

SOUTH AFRICA IN THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

By MURIEL FISHER

The second article of the series in which Mrs. Fisher surveys for us the changing scene in the vast continent on which we live.

IT COMES as a surprise to many English-speaking people to learn that the French colonial empire comprised 75% of what is commonly known as West Africa. As we know, France's colonial policy differed completely from that of Britain. She never attempted to help her African territories towards independence. She merely made the people French Africans who could, on a qualified franchise, send their own representatives to the National Assembly in Paris. The basic difference was, perhaps, that there was no colour bar under the French system, while the more liberal British clung to the colour bar. The British created African Nationalists, the French created French Africans. The result, with the tragic exception of Algeria, was that when colonialism turned almost overnight to autonomy, there was neither revolution nor chaos, as happened in the Belgian Congo.

French West Africa

The great change began in 1956, when Monsieur Mollet's government, forewarned by events in Indo-China and Algeria, introduced the famous "loi-cadre" which introduced African election to African Cabinets, but still with a Governor appointed by Paris. Two years later, when President de Gaulle came to power, he recognized the force of African Nationalism and came to terms with it in one grand gesture. With Monsieur Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast he toured all the French territories in Africa, and also Madagascar, and offered them a simple choice — autocracy within the French community or total independence without French money. The acceptance of the former was complete, except by Guinea, whose young leader, Sekou Touré, chose total freedom. General de Gaulle was furious, and stopped Guinea's annual subsidy of £7 million on the turn, so that Sekou Touré had to look elsewhere for funds, mainly to the Communist countries.

Otherwise, transition was painless, with independent states appearing all over West Africa, either singly or in Customs Unions or loose Federations. Of Algeria we shall speak later.

British East Africa

While the British and the French colonial empires in West Africa have over the past five or six years burst the bonds of colonialism and erupted into independent states, the same process has been taking place in British East Africa, but far more painfully and violently. Africa is learning that independence is not necessarily synonymous with peace, even in the West African states, trained for many years towards self-government. Ghana, that shining symbol of freedom for all of Black Africa, is seldom without its troubles and seldom out of the news. Dr. Nkrumah has, since the alleged assassination plot, demoted and detained three of his Cabinet Ministers, and he has as many problems as five years ago.

It is becoming more and more apparent that democracy, which is so well rooted in the colder climates of Britain, Europe and North America, wilts and dies under a tropical African sun. Not even in our own country has it had much success, even among people of European descent. How

much less can it be expected to thrive among the African peoples, conditioned throughout centuries of tribal life to accepting without question the one-man rule of tribal chiefs? Moderation is regarded as weakness, and invariably, as in the past, the Nkrumah, the Nyerere, the Houphouët-Boigny, the Kenyatta, becomes the idol of the people.

East Africa, like the territories in the West and in the North, was stimulated and disturbed by the War, the lessons learnt therein and the knowledge gained, as well as the realization that the White man, always so unquestionably the master, was so far from perfect that White man was fighting White man, just as Black men have fought through the ages. War experiences led also to thirst for more knowledge, more education. The fortunate few who achieved education returned to be politicians, agitators, occasionally statesmen, and often cruel and ruthless leaders like the Mau Mau "Generals".

British East Africa consisted of **Uganda, Kenya Colony and Protectorate**, which is a narrow coastal strip, **Tanganyika**, once a German possession and then a Mandated Territory, and the little Sultanate of **Zanzibar**.

Uganda

This is the smallest of the mainland territories and has about 6½ million people, with no settler problem, since White settlement has always been discouraged, and the 8,000 to 10,000 Europeans are mostly administrators or missionaries. There are about 50,000 Indians. In all, only 1½% of the population is non-African. There are four provinces, dominated by **Buganda**.

In 1862, the explorers Speke and Grant discovered the small Hamitic kingdom of **Buganda**, ruled by **Mtesa I**, directly descended from a dynasty which began in the 15th century. He was friendly towards the first White men, and allowed missionaries to work in Uganda, though his successor tried to murder all Christians.

Today, the Kabaka or King of Buganda is **Mtesa II**, (Freddie to his friends), who went to Cambridge and served in the Grenadier Guards, but this does not make the set-up any the less feudal. Buganda is a paradox in Africa today, since, far from craving independence, it has remained fiercely feudal and aristocratic.

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Uganda, a British Protectorate since 1893, has two parallel governments: firstly, the usual British Governor, Executive Council and Legislative Council, with very slowly increasing African representation; and secondly, Buganda's own Parliament, the Great Lukiko, under the Kabaka and his Cabinet.

In 1953, the British Government, with its passion for federation, hinted at a Federation of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, but King Freddie, afraid of being dominated by White Kenya, dug his toes in and said, "No!"

This gesture cost him his throne, for a while, at least. He was put on a plane and rushed to London. Sir Oliver Lyttleton tried to explain away this precipitate action, but Buganda went into mourning, the men grew beards to demonstrate their loyalty to the Kabaka, the Lukiko refused to nominate another king, and the Kabaka's sister is said to have died of grief. The King demanded independence, not only from East Africa, but from Uganda, which would have meant economic ruin for the other three provinces. Finally, after lengthy negotiations, the Kabaka was allowed to return as a constitutional monarch, on condition that Buganda remained in Uganda. King Freddie got all he wanted — no federation, full control over Buganda, the majority of seats in Legco for Africans, and three Cabinet posts for Buganda in the government of the whole country. In 1955, after two years' absence, he returned in triumph to his people. Beards were shaved, drums beat, and the people feasted for three days.

Political parties in the other three provinces, who wanted independence for Uganda, tried to infiltrate into Buganda, but with little success. In 1958, African representatives to the Legco of Uganda were directly elected in an all-Uganda election, and in March 1961 the Council became virtually democratic, 82 of 101 members being elected on a common electoral roll. The Kabaka of Buganda saw no reason to give up his ancient throne to become a shadowy political figure, his tribal chiefs objected to losing their powers as had happened in Ghana, and Buganda therefore boycotted both elections, and in 1961 declared her independence from the rest of Uganda.

However, a Constitutional Relationships Committee had drawn up a new constitution to ensure the unity of the country while allowing for a federal set-up between Buganda and the other provinces. Uganda became independent in October this year, and under this constitution the Kabaka and his tribal chiefs will probably be able to retain their traditional policy while the rest of Uganda becomes more democratic. In the absence of White settlers to oppose Black Nationalism, political parties have been slow to form and are mostly Catholic vs. Protestant vs. Muslim, instead of Black vs. White.

Economically, Uganda is the most prosperous of the East African countries. Most of her export crops of coffee and cotton are produced by peasant farmers; less than a quarter of a million are in paid employment, and these are mostly refugees from Ruandi-Urundi. There are also some industrial enterprises and a large hydro-electric station on the Nile, supplying electricity to Uganda and to Kenya.

Consideration of East African Federation

Before going on to Kenya and Tanganyika, let us look briefly at the idea of a Federation of these territories. Julius Nyerere, Tanganyika's leader, is a champion of federation, and is supported by Tom Mboya, the "angry young man" of Kenya. Both think that Nyasaland and Ruandi-Urundi might join such a federation. The idea of federation is not new — the British suggested it in 1927, but the mere mention of it in 1953 was enough to cause Buganda to threaten to secede. Africans have always feared the domination of the White settlers of Kenya, but with African control the idea is now more acceptable. Much of the machinery for federation already exists in a Customs Union, and in the East African High Commission set up in 1949, which controls many inter-territorial services, such as Railways and Harbours, Aviation, Customs, Postal Services and so on. In 1961, the leaders of Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya agreed that these common services should be continued, and that a Common Market should be developed. As separate entities, these countries can never be as strong economically as they could be in federation.

Kenya

Of all the African territories, Kenya carries the greatest load of seemingly insoluble problems, chief of which is how to unite Whites, Asians, Arabs and Africans into an independent state with a plural society. Fears are rife: White fear of Black domination and economic ruin; Asian fears of the effect of change on their commercial interest; African fears of White domination and loss of land. Furthermore, the Africans are divided among themselves by tribal affiliations.

Kenya has the same problem as South Africa — to whom does the land belong? The Kikuyu have been there for some 300 years, the Arabs have traded for 3,000 years, the British came in 1895 and the Asians in 1901. And yet, the healthy, fertile Highlands have until recently been mainly in White or Asian hands, and Kikuyu have worked as low-paid labourers on the lands their forefathers owned.

What is the background to the "White Highlands" problem, the crux of Kenya's difficulties? In 1895, Kenya was declared a British Protectorate, a land thinly populated owing to disease, drought, tribal feuds and centuries of Arab-run slave trade. Since then the African population has increased four-fold as the result of peace, law and order and modern agriculture and medicine. In 1902, the railway to Uganda was opened, and in order to provide traffic on it, the British Government encouraged settlement of the almost empty Highlands — and lit the fuse which was to explode in the Mau Mau rebellion fifty years later. Even though the Carter Commission in 1932 gave back 21,000 acres, the Kikuyu still firmly believe that the land was stolen from them. That grievance, plus the Kikuyu love of intrigue and their suspicious nature, made them take the lead politically, and led to the Mau Mau campaign of atrocities, the worst in African history this century, a campaign which changed the Kenya scene

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forever. Added to the land question was the White/Black social relationship, so akin to that of South Africa, and frustrating bans, such as being forbidden to grow the most profitable crop — coffee.

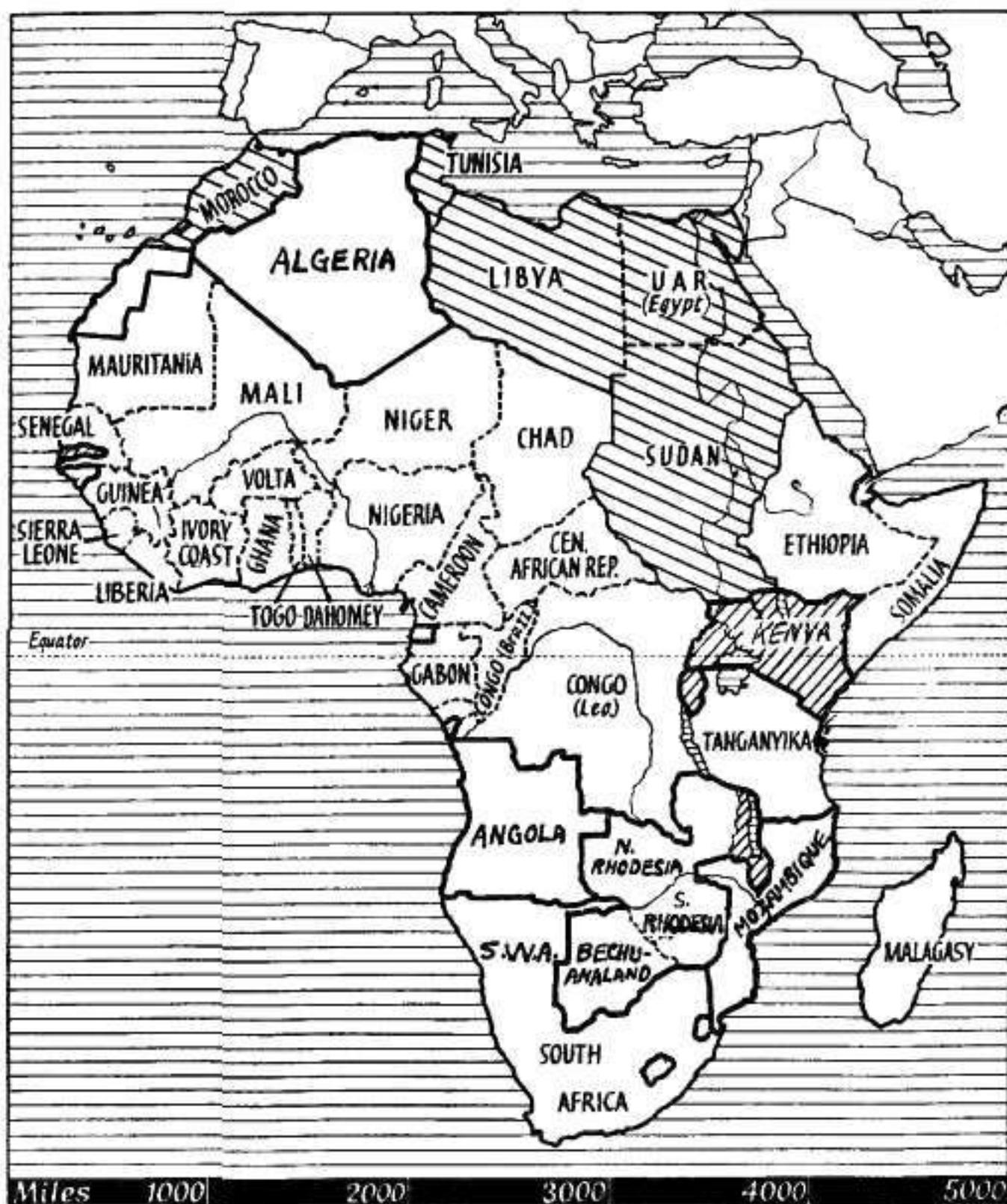
The original African movement of 1920 was revived by **Jomo Kenyatta** in 1928 with the aim of getting back the land. A split took place which was to last right through to the Mau Mau, which aimed to overthrow the Government and drive all Whites from Kenya. It took all the 60,000 White settlers, plus police, army and many loyal Kikuyu to end the Emergency, and by 1954 the whole political situation was changed. In 1956, the **Lennox Boyd Constitution** gave the Africans 8 elected members on the Legislature, but a boycott, led by **Tom Mboya**, who is a Luo, not a Kikuyu, forced an increase to 14 Africans, equal to European plus Asian members.

In February 1960, at the **Lancaster House Conference**, the objective of independence was stated for the first time, and accepted by all the delegates except the right-wing settlers, who formed the **Coalition Party** under **Cavendish-Bentinck**. Many Europeans, however, accepted the coming change and supported **Michael Blundell's** New Kenya

Party. In fact, only 4,000 settler families (or 15,000 people) of the 60,000 Europeans opposed Blundell.

Kenya would probably have had her independence by now had it not been for the recurring splits in the African parties. KANU is the strongest party, but was sadly divided in the 1961 election campaign. Their only unity is the KANU policy that **Jomo Kenyatta**, the Mau Mau leader, now freed from jail, shall be the first Chief Minister. **Tom Mboya** supports him, but there are signs that Kenyatta, now an aging man, does not hold the real political power. KADU, the more democratic party, was formed by five tribal parties who feared Kikuyu domination, and is a strong opposition to KANU.

In the February 1961 elections, KANU and KADU jointly instructed Africans to vote for Blundell and liberal independents in the 10 common roll seats reserved for European members, and similarly the 4 National seats reserved for Whites went to Liberal members. Although KANU gained 18 seats to KADU's 12, the latter was asked to form the Government with the support of some European and some nominated members. Both parties agreed to press for independence in February 1962, but this has not yet come about.



Economically, Kenya is the most advanced of the East African countries commercially, but the poorest overall, with an average annual income of less than £20 per head. As the Land Settlement Board enables more African farmers to take up farms of up to 150 acres in the Highlands, it is likely that small European farmers will have to leave, but the large tea estates and huge ranches will remain, with large African managerial staffs.

But Kenya is insolvent. In 1960, some £12 million of capital left the country, and there must be some prospect of more stable government before Western countries will invest. Added to that is a steadily increasing population and pressure for more wages, which may prove too great for a shaky economy. Even with aid from Britain or other countries, times will be difficult for Kenya for years to come, though Federation could help her. The present disquieting rumours of suppression of the freedom of the Press and of Communist influence are not likely to encourage Western investment.

Tanganyika

This is the largest of the East African territories, with a population of 9 million. Tanganyika has achieved independence quickly and quietly, mainly because it is not a multi-racial country. Less than 1½% of the population is non-African, consisting of some European settlers and farmers, and Asians and Arabs in trade or public service. There are over 120 different African tribes, but the Swahili language is generally understood, and there are neither the tribal jealousies of Kenya nor the religious divisions of Uganda.

Added to these factors is the strong personality of **Mr. Julius Nyerere**. The year 1945 saw the first nominated African members in Legco, in 1958 came the first elections for the Legislature, and in October 1960, Tanganyika had an African Prime Minister, Mr. Nyerere. The first reason for these rapid and non-violent changes was the strength and unity of TANU, founded by Julius Nyerere in 1954. By 1958, due to his drive and leadership, it had branches in almost every village of that vast country. He himself used to go out and talk to workers on tea plantations and farms. The second reason was British policy, especially when **Sir Richard Turnbull** became Governor.

In the 1960 elections, the people voted on a common roll for 10 Europeans, 11 Asians and 50 "open seats", and TANU swept the board with 70 out of 71 seats. There are also 9 nominated members and 2 Civil Service Ministers.

Nyerere's policy is one of African Democratic Socialism, with emphasis on co-operative development plus the need for private and foreign capital investment. His "crash programme" immediately after independence, of Africanization of police and civil service, plus other drastic measures, have caused much concern abroad and damaged the image of a moderate Nyerere, but it had to be done to keep the flame of nationalism alight. Soon afterwards, Nyerere resigned the Premiership in order to re-organize TANU into an administrative, as well as a political body. He has since become president of the independent Republic of Tanganyika.

Like Kenya, Tanganyika is a poor country, with an average annual income of less than £20 per head, which means malnutrition for many. There is little employment, since the people live off the produce of their farms. The Government Development Plan emphasizes investment and agricultural education, but the main difficulty is the shortage of educated Africans. Only about 40% of the children go to school, and primary school at that, and both education and health services are retarded for lack of money, although the missionaries do valuable work in both fields.

The franchise is not "one man, one vote", but restricted, with liberal qualifications, but the greatest thing about Tanganyika is the realization that the people must work for their own development. "Freedom and Toil" is the TANU motto. It is not enough to sit back and expect miracles from the new Government.

Ruanda-Urundi

Tucked in between Tanganyika and the Congo are the two little new sovereign states of Ruanda and Urundi, once linked with the Congo under Belgian rule. While Belgium encouraged their independence, perhaps because they were costing her £4 million a year, she has had no success in reconciling the two major tribes. The Batutsi (or Watutsi), one-fifth of the population, immensely tall and aristocratic, with a cult of sacred herds of cattle, have for generations treated the smaller, cattle-less four-fifths, the Bahutu, as serfs. By 1957, new ideas of democracy had begun to infiltrate, but the Batutsi were quite determined that independence should not mean domination by the Bahutu majority. This is not unlike Buganda's position. Equally, the Bahutu wanted to destroy the Batutsi domination before it could be entrenched in an independent authoritarian state.

Belgium, as in the Congo, moved too fast. Backing the Bahutu, she announced, after the death of the old king in 1959, plans for the independence of Ruanda-Urundi. Almost at once civil war broke out, brief but vicious. The Batutsi were outnumbered, even with the support of the Batwa pygmies with their poison darts, and many fled to Uganda and Tanganyika. Both tribes lost heavily, and the young Tutsi king retired to comfortable exile in Belgium.

In October 1960, the Belgians elevated the **Ruanda Council** into a National Government, with 35 Hutu, 12 Tutsi and 1 Twa. The Tutsis were furious, and bloodshed was forecast when independence came in July this year. So far, however, it has not happened.

In **Urundi** the tribal tension was less acute, as it was predominantly Hutu, or a mixture. The strong Tutsi opposition party may have support from Tanganyika, since Nyerere certainly foresees a union of Urundi in the South with Tanganyika, and possibly Ruanda too, though economically they are poor countries. Now they are separate little states, bound only by a Customs Union.

(To be continued.)