Nationalism in Colonial Africa

by THOMAS HODGKIN.

(Frederich Mueller, 10/6)

Basil Davidson

Nationalism has had a bad press in recent years; and with reason. The intellectuals had good reason to distrust it. Didn't Franco invade and crush the Spanish Republic in the bauleal name of "the national idea"? Wasn't nationalism the last-ditch defence of the Bourgeoisie against the assault of the collectivists? Didn't Franco unite his enemies against his father against Europe and the United Nations? And what about the "national idea"? The recent years; and with reason. The intellectuals of the 'Thirties had good reasons to distrust it. Didn't the intellectuals of the 'Fifties, for instance, reflect on the long and difficult road which we have travelled towards the goal of Independence. African nationalism was not confined to the Gold Coast - the new Ghana. From now on it must be Pan-African. And the ideology of African political consciousness and African political emancipation must spread throughout the whole continent, into every nook and corner of it."

Meantime, while this spreading process went on, the independence struggle in the Gold Coast rapidly became confined to the Gold Coast. Probably there was no other way: yet such was the dividing pressure of imperialism. British and French-in West Africa that the African political leaders of all these territories have appeared unable to concert even a small degree of common action. The independence of the Gold Coast have never been concerted with those of Nigeria: nor those of British Africa with French Africa. Finally, for all their ideas about internationalism, African leaders were pushed further and further into a limited nationalism; and it remains to be shown now and when they will reverse their tracks.

But for the truth is that this crystallisation toward nation-states is not simply a choice, a fashion, a passing political tactic. On the contrary, it is the product of all those many factors which have combined, these many years, into the African awakening of our day. It is the product of Imperialism. It is the product of the gradual disintegration of tribal society, of the undermining of old chieftaincies, of the conflicts of interest between agriculture, of the passing of tribal land tenure. It is the product of the growth of towns and cities, up and down Africa, in which the downtrodden peoples of new nations could pour: so that there is scarcely a great conurbation in Africa south of the Sahara that has failed to double and quadruple its pathetic "native slums" over the past few years. It is the product, in short, of the detribalisation and the urbanisation (and, increasingly, now, of the industrialisation) of many millions of Africans, driven out of the world of their fathers into the world of European conscience, but not admitted to that new world except on terms of helotry and hunger.

As Hodgkin shows, Dakar in Senegal has grown from 92,000 inhabitants in 1936 to 300,000 in 1955; Bamako in the French Sudan from 22,000 in 1941 to 100,000 in 1955; Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo from 27,000 in 1935 to 340,000 in 1955. Here in these seething hotbeds of germinating nationalism, people have been forced out of the world of their fathers, driven out of the world of European conscience, but not admitted to that new world except on terms of helotry and hunger. A great crystallisation toward nation-states is not simply a choice, a fashion, a passing political tactic. On the contrary, it is the product of all those many factors which have combined, these many years, into the African awakening of our day. It is the product of Imperialism. It is the product of the gradual disintegration of tribal society, of the undermining of old chieftaincies, of the conflicts of interest between agriculture, of the passing of tribal land tenure. It is the product of the growth of towns and cities, up and down Africa, in which the downtrodden peoples of new nations could pour: so that there is scarcely a great conurbation in Africa south of the Sahara that has failed to double and quadruple its pathetic "native slums" over the past few years. It is the product, in short, of the detribalisation and the urbanisation (and, increasingly, now, of the industrialisation) of many millions of Africans, driven out of the world of their fathers into the world of European conscience, but not admitted to that new world except on terms of helotry and hunger.

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indigenous culture, their African consciousness, their sense of distinction and African culture — this mingling of their ideas with our ideas, this nationalism in Africa will not be a poor thin copy of what others have already done. The apostles of meritocracy may lose their way in myths and mysticism; it remains true that the nation-states of Africa will make their own original contribution to the sum of human wisdom.

Which is as much as to say, no doubt, that Africans will take their own way towards independence. One could add some examples. In the Belgian Congo, the diligent and autocratic Belgians have recruited their most solid adherents precisely from these "privileged strata". The dilemma that is likely to present itself to a bold and thoughtful man of the Bakongo or the Baluba peoples to name only two of the Congo's leading tribes is: is it not better to "side with the Belgians" or to "side against them"; his dilemma is whether he will give his loyalty — whether history will demand him to give his loyalty — to a Bakongo or Baluba nationalism, or to abandoning Congo nationalism. He feels himself on the threshold of a new life, an altogether different life, certainly a better life. What will he find beyond?

It will be obvious to anyone who has given more than a passing thought to the history of Nigeria of these last few years, that imperialism has had much less influence in this crystallisation process than most of us have previously believed. No doubt it has proved convenient to imperialism that the principal political movement of the 15 million people of Northern Nigeria has found itself in growing conflict with the principal political movements of the two southern regions. It may be convenient to imperialism that the Yoruba movement, in the south, is often in conflict with the Ibo movement. But nobody need question that the conflicts have deepened, and that in fact, endemic to these old established societies and their newly-felt national consciousness.

But that is not to say that the policies of the imperial powers cannot and do not profoundly influence the immediate shape and form of these states and of nationalist movements in other parts of Africa. Conservative and Labour colonial policy has seldom differed in more than emphasis and detail: but that is not to say that the shape and texture of these new African nations and "nations" (for some of them are still early on the road) could not and would not be very different in the circumstances of a socialist

Britain. This does not mean that constitutional advances under a capitalist Britain are not real advances; in the short run, they are. But in African national consciousness is a step towards equality and independence. But it does mean that socialists in Britain owe allegiance (as well as to others) to give much more serious attention to the colonial fact than they have ever been willing to give in the past. Unless we understand what is happening today, every advance in a sound appreciation of the meaning and potentialities of nationalism in Africa, we shall make a hash of our future ties with these peoples who are now becoming nations. We shall lose what chances we have and already they are slender enough — of helping our natural political allies against our natural political enemies.

This need to think about the realities of colonialism is the principle reason why Hodgkin's book is valuable and important. Here in sensibly compressed form there are set forth in clear detail the main questions and answers: the policies of the colonial Powers and their contradictions as, for example, that Africans in the Belgian Congo may be engine drivers and skilled workers and so on but Africans in neighbouring Northern Rhodesia may not:

The Accumulation of Capital
by JOAN ROBINSON
(Macmillan, 1956, 28/-.)

Professor H. D. Dickinson

Since Keynes' General Theory, two books on economics have appeared in Britain that, in the reviewer's opinion, represent major contributions to economic science. These are Professor A. W. Lewis's Theory of Economic Growth and Mrs. Joan Robinson's Accumulation of Capital. Now at last we are seeing a convergence of economists from various quarters upon the problems of long-period economic change.

In what follows, I shall concentrate upon Mrs. Robinson's Accumulation of Capital. For instance, she discusses changes upon three fundamental variables: population, capital and technical knowledge. (She makes clear the distinction, so rarely observed, between a change in technical knowledge and a shift from one technique to another within the range — she calls it a 'spectrum' — of techniques already known. Such shifts may occur in association with changes in the amount of capital per head or in the ratio of capital or labour to natural resources.) Of these three, changes in the amount of capital (due to changes in the rate of accumulation, or in the profits). One by one, she introduces complications: a spectrum of technique, economic fluctuations within the long-term process of accumulation, finance, a rentier class (who consume out of profits), diminishing returns, the theory of prices, and international trade. Thus she works into her scheme practically the whole of the conventional content of economic theory. It is truly a work of meditation that is, a thing that is very close and is, in places, difficult to follow. But it is very rewarding. Not least of the reader's rewards is to find familiar topics put into an unfamiliar context, thereby acquiring new and greater significance.

Historians Qf economic thought have often suggested that the shift of interest away from dynamics and towards static equilibrium was due to the empirical work of by one, it is something that is often suggested that there was a secular tendency for the rate of profit to fall, his respectable colleagues were surprised and pained). Cannan and Pigou tuj-ned utility theory from a w-a-
wages bill then appears as income from sequences. There are dark references to work (directly or through hired managers). The excess of the product over the owned by a small number of individuals as an economy in which 'property is unemployment, inflation, balance-of-payment difficulties, and various other cations of this are that Golden Ages are perhaps the second half of the twentieth century in Western Europe was one: per- of rare occurrence (perhaps the nineteenth century). Much of her analysis is devoted to eluci- date the conditions under which a 'Golden Age' can occur, and, more mena- cingly, the consequences of these conditions not being fulfilled. The impli- cations of this are that Golden Ages are of rare occurrence (perhaps the nineteenth century in Western Europe was one: per- haps it is a phenomenon of the seventeenth century in the United States will turn out to be one — it is too soon to say) and that in the absence of Golden-Age con- ditions we may expect falling real wages, unemployment, inflation, balance-of- payment crises, and all the other vices of other evils. This is under capitalism, defined as an economy in which 'property is owned by a small number of individuals who hire the labour of a large number at agreed wage rates and organise their work (directly or through hired manage- r). The excess of the product over the wages bill then appears as income from property'. The 'rules of the (capitalist) game' are such that in many situations they lead to self-contradictory and destructive con- sequences. There are dark references to the paradoxes of the capitalist rules of the game and to situations in which the rules of the capitalist game become 'unplayable', in which case there is the possibility of 'adopting a different set of rules'. What these rules might be is a subject that Mrs. Robinson does not deal with.

Orthodox economics has often been referred to by Mrs. Robinson as capitalist apologists*. In a sense this is unfair. Economics is a description and an analy- sis: it neither praises nor blames. But in another sense the accusation is true. Every newspaper editor knows the prop-

The TORENT OF SECRECY by Edward Shils

(Wm. Heinemann, 15/-).

Professor Shils' book is a study of McCarthyism. Other eminent scholars have written on the prevalence of witch-hunt- ing in the United States, mainly from the angles of constitutional law or of classical liberal theory. Such attacks on McCarthyism have come from those who see its clear infringements of legality and who deplore the use of political and economic blackmail to suppress individuality and enforce conformity. Professor Shils could not not be aware of such criticisms of such allies in the cause of decency, but would, I think, disagree with them in their analysis of the problem. Professor Shils sees McCarthyism as a natural product of certain strains in the American democratic tradition, especially in the manner in which that tradition treats the idea of class. Here "class" must be understood not in the simple terms of capitalist-proletarian position but in the more complex terms in which the term is used by sophisticated American and British sociologists. Professor Shils is a prominent American sociologist, but he knows as much as we do about the British academic sport of manning the barricades to repel the jargoners of transatlantic social science. He has lived with us; he knows us well; he can't be said to love us to excess or to approve the smugness, lack of initiative and our acceptance of undemocratic social mores. But in comparing McCarthyism with whatever it is we have in England, we come out best. The "old boy" tradition, and the cúirt, the subtle flatteries that won away the po- liti- 

*Notes and references are omitted for brevity.
about book burning be suppressed by the official Voice of America. In England the Empire Loyalists quietly lose their deposits.

The class aspect of all this is important. In Parliament both parties contain large numbers of conventionally well-educated people. Using class to mean social and professional educational status there is a struggle between front benches and no-class struggle between Wykehamist Ministers and Wykehamist civil servants, nor indeed much between Ruskin and W.E.A. backbenchers and University front benches. In contrast the Congressman is, in the popular mind, and sometimes in fact, an ill-educated bigoted time-server, who, if he had any real talents would not be wasting them on the uneducating and unprofitable profession of flattering constituents, getting himself cheap rides and press publicity, and reading high school poems on “America” into the Congressional Record. For nearly one hundred years Congressmen have had something of this reputation, and so for most of this time have civil servants. But with the New Deal a new type of civil servant appeared in Washington — young, sophisticated, interested in theories, despising Congressmen quick to answer under questioning, well educated, often at the Harvard Law School and frequently enough Jewish to arouse the anti-semitism latent in all professional super patriots.

Status anxieties (and the frustrations and aggressions resulting from them) are now an important rival to the constitutional theories of Freud in the literature of American psychology. In respect of the desire of Congressmen to injure the good name of government in the arts, the status thesis is not unhelpful here: it is brilliantly handled by Professor Shils. Scientists suffered at the hands of McCarthy because they are (a) intellectualists, (b) because they have their own internal standards of judging facts and men, and (c) because they are the guardians of secrets. Secrecy, whether or not it is warranted drives the McCarthyites mad. Like all others, they are intrigued by the knowledge that there are important secrets. (b) they have important secrets. They are incensed that the government will not turn them over for safe-keeping to Congressmen, so they probe into every possible (and impossible) aspect of the lives and thought of those who have the secrets in their keeping. For the sake of publicity they will sell truth or falsehood with equal even-handedness. Democracy, they declare, demands both total public and total secrecy — and the easiest road for them is via total conformity. Security on the other hand demands neither total secrecy, total publicity or total conform- ity. McCarthy contributed nothing to the security of the American Republic, on the contrary, his hectoring attitude towards the government departments, his character assassination and his leaks contributed to the loss of all the sights of relief heard at his political eclipse, that of the Federal Bureau of Investigation was loudest.

What is the fundamental cause of all this? In Prof. Shils opinion it is native American populism, the traditional desire to form all Americans in the image of the folksy, patriotic, Christian, rural or petit-bourgeois average Anglo-Saxon who dislikes the foreigner abroad and the thinker at home. Professor Shils' plea for the development of a genuine pluralistic community in which individuality is not under continual suspicion, and in which institutions like the Universities can tell State governments and Congressmen to keep out, will be sympa- thetically heard over here. In American terms it is a plea for conservatism and in consequence this is a book which the Left here will find both stimulating and provocative.

RICHARD PEAR.

JIM LARKIN: THE RISE OF THE UNDERMAN
by R. M. Fox

(Lawrence and Wishart 18/-)

When Sir Lewis Namier said that there were "two dozen Irelands" in nineteenth-century Europe, he meant national minorities, and so, in effect, 80,000,000 of us, on this island think of the Irish problem as a national one which found its "solution" in Home Rule. Mr. Fox's book reminds us helpfully that the gathering tension in Ireland before 1914, which made the future for the United Kingdom seem as insecure as that of the Empires of the Hapsburg or Romanov, had social as well as national ingredients: that linked with the struggle for self-determination went the fight for a life of a labour movement, inspired on its political side by its connection with the cause of national freedom, and on its industrial side by the desperate poverty of the Irish workers.

The story in which nationalist and socialist aspiration were inextricably tied up with each other is clearly illustrated by the career of the labour leader, Jim Larkin (1867-1947). Although his Irish Transport Workers Union earned the reproaches of Sinn Fein leaders for concentrating on industrial rather than patriotic agitation, Larkin himself, in- vited to tell a London labour audience about the great dock strike of 1913, in- sisted that the "struggle for National Freedom in Ireland was more important than the 1913 Labour struggle" (which was "received in dead silence"). This duality of aims continued until Larkin left for America in October 1914. As Ireland began to fill with armed bands in response to Carson's challenge, he had insisted on his followers forming a working-class Labour Defence Force distinct from the general Irish Volunteer movement, but his patriotic efforts still earned the approval of such prominent non-socialists as Sir Roger Casement; and his career provides an interesting study of the rise to power of a bitter man whose heterogeneous million were victimised by both economic and racial oppression — a type of man whose role in history may be only just beginning.

Mr. Fox inevitably draws special attention to this aspect of Larkin's significance by devoting about half his book to the heroic strike-epic and the heroic failure of 1913 in Dublin, while he skips very briefly over Larkin's nine years in America and his later activities in the Dal, as a member of the Dublin Corporation, and as General Secretary of the Union of Ireland. Even in dealing with the events to which he devotes most attention, however, Mr. Fox does not always give more than a one-sided picture of the situation. The traditional and bitter mistrust between Protestant and Catholic workers, which Larkin tried determinedly and with great success to overcome, is written off as "sectarianism", and although this is what it was, seen from the point of view of the class-war line-up which Larkin was trying to bring about, Mr. Fox's phraseology is too simple to describe such complex and deeply-rooted group attitudes; Larkin's achievement would seem greater, not less, if its background were more scrupu- lously presented. Again, Mr. Fox adopts without question Larkin's own view that the government acutely tried to split the Irish Protestant majority by wil- fully misinterpreting the Dublin strike as a nationalist demonstration and sending troops to stir up trouble between Orange and Green factions of the working class; there is no evidence for this, and it seems at least as likely that the civil and military authorities assumed out of sheer obtuseness and force of habit that the Dublin disturbances had national- istic causes, and reacted in their trad- itional way.

Mr. Fox tries to take a wide view, so that his eulogistic tribute to Larkin suc- ceeds in re-creating something of the atmosphere of the period; it is all here, the violent oratory at mass meetings, the brawls between strikers and blacklegs, the law-courts hopelessly prejudiced against labour leaders, even such tithes as the revealing assertion that the police "always made a dead set at any musical instruments when the strikers marched to a band". On the other hand the purpose nowadays of a book like this — apart from the hagiography of a man perform- ing an act of piety to a lost leader's memory — is not clear. The historian, even the social historian, will not have much use for it. And the times are surely past when the working class public, even the labour public, felt itself set apart from society in general and identified it- self exclusively enough with the Labour movement to form a market for this sort of party-literature; what it wants to read nowadays of a book like this — apart from the hagiography of a man perform- ing an act of piety to a lost leader's memory — is not clear. The historian, even the social historian, will not have much use for it. And the times are surely past when the working class public, even the labour public, felt itself set apart from society in general and identified itself exclusively enough with the Labour movement to form a market for this sort of party-literature; what it wants to read nowadays of a book like this — apart from the hagiography of a man perform- ing an act of piety to a lost leader's memory — is not clear. The historian, even the social historian, will not have much use for it. And the times are surely past when the working class public, even the labour public, felt itself set apart from society in general and identified itself exclusively enough with the Labour movement to form a market for this sort of party-literature; what it wants to read nowadays of a book like this — apart from the hagiography of a man perform- ing an act of piety to a lost leader's memory — is not clear.
There were also unfair colonial policies. Colonial economic policies such as taxation, forced labour and compulsory growing of crops caused discontent among Africans. The suffering of Africans which was also expressed in form of armed resistance in many countries marked the growth of African nationalism. The settlement of large numbers of European settlers in different parts of Africa caused growth of African nationalism. Large numbers of Africans were displaced from fertile lands in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa and many other countries. This caused destruction of African culture.

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Slide 1 AFRICAN NATIONALISM IN PERSPECTIVE Typology of state centric Nationalism in Africa 1. Pre-Colonial African States- North Africa and the Horn; Southern Africa: Lesotho

The Anglophone Mandela Slide 12 Other Post-Colonial Regimes Post-Revolutionary States- Lusophone Belgian Legacy- DRC, Rwanda and Burundi Italy and Spain- Remnants of Empires- Somalia, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea Slide 13 Patterns of Government in Africa Slide 14 Post-Colonial Regimes Post Settler Regimes: Home Rule Zimbabwe Namibia South Africa Slide 15 Post-Colonial Regimes and the Impact of Colonialism Ethnic Identification Overseas. In Africa colonial boundaries divided ethnic groups across states in some cases and included large numbers of ethnic groups within their borders in most cases. Attempts in the post-colonial period at fashioning supra-ethnic national identities, however, have largely failed, with many African states caught up in ethnic violence and conflict at various points in time. 6. In Uganda ethnicity has proved to be even more salient as a political force than in many other African states. 2 Paris Yeros (ed.), Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa: Constructivist Reflections and Contemporary Politics (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999).