

A discernible conflict

Raymond Kunene

decided to approach my MP father again, but again he stalled me with a mass of promises. He did not answer my letters and I wondered if his wife was intercepting them, as parliament was in recess and they would have been forwarded to his home. On the advice of a friend, a remaining friend of my days before I began to crawl across the colour line, I decided to give my father three last weeks to answer. An incident that followed finally decided me to go ahead on my own to try and get a white identity card. . . .

ONE NIGHT I WENT to a night club for white people. I was with one of the friends who had attended my birthday party. We had only just arrived when a young girl whom I knew well came in on the arm of a strange man. She was not white and had attended the Alexander Sinton High School with me. This school was for people who were not white, the so-called "Coloured."

At first I wanted to steal out unobtrusively, before she could see me, but fate would not have it; she saw me. I could see her blush, even in the dimmed light. She was very light in colour and could easily be taken for white. Her escort went over to the bar. My companion was busy elsewhere. She, let us say her name was Enid, came to my table.

I was terrified because I did not know what she would do. As she sat down my terror evaporated because I realised she dare not say too much, being in the same boat as I myself.

"I did not know that you were playing white, too," she whispered.

"This night club is exclusively for white people," I answered and assured her that she need have no fear that I should give her away.

"I am here with my fiancé. He had no idea of my background. My papers are in order. We are getting married in two months' time. If he asks you, say we met at a dance at Sea Point," she said, her eyes begging me to co-operate.

It was the last time I saw Enid. I hope she is happily married and well on her way to helping with the survival of the purer than pure Afrikaner people.

After that evening at the night club I gave much thought to the wisdom and advisability of trying to become white. But then my skin is white, and therefore I *am* white.

But is there any achievement in it? It offered one the chance of a decent life but should I, or we, with our lighter skins, encourage that wretched idea of superiority on account of colour by ourselves crossing over the colour barrier? Should I not rather try and help to smash that inhumane and miserable boundary so that every man could be treated as a man and merit could be the means of judgment?

My provisional decision was to go ahead and obtain my white card. My reason was to demonstrate once again that the so-called Afrikaners (meaning the white people here) did not know which was which and who was who; that they are a hybrid nation and would remain so forever — no matter how many laws the Government passed. ●

[To be concluded

Sjambok and Other Poems, by Douglas Livingstone. (Oxford University Press, 15s.)

LITERATURE WRITTEN FROM COLONIES by white writers has often been characterised by a romantic, nostalgic quality about it which seeks not only to imitate contemporary styles "at home" but also to celebrate sentiments reminiscent of "home scenes." One of the greatest tragedies of colonisation is that it replaced for the settler population a variety of human experience with a restricted artificial world where to be acceptable one had to behave as much like a European as possible. Canons of behaviour, of literary expression were those of the culture from which they were removed by time and distance. The end result of this was a separation of worlds. Those who lived in China, India or Africa came back to the home country knowing little or nothing about the richness of the cultures amongst which they had lived. If you asked those who had spent their life in Africa, what they knew of the African literature they asserted that there was none "before we came." One writer commented happily that the heroic epic did not exist amongst South African indigenous people and went on to illustrate this by quoting from a song which he asserted was the ultimate poetic expression which the African mind could compose.

In an analysis of Mr. Livingstone's poetry all this is relevant, not particularly because he denigrates African culture but because failing to discover its depth has deprived his poetry of a necessary extension to his poetic idiom. What he sees and feels is largely determined by the European literary norms. It would be asking too much of any writer to write with the confidence and intensity of a cultural stream from which distance can be a decisive factor. Mr. Livingstone's poetic animus is dominated by a romantic vein, perhaps not unnaturally. The exotic beauty of Africa holds his attention and becomes an amazing discovery. The clouds, the storms, the kudu, the zebras, the moon are all the subjects of his inspiration.

EUROPEANS IN AFRICA have often ignorantly claimed that the "native remains unmoved by all the beauty around him." That he should accept as natural the grandeur of the Kilimanjaro or the beauty of the wild animals seems most unusual to them. Now the truth, of course, is totally different. Africa's anthropocentric philosophy relegates all natural phenomena to functional position, contrary to general belief. A flower, a kudu or a tree cannot be beautiful per se, it can only be used as a symbol of the beauty of human qualities. Thus the African poet describes the hero of his poem as:

"The crimson tree,

That grew alone at the mountains of Ndulinde."

European romantic poets have indeed in their intensity of feeling gone beyond levels of formal description and depicted "skylarks," "nightingales," as symbols of their condition. Unfortunately Mr. Livingstone suffers from lack of such symbolism. His descriptions of nature fail to go beyond a self contained ecstasy. But Mr. Livingstone does not belong to the age of

romanticism; he has to cope with 20th-century styles of modern poetry. Now these 20th-century European poetic styles have become bankrupt because, like the worst of abstract paintings, they have developed a cult of private symbolism which has no functional association with the forms to which they are related. Mr. Livingstone seeks a compromise which, whilst interpreting the individualistic basis of modern poetry in European capitals combines the warmth of his daily experience in Africa. The result is a poetry conscious of words, perhaps too conscious. The author organises words to give the impression of freshness, to imitate contemporary European styles. Unfortunately, the words are not an integral part of a system of ideas. It is for that reason that often:

"Everything circles: my distilled and vortexed solutions suavely split . . . My Soulfull Portion collapses. Once more a parched bladder croaks lawlessly, alone; its situation Rejected by the statutes of creation."

The use of compound words often jars:

I find it now stinks of me and has not its delicate swan-necked flagon of you

. . . the moon through nets of silver-new creeper-rose and you.

. . . horn-beaked toes and wei fringe of Sioux feathers happy-muddled

This overconcern with words comes of a desire to fuse the romantic feeling emanating from the Africa-physical environment and the stylistics of modern European poetry. The style of his poetry betrays a discernible conflict between a desire to celebrate Africa's beauties and to avoid being labelled romantic. This indecision produces a formalistic style interspersed with romantic descriptions of nature.

THE LIFE OF THE AFRICAN presents for him a curious external interest. "The gaiety in the compounds" is felt only as an external phenomenon, the sjambok itself which has the same terrifying symbolism for Africans as the swastika has for the Jews is written about as if it were a

"good (symbol) on a wall and is still

The only goad the phlegmatic oxen apparently understand. Of course it is excellent For killing snakes. . . ."

His best poems like the "Sax and Marimbabas," "Iscariot," show clearly that he has talent. "Sax and Marimbabas" is a moving poem, words are more than structures imposed on a system of thought or feeling, they are active forces conveying thought and intense feeling.

"Coals frowning in the half-sawn petrol drum

flick sparks from the darkness of intent eyes, an angry orange sheen from the glared teeth, under a starpocked April-cloudless sky."

"Iscariot" is reminiscent of Francis Thompson's compact poetic style. This book of poems augurs well for Mr. Livingstone's future as a poet. He must cast the net where he is. ●

Angry Judgement

Margaret Roberts

The Anatomy of Apartheid, by E. S. Sachs.
(Collet, 45s.)

IT IS NOT EASY to see why this book was written in the form the author chose. "My aim", says Mr. Sachs in his introduction, "is to present the true facts about an inhuman system, in order to arouse the indignation of all civilised people against it. . . ." But in practice it is unlikely that many will be aroused — except the already converted — because Mr. Sachs does not stick to the facts. Judgments on people and their motives are unlikely to convert unless they are substantiated. Thus it may be that the present South African government "do not care a damn about the Afrikaner people, and that they unscrupulously exploit religion to serve their despicable ends. . . ."; but it is not enough just to say so. Too often Mr Sachs rushes off at a tangent from his argument to present this kind of angry judgment. He, like many others, has very good reason to be "spittin' mad", but it is a mood best overcome when one aims to convert with the written word.

His sense of fury would matter less if the book could serve as reference ammunition for the converted. But much of the material is badly out of date. For example, a sub-head reading "Conditions of African Workers in Industry Today" quotes figures relating to the late 'thirties and early 'forties. In this, as in other sections, he does his cause a disservice, for later statistics show the position to have worsened considerably. But basically, the fact is that with so much written material coming out about South Africa, this is simply not good enough.

Yet, after taking account of Mr. Sach's transparent prejudices — among which are Liberals who see the South African situation in race as opposed to class terms — there remain some perceptive sections on labour conditions in the period Mr. Sachs knows best. It is a pity he did not decide to write a "Physiology" of South African trade unionism, rather than a very static Anatomy. ●

The Most Active Focus

Henry Swanzy

Black Orpheus. An anthology of African and Afro-American Prose. Edited by Ulli Beier. Ikeja: Longmans of Nigeria. 1964. Pages 156. N.P.

THE MOST ACTIVE FOCUS for writing in English in Africa is centred round the magazine *Black Orpheus* in Western Nigeria, a review which receives a subsidy from the regional Ministry of Education; and it is from the last five years of *Black Orpheus* that the editor has selected these sixteen stories and sketches by writers from all parts of Africa, as well as the Caribbean and the United States. He has divided them into three sections, which he calls "New Realities," "Tradition" and "Experiment". Of these, the first, delineation of the contemporary world, gets the largest quota (65 pages), with 46 pages allotted to experiment, and 35 pages to Tradition.

Inevitably, it is the first group which, as a whole, succeeds best by aiming lowest. All its stories — they are really sketches — convey with wonderful precision the very different scenes in which they are set. Christina Aidoo's "No Sweetness Here," ostensibly about the tragic death of a schoolboy of "indecent beauty," conjures up the smells and the sounds of a Fante fishing village. An Ibo village in the forest is evoked by the more practised, if more mechanical, talent of Cyprian Ekwensi, making use of the device of a recording trek by a radio producer. The semi-slums of North London, with all their sleazy humour, make their impact in Gaston Bart-Williams' "The Bed-Sitter." Then follow three snapshots of South Africa: a lawyer's waiting room by Ezekiel Mphahlele, a shebeen queen's establishment by Alex La Guma, the streets of Johannesburg by Bloke Modisane. The section closes with a jazz sequence in America by Frank London Brown, in language so technical that it is a little hard to follow.

The "traditional" stories are mainly West African. They start with the curious "Bambara Knights," by Mallam Amadou Hampata Ba, translated by Una Maclean, an account of chivalry from the Middle Niger, the relations of two high-minded warriors and the pretty young wife of the elder one. Birago Diop, also in translation from the French, re-tells the legend of the *Mamelles*, the two last little hills of Senegal, which, despite their comparison to breasts, are apparently the relics of the humps of two hunch-backed wives. We cross the Atlantic for a modern Anancy story, a tour de force by the Jamaican Andrew Salkey, who recounts the fight between the spirit and body of the famous spider hero, in language that recalls Amos Tutuola. Finally, there is an extract from a Yoruba novel by Tutuola's master, D. O. Fagunwa, which concerns the spirits of the forest, even though the protagonist is a lorry driver.

THE EXPERIMENTS ARE OF MANY different kinds. Gabriel Okara uses a translation of his native Ijaw syntax, word-order and images, to describe a book-worm looking for IT, who is saved from lynching by a female witch. Camara Laye contributes a typical allegory, "The Eyes of the

Statue," an essay in loneliness, the meeting of an old man and a girl, in a country that is not apparently in Africa at all. "Barion and the Flames" is a West Indian attempt at surrealism by E. A. James, involving initiation rites, and the burning of the house of a character called Primero, a capitalist, by another called Segundo. This experiment lacks the power of Wilson Harris' account of "Kanaima," the avenging god of a wandering tribe of Indians, who flee from his presence into a little village of Negro pork-knockers (prospectors). Finally, the American writer Adrienne Cornell attempts a conte, "Because of the King of France," the story of a young Negro pianist, who runs away from New York, after an unhappy love-affair with a Jewish girl, to the Virgin Islands, explaining years afterwards that he was seeking refuge in the classic purity of the Grand Siècle, King Louis XIV, who had summoned Chopin to his court.

THE ENGLISH THAT IS USED in all these stories, with one or two exceptions in the experimental section, is sinewy, pure and strange, and under perfect control. Who but new Africans could use their native wisdom with such ease and elegance? "A bad marriage kills the soul. . . Mine is fit for burial" (Aidoo). "When memory goes looking for dead wood, it picks up whatever faggot it pleases" (Diop). "The man who wakes up early in life, And holds the matter of women too near his heart, Will never become an important person" (Fagunwa). These contrast with the astonishing varieties of the regional tongue. "The lightie here is anxious to see her. He is an awake boy, a real smart juba, and I like him" (La Guma). "Just open your mouth and we'll bliksen you — swart hell" (Modisane). "The sky is a great pork-knocker's blackboard and riddle, infinitely rich with the diamonds of space, and infinitely poor with the wandering skeletons of eternity" (Harris). "To the window he went once more and at the night looked. The moon was an about-to-break moon". (Okara).

ONLY VERY OCCASIONALLY do we accept the bitter parable in Modisane, in perhaps the best constructed of all the plots, of the unfortunate Caiaphas, with a degree in psychology, who suffers "spiritual castration" at the hands of the brutal Afrikaners, and is then compelled to recite Shakespeare at the point of a gun held by a bully of his own race. "The parable thou always talketh" is really neither Ijaw nor English. Occasionally, Salkey's deliberate imitation of Tutuola breaks down, and the "brightness" of the night is nearer "artfulness". Nor is the outsider able to say whether Ekwensi is using the language ironically, when he remarks, "These men were more than radio subjects. They were television material". One is not so certain of the accuracy of that humour as of Bart-Williams' "Putting Angela in his pocket, he went to Hornsey".

But these are small reservations in what is, all in all, the best and most stimulating of all the many anthologies to come out of Africa that it has been my fortune to read. ●

A late Buchan

Terence Ranger

The Sudden Assignment, by Lord Alport.
(Hodder & Stoughton, 35s.)

LORD ALPORT'S book will no doubt be read by many as a companion volume to Welensky's account of the last days of Federation. It does, indeed, furnish many interesting discrepancies and a good deal of fresh information.

But it deserves to be read for itself. It is a very personal book and a very revealing one. In no sense an official statement, it shows very clearly what sort of man was chosen to represent Britain on the Federal spot. It also shows what happens when a man of Lord Alport's sort—a distinguished version of a classic British political type—is set to grapple with the realities of Africa today. Lord Alport is one of the last, perhaps, of those characters given a classical mythical definition by John Buchan, of which writer there are constant echoes in his book. A man of firm and honest values, believing in Britain's guiding role in the world, sustained by a religious faith which has always seemed in perfect consonance with his political and social values, liking and looking for adventure—a fitting person, it might be thought, to choose as the last of the Central African pro-consuls. Mr. Macmillan, when offering Lord Alport the job, referred him back to the distinguished careers of Lord Milner and Lord Curzon; it was ironically appropriate that the man who saw the winding up of the British imperial interest in Central Africa should have been so much imaginatively in the mould of the

great shaping imperialists.

Lord Alport tells us of Enoch Powell that he is one of the few great romantics in British politics today. Lord Alport himself is clearly another; it takes a high capacity for romance to be a John Buchan man in the Tory party of the 1950s; to believe in the continuing fitness and readiness of Britain to meet the imperial responsibility in an age of quarter-principled, three-quarter expedient withdrawal. Sent out to defend British interests, Lord Alport was from the start at variance with his colleagues and masters in his continued stress on British responsibilities.

He was even more at temperamental odds with the African situation itself. Men of his type, with all their real virtues, have always been lacking in imagination; but it used not to matter since they could impose their concepts upon the realities of the African situation, sometimes really shaping it, sometimes creating for themselves at any rate a recognisable world in which to live. Lord Alport found himself in a world where the men and the forces he could not imaginatively understand were those which counted: the African nationalists, whom he believed quite unready to rule; the Irish servants of the United Nations, whom he believed motivated by a purposeless hatred of England, continuing a quarrel which reasonable Englishmen thought ended in 1922; even the "sinister looking half-Chinese" U.N. bodyguard he saw in the Katanga; these were the people who were actually deciding Central Africa's fate. It was difficult enough to understand Welensky; impossible to understand sympathetically the forces which were breaking through the imperial crust—"dark, corrosive forces," Lord Alport found them, "which if given the chance would

destroy everything for which Britain and its people stand."

OPERATING WITH HIS twin romantic misconceptions of Britain and Africa it is no surprise that he was consistently beside the point in his recommendations. It emerges from the book that some of the oddest and least practical ideas of those odd years emanated from Lord Alport—in particular Sir Edgar Whitehead's scheme for Northern Rhodesian partition. Lord Alport's *Sudden Assignment* was undoubtedly a disillusioning failure.

Yet even those most sympathetic to the new nationalisms of Africa; to the United Nations view-point in Katanga; and to the rest of the forces which Lord Alport failed to come to terms with; will surely find the character which emerges from this book in many ways an attractive one. Clearly he wasn't our ally or our friend. Had his advice been taken there can be no doubt that the Central African situation would have been much worse than it is now. Yet there is something there; something in his sense of obligation, which gives dignity to his failure. When today the great danger for Southern Rhodesia especially is a British washing of the hands, it is no bad thing to have Lord Alport end his book with the call to Britain not to forget "that it still has a debt to pay in Central Africa." It would be pleasant to believe that Lord Alport will come in time to define that debt rather differently and be able to give "help and understanding" not only to those "who shared with Britain in an attempt to establish a non-racial society" but to those who follow the different, and we must hope more practicable, romantic ideals of African nationalism.

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Quality and less

Alfred Hutchinson

One Man, One Matchet, by T. M. Aluko. (Heinemann, 16s.)

A Surfeit of Sun, by Sean Graham. (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 21s.)

I Speak of Africa, by James Halliday. (Blackwoods, 18s.)

The Second Round, by Lenrie Peters. (Heinemann, 18s.)

MR. ALUKO'S NOVEL is of outstanding quality. It carries throughout the stamp of a highly gifted writer. It is set in the village of Ipaja, in the cocoa-growing region of Nigeria, where an outbreak of cocoa disease threatens the farmers with ruin. The farmers are agitated, too, by the government's campaign to cut down the stricken trees and passions run high. And to this troubled scene comes Cambridge-educated Udo Akpan as the new District Officer. Though an African, he is as much a foreigner to these parts as the white man he succeeds and his fellow Africans refer to him without rancour as the "black white man." His work is bedevilled by Benjamin Benjamin, a colourful nationalist agitator and scoundrel, who commands both the ear of the chief and the columns of a nationalist newspaper. Benjamin Benjamin revives an old tribal land dispute — converting the substantial sums collected for the Igbodudu Land Appeal Fund to his own use. There is a mild, inconclusive riot and a killing.

But the main strength of *One Man, One Matchet* lies not so much in the plot as in the magnificent characterisation. There is a fascinating interplay of character and motivation. The characters are drawn with warmth and sympathy and at no point does the author try to manipulate them for his own ends. Mr. Aluko has a sharp eye for human foibles and even the most dignified of his people are not above ridiculousness. The characters are memorable: flamboyant Benjamin Benjamin; irascible old Chief Momo; rich, vain and gullible Olowekere, jockeying for a chieftancy; meek and mild Reverend Josiah Olaiya, anxious to divert some of the streams of campaign money into his church. But they are lovable people — even the unworthiest of them. And in the unhurried, rural tempo of the book they play out their individual dramas under the author's kindly but ever-watchful eye. Life is charmingly inconclusive and here and there Mr. Aluko gracefully squanders an incident which promised possibilities. But the sure touch is always there, evoking the smell of life.

In an age of axe-grinding it is remarkable that Mr. Aluko does not seem to have an axe of his own to grind. There is an absence of posturing: that is left to his characters. Mr. Aluko, too, never passes judgment: that is left to his readers. And neither does he explain his characters to potential foreign readers: there is no need because his characters are universal. The writing is clear, with many a sudden comic turn. Perhaps the book could have done without the last chapter which is explanatory, for by then the drama has been well and truly played out. *One Man, One Matchet* is a significant contribution not only to African writing but to the world's writing and one looks forward to this talented Nigerian writer's next book.

A Surfeit of Sun by Sean Graham is a competently written novel set in Thomor, West Africa. Mr. Graham has closely observed the customs of his subjects and his book has a West African flavour. Much play is made of Sarah Green's sense of alienation on her return home after years in England. In Thomor this first African woman barrister plunges into an affair with Mervyn Clarke, the young white Fisheries Officer. Their affair is played out in a state of crisis because the fish on which Thomor depends are late that year. There is a reversion to the old ways and members of the Yewe Fetish Cult sacrifice Dede, Mervyn's African mistress. In the trial for ritual murder that follows, the lovers find themselves in opposing camps: Sarah defending the accused; Mervyn appearing for the prosecution. The trial section of the book is well-handled.

Mr. Graham has written a good yarn with a tension that holds out to the very end. The main characters, however, remain on the whole unreal, though many of the minor characters flash into life. Fuad, the Syrian storekeeper, exudes an earthy humour. While the affair between Sarah and Mervyn generates some interest, it never develops into anything significant and neither does Sarah's voluntary exile in the end.

JAMES HALLIDAY'S *I Speak of Africa* will no doubt appeal to some British readers but what Africans will make of it is another matter. The story is told by the retired general manager of Luwongo Lead Mines and is an account of the wind of change blowing a British colony into independence. *Uhuru* has an initial bad turn when leadership is captured by the bad "Lion Warrior," Washington Kambalum, but all ends well with the benevolent, chieftainly Joshua Mpungu ensconced in the presidential chair. His country is humming. There are British bases and a flourishing trade with South Africa. Unlike the damnable Pan-Africanists, President Mpunga believes that African rule would spoil South Africa and in this he is in full agreement with Dr. Verwoerd. Mr. Halliday criticises much that deserves to be criticised: graft, corruption, self-seeking, intolerance — and deserves praise for his courage. The book is full of droll characters with droll names like Ice-cream and Lemonade. Droll situations involving witchcraft and cannibalism abound. The reader is treated to some strange insights, for instance, that the Africans love the Afrikaner, Dr. Pretorius, "because the *bwana* never talks to us." No doubt some old British colonial types will see in Mr. Halliday's independent state of Luwongo an Africa after their own hearts but I do not think that this book will have much appeal in Africa.

The Second Round by Gambia-born Lenrie Peters is the least successful of the four novels. It is set in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and concerns the return of Dr. Kawa to his native land. This is obviously a subject which has a deep interest for the author and one suspects that Mr. Peters has also experienced the alienation of the "been-tos." His story somewhat runs away with him and his imagery is more suited to poetry than prose. ●

The Past to Life

Robin Hallett

Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957, edited by G. E. Metcalfe (University of Ghana and Thos. Nelson and Sons Ltd., 84s.).

ONE OF THE MOST TRULY EXCITING intellectual developments of recent years has been the "discovery" of African history. Ten years ago it was possible for well-educated people to assert in all seriousness that Africa was the continent without a history. Pressed to define what they meant they would explain that history is dependent on written documents, that most African societies were pre-literate when they were brought under European rule and that there could therefore be no such thing as African history. The old arguments are not quite dead, they are still occasionally brought out by eminent professors at ancient universities, but to any honest and serious scholar the view that Africa possesses no history of its own is nothing but an absurd myth. For today the work of an ever-widening circle of scholars — in Africa, Europe and America — is showing that the sources for African history are infinitely more abundant than anyone dared to imagine even a few years ago. The oral traditions of African societies, the sites of ancient settlements, the distribution of plants or languages, the archives of European powers — from a study of all these various sources the historian can gradually piece together the pattern of the African past.

BASICALLY WHAT ANYONE INTERESTED in history is trying to do is to bring the past to life, to find out how men lived in ages other than our own, to note the contrasts between different ages and to discover how these contrasts came about. To this task the studies of the archaeologist, the botanist and the linguist can make — at least in so far as Africa is concerned — important contributions; but the reports of these specialists usually make difficult reading. If the ordinary reader is really to feel the proper excitement of history, really to feel that he can hear the voices of men who lived long ago, he must turn both to the records of oral tradition and to the documents whether published or unpublished, contained in libraries and collections of archives.

"To the African," W. E. F. Ward has suggested in the preface to his *History of Ghana*, "history is living in a way it cannot be to the European." He goes on to illustrate the significance of oral tradition from an incident in his own experience. "An elder once gave me the story of a gallant feat of arms performed by an ancestor of his seventy years ago. When he had ended, he broke down, got up hastily and left the circle, and walked up and down outside for twenty minutes striving to recover his self-control." The importance of oral tradition needs stressing, for the old man, the repositories of tradition, are dying off. One of the most urgent tasks in the field of African history is the recording of this vast fund of historical material before it fades into oblivion.

THE DOCUMENTS IN THE ARCHIVES are more durable; but for most students of history they are usually completely inaccessible. How many

Ghanaian students, for instance, can afford to visit the Public Record Office in London's Chancery Lane? Those able to do so will be able to find there file upon bulky file filled with the correspondence sent back to the Colonial Office or to other Government Departments by the English traders and colonial officials who worked on the Gold Coast from the seventeenth century onwards.

But now Mr. Metcalfe has come to the aid of all those who possess a real interest in Ghanaian history, for he has been through all the archives from 1807 onwards, selected the most interesting documents, added to them extracts from the most important printed documents of more recent years and brought this mass of material together in a handy, well-arranged and extremely well-edited volume.

THE DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN SELECTED, as Mr. Metcalfe points out "to illustrate the development of British policy in Ghana between 1807 and 1957. 1957 is, of course, the date of Ghanaian independence. 1807 is a date of almost equal significance, for in that year the British Parliament abolished the British slave-trade. From 1807 "the task of African civilization," as it was called, became a more or less continuous element in British plans for that continent. However inadequately conceived or mistakenly pursued, however over-laid at times by other self-regarding motives, this concern for African welfare essentially distinguishes the period after 1807 from that earlier phase of Anglo-Ghanaian co-operation in the slave-trade which, mutually profitable to the men of both races at the coast, was based on the devastation of the African and Ghanaian interior." This is Mr. Metcalfe's summing-up. Not every one would agree it. Thus a Ghanaian politician, Mr. Obetsebi Lamptey, speaking in the Legislative Council in 1949, could accuse Britain of "clapping their (i.e. the Ghanaian people's) neck into the noose of another slavery more insidious, more far-reaching in its intensity, more devastating in its effects than the physical slavery which preceded it. Britain's control," he concluded, "has ruined this country."

IMPERIALISM IS A SUBJECT of passionate debate to anyone concerned with the affairs of Africa. One of the most intriguing aspects of Mr. Metcalfe's selection of documents is the light that it throws on the motives of the agents of imperialism. Two themes come out very clearly. One is the reluctance with which the British Government assumed any responsibilities at all in West Africa during the greater part of the 19th century; the other is the extraordinary *volte-face* that took place when the British found themselves faced with competition from European rivals. Thus in 1880 Lord Kimberley, the Liberal Colonial Secretary, was resisting the appointments of British Commissioners in the interior of the Gold Coast, because such a policy would lead both to an increase in "the direct responsibility of the Government" and to the "progressive augmentation of expenditure... both of which results would, in my opinion, be very undesirable." Six years later, however, after the Germans had started to annex Togoland, the same Lord Kimberley was writing, "It is safe to assume that the German Government will annex anything which is not claimed by some other Power. Therefore we should make up our minds promptly as to any territory we really want, and take it at once."

To bring the past to life: how well these documents do that. And how varied they are — for here are English statesmen thinking aloud, English governors writing confidential letters, Ghanaian business-men and politicians criticising British policy, overseas experts talking about the development of industry or education. All in all, Mr. Metcalfe and his publishers have done a magnificent piece of work in producing a book whose appearance is something of a milestone in the development of West African historical studies. ●

The Obvious Message

Sebaretlane

The Third World, by Peter Worsley. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson.)

I HAVE TRIED HARD, but unsuccessfully, to like this book and to write an appreciative review of it. The subject matter is to me of the greatest interest. Professor Worsley is clearly an admirable person, with a broad-minded tolerance of many of the failings of humanity. His views are conciliatory and sane. He displays an encyclopaedic grasp of his great subject. But try as I will, I must admit that his book leaves me unsatisfied.

I am not sure that my dissatisfaction is all Professor Worsley's fault. His book is basically a plea to the world's white people to take the Third World (to him it is the non-communist African and Asian countries) more seriously than so far they have taken it. But I read it at a moment when the internal disunity of the Third World is obvious, its disunity and also its impotence in the face of American aggression in the Congo, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic. Since the book was written much of the gilt has come off his gingerbread.

Unfortunately there are faults inherent in the book, quite apart from the circumstances of its birth. It is packed with facts and with quotations. Nearly all are instructive, true and important. Yet one finds it hard to relate this wealth of data to any general theme. One finds it difficult to know whether the book has indeed any message except the rather obvious one that the Third World is of growing importance, that many of its values are needed by the rest of the world, and that the development of the poorer countries should be undertaken more seriously by everyone.

I COULD HAVE WISHED for a far fuller treat-

ment of Japan, the only non-European country to have equalled the Europeans and Anglo-Saxons in scientific progress, and perhaps the only one to have received no aid or investment before "take-off."

The Japanese experience seems to show that, in development, what is really necessary is a tough determination to modernise, on a base of discipline, thrift, and obedience, with the inspiration of a fierly nationalism, guided by valid cultural traditions. It seems to show that hand-outs from rich nations, though they can achieve something in some countries, have also a dampening and depressing effect at their best, and at their worst can ruin the receiver's morale. It is factors like this that make one distrust sentences such as "the reduction of (world) military expenditure to one third of its present value and could provide the funds needed to industrialise all the underdeveloped countries within 10 to 20 years." Surely the main difference between the developed world and the underdeveloped world lies in differing attitudes to savings, personal efficiency, and hard work. Does Professor Worsley seriously think that any amount of currency in the world could effect so colossal a change in 10 to 20 years?

There are nevertheless extremely valuable passages. In particular I shall always keep my finger on his discussion on the nature of nationalism, and on its relationship with communism.

Having said all these unkind things I feel a bit guilty. This book is timely. I am glad that Professor Worsley wrote it. Also the icy blizzards of the Johnson doctrine cannot go on for much longer. Either the sun of Kennedyism (encouraged by books like this) must once again appear. Or something even hotter than the sun will put an end to the Johnson doctrine. ●

On a rural station

Marieke Clark

Zambia Contrasts, by Gladys Jamieson. (London Missionary Society.)

FOR THREE YEARS Mrs. Jamieson served the London Missionary Society in Northern Rhodesia on a rural mission station. She says she has tried to paint a picture of life in one small corner of Africa. The result is disappointing. One had hoped to find in the book the record of the experiences of a European who penetrated the surface of African rural life and who tried to relate the poverty she describes to the political conditions of the country; her experiences in the clinic might have been related to traditional beliefs concerning sickness and set against the background of contemporary events; and Christianity might have been re-interpreted. In *The Man Next To Me* Dr. Anthony Barker has succeeded in relating

modern missionary work to the needs of contemporary Africa. But in Mrs. Jamieson's book there is conventional description of Africans sick in the hospital, walking through the bush to obtain drugs, Africans as hard working students, and as demure converts "glad to have been posted to mission schools because we can still carry on the work of God as we did at the mission."

Mrs. Jamieson's stay in Zambia coincided with some of the most dramatic months of the country's recent history. Political matter is not entirely excluded and occasionally, such as when she describes election night, October 1962, we are aware of the historical importance of the events we are watching. But there is no mention of the political cross-currents at Serenje, the torn loyalties of students, and the relevance of mission education to African nationalism. Mrs. Jamieson says of a student "he was a keen UNIP man, but a keen Christian too, in his own way."

Far from the westernised atmosphere of town, missionaries on rural stations have unique opportunities to observe social and political change; it is sad that so few of them make use of their opportunities. ●

Saleable Journey

Aaron Segal

Summons to Ruwenzori by Tom Stacey. (Secker and Warburg, 25s.)

TOM STACEY IS AN ENERGETIC, competent and romantic English journalist; a combination almost certain to produce sparks in Africa. He has written an engrossing personal account of his involvement in an attempt to conciliate the Bakonjo tribe of Western Uganda, at war with the neighbouring dominant Batoro tribe and by extension with the Central Government of Uganda.

By virtue of an earlier trip to the fabled Mountains of the Moon Stacey had established intimate contact with a young idealistic Mukonjo, Isaya Mukirane. When Mukirane initiated a secessionist movement to free his people from the very real oppression of the Batoro Stacey was called in to see if he could somehow help to bring the Bakonjo and the Uganda government to terms. His brief journey evokes magnificently the absorbing presence of a scenery without parallel in Africa as well as the progressive mental disintegration of his friend Mukirane, obsessed with becoming a Messiah to his people.

The principal failings of this book are its self-imposed limitations. The Bakonjo are only one of hundreds of tribes in Africa whose lives have been messed up by colonial boundaries. National governments must everywhere wrestle with the real grievances of these groups and the need to build national unity through the encouragement of non-tribal sentiment. The Bakonjo wanted a district of their own or else to secede from Uganda. They might have settled for being placed directly under the authority of the Uganda government and freed from administrative control by the hated Batoro. All of these solutions were and are fraught with ominous consequences for fragile Uganda politics and these considerations are avoided by Stacey. His aim is a book which will make readers feel rather than think about the problems of Uganda and Africa. To the extent that this book requires scant mental effort its saleability is increased and its ultimate value decreased.

TOM STACEY COULD HAVE WRITTEN a fine, imaginative, and thoroughly non-academic study of a people whom he knows well and cares about, their problems, and the relation of those problems to the most pressing issues in Africa today of nation and tribe. He has chosen instead to write an eminently readable journalistic account of Tom Stacey's relations with what he refers to as "primitive people." ●

Why the Boers Won

Merle Babrow

British Supremacy in South Africa 1899-1907, by G. H. L. Le May. (Oxford University Press, 25s.)

PROFESSOR LE MAY'S BOOK is an account of the attempt, and failure, of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and his representative in South Africa, Alfred, Lord Milner, to break Afrikanerdom and establish British supremacy in Southern Africa at the turn of the century. This study does not break much new ground, although some use is made of interesting material from the Milner papers and the Colonial Office records; it is, however, compact, useful and refreshingly lucid.

Milner was not merely frank about his designs on Kruger's republic; he claimed without irony, "the credit" for precipitating the Boer War. His plan was to transform the Transvaal—after the discovery of gold the centre of power in Southern Africa—into a British Colony. The Afrikaners would be defeated in a short decisive war. A policy of Anglicization and large-scale British immigration would be the prelude to self-government. Later, the Transvaal would form the pivot for a union of the Southern African colonies under British hegemony.

Professor Le May rejects the view of historians like Hugh Seton-Watson that the Boer War is a classic example of a Marxist imperialist war. It was, in his view, a politicians' war. The mining magnates and their London shareholders wanted not war, "but the coercion of Kruger in their own interests." (Did this not inevitably mean war?—certainly their interests seem to have coincided.)

MILNER GOT HIS war, but his plans went awry. What the Afrikaners failed to win by the sword was conceded to them by the peace treaty, the subsequent grant of self-government, and the Act of Union (1910), which united a self-governing South Africa under white majority (i.e. Afrikaner) rule.

Why did Milner lose so badly and at such a tremendous cost—an enormously expensive and destructive three year war which involved the use of almost 500,000 British troops against a small Boer force and led to the downfall of Balfour's government in England?

Milner—and everyone else—underestimated the capacity and willingness of the Boers to fight to the bitter end ("Nonsense!" he wrote in 1900, "there are limits to what they will suffer..."). His plans were thwarted and upset by the pressures of domestic politics and public opinion in Britain and in the Cape Colony (though not in loyal Natal). Milner was also frustrated and opposed by the British generals, who were not interested in his grandiose political schemes and failed to secure the decisive

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victory and unconditional surrender necessary if he were to have a free hand after the war. Kitchener, impatient for promotion to India, was anxious to come to terms with the Boers. When he failed, he determined to defeat them by any means, but his "methods of barbarism" only stiffened their resistance and earned their undying hatred.

Irritated and frustrated by their failure to defeat the elusive commandos, the British entertained several wild schemes. Hely-Hutchinson, the Governor of Natal, proposed that Natal be enlarged to include the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, with a constitution "jerry-mandered" (his own words) to ensure a British majority in an elected assembly. While Kitchener toyed with the idea of deporting recalcitrant Boers and their families *en masse* to Fiji and Madagascar.

AT THE END of the war Milner turned down the offer of the Colonial Secretaryship in order to carry out his grand design for South Africa. But time was running out: a grant of self-government by the incoming Liberals would not be long delayed; British immigrants had failed to materialise; and the Afrikaners had not been Anglicised. On the contrary, the war gave birth to a fiercer, more disciplined Afrikaner nationalism and the old-fashioned leaders like Kruger were replaced by men who were younger, subtler and more effective.

United as never before in their Het Volk party the Afrikaners waited, while the British nervously blundered and miscalculated. The Ridgway Committee, sent out by the Liberal government, were convinced that their franchise proposals (allowing 15% weighting of constituencies—a proposal intended to benefit the British, but subsequently turned to their own use by the Afrikaners) would ensure a British majority. But the Afrikaners won. "We are in for ever," said Smuts gleefully. They were too. Churchill was not worried. Without the stimulus of opposition, he believed Afrikaner nationalism and the Dutch language would die a natural death: English would prevail by reason of its "innate superiority."

ONE CANNOT BUT admire the bravery with which the small Afrikaner nation fought the first successful—and one of the fiercest—of the anti-imperialist wars in Africa. But does one wish, in the light of subsequent history, that Milner had succeeded in establishing British supremacy in South Africa? Looking at Southern Rhodesia, or at the record of Natal, one doubts whether it would have made much difference.

Professor Le May rightly points out that white unity was always bought at the cost of non-white interests (at Vereeniging and in 1910); but, in view of the increasingly repressive legislation since 1910, one can hardly agree with his conclusion that the grant of self-government by Campbell-Bannerman gave to South African politics "half a century of moderation." ●

Ancient African Kingdoms, by Margaret Shinnie. (Arnold, 21s.)

AN ATTRACTIVE LOOKING piece of African book boom production. But it is really a school book in disguise, which is all well and good since stimulating books on the history of Africa are badly needed at this level. But in this case the contents are not nearly as worthwhile as the packaging.

The author states in the Preface that "It is meant for those who have yet to decide on a career, in the hope that some of them may be sufficiently interested to wish to explore the history of Africa further." What a dreary job for history to do. Such an aim reduces the study of history to a mere insider's discipline.

Greater knowledge of the unfolding history of Africa is necessary for everybody both outside and inside Africa. Their ignorance of the highly developed African Kingdoms enabled the colonial powers to look at the history of Africa merely in the terms of penetration of their explorers into the "dark continent". And this type of thinking survives among people who have no vested interest in belittling African achievement.

At the same time a "chip on the shoulder" type of romanticised African history is growing up. There is the "Africans did it first" school. It turns out that many of these claims rest on the achievements of the Mediterranean-based civilisations. And this is just about as sensible as laying the credit for the happenings in the Roman Empire at the feet of the British.

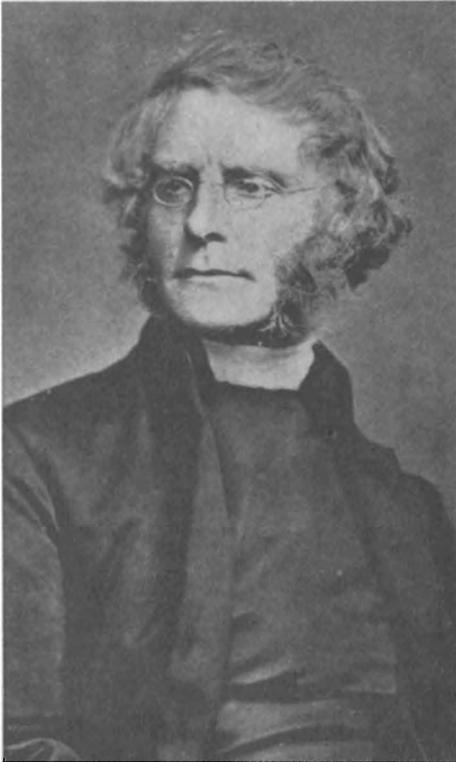
These are just two attitudes which greater discussion and investigation will help to adjust. But this "book seeks to avoid giving information which is still controversial". And this may account for its dryness. Not that there is any need to be outrageous. E. W. Bovill's *The Golden Trade of the Moors* shows with what spark the stories of the inland kingdoms of West Africa can be told.

Somehow Mrs. Shinnie seems to have managed to iron out all the excitement and significance of discoveries such as the Nok terracotta figurine of the woman with a bun illustrated on this page. That this was an archaeological discovery which changed many notions of the African past; that some of this statuary may predate some of the Greek naturalistic statues; none of this does she mention. And this would be such a good chance to demonstrate the workings of modern archaeological means of dating by testing carbonised wood.

So all the beautiful illustrations do not seem to be integrated into the book. An African politician picked up this book and said "Oh, the same old pictures". He was being unfair. But if only Mrs. Rennie had used them better. And she and her husband have gathered some interesting contemporary illustrations which serve to show, though she does not seem to make the point, that these ancient kingdoms of Africa were not so much "backward" as that they continued to develop at the slow speed of the middle ages until they were suddenly faced with the results of the rapid development of technology taking place in the home countries of the probing colonial powers.

Sobantu

Shula Marks



John William Colenso by Peter Hinchcliff (Nelson, 25s.)

SO REVERED BY THE ZULUS was John William Colenso, Anglican bishop and missionary in Natal from 1854 to 1883, that even at the turn of the century educated Africans were saying that since the death of *Sobantu*, Father of the People, they could trust no white man. In the last ten years of his life Bishop Colenso, excommunicated by the Church of the Province of South Africa, fiercely distrusted by the majority of his fellow clergy in Natal and a former shadow of himself in health, devoted all his remarkable courage energy and determination to secure justice for the Zulus.

His earlier interest in the welfare of the Africans of Natal and Zululand confronted by encroaching white settlerdom was roused to feverpitch by the travesty of a trial accorded the Hlubi chief, Lungalibalele, in 1873. The chief, accused of treason by the Natal government, had run foul of Theophilus Shepstone the autocratic Secretary for Native Affairs, formerly the Bishop's most staunch and powerful lay ally, thereafter one of his bitterest antagonists. Colenso's defence of Cetshwayo at the time of the Zulu War some five years later and his opposition to the policies of Sir Bartle

Frere, Imperial High Commissioner in South Africa, whom he regarded as responsible for the war, brought him even further odium and unpopularity.

Even after the deaths of Sobantu and King Cetshwayo within a few months of one another in 1883, the history of the Colensos and the Zulu Royal family was to be intimately linked.

Courage, perseverance and outspokenness in the defence of what he believed in were nothing unusual in the Bishop's life. As this new book by Professor Hinchcliff shows, these qualities revealed themselves not only in his preparedness to champion the rights of the Zulus, but also in his stand on the theological questions of his day. It is with this aspect of the Bishop's life that Professor Hinchcliff has been primarily concerned. Writing from an orthodox Christian point of view, the author, who is professor of Ecclesiastical History at Rhodes University, has been able to present the 19th century theological disputes in which Colenso was involved lucidly and meaningfully even for the non-believer. In the process many of the misconceptions and inaccuracies which had crept into the tale of Colenso's battle with the metropolitan of Cape Town, Robert Gray, have been cleared away. In his discussion of this episode and the nature of the Bishop's "heresies," Professor Hinchcliff attains an admirable objectivity and freedom from bias. May the gap left by his not dealing with Colenso "defender of the Zulus," be filled in as straightforward and non-partisan a fashion.

TO THE STUDENT OF AFRICAN HISTORY, it is the Bishop's views as missionary which hold particular interest. At a time when the majority of missionaries in Africa were still culture-bound in the extreme and preaching hell-fire to the "benighted heathen," the Bishop's ability to transcend the prejudices and value-judgments of Victorian England is all the more remarkable. Colenso was apparently groping towards a Universalist religion even before he left England. He believed there was a divine spark in each man, which it was the task of the missionary to reveal. His views on baptism and polygamy, both grossly unpopular in his own day, were a development of this and of his generous humanitarianism.

The account of how Colenso was led from an initial unquestioning fundamentalism to his criticism of the Old Testament by the questions of his African converts is particularly appealing. It brings to mind the remark attributed to Disraeli after the defeat of the British troops at Isandhlwana, where the Bonapartist claimant to the French throne was killed:

"A remarkable people the Zulus; they defeat our generals; they convert our bishops; they have settled the fate of a great European dynasty." ●

Chad Frescoes

THE ENNEDI MASSIF is situated in the Sahara area of the Chad Republic, north-east of Fort Lamy, on the Sudanese frontier. This area, far away from the main routes of communication, has been ignored until very recently even though the massifs of Hagggar, Tibesti and Tassili have been explored and have revealed important artistic discoveries.

Erosion has scooped out many caves in this sandstone massif. These caves have been lived in and used by nomad populations as natural shelters during centuries and even millennia. The climate on this plateau, 1,450 metres high, is fairly mild, and the summer rains make possible the existence of a varied flora and numerous fauna (gazelles, antelopes, ostriches, panthers, monkeys). Several thousand Bideyats or Goranes follow the rains with their flocks. The impossibility of cultivation forces the Ennedi population to lead a pastoral life that has been the same for 6,000 years.

Since 1930 French soldiers have pointed out the existence of painted shelters, but it was not until 1956 that an expedition was sent to study the peoples (Zaghawa of the North Ouadai) and systematically to unearth the paintings. The results of this expedition, led by Gérard Bailloud in 1956 and 1957, were shown for the first time to the Parisian public early this year.

Gérard Bailloud left Fada with a Gorane guide and four camels. During the next year, camping at the foot of red rocks, he covered an area within a sixty kilometres radius, visited more than 500 caves and discovered 200 paintings. The rock paintings have been transferred from the wall itself on to drawing paper and then carefully coloured on the spot in water-colour, to copy the original colours exactly. These are the life-size pictures which we can see at the Museum of Decorative Arts.

The base of the sandstone wall is a light yellow, on which the frescoes have been painted in a limited colour range. The colours consist mainly of red ochre, an un-failing and surprising violet, white, black and sometimes brown.

These frescoes cover several thousand years of history and prehistory: from the 5th millennium B.C. until the 18th century A.D. Successive generations sheltering in the caves have decorated them, and in this