

The Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano has put forward certain important points in the campaign against materialistic atheism in Latin America. It first of all points out that sociological formation must be based on integral religious and moral formation. For this the Council recommends, among other proposals, an adequate social formation, for both sexes, in seminaries and houses of religious training. Study weeks and conferences should be arranged to stimulate enthusiasm. The systematic preaching of the Church's social doctrine is recommended, as well as the religious and moral formation of the laity. The holding of Catholic social weeks is to be encouraged, and inter-American study circles are to be organized. The Catholic Information services in each country should bring to the fore the Church's activities in the social field. Catholics should play their part in all national centres of education and art. An association of Catholic artists and writers should be formed and there should be exhibitions, popular plays, etc., on the theme of Christian social justice. The Council stresses the grave obligation of the authorities and of the faithful to promote a morally healthy cinema, radio and television, and to protest against programmes which offend.

The Bishop of Mallorca, Don Jesús Enciso, urges the necessity of diocesan co-operation in the work of OCHSA—the sending of priests to Spanish America. He desires that such priests shall have the full support of their dioceses, to which they will eventually return. To this end the Instituto Apostólico Junipero Serra was created, and in Mallorca it is this institution that will prepare priests, nuns, members of secular institutes and lay people for work in Spanish America. Incidentally, the first Latin-American conference is to be held in Rio de Janeiro from August 15 to 20, 1960.

Caritas, a section of Catholic Action in Spain, is initiating a nation-wide campaign, the purpose of which is to arouse in the Spanish consciousness a greater sense of personal responsibility for all needs. Taking account of the double aspect of charity—love of God and love of one's neighbour—the campaign is centred on the feasts of Holy Thursday and Corpus Christi. Holy Thursday, the day of universal love, should be marked by the prayer and sacrifice of all for all, especially for those in need; on the feast of Corpus Christi, by what we give to Christ in his poor, we should show that the love of Christians towards Christ goes beyond hymns and flowers. Incidentally, the women of Catholic Action have launched a campaign against world hunger.

K. POND

REVIEWS

Through the African Bush

THE usual guides are becoming too old. Lord Hailey's *An African Survey*, Seligman's *Races of Africa*, Baumann and Westermann's *Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique* and the rest, all plot the course on ancient bearings.

None of them really provides what is now needed for anyone interested in getting quickly a picture of the cultures and sociology of Africa as it now is. They are too official and magisterial, or caught up in anthropological and economic detail, or enthusiastic for bows, beads and baskets. They do not distinguish the wood from the trees for general readers whose time for Africa is limited. So until someone writes an entirely new kind of book on African sociology and cultures, it will be hard for most people to form any accurate general impression of the human similarities and differences that underlie the political life of the continent.¹

This little excursion into the bush of current writings about Africa is through fairly thin scrub as it happens: not that the books are bad, but there are not many of them. (A number of autobiographies and human interest stories are omitted—one tires of reading reviews of them.) On the track of popular academic writing, Basil Davidson's history, *Old Africa Rediscovered*,² is a notable landmark. It probably could not have been written ten years ago, for lack of material and for lack of interest in it (though there was a previous work on African history from an African point of view, de Graft Johnson's *African Glory*). *Old Africa Rediscovered* tends to proliferate names of peoples and places and makes too many comments for its size; but to pick up from time to time it is a good introduction to the possibilities of African history, and refers to a great deal of work that is not generally known. It should be supplemented by a second volume on African cultures today, but that would need much more anthropological knowledge and more contact with people. (Mr Davidson did his best, but probably lacked opportunity for much of the travel that would be necessary.)

The book now needed is one that does not make too much of the contrast between Old Africa and New Africa. Who talks of Old Europe and New Europe? If the son of a Scottish crofter becomes a bank manager, it seems quite natural; but if the son of an African farmer becomes a clerk, what 'problems of social change', 'adaptations', 'tensions' and so forth are supposed to be involved! I see that an old Africa hand with a passion for snakes is said to have lamented administrative policies that 'make third-rate Europeans out of a race of potentially first-rate Africans'. Africans seem to complain of them because they have made first-class citizens out of some potentially third-rate Europeans, another problem of social change and culture contact. Mr Davidson shows for how long and how deeply a variety of foreign influences have permeated African life. In such places 'the African personality', however defined, has incorporated something of the Arab or the European. It does not just lie below the surface waiting to 'rise up' or 'break out' (the choice of metaphor depends upon who you are and where you live in Africa). Basil Davidson is useful in describing how complex, and in places rich in the arts of life, the African background is. I suppose it will do nothing for those who like the stereotype of 'the African' dressed in skins, eating maize porridge and grateful for it too—a stereotype

¹ A newly planned Oxford Library of African Literature will provide a solid basis for such impressions.

² *Old Africa Rediscovered*. By Basil Davidson. (Gollancz, 25s.)

as realistic as would be that of 'the European' singing at his conveyor belt and touching his forelock to the gentry.

The rest of the books at first sight seem to emphasize the variety in Africa. What are we to make of the contrast between the magnificent library of an Ethiopian scholar pictured in Edward Ullendorf's *The Ethiopians*,³ and the almost naked old peasant pictured on the cover of E. W. Winter's *Beyond the Mountains of the Moon*?⁴ But of course (though the peasant is from another part of Africa) there is no inconsistency. Europe is equally represented in a farm labourer and a university professor. Only when Africa is in question it often seems to be assumed that everyone ought to be more like everyone else, to be 'the African'. *The Ethiopians* is a convenient introduction, as far as a non-specialist in a very specialized field can tell. *Beyond the Mountains of the Moon* consists of the dictated autobiographies of four Africans, much as one might (if one could persuade them) take four people out of the market place in an English country town and let them tell their stories in their own words. I found nothing intrinsically interesting in these stories, and somehow, when presented in this way without much explanation, the unfortunate authors are made to appear naive and quaint for the benefit of a public they could not gauge. A number of specialized anthropological studies have appeared, of which those most likely to reach a general public are Professor Read's *Children of their Fathers*⁵ (the children, and the fathers of course, are the Ngoni of Nyasaland, and they are or were all very integrated and well behaved) and John Beattie's portrait of the Banyoro of Uganda.⁶ This is one of an American series in which various peoples of the world are described without technical jargon. Finally, the new World's Classics *East African Explorers* is an excellent anthology. Who could fail to enjoy Joseph Thomson, for example, visiting the land of Makula:

It seemed a perfect Arcadia. . . . The people accorded in every respect with the scene. The time was the sultry afternoon hours, and all were having a siesta before bestirring themselves to enjoy their evening repast and the cool hours of the sunset. . . . I felt as if I had fallen upon some enchanted place, as I stood unseen taking in the picture.

The charm was easily broken. We simply gave a shout, and in a moment every man was on his feet, clutching his spear.⁷

'We simply gave a shout': what a lot of the history of 'culture contact' in Africa is summarized there.

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³ *The Ethiopians*. By Edward Ullendorf. (O.U.P., 30s.)

⁴ *Beyond the Mountains of the Moon*. By E. W. Winter. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 28s.)

⁵ *Children of their Fathers*. By Margaret Read. (Methuen, 18s.)

⁶ *Bunyoro: An African Kingdom*. By John Beattie. (Henry Holt and Co., New York.)

⁷ *East African Explorers*. Selected and introduced by Charles Richards and James Placc. (World's Classics Double Volume, 8s. 6d.)