

At this point M. Monod exhibited various objects which seem to bear the impress of Egypt, the Aegean, or of Asia. He continued:

‘ Il serait, naturellement, absurde de ne plus voir sur l’Afrique que ces nappes superposées de sédiments orientaux, car il y a tout de même, sans compter le cycle pygméen et celui des chasseurs steppiques, un puissant substratum nigritique, largement autochtone peut-être, et en tous les cas de mise en place extrêmement ancienne. Mais ceci dit, c’est par la Méditerranée, l’Égypte, l’Arabie ou Zanzibar que l’on entre en Afrique, qu’on s’appelle raine, souris, langue, légende ou religion. Ce n’est pas par la côte occidentale et son Océan Ténébreux.’

### *Applied Anthropology in Barotseland*

A NOTABLE instance of applied anthropology is provided by the first of the *Communications* issued in two mimeographed volumes by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. The Director, Dr. Max Gluckman, after two years’ study of the situation, sets out his proposals for the reform of the Barotse Native Authorities. These are addressed to the Provincial Administration and to the Paramount Chief-in-Council. In a letter to the latter, Dr. Gluckman advises them, as a friend, that ‘ to keep the past alive only on the past is impossible; the past will only remain alive if it draws strength from the present ’.

The people concerned are the Lozi (we used to call them Barotse), living in the great, annually flooded, plain of the upper Zambezi, whose political organization differed in important respects from that of other major Bantu tribes. It was much more centralized than that, e.g., of the Sotho and the Nguni. The country was divided into *lilalo*, ‘ habitations, land-districts ’, demarcated by boundaries. The people, as distinct from the areas in which they lived, were divided into *makolo*, ‘ political sectors ’. *Lilalo* and *makolo* did not coincide. Members of any one sector were scattered: even in one homestead there might be people belonging to several *makolo*. This system was related to the physical conditions which compelled people, during the flood, to remove from their villages. Officials, with different functions, were appointed over *lilalo* and *makolo* respectively. Each of the latter was under a councillor residing in the capital, who took charge of cases brought to him. There was little local autonomy.

When the British took supreme control of Barotseland by virtue of treaties made with the King-in-Council they agreed that the Lozi should continue to govern themselves. They did not understand the peculiar dual organization. For the purpose of tax-collection magisterial districts were established and these were divided into sub-districts to which the old name *lilalo* was assigned; important local people were appointed as indunas. The nature of the *makolo* was neither investigated nor appreciated. Apart from court-cases and taxes the old system still functions; but utter confusion has resulted. Dr. Gluckman proposes, as the only possible compromise which, without violating Lozi tradition, would be efficient and economical, to combine the two systems: he would abolish the allocation of people to *makolo* and place the *lilalo* under the *makolo* heads.

Other proposals affect the supreme council of the nation, the *Kuta* (Khotla). This comprised three chambers (so to speak): Sikalo, Saa, and Katengo: they sat together for routine matters such as distribution of land, but over matters of major importance they deliberated separately. The king and his chief councillor (Ngambela) ‘ respected the Katengo for it spoke for the mass of the people ’. Under the new régime the Katengo ‘ has definitely declined in importance ’, which Dr. Gluckman deplures. The Sikalo has been made the provincial authority and Saa-Katengo the Lealui district authority; this Dr. Gluckman considers ‘ a skilful application of old names to entirely new organs of government ’, but complains that the posts on each were not allocated logically or consistently. The subject is complicated and we cannot enter into it here. Few of the seats on the *Kuta* are hereditary;

but certain members represent deceased kings: it is as if in the House of Lords the present Duke of Wellington sat as the representative of 'The Duke'. Dr. Gluckman is opposed to the abolition of these titles on the ground of economy: they are 'Lozi history' and cherished as such: and to retain them does not cost a great deal. The Lozi have their national treasury from which the native officials are paid; the Pim Commission complained that the expenditure on this head is much too high and that many officials are superfluous. While Dr. Gluckman does not advocate any elimination of 'titles' at present, he warns the Lozi that the keeping up of numerous officials means not only low salaries but also a retardation of social services.

A third subject investigated by Dr. Gluckman is the *malapa*—a Sotho word which originally denoted the inclosures around Sotho huts but which now among the Lozi is applied to the king's storehouses. The people were all attached to one or other of the *malapa*, each of which was in charge of a *sikombwa* ('steward'). The tribute brought to the king in old days was stored there; people visiting the capital could always find food at the storehouse to which they were attached. With the abolition of tribute, goods no longer flow in any quantity into and out of the capital, and visitors on legal or other business have difficulty in finding shelter and food. Dr. Gluckman makes the sensible suggestion that the *malapa* be rebuilt as rest- and eating-houses and that the 'stewards' be again put in charge of them.

We have not been able, within the compass of a single Note, to touch on all the interesting points of this memorandum. Here is good testimony of the value of a specifically trained and independent mind applied to difficult administrative questions. We shall watch with interest the outcome of the proposals.

### *Birth-rate in Belgian Congo*

DR. G. A. SCHWERS of Coquilhatville examines in *Aequatoria* (7<sup>e</sup> année, 1944, numéro 3) factors making for a diminished birth-rate in some regions of Belgian Congo. He is not satisfied as to some of the alleged causes, such as malnutrition. He is open to believe that certain toxic elements like hydrocyanic acid in manioc have some effect on fecundity, but this requires further study. Social factors certainly operate—breakdown of manners and customs, premature emancipation of women, and so on. Apathy, loss of racial pride—all that he calls *psychic traumatism*—certainly has a great part to play. But Dr. Schwerts will not consider that the problem is on the way to solution until answers are found to three questions: (1) Do there exist among the regressive tribes, and only among them, anatomical lesions or functional disorders affecting the sexual cells and not attributable to any known toxic infection? (2) If those lesions exist and if they accompany *psychic traumatism*, what is the link between these two phenomena? How do they combine their effects to bring about a declining birth-rate? Is it possible to establish between them relations of cause and effect, or do they both depend upon a common factor? (3) By what mechanism do certain tribes resist *social disintegration* and the *physiological decay* which sweep away neighbouring tribes? Dr. Schwerts has no final answer to give to these questions; but his examination of some 39,000 persons of the Nkundo tribe and comparison with some other groups of the same region suggests a partial reply. At the time of his inquiry one section of the Nkundo had little contact with Europeans; the men did not furnish labour to plantations or for the roads. Apparently they were a vigorous, sober, sufficiently nourished people, conservative in their attitude, and only to a very small degree afflicted by venereal disease. They ought to have exhibited a normal fecundity; on the contrary the average worked out at about one birth to every three adult women. There was something peculiar about this state of affairs: here and there a village still prosperous alongside others on the brink of disappearing; an abrupt line of demarcation between the unprolific Nkundo and their fruitful neighbours living in identical conditions. Puzzled by this paradoxical *dénatalité*, Dr. Schwerts set himself