

In a way he is more to be respected than the PCVs who went into a kind of suspended animation for the duration. My own reaction was to follow the same logic in the opposite direction.

The pursuit of this logic led me eventually to South Africa and to the homes of people of all races who are engaged in the fight against apartheid. It was for some of these anti-apartheid South Africans that I originally tried to sum up what I thought the Peace Corps amounts to in Africa and what it means as a facet of US foreign policy for Africa. My impression was that the nonwhite leadership in East and South Africa is of a very high calibre. I could personally imagine a great future for these areas, not so much in terms of brute prosperity as in terms of general human happiness. The catch I thought was apartheid, a problem which only the US and Great Britain have the power to resolve peacefully, though I rather doubt they will. It was in the context of the problems of the continent of Africa as a whole that I came to picture the Peace Corps as a liberal gesture in a general policy vacuum. Thus, paradoxically, it is a gesture both worthwhile and hopeless.



2. ELMINA FORT ST JAGO  
South-west bastion seen from tower

## EPISODE

The dark waters of Tanga harbour throw up the light of the ships lying at anchor. British India, Union Castle, the Robin and Farrell Lines. Below the Club, the various company launches - Smith Mackenzie, Dalgety, Twentsch - are tied up at the customs dock, where an askari in a coarse, stiff, khaki uniform and fez keeps guard. The dark shapes of small fishing dhows seized for smuggling are seen drawn up on the shore. It might be any odd evening in the year. There is the sound of pleasant conversation from the bar. A few couples dance to records on the expansive, darkened dance floor. Elsewhere in the old, coastal town, Indian families, Ismaili, Hindu, Goan, carry on the life of their families in small flats or modest bungalows. In the African quarter, which spreads away to the palms and cassava patches of the outskirts, family groups share mounds of hot *posho*. At the Princess Bar, the halfcast Goan, Fernandez, serves up the beaded bottles of Tusker and City beer while his Arab-African concubine Sherifa sulks on a barstool. A mixed crowd of European and African riffraff and minor civil servants drink, talk over the noise of the American rock 'n' roll music and watch four men competing at the football game machine.

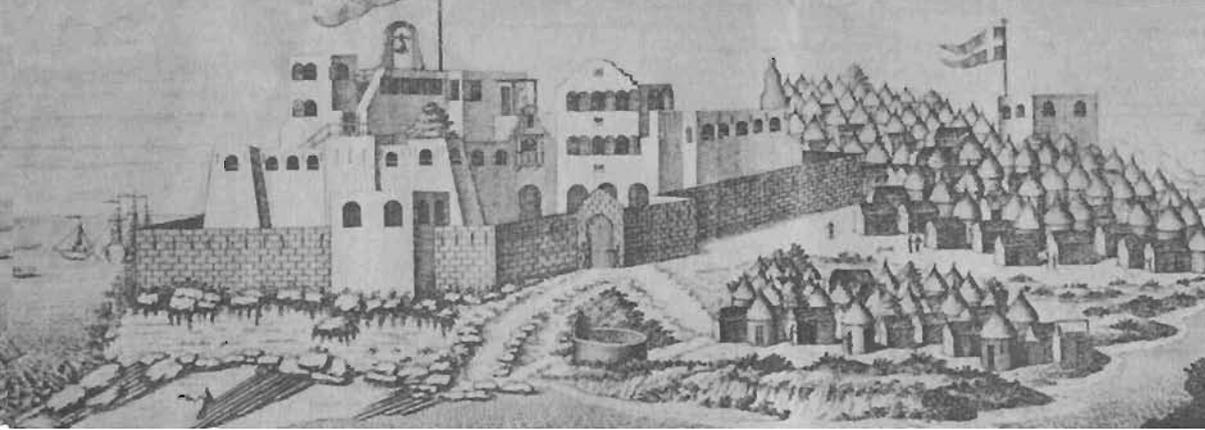
A sailor and an African girl in short skirt twist . . .

## Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa by A. W. Lawrence. (Jonathan Cape, 63s)

"I am only indirectly concerned with the history, political or economic, of European endeavour, or of the Africans; those topics form the frame, not the picture, and are so treated. My purpose is to trace the changes in each trading community so far as they are, or used to be, visible in the buildings - fortified enclosures, within which a group of Europeans and Africans lived, worked and (often prematurely) died, between 1482 and the beginning of colonial rule."

In this definition of the scope of his book, Professor Lawrence indicates that he is dealing with more tangible evidence than is available to most other writers who treat the subject of Africa's past. Professor Lawrence, who was Honorary Secretary to the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board, directed archaeological investigations in Ghana for a number of years and undertook the repair or restoration of the principal remaining buildings. The present volume constitutes a detailed and scholarly exposition of the original designs and the subsequent alterations and extensions of the various West African castles and forts. Most of these were concentrated along the coast of what is now Ghana where about a hundred trading-posts existed, most of them contemporaneously, within a stretch of three hundred miles. The oldest of these, Elmina castle, was founded by the Portuguese in 1482, when Columbus had not yet discovered America. It is the earliest European building in the Tropics and served as a model for similar fortifications which marked the points of contact between local communities and traders, not only in Africa but also in Asia and in North and South America.

These fortified enclosures were established by rival European powers to safeguard their export and import trade monopolies which they held through agreements with - and sometimes at the invitation of - local African states: in return, the Europeans



CHRISTIANSBORG c. 1750 (after a Danish officer?)  
East and north sides

bound themselves to assist the townspeople in case of an attack, whether by rival Europeans or by Africans. Only in the case of Wydah, Dahomey, was the port open to ships of any flag, and the forts of three European nations stood in close proximity. Professor Lawrence tells of how the inhabitants of Wydah continued to hoist the French and English flags over the remains of the two trading stations long after their occupants had withdrawn, and this may be interpreted as a sign of the esteem which marked the relationship between African population and European traders. (In the case of Portugal, however, which had retained an acre of vegetable garden, the site of its old fort at Wydah, "for sentiment's sake", the Republic of Dahomey proclaimed in 1961 that it would no longer tolerate this imperialist possession.)

Keta, the last big fort to be built on the coast, was the only one which was founded against the wishes of the townspeople, "who preferred to trade with all comers and therefore consistently refused to let Europeans establish a stronghold which might dominate their territory." Although Professor Lawrence is chiefly concerned with the evidence of the physical remains he does give a brief outline of the history of the various stations he deals with. Very often, of course, the evidence of the building itself has other than strictly architectural implications. Anomabu for instance, the last English fort to be built on a grand scale, is the only fort whose original structure includes a large prison specifically built to hold slaves awaiting transport overseas. At the time of the early forts, Europeans were attracted to West Africa not so much by slaves as by the gold, ivory, pepper and other products - but mainly gold - which they could obtain in exchange for other goods. The demand for slaves was then still limited; those slaves who did change hands in those early days were often sold by the Portuguese to African merchants from the interior who required porters to carry away the goods they had obtained in return for their gold. Later, when the slave trade changed direction, it became a more sinister institution.

Where Professor Lawrence does digress from the strictly archaeological discussion he is often at pains to point out that the contact between Europeans and Africans was marked by friendly relations, especially in the case of those slaves who were kept as a permanent labour force at the castles and forts, and who lived under surprisingly humane conditions, according to the present volume. It seems that they often lived as full citizens in the surrounding towns, and as the relationship between town population and castle inhabitants was usually cordial, their servitude cannot have been unduly oppressive. They were highly skilled workmen and irreplaceable; their owners were careful not to antagonize them. "No evidence suggests that they were predominantly meek," Professor Lawrence states, and he goes on to quote the report according to which two slaves 'beat the sergeant in the garden', but he does not explain what provoked the incident, nor what its consequences were. These permanent slaves received wages - the English paid them at twice the free rate - and they could supplement their income by taking private employment. They were also granted concessions in response to their demands, in one instance leave of absence to cultivate their own farms, and the percentage of run-away castle slaves

is stated not to have been greater than that of run-away soldiers.

The chapter on the life at the forts presents some amusing sidelights on the character of the inhabitants: "After many years of complaining that there was no one to bury them or to christen their mulatto children, the Dutch eventually induced the Company to send out a minister, but regretted their importunity on finding that he held strong views against polygamy." The English appointed an African, the Reverend Philip Quaque, as chaplain to the castle at Cape Coast, whereupon officers who failed to attend divine service every Sunday were fined 7s.6d., "unless the Governor should cancel the service on some adequate ground" - which he seemed to do with remarkable frequency. A Danish officer at Christiansborg wrote: "We could not find place for many goods, especially when we received by each ship 30-40,000 pots of brandy; then there was no room in the store-houses and we were obliged to set the vessels filled with brandy in the rooms of the servants, who imposed a heavy leakage or rather 'drinkage'". This grave deficiency in accommodation was later rectified.

There is no doubt that the political influence of these fortified enclosures on the coastal African states and, through them, on the balance of power inland, was considerable; Professor Lawrence's work is an important contribution to its eventual assessment. He himself writes, "In all history there is nothing comparable with the effects produced by the forts of West Africa; nowhere else have small and transitory communities of traders so changed the life of the alien peoples who surrounded them, and indirectly of a vast region beyond." He traces this influence on the course of colonial history: "It was along the Gold Coast that the forts had been concentrated most densely, and it is not fortuitous that this was the first native African territory to become an independent state on a modern pattern; there only, generations of literate Africans had learnt to hold their own in the white man's world." He sees a continuation of this influence on the current situation: "The political crisis which immediately arose in the Dominion of Ghana (and has since given occasion for the Republic's peculiar administrative features) grew out of a cultural division between the coastal area, where Europeans had worked among and with Africans for nearly five hundred years, and the interior, where there had been little more than half a century of such intensive contact." But he produces - quite legitimately - all the evidence to demonstrate the benevolent English had been forbidden to undertake any activity which would involve competition with Africans, and this will have to be balanced against less favourable accounts. Nevertheless, the positive aspects of these centuries of Afro-European relationship which he stresses, must find their place in the reinterpretation of the period of European penetration and conquest, which is part of the process of rewriting African history outside the familiar framework of colonial preconceptions. They exist, together with the evils which have arisen from the contact and which perhaps predominate in our minds today.

This book, with its beautiful illustrations and interesting plans is of course primarily of archaeological importance, but this should not obscure its general value to everybody who is interested in the West Coast of Africa.

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## Learning from Africa

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Aylmer Hunter

*The Primal Vision. Christian Presence  
Amid African Religion* by John V. Taylor.  
(S.C.M. Press R1.60)

"WE ARE THE MODERN CANNIBALS who eat man's personality and leave him—out of harmony with himself and those with whom he has to live" writes a European missionary quoted in this book. If only *The Primal Vision* had been published 100 years ago, how many brutal blunders might the early Christian missionaries have avoided in their courageous efforts to preach the Gospel in Africa. Belated though it is, the book is certainly worth reading, particularly by those people who still believe that 'Western Civilization' and Christianity are the same thing. Those who have long since seen through that fallacy will be encouraged by the profound attempt which Taylor has made to find out what Africa has to teach the Church; while those who believe that the Christian Gospel is irrelevant in the Africa of the mid-1960's will be challenged to think again.

Instead of writing a book to tell the people of Africa what he thinks we ought to know Taylor has sat down to *listen* to what Africa has to say to him and his ideas. This humble attitude is itself a refreshing change, but what makes the book even more worthwhile is the care and perceptiveness with which Taylor has listened. In a remarkably short book Taylor has condensed, without distortion or vague generalisation, the essential elements in the traditional African view of life. Of course one could argue that there is no *one* African view of life any more than there is one 'African Personality', but Taylor draws on his own wide experience, and even wider reading, to show that certain important elements are common to cultures as widely separated as those of West Africa, the Sudan, Tanganyika, and Zululand.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN the Western emphasis on individualism and the African stress on human solidarity and mutual responsibility is particularly enlightening. Sin is seen as essentially anti-social; as an action which destroys human relationships. Man is seen as part of a unified creation where there is no unbridgeable gap between the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate. "No distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for Nature, Man and the Unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community" (p. 72). The Theologian, the Psychiatrist, and the

Doctor will get many new insights from this book: the Social Scientist will see how many of the exciting 'new' political ideas (e.g. African Socialism) have roots that go deep into the history of the Continent.

The major weakness of this book lies in the fact that it seems to me to be only half completed. Taylor has described brilliantly and with great insight the beliefs of Africa, but of an Africa before the days of export cocoa, diamond mines, secondary industry, a cash economy, and large cities. It is true that much of what Taylor describes is still very much present in Africa just as the child is still present in the man, but, surprisingly for an author who has written books about 'Christians of the Copperbelt' and 'Christianity and Politics in Africa', Taylor says very little about the shattering effects of an industrial revolution, modern education, and mass communications on the traditional beliefs.

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## Post Mortem

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R. A. Hasson

*Unholy Wedlock* by Harry Franklin  
(George Allen and Unwin)

EVEN WITH TREMENDOUS generosity and sympathy on the part of the supporters of Federation, it is very much open to doubt whether the 1953 arrangement could have been made to work. The partners were incompatible and union by consent was impossible.

This book shows that faced with this situation, the federal architects made decisions characterised by myopia and meanness. In short a political arrangement which initially stood little chance of success, was most grossly mismanaged. Indeed some of the blunders committed were unnecessary even in terms of the narrow and selfish aims that those in power pursued.

FRANKLIN IS EMINENTLY WELL-QUALIFIED to write this book. He is not one of the group of hindsight prophets on the federation, who now asserts "of course the thing was bound to fail." But more important than this, he has the 'feel' of the situation.

He rightly appreciates that the arguments in favour of federation were more impressive for their quantity rather than their quality. As he says (p. 42), "Every conceivable argument was relied on from defence in the next war and resistance to communism down to local water development." It was this myriad of bogus arguments rather than as Franklin suggests, the purely 'econo-

TAYLOR DEFENDS THIS by pointing out the continuing, and often increasing, importance of traditional beliefs in moulding the views of the new Africa. We would not deny their importance nor withhold our gratitude and admiration from Taylor for articulating them so clearly but there is still need for another volume dealing with the effects of the last century of economic, social, and political upheaval on the Africa of to-day. How does one maintain a Christian Presence in the melting pots of Johannesburg, Nairobi, Lagos, and Cairo? Will Mr. Taylor write us a volume II?

Meanwhile white South Africans, who suffer more than most people from the arrogance of imagined superiority, should be made to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the present book. It is, moreover, a *must* for those, both black and white, who seek to understand Africa. Underneath the deceptive simplicity lies much rich insight.

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mic' arguments that persuaded the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia to support federation.

THE WRITER UNFORTUNATELY spends little time on the Labour Party's attitude to Federation. He sees, however, that for Lyttelton the Federal link-up was as simple an operation as a company merger. Indeed one feels that those who created the federation had much the same spirit as those who partitioned Africa at the great European conferences in the latter years of the 19th century.

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to improve on Franklin's discussion on Kariba and the economics of federation. One feels however, that he overemphasizes the impact of the Devlin report. If "it shook the British government and shocked the British people" (p. 145) the results of this shaking up were not apparent for a considerable time. The Monckton report which while supporting the federal idea left an escape-hatch, was surely more important in persuading the British Government to abandon a lost cause.

One cannot read this book without feeling that it is incumbent on Britain to be unusually generous to the two former protectorates to compensate for the humiliation and suffering that Britain imposed on them whether as principal in the first degree or as an aider and abettor.

ONE FINAL POINT. It is unfortunate that the writer should fail to give the references to his quotations. This would be important for two classes of reader—first the student of Central African politics who might wish to follow up a particular quotation; second, readers with no background of Central African politics will want to feel that the statements quoted are the *ipsissima verba* of the makers. But in the last resort it is a tribute to the excellence of the book that its main fault stems from the writer's excessive modesty.