

UGANDANS HAVE LONG BEEN TREATED to a high standard of historical research, partly because their country has never been considered anything but African and thus has been spared the false starts which clutter literature on Kenya. Buganda's centralised monarchy aroused interest in the early colonial days, not least from such Baganda leaders as Apolo Kagwa who wished to put forward a special interpretation. The three contributors on Uganda know the country well, all having been connected with Makerere College; their earlier works had already proven their competence, and provided a sound basis for elaboration and refocus. Professor Low's essay does justice to the traditionally dissident parts, Busoga, Bunyoro and the Nilotic provinces as well as Buganda, while not losing sight of the British military and administrative measures which forged the modern state. Cranford Pratt's chapter on administration and politics 1920-45 and Cyril Ehrlich's two chapters on economic history are equally well-wrought and comprehensive.

The colonial periods severed Zanzibar from its coastal relationships. The political and economic centre of Kenya moved inland and the rulers of German East Africa, having politically superseded the Sultan of Zanzibar on the coast, were determined to end economic dependence on Zanzibar, especially as it became dominated increasingly by Britain. John Flint, in a concise summary of colonial history up to 1950, deals with the process by which the Sultan was divested of his effective authority, from abolition of slavery to the creation of a legislative council including first Asians and Arabs and later Africans as well. The economic background, fluctuating copra and spice prices, is especially well integrated.

THE MOST RADICAL EX-COLONY in East Africa, Tanganyika, is least served by the Oxford History. W. O. Henderson adopts the interpretation of the German administration developed by Charles Dundas, composer of the Atrocity Report of 1918, an interpretation which became the orthodox British view. The succession of revolts and military punishments did indeed occur, but parallel development of a more benevolent civil administration, notable for its education policy and emphasis on peasant agriculture, as for efforts to retain and use indigenous leadership, is neglected. Otto Raum's essay on African society in German times is as warm as Henderson is distant. The wealth of fascinating detail is, however, devalued by Raum's lack of documentation and a central argument.

Tanganyika under the British Mandate experienced an extraordinary period of rather arbitrary government, which sometimes inadvertently introduced revolutionary measures. Byatt's Local Courts Ordinance unleashed semi-anarchy in Bukoba by curtailing chiefly powers and Cameron's Indirect Rule, imported from Nigeria, created paramount chiefs and an aristocracy which were often unnatural and therefore easily toppled by a nationalist party. Professor Ingham has not begun to touch these vital issues of practical administration and leaves us skating on the surface of European rivalries.

The Oxford *History of East Africa*, Volume II (one more will follow) contains so much that it has become hefty and expensive. One would not wish, however, to sacrifice the estimable bibliography of published and unpublished materials which caps it off. The heirs to this, as the other colonial legacies may question the value of some portions, but the many very good chapters will stand alone and give solid support to ongoing research. ●

## Two Poems by MICHAEL DE FREITAS

### *The Trees*

*You asked for a letter, my love, which  
sent me off reminiscing of the  
Many other letters I had  
sent, to so many  
other flowers that faded.  
The leaves on which I scrawled  
with sweat dripping from my  
heart. Words that I knew not  
existed also faded, and finally  
erased with Autumn and age.  
I remember the first flower  
so pretty, so bright.  
I remember the first letter  
sent to my flower at night  
with words like sword and kill.  
No. I did not know the sharpness  
of the blade. Of death no  
inkling had I.  
Yes, I look back still sweating  
and thinking. The fragrant sweet,  
and Autumn's here again.  
The leaves go first, I remember,  
then you fade, pretty flower,  
and wither. But now  
My eyes are old and clear  
Through the dying foliage I can  
still see some beauty.  
I cannot let you fade,  
So I must hold the leaves  
and not let my bare branches  
scrawl over you few remaining leaves.  
Don't fall. Defy Autumn this last year  
before the demolition men come.*

### *Soul food is made from black-eyed peas, says Jason*

*The winters here and through the long  
summer past  
we planned and loved and dreamt of the  
days  
when our life would truly be joy, but  
it's not to be. For today I walk in streets  
that are  
bare, with only snow, and the faces of the  
natives all staring at me.  
The intruder they think;  
But am I?  
I walk the lonely road, with a vision that  
was  
once real, so pure, so true, 'twas you  
that kept me warm and free from lies and  
pain.  
It was not enough I complained.  
Now there's naught, and here am I  
winter and snow, alone, just I.  
I can hear your call, is it not over?  
Can we start anew, amid all this horror  
of mistrusts and hates, seen through barren  
gates?  
Oh love, don't cry, it's not I just life  
that flips like a coin with it's two sides  
of joy and sadness. We reap them both  
The clock goes not back, life goes on  
we grieve, we laugh, through my perpetual  
frown  
Where are you? Your voice grows fainter  
I smell death this horrid winter  
There is an old man on the corner, in the  
snow  
grimacing, pretending he is laughing  
I know better, I saw him once before  
with his scythe in Sammara. Speak louder  
love,  
the winds are blowing your words away;  
What is it? Oh, him.  
It's me he wants, not you.  
I have a bill to pay and it's late  
my time is up, interests ran out  
I'll wait over there for you, where it's always  
summer  
Put on a warm coat.*