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THE AFRICAN / *This Is His Story...*
By Smith Hempstone
African Correspondent
The Chicago Daily News

Africa is a rich continent. It is rich in its history, its tribal traditions, its religions, its natural resources. It's especially rich in its possibilities for the future.

But what are those possibilities, and who is the African who can—or cannot—make those possibilities a reality?

This is the story of the African, a proud man, often a poor man, but a man with the 20th Century still before him.

Smith Hempstone, Chicago Daily News Foreign Service correspondent for that vast stretch of Africa below the Sahara, knows the people there better than do most Americans.

Since 1956 he has traveled thousands of miles, mostly by auto, horseback or afoot, and visited and re-visited every African nation and territory.

His understanding familiarity with his chosen beat has won him the Sigma Delta Chi award for Distinguished Foreign Correspondence. It has also led to an excellent book, "Africa: Angry Young Giant."

In this series, reprinted from The Chicago Daily News, Hempstone examines the people who make up this newly awakened continent. This is the story of who they are, what they are, and why.

I. Abundant History Lacks Historians

Africa has been called a continent without a history. Nothing could be further from the truth. Africa has a history as complex, as terrible, perhaps as splendid in a barbaric fashion as that of Europe.

What the continent has lacked has been historians. Africa, except for the Mediterranean littoral, is almost totally devoid of written records.

The explanation for this lies in the fact that, for the most part, African languages had no written form until the advent of the white man.

Consequently, scholars seeking to reconstruct the African past must rely almost entirely upon stories handed down from generation to generation, archeology and anthropology.

Because we take so much for granted the ability to write—and perhaps unconsciously assume that no civilization is possible without this technique—we tend to equate the absence of written records with the absence of civilization.

This is like saying that an earthquake does not take place if there is no seismograph available to record it.

THE EVIDENCE of the archeologists and anthropologists, as valuable as it is, is frequently fragmentary and sometimes conflicting.

Much of Africa has not yet been subjected to intensive scientific study.

What do we know about Africa?

About its pre-history we know very little indeed. We know that Africans in the

earliest times knew how to smelt iron and copper. It is believed that these first steps in the long evolution of man were taken at about the same time in Africa as they were elsewhere.

A few experts, among them Kenya's famed anthropologist, L.S.B. Leakey, go further and suggest that the headwaters of the Nile, rather than the Middle East, may have been the cradle of all mankind.

TESTS MADE at the University of California suggest that a human skull found in Tanganyika by Leakey and originally thought to be 600,000 years old, may be 1,700,000 years old.

It was at the shores of the central African lakes that man first shook off the antediluvian slime and began his long and perhaps futile journey to the 50-megaton bomb.

Then it is probable that he used the Nile as a great highway to spill into Europe.

It will take many more years of study to determine whether this theory can be accepted.

About the history of medieval African we know a bit more. We know that well-developed and prosperous empires and city-states have flourished in North Africa since pre-Roman times.

We know that the valley of the Nile was the site of Nubian Christian kingdoms in the 6th Century.

OLD TRADITION and the Old Testament suggest that the Amhara area of Ethiopia was a powerful state long before the birth of Christ.

If that is not yet substantiated, it is at least certain that Ethiopia was a well-developed, feudal, Christian kingdom 1,400 years ago.

We know that powerful military empires such as Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Bornu existed in the grasslands of West Africa south of the Sahara from the 11th to the 18th Centuries.

We know that the Watusi overlords who rule in Urundi have been there for 800 years. We know that the kingdom of Buganda, which exists today in southern Uganda, was established in the 15th Century.

We know that a well-organized Bakongo kingdom existed at the mouth of the Congo in the 15th Century and that the Guinea forest kingdoms of Ashanti, Dahomey, Oyo, Benin and Nupe existed in the 17th Century if not earlier.

We know that the East African coast was organized

into Afro-Arab states perhaps as long ago as the 9th Century.

ABOUT CENTRAL and southern Africa our knowledge is less exact. But the Rhodesian kingdoms of Butua and Monomotapa certainly existed and the puzzle of the ruined stone city of Zimbabwe remain to be solved.

These states were all civilized to a greater or lesser degree in the sense that they were organized. They had kings, nobles, courts, capitals, armies, tax collectors and social and political hierarchies.

As a general rule, the most developed societies in the Western sense were those having the longest and most intimate contact with Islam: the North African, Nile Valley, Niger Valley and East African coastal states.

The impact of the white man on Africa, confined largely to the last 200 years and in many areas to a much briefer period, had a shattering effect not only on African society but upon the individuals who comprised that society.

This was emphasized by the fact that these first contacts were often in connection with the slave trade, which dealt a major blow to Africa, although domestic slavery had been practiced for centuries before the export of slaves became a major factor.

THE FIRST African reaction was to try to forget the history of Africa, to emulate the white man, to become a part of European history. The African regarded his own past as shameful and barbaric, something to be forgotten.

With the surge of African nationalism has come a rebirth of interest on the part of Africans in their own history.

As might be expected, that which once was regarded as of no significance now has become a thing of beauty and majesty without fault.

Petty chiefs, through the eyes of the nationalist, become kings, small tribal chiefs swell into empires and robes of skin acquire threads of gold.

The fact remains, however, that the once-despised African past has assumed tremendous political importance for Africa's political present. One has only to note that Gold Coast changed its name to Ghana when it became independent and French Sudan became Mali.

There is a longing to recapture past glories in an attempt to wash out the memory of servitude and humiliation. He who would understand the African must appreciate this.

BUT THESE past glories—and more research will help us to determine to what degree they were, in fact, glorious—raise an important question:

Is Africa, as most of us assume, a primitive society, perhaps arrested in development, for which nationalism can provide the necessary catalyst for a flowering of the seed so long germinating in African soil?

Or is Africa, in fact, decadent, a cluster of societies that have faced challenges they could not meet and are now permanently in decline?

This is the basic question and the essential challenge that faces the people and leaders of Africa today.

January 2, 1962

2. Continent Offers Varied Climate

Most of the impressions we have about Africa are wrong.

The world's second largest continent is not a particularly hot place. North Africa has a mild, delightful climate that any Californian would envy.

The Sahara, as anyone who served there during the war can tell you, gets bitterly cold as soon as the sun drops beneath the horizon.

The coastal areas of West Africa and the forest areas of Central Africa are hot and muggy. But no hotter and no more muggy than Kansas City, Memphis or Washington, in July.

LIKE North Africa, South Africa can be bitterly cold. So, too, can be the highlands of East Africa.

Nor, with apologies to Edgar Rice Burroughs, is Africa one big forest, drenched with rain, stiff with gorillas and slimy with snakes.

The vast majority of Africa is dry, semi-wooded plain. There is, of course, a forest belt, stretching from Sierra Leone in the west to Uganda in the east.

Deserts exist in northern Africa (the Sahara) and in southern Africa (the Namib and Kalahari). In the highlands of north, east, and southern Africa (where most of the white settlement has taken place) pine trees grow and roses bloom.

But the most typical African land is lightly wooded plain country with a thin grass cover, suitable for agriculture if properly farmed, and good for ranching, if it doesn't lie within the tsetse fly belt.

Although, contrary to the general impression, one is not overwhelmed with bugs in Africa, the tsetse fly and the mosquito have been enormous factors in making the continent, for better or for worse, what it is today.

THE tsetse fly, which is slightly larger than the common house fly (it can be recognized by the scissor-like position of its wings when in repose), spreads from Gambia in the west to Ethiopia in the east, from Chad in the north to Rhodesia in the south.

It is a carrier of sleeping sickness, and its bite can be fatal both to men and to domestic stock. Wild animals have a natural immunity to it.

For centuries, the tsetse fly has hindered the development of Africa by causing illness among men and by barring large areas of the continent to domestic stock.

By the same token, it has made possible the preservation of Africa's invaluable wild life.

THE ANOPHELES mosquito is the carrier of malaria. It exists generally in Africa, particularly in hot, coastal areas.

Nowadays, through the use of malaria suppressants, it is possible for white men (Africans have developed a limited immunity to malaria by long exposure to it) to live in Africa with relative safety.

But had it not been for the Anopheles mosquito, white penetration of Africa would probably have come earlier and colonization certainly would have been both more widespread and more intense, with profound economic

and political consequences for the continent, not all of which would have been unfavorable.

There is little question also, but that Africans themselves would have reached a higher level of development had it not been for the malaria-bearing mosquito, which has kept much of the continent's population half-sick and lacking in stamina for centuries.

Physical factors that have conditioned the development of the continent and its people are the great desert of the Sahara, the lack of natural harbors, and the limited number and the rapids-choked nature of its rivers.

IT IS an established fact that Africa has been getting drier in recent centuries. This particularly applies to North Africa, which 1,500 years ago was the granary of Rome.

The drying up of the waterholes and the encroachment of the desert on the Saharan oases, which finally throttled the caravan routes, had a profound influence on African history.

These routes represented the most important links between Black Africa and the civilizing influence of the Christian-Moslem Mediterranean world.

With these gone or greatly reduced in their practicability, medieval Africa was thrown back on its own resources, resources that proved, at least in the Western sense, to be inadequate.

The effect of the loss of the Saharan arteries could have been minimized had there been alternative routes from the African coast into the interior. These did not exist.

THE AFRICAN coast is ringed by reefs and sand bars, through or over which a hundred years ago there were only few and perilous channels.

A glance at the map of Africa will show how few are the indentations in the coast. This indicates that Africa has very few natural harbors of any size.

Rivers are the natural routes of penetration into any continental land mass. Despite its huge size, Africa has

only five large rivers: The Nile, Congo, Zambezi, Niger and Orange.

Each of these is choked with sand bars and blocked by cataracts and waterfalls at several places. In addition, access to the interior of West Africa is blocked to some degree by the presence of a thick rain forest.

Because of these factors, the world to a large extent passed Africa by. It was the last of the continents to be exposed to modern ideas and

advanced technology.

Whether the ingenuity of man can change the African environment sufficiently to allow the continent to bridge the gap left by centuries of isolation remains to be seen.

What is certain is that Africans, like other men, have been shaped in the course of centuries by the nature of the land in which they live.

Neither they nor the land can be changed overnight.

January 3, 1962

3. Most Africans Call Mud Hut "Home"

The type of home in which the African lives has, as with other men, been conditioned by climate, availability of building materials and sociological factors.

Perhaps the most typical form of African house remains the mud hut with a thatched roof, which most of us associate with Africa, although it is equally prevalent in Asia.

It is cheap, requires few materials and little skill to build and is cool in hot weather.

The hut—or series of huts, as is usually the case—is built by the family who will live in it. In the less developed societies, it is round, with square huts usually being found in societies slightly more evolved.

TO BUILD one, the ground is cleared and swept and several strong posts are placed in a circle. Smaller sticks are placed upright in the ground between these posts. These are joined by a series of interlacing vines.

The holes between the vines, the sticks and the posts are then chinked with mud, which is allowed to dry in the sun. The business of building

the walls is usually done by the women.

It is customary in most societies for men to roof the huts. A frame of wood is first built and this is then covered with grass, banana leaves or palm fronds, depending on which is available.

No provision is made for a chimney, and there are no windows. The result is that most African huts are very smoky.

Africans like them this way, however, and unquestionably it does make for warmth and keep bugs at a minimum. However, it aggravates the eye diseases from which Africans suffer so much.

The lack of windows may also be explained to some degree by this desire for warmth and a bug-free atmosphere. Protection against wild animals also enters into this, as does fear of the supernatural.

Many Africans believe that their souls flit from their bodies when they sleep, leaving them particularly vulnerable. Should an evil spirit enter a hut through a window, it could crawl inside their vacant bodies.

This type of home may last for many years if it is rethatched and rechunked.

If it is destroyed (fires are frequent and some tribes, like the Kikuyu, are required by custom to burn a home in which someone has died) or if it is necessary to move to another area, the loss is not great.

IN THE old days, African farmers practiced a system of shifting agriculture, farming one area until it was worked out, then moving to another.

Now, with the introduction of modern medicine and the end of tribal warfare, the population redoubles itself every 35 years and there is not much vacant land left.

Hence the tendency to remain in one place. Consequently, homes nowadays are intended to be more permanent. Thus, if an African farmer has the money, he tends to build a square house made of sun-cured mud bricks topped with a roof of galvanized metal.

Such roofs are the sign of an evolving, prosperous man.

The African family is large. It may consist of grandparents, their married children and their grandchildren.

Sometimes the entire family will live in a cluster of huts. In rural farming areas, even when this is not the case, the average "home" consists of a cluster of such huts.

To a large degree, this is because most rural Africans are still polygamous. The father of the family will have a hut to himself, where he eats and sleeps.

Each wife will also have her own hut and with her will sleep her children. There may also be a separate kitchen hut (otherwise cooking is done outside) and a separate hut for use by the wives when they are menstruating, since this process is surrounded by many taboos.

Thus each hut fulfills the function of a room in a Western house.

AMONG SOME tribes, such as the Yoruba of western Nigeria, these huts, enclosed by compounds, are grouped into villages. Other Africans, such as the Kikuyu, traditionally have not lived in villages, each family compound being placed on a separate ridge.

In areas such as northern Nigeria and coastal Kenya, where Africans have been subjected to Moslem influence, the tendency is to build permanent, rectangular homes and to live in towns.

AS MIGHT be suspected, nomadic tribes such as the Turkana and Masai of Kenya, live in less stable structures.

Mud and sticks are still the basic building materials, although skins are sometimes used. The structures tend to be smaller, lower, and more flimsy.

Some nomadic tribes burn their villages when they move.

others just leave them standing, while still others, in areas where wood is in short supply, take the frames with them.

Among tribes like the Masai, in which the young men are organized on an age-group warrior basis, the young men live together rather like a college fraternity until they reach their 30s, when they take wives and become elders.

But just as Africa's political structure is changing, so too is the social structure, of which the home is only a manifestation.

The homes described above are still used by the vast majority of rural Africans. But, as happened in Europe and America during the industrial revolution, there has been a tremendous surge in recent years toward urbanization in Africa.

Africans come to town for the same reason white men did and do: For better wages, more excitement, and to escape from the discipline of their parents and tribal elders.

WITH THIS move has come a breakdown in tribal discipline and in social customs. Nowadays, if only because the groom must pay a large sum to his in-laws for each wife he takes, monogamy is becoming more prevalent in the towns.

Many African young men cannot afford even one wife. These city bachelors, if they are lucky, live in barracks-like buildings built by the municipality. If they are unlucky — and most fall into this category — they live as they can.

A typical home of this nature for a man with a wife and four children would be built of concrete and have a tile roof.

There would be a small living room, two small bedrooms, a kitchen and some form of sanitation.

The best of these have electricity, running water and indoor sanitation. But many others lack these facilities and provide, in essence, only permanent cover from the elements.

IT IS ONLY fair to say that South Africa, despite its racist policies, has built more and better public housing for Africans than any other African nation.

The problem is that there is not nearly enough of this sort of housing and that, even though the rents charged are low, they are far too high for the mass of urban Africans, the great majority of whom earn less than \$400 a year.

THE POLITICAL ferment engulfing Africa has made the continent a land of great expectations. For its millions living in urban squalor, the future, if it is to be stable and secure, must offer a better home.

The rural African in his grass hut is no worse off than his grandfather and in many ways is better off than his city cousin.

But revolutions are bred in the teeming slums of the cities and it is these thrusting, poverty-racked urban masses to whom the political leaders of a new and independent Africa must answer.

January 4, 1962

4. African Husband Rules Supreme

Family life in Africa is quite unlike that in America.

The family has a different structure and its members enjoy privileges and responsibilities that seem strange to Americans.

Perhaps the point on which American and African attitudes vary most markedly is the role of women.

Although African women often exert tremendous authority within the spheres reserved for them, their general status is that of chattels. Africa is a man's continent.

The tendency—there are, of course, no accurate statistics—in Africa is for men to marry somewhat older than they do in America. In contrast, most African girls marry while they are still in their middle teens.

THE TRADITIONAL reason for the late marriage of young men was that they were needed as warriors. Girls, however, virtually as soon as they become capable of childbirth, become eligible for marriage.

In a society where power depended upon the size of a tribe and the absence of Western medicine condemned two out of every three children to death before adulthood, both of these practices made sense.

Although the need for young men to serve as warriors no longer exists, the tendency is still for African men not to marry until their late 20s at the earliest.

The basic reason for this is the necessity to pay "bride price." This is a sum, in cash, kind or both, paid by the suitor and his family to the father of the courted girl.

Early white missionaries, when they saw this payment being made, assumed that the girl was being bought, hence the term "bride price." This is not accurate.

The original function of the "bride price" was to act as a stabilizing factor in a community that frowned upon divorce.

If the husband misbehaved, his in-laws were entitled to keep the "bride price" while the bride could return to her family.

On the other hand, if the girl turned out to be a bad wife (and failure to bear children might put her in this category), the husband was entitled to send her away and to reclaim the "bride price."

Thus, both families had a financial stake in seeing to it that a marriage was a successful one. "Marriage insurance" would probably be a better term than "bride price."

IN RECENT YEARS, however, this custom, like most other tribal practices, has strayed somewhat from its original intent.

"Bride price" is still paid and the average is high, so high that most young men cannot afford to get married until they have worked many years.

Here in Kenya, a young man may have to pay as much as \$100 (five months' pay for a city worker), five head of cattle, 20 goats and 100 calabashes of native beer for a desirable girl.

MANY INDEPENDENT African states have either abolished "bride price," or set ceilings on it, but the practice persists and costs are so high in relation to earnings

that the situation represents a real social problem.

In rural Africa, the women do most of the heavy work. In addition to the more traditional tasks of cooking the family's meals and rearing the children, African women gather and carry food and firewood for long distances, help with the construction of the home and work in the fields.

Because every woman, no matter what her physical liabilities or lack of social status may be, presumably has the capacity to bear children and to perform manual labor, and because traditional African society offers no role for a single woman, in the past there have been no old maids in Africa.

To counterbalance the loss of males through wars and other factors, there arose the practice of polygamy, which effectively absorbed any surplus women.

Tribal taboos also encouraged polygamy: Among many tribes a man may not sleep with his wife for two or three years after she has given birth.

By the same token, a dead man's brother automatically took over his brother's widows. This practice still exists and serves a useful function in a society where insurance and social security benefits do not exist.

Christian Africans, of course, are theoretically limited to one wife. Many get around this by having one "church wife" and several "native custom wives."

Moslem Africans are limited by the Koran to four wives. Animists can have as many as they can afford.

BOTH BECAUSE tribal customs are breaking down under the impact of urbanization and because of the economic factor, the number of Africans with more than one wife is slowly shrinking.

Perhaps partially as a result of this, prostitution, which was virtually unknown in tribal society (because all women married) is on the increase.

There is probably no group of people more indulgent of children than Africans. In more than five years in Africa, I have never seen an African adult strike a child.

Again, this may be tied in with the African concept of the family. To them, the family is composed of all its members — the living, the dead, the unborn.

If a child resembles a dead great uncle, he is literally believed to be that person.

Thus, to strike a child may be to anger the dead.

The African family group is far larger than is the family in the West. It includes grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, uncles, aunts and cousins.

Each member of this enlarged family has responsibilities. Any member of the family may demand money, food or lodging from the others.

No matter how worthless he may be, he may be refused only at the risk of incurring the anger of the dead and the disapproval of the living.

Again, this custom fulfills the function of a social security system, protects the young, the stupid and the old from starvation.

But its detrimental effect on the development of Africa has been incalculable.

Those with industry and intelligence have been dragged down to the level of the lazy and the incompetent.

It has led to corruption, because it is less culpable to steal than to turn away a relative. This system, perhaps more than any other factor, has prevented the accumulation of the domestic savings necessary if a strong economy is to develop.

THIS practice, like many other tribal customs, is gradually breaking down. As younger people move to the cities to earn their living, they escape both the demands and the discipline of tribal mores.

AFRICAN family life, then, is in a state of flux.

The next few years will show whether it is to develop along the individualistic lines of the West or remain within the broader, more communal lines laid down by African custom and tradition.

January 5, 1962

5. Dinner Remains Dreary Affair

Although all the world's 50 major food crops can be grown in Africa, the diet of the average African is among the most monotonous and least nourishing in the world.

History, tribal taboos and economic factors have combined to make this so.

To begin with, many of the foods now grown in Africa are relatively new to the continent.

To mention only a few, corn, pineapples, mangoes, papayas, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, peanuts and wheat were all introduced, mostly by the Portuguese.

Other fruits and vegetables were introduced to the coastal and near-Saharan areas of Africa by the Arabs.

BUT FOR THE mass of Africans, the possibility of a mixed diet simply did not exist until 150 years ago.

For the thousands of years before that, generation after generation of Africans grew up, lived and died on the most limited and least nourishing of diets.

The cumulative effect of semi-starvation on hundreds of generations can only have been profound.

A half-starved man does not invent, does not build, does not create a literature, does not philosophize. He is too busy worrying about where his next meal is coming from.

TODAY, although famines still take place in Africa (a

million people in Tanganyika and here in Kenya would be dead today were it not for American corn distributed free this autumn), the average African can be fairly sure of a reasonably full belly all his life.

This factor, in combination with the introduction of Western medicine, has increased by at least 50 per cent the life span of the average African in the last century.

But the African diet still remains alarmingly short of vitamins, fats and proteins.

The staple African food south of the Sahara is corn. This is usually ground into meal, boiled and eaten like porridge.

To this is added whatever comes to hand. Perhaps some cabbage, onions, bananas, beans or a little meat.

As far as meat is concerned, Africans have been starved for it for generations.

Historically this was not the result of low incomes so much as an inability to kill game animals and an unwillingness to kill domestic cattle, which are regarded more as a prestige item than as food.

All of the early travelers to Africa remarked upon this meat hunger, which expressed itself to some extent in cannibalism, and to a larger degree in the habit of Africans gorging themselves on meat, often until they were unable to move, when it was available.

Today the per capita annual consumption of meat is believed to be about eight pounds, less than most Americans eat in two weeks.

This consuming hunger for meat can still be seen in the ability of two Africans to eat an entire sheep within 24 hours.

IN THE Central African rain forests, where it is difficult to grow corn, manioc and other root crops are the basic food.

Again, these roots are cooked, ground into flour and eaten like a porridge with whatever supplementary vegetables and fruits are available.

In West Africa, rice and millet are the staples. Again, meat and vegetables are in short supply. Thus, it can be seen that all across Africa, the basic diet consists mostly of starch and is painfully short of vitamins, fats and proteins.

ALTERNATIVE sources of proteins, such as fish and eggs, are often, although by

no means always, spurned because of tribal taboos.

Eggs appear never to have been eaten by Africans before the arrival of white men, perhaps because it was more valuable to allow them to hatch.

Many tribes also believe that eating eggs cause sterility.

Although Africa teems with fish, they are only beginning to become a major food item. Africans associate fish with snakes and, since many have taboos against snakes, some tribes will not touch fish.

Taboos, however, are slowly breaking down as the tribal system itself crumbles under the impact of urbanization and nationalism.

More Africans know how to grow a greater variety of crops. More Africans are willing to eat a more varied diet.

The most important factor blocking a better diet today is the African's low earning capacity. In no African nation does the average adult earn more than \$400 a year. Most earn less.

With little more than \$1 a day to pay his rent, school and hospital fees, and to provide clothing for his family, the African has little to spend on food.

Until his productive power (and hence his earning capacity) becomes greater, the African cannot buy more and better food for himself and his family.

Until he has more and better food, his productive power cannot, almost by definition, become greater. This is one of the most vicious circles facing those responsible for the development of Africa.

Africans are not great coffee drinkers, although coffee is one of the continent's most important and lucrative crops.

Almost without exception, Africans prefer tea, which, aside from water, is their major drink. This again, of course, is a European import.

Africans like their tea strong, sweet and with lots of milk. Most Africans eat only one meal a day, in the evening. A couple of cups of tea and perhaps a piece of bread keep them going for the rest of the day.

NOR IS liquor a stranger to Africa.

Since time immemorial, Africans have known the secret of making it from fruit and vegetables. In the early years of the slave and palm oil trade in West Africa, gin was used as a form of currency.

In 1894, when the British stormed the stronghold of a Nigeria Jekri chief named Nana, they found that his personal cellar contained 8,300 cases of gin.

But within the last century temperance groups at home have exerted enough pressure on most of the colonial powers to ban European liquor for African consumption.

This has not bothered the Africans much. They've gone ahead brewing their thick native beer and making head-splitting hard liquor. In the old days, tribal custom, reserved drunkenness as a prerogative of grandparents.

Nowadays, with the advent of liberalism, most Africans are allowed to buy European beer, wine and hard liquor and the young men do get drunk.

Alcoholism does not seem to be a particularly pressing problem.

The problem of food, however, is most important. If Africa is to advance, the Africans must have a better-balanced diet and one richer in vitamins and proteins.

Nor can one hand out vita-

min pills and expect Africans overnight to be capable of the same mental and physical exertion as well-nourished Americans or Englishmen.

It will take centuries of improved diet to counter-balance the ill effects of genera-

tions of semi-starvation.

Anybody, black or white, who refuses to recognize this, is just kidding himself.

The time to start, of course, is now.

January 6, 1962

6. Age-Old Tribes Control Hinterlands

The tribe, rather than the family or the nation, is the basic social unit in Africa.

There is no part of the continent in which this is **not so**.

The tribe is the framework within which the African lives and dies. It is only through his membership in the tribe that an African has reality.

The tribe's collective code of ethics governs the lives of each of its members. To be expelled, ostracized, cast out from the tribe is literally to cease to exist.

Tribalism is at once a major factor in giving Africa such stability as it has—because it gives a man emerging from the Stone Age into the Atomic Age a point to which he can anchor himself—and an important divisive force, because it sets him against his fellow citizens.

What is a tribe?

This is as difficult a question to answer as "what is a nation?"

Perhaps a reasonable answer might be that a tribe is a group of people, speaking the same language, who consider themselves to be more closely tied to each other than to the rest of the world.

Often one tribe will have a language, history and customs quite different from those of another tribe. But often the differences, at least to the

outsider, will appear to have less significance than the similarities.

When this is the case, one is driven back to the original statement that a group of people is a tribe because it considers itself to be different and exclusive in relationship to its neighbors.

THERE ARE, of course, real scientific differences between what might be called the "races" of Africa, although the distinctions drawn between them often are more linguistic than ethnic.

Thus we have the Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa, stretching from South Africa to Kenya, then due west to the bulge of Africa.

Within this great Bantu zone, in what is today Southwest Africa, and in parts of South Africa, live the remnants of the Hottentot and Bushman people. These are probably of earlier origin than the Bantu.

On Africa's eastern "horn" and stretching up the east bank of the Nile, live the taller Hamitic, Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic peoples, who are probably of Middle Eastern origin.

ON THE GULF of Guinea live the true Negroes, quite black people with broad noses and outward-turned lips. These are the people to whom most American Negroes are related.

Behind these, stretching in a broad band from the Atlantic to the Nile just south of the Sahara, are the Sudanic peoples.

North of the Sahara, the people are a mixture of Semitic and Hamitic, with the former predominating, except in Morocco.

But these larger groupings, although they have a firm scientific basis, have little reality for the average African. As far as he is concerned, he is Foulah or Yoruba, Bakongo or Bateke, Swazi or Zulu, Mashona or Matabele, Giriama or Masai, Amhara or Galla.

It is the tribe that counts.

Within the family, clan and tribe, there have always been social distinctions of some sort. But, contrary to common belief, all tribes do not have chiefs.

Among those that do, the chieftaincy is by no means always hereditary.

Europeans first made deep contact with Africans on the West Coast. Most of these tribes, with important exceptions, such as the Ibo of eastern Nigeria and the Bassa of Cameroun, were organized under chiefs.

Thus when whites came to other areas of Africa, they often assumed that men to whom deference was paid by other Africans were chiefs, when in fact they were only respected elders or seers believed to have magical powers.

The Kikuyu, for instance, had no chiefs until the British appointed them to act as government agents.

AMONG TRIBES that had no chiefs, decisions usually were made by councils of elders. Men who had been successful in war or who appeared able to command magical forces obviously enjoyed a position of privilege.

But a man's destiny was fairly well decided for him from the day he was born.

Tribal custom dictated when he would be circumcized, how long he would serve as warrior, when he could marry, how he should placate the gods, when he would become an elder.

He knew that if he was not born into a royal or occult clan he had little or no chance of becoming a chief or a seer.

Tribal mores, taught him by his parents, showed him how he should act under

every circumstance that might arise.

Within the limits of tribal custom, he was free. Beyond these limits he could not stray without peril to himself, his family, his clan and his tribe.

Colonialism shook the foundations of tribal structure by introducing alternatives to this sort of life. Education and the introduction of Christianity struck at many tribal beliefs.

The infusion of capital created cities and jobs where an African could go and earn his living far from the disciplinary pressures of tribal life.

WHAT colonialism started, nationalism is making an earnest effort to finish.

Most African political leaders are intent on destroying tribalism, if only because it offers an alternative to their own authority.

Thus, one of Kwame Nkrumah's first moves after

Ghana became independent in 1957 was to crush the power of the proud Ashanti chiefs.

ALTHOUGH tribalism is still an extremely potent factor in African life, it is fair to say that it is in retreat before the assaults of nationalism and urbanization.

New elites are forming—elites based on political power, wealth and education. The social revolution taking place in Africa is no less profound than the political one.

No one can now say what will emerge. Tribalism is still strong. But unless the political and economic revolutions fall—and there is a possibility that they may—tribalism would appear to be doomed.

Whether a society based on the individual will replace it, however, is highly problematical. Hence the appeal to Africans of a collective or communal life based on a modified form of socialism.

January 8, 1962

7. Education Makes Slow Progress

There was no formal African education in the Western sense before the arrival of the white man. There was "education," of course, in the sense that children were taught by their parents how to conduct themselves. Among some tribes, selected tribal elders assisted with the teaching.

Children learned the legends of the tribe. Boys were taught by their fathers how to hunt and to fight. Girls learned from their mothers how to cook, to tend the fields, to take care of children.

In areas such as North Africa, the Sudanic states and coastal East Africa, where Moslem influence was strong, some children received Koranic instruction.

This was, as it is today, mostly a matter of learning verses of scripture by rote, without understanding either the language (Arabic) or the meaning.

THE CHRISTIAN missionaries were the first to bring classroom education to Africa. This means that, in many parts of the continent, there was no formal education at all as recently as a century ago.

Until even more recently, this mission education meant

only the three R's and manual training.

If an African could read and write a little, count up to 10, and use a crosscut saw, he was considered educated.

There were, of course, exceptions. Almost all of these occurred in British West Africa, which a hundred years ago boasted a few African bishops, knights and well-educated teachers.

In the early days, there was a certain amount of African resistance to Western education. Many old-time missionaries remember paying African chiefs for the privilege of educating their children.

The Africans often thought that in sending their children to school they were selling them into slavery, or feared that exposure to Western ways would alienate their children from them or make them bad citizens. From the tribal point of view, this frequently happened.

But this fear of education today has turned into a thirst for learning.

MANY AFRICANS are still reluctant to send their daughters to school. This probably is due to the attitude of their mothers, who, as a general rule, are far less educated and "civilized" than their fathers.

The women do most of the physical work in Africa and a premium is placed on the ability to bear children.

To look after the younger members of her brood and to help her in the fields, the African mother needs many hands. Her older daughters help her.

The result is that for every 10 African boys who get some education, only one African girl ever sees the inside of a school.

This creates a self-perpetuating and dangerous imbalance in African society. This is largely the reason that the venter of "civilization" or "culture" of many Africans with considerable formal education (up to and including doctorates) appears to be, and often is, pitifully thin.

AS CHILDREN, Africans are brought up by their mothers, women often only a step advanced from "barbarism" (these are all relative terms and should be treated gingerly).

While at school, they return to homes which, in the Western sense, are uncultured.

In other words, their "education" is restricted almost entirely to what they learn in school. There is none of the "unconscious education" that takes place in a Western home.

Having finished their schooling, they marry women who are, in most cases, little more advanced than their mothers. These women bear their children and the process begins all over again.

It is safe to say that the education of women is the most neglected and most challenging aspect of African education.

Until the vicious circle mentioned above is broken, Africa can never become a "civilized" continent.

BECAUSE of the demand for education among African boys, governments have now invaded a field that as recently as World War II was largely the preserve of the mission societies.

Both educational authorities now offer a curriculum that is either exactly the same as that offered in Western nations, or almost the same.

The African student works under three tremendous disadvantages. After the first year or two of school, during which he may be taught in the local vernacular, he has to learn all his subjects in a foreign language — English, French, or Portuguese, as the case may be.

SECONDLY, Africans learn from European textbooks, the content of which has little real meaning for them.

It is demanding much to expect African children to take an interest in memorizing the Lake poets or in working out how long it takes a locomotive to get from point A to point B when they have never seen a train.

Much good work has been done in the last five years to adapt textbooks for African use, but much remains to be done.

Thirdly, the average African home is not conducive to study. Things like paper and pencils are either nonexistent or in short supply; few homes have electricity or furniture.

BUT THOSE who get the chance to face these overwhelming educational problems are the lucky ones. In all of Africa, not more than 25 per cent of all school-age children get any education.

Among those who do, the wastage is terrific. Of any 100 students of the 25 per cent who do get to school, only 50 will get as far as the fourth grade.

Of this 50, about 20 will reach the exalted heights of the eighth grade. Of this 20, perhaps eight will be graduated from high school.

Of this eight, three may go on to college and one of these may get a degree. This savage attrition rate is another great educational problem facing Africa.

In part it is due to finance. Although a few African nations have succeeded in making primary education free and compulsory, most have not.

The fees, although small, often are beyond the means of African parents. These fees, of course, grow larger as the student progresses.

To a large degree, however, student wastage is attributable to inadequate teaching in the lowest grades.

There are not enough trained teachers to staff even the inadequate number of African schools. It is not unusual to find a man with a fifth grade education teaching the fourth grade in an African school.

Thus, formal educational ignorance, like the cultural barbarism of the African woman, is self-perpetuating.

THE DEGREE to which these problems exist varies from territory to territory and with the educational policies of the former colonial powers.

In general, the French theory was to thoroughly educate a small elite capable of running the country.

The Belgian theory was to provide a widely based education with a heavy emphasis on the practical, almost completely neglecting university education.

British policy has been and is roughly a compromise between these two.

Education in Portuguese Africa, basically because of poverty, is almost nonexistent.

NOR IS Africa immune from the age-old problem of education: What good does it do to create a large educated class if there are only a small number of jobs available for men with the qualifications?

Thus Africa's educational aridity is tied to the continent's poverty.

What is the solution to this problem. More money for additional schools staffed by more and better teachers would certainly be a starter.

But where is the money to come from? If it comes from foreign sources, which are limited, its donors will have to remember the dangers of

creating an unemployed and unemployable educated class.

This means more money for economic development that creates jobs, not money wasted on expensive prestige projects but funds to make the African economy more productive.

WHAT ABOUT the education of women? To ask one question about the problems of African education is to raise a hundred others.

Again, there are no quick and easy solutions. Africa will have to wait. But the continent's restive youth has little patience and no problem facing Africa today is more explosive than that of education.

January 9, 1962

8. Old Gods Still Dance In Rain Forests

In Africa, the old gods still dance. Of an estimated population of 234,000,000 (there are no firm statistics) about 111,000,000 follow the animist faiths of their forefathers.

Behind the animists (pagans or fetishists are other rather inadequate terms to use to describe believers in the traditional African religions) come the Moslems, 88,000,000 strong.

Islam's stronghold is that half of the continent north of the equator in general and north of the Sahara in particular. Except on the east coast of Africa, Islam has little sway south of a line drawn from Zanzibar to Leopoldville.

Christianity, with 35,000,000 adherents, is very much the junior member of this religious big three.

ALTHOUGH Christians are found in every African country, the faith is naturally strongest in areas where European penetration has been strongest and of the longest duration. This means South Africa, the coastal areas, along the historic routes to the interior, and in the cities.

A fourth element that should be noted, but need not be considered, are 640,000 Hindus, Taoists and Confucians. These are all Asian immigrants, a group socially and religiously exclusive, which has had little impact on Africa in any field except commerce.

Since animism is the largest, longest established, and only indigenous African religion, it must always be a starting point for any consideration of the African in relationship to his god or gods.

The practice of African traditional religions varies

widely from territory to territory.

But essentially animism, a cloak that covers many shoulders and has been termed "a minimum definition of religion," implies a belief in the existence of spiritual forces residing not only in men but in inanimate objects such as trees, waterfalls, stars, the sun and the moon.

It usually, but not always, implies acceptance of an impersonal supreme deity or life-force pervading all men and all things.

To put it into its simplest terms, the African sees life as an electrical field filled with currents buzzing back and forth. He contains this electricity. Everything that he can see is charged with it.

There are beings at whose existence he can only guess, which can be defined by the pattern of electrical charges surrounding them.

THESE charges, or forces, are not only power but life itself. As long as his battery remains highly charged, life is good and profitable.

When his enemy receives a new and heavy charge of electricity, his own battery runs down, his cattle and children sicken, he himself may die.

To prevent this, to placate these life-forces, to coax them to enter into him rather than his enemy, he performs certain rituals that can be described as the dogmas of his religion. He may sacrifice a goat or a chicken or pour native beer on the ground.

Or he may employ someone known to have a battery well-charged with the magical forces of life—a "witchdoctor"—to perform these rituals.

The medicine man's strength lies in his ability to interpret and manipulate these life-forces for the benefit of himself, his friends or his clients.

And never let it be thought that when an African pours beer on the roots of a great tree, he is worshipping the tree itself. He, if not we, is capable of differentiating between the tree, the thing of wood, and the life-force it represents.

MANY Africans worship a pantheon of gods as diverse of those of the Hindus or ancient Greeks. The Yoruba of western Nigeria, for instance, have 401 deities, including shango, god of thunder, and Olokon, god of the seas.

All Africans, even if they are not "ancestor worshippers," believe their dead ancestors have the power to influence the fate of the living,

The African family, in fact, includes not only the living but the dead and the unborn. All are present around the fire at night.

Finally, there is the supreme being. He usually is regarded as all-powerful but remote and generally unconcerned with the affairs and fates of men.

Because of these characteristics, he is seldom invoked except in times of dire trouble.

THUS THE spiritual world of the African is one filled with forces both benevolent and malevolent.

Nothing ever happens accidentally. If a gourd is broken at the well or a wife dies in childbirth, it is not because the gourd was weak or the wife's pelvis was too small.

Both events took place because the man lacked life-force, while his enemies had it. The sharp line that divides the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit simply does not exist for the African.

What are the implications of all this as they affect the African of today?

This failure to appreciate any relationship between cause and effect makes it difficult for the African to accept reality, whether that reality be political or economic.

IF A politician of his tribe fails to deliver on his campaign promise of a free auto for every constituent, the African's reaction is not to vote the offender out of office but to blame himself, the tribe and possibly the politician for not channeling enough life-forces into the wish.

If a plain is devastated by a series of flash floods, the African's reaction is not to build

dams and to reforest the hills but to sacrifice more goats to the rain god.

It is difficult to see how Africa can make much of itself physically until the African accepts cause and effect, individual responsibility and other concepts the West takes for granted.

By the same token, Islam has instilled in its adherents a fatalism, an acceptance of tragedy as God's will, which bodes ill for the material welfare of Africa.

When a Somali nomad's cattle are wiped out by rinderpest, he does not curse himself for not taking the veterinary officer's advice to have his stock inoculated.

He says, "God is great!" and borrows some breeding stock from a relative. This stock, too, goes uninoculated.

IN ALL, however, Islam suits Africa well. Its theology is simple and understandable and may be wrapped up in the words, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his Prophet."

Its ritualistic demands are slight (prayer five times daily) and it permits polygamy, which is the basis of African social life.

It gives the African a law to live by, encourages charity and (at least theoretically) protects him from the ravages of liquor.

On the other hand, it discourages him from obtaining the Western education that opens so many doors for him.

As far as Christianity is concerned, this is a time of crisis in Africa. It was at the height of its prestige in Africa years ago.

Because of its early monopoly on schooling, Christianity got a head start among the educated classes, although many unquestionably joined the various denominations in the hope, not of salvation, but of a well-paying job after they completed their education.

The present is a time of crisis for many reasons. As colonialism retreats, Christianity, a white man's import, loses prestige.

WITH governments now handling the bulk of African education, it is no longer necessary to be a Christian to earn the degree that brings with it wealth and prestige.

Christianity's demand of monogamy runs contrary to African social custom.

Lastly, Africans have seen that while Christ teaches men to love their neighbors, many white Christians do not practice this in regard to their darker brothers.

Christian Kikuyus, however, died for their faith during the Mau Mau terror and that is a test that many in the West might fail. Christianity may survive in Africa: it probably will endure in a modified form.

BUT difficult days are ahead.

Both African Christianity and African Islam are shot through with practices and beliefs that have their origin in animism.

That means that the success or failure of Africa ultimately depends on the ability of animism to come to terms with modern life.

Animism, as practiced in Africa, while it has a dark side, is by no means an ignominious creed. The only real question, however, is whether it is a creed by which men can live and prosper today.

One is inclined to say that it is not.

January 10, 1962

9. Western Attitudes Alter Art

Although African art today enjoys a considerable vogue, most of the work being done now is **inconsequential and derivative.**

The introduction of Western life and administration to Africa was a blow to the solar plexus of black society.

While colonialism by no means destroyed the African's traditional religion (111,000,000 of the continent's 234,000,000 people still worship as their ancestors did), it certainly altered the African's attitudes toward his gods.

THE SPIRITUAL world of the African remains one of demons and terror, buzzing with electricity-like life forces. But while the gods still appear potent to the African, they are no longer all-powerful.

Most Yorubas still feel it is a good idea to sacrifice the occasional goat to Sopona, the smallpox god.

But they also know that it is apparently pleasing to Sopona for one to allow oneself to be scratched on the arm by a health assistant, for he seldom strikes any more if this is done.

The gods have become tired, less cruel, less demonic. And it was in the portrayal of the demonic that African artists excelled.

When we speak of traditional African art we mean, almost entirely, sculpture. Since, with the exception of a few tribes, Africa had no written languages before the advent of the white man, there was no literature.

WITH the exception of the cave paintings of the Bushmen, there was virtually no painting. Architecture was of little consequence.

African music, leaning heavily on percussion and wind instruments, while interesting, is repetitive to the Western ear.

There was considerable African decorative art. Beads, cowrie shells, feathers and fur were used to decorate clothes and tools. Pleasing patterns were burned or scratched into gourds.

Even these minor arts, however, were dealt a death blow by the impact of colonialism.

When a woman could buy a cheap, unbreakable enamel basin gaudily decorated with painted flowers, there remained little incentive to spend long hours scratching designs into an all-too-perishable calabash.

It should not be assumed, however, that Africa was one great studio of demonic and decorative art before the advent of the white man. Vast areas of the continent have never produced anything but the crudest work of any kind.

With the exception of Ethiopia, which with its Christian-Semitic heritage is rather a separate case, 90 per cent

of African art has sprung from the West African states from the Congo north to the Ivory Coast.

From this area came the magnificent fetish masks, stools, *cire perdue* bronze heads and *ekoume* wood idols with which we associate all that is truly great in African art.

WITH THE political renaissance of Africa has come a renewed interest in African art, a desire to recapture its past glories and to find new forms of expression for its new hopes.

To a large extent this a movement in which there is still considerable white influence, although Africans are taking an increasing interest in their own cultural past, and future.

Sculpture, the art form in which Africans excelled most in the past, in general has managed only to emulate rather than to recapture or improve upon the old glories.

Good work is being done by two Nigerian sculptors—Ben Enwonwu and Felix Iduhor—but they, unfortunately, are the exception rather than the rule.

THE GREAT majority of the wood carving and bronze casting taking place today on both coasts of Africa is

clumsy, imitative and mass-produced.

The painting is little better. Most African universities now have art schools and it is a poor capital indeed that does not boast at least one professional painter.

Most of their work, however, comes out looking second-rate.

A YOUNG Frenchman named Pierre Lods runs an art school in Brazzaville. His students have come about as close as possible to creating an indigenous school of painting.

Lods has prevented his students from becoming derivative by not exposing them to European art. But he has not been able to keep them from developing a symbiotic relationship to each other.

As a result, after 10 years' existence, most of the work of Lods' students comes out highly stylized, similar in appearance and a little flat. Some of it, however, is very good.

Neither music nor architecture has flowered yet. Africa is just beginning to produce trained architects and schooled musicians. In 10 years it may be possible to evaluate their work.

It is in literature, the art form that did not exist in

Africa a century ago (except in its oral form—story telling) that the most encouraging signs are seen.

President Leopold Senghor of Senegal composes poetry of exquisite grace, as do Davidson Nicol, principal of Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College, and Dennis Osadebay, the Nigerian lawyer.

Novelists include South Africa's brilliant Peter Abrahams, and Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Edwensi, all Nigerians.

IT SHOULD be noted in passing, although their work has no reference to Africa as a continent if only because the political fate of the white men is circumscribed, that white Africans like Laurens Van der Post, Nadine Gordimer and Alan Paton (all South Africans, incidentally) have made signal contributions to the field of contemporary world literature.

Fine as is the African-written poetry and prose, it still leaves something to be desired. Perhaps it is because these men are writing in languages and art forms strange to them.

Perhaps it is because there is no African reading public and their works of necessity must be geared for white consumption.

January 11, 1962

10. Health Leads Continent's Problems

Africa is a continent of sick people.

Most Africans are physically small. With the exception of the Nilo-Hamitic and Hamitic tribes of East Africa, whose members often tower 7 feet or more, 5-foot-7 is a good size for an African.

The average weight is probably about 140 pounds. Few Africans, except those whose affluence enables them to eat European food, are fat.

Consequently, it is almost a status symbol among Africans to be fat. In pre-colonial days, the chiefs of

some tribes force-fed their wives with milk until they became too fat to walk.

But life for the average small, underweight African is full of sickness and short in duration. There are no African actuarial tables for the simple reason that 99 per cent

of all Africans have never heard of an insurance policy, much less owned one.

It is believed that before the white man came, the life expectancy of the average African was about 35 years. The introduction of Western medicine, it is believed, has extended this by more than 10 years.

The Africans battle against death begins the minute he is born.

Although all African governments, independent or colonial, provide for their people health services that are free or virtually so, the great majority of African children even today are born in their mothers' huts.

There just aren't enough hospital beds to go around. In addition, even expectant mothers are required to work in the fields.

Tribal taboos (African women are far more primitive and conservative than men in such matters) also play a part in the reluctance of African women to give birth in a hospital, even if room were available.

Consequently, most African children are delivered by the mother herself, aided by female relatives or a tribal midwife under conditions far from sanitary. Many umbilical hernias result.

BABY FOOD and sterile cow's milk are, of course, things beyond either the ken or the financial reach of most African mothers. Most babies are breast-fed until they are as much as 2 years old.

If the mother's milk dries up, the baby is fed on a mixture of water and corn meal.

As a result of these feeding habits, of general filth and

of inadequate clothing, it is unlikely that the infant mortality rate for the continent is less than 25 per cent of all live births.

If an African child survives his first two years, his chances of reaching adulthood increase sharply. But there are many hazards still to be passed.

Malaria, pneumonia and tuberculosis are great killers. Malaria is endemic to much of Africa (except for the dry highlands) and, although generations of infection have given Africans a limited immunity, many are killed by the disease.

Malaria suppressants and mosquito nets are beyond the means of most Africans.

State, rural and municipal councils do their best to spray malaria breeding areas but, again, finance prevents the eradication of the sickness.

AFRICA, contrary to popular belief, is not always hot. In most areas the climate is characterized by sharp rises and drops in temperature, particularly between day and night.

Most Africans are inadequately clothed and own few blankets. Consequently, already weakened by other diseases, many Africans die of pneumonia or tuberculosis.

Fires are kept burning in African huts all night in an effort to keep off the cold. Many an African child has died or been disfigured for life after rolling into one of these in his sleep.

ALMOST all Africans in rural areas go barefoot and consequently suffer from hookworms and other parasites of that type.

Intestinal diseases are widespread. So are eye diseases.

This is not to say that the African is a dirty person. He is not. But in much of Africa, water is in short supply. Piped water is a rarity. When water is carried a mile or two from a stream, one thinks twice before washing.

SEWAGE systems and plumbing are almost unknown except in the larger cities. Filth, therefore, is difficult to combat.

Because the African diet is mostly starches and dangerously short on vitamins, proteins and fats, Africans have little resistance to disease.

They have magnificent physiques as the result of years of heavy work. But they drop like flies from diseases that most Americans would shrug off in a week.

It was thought for many years that Africans did not suffer from mental illness, cancer and ulcers—diseases associated with Western, high-pressure living.

Recent studies, however, indicate that Africans are nearly as prone to these as are white men.

Nowadays, in contrast to the situation half a century ago, there is little African resistance to Western medicine. Most Africans now have an almost pathetic belief in the hypodermic needle and the pill.

The larger the pill or the more wicked-looking the needle, the more the African is prepared to accept its efficacy. Many Africans believe Western medicine to be a form of magic that any white man can perform.

Consequently, any white man traveling in the bush is likely to be called upon to cure anything from a broken arm to syphilis (venereal disease also appears to be widespread).

BUT WHILE most Africans accept the fact that Western medicine is effective, they also still rely on witch doctors. Many Africans are brought to hospitals only after witch doc-

tors have made them even sicker than they were before.

In short, no great economic progress will be possible in Africa until the health of its 234,000,000 people is dras-

tically improved.

This will be a long and expensive process. Ill health has no quick and easy solution.

January 12, 1962

11. Soil Still Reigns Supreme

At least 80 per cent of Africa's 234,000,000 people earn their livings from the soil.

This is a continent of farmers and cattle owners, most of them woefully unskilled in the techniques of modern agriculture or veterinary science.

Most of the coastal people combine farming and fishing. Again, their primitive methods deter them from reaping much of the rich harvest the sea has to offer.

A FEW tribes, such as the pygmies of the Congo and the Bushmen of southwest Africa, neither farm nor own cattle but are hunters of game and gatherers of roots, honey and berries.

In and around the major cities such as Nairobi, Salisbury, Johannesburg, Leopoldville and Lagos, industries exist and Africans work in factories, railway yards and shops.

In the main, however, Africa, where each of the world's 50 major crops can be grown, is an agricultural continent and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

ONE OF the most important tasks of the colonial regimes was to convert Africa from a barter society to a cash society. This task has not been wholly accomplished.

This was necessary if European goods were to find a market, if the territories were to find the revenues necessary to develop themselves, if white farmers were to have labor.

This was sought by two means.

The first was to create an African desire for manufactured goods, to create a taste and a need for shoes, cotton cloth, bicycles, tin roofs and soda pop.

THESE THINGS, obviously, could not be acquired by barter. If he wanted them, the African had to go to work for a cash wage.

The second and more direct means was taxation. For those who had no desire for consumer goods (and some tribes still do not) the government imposed taxes that made it necessary for the young men to go onto white farms or into the cities to find work.

In the main, however, the African's desire to acquire goods was enough to bring him at least partly into the cash economy.

Wages in Africa were pitifully low by American standards. So is productivity.

Here in Kenya last year, African laborers employed on white farms earned an average annual wage of \$134.

In addition, however, farm laborers usually receive hous-

ing for themselves and their families and either basic rations (corn meal and milk) or the use of a plot of land upon which to grow their own food.

The average laborer on a white farm, however, works on a "task" rather than an hourly basis. Most finish their work by noon and have the rest of the day to themselves.

EMPLOYERS have discovered that while incentive bonuses and overtime pay produce a greater effort from some workers, most do not respond.

In part, this is tied to the problem of generations of dietary deficiency. Many Africans just do not have the stamina to work an eight-hour day.

Another factor is the African concept of "target labor." Many Africans are interested only in acquiring enough cash to pay their taxes or to buy a specific item: a bicycle, a radio or a wife.

When they have worked long enough to acquire this sum, they quit their jobs and return to their homes. Incentive bonuses and overtime only mean that the African reaches his "target" and quits sooner.

THE PROBLEM is that the idea of saving, either to acquire capital or provide against financial emergency, has not taken hold in Africa yet, although the trend is in that direction.

Africans have learned through the centuries that to acquire wealth is to tempt either the gods or a stronger tribe to take it away from you.

The social system, too, which requires that any member of a family who has wealth must share it with all his relatives, does not provide much incentive for the accumulation of capital.

Those Africans fortunate enough to have their homes in highly productive areas (the Kikuyu in Kenya, the Ashanti in Ghana) where cash crops can be grown are not faced with the necessity to work for others to pay their taxes or to acquire goods.

In these coffee- and cacao-producing regions has grown up a small class of reasonably prosperous farmers. But they are the exception.

As in every other society, there is a movement away from the land and into the cities. Africans, like Americans, prefer the bright lights and the fuller lives of city living to the hard work of farming.

In Africa, however, this movement has been conditioned by the lack of economic opportunity.

There are only so many jobs available in African industry (almost all of which fall into the light industry category) and few Africans have the skills necessary to advance once they do get jobs.

Pay is higher in the cities, however, and Africans flood in to compete for jobs

as house servants, odd job men and general industrial laborers.

THE AVERAGE unskilled African with a fourth grade education can expect to earn about \$30 a month plus rations and housing in most large African cities.

Although this is about three times as much as he could earn on a white farm, it is not enough for a family to live on. Consequently, most Africans keep their wives and children on their small agricultural plots while they work in the cities, seeing them perhaps four times a year for a total of about a month.

The psychological effect of living this divided and unnatural existence must be profound for all members of the family.

Education, as the African well knows, is the key to the whole problem. An African with a high school degree or some technical knowledge can earn as much as \$1,000 a year as a clerk or mechanic.

ALTHOUGH this seems little to us, it is a great deal for an African. It is enough to enable him to educate, feed and clothe his children, and to live with his family in a decent house.

For those with more than a high school diploma, the sky is the limit. The financial rewards of politics (to which many educated Africans gravitate) are great.

And most foreign firms find it politically desirable to Africanize their managerial and executive staffs to as great a degree as possible.

The spectrum in Africa today, then, ranges from the attorney who earns \$10,000 a year as a minister in an independent government plus twice that much from his private practice and business interests, to the Bushman who lives on wild honey and game meat and never sees a coin in his life.

Between these two extremes lies the average African, a man with a small cash income who still must depend on his wife to till the soil of his small plot while he works in a city or on a white-owned farm.

This man still has one foot in the barter-economy past, with all that implies. But his eyes are on natty clothes, bicycles, transistor radios and diplomas for his children.

HIS ASPIRATIONS are rising. His productivity is not. Before him he sees the desirable fruits of civilization. Yet he lacks the capital or the skills to acquire them.

For the moment he is involved in the froth of politics, for it is from these semi-urbanized masses that the nationalist movement has grown.

He is sure that his tomorrow is going to be better and richer than today. Soon tomorrow will come.

If his aspirations are not realized—and it is doubtful if they can be for him, although with injections of foreign capital and Herculean effort, on his own part, they may be for his grandchildren—his fury could shake the world.

January 13, 1962

12. Can Western-Style Democracy Work?

Many observers have been shocked and disappointed at the quickness with which democratic in-

stitutions have withered away in emergent Africa.

All across the continent their is virtual single-party

rule and what appears to American eyes to be popular dictatorship.

Our democratic institutions and practices took root over the course of many centuries and blossomed under a given set of circumstances to fit the needs and aspirations of a minute portion of the world's people at a specific time in history.

Parallel circumstances, needs and aspirations are not present in Africa today.

The historical basis does not exist. Long before universal franchise became the order of the day in the West, the masses had at least limited experience in the organization of democracy through guilds and advisory councils.

THIS has not been the case in Africa.

Democracy and its institutions are imported concepts, imposed upon the people by the colonial powers because that was the way things were done in their own countries.

African leaders were quick to seize upon these concepts and institutions as a means to an end.

With these as levers, the Africans were able to pry the colonial nations out of the continent and to gain political power for themselves.

But the fact that the African leaders found democratic institutions to be a useful tool does not mean that they have any real affection for or understanding of these institutions. They do not.

The African's vision of politics and political institutions has naturally been conditioned by his own history and the structure of the society within which he lives.

ALTHOUGH the African is by no means essentially a totalitarian, his manner of expressing dissent and his at-

titudes toward government differ from ours.

Historically, when a major decision was to be taken by an African tribe, whether ruled by a chief or by a council of elders, discussions were held.

Every man had the right to give his opinion. Discussion might go on for days.

THESE seemingly endless "palavers" (a West African pidgin-English term rooted in the Portuguese for "word") were remarked upon, usually with irritation, by every early white traveler in Africa.

When everyone had said what he had to say, when the problem had been discussed from all angles, when every point of view had been given expression, the chief and the elders then came to their decision.

Their decision. If the tribe was ruled by elders, usually had to be unanimous. If one man held out for his point of view, he had to be persuaded.

AN EXTREME example of this can be seen in the history of the great Zulu chief Chaka, whose armies caused havoc in south and central Africa.

Chaka on at least one occasion impressed European visitors with the discipline of his people by marching a large number of his warriors over a cliff to their deaths. Not one warrior hesitated.

To have done so would have been not only cowardly but traitorous.

These attitudes have been translated to the modern political arena. To the African, his political party is not just a group of men with similar ideas about politics and economics.

It is the nation in political action. This concept has been strengthened by the fact that Africa's political parties had their births in nationalist movements.

TO BREAK OFF from this movement to form a rival political party was to play into the hands of the colonialists and to delay independence.

After independence, such deviationism was equally culpable because it weakened the political foundations of the nation.

This can be seen by the fact that, in most African languages there is no term for "political opposition"; the only translation is "enemy."

THE AFRICAN, then, regards it as right and natural that the nation should be represented in the political arena by a single party. To have more than one is to be weak and divided.

Within that single party there remains scope for opposition. The African may fight for his ideas at any level of political organization.

But if a decision contrary to his ideas is reached, he is bound to support it loyally and energetically. Thus is the discipline of Chaka's warriors harnessed for the good of the modern African state.

Under such a system it is clear that the party becomes supreme over the parliament. This is what has happened.

Both Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea freely admit that their national assemblies exist only to endorse decisions reached by the party.

BY THE same token, it is equally unthinkable to the African that either of the other two historic branches of Western democracy — the executive and the judiciary — should contravene the wishes of the people as expressed through the party.

IT IS worth noting that no African leader, no matter how dictatorial his methods, has attempted to enforce any policy that does not have the approval of his party.

This is true of both Nkrumah and Toure.

While both have gathered unto themselves great personal power, they have done this only with the approval

of their party organization.

THE JUDICIARY, in contrast, has attempted in most African states to uphold the independence and impartiality of the courts.

When this has conflicted with the will of the people as seen in the policies of the party, however, the courts have been bypassed by administrative edicts and executive decrees.

Because they do often find themselves opposing party policies, it is unlikely that independent judiciaries will long survive in emerging Africa.

THUS it can be seen that Western democratic institu-

tions have little value for the African because they do not fit the African's concept of himself in relation to his society.

The African wants not justice so much as unity, not a balance of authority within the state but a strong state.

In essence, this can be called democratic centralism, because it does allow for dissent within the framework of the party but not beyond it.

It is not our way of doing things. It may be better or it may be worse. The only thing that is certain is that it is the African's way.

January 15, 1962

13. African Suspects White and Black

Throughout his history, the African has always been among the most exclusive of men.

Cut off from the main stream of the world's history by the impenetrable nature of the continent, isolated from his fellow Africans by vast distances and the multiplicity of dialects, the African for centuries has learned to trust only those he knows.

This has come to encompass a widening but still pitifully small circle of people. The family has enlarged into the clan and this into the tribe.

THE UNITY of the clan and the tribe is real. From this base, tribal alliances, often fostered by the thrust of nationalism and nurtured on a common opposition to alien rule, have emerged into something approaching a feeling of common nationality.

Beyond this lies a vague feeling that President Leopold Senghor of Senegal calls "negritude." This can be translated as "the-importance-of-being-black."

It is used to describe the vague feeling of cultural affinity and political fellowship that many African intellectuals feel toward each other in opposition to the non-black world.

BUT FOR the average African, the tribe is the limit of his automatic trust and friendship. This has implications that are not entirely unfavorable for white men in general and Americans in particular.

To a Somali, a white man is no more alien than is an Ibo from Nigeria.

Even among tribes belonging to the same racial stock and living in the same fashion, such as the Nilo-Hamitic Turkana and Suk of Northern Kenya, a white man is often

more trusted because he is removed from tribal rivalries and fears.

Despite this ethnocentric attitude, the African has always been a courteous, friendly and generally peaceful person.

The record of history substantiates this. Of perhaps 50 white explorers who opened up Africa, going among the tribes sometimes almost alone, only two or three met violent deaths. Most of Africa came under colonial control through treaty rather than conquest.

There was, in fact, no anti-white feeling in Africa until the white man produced it by his actions.

THE LEGACY of the slave trade and of the discriminatory actions of later whites in Africa haunts us today.

There could have been no slave trade had there not been African chiefs willing to sell

other Africans into slavery. The Arabs, too, played a major role both in the procurement and in the export of slaves.

It is not so much that Africans reproach whites for the part their ancestors played in the slave trade. It is more the fact that there was a slave trade that has contributed to the creation of a massive African inferiority complex.

COLONIALISM has also added tinder to this smoldering and often unspoken resentment.

Although Africans say the colonial powers ruled badly, the real sin of these nations, in African eyes, was that they ruled Africa at all.

THERE IS, however, a fund of good will and respect for America and Americans both among the leaders and people of Africa. It is not always seen, but it is there.

This is based on the fact the United States is the senior "revolutionary" nation, the first to free itself from colonialism. It is based on the fact that we are wealthy and that we know how to do things.

The value, as political assets, of our informality and friendliness cannot yet be as-

essed because there has not been enough mass contact.

In general, however, the African tends to be a formal person who does not give his friendship easily. For this reason, it seems that the African, at least for a time, will feel closer to his European mentors than he will to us.

There are cracks in the image of America. The largest of these involves the racial problem in the United States.

Although Africans themselves understand and practice discrimination (mostly along tribal lines), they don't like it when it is addressed by another race to people of their own color and often to their own diplomatic representatives.

Another crack in the image is our failure to live up to our revolutionary past.

Africans, while aware that we have generally favored the emancipation of the continent, know that for cold war reasons we often side with our NATO allies which, through one of the misfortunes of history, happen to be the colonial powers.

LASTLY, many Africans regard the United States as too inconsistent and unsure of

itself. In this respect, we seem to suffer in comparison with the Communists.

Communism has some appeal because it seems more closely allied to the African's communal society than does the free enterprise system of the West. Communism has some appeal because both we and the colonial powers have made it forbidden fruit.

But most important of all, it has appeal because it represents strength.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev tells the West he will "bury us," that Communism is "the wave of the future." We talk about standards of living and brotherhood.

WHICH does the African believe?

When the Russians ran their recent series of atomic tests, barely a squeak was heard from the African nations. When we consider one test, the protest is deafening.

In short, for historical, political and sociological reasons, the African will never love us. Nor is it likely that he will hate us.

He will either respect us or hold us in contempt. The choice is largely up to us.

January 16, 1962

14. Future Has Its Gloomy Sides

The African is a complex individual — as unlike the average American as a person could be.

But if the African is complex, he should at least be understandable. The course of his actions, present and future, can be traced in his past and in his environment.

In earlier articles it has been shown that:

—An inadequate diet for centuries and exposure to a host of diseases have left Africa a continent of sick people.

—African family and tribal structure has tended to discourage individualism and to place a premium on conformity; the African is the original "organization man."

—African education is inadequate in almost every respect and plagued by a host of seemingly insoluble problems.

—Animism, the traditional religion of Africa followed by nearly half of the continent's 234,000,000 people, prevents the African from seeing the real relationship between

cause and effect; Islam, followed by another 88,000,000 Africans, also encourages a fatalistic approach to life.

—Most Africans are desperately poor, both physically unable to do continuous labor and uninterested in it; the African social system discourages domestic saving.

—The African is genuinely uninterested in Western democratic political institutions.

—The African suffers from an ill-concealed mass inferiority complex and is essentially an ethnocentric isolationist.

The implications of these facts and characteristics are far-reaching.

In the political arena it means the trend toward one-party rule and popular dictatorships in individual African nations will be accentuated.

It means that the tendency will be for political leaders to hold office for long periods, then to be removed by coups either from within the ruling party or staged by the army.

It means that the pan-Africanist dream of creating a "United States of Africa" is unlikely to take place in the immediate future and may not take place at all.

The emergency nations have been created arbitrarily and often cut across tribal groupings. Thus they have no ethnic reality and often little reality in a geographic sense.

Even regional groupings will be hard to achieve. Cooperation on the economic, medical and cultural levels may take place, however.

It means that the African nations will resist with every means at their disposal attempts to involve them in the Cold War. In the event of a Russian or Chinese attack on the West, it is unlikely that a single African state would come in on the side of the West.

In the economic sphere, it means that Africa seems perpetually condemned to the status of a have-not continent.

No amount of foreign aid can put Africa on its feet overnight. The African's diet, health, social customs and religious beliefs all militate against the creation or maintenance of a self-starting, self-perpetuating, progressive economy.

So, too, does his physical environment and his shortage of educational facilities.

In the social sphere, few changes appear to be in offing. Despite the political ferment that has gripped Africa for the last decade, there has been little demand for the emancipation of women or for any other fundamental alteration in the structure of society.

WITH THE gradual withdrawal from Africa of at least half the continent's 5,000,000 whites (and this certainly seem to be in the cards), much of the impetus toward social change and economic development would seem likely to disappear.

In short, it does not seem that the future belongs to Africa.

At least not the foreseeable future.

When the winds of political change have finally

swept through Africa from north to south and all its nations are free, a situation that should obtain within the next decade, Africa is headed for a psychological, political, economic and social slump.

Both the West and Soviet bloc will have become more accustomed to the Africans. The kid-glove treatment will end and will no longer be enough just to be black.

Africa will have to compete with the rest of the world for development funds, both private and governmental, in a shrinking capital market.

The tendency within the African nations, after the surge of nationalism has exhausted itself, will be to slip back, little by little, perhaps unnoticeably, to the old ways.

THESE ARE gloomy words. Is there no possibility that the thrust of nationalism can be channeled to develop Africa's economy and social structure?

It is possible. But it would require the most dedicated and intelligent leadership combined with Herculean efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of the African masses.

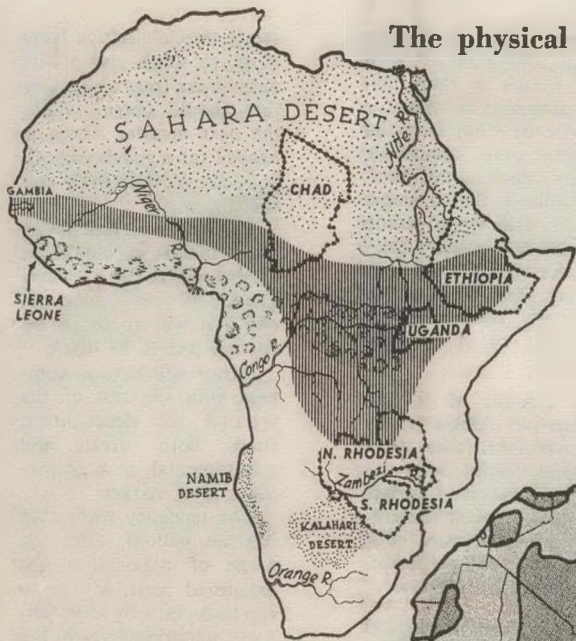
Even given these prerequisites, which cannot be seen today in most of the continent, the advance would be both modest and slow.

For decades, perhaps for ever, Africa will remain one of the world's problem areas.

Not to accept this is to prepare the ground for psychological defeats of profound significance.

January 17, 1962

The physical characteristics of Africa



The races of Africa



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