A THOUSAND YEARS OF WEST AFRICAN HISTORY by J. F. Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie (Ibadan University Press and Nelson, 25s.)

AFRICA IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES by Joseph C. Anene and Godfrey N. Brown (Ibadan University Press and Nelson, 40s.)

These two books are stable companions — both products of a Workshop on the teaching of African history organised jointly by the Department of History and the Institute of Education of the University of Ibadan in March 1965. Both books and Workshop arose out of a decision by the West African Examinations Council to introduce new papers on 'The History of West Africa from A.D. 1000 to the present day' and 'The History of Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries', into the school certificate examination. While designed primarily to meet the needs of teachers, faced with the problem of teaching the new syllabus with inadequate material, these books are meant also for university students and for the general reader. They are in the form of symposia, with essays on a variety of topics contributed by members of the staff of the University of Ibadan and specialists brought in from outside. The individual contributions differ a great deal, as regards their actual quality, use of sources, approach to their particular themes, level of readership for which they appear to be intended, and so forth. And, as the editors frankly admit, considerations of urgency — the importance of making these books available to teachers as rapidly as possible — have meant that they have been produced with the minimum of editorial work.

Of the two the Ajayi-Espie symposium seems clearly the better work. This is partly due to the nature of its subject-matter. The last thousand years of West African history is, from any point of view, an admirable theme. It possesses a genuine unity. Though the evidence for particular societies, regions and periods is still very defective and scrappy, it is not essentially more so than the evidence for, say, the history of Greece and the Mediterranean during the last millennium B.C., which until recently was included in the basic training of the European young. It is a field in which we have to deal, not with what Professor Trevor-Roper has called "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes", but with history as "a form of movement, and purposive movement too". So one hoped that this book would really succeed in pulling together the results of recent research, making reasonably clear the stage which our knowledge has now reached indicating the nature of the problems which remain unresolved and the broad lines along which work is now going forward. This is no doubt the aim. Unfortunately in practice it has only been very partially realised. There are some interesting and suggestive contributions — for example, Professor Thurston Shaw on 'The Approach through Archaeology to West African History', Christopher Fyfe on 'West African Trade', Professor Ajayi himself on 'West African States at the beginning of the 19th Century', John Hunwick on 'The 19th-Century jihads'. But the book as a whole lacks coherence. Much of it reads like a rehash of older secondary works. It contains a surprising number of avoidable errors. And a good deal of the treatment of the late pre-colonial and colonial phases of West African history remains oddly European-centred.

In large part, no doubt, these weaknesses are due to the fact that the book was produced in such a hurry. This accounts for the way in which the subject-matter of various chapters overlaps, and for minor discrepancies — for example, the fact that we are given the story of Idris Alooma's importation of Turkish musketeers (or muskets?) into Bornu in three different versions, in one of which they are said to have come from Tripoli, in another direct from Egypt (not by the Tripoli route), while the third simply speaks of them as having been imported from the Ottoman Empire. More worrying are some of the wilder statements that seem to have slipped through the editorial net: e.g. that "a close study of some 800 human skulls" from the Sahara, north of Tassili, "suggests that the ancestors of West Africans of today played an important role in building the civilisation of ancient Egypt"; or that "we begin to hear of" Kano in A.D. 999; that the kingdom of Tekrur "was probably in existence at the beginning of the Christian era"; that the boundaries of ancient Ghana were said to have been "Senegal and Baule to the south and west respectively" (presumably this should read "to the west and south"). References to sources sometimes give the impression of lack of familiarity with the authors cited. For example, we are told that:

"The writings of Arab Muslim chroniclers about West Africa appeared in the wake of the religion of the Prophet: Ibn Munnabeh wrote in A.D. 738, followed later by Al-Masudi in A.D. 947."

This passage does not make clear that many of the most valuable references to the Western Sudan, from the 8th Century on, are to be found in the works of Arab geographers, not of chroniclers or historians.
I am not sure what is the point of the reference to Ibn Munnabeh, who— as far as I am aware— does not mention West Africa, nor why Al-Masudi is singled out for special mention in this way. In general, in their handling of the history of the Sudanic States during the medieval period, the authors seem to follow closely the conventional accounts of Delafosse, Bovill, Trimingham, etc., and to pay rather little attention to newer, more critical interpretations of the evidence.

When we come on to the 19th Century, for which the evidence is relatively abundant, one would hope that the main emphasis would be on the internal changes taking place in African societies, developments in technology (including military technology), the emergence of new social classes, ruling groups and forms of state, the problems confronting West African States in their relations with one another and with the European Powers. Some attention is given to such topics, more certainly than would have been the case twenty years ago. But the text is still fairly heavily loaded with conventional expansion-of-Europe, scramble-for-Africa material. There is a somewhat inadequate five-page note on Samori Toure, but little attempt at a serious examination of late 19th-Century movements of resistance to European penetration, from the standpoint of their organisation, ideas, basis of support, interrelations, or discussion of the causes of their ultimate failure. This indeed is the general line of criticism advanced by Dr. Afiegbu in his interesting sub-chapter, "A Reassessment of the Historiography of the Colonial Period", which reads like a kind of minority report in relation to this whole section of the book. In their treatment of the colonial period itself, most of the authors seem anxious above all to hurt nobody's feelings, and tend therefore to steer clear of any real analysis of the causes and character of the colonial system in both the British and French territories, contenting themselves too often with the most innocuous, and sometimes meaningless, generalisations:

"The colonial system came into being because a number of people in Western Europe, holding certain ideas in matters of religion, social policy, politics and economics, came into contact with African peoples holding different ideas and living under a different system..."
it is possible to imagine several improvements in the colonial system which actually came into being. It would be very disturbing if the West African young, with all the problems that confront them at this stage of their history, were to be trained to think so ineptly about their past.

The history of Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries is a very large and difficult subject to present in an intelligible and coherent way in a volume of this kind. The editors of this second symposium have not made their own task easier by including in it some entire chapters from the companion volume dealing with West African history. They have tried to pick out certain general themes, such as the impact of missionary activities and the emergence of new elites, but these have only been worked out in a rather sketchy and limited way. The main body of the book follows a regional approach, with the historical developments taking place in North, West, East and Southern Africa discussed in separate sections. This means that the reader is given a good deal of reasonably accurate detailed information, but unconnected to the larger historical problems. Some

FREEDOM AND UNITY / UHURU NA UMOJA, by Julius K. Nyerere (Oxford University Press, 45s.)

Publication of this book, in January, coincided with what has come to be known as the Arusha Declaration. It is a pity that the declaration could not be included in the book, which is a selection from Nyerere's writings and speeches. For it is clear that our understanding of the declaration, a milestone in the social development of Tanzania, must remain shallow until we read "Freedom and Unity".

It has recently been said that Rene Dumont's "False Start in Africa" is virtually compulsory reading among Nyerere's colleagues. Dumont's book has been mentioned as the main influence behind President Nyerere's recent moves on Socialism based on self-reliance. But I very much doubt if the French writer's work did anything more than confirm President Nyerere's own political philosophy.

The key to that philosophy, as the blurb suggests, is provided in the introduction by the President to this collection of speeches and writings. The collection is an historical record of Tanganyika's development to independence, tracing the process from the formation of the Tanganyika African National Union to the present. Inevitably, that process is also the story of the President's own political development.

Without a treasury of philosophical works to lean back on, Africa has to make do with political thinkers who are at one and the same time practical men of affairs. There has been a steadily rising crop of this type of literature, produced under pressure. The Nkrumahs and the Senghors have made contributions to the pile, and now Nyerere has added to it. What makes this particular book especially welcome is that it effectively debunks a lot of rubbish which has been said about Nyerere's attitude to Socialism. Many have projected his concept of what he has called African familyhood as backward-looking and an unscientific form of Socialism. One has heard of this so often in critical tracts that it even seemed unnecessary to read the President's own work in order to form one's own opinion of him.

What is unscientific about it? Are those who pass for scientific socialists any good for the future of Africa? These self-styled experts on socialism must be the most dumbfounded and must now wish they had not been so quick in pronouncing judgment.

What emerges from this book is that President Nyerere is anxious to preserve a way of life which is based on egalitarianism. What makes African familyhood an attractive concept is the absence in it of tendencies towards the exploitation of man by man, a concept which extends beyond what is known as a family unit in the European sense of that word. In this, family embraces all members of a village community.

It is this impulse and spirit of communalism which informs the President's philosophy. It is this and this alone which provides any justification for the system being known as African socialism, denoting a condition of life in Africa which constitutes a projection of primitive communism in the framework of modern social organisation. It is only fair that it should be pointed out here that the President does not himself call it African socialism

The concept of self-reliance, although given prominence for the first time in the Arusha Declaration, is not itself new. The struggle for freedom in
Tanganyika (now Tanzania) had as one of its integral components a deliberate emphasis on the idea of Africans themselves doing things unaided by others. President Nyerere writes:

"The decision that TANU should accept membership only from Africans (later defined as any person having one African parent) was a political decision necessary because of the prevailing lack of self-confidence in the African community. Years of Arab slave raiding, and later years of European domination, had caused our people to have grave doubts about their own abilities.

"This was no accident; any dominating group seeks to destroy the confidence of those they dominate because this helps them to maintain their position, and the oppressors in Tanganyika were no exception. Indeed, it can be argued that the biggest crime of oppression and foreign domination, in Tanganyika and elsewhere, is the psychological effect it has on the people who experience it..."

This message should not (cannot) go unheeded in Southern Africa. Nyerere's fight for change by constitutional means is well known. His patient negotiation at home and at the United Nations; his deep concern about racial harmony in his own country — these qualities have in the past had a profound effect on people to the south of the African continent.

There have been those who, operating in a totally different set-up, such as in South Africa, have tried to emulate Nyerere - at what cost to the struggle for liberation! It was right for Nyerere to champion the cause of non-racialism in Tanganyika at a time when it was clear that the Africans would soon be masters of their own house. He could afford to preach love of the White man because his fight was then almost over, and the end was in sight.

But what he was doing then unerringly for his country used to be quoted with devastating effect against the interests of the liberation movement in southern Africa. When the Nyerere attitude was rehashed in South Africa, it all amounted to putting the cart before the horse, and was ridiculous in the extreme. I hope he will now, after publication of this book, be better understood.

As a Pan-Africanist, President Nyerere emerges as a practical person. He feels deeply about the problems which divide Africa at the moment, and tries to offer solutions in a practical way. Some have accused him as seeking the never-never long haul, through regional federations leading eventually to Pan-African unity.

But regional federations are certainly not things that are in themselves desirable but a practical necessity on the road to full unity. This is the way President Nyerere sees the problem. He is as convinced as anybody else can ever be that unity is the only salvation for the small, often economically unviable states of Africa.
The State of Black Being

The definitiveness of Fanon is a continuous flow from this first book, "Black Skin, White Masks", through his political essays and "Studies in a Dying Colonialism", into his Third-World manifesto, "The Wretched of the Earth". His okra-spirit fills our mind's eyes with the black rays of NOMMO, giving us understanding and direction. Fanon's Spirit — no longer encased in colonized flesh — moves black men to move.

"Black Skin, White Masks" parts the translucent curtains of objectivity enshrouding the psychology of the black man, specifically, and of the colonized in general. Before Fanon could reach the level of racial relevancy in the "Wretched of the Earth" and "Studies in a Dying Colonialism", before he could perceive and move toward the humanism of Black Truth, he had to go beyond Freud: beyond symptomatizing and diagnosing the colonized (the blacks) with the assumptions of the colonizer's (the white's) psychology. For how can the psychological assumptions of the competitively cold white world of "objectivity" be valid in the sensual and cooperatively spiritual black world of subjectivity? Indeed, the latter is closer to the earth, to life and living, to seeing men as men and not as manipulative things. Fanon realised the psychological significance of Leopold Senghor's words: "Emotion is completely Negro as reason is Greek." Fanon knew that the black man had to look inward anew...in order to see beyond. To see beyond is to have understanding among the colonised so judgment may flourish — so alienation can be destroyed.

The colonised (the blacks) must understand in order to judge; hence, to disalienate. But to understand means to communicate:

"To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilisation." (pp 17-18)

When the colonised person's sole use of language is to construct an impressionistic dialogue with his master, he is furthering his self-hatred and alienation. Fanon says to the colonised..."We must conceive of our utterances as a way..." to take on a world, a culture "that is and from us". We, the blacks — the colonised — must begin to see James Brown, for example, as a legitimate cultural construct, as the whites — the colonisers — see Mozart as culturally legitimate. Fanon is saying that, when the black man sheds his ethnic dialect or language as "primitively degrading" and adorns his oppressor's language as "sophisticated" and right in his frenetic quest for that white mirage of humanism, the black man has signed his spiritual death warrant.

To be black is to produce simultaneously fear and frustration in one's oppressed self and the oppressor's self. In Fanon's words, "the Negro is a phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety". Fanon realised that it was necessary to get down to the nitty-gritty, the focal point; the crux of the colonial mentality. In his sixth chapter, "The Negro and Psychopathology", Fanon's truth-seeking Black Rays poetically glisten upon..."a massive psychoexistential complex" which, through analyisation, Fanon destroys. His destruction clears the earth for the foundation of a humanistic construct which is manifested in the "Wretched of the Earth". For before one builds in a revolutionary manner, one must destroy. Being a black revolutionary and being an existential psychiatrist, Fanon knew that he had to explore the dark-strewn alleys and tense pillaged jungles of the black psyche with the scientific technique of the West and the philosophical subjectivity of the Bandung World. The "fact of Blackness" is the fact of two world-views. One black, one white. One of cooperation, one of competition. In essence, one of humanism and one of cold objectivity.

[Footnotes]

- Okra - Ashanti for the "inner man", the Soul of a man, as Fontella Bass sings.
- NOMMO - An African expression meaning The Word, The Seed of Life, the Bearer of All Things Dynamic.
"If a man is born in a society where existence depends on competition he comes to accept life as a struggle and inevitably wants to exploit the differences between himself and other people to inflate his own ego. He stops seeing these differences just as differences but, in all good faith, as inequalities. All his education, home training, social structure... every aspect of his life is founded on 'inequality'."

So spoke my young Nigerian brother, Obi B. Egbuna. This is what Fanon is psychoanalytically driving home. That for environmental, rather than physiological, reasons, the European has been most vulnerable to the terminal disease of racism. It is within this competitive environment that Fanon exposes the relationship between the neurosis of being black and the neurosis of being the racist oppressor.

In one instance, we see that when a white man spends most of his time trying to achieve material gains, he has little time to fulfill his sexual needs. In general, the black man has time to fulfill this important need. This contrast results in "negrophobic" attitudes by the white man that force, or compel white-black relationships to be expressed on the genital level.

"... when a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his idea is of an infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in the relation to the Negro, who is viewed as the penis symbol?" (p. 159)

Fanon beckons us onward; urges us not to stop here. We must go further. For in the eyes of the whites, the black man is not only the genital — he is more. "The black man is the symbol of Evil and Ugliness". Fanon effectively persuades us to reflect on these oppressive assertions. From this intellectual endeavour he hopes the black man will develop the thrust to move towards disalienation and self-determination. We need not be naively narrow-minded about ourselves and our gifts to the world.

The Beckoning of Fanon guides us away from the quagmires of a humanless culture. He tells us not to get hung-up in the whirlpool of apolitically perceiving black culture from a tight ontological basis, when in reality "... there is nothing ontological about segregation". We see the Beckoning of Fanon calling us to embrace the need to struggle for manhood: Humanism.

"It is my belief that a true culture cannot come to life under present conditions. It will be time enough to talk of the black genius when the man (in us) has regained his rightful place." (p. 187)

... when the man has regained his rightful place...

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"In a society founded in cooperation... man is not a means to an end, but the forces of all human endeavour."

Brothers, pick up this book and read about the work that has been done on us. Then, let us resolve a new stance on the work that we have to do. Fanon tells us to start with Self. But first understand the Self and its historical and psychocultural origin:

"Face to face with the white man, the Negro has a past to legitimate, a vengeance to exact..." (p. 225)

And only then will leaders of the black liberation understand the psychological, political, economic and cultural effects of racism and colonialism upon their people. Fanon did.

As we enter the battle between the beast and our humanistic selves, Fanon's "okra-spirit" leaps before us chanting the poetical words of 'Black Skin, White Masks' to fill us with understanding that will prepare us for relevant action. Fanon's "okra-spirit" dances to the rhythm of his final prayer...

"O my body, make me always a man who questions..."

... which becomes the revolutionary vector piercing the temporal; making the way clearer for us who will die to live.

Ghanaian Apologia
Martin Legassick

THE GHANA COUP, by Colonel A. A. Afrifa (Frank Cass, 258.)

It would be a mistake to waste too much review space on this inevitable apologia for the 'coup' of February 24, 1966, which deposed President Nkrumah. Afrifa's text, brief as well as written with military terseness, is indeed more sane and balanced than the hysteria which the Western press and the Ghanaian politicians, flocking back from exile, have generated, and which emerges in the preface and introduction, written respectively by the arch-exile Busia, and by Tibor Szamuely, a former lecturer at the Winneba Ideological Institute. Szamuely feels obliged to engage in that form of self-flagellation characteristic of those whose gods have failed: not only was Nkrumah bad, proclaims Szamuely, he was a Fascist and a racist, encouraging magic, idolatrous worship of himself, and destroying the "incurably happy-go-lucky" Ghanaian way of life.

Afrifa himself is a frank man, and for this reason his account of his background and motivations are of value to those interested in the African military mind. He came from a long line of chiefs who had served in positions of command in the Ashanti Army, was a Christian (of various denominations), and at secondary school won, in one year, prizes in Latin, Greek, Religious Knowledge, History (English, no doubt), English Language and Geography.
Soon after joining the army, he was sent to Sandhurst, which has clearly become the point of reference of his life: "a wonderful, mysterious institution" (pp 49-50). He had drilled into him the military worship of "honour", punishment as the consequence of misdeed, "fair play" — and at Sandhurst, or among Ghanaian exile friends, he developed that familiar equation of "communist" and "conspiracy", an adulation of chieftainship (p. 116) and a latent contempt for the "illiterate masses". Danquah's demand for gradual progress towards Ghanaian independence is, for example, defended as "most imperative because, even though many Ghanaians were educated, nearly eighty per cent of the population was illiterate". Throughout, indeed, the thought occurred to me that this book could have been written by General Alexander (whose book I reviewed in these columns some months ago); he has identical things to say about the Ghanaian soldier, the Ghanaian army in the Congo. But it is equally typical of the Ghanaian non-military bourgeoisie, who, as a friend of mine once said, "would all be wearing lawyers' wigs if it wasn't so hot".

What emerges also from the book is that the army, far from being concerned with Nkrumah's regime, intervened only when it itself was affected — when the officers felt it was being run on "family sentiments" (p. 42), that the President's Guard got special treatment (p. 102), that Generals had been unfairly dismissed (p. 104), that the army was being prepared for a campaign in Rhodesia for which it was not equipped (p. 105). What else, however, could one expect from officers who would censure their new Chief of Staff for "cigar-smoking in public and in uniform" (p. 100).

The various assertions made by Afrifa regarding Nkrumah's domestic and foreign policies, and his motivations for them, are always very debatable, and in some cases untrue. Nkrumah never executed political opponents (p. 119), he could by no stretch of the imagination be accused of selling his country to the Russians (p. 110), or of preaching "communism of the Chinese type" (p. 124), and his pan-African policy requires much more sophisticated examination than the bald accusation that he wished to head a United States of Africa.

Last year 'Monthly Review Press' published an assessment of Nkrumah's regime called 'Ghana: End of an Illusion' by Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, two Berkeley radicals. Opinions, even among socialists, differ on the merits of this work, which was written without first-hand experience of the country. It does, however, make a number of stimulating points: the conservatism of Nkrumah in the 1950's, which became reflected in the structure of the CPP, the role of the Gold Coast (and other colonies) in making possible the British post-war economic revival, the fact that it was the development plan of Arthur Lewis, and not the profligacy of the regime, which depleted the country's foreign reserves between 1957 and 1961, the inability of the CPP and the structures it had created around it to escape from the mythical history they had established for themselves, and to regain touch with the really radical elements in the country (Sekondi-Takoradi workers, agricultural workers, etc.) to reinvigorate itself and them, when Nkrumah's development strategy and world view was altered after 1961. The study misinterprets Nkrumah and the CPP in asserting that they believed they were a socialist state — they only claimed they were building one. But it does issue a challenge to other African leaders who claim to be working towards socialism to continually question their strategy; to question the role foreign investment can play, to question the structure of the party and where its support comes from, above all, to question themselves and permit open self-criticism by the party. Democracy and socialism do not reside, ultimately, in institutions, leaders, policies, slogans, or laws, but in the attitudes and actions of participating persons. The Ghanaian experiment has, initially, failed. Meanwhile there are others. And meanwhile Colonel Afrifa and his colleagues, who dislike "funny Chinese-type tunics" (p. 122) can return to their absurd British wigs.

Human Ethology
Simon Ottenberg

THE TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE: A Personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations, by Robert Ardrey (Atheneum)

Ardrey, author of the well-known "African Genesis", now writes a serious "popular" book of a more general vein. Here he moves toward a new view of man's instincts and their implications for the future of human society. The work is pessimistic, yet he himself feels optimism is possible. Ardrey, a play and screen writer, is committed to no single academic discipline, moving freely over ideas in a wide range of disciplines. Much of his thinking comes from studies of animal behaviour in the wild, from the newly developing field of 'ethology'. The research in this area is controversial and the arguments of specialists often draw on technical points. It is thus difficult for a generalist to work his way through details, and Ardrey sometimes gives the impression of unanimity among scientists where it does not exist. Yet he writes interestingly of animal behaviour and its relationship to man.

Ardrey feels that we have underplayed man's animal origins and nature. In the past forty years or so we have grossly underemphasised his instinctive aspects while overstressing his capacity for learned behaviour. He takes the territorial instinct as his example, but he means more than this single pressure of man and some other animals to automatically gain and defend territory. He feels that competition between males, especially of a species, is not so much a conflict over possession of females, as it is over territory as property. He does not totally discredit Freud and sex, but feels that other instincts such as that associated with territory, are more significant than the sexual drive and have been neglected. Territorial behaviour as instinct is con-
nected with survival of many animal species, including man. In humans it is an open instinct for there is a high level of learning associated with it. In many lower forms behaviour is more closed and programmed.

He moves through a range of studies to show territorial behaviour in animal forms. There is the arena behaviour in the Uganda kob, for example, where a few males control special sections of land for themselves and where the only breeding occurs; other kobs do not have intercourse. There are the territorial controls of male-female animal pairs, the robin, for example. He analyses the still unsolved problems of the homing instincts of many animals — the return to a territory. There are interesting descriptive passages on animal behaviour, perhaps the best part of his book. On less sure grounds he then postulates that all higher animals and possibly many lower forms have three needs: security, stimulation and identity. These fundamental features take different forms in animal societies that have inward antagonism, what he calls a 'noyau' society, as against those with outward antagonisms, the nation. Moving from animals to humans, Italy is his example of a 'noyau', a society with inward conflicts that has been ineffective in outward aggression; and for nations, there are many, such as Russia or the United States, that have features similar to higher animal forms. From here he goes on to a discussion of man's wars, especially World War II, in terms of his categories of analysis. He sees man as an animal, having, through his history and back to the earliest prehistoric hominid forms, a sense of territory and being a predatory form. Man has been a killer of not only animals, but of man, from earliest times. In man aggression is innate. We cannot get rid of it by acting as if it were not there. We must recognise it. When aggression in human society is turned outward, toward other human societies, there is a high level of animosity within the aggressor group, when it is turned inward there is not, of course. This is man's problem — how to handle his innate aggressive behaviour without leading to war, to produce internal animosity without external destruction.

Ardrey ponders the problem, then, of how man, with his stress on a territorial base, his predatory instincts, his needs for relief from boredom, for identity and for security, can live with his fellow men. While he is not able to offer final solutions he feels that we have avoided facing the problem of man's animality. He is well aware that his views on human instinct tend to label him a reactionary, not only scientifically but also in a political sense: that his attitudes towards territory and predatory behaviour can be used to justify fascism, apartheid and other non-democratic forms, and that he himself views the territorial imperative as some justification for capitalistic as against socialistic forms of government. Yet he feels that these are side issues; the questions he raises must be resolved.

It is hard to disagree with his central thesis. We do put too much distance between us and the rest of the animal world and we need to re-examine our view of human instincts, using the results of ethology as well as other sciences. The world is, after all, composed of people who believe that man is a peaceful loving animal and yet we all practise war, but practise it as if it were an exception, not a normal turn of our lives. Although Ardrey's descriptions of animal behaviour are important and instructive, when he moves to man and human social problems the bridges that he makes with the other animals is not sure. The discussion of human nature and instincts has a trite quality to it and is much less convincing than his writing on the Uganda kob and other species. The matter of man's instincts is today lost in a miasma of conflicting tests and reports from a dozen scientific disciplines and his own view, that they play an important role in man, does not reassure us at all by his own examples. His few brief comments on South Africa show this clearly. Ardrey is most correct to reopen these issues but his own evidence on man is mainly speculative.

**Mfecane and after**

**Martin Legassick**

**THE ZULU AFTERMATH: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa, by R. Omer-Cooper** (Longmans, 338s.)

Late in the nineteenth century a few white South Africans began systematically to collect and record the traditional histories of the indigenous inhabitants of the country: the volumes produced by Stow (1905), Ellenberger (English translation by McGregor, 1912), and Bryant (published in 1929, though Bryant had been collecting tradition since 1883), were the major results. These works are uncritical, burdened with fallacious or outdated 'a priori' conceptions, overly concerned with narrative rather than analysis, refusing to consider in any but the most superficial terms the motivations of the groups and leaders with which they dealt. Nevertheless, they form, like the writings of Delafosse for the Western Sudan, the indispensable basis from which most subsequent historical studies of African societies in South Africa have taken off. Unfortunately, from then until now, most of the accretions to the body of tradition which they collected have gathered incidentally, in the work of anthropologists whose main concerns have lain elsewhere, or of interested amateurs. Historians of South Africa have devoted less and less attention to indigenous African societies: for both liberal and settler historians, "non-white" peoples have been no more than pawns in the games of white expansion and white "nation-building", colonial policy and "native administration", a faceless irrational mass who suffered or were happy only in response to white actions. In this, South African historians have fallen short even of that master-racist and settler-apologist George McCall Theal: a perusal of his eleven-volume history of South Africa shows far greater space devoted to the doings of African societies than any subsequent general history. For Theal the "non-whites" were
indeed variously indolent, cruel, hypocritical, savage, servile, cunning, and always inferior. But, even if these were ethnocentrically ascribed, Africans did have qualities, attributes.

Set against this background, "The Zulu Aftermath" is a revolutionary book. For the first time a historian of South Africa is using the sources and techniques which have been developed by modern African historians, is searching for themes and patterns in the interplay of African societies and not as imposed by whites. This book is historiographically revolutionary, and it is ambitious (it covers much of the nineteenth century in time and ranges over parts of East and Central Africa, as well as South Africa in space); its sources, its theses, its method and its organisation, therefore deserve attention.

Because of the scope of this volume, the sources used are largely secondary — the existing syntheses on particular tribal groups made by anthropologists, or earlier by collectors of oral tradition. The more accessible of published contemporary accounts have also been used. Omer-Cooper has also incorporated unpublished archival material from the Portuguese archives and those of the Methodist Missionary Society, and from the scarce "Journal des Missions", of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society, which provides interesting new factual material on the relations of Dingane, Shoshangane and Zwangendaba with the Portuguese, of the movements of Ihigh Veld groups, and of events in the southern Nguni area. He uses his material, as has rarely been the case with it before, to elucidate the movements and motivations of African groups — but he has, as I am sure he is aware, only scraped the surface of the sources he has used. The published sources, periodicals, official publications — not to mention missionary archives and private archives — are rich with evidence for elaboration of the themes of the present book, and the study of similar themes with the same methodology.

The major part of the book deals with the consequences of the revolution which transformed the independent chiefdoms of the Northern Nguni into the Zulu state, but it is, perhaps, in the chapters dealing with this transformation that Omer-Cooper is most analytically original. He argues that the revolution was caused, in general terms, by population increase, and, more specifically, that a "local centre of high pressure" (p. 2) developed in Zululand. This led to increased inter-group warfare, and the growth of larger-scale political communities adopting the Sotho age-regiment system. His thesis is more persuasive than any other advanced because it gives structural reasons for both the time and the place in which the transformation occurred: no other theory has, so far, come close to explaining it. Omer-Cooper also stresses that a number of larger-scale communities were formed (the Ndwandwe, the Nguni, the Mthethwa possibly the Hlubi?) and implies that the later emphasis on the dominance of Dingiswayo's Mthethwa may be hindsight based on the emergence of Shaka's Zulu state from this confederacy. The author's account of the structure of the state is also valuable, since Gluckman's account in 'African Political Systems' is based on the later state of Mphande.

In the remainder of the book, Omer-Cooper considers the effects of the rise of the Zulu state on most of the other communities of Southern Africa. Some, like Shoshangane's, Zwangendaba's, and Sebetwane's followers, moved northwards across the Limpopo. Others, such as the southern Sotho, the Swazi, the Ndebele (and, in a smaller way, the Mpondo) established larger-scale, better and more centrally organised state systems than they had had before south of the Limpopo (though the Ndebele eventually moved to Rhodesia). Other communities were simply caught up in the general process of change and migration, disintegrated and recombined until the situation stabilised. Omer-Cooper's separate narratives of the fortunes of these communities are always competent, and often contain new information or analysis of motivation. Where he is discussing the structure of the resulting states he deals best with those groups where anthropologists have been before him, such as the Swazi, the Southern Sotho and the Ndebele. The weakest section is that on the Southern Nguni and the Mfengu: two chapters comprising eleven pages. The lack of adequate secondary monographic historical writing on the Southern Nguni (the Xhosa, the Thembu and the Mpondo, etc.) is a strange lacuna in South African studies, considering the emphasis given in South African history to 100 years of warfare on the "Eastern Frontier".

There is a more general comment which should, however, be made on this main section of the book. Omer-Cooper is dealing with an incredibly complex set of actions and responses, constructive and destructive forces, patterns and movements. He has chosen to deal with these by isolating specific groups and their leaders and following them through to, usually, the end of the nineteenth century. He has aimed, he claims, "to sacrifice a certain degree of depth and detail in the treatment of particular movements in order to preserve a picture of the coherence and interconnectedness of the whole vast process" (p. 7). In fact it is debatable if his method of organisation does this. In a situation where one is dealing with both state-formation and migration, a more flexible approach with some chapters based on geographical areas or on specific time-periods might be more valuable. Sebetwane's activities on the Ilhig Veld, for example, are more closely linked to other invasions of the Ilhig Veld than to his subsequent state-formation north of the Zambezi. Also, in view of the author's aims, it is questionable whether there are not too many names, places and dates for the reader to assimilate, and whether a good deal of the narrative might not have been replaced by a comparative structural analysis of the types of states which formed in the Zulu aftermath, and the relevance and applicability of terms such as "kingdom", "nation", "empire", "tribe". In the context of this revolution, how does one define "ethnicity" and what is its relation to genealogical descent, political affiliation, and cultural pattern? These questions are also relevant to an earlier article of mine in these pages on pre-nineteenth century South African history, and to
Old Myths, New Truths

John Henrik Clarke

AFRICA, HISTORY OF A CONTINENT, by Basil Davidson (Macmillan, New York, $25.00)
AFRICAN KINGDOMS, by Basil Davidson and the Editors of Time-Life Books ($3.95)
THE GROWTH OF AFRICAN CIVILIZATION, A History of West Africa, 1000-1800, by Basil Davidson,
with F. K. Buah, MA, and the advice of Prof. J. F. A. Ajayi, BA, Ph.D. (Longmans, $2.00)
A POLITICAL HISTORY OF TROPICAL AFRICA, by Robert T. Rotberg (Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. $12.50)

In the book "Africa: History of a Continent" the writer Basil Davidson and the photographer
Werner Forman have combined their respective talents to produce a long photo-essay on African History that compliments the subject. In this book, Basil Davidson continues to show growth and depths in his knowledge of this subject that has been so long neglected or distorted. The text of the book is a perfect working of first-hand knowledge and proli-

Chief gubernator of the ice age chilled Europe, the Sahara we know today as an empty, arid desert was a fertile region whose flowing rivers and grassy valleys teemed with fish and wild animals. During the next 6,000 years in this inviting land, waves of migrants developed a series of increasingly advanced societies, which they recorded in a collection of remarkably
beautiful scenes carved and painted on native rock—the most complete record of early African civilisations and Stone Age life to be found anywhere...

For many centuries Africa and its peoples seemed mysterious and even perverse to the rest of the world. Generations of traders anchored their ships on the continent's glittering surf line and pushed their caravans through its dry, abrasive plains. They knew and valued Africa's gold and ivory, but the continent itself remained a puzzle. Where had Africans come from? Why were they so different from other men?

This and many other new books on Africa are answering some of the long outstanding questions. As Basil Davidson has said:

"Africa has not been, after all, a land of unrelieved savagery and chaos. On the contrary, its people have had a long and lively history, and have made an impressive contribution to man's general mastery of the world. They have created cultures and civilisations, evolved systems of government and systems of thought, and pursued the inner life of the spirit with a consuming passion that has produced some of the finest art known to man."

THE GROWTH OF AFRICAN CIVILISATION was planned for students of history in West Africa who were preparing for the General Certificate of Education and similar public examinations. The writers and their adviser have written this book to dispel the idea that there was no African History before the coming of the Europeans. In their research for the book they discovered that, until very recently, what was designated as textbooks on African history was nothing more than accounts of Africans' encounters with the Europeans written by merchants, missionaries and colonial servants.

The book covers the 500 years, 1000 to 1500 A.D., before the Europeans started to come into Africa in large numbers, and continues through 1800, the period when the Western slave trade was converted into the modern colonial system. By using this approach the reader is able to see what was accomplished in Africa before the slave trade and what, in Africa and in Europe, set in motion this tragic era in African History.

This book is recommended as an introduction to the history of West Africa.

A POLITICAL HISTORY OF TROPICAL AFRICA is the first attempt to tell the political history of the greater portion of Africa. The idea is an ambitious one and it succeeds most of the way. Professor Rotberg first attempts to deal with the general history of Africa as a preface to the political history. He observes that the existence of African history has in recent years achieved widespread recognition...

This said, Professor Rotberg starts his "Political History of Tropical Africa" at the most logical starting point, with a brief history of "Africa in Ancient Times" and "The Story of the Rise and Fall of Kush". We learn that the ancient African politicians were men, and women, of wisdom and stature who built great states and Empires before Europe was born. The story continues with the relationship of "Tropical Africa and the Mediterranean World" and shows the early development of political thought as reflected in great African personalities like King Pept II (c. 2235 B.C.), King Sem-sret I of the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1970-1936 B.C.), King Tut-Hatshepsut (c. 1530-1520 B.C.), and the most remarkable woman of the ancient world, Queen Hatshepsut.

In the assessment of the politics of mediaeval West Africa, Professor Rotberg writes a concise history of the rise and fall of the main empires and independent states of the Western Sudan and shows how the internal strife within these states and the expansion of Europe after the Middle Ages made the slave trade possible.

This political history was long overdue. Fortunately, it is comprehensive enough to serve as a model for future books on this subject.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Peter C. Garlick


Investment, growth and planning in Nigeria (which incidentally would have been a simpler and more helpful title) form the subject matter of Dr. Aboyade's useful contribution to the Praeger Special Studies series. It is, for the most part, forcefully written, with the author's viewpoint and his concern with the urgency of the problems strongly projected and well argued in controversial areas. The book, the off-spring of a Cambridge Ph.D. these thesis and of planning experience in Nigeria, is intended for students of economic development, applied economics and African affairs, professional economists in policy advisory work, and economic research workers interested in methodological problems in Africa.

Dr. Aboyade's purpose is to provide a discussion in depth of the economic development of Nigeria with special reference to capital investment and the nature of planning, past and future. Capital formation he sees as central to the development of an underdeveloped economy. Past planning techniques though not without achievement, are inadequate for Nigeria's development problems, which "would seem to call for an alternative approach that starts from the grass roots of effective organization for planned management and then re-examines the whole programming technique in a new light."
In the first half of the book, Dr. Aboyade examines capital formation in relation to the theory of development, the problems and methodology of estimating capital formation by sector, and the level and composition of investment. The second half of the book is concerned with Nigeria's experience, especially in the 1962-68 Plan, the economic institutional setting of Nigeria, and Dr. Aboyade's view of Nigerian planning for economic development in the future.

There is space in this review for only a few of the many topics raised in the book, and none for the numerous asides one might wish to include. There is much useful discussion of theoretical material; brief observations about some development theory concepts - vicious circles, dualism, subsistence, capital-output ratios - in a Nigerian context; and in greater detail, the theory of capital, and of development planning, in economic growth. Dr. Aboyade's concern for fruitful, well-directed capital investment leads to a detailed examination of the high proportion of residential building in total capital formation in the 1950's in Nigeria, and, at one point, to a comparison with more developed countries at "broadly comparable stages of growth" - with the U.K., Germany, Italy, and the U.S.A., at overlapping periods in the second half of the 19th century, for example. This, related to Nigeria's own possible take-off situation, left one reader with his feet off the ground, an experience which recurred at some points in the final chapter (where, it must be said, the author clearly behaviour" that leads to prestige spending on luxury houses and consequently a misallocation of scarce resources. However, not all the expenditure in private building is irrational from the individual point of view. Given the situation, it is perhaps difficult to find better private investment opportunities for aware businessmen and farmers with money, than in houses to let in the major urban centres. Dr. Aboyade's comprehensive planning approach would seek to achieve a better use of real resources and available funds, and at the same time to meet the society's housing needs.

The 1962-68 Plan, its achievements and its failures, as Dr. Aboyade sees them, are a major concern of the book. The background and outlook of Professor Wolfgang Stolper of the University of Michigan, the Plan's chief architect, are thoroughly examined. While Professor Stolper did "an impressive job", notably in establishing some "sound principles of administrative decisions", he did not "share the wider conception of planning as an instrument to achieve a different social order" to which Dr. Aboyade himself subscribes. In his criticism of the Plan Dr. Aboyade realises the complexity of the problems he confronts). The conclusion, that "the structure of capital formation in the Nigerian economy was relatively lopsided and was not conducive to its effective structural transformation and rapid development", helps to explain why a rising capital formation in the 1950's was accompanied by a falling growth rate. He sees a case for policy makers to curb the "irrational Aboyade offers observations, which are both discerning and controversial, about the criteria used by the planners.

Recognizing the importance of economic institutions in promoting development, Dr. Aboyade examines the Nigerian scene with a view to reorganizing existing institutions where necessary. New ones are suggested to fit a wider West African setting, for West Africa considered as a continental sub-region makes more sense than any smaller national area in terms of the considerable growth that is envisaged. The planners, then, must facilitate the attendant social change inherent in the economic development to be wrought; they must allow for flexibility at all stages, and for a more responsible and concerned role on the part of the political leadership; and they must identify and seek out the empirical material required for optimum planning. But planning must be a two-way process, grounded in grass-roots initiative and enthusiasm.

Writing before the tragedies of 1966, Dr. Aboyade's anxieties about - indeed castigations of - the role of politicians proved well-founded. Imaginative, inspired and informed political leadership is required. Incidentally, Dr. Aboyade regards the association with the European Common Market as being in the wrong long-term direction of West African development.

The publisher deserves a little censure. Apart from the hand-out leaflet's illustrative "quotation", which improves upon the text, editorial Americanisation of the original spelling has left, in the offset reproduction, gaps and slanted letters such that there is an argument for leaving spellings unchanged, especially since not all were picked up and other editorial jobs were neglected (for example, "animal capital formation", p.64; and "the planners made the serious mistake of stopping one step short if their enumerated principles were not to be thrown to the winds in the administrative stampede...", p.185).

This book, like others in the series, is highly priced. There is no index. Seventy-five pages (about one-fifth) of the book form the bibliography, which allows us, thesis-fashion, to see in detail the sources of Dr. Aboyade's thinking (quite apart from over thirty pages of footnotes) if this is desired. It will be a pity if the book has priced itself out of the market for some readers for whom it is intended - it would make stimulating seminar material for university students.

Whether of not the reader finds Dr. Aboyade's general argument too ambitious, this volume is an informed, concerned, thought-provoking attempt to combine macro and micro approaches to development planning in a West African setting.
**ANALYSIS AND METAPHYSICS**

**David Brokensha**


**Ambiguous Africa: cultures in collision**, by Georges Balandier (translated from the French by Helen Weaver) (Pantheon Books, New York)

Although these two books are markedly dissimilar in purpose, organisation and style, a combined review has the advantage of emphasising the distinguishing diametrically opposed ways.

Both books are concerned with the effects of colonialism on Africa, and with an assessment of contemporary problems facing new states in Africa, though the two authors approach their studies in diametrically opposite ways.

Martin Kilson, of Harvard University, has written an unusual book for a political scientist. Political scientists studying Africa now outnumber scholars from any other discipline; the current list of Fellows of the African Studies Association (U.S.A.) shows that nearly a quarter of the 654 Fellows are political scientists. Now most of these scholars are concerned with "macro" studies, with examinations of political parties at the national level, or with relations between states, or with constitutional developments. Kilson has joined the relatively few other perceptive scholars who realise the necessity of studying events at the local as well as the national level, and it is this feature that gives his book its special worth. "Political change among rural and urban masses is one of the most neglected aspects of the study of modern African politics." And "above all else, African development or modernisation is, I think, fundamentally a matter of transformation of rural or local society, much more than it is a matter of large-scale industrialisation, which cannot possibly occur in the foreseeable future." To develop this central theme, Kilson uses the techniques of the sociologist and the historian, incidentally illustrating that what one studies is more important than one's academic discipline: to-day there is a great need for an inter-disciplinary approach, such as is admirably used in this volume. Kilson has combined the anthropological-type study of local communities with the historian's use of documentary sources, fitting his data into his analytical framework, derived from sociological and political theorists.

The book can be considered on two levels: primarily, it is a study of modernisation ("that complex of changes resulting from the contact of Western technological, industrial societies") in Sierra Leone, over the period 1896 to 1961. On a second level, the book is a profound study of processes of social and political change in modern Africa, and the two levels are neatly fused. Kilson outlines, in chronological order, the changes that took place in Sierra Leone social and political institutions over this period, dealing with the establishment of colonial rule, the role of traditional authorities, the development of nationalism, progress to self-government and growth of political parties. Throughout, he pays particular attention to events at the local level, which made his book both eminently readable, and also illuminating for specific changes.

Several main themes run through the historical account; these include a series of relationships, such as that between British District Commissioner and Chief, between Chiefs and political parties, (or "tradition and nationalism"), between traditional authorities and the new district councils.

Kilson gives a convincing account of the colonial situation, incidentally relying largely on our second author, Balandier, for his classic interpretation of colonialism in Africa: the major features of colonialism are the state of dependency, and the importance of the market economy. The "doctrinaire and nearly pathological obsession of British colonial authorities with the theory of indirect rule" is observed. Kilson devotes much space to the course and effects of the transfer of power, being quite explicit in his interpretation of its non-revolutionary character, and the consequences thereof. Among the minor themes are the urban poor and voluntary associations; elites and education, ethnic affiliation, newspapers, business and corruption; the "young men"; women in political life; the Poro Society and the peasant tax riots; social stratification and social class.

It is easy to find parallel conclusions for other African states, particularly those of West Africa. Kilson's themes - politics (which he describes as "mainly about power and what power brings to those who hold it"), politicians, political parties, relations with traditional authorities and with peasants - have a wide applicability. His "analysis ... leaves few grounds for optimism, and a movement toward full-fledged authoritarian rule in the near future would be no surprise." Recent events in Sierra Leone certainly justify this statement.

Kilson's book is excellent in several respects: it is clearly written, well-organised, achieves a nice balance between description and analysis, has a wide validity, and is handsomely printed. It should encourage other students of political science to concentrate on local developments, rather than attempting studies that are vague and grandiose, or detailed but ultimately shallow discussions of political events at a national level.

What a contrast Balandier's book presents: Georges Balandier, perhaps the most distinguished French Africanist, has been studying Africa since 1946, and is justly esteemed for his penetrating sociological
analyses of the colonial situation, and of social change, in his earlier work "Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noir" (1955) and in a series of important articles. "Ambiguous Africa", however, is a book of a different order.

The book first appeared in French in 1957, and was based on Balandier's observations and impressions made in Africa over the previous decade. He deals mainly with French-speaking Africa, with occasional references to Ghana or Nigeria; he does not always identify the location of his observations, but generalises for all Africa, an unwise procedure. The book is loosely organised and rambling, consisting of almost psychedelic thoughts on negritude, race, diversity of African cultures, "the style of the architects of modern Africa," "Young Africa", the cities, place of traditional dances, art and ritual, effects of Christianity. Much of the writing is greatly out of date, and the book's value may be due to the natural social and sociological landscape, representing a prerequisite to all research." Every observation reminds Balandier of some other phenomenon, so that the reader has to run in order to keep up, then is rewarded with subjective statements such as the following. "What with the aridity, the sparse vegetation, the rocky debris and the disappearing paths, I re-experienced my profoundest African emotions." (I am sure that read aloud in the original French, this sentence would sound grand: as it is, it means little.)

This is a very personal book: "When I arrived in Dakar in 1946 I was motivated primarily by a desire for escape and expatriation... I felt the need for a radically different form of existence. I approached Africa less for her own sake than mine". Balandier attempts to reconstruct his attitudes and impressions, in a frankly subjective and romantic fashion. The result is a cryptic and complex book, in places reminiscent of a late-night discourse by a brilliant, restless, intense man, eagerly seeking out their spontaneity, demonstrations of a kind of surrender to impressionism, to the natural and sociological landscape, represents a prerequisite to all research." Every observation reminds Balandier of some other phenomenon, so that the reader has to run in order to keep up, then is rewarded with subjective statements such as the following. "What with the aridity, the sparse vegetation, the rocky debris and the disappearing paths, I re-experienced my profoundest African emotions." (I am sure that read aloud in the original French, this sentence would sound grand: as it is, it means little.)

This is at times a poetic book which offers sensitive interpretations and keen insights, (despite an erratic translation that is at times too literal) but the reader has to bear with much cloudiness and loose generalisations. "Behaviour which he (the inquisitive foreigner) believes to be simple conceals motives and justifications which transcend his familiar frame of reference"... "villagers still harbour their dreaded 'elders' and maskers who defend the social order or vested interests." Balandier sees Africa as dark, mysterious, incomprehensible: "One is endlessly tempted to ask questions which the land continues to evade. Her dark face remains mysterious: she betrays almost as few clues to the future as a Fang burial statue offers to the mystery of the beyond." Probably because of my close knowledge of what Polly Hill has called "the rural capitalists of Southern Ghana", I find such statements irrelevant, and prefer the sort of questions asked by Kilson, and the answers he gets.

To return to the contrast between the two books, while Kilson includes eighteen tables, Balandiereschews any quantitative data, and prefers to have 53 text-figures, of gourds and knives, grass huts and statues, the relevance of which is not clear. By selecting a specific period and place and problem, Kilson has succeeded in his aim of giving us a three-dimensional picture of African political change. Balandier's book accepts no such rigorous bounds, but roams freely in a Gallic metaphysical manner: it would make good reading on a sea-voyage for one who did not need a guide to modern Africa.

Oginga Odinga
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