

is our own direct concern, something in which we are involved as colonizers and traders, and about which we can do something. The reader should not be put off by the simple classroom style of the argument, for there is more cool judgement and analysis in these short texts than in many a hardbacked tome. In particular it is very satisfying to see an account which manages to convey the real share of the advanced countries in the blame for current poverty without recourse to silliness, such as the suggestion that advanced countries deliberately develop synthetics to do the poor countries down. Jonathan Power puts his finger more than once exactly in the right place, in his stress on high tariffs against manufactures from underdeveloped countries as a major obstacle to their progress, and in his clear argument that price support schemes are a wasteful and inefficient method of giving aid. Only occasionally does his argument leave itself open to criticism. He would be hard put to substantiate his claim on page 12 of the third pamphlet, 'The Role of Trade', that speculation in commodity markets has increased price fluctuations. Also, the emphasis on discrimination against textile imports to advanced countries, while quite rightly pin-pointing a most disgraceful situation, is misleading in some ways. For it is easy to see in this case why exports from poor countries have been held down. But what of other manufactures where Japan, for example, has expanded exports in spite of tariff barriers? Why not the poor countries? Of course, that is a big question, but the answer lies in part in the kind of policies which underdeveloped countries themselves have adopted since the war to trade, policies of protection, import-substitution and a deliberate opting out of international trade. Far more harm has been done to other poor countries by such policies than to the rich nations. Great gains could be realized by a

general freeing of trade restrictions on manufactures with a deliberate discrimination in favour of exports from poor to advanced countries, and it is within the power of the rich to bring this about. But as the UNCTAD conference has demonstrated, we are not really interested.

There is something profoundly disquieting about the Haslemere Declaration, which presents a critique of current aid and trade policy and of more besides, plus a 'programme' to which the signatories pledge themselves. It is not that many of the criticisms of behaviour by rich countries are not well founded, nor is it the angry tone, for which there is ample justification. It is a pity when intelligent and well-informed people settle for the pat formula and the slogan, but this seems to be endemic in documents prepared for mass signature. What is really worrying is the question of conscience salving. Consider this passage: 'We recognize the value and humanity of the work done by the overseas aid charities and the genuine motivation of many of those who contribute to them, but we refuse to accept this salving of consciences. Too often it is the equivalent of tossing sixpence in a beggar's hat. . . .'

Suppose, instead, that we sit down and write a declaration in which we call on the government to make the Minister of Overseas Development one of the five most senior members of the cabinet, all aid to be channelled through an international organization so that the donor countries have no power to interfere with the poor countries' policies, etc. It is clear that the participants do not really think that any of this will come about, because they do not discuss means to achieve it, but no doubt they went home to bed feeling better. What this reviewer finds hard to understand is why one set of conscience salvers should look down their noses at the others. CHRISTOPHER BLISS

Exchange

PHILIP ROUSSEAU and ANNABELLE LEE

After three years on the missions, my wife and I would like to comment on Annabelle Lee's article 'African Nuns' in the May number of *New Blackfriars*. We make no suggestion, needless to say, that her own report of an unspecified area was in any way inaccurate. We would merely offer a perhaps more heartening set of

examples from our own experience, which may help to build up a balanced picture of the missions.

First, three points by way of support. 1. The people often seemed ungrateful. In most cases 'unthinking' might be a better word. But where ingratitude was more marked, it sprang from a

misunderstanding of what the Church had come to offer (a misunderstanding shared by some missionaries), and from a feeling that the Church and the colonial administration (or the Church and the ruling party) were too closely allied. It is worth remembering that African clergy and religious are themselves the victims of this ingratitude.

2. Many local Christians were too dependent on their clergy. They waited for a lead, for a stimulus which was not always forthcoming; and they were reluctant (or ill-equipped) to take any initiative themselves. There are signs that this is slowly changing. Some priests in our area realized clearly that more responsibility should be offered to the lay people of the churches.

3. Perhaps one of the greatest problems still facing missionary workers is adaptation. More important than the adaptation of the liturgy (which needs to be transformed, not merely translated) is the adaptation of religious ideas. This is not a theological problem only: an African spirituality is needed, with its own vocabulary, its own emotional equipment, its own asceticism.

Now to make a more definite contrast with Annabelle Lee's article. 1. Nowhere in our own area did we find missionaries whose attitudes could be described as supremacist. There was among some a certain paternalism, a feature of earlier time; but it was rare. Certainly no sense of superiority was allowed to affect the relations between African and European sisters, who lived, worked and prayed together in the same house as one community.

2. African sisters were certainly allowed positions of responsibility, and were trained accordingly. Of the four African sisters on our own mission, two were fully trained to teach in the primary school (of which one of them was headmistress); another, having completed her secondary education as a sister, was doing a five-year training course to become an S.R.N.; and the fourth was still completing her secondary education, prior to going to the university.

3. We did not find that the African sisters were in any way estranged from their own people or background. They were not only encouraged but obliged to speak the local language, and they had continual contact with the rural population around the mission. Their knowledge of customs and language and their personal experience were invaluable aids to the work of expatriate missionaries and teachers.

4. Modern opinions about religious dress,

and about the relations between sisters and those outside the convent, have had their effect on all members of religious orders in our area—including the African sisters, who are fully integrated members of their communities.

5. Many of the missionaries in our diocese (certainly nearly all those engaged in active pastoral work) had a good command of the local language, and often of some other. A few had anthropological training, and were making important theoretical contributions to the pattern of missionary activity. In conversation and in their work these men always showed great respect for the research and writings of well-known professional linguists and anthropologists.

PHILIP ROUSSEAU

Annabelle Lee comments:

I am pleased to learn that Mr Rousseau taught in a part of Africa where missions were in a healthier state than the majority of those which I saw. He has described the type of situation that I expected to find when I went to Africa after hearing a lot of discussion, both religious and secular, about the role of missionaries and other expatriates in Africa and Asia. However, I was shocked by some of the extreme examples of missionary attitudes and behaviour which I witnessed and was generally surprised that the majority of all the different types of missionaries I knew had not moved with the times.

My primary aim was to show from my more detailed knowledge that a number of points in Elizabeth Power's article could be substantiated, but that the situation was not as black and white as she had implied, and that once I had been able to break through the barrier of withdrawn submissiveness which separated the African nuns from the rest of society I found them very spirited and sensible women from whom I could learn a lot.

My original article was read by a Roman Catholic professor of history and a Roman Catholic priest who had done anthropological field research in India. They exhorted me to publish it because they knew the situation I described had parallels elsewhere and they thought that the facts ought to be known. Both pointed out that a particular attitude to authority was one of the most important factors in producing the situation I described, one which is commonest in the Roman Church but which does occur elsewhere. (The early Moravian missionaries who were used to being ordered around by the home committees, in

their turn exerted their authority over the Africans who came under their influence.) The priest-anthropologist went on to state that in his order there was a number of petty rules made so that people would break them and, feeling guilty, would be more submissive to their superiors at other times. He also believed that if his order decided to accept only the tough and adaptable it would not be able to recruit enough people to staff all its schools and seminaries. If that is the problem it would be better to pay some more suitable lay people to work in these institutions or, if it is impossible to obtain them, to close the seminaries and hand over the schools to the government.

In my article I was careful to acknowledge that different tribes of missionaries have different attitudes and customs. I am aware that theological and social ideas change and develop and that not all groups within the Church respond to change at the same speed. In the areas which I described the first missionary to start work was a man of remarkable courage and determination with a serious respect for, and interest in, the country in which he worked. In his book, which also contains both good ethnography and sentimental pious remarks, he wrote thus: 'Moreover, if a missionary takes his duty seriously, he must be prepared to live as a negro among negroes, i.e. he must adopt their thought processes and actions where they do not contradict Christian morality. . . . This demands tremendous patience, strength of character, will-power and a great love of mankind and above all, divine grace, aptitude and knowledge. It is nonsense to believe that everyone who shows some degree of aptitude and suitability, is called to be a missionary' (Alfons M. Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes*, Augsburg, 1899, p. 73, translation by Christine Rogers). Another member of his order wrote: 'Primum curate infirmos, deinde docete' (*Missionsblätter der St Benedictus-Genossenschaft*, 1896-7, p. 201). The present missionaries in the area are not aware of what was written earlier and do not appear to share these attitudes.

There is little point in presenting evidence to

demonstrate whether missions do more good than harm. There are considerable local variations and the whole matter is too vast and complex to be assessed at this point in time. One important principle for those who think about Africa and work there today is that they avoid reassuring themselves about their position when they are feeling the pinch of political and social change by dissecting the past and attempting to apportion blame to Africans and Europeans. Furthermore, they should never look for, or expect, gratitude. The only sensible thing to do is to accept the present situation with realism and without fear and, in the light of it, to try to understand the best way to act.

Many people agree that religious ideas need to be adapted in Africa but this can only be done by Africans. If few are enthusiastic to attempt to do so, this must be accepted as the unfortunate result of what has happened earlier. Any attempt to enforce the process would only defeat its own ends, but adaptation is more likely to occur most easily where the expatriate missionaries have had an interest in, and knowledge of, the relevant languages and cultures.

In many areas Roman Catholic missions appeared to make impressive progress because of their substantial material resources and large number of celibate professional religious ready to spend their lives as missionaries. However, in some areas it is clear that the way in which the Roman Catholic Church has depended on professional (usually expatriate) religious and has demanded little of amateurs is one of its greatest weaknesses. This, like the adaptation of religious ideas, can now only change slowly.

It seems that some missions will soon have to pay heavily for the particular policies they have adopted in the past, yet this is not necessarily anything to fear for in Africa, any more than in Europe; it should ultimately be beneficial for the Church to be stripped of some of the possessions and secular authority it has enjoyed in the past.

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