

The book ends on a hopeful note. General Qassim attended the consecration in Baghdad of a new Nestorian Church, and the Church of Rome, so long and intimately involved with the Eastern Christians – long before the Protestants became concerned – is, Dr Joseph reminds us, on friendly terms with the Muslim powers under whose aegis these Christians have to live; a very constructive approach.

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ESSAYS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, by E. E. Evans-Pritchard; Faber and Faber; 30s.

Professor Evans-Pritchard has been for some twenty-five years the great examiner of British social anthropology, posing questions and providing model answers for his junior colleagues. It is due to him that the British school of anthropologists has avoided the dangers of amassing great bundles of ethnographic details on the one hand, and on the other of uttering sociological pontifications lacking an empirical basis. This has been done by linking the presentation of first-hand research to theoretical discussion, so that it is not really possible to discuss Professor Evans-Pritchard's theoretical contributions without discussing his monographs on the people he has studied. As a result, his purely theoretical pronouncements have been modest both in number and in expression. The book under review, therefore, which collects three theoretical essays and six ethnographic studies, is not therefore of quite the same importance as was *Azande Witchcraft, Magic and Oracles* or *The Nuer*. The essays here contained will be more easily digested by laymen than his *magna opera*, and for professionals they provide an enviable example of how to write good anthropology and good English.

Two of the theoretical essays argue that social anthropology is essentially related to historiography, more particularly the history of institutions and social history. The underlying resemblances will, the author believes, become more and more apparent as anthropologists come to concern themselves with societies where there is documentary historical data, and as historians come to interest themselves in the past of non-European peoples. This might seem platitudinous; but at the time Professor Evans-Pritchard put forward the view that 'Human societies . . . are seen as systems only because social life must have a pattern of some kind, inasmuch as man, being a reasonable creature, has to live in a world in which his relations with those around him are ordered and intelligible', he was strongly criticized by those who held that 'human societies are natural' systems which can be reduced to variables. Professor Evans-Pritchard traces the origins both of this belief and of the rejection of religion by the majority of social anthropologists to the background of nineteenth-century positivism in another essay *Religion and the Anthropologists*, which quotes some entertaining examples of sociological cocksureness. The reason for the lack of religious faith among anthropologists seems to be not the actual findings of study but rather the motive

for studying belief and ritual – the preconception that they are in some way abnormal growths needing explanation.

Of the six ethnographic studies one deals with the sacred kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan; there the king despite his official holiness might be killed by rebels who claimed to defend the kingship against the short-comings of the actual king.

The other five deal with the Azande. One essay, *Zande Kings and Princes*, is in method closer to history than to ethnography since it uses oral tradition and published accounts to examine the relation between individual personalities and the nature and possibilities of royal power. *Heredity and Gestation as the Azande see them* is more technically anthropological, discussing the relation between Zande physiological knowledge and their ideas on the origin of the soul. *Zande Blood-Brotherhood* raises some theoretical questions. Among the Azande blood-brotherhood is not regarded as an artificial form of kinship, but rather the magically-treated blood is regarded as possessing force of its own, capable of killing somebody who defaults on the obligations he has undertaken. *Zande Theology* discusses the claim made by previous writers that the Zande have a strongly monotheistic concept of a Supreme Being. Professor Evans-Pritchard, by examining the actual situations in which the Supreme Being is addressed or referred to, shows that this concept is in fact marginal to Zande culture. Previous writers 'have not only constructed such a doctrine as we would recognize were we to feel and act as they do but have separated and given distinct conceptual individuality to notions which are confused in Zande mentality'.

In the final paper on *Sanza* we are given an account of Zande 'double talk' which provides many circumlocutions to express the undercurrents of jealousy in social relations. The author links it to 'the dominant features of Zande philosophy; the witchcraft motif . . . The Zande attributes all his misfortunes to the ill-will of others', and to the social structure in which princely suspicion once aroused was dangerous to commoners.

If one theme may be seen as linking these essays together it is the implicit argument that just as social systems are the consequence of the rational acts of free individuals so their study requires the human qualities of perceptive sympathy and balanced insight. Social anthropology has as its necessary foundation the possibility of translating the meaning of social relations from one cultural setting to another; but this obliges the anthropologist to be something that is very much more than a cine-camera or tape recorder.

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THE RIGHT TO MEMBERSHIP OF A TRADE UNION, by R. W. Rideout; The Athlone Press; 45s.

Dr Rideout's book is concerned with the law relating to the admission of members to and their expulsion from trade unions. The subject is an important one