

is not in itself a ritual system. It is not impossible, however, that it could give birth some day to a ritual superstructure more or less rooted in African cultural tradition. The rationalist and atheistic character of marxism is not an insuperable obstacle to such an evolution if we accept the theories of some anthropologists according to whom the traditional religions are non-theistic ritual systems, rather like Confucianism.

There have also been attempts to trace a kind of dialectic and even of dialectic materialism in the traditional systems. This is again a confusion, in some cases intentional, between two different stages of intellectual evolution within two contextual frames which are very different, even if they sometimes show a few superficial similarities. Indeed, the total and constant interaction between the various fields of human activity and between cosmos and society, as more or less clearly postulated by traditional cosmologies, does often have a markedly dialectical character. Many of these cosmologies are dualistic, founded upon the necessity of conciliating and balancing opposites. This is indeed a brand of dialects, though very far from the hegelian and marxian varieties, since it is static and not dynamic. If there is a dynamics it is a dynamics of stability; it tends to ensure social well-being, harmony between society and cosmos through the perpetuation of an equilibrium, and to ignore the notion of a progressive evolution from crisis to crisis.

THE MARXIAN NOTION OF HISTORY would have been completely foreign to traditionally-minded Africans. The very notion of a traditional history is questionable. Many societies had, of course, records of their past, but in most cases these records, started as genealogies, quickly became mythical and were then integrated into the religious systems, their main function being juridical. This type of history can be said to merge with constitutional law; it often aims at explaining and justifying the present by the past, but seldom opens any definite eschatological perspective. In the societies whose systems of beliefs were eschatological, it was mostly of the 'back to the golden age' type.

There is, finally, the question of materialism. The point has often been made that the deep religious feeling of the Africans is an insuperable obstacle in the path of marxist propaganda, because of the materialistic assumptions of the doctrine. It is true that most if not all of the African religions described by anthropologists are of a theistic nature, very often embodying belief in a High God or Supreme Creator, and are hardly reconcilable with marxian atheism. For all that, it does not necessarily follow that traditional religious systems are to be defined in terms of idealism or of spiritualism. It is questionable whether the contrast *materialism*: *idealism* is relevant at all stages of cultural evolution. Rites, especially magical rites, are a means of acting upon the material world. In many cases they are conceived and explained in strictly material terms ('forces,' 'energy,' etc.). Some African intellectuals even go so far as to find in traditional cosmologies a kind of prefiguration of modern physics. In all probability traditional societies did not oppose 'faith' to 'reason', or, if they did, the tension between them was resolved by the conciliatory dialectical process alluded to before.

It can be said in conclusion that, despite fundamental discrepancies, an efficient marxist propaganda can be, and actually has been, based upon the superficial resemblances between the remnants of the traditional religious systems and an oversimplified presentation of the essentials of marxism.

TO AFRICAN EYES MODERN European ideologies do not appear so much the end products of protracted intellectual and socio-historical evolution, as the starting point of new and still unpredictable evolutionary processes. Not to have gone through the great ideological and social battles makes Africa freer than we can be from the momentum of tradition. Africa has been and is being showered with a stream of imported ideologies of widely differing bases, assumptions, ages, aims, and degrees of evolution and elaboration. These are being

COMMENT

Gamesmanship—

South African Style

IN SUNNY SOUTH AFRICA WITH its wide-open spaces, sport is very popular. White and black are a sport-loving people: good clean fun, in fact, in the healthy open air.

But it must not be thought that in a country so full of tensions and complexes, that sport can escape the racial lunacies that bedevil all other fields of activity: *au contraire*, some of the zaniest contradictions—prize exhibits—are to be seen in the field of sport. To wit, at random:

In South Africa, Coloured, African and White soccer players were *prosecuted* for playing with Indian players.

In South Africa, a marathon trial had to be started *outside* the Bloemfontein Stadium, because no non-whites were permitted to enter it—and white and black runners had to start at different times, because of "separate development."

Papwa Sewgolum, in a by now classic episode, received his Natal Open Golf Prize in the pouring rain while his fellow Indians grinned from the glass-fronted enclosure of an exclusive golf club—the reason being that Indians were admitted to the club as waiters, but never as guests.

But this is merely skimming the top.

THE REAL PECULIARITIES ARE to be found lower down—or perhaps higher up, depending on how you look at officialdom. For it is among the top administrators of racial sport that the real oddities are found. There was General Klopper—hero of Tobruk and head of South Africa's Olympic Association—reacting to a Cabinet Minister's declaration of opposition to mixed sport inside or outside South Africa with: "We are not

grafted on to a stock of native concepts at various stages of degradation. And the graft is taking place in a wholly unique and unprecedented political, social, and economic context. Finally, while the influence of those ideologies certainly reacts upon the evolution within the context (economic development, political organisation, international relations, etc.), their ultimate fate is, at the same time, conditioned by this context and its needs

Any long-term prophecy would certainly be unwise today. For the time being, it seems that the dominant trend is towards a kind of original synthesis, particular to Africa, between certain corollaries of marxism in the field of political and economic organisation, and a continuation of non-materialist, non-rationalistic (in the European sense) attitudes where the *Weltanschauung* and philosophy of action are concerned. A number of

prepared to make war on the Government." Or Vivian Granger's comment when the suspension of South African soccerites for racialism was lifted by the World Soccer body: "This is a defeat for the Communists." (The racial policy for which South Africa was suspended had not been changed by the time the suspension was lifted—but this opens up extensive vistas of gamesmanship in international reaches and would take us too far afield.)

There are two apocryphal stories which have the ring of truth. One is of a top rugby administrator being asked why non-white South Africans, in contrast to the Maoris, had not produced any outstanding rugger players. He replied by telling of the time he had to coach a non-white group. According to him, they were such a drunken lot that many of them staggered from the fumes every time they put their heads down in a scrum. The other is of a similar inquiry at a meeting of the Commonwealth Games Federation: in reply, a South African delegate produced tourist picture post-cards of beaded belles from the Transkei: "This is the kind of people we have to make sportsmen of", was the explanatory comment.

FACED WITH THIS KIND of gamesmanship, the sportsmen who are trying to remove racialism from sport are up against pretty tough opposition. Yet they have made considerable progress and there is a very real chance that white South Africa will be suspended when the International Olympic Committee reviews in October its warning last year that South Africa would be suspended. This would be the result of relentless campaigning on the part of our nonracial bodies such as the South African Sports Association, spearhead in the fight, and its more recent ally, the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee.

But their advances are the result not only of their persistent endeavour but also their ability to match the gamesmanship of their opponents.

It is in this light that we must regard two events which recently made headlines on the sports-front. One was the arrest of the banned Dennis Brutus, founder-secretary of SASA and advisor to SAN-ROC, by the Security Police in the offices of the white-controlled Olympic Association just before a meeting. The other

Africans reject atheism, although they claim to be marxists and do, indeed, use dialectical methods of reasoning, try to construct a socialist economy in their countries, and favour a neutralism hostile to the Western bloc. China is often their ideal, because they admire its achievements in the economic field and also, and chiefly, because they believe that the Chinese have succeeded in acclimatising marxism and in assimilating it while retaining their own cultural originality in its integrity.

On the whole, the ideal of the contemporary African elite most often seems definable as the will to achieve a working synthesis of all positive imports—idealism and materialism, marxism and jeffersonism, and so forth—by africanising them into an original whole. It will be a welcome—and, perhaps, not quite unlikely—surprise if they can succeed. ●

was the announcement, not 48 hours later, that John Harris, Vice-Chairman of SAN-ROC had flown to Europe to meet top sports administrators on the world bodies, including the International Olympic Committee.

The background was this. The S.A. Olympic Association had revealed that it was going flat out to send a strong team to the October meeting of the I.O.C. in Nairobi, in order to avoid suspension. They would spare no expense. It was also certain that the non-racial bodies would be denied passports for the same meeting—the fate of George Singh, Cassim Bassa, Harry Bloom and others is well known. If matters were left to October, the body "not at war with the government" might well win hands down.

But it so happened that the I.O.C. had also called, for June, a Conference on the specific theme: Sport and Politics. What happened at this Conference, held in Lausanne, would have a strong, perhaps overwhelming, influence, on the October Congress.

So off John Harris went. Even if he failed to gain a hearing at the Conference, he would be able to meet personally the most influential sports administrators in the world and give them some of the facts. He would also make it clear that what the nonracial bodies desired was not the exclusion of any group in South Africa—though they were often alleged to be anti-white—but to ensure the inclusion of all South Africans on merit.

Getting away was not as simple as it sounds. For when Dennis Brutus was arrested, he had in his briefcase the master-copies of the representations John Harris was to submit. He also had the complete schedule of the flight to Rome, Lausanne, Paris and London. The briefcase is still at the time of writing in the hands of the Security Police. So it was necessary to make some adjustments—like a change in flight-time.

It has left the white-controlled bodies fuming of course, and all nonracialists, including those who could not care less about sport, highly jubilant.

Whatever the outcome of the venture might be, it has shown that the machine of racialism, official or semi-official, is not as efficient as people are inclined to fear. It has also provided a lesson in Gamesmanship—South African style. ●

JOHN PLAYER