellow-Africans. It is this which leads some white people to desert him, and to turn for safety—even with heavy hearts—to the Afrikaner laager.

Mr. Luthuli never minces words in speaking of white supremacy; he talks damningly of white rule, white domination, white arrogance, white callousness. He does not use nice words like Western, foreign, alien, imported; he just uses *white*. This is characteristic of him, but it repels those white South Africans who were reaching out timid and tentative fingers to touch him.

Compounded with this ruggedness and uncompromisingness is a deep religious faith. Mr. Luthuli makes it clear that at Groutville, conversion to Christianity meant "the creation, almost, of a new kind of people"; his faith was deepened at Adams College, under Edgar Brookes. But this did not prevent him from being a critic of South African Christianity, and of the way in which the Church "tended to accommodate itself to the general secular pattern of the country." Mr. Luthuli condemns apartheid utterly as a corruption of Christian standards, an attempt to pour back this "new kind of people" into the old mould of tribalism.

He was therefore bound to question the duty of a Christian towards the State. With full understanding of what he was doing, he, as head of the African National Congress in Natal, and at the same time Chief of the Umvoti Mission Reserve, took a leading part in the Defiance Campaign of 1952, which aimed to break openly certain apartheid laws. Of this he writes that

what we have aimed to do in South Africa is to bring the white man to his senses, not to slaughter him.

Because of these actions he was summoned to Pretoria, where Dr. Eiselen, who could make and unmake Chiefs, asked him how he, an officer of the law, could encourage people to defy the law. The outcome of it all was that Mr. Luthuli was deposed. He made a public statement which contained a famous passage:

Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately and modestly at a closed and barred door?

He concluded: "The road to Freedom is via the Cross. *Mayibuye! Afrika! Afrika! Afrika!*"

Mr. Luthuli states more than once that his faith sent

him into politics, and sustained him through the interminable Treason Trial. He concludes his book by saying that if God gives him strength, he will die, if need be, for the cause. That Mr. Luthuli is a convinced Christian, there can be no doubt; "but his Christianity is unrecognisable to the great majority of white South African Christians." That is the state of our nation.

The question is often asked, how does this Christian man co-operate so warmly with Communists? Mr. Luthuli's answer has always been the same. He is not a Communist; he believes Communism to be "a mixture of a false theory of society linked to a false 'religion'." He himself tends towards Socialism, and he is no worshipper of the State. His main purpose is African liberation, and "resistance movements cannot afford the luxury of McCarthyism." Once he put the matter pithily to this reviewer; he said

If a man is working with me for liberation I do not enquire into his lesser politics.

Mr. Luthuli's willingness to co-operate with all led to the Congress Alliance, the Freedom Charter, the Treason Trial, and his several bannings. It is this invincible resolution that is portrayed without adornment in this unadorned book. Strength, pride, integrity, they show in his book, as they show in his strong rugged face.

Is Mr. Luthuli representative of his people? Do they share his high ideals, his abhorrence of totalitarian power, his magnanimity? He does not pose this question but he answers it. He says he does not for a moment entertain the idea of Africans turning into race oppressors; he says the Master Race concept is not theirs. The trouble is that the great majority of white South Africans do not believe him; why should black men be more magnanimous than they?

The great strength of Mr. Luthuli's book, its unadorned picture of courage and integrity, is also its great weakness. There is no echo of Luthuli the orator, here; the tone is too flat and even. Poetry he does not permit himself. When his second ban expired, he waited for the bans to expire of his devoted associates Conco and Yengwa, so that they could travel together. "We decided," he says, "to give ourselves a shake in the air of freedom." But such touches are rare.

Nor does Mr. Luthuli permit himself much emotion, except occasionally, when he speaks of his wife or mother, or of some close associate such as Dr. Conco, or of some admired white friend, such as Bishop Ambrose Reeves, to whom he pays more than one deserved tribute.

This artistic and dramatic deficiency, or alternatively this emotional austerity and modesty, deprives us of much of the *feeling* of some of these events; and it applies to the description of the home life also, so that we do not know what it was like to live in Groutville. Nor do we know what it was like to belong to the African National Congress, and to attend its conferences, and to know that one's course was dangerous. The autobiography in fact reads like a statement of basic material for a biography that should certainly one day be written.

Yet as the great strength is the great weakness, so is the weakness the strength. Quite clearly this story is the truth, set down by a man to whom truth comes so naturally, that he does not think to adorn it and drama-

tise it. In his Epilogue, Mr. Luthuli, in a passage less austere than most, grieves over those whose good and honourable desires led to banishment, deportation and gaol, while their families suffered poverty and acute distress. One may well grieve over them, and over South Africa. And one may grieve over the noble writer of this book, whose life has been spent in brave struggle and resistance and suffering, when it could have been spent more fruitfully and creatively in the service of South Africa. ●

Are Africans Backward?

EDWARD ROUX

The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa, L. S. B. Leakey (Oxford University Press)

THIS LITTLE VOLUME contains two lectures recently given by Dr. Leakey in Britain. In the first he discusses the progress of man in Africa, in the second Africa's contribution to human evolution. The writer is intrigued by the interesting fact that Africa, considered in recent times the most backward of the continents, appears to have been not merely the place where man evolved from non-man but also the region where the first form of human culture was developed.

What constitutes man as distinct from non-man is of course a matter of definition. Dr. Leakey thinks the basic criterion of humanity is the ability to make tools to a set and regular pattern. That this occurred for the first time in Africa is well substantiated by the archaeological evidence. The implication therefore is that "Africans" initiated that long progressive process which led to modern civilisation. But this is not the same thing as saying that the Africans (i.e. the Negroid peoples as we know them today) were the pioneers of culture. Presumably there was a time when all men were Africans, since no men existed outside of Africa.

There is confusion here between places and peoples, since Dr. Leakey at one moment is comparing cultural developments in Europe and Africa ("while Africa cannot challenge Europe in respect of the oldest depictive art . . . man in Africa during the early stages of the hand-axe culture was already sufficiently interested in colouring matter to transport lumps of red ochre for many miles to his home") and in the next breath is considering the chaos in the Congo where he says Europeans are mistakenly trying to impose their ideas of democracy upon Africans accustomed to quite different systems of government.

One can agree with Leakey when he says that he "does not blame racial factors for African stagnation during the period which commenced about 5,000 B.C. and continued until a few years ago." There were other factors, mainly geographic and climatic which were beyond human control.

The cultural revolution which made man a recording

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animal (a writer and builder) started neither in Africa nor in Europe, but in Asia. It affected the Greeks 2,800 years ago, the Germans a thousand years ago and the Africans only in modern times, not because the Greeks were "superior" to the Germans and the Germans "superior" to the Africans, but because of purely fortuitous circumstances.

The argument here is clear enough: environmental and not racial factors seem to be responsible for African backwardness. But this argument is not sustained with any degree of clarity, because Leakey fails to face up to the fundamental difficulty which bedevils almost all discussions involving race. This difficulty arises from our inability to separate out the effects of nature and nurture in human affairs.

There is of course an irrelevant diversion (a false trail) which must be avoided before the discussion gets under way. This is the subjective idea of "superiority" and "inferiority". Leakey realises this: people are prone, he says, to consider as superior the qualities of the race to which they happen to belong. In the case of the Africans there were "certain ways" in which they were perhaps superior to their white invaders. A number of examples are given. Africans believed in practised family planning; the Kikuyu for instance that a woman should not start another child before the previous one was two years old, because both mother and children would suffer. Africans did not impose the death penalty except on the persistent murderer. They believed that restitution must be made to the bereaved family. Other examples concern the rights of women and the avoidance of drunkenness.

It is strange that a biologist should consider such differences between European and African custom as evidence of *inherited* mental and psychological differences. He does not actually state that he regards these differences as genetic in nature but it is clear enough that he means this because these examples are introduced by the following statement:

"As a social anthropologist, I naturally accept and even stress the fact that there are major differences, both mental and psychological, which separate the different races of mankind. Indeed I would be inclined to suggest that however great may be the physical differences between such races as the European and the Negro, the mental and psychological differences are greater still."

A statement such as this can have little meaning unless the terms "mental" and "psychological" are very carefully defined. Individuals within a group differ in ability and temperament. The causes of such differences are highly complex, involving both genetical and environmental factors. Whether there are overall statistically significant differences in genetic factors between races which affect social and political behaviour is something which we cannot determine from existing data.

On the face of it there are other and more obvious explanations as to why, for instance, "one man one vote" has resulted in dictatorship in Ghana or Russia and a form of liberal democracy in Holland or England.

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