

“genuine racial partnership” in these countries, why not face up to it and work out what the conditions are for progress in a nonracial yet African-controlled Southern Africa? It is the “big push” from the ordinary people of Africa that is going to be needed to make Africa what she can become, not the building up of Europeanised elites, or closer economic ties with Europe.

Before hearing the Davie lecture one may have thought that Mr. Oppenheimer had a personal part to

play in assisting and canalising Africa’s “big push” if only because he once resigned from the United Party and is known to support the Progressives. It might even have been possible to see for him a progressive role in the agony of South Africa’s emergence from European domination. On the evidence of the lecture there can be no such hope. Instead of being a potential force for progress in Africa, Mr. Oppenheimer is only to be seen as an obstacle to it. ●

## Ibrahim el Salahi

ULLI BEIER

IBRAHIM EL SALAHİ IS A YOUNG Sudanese artist who is now a teacher in the Khartoum Technical Institute. Salahi was trained at the Slade School in London, but it is evident from his present work that he has developed far since then. He seems to have developed his highly original forms from Arabic calligraphy. Some of his works are abstract compositions based on Arabic writing. Most of his work is figurative, the basic Arab forms being still recognisable and some of the exquisite rhythm of this writing has been preserved.

In content, however, Salahi’s art has grown beyond both the influences of the Slade and Arabic writing.

Salahi presents us with a series of anthropomorph images which are extremely haunting. These images are human in their suffering—but the forms seem to suggest human, divine and animal elements all at once. As in ancient African mytho-

logy there are no clear-cut divisions between the animal, the human and the divine.

The strong *African* feeling in these pictures is surprising—coming as it does from Khartoum, from an Islamic culture with no tradition in figurative painting. Yet it is so strong, that one thinks at first one recognises resemblances between Salahi’s images and African masks. Senufo? Dan?—No. A closer look reveals that it is an affinity of spirit rather than of form. These images—like masks—are appearances from another, supernatural or superreal world. We regard them with a mixture of awe and delight, trying to interpret the cryptic message they carry.

*In November-December 1961, MBARI exhibited a small collection of Ibrahim el Salahi’s drawings, one of which is reproduced below.*

