

ceives clearly the necessary connexion of causes and effect which produces his suffering.' She herself had a truly morbid love of suffering for its own sake and committed practically suicide by deliberately starving herself to death in England during the war. Mr Rees comments that 'she wanted to die for the good of her soul', but himself finds it difficult to combine this with her scepticism concerning the soul's immortality.

It seems that Simone Weil is so interesting to our contemporaries because she was both a

neurotic and a writer of whom one never quite knows what she means. She speaks about God without believing in him, she has quasi-mystical experiences of Christ though she is not a Christian, she asks us to love the universe which simply cannot be an object of love, and she affirms that the Last Judgement means total annihilation. It is difficult to argue with a person who uses words in a completely different sense from that in which they are usually used – but this is evidently her attraction.

HILDA GRAEF

THE STOLEN DESERT: A STUDY OF UHURU IN NORTH EAST AFRICA, by The Earl of Lytton. *Macdonald*. 38s.

This is a lightweight book with little apparent overall purpose or cohesion. It is perhaps best regarded as a personal notebook in which the reader is presented with a selection of topics which have at various times engaged the interest of the author. The topics are mostly to do with the past and present in North East Africa, with particular emphasis on Ethiopia and Somalia. Towards the end of the book the author's attention appears to have been attracted to the subject of the achievement of independence by Kenya, a country which Lord Lytton revisited in 1961.

In a book of little originality, the author draws heavily on secondary sources. Many of these are depressingly outdated. We spend a lot of time with Sir Charles Eliot (1905), Budge's *A History of Ethiopia* (1928) and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1929). For his chapter on the Kikuyu the author seems to have relied almost entirely on books which are better read than paraphrased, and in particular on Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938).

In terms of ideas the reader is plunged back into the inter-war years in Europe, with their preoccupation with racial concepts. In the course of the book there are extensive accounts – sometimes difficult to follow – of ebbs and flows of peoples and mixtures of blood; of Hamites, Caucasians, Ham and Sem, and what the author is pleased to call 'Noah's Curse'.

In terminology we are in the midst of words and phrases which, although once used, now make some of us blush. Phrases such as 'we Protestant British'; 'the primitive nomad';

'European democracy'; 'civilisation intervened' are used with devastating unconcern. 'The African' is used in a way similar to that in which we might talk about 'the Thomson's gazelle'. Most terms which are generalizations are dangerous; some are meaningless. Many of the generalizations used in this book are also both presumptuous and insulting.

Lord Lytton is also very selective. The Galla (the author appears to be pro-Galla) are a nation; the Kikuyu are a tribe. What is a nation? What is a tribe? His sympathy for the Somalis is open and declared. This helps him to understand, indeed to champion, the cause of Somali nationalism. The account of Lord Lytton's valiant attempts to persuade the British colonial government to face up to the Somali problem in the Northern Region of Kenya before Kenya become independent forms perhaps the most interesting part of the book. At a time when the issue was far more flexible than it is now, the departing colonial power shirked it. And so it remains, a festering sore of bitterness between Kenya and Somalia today, and a likely source of mischief for both countries in the future.

Unfortunately Lord Lytton's sympathy for the Somalis appears to be the cause of a failure to understand nationalism as it occurs in the rest of the African continent. For the Somalis are the exception in Africa. They are perhaps the one people in the entire continent with a sense of nationhood which fits conveniently into the old European-based concepts of what nationalism is.

During the course of the book Lord Lytton makes clear his own views on the transfer of power from colonial to African governments which has been such an important feature of the African scene during the last decade. Politically we soon know where we are:

'The promise of an African political majority (not necessarily one man, one vote) in thirty years would have been a sensible promise in 1950, but the undated promise of 1960, although in line with the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, was a glaring folly.'

(p. 77)

In certain Belgian circles just such a thirty year plan was contemplated for the Congo in 1956. It was rejected at the time as wildly radical thinking. The Congo, like much of the rest of Africa, was independent by 1960. The question one wishes to put to Lord Lytton, and to others who castigate the British retreat from empire, is a relatively simple one: was there really an alternative?

Lord Lytton asserts that:

'two thousand or more independent tribes have within the long lifetime of a single man coalesced into less than fifty nations. This is an achievement of the Europeans . . .'

(p. 98)

This is surely an extravagant claim. To some of us, the process of nation-building in Africa, far from having been completed, appears in most areas to have only just begun. This makes it difficult to agree with Lord Lytton's assessment that the process has been the achievement of the Europeans who have now departed. One could make a rather better case to show that more progress has been made in the direction of creating nations in Africa in the last six years, than during the previous sixty.

IAIN R. SMITH

DEDICATION and LEADERSHIP

Douglas Hyde

' . . . I consider it one of the most important books written in our time . . . which must be read and read widely particularly in those Western democracies which seemingly believe that so long as God is in his heaven, then everything is all right with the world.'

The Standard

This is a detailed study of the methods and techniques used by the communists to awaken in their followers their exceptional degree of dedication.

Large crown

15/-

EVOLUTION OF MAN

Bernard Ryan, F.S.C., Ph.D.

The author examines the ramifications of the evolutionary theory from the standpoint of a catholic philosopher. He formulates a philosophical theory of evolution, defining or re-defining pertinent concepts and commenting on a few other general theories of evolution.

Demy 8vo

30/-

CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO THE BIBLE

Dom C. Charlier

translated by Hubert J. Richards, L.S.S.
and Brendan Peters, S.T.L.

' . . . one of the wisest books about the Bible ever met with. It is the product of catholicism at its finest. . . . ' *Theology*

SANDS & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.
15 King Street, London, W.C.2.
