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ON GOVERNING COLONIES

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THE JAPANESE POPULATION PROBLEM

NIGERIA: A CRITIQUE OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

ON GOVERNING COLONIES

Being an Outline of the Real Issues and a Comparison of the British, French and Belgian Approach to them

by

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Dedicated

to

MOMAN KAZAURE

who accompanied me over much of Africa between

1930 and 1943

and

CHAKALA MAGE

Tirailleur Sénégalais

who accompanied me on journeys along the Niger

and into the Sahara in 1944 and 1945

THE GOOD COMPANIONS

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I am particularly indebted for criticism to Sir Andrew Jones, formerly Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, and formerly Deputy Chairman of the West African Governors' Conference. While I was at Geneva it was my good fortune to see something of Lord Lugard when he came out for meetings of the Permanent Mandates Commission. For knowledge of and insight into the colonial question as also for nobility of character he stood alone. After Lord Lugard, Sir Andrew Jones, in my experience, understands most of Africa. His benevolent Pickwickian countenance goes well with his human and humorous affection for Africa and Africans, but it

also goes with a mind that has a razor edge to it and an uncommonly wide stretch.

For all facts and comment in the book I alone am responsible. None of the friends above is necessarily in agreement with its contents.

As the book was written in my spare time while on military service overseas, access to library books has been difficult and a satisfactory filing system has been impracticable; but every effort has been made to confirm references.

Mr. Kenneth Bell, M.C., formerly Fellow of Balliol College and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, has added one more kindness to many given me in the last twenty years, by seeing the book through the press.

W. R. C.

India.
January, 1946.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

WE have been hearing much about colonial affairs in recent years. It is certain that we are going to hear a good deal more.

The literature is already so voluminous that it is difficult even for one with some specialist interest to keep abreast of it. Worse, the real facts and the real issues are becoming blurred. From one side we get a flow of academic studies financed by this or that research grant, based, it is true, upon documents, but the documents are too often taken at their face value. The researchers are mostly ladies and their housekeeping instincts impose a tidiness which does not always correspond to the facts in the bush. The black man under his palm tree is one thing; papers from Colonial Ministries and Colonial Secretariats may well be more or less than that thing. From another side come the pleadings of those who see colonial questions mostly or wholly in terms of European capitalists exploiting defenceless natives. They confuse us by their concern not with what exists but with what they conceive to exist. From still another comes the clamour for heroic schemes of economic development. From yet another side there are well-meaning idealists who vociferate for what they call the self-government of colonial subjects. Again, from our American friends we receive both criticism and counsel, the value of which will be still greater when they can pass on to us the benefits of their own experiences in solving their thirteen-million negro problem and the problem of their financial imperialists in Central America. Last but not least, there is a rising cry of the Indian-Bengali kind from Africans themselves, educated in our schools, for what they call liberation from the white man's yoke.

The culture of England today is, as of most of the Western

world, pagan and materialist and sceptical; but the heart of England is still Christian. The English conscience is sensitive. Doubts as to whether we have any right to hold on to the colonies are, notwithstanding a certain recent weakening of them, still widespread. Memories remain of the horrors inflicted by the Slave Trade and by exploitation here and there. A vague sense of sin about the Empire is still current like the vague sense of sin which was current about the treatment of Germany between 1919 and 1939. The results may well be equally disastrous. What is needed today is a little more head with this heart; above all, a little more information about the facts. The European record in Africa, for example, is, everything considered, not a bad record. It is better than the African record in Africa. All the European Powers with colonies have done more good than evil to their charges, and they all today show concern, though not always either wise or sufficient concern, for their well-being.

The oddity of the situation today is that thanks to our conscience and to our ignorance we are likely to inflict, with the best intentions, irreparable harm upon our colonial charges. Catastrophic forces have been let loose upon them which can be compared to telescoping into one age the Renaissance, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the Industrial-Agricultural Revolution, and the Bolshevik Revolution, and then to exploding this amalgam over the fifth- and sixth-century Saxon chiefdoms in England. The European Empires cannot escape the responsibility of controlling and directing these consequences. If they fail they will not only lose their colonies, which is of secondary interest, but the colonial natives will suffer for long, long years. That is to say, we are now in the formative period. Decisions made in the next five or ten years will shape the future for generations. It is no doubt true that in the long run African temperament and character will determine the form which African civilization will take; but it will not determine all of it. We shall determine much of it; and what is more we shall determine the pace at which changes are made from one form to

another. The pace of change is always more disturbing than change itself.

I therefore attempt in the pages that follow to clarify the position. The essential facts are not complicated; the essential issues are not obscure; providing we get down to concrete particulars. I have read many of the documents, but that kind of knowledge is no substitute for personal knowledge. Official papers, notably official declarations of policy, are not seldom designed to cover up a lack of policy. Or, on the other hand, the gap between paper policy and the practice in the bush is often wide. My aim will be to speak of things as I have seen them myself, my eyes always on the herdsmen wandering over the Sahel and the Desert with their cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels; on the Mohammedan farmers and traders in the savannah and orchard bush; on the fetishists growing yams and bananas in their gloomy forests or fishing in their swamps; on the new townsmen, who decline to walk on the streets without their topees and sunglasses; on the new wage-proletariat around the mines and factories and railways; on Christians and sorcerers; on cunning journalists and ritual murderers; on Secretariats and bush stations.

I have had about eight years' experience of Africa and the Africans, partly as an officer in the British Colonial Service and partly as a soldier. Nearly half of this time was spent in Nigeria; of the rest I spent a year in Sierra Leone, a year in the Belgian Congo (with visits to French Equatorial Africa, to Angola, to East Africa, and to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan), over a year in French West Africa, and some months in the Gold Coast. Further, I have travelled in South Africa, in Malaya, in the Dutch East Indies, in Formosa, in the Philippines, in the Pacific, in the West Indies, and in the Southern States of U.S.A. I have also visited Liberia on three occasions, an African Republic that has its own problem of colonial administration.

Africa, and especially the three-quarters of it which is ruled by Britain, France, and Belgium, will provide the concrete particulars

for my discussion. Africa is not the only colonial area; but it is the dominant colonial area. That great continent is, except for a few strips here and there, such as Egypt and Abyssinia, wholly colonial. The whole gamut of the colonial problem is run in Africa. And what is worked out there soon colours or shapes colonial practice elsewhere.

I exclude the Portuguese colonies from my survey because I have not enough first-hand knowledge of them to discuss them profitably. From a superficial acquaintance with Portuguese Guinea and Angola I believe that Portuguese Africa confirms the points made in this book.

I shall not discuss South Africa because it is a special case. Nor will I refer to the Highlands of Kenya occupied by European planters, another special case. Both of these cases are the result of a history for which the present generation in neither country is responsible, and which is not likely to be repeated elsewhere in Africa. It should not be forgotten that a large part of Kenya is not alienated and that African customary life there continues more or less undisturbed. Southern Rhodesia is also a special case and will not be included though it is different from either South Africa or Kenya. The 60,000 odd Europeans responsible for the interests of about 2,000,000 Africans there have inherited an awkward situation; they are tackling it with humanity and intelligence under the general scrutiny of the British Government.

I shall not discuss any part of Africa or any colony outside Africa of which I have not had personal experience, though I am satisfied that the data on which I rely for my conclusions are relevant to the whole situation and are not peculiar to any given area. My examples are not unique, but typical.

Six European Powers have colonies in Africa. How they came to get them no longer matters. Neither the present nor the preceding generation had anything to do with that. What matters is that the present generation has to carry on with the heritage. It is momentous.

CHAPTER II

Africa and Africans

AFRICA

AFRICA is three times the area of Europe. The greater part of this land mass lies in the Tropics. Africa is the Tropics *par excellence*. A result of this is that, apart from the Mediterranean and South African fringes and the isolated highlands like Kenya or the Kivu, Europeans support the climate with such difficulty that their permanent settlement on any significant scale is ruled out. Another result is that the tempo of African life is slowed down by the heat and the humidity.

Disease is more prevalent in Africa than in any part of the world. Malaria is universal. Dysenteries and other intestinal diseases are nearly universal. Sleeping Sickness, Venereal Maladies, Smallpox, Plague, Guinea Worm, East Coast Fever, Recurrent Fever, Yellow Fever, Bilharzia, Elephantiasis, Tuberculosis, Meningitis, take a heavy toll. Most of these diseases are spread through insects which, even more than the black man, are the characteristic inhabitants of the Black Continent—ants of innumerable species, termites, wasps, hornets, moths, spiders, house-flies, biting flies, tsetse, fleas, lice, bugs, ticks, cockroaches, locusts, centipedes, scorpions, and, most noxious of all, mosquitoes. The African has so far contributed to the world no philosophies, symphonies, jurisprudence, science. His great feat has been to survive his enviroment in this "Empire of Insects."

Moreover, he has always been at a disadvantage in the unceasing struggle because of his hunger. Africa is a poor country, exception made of the equatorial forest zone and of a few other regions. Not only the Sahara, which comprises a bigger area than Europe (and it is only to the south of the Sahara that Africa

proper begins) but over most of Africa the soil is thin and unfertile. Laterite covers thousands of square miles. Hence to produce his food, especially with the techniques at his disposal, has been a hard task. For many, perhaps for most, the diet is still insufficient in quantity and nearly always unbalanced. No small part of the African's mentality and values is coloured by this traditional pre-occupation with getting something into his stomach. In the language of some tribes the word "to be happy" is the same as "having plenty to eat." Corpulence is valued for its being a rarity and as a sign of opulence. What dominates his thinking is not "the sexual life of savages" (the brilliantly commercial title of one of Malinowski's books) but a good meal.

This poverty of soil and of technique has resulted in a very low density of population. The total population of Africa is estimated at 150 millions. French West Africa, for example, which is over 2,000 miles East to West and 1,500 miles North to South, has a population of about 15 millions.

Another effect of the poverty is that the African quota of total world production is very small; the African quota of total world exports and imports amounted before the war to less than 5 per cent. On the other hand its output and exports included a large, in some cases a predominant, proportion of certain commodities—e.g. gold, diamonds, chrome, copper, tin, vegetable oils, and cocoa. The quantity of European and American capital brought to Africa has been very small relatively, because, again thanks to the poverty of Africa as a whole, it has been more profitable to invest elsewhere; and the greater part of this capital has gone into mining and into mining in one region, Southern Africa. Such capitalistic exploitation as exists at all is thus limited to a fractional area and a fractional population.

There, then, is the stage on which the African plays out his life—a tropical climate; a wide range of special diseases, mostly insect-borne, to sap his vitality; malnutrition; and a poor soil which can support only a thinly-spread population and which so far has discouraged the investment of foreign capital.



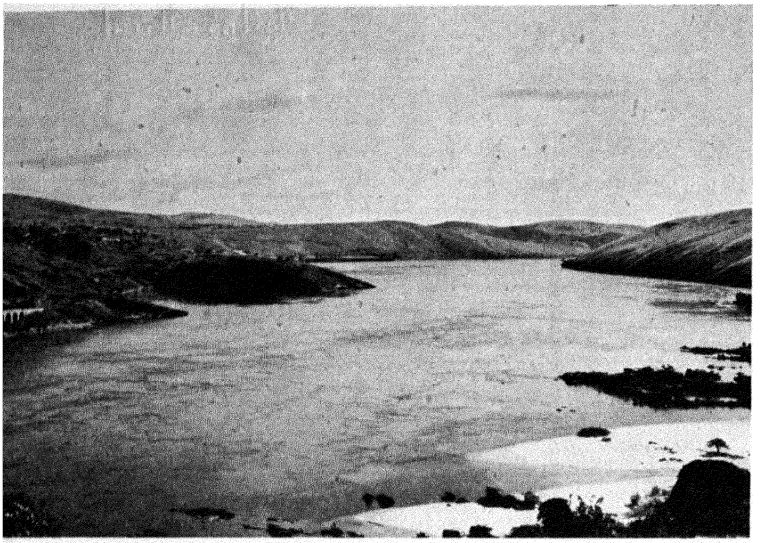
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The West Coast



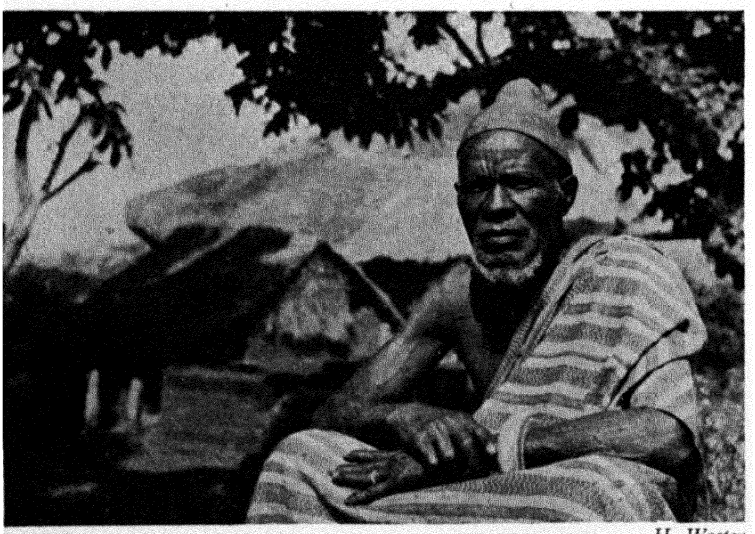
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The Savannah (Upper Volta)



E. Lebied

The Lower Congo



H. Wooton

Illiterate and Pagan Peasant, S.E. Nigeria

AFRICANS

It must not be concluded from this that the Dark Continent is therefore also the Gloomy Continent; that there is everywhere nothing but disease and poverty. If the African has much of both he certainly can stand more of either than the European. Africa is the Merry Continent.

To generalize on Africans is even more difficult than to generalize on Africa. The abiding impression of most travellers would be the diversity of both. Great deserts and great forests, great plains and great mountains, great lakes and great rivers: the only common element would seem to be the scale, the bigness. Even in the middle of the Sahara there are mountains as high as the Alps and there are several massifs each covering a bigger area than Switzerland. And among the 150 million inhabitants of Africa there are the Pygmies, the smallest of the children of men, and the Watusi, the tallest. There are coal-black men in the equatorial forests and white Moors in Mauritania; and elsewhere every gradation between black and white. There are naked fetishists and there are old aristocratic intricately-civilized ruling castes. There are fine-featured Hamites like the Fulani in West Africa and there are thick-lipped, broad-nosed, leather-skinned, prognathous negroes. Africans feel as great a difference between one tribe and another as for instance Swedes and Portuguese feel between each other; indeed a much greater difference, not to say repugnance. What might be true of the facts in one colony would thus be untrue in another; indeed the facts might be antithetical within the same colony, as they are in Nigeria or French West Africa.

What has the Watusi or the Abyssinian Copt in common with the Freetown creole? or the Hausa with the Ituri Bantu? or the Gold Coast Ashanti with the Senegal Joloff? or the naked Guinea Koniagui with the President and Cabinet of the Republic of Liberia?

Yet there remain traits which are distinctive and characteristic of the dwellers of Africa as such—as Africans. The Moor, the Touareg, the Tebu, the Watusi, are, after all, people of feeble numbers and are highly unrepresentative. Perhaps their races are not African in origin. The indigenous African belongs to south of the Sahara. There is, moreover, a marked similarity in many bodily and mental qualities between all the savannah peoples on the one hand, and between all the forest peoples on the other. And there has been endless fusion of blood between these two basic groups. Thus all but a few Africans south of the Sahara have in some measure or other woolly hair, the famous African hair.

Here are the mental or spiritual qualities which I have found to be common among Africans, though, needless to say, not all Africans have all these qualities. Their commonness is due probably to some measure of common blood (the woolly hair is the mark), to the same or a similar simplicity of life, and to the same or a similar geographical environment:—

First, cheerfulness. The average African is incorrigibly cheerful. What to Europeans would be disasters, such as economic ruin or prison or disease, rarely break his peace. If he gets worried he lies down and sleeps. He can sleep anywhere and in any posture. Even slavery failed to depress him: he soon recovered his good spirits and multiplied his kind. The African has not lost happiness. Another common quality is indifference, insouciance, child-like ingratitude, light-hearted failure to keep his word, letting you down. It is rarely due to intentional ill-will. It is just that he has little sense of time; which for him does not count. Few Africans are put out by being kept waiting. They chatter or just fall asleep like a dog. With this goes another quality, patience; and with the patience, gentleness. Despite the persistent chatter and laughing the African is not noisy and not violent, apart from sudden gusts of passion or panic. He is quieter than the European. He is the only man left in our days whose nerves are not on edge. There is something soothing in his voice, something of a velvety softness.

Children, especially babies, once the strangeness of colour has worn off, take instinctively to the African. And he no less instinctively takes to babies and children. When I was in French Africa, where officers have their wives and children and commonly employ their black batmen to act as nurse-maids, I never ceased to marvel at the spectacle of fierce-looking Bambaras nursing and tending with unwearied patience and tenderness the babies, often peevish in that climate, entrusted to them by their masters. Nor shall I forget a hot midday once at Pt. Loko in Sierra Leone, at the hottest time of the year. Three Syrian children were struggling along and the two youngest, babies, were crying because the heat of the laterite was burning their bare feet. The elder sister tried to carry one and left the other behind. A Timne bush-woman, with a baby of her own on her back, immediately went to the Syrian child, picked it up, comforted it, and carried it back to its home. As the Syrians cheat the bush folk shamelessly, this was to improve upon the Good Samaritan himself.

Another common quality is respect and considerateness for old age. In general the older a man is the higher is his status. Again, the level of manners is high, higher, on the average, than among Europeans. The average of physical courage is not below that of Europeans, despite a tendency to panic when suddenly confronted with something unexpected. I have seldom been in a difficult situation where I have not been compelled to admit that my African companions were better men than myself. There are of course exceptions. Some tribes are cowardly, like the Susu; and the Europeanized African, notably the new urban clerk class, often loses his courage just as he loses his woodcraft and physical virility. The Senegal Joloffs, for example, are notoriously cowardly and inept as soldiers just as they are notoriously cunning lawyers, thieves, and blackmailers. As a rule, however, the true African will shirk neither wild beasts nor wild men. His only fear is the other world. This fear of spirits and the spirit world, this pre-occupation with sorcery, witchcraft, magic, libations, sacrifices, tabus, is the last defence to resist

to Islam and Christianity. The horror is atavistic. Even sincere Christians are liable to relapse into it.

Is the African immoral? Moral ideas vary widely. To the Englishman morality connotes primarily sexual continence. To the Frenchman it connotes primarily industriousness and thrift. The African in general rates neither of these qualities high. Sexual promiscuity is commoner in Africa than in Europe. But there is little violence, little dirty-mindedness, and perversions are extremely rare.[1] In considering his sexual morality two factors must be taken into account. First, for thousands of years what interested the African most was to have children. The paternity of the child was of secondary importance.[1] The possession of it for his family group and for his tribe was what mattered.[2] A woman who can bear children is a valued woman. The customary authority of the maternal uncle so widespread in Africa is probably a relic of this ancient outlook. Second, babies are normally suckled two, three or more years, and during the suckling period the woman does not cohabit with her husband, who thus becomes polygamous if he can afford it—only a tiny fraction can—or he seeks extra-marital relations, which are not condemned by tribal morality.

Traditionally in most tribes trickery is considered admirable rather than the contrary.

He has a strong addiction to alcoholism—to beers of various kinds, fermented palm juice, cane spirits, and so on—though the women drink less than the men. The beer parties among some tribes are such that the traditional West Coast European seems a teetotaler in comparison. One of the several great services rendered by Islam to Africa is its stamping out of alcoholism.

[1] Homosexuals have grown up among the Dakar Joloff.

[2] During the war I spent some time in a French barracks where there was a Company of Malgaches, all of whom had been away from their homes 6 or 7 years. I used to talk to them frequently. One day I asked one of them how he was getting on. His reply was the delighted response that he has just received the first letter from his village for 5 years and that in it was the good news that since he was away his wife *a gagné deux petits*.

Unfortunately the Mohammedan total-abstainers often take to another intemperance, that of chewing the kola nut which contains an alkaloid drug and which when consumed in quantity is noxious.

He is usually vain and usually capricious, but his vanity and caprice are, like his lack of gratitude, childlike.

While hospitality to, and indeed almost communism with, members of his own group is normal he has little or no sense of duty to men outside his group. He is indifferent to their sufferings just as he is indifferent to the sufferings of animals. He has no sense whatsoever of the human community, none even of the community of black men. It was this indifference which made the Slave Trade possible, for it must never be forgotten that that Trade was essentially African. Even slaves released by the Royal Navy and settled at Sierra Leone took to slaving. To men outside of his own group he is greedy, rapacious, without any inhibitions of shame or honour. In the Europeanized African, who emancipates himself from the social discipline and the social obligations of the old family and tribal system, this easily becomes the cunning thievery, the pitiless exploitation, the complicated treachery, for which they are famous among the fighting and farming races. The traditional insecurity of life together with the traditional family pressure for gifts and charity would intensify the habit of greediness; which after all has more of the greediness of children than of the hardened heart. The rapidity with which the African deteriorates when removed from his normal habitat or discipline is remarkable and remarkably disconcerting. The African generally needs commanding, which he does not resent. His respect for force is traditional. Freed from command he tends to go to pieces. The new labourer class and the new town class are a byword; in the bigger towns there is now a desperate criminal slum class growing up, a phenomenon as new in Africa as the pimping for sodomy which now goes on in the ports.

The innate mental capacity of the African has been much

canvassed, especially in connection with the pace with which self-government might be conferred. Too little is known scientifically of innate mental capacity in any human beings to permit of useful generalization on the point. Also the African is too new to our techniques to be judged by them yet. In any case it is not the African's mental capacity which makes early self-government problematical, but this tendency to a limited or non-existent sense of obligation to anyone outside of his own group. Experience in all colonies to date is that once you entrust an African with authority that is not his traditionally (as, for example, the traditional authority of the tribal chief) he will in the majority of cases abuse it for his own interest. Entrust a headman with the payment of the labourers in his gang and he will embezzle. Entrust the supervision of frontier patrols to a customs guard and he will soon be deep in graft. Entrust a clerk with the cash and he will peculate.

A main cause of his untrustworthiness with money springs from the African family system. As often as not the senior clerk embezzles not to pay his own debts but the debts of his family. The successful member of the family must help all its members. He often leads a life made most uncomfortable by their importunities. One of the first Africans appointed as a Justice in W. Africa received a salary of £1,500 a year in a community where the average income was about £20 a year. Yet he died a poor man and had unceasing difficulties to make both ends meet. Education in Africa needs to work on African public opinion to modify the family system, much of which is harmful in a society that is going individualistic and cash-economy.

He is improvident to a degree that has no parallel amongst other people. Indeed it is upon his improvidence that much of his cheerfulness, placidity, idleness, lack of nerves, and physical courage are based. It derives from a remarkable lack of imagination or from the abstract thinking which goes with imagination; a lack which marks all his activities whether as a farmer conserving land or seed, a householder administering the family finances, a

lorry driver taking a bend, a domestic lighting a petrol lamp, a soldier engaged in a patrol or advance guard, a journalist writing a political article. The African seems unable to think of what is round the corner. He is preoccupied with immediate facts and sensations such as, in the examples cited above, food for the moment, making a splash, enjoying the exhilaration of speed, doing a chore with the least effort possible, or gratifying a spite. For him it is not a matter of To Hell with the Consequences: there are just no consequences. This may well be a temporary condition arising from the nearly complete insecurity of his life until recent years.

His famous idleness is mostly an idleness in acquiring profits for others. He will work hard enough on his own farm. It is also an outcome of his sound nerves; for most of this vaunted European virture of industriousness is European neurasthenia—a fidgetiness, an incapacity for stillness.

The African is said by most of his observers to be merely imitative. This is the sort of generalization of which one needs to be more than ordinarily chary. It is probably an inevitable characteristic in his present plight. The Japanese were also written off as imitative. Nevertheless there is something in it: he has a facility for imitation above that of the European. As a result he picks up languages with surprising ease. And as a result he can be taught the initial stages and the outward forms of most techniques with deceptive speed. His progress beyond them is often disappointing. He seems to require a formula; which would explain his success as a lawyer and his lesser success as a scientist. It is evident that his imitativeness is such that we should ensure that he sees a minimum of what is second-rate or meretricious in us or in our civilization. The glitter of our chromium-plated emptiness is peculiarly seductive to him.

One inoffensive aspect of his imitativeness is shown along the literate Coast communities where he is in the process of acquiring surnames (most African tribes employ no surnames). A minor political agitator was at large in Freetown in 1944 with the name

of Mr. Oliver-Stanley (the English Mr. Oliver Stanley was Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time). I knew a clerk originating from the bush and employed in the Lands Department of a certain colony who called himself Mr. Lands. Hyphenated names are particularly esteemed—e.g. there is in Sierra Leone the well-known Mr. Theoclymenus Akibo-Betts. On the other hand certain surnames derive from European rather than African sources, such as, presumably, that of the Gold Coast clergyman, Rev. Cockeye-Brown, or those of two petty traders I once met in Nigeria, Messrs. Whisky and Soda.

Aesthetic sensibility is noticeable among Africans, though it is, naturally, conditioned by his nervous make-up (slower-working than ours) and by his lesser imaginativeness. It takes numerous forms such as an exquisite hand-writing—it is rare to encounter an ugly African script—an agreeable sense of colour and design in clothes, an appropriate shapeliness in mud-brick or grass houses, but above all in singing and dancing. The strongest card in the missionary's hand is hymn singing. The African, who does not whistle, perhaps because of the shape of his lips, loves singing. The rhythmical movement of dancing is a very need of his nature. Boys washing crockery will, on little provocation, turn the procedure into hand-miming (sometimes with unsatisfactory results to the crockery), labourers cutting a lawn will sickle or scythe to a rythm, navvies will wield their picks in a dance.

Among Africans of most tribes there is a higher proportion of handsome men and women than amongst Europeans. Their bodies sometimes achieve complete beauty of form and movement. And as brother human beings the generality of Africans, above all outside of the forest country, are very pleasant people to live amongst, friendly, smiling, and neighbourly.

The position of the African woman is better than what was the position of the European woman until the 19th century. It is true that she is often betrothed to someone who is not her own choice (although her choice is probably now the more common

and is becoming more and more the rule), but she could always run off with a lover if she did not like her husband. Husbands normally spend much effort on retaining the loyalty of their wives. In any case she always had her own individual hut and her purse was her own. A Married Woman's Property Act is not needed in Africa. Most of the petty trade is in the hands of the woman, who thus commonly acquires a respectable capital. She sometimes strengthens her position by becoming the creditor of her spouse. She is not an easy creditor and in such cases keeps a very watchful eye on his doings. I have again and again seen a Jollof fisherman return to shore after a hard day at sea and have his catch impounded forthwith by his wife. Even Islam failed to affect essentially the status of the African woman—how much so one can see by going from Negro Africa up to the Mediterranean Coast and comparing the slave status of the Arab woman in Algeria or Tunis. In most pagan tribes the women work in the fields as a matter of division of labour; among the Hausa, who have long been Islamized, the women never do the farm work.

African society, in its numerous structures, lays down strict duties on its members, but it is rarely an arbitrary society and most Africans have a very lively appreciation of their rights. They have rights, they know what the rights are, and they are quick and persistent in maintaining them. This was true even of the slaves. A danger of such a quality is that once his own society and its discipline disintegrate he carries over the sense of rights divorced from the sense of duties—which might have some disagreeable effects in African political evolution.

Understanding of the African has come slowly. Scientific studies of his way of life began mostly towards the end of the 19th century. The application to Colonial Government of the findings of those studies hardly began until well in the 20th century. The first British colony to appoint an anthropologist was the Gold Coast, just after the first World War. Some of the school of Modern Economic Developers are, most interestingly,

now showing hostility to the use of anthropology in colonial policy because it upsets the assumptions behind their programme for a rapid entry into the paradise of urban industrialization. Anthropology, however, whether it be the anthropology of the professional researcher or the amateur efforts of officers on the spot, has made an immense contribution to Colonial Government. The sociological approach is of course the first need of approach to the whole problem of government, in England no less than in Tanganyika.[1]

To recapitulate, the characteristics of the African which stand out are cheerfulness, an aesthetic sensibility, which on analysis is a feeling for the body and its proper use as a vehicle of self-expression, patience, gentleness, and essential good manners. With them, however, go fear of the other world, incontinence. callousness, lack of shame, little sense of obligation outside his own group, and childishness (of which imitativeness is a symptom). These less attractive characteristics are symptomatic of a non-European morality, itself the product of physical environment, above all of the insecurity imposed by his physical environment. The insecurity of the physical environment is reflected in such

[1] The sociological and the geographical-economic approach is essential to an understanding of colonial questions, just as it is indeed to an understanding of any European country. What the sociologists like the Lynds have done on Western industrialized urbanized society is being done by anthropologists on African society, notably by A. I. Richards, the Kriegs, Fortes, Meek, Rattray, the Culwicks, Leith-Ross, Daryll Forde, Labouret, the Belgian students of native law, and others. The great travellers like Livingstone, Barth, Duveyrier, and Mungo Park, and the pioneer soldiers and administrators, have left invaluable records. For the colonial problem as a whole Professor W. K. Hancock's work *The Survey* is indispensable. Truths about the Empire much in need of saying have been said with wisdom and brilliance in his *Argument of Empire*. Professor Macmillan's series of studies is valuable. Lord Hailey's *Survey* is a mine of useful information. Two recent interesting works, written from another view point than my own, are Rita Hinden's *Plan for Africa* and Joyce Cary's *The Case for African Freedom*, as also the Fabian Colonial Bureau essays and the I.L.O. Reports. The work of the *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* at Dakar, whose Director is the remarkable French savant, Professor Theodore Monod, is particularly useful on French Tropical Africa. Sir A. Pim's Reports on E. Africa and N. Rhodesia are essential reading.

mental characteristics as an inability to think of what is round the corner. The climate, the diseases, the malnutrition, and the poverty of the soil have to a large extent made the African what he is.

To me the most remarkable characteristic of the African is the rapidity with which he deteriorates when taken from his traditional environment into a modern urban environment. Countrymen who a century ago went into the new slum-factory towns in England also deteriorated; but the African's deterioration is different from theirs, different in kind not in degree. It is for this reason that the average African's not resenting command enables, or could enable, us, the Trustees, to take all suitable measures for protecting him from this deterioration, even though the protection runs counter to his immediate desires. It would be a subordination in order to achieve his fulfilment.

CHAPTER III

Where to Begin

ORDER

THE first concern of any government in any country is to keep order. Outside of the new towns that offers no difficulty in Africa. The peasant and village population, which comprises not less than three-quarters of the total in all colonies, is an orderly population. Crime is less frequent than in Europe or America. The special problem of the new town population will be noticed later.

DISEASE

Disease is the sorest affliction of the African's life. Some of the disease is due to malnutrition; the rest is due to the special maladies endemic to Africa, such as intestinal parasites or malaria, which in some areas necessitated Army recruiting doctors to reject three men out of four. To remedy or to assuage the affliction is a primary objective of all Colonial Governments. Far from enough, however, has yet been done, or even imagined. Let us cast a glance at the way the French, the British, and the Belgians are pursuing the objective. Our standpoint must be prevention of disease rather than cure.

The French system is good. At the bigger centres there are hospitals for major cases, like major surgical cases, and in the rural areas there is a network of medical centres. The emphasis is sharply on the latter, not the former—i.e. on aiming at providing certain minimum medical facilities for all rather than providing a few elaborate hospitals where only a handful of special cases can be treated. In these centres the patients live their normal home-life as far as possible, preparing their own food, husbands bringing along their wives and possibly a baby or two, and so

on. It is all free and easy and very French. The terror that is inspired in the villager by regimented antiseptic hospital life, especially of the British kind, soon disappears in this home-from-home atmosphere. What is lost in antisepsis, admittedly something, is gained in confidence and cure. Further, for the great special diseases the system is to organize mass attack. Thus in French West Africa there is the Autonomous Sleeping Sickness Service, with its own budget and staff of doctors, entomologists, and researchers, run, like the whole French Medical Service, on military lines, entrusted with the responsibility of stamping out the Sleeping Sickness scourge. The head of the Service told me that he believed they could stamp it out within the next 10 or 15 years. After that a mass attack will be launched against other special diseases such as Venereal Disease, an even crueller and more widespread scourge than Sleeping Sickness. Again the French have no use for a handful of negroes trained in European medical schools and clamouring for the high salaries, high social standing, and closed trade unionism of the British Medical Association model. They concentrate, instead, on producing African medical auxiliaries who are given a three or four years' training in the impressive Medical School in Dakar, and who are then set to work. Further, compulsion is employed for vaccination and other preventive measures. Finally, in the Pasteur Institute[1] and its local branches there are researchers working on the spot. The foreign observer is left with an impression of high professional standards and an indifference to money-making on the part of the personnel in the French Medical Service. It possibly owes much to the fact that it is still a military service run by Army doctors, although the French Medical Association is fighting to put an end to it and to make it civilian.

The system in the British colonies is different. It has tended to concentrate on a few hospitals in the bigger towns, the rural population, which is the vast mass, being provided, in sparse

[1] See *Rapport sur le Fonctionnement Technique . . . en* 1943. Dakar, 1945.

numbers, with dispensaries manned by African male nurses and equipped with simple medicines. The hospitals are excellent,[1] particularly for the doctors and European nurses appointed to them, but they touch the merest fraction of the population. The outlying dispensaries are frequently nearly useless; and the bush stations where there are Medical Officers (who often become enthusiastic for their work) are relatively few. As for African medical auxiliaries trained in Africa, little use has so far been made of them. The nurse-dispensers of the Gold Coast are an exception. Instead there is an increasing number of Africans entering the Medical Service who have done the qualifying course at a Medical School in England, not seldom at Government expense, and now, thanks to the new system of Colonial Welfare Fund grants, at the expense of the British taxpayer. They are anxious to enter Government Service and they demand the same standard of life as their European colleagues, and they enjoy the amenities of this admirable hospital system combined with lucrative private practice. Plans are now on foot for producing medical auxiliaries on the French model both in East and West Africa, as at Yaba in Nigeria. The impression left by the medical system built up in the British colonies is one of inexcusable inadequacy. The excuse of poverty will not do because the French colonies are poorer than the British. The strategy, the conception itself, is wrong. It does not touch the ordinary African and it does not touch the great problem of disease in Africa. The Medical Services in Africa must be firmly based firstly on prevention (which will involve close co-operation with Agricultural Veterinary and other Departments), secondly on a special attack on the great special diseases, and thirdly on the widest use of medical auxiliaries for the rural population. In addition to a faulty conception of problem and attack, the quality of personnel in British colonies, both professionally and personally, also often leaves something to be desired. There are, needless to say, gifted and disinterested men, and many of the younger men are supplanting the defective old brigade, but there are still too many

[1] Cf. Report on Dar-es-Salaam hospitals in 1943.

who are neither competent nor disinterested. Sloth and self-indulgence, reminiscent of mediaeval monks, is common; but the high salary continues coming in and the post is secure for life. It is not easy to see how the standards can be reformed so long as the right of private practice is retained. It is said that that right is imposed on Colonial Governments, against their will, at the instance of the British Medical Association. In Southern Nigeria and the Gold Coast, for example, cases are cited of Medical Officers making £1,000 or £2,000 or more a year in this way; often merely by handing out "M & B" tablets for gonorrhoea or 606 injections for syphilis or for aphrodisiacs (both drugs bought by public money), or even by injecting plain water. The majority of the doctors deplore the system. A British Chief Commissioner, telling me of the work of one doctor who refused private practice and who was dedicated to his high profession, said that he made a point of checking up the number of out-patients in the several stations where this Officer had been appointed: the increase in each case was 400 to 500 per cent over the numbers previously treated. The system is the less defensible because doctors posted to bush stations in N. Nigeria or N. Gold Coast are cut off from this supplementary income. A reshaping of the British Colonial Medical Service is urgently required and the first step is to appoint a strong non-medical Royal Commission with full terms of reference to examine it. Meanwhile the direction and the administration of the Medical Service might be taken out of the hands of elderly Service doctors and transferred to the Secretariat. The medical man should be free to practise his *expertise*, which is medicine and not administration.

The Belgian system is different again from both the French and the British. An intensive attack is made on infected areas before handing them over to the normal Medical Service. In the normal Medical Service hospitals, again, are rightly considered to be less important than the providing of moderate medical facilities over the widest possible area. Great emphasis is laid on training reliable African medical auxiliaries, whose number

run into hundreds. A special characteristic of the Belgian system is the part played by voluntary societies, such as the Queen Elisabeth Foundation, which are well endowed, can deploy their funds at strategical points, and who carry out valuable mass attack against special diseases, and also by the big business corporations, notably the Société Générale and its subsidiaries. Thus the Union Minière provides their workers with the most complete medical facilities that are found anywhere in Africa, running, logically, to pre-natal care for women.

POVERTY

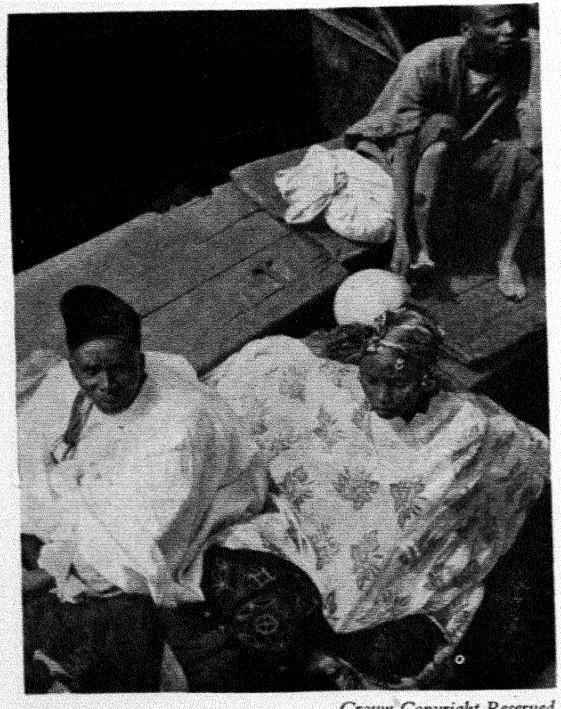
It will be some time before medical facilities on the European scale can be provided in Africa. It will be a long time indeed before they are needed on that scale.

For despite these special diseases the main problem of health in Africa is nutrition—with increasing the quantity and with varying and balancing the kind of food. That is to say, the main problem of health today is the problem of poverty. Give the average African enough to eat and he develops an astonishing strength of resistance to disease. Even as things are, he has largely immunized himself against many of the special diseases, such as malaria, and adequate feeding would cut at the root of most of them.

Poverty is thus the first material problem in all the African colonies. It has been lessened progressively in the last 30 or 40 years, during which the standard of living has improved steadily. But much still remains to be done.

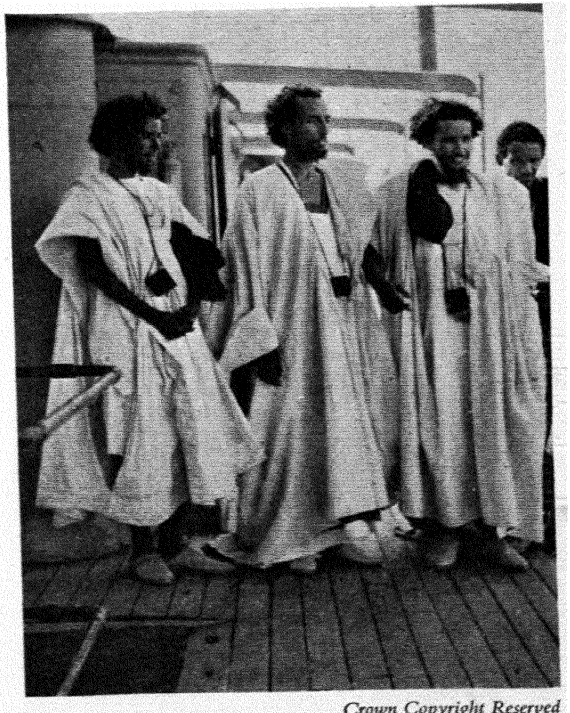
Poverty will be lessened through a certain amount of industrial development, which will be discussed shortly, but the most effective approach will be through Agriculture.

The African is a good and intelligent farmer, but his battle against unfertile soil, erosion, water (too much or too little), and pests can and must be helped by all the resources of modern science. He will accept this help once its utility is demonstrated



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Moors



H. Wooton

Ibo girls dancing



E. Lebied

Congo Bantu Woman

to him. Among the changes that are urgently required are the providing of water supplies, the study and control of locusts and plant diseases, the redistributing of population, the planting of belts of woods, major programmes against erosion, programmes for regenerating soil fertility, and the use of better seed. These measures are all beyond his slender means as an individual; if they are to be provided they must be provided by the Colony Government. They will necessitate an augmentation of the Agricultural and related Services such as Forestry and Veterinary Science, which are all far from being big enough in all African colonies.

The very beginning is water. More than any other single factor it is the uneven rainfall and, out of the forest country, the 6 to 8 months' drought, that causes so much soil destruction, so much defective agriculture, so much dietetic deficiency, and so much grinding work. And the attempts made by the natives to tap and to conserve water supplies, in wells and pools, cause so many of the diseases such as guinea worm or intestinal parasites. Every traveller off the main roads in Africa has seen the long walk to the dirty water-hole or well made every day by the women and the hard labour in drawing the water and carrying it back to the village, and he has seen the driving of cattle from one well or pool to another, ten or twenty miles away, losing condition more and more as the dry weather goes on. It is always towards the end of the dry season that man and beast succumb most heavily to the epidemics. Thus if the money available is such that a choice must be made between hospitals and water conservation, public health considerations alone will necessitate a choice for water conservation. But public health considerations are not alone for making this choice. Water is the very basis of the problem of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and Soil Preservation in Africa. We have heard much too much about political questions in Kenya: the primordial question in Kenya is famine and the increasing soil deterioration which causes the famine. We have heard much too much of the "reforms" of a tedious West Indian Governor of Tanganyika, who rose from

the clerical ranks, in endowing tribal groups with separate treasuries; but the primordial question in Tanganyika is also famine, like that which recently desolated the Central Province for three years running; and the famine there is also due to erosion and the water problem.

All African colonies but especially all British African colonies have suffered from departmentalized approaches to this or that problem. A crying need is a co-ordinated approach in which the relevant Departments get together and work out a unified programme. Medical policy, agricultural policy, forestry policy, veterinary policy must be parts of one organic policy. There is now no longer an excuse for departmental piddling: the Tennessee Valley Authority Scheme is a living and highly successful example of how to go about the job.

The Agricultural Departments have in all colonies thrown up some good men and have done some good work but too often the men and the work have been good in spite of and not because of the Agricultural Departments. The great work of extending rice production in Sierra Leone, for instance, or the anti-erosion work of the Conservator of Forests there, Mr. McGregor, owes everything to an individual's imagination and drive. The Agricultural Departments can certainly plead an insufficient budget; what should have been the highest-priority Department is normally the Cinderella. Yet even so there has been too much academic remoteness about the Agricultural Departments. Few if any of the Agricultural Officers have any practical farming experience (a valuable though painful necessity as those of us who have lost money in farming are aware); and too many, surprisingly, have little of the farmer's mentality. That is why the adaptation or the abandonment of methods suitable to Europe but unsuitable to Africa is slow in coming. The gap, too, between the ideal laboratory conditions of a Government Experiment Station, which is not obliged to pay its way, and the conditions of the peasant who must tame Nature with weak tools and in the process must feed himself or

perish from hunger, is not sufficiently appreciated. An old peasant in Northern Gold Coast when asked by an Agricultural Officer why he did not come to the Experimental Station replied, "We farm for our bellies, but your monthly wages come in whatever happens to your plants." The Agricultural Officer who does not become aware of this gap is, in his dealings with the practical peasant, like someone teaching his grandmother to suck eggs. The approach must always be from and to native methods and be based on the total local environment. The linking up of animal husbandry with soil cultivation in the Savannah country, that indispensable marriage between beast and earth, is much needed. For years in Northern Nigeria official efforts to bring about the marriage were so notoriously inept as to discredit the idea, all because the main factors of local environment had been ignored.

No less serious has been the tendency of Agricultural Departments in most colonies—the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (the best-run of all the British dependencies) is a notable exception—to concentrate their efforts on export crops and not on subsistent peasant farming. When an export crop has become a dominant factor in the standard of living of a colony, as cocoa is in the S. Gold Coast, or ground nuts in Senegal, much effort will have to be given to it. But policy should as far as is practicable circumvent any such dependence on one single economic factor.

European plantation-produced palm oil from the Congo or the Netherlands Indies is both cheaper and better than that produced by the West African peasant. This problem, which is special and local, will not be discussed here but it is symptomatic. Action will soon be required. I believe that with co-operatives and with socialized (not necessarily socialist) control the peasant can still carry on his palm-oil farming. The cocoa industry in the Gold Coast is also too complicated for discussion here.[1]

Agricultural policy, in short, should be heavily weighted in

[1] See Colonial Office White Paper Comd 6554, October 1944, and Nowell Commission Report Comd 5847.

favour of African peasant farming as against European plantations, and in favour of subsistence crops rather than export crops. Practice already tends the other way in most colonies, and in the future pressure to accentuate that tendency, which has a more immediate economic value but a lesser social value, will increase, particularly with the coming of the promised post-war experts from English cities to "develop" the colonies. From the economic point of view alone mixed and subsistent farming is normally the only sound farming in the long run; monoculture is notoriously both unsafe and soil-ruining. In Africa the economic side of agricultural policy is only one side; agricultural policy in Africa must be as much concerned with the way of life as with growing food or bringing in money.

It is for this reason that the other, the second, way of reducing poverty, the way of industrialization, which is the favourite European specific for curing poverty, must be treated with extreme caution. It is not to be denied that certain necessities like bricks, tiles, fruit juices, soap and sugar, and perhaps textiles, can and no doubt will be manufactured in the colonies. But plans, apparently sponsored by both the British and the French Colonial Offices, go further than that. Quasi-official development schemes have been announced which envisage large-scale industrialization in certain areas.

The European and American world today is an urban world. All values are urban values. The townsman has vanquished the countryman. It is therefore not easy to convince the flatdwellers who man the Colonial Office and most of the other institutions concerned that there is a case against their philosophy of Ford's in his flivver, All's right with the world; that a high standard of life means paved streets, shop windows, neon lights, glossy advertisements, aspirins, several cinema shows a week, and wireless sets for every man which, in keeping with the B.B.C.'s self-dedication to making the common man commoner, will bring to the furthest desert well and to the remotest forest grove

the saxophones wailing without end and the voices of jazz women previously heard only around Piccadilly after dark. The one people in the world who have not lost happiness are, with the best intentions, now being menaced with a life rich in gadgets but richer still in dependence, frustration, emptiness, and sorrow.

In Nigeria, for example, "a vast new road scheme costing at least six million" has now been promised. The result, it is added exultantly, will be to increase motor traffic greatly and "to employ thousands of men." Why not leave these men alone, growing their own food on their own farms in their own time and way? Why "increase motor traffic greatly"? In French West Africa the Governor of Mauritania has been promising to mechanize communications in his colony and to "dethrone the camel."

There is of course a need for roads. The reasons are better than those announced above, though whether some of the money might not have been more usefully employed on other matters is open to discussion. Nigeria has already worked out a Development Programme[1] which is to cost over £40 million spread out between 1945 and 1960. Most of it will be spent in the first ten years. On the whole it is a good scheme, the risks of industrialization being small, but plans for agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry were unfortunately not included in it. They are to come later. Of the £40 million about £5 million are earmarked for rural water supplies, another £5 million for urban water supplies, £9 million for a building programme, £8 million for Medical Services, about £2 million for a hydro-electric programme, and about £1¾ million for education.

Not enough is known as to spending plans for the £120 million Colonial Development and Welfare money to be provided by the British taxpayer in the ten years between 1946-56 to make any useful comment at this stage. The money will be disastrous if it is laid out with an eye to town populations and factory developments; it will be beneficent if it is laid out with an eye to keeping and strengthening a subsistent peasant society.

[1] *Preliminary Statement on Development Planning in Nigeria*, Lagos, 1945.

Development Schemes are fraught with peril unless they are shaped on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority Scheme—a total and unified approach, "a cohesion of all the relevant specialisms"; an outgrowth from the basis of local Nature, of soil and climate and traditions and temperament; a building on the foundation of real people and real things. By that criterion industries will be built up only in so far as they serve to supplement the peasant society. By the same criterion, too, in a few special and unrepresentative areas, such as the S.E. of Nigeria, where there is a problem of sharp over-population among a vigorous people whose soil is damaged or insufficient, industries might be encouraged.

Luckily for the African, industrialization will be limited and most likely it will not afflict the majority, let the Development Schemes be what they will. Poverty is the principal material problem of Africa; it is also the principal shield against the menace to its happiness. The coal and iron and other raw materials required for industrializing are not widespread. In the Congo considerable industrial evolution is probable because it is possible. There are already textile, machine tool, ship building, and other factories in existence. In certain limited regions, such as the mining area of N. Rhodesia, there is already a mining proletariat. But over Africa as a whole the bulk of the population is likely, by reason of this blessed poverty, to remain a farming population. Yet even this agricultural population is not unmenaced: official schemes are now proclaimed for mechanized collectivist farming.[1] There will be, it is clear, no end to the meddlings of these Ford-minded townsmen.

Industrialization, to whatever degree it goes, will need the most watchful surveillance. It will bring about new classes, new towns, the modern money-economy revolving around the symbols of wealth rather than wealth itself, new social values whereby the men performing the most useful functions such as

[1] In a few unrepresentative regions they might be an advantage—e.g. in S.E. Nigeria.

growing food are paid the least and rewarded with the most insecurity, a new individualization of property and indeed of all social relations, new political pressures for protecting infant industries, and new divisions of wealth hitherto unknown to Africa. To protect the new urban proletariat thus brought into being social regulations along the lines of the I.L.O. Conventions will be essential. Special attention will also have to be given to town-planning and for policing. The missionaries, who do so much harm where they are not needed, will have much to contribute in the new towns.

Mining, which can be developed only through European and American capital, raises the question as to how to control mineral resources, which are wasting resources, for the benefit of Africans themselves as well as for the benefit of European investors. Northern Rhodesia, for example, gets too little advantage from the exploitation of its copper fields. According to the Fabian Research Bureau the value of the mineral yield there in 1937 was about £12 million. Of this sum about £300,000 went in wages to Africans and, at a generous estimate, another £300,000 in social services. Very high wages—e.g., £10 a week minimum to European miners—and very high salaries are paid. The rest, after paying for various maintenance services, went to the shareholders. Although N. Rhodesia is a big country with a small population (about 2 million) a considerable proportion of the natives' food is imported instead of being grown. Another point about mining is that it ruins the agricultural land and that it encourages erosion. Tens of thousands of acres have been ruined by tin mining in Nigeria. There is no obligation on the mines to repair the land.

Once very high salaries are paid, as by the Sierra Leone Diamond mines, or the Rhodesia Copper mines, or by a trading octopus like the United Africa Company, there is at least a *prima facie* case for investigation. The U.A.C. (United Africa Company) comes in for much criticism in West Africa but so far no concrete cases of abuse have come to light. The real objection

to the U.A.C. is the potential power of any big corporation like this bringing pressure to bear behind the scenes—e.g. of the Directors going straight to this or that Minister. It is doubtful too whether so big a corporation can be efficient—it is too big to retain the initiative of true private enterprise.[1] The United Africa Company, conscious of its own purity in the face of so many aspersions, would no doubt welcome the public enquiry into its operations that is so often demanded.

Exploitation of Africans once industrialization gets under weigh is, in general, not likely from European and American capital, which is, on the whole, already well controlled through social and other legislation. It will come from Indians and Syrians and from Africans themselves. The Indians, who have made great fortunes during this war and who show little social conscience, are in parts of East Africa as big a problem as erosion.[2] In West Africa the Syrian plays a similar rôle and keeps too much of the retail trade away from African traders.

BREAD AND MORE ABUNDANT LIFE

The dominant problem on the material side then is Poverty. And the dominant solution of that problem over Africa as a whole is an improved agriculture. Until this truth is firmly grasped we have not got our proportions right. The problem of disease will be handled most effectively in this way, although special maladies will need special campaigns like the French Sleeping Sickness campaign, and general medical facilities for normal common ailments must be provided on a wider scale.

The material side is, in Africa as elsewhere, only one side of the government. The African does not live by bread alone. He

[1] The fantastic story of cocoa trading in the Gold Coast shows little of Machiavellian efficiency on the part of the U.A.C.

[2] In Tanganyika about 75 per cent of the retail trade is in Indian hands and Indians total about 75 per cent of all the landlords in the towns. They own vast plantation areas and speculate in land. They are lawyers and clerks. And their contribution in taxation is slight. The Government of Tanganyika is, like the Colonial Office, afraid to act because of the pressure brought to bear on Delhi and Whitehall by the Congress Party.

needs more in his belly but he needs still more a concern for the quality of his life. It is necessary to emphasize this because so many well-meaning and influential people dealing with colonial affairs tend to confuse the more abundant life with more abundant gramophones and motor-bicycles; an illusion to which the African himself is now pathetically susceptible.

That is to say, we must look at Africa from the bush end, not from the colony capitals and ports. To maintain an independent peasantry carrying on self-subsistent farming is the goal. And having grasped that, we are at once brought up against the question of land tenure.

The system of land tenure is of cardinal importance. According to the old African custom the land belonged to God or the Gods; there was no more private property in land than there was in the oxygen of the air. But there was private property in the fruits of tilling the land. Here and there, notably in the richer agricultural areas, such as the Gold Coast cocoa zone, private property has grown up. Along the coastal strips (the so-called "colonies" as contrasted with the "protectorates") the English legal system, including the English land property system, was imposed in the early days. Further, certain areas, notably in East Africa and the Congo (where over 100 million acres have been affected), have been alienated to Europeans, though it is doubtful if any colony will alienate any more land on other than a very minor scale to Europeans. Over Africa as a whole, however, the land is still communal land even where the right of use is individualized.

The pressure to individualize land property will become stronger and stronger. I believe that the pressure should be resisted without hesitation,[1] though it is fair to say that many experienced colonial administrators have now come to the

[1] The Gambia Government, needing land for its new town-planning scheme near Bathurst, has paid to the Estate of an African lawyer £13,000 for 38 acres, the agricultural value of which would be a few shillings an acre. The site value is pure "unearned increment."

contrary opinion. It is true that African communal tenure went well with a condition of things where land was plentiful, population thin, and farming practice was based on "shifting cultivation"; a condition that is now passing. It is also true that as population presses on land and as farming practice stabilizes around soil conservation and mixed husbandry, the permanent occupation and care of one piece of land by one family is bound to come and indeed is desirable. Is it not possible, however, to have individualization of the occupancy of a piece of land at the same time as refusing to allow it to be treated as unlimited private property? Titles to land can be registered, individualized and permanent occupancy can be guaranteed so long as the land is adequately farmed, laws can be enacted against an uneconomic minimum fragmentation, but on no account should a power of mortgage encumbrance or a pecuniary transfer be tolerated. The huge load of mortgage indebtedness on Gold Coast cocoa farms is a sufficient lesson, as indeed is the story of agricultural indebtedness in all countries.

An integrated total policy will also assign an important place to co-operatives, whose functions are as valuable socially and politically as they are economically. Through them too can be handled whatever measure of collective farming might be found justified by total policy.

IGNORANCE

After the economic environment the most decisive factor in determining the quality of life is that of education. African society had in most tribes and groups its own system of education which, as will be shown directly, was well adapted to the needs of its people. As it did not, at all events in the non-Islam parts, include a knowledge of writing, it was not considered by European officials as education. To the European only a literate person can be educated; a proposition soon deformed into the proposition that the literate person is an educated person. It is true, of course,

that old tribal education needed much changing and supplementing to meet the recent changes in African life; and it is also true that European-style education has come and indeed can be welcomed. The education problem in Africa is complicated by two special factors: first, the content of the education will to some extent be alien to the African, and, second, it concerns a people who are primitive (using the term in no offensive sense).

Until not very long ago, then, education was seen entirely as a matter of enabling as many children as possible to read, write, and do arithmetic; higher education was seen as giving more and more of this. The same conceptions and the same methods of popular education which held sway in Europe since the introduction of compulsory schooling in the 19th century were transferred *en bloc* to Africa. Those conceptions and those methods are now recognized everywhere to have been insufficient and sometimes harmful. How much more so were they insufficient or harmful when imposed upon the African without any reference to his traditional values and disciplines and without any reference to the needs of his very special environment! By their fruits ye shall know them. Every town in West Africa, where this literacy education has been longest planted, shows these fruits.

The hunger for education, it is said again and again, is impressive all over Africa. It is impressive. It is not added, however, that the hunger to "savvy book" is largely a hunger for the office jobs that this qualification confers. It is a hunger to join the new *petite bourgeoisie* of clerks and to wear European clothes and to live in the towns. There is about it little hunger for knowledge. Literate Africans, indeed even those who have been given a secondary or higher education, read very little, as the British Council has been learning in West Africa. They lose much of the instruction of their traditional education but they too often acquire only an uncertain command of the mechanical externals of European education. Education in the British colonies means for the African Standard III certificate, leaving school certificate, and so on.

The tendency, especially in British colonies, has been for the boys who "savvy book" to consider it an unspeakable indignity to work with their hands such as at farming or at a craft. A mischievous outlook from the social point of view, it nevertheless worked on the economic side so long as there were enough vacancies going for the volume of clerks turned out. The supply now is too great for the demand and in all the bigger towns of British Africa there are these bands of failed literates, wholly or partially unemployed, discontented, and occasionally criminal.

The cure, as Monsieur Pierre Ryckmans, a brilliant Governor-General of the Congo, pointed out, and has now recently been recognized in the British mass-education scheme, is to make everyone literate. The qualification of "knowing book" will then cease to have any scarcity value. Everyone will have it; the mason and carpenter and farmer and pastoralist will then be esteemed for what they are, the salt of the African earth. Today only the merest fraction is literate—e.g. ½ per cent of the population of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. In the Gold Coast there are school facilities for only 100,000 out of a population of over 4 million. The figures are worse in other colonies.

Universal literacy will also do much to break down the disadvantageous status of African women. I do not mean to imply that African women are normally unhappy or badly treated; I have already shown that they are not. Nor do I mean that a change can be rushed into without regard for subtle and possibly disastrous results. There is no doubt, however, that the African woman is by tradition assigned a rôle which is incomplete for her life today; a position deriving from the old life of primeval man who, preoccupied with the group and not with individuals in the group, divided the group up into the Men, who fought for and organized and ran it, and the subsidiaries to the Men, namely the women, the children, and the slaves. Another point in this connection is the one made by the African teacher Aggrey: when you educate a man you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman you educate a people.

To be fully effective and not just external and mechanical the method of education in Africa must, like its content, be related to the manner of living in Africa, and it must also be in terms of the African's own emotional experience. For the same reason it must win over the fullest co-operation of African tribal authorities and the Native Administrations.[1] A valuable experiment of exceptional interest is being made in Sierra Leone today, thanks to the originality and enterprise of Miss MacMath of the Education Department and of Dr. Magai of the Medical Department in using the "Bundu" or Women's Secret Society.

In most African tribes which are not Islamized there is an Initiated Group or Groups; what we call the Secret Society. This is a closed fraternity into which men are admitted after undergoing long training and passing severe tests in the duties which they, as good members of society, will have to carry out. No matter how much mumbo-jumbo may go with it, no matter indeed that in some places the fraternity is perverted to evil ends like the Leopard Societies in forest country or the *Koussanga* in Senegal, the African Secret Society makes sense. Here is a list of subjects taught by a Secret Society into which Governor Labouret, the French authority, was initiated: Religion and Magic, History and Traditions of the Tribe, Laws, Hierarchy, Etiquette, Hygiene, Relations with Women, Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting, Singing, Dancing, and the Secret Language. Female Secret Societies are less common, but in places they are powerful. They often have, amongst other ends, a trade-union rôle *vis-à-vis* the men; a function not without its comic aspects. A characteristic of all Secret Societies is the initiation. The rites are so impressive, so frightening, that their stamp is indelible. Often the young man is made to simulate death and to be born again. The secrets revealed to him must never be betrayed (hence the difficulty of getting exact information). Men and women prying into the

[1] In the past, press-gang methods were sometimes resorted to in order to fill a school. As a junior Political Officer I was once instructed to tell a Chief to find 18 more boys to fill a recently started and unpopular Government School; instructions that I had no hesitation in ignoring.

retreats of the Secret Society are put to death. One of the many results of the impact of European civilization and especially of missionary propaganda on Africa has been the weakening of initiation.

The part that the Initiated Group might play in true education is self-evident. If the Colonial Office Mass-Education Scheme, now on the boards to overcome illiteracy in one generation, is to be effective in areas where the Initiated Group is still powerful or influential, the Sierra Leone experiment must be applied. The essential idea can be applied in most places.

It is not argued of course that there must be no European-type schools nor indeed that the kind of education suitable in Timbuktu or Bongo will be suitable at Lagos or Dakar. But the European-type schools instead of dominating, or instead of being the only schools, should be a small minority; the bush or village school should be the base because the village is the base. And the base of teaching in the village school must be self-subsistence agricultural practice. Attention must also be given in both town and bush schools to the teaching of crafts and trades and hygiene, and especially to the inculcation of discipline and respect for constituted authority.

Attention, moreover, must be given to Mission schools. In all parts of Africa, Missions are running schools; in some parts they run all or nearly all the schools. In the Gold Coast, for instance, they have played a major rôle, thanks to Government grants and to a lazy education policy in the past. In the Congo there are nearly a million pupils in Mission schools. The quality of education given in the Gold Coast Mission schools was poor and the system degenerated into a weapon wielded by the rival Missions, especially Roman Catholics versus Protestants, in "the scramble for strategic positions" for winning over their brand of convert. Government money was in effect used for financing religious warfare—in the name of education.

As Mission schools form a part of the Mission's prose-

[1] See *Overseas Education*. Oct. 1944.

lytizing objective the vexed question of missionary effort in general cannot be side-stepped. There is no one answer to that question. Whether Missions are good or bad depends firstly on who the missionaries are, secondly on how they go about their work, thirdly on the kind of people amongst whom they work. The missionary might be a Father Damien or a Mary Slessor on the one hand, or he might on the other be a Seventh Day Adventist or a Watch Tower Russellite. The work might be among Moslems, who should be left alone, or among healthy stable conservative pagans like the Koniagui in Guinea, who should also be left alone, at least until their own Society begins changing, or it might be amongst detribalized workers in ports, mines, and factories, who will benefit by conversion as also will tribes whose customs are better jettisoned than encouraged.

The greatest danger of Mission effort is the breaking down of one morality and discipline in order to impose what the missionary considers *the* morality and *the* discipline. He forgets the text that "in my Father's house are many mansions." The efforts to stamp out dancing, or the efforts to impose the whole conception of Christian marriage, are examples. Again the Bible warns him: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; . . . Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked . . . The last state of that man is worse than the first."

In the Congo there have been a series of significant movements among the Africans springing out of the sect of Jehovah's Witnesses (or the Watch Tower). As late as 1944 a prophet arose among the Masisi tribe and announced that he was Christ Come Again. He interpreted the Bible to mean that Black Men were the chosen race and should become masters of the White Men. Ritual dances were performed around the Bible. Some white planters were then kidnapped, stripped, and made to carry loads on their heads for 12 miles. A worse fate was spared them only because the Authorities got wind just in time. It is true that other missionaries denounce the Watch Tower as not being a *bona fide*

Mission movement and as being financed by Anti-Imperialist groups in the United States, but a sharp significance still remains.

Governments can no more tolerate a *laissez-faire* policy towards Mission interests than they can towards mining or planting interests. The power exercised by some of the Jesuit missionaries in the Congo, above all the pretensions of a prelate like Monseigneur de Hemptine, a priest of outstanding personality who shares with the Mining Trust the control of the Katanga, are scarcely admissible.

Governments in all colonies have had to deal with cases of intolerable interference with native morality, native social discipline, and native legally-constituted authorities, by missionaries, above all by Roman Catholic missionaries. The latter make much play in their appeals to Governors with the clichés "freedom of conscience" and "liberty of worship," but in practice they seek to deny that freedom and that liberty to all who do not accept their conscience and their worship. A concrete case arose in the Gold Coast in 1937 when the head of the White Fathers, a group that contains many priests who are fine as persons, that has some good work to its credit and that is free of the virulence of some of the Roman Catholic priests,[1] wrote a memorandum for a Vatican Inspector on the conflict between the Christian religion (as conceived by the Roman Catholic Church) and Native Law and Custom (as upheld and guaranteed by the British Government so long as, in the official phrase, it is "not repugnant to justice, equity, and good conscience"). Monseigneur, despite his residence of 30 odd years in the country, showed a good deal of ignorance of native law and custom.

Their most mischievous meddling is with African marriage laws. To the Roman Catholic priest much of African marriage

[1] Roman Catholic propaganda in British colonies is almost entirely in the hands of aliens, some of whom are actively Anti-British. During the war my military duties brought me official cognisance of a case in Sierra Leone and another in the Gold Coast, both priests being Irish. They are no doubt exceptions; the average Irish priest has all the warmth and charm for which his race is well known and has a good touch with Africans.

is not marriage at all but a mortal sin. Further, where there is polygamous marriage they refuse the status of marriage to all but the first wife; the others they, in effect, divorce. The wise humane and decent provisions for divorce in most African groups are on the other hand assailed with tyrannical bigotry. The priests seek to arrogate to themselves the right of finding husbands or wives for their converts and they terrorize those who resist or lapse. Parental control over children is thus broken up, women lose their old traditional security, and family life is disrupted. The inheritance of widows, for example, which for the African was a sacred duty to the dead and a sacred right of the living, and which we should see at once as a social insurance against the widows being left destitute and defenceless, is condemned in the name of Christ. In practice the normal lot left to them is then prostitution. Just as the priests disrupt the authority of parents and husbands and family elders, so too do they disrupt the authority of Chiefs and other constituted authorities. Converts wear metal crosses and frequently use the badge as a pretext for being saucy to chiefs. Whatever they might say to the contrary the priests recognize only one authority—their own. Even in Roman Catholic countries in Europe they are made to accept some compromise between Mediaeval Canon Law and modern civilized civil law; amongst defenceless African pagans their way is easier.

Among other matters in which they interfere is the burial of the dead. As one senior British official in the Gold Coast wrote in connection with a Roman Catholic disturbance in his province, "Africans hold just as strongly as do Christians that certain rites are necessary for the repose of the soul of their departed relations." So too the ceremonies connected with opening up a new farm, building a new house, and so on.

The exploitation of material needs like schools or hospitals, which ought to be provided by Government, as a weapon in proselytization, is indefensible, above all when it is helped on by Government grants. In Southern Nigeria in 1945 an Irish Roman

Catholic priest announced that if the natives in a certain place would contribute such and such a sum he would give them a maternity hospital and a school. It is to be hoped that the Medical and Education Development Schemes for Nigeria will put an end to this thin-edge-of-the-wedge method of proselytizing.

The position is the more unfortunate when the Governor of the Colony happens to be a Roman Catholic himself.

On the other hand, of course, there are not a few priests who in themselves represent well the teachings of Christ and who convey the elements of Christianity with humility and wisdom. Africa has seen few nobler men than Father Trilles, the French priest who worked so long, so affectionately, and so humbly amongst the Pygmies.

It is unnecessary to add that I am not assailing Christianity nor the Roman Catholic Church nor the Roman Catholic Priesthood. Many of the White Fathers and not a few of the Irish missionaries are beyond reproach. Protestant missions are by no means free of the defects noted above. But an objective survey of Colonial Government cannot escape a reference to what is in truth an essential point. Wordsworth in the tropics has not, as Mr. Aldous Huxley once pointed out, the same message as Wordsworth in the Lake District.[1]

Missionaries should be licensed and inspected and, when desirable, deported. No missionary should be allowed to enter the country without a permit, given only after a severe and comprehensive examination. Quotas should also be determined so that no one sect or creed gets a predominant position. The entry

[1] Footnote on African Islam: Islam brought to Africa Monotheism, a crusade against alcoholism, an international fellowship of believers something near equal, a moral code not without a certain elevation but always within reasonable reach of African practice, and personal dignity. The Mohammedan peoples in tropical Africa are a good testimony to their own religion, exception made of the Joloffs in Senegal. Islam in tropical Africa lacks all intolerance. The main defects of Islam are firstly the official position accorded to women (though there are signs of change) and secondly its association with and dependence upon the one book, the Koran. This means that if the limits of its evolution have not been reached, which sometimes seems the case, further growth will be retarded by the rigidity of Allah's Word as written down by the Prophet.

in such large and unchecked numbers of alien Roman Catholic priests into the colonies of England, a Protestant and Erastian country, is an oddity that may well have embarrassing results a generation hence. The Roman Catholics will in any case from their doctrine and ritual always have an advantage in Africa: the dogma, for instance, that the priests can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and that by giving or withholding this sacrament they can determine future weal or woe, is close to the fetishist's mentality. The practice of confession also appeals strongly.

With these background facts in mind we will now glance briefly at what the British, the French, and the Belgians are doing for the education of their colonial subjects.

Just as medical policy has been feeblest and most muddled in the British colonies, so too British educational policy has been feebler and more muddled than either French or Belgian. Happily there is an improvement now being made and reforms inspired by both realism and imagination have been promised.

The French, from the days of their arrival in Africa, showed an enthusiastic concern for schooling the African. One of the first acts of a soldier like Gallieni after pacifying a town was to set up a school. French education policy today is clear-cut. It is a "carefully devised" part of that total French policy towards their colonies which will be noticed in the next chapter. The education policy has been summed up by one Governor-General as "*instruire la masse et dégager l'élite.*" This is how it works: All education is free. All education is controlled by the Government. Private schools such as Mission schools are not tolerated unless they have received a permit and then they must follow the courses laid down by the Government. The problem of Roman Catholic schools, so difficult in all colonies, is thus solved by the Roman Catholic French. They would never tolerate certain activities of certain Roman Catholic missionaries which

are considered, fatalistically, as politically inevitable in British colonies. Only the French language is used, never a vernacular. There is no differentiation between Black and White in the schools: the only differentiation is between those who pass and those who fail the examinations. Again and again in the bush I have seen the children of French officials sitting in a class of African children and being taught by the local African schoolmaster. At the Lycée (the Secondary school) at Dakar in 1944 the Admiral's daughter was sharing a desk with an African girl, and the daughters of other French officers and officials were doing the same. In principle, elementary education is open to every African child; though in practice financial difficulties modify the principle; when funds are available there is no doubt that elementary education will be compulsory. The elementary schools in all towns of any size are run on very much the same lines as the primary schools in France. Often the headmaster is a Frenchman of the *primaire* social class and he lives, at this N.C.O. standard, on pretty close terms with the literate Africans. In the villages are the *Ecoles Rurales*, one of the finest conceptions of the French, their objective being to educate but at the same time to make no break with village life. Literacy is thus but one subject in a curriculum that includes Hygiene and Agriculture. Children can come naked if that is the village custom. Teachers are trained in the admirable college at Koulikoro, with its fine farms, gardens, livestock, and workshops. Emphasis in all primary schools indeed is on vocational trading. To teach the reading and writing of French, and the general ideas of French life, French patriotism, and French Imperial geography, and then to produce mechanics, carpenters, and other tradesmen, as required and, in the villages, peasants: that is the purpose in educating the mass.

The *élites*, the *èvolués*, who enjoy a special position in the French colonies, are neatly separated from the mass. They are given a higher education designed to assimilate them to French civilization and to use them as auxiliaries in the propagation of French civilization, which is the goal of French colonial effort.

The supply of this *élite* is in principle limited to the number of jobs going. The French claim that they thus avoid the problem of an unemployed literate class who, as is well known, become the most dangerous enemy of, instead of a useful auxiliary to, the colonial Power. In practice the balance is achieved by accident —there is still a shortage of clerks.[1] This *élite* is encouraged to think of itself as French rather than as African and the attitude to its colour is less provocative than among any other colonial Power except the Portuguese. There is a growing approximation to social equality between them and the French N.C.O. class.

The way the French treat the half-caste shows them at their best. There has been as much nonsense written and spoken about the half-caste as about the old League of Nations. The half-caste exists; he is with us; in the towns he will no doubt increase. The fact is not deplorable. It is to be welcomed. Brazil is a sufficient answer to pessimistic forboding about miscegenation. An accession of European blood in the urban and detribalized communities of Africa will do no harm. In the British colonies there is a persistent official assumption that there are no half-castes. As a result they are usually abandoned. The women become prostitutes and the men tend to become a lost unhappy people with bitterness and hatred in their hearts. Yet this need not be so. Some officers in Nigeria will recall Mustapha X, the son of a Lieutenant-Governor (subsequently Governor elsewhere) who became a Government clerk. They will agree, I believe, that Mustapha had much of the ability of his father with a higher resistance to the tropics and without the latter's unscrupulous careerism. Nor should account be ignored of our Governors of West Indian descent. In the French colonies there are *Foyers des Métis* (Homes for Half-castes) to which, in principle,[2] Administrative Officers are bound to send half-caste children in their district who are not being brought up in a suitable way; which

[1] The account in Hailey's *Survey* exaggerates the facts: the French have the *intention* rather than a *scheme*.

[2] Financial or administrative difficulties limit the practice of the principle.

would be the great majority. The Foyer at Bingerville in the Ivory Coast can be cited as an example. It has good buildings set in spacious grounds. The young French Director and his wife are enthusiastic and intelligent. The very young children of both sexes live together; when older they are separated. They are charges of the State. The education is in all senses completely French: they are brought up as French children and brought up well. They have no inferiority complex. The boys are trained for government intermediate posts and the girls are trained in housewifery and for various careers such as nursing. As the half-caste girl is generally good-looking and resists the tropical climate she has no difficulty in marrying. French N.C.O.s in the Colonial Army are sometimes glad to have such wives. Thus a class both contented with its lot and useful to the French Empire is brought into being.

The validity of the French theory and practice of education depends upon the validity of French colonial policy which, amongst other things, aims deliberately at making a break with African tribal culture, and at producing as many Africans as much French as possible. Those chosen for this frenchification, the *élite*, the *évolué*, are chosen by examination, without any other reference, the number of places open to them being determined by the economic demand. Here, apart from the basic validity of French colonial policy, is the question mark. A rigid arithmetical determination of the *élite* to whom the blessings of French culture and of a more or less equal social standing, to whom alone, in fact, is any sort of higher education open, will this meet the clamour, rising higher and higher, for secondary education and for the French status? Some of the children of this new class, for example, might soon be denied it because there will not be enough places for them. The French appear to avoid the colour bar, but is it not true that in practice they are producing both a colour and a class bar? The principle has hitherto worked because the demand for clerks, etc., has been greater than supply, a situation that will soon disappear.

As a matter of fact the severest critics of the French system are French colonial officials, not least French colonial education officials, themselves. They deplore the break with the African environment, the imposition of French culture on people to whom it is largely irrelevant, and the creation of a class of *ersatz* Frenchmen.

The Belgian education policy displays the realism, the humanitarianism, the method, and the enlightened self-interest that are characteristic of their colonial policy and practice as a whole, and also of the pronounced slant recognized in all aspects of the Belgian colonial effort which is given by the power and privilege and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church in the Congo. Policy is decisively against the *ersatz* European. Primary education is in the vernacular. The emphasis at all stages of education is vocational, from training carpenters to producing medical auxiliaries. In the Congo alone, thanks to this vocational training, is African labour ordinarily economic today. The bulk of primary and much of the vocational schooling is in the hands of the missionaries who, in the case of the Roman Catholics, are subsidized by Government and are given a pretty free hand in details. Governor-General Ryckmans has recently accorded subsidies to the Protestant Mission schools.

The British education practices—it has hardly been possible to speak of a British education policy—have mingled every approach and every attitude that could be disastrous, disaster itself normally being warded off only because of the inspired muddle which resulted in nothing getting very far and in what was done in one direction being cancelled out by what was at the same time being done in the opposite direction. Much-needed reform is now on the way.

One peculiarly British contribution that has come to stay is the modified Public School idea. This suits the African: it appeals to his athleticism, to his narrow group loyalty, to his instinct for

manners, and to his snobbery. Its discipline and the inculcation of ideas of honour are much needed by boys and men from whom tribal authority is loosening; and its mild colouring of Christian teaching is, in the non-Islam parts, to the good.[1] Nor is there any denying that British educational practice has shown concern with quality. The special evils of British educational practice have been fourfold.

First, the multiplication of the quasi-literate clerk class and the neglect of vocational education, and with it the neglect of village schools and of the countryman in general. Second, the imposition of more or less unmodified curricula taken *en bloc* from English schools and designed for English certificates (the setting and marking of the examination papers for which is or was normally done in England by people who had never seen an African!); "the cult of the certificate" as Lord Harlech called it when he was Under-Secretary of State. Third (it is part of the same mentality), the sending, often on scholarships at Government expense, of Africans to England. Some Africans, especially of the Sierra Leone type, who are now quite Europeanized, do well there; but to send Africans in the numbers sent from the Gold Coast and Nigeria is good neither for the individuals concerned nor for their country. Fourth, the uncontrolled or insufficiently controlled Mission schools. The worst examples are found in our best colony, the Gold Coast.

These evils are now admitted and plans are being worked out for correcting them. The greatest opposition to reform comes from the African literates themselves. They see the suppression of the External Examination system as a trick to deprive them of English credentials, and they see the plan of providing facilities for higher education in Africa instead of in England or U.S.A. as a trick to shut them off from the outside world. Nevertheless, I believe that their opposition would soon disappear in the face of a *fait accompli*. And does the opposition of so tiny a group

[1] I have been repeatedly struck by the good manners of the pupils of Achimota.

matter? The interest of the country as a whole must be the sole criterion. The Commission sent out to West Africa in 1944 to report on Higher Education there have now recommended the creation of colleges of university standing in Nigeria (Science and Medicine) the Gold Coast (Arts and Engineering), and Sierra Leone.

The parallel between industrialization and farming for export on the one hand and "literary" education and Mission schools on the other is evident. Both are the solution of a problem which would occur naturally to an urbanized and detribalized outlook like that of our own. In both cases, too, it was not seen that, the African circumstances being what they are, Ignorance, like Poverty, is not just a handicap but also a shield.

To recapitulate, the assault on Disease, Poverty, and Ignorance must be three-pronged, as shown above, and it must be based on a scientific and cautious improvement of environment, not a destruction of it. The African has assets in his physical, mental, and spiritual legacies which must on no account be squandered. If by removing Disease, Poverty, and Ignorance you undermine his resistance to the diseases, poverties, and ignorances of civilization, what good have you done?

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CHAPTER IV

Policy and Practice: British, French, and Belgian

THE Powers with colonies cannot escape having some main intention about the way they run them. It is this intention which forms their colonial policy. The way they cope with these peculiarly African material and moral problems which we have just looked at, is determined, directly or indirectly, clearly or vaguely, by it. Colonial policy thus amounts to saying what kind of Africa they have in mind.

All of the colonial Powers in Africa have made official declarations of their policy. These give a fair enough indication of the broad general direction. But to know what the Powers are really doing and whither they are really moving it is necessary to see them at work in the field. It will then be found that their colonial practice is largely shaped by their national temperament and by the way they do things at home, reacting on the local environment. The temperamental similarity between the British and the Belgians (or rather the Flemish Belgians, who predominate in their colony), a similarity that reveals itself in their sense of humour, would have not a little to do with similarities in colonial practice. The Belgian reaction to the kingdoms in Ruanda-Urundi is about the same as our reaction to the kingdom of Buganda or to the Emirates in Northern Nigeria. The reaction of the French to the Hausa Emirates in their territories is on the other hand sharply different. The official documents must therefore be read with constant reference to the temperament and to the tradition of the ruling Power concerned, and also with unforgetfulness of Drift and the Line of Least Resistance, especially in the colonies themselves where climate makes clear-cut energy uncommon.

FRENCH OBJECTIVES

The French objectives have alone been defined precisely and in detail. French colonial policy hangs together as a unified whole. It used to be called Assimilation; it was then called Association; it now uses both terms but the accent is strongly on Assimilation, as the celebrated Brazzaville Conference in 1944 shows. *Association* means that the colonial charges are to be associated with the French way of life; *Assimilation* means that they are to be assimilated into it. Association will be the aim where, as for example in Indo-China, Assimilation is not practicable. In Africa the aim is Assimilation. Native institutions are to be used for utilitarian reasons where desirable, but strictly in subordination to the objective of frenchification and not because they have any inherent value in themselves. The aim is to make the African a black Frenchman, and to make the colonies not self-governing Dominions but so many *Departments* of France. They will be *La France d'Outremer*. The French Empire is to be welded into a tightly-bound entity, the *Union Française*, run from the centre, Paris. Protectionism will limit the trade to the Empire where possible, and economic programmes will be worked out in Paris and then imposed upon the colonies; this colony to produce quotas of this and that commodity, and in return to import quotas of this or that; Senegal, for example, groundnuts for the vegetable oil requirements of France, and Indo-China rice for Senegal food requirements. And each colony will furnish its contingent of military man-power to the Empire.

Thus in no French colony are there any of those embryonic legislatures and executives which are so characteristic of British colonies. Such provision as exists, or is contemplated, for representing colonial opinion does not go beyond sending men to Paris on councils with purely advisory functions and, at the most, Deputies to the Parliament in Paris. Centralization is the key. The source of law is the Minister's decree issued from Paris.

An exceptional position, however, is to be given to Indo-

China. The Minister for Colonies made a declaration on March 25, 1945, on the constitution that will be given to Indo-China once it has been liberated. The five colonies will form an Indo-China Federation. The Governor-General will be assisted by local ministers chosen by himself. The Federation will enjoy a limited economic autonomy. Indo-Chinese will be admitted to all posts civil and military throughout the French Union. And, most interesting of all, a Legislative Council on the British model will be set up. But, it is emphasized, there will be no Indo-China autonomy or self-government.[1]

The French are now less optimistic about the speed with which all or the majority of their African subjects can achieve frenchification; a fact which had much to do with the pre-war change from *assimilation* to *association*. The naked Koniagui in Guinée, for example, and even the clothed millions in the interior, have been showing an obstinate slowness in taking up French culture. They, the mass, will therefore be allowed to go on in the old way, or rather some of the old ways, but they must at least learn to speak and read and write French, and they must do French military service.

The French system of compulsory military service, it can be remarked in passing, dictated by the perilous strategic position of France *vis-à-vis* Germany, costs the French more in popularity among their African subjects than anything else. In principle all able-bodied Africans are liable to three years' service; much of the service is done outside of tropical Africa. If the Army does not need the whole of any one "class" (e.g. "the 1946 class"), those not enlisted can be put into the Labour Service, the so-called *deuxième portion*. (In addition, forced labour is common for building roads and other public works.) Any town of even small size has its barracks and its soldiers. The village elders hate the system as it deprives them of a considerable labour force

[1] Since the above was written the position has become confused through the outbreak of armed revolt. The outbreak, in my opinion, was to be expected. It has significant lessons for the French.

needed for producing their food. The better the race the more they suffer because they are more valuable as soldiers. Moreover, many, perhaps most, of the recruits are lost to the village for ever; they leave with tears but they rarely come back. They lose all taste for the old life and prefer to live in the towns. More of them deteriorate socially, acquiring habits of idleness, scrounging, and sometimes of drinking, more than do Belgian or British African soldiers. At the same time it costs the French a good deal in prestige as ordinarily the recruits spend some time in France and there they are solicited by white prostitutes. And it is doubtful whether it produces a military force worth the cost both to the African or to the French. It produces a big but a mediocre force. It is doubtful indeed whether French African troops are ever worth using outside of the tropics. The volunteer system in the British colonies allows a choice so rigorous that only the really apt are selected for the Army and they become a *corps d'élite*.

On the other hand the French, who have a strong sense of the noblesse of the sword, do give and receive a respect and camaraderie with their black troops who have seen service. To this extent their military system creates a certain bond.

In French West Africa there is a group of natives with a special status—the *concitoyens* or co-citizens. After the 1848 Revolution the French conferred the rights of French citizenship on their black subjects. The only black subjects they had in Africa at the time were the Joloffs along or near the coast of Senegal.[1] They organized them into four *communes* and gave them French law and French justice (subsequently modified by allowing Mohammedan law, notably for inheritance and polygamy, and a special code) and also representation in the French Parliament. (Incidentally French officers have no vote.) Free education and whatever else is going for Frenchmen is theirs. The men and women in these *communes* (now merged to three), Dakar, St. Louis, and Rufisque, are known as the *concitoyens* or *originaires*. As this

[1] It is because Senegal was for long the only French colony in Africa that all French Negro troops are still known as *Tirailleurs Senegalais*.

was before long seen to be a mistake, but no one dared to annul it or to move for annulling it, for fear of being branded as anti-Democratic or anti-African, these *communes* remained but citizenship has been limited to them and not extended to the rest of Senegal, let alone to the rest of Africa. Hence this oddly privileged minority of 80,000 natives, marked off from the rest of the 2 million in Senegal and from the 15 million in French West Africa.

The black *concitoyens*, though of exactly similar culture and style of living to the other Joloffs in Senegal, do the same military service and under the same conditions as Frenchmen—twelve months instead of the three years done by other Africans before the war, the same pay, the same food (including the wine ration), the same clothing, and the same precautions against heatstroke. As soldiers they are useless, lacking physical resistance and courage. Everyone derides this old absurdity but no one dares touch it. The sacred name of Democracy is thus perverted into maintaining a small privileged group. In Paris political circles the Joloff *concitoyens* hold forth as the spokesmen of black Africa. It is the more regrettable because the town Joloff is the least attractive native in all Africa—too many of them are dirty, ugly, mannerless, quarrelsome, excitable, dishonest, and with little moral sense. The situation is the worse in as much as they predominate in Dakar, the capital of French West Africa, and can there exert and do exert continual pressure on the Government, the French official having the same fear for, and showing the same cowardice in front of, them as the British official has and shows for the black lawyer. The Joloff is well aware of his privileges and of what can be done by appeals to Parliament or to the Press, and above all to well-meaning but ignorant Left-wing groups in France. It is a daily sight in Dakar to see Joloffs pushing French ladies off the street and bathing on beaches made for Europeans. I have more than once seen them evacuating on the beaches in full view of a French family.

The *concitoyens* have been organized by the French Socialist

Party. An interesting fact is that they are normally both Mohammedan and Socialist. The Secretary-General of the Socialist Party in Senegal (which includes Frenchmen) is a Mohammedan Hadji. Their socialism, however, has, on examination, more of black nationalism than of socialism. In the elections in 1945—the first for a decade—their *bloc Senegalais* swept the polls with over 90 per cent of the votes. Their leader is a well-to-do Joloff lawyer, and, it is fair to add, a man of ability and character.

Provision exists for creating other *concitoyens*, but as only about fifteen are created each year, it is of no practical interest. The total number for West Africa outside of the Senegal *concitoyens* is some 2,000.[1]

BELGIAN OBJECTIVES

The Belgian Congo, following on the remarkable explorations of Stanley, Grenfell, and others, began life as a Protectorate run by an international humanitarian association, in which Englishmen predominated, dedicated to the work of suppressing slavery in Central Africa. King Leopold II of the Belgians, one of the most sinister figures of the 19th century, a heart as cold as the tomb, a lechery as hot and as insatiable as an Oriental dream, a miser's greed for money and a business-man's cunning and single obsession in pursuing it, a man of intelligence and unshakable purpose, got himself made President of the humanitarians, and before long, in the eighties, evolved into the King of the Congo Free State. He had already made careful soundings as to taking over Abyssinia, but the Congo, now explored and opened up by Englishmen, and held in the feeble hands of idealists who combined the English reverence for monarchs with an English vagueness, was made to order for Leopold. Under him the Congo Free State had no official connection with Belgium: he happened to be the monarch of both countries. It was not until

[1] French North Africa does not come under the French Colonial Office. The two Protectorates of Morocco and Tunis come inder the Foreign Office and Algeria comes under the Ministry for the Interior. It is nevertheless closely affected by French colonial policy concepts.

1908, after Leopold's death, by when there had arisen a world-wide indignation at the atrocities systematically perpetrated on the Africans in pursuit of ivory, rubber, and whatever else yielded profits (Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*), brought to head by the exposures of less vague Englishmen, that this private monarchy was suppressed and the Free State made a colony of Belgium subject to the Parliament of Belgium.[1] The people of Belgium thus acquired responsibility for a colony where millions of acres of forest and agricultural land and millions of acres of mining country had been alienated to corporations, where the natives had been antagonized, and where public administration had been conducted with the same moral standards as a patent medicine company. Such an inheritance was bound to leave some of its traces. Yet such has been the conscience and effort devoted to the task by a people with no colonial experience whatever that the Belgian Congo today is as well-run as the best-run colony in Africa. Lugard's idea of the Dual Mandate has been carried furthest—of developing for the world the riches of the colony while at the same time doing the best (according to their lights) for the colonial charges. The Belgian literature on colonial matters is as probing and as interesting as that produced by any colonial Power today.

Here are the basic facts about the Congo:—

First, it is far and away the richest colony in Africa. It alone of African colonies has millions and millions of acres of fertile agricultural and forest land. It alone has thousands of miles of navigable waterways (the Congo, the Luluaba, the Kasai, the Kichapa, and the Lakes). It has the highest hydro-electric potential in the world. It has a wide range of mineral wealth—copper, tin, gold, diamonds, iron, and coal, as well as the rare minerals like radium. Thanks to this potential it already has a fully equipped textile industry (about 20 million yards produced in 1943), leather and shoe (25,000 pairs in 1943), and many other industries; and it is bound to become a considerable African industrial power.

[1] Leopold had in fact in his last will and testament bequeathed it to Belgium.

A traveller today is struck with the stage to which the industrial and general economic development has been carried, as evidenced in the ports, the railways, the river services, the air services, and factories, and the mines.

Second, related to this economic development and to the heritage of Leopold's concessionaires, is the part played by big corporations. Lever's soap combine, for example, known as the *Huileries du Congo Belge* and a part of the Lever-U.A.C. trust, controls great tracts of rich land. The chief of these corporations is the Société Générale de la Belgique, a powerful holding company that commands a variety of interests reminiscent of those of the Mitsui or Mitsubishi in Japan. It embraces banks, insurance, shipping, airlines, plantations, urban property, mines (Union Minière is a subsidiary), and millions of acres of land. Such a concentration of financial power might be a danger because it can bring pressure to bear directly and indirectly (e.g. by encouraging senior officials of the colony with the hope of highly paid directorates, or by political-economic give and take at Brussels), but in practice it is hard to put one's finger on specific abuses. The fact that the Belgian Government is a big shareholder in most of the subsidiaries, taking over part of Leopold's interests in them, would be one safeguard. The power of the Belgian Parliament is another safeguard. Thus while Big Business has an importance in the Congo exceeding that in any other colony it does appear to be sufficiently under control. And controlled Big Business may well be the most efficient way of developing the economic resources of the colony.

Third, the power of the Roman Catholic Church. In principle, a relic of the international beginnings of the old Free State, Protestant missionaries have equal rights and opportunities with the Roman Catholic Church. In practice the Roman Catholic Church is the State religion subsidized with State money.[1] It

[1] During the war subsidies have been given to the Protestants, as noted above, so as to enable them to keep their schools going. There are about 800 Protestant missionaries and they claim to have about 400,000 baptized converts. The Roman Catholics have over 3,000 missionaries and over 2 million converts.

also has extensive holdings of land. An Apostolic Delegate is accredited to the Governor-General. Education is mostly in the hands of the Church. No other colony, not excluding the colonies of Catholic Powers like France or Portugal, gives such a position to the Church. One good effect is that moral considerations do receive attention. And as Belgium is a Roman Catholic country it cannot be expected that she wants either Protestant or foreign missionaries indoctrinating her colonial charges with a culture alien to her own.

Fourth, the native population of the Congo, which amounts to about 10½ million (excluding the densely populated Mandate of Ruanda-Urandi, which amounts to another 4 million) is predominantly Bantu, primitive in its stage of social and political evolution, and without the aggressiveness of the West African negro. The political ferment which is destined to have considerable importance before long in West Africa will come slowly in the Congo.

As for their objectives, the Belgians, unlike the French, do not consider their colony as the overseas part of the home country. On the other hand, unlike the British, they do not foresee it, anyhow within any lapse of time that can matter for the present, as moving towards self-government. (There is a movement for local white self-government similar to that in Kenya. So far there are less than 40,000 whites in the colony, about three in four being Belgian, and it is probable that further European colonization will not be encouraged.) Government is centralized: control is firmly seated in Brussels. The Minister's decree is the source of law. In the colony itself native traditional authorities are used as much as possible.

BRITISH OBJECTIVES

The British colonies contrast sharply with both the French and the Belgian, for our aim and also our practice is to eliminate ourselves. We shall not disappear tomorrow nor the day after

tomorrow, but the Governor of each British colony is in fact presiding over the liquidation of that colony—as a colony. It is to become a self-governing dominion.

The essentials of British policy and practice can be summarized easily. First, "the interests of the African natives must be paramount."[1] Second, the running of each colony is, as far as possible, left to the Governor of each colony. "We do not try to run the colonies from Downing Street," as Mr. Churchill once said when Minister for Colonies. The control of the colonial empire centralized in Brussels in the case of the Belgians and in Paris in the case of the French is quite otherwise with the British. Thus unlike in the French and Belgian Empires, the source of law is the colony itself, not the metropolitan Government.[2] Indeed a new Colonial Constitution can be introduced, as it was introduced in the Gold Coast in 1944, with scarcely a word being uttered in Parliament. Thus, too, again unlike the French and Belgians, we have an incipient Parliament in each colony, the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council is the source of law. It is of no importance in this connection that for the time being some colonies have no elected members and that where there are elected members there is an official majority. (Recent exceptions are the Gold Coast and Nigeria.) The point is that the machinery of the parliamentary system, of representative government, exists and is in fact the foundation of Government in the colonies. Popular representation can be and is being broadened *pari passu* with the fitness of the people to make use of it.

Third, administration is based upon what is known as Indirect Rule. This is considered to be the best way of interesting natives, and of using them, in the governing of themselves. That is to say, it is a method of local self-government carried

[1] Devonshire White Paper, 1923. Amplified by Mr. Churchill when Secretary of State and by subsequent Ministers.

[2] It is this decentralization which largely accounts for the striking lack of a single policy on such matters as Education, Agriculture, Land Tenure, Mining, etc. The disadvantageous side of this decentralization is that the passing whims of Governors have counted for too much.

out on the advice of and under the supervision of British officials.[1]

INDIRECT RULE

The policy of Indirect Rule was worked out in Northern Nigeria by Lord Lugard when he was the first Governor, between 1900–1906, extended by him to all Nigeria when he became Governor-General of the union of North and South Nigeria, 1912–1919, and subsequently expounded in his book *The Dual Mandate*. The policy was brought into some disrepute in the twenties through a series of mediocre careerists who became Lieutenant-Governors of Northern Nigeria and who, exploiting his great name, sought to make an occult mystery of it as something too deep to be understood by the uninitiated, and, at the same time, to establish archaic Islamic absolute monarchies. One Lieutenant-Governor even attempted to make Europeans subject to native Mohammedan courts with a power of death sentence. Nevertheless the substance of Lord Lugard's policy has stood the test of time, including the time of these careerists, and it is now the accepted policy throughout British Africa and, to a large extent, the current practice. Model examples are provided from the Uganda, Papua, and the Ovambas in S.W. Africa. The Belgians have adopted it (with certain modifications) and there are not a few French Colonial Administrators like Governor Louveau, the late Governor Geismar, and to some extent the late Governor-General Eboué, who regret that it is not the policy of the French. It is largely practised in the model French colony, the Cameroons.

Indirect Rule originated from the fact that Lugard in Northern Nigeria had only a handful of officers to rule ten to twelve million Africans. He was forced to use the native institutions

[1] To paraphrase Prof. MacMillan's definition. The word *Trusteeship* has now been tabooed officially. The function of a trustee is the trust and development of an estate, and the heir. Wise Africans are well aware that for the time being they must be wards. A good example of how the British carry out their trusteeship at its best can be found in the *Report on the N.T.'s of the Gold Coast* 1937–38.

which were there as a going concern. As it happened there were in Northern Nigeria a score of highly developed Emirates. After further experience of these native institutions Lugard moved on to realizing that this was not only the easiest practicable course for the British to pursue, but it was the best course for the Africans. That is to say, he moved on to appreciating the inherent value of African institutions and of developing the African through them. The essence of Indirect Rule is thus to rule through the traditional sources of authority, the European official being there to advise and to supervise.[1] The customary authority is a monarchy in the Emirates and in Uganda, a powerful chiefdom in some other places, a federation or a disconnected series of chiefdoms in still others, and small village groups, even family groups, in others. Thus there is one purpose to Indirect Rule, but dozens of different kinds of Indirect Rule.[2]

Indirect Rule has come in for the following main criticisms:—

First, these Native Authorities are not sufficiently effective for the complexity and the pace of the new economic and social development promised to Africa. The answer to this criticism is that if the development is so fast that the continously evolving and self-adapting Native Authorities cannot cope with it, it is then too fast for African society. We are in danger in fact of going too fast.

Second, chiefs or other Native Authorities are given powers that they did not enjoy before the white man came and that are unknown to native customary law. This is true in a few cases, but it is not true for the majority. The answer is for the British Authorities not to give the powers unless it is demonstrably in the interests of the community to do so and unless supervision is alert so as to prevent abuses.

[1] Lugard's *Political Memoranda*, written in his early N. Nigeria days, are still worth study by the colonial official.

[2] The standard academic account of Indirect Rule is given in Margery Perham's *Native Administration in Nigeria*, which is based upon a study of the official papers and on travel in Nigeria and other colonies.

Third, where the Native Authority is the Extended Family or some other small group you get such a multiplication of "governments" that modern functions cannot be carried out by them. In the Ibo country of Southern Nigeria, for example, 160 separate Native Authorities have been set up. There are 210 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone, formed into over a hundred separate native administrations. The answer to this is to enforce, in due time, a federation of authorities, and if this proves impossible then to rule directly. The Ibo is an anarchist at heart and may possibly do better under Direct Rule, modified by a measure of representative local government, than under Indirect.

Fourth, how are you going to integrate, to connect up, a multitudinous variety of Native Authorities into a common effort and common standards and, in time, into a common State? This question, is irrelevant to the question of Indirect Rule. The integration will be neither easier nor harder under Indirect than Direct Rule. And there is no reason, given good government, why the integration should not be achieved step by step just as it has been achieved between the French, the German, and the Italian peoples who compose Switzerland.

Fifth, native institutions are, like native customs, in any case disintegrating before the march of progress. Why then bother about them? The answer to this is that some native institutions —e.g. cliterodichotomy, tribal tattooing, marriage by capture, sacrifice—will disintegrate, and the sooner the better. Others will change, will evolve, just as institutions and customs have changed and evolved in England; but this is not the same thing as disintegration.

Sixth, the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of fitting in an educated population, which we are daily making larger and larger, with the traditional native authorities. For instance, a negro educated under Professor Laski at the London School of Economics, or another negro who has done a B.A. with "Honours" in British Imperialism in an American college, is not going to take orders from chiefs and elders who cannot read

and who show a cool indifference to the existence of Professor Laski or the American College. It is true that the strongest opponents to *Indirect Rule* are found amongst educated Africans. They want little or nothing of the old tribal institutions; for them the sooner African civilization approximates to European civilization the better. They complain of being treated as museum pieces.[1] It is understandable that this class, which is a new bourgeoisie, will feel the same resentment to the old ruling classes in Africa as the new capitalist classes in England and elsewhere, thrown up by the Industrial Revolution, felt to the old land-owning aristocracy. While Government cannot be expected to rearrange African society to accommodate them, something must nevertheless be done to meet their criticism and to engage their interest and loyalty.

The educated African will not, and cannot be expected to, remain quiescent under a regime that does not use his knowledge and mental training. Government should therefore lose no opportunity for having use made of them wherever practicable. Thus as far as possible chiefs should be educated men. It is not possible to choose at once all chiefs on this basis, but where, as is usual, the chief can be selected from a number of members of the chiefly family, preference could be given, other things being equal, to the educated members. Care, of course, should be given to the education of chiefly families. Likewise with tribal councillors, who are the assistants of the chief. This, in fact, is being done in all the colonies, and with good results. A high percentage of Gold Coast chiefs are educated. Fourteen or fifteen years ago when working in some of the Emirates in Northern Nigeria I began to feel that the Emirates, if retained at all (I was doubtful about the utility of retaining them), could never become anything but outmoded arbitrary monarchies.

[1] Cf. *Gambia Echo*, August 28, 1944: "We do not wish to see any of the old decaying constitutions restored and revived. . . . None of the intellectuals who have absorbed western ideas with such fervour will stoop to lend a hand in turning the scales again in favour of tribalism."

Since then some of the old Emirs and their councillors have died off, and as in the case of Zaria, Abuja and elsewhere, educated men have succeeded. The change is striking. I spent Christmas Day recently in the company of one of these educated Emirs, a product of Katsina-Kaduna Colleges, and his conversation, in excellent English, covered matters like the post-war settlement of Europe, the future of Russia, the inadmissibility of modern war. This process is only in its beginning. Step by step the Emirates can be run from top to bottom by educated men. Their capacity for adaptation, given courage and imagination on our part, will not be less than that of our own monarchy. It needs to be made clear, however, that no conceivable modification of native institutions can guarantee a white-collar job for every man who has been to school.

Making use of the educated class is the first reform required by the practice of Indirect Rule today. The second reform required is to limit the autocracy of the Emirates and of other monarchies or oligarchies by an effective public opinion. These autocracies are coming in for a good deal of criticism now, mostly on the score that they are not democratic and that they are traditionalist. The English, who have no equals for their monarchism and their traditionalism, ought not to be disconcerted by this criticism. Nevertheless, both in the immediate interests of good government and in accordance with our policy of ultimate self-government, steps must be taken towards limiting the monarchies and oligarchies and towards providing machinery whereby public opinion can be assured of bringing requisite pressure to bear in a constitutional way. This problem must be tackled in and from the villages. There is in just about all tribes a village head with his council of village elders (at bottom African society is pretty democratic and pretty equalitarian). In an Emirate like Kano, which has two million subjects, it is certain that the villages now count for little, much too little, at the centre. The most hopeful way of tackling the problem would be to create farmers' co-operatives, the village council

and the co-operative becoming one. The element of economic self-interest involved would vitalize village self-government; and from that base could expand up and up to the Emirate ministers. So far co-operation is widely developed in the French colonies alone—the *sociétés de prévoyance indigènes*—and it may well become, in spite of the French, their best contribution to the self-government of their Africans.[1]

Indirect Rule cannot work satisfactorily unless European supervision is continuous and probing. The riots in Uganda in 1945 were due to autocratic abuses in Buganda of which Government should have been aware and which should not have been allowed to exist. Comparable abuses have occurred and will go on occurring in other colonies because of inadequate supervision. Direct interference, moreover, is called for where customs become perverted. In parts of Sierra Leone, for example, the institution of polygamy is being perverted into a form of capitalism which has evil social effects. Mr. C. H. Newland, a District Commissioner there, has made a study of the phenomenon. Rich men pay the bride price on the women and thereby increase their wealth firstly by increasing their farm-labour force and secondly by collecting adultery compensations from the poor men who cannot afford to pay bride price. As a result, more than half the men in some regions had no hope of ever acquiring a wife and were in hopeless debt to the wealthy husbands on account of adultery compensations.

In pleading for Indirect Rule, even when reformed by taking into account the educated men and by limiting central native authority by the constitutionalized authority of public opinion, I do not argue that it is the best system for all places. Indirect Rule is not desirable where traditional authority has disappeared, as in parts of East Africa, or where it has disintegrated too far or

[1] Not as they are now but as they might be made. At present these co-operatives are mostly run directly by the D.C., who has at his disposal funds subjected to indifferent or no auditing. Thus sometimes the D.C.'s car will belong to the co-operative. Nevertheless the idea and the principle is there, and the practice can be and no doubt will be vivified.

lost responsibility as nearly everywhere around the old port areas, or where it is too rudimentary or too anarchistic as perhaps in parts of South-Eastern Nigeria. Also, in the new urban areas, where men and women are drawn from various places and tribes, it is better to have Direct Rule, encouraging representative institutions for local government on a municipal basis as quickly as possible. As the bulk of this new urban population is detribalized, but not yet Europeanized, this will not be easy and may for some time have to remain as a goal for the future. The "colony" part of Sierra Leone—i.e. Freetown and the Peninsula —has long been Europeanized and Christian so that Direct Rule plus local self-government is the only practicable policy there. Freetown is to be compared with the West Indies, rather than the African Hinterland. Nor is it argued that every item of Nigeria-type Indirect Rule should be introduced where Indirect Rule is a practicable policy. The case against Native Treasuries, for example, at all events as now generally conceived, is strong.

But the case for Indirect Rule in general, not as an end in itself but as a means to extending local government, is overwhelming. If I had any doubts left on the matter they would be resolved by watching the French system at work, where traditional native authorities have been systematically broken down. The Hausa word for Emir or Chief is *Sarki*. In the Hausa country belonging to the French the word *Sarki* today always refers to the French District Officer. . . . At Sikasso, once the seat of a Sudanese monarchy comparable with Kano, nothing is left today but a fragment of the walls of the old city defences. The reigning family was wiped out by the French at the same time as they razed the city to the ground. At Abomey, the seat of the old kingdom of Dahomey, one again sees the ruins of the enormous palace of the kings. One of their descendants, an ex-Lieutenant in the French Colonial Army, sits in a small compound at Abomey as the French nominated chief. . . . Where is the Roi du Cayor, who in the 18th and 19th centuries wielded such power in Senegal?

Not that native chiefs disappeared. The French soon found that they had not enough European personnel for the direct rule of every group or town or village. They therefore began putting in chiefs of their own selection, often old soldiers, or old clerks, and often foreigners to the group concerned. This worked in the way one would expect. Such chiefs became the French petty *fonctionnaires* on the spot but they lacked the real authority of a native ruler, because his authority is divine.[1] The real native authority, though unbeknown to the French, remained as a spiritual authority in the background. In the last fifteen or twenty years the French have realized this and have sought to reinstate these traditional authorities; but they always treat them as the local French *fonctionnaire* and allow little of the traditional power of the chief. He is a cheap but effective local agent. He is held responsible for law and order, for village policing, for finding the compulsory labour, for collecting tax, for compiling the population register, and so on. Even a great chief like the Moro Naba of the Moshi, who has the allegiance of over two million people of fine fighting and farming stock and to whom the French accord the trappings of office, has little real power.

This is intentional policy. It was reiterated at the Brazzaville Conference in 1944.[2] There the approach was strongly for *assimilation* though with corrections of certain mistakes made in the past. The emphasis was frankly on hastening the advance towards French civilization and against developing the native civilizations. The French are aiming not at bringing about the political independence of their colonial charges but rather at their political dependence, the pill being sugared with their *assimilation* to French institutions—the French law, the French system of administration, the French Parliament, and the French

[1] A remarkable article against the French thesis written by a chief, Fily Daba Sissoko, appears in *Renaissances*, October, 1944.

[2] The Brazzaville Conference was attended by the Minister, 3 Governor-Generals, 18 Governors and various others, and it lasted 10 days and made recommendations on French colonial policy and practice. Full report is given in *Renaissances*, October, 1944. There are also comm[illegible]

education system. African native institutions are retained or used only in so far as they serve this purpose. They are not considered to have a value for their own sake. The spearhead of the frenchification drive is the *élite*, the new educated, who of course have no traditional authority and therefore no sympathy with traditional authorities.[1]

Indeed the less the tribe or group has strong traditions of its own, the more quickly it seeks to become Europeanized. Thus the Mohammedan Hausa-Fulani, who has a real culture of his own, feels no desire to wear European clothes, sun spectacles, and topees. This is also true of the pagan races with a fighting tradition. The coast and forest races, on the other hand, who often had been broken by enslavement, are deeply attracted. French policy is having the effect of producing a profound social revolution wherein the old dominant races and groups are becoming subordinate to the former slave or servile peoples.

The Englishman by temperament feels little sympathy with the new class of schooled African; his preferences are for the "savage." The Frenchman by temperament feels little sympathy for the "savage"; his preferences are for the literate. French administration has slight interest in and gives little time to native customs and ideas and languages. The ignorance of French officials is in fact astonishing. I have met scores of French colonial officials, including men who had spent ten years or longer in the one community, but only two men amongst them all had learnt an African language. Interpreters are in universal use; a corps drawn from the famous *élite*. The interpreters, like the clerks in the District Commissioner's office, are generally foreigners in the community, by race and still more by sympathies. And as a single District Commissioner might be running a district with as many as a hundred thousand to a quarter of a million inhabitants, and as, too, the extreme centralization of all French administration keeps him closely to his files and records, the *de facto* power of the interpreters and clerks is great. The corruption

[1] In the capital of A.E.F. they have a Club called the *Cercle des Evolués*.

is equally great. They are hated and feared by the villagers. In many towns the biggest house is the interpreter's house. Yet one of the beliefs of the French which I have heard repeated many times is that they are closer to the African than are the British. Some Frenchmen are closer to some Africans; the French children who sit in the same schoolroom with African children, the French N.C.O. class (of which more anon) who are on terms of something like social equality with the African interpreter and clerk class, are close to the African; but the sympathy and the knowledge of British officers is closer to the African than that of their French colleagues as a whole.

Indeed I cannot avoid the impression that repugnance to or dislike for the African is more common amongst Frenchmen than amongst Englishmen. This is not due to a sense of colour (which is certainly stronger amongst the English than the French) but rather to the vehement impatience of the French temperament, above all an impatience with the mental pace of the African. A not uncommon result is that at one moment the African is being treated with easy familiarity and lavish handshaking, and at the next with irritable upbraiding or abuse. Caresses and kicks, speaking metaphorically, are apt to be mingled in a confusing rapidity. The African never quite knows where he is. His vanity is flattered by the handshaking but whether his respect is aroused is another matter. The average Frenchman in Africa, I believe, is at heart already disappointed and bored with his African *élite*. It is not easy, least of all for the impatient Frenchman, to hide boredom.

The indifference and ignorance as regards the ordinary bush African is shown by the literature, as thin in quantity as it is poor in quality, produced by the French official on Africa today. During the 19th century and up until about the last war, the French explorers, such as Duveyrier, and the French pioneering officials such as Delafosse or Carbou or Arcin, studied Africans with enthusiasm and wrote many books, including some of the best books. With the exception of

Governor Labouret, Governor-General Eboué, Monod, and a couple of others, they have produced little of value in the last twenty years. Both the quantity and the quality of British and Belgian colonial literatures, especially British, has declined in the same period, due probably to the increase of office work, but the decline is less steep than the French.[1]

And what does the African subject think about French rule? I was shown, amongst other documents and files, by a French friend, then District Commissioner at ——, a report by one of his recent predecessors, summing up the situation in the District over the preceding twenty years. In it he wrote "de la plupart des commandants de cercle qui se sont succedés â ——, il ne reste aucun souvenir, même pas celui de leurs noms"; and of the few who were remembered they were remembered because "les indigènes en ont conservé un mauvais souvenir" and always by the nickname which Africans choose so unerringly for hitting off a defect of their European masters. Thus one District Commissioner was remembered as "Captain Coutopo" (i.e. *coup de poing*, from his habit of striking them when in anger), another as "Mr. Fire" (because he was "nervous like a flame"), another as "Old Silence" (because he had a horror of noise, of drumming, of babies crying, of donkeys braying). The French, of course, are not unique in acquiring opprobrious nicknames. African verdicts on British officials would also be at times no less unflattering.

The French colonial system then is the clearest in conception and in definition and is the most likely to make an immediate appeal to the *évolué*; but it is not a good system. There is no paramountcy of African interests: France is paramount. French strategical interests are paramount. There is no future of self-

[1] The French produce the *Bulletin de l'Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire*, which is good, but *Nigeria*, produced in Nigeria, and perhaps *Sierra Leone Studies*, produced in Sierra Leone, are better. In addition *l'Institut* produces research papers and monographs. The work of this unique body is due little to official encouragement, almost wholly to its Director, the remarkable savant-explorer Theodore Monod.

government: only subordination to and dependency on the Metropole. There is small consideration for the ordinary African; consideration is mostly for the literate African, and even his place is permanently subaltern and auxiliary, unlike that of the African lawyer and doctor in the British colonies. For on examination the favoured position of the *évolué* is largely spurious: he remains favoured so long as he remains subaltern. Let him begin to talk about self-government, as is common amongst the same class in British colonies, and he will receive short shrift. The French Colonial Governments in fact are both hypersensitive to and suspicious of all criticism. The press has been closely watched and often closely controlled. At a certain moment I was officially interested in an incident which arose over the natives in the British part of a mandate, cut up between the British and French, agitating in the press of the local British colony for the bringing together of the two parts. The French Governor concerned could not believe that we had not instigated the agitation and that the press was not controlled by us. . . . So too with political meetings.

Another aspect of the iron hand in the velvet glove is the common practice of drafting telegrams in the District Commissioner's office or the Secretariats addressed to the Governor-General or the President of France from African chiefs or African religious leaders on the occasion of national fêtes, protesting undying loyalty to France and proclaiming boundless gratitude for the blessing of French rule and culture. I have a copy of a number of such telegrams from a Senegalese *Marabout* addressed to Marshal Pétain in 1941 and to General de Gaulle in 1944. The telegrams in the former year castigated the Gaullist mercenaries and rebels as being in the pay of England and gave devout thanks for Pétain; those in the latter year castigated Pétain for the indignity his unnatural regime had brought to the name of France, and thanked the great leader de Gaulle for wiping out the stain. In both cases the natives in whose name the telegrams were sent were declared to be ready to stand

by the addressee to the last man. They had of course, little knowledge of and little interest in the case of either Pétain or de Gaulle.

Some of the leaders are no doubt flattered by the apparent importance thus accorded to them—by the appearance that an expression of their opinion is of interest to the head of the French Government. The same flattery, or good manners, is exercised in giving the various African leaders a seat in the official tribunes at those public ceremonies (e.g. July 14th) so dear to the French; in paying and renewing courtesy calls; or in reserving special compartments in railway trains. But in the long run it is a risky proceeding. Leaders who have only the trappings of leaders will not count indefinitely with the African peoples, especially once the latter begin to agitate for concrete things. The danger is of fabricating such an atmosphere of pretence and bluff that the French rulers will come to believe in it themselves and thereby to miss the true currents of public opinion.[1]

It will not be long before the French will have trouble from their Senegal *concitoyens*. The way the wind is blowing is unmistakable. The elections of 1945 showed more than one straw. Speeches I have heard at political meetings in Dakar as also sentences in articles in their newspaper leave me in no doubt.[2]

Senegal is of today; but Senegal is a mere fraction of French tropical Africa. Political agitation in French tropical Africa is not yet within sight. But the kind of Africans in it will be determined by the general colonial policy of the French, and this does risk turning it all, in due course, into one large Senegal.

Fortunately for the French the gap between their policy and their practice is sufficiently wide to nullify the worst effects. For one thing there is the passive resistance of the ordinary African in the bush, a force as recusant as the ocean. For another,

[1] Did Governor-General Boisson, for example, believe that the dithyrambic article on his heroism during the Dakar Affair written by a Toucouleur *Chef de canton* convey any sincere picture of Toucouleur feelings on the matter? See *Paris-Dakar*, May 18, 1941, for the article or *Reveil*, March, 1945.

[2] *l'A.O.F.* Cf. article by Sar, May 18, 1945. Also protests of M. A. Gaye.

the average District Commissioner in the bush is a long way from Dakar, or Brazzaville, and longer still from Paris, and he, using common sense and his local knowledge, tends to do what is best suited to the local scene. Normally, too, he dislikes the official policy of assimilation. This is particularly true of the areas, now mostly in the Sahara, administered by soldiers. They, without any fine-wrought theories, carry out Lugard's Indirect Rule almost to the letter.

JUSTICE AND LAW

The subject of justice and law is of special importance in itself, of special importance in its relation to Indirect Rule, and of special importance in its effects at a time when the impact of European civilization is pressing relentlessly on African ideas and ways of life.

In the French colonies policy and practice are again clear. There is the *justice française* and the *justice indigène*. The former is French justice based on French law, administered in the usual French courts manned by professional magistrates or judges. Generally speaking it is only the French colonials and the African *concitoyens* and, since 1939, old native soldiers, who are subject to it.[1] It is the *justice indigène* which covers the great majority of the African population. It is administered in *Tribunaux Indigènes* (these have nothing in common with the native courts of our Indirect Rule. "They are native only in that they are not regulated by statutory law and in that they have native assessors"). The Tribunal is presided over by the District Commissioner and it can award the death penalty. Both in law and in procedure it approximates more and more to the ordinary French court. Yet the striking fact about justice in French Africa is that the great bulk of litigation is settled either directly and arbitrarily (which is not the same as unjustly) by

[1] It is interesting that a large proportion of the professional magistrates are West Indians, especially Martiniquais.

the District Commissioner in his office, or still more, unofficially and irregularly by the traditional chief. Thus in 1935[1] there were less than 20,000 civil and criminal cases before all the courts in all A.O.F. In the same year in Nigeria there were about 400,000 cases. These are striking figures.

The Belgians show their characteristic modification of the British system. That is to say that they make more use of professional courts than we do, but native courts (in the Indirect Rule sense of the expression), notably in civil affairs, are important and are becoming more important, although the necessary supervision and revision are carried out by a law officer rather than by the District Commissioner. The significant difference between Belgian and British justice is that the lawyer is either excluded or severely restricted in the former. The Belgians do not have to contend with hordes of African lawyers scratching for a living.

The British system of administering justice is another muddle of good and bad; of traditional British ideas on justice and of African common law; of Indirect Rule and Direct Rule. It is a case of the British muddle not yet having flowered into the British compromise. The Belgian practice is the least defective; partly but not wholly because the problem there is the least complicated. The French system is practical and fair. But the problem of law and justice is in all colonies far from solved. In the long run it affects the well-being of society not less, in Africa today more than, the political constitution. The practice in British colonies will be looked into below with more detail partly because it is an example of dangerous failures on our part and partly because it illustrates a problem common to all colonies.

African ideas on justice, like African ideas on God and the Good or African ideas on property (two deeply formative

[1] Although promised later figures I was unable to get them from the authorities.

factors on law everywhere), are not the same as European ideas; deriving, as these latter do, from Greco-Roman concepts on the one hand and from Christianity on the other. The truly Islamized parts of Africa stand alone in this matter because their judicial practice is determined by the Koran (modified inevitably by the local environment). For the rest of Africa, justice is at bottom a matter of appeasing, or anyhow of not displeasing, the ancestors, the spirits, the gods, or God; all of whom are easily upset and not easily satisfied. Hence the world, so dark, so obscure, to us, so deeply real to the Africans, of taboos, of sacrifices, of magic, of sorcery, of witchcraft. No European suzerain could tolerate all the manifestations of African customary justice. None could tolerate human sacrifice. Nor the punishment, sometimes by death, of a woman who bears twins. Nor poison ordeals.

But that is not the whole story. These are the fringes, the minor incidentals. The more one knows about the functioning of African society, as the anthropologists are confirming, the more one realizes that that society, including the judicial system of that society, makes sense. That is to say, the case for African jurisprudence is the same as the case for Indirect Rule; and, indeed, native courts form an integral part of the British practice of Indirect Rule. Lord Lugard and, until recent years, his successors in Nigeria retained the native courts *in toto* and excluded British law and judicial methods except for the tiny minority of Englishmen and of Europeanized Africans living there. On the whole this policy is now being reversed, or at least countered, despite the extension of Indirect Rule for administrative purposes. Native courts still predominate and the bulk of African litigation is still settled in native courts;[1] but lawyers and English procedure have been launched and the momentum they have gathered is not likely to be held.

What are the results?

[1] Before the war, about 400,000 cases were tried in the native courts and about 9,000 in the lawyer courts p.a.

The result of English law is to regulate behaviour in accordance with English ideas. It must be so, even though modifications are tolerated for local conditions. Thus one effect is to impose our ideas of property on a people whose ideas of property are traditionally largely communal. It is true that the Africans are bound to move towards a lesser communalization and towards a greater individualization of property, and that some extension of contract as against status, of a money economy, of credit, is inevitable, especially in the towns. Yet, excepting special towns and districts, the native courts have shown themselves quite capable of coping with these changes. The first result of English justice, then, is to impose European and capitalistic ideas of property and of economic relations.

The second result is to make justice less just. Law and justice cease to be synonymous.[1] If an African commits a crime and is brought before the Elders, or whoever constitutes the native court, he will soon be brought to book. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they will soon know whether he committed the crime or not, and they will know the most suitable punishment. The guilty man accepts their verdict. Likewise if he is brought before the District Commisioner justice is done and accepted. If, however, he is brought before a court subject to English procedure—elaborate pleadings, cast-iron rules, benefit of the doubt, right of appeal, lawyers, and a magistrate who knows neither the native language nor native law and custom—he will in the majority of cases get off. The court will not be satisfied that the guilt has been proved (for proof is difficult without an elaborately modernized police system) or the case will fail because he has been charged under Section IV (b) when it should have been V (f) ii. This uncertainty as to the white man's law never ceases to astonish the African. Even the white man does not know what his law really is! Every villager knows that the accused has committed the theft, but by the mysterious opera-

[1] Cf. *History of Legislation in connection with Native Jurisdiction in Gold Coast*. Governor Printer. Accra, 1931.

tions of the white man's law he gets off. If you commit a crime the first thing to do, therefore, is to get a lawyer, because he, the "professional liar," has "strong medicine," and can work the white man's oracles. Even District Commissioners are frightened of lawyers. So during the war, to take a case from my personal knowledge, of the thousands and thousands of thefts from Army, Navy and R.A.F. stores only a minority of the thieves were caught, and of that minority only a fraction could be convicted. And of the tiny fraction convicted the criminals were awarded two, three or four months' imprisonment. I recollect a case of three natives who stole an Army truck, drove it into the bush, sold the battery, tools, tyres, and movables, and then abandoned it. Two of the three were discharged, and the third was given three months' imprisonment.[1]

That raises the question of prisons, the only deterrent available now that corporal punishment has for all practical purposes been suppressed. Fines are no deterrent because few Africans keep their wealth in cash, and therefore have no money with which to pay fines. Prison is in most tribes a new idea, traditional punishment being death (rare), slavery, mutilation, sacrifice of animals, or compensation. It therefore carries no social stigma. Not even the warders can arrive at feeling that their wards are under a social stigma. Prison is thus no social deterrent. Most officers have probably had the experience of being greeted happily by a native whom a year or so earlier they had sent to prison. The ex-prisoner feels that personal relations have now been established and that anything from a tip to a job can be expected. And there is no physical deterrent because the prisoner is better fed and better lodged and works less than the average African outside prison. Prisoners normally work outside of prison at light tasks such as gardening or carrying water, and are out amongst the world during the day-time, returning to the prison for meals and night, so that they suffer no isolation or

[1] The French for such offences were trying the criminals by Court Martial and giving sentences of 4 or 5 years.

solitude. I know of a case of a prisoner who, when returning from work outside the prison, somehow straggled behind and when he reached the prison gate it had been locked and barred. He was indignant at being shut out in this way, especially as it was near meal-time, and he called upon the passers-by to help him in raising a hullaballoo to be admitted. . . . Two or three months spent in this way is a holiday and it is not surprising that the same guests return again and again. Imprisonment in the French colonies is a different matter: the prisoners are chained or wear irons, the food is bare, the lodging is barer, discipline is severe, and the sentences are longer.[1] The Belgian prisons are also serious; in the Congo as in French colonies a return visit to prison is not relished.

The third result, then, of introducing English justice, combined with English prisons, is to encourage crime. Hence that large and rapidly growing criminal rabble in all the ports and bigger towns, divorced from family and tribal discipline, doing odd jobs, pimping for harlots, since the war pimping for sodomites (a perversion traditionally unknown over most of Africa) and, whether with or without legitimate work, stealing. Boys of tender age range about in gangs. The skill, audacity, and dangerousness of African burglars is not below the best European or American standards. The position is the worse as town populations are increasing sharply—doubling or trebling their numbers in 10 or 15 years (e.g. Bathurst).[2] I have been told more than once by old Africans that crime has increased since the British took over the country.

The fourth result of English justice is that it encourages litigation. To begin with it is a system originated by and for a very litigious people—the Paston Letters and mediaeval and

[1] E.g. complaints in *l'A.O.F.*, 1945, article by Haji Momar Gueye, "Camps et Prison."

[2] So too in French Africa. Dakar increased from about 90,000 in 1936 to 160,000 in 1944. The police are insufficient and crime is common. In 1945 the authorities gave an official estimate of 15,000 drifters—men and women who had no abode and lived without ration cards.

later documents reveal how litigious we were. This litigiousness is imposed on the African. Lawyers actively tout for cases, but no less important is the hope, made reasonable by so many notorious examples in every town, of somehow getting the better of the law, that incalculable law of the white man, in the end. The African is by nature often both litigious and a gambler. Appeals are thus universal where the courts will tolerate them. In West Africa, for example, there are appeals from court to court in a colony, then to the West African Court of Appeal, and then to the Privy Council. There was a case in the Gold Coast involving title to land ultimately valued at £30 where an attempt was made to appeal to the Privy Council. (Land must now be valued at £500 before an appeal to the Privy Council can be considered.) So too in criminal cases. Recent typical examples are provided by the case of the postmaster at Jos from Nigeria, and by the case of the chief clerk of the Medical Dept. from the Gold Coast (thirty-two charges of forgery and falsification of accounts).

The fifth result is that it makes justice more expensive. The Kibi versus Asamankesi land dispute, in the Gold Coast, which dragged on from 1921 to 1935 (when Government stepped in) cost Kibi over £100,000 and Asamankesi a larger amount. A favourite device of lawyers to swell their fees is to get adjournments. A case begun in the Gold Coast in March 1940 was still going on five years later after fourteen separate adjournments. Corrupt practices are also resorted to for the same purpose, such as bribing clerks and bailiffs to lose papers or to fail to serve summons.

Honourable lawyers deplore the situation. So do the judges. But the problem is now beyond the will of one man or even a group of men. Drastic overhauling is required from top to bottom and it can only be undertaken by the Colonial Office itself, using the aparatus of a powerful Royal Commission.

In the early thirties the Colonial Office made a beginning. But it was a false beginning. It sent out a member of its legal

staff, Sir Grattan Bushe, to study and to report on the administration of justice in the African colonies. Sir Grattan Bushe had had no experience of colonial administration and no knowledge of anthropology or sociology. He just happened to be in the legal branch of the Colonial Office instead of the Ministry of Transport or the Board of Trade. His report[1] showed a remarkable concentration not to say canalization of interest. He began by excluding native courts from his purview, the subject which constituted the great bulk of the question. In the courts that he left to his investigation he limited himself to criminal justice. There he exercised himself greatly over what he conceived to be the need for a "homogeneous body of law"—in Africa!—and he had no difficulty in finding the solution. The solution was more professional magistrates and *ergo* the courts and lawyers that go with them.

This report must rank as one of the most inept of documents, producing as it did a solution so wildly disproportionate to the plain needs, that came forth even in the fateful inter-war years when all government and administration had sunk to so low a level of ineptitude. Sir Grattan Bushe was subsequently made a Governor, presumably for this service. Meanwhile Crown Colonies were subjected to the "legal reforms." Even Nigeria was subjected to them, the colony where Lugard's great system had been worked out, where it had proved both its efficiency and its adaptability, and where, if ever, was the good wine that needs no Bushe. The lawyers were launched for good.

Now another beginning has been made, this time under the auspices of the Gold Coast. In 1945 a Commissioner (in the person of the Recorder of Liverpool) enquired into and reported on the High Cost of Litigation. The scope of his enquiry was thus limited but the facts brought out are so damaging that some change can now hardly be avoided. One official, for example, on giving evidence on "the ruinous expenditure on land litigation," ascribed it to "the rapacity, the unscrupulous-

[1] H.M. Stationery Office. Comd. paper 4623 of 1934.

ness, and the non-observance of professional integrity" on the part of the lawyers, who "cleverly play on their countrymen's weakness for litigation," who "foster suits," and whose "fees are excessive." He urged that the lawyers be excluded from all land cases. These are strong words for a civil servant. What is required now is a Commission working on the same lines, confined however not to one aspect alone and not to one colony alone but open to the whole subject in the African colonies as a whole. The Commission should include sociologists, colonial administrative officers, and colonial agricultural officers, as well as legal experts (who should be in a definite minority), and it will have to probe into *the reasons* for so much litigation as well as into the process of litigation itself.

African native justice had its defects but it made sense. British lawyer-justice too often makes nonsense. The position today reminds one of the court case in *Alice in Wonderland:*

" 'You ought to have finished,' said the King. 'When did you begin?' "

" The Hatter looked at the March Hare, who had followed him into the court, arm-in arm with the Dormouse. 'Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was,' he said.

" 'Fifteenth,' said the March Hare.

" 'Sixteenth,' added the Dormouse.

" 'Write that down,' the King said to the jury, and the jury eagerly wrote down all three dates on their slates, and then added them up, and reduced the answer to shillings and pence."

CHAPTER V

Self-Government

THE FRENCH AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

It will already be clear to the reader that self-government plays no part in French colonial policy or practice. All legislation emanates from the Government in Paris, normally in the form of ministerial decree, the details of which are applied in the colony by the Governor-General's ordinances. Provision is made for consulting colonial opinion or, rather, the particular French form of representation of colonial opinion, before issuing decrees of major importance. The representatives consist of the Deputies in the Parliament who come from the colonies. In the case of French tropical Africa there is one Deputy from Senegal, the representative of the *concitoyens*. There is none from the rest of French West Africa and none from French Equatorial Africa. Sometimes the colonial members of one or more of the various advisory councils might also be consulted. Further, there is an organization at Paris consisting of Senators and Deputies from all the colonies and of delegates elected by French citizens in the colonies. It is now known as the *Conseil Supérieur de la France d'outremer*. The name is liable to change with the same frequency as the names of streets in French towns, but the institution, like the street, remains. In all these bodies, *ad hoc* or permanent, there is no power at all; their utmost right is to be consulted.

In the colonies themselves there are also advisory councils, sometimes they are elected, mostly they are nominated. They too have no power. And, as in the case of the councils in France, they have little life. Nor, given the system of Direct Rule which prevails in the French colonies, is there that representation of ordinary native opinion operating in and through ordinary native tribal institutions which exists in British colonies; that is

to say there is no local self-government, which is the indispensable foundation of any real representation. Just as the Governor-General has no real legislative power beyond making local regulations, so too the Governor-General's control over the various Governors under him is so centralized that the latter can issue only minor regulations referring to minor local matters or to applying in detail the *arrêtés* of the Governor-General.

The Brazzaville Conference condemned the present Councils, both in France and in the colonies, but their recommendations for reform did not touch their essential principle, namely complete centralization of power in Paris, the colony organs being endowed with only advisory functions.

In order to make assurance doubly sure the Ministry for the Colonies has an Inspectorate which possesses full and unfettered powers of enquiry. It sends an inspecting mission to every colony every two or three years. The Inspectors can give no order in the colony though they can request action on their findings. The power of reporting to the Ministry in Paris is sufficient for all their needs.

All this centralization is unqualified by the existence in France of an effective body of public opinion which is interested in and well-informed on colonial matters; for, unlike the position in England, no such body of public opinion exists. It is in fact difficult for anyone outside the charmed ring of the higher bureaucracy or of the small parliamentary colonial group to know what is going on in the colonies. No annual reports are published on a colony; and inside a colony no departmental reports are published.[1] Statistical summaries began to make their appearance in some colonies before the war; but French statistics, above all French colonial statistics, have much of the same fine careless rapture as French motor traffic.

In short there is no self-government in the French African

[1] The Mandates, Togo and the Cameroons, owing to the obligation to submit reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission, are, on the other hand, well documented.

colonies even in the most rudimentary form, and there is no intention of giving any. Government is firmly centralized in Paris. In principle when, if ever, the subject natives are capable and desirous of exercising the vote they will vote for a Member of the Parliament in Paris. As the principle of Direct Rule and of Assimilation has destroyed all local self-government it is not clear how a workable beginning can be made for an effective parliamentary representation of this or of any other kind. The French will have to tackle the problem as soon as they carry out their promised constitution for Indo-China.

But the basic policy, namely no self-government, is not in question. The Brazzaville Conference defined it uncompromisingly:

> Les fins de l'œuvre de civilisation accomplie par la France dans les Colonies écartent toute idée d'autonomie, toute possibilité d'évolution hors du bloc français de l'Empire; la constitution éventuelle, même lointaine de Self-Governments dans les colonies est à écarter affirmer et guarantir l'unité politique infrangible du monde français. . . . C'est Paris que presidera à la planification de l'ensemble de l'Empire. . . . L'economie sera soumise à la direction et au controle de la metropole.[1]

THE BELGIANS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

The Belgian system is highly centralized by British standards but it is less centralized than the French. The source of colonial law is the King's (i.e. the Minister's) decree, but Parliament has more power of interfering than the French Parliament. There is also the *Conseil Colonial*, which consists of fourteen members nominated for their special knowledge of and interest in colonial questions. The *Conseil must* be consulted on all decrees; and its opinion *must* be given in the form of a written report or, where there is no unanimity, separate written reports, which are published together with the legislation. The Minister can over-ride their opinion, but it is rare for him to do so. The *Conseil* can

[1] *Recommandations*. 1ère Partie.

also recommend legislation; such a recommendation carries considerable weight.

The Governor-General has much more power than a French Governor-General, though less than a British Governor. He must be consulted before the Minister submits decrees to the *Conseil Colonial*. His legislative power is limited to "emergencies," and such *ordonnances-lois* then issued by him lapse if they are not confirmed by the Minister within six months. Governor-General Ryckmans has urged that the *ordonnances-lois* should be valid unless they are specifically disallowed; a reform that will probably be adopted.

The Belgians also have a Colonial Inspectorate, but its power is much less than that of the French Inspectorate.

Inside the colony native public opinion is adequately cared for up to the present by the practice of Indirect Rule. There is also a body of Europeans "qualified to judge of native interests," eighteen in number and nominated by the King, known as the Natives Protection Committee. It meets annually and presents a report, which is published. It can also, either collectively or individually, submit a report on specific matters at any time. The Committee, which does good work, is dominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The predominantly Bantu population of the Congo is mild in disposition and has neither the political development nor the political consciousness of the West African negro so that a movement for self-government is not yet within sight. The Belgians in any event do not, in any future that matters today, look forward to self-government in the parliamentary sense. Their purpose is to *dominer pour servir*, to use the title of one of Governor-General Ryckmans' books.

There is in Belgium a more effective body of informed opinion on colonial affairs than in France, and, again unlike the position in France, it has access to full and reliable official reports such as the *Rapport Annuel du Congo Belge*, and the periodical *Congo*.

THE BRITISH AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

The British system has two sharply defined peculiarities in comparison with the French or the Belgian. The peculiarities really spring from a single peculiarity. In the first place there is, relatively speaking, no centralization. Nor is there any inspectorate, and, despite the ill-advised advocacy for it made in certain quarters, there is little likelihood of anything so un-British being adopted. There is not even a Standing Committee in Parliament or a permanent advisory council of colonial specialists. Each colony runs on its own steam. This devolution however does not mean a lack of interest at home. On the contrary there is a large and active and effective body of public opinion; and the publication of a long series of reliable, though sometimes complacent, official reports is available for all to read who will. In the second place, the source of law is always the local Legislative Council,[1] which is an embryonic Parliament, with debates, questions, budgets, and representation. The intention, and indeed the practice, is to go on increasing popular representation *pari passu* with the local demand and capability for it, until, at length, self-government is consummated.

The British system, which alone gives so much to its colonial subjects, is alone exposed to a continual battery of demands for more. That is to say, there is a movement for immediate African self-government. So far the movement is of practical importance in the British West African colonies alone. In the French West African colonies, populated with the same or similar peoples, there is no such movement. Since much is being heard in the colonies about it and since much more is likely to be heard, and since, too, the autonomists can count on the support of a section of public opinion in England, I propse to discuss this in some detail. A factual, one might almost say a statistical, analysis is essential because it has become enough today for 10 Africans,

[1] In practice draft bills are submitted to the Colonial Office, but this does not affect the principle.

possibly all from the Kikuyu in Kenya or from Lagos in West Africa, to gather together in England with a couple of West Indians, often all of them students maintained at Government expense, on some occasion or other, and to form themselves into a body with some such title as The All-Africa League or the Pan-Coloured Confederation of the World, and to issue an ultimatum to the Imperialist Powers to quit Africa. No matter how unrepresentative and trivial the group may be, and no matter how silly its resolutions, the British press can be counted upon to give them free publicity, and some section of British public opinion can be counted upon to give them support.

THE AFRICAN PRESS

Freedom of public meetings and freedom of the press exist in the British colonies, and full advantage is taken of these two freedoms in British West Africa. There and there alone are there newspapers run by Africans for Africans;[1] indeed there are no European-run newspapers of the kind of the Congo *Courrier d'Afrique* or *l'Avenir Colonial* or the French African *Paris-Dakar*. In the industrious research monographs on colonial administration written outside of colonies, the African press has been overlooked. One feels something of the same incompleteness before this oversight as one would if *Strategica* (Mrs. Lily Peters), the famous lady military expert, should broadcast on a military situation without reference to airpower or armour.

Here are the main facts.

In the Gambia, there is *The Gambia Echo*, a weekly.[2] In Sierra

[1] In Dakar there is a fortnightly African-owned Socialist paper, *l'A.O.F.*, of two sheets. It claims to have a circulation of 3,000. It is mild reading in comparison with the African papers in British West Africa.

[2] *The Gambia Echo*. For King and Country. A Journal of Distinctive Policy. The Echo of Deeds and Words of Politics and Policies in the Gambia. Vibrant with Truth. Bathurst.

Leone, there is *The Sierra Leone Daily Mail*,[1] *The Daily Guardian*,[2] and also a weekly. In the Gold Coast there is, amongst others, *The African Morning Post*,[3] *The Spectator Daily*,[4] and *The Daily Echo*.[5] In Nigeria, or more accurately in Southern Coastal Nigeria, there are about a dozen newspapers of which the outstanding are *The Daily News Service*, *The Comet*, *The New Eastern Mail*, *The West African Pilot* (Lagos), and its three subsidiaries *The Eastern Nigeria Guardian* (Port Harcourt), *The Nigeria Spokesman* (Onitsha), and *The Southern Nigeria Defender* (Calabar). There is also the Government-owned Hausa language newspaper in Northern Nigeria, *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*,[6] now running as a daily which gives objective news in Hausa.

The West African press has been criticized as parochial, irresponsible, and corrupt. The criticism, in my opinion, misfires. The press may be unbalanced and, in some cases, immature, unrealist, and mischievous politically, but it is not corrupt and instead of being parochial it shows an alert if distorted awareness of the outside world. And it is free of the vulgarity and triviality of the popular press in England and the United States. *The West African Pilot*, the most mischievous politically, is, from the technical point of view, a notable achievement. It dates from only 1937,

[1] *The Sierra Leone Daily Mail*, Freetown.

[2] *The Daily Guardian*, Nisi Frustra. Freetown. Both of the Freetown dailies are honourable and responsible newspapers, though with a restricted capitalization and technical equipment. They are a fair expression of the Christian conscience which whatever its imperfections is characteristic of the established "Creole" families.

[3] *The African Morning Post*. Independent in All Things and Neutral in Nothing affecting the Destiny of Africa. Read it for Impartiality, Consistency, Truth and Choice Language. Accra.

[4] *The Spectator Daily*. Admire its Originality. Note, it is always imitated, never excelled. Accra.

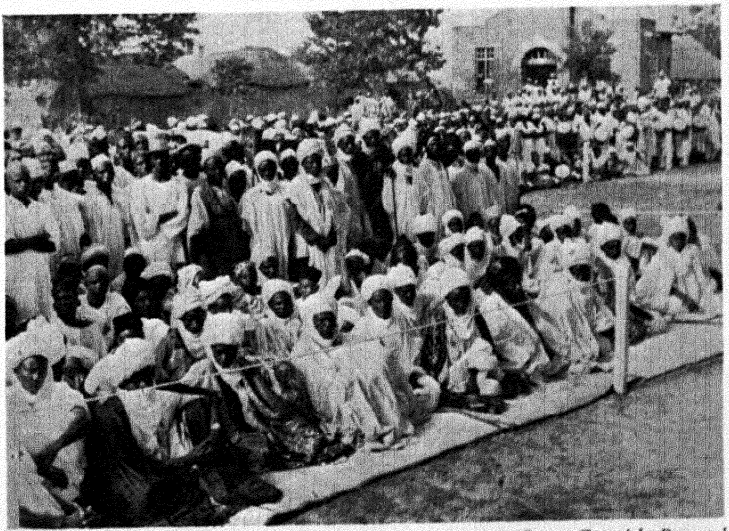
[5] *The Daily Echo*. Accra.

[6] I.e. "The truth is worth more than a penny." This imaginative and much-needed venture has been entrusted to one of the most brilliant officers in the Service in Nigeria, Dr. Rupert East, and he is seconded by an able Hausa, Mallam Abubakar Imam Kagira. For the time being it is financed by public money but later will be self-supporting. It is independent of Government control. Its policy is to give true and accurate information, to comment fairly without fear or prejudice, and to give space to expressions of public opinion.



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Emir of Zaria



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Installation of Emir of Abuja



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Illiterate and Pagan Village Headman (N.T. of Gold Coast)



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Another

and has a capitalization of £15,000.[1] It is set out well, the news is well chosen and well printed, and the English is excellent.

This African press is in all four colonies becoming more and more political and agitates for more and more self-government. In Nigeria the newspaper with the widest circulation is now the spokesman and the fomenter of the agitation for immediate self-government.

Extracts illustrating the claims now being put forward by this press are given below. The first extract comes from *The New Statesman*[2] which published an interview with one of the African journalists who went to England as guests of the Ministry of Information in 1943:

WHAT WEST AFRICANS WANT

Councillor Bankole Awoonor-Renner is an elected member of the Municipal Council of Accra in the Gold Coast. He was in England to study conditions here, especially those of West Africans in wartime Britain. Would he agree to answering some questions? Yes, he would.

Q.—Did the British authorities make any difficulties about your journey?

A.—It took some arranging, but they did not object.

Q.—What is your opinion about the future of the Gold Coast?

A.—It has no separate future. It must share that of the other British colonies and of French West Africa. This is the opinion of the young and all progressive elements in West Africa.

Q.—Can you explain this more fully?

A.—Certainly I can. There is no real racial division in West Africa. We are one people. We have been subjected to the rule of British and French for over a century. Before that we had contact with the Dutch and the Portuguese. Yet after so long a period we are still treated as unfit to conduct our own affairs. It says little for the administration of the European Powers. The British say that we are being educated

[1] See report in its number for November 22, 1944.

[2] August 7, 1943. I make no correction of the errors of fact in this valuable interview, the true significance of which is that ignorance of the simple facts of Africa is so great in England that a journal of the standing of *The New Statesman* could publish it without humorous intent.

in self-government. The time has come when we must take decisive steps to advance. The first thing is to abolish the artificial frontiers between us, established by the French and British Empires. In many places, the frontiers divide not only tribes but families. A man's farm may lie at one end of a village, and he is called French and is subject to French law. That of his brother or his cousin may lie at the other end, and the brother is called a British subject and is under a totally different law. We cannot understand or tolerate these artificial divisions. We want a united self-governing West Africa.

Q.—But will the French and the British Governments consent to that?

A.—We think that after the war they will be far closer than ever before, and may come to a common policy on West Africa.

Q.—Do you want to be completely independent of Britain?

A.—No. We fully appreciate that no complete "independence" is possible, if only for reasons of security. But we see no reason why we should not be a Dominion with as much freedom as, say, New Zealand, now has in practice. In any case, if we had an independent choice as equal partners, we should not wish to leave the British Empire.

Q.—By West Africa you mean the territories south of the deserts and west of the Congo Basin?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Failing the unification of the British and French colonies, what would you propose?

A.—As a first step the unification of the British colonies and their self-government.

Q.—Would that not be difficult, in view of their geographical separation?

A.—We do not admit that. The British system is all the same. Even the so-called mandated areas are simply administered as parts of the colonies.

Q.—How would you manage the language difficulty?

A.—We have a Lingua Franca in Haussa, which is understood by the vast majority in West Africa. Haussa should be made the compulsory language of education. The English have adopted, as a method of keeping us apart, the teaching of local languages in the schools. This may have its good points. But as a unified state we need one language. And Haussa must be that language since it is more widely spoken in West Africa than any other language.

Q.—What would be your idea of education?

A.—Free compulsory education up to 18 years, and local universities.

Q.—Are not the French colonies better supplied with schools than the British?

A.—No. The French schooling ends at the third standard, except perhaps for a tiny minority of the *élite*. What use is education up to the third standard to a man? But then there is another aspect of the French education. With the Englishman the more you know the more he despises you, while with the Frenchman the more you know the more he accepts you as equal.

Q.—What would be the system on which you would establish self-government?

A.—Universal suffrage.

Q.—Would the peoples of the interior be able to exercise such political rights at their present stage of development?

A.—Yes, certainly.

Q.—Would you preserve local cultures and civilization?

A.—Yes, that is no barrier to the unity of government.

Q.—Is it not the case that in the north the Mohammedan peoples exercise domination over the Pagan tribes?

A.—No. We are one people. We are not divided by castes. Nor does religion constitute a caste. Moslems, Christians, and so-called Pagans, we meet as equals, work together, and inter-marry.

Q.—How does the Mohammedan conception of the position of women affect the high status of women in African tradition?

A.—We do not adopt the Eastern view of the position of women. It is not a fundamental doctrine of the Moslem faith.

Q.—Your conception is then one of real equality between races and creeds?

A.—Yes; and we must first abolish the distinction between the European and the African. You cannot realize what it means to us. We may be as educated as any Briton, but in our own country that makes no difference; we are nothing. We are not even paid the same for government service as Europeans of the same grade. The gap in official pay between the English and the African is a wrong which we bitterly resent. It is only one instance of the unfairness of conditions in our country.

Q.—Do you plan to industrialize West Africa?

A.—Yes. We should begin in the mining areas. Then there is the processing of cocoa. There is a possible lime industry. And we could make our own textiles. At present the real ruler of West Africa is the United Africa Company, which monopolizes all trade in the country.

Q.—Do you see any danger in industrialization? Might it not put

you more than ever at the mercy of European capitalists who would simply exploit your people for their own profit?

A.—We recognize that danger.

Q.—You have your own land in West Africa, thanks to Lord Lugard. I take it you want to own your own industry also? Many people think that *political* emancipation is useless if the power still remains in the hands of the foreign economic interests?

A.—The proposed Land Bill of the Gold Coast, 1898, which was exploded by the activities of the African delegation to Downing Street in that year, was the basis for our owning lands. Lugard came later. We must possess our own resources so that no one can enslave us. But we demand self-government at once. Unless we get that, we shall not be able to progress as a nation. Our aim is political unification and economic self-government.

Now follow extracts from the West African press itself:

This new world order . . . politically it should guarantee to the Nigerian the exercise of executive, legislative, and judicial power.[1]

It has been shown that we would be able to rule ourselves efficiently on modern lines in less than ten to twenty years.[2]

The educated elements in Calabar declare that Nigeria is ripe for self-government. The government . . . would be in the hands of the enlightened elements at the start.[3]

We demand internal self-government for Nigeria. . . . We, the people of Nigeria, will be responsible for making, interpreting, and administering our own laws in addition to exercising executive powers, so far as our internal affairs are concerned. Matters of defence, currency, foreign relations, must be left with the Mother Country until after an experiment of say ten years, when . . . Dominion Status. A compromise constitution of the Gold Coast model will not satisfy us.[4]

The chiefs (of the Ashanti) should be left alone and not degraded to become the instruments of the colonial power.[5]

The Gold Coast prefers servile acquiescence to self-government.[6]

[1] *West African Pilot*, November 21, 1944.
[2] Ibid., October 18, 1944.
[3] Ibid., 1944.
[4] Ibid., December 15, 1944.
[5] *The Daily Echo*, August, 31, 1944.
[6] *West African Pilot*. Date lost—about November, 1944.

A constitution like that of Ceylon is the next step.[1]

This nation (of Nigeria).[2]

Sierra Leone, alas, has been notified officially that she is not ready for self-government.[3]

One smarts under a feeling of inferiority.[4]

How far below the ladder we have been placed in the estimation of the civilized world.[5]

According to Mr. Austin Smith, an American engineer now in Nigeria, Africans would make better engineers than any other race in the world if they had the training.[6]

Mr. George Schuyler comes to our rescue . . . not only is he one of the greatest journalists produced by the negro in America but he is one of the leading writers on the American continent. . . . Mr. Schuyler attacks the myth of the alleged backwardness of the African as a barrier to self-government. Mr. Schuyler denies that Africans . . . were less experienced in self-government than European peoples, and insists that in art, medicine, industry, and commerce Europe had only surpassed Africa in the last century.[7]

We fear the role of Imperialism in post-war years and we urge African commercial companies to combine into organizations like Woolworths, Marks and Spencer, Lewis, etc.[8]

. . . ruthless Imperialism and exploitation . . . Britain and America intend jointly to exercise control over the coloured races of Asia.[9]

On July 26, 1947, the Republic of Liberia will attain one hundred years of independence. This day should be immortal in African history because that is the one answer to the question whether black men and women are capable of ruling their kind and others within their territory.[10]

Mr. Akweke Orizu, M.A. (Columbia), deals with disunity in his homeland. "The people of this country (Nigeria) are of the same origin . . . whether we are called Fulanis, Yorubas or Ibos . . . we do not participate in the same religion but we profess the same ceremonial as Africans . . . we have the same mannerisms, principles, customs, discipline, and convictions that are peculiarly African."[11]

[1] *West African Pilot*, December 16, 1944.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Sierra Leone Daily Mail.*
[4] *West African Pilot*, December 16, 1944.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, December 13, 1944.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid, September 22, 1944.
[11] Ibid., November, 1944. Mr. Orizu turns up again, this time in the *New Yorker*, December, 1944, and this time as a "Prince of Nigeria." To quote the *New Yorker* interview: "We're fresh from an enlightening chat with

The word "Native": Sergt. Bruce lectured to a crowd of people at Owerri. He declared himself a "native" of the Gold Coast.[1] . . . The choir then treated the audience to a series of "native" songs[2] . . . Mr. E. A. Animashaun, Printer, Egwa "Native" Administration.[3]

With the appointment of Mr. C. D. Onyeama as Assistant District Officer, the Nigerian Government has taken a step towards adopting the progressive policy of the Gold Coast. . . . As to the salary . . . it is to be hoped that Government will not commit the mistake of considering factors quite apart from efficiency. . . . There must be no . . . disparity.[4]

Such newspapers give publicity to and derive comfort from the activities of bodies like the *National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples* in the United States (and its plan for a World-wide Coloured Liberation Front) or the *League of Coloured*

Prince Akweke Orizu of Nigeria, who was recently described in our book-review column, for all we know with perfect accuracy, as 'probably the most literate prince alive.' He has been in this country five years, getting a thoroughly American education at Ohio State and Columbia. Prince Orizu is timely by reason of the book he has just had published. It is called *Without Bitterness* and is a philosophical study of African economic, social, religious, and political issues of the past and present. The Prince also discusses the future of Africa in terms of a philosophy of his own which he named Zikism. We gathered that a definition of Zikism would be difficult but that it embraces Plato, Aristotle, Spengler, and Harold Laski and is in essence a youth movement. His purpose in writing the book was to convince his readers that Africa is a continent to be taken seriously. As things stand now, the Prince pointed out, it isn't even generally known that Africa has a substantial contemporary literature.

The Prince is actually now the King of Nnewi, having succeeded to the title on the death of his father, Ezeugeonyamea I. He left one of his brothers on the throne as regent while he completed his education. Orizu will reign in a palace set in four miles of ground, most of which, he assured us, is as busy as Times Square. Prince Orizu himself occasionally adds to the confusion by playing the cornet."

[1] Social Notes in *West African Pilot*.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] *West African Pilot*, August, 1944. The same demand for equality between African and Europeans appears in French Africa. Thus Lamine Gueye in *l'A.O.F.*, April 13, 1945, demands exactly the same salaries together with Colonial Allowances. When British African troops who have been fed on European rations, given all the welfare services, and told daily that they are heroes, return from service, the literates among them will no doubt voice similar claims. The immeasurable disaster of the war has not spared the African colonies. Apart from its effects on the many thousands of Africans in the Forces, the prestige of the white man has fallen in all areas where British and American troops have been stationed.

Peoples. Their programmes are kept before the attention of the West African reader.

Comfort is also derived from stray Socialists who find themselves on the Coast from time to time. The presence of the Army in West Africa during the war brought a number of such. They mean well but, judging from the articles in which they propound their solutions, they saw little of Africa. Thus one urged a war on the "squalor, poverty, disease, and illiteracy," which he found to be characteristic of Africa, and the introduction of "modern mechanized methods of agriculture." The only way out "was handing the means of production" back to the people, including the land. "The only way out is socialism." Yet he was pessimistic to this extent that he believed that "Nigeria will be chained to British Imperialism for at least another ten years."[1]

Selections are now added from the columns entitled Provincial News or Social Notes, which are a feature of this press:

Makurdi: Mr. F. I. Onyekonwu, Sarkin's motor driver, was "at home" with his friends and relatives on his brother's arrival on leave from Enugu. The function was opened at 6.30 p.m. with breaking of kola nut by Mr. J. M. Mefor. Drinks and delicacies were satisfactorily served till late in the night and the function came to a close with a short prayer said by Mr. C. O. Ilobi, Catechist of the R.C. Church here.

Zaria: Recently Mr. M. A. Adesanya of the Railway Accounts here celebrated a joint birthday anniversary of himself and that of his son, Mr. Tajuddeen Adebiyi Adenrele Babatunde Adesanya. At about 5 p.m. Mr. J. O. Banjob, the master of ceremonies, introduced Messrs. M. S. Agbaje and B. A. Ipaye as chairman and sub-chairman respectively. After his opening address Mr. Agbaje declared the function open. The toast of Mr. Adesanya was proposed by Mallam Z. Y. Djimka and that of Mr. Aderenle Babatunde Adesanya by Mr. S. O. Odebunmi, to these Mr. Adesanya responded. Mr. J. Ola Olode proposed the toasts of the guests to which Mr. S. A. Onafuye responded. The toast of the ladies was proposed by Mr. A. Akinloye and Miss L. Miller responded. That of cooks and stewards by Mr. A. L. Badamosi, to which Mr. M. A. Ajayi replied.

[1] "Suggestions from a European," in *West African Pilot*.

One of the biggest social events of the season was the society wedding which took place on Sunday, September 24th, in St. Patrick's Church here, between Miss Mercy I. N. Eduzor and Christopher N. Okonkwo, all of Enugu Iki town in Awka division. Rev. Father M. Gately officiated and Mr. E. D. O. Okeke was the best man. The tying of the nuptial knot was followed by the signing at the vestry of the marriage register which was witnessed by the relatives of the contracting parties. After the service, a grand reception was held at Mr. C. N. Okonkwo's residence at 3 p.m., where Mr. V. I. Nwebe was the master of ceremonies.

Tabu: Under the chairmanship of Mr. D. E. Durojaiye the Nupes and Ogbomosos in this area gave a rousing "send-off" to Mr. Momodu Afolabi, Pointsman, Nigerian Railway, here, on the occasion of his transfer to Lafenwa Station. The function was brought to a close at 9 p.m.

Benin City: Under the chairmanship of Mr. Tom Oriaku of the Police Department here, Kr. Joseph Alonge, also of the Police Department was "at home" in honour of his promotion to the rank of corporal. After refreshments and drinks had been served, speeches were made.

Kafanchan: A grand "send-off" function took place recently in honour of Mr. M. E. Essien, of the Loco Running Shed, here, who will shortly go on transfer to Minna. The function was declared open by Mr. P. O. Ogbonna who outlined the object of the gathering. A group photograph was taken at the Loco Shed. Many speeches were made and the first speaker was Mr. L. Mba, of the Engineering Department. Among those present were Messrs. J. Uyanwune, P. Okoro, B. P. Chukwu and A. C. Kuku.

CLAIMS OF THE AUTONOMISTS

What then do these cuttings tell us?

The autonomists are, or rather call themselves, Socialists. There is nothing original in that these days. But their Socialism has been taken over somewhat undiluted from Europe and America. The programme of nationalizing the land, for example, and of returning it to the people, may it not be redundant in West Africa where about 90 per cent of the people are independent peasants and where land, except for the Europeanized coastal

belt, is still communal? The Socialism, too, does not exclude the pyramiding associated with the big chain-store combines. Nor the paying of salaries to the few favoured Africans who can get First Division posts in the public service at the rates paid to Europeans who are obliged to maintain two homes (one in Africa, another in England), and to run the risks of a climate extremely unhealthy for them. It shows, too, a special preoccupation with the clerk class.

To put the point in another way, these men are townsmen, townsmen, too, of the new detribalized towns. Their outlook is completely urban. I have never yet read a paragraph in the West African press that dealt with farming (the occupation of four men out of five), with villages (where these four men out of five spend their lives), with country life. The Gold Coast and still more the Nigeria papers print reports from all towns of any size in the interior. The reports are invariably limited to social notes on lawyers, clerks, lorry drivers (a new *petite bourgeoisie* in African society), and the like. The native of the northern territories of the Gold Coast or of Northern Nigeria would find in them nothing that touched his life at any point.

Yet they claim to speak for what they call the Nigerian nation. The African interviewed by *The New Statesman* speaks for more. He speaks for the West African nation. There is of course no Nigerian or Gold Coast or Sierra Leone nation any more than there is a European nation, even though the national idea may be creeping in. Indeed much less so. In Nigeria alone there is a variety of men ranging from Stone Age nudists to highly organized political and cultural groups like the Emirates, from Ibo man-eaters to monotheistic Hausa, from fair-skinned Fulani to the black thick-set swamp negro.

The oft-repeated admiration for Liberia reveals the sort of "nation" that they really have in mind. Liberia is run, in so far as it is run at all, by about 60,000 people descended from the emancipated slaves sent there from America in the middle of the last century. The "nation" they govern consists of two million

people (this is a guess: the population has never been counted) who comprise tribes as heterogeneous as (to name a few) the Mandingo, the Toma, the Kissi, the Vai, and the Kru. That is to say, it is an oligarchy of foreign townsmen, not a nation. I am not criticizing Liberia. I hope that the Republic will continue and be given sympathetic help. It has done as well as could be expected under the circumstances. But even the Ibo intellectuals educated in American colleges could not contend that the lot of the peasants and fishermen there was preferable to the lot of the peasants and fishermen in British West Africa. . . . If they feel that it is preferable a sojourn of a couple of weeks among the Kru would soon enlighten them—if they get away alive.

They ask for self-government and self-government in our time. They admit that "at the start" the government will be in the hands of the educated minority. They might legitimately claim, though I have not so far encountered the claim, that they as Africans are as good judges of the well-being of the twenty-five million Africans in Nigeria as British officials, and that they would have or could arrive at a technical efficiency not less than theirs. Would, however, the population of the Emirates and the other bigger groups, which comprise perhaps two-thirds of the population, agree? Would the peasants and fisherfolk in the Ibo country itself agree? There can be no doubt about what the answer would be.

In fairness to them it is to be observed that in general they profess no enmity to the British people and they wish to remain within the British Empire. Also their agitation carries a strong impregnation of our own Christian teachings and of our own traditional Liberalism.

Yet, on final examination, is not the main motive one of resentment? Putting inverted commas around the word *native* when it is used in its normal English or legal sense is an example. *Indigenes* is not an English word; it is French and it means precisely what our word *native* means. That is to say, the agitation displays the signs of someone who has been hurt, who has been *froissé*;

the result of experiencing bad manners and ignorance, not in British West Africa, where the relations between black and white are normally friendly and courteous, but abroad when undergoing their education. Another example is the condemnation of a school opened on the Nigeria plateau by American missionaries for their children as a Jim Crow school. And the clichés about British Imperialism which, whatever their relevance or irrelevance may be elsewhere, are irrelevant to West Africa.

They show more shame than pride in being African—and the ordinary African has less cause for shame than any human being alive. These foreign-acquired notions have been acquired too abruptly and too brutally. Also it is clear that the more sincere leaders are intellectuals, i.e. men of thought and sensibility. Men of thought and sensibility must in all communities pay dearly for their dangerous gifts, one price always being a certain solitariness. The African intellectual will for some time pay a dearer price than usual, because his isolation is, necessarily, greater proportionately.[1]

WHO WANTS SELF-GOVERNMENT?

How strong are they in numbers? In all four West African colonies their numbers would not amount to a half of 1 per cent of the population. They are drawn from the colony capitals and a few ports. In all four colonies, too, their organization for common action is rudimentary, and they are riven into jealous suspicious factions.[2] In Nigeria there was formed in 1944 the *National Council of Nigeria*, its substance coming from the Nigeria Youth Movement, the Nigeria Reconstruction Group, the Nigeria Youth Circle, the Nigeria Union of Students, and the local trade union movement, all groups numbering a few

[1] A remarkable movement in Kenya among the Kikuyu peoples is worth noting here. Not content with the amount of school facilities provided by the Government a "nationalist" and anti-white group has organized over a thousand schools, elementary and part-time. The group calls itself the Kikuyu's Teachers' Association. Officially it does not exist: the Government does not inspect the schools and ignores it, for which reason it is difficult to get exact information.

[2] Cf. *Daily Guardian*, September 21, 1944, Freetown.

hundreds at the most; the bickerings that are still going on exemplify disunion not union.[1] It is a congeries of agitators rather than an organization. On the other hand their feeble numbers, their disunity, and their unrepresentativeness, are no measure of their real importance, They include, and in the future can be expected to include more and more, this powerful class of new rich, above all of the lawyers, as well as well-meaning idealists.

Their nationalism will thrive on our own fear,[2] on our own lack of self-confidence, and on our own well-meaning but ill-informed radical groups at home, not on any demand from the mass of their countrymen for their kind of self-government. Some of our radical groups, ignorant of the local facts and misconceiving the situation in terms of cliches like *Imperialism*, *colour prejudice*, and so on, will fight the battle of this small privileged bourgeoisie just as they have fought the battles of Indian capitalism in East Africa. The nationalism of this tiny African minority is not supported by ninety-nine per cent. of Africans. The Governor of the Gold Coast, himself a West Indian whose sympathies for the African are not in doubt, spoke as follows to the Legislative Council in 1944:

I have been disappointed at the response to the Government's effort to establish self-governing municipalities and I am left wondering whether there is any real demand for these reforms from the people as a whole. . . . The results have certainly not been encouraging. . . . At the last municipal election in Kumasi there were 3,805 registered voters. Only 828 took the trouble to vote. In Accra, out of 6,009 registered voters only 2,941 voted at the last Legislative Council election and 3,121 at the municipal election. At Secondi out of 1,244 registered voters only 186 voted. . . .

As for the councillors, do they realize their duty to improve the towns and to raise the necessary rates to provide funds? Are they going to have the moral courage to impose these rates and see that they are collected?

[1] See *West African Pilot* from October–December, 1944.

[2] A senior official in Sierra Leone used to say that it was "ruled by the creole and by fear of the creole."

Even in Freetown, the oldest of our West African towns and where the literate population is most numerous, the interest is not much greater.[3]

HOW READY ARE THE COLONIES FOR AUTONOMY?

Apart from the lack of demand for, and the uncertain capacity of the agitators to carry out any measure of, self-government, there is always the enormous barrier raised by certain qualities which too often go with the African character, at all events for the time being. To put it brutally, a defective sense of honesty. To put it more fully, an inability to resist abusing power or opportunity when unrelated to the traditional and delicate and intricate sanctions of the tribe or family. The new men in these new classes have emancipated themselves from tribal discipline but few of them have gone far in acquiring that sense of public obligation which is essential for the working of any kind of self-government. The first care of too many of them when they get responsibility is to see what they can get out of it for themselves and their friends. Too many Africans, be they watchmen entrusted with stores, clerks with cash, lawyers with litigation, will cheat and steal. In 1944 in the Gold Coast, the most advanced of West African colonies, a political leader and lawyer called Kojo Thompson was involved in an unpleasant case of £25,000. He was struck off the bar, though he was not imprisoned. In connection with the same case was the affair of three other notabilities, business-men and lawyers, who conspired to commit perjury; they were convicted and punished with £200 fine plus one day's imprisonment. It would be wrong to pretend that all are like that. One of the glories of British West Africa is the number of clergy, lawyers, doctors, and others who combine trained talent with a sense of public welfare. But as far

3 In Freetown the Council lacks complete power. On the other hand even at Dakar only 60 per cent of the voters exercised their franchise in the 1945 elections. The Dakar Council has real power and canvassing was active and anti-white.

as self-governing institutions are concerned there are still too many who do not.

The exploitation of Africans so much spoken of by the nationalists exists. In West Africa the exploitation is done mostly by other Africans.

The lawyers and business-men are the apex of the pyramid, the base of which is the clerk class. Clerical work has to be done, even in West Africa, and many of these Africans do it well and do it honestly. I count good friends amongst the clerks. But they do form a new class with sharply defined characteristics. They are largely detribalized, they are entirely urbanized, their passion is to wear expensive European clothes, they have a standard of life out of proportion to that of their fellow Africans (e.g. entry to dances for clerks in Lagos or Accra is about five shillings a time, in Freetown about ten shillings, which would keep a farming family for about a month. At these dances they wear dress clothes, normally tails and white tie). Debt is perpetual. They often lose the good manners which are natural to the ordinary African, and the worst of them practise a provocative insolence. It is a sign of their privileged position that during the war, the Army ration of whisky was one bottle a month in Nigeria for officers, and whisky was nearly unobtainable in England, but African clerks were entitled to a permit for three bottles a month, the same as European officials. With time no doubt their shortcomings will be corrected, but in an electorate in which such men would constitute the vast majority of literates, and the illiterates would amount to over 90 per cent, representative self-government would be up against an insuperable difficulty.

In spite of the detribalization among the literates, the tribe, or the idea of the tribe, still exists for most of them. Their inner life is still profoundly touched by old fears and sanctions. The Europeanization which the nationalists call civilization has cut less deep than they pretend. Were any of them shocked when Otaru of Auchi (Southern Nigeria) died recently and left 146

children? And the specifically African concern with the spirit world is as strong as ever with the majority. When the Alafin of Oyo (Southern Nigeria) died in 1945 one of his followers had his own grave dug and had to be restrained by Government from sacrificing himself in order to follow his old master into the next world where he could wait upon him. The ritual murder in 1944 in the Gold Coast following the death of Sir Ofori Atta is of particular significance in this connection. Here is the story:

In July, 1943, the paramount chief of Akim Abuakwa, Sir Ofori Atta, died. His chiefdom was the largest, and, from the viewpoint of production, potentially the most important in the Gold Coast, but his fame was due to his own personality and to his association with progress and with the modern educated African. He was famous for his interest in modern administration, modern politics, and above all in modern education. He was one of the few Africans who have been knighted.

According to the custom of his people, the second funeral ceremony, which lasted about a week, took place seven months after his death, that is, in February, 1944. The centre was at Kibi, a town in the high forest. To it had come members of his family, members of other chiefly families, and many other mourners. Among them was Akyea Mensah, the Odikro (chief) of Apedwa.

On Sunday morning, February 27th, the Odikro left the lodgings where he and his attendants had been staying for the last few days and set out for the compound where the major ceremonies were to be performed.

The wife who had come to Kibi with him waited for him that evening and all that night; but he never returned. The principal mourners, mostly members of Sir Ofori Atta's family, assured her that he had had to go away quickly to a town at some distance but that he would no doubt soon come back. He did not come back and before long a search was organized. He was not found. A month or so after his disappearance the

rumour ran that he had been seen at Krachi, where he was in the bush, withdrawn in retreat. But he never came back.

Meanwhile the Government had stepped in. Bit by bit they pieced the clues together. It was not easy because the episode concerned the solidarity of the tribe, and it concerned the other world, the other life, spirit and spirits, so that men spoke little if at all. It was in fact fear of the spirit world that gave the first substantial clue. One of the Ofori Atta family needed money, several hundred pounds, to pay a fetish priest to concoct a bath for him which would lay the ghost of the Odikro of Apedwa, which had been much disturbing his peace. Human bones were also found which experts reported on as being the bones of somebody of the same figure and size as the Odikro, and that life had left them at about the same time as he had disappeared.

By August, six months after his disappearance, the Government investigators had finished their investigations. They rounded up seventy-five witnesses. This is what they found.

On that Sunday morning in February, the Odikro entered the Stool House. Some of the leaders of the tribe were already there, dressed, like himself, in the ceremonial robes. Two sheep had been sacrificed and their blood poured over the Stool. A modern touch was given by the presence of two bottles of Schnapps. Later the blood of a sacrificed dog was also poured over it. Then eggs and smoke. The Odikro, after visiting a two-storied building in the compound, entered the third courtyard and joined a group of eight senior mourners. These included four sons or grandsons of Sir Ofori Atta. They invited him to sit down and one of them then gave him a glass of something to drink. While he was drinking it, one of the sons, standing behind him, struck him on the back of the neck with a cudgel; the Odikro fell to the ground stunned; all eight then fell on him, one stabbing the ritual dagger through his jaw.

After the sacrifice of the Odikro, the culprits, who were well aware that such a rite would be treated as murder by the British authorities, put out rumours. They fabricated one story that he

had committed suicide; another that he had disappeared into the bush, probably due to lapse of memory; another that he was in religious retreat. Men and women were bribed or menaced to say that they had seen the Odikro in this or that place, and the utmost pressure was exerted on them to take no part in the search.

The conspiracy went much further than the eight performers of the sacrifice. It concerned some of the most eminent African personalities in the Gold Coast. It included well-known barristers with flourishing practices and political power. Four persons, including an eminent barrister, were convicted of perjury when instigating a son of the Odikro to say at the murder trial that he had seen his father alive. Another eminent barrister, who is one of the leaders of the Gold Coast political intelligentsia and had gained a London School of Economics doctorate for an anthropological thesis, was committed for attempting to cause a witness to disobey a summons to appear at the inquest of the Odikro. This defendant, although the judge characterized his defence as a "complete fabrication," was subsequently discharged on grounds of a technicality. After a study of the evidence I have no personal doubt whatever as to how a non-technical spectator would make up his mind.

The whole episode suggests that the modernists are more old-fashioned than was thought. But unfortunately the most old-fashioned thing about the majority of them is their veneration for a civilization, our own present Western civilization, the dangerous nature of which the maturest minds in Europe and America are now trying to parry in an attempt to recover the stabilities which still exist in Africa. The modernists are throwing away their gold to chase after gold paint. In Africa taxation is trifling, work is light and easy, everyone has leisure, there may not always be enough to eat but there is rarely starvation, men and women till their own farms and fish the waters in their own time and in their own way, everyone belongs to a close-knit community and is surrounded by the warm comforting glow

of unlonely family and village life, where perversions are unknown, insanity and suicide infrequent. In Africa alone are there communities today who are ever laughing and singing. It is this life which these alien-indoctrinated townsmen would destroy in order to set up in its place the desert of industrial cities, where many, perhaps most, men are lonely, insecure, frustrated, and where life becomes faster and faster towards worse and worse.

The Colonial Powers have indeed pushed too far. Their great duty today is not to "develop" Africa but to slow down the "development" and to safeguard for Africans a way of life that we now see to have so much that is wholesome and happy. Ritual murders cannot be tolerated; but are they worse than the environment of Pittsburg?

That is not to say that this small modernist minority is to be ignored. On the contrary it must be taken seriously and treated with tact, even when its desires must be refused with courage and realism. It includes able and honourable men. A man like Herbert Macauley, now eighty years of age, a leader of the Autonomy Movement in Nigeria, is a remarkable man by any standards. Social relations, already good between European officials and these Europeanized Africans, should be cultivated as far as is mutually congenial to both sides. British officials serving in Europeanized or "progressive" regions will need a different approach from that in the non-Europeanized regions. They should be able to contribute to such communal activities as orchestras, brass bands, theatricals, literary and debating societies, arts and crafts exhibitions, garden competitions, Boy Scouts, and so on. The greater use of the educated African in the native administration is, as already stated, called for. And despite the discouraging lack of interest so far shown everywhere, local self-government will be the most practicable objective in these new urban communities and should be given as quickly, step by step, as the majority of people are capable of exercising it. Parliamentary self-government and not Indirect Rule is also indicated as an early objective for the Sierra Leone peninsula.

THERE IS NO ONE AND ONLY FORM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT: THE CASE FOR SEPARATING NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN NIGERIA

It is probable that the political evolution of the coastal part of Nigeria will be along representative parliamentary lines rather than the chiefdoms and elders of Indirect Rule. The Ibo peoples, for example, running into four millions and full of vitality, seem to be born Jacobins. Further, this evolution has already gone so far that to foster and direct its course now requires a special policy and a special outlook; one altogether different from that required in governing Northern Nigeria, which is traditionalist and monarchical both in institutions and in temperament. In culture it is predominantly Mohammedan; the South will be predominantly Christian. The political evolution of North and South will be so different as to risk being at cross purposes.

It may well thus be to the interest both of the North and South, whose natural bent is, like their geographical environment, their civilization, their history, and their race foundation, so opposed, to separate them, to make them two distinct colonies as they were before 1912. The posts, communications, and other technical services, could be common as they are common in East Africa. Northern Nigeria, which numbers more than half the population and covers about two-thirds of the land, cannot be ruled from Lagos, above all from the Lagos of today. Nor is there anything to be said in our depersonalized age against smaller governmental units as such.

It is possible, too, that the northern territory of the Gold Coast should be constituted into a separate colony, though as the political evolution of the Gold Coast is likely to be more balanced than that of Southern Nigeria this is possible rather than probable. In Sierra Leone, too, the dominance of Freetown and the Peninsula on the rest (90 per cent) of the country is inadmissible. Hitherto Sierra Leone has been run with an open eye to 100,000 special people, and a blind eye to the two million

in the interior. A certain Governor is alleged to have left the Peninsula only once during his tour of office.

In any case the essential point is to grasp and then to provide for this: namely that the political evolution of African groups should accord with their natural bent and their natural interest and not with any one single pattern. What is meat to the Ibo may be poison to the Fulani.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION FOR NIGERIA

A week after I had written the sentences above, the proposals for a new constitution for Nigeria were announced by the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards. His plan is the most encouraging invention in British colonial policy since Lugard's systematization of Indirect Rule, and no doubt it owes much to a study of the inner meaning of Lugard's teachings. It is fitting that the name of Nigeria should once again be associated with a real and basic contribution to the governing of colonies; with what amounts to more than a striking advance, to a stroke of political genius.

The three Regions into which Nigeria is already divided, viz, the Northern Provinces (which comprise about three-quarters of the area and over half of the population), the Western Provinces (mostly Yoruba), and the Eastern Provinces (predominantly Ibo), are each to have a Regional Assembly. Africans will constitute a majority in the Assemblies; they will be chosen however not by ballot but by the various native administrations, that is to say by the various units of local government. At this stage the functions of the Assemblies will be advisory, not legislative, though they will have full power of discussion and also certain financial powers. Northern Nigeria will have a different Regional Council from the above. In addition to its Regional Assembly of 19 official members and 20 unofficial members (of whom 14 will be selected by the native administrations and 6 will be nominated by the Governor to represent the Pagans), there will also be an Upper Chamber, the House

of Chiefs, of which all the major rulers such as the Emirs will be members as well as representatives chosen from and by the smaller rulers (rather in the same way as Scotch Peers are chosen for the House of Lords).

At the centre there will be the Legislative Council for all Nigeria. Here again there will be an African and an unofficial majority: and here again the choice will be made not by ballot (except in the old ballot districts, and except for 4 nominees like Lagos), but by the African members of the respective Regional Councils. Official members will number 20, unofficial 29. The Legislative Council will have considerable powers, subject, however, to the Governor's veto.

This constitution would, like any other constitution, be open to discussion as regards details. Changes will no doubt be made with experience of their working. It is evident, too, that there is a certain complexity, not to say cumbersomeness, about it; but it would be asking too much to expect the constitution to be less complex and less cumbersome than the structure and the functioning of so heterogeneous a community as Nigeria. Giving self-government to Nigeria is not the same as giving it to New Zealand. Its merit is that for the first time some workable solution has been suggested for an exceedingly difficult and increasingly urgent problem.

A substantial advance has been made towards self-government. African affairs will now be subject to full discussion by Africans and to pressures that matter. Step by step the advance can be extended, as required. Further, the machinery is all firmly based on the native administrations, that is to say on the villages and peasants themselves. Going hand in hand with the mass education drive this will give to the ordinary African in the bush as effective a say in his Government as that of the ordinary Englishman in England. The fictitious political importance and power of the lawyer-politician is now reduced to its true proportions. Politicians of the Mr. Awenner-Rooner type will now have to work with the local Government units for bringing

about their West African nation. Clamour in Lagos will no longer be enough. Finally, if ever unity will be possible in such a welter of diversities as is Nigeria, it will be through some such approach as this.

The real advance made by the Nigeria proposals is most clearly measured by the new constitution introduced into the Gold Coast in 1944. Instead of starting from real facts and real people and instead of consisting of something that is native to the country itself, the Gold Coast constitution is a jumble of wooden parts, a dull contrivance of bureaucrats who see things from the wrong end—from the top and not from the peasant in the bush—and it has as much life in it as a wooden doll with movable legs, arms, and eyes.

CHAPTER VI

The White Official

WHATEVER policy may be laid down by the Imperial Government or even by the Colonial Government, the average African will be much, perhaps most, affected by his European rulers on the spot, by the sort of man his District Commissioner and his several technical officials are. That is to say, you cannot discuss colonial policy and administration without giving a good deal of attention to colonial officials. Their quality and their morale are primordial.[1]

THE MACHINERY OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

As the officials who work the governing machinery are intimately affected by that machinery and in some cases are themselves the product of it, its main features, which will already be clear from the foregoing pages, are summarized here:

The French have a neatly defined colonial policy. Control is extremely centralized in Paris. In the colonies themselves control is centralized in the colonial capital and, in principle, little initiative is left to the District Commissioner. On the other hand, few questions are asked as to how he carries out his orders providing he avoids scandal.

After the Vichy regime was suppressed there was a big drive in French West Africa for producing commodities needed by the war machine, notably wild rubber and oil fruits of various kinds. Quotas were set for each district for the particular product or products it could produce. The methods pursued by District Commissioners to reach their quotas would not have been

[1] I tried to bring out this point in my *Nigeria*, 1936, which gave great offence to the Authorities who excluded it from the official bibliographies of Nigeria.

tolerated in a British colony, nor indeed in Paris. I saw natives in one district going over to Portuguese Guinea to buy rubber at 42 francs a kilo in order to meet the excessive quota exacted from them and for which they were paid the fixed price of 14 francs a kilo. In the same year I happened to be in a district in Niger Colony where the District Commissioner in order to collect the quota of ground-nuts laid on his district made it a penal offence for any native to eat any ground-nuts, even though grown by himself. I must add, however, that in Niger Colony the esprit de corps and the relations between white and black are good because its poverty saves it from development schemes and from any real interest taken by Dakar or Paris. Its happiness is the happiness of a country without a history. The fact that much of it still is, and all of it not long ago used to be, administered by the Army saves it from much paper work and preserves for it much of the traditional native authorities. The soldier is always a better colonial administrator than the lawyer.

The District Commissioner, to resume, has a good deal of personal power in practice; much more than his British counterpart. Moreover, technical officials, including the doctors, are largely or wholly under his orders. The system of Direct Rule increases this power. Native authorities and institutions are retained only as far as they are useful to the District Commissioner. They are considered, as already explained, to have a very subordinate value in themselves as compared with the goal of progressive frenchification; for which reason the French show little interest in, and less knowledge of, native customs and ideas. Interpreters are universal, and are universally powerful. No encouragement is given to studying native languages and customs. Indeed the system of *Plaque tournante* ("designed to prevent corruption") makes such a study difficult and of slight career value. The *Plaque tournante* or the *Rouage* is the system whereby officials are, in principle, not sent back to the same district two tours running. After the normal tour of two years the District Commissioner might be sent anywhere in Tropical Africa (including Madagascar)

for his next tour.[1] He might well spend his one tour in two or more different districts. In the case of technical officials they might belong to a service that covers the whole Empire, including France, thus doing say a tour in the Ivory Coast, followed by several years in Bordeaux, followed by a tour in Indo-China, followed by a tour in Madagascar. The lack of continuity which results is not in the policy, which is permanent, but in the personal manner of carrying out the policy. In all cases the specialization is not Africans but the French colonial system. The paper and the process are the same in all colonies. It is for this reason that personal contact with the ordinary native is not as close as in British colonies. Touring of a district is irregular, superficial, and often sanctionary. The curious position of the *évolué*, the quasi-frenchified African, approaches that of the French N.C.O. class, a class which is much used in their Colonial Service. This combination contributes a flavour hard to define but unmistakably present.

The British system is much more decentralized, both between the home government and the colony, and, within the colony itself, between the capital and the district, though centralization gains more and more ground. Going with this relative devolution is a much less precisely defined colonial policy so that major differences in approach and in method are found between one colony and another. Yet the British administrative officer has little power of initiative, due primarily to the legal system and to the terror felt by everyone of being on the wrong side of the law; a terror all the greater because the law is so incalculable. The one precisely defined item in British colonial policy—paramountcy of African interests—is in fact the fundamental objective and the fundamental characteristic of all British colonies. The African is treated indubitably as an end in himself and as the end of British rule. The system of local self-government known

[1] The great superiority of administration in the Cameroons is due to the fact that it is closed—officials spend their life in that one colony and thus learn languages.

as Indirect Rule and the encouragement of the study of African languages and institutions prevail because they are held to have a value in themselves. A knowledge of the local language is compulsory and touring is, in principle and until recently was also in practice, frequent. Indirect Rule also goes hand in hand with the policy of moving towards representative and parliamentary government. Likewise Africanization of all branches of the administration has gone furthest in British colonies. First Division posts are being filled more and more by Africans. So too African doctors, lawyers and clergymen and other University types are numerous in British colonies. They are rare in French colonies; they are non-existent in the Belgian Empire.

The Belgian system is centralized but not so extremely centralized as the French. Policy, too, is defined with some precision but with less rigidity than the French. As the Belgians are very sensitive to criticism, both in Belgium and abroad, the personal power that is left in the hands of the District Commissioner is comparable to that of a British, not a French, District Commissioner. In any case Indirect not Direct Rule is the base. Instead of seeking to turn the natives into Belgians the intention is to keep them African and to develop them along traditional African lines. Thus few Africans are taught French. All administrative officers must speak and work in the native languages, and a good deal of effort is given to understanding native institutions and native social values. The powerful and privileged interpreter does not exist. Officials, too, tend to specialize on certain peoples and regions; continuity in posting is aimed at and largely achieved. Touring is compulsory: e.g. a Governor must visit every district at least once a year, a Provincial Commissioner must visit every province at least twice a year, and the District Commissioner must spend 20 days a month on tour. The Belgians also have a Second Division in their Administrative Service recruited from the European N.C.O. class, but it is better educated and more controlled than the French Second Division.

THE FRENCH OFFICIAL

Entrance into the French Colonial Administrative Service is, like entrance into every other French Service (excepting the Diplomatic), by written examination. Each year a certain number of places are declared open, 50 for example, and the first 50 gaining the highest marks get them. Not only has the examination little relevance to ascertaining the aptitude of candidates for the colonial career but there is also no interview so that physique or temperament or personality count for nothing. The successful candidates then go to the Colonial University, *l'Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outremer*, and do a course of three years. An experiment was made before the war of sending the students out to a colony for a year or two in the middle of the course in order to see how they shaped at the life, their return to the University and their final entry into the Service being determined by the report made on them. In the Service in Tropical Africa only about half the First Division have begun their career as probationers in the First Division. The other half have begun in the Second (or clerical) Division, the so-called *Service Civil*, which is recruited locally in the colony. Men so selected for the First Division have often had some University training but for some reason or other did not go to the Colonial University and, after a few years in the colony, they have managed to pass the entrance examination into the First Division. In French Equatorial Africa, for instance, it is said that at least two-thirds of the Administrative Service have been promoted from the *Service Civil* in this way. The *de facto* power and the numerousness of this N.C.O. class has already been mentioned. It constitutes a factor of subtle importance in the atmosphere of French colonial administration. Where the men are officer type their status is particularly unfair because they are made to do officer's work but without his pay, position, or prospects. Another factor of importance is that just about a quarter of the French Colonial Service is, like the personnel of the French Colonial Army, drawn from Corsicans. They are

noticeably successful in getting promotion. At the end of Boisson's Governor-Generalship of French West Africa in 1943 four or five of the eight Governors were Corsicans. Another quarter of the personnel consists of Bretons. They play in the French Empire something like the same solid rôle played by the Scotch in the British. Overseas France owes much to the Breton. The admission by examination also provides careers for many French West Indians of African or part African descent, especially in the magistracy. French West Indians are all French citizens or co-citizens.

Governor-General Eboué was born in Guyanne.

Emoluments are not easy to compute because the basic salary represents only a portion, perhaps only half of them, a variety of allowances making up the rest. They used not to be as high as in the British or Belgian Services though the difference was less than generally believed. With family and other allowances they are today not below the British. The lower standard of living is due to the French habit of living thriftily rather than to low salary scales.

The housing provided is generally good but not as good as the British. I have seen a District Commissioner's house or apartment built as the second-story over his office, like a shop-keeper's lodgings above his shop. In the bigger centres the official residential quarter is normally much more cramped than in the British centres; it is often in or adjacent to native quarters. There is nothing in French Tropical Africa that compares with Ikoye, the residential district in Lagos. While French official bungalows generally have vegetable gardens and pigeon lofts, rabbits and poultry, destined for the cuisine, flower-gardens are less common. The French way of life is healthy but less spacious and less gracious. The Frenchman has not that need either for comfort or for recreation which the Englishman seems to have.

Tours are normally two years, followed by six months' leave in France. The French have higher resistance to the tropics than the Belgians, and higher still than the English. Unlike the British,

French officials normally have their children with them, the main limitation being the availability of schools. They thus get more family life of the normal sort than the British. Normally, too, they consider their primary purpose in being in the colony to save money. Festivities of the British African kind are rare.

Promotion for the ordinary District Commissioner is by seniority. Promotion to the senior appointments normally goes to the Secretariat men. It is notorious in the Service that if you want to get on you must get into the Secretariat. The extreme centralization gives a natural bias in favour of anyone who can get near the centre. Moreover, before the war political influence counted for a great deal in getting Governorships and other senior posts. All political parties were guilty of this demoralizing system of spoils. Thus the *Chef de Cabinet* of the Socialist Prime Minister Blum was given an African Governorship, never having been in a colony in his life before. (This is by no means necessarily a disadvantage but unless the man is of exceptional ability it is.) His subsequent metamorphosis into a persecuting Pétainist under the Boisson regime in French West Africa was not out of keeping. One accidental result of General de Gaulle's rise to power is that the bush District Commissioners in the Cameroons and in the lowly Equatorial Africa, who for one reason or another nearly all came over to his unpromising cause in 1940, have since been rewarded with Governorships and Chief Secretaryships. They now hold the majority of senior posts in Tropical Africa. It will be interesting to see whether their early career and their unexpected ascent will have any effect towards decentralizing. So far the evidence is to the contrary.

If a subjective observation can be ventured, the English spectator feels that while French policy is the most coherent and the most persuasive on paper, and shows a number of fine and boldly imaginative features, and is for the moment the most likely to satisfy the *amour propre* of the African, or rather of the literate African, it is in the long run the least hopeful for the ordinary African and the least capable of adaptable evolution. In the same

way the quality of the French Service as a whole looks on paper to be the fairest and the most promising because it is the *carrière ouverte aux talents*; in reality, however, it is the least distinguished of the three Colonial Services, partly because, as always, the *carrière aux talents* becomes the *carrière aux talons*, partly because the selection by examination does not select the best fitted, and partly because the average Frenchman prefers life in France to life in Africa. Despite the presence of many brilliant and devoted men the Service as a whole contains a considerable proportion who make defective representatives of French civilization. The French themselves are aware of these shortcomings. At the Brazzaville Conference in 1944 the *Service Civil*[1] was condemned; so too recruitment by examination; so too the multiplicity of allowances in place of a modernized standardized salary scale; and so too the acceptance of the perquisite system. The conference also criticized the quality of French personnel, especially in business, in French colonies: "Trop souvent les colonies ont été dans le passé le réfuge de declassées qui cherchaient à faire le plus rapidement fortune."[2]

THE BELGIAN OFFICIAL

Entrance to the Belgian Colonial Service is also by examination. In principle anyone can go to the *Université Coloniale*. Those selected for the vacant places in the Service are selected at the end of the first year, primarily, but not wholly, by examination. Then follow another three years. The course is closely related to the African career: native languages, culture, and ethnology play a big part. The Second Division men also enter by examination. Both the First and Second Division officials are the better examples of their respective social classes.

Of the two races which constitute Belgium, Walloons and

[1] See report of discussions; also *Reveil*, Dakar, March 30, 1945, and *Le Progrès Colonial*, Ivory Coast, February, 1945, and *Renaissances*, October, 1944.

[2] *Renaissances*, October, 1944, pages 72–73.

Flemings, the Flemings are in a heavy preponderance in the colony. They show something of the same aptitude for colonial life as their cousins the Dutch.

Emoluments are not as high as the British but are high enough in comparison with the salary scales in Belgium to make the career well worth while to good men, and high enough to permit a good standard of living in the colony.

Tours are normally for three years to four years. An odd anomaly is that officials serving in salubrious quasi-temperate zones like the Kivu or the Katanga do the same tour as those serving in the steamy pestilential Congo basin. Tours, in truth, are too long. The Belgians lose much by this penny-wise illusory economy.

The housing, too, is defective. The outlook derived from the crowded urbanized homeland persists in the colony and even senior officials, like the Governor of Leopoldville, for example, live in unimpressive quarters. Belgian officials say that this poor housing is, like the overlong tour and the overlong office hours, due to the jealous and mistaken criticism in press and parliament at home of their so-called over-luxurious colonial life. They say that the criticism is instigated by the business firms in the Congo because they do not want to see their ordinary routine employees (the managers and directors are well, sometimes extravagantly, paid: many are better paid than the Governor-General) disturbed by a superior standard of living given to Government officials.

Promotion works much the same way as it does in British colonies, with about the same merits and the same defects. One hears just about the same complaints about it over *small chop* as one hears in British colonies. The bush District Commissioner is undervalued. Governors and Secretariat heads are too often the negative careerist whose administrative genius is confined to keeping out of trouble and to ingratiating himself with his seniors.

The Belgian Colonial Service has, for all its youthfulness, achieved a Service tradition which the French, with the possible

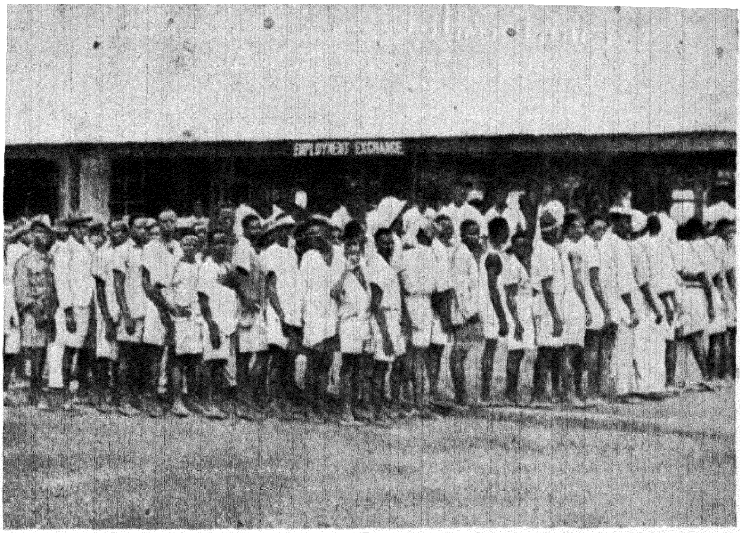
exception of the Cameroons (the French model colony), has scarcely yet achieved. Its standards are good.

THE BRITISH OFFICIAL

Entrance to the British Colonial Service is entirely by interview. Intellectual standards are estimated not from examinations but from University or other appropriate records. Much consideration is given to physical and temperamental fitness for the work. The majority of the entrants are drawn from Oxford and Cambridge or from the Services, but the elasticity and the fairness and the conscientiousness with which the recruiting is done has given the entry to no small number of men drawn from all classes and backgrounds and from all parts of the British Isles and the British Empire. The system has justified itself beyond doubt, even though much of its recent achievement is due to the personality of one man, Sir Ralph Furse, who has presided over it with wisdom, width, and insight for more than a quarter of a century.

There is no Second Division for Europeans in the Administrative Service, nor indeed in most technical services. This is also an incontestable advantage. No one with personal experience of the colonies, including the French and Belgian colonies, would have two opinions on that point. The very heavy intake into the Service after the 1914–18 war brought a large body of the N.C.O. class, from the men who had got temporary commissions during the war and were given preference for government posts. Good men were included amongst them but the general result on the Service has been unfortunate and is not likely to be repeated.

The British Colonial Service has gone much further than the French (which has not gone far) in throwing open First Division posts to Africans. Africanization in certain technical services in certain colonies, notably in the Gold Coast, has gone quite far. For example in 1926–7 there were 10 Europeans in the P.W.D.

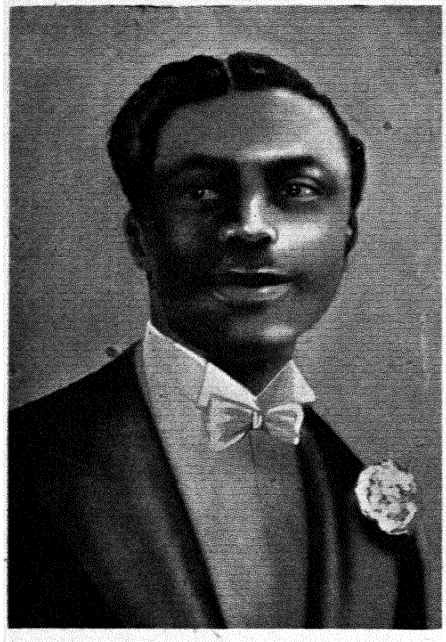


Queue before Employment Exchange, Lagos, in 1944

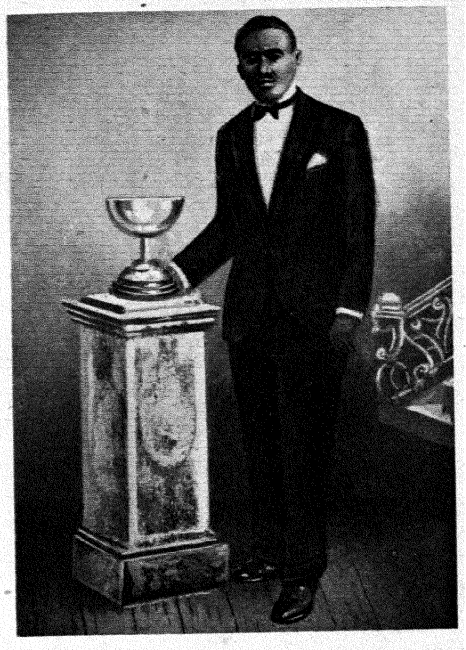


Advertisement of a cinema film showing in an African Cinema at Dakar in 1945

PROGRESS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION



Mr. Bruce Johnston



Mr. Baker-Cole

TWO EVOLVES FROM BRITISH WEST AFRICA

architectural branch, while in 1941–2 there was only one; in the traffic branch of the railway there were 23; in 1941–2 there were 12. There are African medical officers, agricultural officers, veterinary officers, dentists, foresters, surveyors, and engineers; all First Division. Official policy has declared for maximum Africanization to the limit of the possible. Officials on the spot are less confident about the wisdom of the policy, and criticism, notably on the grounds of corruptibility, is rife; yet on the long view Africanization must come. The only question is under what conditions. In recent years even the Administrative Service has come within the Africanization policy. So far two African Administrative Officers have been appointed in the Gold Coast (one was recently involved in a certain affair and may not be staying) and one in Nigeria (since invalided out of the Service). There is a strong case for those who argue that the time has not yet come for Africanizing the Administrative Service. It is not a question of the inherent capacity or incapacity of the African. It is that the Administrative Service, as the senior service, is *the* Government, and as such it is to and for the Africans the representative *par excellence* of the British connection. It is conceivable that an African medical or engineering officer will carry out his technical duties not less efficiently than the European. But the Administrative Officer is more than a technical officer: he is the British *Raj*. In the second place the Africanization of the Administrative Service is incompatible with Indirect Rule. And in the third place it is certain that an Ibo District Officer, no matter what his personal merits may be, will be less acceptable to say a Hausa or Yoruba or even to an Ibo District than a British District Officer.

The African District Commissioner has arrived. Will British Africa also soon be seeing the female District Commissioner? A demand for this reform is being put forward in England. The little colony of Gambia has, like David before Goliath, accepted the challenge. Two female Administrative Officers from England have been added to the strength of that colony (they are now in

the Secretariat for the time being). More, it is suggested, are destined for West Africa. In view of the large unemployed corps of A.T.S. and W.A.A.F. "Officers" released by the peace the pressure to increase such appointments is probably strong.... Yet the fool hath said in his heart that there is no progress! Do we, peering through the haze beyond the present, descry, faintly and sungilded in the morning light, the distant peaks of the Future and its Brave New World, where the helm of British State is held in the grasp of Mrs. Stitch—it is the second Stitch Administration—with Miss Nelly Pepper as the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Colonial Office lying in the lap of Dr. Myrtle Match, Ph.D.?

An error made in fixing the salary scales of the First Division African officials has been to base them on the standards not of Africans, even upper-class or chiefly Africans, in the colony concerned but of Europeans. The emoluments of the latter after all include compensation for the fact that they have to support two homes, to keep a high standard in the colony, and to be indemnified for the risks to their health. Here again we are running up this new and privileged bourgeoisie in the name of democratic equality.

Emoluments for the Administrative Service begin at £400 a year plus furnished quarters and rise automatically within 15 years to about £800 to £1,000. As in the French and Belgian Services, the retired official receives a pension after 25 years' service.

Tours vary according to the climate. In West Africa the tour lasts 18 months followed by 18 weeks' leave plus the time taken in going and returning. In Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand, it lasts 3 or 4 years.

Housing is generally good and generally superior to that in French and Belgian colonies. But there are wide variations and indefensible anomalies.

Promotion is, in theory, by merit. In practice it is automatic for all for the first ten years or longer. After about 15 or 20 years

men selected for promotion get it fairly quickly: once you begin moving you generally move quickly. There are examples of a District Commissioner catching the eye of a Governor and then himself arriving at a Governorship or Chief-Secretaryship within ten years. I know one such "brilliant" officer who was a District Commissioner in 1926 and a Governor in 1931; but then he unearthed a Mahdi plot and the Governor concerned believed, unlike anybody else in that colony, in Mahdi plots. The unearthing was so successful that no one has heard of Mahdi plots or plotters since then, which is more than 15 years ago. The last I heard of him was a resounding speech on Social Justice and the Finer Conscience—he being always as up to date as the head of the Colonial Office itself. The "new" policy introduced with much *éclat* by a West Indian Governor into Tanganyika, also about 15 years ago, proved very profitable for a number of "brilliant" officers there.

A characteristic of the average British officer is his instinctive sympathy for the African; which distinguishes him from the Belgian and still more the French official, who may be just and tolerant but who seldom feels an instinctive sympathy. The British official may be short-sighted and mentally lazy but he nearly always has a genuine liking for his charges.

QUALITY AND MORALE OF THE BRITISH OFFICIAL

The level of administrative skill required of the colonial official is generally not high; it is rarely if ever comparable with that required of officials in the Food Ministry or Aircraft Production or the mobilization and distribution of man-power in England during the war. The true comparison is rather with Local Government. Not, unfortunately, that the vices of the bureaucrat are unknown: if anything they are accentuated. The qualities demanded of the colonial administrator are of a different sort: moral rather than administrative: understanding, sympathy,

insight, and patience. Running Africa is a job requiring character and kindness more than intellect.

Arnold Toynbee has said in his *Study of History* that for a regime of government to survive it must have charm for the governed. This is certainly true of empires. The handful of Europeans who exercise sway over millions must throw some charm over them. They must have the qualities of an authentic governing class—command, disinterestedness, fairness, and likeableness.[1] These qualities can be found in most social groups in England—they do not depend on income alone—but they must be looked for and fostered.

That is the measuring rod against which we must put our Colonial Service personnel. England of all countries can find the men who would pass the test. Yet not a few in the Colonial Service do not pass it. The superiority of the Service in the Sudan (which comes under the Foreign Office, not the Colonial Office) on which all travellers insist, is due to the fact that a conscious and persistent effort is made to form it and to run it on the basis of a governing class. This approach should be not merely one point in colonial administration: it should be the starting point. The career must, through the emoluments, the length of tours, the conditions of life in the colonies, and the esprit de corps in the Service, be made such as to draw and to keep the best that we can offer.

In considering this all-important question of the European personnel account must be taken of the unusualness, if you like the abnormality, of the life. It is a life in which isolation in some degree or other will be common. Further, ordinary family life will often not be possible: if there are children they will rarely be able to remain in the colony, and sometimes wives will not be able to remain there. The men themselves are not spared. The

[1] By "governing class" I mean something very different from a fake aristocracy. Service plus manners will be its mark instead of careerism. Nor will it be incompatible with Mr. Gandhi's advice to the British in India: "Every Englishman has to dismount from the horse he is riding and cease to be the monarch of all he surveys and identify himself with the humblest of us."

climate soon takes its toll, indeed, on the body and nerves of the strongest men. There is no denying the wet bulb thermometer, nor the glare of the tropical sun, nor the dust and wind of the desert. Few Englishmen after a year's sojourn escape a feeling of being out of sorts and never quite well. The oil-burning frigidaire has revolutionized life in the tropical bush; but the sun and humidity and insects and diseases are not abolished. In truth the brains of few men are worth much after 20 years of this environment.

The impact of this abnormal environmentmay be too much for some. A cadet chosen at the age of twenty-three, for example, may throw himself with enthusiasm into the new career. Ten years later he may be unrecognizable. He may have lost interest or may even have developed an active dislike for the work or the country or the people, staying on only because he cannot find another job as good financially or because he will lose his pension. Perhaps, as so often it is, it is not he but his wife who has taken a dislike to the life. It is far from certain whether the average District Commissioner, whose life makes apostolic claims on him, not unlike the Church, is not better as a bachelor. Mr. Thurber's lines have a special point in the African bush:

> Who drags the fiery artist down?
> Who keeps the pioneer in town?
> Who hates to let the sailor roam?
> It is the wife, it is the home.

For one reason or another the British Colonial Service, where the inescapable man-management has been neglected or ignored, certainly shows too high a proportion of these misfits today. In 1944 when travelling through Nigeria I was told again and again that 50 per cent of the Service would retire if they could get voluntary retirement—i.e. if they did not have to lose their pensions. The proportion in the Gold Coast would not be as high but it would be considerable; in Sierra Leone it was probably higher still. As it is, the volume of retirements, even at the cost of losing the pension, is not insignificant. No General would ever

attempt a campaign if the morale of his officers was what the morale of the British Colonial Service is today.

Why is it so low? It is not all to be explained by the climate or the discontent of wives. Much of the blame lies with conditions within the Service itself. Here are some of the outstanding evils:

There is a most mischievous lack of continuity in postings. An officer might serve in two or more different posts in the one tour. He feels as unsettled as a log drifting down a stream, gets discouraged and loses interest. Whatever he does is writ in water. From Lugard's day onwards every one has deplored this changing from post to post, and its disastrous effect in preventing personal knowledge of and therefore sympathetic personal relations with the Africans. Yet the nuisance goes on unabated. If anything it is worse than ever.

Then there is the office routine, which also becomes worse and worse. Most British District Officers spend a great and also a growing part of their time at purely clerical work. This is partly due to the increasing centralization of control, partly to an excessive number of links in the hierarchical chain (in Nigeria, for instance, there is the A.D.O.—D.O.—Resident—Chief Commissioner—Governor), partly to the various development schemes which transfer much of the interesting executive work to specialists and leave the District Office as a post office, and partly to the impossibility of confiding much purely clerical work to the African clerks. The European Second Division in French and Belgian colonies has the advantage of relieving the District Officer of such routine. Their policy, which used to be the British, of making the District Commissioner the supervisor of all the activities and life in his District and therefore the superior of technical departments needs reviving in our colonies. He has been slipping more and more from his natural place. A friend of mine with 16 years' service was, I discovered in Northern Nigeria in 1945, spending most of his time in routine paper work such as running this or that errand for Department personages and in signing yam and whisky permits for the clerk colony in his District,

évolués from the educated South. He saw little of the local natives, his charges. Touring, which used to be so good a characteristic of British administration, becomes less and less frequent. This particular District Officer had been in his District 8 months and had not seen nine-tenths of it. He considered himself lucky if he could get out 4 or 5 days a month. Ten years' earlier he spent at least half his time on tour. I passed through towns of 3,000 or 4,000 inhabitants in the Emirates, known to me 10 or 15 years ago when they were visited every 2 or 3 months, which had not seen an official for 2 or 3 years. Most of the villages which 10 or 15 years ago in my time were visited at least once or twice a year never see an administrative officer now. In this connection the coming of the motor-car has had bad effects. Few officers now tour on horse or by foot—the only way to know the country or people. They run out by car to a chief's town, spend a couple of hours checking his books, and then run back again.

The novelist's picture of the Colonial Officer as a tall hawk-eyed fellow barking out sharp orders, suppressing native risings with his bare hands, climbing up to the stockade of some savage chief with a Union Jack in his clenched teeth as he grimly hums the Eton boating song, is out of date. Today he is mostly a sallow and harassed man peering nervously above a heap of files.

Officers are also perplexed and discouraged because they do not know what is the real intention or policy. What, for example, is the real policy regarding this self-government movement? or these *évolués*? or regarding these grandiose development projects?

The Secretariats are largely to blame for this. Their quality is not good enough. Colonial governments of the size and complexity of Nigeria still have no general staff, no "thinking branch." They have not even a staff of trained and permanent Secretariat officers. Jokes current in Lagos about some of the Secretariat seniors were funny but also sinister. The Secretariats are manned with ordinary Administrative Officers seconded to them for a tour or two, generally men who dislike the bush.

What is needed is a real Secretariat, central and combined, staffed by men who can take a long policy view and who can cope with the technicians, and containing and directing the administration of all departments.

Promotion works unsatisfactorily too. No final solution is ever likely to be found to this question because no unanimity as to what constitutes merit is ever likely to be found. Some safeguard against the human tendency to err and against mere arbitrariness or favouritism, on the other hand, could be provided by setting up within the Secretariats a personnel branch (like the M.S. branch in the Army) and by allowing some right of appeal and review. The good honest bush District Officer, the foundation of the whole regime, is neglected today. The succulent plums go to those who catch the eye of the Governor and who manage to satisfy him in whatever whim he happens to be taken up with at the time. The Colonial Service includes Governors of outstanding personality and ability; but it also includes too many who are outstandingly unfit for their high functions. The doings of some of them would if told in a book not be believed. Fads like the Singida Railway in Tanganyika which cost dear and now runs about one full train a year; or £100,000 experimental farms which have to be abandoned; and, still worse than incompetence, a low standard of personal conduct, not to mention turpitude. One Governor was until recently flourishing on the West Coast for over a decade who combined miserliness and sexual mania with an absence of either ability or interest. There is no final solution to the promotion problem but something must be done about it when it eats into esprit de corps as it does now. The clever cad, often just the mere cad, has altogether too much in his favour at present.[1]

[1] The Colonial Office is also to blame. In 1942 a certain Resident Minister, on investigating complaints against the head of the P.W.D. in a certain colony made by the military, found that his incompetence was such as to prejudice the local war effort and he asked for his removal. The Colonial Office at length reluctantly removed him, not to retirement, as had been understood, but to another colony on promotion and at an increase of several hundred a year in salary! "Kicking up stairs" is as demoralizing to any service as corruption.

One's dominant impression of the British Colonial Service is a spirit in which self-confidence is lacking and the willingness to take risks and to live dangerously is conspicuously absent; a spirit dominated by fear—fear of touching a menace like the Indian traders and planters in East Africa or Fiji, fear of antagonizing the Missions, fear of questions in Parliament at home, fear of disciplining West African dissidents or town criminals, fear of the big firms, above all fear of the lawyers. A governing class cannot afford to fear. Fear and be slain!

CHAPTER VII

Conclusions

ALL the Colonial Powers in Africa have done well by their African wards. The sense of responsibility is particularly active among the French, the Belgians, and the British; in the last twenty years it has grown from strength to strength. Imperialism in the ugly sense is, over the greatest part of Africa, dead; the exposures of veterans like Mr. Brailsford, to whose writings the awakening of the new conscience is in no small part due, and others have no relevance there today. It is well to grasp this fact at once. There are enough authentic problems in Africa without getting emotional over what does not exist.

The Belgian approach to their colonial responsibilities is too similar to the British to call for further comment here. The problems in the Congo are less complicated than in most of Africa, and the Belgians are free to concentrate on them without having to disperse their energies over the wide and diverse fields which the French and British are required to cover. The ratio between population and economic resources in the Congo is also in their favour. Sometimes it looks as though their aims go no further than turning their Africans into healthy cattle, but that is a superficial view. Despite a feet-on-the-earth realism, both their policy and their practice are much concerned with the quality of life, now and in the future. Their difficulties will arise when the Bantu awakens to political consciousness. For the time being it is sufficient to say that what they are doing is as good as anything being done in Africa. Ryckmans' phrase, *Dominer pour servir* hits it off exactly.

As between the British and the French approach to their respective colonial responsibilities there is, on the other hand, a fundamental difference.

The approach of either is determined by the national temperament. The dominant political strain in the British national temperament and tradition is whiggery; in the French it is Jacobinism. Whiggery heavily impregnates British colonial policy and practice; Jacobinism heavily impregnates French. And so too with other manifestations of the national temperament: in the British colonies, for example, besides the parliamentary idea and Gladstonian administrative rules and *ad hoc* liberalism, our cricket matches and blazers and clubs and dinner jackets and Churches are, like our language, there for good, whatever may be the fate of our suzerainty.[1]

Everything considered the British effort, I believe, is better now and more promising for the future than the French. It is not pleasant for anyone who feels a respect and an affection for France to criticize the French colonial effort, all the more so when the French are so proud of and so sensitive about it, and when, too, it has so much, like its medical work and its generous disregard of colour prejudice, to its credit. Nevertheless I see no escape from passing a judgment that is less favourable to the French than it is to the British.

British policy starts from the point that the African is the end himself. There is no *arrière pensee* about it. Whatever its shortcomings may be in conscious theorizing, it does seek to achieve for him the maximum welfare possible now and to give him self-government as soon as he can exercise it. We may be muddled but we see ourselves as Trustees who are to hand over their trust at the earliest practicable moment. French policy, on the other hand, is not muddled but it starts from the point that what matters most is not the African but France. It never rids itself of preoccupations about military manpower, war supplies, strategic bases. The end is not the African but what he can con-

[1] Cricket became such a wholetime passion among the natives of the British Pacific Islands that it had to be limited to two days per week.

tribute to France's political-military position as a World Power. We too, of course, also think of our political-military position. The strategic value of our colony of Gambia, for example, is not likely to be overlooked; and still less that of Freetown. But the African nevertheless remains for us the first priority. In the French Empire he is subordinate to the interests of the Empire as a whole, which in practice means France. The French can argue that the two ends are not mutually exclusive; they no doubt strive to reconcile them. But the reconcilation is not and cannot be complete. No man can serve two masters. What line, for instance, would the French take if a movement should arise in their colonies as strong as in the neighbouring British colonies for self-government? Or even for a separation from the *Union Française?* The African is not yet really in the French Union but if he is admitted into it he will be there not on the terms chosen by himself but on those imposed by the French.

The recent history of France in Syria shows clearly how she feels about it and what she wants to do when she has outstayed her welcome and her former wards wish her to go. The rather highly publicized policy regarding the future constitution of Indo-China is not unconnected with what is her basic attitude to the colonies—the political-military position of France herself.

To the friendly foreign observer it seems likely that France, thanks to this uncompromising and unrealistic hostility to any sort of political devolution in her Empire, and oddly enough also thanks to the spirit of social Jacobinism, will have more political troubles than will the British, and she will reap more hatred in the process. The likelihood is the greater because it is far from certain whether the virtues of the French (derived, notwithstanding the adultness of French civilization and the mature brilliance of individuals, essentially from a peasant and small-country outlook) are the kind required for the detailed organization of a vast and vastly diversified Empire into so highly centralized a bloc. There is nothing in the French Government system anywhere to show it. Further, the only way the policy

of the *Union Française* could work with certainty would be to give more or less complete equality to all within it. The French would then be a minority in their *Union Française*.

Whether there will be or will not be political upheavals in the future, it is certain that the policy of impatient frenchification and its resulting assault on native society, inspired by this permanent preoccupation with the political-military position of France, has made life less agreeable for the African in French colonies than in British. The policy has not got as far in practice as the French desire or claim, partly because of the poverty of their colonies (which has slowed down all plans), partly because of the passive resistance of the African, and partly because of the good sense of their officials out in the bush on whom the day-to-day business of government falls.

In practice there is thus some blurring of the differences between the lot of the average bush African on one side of the Anglo-French frontier and the other; in the bush the similarities of practice are often greater than the differences. The *Administrateur* at Tessawa, for example, goes about his work very much the same way as his British colleague across the border at Daura. But the difference in conception remains, and even there in the interior, far from capitals and ports and the Europeanized Africans, the difference finds expression in a multitude of small ways which are not lost on the native.[1]

The British share one great defect with the French: the way they conceive of "Development."

British efforts for progress in Africa have been marred by two

[1] After finishing this monograph I came upon *Africa Dances*, Penguin, 1944, by G. Gorer, in which severe criticism is made of French colonial administration derived from a hasty motor tour of a couple of months made over ten years ago along the main roads of French West Africa. As the erotic interest of the book will give it a wide circulation it must be said that notwithstanding a certain insight and a sympathetic interest in Africans evinced by the author his criticisms amount to an impertinent caricature and the French Government would be justified in making a diplomatic complaint. It is deplorable that responsible publishers should reprint such a work at a time when a spirit of mutual comprehension and trust is a primary need of England and France.

major shortcomings. First, we see things from the wrong end. Our perspective is false. Thus we spend £X on a hospital when £X/2 would have given the locality concerned a water supply, the lack of which causes more diseases than the hospital could ever hope to deal with; or we lavish energy on devising a constitution which might mollify the demands of a handful of town lawyers and clerks when we have made no more than a beginning on self-government in the villages; or we orientate our Agricultural Departments into spending themselves on some special unrepresentative activity when nothing is done for the ordinary self-subsistent peasant; or we "reform" a judicial system in order to better the lot of professional lawyers. This tendency to topsy-turvy perspective might do much harm in connection with the development projects now on foot. Second, and it flows on from the first, we lack the unified attack. None of these colonial problems can be isolated from the rest. They are parts of a living whole. That is why the Tennessee Valley Authority with its conception and its practice of the total and the integrated approach contains a lesson of the highest relevance to Colonies. Starting from the base of the self-subsistent peasant you set all your departments going on the essential tasks such as water, seeds, pests, animals, co-operatives, village government, village schools, and from there the budget of roads and railways and industries and higher education and central self-government can be dealt with in their natural order; which is to say, as and as far as they are rooted in the primordial purpose—the self-subsistent peasant. Policy should grow from the soil, like a tree.

The starting point is the people, the real people and what they most need. It is for this reason that policy in Africa cannot be shaped by considerations of what is best in the West Indies. Beyond the fact that the West Indies are Crown Colonies and that most West Indians are black in colour there is little if anything in common between the problems of Africa and those of the West Indies.

This habit of comparing peoples and places that are not comparable is largely to blame for our rushing the African faster than is good for him. The overhasty introduction, not to say imposition, of our legal concepts and procedure is a case in point. Other examples are legion. A recent example is the way in which trade unions were introduced by the Government in Nigeria. Concepts and practices were taken over *en bloc* from England and imposed on the irrelevant conditions obtaining in Nigeria. In 1945, three or four years later, the Government had on its hands a General Strike which had been launched with an irresponsibility that would have been comical had it not been dangerous.

From this same criterion of real people and real things the internationalization of colonies which has recently been demanded in high quarters[1] is neither practicable nor desirable. The administration of a colony cannot be shared. For good or for evil it must be entrusted to a single Power. The Anglo-French condominium in the New Hebrides, now going on for forty years, is not particularly bad but both the British and the French would rate it well below their normal standards. The New Hebrides is an argument against internationalization. Arguments from the work of the Permanent Mandates Commission are equally fallacious. Its work was good as far as it went, partly because of the presence of a few experienced men of the quality of Lord Lugard and Lord Hailey, but mostly because it did not go far. Some day the game played by the Germans in Tanganyika between 1930 and 1939 will be revealed. The Indian problem there has also been due in part to the mandate. This is not to say that some sort of general international supervision and standardization might not be workable or desirable; particularly in suppressing military conscription; but I believe that more than this would do harm, not good, and that its advocates would be disappointed by the results. The most effective answer

[1] Cf. Lord Hailey's *The Future of Colonial Peoples*, London, 1943.

to this canvassing for internationalization would be to persuade the U.S.A. (from whom the demand mostly comes) to assume responsibility for running some colonies itself. Why not the Japanese Islands in the Pacific and perhaps the ex-Italian colonies in Africa? An ounce of such experience would equal many tons of articles and speeches. It would be in the interests of everyone concerned, too, if advantage could be taken of the admirable qualities of the Scandinavians, Italians, and others by providing for the admission of a certain number into technical departments. Such provision already exists in the Congo.

In the last analysis the fundamental question in colonial policy today is the question of introducing European civilization among primitive peoples.

It is strange that almost everyone assumes that there is no question about it at all, and that our first duty is to spread the blessings of our way of life as quickly as possible.

No decision on colonial policy, therefore, is worth anything unless it is grounded firmly on a clear understanding of what our civilization is and of what African civilization is.

As for our civilization, can any man of sense and sensibility have lived through the last twenty years and still retain a confident conviction as to the superior value of our way of life or as to the promise of its future? Our technological advances hold out a prospect of mastering poverty and insecurity and drudgery and disease, at all events in their main incidents. All we need to do is to control our technological skills. Perhaps we will control them. But until we have got further ahead in that direction than now, it is wiser to keep in mind the present poverty and insecurity of life for most Europeans, the present incidence of disease, the present huge social inequalities, the frustation in work, the loneliness, the emptiness of life, and the murderous intolerances. We might achieve a golden future. Here and now the best of our townsman's world has been exposed in the Lynds' *Middletown*; the worst has been exposed by the war. It is a

tale told by an idiot. And he is a bold optimist who can exclude from his vision of the future flame-throwers, stratosphere rockets, arsene gases, ten-ton bombs, inextinguishable incendiaries, atomic explosives, and all the other utensils in the Devil's Kitchen within our grasp. A wry smile must surely rise on the faces of the gods as they watch the irony of the position, for the unhappiest age in recorded history is spurred with a missionary urge to spread its way of life on a people whom it commiserates as unfortunate.

As for the African way of life, the African suffers from poverty, it is true, like most of mankind; but the absolute poverty is less than in much of Europe and in most of Asia and the relative poverty (relative to his needs, material and psychological) is less than the poverty of Europeans. Like most of mankind he also suffers from disease, but his health both physically and psychologically is above that of the average European. And he derives more interest from his daily work, his basic beliefs are more rooted, his family life is more stable and his society is closer-knit, warmer, and less unequal, than that of the European. He has not attained unto painless dentistry, scientific surgery, wireless sets, automobiles, and the rest, but make no mistake about it, the average African gets more joy from his life than the average European. It will take more than clichés about trying to turn Africa into a Whipsnade and Africans into museum pieces to shake this fact.

It is true enough that we cannot conceal our civilization from him. Much of it, moreover, we cannot deny to him: we have in any case gone too far for that. Thus mass literacy is on its way. But there are two facts to remember in this connection. One is that the vast majority of Africans, perhaps as many as three in every four, still live in small villages, tilling their own farms or herding their flocks or working at their ancient crafts, and thinking their own thoughts and following the old rules of life. The new *élite* in Lagos, Dakar or Elisabethville is more noisy than numerous. The other fact is that we, the Trustee

Powers, can control and direct both the volume and the speed of the inflow of our civilization. We are not as helpless as all that.

The African himself must understand that if he insists on a high standard of living, which is to say on purchasing power, he must pay the price. The price is his own independence. He will get this purchasing power if in industrial production he goes into factories or mines and becomes a wage earner, or if in agriculture he goes in for capitalized plantations on the one hand, or socialized collective farming on the other, and becomes a controlled unit in these aggregations.

For the green felt hats, coloured sweaters, gramophones, wireless sets, motor-cycles, cameras, and so up to frigidaires, motor-cars, cinemas, here is the price he must pay—freedom. The bulk of the literates are clamouring for these things; perhaps most of the unsophisticated would blindly surrender their freedom for them. The great voluntary stream of labourers from Central Africa, where they have freedom but no green hats, down into the Union, where they have no freedom but can get green hats, is illustrative. The Congo, too, shows with what readiness the African will surrender his independence in return for the higher material standard of living he can get as a mine worker, a factory worker, or a plantation worker. But we, the Trustees, can and must help the African before this dilemma.

It will be clear from these pages what is the environment of the African, what are the human subjects of it, and what is the right way to go about transforming it. The T.V.A. and other experiments show what science can do to transform an environment in the right way, and Europeans like Lugard in Uganda and Nigeria, Ryckmans in the Congo, Hubert Murray in Papua, Lyautey in Morocco, Andrew Jones in the Gold Coast, and hundreds of humbler officers show what sympathy and understanding can do to transform human beings. The African will respond to leadership towards the right environment.

Let us then give him those of our techniques in which he

stands in genuine need, but let us clear our minds of cant as to what our civilization is worth and as to what his is worth. The African has produced no Belsen camps.

And, again coming down to real people and real things, why not appoint a series of strong Royal Commissions which, without fear or favour, can make an objective investigation of some of the immediate needs—agriculture, medical services, justice, taxation and control of Syrian and Indian capitalism, and morale in the Colonial Service? The principle, too, of spending the British taxpayer's money for development projects in the colonies is less sound than is assumed today. A re-examination on an appropriate scale is called for. One of the lady colonial experts has even announced that England "should" find £3 million a year "for a long period" in order to put Abyssinia on its feet.[1] Why only Abyssinia? Why not Tibet or Paraguay? And why specifically England? In so far as development projects are justified in Abyssinia or elsewhere, the capital should be provided by the United Nations' Organization, not by a single Power, and above all not by England, the economic plight of which requires all the capital it possesses for its own development. Attention given to colonial questions by Parliament is negligible. Except for occasional questions only a couple of days a year are now given to them. When Mr. Harold MacMillan introduced the Colonial Estimates only 8 Members were present, so slight is the interest felt. The Royal Commission technique is therefore the most effective, though a permanent Parliamentary Commission might also be useful.

Let us get down to the real facts and see them in the correct perspective. And let us say a thing is wrong or bad when it is wrong or bad instead of blowing over it a smoke-screen of platitude and airy rhetoric, either of the Empire Day Speech kind on the one hand or of Socialist pamphleteering on the other, of Imperialists or of Anti-Imperialists.

Peoples of countries which are responsible for running

[1] Cited in Lionel Curtis, *World War: Its Cause and Cure*, p. 189.

colonies must clear their minds of misinformation and cant. Perhaps in time it will not be too much to hope that peoples of other countries will clear their minds of at least some of the grosser misinformation and some of the grosser cant now current about colonial affairs. A beginning might well be made by banning the portmanteau bogey word *imperialism*. If this is asking too much then let the word cease to be linked with Britain alone. The spreading of strategic or political or economic hegemony by our Russian friends in Eastern Europe seems to be very much like what they denounce as imperialism in Gambia or Senegal; and the demands of our American friends to the Marshalls, Carolines, and other strategic *points d'appui* in the Pacific, to say nothing of the whole Carribean Region or of Liberia, and to say still less of dollar diplomacy, seems to be very much like what they denounce as imperialism in Ceylon or Java. Moreover, this imperialism of either our Russian or our American friends shows little evidence of "the paramountcy of native interests" which is the mainspring of British Colonial Policy. Korea is now divided up between the Russians and the Americans: there is no evidence that in either the Russian zone or the American zone the interests of Koreans are treated as paramount. Is it possible that the difference between British or Belgian imperialism on the one hand and Russian or American imperialism on the other consists in the attitude of responsibility of the former for their colonial charges and of irresponsibility of the latter for theirs?

THE END

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