

# THE NEW AFRICAN



All the Fields and Mines of  
 Africa are thick with mortgage columns.  
 Bearing inscriptions stating that the  
 Land on which they stand was pawned  
 To such and such powers for so many  
 Dollars, for so many  
 Pounds, for so many  
 Roubles, for so many  
 Francs, for so many  
 Yens, for so many  
 Marks, for so many  
 Liras, for so many  
 Drachmas, and so on and so on.

Africa and her dispossessed children  
 Shall at this point be hell bounded  
 With the international debtors cord.  
 At this time not only will we be expelled  
 From our homes and villages, but  
 We will have to pay with  
     our flesh  
     our blood  
 And our nationhood.

My commentary above is but the modest declaration of the powerlessness of Africa at this monotonous hour of her history to combat the formidable neo-colonialist military-economic penetration on the one hand and the continued presence of the white racist regimes willing uncontrollable powers on the mass of black people on the other hand. Neo-colonialism which excuses itself the loss of physical presence but in fact this type of colonialism is far more evil in its terms of reference because it is enforced indirectly and forcefully. Making use of the so-called 'peoples' representatives' to implement whatsoever orders are issued. Neo-colonialism is a blood relative of colonialism, always motivated by huge profits without wishing to reinvest a tiny fraction of the gains accrued. Neo-colonialist economic and military adventurism in Africa are being re-enforced every day by subtle and refined means. By total collaboration with a tiny but hard core power-elite, neo-colonialism aims have been fulfilled with speed. This time it wasn't a white governor of state but a black head of state who performs the true functions. These powerless men who can be dismissed by neo-colonialist emissaries will tour the world initialing financial documents, affixing their signatures to friendship treaties of all sorts and stamping their seal of office to ill-conceived projects which would give to them the usual ten percent and make their countries carry the debt. Neo-colonialism lays heavy responsibility on the traditional chiefs as well in Africa since the political system accords these hereditary heads with special powers. The absolutism of neo-colonialism operating within the circuit of capitalistic morality is completed by the law of supply and demand. Immediately the cheap African labour force realise that each time they step up production their bread is in jeopardy, each time the African worker looks around him he observes with fear the reserve army of unemployed waiting to take his place and so keep his wage down, in the light of his trade union organisation are formed. But the creation of Trade Unions breeds automatic repercussion. The neo-colonialist-capitalist

# Neo-Colonialist Imperialist

list groups invoke the 'Sacred Law of Supply and Demand' and force the state through their economic advisers, ambassadors who have more power to display than the electorates, and with the threat of military intervention the state acquiesce to whatever demands the agents of neo-colonialists have mapped out. Ly Abdoulaye in a concise book about the use of French Africans as soldiers in Morocco, Vietnam and Algeria puts it brilliantly: 'African troops' became the instruments of imperialistic rivalries and above all of repression in order to conserve the system of exploitation (capitalist) in the colonies and the metropolis'.

'We have left almost nothing for the producer in return for the considerable riches our commerce. Almost nowhere are there any fixed riches'

This is a sample of imperialist morality. This exemplifies the way Africa is being repeatedly bled commercially, not for the benefit of those who toil in the arid fields to produce the raw materials that keep the economic machinery of Europe going, but the benefits and all profits find their way into the pockets of the overseas shareholders to generate european capitalism and to frustrate African development. Neo-colonialism is powerfully re-enforced with collaborators from within Africa. These are the new breed of men stationed in the barracks who would not hesitate to open fire on the workers. One has seen the effect of such display of reckless fire power in the recent uprisings in Western Nigeria and also the aftermath of the widespread strikes (1969) in the Ashanti Gold Mines. Neo-colonialism prefers decadence and confused mess to revolution because this is the climate suitable for the germination of huge profits. Neo-colonialism is bound to breed conflict, since any attempt to rescue the 'instrument of production' from the capitalist would breed exaggerated fears leading to a confrontation. When Patrice Lumumba pronounced the wealth of the Congo for the Congolese many a European capital fell in total disarray, for Lumumba has defied the pronouncements of King Leopold's circular to his district commissioners in the Congo of June 16, 1897. 'These peoples must submit to new laws of which the most imperious, as the most salutary, is assuredly the law of labour'.<sup>3</sup> Lumumba's declaration to utilise whatever wealth the mineral resources yield is exclusively the sole property of the Congolese masses brought about his death. The

# MILITARY PENETRATION IN AFRICA

## MUKHTARR MUSTAPHA

Belgians were willing to hand over political power, but not the economic tools because their influence elsewhere would depend largely on their total economic domination, it also indicates in the present day that any African leader who is bent on economic and political justice for his people must be ready to stake his claims by a 'military rear guard strategy'. Otherwise internal order would collapse, the economy would sag and neo-colonialist penetration would be unimpeded. At this stage it will be useful to question the capability of Africa to resist such back-stage indirect interference with the economy and political affairs. Is Africa competent to direct under combat the present erratic control of such negative leadership that robs the continent? Would Africa win under the Guardianship of characters like Hastings Banda, Ian Smith and Voster (racist prime ministers of S/Rhodesia and South Africa respectively) no Africa cannot win. Except with singular courage of leaderships like those of Guinea, Tanzania and Zambia can Africa see the road to a total liberation of the instrument of Government and Economics. The notion of total isolation by Africa in relation to dealings with the neo-colonialist powers is a feasibility. But this is not enough as a short term strategy. The long term policy for Africa should be towards developing increased cooperation between each neighbour state in matters of defense, economic strategy and political thought. Africa must unite now for any delay offers the enemy the chance to strengthen their defence and consolidate their neo-colonialist thrust.

While there have been notable failures of statesmanship, however, the larger problem arises from the incapability of some African leaders to see the true meanings of the grave responsibility that Independence and Self Government brought upon African.

- (1) Ly Abdoulaye, *Mercenaires noirs*, (Paris, 1957, p. 68.) (2) Abner Cohen, 'The social organisation of credit in a West African cattle market' (*Africa* XXXVI, pp 8-20.) (3) E. D. Morel 'History of the Congo Reform Movement!' (pp 3-17.) (4/5) President Kaunda's speech at Mulungushi 1969 (6) Kwame Nkrumah, 'Neo-Colonialism' p. ix. (7) Ahmadou Kouroubari, 'Histoire de l'Imam Samori' Translated from Maurice Delafosse's 'Essai de manuel pratique de la langue Mandé ou Mandingue.' (8) Frantz Fanon, 'Towards the African Revolution', (p. 100.)

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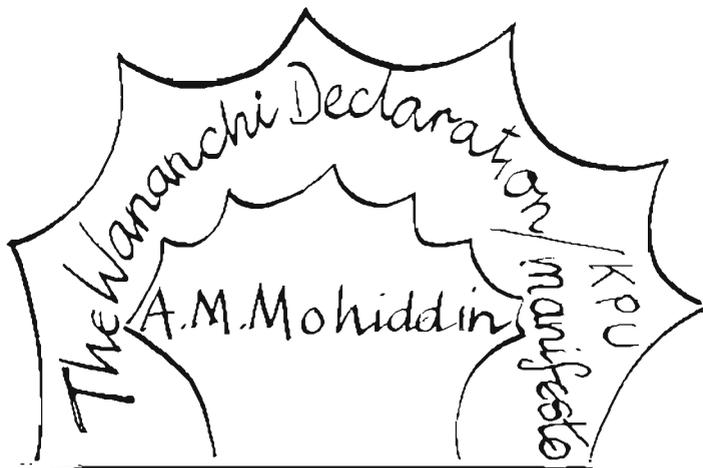
nationhood. Also the incapability to respond in a balanced manner to a wide range of challenges and appeals, taking into account the density of tangible African interest and intangible international interests that often leads in conflicting directions. African statesmen and politicians alike strive to preserve a stable economy and democracy (with some notable reactionary cliques) the former they have failed to achieve, the latter they have not yet started to tackle. President Kaunda has said in these words the aims of capitalist exploitation<sup>4</sup>: "Today our society is being exploited very badly indeed by some unscrupulous men and women who are being driven to the extreme right by the 'profit motive'." Furthermore Kaunda's gift for dissecting the complex problem of legitimate African interest and capitalistic demand from without went on to say this:<sup>5</sup> "The profit motive taken to excess leads us to the road of capitalism. On the other hand, whatever man does consciously or unconsciously has a strong element of profit motive. This, however, it should be pointed out could be 'profit motive' in the interest of society as a whole or 'profit motive' in the interest of an individual."

Whenever a Government in a newly African Independent Nation fails to produce good economic results law and order starts breaking down. Mass unemployment and severe suffering creates near revolutionary atmosphere. But the leadership in some of these countries because of fear and unwillingness fail to take the necessary measures to radically reform the out-dated colonial economic structure. The industrialists and powerful landowners and foreign business agencies gang up against any change that would alter their position. At this alarming stage the flight of capital caused by the psychological effects of political and social instability generates a rapid depreciation of currencies rendering worthless whatever savings the workers had made. (Value of Ghanaian Cedi in 1965 dropped from the internationally recognised rate of ten shillings to six shillings and eightpence). Economic and political disequilibrium have now paved the way for military intervention sometimes by mercenaries or the deployment of paratroopers based on African soil (notably French military presence in Tunisia, Senegal Malagasy, Gabon, etc) and lastly the use of indigenous African troops. In the absence of political cadres wholly committed to defeat reactionary forces within the army, bourgeois reactionary demands have succeeded through incompetent officers who by virtue of their possession of arms have turned oppressors overnight. It is this new breed of barracks agitators who are causing more harm than the Nkrumah's and Keibas. In his famous book Dr. Nkrumah states:<sup>6</sup> "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it, is in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty while in reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside." The neo-colonialist powers from without are the sole possessors of the colossal African labour force, while the life span of the African is being shortened under the damp mining pits of the Diamond Mines in Yengena and Sefodu (two areas of concentrated diamond mining operations in Sierra Leone controlled by the SLST)

Europe continues to build more planes and missiles intensifying the arms manufacture to militarise Africa and keep the populace in total confusion. It is this last commodity, arms of all descriptions, which is making neo-colonialist continued presence felt. Africa has the shortest possible time to re-organise her affairs, in this light regional alliances leading to a continental union must be the theme song in order to combat effectively the blatant neo-colonialist greed. Up to the period of 1897 - 1891 when the seven years war between the French and Samory the true intentions of colonialism were seen in clear perspective, by Samory one of the great patriots of Africa. In a dispatch to the Sultan of Sokoto and Ahmadou, Samory expounded on the virtues of alliances and the ills of fragmentation in these words: "If you continue to make war on your own, the whites will have no trouble in defeating you. I have already undergone the experience in trying my strength against them. Let us therefore unite. You will hit the French from the North, I will harass them in the South and we will certainly manage to get rid of them."<sup>7</sup> It is true that the African political revolution is still groping for a clear sense of its purposes, it is also true that Africa's eventual scope for political maturity is enormous. What is not true is that Africa could rid herself overnight of all the external pressures that disengage her from having a clearer insight of the many tricky equations that beset her path.

African states should search for unifying elements instead of over-estimating the divergencies. Frantz Fanon in his book *Toward the African Revolution*, chides the international left movement in these words: "What we ask is that their action be stepped, not in an atmosphere of diffuse sympathy, but in the doctrinal rigor of an authentic anticolonialism".<sup>8</sup>

Africa will only accept external and friendly advances if and only if they are punctuated with purity of motive with regards to whatever project they wish to undertake. Cooperation is possible but only on the terms which Africa will stipulate. Belligerency between African states must come to a halt since these are skilfully manipulated as to enable the neo-colonialist designs to thrive on African soil. Africa is now working within a limited time cycle to rectify and correct the persistent frustration of the development of the continent as a whole. Self-delusion and irresponsibility by some African leaders will only hasten the way to disaster. Africa should be able to strike a path of her own. Africa can walk with the big powers without being drawn into their neo-colonialist-capitalist military complex. In many ways Africa is a research station where most of the complex problems which the twentieth century has bred could be observed, studied and the solutions tested. Africa could win and achieve total victory if there is total continental mobilisation aimed at defeating neo-colonialist encroachment. The seeds of determination have started to sprout, but this gain should be exploited further by seeking to strip from Africa the neo-colonialist yoke. Unity would bring a total realisation of the dreams for economic, political and social freedom. All Africa must unite now.



The title of this document is indicative of what it contains. "Wananchi" is a Swahili word whose literal translation is "the owners of the land or of the country", or to put it more colloquially, "the Common Men". It is therefore very obvious from the cover that it is the common man's declaration as opposed to that of the elites, which the document is all about.

The Wananchi Declaration is the political manifesto of the Kenya Peoples' Party (KPU) - the second political party in Kenya. At first sight it would seem rather odd that there should be another political party in a developing country like Kenya where the urgent problem is that of mobilising all available resources for the supreme task of nation-building and economic development, and not to dissipate energies in organising futile political parties. There is, after all, another political party - the Kenya African National Union (KANU) - the present ruling party in Kenya. The whole phenomenon is even odder when we see that the KPU is led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who is on record as having been a supporter of the single party state. How can we account for this state of affairs? There are two explanations.

One, the nature of the single party itself. There has been a lot of muddled thinking and bizarre pronouncements on the one-party state. Literature and analysis on the single party has always tended to centre on the working and experiences of the Communist parties elsewhere outside Africa and during a historical period which is not directly relevant to contemporary Africa. Even in those studies done in Africa on specific single party systems, the intention has been invariably to expose these systems as not being democratic. And when these democratic weaknesses were 'found', they were immediately assumed to be the characteristics of all single party systems in Africa. Rarely has the single party in Africa been studied objectively, taking into account the objective conditions of the country, its historical antecedents as well as the wishes and aspirations of the people.

The single party system, like any other party system, is a particular type of political organisation. And as such it can be described as being democratic or otherwise depending, of course, on the extent to which it is controlled by the people. It will be democratic if it is controlled by and expresses the wishes of the people - the Wananchi. It will be dictatorial or oligarchic if it simply expresses and serves the interests of one man or a group of men. Thus,

centralisation of political power - whether in one man or a group - does not in itself constitute a democratic one party system.

It is true that some of the so-called one party states in Africa are simply euphemisms for dictatorships. The single-party has the potential of being an effective vehicle of the peoples' will and power as well as being an instrument of dictatorship of the worst reactionary type. A single party system of the type that exists in Guinea and Tanzania where the individual citizen - the Mwananchi - can fully and effectively participate in the affairs of the country at all levels, can indeed be a powerful instrument of nation building and de-colonisation.

We must not therefore confuse any concentration of political power in a state as single party system. Worse still, we should not allow others to persuade us into believing that a given country is a democratic single party system, particularly when this very persuader does not recognise another system with seemingly similar characteristics as being a democratic single party system.

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga asserts that when the KPU was formed, KANU had ceased being a democratic political party. KANU was thus not a party of the Wananchi. Another party reflecting the wishes and aspirations of the people had therefore to be found.

The second explanation is centred on the contemporary political scene in Kenya itself. Kenya's struggle for independence was one of the bitterest in contemporary anti-colonial history in Africa, comparable perhaps to the heroic struggles of the Algerians. And yet, in spite of all these losses of life, of deprivations, humiliations and exploitations which took place under British colonial administration and during the Mau Mau period, Kenya today shows no visible sign that the old master is no longer in the saddle, that things have changed, that Kenya is an African country and that the interests of the indigenous people - not the settler - are indeed paramount; that, in short, the African is himself in command of his destiny. The faces are unmistakably African but the system is, equally, very much un-African.

The first part of the Declaration provides the historical background and lists specific events leading to the formation of the KPU in 1966. Indeed, the Declaration is an incisive indictment of the KANU Government of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and his colleagues. And the critique is more pungent because it comes from a group of distinguished leaders who were at one time in the forefront of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles in Kenya, and were indeed themselves part of the original government of independent Kenya, six years ago. The KPU argues that if any changes have taken place in these six years of formal independence, they have been to reinforce rather than to change the colonial situation. What has gone wrong in Kenya?

The KPU's answer can best be presented within the context of the two prevailing theories of independence in Africa.

The departure of the colonial masters from Africa conveyed different meanings to different people. To some African leaders, independence meant nothing

more than the assumption of the African's "natural rights" to rule himself. It was, as it were, a mere changing of the Guards. Nothing really changed except the ruling elites - the Guards - now Africans instead of the colonial masters. To others, independence meant the beginning of a long and difficult road to a real self-determination and to enduring harmony between individuals in the community. And this essentially implied a radical modification of the inherited colonialy-created socio-economic and political structures, into something more functionally effective and meaningful to the people themselves.

The basic difference between the two types of African leadership is aptly expressed in what President Obote once termed as those who are satisfied with "limited sovereignty" and those who strive for "complete sovereignty".

The Wananchi Declaration, as well as its leaders, emphatically asserts that the present Kenya Government belongs to the former group of African leadership. And this is the reason why Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Mzee Bildad Kaggia left KANU and formed the KPU.

Kenya's independence provides an example par excellence of successful colonialism. After some deliberately calculated hesitations and 'reservations' the British handed political power to a select group of people in Kenya who were considered "fit" and "worthy" of British trust. Those who have been tried and tested and proved to be reliable despite their noisy anti-colonial, anti-imperialist rhetoric.

While those who proved to be intractable and dangerously deviant, like Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Mzee Kaggia, were later skilfully weeded out. In this intricate political surgery the national bourgeoisie was not alone. One certain Attwood, a former American Ambassador in Kenya - has admitted his role in no uncertain terms. There might have been others.

This same approach of subtly working on the national leadership, of attempting to corrupt it, has also been used on other African leaders like President Kaunda, Nyere and Obote, but these proved to be uncorruptable. Their sense of commitment and nationalism is too formidable a stumbling block for the imperialists to negotiate with.

In short, the KPU's indictment against the present Kenya leadership is that it has betrayed the nationalist revolution - that those who died in the forests during the Mau Mau period lost their lives in vain. The objectives for which they gave their lives have not so far been realised in Kenya, nor will they ever be as long as the present leadership is in power. Kenya is still dominated by the settlers, if not by their physical presence then certainly their values are predominant everywhere.

Indeed, even the name of Mau Mau is increasingly becoming a taboo and an embarrassment to the present Kenya Government. Its elevation to the National war of liberation or the status of a national day of dedication to the heroic struggle would be too risky to the "international brotherhood of profit seekers" who have found in Kenya "a healthy and stable economic climate" (Wananchi p. 5.). At all costs, foreign capitalism must not be frightened away - they are very important to present Kenya. At any

rate, the distribution of the fruits of independence to the national bourgeoisie has not been commensurate with the sacrifices made by the recipient during those bitter days. For example, some of the present Ministers were not even there: Hence Mau Mau is too explosive a reminder to many people in Kenya today. It's best forgotten.

The present Kenya leadership has failed not only in not responding to the colonial situation, but also in the implementation of some of their most important policies. Even the wishy-washy "African Socialism" is now a dead letter. It is worse than that. In the words of the Declaration itself: "Under the cloak of something called 'African Socialism', Kenya is moving towards one of the more orthodox forms of capitalism to be found in the world today ... it seeks the Africanisation of trade, landholding, executive positions in private companies ..." The Declaration is thus accusing the KANU Government of using the good name of socialism for capitalist ends!

What has happened during those years of Uhuru? The period has revealed fundamental contradictions in the pronouncements and actual behaviour of the new Kenya rulers. No one can accuse the Kenya leaders of not being African nationalists, yet one is at a loss to understand what has happened. Is it a case of the proverbial dictum "If you can't fight 'em, join 'em"? Or is it an example par excellence of an elite determined to hold onto power?

In 1965 Kenya Ministers were speaking the language of the masses and of the dedicated revolutionaries. For example, one junior Minister put it: "... If we are to build a socialist system in Kenya in our life time ... we must therefore be prepared to deny ourselves the consumption of the numerous luxury goods on which the bulk of the incomes of the wealthy people in Kenya is now spent." The Junior Minister later warned that if the then existing system was not changed "... within the next five years we shall have a new social class with vested interests in control."

The Junior Minister was of course right, although a bit liberal in his estimation of the time involved. For the same person, but now full-fledged Minister said in the Kenya National Assembly in 1968 that he saw "nothing wrong in a civil servant engaging in business". In the same speech he was reported as saying that he did not see why Kenya should not have a few millionaires. Something traumatic has obviously happened to the Minister during the period to compel him to radically shift his posture - from socialist to capitalist.

It is the KPU's contention that the present Kenya leadership has in fact joined the ranks of the capitalist exploiters. And it was this say - and tragic - realisation which led "true nationalists", like the members of the KPU, to "press for economic and social changes to carry out KANU's earlier pledges to the people. They wanted more than the replacement of a few white faces with black". (Declaration, p. 3.)

But Kenya's case is not unique in contemporary independent Africa. Perceptive foresight was one of Franz Fanon's rare gifts. In 1961, Fanon clearly saw the emerging phenomenon of the great betrayal of the masses by the leaders for whom they

once willingly gave their lives. The leader who, once independence was declared "... far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisie". (Wretched of the Earth, p. 134)

There is a wise Swahili saying "Kuwani Muone": grow (in age and maturity) and you will see (the reality). But for those who are involved spectators, they see the Kenya reality with shame and bitterness.

The Declaration warns those "who drive to their large new farms, their smart houses or their cocktail parties in their big new cars", that they cannot "fob the people off with a flag, an anthem and a Parliament ...". The KPU leaders seem to argue that the present Kenya leadership has forgotten that the very nationalist forces which compelled the mighty colonial power to release the Father of the Nation, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, are still at work in Kenya, and no one in Washington, London or Bonn can stop them. The present Kenya leadership must come to grips with this reality, or it too will have to go the way of the colonialists. No one can stand in the way of the masses - the Wananchi. Ironically, it is Mwai Kibaki, the present Kenya Minister of Commerce, who four years ago made this somewhat prophetic statement: "The choice and challenge before us is this: shall we use the political power we have inherited to bring about the necessary transformation to socialism or are we just to join and swell the ranks of those very few who are now wealthy and comfortable? The future course of development of our nation depends on what choice we make now. One thing I am sure of is that in this fight for economic liberation the peasants and the workers will never let go"

What does the Declaration propose for Kenya? In the first place it "invites all Wananchi to join its ranks". (p. 3.) The KPU is the party for the masses - the common man. It also provides a general formula for nation building and decolonisation, and for true independence and not for "limited sovereignty". The KPU proposes democratic socialism as the only appropriate method of development for Kenya. "Our goal is a democratic, socialist state, without exploitation by a privileged few" (p. 3) The Declaration minces no words on the definition of socialism nor on the role of nationalisation. Socialism entails putting "economic power into the hands of the people". The social and economic institutions

of the country must be utilised for the benefit of the Wananchi. "Of course the most important machinery in making capital contribute to growth will be public control or ownership of the means of production". (p. 10) And in a neat sentence, the Declaration almost casually asserts: "The KPU will see to it that the banks and insurance companies are nationalised". (p. 9.)

The settler-European dominated education system must be thoroughly cleansed of these alien and bourgeois values. The new socialist system must reflect the African presence in Africa. All in all, the Declaration proposes a thorough overhaul of present Kenya society. It commits itself to the proposition, already made by another socialist African political party - TANU - that if Africa is to be truly developed then it must be by Africans and under African terms. Thus, the KPU like her sister party TANU, is committed to the policy of socialism and self-reliance. "We have to learn to think for ourselves, to work out what is realistic for us". (p. 16)

The Wananchi Declaration is one of Africa's serious statements of African problems and their possible solutions. It does not provide answers to these problems: it is rather a bold statement of intentions based on clearly thought-out alternatives. But is the KPU capable as a party to implement these proposals? Does the Party have the support of the masses? These are difficult questions to answer since Kenya has never had an election since 1963. But judging by the amount of pressure put on the KPU and its personnel by the KANU Government, by the almost impossible conditions under which the KPU is working (it is not allowed to hold meetings); indeed, judging by the manner in which the municipal elections of August 1968 were handled when no single KPU candidate managed to fill in his nomination form correctly (!), and yet the Party is still a threat to the KANU Government, one rather feels that the KPU is a political force to be reckoned with in the contemporary Kenyan political scene.

Jaramogi Odinga and Mzee Kaggia belong to that increasingly rare breed of African political leaders that this continent has seen. Dedicated to the cause of the masses, principled and uncorrupted in their ideals and objectives. This is also the group to which Presidents Sekou Toure, Julius Nyerere, Nasser, Obote, Nkrumah and Keita belong. It is also this group which is the main target of neo-colonialist and imperialist intrigue. These leaders deserve the complete dedication and service of all true African revolutionary nationalists.

# AFRICA ■ IN RHYTHM ■ AND LITERATURE sketches ■

## MAKEBA MUSIC BESSIE HEAD

... "They thought what other people only sing in songs," said Zhivago of his love for Lara. He could not have meant the run-of-the-mill but the songs Miriam Makeba chose for her repertoire. Who else sings of love and life that has a long thread of continuity and purpose?

I have said so many tentative things about her, out of surprise. I once said that the human voice must have power and authority to be heard and she has this - because of the demands she makes on the concentration. I also came around to the view that she has a great soul and this made her transcend the achievements of anything run-of-the-mill. She could never be cheap entertainment.

That two unlike artists like Pasternak and Makeba eventually said the same, eternal, everlasting things to my heart, appears to me that they travelled a similar road where everything was a mass of pain, confusion, loss and human stupidity. They recorded it all with silent eyes, possessively keeping the beauty in their hearts to themselves, knowing it had no place where false ideals were set up whereby people had to live or be shot dead or imprisoned.

We were thinking about other things when wading through the bleak terrain that makes up so much of 'Doctor Zhivago' - there were those detailed, precise recordings of what one peasant said and what another peasant said and the recording goes on and on with ruthless precision. The heart of the writer is not involved and that is half the pain of the book. He was just looking and looking and simply not liking anything he looked at. He was a man slowly having a nervous breakdown because of all the things he had been born with in his heart, that he had been born to have a great love affair, in spite of the revolution that a love affair conducted amidst total collapse, was going to be the only worthwhile achievement of his life. Because nothing prepares you for the shattering beauty of the last pages of the book.

The references to Lara are always small, abrupt sentences tagged onto those eyes which silently watched a hateful and inhuman world. They teeter at the end of a terrifying description of Moscow, overrun with the plague and rats, the secret police, where things like fresh vegetables have gone on the black market and are only obtained at the risk of being deported to Siberia. It is those agonies which dominate. There can't be people there anymore, only terror and insanity. In all this Lara says: "Yura, I want to tell you something." He knew, says the author with quiet amusement, she thought she was pregnant.

It holds you for some time, the man's heart which he keeps such a secret, as though he is conducting a silent conspiracy of his own against all those things which are not truth but evil. It's as though his heart and what was in it would eventually acquire the power to make the universe whole and sane again. It has that effect, because once the man breaks down and shows you his secret heart, you can't remember or care any longer what one peasant said or the other peasant said - only those eternal lines: "Oh, what a love it was, how free, how new, like nothing else on earth!"

The voice of Makeba breaks in on the ear in the same way: Oh, how free, how new, like nothing else on earth!

I think it's the shock of the contrast. This same precise, ruthless recording is going on in Southern Africa of life on a bleak, terrible terrain. One black man said this about losing his family and home overnight and another black man said this and you know that the white man who said that can only increase the terror and insanity because his way of life which coddles him and sets him apart from the rest of mankind, needs it. You know Makeba lived through all of this and recorded it with still, silent eyes but when you turn to her music, some other world reaches you where in all, all this a mother sang a song to her baby about a canary.

It is more than just a song when Makeba sings it. It is her whole life and secret heart which she kept to herself throughout all those years she was a recorder of everything that amounted to rubbish - because that's what evil is: Rubbish. It is almost with relief that one listens to her music because it says the true things about Southern Africa, that the children who made up the game song about the pretty new dress are going to survive, that there are people here too, black people, born to have great love affairs, full of wonders and things, which will be more important than our revolutions.

I have no logical argument as to why those things are more important, except that I believe in the contents of the human heart, especially when that heart was a silent and secret conspiracy against all the insanity and hatred in mankind. In this context, the heart of Pasternak is the true liberator of Russia and Makeba music is the liberator of all black people.

They could have said other things because we were thinking of other things. But they are greater than others because the end products of both their gifts to mankind is only what they were born with in their hearts.

# *A decade of television*

*Olu Ogunsanwo*

The beginnings of television date back to the twenties of this century but it was not until 1936 that the British Broadcasting Corporation started the first regular public television service in the world. Since then some of the remarkable developments that have taken place include telerecording, colour television and transmission by satellite.

When the first service was to be established in Nigeria some cynics criticised it as a luxury which an African government could not afford. However, conscious of the impact and immediacy of this mass medium, the authorities went ahead as projected and the first TV station in Africa South of the Sahara was established by the Western Nigeria government in Ibadan in 1959 just a year before Independence. Within five years of its operation, three other stations were established viz ENTV at Enugu by the former Eastern Nigeria government, NTS (now known as NBC-TV) by the Federal Government and RKTU in Kaduna by the former Northern Nigeria government.

For instance NBC-TV (known as Nigerian Television Service until 1966) was established in April 1962 under an agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria and NBC of America. This influence was reflected not only in the Management but also in the preponderance of American films in NBC-TV's programme schedule. When, however, the contract expired in 1966, the Federal Military Government refused to renew it because it was convinced that the station must be run by Nigerians to suit the needs of Nigerians. It was then annexed as the TV arm of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. The three other stations were established under similar contracts with foreign television establishments.

After ten years of television broadcasting in Nigeria, one may venture to ask how far the institution is succeeding in fulfilling the motives for which the stations were founded. All of them were established as statutory corporations and therefore receive government subsidies in addition to commercials.

There are many problems confronting the executives of television in Nigeria, problems which are financial, technical and administrative. For instance owing to transmitter problems, NBC-TV can only be viewed in and around Lagos to a paltry viewership of about 50,000 during peak periods. WNTV from Ibadan covers that area and also overlaps NBC-TV in the Lagos area. One phase of the development of WNTV (in the initial programme) was to cover the Mid-West but the creation of the state brought this

to a standstill. RKTU can be viewed only around Kaduna while ENTV transmits around Enugu and Aba. All this is due to the fact that the most powerful transmitter can only supply effective viewing within a radius of 100 miles and each of the stations cannot foot the colossal expenditure of a network. As a result of the paucity of the transmitters, the medium as at present run in Nigeria, is not yet serving even five per cent of the population which can at present benefit from this organ of mass information.

Moreover, there is such keen rivalry between WNTV and NBC-TV because of transmission overlap and WNTV seems to dwarf the image of NBC-TV which can be viewed only in the Lagos area. Besides there is such parallel programming which results in the use of the same material and artistes and dissipation of energy and man-power and that in a developing country. Television is an expensive medium if it must be run properly. Even though these stations earn from commercials in addition to government subsidies yet they all run on shoe strings. The studios are below standard size generally and are ill-equipped for ambitious productions.

Nigerian television now has a core of well-trained personnel who are compelled to work in a circumscribed atmosphere with poor equipment which do no credit to their creative genius. What chance has a show directed on only two or three imperfect cameras in international competitions or a programme that cannot be edited to make for a neat finished professional job? NBC-TV now has a plan to purchase four new studio cameras.

The field of local documentaries is one in which television has not delved into much. Nigeria, and in fact Africa, has a wealth of documentary material that would find suitable overseas markets if well directed. TV owes it as a duty to project the culture of the country not only to foreigners but also for the enlightenment of the citizens. The TV and cine-cameras must be brought out a lot more frequently to report more local news and produce exciting documentaries. In the last decade, a lot of useful and valuable material had been transmitted whether 'live' or recorded, which, with some foresight and sacrifice should have been kept in archives and even made into films for resale to other networks outside the country.

Because of the meagre funds available to TV stations in Nigeria, it has not been possible to develop a core of professional artistes and talents and hence that professional standard of production is still elusive. The lack of rehearsal rooms or adequate studio space makes detailed planning and rehearsals almost impossible. There have been programmes that went 'on air' unrehearsed and, as a result, direction has come off the cuff.

In Nigeria, the TV set is classified as a luxury item in the import tariff and as a result only well-to-do families can afford to own sets. In view of the importance of TV as a medium of information, entertainment and education, it may be necessary for the government to consider encouraging industrial concerns with highly developed electronic technology to establish industries to manufacture low-cost TV sets for the average family in Nigeria. This is bound to increase viewership and also enable TV

to fulfil its functions fully for the advantage of the community for which it was established.

The creation of more states in Nigeria may in some way help to solve the dilemma of TV. Even if resources are available to establish separate TV stations for each state, it is unnecessary and the Federal Military Government must stem any such move by unifying all existing stations to form a single network. The case for TV has not been helped by the Ani Report on Statutory Corporations which sees a broadcasting corporation as a non-essential corporation. In addition, the bureaucracy and red-tapism of the Civil Service have no place in broadcasting and those concerned with the management of TV must assert their claim to freedom under which creativity can only flourish. Yet one may say such freedom can be difficult to attain since the stations are run on government subsidies but if the BBC attained this status, it can be done in Nigeria as well.

It will therefore be advisable for dynamic and progressive steps to be taken to improve the lot of TV in Nigeria in the next decade that may well usher in the glamour of colour television.

# GROWING AWAY FROM THE SHADOW WILLFRIED FEUSER

A corner of the blackboard in Auditorium I had been forgotten by the cleaner when the delegates flocked in; some left-overs from the last class in Educational psychology before the Christmas vacation stared them in the face: Experience or practice ... Change in Behaviour ... Normal Growth, Maturation.

A fitting bit of shorthand for the Ife Conference on African Writing in English. The sun over the brand-new campus with its Israeli-designed architecture was at its resplendent best before the coming of the Harmattan dust. Only the sandflies failed to observe a truce, and one American novelist was later said to have fled back to Chicago two days after the opening. The Vice-Chancellor of Ife University, Dr. Oluwasanmi, who had been rushing from one opening speech to another - he had the Ife Festival of the Arts to cope with as well, while flowing robes and anthropologists' moustaches indicated that a Conference on West African Chiefs was about to start in Auditorium II next door - made a fervent appeal to the critics' sympathy for the young writers, some of them sitting with open-eyed wonder among the undergraduate audience.

Four days of hard work followed, not only for Michael Crowder, Ife's Director of African Studies, who had synchronized the two conferences with the Festival, and H. L. B. Moody, Head of Ife's English Department, who bore the brunt of organizational detail.

Eastern Africa was strongly represented. A tough and vulnerable-looking James Ngugi rejected

the white outsider's view of the African from Rider Haggard to Alan Paton and ended somewhat abruptly on a socialist profession of faith. David Rubadiri reminisced about the first novel by an African that had come his way and kindled the spark in him - Ekwensi's 'People of the City.' Now he made his audience aware in his detached ironical manner, with Okot p'Bitek and others, East African Writing in English is firmly planted on its own feet.

The West African writers were conspicuously absent, Achebe and Soyinka for obvious reasons. J. P. Clark had stayed in Lagos nursing a recent illness. Kwesi Brew of Ghana was kept away by an ambassadorial engagement. Two other writers with long past associations with Nigeria were unable to attend: Ezekiel Mphahlele and O. R. Dathorne. The field belonged to the critics.

Christopher Heywood (Sheffield), former Professor of English at Ife University, and the spiritus rector of the conference, analysed the technique of South Africa's most prolific novelist. ('The Cool Eye of Peter Abrahams'). However, apart from Ngugi's and Rubadiri's East African contributions and Edward Blishen's intensely personal appraisal ('African Writing in English - a New World Literature'), which soared from coast to coast, critical attention was mostly focussed on West Africa. Gerald Moore (Sussex) came to grips with Christopher Okigbo's hermetic poetry, bringing it in line "with the esoteric nature of initiatory practice". Professor Eldred Jones (Fourah Bay) pointed out the double edge of Wole Soyinka's ideas of progress and civilisation. Soyinka, he stressed, does not roundly condemn progress but satirises those who only cherish its empty trappings, or are given to slavish imitation, like Lakunle in 'The Lion and the Jewel':

"I kissed you as all educated men -  
And Christians - kiss their wives.  
It is the way of civilised romance".

In society's spiritual morass the artist alone is in "an essential state of grace"; he has to be ready to sacrifice himself to shock the inert mass into a new awareness. Such artist-martyrs are Eman in 'The Strong Breed' and Sekoni in 'The Interpreters'.

Professor Lalage Bown (University of Zambia) called for more historical perspective in assessing literary development. English literature, she declared, does not debar a Samuel Pepys, a Lord Macaulay, a Lord Chesterfield from its premises; why should African literature shut out an Ignatius Sancho, a John Christopher Taylor - Bishop Crowther's companion on the Niger - or a historian like Carl Christian Reindorf? She traced the development of a distinct African prose style from the 18th century beginnings to the great parliamentary speakers of the post-independence era.

Problems of cultural interpenetration were in no wise neglected. Mrs. Brenda Packman (University of Ife) drove home some of the difficulties inherent in the translation of African literature from French to English, and Dr. Abiola Irele, comfortably astride the two languages and cultures, tried to break down barriers to communication erected by the colonial past. At the same time he postulated the unity of modernism and tradition and called for a radical decolonisation of African literary criticism.

Even when dealing with literary topics many of the speakers veered back to the pivotal question of language; significantly, Tutuola's novels were a recurrent theme. Professor John Povey (Los Angeles) emphasized the rapid process of divorce from British tradition that had taken place in West African writing in both language and subject matter. This process was similarly described by Edward Blishen as a growing away from the shadow of an old established literature.

It was hardly a conference aglow with the excitement of new discovery. It is true, John Povey introduced some young writers with a radically different perspective like Kbella Sonne Dipoko and Ayi Armah, but this was almost in the way of a parting gesture. Discussions tended to crystallise around the new classics. Determinedly moving away from impressionism, literary criticism in Africa is now well on the road toward academic consolidation.

## NOTES ON AFRICAN CULTURE AND LIBERATION

DENNIS BRUTUS

AT THE PANAFRICAN FESTIVAL OF AFRICAN  
CULTURE,  
ALGIERS

At this great cultural gathering - the first of its nature in the history of Africa - there will be many contributions of profound significance, offered by some of the most distinguished thinkers on the cultural problems of Africa. To these contributions I am content to offer merely a few marginal footnotes on aspects of Culture in Africa which I believe it is necessary to take into account in any comprehensive discussion. I must add that it is my belief that there are many distinguished intellectuals in Africa whose views need to be added to those submitted to the Symposium, if we are to have the fullest and richest understanding of the tasks which await us.

I speak deliberately of "tasks which await us" for I believe that it is no cliché to say that Africa is in the process of rediscovering and redefining herself and her culture, and that the greatest part of this task lies before us, and stretches in an immense vista into the future.

It is as a contribution to the preparation for these tasks of the future that I offer these footnotes.

It is, I believe, essential for us that we should, in preparing for our journey, strip ourselves of all unnecessary lumber - particularly of such procedures and attitudes as we have taken over from, or have had foisted upon us by the colonial powers throughout Africa. It should not be necessary for us to create such stiff and complex procedures that it is difficult

for the artist to speak to the people for whom his work is done; nor should he find, interposed between himself and his audience, a hierarchy of bureaucrats or functionaries, through whom his message and his experiences must falter; above all, we must not be guilty of the restraints and silences which have been imposed on us by our oppressors - let Africa be distinguished by the freedom it gives for the artist to reach his full creativity, whether as poet, as dramatist or as editor - in a freedom truthfully and honestly defined which is not debased by sensationalism or commercial exploitation.

Not less important is the need for freedom from alien cultures or, more precisely, the imposition of their standards of value. The ideal for an African is not to be a black Frenchman, or a black Englishman, nor anything else but to be, at the greatest height of his powers, an African. Those who teach otherwise, whether they are foreigners or Africans, if they accept these alien standards, are not the friends of Africa or of Africans.

This is true in a much more serious way in the area of politics and economics - areas which we know as Africans, cannot be artificially segregated in his society. The involvement of non-African countries in African economic and political life, in some areas, continues at an ever-increasing rate. This involvement is frequently to the detriment of Africa, and especially in the area of current greatest involvement; Southern Africa. British and American investment in the racist oppression of Apartheid shows no sign of decrease; the reverse is true. And the economic and military strength of Apartheid grows to monstrously dangerous proportions which threaten the freedom of all of Africa. To ignore this threat, or to discount it, would be to do a grave harm to Africa and to the cause of African liberation.

If Britain and the United States are the leading partners of Racialism in Africa, propping it up and strengthening it in South Africa and Rhodesia, and, through NATO arming the Portuguese oppressors in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissao - if these are the leaders, they are not left far behind by France, West Germany and Japan. By their support for and involvement in Apartheid, these countries are acting against Africa. France, for instance, may claim to be the friend of some States in Africa, but as long as she sells Mirage and Mystere jets and Alouette helicopters to South Africa, and helps her to set up a system of ground-to-air missiles, who can say that she is the friend of Africa? And who can say that Africa should remain silent when France is arming the enemy of Africa and the African people?

These are not matters of art. Some would even say these are not matters of culture. But we have come to the Festival of Panafrikan Culture understanding that there is a clear role for culture in the liberation struggle and that there can be no true culture where there is no freedom.

It is for this reason that I must reiterate - and I come from the area of conflict in Southern Africa and have been a political prisoner of both the oppressive regimes of Portugal in Mozambique and of South Africa, and have known the denial of all freedoms - that the freedom of Africa is imperilled by the growth

of the monster of Apartheid oppression, bloated and swollen by support from outside Africa to which I have already referred. The threat to Africa which is developing in Southern Africa can only be neglected at our peril. It needs the grave and urgent attention of us all.

The first is that the gap between the affluent world, which derived so much of its affluence from others, and the "developing world" grows rapidly greater. Those who have, will have more. Those who have little will have less. This is a matter of declared and defined policy, evidenced in such studies as the recent one by Duncan of Rio-Tinto in which the "Third World was discounted" and certain areas selected "for the greater future concentration of efforts and resources." The great expenditure on the exploration of the moon must also be seen in this context. While we salute, as a triumph of Man's intellect and of the human spirit, this great achievement, we must also be conscious of this turning towards mechanical and material concern as a turning-away from the urgent and immediate human problems which are crying out for solution. What might not the money spent on the moon probe (24,000m dollars or £10,000m) have done to relieve the agony of Black Americans? What might it not have done in social engineering to alleviate the agony and racialism which disfigure the United States: They can boast about their achievements on the moon; they cannot boast about what they are doing in their own country. Nor about what they are doing in Africa.

The second consideration of global significance is the increasing emergence of racialism in areas of the white world. The United States situation is sadly familiar to all of us; that of Britain, with characteristic humbug, is still in large measure concealed or disguised. But these symptoms in Britain and the United States are only part of an unfolding pattern, of which other parts can be seen in areas as distant as Australia and New Zealand. There is developing a most terrifying alignment of racial loyalties.

There is evidence of an unthinking and automatic lining-up of people - sometimes even those who believe themselves to be "liberals" - on the side of their "kith and kin". A division of the world on the line of colour. It is this blind loyalty to race and colour - this coalescence of the centuries of racial oppression by different white nations in different parts of the world - into a single global line-up on the basis of pigmentation - which some of us see, with great dread, looming in the future.

It is here that Africa, particularly in this Cultural Festival, has a special role to play, a special gift to give to the world. It is for us to assert the singleness of the human race, and the primacy of human values. We are on the side of humanity. It is this assertion, this declaration, that we must send ringing round the world - to save not only Africa, but all the peoples of the world, and to ward off this catastrophic conflict which some, in their blindness, their folly and their avariciousness, would thrust upon the world. I trust that of the many and important assertions that the Festival - and all of African Culture - will give to the world, this declaration will be paramount: Africa declares itself for the full freedom of Man and the Family of Man.



Even at the heavy cost of discontinuity, Afro-American writings have developed serious abbreviations. Black writers in America and Africa are approaching the point where their emotional sensibilities and their physical involvement is being transmitted with tremendous clarity and acuteness. Recently, those observers of literature on the Afro-American circuit would have noted that the flow of literary material has taken an appreciable shift towards verse. Afro-American writers and musicians have realised that they are living in a state of crisis, and because a crisis is in most cases short, therefore they cannot afford to expend their energies in verbal excess. The position now of the Afro-American writer is that of a man smashing a stone tower to obtain a clear insight of the construction. By doing this, the writers are not just co-operating with catastrophe. This revolutionary state has compelled the writer to search extensively for the most laconic way of stating his case. The writers today in Africa and America are propelled by a desire for condensed expression, the writer's screening time is limited, therefore his task should be levelled towards clarity of thought in short forms: call them poetical tone, movement and shape.

Surely it would be easy to dismiss my arguments about the emergence of verse as a useful instrument in preserving the nature of the grave crisis in the "third world". There are those who would scorn and dismiss all this as a passing vogue and contend that prose is the answer to the cause. The black writer in Africa and America, and this also applies to writers



# THE VOICE OF FREEDOM

KATEB YACINE

translations by Willfried Feuser  
University of Ife

Lakhdar's yellow cotton pyjamas cause a lot of sniggers among the French boys in the boarding-school; they have about the same funny effect as his striped shirts, his two pairs of drill trousers, and his box of dried figs with its enormous padlock. His neighbours in the dormitory can afford to gobble marrons glacés without even enjoying them, and Mustapha furiously tears up the discarded tinfoil wrappers which Lakhdar wants to collect.

Independence for Algeria, Lakhdar carves in the desks and in the door with his knife.

Lakhdar and Mustapha leave the common room to look for streamers.

The peasants are ready for the parade.

"Why the hell did they bring their animals along?"

Agricultural labourers, workers and traders.

Sun. Crowds.

Germany has capitulated.

People walking in pairs. Bistros full to overflowing.

Bells.

Official ceremony; war-memorial.

The police keep at a distance.

A mass counter-demonstration.

We've had enough of promises. 1870. 1918. 1945.

Today, May 8th, is it really V-Day?

The boy-scouts spearhead the procession, the students follow.

Lakhdar and Mustapha march side by side.

The crowd keep growing.

In fours.

No passer-by can resist the streamers.

The police are jostled while keeping order.

A hymn forms on the lips of the youngsters:

From our mountains rises  
the voice of freedom loud.

Mustapha feels himself part of an unassailable millipede.

Bristling with so many moustaches, carried by so many horny feet, one can stare down the settlers, the police and the chickens that flee in panic.

A plain-clothes man, concealed in the shadows of an arcade, fires at the flag.

Machine-gun fire.

The police cordon wavers.

Demonstrators have been disarmed on reaching the mosque by the commissioner aided by the muphti.

Chairs.

Bottles.

Branches cut on the way.

The police cordon snaps.

Do they want to contain the people's first mass-demonstration?

The flag-bearer collapses.

A war veteran grips his bugle. Is it to sound reveille or a call to arms for the Holy War?

With a stroke of his sword a peasant slashes the shoulder of a bareheaded student whom he mistook for a European.

Mustapha throws away his neck-tie.

The French mayor is shot by a policeman.

An inn-keeper is writhing in his bloodied burnous. Lakhdar and Mustapha are separated in the stampede.

There are only three students left with Mustapha; an old Jewess throws a flower-pot down on one of them, more to make him move away from her window than to hit him. The last groups fall back before the fire from the machine-gun nests; the army blocks the main avenue, shooting on the ragged figures; police and settlers are mopping up the lower-class neighbourhoods; a single way out remains.

Ten o'clock.

It has all taken just a few minutes.

The bus to X... , half-empty.

Mustapha heaves himself up. His childhood dream has come true: He stands beside the driver; a Moslem gendarme has got in beside him.

"Stand near the door", the gendarme says with a smile.

Mustapha is delighted.

He doesn't notice that the gendarm's cap has a bullet-hole in it. "It's dangerous to lean out of the door", the driver says, but the country-side is deserted; the bus remains empty till they arrive at the village. The telephone line has been cut. The peasants spread out. Machine-gun fire. The first arrests are made among the followers of Ferhat Abbas: a court registrar, a public letter-writer; the merchant who occupied the treasury office has

Born 26th August, 1929 at Sighout Youcef, Algeria. Along with Malek Haddad and Mohamed Dib he is one of the most outstanding modern Algerian writers and poets. He was imprisoned at the age of sixteen for taking part in the historic demonstration for Algerian independence on May 8th, 1945. His creed as a writer is impregnated with the spirit of the war of liberation:

"I think that the poet and artist stands in the front rank of the revolution. The revolution is not only political, social, and ideological. It embraces the whole of existence". (1958)

Yacine Kateb's works include his novel, *Nedjma* (1956), in which he probes the genesis of the Algerian nation, symbolized by the elusive, mythical figure of the woman *Nedjma*, the drama *Le Cercle des Represailles* (1959), and the poetic journal, *Le Polygone Etoile* (1966). W.F.

killed himself: the Senegalese have broken into the northern sector of the village; women have been assaulted; mass arrests have been instigated by the settlers, who organised themselves into armed militia units as soon as the news of the events in Satif reached them.

The administrator undertakes to maintain order. The settlers and their wives, almost on bended knees, want him to finish the matter for good.

The administrator gives it to the commanding officer of the Senegalese.

The peasants are dispersed by machine-gun fire.

Two escapees are shot at the entrance to the village.

The militia draws up the list of hostages.

# LOBETAL

Jean Ikelle-Matiba

... Finally the sound of a bell, the hum of human voices, the echoes of a village, and the people crowding around a landing-stage, heralded Lobetal.

We were given a grand reception. There was quite a big welcoming committee expecting us. Our luggage was loaded on carts. We walked the rest of the way. It was a nice road, very clean and lined with flowers, leading through a garden full of lovely smells. In the distance we saw white buildings with black windows emerge out of the greenery. Lobetal was an important educational centre. It had a church with a capacity of a thousand, spacious classrooms, comfortable dormitories, a nice residential area for the teaching staff, a well-stocked library, a book-shop, a dispensary, recreation rooms, a post-office and a shop. Some traders had settled in the surroundings.

Jean Ikelle-Matiba was born in Song Ndong near Edea (Cameroon) in 1926, a direct descendant of the famous Bassa chief, Pemnie-N'tomb. After attending the Ecole Supérieure in Yaounde he studied Law and Social Sciences in Paris. Ikelle-Matiba has been living in the Federal Republic of Germany for a long time, writing scripts for the "Deutsch Welle" and working as an assistant to the Director of the Evangelical Academy at Iserlohn.

His only novel, 'Cette Afrique-là' (1963) is the life story of an old Cameroonian, Franz Momha, who grew up under the German administration, attended various elite schools, and suffered greatly for refusing to shift his loyalties to his country's new masters, the French.

Through Momha, the story-teller minces no words in dealing with German atrocities during the early stages of colonisation, his picture of a country under German colonial rule contrasts sharply with the traditional French and British view.

Lawyer Gharib, Mustapha's father, is pointed out as one of the ring leaders.

The sun is still up.

May 1961.

Mustapha pays a visit to the graves of the two who were recently shot.

Curfew.

Civilians and policemen, shakingly suspects being escorted with kicks.

Their bodies are exposed to the sun.

From *Kateb Yacine: Nédyma*, 1956, (Editions du Seuil, Paris). Transl. by Wilfried Reuser.

We were accommodated in very modern, first-rate dormitories, where we met fellow-pupils who had arrived before us. They received us very politely and helped us to settle in. As we came from various provinces, we spoke German to understand each other.

The syllabus, which was full enough already, became even more crowded. It appeared rather like a reversion to scholasticism; we were taught all kinds of things which had no practical purpose whatsoever. The courses were hard. Apart from general subjects we had to study English, music, art, geography, and history. But the brand of history we were taught was strongly biased. It was based on the superiority of the Teutonic race. We learned that there were three powers on earth, Germany, France and England. But the English were insidious and the French unjust. How did our teachers explain this?

The French are a great nation that once had mighty kings, invincible warriors, and such an incomparable civilization that even our own kings in the eighteenth century spoke their language, which during that period was considered a universal language, owing to the French writers who had spread their ideas all over Europe. But driven by some strange madness they revolted, killed their king, and betrayed their masters in order to adopt a hypocritical system of government called Republic, which benefits on the rich man while contributing to the misery of the masses. They proclaim the liberty and equality of all citizens before the law, whereas in actual fact these rights and liberties are pawns in the hands of a caste of bourgeois politicians who pass laws guaranteeing merely their own interests. Their colonial policy casts shame on the civilized world, for not only did they sell Negroes as chattels and systematically exploit the yellow race but they also let the natives live in the most tragic conditions even though they are human beings like everyone else. They are incapable of actually granting freedom to anybody since they are not free themselves. The French workers are the last to have grown conscious of their condition and to have been able to get organized, owing to their own individualism. But the common people still believe in the Republic.

As far as the English are concerned, they are perfidious because they are hypocritical and jealous. They have a morbid fear of being surpassed. Is not the major part of the misfortunes besetting their

French neighbours caused by them? As soon as they realise the military superiority of another nation, they go around looking for allies with the aid of their vast financial resources, and sign treaties in order to be able to destroy that power. They are ardent advocates of a balance of power between the divers nations. They chased the French out of their possessions, Canada and India, and conquered them for themselves. Unable to live off their own poor soil, they turned adventurers, conquered the greater part of the countries on the globe and now like to call themselves the first colonial and maritime power.

We also learned that the United States of North America was a young country with a great future and that the Tsars had done a lot of harm to Russia, which was still living in the Middle Ages.

Our history classes were thus rather on the ideological side. This was how we learned to despise everything that was not German. It has to be noted that we were living through the period of European nationalism. Every colonial power was trying to create its own extensions overseas. This was the case with the English, French, Dutch, and others.

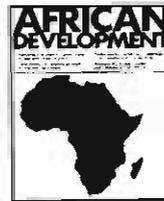
After classes we used to go to the stadium, the gymnasium, or the swimming-pool. Everyone devoted himself to his favourite sport.

On Saturdays we had our weekly compositions. Competition was often tough and the margin between the pupils' marks insignificant. But the beginnings were encouraging. I came out on top. The results were communicated to Die-Ngombe. I learned about my success through a letter of congratulation from the headmaster.

During the Easter vacations we would go to the seaside. The first time, I was afraid - water as far as the eye could see, waves as high as walls with deep abysses in between, the endless surging of the sea. We would venture out very far, as far as Schuellaba, Tiko and Victoria which seemed quite close to us. At Lobetal we learned how to swim and to row, at least those of us who did not already know. This got us passionately interested. We would enjoy organising canoe races. The boys from the coast won most of the time. Only once did we succeed in beating them after months of tough training. It came as a big surprise. The headmaster, who wanted to encourage us further, declared: "Do you see now that you have managed to beat those born fishermen through your efforts? This goes to show that there is no monopoly in any field. Hard work and endeavour surpass everything. Don't let anybody pin a label on you telling you what you are. You are like me, and I am like you. One day you will take my place through your sheer courage, and you will accomplish your task with the same diligent effort. A man's race and birth are not enough, only what you yourselves put in counts".

Lobetal was an ideal place for intellectual work, and we made the best of it. This was no longer the medieval school of our beginnings. The rod was not used anymore, for there were no longer any deserters or laggards to be castigated. Instead there were men with the rugged will to live, to play their part, men imbued with the spirit of superiority, who dreamt of world conquest like their masters. Our motto was "order and Discipline."

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# VERSE

LIKE THE TIDE : CLOUDWARD

Turning here  
Or returning there  
A fractured rhythm from  
The distant past makes demands  
Or the image summoning  
The existence of things  
Or exploding the core of  
The sinister rot our minds must vomit  
When the cloudward flood screams  
And some panting and fear-ridden  
Wish to have been born without as  
Much as a teaspoonful of brain  
Soldiers or architects  
We might have been. But here we stand torn  
Between academic masturbation and splitting  
Or chiselling words leaving the air unreddened  
Where for humanity a little wrench  
Would have sufficed for salvation. But  
Words, be they elegant  
As verse or song  
Robust and piercing as sunshine  
Or hideous memories of our  
Cowardice in bondage are meaningless unless  
They be the solid coil around our desire and method  
Or the 'most competent rememberer'. May we  
Turn here  
Or return there  
Where a fractured rhythm from  
The distant past moves us

Keorapetse Kgosisile

## AFRICAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

Volume II 1969



Norman R. Bennett, Editor

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Four red cola nuts under a Baobab tree  
 The green foliage of the jungle bed steaming with heat  
 A snake's egg perched on a withered paw paw leaf  
 A white calabash upside-down  
 A clay pot half covered sitting on three stones

The jungle makes one child-like  
 The Male in me is subverted  
 The true soul liberated  
 The green darkness fills my eyes  
 The strong smell wraps my head

Do I see a Baobab tree?  
 And a snake's egg?  
 And cola nuts?  
 And upturned calabash?

I am at your very heart  
 Right in the sacred grove of Paravanja  
 A horse tail pegged into the ground  
 A deer's horn in a clay pot

Ke din din ke din  
 Kraku din ke din  
 A-a-a a-ro shango!  
 Who are you? Man Pass Man

You will like to speak to me  
 Will you?  
 Do you think you would speak  
 speak to me  
 My ochre eyes glow with smile  
 My wide face calm  
 My hands black and rugged  
 Soft like stones  
 My daily talk is when  
 When will you speak unto my face  
 You don't want to know  
 Do you?

Lift your arms and cry  
 Give yourself a release  
 Dislodge those crooked barbed wires  
 from your brains  
 And say yes  
 Say yes  
 Yes to me  
 My soul feels the pain  
 My eyes are breathing  
 Bleeding and breathing  
 I am a person  
 A true man  
 Call me an ape  
 It is beautiful  
 Say my name loudly  
 Repeat: Africa  
 Yes ! Go on saying  
 Say it again  
 Africa Africa  
 Loud and clear  
 Africa  
 Africa

Kolomashi: African Ritual

Iroko: Mystical tree

# 4 poems

## Mukhtar Mustapha

I will dance for grief  
 and hate;  
 I will dance for joy  
 and love  
 I will dance for plenty  
 and rain  
 I will dance to stop the unknown  
 and mysterious  
 I will dance for voodoo  
 and Kolomashi  
 I will look at my raw black skin  
 and dance.  
 I will shut my eyes to plenty  
 and dance  
 I will dance and dance till I  
 destroy you;  
 I will dance till you choke and give in  
 give in  
 I will dance till the dying man  
 staggers and coughs;  
 I will dance my dance till  
 I suck you up - Ghee !  
 I will dance now and stop  
 the running water - Zim !  
 I will dance for the new-born till it  
 it talks - Bam !  
 I will dance for the snakes  
 I will dance for the leopards  
 I will dance for the aligators  
 I will dance for the lion  
 I will dance for the big Iroko tree  
 I will dance and make your mouth  
 twist and fold  
 I will dance and put my curses on you  
 I will dance for my mother gone  
 beneath the ground;  
 And raise the dead to full height  
 And rid the earth every corner of  
 it of evil spirits;  
 I will dance and make war  
 and strike a deafening blow;  
 I will dance and circumcise  
 and initiate the innocent  
 I will dance; I swear to God  
 And end you. I will.  
 Dance is me.  
 The only property you can't have.

## Hijaz by Night

Could you swear this is paradise  
Would my eyes tell me truth  
Could they both see the true and the same  
What is this in front of me  
What is it? Truly my brother what is this?

All across the northern sands I traversed through  
Gods golden hunched back to this land  
On chamelion cloak I planted my feet  
two brown vein feet of cautiousness  
I walked the Nile through Hijaz by night  
Disappeared through the mount's mouth on  
a chicken's wing  
Into pure and truthful open I emerged  
with my hand on my head  
Where am I going?  
Oh God help me! Which is thy  
Kingdom?

What is the eye?  
Flashing unchallenged  
Its thousand light cells  
Through rocks hard as water  
Through trees green like purple avocados  
Through the pores of plum leaves fine line polythene

The earth beneath me rattled its fingers  
A Crucible of honey bubbles gently to the  
end music  
Hanging from the rails of heaven a leather parchment  
In the middle cryptoramic characters  
A bird's claw dripping in ink with  
Majestic awe glided across  
Will I know the meaning  
Could it be paradise?

Snakes - Swaying- Swervingly  
Reeds / Flutes / Tambour  
Crashing / Penetrating / Manful

Help me my brother, talk to me my friend  
Give me the will of gentle fire  
Coat my hand with sponge  
Let there be perpetual darkness  
The prince of sand is night  
Give me your will I will dream  
of the wind in Hijaz by Night.

# Two poems John Okai Oblogo Concerto Atavanyo Concerto

## Oblogo Concerto

You giraffely walk in your tortoise-tail supersonic sleep,  
I elephantly dance in my antelope dream;

My hippopotamus heart begins its steep serpentine creep . . .  
Dare not o dare not stifle my dinosaur scream.

Your eyes plant a mine in my soul's marrow,  
My feelings' fields lie not at all fallow,

In what waters should my wishes wallow?  
The storks of my soul wade in seas shallow,

My dreams wait for you, sweet summer's swallow;  
Fly in fly in with your healing halo.

A fully-fledged fire fingers  
Your fair and feeling fragile flower;

A finely-laced lyre lingers . . .  
Your not unhalting anxious lover

Knows that the genesis of joy  
Engenders more than centuries have known;

That in the marble-tombs of Troy  
No single flower has ever grown,

You waywardly walk in your ice-berg-clay peninsula  
sleep.  
I drunkenly dance in my drowsy drowning dream;

My raw rhinoceros soul begins its steep serpentine  
creep . . .  
Dare not o dare not stifle my dinosaur scream.

Alavanyo Concerto

Cross. Banner. Swastika. Sickles.  
Dross. Hammer. Floodfire, Spittle.

The sun is the centre of our system.

The leaning tower. Two stones. Revolution.  
Summons to Rome. Burning stake. The Inquisition.

The sun's not the centre of our system.

El Cordobes ! El Cordobes !  
There are some things I have to confess;  
(The bulls and bulls you kill in the ring.)  
When to the winds you all caution fling,  
You still have things unto which to cling.  
The bulls and bulls you kill in the ring  
Alone have no prospects of wearing a sling.  
The bulls and bulls you kill in the ring.

But when Galileo Galilei  
Was thrown into the rot-ring of scorn,  
The charging bull they hurled against him  
Was armed to the horn and to the hoof  
With the cudgel of hate and the spear of fear

And with the red-hot crowbar of anger  
Galileo Galilei in the ring  
Was alone; his only weapon and friend  
Was time; and time was a mere toddler then.  
(And for time to mature in marrow,

You certainly have to come tomorrow;  
Centuries and centuries after the morrow.)  
And they said: Galileo Galilei,  
We hear you are not at home in the mind,  
We fear you must be counted with the blind.

You may think all your thoughts; you may,  
But your ideas shan't see the light of day:  
Your midday coughing hurts our midnight prayers.  
And you said: two is a crowd; even the  
Elements bear witness; the heavens  
Hear evidence; the universe gives judgement.  
Place no mouldy margin upon what I  
Should imagine; and no single censor  
In hell or heaven shall tell me censor  
My sign or sin. You retail a sick tale  
Tailored to your taste. But toppling trees tell  
Another story. When in the lap of  
A man-blinded God, truth lies, lying like  
The soon-to-be-unlaced lips of a hell -  
Robed Iscariot the Judas jettisoned  
Into the joyless jungle of seekers  
After the truth that shall not tear apart  
When torn apart, caterpillar canoes  
All crawl into the highway threshold  
Of a contourless anger; but the seed,

O God, is already in the soil; the  
Rains have already gone down to it.  
Alavanyo Alavanyo; better  
Times cannot be too far away. I  
Sit here watching the stars. Alavanyo.

Hei . . . Galileo Galilei . . . My eyes  
are watering, their teeth are tightening, your lips  
are quivering, and our solo-song slows  
down to a silent stop; Hallelujah chorus  
cracks upon the shock-rock of an anti-  
truth cataract.

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . . you fold  
your face like a praying mantis pawned for  
a pound of maize; and we erase all  
trace, taking no chances with cheating  
charcoal-sellers who hold the hand of hands  
over the hovering hawk hankering after  
human flesh.

Hei . . . Galileo Galilei . . . Time marks  
time in our tears, and the rivers of truth  
renew their roar; fire flights flesh in their  
fears, and suns that shone should no more soar.

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . . truth's lip-  
stick on your mind, green anger in their heart,  
scorners' thick mud on your shirt, black dark-  
ness in their hair, dry dagger in some  
hand; and they crouch and come: advancing  
towards you, advancing towards me,  
charging against the very liver of  
truth.

Hei . . . Galileo Galilei . . . water  
walking, rainbow running, and the sky in  
our song; I hear them laughing, I see you  
sneezing, murderous thunder under their  
tongue. Rays of knowledge pierce their eyes, smoke of  
truth blocks their nose; and the fire in the  
flesh, and the rainfall on the rock, and the  
myre in the mesh, and man shall not talk - amen . . .

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . .

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . .

Grave and grievous galley-groans all relay  
The grandeur grinding of the painful play  
Of rude rods on souls that forlornly pray  
But whom suffering shall soon surely slay  
On a particular forthdawning day.  
They love this earth, but their bursting breath gives way.  
They love this life, but their spirits won't stay.  
The candlelight of knowledge and truth hold sway;  
Inquisition fires faint-die away.

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . .

O . . . Galileo Galilei . . .

\* Alavanyo ; (in a Ghanaian language, Ewe,) means:  
Everything will be alright.

Poems  
Pivika I Choonara  
Distorted Vision  
Presence

Presence

The owl hoots his hungry call:  
All Else is still.  
Silence follow the midnight chimes  
Into the dark green of night.  
Still,  
All alone in time, in thoughts,  
Only the presence keeps company;  
Formulated of talks talked.  
and talks that took no tongue.  
Yet untongued the talks go on  
In time, across yesterday and tomorrow  
Where time knows no time.

Again the owl hoots  
Then dead silence of silence.  
All else  
Still in the presence .  
Yet in time past silence and sound were one.  
Orbits and orbitals waited for the Word,  
And present a future in the past  
When time had yet not begun.  
The clock measures minute time,  
The long pendulum swings  
Within Galileon laws.  
The mouse cries:  
Then silence  
Between the claws.

The leaves rustle,  
The soft murmur, the frozen cry.  
Then the silence of the sigh  
As bits of hair float in the sky.  
Towards what?  
I wonder why?

The mighty manipulator surveys the scene  
And tugs another set of strings.  
Some other mouse or lowly creature  
Ventures out to explore.  
Some other owl sharpens his claw,  
Claws that once crawled across some ancient floor,  
Now petrified,  
Frozen in fossil beyond some museum door.

The owl watches, waits with beaded eyes.  
From the throne that deals in human cries  
Does He watch, does He stare  
At the cold crawl of despairing despair,  
Heed to the hollow laughter  
Of the funfair.  
Is He touched by the talk  
Of the troubled tongue,  
The square root of minus one,  
Midnight darkness, midnight sun.  
Were they all one  
In time past when time had not yet begun.  
Knowing, does He care, does He despair  
Ad infinitum.

Distorted Vision

Universal eyes are eyes for me  
two eyes that work as one  
like two ears or nostrils  
- unity of purpose -  
brotherhood.  
I'm glad I have no neon-eyes.

I love eyes that see  
things as they are  
houses, streets, and people  
and give a name  
of village, ghetto or city:  
not divisive eyes.  
I'm so glad I have normal eyes.

Factory made ears tuned to please  
trained to listen to condescension  
and to convey false glory to the mind.  
Mass produced mind made in South Africa !  
Sealed to reason  
and barred to truth.

Eyes dead like street lights  
illuminates  
without themselves seeing.  
Neon - eyes hurt the heart.

Such eyes as see napkinned dogs  
and spectacled monkeys:  
see colourful 'clear' skies  
and danger everywhere.  
Oh! the magnifying right eyes  
and condensing left ones !  
Right for white and left for black.  
Poor poor eyes that do not focus.  
I'm so glad  
glad with all my heart and mind  
I have no neon - eyes.

# DECADES OF HAPPENINGS

*Egyptian Past*  
Robert Cornevin

IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS: A short history of Egypt from the fall of Ismail to the assassination of Boutros Pasha, by Duse Mohamed, 1911 (Frank Cass, 380 pp. 84s.)

Mohamed Duse was born in 1866, the son of an Egyptian officer who, on a colonial tour of the southern markets of Egypt, had married a Sudanese woman. His father, brought up under French influence, consistently fought for the Egyptian fellahin against foreign settlers, and met his death in 1882 in the Arabist revolt.

Instead of studying medicine as his father had wished, Duse read History at Kings' College, London, and then travelled abroad, particularly in America and Turkey. His interest in the theatre was shown by *Le Nait de Cleopatre* (1907) and *Le lis des Bermudes*, which was apparently provoked by the growing racialism of the English.

During his foreign travels he read a great deal, met journalists, and wrote *Au pays des Pharaohs* in 1911. Critics thought this a nationalist book of importance -- a contemporary history of Egypt by an Egyptian, which denounced British imperialism to British public opinion.

Khalil Mahmud of Ibadan University has written a remarkable introduction to this second edition. In it he points out Duse's exceptional role as a journalist in Nigeria from 1933 until his death in 1945. He shows well the part Mohamed Duse played in the defense of coloured peoples by the journal he founded in 1912 -- *The African Times and Orient Review*, in which Casely Hayford, Papafio, Sapara, Christopher William Betts and other collaborated.

Duse was perhaps the first Pan-African to come from Africa; perhaps he was the first African to spend long periods of time in the United States and England, as Indian and Singhalese nationalists were already doing.

This new edition of *Pays des Pharaohs* is opportune. It does, however, seem limited to the English-speaking world -- one wonders whether Duse ever knew *l'etudiant noir*, or witnessed the first signs

of negritude. Did he read of the first rumblings of nationalism in the Dahomeyan or Camerounian newspapers? There are several questions on the origin of Pan-Africanism which a study of Duse's articles and newspapers in London and Nigeria help to solve.

*Asian East Africans*  
John Grigg

'A History of the Asians in East Africa, C. 1886 to 1945' by J. S. Mangat (Clarendon Press:OUP)

This book should be read by any serious student of African history, and by politicians of all races who seek a genuine understanding of problems left over from the colonial period. It will not, unfortunately, attract the general reader, whose ignorance and prejudice so often determine the course of politics.

Dr. Mangat carries the story of Asian activity in East Africa through from the early days of trading in Zanzibar and along the Coast, to the construction (largely by Indian labour) of the Uganda railway, to the commercial development of the interior, to the fight against European discrimination (which became most grievous after the First World War), to the partnership with Africans in the anti-colonial struggle, and finally to the "dilemma" posed by the triumph of African nationalism. He writes without emotional colour and with the meticulous documentation appropriate to a thesis -- on which, indeed, the book is based.

His sources are mainly official archives, because unfortunately the Asian pioneers had neither the time nor the inclination for keeping diaries or writing their memoirs. As a result, the text is dry even by academic standards. But no one could fail to admire the thoroughness with which Dr. Mangat has assembled and analysed his material.

He is too conscientious to suggest that the Asians in East Africa have a completely unblemished record. He admits that some of them lived, at first, in overcrowded conditions which invited the spread of disease, and he also admits that their isolation from both Europeans and Africans was in part due to their own "rigid communal and caste traditions". Moreover he is well aware that the role of shopkeeper and moneylender, which was pre-eminently the Asian role

in East Africa, is seldom conducive to popularity.

All the same, he proves beyond a doubt that complaints against the Asians were grossly exaggerated by European settlers and like-minded European officials, whose dream of a "white man's country" was threatened, in the first instance, by Asian competition. And he shows that the paramountcy of African interests was established as an axiom by the Imperial Government partly as an excuse for resisting the Asian demand for equality.

Anyone who looks at the record dispassionately must see that the Asians played a vital part in laying economic foundations for the independent East African States of today. The value of their contribution has to be judged according to the value placed upon such accessories of modern civilisation as a currency, a banking system, marketing procedures, availability of consumer goods, etc. Those who regard such things as corruption are quite free to denounce what the Asians did: those who appreciate such things cannot honestly deny them a large share of the credit.

As an Englishman, I was particularly interested to read about Allidina Visram, who was both an earlier and a larger-scale operator than Lord Delamere (supposedly the pioneer of economic development in East Africa). Born in 1863, Visram began his career as apprentice to an old-established firm in Zanzibar. Even before the railway was built he had penetrated the interior with caravans and established a chain of stores. But the railway helped him to create "an extensive East Africa-wide business network".

He invested his self-made wealth in a diversity of projects-- 'Furniture-making at Kampala and Entebbe, soda factories, (vegetable) oil mills at Kisumu and at the Coast... a soap factory at Mombasa, two small cotton-ginning establishments at Mombasa, and Entebbe, and saw-mills in Uganda and near Nyeri."

Before he died in 1916 he had set up a cotton gin-ery at Kampala, which Dr. Mangat describes as possibly his crowning achievement. He was noted for fair dealing and did not abuse the monopoly position which he held in many districts.

Until recently, his statue stood in Mombasa. Perhaps it will be re-erected one day, because triumphant majorities have nothing to lose from recognising the merits of minorities.

## Jameson Raid Sam C Nolutshungu

'The Liberal Party and the Jameson Raid' by Jeffrey Butler (Oxford University Press, London).

The Jameson Raid caused a great deal of controversy in its day and the British responses to the Raid had far-reaching consequences not only for Anglo-Boer relations but for internal British politics. The enquiry into the Raid affected the Liberal Party deeply and poisoned many friendships. But what was perhaps of greatest interest was the inadequacy of the British Parliamentary response to the Raid, and particularly, the part played by distinguished persons in

the whole affair. Another question which remained unanswered for a long time was why the Liberals failed to expose all they knew they could and why they did not exploit the Raid to better advantage.

Butler shows the subtle interplay of semi-conscious motives, personal pre-occupations and political miscalculation which placed Harcourt and many of his liberal followers in a difficult position. From motives which ranged from understandable to laudable many of the investigators lost opportunity after opportunity to establish the facts and to achieve their ends. Chamberlain's political career survived the inquiry, Rhodes's standing in South Africa was only slightly affected by the official condemnation - but Harcourt's leadership of the Liberal Party did not survive, and the liberals were divided throughout the aftermath of the raid.

Butler's study of the Liberal Party and the Jameson Raid is very thorough and perceptive; consequently it makes very interesting reading while it illustrates some of the problems facing Parliamentary committees when they are called upon to establish the truth amid so much emotion, and when, apparently, so much is at stake.

## Apartheid on Paper Sam C Nolutshungu

'Apartheid: a documentary study of modern South Africa:' by Edgar H. Brookes (Routledge, Kegan Paul, London)

This book is a collection of documents designed to illustrate the South African political scene. It covers all the major statements of political parties, and a variety of extracts from other sources. All the documents are succinctly introduced and the reader is left to form his own judgements.

My objections to this useful collection are few but perhaps worth mentioning. First, I think Dr. Brookes could have used his introduction to the book much more profitably by analysing in greater depth the solutions to the South African problem which black and white politicians have proposed. He need not have stated his preference but he would have rendered inestimable service if he applied his historian's skills to spelling out the different views.

Secondly, and this is perhaps less important, Dr. Brookes tends to be too concerned not to be unfair to the Apartheid sympathisers. He seems to be saying in his introduction, "Most of them are good men really; they're only mistaken, perhaps they're afraid." Afraid they almost certainly are: mistaken they are not - Malan, Strydom Verwoerd and Vorster did not suffer a moral lapse they made a deliberate moral choice.

Are they good and kind? Only as they must sometimes be in order to be thoroughly vile. Or put in other words: I do not expect them or their followers to be bad individuals ( who of us is ) in order to support Apartheid. They can be as good as the rest of us. That does not matter. It is not whether Japie van Zyl is as good a man as his fellows that matters: it is that goodman Outa van Zyl has made

a shrewd choice and persists in defending it at whatever cost. That we would forgive him but for the choice which stinks. And so, it does not matter whether he is good or bad: all we want is to make him revise his choice.

My final objection is that the African opposition to Apartheid is not well documented here. We realise of course that difficulties with regard to the suppression of Communism and General Laws Amendment Acts would have arisen. It is a pity still that these materials could not be included. One wonders how history is at all meaningfully taught under these conditions.

All this is said in criticism of a very useful piece of work.

## Kaunda and U.D.I NGA Ngoma

"The High Price of Principles" by Richard Hall (Hodder & Stoughton, London)

The post independence era of the African States is a very complicated and a sensitive period. It has earned itself a number of appellations, ranging from teething troubles, neo-colonial to confused.

The crucial issue is that at the end of the 5th Pan African Conference in 1945 in Manchester, participants were enjoined to return to their respective territories and sow the seeds of the struggle that lay ahead. In December 1958 President Nkrumah in his closing speech declared at the end of one of his most powerful orations: "Forward then to Independence, to Independence now and tomorrow the United States of Africa."

Observers are almost unanimous that although both conferences were continental in scope and pan-africanist in orientation, they clearly ordained the territory-by-territory strategy in the struggle for continental freedom and unity. How correct this approach was history has still to pass its judgment.

Julius Nyerere, according to Hall, counselled that to tackle the policies of the Central African Federation along separatist lines would eventually defeat its own purpose in that in the final analysis Southern Rhodesia, as it then was, would be left in the lurch and the idea of unity in that area would be set back.

Kaunda and Banda carried the slogan - Down With Federation - throughout their respective territories. The evils of colonialism were portrayed as evils of Federation and federalism. Ironically, both leaders urged return to colonial status if only to do away with the Federation. Federation was eventually dismantled and with its demise emerged Malawi and Zambia. The other territory was left in the lurch -- Southern Rhodesia did not give way to Zimbabwe. After UDI one heard the familiar echoes that Rhodesia should revert to British Colonial Status so that Britain should end the rebellion. To the African nationalist this is a dilemma. Has one to concede British colonial status of Rhodesia or to seize independence from Smith and change UDI to genuine independence and majority rule?

Hall makes no bones about the fact that Kaunda has opted for the earlier course of action. He has pleaded with Britain to take Rhodesia back into her colonial fold so that she may end the rebellion. He negotiates with Britain for Javelins and a token of airmen. The other side of the bargain was that all airfields of Zambia were to be under British control. Kaunda is employing the same tactics that he and Banda had employed against Welensky. Hall implies that Kaunda had Nyerere's full support in this course of action.

Kapwepwe and Kambona on the other hand were for swift african action. It appears that some African states were not unwilling to contribute troops. Ghana had even cancelled her army leave, the Airways and the merchant navy were ready to transport troops to Zambia at a moment's notice. Air support would have come chiefly from the UAR and Ethiopia, but the airfields were now under British Control.

Many say Nyerere's support for Kaunda's course of action apart from the fact that for him it was a hundred and eighty degree turn, contributed to much of the confusion that followed.

Hall extols Kaunda's virtues on his stand on the UDI generally and to his adherence to the principle of majority rule in particular. He lauds his perseverance in the face of great trials. This is all very well. But trade boycotting of illegal Rhodesia, which involves buying from South Africa is neither a short nor a long term solution. The diversion of copper from Beira to Mtwara is at best an expedient measure dictated by present difficulties. Kaunda has to give a positive lead on the solution of the outstanding problems of Southern Africa which apart from frustrating Pan-Africanists' dreams of a totally liberated Africa will, so long as the white regimes exist, constitute a thorn in the flesh for Zambia. politically, militarily and economically.

Since Hall's book went to the press, a series of events have taken place in Zambia. It's a pity he could not have anticipated them, otherwise we would benefit from his assessment of the situation. There has been a referendum to amend the constitution - Kaunda won it. UNIP has had a shake. Kapwepwe resigned the Vice-Presidency of the country, and Kaunda retaliated by dissolving the Central Committee, appointed himself Secretary-General and ran the country assisted by a committee of hand-picked men. Kapwepwe was persuaded to withdraw his resignation which he did. Kaunda won again here but lost his personal plane. Kaunda announced that the state take over 51 per cent in the mining interests. This won him great popularity in the country. Although Kaunda has won this round he came to a stalemate when he came face to face in a confrontation with the bench. This left a dross of sour taste in the country.

The book has a lot of useful material although it does fall short here and there and make a slip now and again. He shows clearly the workings of the forces behind the UDI culprits. He has sought to analyse their power and source of support. At times, the author makes bizarre observations. He points out that the Tanzanian-Zambian Railway line can be more easily justified in political terms than in economic terms. What greater economic justification can there be than the prospect, of the open-

ing up of the vast interior of the two countries, this Railway line holds out. This will undoubtedly be a boon to development both industrially and communication-wise.

Hall's tone throughout is unmistakable. He seeks identification with Africa. But he slips too often. His reference to Nkrumah leaves much to be desired. His tone resembles that of the London Express and Time Magazine. Hall should know by now that Nkrumah as the leader of African thought and revolution has come to stay. He is in a class by himself. He is the mentor of many of the present leaders. The extolling of Kaunda and Nyerere is no bargain for President Nkrumah's denigration. Nkrumah's Dark Days in Ghana, answers and refutes all charges Hall levels against him. We wouldn't like to say with Isaac that "the hands are Esau's but the voice is Jacob's".

One happy episode which Hall dramatises is the struggle for royalties in pre-independence Zambia. Arthur Wina, Zambia's first finance minister outwits the hawks from the City and gets away with it. He emerges an undoubted hero of the affair.

## Transkei Tragedy Betty Sleath

'The Transkei - A South African Tragedy' by Randolph Vigne (The Africa Bureau, 2 Arundel Street, London, W.C. 2. 2s. 6d.)

"The future of the Transkeians -- and indeed of all black South Africans -- must be constantly kept in mind by all who feel a duty to help South Africa save itself from the disastrous effect of white racial domination, so clearly demonstrated by the plight of the Transkei."

Those are the closing words of this important pamphlet which sets out, as the author says, "to examine the reality of life for the people of the Transkei." Just how ominous that future is and how grim are the present conditions of the Transkeians is clearly shown in a detailed analysis of the political and economic disadvantages and the appalling human misery and degradation that are the lot of those "repatriated" to "homelands" already ruined and brought to near destitution by the overstocking and erosion due to overcrowding this once fertile and lovely land.

Every page reveals instances of the cruelty, the absolute disregard of even the most basic human rights and the hypocrisy of the white racialists in their struggle to convince world opinion of their "concern for the real well-being of the African" while they build up an increasingly helpless and dependent pool of cheap labour for their own industries.

With all the cards stacked against them and all the dice loaded the Transkeians have little chance to make their voices heard in the wider world. Their plight can be too easily forgotten but they have an eloquent spokesman in Mr. Vigne. One hopes, for their sake, that this pamphlet will receive the wide readership it deserves.

## South Africa and the U.S. R. H. Green

'Southern Africa and the United States', edited by William A. Hance, with Leo Kuper, Vernon McKay, and Edwin S. Munger (Columbia University Press, New York and London).

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing but rather that a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude..." Pilate could have prevailed had he chosen, the USA could too - the issue was and is one of priorities and not of instruments, capabilities, or means. This volume explores what the USA should do to support the struggle against entrenched, consolidated and consolidating, expansionist racism and economic exploitation in Southern Africa and decides that the appropriate answer is nothing substantial. Verbal disavowals and criticisms, with no belief in their effectiveness - as proposed - can be seen only as a public washing of US hands.

One problem is that while the authors seek to define the limits of an appropriate US policy toward Southern Africa nowhere is there any explicit elucidation of what they perceive as desirable US goals. A rather imprecise implicit definition may at some risk - be deduced from Vernon McKay's opening essay.

Apparently Southern Africa should (from a US point of view) evolve into a modified Morocco or Kenya. A bourgeois democracy - with proper checks to prevent the spread of "leftist", "racist" agitation, and a moderately directed and highly stimulated capitalist economy - initially at least largely in the hands of its present owners - seem to be envisaged as desirable. They are seen as desirable for South Africa and South Africans, a means of enabling South Africa to participate in the development of similar policies in independent Africa, and a permanent barrier to Communist penetration which is now based on South African, Portuguese and Rhodesian deeds and words including their presentation of themselves as the models of white, Christian, democratic, civilised, capitalism.

Whether one agrees with that goal for Southern Africa or not - the reviewer would doubt that most Southern Africans do - it is hard to see how the volume's prescription of mild verbal criticism with a little economic assistance to the African enclave or border states, but without the backing of military force, economic sanctions or even active disengagement is expected to further it. Inaction seems to be recommended because South Africa is seen as a viable, internally self-consolidating, externally hegemonic policy which can create a stable Southern African state system using neo-colonised African states (possibly including a Rhodesia and even a Mozambique ruled by cooperative, moderate African governments) as buffers!

Order apparently ranks well ahead of justice

while economic advance even with no increase in economic justice and under a quasi-totalitarian, racist socio-political system is seen as preferable to the risks of revolution. Certainly the authors do not see the laager as weakening nor its "broadening" as leading to African participation; equally, they reject the view that economic advance will bring either economic justice, human dignity, or socio-political participation.

Like the USA conservatives whom McKay criticizes - albeit more subtly and implicitly - the contributors really seem to be saying "South Africa is letting our side down" - a point of view with evident implications. Their denials that South Africa is really a champion of the best of the West seem to mean that it is an ineffectual, perverted, and counterproductive one - an errant brother to be chided and cautioned for his own good, but also to be understood and tolerated.

Myrdal's warning that "the profession of scholarship should not be a recondite conspiracy against the common man" is all too relevant to this volume. There is no passionate feeling that change is essential, no anger at entrenched injustice, no root and branch rejection of a system based on the utter denial of the common humanity of man. In the circumstances this amounts - however unintentionally - to an absolutism and defense of the status quo. The only real passion in the volume comes in Kuper's strictures on the PAC and Munger's on Bishop Huddleston and de Blank.

Vernon McKay - a tough minded realistic evaluator of the overseas interests of the USA - is the least willing to be nice to (White) South Africa or to accept the pipe dream that there is any internal dynamic for change. In the end even he escapes from reality and his own analysis by feeling that a system based on participation is in some sense inevitable and in some way will evolve peacefully.

Leo Kuper is the least useful. His superficial discussion of "non-White" politics gives the impression that nothing is happening or will happen. In a sense and for a time this may be only too valid for South Africa itself but hardly for Southern Africa as a whole.

William A. Hance surveys the economic dynamics of South Africa and finds no cogent reason to suppose they will lead to socio-political change toward fuller participation nor even toward any approximation of economic justice. However, he does so in a manner worthy of Oppenheimer and Rupert thus managing to conclude that continued economic advance (the crumbs from the rich man's table?) is better than nothing and should not be endangered by disengagement let alone sanctions. (This is becoming an appallingly standard "concerned liberal" view, vide 'The Economist' on "The Green Bay Tree".)

Edwin S. Munger on "New White Politics" is, probably, the most interesting and stimulating - if also apparently the most committed to order, to speaking in mild and civilized tones (not, for example, those of 'Naught For Your Comfort'), and to "understanding" white South Africa. His chapter effectively shatters any illusions that the broadening of the laager is a move toward liberalisation or African participation or that the Vorster-Ver-

ligte position has anything in common with belief in the equal dignity of all men much less creeping non-racialism. (The trend of events since Munger wrote fits his schema quite well in these areas.) On the contrary, the former is a tidying up exercise to consolidate the white power base and the latter a modernisation and streamlining at home combined with the creation of better external public relations and the possibility of seeking defense in depth via a ring of neo-colonised African satellites.

Munger notes the decline of anti-Semitism as official or quasi-official policy and the rising interest in and respect for Israel in this context. South Africa increasingly sees Israel's efforts to find a final solution to the "Arab problem of Palestine" as similar to her search for a final solution to the "Bantu problem of South Africa". (Both states now tend to claim that the "problem" - i.e. dispossessed-people were not present when they came and now, like locusts, seek to take the milk and honey the colonizers have made to flow in the desert.) The verligte-verkramppte debate can be seen as rather parallel to the Dayan-Meir type dialogue on whether a moderately large internationalised Arab minority plus "friendly" (i.e. controlled) buffer states or a basically "Arab Free" Israel with a quasi-garrison external policy is preferable. Emotionally Israel's Jewishness has become less significant to much of white South Africa than its role as an embattled bastion of Western civilization - a new perception which facilitates bringing South Africa's Jewish community into the laager. The study by South Africa of Israeli tactics can hardly be very reassuring to Zambia or Tanzania unless Vorster decides that "defense by Blitzkrieg" and "deterrence by random massive retaliation" have really not paid for Israel and would damage white South Africa's typical pose as a champion of international law.

Clearly no South Africa-Israel alliance is to be expected. Israel does not share white South Africa's views of Africans nor does she perceive herself in any way as a state based on the denial of the common humanity of man. Her attitude to her Arab minority is more that of White head (or Rhodes?) than of Vorster. Her refusal to become dependent on an Arab labour proletariat is principled as well as politic. Further her external policy is premised on links with major Western states (to whom South Africa is an embarrassment) and - at least peripherally for UN votes and secondary economic contacts - with independent African states (to whom South Africa is anathema).

'Southern Africa and the United States' is a horrifying book for all who do view Southern Africa with a passionate commitment to the attainment of justice. It offers naught for our comfort. All the more so because these are not conservative, uninformed, racists speaking. They are in fact among the leading spokesmen and experts of the US Liberal establishment on Southern African matters. The reader has no excuse for not knowing what positive initiatives to expect from the USA in the struggle to create just economies, societies, and policies in Southern Africa - none.

# ANGER CONFLICT FREE EXPRESSION

## Jahn's Neo-Africa se anderson

'Neo-African Literature' by Janheinz Jahn (Grove Press, New York)

Janheinz Jahn, the German Africanist, has been recognised in both black and white literary circles as one of the most efficient and accurate experts in the realm of African, Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian Culture. Practically every brother and sister into a "black thing" has read Jahn's first book: 'Muntu'. Many of us with question take 'Muntu' as the gospel truth on Black Culture. Many of us even think that Janheinz Jahn is a brother!

There is Danger here. Danger to our Black History, Black Present and Black Future. This Danger has been haunting us ever since the 16th Century European Slaverships. It is the dangerous dependency upon a white analysis of our existence that is plaguing not only the cultural component of our Liberation struggle; it is lecherously infecting all facets of the struggle. Janheinz Jahn's two major works, 'Muntu' and 'Neo-African Literature' are merely functioning symbols of our reliance upon a white analysis (correct or incorrect) of the Black Cultural development.

What is presented here is a small contribution to a Black analysis of 'Neo-African Literature'. In addition to this, we must bear in mind that there also should be a thorough Black analysis of 'Muntu'; simply because it is being religiously read and discussed by Black people. We must continuously be aware of how Black literature contributes or does not contribute to the construction of an Afro-American national literature and, hence, a Pan-African literature whose existence would be for the liberation and perpetuation of Blackness, Black people and Humanism.

What Janheinz Jahn has accomplished in 'Neo-African Literature' is to (1) chronologically compile black writers and their works from about 600 AD to 1966, (2) scientifically ... "classify neo-African literary material according to its content and some of its recognisable stylistic features and patterns of literary expression ..." and (3) present summaries of literary analysis for every era and major language category of Black Literature. Because of the meticulous tables and extensive bibliography, the book is valuable. Nowhere in the English language can one find such an elaborate structure that - at a glance - enables you to almost pinpoint a particular Black Writer, the language, style and era in which he wrote.

We see in 'Neo-African Literature' as in 'Muntu' the spectrum of Black writing from Africa to Europe to the Americas. But it is in the realm of social and

political analysis, not the interpretation of Neo-African styles and patterns, where Jahn fails. Social and political analysis is the essence of 'Neo-African Literature'. We being black and struggling towards our Liberation must out of necessity socially and politically inspect Janheinz Jahn's analysis. More than this, it is of a moral imperative that we must recognize the limitations of whites understanding Blackness: of whites interpreting human differences not as inequalities

Yes. 'Neo-African Literature' was written on the basis that African and Neo-African literature is a living sophisticated part of a definite culture. But subtle and often overt racism and misinterpretation enters when Jahn stumbles into the arena of Black literature as politics and black emotions. His European background forces him to accept O. Mannoni's colonial psychoanalysis in 'Prospero and Caliban.' Jahn's acceptance of Politics and the aesthetics of literature as being mutually exclusive forces him to confront Frantz Fanon's explanation of the politicisation of the Black writer (i. e. intellectual).

At one point Jahn states that Fanon "wrote as a fighter;" that Fanon saw literature as nothing but "just another weapon". And at another point, he states that Fanon's literary analysis was from a purely psychological viewpoint. He claims that Fanon's ideas about the Literature-of-the-struggle are ideas without aesthetics. Jahn says Fanon reduces literature to:

"... three alternatives: assimilation, escapism or rebellion; exoticism has always been close to escapism. In a context like this literature as a weapon is either blunt, jagged or serviceable; and when the battle is won, the weapon is no longer needed. Fanon's analysis leaves no room for a free literature of independent writers, such as has grown up in the last few years in many parts of Africa. His literary-history-in-three-phases does not include freedom."

Fanon was stressing the psycho-political changes most Black writers go through in their quest for a personal and national liberation simultaneously giving birth to a new aesthetic while disregarding the dead Western aesthetics. In fact, Fanon's basic emphasis was upon the necessity of a revolutionary national aesthetic to aid in determining what is "good" and what is "bad" for the Nation.

Yes, Black literature is a weapon. And it is more. It is a treasure chest of old black tales, fables and myths. It is a mythmaker, perpetuator. It is the inseparable fusion of black politics, black aesthetics, black ethics. A Black writer working inside the boundaries of this national literature, regardless of the quantity of his political actions, maintains his unique personality. That is to say, his literary freedom is geared to the needs of his people and the constant striving towards humanism. Hence, what Janheinz Jahn says is the antithesis of seeing Black literature as a national literature. Jahn is suggesting (if not asserting) that Black people - in the name of Freedom and Individualism - tolerate and laud such "black" writers as Afro-American Frank Yerby (*The Foxes of Harrow*, etc.) and Malian, Yambo Ouloguem (*The Need for Violence*). Yerby is a white novelist in negro-face. Ouloguem hiply preserves the negative white myths about Blackfolk. Therefore, when Jahn speaks of the "independent" writers of today's Africa and Afro-America, he is talking about those blacks who attempt to separate the political reality of racism and neo-colonialism from their literature. They write, at best, as Africans and Afro-Americans for the sake of Black Culture. They do not write for the sake of Black Culture and the liberation of their people. Another very good example is the negritudist himself: Leopold Sedar Senghor. For years he sang of the glories and beauties of Africa through an Africanised French tongue. But his songs did not free his poverty-stricken people ... nor himself - from France. Senghor is French first (further substantiated by his French wife) and African last.

Indeed the conflict between Fanon and Jahn - and between the contemporary white critic and the black writer - is that of understanding and dealing with the political and psychological components of Black literature. Contemporary Black literature is no longer protesting about equality and civil rights as defined by the Western System. It is asserting that the West has nothing to offer the Black people specifically and humanity in general. And henceforth the West must be eradicated. Through the act of eradication the Black Man creates a Black aesthetic that is historically tied to both Western and Nonwestern influence. Its present and future is not devoted

to being new. A newness not out of a strange ahistorical vacuum, but out of an analysis of Black and Nonblack cultures.

And it is in this arena that Jahn and other negro-philosophers reluctantly see themselves and their cultural offerings being rejected - if not destroyed.

In spite of these realisations one cannot alter the positive contributions of Janheinz Jahn's work in Black writings. True: he has, as was mentioned above, painstakingly compiled valuable chronological tables and synopsis of stylistic analysis. True: he has elaborately demonstrated that African modes and styles can be found underpinning most of Black literature - in and out of Africa: past or present.

But we continue to find more instances where we must check Jahn's analysis and quoted analysis. For example, his major analytical sources for the Harlem Renaissance period were of a racist nature. Jahn

uses, for instance, Robert Bone's horrendous, 'The Negro Novel', without criticism. In fact, Jahn himself declared that the white critic and author of 'Nigger Heaven' (dig that!) Carl Van Vechten, was the Harlem Renaissance's 'propaganda chief'. Jahn also feels that Van Vechten's gathering of white elites and Harlem writers successfully ended public admittance of white racial prejudices in New York City! He apolitically and ahistorically acknowledges the Africanisms in the Black writings of North America. In so doing he renders Black America's conscious and unconscious struggle for survival of its people and heritage into a struggle for white acceptance. Further, Jahn keeps the myth of white-aristocracy-as-beyond-prejudice alive by stating:

"For it was only among the aristocrats that he (the Afro-American) did not have to pass a test in respectability and was not catechised on his creed ... The average middle-class citizen and the average working-man found it much harder to eliminate their conventional prejudices."

Here again we see that racist German arrogance vis-a-vis the Teutonic myth leaping forth. For, Jahn implies, it is only the elite, the aristocracy, the Anglo-Saxon ... hence the descendants of the Teutons who know how to appreciate the noble savage's exotic "intelligence". After all, the American middle-class and working class is comprised of Jews and Slavic descendants (Poles, Italians, etc.) Blinded by his racist arrogance Jahn is incapable of perceiving (a) that white racism is classless and permeates all Europeans and their descendants and (b) therefore the Black struggle is not only against the "ruling class" but also it is a liberation struggle against the totality of white America and Europe.

Another place where we are moved to check out Jahn's analysis is in the field of the Blues. Straight-jacketed by his Judeo-Christian outlook on the flesh and the spirit, Jahn perceives the Blues strictly from a cold mechanical posture. The Meaning, that is the essence of the Blues, frequently is beyond his ken. He separates the Blues mechanics (he calls it "Blues Logic") from the Blues message. In his analysis of "Hitch-hiking Woman Blues" Jahn is so possessed by form that he claims the mechanics of it "obviously goes wrong. ..." His overemphasis upon form forces him to miss the sexual implications of the song - which is why it was sung in the first place! To the Blues Singer and to the Blues Audience it is not just how something is sung, but more what is being sung. For a more precise Blues Analysis one should, for a start, check out Ameer Baraka's (Leroi Jones) 'Blues People' and 'Black Music', A. B. Spellman's 'Four Lives in the Be-Bop Business' and Charles Keil's 'Urban Blues'.

When white authors publish detailed "scholarly" works about Blacks we should not relax and sigh relieved that someone is doing the necessary work. Instead, we should be intensely committed to developing a more accurate understanding of the meaning of blackness and Black Revolution. This should be one of the many duties of a Black Studies programme, if it is to truly serve Black people. We must remember: our task at hand is not only to instill Black Al-

legiance but also Black National Pride. That is to say Janheinz Jahn's 'Neo-African Literature' should be treated as a valuable catalyst in the political process called Black Liberation.

Finally, as one reads this book of importance and danger, one should keep Amos Baraka's prophecy foremost in mind:

"... who will survive America?  
very few negroes...  
no whites at all..."

This is the Destiny of the Black Americans; the Coloured of the world who are being and have been analysed, scrutinised and synthesised by Europe and White America. German, Jew or Anglo-Saxon; they have other, more diabolic, interests than preserving Humanity - much less our Existence.

Brother Fanon warns us of their hypocritical litanies. We must dig the Brother's warning... and with revolutionary sophistication and soulful zeal proceed with the Black Business of Liberation.

## Prison Poems Sam C Nolutshungu

'Letters to Martha and other Poems from a South African Prison' by Dennis Brutus (Heinemann Educational Books, London)

South Africa has not produced much poetry of any significance in English. 'Letters to Martha' is a handful of poems which are artistically competent and intellectually meaningful. For this reason their author, Dennis Brutus, has good reason to be regarded as one of the very few important South African poets.

Most of these poems were made during their author's imprisonment in South Africa and while he was under house arrest. Sharply descriptive these short poems bring out the horror, the misery, the loneliness, the humiliation - but above all, the horror of the South African prison cell. Some men become vicious in prison, others sexually perverse, others still, become insane. Brutus' reflections like his poems, are masterfully controlled. Prison is ugly and debasing but it is still possible for the prisoner to be generous, compassionate and self-respecting:

Presumably  
one should pity the frightened ones  
the old fighters  
who now shrink from contact;  
.....  
.....

But it is best to shutter the mind and heart  
eyes, mouth and spirit;

say nothing, feel nothing and do not let them  
know

that they have cause for shame

Brutus is dignified, self-controlled, almost urbane even when the pain is at its worst. He knows the unnatural vices born of fear; he knows fear is a deadly enemy. In "The Mob" he describes the white crowd who attacked those who protested against the Sabotage bill, as

the fear-blanked facelessness  
and sturm-lidded stares  
of my irrational terrors  
from whom in dreams I run.

By having South Africa excluded from the Olympic Games, Brutus 'lashed them'; the time of achievement will come

when I flog fresh lashes across these thieves.

Many poems of political statement have been written in our time and before: Brutus' poems are among the best, the most important. If there is such an art as political poetry, this is some of it. I hope Brutus will make more and greater poems.

## Prison Letters Jacqueline Kaye

'Soul on Ice' by Eldridge Cleaver (Jonathan Cape, London).

Eldridge Cleaver's letter from prison are notes towards an analysis of American society in disruption. This disruption has been precipitated by the black man's refusal to fulfill any longer the sexual and economic roles for which he has been cast in a nation with its own built-in forces of destruction: race and class. Cleaver's vision of "America re-creating itself out of its own ruins" pinpoints the agonising self-reappraisal which all Americans, white and black, must undergo as they prepare to jettison the old heroes and the old ideals. They must now attempt to salvage something of the City on the Hill with which to rebuild.

The ruins of America are within her people as well as within her cities, they are the ruined integrities of black and white men and women. The price the white man has paid for power and domination is the loss of a sense of himself as a sexually potent being. Like Mailer, Cleaver has a strong sense of the white man's frantic and reverberating ambivalent flight from knowledge of this to homosexuality and the myth of the black woman. Cleaver is concerned however, with the black man's regaining the manhood he surrendered, with all the functions of the intellect, to the authority of the white. Only when this is achieved will the black man in America recapture his own identity.

The ruthless disgust with which Cleaver exposes James Baldwin's surrender of his identity to white domination is balanced by his love letters to his lawyer. In these there is a strong sense of his having overcome the loss of identity threatened by his "education" as a prisoner of war in the United States.

Cleaver knows that the struggle in America will be decisive and is universal in its implications. The

violence of revolt in American cities is to be linked to the revolution in Vietnam, must be linked to it in there is to be any sense, any dignity in the suffering and death of black people. The simplistic dichotomies of Elijah Muhammad no longer satisfy Cleaver. He takes as his heroes the black martyrs of a war which has raged since slaves were first brought to America, and told to sing as they sweated and bled their lives into the soil of a land they now recognise as theirs. As the whites seek the joys of black physicality, so the blacks in turn seek political and economic power, the privileges of the power of the intellect.

Cleaver's sense of the tragedy of an oppressed humanity, "forever seeking life and almost always receiving betrayal and death from the outstretched hand of the seducer," is counterbalanced by his knowledge that there is in process a self-awakening in

*Magic Art!*  
Sebastian Clarke

'No seed For the Soil & other stories' by Ekuundayo Rowe. (Vantage Press, Inc., New York)

"The sorcerer in the primitive tribal society was in the most profound sense a representative, a servant of the collective, and his magic power entailed a risk of being put to death if he repeatedly failed to fulfil the collective expectations."

From *The Necessity of Art* by Ernst Fischer.

Art at its most functional level is the profound relationship between the 'I' and the 'You': it is the dialectical function of art to reconcile being and nothingness nature and the transformation of the world as it now exists ... a spiritless, decadent materialism. It is, on another level, the "illumination of social relationships, of enlightening men in societies becoming opaque" (sightless, stupid, filthy), "of helping men to recognize and change reality." It must be sunlight falling on these unconscious humans, caged in this vapid comfortable death, of directing their energies into a more fruitful direction ... spiritual, material. All art ... Black Art! ... is magic! i.e., it is a way of conquering nature and of transforming its by-products (artifacts) into functional purposes. Man, the black magician, channels nature into a thing to use ... of raising these humans ...

Brother Rowe's book of songs, of poetry ... short stories of our life's woes and laughter ... proposes a profound and complex fate of our "Westernising" societies ... proposes their complexities, contradictions and goes on to remedy the societies' sickness.

We are a people not only confronting the psychic and material repercussions of colonialism, but, more significantly confronting the future with its manifold traumas, crises. With all the seriousness that this suggests we still manage to laugh (a people of supreme beauty). "Me and My Armour", one of the five poetic

visioning directioning short pieces contained in this slim volume fulfils the revolutionary direction in which our societies must go. In "Armour" Kakpindi, a private in the army whose sole function is to "clean the officers' boots" and who did not like the leading officer, Major Mongo because he "did not like me," has been static (up-the-ladder wise) for twenty years ... so ... in order to endow himself with some power ... equal at least to the many officers who inhabit the place ... enacts his fantasy dream by donning the uniform of an officer ... adorned with "buttons, crowns and all" ... to pose in front of a mirror. The poetic insight the writer commands in describing this scene would quite naturally reinforce the reader's own conviction that the private is damned to colonial mentality ... the streak-freak of memeticism ... but ... the story goes on to reveal his Africanness and sense of national pride ... as opposed to nationalism.

Major Mongo receives the total awareness sight of private Kakpindi whose ridicule and respect for the man reveals the nature of the complex relationship with power and powerlessness. "When Mongo spoke or gave orders, he whistled" ... his sss weren't together ... "he was also noted for his delight in perfume - like his wife." In spite of all this Mongo was a "brilliant fellow. He was efficient." Mongo also has a sense of the reformist in him. "He was responsible for most, if not all, the major changes in the nation's army" ... "He was also responsible for expelling half the officers for creating tribal palaver within the army." ... Consciousness! ... "I remember two sergeants who were caught whistling "Sussex by the Sea" ... colonialist reactionary legacies ... they were supposed to whistle "Moa River", "The Cocoa Pods of Mfantisipim" and other tunes that were closer to blackness. Mongo was designing a new uniform "because he wanted something authentic," and not uniform symbols that reflected creative un-originality and a sense of identification with evil. I could go on and on until eternity sighting the manifestations of Black-consciousness that the writer seems to be aware of. This is a review ... not in the European sense - evaluating the "aesthetic" value of the work ... for art in the pristine creative sense "had nothing to do with 'beauty' and nothing at all to do with aesthetic desire: it was a magic tool or weapon of the human collective in its struggle for survival." (Fischer) It is on these terms that we should evaluate the works of our artists. Is he contributing to our struggle or not? Our African brothers are engaged in the battle of righteousness ... not of ineffectual words ... but of guns, arms ... the stage of revolution where death is a real thing and not the facile projection of somebody's mediocre mind.

In "Armour" the cat and mouse relationship between Mongo and Kakpindi is transcended ... Mongo decides to oppose the government's proposal to "introduce compulsory military service for every male between 19 and 28". "Within the barracks, Mongo was the odd man out." He absolutely refused to support the majority's affirmation of the rightness of the new proposal. But Kakpindi at least was on his side. Mongo believed that their (the young generation's) nationalism would not "submit to any attempt by the government to have their fundamental right trampled.

Besides, Mongo regarded conscription during peacetime as colonialist in nature - imposing military and defense policies of former colonialist countries on a new independent nation. " These words speak for themselves. The writer's position is clear ... the colonial slave-master with his weird brand of Machiavellianism, his perverted logic, his inhuman attitudes to the human person ... must be disembowelled ! That beast must not be allowed to stay in the sun-light, restructuring new Africa.

The story is unfolded: powerless Kakpindi fortuitously attempts to aid Major Mongo in his attempt to prevent the proposed bill from passing. With the aid of a sorcerer and some scheming with another private who impersonates the person of a sorcerer they precipitate victory for Mongo and the nation. How this is accomplished is something else! ... Man the magic maker ... maker of art ... rationaliser of nature (her constants) -- the embodiment of primeval reality ... exploits the superstitious nature of the society. Lt. Colonel Ojei is the brother-in-law of the Minister of Defense who is leading the pro-conscription contingent. Ojei who is organizing support for the proposed new bill at the same camp where Kakpindi is stationed is ruled by his wife, the controller of her husband's actions. Kakpindi is placed, through some conniving and collaboration, in the vicinity of Ojei's wife. He wins her 'gossip' trust, and begins a weird plan to force her to influence her husband to revoke the proposed new bill. With his imposter friend he cons Mrs. Ojei into believing that an incoming disaster can be prevented if she stops the bill ... Having submitted to the "sorcerer" the plan works beautifully. On the day of the opening of the National Assembly no word was mentioned about the bill.

In the story of the book's title it is a curious event

of contrast to the western world's attitude to child-bearing. Throughout this corrupted West one can hear echoes of "overpopulation", "birth must be controlled", etc. Whilst in 'tribal' Africa a woman who is incapable of having a child is subjected to humiliation, scorn, in a word, rejection, by the society at large. "No Seed for the Soil" depicts with the intelligence of Bunuel's camera-eye the transition of a woman from barrenness to fertility, to having lost the baby in a melee of hysterics when an unknown force is supposed to invade the village, to the logic of regaining it.

"Ticket to Tower Hill" is the story (so characteristic of us) of a talented thirty-five year old man with an economics degree married to a white woman. Because of his political ambitions which his wife senses and understands he is left alone to face the electorate as a blackman with no ties with white-ness. However, during the course of a speech someone asks him: "What about domination of our retail trade by foreigners? What about the foreign banks and firms?" He is unable to answer this because of the implications and relation they bear to his white wife. His political reaching-out collapses. His wife returns to him, etc. This black man/white woman relationship is one of complexity and will be resolved when one must close ranks. Brother Rowe is a preacher. He is preaching virtue, morality, righteousness ... explaining our neurotic, dizzy-headed complex outreaches in face of what we are as a people ... in our colonized heads.

All the other stories are laden with beautiful instructions for our resurrection as a people from the tombs and castrating influence of Western culture. Man the Maker of Magic Art ! will be alive again ... this time under his own influence, with his own fingers and mind.

# MAN'S UNENDING PROBLEMS

*Underdevelopment II*  
Sam C Nwutshungu

'African Renaissance' by Leonard Barnes (Victor Gollancz, London)

Whether one calls it development, modernisation or transformation, the task to which the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are avowedly committed is the same. Everywhere it is essentially economic; everywhere it is intractable to define and near impossible to accomplish; everywhere it is closely bound up with the relations of the states both with their neighbours and with the affluent countries.

Relations with the advanced countries are important not only at the obvious levels of political and economic interaction but also at the more subtle level of cultural and intellectual exchange. Correctly conceived then, development involves the transformation of minds. It calls for a development ethos while it poses questions as to the ends that develop-

ment must pursue and the social philosophies under which the process must take place.

While it has been almost common knowledge since the days of the Classical economists that growth depends not only on technology but also on the state of the arts, it is fair to say that so far no one has tried to assess in depth the temper of African culture with reference to its relation with underdevelopment. Barnes can claim credit for taking a deep look at the African and identifying his cultural inadequacies in the age of development.

Barnes' s perception of the problems is enriched by his familiarity with Africa and by his incisive if often aphoristic style. He reports impressions, not data when he talks of the type-African - and perhaps that is all that one can meaningfully record when one tries to assess a culture. His impressions simply stated are that whatever way we look at it, Africans have made a mess of things and are far from realising the fruits of independence. This is hardly surprising because people usually make a mess of independence. "The truth is that where a nation exercises so-called independence, it is never because it

is fit to do so. Always because no agency yet exists in the world which is fit to prevent it." But that, of course, absolves the Africans no less than it does their more experienced, more affluent congeners. Barnes's reproof of the African is both bitter and compassionate. The main problem facing Africa is often the African himself; the type-African procreating without restraint, indulgent, complacent, infantile and lacking in the Stoic and Homeric values.

"The type-African today is an aged child, in whom bitter constraint and huge perplexity turn the hair grey before he can grow up. To him a premature senility must come before a punctual maturity can."

Also: "It is not very wide of the mark to say, as I have heard it said, that an 18-year-old African has a mental age of 10, and by the time he reaches a mental age of 18 he is usually dead."

But there is hope yet for Africa and its Africans. Hope lies principally in the correction of the imbalances between town and country, population and resources and in an intellectual-moral re-orientation. Barnes' solution is fairly simple: a rural revolution against the disproportionate urbanism of the type-African must occur. "The leaven of the rural revolution consists in a blend of trained excellence of peasant character with trained excellence of intelligence at graduate level such that the character conceives the end and the intelligence perceives the means."

Many familiar themes are touched upon: Balkanisation, the famous 'circular and cumular causation' of international economics whereby the rich get richer and the poor get poorer: indeed what might be called the 'conventional wisdom' of development studies is lavishly used. As conventional wisdom these insights are not rigorously examined, but perhaps, understandably. Barnes' own central theme the rural revolution, is eloquently and on the whole convincingly, argued. There is not a single feature of post-colonial Africa, not a single controversy from Hodgkin to Prebisch that is not adumbrated. 'African Renaissance' is a book of its times.

Yet the book is by no means entirely unexceptionable. First the concept of type-African is a misleading if not harmful device unless some indication is given of who the type-African is; the peasant character too seems a getaway phrase without much empirical content. If Marx was wrong to berate the peasant for the "idiocy of rural life" Barnes is no more justified in glorifying him - in spite of Mao - for virtues which are neither apparent nor, when clearly stated, (as they are not in this work), are hardly the peasant's unique privilege.

I quite agree with Barnes' reproof of African elites who have on the whole been bad rather than good. Barnes' disdain is that of the insider, comparable in this regard to Turgenev's disdain for Russian intellectuals; but unlike Turgenev's, Barnes's hopes are affirmed more frequently than is perhaps necessary. Because he is not speaking of his kith and kin, he is aware that he is touching on delicate subjects; it is as if he pauses every now and again to remark his own frankness. Such is the state of discussion in our times!

Our writer is, at least in part, an outsider, and as such lacks a dimension of insight which only Africans who know both the observable social realities and the often unspoken personal dilemma can articulate. In the last, and perhaps most important instance, the African must recognise that his problem is not only operational but also philosophical, or more accurately, ideological.

It will not do for the critical African intellectual to embrace the mainly Victorian (in the best sense) ideals and beliefs which are never far from the surface in Barnes's book: the belief in 'material progress' in 'self-help' in 'industry'. The modern African intellectual knows that he needs them to survive but that he doesn't have to love them. It would be a sad thing if development meant no more than that Africans would work hard to achieve in the 22nd or perhaps 25th century what Europe has achieved in the 20th. It is a doubtful prize. Africans know the advanced world better than it knew 'progress' in the epoch of its own development. As part of the modern world the African intellectual is involved in the global controversies of the day - the twentieth century world-picture - with its doubts, evasions and perhaps helplessness. And the half-dream, half-nightmare awareness of the age cannot be expunged by pious exhortations that without affluence Africans cannot afford spiritual crises.

A bourgeois elite with a simplistic development ideology is perhaps never likely to emerge in Africa to the importance enjoyed by bourgeoisies of the European past. The truth is that development as an ideology has been superseded by history; it is therefore a twentieth century ideology (that embodies development) which must be created: a re-interpretation of human experience in African conditions that acknowledges and overcomes the doubts that must inevitably arise about development. To borrow words from Castro, the African knows the times he lives in, he must learn to live in them with dignity.

Barnes makes repeated reference to the Chinese Commune and even devotes a whole appendix to an explanation of the reference. I quite agree that much can be learned from the Chinese experience. Yet we must always be wary of the obsessive analogies which so often understate real cultural, political and historical differences. From others the African must no doubt learn but his pre-eminent duty is to interpret his own experience in an honest way: only when this is diligently done will "a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred minds contend" (Mao) in Africa. In the meantime "let us try and converse calmly, since we are incapable of keeping silent." (Beckett).

When one considers the history of modern advanced states one is tempted to conclude that far-reaching change always took place because of some severe stress - the greater and more immediate the stress, the speedier the change. Let the point go undisputed. Such a stress exists in Africa, in Barnes's view, it is demographic. But perhaps overpopulation is a gradual stress the effects of which are felt with an immediacy when the problem is large beyond the point where it can inspire change without sapping the very energies needed for development.

The trouble with stress is that it is not something one can set about providing. Perhaps it would be dan-

gerous to create a state-of-stress mentality in order to facilitate development. For most African countries development will be unspectacular and arduous. The imperative task will be to insure that standards of justice and decent government are maintained during the period of development and that human values are not mortgaged to the spes of development. This will be secured by a fuller vision of African society and its possibilities than is often contained in the writings of development scientists. In this regard Barnes has acquitted himself well. Whatever we make of his judgements, 'African Renaissance' is an important document which no literate African can justly ignore.

## Underdevelopment III

Betty Sleath

'Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa' by Robert Chambers (Routledge, Kegan Paul, London).

'Social Policy in Developing Countries' by Arthur Livingstone (Routledge, Kegan Paul, London)

These two extremely useful books are both largely concerned with the economic and administrative problems of development. Both should be of value and interest to anyone concerned with such work at any level and of interest to all who are interested in the development of Africa.

Mr. Chambers has had direct experience of settlement schemes while serving with the Administration of Kenya and has visited schemes in eight African countries while preparing material for his book. His detailed analysis of one scheme, the Mwea Irrigation Settlement in Kenya, and the subsequent comparisons with other schemes gives many important pointers to problems, failures and mistakes that could be avoided in the planning and implementation of future schemes. The urgent need for close co-operation between experts, technicians and departments involved in these schemes is strongly stressed and examples of loss of precious time and money through lack of co-ordination are given.

In the more general discussion of the nature of some of the schemes I found myself wondering, in respect of individual holdings on a complex and very technical irrigation scheme, what would happen when the settlers' sons grew up and needed holdings of their own. Such young men would be unable to afford to start irrigation schemes on their own and, used to the techniques of intensive farming under irrigation would be unable and unwilling to return to subsistence farming even if this were desirable.

Unless the settlement is capable of big extension what would the future hold for these young men? Migration to cities or fragmentation of holdings in the settlement! Ought not all permanent settlement schemes to make some attempt to start some small industries to provide alternative employment? If this could be done and such industries could give training and employment to people from surrounding regions as well as members of the settlement it would be immensely beneficial.

In his conclusion Mr. Chambers acknowledges that there will always be special circumstances

calling for complex, highly technical and high cost schemes but he urges planners in poor countries to consider the possibilities of smaller, low cost, schemes using intermediate technology and involving much local effort before succumbing to the temptation of a high cost spectacular scheme.

In view of this conclusion and because I am an enthusiastic advocate of these smaller schemes which give such opportunities for the development of individual peasant enterprise, I wish that at least a chapter could have been given to the merits and demerits of such schemes. The very short mentions they are given are not enough to give a basis for comparison. However, the very full bibliography should be useful to those who wish to study these and other schemes more fully.

"Human beings are vital economic resources. They are both the ends and the means of national planning." These words are from the introduction to Mr. Livingstone's very practical book of Social Policy. Although it is very realistic about the immense economic problems facing Social Planners in poor countries this is a very humane and compassionate study of how the need to make the most effective use of these human resources can be combined with meeting the overriding claims of their human needs and rights.

Like Mr. Chambers he urges more co-ordination between mutually dependant services; of these he says: "it is not uncommon to find such services as public health and education conducted by separate government departments which show little interest in the co-ordination of there respective programmes". This criticism makes sound sense as, indeed, does all of this short book. When dealing with the vicious circle of hunger, disease, ignorance and the poverty they breed, it's impossible to pull them apart. Each contributes to the other and the treatment of one must affect the rest to some degree.

Education, Health and Social welfare are the three aspects of planning discussed and there is enormous scope for co-ordination here. There can be few enlightened educators in Africa who would oppose Mr. Livingstone's views on revised curriculums in schools and the inclusion of practical as well as academic subjects. I wish he had also suggested the inclusion of hygiene and dietetics, and simple instruction in child care for girls. I wish, too, that the possibility of voluntary social work by older students was mentioned and the introduction by President Nyerere of a year's voluntary service by all University graduates as partial repayment of what their education has cost.

While education is essential for development and can play a big part in improving health standards there are immense problems to be faced by the health service. Not all illness is due to ignorance and many cripples, mentally sick, deformed, diseased and other sufferers need treatment in hospitals or clinics. The shortage of hospitals and trained personnel is discussed and the author suggests the training of auxiliaries. The difficult decisions to be made by governments in allocating scarce funds to the Social Planning services are considered, and the conflicting claims of short term alleviation of suffering that can bring no las-

ting benefits and the long term schemes that might end much suffering and disease for ever but would bring no immediate help. It takes much courage to ignore the immediate needs of the living in favour of the millions yet unborn or to press on with a plan for more secondary schools to produce the teachers, administrators and other skilled personnel the country needs when such a programme would mean fewer primary schools and the denial of any education at all to millions of children.

These and many other problems are considered and the beneficial or harmful effects of international aid are looked at. A list of suggested reading should be particularly useful to readers with special interests in any specific angle of Social Policy.

## Rain Betty S Leath

'The Introduction of Rainwater Catchment Tanks and Micro-Irrigation to Botswana' (Intermediate Technology Development Group, 9 King Street, Covent Garden, London W. C. 2, 15s.)

The Intermediate Technology Development Group is concerned with research and practical experiment in low cost development techniques that can be easily practised by peasant communities. They are also concerned with the problems of teaching such communities how to pit these techniques into effect at village level.

This book is a full and detailed account of a successful experiment carried out by I. T. D. G. in Botswana. Following feasibility tests carried out in conjunction with the Bamangwato Development Association a group of village schoolmasters were first shown how to build these simple catchment tanks and then were able to pass on their knowledge to the pupils by building tanks at their schools for irrigation of school gardens.

With its detailed descriptions of every stage of the experiment, and many plates and diagrams, this book should be most valuable to extension workers, schoolmasters and anyone who is concerned with irrigation for small scale agriculture or market gardening in countries and regions liable to drought.

## On Sociology Marilyn Jones

'An Introduction of Sociology' by J. E. Goldthorpe (Cambridge University Press).

The most important supposition underlying the ordering of material in this 'general' introduction, is that a useful analysis can be developed to demonstrate the effect of the intrusion of Western industrial techniques into African society by employing a sociological discipline informed by two major traditions. Firstly those classical concepts developed in the mainstream of western urban industrial life, and secondly the formal and descriptive methods introduced by social anthropologists,

Mauss and Malinowski, have come to provide the substance of the cultural and psycho-sociological assumptions intrinsic to the work of later sociologists.

Goldthorpe makes explicit his intention to demonstrate that African society can also be largely treated in these terms. It is in this respect that this book is more than unsatisfactory as a preliminary text. The failure, to indicate the possible multi-causal and fluid character of the processes by which change is brought about leads to such generalisation as for example, those concerning the role of the entrepreneur in a developing economy, which completely ignores the crucial aspect of state control. Such a synthesis which in attempting to draw out parallel action and causal processes common to both Sub Sahara Africa and the northern Hemisphere is thus revealed as an inadequate procedure resting upon a less than stringent application of the sociological terminology to which Goldthorpe himself draws particular attention.

In providing a solid and orthodox survey of the fundamental texts both by way of footnote and comprehensive bibliography, the book provides a useful if somewhat sterile indication of the material available to the African student of sociology. In the introductory section the ideas which govern the approach of the book itself emerge. 'Sociology has arisen in part from the need to see society as a whole' and therefore, contingently it is necessary to understand the almost independent nature of the forces and pressures which comprise the social order, constraining the capacity for action and thought of the individuals within it. It is at this point that Goldthorpe introduces the fundamental concept of the fund of social knowledge available to the individual in society. The individual's conception of himself and the group to which he belongs is radically altered by an awareness of alternative systems of action. The manner in which this awareness is developed is of seminal importance to a discussion of African society as it is in fact to the complex problems which surround development in the third world.

Sociology can therefore be seen as giving precision to the individual's incomplete perception of the nature of his social environment. The development, the correlation and the interpretation of raw factual data (when it is available and accurate!) is a strategic function of the 'sociological imagination'.

In orientating this text closely to the transatlantic body of sociological research understatement occurs of factors which have assumed critical proportions within African society. In particular the lack of emphasis given to the political sector and its particular role in the former colonies in developing a national identity capable of superseding previous group loyalties. Ideology, provides a concept capable of demonstrating many features of the processes involved in establishing social order, and as such demands emphasis.

It is further necessary to understand the time dimension involved in the context of studying African society and in such an Introduction of Sociology it would have been of interest if reference had been made to the emergence of a possibly 'Indigenous' sociological tradition.

# THE DAY THE THUNDER STRUCK

## MUKHTARR MUSTAPHA

A hole was dug in the ground, a goat and six chickens were slaughtered. Wrapped round a banana stem were rolls and rolls of black and white thread. A monkey's skull with a bell on its head rested on a clay pot containing assorted bird feathers. Beyond the Sacred Bush of Bambey stood the most respected hut of divination. From within the huts the sound of gongs and human cries rocked the atmosphere which up to this time was still and mysterious. And now light had started to penetrate in the thick foliage of the jungle, I could see somewhat strange objects flashing swords in the air, stamping their feet with caution and dancing round a circle in the middle of which stood a carved human figure. And now a man would crouch on his belly holding a horn and reciting prayers which he alone could hear, at short intervals the occasional owl would hoot and register its mystical message then disappear into the wild with Messianic swiftness.

This is my home. Africa. What are you doing here? What is your business here in the dark forest? Leave me alone old papa, you cannot help me so do not provoke me. 'Something will happen today' the old man growled as he spoke to himself. 'I say something will happen today, how could she die without blood flowing?' But still the old man went on 'How could she have died a bloodless death?' 'It must be the work of one of those medicine men' I said, 'They sucked her blood without leaving a single scratch on her face, they took away my only daughter whose voice could pierce a palm kernel and bring the Panther to submission'. The old man said with his right hand clutching his matchete and gritting his teeth, his head was raised towards a tree plunged in deep thought his eyes have now turned leopard green. It was nearing midday and it started to rain non-stop but the persistent drumming and stamping of feet from the sacred bush drowned the effect of the torrential down pour. As the rain ceased the drumming and dancing became more frantic. The dancers wore headbands trimmed with horns and cowries, round their legs were small bells and porcupine quills sewn into a pad made of raffia.

I started to pick my way cautiously through the dense undergrowth and positioned myself at vantage point from where I could observe this curious pantomime. And now the body of the dead singer was carried by seven women shoulder high trotting with short paces as if marching to the tune of martial music. The body was lowered in the middle of a clearing. Then from nowhere appeared the most frightening

mask with horse tail in one hand and a chicken in the other. The chicken was stripped of all its feathers and its throat was slit and the blood smeared on the four corners of the clearing and on the forehead of the dead singer. By this time the head priest was sitting nude by the feet of the deceased apparently interrogating her as to who her assailants were. The deceased herself is now being questioned to accuse her murderers.

Priest to deceased: Why are you so still? You were singing two days ago, why are you so quiet today? Tell me your quiet thoughts? Say to me the name of your murderers? Your father is here, your mother is here but you have gone. You left without a drop of blood on your bamboo bed. Who took you away? Confess. Speak loud. And now the right hand of the deceased by some inexplicable force raised itself towards the sky and dropped again. The chief priest dipped his hand into a bag made of crocodile skin (Kuma) removed certain particles, one of which he chewed and spat the juice in the eyes of the deceased. The other particles were scattered in the wild. Then someone started a song from the corner where the tall drums were standing. The response by the cult members left me in awe and unparralleled fright. Each time the singer pitched a song a kola-nut was thrown in the air and all to a man the atmosphere would become hugged by the powerful chorus. Then the chief priest stood up, moved a few paces and touched the head of the deceased and started singing. "Gba tun gbay tun gbay tun vare kun" and the men and women will respond thus "Shay ke lun shay kun shay, kun shay shay kun shay". After continuous chanting which lasted for about twenty minutes the chief priest raised his hand signalling the chanting to an end. Then the chief priest dipped his hand into a calabash containing mystical herbs, palm nuts and cowries, still sitting by the deceased head the chief priest has now consulted the oracle as to what the meaning was when the dead raised her hand upwards towards the sky. Except for a goat that walked past the ceremonial gathering with its bell jingling no other sounds were uttered. As the deceased was a practitioner and worshipper of the thunder God the help of thunder God was solicited to unravel the mystery that surrounds her sudden death.

In these words:

- O Thunder
- O Mighty Thunder
- I stand by your Gates
- O Thunder
- Open to me the Secrets of this death.
- O Thunder I will worship you the more
- O Thunder I will sacrifice to your altar the choicest bull.
- Tell me Thunder
- Tell me the meaning of this death.
- O Mighty Thunder

By this time several men and women have fallen into a trance, the mystical drum now started to talk in special rhythm, the chief priest with a bag of beads shaking furiously invokes the God of Thunder with prayers and praises, licking his lips and chewing his tongue. The minor priests had positioned themselves by the feet of the deceased rubbing their feet together and clapping their hands. A mask ap-

peared, a bull is fetched, its throat was slit with split second accuracy, the drum rolled thunderously, the horns of the bull were removed, the head placed in a calabash, drops of blood were sprinkled on everybody's forehead. The Chief priest now moving slowly forwards with his face revealing nothing called aloud the name of the deceased singer seven times and with a crash he dropped the calabash he was carrying. "The God of Thunder has revealed to me that your daughter during her lifetime had prayed seven days during which time she had offered her virginity to the most mighty God of Thunder in return for which she should be endowed with the sweetest voice in the whole country. Furthermore your daughter was given several commandments one of which is that she must not stoop in front of any man or worship any other God. Also she was to have offered to the God of Thunder a new born ewe, a mea-

sure of corn and her hair, all of this she failed to do. And lastly she gave her virginity to the river God, a lesser God than the Thunder God whose cult she has always been a most devout member of. Therefore the all-powerful Thunder God had withdrawn her from this earth. The Chief Priest went on "During the performance of this ceremony you all saw a goat walking past. That was the spirit of the deceased singer. The mighty Thunder God has withdrawn her from this world. But in order that her surviving relatives would be clean from all the sins of the deceased, the God of Thunder requests them to shave their heads, confine themselves in their huts until the seventh day when they shall smear themselves with mud and dance through the village as a last and final cleansing act for the sins which their daughter committed. By this act the God of Thunder would forgive you all.

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# ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

D.M. ZWELONKE

The faint sound of a roaring engine sang in my ears. I thought I saw a helicopter overflying us. Then, guu... I knocked against the window frame of the bus. With a start, I woke up and looked from under my eyelashes. Eyes were staring at me, but avoided me when I returned the stare. I remembered I dozed for some time. I could not help it: the heat, the diesel fumes and exhaustion from the previous night's sleeplessness, all took advantage of me.

I tried to look normal as far as possible, but the effort itself seemed to betray me. The roaring engine was now clearer and louder. We had entered another area of our journey, me and the passengers, we were moving along terrifying mountain slopes. The bus changed into second gear, then to first, and then to extra low. It was negotiating a ghastly curve of a sharp climb.

I thought I saw a helicopter roaring past us - no, it was a dream that time I slept, the result of anxiety proceeding from my tormented brain. I always fancied a helicopter might fly low and order the bus to stop.

I turned to look back, a trail of thick dust rushed in full speed behind us. I looked in front, the road seemed too narrow to allow a pass of two vehicles at the same time, and it was ever climbing, and ever bending to the right or left. I looked to the side, through the window, it was a sight that made my eyes bulge, a steep descending at about seventy degrees angles of depression, descending to what seemed to be an abyss. Again, I looked back to the left, the road snaked its way on the mountain slopes, that for a moment it seemed we were moving in a circle, for I could clearly see where we passed, the road coming from the west as if it was taking me back to the land of bondage, then turning north, then east, chasing us in full speed as if saying: hurry, hurry lest the forces of evil catch up with you.

A Ford Falcon materialised from a curve in front of us, and in a split second it whizzed passed us, and left me, in a sense of horror, clasping tightly the frame of the seat; should anything happen, just a little mistake - then ends the dream, then cease all hopes to outrun persecution. But I was not thinking of death, I was thinking of regaining consciousness in hospital and find myself handcuffed and a policeman looking wickedly at me.

Yet we moved, me and the passengers; we - I was one of them by the only fact that I was travelling with them in the same bus; yet, I was a lone traveller on a dangerous road, and that is why the feelings of horror were mine alone. Others were laughing and chatting as if nothing grim might happen.

I hoped and wished that as we were climbing, we should climb out of the mountains, which would be difficult to cross at border gate on foot. My hopes and wishes lapsed into a thin layer of faith, when the bus continued to climb, to climb and for ever climbing, coiling its way like a huge imamba among a cluster of impassable rocks.

The bus engine buzzed and groaned a song of solace to the restless and impatient passengers, perhaps to me alone.

We were moving in a jungle of mountains, the Umlembe range of the Eastern Transvaal, forever posing a threat to the unwary, to the fugitive and the genuine traveller alike, that it must bring to memory the ghastly train mishap that ended the lives of the migrant cheap labourers from neighbouring Mozambique. It was a mishap that our grandmothers do not forget to tell us about it even today. It happened during the period of the great locusts or during the time when night fell on earth at eleven o'clock noon, meaning the eclipse of the sun. It happened long ago, yet I could feel its impact, even now its ghastly spirit suffocating us, or me alone. Alone - the others were behaving like tourists, admiring the grim and gaping dongas down the slopes and at the ugly jungle of shrubs below.

With me it was an apparition. I wondered whether my courage was slipping from my chest through the pores; or through my eyes? I could still feel the effects of solitary confinement during the brief years of my internment, and suffocating blanket of the banning order against which now I was trying to wriggle free out of it as I was travelling through these mountains to a friendly country. I was left with a few months of restrictions when the threat of renewal menacingly hung over my head.

For what seemed a half-century's journey, we sank deep into mountain bottoms, but not exactly bottom because the whole place was an amorphous build-up of dongas and shrubs. We were approaching the border.

"There is the Indian shop," said a young man to me, pointing to a matchbox house appearing from behind some trees. This man sat next to me, obviously unconcerned. An hour ago I had ventured to ask him about that shop, lest the bus pass with me right through the border gate without knowing it - and having no passport. All the others had documents.

It was in the evening when we reached the border. We climbed down, and I strolled as naturally as possible, as if I was returning to where I came from but now on foot; I vanished into a shrub down below the road. I lay on the crest of a mountain top, waiting for the blackness of the night to cover the whole area, so that the jumping of the fence could be done with the minimum risk of discovery. I lay hidden in tall grass and shrubs. A lonely area that was, not a single house could be seen in the distance except for the Indian shop and two huts for the African border guards. I lay poised for action, lest a huge snake want my company.

Even then as I lay, torrents of nostalgia came gushing into my heart, and left me a pitiable heap blinking at the sun that strolled in the sky taking its good time to set, indicating that it might decide not to disappear behind the mountains if it wanted to -

thus summing up the extent of my impatience. Yes, nostalgia found it a good opportunity for itself. I knew what it meant to be taken away from my family and friends when I was in prison. Now I thanked God I am not married and still young, thus better fortified to face the odds of exiled life.

My mind flew to horizons unexplored by me, and came back to rest on the plight of the African in our land. He leads a life of escape - he must escape. The entire country of his fathers is a ghetto, and he must escape, though within its borders.

But miserable African at home, you must escape, escape the spooky shadows in the night, lest they be police. Escape from the Tokoloshe, yes the pass-book; the tokoloshe has always been a haunt to you, and yet you must walk with him, never leave him behind, put him in your pocket however frightening he is - if the reader has heard about the legend of the tokoloshe. Swerve free from the executor's axe of the influx control, and all its permits and specials fuss. Escape from the clutches of poverty and cold. Evade the fist of social degradation, lest the blow kaffir you down on the floor on all fours, and a savage 'boy or John' kick sends you flying. Run, blackman, fast, and make sure white racial chauvinism does not catch up with you. You know your own chauvinism is a product of years of rejection by humanity, rejected by the same person who claims to civilize and christianize you. Do you think that the answer is to stoop down on their feet and beg for recognition, when you well know that you are rejected in no uncertain terms that you are a sub-human being? You remember well what you said: 'Baas, baas aseblief ...' and he said: 'Kaffir, get out of my way.' You went to another one, he said it too, rather severely. You once told your son: 'the baas are very good people.' The next day your son comes home kicked in the stomach by the baas. You have been proved a liar. Then you decide you are no longer going to beg for recognition, you automatically become a racist, and this is a sickness that takes time to heal even when you are free from colonial rule.

Your alternative is to run, but where? When you are in a white ruled state? You have to do his washing, clean his kitchen, and bring up the baby-baas who already knows you are a baboon. Where can you run to when your forehead is tattooed in big block letters: 'Kaffir', for every baas to see anywhere in the country.

Then a few scrape a living, just a handful few. They manage to build a laager for themselves in the form of bank notes and motor-cars' status symbol; that at least even though he is a baboon, he nevertheless owns the latest Ford Galaxie; that he possesses at least a university degree, but that unfortunately does not remove the tattoo on the forehead.

I watched the sun disappearing behind a mountain. As it did it cast a red glow of light, forming an arc. For poets, that was a moment of inspiration, vision and imagination. For me it was either a vision of hope or doom. Then there was twilight, a moment for me to go deep into meditation, since I still had to wait for darkness to settle. I recollected my last hours at home.

On the evening of my departure my heart was filled with excitement. Throughout the day at work my body was light, my footsteps were soft, and my mind was heavy with thoughts - planning and re-planning. I almost did my work automatically: the packing of sweets and biscuits, the kinds of tea and kinds of coffee; all these got into my nerves. The stench of koffiehuis and boecreplaas coffee always made me feel dizzy; the bakery smell of biscuits was filling my belly tight each time I worked on them. I knew my work well, and I was swift. My eyes told no story and no one guessed what mischief was being formulated inside this skull of mine. At lunch-time I deserted.

That evening at home I was feeling good. I decided to say good-bye to my sweet-hearts. I wanted to enjoy with them for the last time. I went to my dark, stoutish, short little thing. I told her I was going to school, and said: "give lady". She said she was sick. Oh, God, I nearly fell dead. I went to another one who liked me because I might steal certain articles for her at the big store. She said too: "female sickness". I was finished. I could not force it, because I was not a sexual pervert. I went to my 'baby' whom I seduced some months ago. Why not when I had already quarreled with her 'mummy'. While she (my baby) delayed at her home, I wandered about, and by the time I got round, she had come out (I learned from her friend) and she was looking for me. I could not find her, and time was running out, so I went home feeling bitter at heart. When time had come tension had built up in my blood, nerves, muscles and bones. I missed the ten o'clock train - because of girls; that was night; so I caught the 1.00 a.m. train the same night.

As I lay there watching the slowly disappearing twilight, I brought to mind many such occasions of good living - girls. I may remember my homeland when thinking of them. Here, nostalgia has surely found a fertile spot. When misery and oppression was intense, love alleviated it. Some say booze does it, but I did not drink, so it was girls. Here, white domination could not extend its paw. Running away from white domination also meant forsaking those who love me.

And yet I ran. I left the shackles of white oppression.

Instead of running within the ghetto, I found myself running out of it, running for my life. For my life because I nearly lost it down in the abyss of a donga, with no one to ever find my carcass. I lost my way on the mountain top. It was so dark I could hardly see my finger. On all fours I groped the darkness and the tall grass, pausing at times, lest I intrude into the solemn abode of a gentle snake.

Umlembe range is a jumble of cruel mountains. The position of the gate has been well chosen, because the area is death to cross during the night except near the gate or where ends the fence; beyond that is a pass to one's doom. The gate is in a gorge. For hours I searched for the bus road, until I found it. I had no guide, no contact. I did not want one. I trusted my courage to see me through. I was a lone figure in the middle of the night, that like a fiend in a haunted neighbourhood, I lurked and lunged forward, that today I wonder what force propelled me to freedom.

# AFRICA'S BITTER DILEMMA

## NYANSAKO NI-NKII

Revolutions have often occurred in the history of nations. From time to time the people of a state have found it necessary to abolish the form or nature of the Government which they themselves or their progenitors set up. In cases where the form or nature of the Government machinery has been defined by Constitution and where circumstances do not call for immediate changes, revolutions still take place in the way of suffrage where a definite percentage of people are called upon to indicate their confidence in, and their loyalty towards, the personalities or groups which have been charged with Government business for a specific time.

The electoral system is the major characteristic of democratic institutions because it is there that Government get their mandate from the people they govern. It is accompanied indispensably by a free press, freedom of religion, impartial judiciary, parliamentary debates and legislations, armed forces for internal and external security, an indigenous and impartial civil service, etc.

In Africa, parliamentary democracy had been considered as one of the best forms of Government because it safeguards the rights of all citizens who have a share in the Government irrespective of their economic or social status.

Yet, even where genuine parliamentary democracies have been enthroned it has become necessary for more sudden and even violent changes of Government to occur. Some of these revolutions have been considered as a disgrace on human history because the motives that drove men to take up arms against their rulers have been base. But other revolutions can be devised to ensure that the violation of human rights can be averted. Failing to reach a 'rapprochement' by debate, men have had recourse to the sword and bullet.

Revolutions have always entailed some form of suffering to those who have been attacked and even to all concerned, and on reflecting upon the amount of suffering entailed by those uprisings, it is indeed difficult to say without reservations when revolutions are justified at this point. But because Government itself is but an invention of man, the occurrence or otherwise of revolutions means only that the principles for which men have found it necessary to form Governments have been realised or have not been. And when we look into concrete instances of revolutions we can easily discern some justification for their occurrence.

One of the most famous revolutions that has occurred in human history is what has been known as the American Revolution of mid-eighteenth century and the Declaration of American Independence which ushered it into being provided a relevant manifesto for all revolutions and for all time, and I quote:- "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men were born free and equal and that they have been endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to these rights governments are instituted amongst people deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. And that whenever any government proves to be detrimental to these ends it is the right to institute in its place such a government as to them shall seem most likely to secure the ends for which they were made. . . ."

We, therefore, the representatives of the United Nations in conference assembled today, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do declare that these states are and ought to be free and independent. . . ."

Thus the Declaration of Independence of the American Colonies goes into history as one of the most articulate expressions for the justification of Revolutions. From this manifesto we can discern three basic principles which can be applied to all revolutions.

First of all we are made to understand that Revolutions need not be irrational and unjustifiable. Although revolutions have been accompanied by violent actions the motives that primarily brought about these revolutions can be justified. It is worth while to note how the declarants of America express their "respect for the opinions of mankind" and make their appeal to the "supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of their intentions".

Secondly, the Declaration of Independence has within it a truth which men have often evaded - that all men were born free and equal, that governments exist only to safeguard the rights of all citizens.

The third point is a corollary of the second. If the government proves to be detrimental to the goal, for which it was made, it is the right of the people to abolish it and to replace it with the one they consider more likely to foster the ends of government.

It is this third point that we are now going to hack at. When does a government prove to be detrimental to the end for which it was made? When is a revolution justified?

Broadly speaking there are three types of revolutions. There are revolutions which are said to be bloodless where changes have been effected by peaceful arbitration. In the other extremity there are violent revolutions, what might be called "coups d'etat" where authority is seized by the armed forces. These are usually the aftermaths of a long term of insecurity and unrest and failure to reach any agreement

between parties in conflict, for instance Dahomey and Congo (Kinshasha). Midway between these two extremities there is one where there is a clash of arms between parties but which have not come suddenly but have been anticipated and even threatened in public speeches like Nigeria.

In the case of bloodless revolutions the causes have been dissatisfaction towards the particular type of governmental authority, for instance Upper Volta. The fight for independence by many African states which formally were under the yoke of imperialist countries like, England, France, Spain, etc., exemplify this type of revolution. They are justified by the fact that the system of government is inimical per ipse to the wants of the citizen because they are ruled by a foreign power.

Here I would wish to dwell more on one example of today. The problem of Africa South of the Sahara, particularly Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) offers excellent example for the second type of revolution: the bloody revolution. This usually comes in the wake of insecurity and unrest, usually brought about by dissatisfaction of the masses. This dissatisfaction in turn is the result of economic and social inequality and the armed forces are harnessed towards a dethronement of the former head of state and his regime from whom the state of unrest can be said to have emanated. In fact the many coups d'etat that have occurred in many African states are also a standing example of this state of affairs. There, the people to whom the reins of governments have been given have misused the privilege given to them by the masses - who are far poorer than themselves to be used as tools in the hands of the former European masters. But as I had said I want to view this aspect from the problem posed by the rebel regime of Ian Smith's Rhodesia.

To think that Ian Smith and his partners in crime will continue to rule illegally in Rhodesia is a great source of mental unrest to anyone who has the slightest taint of justice in him; to live under the fact that a handful of whites will eternally remain overlords of a large majority of blacks is highly offending and frustrating. And on the other hand to maintain that Britain will act more than what she has already done offers no glimpse of hope at all. For Britain has proved beyond all reasonable doubt that, in this respect, she is nothing more than a paper tiger. Because whereas the Rhodesian issue demands a firm radical action on the part of Britain, she continues to toy with the matter. Surely something must be done, and done now!

This is an extreme situation. But when the late Malcolm X, out of a similar desperate situation, declared that extreme problems need extreme remedies, some false peace prophets brandished him a radical trouble monger. Yet even such a notable advocate of non-violence like Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia was constrained to say, "I have recently had to remove one of these noble words from my vocabulary. It is 'patience'". I also am a firm disciple of Henry David Thoreau the exponent of non-violence or as he called it "Civil Disobedience". But we are all human beings and not angels. And where all possible chances of non-violence have been exhausted surely the opposite remains the on-

ly recourse. Force! We cannot continue to look to Britain; it is in fact a blind look to the moon. Remember, Rhodesia is not Aden or Guyana where Britain sent paratroopers to shed blood in defense of a right cause; yet their fault was not as treasonable as that of Ian Smith. Worse of all the Zimbabweans, the true sons of the land are not only robbed of their dignity, social and legal rights but are also denied their most able leaders, from the local to the national level. What can be more provoking than this?

Hence I call on all Zimbabweans within and without to shun their political differences and revolt against the illegal regime of Ian Smith. Domestic problems can be attended to after the common enemy has been defeated. I also appeal to the Liberation Committee of the OAU to step up its aid towards this fight. I summon all mankind that can distinguish between right and wrong to render all possible co-operation to Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, South West Africa and South Africa. Undoubtedly this is justified revolution! What makes a revolution justified is the underlying principle behind it. True, violence involves the shedding of blood and loss of life. But tell me, where has freedom been attained without this sacrifice being done. Who can tell the number of souls that went in the American war of Independence. Besides, the shedding of blood and the loss of lives is only the effect, the consequence. And the judgement of any action as well as that of revolution is determined not by its effect alone but mostly by the cause. If the cause is right and just, O.K.

I am convinced that in the worst of things there is always a degree of good. And so the fight must not be abandoned. The flame of nationalism should not be extinguished. Its sparks must continue to glow in the hearth of African Nationalism. Fight! I say fight, until the battle is won and victory achieved. This generation may not reap the fruits of the struggle but it will be a noble pearl to bequeath to posterity; a free and peaceful land to live and govern themselves. And they will remember us for that.

No, we must not flinch. I am convinced that one day the sword of justice will strike through the barriers of injustice; I am sure that one day a new sunny day will dawn; yes, I hope that one day a bright new era will usher. With this I think I have driven home my point.

The midway type of revolution which takes a long time to germinate in the minds of men before it manifests in the form of action is usually based on a change of ideology. The French Revolution was a conflict between the rich and poor only outwardly, behind the scenes were powerful ideological factors which did what they could to transform public opinion. There are also a few revolutions which have occurred in Africa because of this.

"I represent a party which does not yet exist: the party of revolution, civilization. This party will make the twentieth century . . ."

*Pierre L van den Berghe*  
*a Reply*  
*to*  
*Matthew Nkoana*

Mr. Nkoana's searching critique of my book 'South Africa, A study in Conflict' deserves a considerate reply because of its refreshing intellectual honesty and absence of invective. These qualities are all too often lacking in the heat of political argument, especially when one deals with such a hot topic as South Africa. The fact that my book should still generate such critical fire four years after its original publication shows that it had more than ephemeral value, and I am very pleased that it should have proven so controversial.

Predictably, since I was trying not to write my book from the point of view of any current orthodoxy, I have been accused of almost every crime on the political spectrum. While in South Africa, I was taken for a Communist agitator, a Special Branch man and a CIA agent, in book reviews, I have been accused of being anti-white, anti-South African, Marxist, anti-Marxist, Western-oriented, Communist-oriented, an advocate of violence, an opponent of violence, a revolutionary, a liberal, and now a counter-revolutionary. At the same time, many of my critics, Mr. Nkoana included, paid me the compliment of saying that, as my work was disguised under fairly convincing trappings of scholarship, my attacks against their cherished position was all the more insidious and dangerous. To me, all of this seems to indicate that I must have been even more diabolically clever in hiding my devious intentions than I realised.

However, Mr. Nkoana has the unusual decency of not impugning my motives, and he does make a number of perceptive remarks about both my work and my ideological position. He is wrong that Segal was a major source of mine on the P. A. C., but he is right that I was influenced by Leo Kuper in whose Sociology Department I was a lecturer for two years when I taught at the University of Natal in Durban. It is also true that most of my closest associates and friends while I was in South Africa from February 1960 to December 1961 were members or followers of the Liberal Party, the A. N. C; the Indian Congress and the COD, and hence that these associations might have biased me against the PAC. At the time, however, there were several prominent members of the Liberal Party, especially in the Cape, who were strongly pro-PAC (notably Patrick Duncan) and I also came into contact with them.

Unfortunately, the South African government deprived me of the pleasure of meeting some of the top PAC leaders such as Sobukwe and Ngosana. Most of the PAC supporters I met and talked to were what I suppose could be called "second-echelon leaders", mostly students and teachers. My evidence for stating that the PAC was racist is based largely on these personal contacts, rather than a second-hand account by Segal or anybody else. Most people who claimed allegiance to the PAC exhibited a strong suspicion of all non-Africans, and often openly expressed feelings of racial hatred towards "Indians", "Europeans" and "Coloureds". The contrast with ANC followers was marked enough that I could predict with at least 70% reliability who leaned towards which group, on the basis of whether they openly expressed racist views or not.

To me, racism is the making of invidious distinctions between human groups which are socially defined on the basis of their physical appearance. For an African to say "Indians are greedy" is just as racist as for a European to say "Natives are lazy". Nkoana takes me to task for stating that racism is not limited to "whites" in South Africa. He writes: "racialism ... is not evident in any other group in the country, least of all the African group." Surely, it is a racist statement to suggest that a negative trait like racism is the exclusive monopoly of a "racial" group. Happily, Nkoana then proceeds to contradict himself and to state, quite correctly, in a self-quotation from another piece of his: "The racist philosophy has permeated all strata of society, and had its victims among both the rulers and the ruled". Here we are in complete agreement, but then why does Nkoana take me to task for stating precisely what he himself does. Could it be because I have the "wrong" skin colour?

Having agreed that racism is found in all strata and groups, the next question is whether the PAC is racist. The answer is also "yes", although, not having followed the latest political developments in the PAC and the ANC, I cannot say whether the former is now more so than the latter. Racialism being as ubiquitous as it is in South Africa, it almost inevitably follows that any political movement which wants to be successful must resort to racist appeals. The few that have tried not to do so, such as the Communist and Liberal Parties have condemned themselves to impotence, and, even in those groups, racism was not totally absent even though their organisation was structurally non-racial.

The official statements of Mr. Sobukwe are not evidence of non-racialism, nor are Mr. Nkoana's denials. In fact, the very semantics of their statements prove my point. Sobukwe tells us: "politically we stand for government of the Africans for the Africans by the Africans, with everybody who owes his loyalty only to Africa ... being regarded as an African." This is patently not what Sobukwe means, because the Afrikaner Nationalists certainly claim exclusive loyalty to a government based on African soil. Thus, the statement is, at best, meaningless. Then we are told that "those non-Africans who accepted the "democratic rule of an African majority" would be regarded as Africans". This statement is internally inconsistent and logically confused. If ac-

ceptance of democratic rule is the test of being an African, then there can be no such thing as "non-Africans who accept democratic rule of an African majority". The same sentence uses both a racial and a non-racial definition of African. Elsewhere, Nkoana lapses into an entirely racial usage of the word "African". He speaks of "the severely depressed condition of the African people, who to the PAC include the so-called Coloureds". By implication, the PAC definition here excludes "Europeans" and "Indians". Thus Nkoana redefines "African" to include two of the South African government's racial categories, but to exclude two others. Thus, we have three definitions of "African": one is meaningless; the second is self-contradictory; and the third is racial. What am I to believe? Am I not entitled to conclude that by "Africans" Pan-Africanists really mean "black" or at least "non-white" and "non-Indian"? Is not this hopeless confusion a symptom of racism?

Let me try to accept at face value the often repeated statement of Pan-Africanists, namely that Pan Africanism means rule by Africans, and that being an African means identifying with the oppressed masses, irrespective of "race". I must have gone over this argument at least twenty times with PAC followers. When I told them: "OK, then you must accept me as an African" they replied almost to a man: "You cannot possibly identify with us because you are white". So there you are! And, in fact, predictably, Nkoana chants the same refrain: "Perhaps it is only those who have actually lived the life of inferiority who can fully comprehend the devastating effects of this kind of degradation on the broad mass of the people."

The great tragedy of the South African situation is that Nkoana's statement is, with very few excep-

# TALKBACK II

## DM ZWELONKE

if what Mr. Mathew Nkoana says in the No. 52 issue of the NEW AFRICAN is true, then we in the 'hot pan', that is South Africa, die.

We raise eye-brows in perplexed wonder at what is happening to our organisation, PAC; at what is eating our leaders, because we in jail are in the dungeon without windows (which is Robben Island) - we do not know what is happening in the outside world. Yet we breathe in relief, for those that mess us are not our leaders, they never were. Our leader is incarcerated with us here in the devil Island: the Prof. Sobukwe.

Nevertheless, we must gape at what is becoming of those men who were acting-leaders.

I speak from an ice-berg, which is Robben Island's winter. I speak next to the steel-work furnace, which is the Island's Summer. I speak from hadeswhere,

tions, psychologically correct. But if it is correct, then the adoption of a test of acceptance which can only be satisfied by black people is in fact a racial one, and reflects a racially exclusivistic mentality. This reminds me of another piece of double talk, namely Cecil Rhodes' "equal rights to all civilized men". "Civilization" was always redefined to mean "whites only." "After all, you can't expect raw Natives to become civilized in one generation when it took us 2000 years."

The end of white supremacy must come in South Africa, and it will come through revolution and violence. But the end of white supremacy will not mean the end of racism. I have little doubt that the first African government of South Africa will be better than the present government. It could scarcely be any worse. Unfortunately, I am not convinced that it will be enough of an improvement to want to fight for it. The Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto once said that history was a graveyard of aristocracies. Alas, it is also a hatchery of tyrannies. As an activist, Mr. Nkoana cannot afford to be a cynic. Cynicism is the luxury of scholars. Let him call me a counter-revolutionary if it serves his ends. Personally, I do not care and I wish him well. The present government has already done me the honour of banning my books; perhaps the next one will similarly oblige. All I can hope for is that in my next reincarnation I shall be reborn in a colour-blind society.

One final word of reassurance to Mr. Nkoana: My books are not nearly as "deadly" as he thinks. Not all that many people read them; fewer understand them; and virtually none are influenced by them one way or another. Scholars are no more deadly than gadflies. The politicians and activists are the tse-tse flies of this world.

through an error of history, saints have found themselves locked up. I say to everyone who betrays the struggle, let him pause for once to think of the Africans that languish in that Island, and the many banished cats scattered all over South Africa.

What's this Maoist muddle of P. K. Leballo and Makoti?

We thought men have gone to negotiate for a deal of arms, yet they went for books and books of Mao's thoughts. We thought that the leadership will bring guns to us, instead they bring us some idealogical balderdash. While PAC inside SA waits, some element outside SA have torn it asunder in idealogical confusion.

It's high time that PAC inside SA starts talking. I say for my brothers' sake, those banished to some awesome mountain to perish unknown, or one house-arrested in some hovel in a location, stripped of all the means to earn his living, knowing that for supper it's going to be cold porridge and salted water; for a brother of mine thrown from pillar to post at the whim of the SB's and the labour-bureau despots; a young man just released from jail to meet with hardship; I say for all those of us who are left in the lurch - then we die.

What's the use of going up North for guerrilla training when one is going to be wasted in idealogical prattle.

As I write here I know and can see with the eyes of my mind, my friends left in the Island - condemned to a 20 year term. I can see them pushing the wheel-barrow up the steep of a quarry. I can see them required to work with the strength of a zombie, crushing the quarry stone with giant hammers; and the ceaseless yells of white-rule drunk warders blasting their ears. I can feel the pains while I see the iron-tipped boot swung against a political prisoner's stomach, and the baton crashing on his head. I can see the kind of food he is going to have for supper: which is virus for scurvy (lacking vegetables) and which is evidence for a starting of kwashiorka (lacking milk) as though they were babies. A malnutrition-causing recipe as a special diet. Young men with loads of life-sentences on their heads, hoping for the day of liberation. Yet!

To our horror, some Makoti kind of species is busy dreaming about a queer cultural revolution before he has conquered; busy swilling Mao thoughts in that dream, wanting to convert the whole of SA. to something Mao style before he has even shot a single Boer soldier. He is dreaming to see Red Guards in the vanguard of an absurd revolution; but then his Red Guards would be blackguards, because the colour of their skin is black, (taking it as a literal fact.)

Sobukwe should be crying tears now to see what has become of his organisation, PAC, and the men he has trusted, P.K. among them, a sinister double-cross on principle.

Alarm clocks should have started ringing when ZANU, an ally of PAC called freedom fighters mercenaries in Rhodesia. Be the fighters PAC or ANC or ZAPU or ZANU, the cause is one: African liberation. We want freedom, and we don't care who chance to free us, if we can't ourselves; and it must be freedom, not a change of foreign rulers. Or we fight on. Is ZANU ready to refuse volunteers from OAU? Will they dub such volunteers mercenaries should ZAPU call them in, or OAU to send them on her own? We have mad men in the struggle, indeed. It is the whine of a bedridden invalid, refusing to be helped out of bed because of irrational shame - claiming he can help himself. Because as a fact, ZAPU is doing more fighting in Rhodesia than ZANU. No, ZANU is not fighting, because she is still busy swilling Mao thoughts, not about guerrilla strategy but cultural revolution.

I thought communism has become old fashion; I'm amazed when to some it's still a novelty.

Africans in SA want freedom; they want to live; not to be disorganised into a foreign way of living. They want political power and economic growth; and economic power can come without some funny Red Guard revolution unsuitable to this environment.

The men in Robben Island would not refuse to come out of jail if the doors are opened by victorious Egyptians or Israelis, by American or Russians. It's to feel stupid pride to want to be liberated by a blackman in Transkei, when you know he can't liberate you. It is a living pipe-dream brought to us clearly, like the one of expecting for Jesus Christ's second coming to free us. I'm not implying that Africans in SA are not making an effort to free themselves, but that they won't spit at freedom if it doesn't come by their hands.

Or do you think that the men in jail are enjoying

to be there? You are the men who regard suffering as a test of virtue. Suffering is suffering and evil. That's why no one wants to suffer. No one of you exiled-cats would want to come back and suffer so that you would be virtuous. You waste time prattling over ideology, because you think the men in jail have chosen suffering as an ideal. You are mistaken. They have chosen freedom. And to get freedom, they know they have to fight and land in jail; and that involves suffering - it can't be avoided. Unless when you understand this simple explanation about suffering, you won't understand the evil of the concept of Selflessness.

This is the root of our failure in the struggle. Sending men to battle as if they are horses of war which have no interest in that war, and nothing to gain from it. When such a horse sees that it'll lose its life for the sake of the men who are fighting, it tips the man who rode it, and bolts. But as soon as a man has an interest in a battle, he makes that battle his own, just as he rises to protect his wife from thugs; he has a selfish interest in that battle. I don't know by what philosophical misconception or christian precept or altruistic motivation is the concept of selflessness sprung.

A struggle is never selfless. Or if it is, it's evil; just like the battle in Vietnam. The American soldiers are clearly fighting a selfless battle, because they were sent there by martial law of conscription; they certainly have no interest in that battle, they don't care who wins or loses; they're just in a hurry to finish their term over there, and come back home to live. To lose your life for what you have no interest in is the base kind of selflessness. But the American soldiers are no more selfish in a way you can never imagine when you are drunk of socialist dogma. When I stand up to die in battle, there's a strong selfish motive that has goaded me - something belonging to me has been wronged, and I seek to make redress. When a Cuban comes to die in my struggle (not like the American soldier in Vietnam, but as a volunteer), it is like when I rise to chase a thief who has stolen from my neighbour; I'm not offering myself to suicide, but my intention is to dispossess the thief, and in the act, my motivation is not love of my neighbour, but a principle that I'll leave no thieves unturned. If that is my attitude, should I die, I won't cry that I've died for some one instead of saving my life. I'll say I died for a principle. (That is if I would have the chance to think when I'm dead). To hold a principle, never to surrender it, but to die for it in the face of beggars crying that you should forsake, is a selfish attitude. To cling to a principle is as selfish an attitude as to cling to a wife when relatives cry that you should drop her because they don't like her. But a principle is more than that, because a wife you can kick out sometime.

My interest has been roused in this point by Mathew Nkoana when he referred to freedom fighters in Rhodesia as selfless, though he said it in good intention.

I say this is the root of our failure because it has turned many of us into traitors and state-witnesses in court, revealing all secrets. I have seen it. A man somersault in court like a horse of war to save his skin, because he thought he was fighting for the masses, not for himself; that he was freeing the masses,

not himself, and the thought of dying for someone, for the masses, when others are not, becomes too acid to swallow - he turns traitor. But if he was fighting for a principle, he had no one to betray, but himself; if he had made the struggle a personal one, he had no one to blame, (if blame was called for).

In the same way you think that a person is suffering altruistically. How absurd. You are turning the whole concept of liberation into self-immolation for the sake of others, like a Buddhist burning himself alive in Burma. This battle is not a battle to die, but to live. Or let us all take poison and die the easier way. When one goes to battle he goes with the aim to kill, and with the knowledge that he might be killed.

This is the root of confusion in PAC. Because some men think that as long as there are Poqos in Robben Island, suffering and sacrificed, then PAC

is in the lime-light of the struggle; and as long as they remain in the Island, the better, for it boosts their prestige. You can't gain prestige by sending men, like goats, to the altar for slaughter, and claim that they are selfless.

The three S's in PAC have been misunderstood by many, and gravely. Service, Sacrifice and Suffering. That is why most of Nkoana's group of 1960, and many of us of 1963 went under table after having suffered, as we believe that contribution has been enough when one has gone through all the S's. They take the suffering as a virtue, instead of regarding it as a monster one must meet in the struggle.

The three S's are in order if well conceived.

And now while PAC waits and suffers in SA some men are busy planning a confused cultural revolution.

I say to them: WATCH!

MATTHEW NKOANA TO PIERRE L VAN DEN BERGHE

I must confess to being extremely bored with the subject matter of Dr. van den Berghe's article, besides being even more disappointed now over the quality of his scholarship that I was when I read his book. I suppose I ought to be pleased with the compliment he pays me about intellectual honesty, but how can I be when he himself is so guilty of the reverse?

Dr. van den Berghe admits to have been influenced by Leo Kuper, but although my article referred readers to my critiques on the latter's work as complementaries, van den Berghe has quite obviously never bothered to look them up. It is a cardinal failure of scholarship to ignore reference material. Such a failure, when dealing with an explosive issue such as the South African race question and making charges, borders on criminal negligence. Can it all be due to what van den Berghe calls the cynicism of scholars?

Van den Berghe resorts to hair-splitting and deliberate distortion -- by no means the hallmark of intellectual honesty. He quotes me out of context to make me look like contradicting myself and agreeing with him in spite of myself. His half-quotation: "The racist philosophy has permeated all strata of society, and had its victims among both the rulers and the ruled." What I said, which was also a quotation from a previous article of mine, was as follows:

"The racist philosophy had permeated all strata of society, and had its victims among both the rulers and the ruled. . . . Through both subtle indoctrination and rigid enforcement, the idea had come to be accepted even by Africans, willynilly or unconsciously, that the white man was a superior being with a right conferred from on high to lord it over all others." The dots in this quotation represent the words in the original passage, "a classic example of the truism that 'the ruling ideas of any age are the ideas of its ruling class,'" which did not have to be included because of what had preceded the quotation.

Indeed, the discussion on this issue in my article on van den Berghe's book, taking up eight paragraphs was so crucial to my argument that I took particular pains to elucidate the point. Any intelligent reader (and I think van den Berghe is an intelligent reader) could not possibly have misunderstood it. That is why I am so terribly bored, and in despair about the quality of intellectual honesty to which van den Berghe

pays lip-service.

Van den Berghe accuses me of making "a racist statement to suggest that a negative trait like racism is the exclusive monopoly of a 'racial' group, 'the whites'". I made no such statement! The relevant passage, which van den Berghe again conveniently distorts and which begins by approvingly quoting him said:

"At the level of values and ideology, the European settlers developed an elaborate racial mythology to rationalise their rule. . . . This is what came to be known as racialism, the ideology of racial superiority and exclusiveness, which is not evident in any other group in the country, least of all the African group. Cultural and religious differences remain among the groups, but these constitute an obstacle to political unity only insofar as political consciousness remains low or nil, though they inhibit social intercourse.

If the above statement is not true, the worst that van den Berghe can accuse me of is failure of observation. Failure to see evidence that a crime is being committed does not make one guilty of a crime, or the crime. Or is van den Berghe accusing me of concealment? As for my theoretical position in regard to the question of racialism, my article on his book only touches briefly on that, but it is not too late for van den Berghe to make up for his past failures by looking up the articles on Dr. Kuper's work to which I referred him.

In my article I accused van den Berghe of a serious lapse of scholarship, in that he made a grave charge against the Pan Africanist Congress (by the way, he calls it the Pan African Congress, which does not help me) without adducing any evidence for it. Apparently to make up for that failure, he now produces what is patently heresy evidence picked up from "what I suppose could be called 'second-echelon' leaders" of the PAC.

Van den Berghe was in South Africa between February 1960 and December 1961, at a time when all the three leadership layers of the PAC were in prison. With a few individual exceptions, mainly in the Transvaal (and they were neither students nor teachers), all the leaders and active supporters went to prison as from March 1960. So the students and teachers met by van den Berghe could not be leaders of the PAC, "second or third echelon".

In any case, no serious scholar writes books about the ideologies and policies of national movements without any reference to their policy pronouncements and basic policy documents. Van den Berghe says: "Most people who claimed allegiance to the PAC exhibited a strong suspicion of all non-Africans, and often openly expressed feelings of racial hatred towards 'Indians', 'Europeans' and 'coloureds'."

Granted this was so, a scholar's first duty would be to find out why and I cannot think of any way of doing this other than delving into literature, history and other political activities of their organisation. Such widespread racial hatred as van den Berghe claims to have found among Africans, should challenge the scholarly talents of a holistic sociologist van den Berghe produces generalisations: "To me, racism is the making of invidious distinctions between human groups which are socially defined on the basis of their physical appearance. For an African to say 'Indians are greedy' is just as racist as for a 'European' to say 'Natives are lazy'". I do not exactly know what is meant by 'socially defined', but I am afraid there is here a tendency to juggle with a burning social question.

What are our terms? Are we looking for evidence that, in van den Berghe's own words, "at the level of values and ideology" the Pan-Africanists are developing "an elaborate racial mythology", or merely for signs of group prejudice? Suppose I, an African, said that 'Indians are not greedy' and van den Berghe, a white, that 'Natives are not lazy' -- would these be profound non-racist statements? My wife says that Xhosas are 'cunning cheats' -- but among her best friends are Xhosa-speaking people!

Unlike van den Berghe, I do not regard racialism as a mere trait, negative or otherwise, certainly not in the South African context. I am more at home with van den Berghe when he says (I only wish he could be theoretically consistent) that the "European settlers developed an elaborate racial mythology to rationalise their rule." I go further, in my articles on Kuper to analyse the compound and its motive force. The most relevant passage, dealing with the "habits and institutions" of South Africa, follows:

"These habits and institutions are racialist in orientation, but racialism is the effect rather than the cause of a system of crass economic exploitation. This is not to underrate the scourge that is racialism in South Africa. It is a terrible mental disease once it takes hold of the victim, but it is not in the blood; it is not congenital. True, there are many -- tragically too many -- among white South Africans in whom racialism has become a kind of second nature. But this is not a natural phenomenon. It is fostered and nurtured in the European homes and schools and in public life. The books the children read are littered with the grand myth of the black man's inferiority. But it remains an artificial growth; so artificial, indeed, that it has become necessary to enact legislation to bolster it up and patch up yawning cracks in the racialist wall. Thus we have laws preventing intermarriage between the races, banning multi-racial worship or social mixing in entertainment, sports and other vulnerable spheres. Without this elaborate intervention from the cradle to the grave, those whites who do not know which side

their bread is buttered might multiply enough to disturb the structure of white supremacy and so bring about the end of economic privilege.

Van den Berghe seems to have difficulty over what the PAC means by African. He has my sympathies here! But I would like to conclude by asking him not only to re-read my article, the one that has caused so much concern to him, but also the others to which I referred him. He should find in that article, also, that I never called him a counter-revolutionary, but said he was a victim of pernicious literature (as contained in his bibliography) which had been built up over the years in counter-revolutionary ideological warfare.

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MATTHEW NKOANA TO 'D M ZWELONKE'

Your deep concern about the plight of the men on Robben Island, and about that of the others banished to remote places in our homeland, is truly touching. And it is proper for you and others not only to draw attention to these, but to speak out -- "lest we forget."

I share every bit of your agony and anxiety over the parlous condition of the movement abroad, as evidenced by what I had to say in the No. 52 issue of 'The New African'. It was not an easy but painful decision for me to write as I did, washing our dirty linen in public, as it were. But just as you say it is time for you inside South Africa to speak out, so it seemed time for me to do so.

While I agree with you about the correct interpretation of the PAC motto Service, Sacrifice, Suffering, I think you have missed the point of my use of the word selfless about South African freedom fighters in Rhodesia who were so unjustly described as mercenaries. The sentence read: "What is an insult, an unpardonable insult of a counter-revolutionary nature, is the description of selfless freedom fighters as mercenaries."

Perhaps it would have been less confusing if I used the word dedicated, but what selfless denoted in that context is that the freedom fighters were not fighting for remuneration like soldiers of fortune. So you can see I wasn't writing an essay on what you describe as a "philosophical misconception or Christian precept or altruistic motivation" of the concept of selflessness.

I think you are unfair to the great fighters of 1960 and 1963, most of whom, far from "going under the tables" as you aver, are as dedicated as ever. Many of those who in 1960 went into the fight as great patriots, became the victims of bad generalship in 1963 which resulted in what came to be known as the April Fools Day Debacle in Maseru.

I can vouch for these men, for their courageous spirit, and I am proud to have been fortunate to share experiences with them during the course of momentous events, in and outside prison. One of these imperishable memories was their part in what we came to know as the Battle of the Pick-handles inside the notorious Stoffberg Prison. History was made there, and it will yet be recorded.

These men and those of 1963 can be said to have gone into temporary retreat, to size up the enemy and take stock of their own position. So take courage, dear brother.

Izwe Luthu

# AFRICAN RELIGIONS

Bessie Head

Something repels the heart deeply in most organised forms of religion. There was a geography book of my school days with most of Asia blanked out as barbaric because Asians were so difficult to convert to Christianity. And there was a picture of a group of Untouchables standing by the sea-side and praying to the God, Shiva, the only God they were allowed to have because he never wanted much from mankind except a little water and Bel flowers. The caption under the picture said that the Untouchables were afraid to enter the temples, even though Indian law now allows them to do so.

Because we could not enter a place where gold ornaments were kept and incense burned in intricate rituals, we were discounted as a people having anything of value, as though our lives were a blanket of darkness or nothingness. You feel the agony of it in this age when we are supposed to borrow development and borrow everything either from Russia or America. Professor Mbiti, in his quiet and detached interpretations of African religions,\* side-steps the snobs and explains the way of life of a mass of people who were for so long discounted in the scheme of things. Although he speaks of African people, the appeal his ideas have for me is that they are wide and generous enough to take in all the humble who shall, one day, unexpectedly, inherit the earth. It is hard to imagine a heaven where the Pope officiates, because so many people would have to be excluded, but it is easy to imagine a universe and a people instantly immersed in a religious way of life. There are trees in this universe and they might tell a man in his own secret heart that they like to dwell near his hut. Also chickens and birds and rivers and sunsets and everything that flows and lives. A man in such a world takes his own time and goes about his affairs peacefully, nor does he have to shout and contort his features about the tree which indicated that it liked living near him. His whole world, says Professor Mbiti, is his religion and he is a religious man. This unity and feeling of at-oneness with all living things is the base of African traditional life and one has only to have lived through all kinds of clap-trap and then be plunged into a traditional society to fully support his view. It is indeed as though God, and a very original God, is quietly managing affairs, "behind the scenes," and people can afford to get on with the task of living. You can't imagine a God here who is only greeted on Sunday or Friday, but Someone who is absorbed and accommodated into a whole social structure and can be greeted at any moment.... "Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to..."

\*African religions and philosophy' by John S Mbiti (Heinemann Educational Books)

attend a funeral ceremony ..."

I take this view a little further. To me, this is the religion and attitude of mind of any people who have never been wanted by the rest of mankind, nor had the means or education to find God in a posh place. We had to make do with just what was at hand and if God is a subconscious process in our minds, he is perhaps that much more dignified and respected. He is not exclusive either, but shares in every aspect of communal life; that is, the word religion in the traditional sense simply means the way a particular tribe is living from day to day and season to season and year to year.... "A great number of beliefs and practices are to be found in any African society. These are not, however, formulated in to any systematic set of dogmas which a person is expected to accept. People simply assimilate whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities...and each generation takes them up with modifications suitable to its own historical situation and needs..."

One would pause and ponder a little more deeply on his proposition that a communal goodness is the root and foundation of African religion and that the individual within this community derives all his spiritual needs from participating in the entire life of the community. This idea is totally opposed to the great streams of Asian religious ideas where the accent is totally that of individual effort of individual souls. There are superhuman goals set, far above the capabilities of a single man and on examination of those disciplines prescribed, one becomes a little hesitant about the spiritual superman. There are indications of co-operation and assistance from unseen sources, even from that small circle of exclusive disciples, but it is not stressed. The co-operation which is necessary to achieve the highest standards takes a second place to the personalities involved in the propagation of new religious ideas. Thus, the ideas, which are of major importance, fail to become a part of the whole society because not everyone is attracted to a personality.

A great feeling of humility is generated by mutual co-operations: not the individual alone, to the exclusion of everyone else who helped him to become what he is. If this idea was also transported to the realm of the spirit there might be no more caste and class wars in the name of God. Indeed, God in Africa might, at last, be unashamed to say that he is unable to manage the enormous job of being God all by himself. That old man So-and-So with no teeth, but a good heart, gave him a helping hand, so that it is just anybody's heaven, where each person can feel that he matters infinitely and is loved, infinitely. Working his conclusions on the base of the African traditional structure, Professor Mbiti proposes a type of transfused religion. He says: "Transfused religion is the type which promises the greatest amount of influence on African peoples. Here, religion becomes more and more a social uniformity, without theological depth, personal commitment or martyrs. It is just "there," somewhere in the corpus of one's beliefs, whether one is conscious of being religious or not. It is not institutionalised.... It is equally tolerant as it is indifferent. But this is the form of religious life on which Africa must count to make an impress on morals, ethics, standards, and social conditions of its peoples. It is a religion

behind the scenes."

It is this "behind the scenes" which I like so much, if it could take away the exclusive temples and churches and let God be. After all, God is only there in the first place because people want something to trust, to feel some organising ability somewhere, to feel the need for restraint, and perhaps to be loved. Maybe God does these things anyway, whether mankind cares or not, but there was something wrong with the other social structures. One

after another they are condemned or doomed as God and caste in India is doomed. The outline Professor Mbiti gives of the African social structures is an invitation to the Gods to try out a new climate: "In traditional religions there are no creeds to be recited; instead, the creeds are written in the heart of the individual, and each one is himself a living creed of his own religion. Where the individual is, there is his religion, for he is a religious being. It is this that makes Africans so religious: religion is in their whole system of being..."

(Heinemann Educational Books)

# SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH

Tayeb Salih

## MUKHARR MUSTAPHA

Tayeb Salih's new book is like an unusually well polished floor, shining and glimmering not only on the surface but within the pores of the wood. The writer today in Africa should attempt to reflect the sum total of his situation in order that his readers be made to feel as if they were part of it. Tayeb has displayed tremendous technical mastery as far as the dramatic situation of his book is concerned. The book is about an obvious clever chap called Mustafa Sa'eed whose way of life was given to wild excitement, women, intellectual brilliance and killing. Mustafa Sa'eed had travelled from his native Sudan to Cairo and then to London, during which time his whole mental situation went through a complete re-orientation: Mustafa's secret love for Mrs. Robinson, his guardian's wife, his involvement and later killing of Jean Morris, his intriguing meeting with Isabella Seymour and the short-lived false romance.

What Tayeb Salih has done in the first half of his book is to juxtapose comic relief with serious drama. To illustrate the writer's strong sense of drama: "The man shook me by the hand and said, 'How are you, Mr. Sa'eed?' 'Very well thank you, Mr. Robinson,' I told him. Then the man introduced me to his wife, and all of a sudden I felt the woman's arms embracing me and her lips on my cheek. At that moment, as I stood on the station platform amidst a welter of sounds and sensations, with the woman's arms round my neck, her mouth on my cheek, the smell of her body -- a strange European smell -- tickling my nose, her breast touching my chest, I felt -- I, a boy of twelve -- a vague sexual yearning I had never previously experienced." One could imagine twelve-year-old Mustafa Sa'eed standing beside Mrs. Robinson with his head swirling in fantasies; there are no limitations to Mustafa Sa'eed, his shrewdness and patience always win.

The writer has brought about by his description of village life in the Sudan nostalgia and vivid sensual scenes in the minds of those who have visited or read about Africa. One need not live in Mustafa Sa'eed's village to enjoy the daily happenings or laugh at the comic misfortunes. He never makes his characters totally mean or unkind. This gives vitality and spirit to them. One sees the strange devotion of Mustafa Sa'eed's widow to the memory of a loving husband: "if they force me to marry, I'll kill him and kill myself." For Mustafa Sa'eed's widow was not going to be made common by re-marrying. For her, only her dead husband mattered: he alone provided her with comfort and plenty. She was not going to succumb to the notion that 'women belong to men, and a man's a man even if he's decrepit.' Hosna Bint Mahmoud, Mustafa Sa'eed's widow, is a strong personality, surviving against the tide of her society: her tastes were founded in her dead husband. She would not change sides, nor pledge her loyalty to any other living person. And the inevitable occurs: Mustafa Sa'eed's widow kills Mad Rayyes, the undesirable suitor:

"Bint Mahmoud look to your honour. What scandals are these? A virgin bride doesn't behave like this -- as though you had no experience of men." Then Mad Rayyes screaming at the top of his voice, "Bakri! Hajj Ahmed! Bint Majzoub! Help! Bint Mahmoud has killed me! She accepted the stranger: why didn't she accept Mad Rayyes?"

Tayeb Salih has brought and given considerable expression to writings in Africa. He has painted fantastic subjects which kindle his imagination and offer him an issue for his 'madness.' His closest attention has been to the people he created, to the laughter, to the old lorries and to the barren towns. All of these things he has fed with life and movement and involvement. Like a skilful painter, Tayeb Salih carves out and pieces together scraps of beauty. He sometimes forces his plot and works in a highly exaggerated fashion. Reality is not enough for him. Sometimes he employs abstraction and sometimes fact which takes him near to the true position of a passionate observer. My only criticism of Tayeb Salih is the way he injects colonial literary structures that had nothing to do with the writer's situation in Africa. Yet his new novel is a very witty and entertaining book -- a must!

# Moments for Reflections

Though Western education was to prove in its impact the most radical of all innovations introduced by the colonial powers, education as such was not foreign to African society. The NEW AFRICAN magazine at this juncture has travelled a great deal further than the original goal of the colonialist educators. What in effect the NEW AFRICAN has undertaken is a colossal task to re-educate the African on the one hand and educate the non-African on the other hand about the diverse cultural heritage of Africa, about the political, social and economic pressures that Africa is living with. The NEW AFRICAN has sought to concentrate tremendous resources on an expansion into the wider communication field. With this objective in mind, the NEW AFRICAN has brought to light for instance the depressing state of political and racial imbalance in South Africa. And at the same time telegraph into Africa with absolute precision the problems that beset the European and North American countries. In its scope of news coverage which is only a facet of the magazine's make-up, the NEW AFRICAN has published writings of formidable Africans and Europeans on subjects as diverse as 'Tribal Circumcision' and the 'Bronzes of Benin'. The magazine is bound to be different from that literature published about Africa in relation to global magnetisation. It was to be a journal worthy of the true confidence that a reader anywhere in the world demands. These being the untainted truths, journalism backed with sound reason and fertility of thought and courage. The magazine's task is to serve those 'born of the age we live in'. To translate the perceptions of the intellectuals from 'intellectual gymnasticism' to fundamental A B C. The magazine is to appeal to a whole new generation of Blacks and Whites aspiring to peaceful co-existence in an age stifled with war, oppression, racism, political and economic enslavement, automation and rising standards. As things stand the NEW AFRICAN has been able to live with modernity but still able to uphold radical thinking and also capable of admiring those who paved the way for such a climate of thought centuries ago.

The NEW AFRICAN constitutes the first act, the first concrete demonstration of African cultures awakening. An awakening to a culture which increasingly affirms its autonomous existence, thus breaking the still silence which it has held. The people who have read the NEW AFRICAN expect much and gain most. Because of the literary goal which is neither dogmatic nor ideological therefore, the new reading public that the NEW AFRICAN gets across to, feel very strongly about the necessary undertakings that the journal has fulfilled. That the NEW AFRICAN satisfied the legit-

imate and primary aims of all age groups is no question and that the NEW AFRICAN will succeed in winning more friends has never been doubted. This has been achieved through conviction backed with reason, bravery and coherency of ideas and thoughts. The magazine aims at harmonising the various diverse thinking of the minds whether in Europe or in North America who are now facing the thin line of indecision. If this message of brotherhood could be successfully telephoned with less force, then perhaps the original aim of 'INTERACTION' would have been successfully met. The NEW AFRICAN has accorded preference for African writers because these people have not found a literary promise in Europe or North America. And in order that the problems of Africa would be discussed at its core by people who live with the problem. As to our friends in other parts of the world, we have always kept open the corridors of communication while serving this calling. The NEW AFRICAN in collaboration between peoples artificially separated, provides the basis for common identity within the framework of universal understanding.

As the Editor of the NEW AFRICAN, among other preoccupations, my tasks are that of mustering and marshalling the universal consciousness particularly about Africa which often is distorted and always misrepresented.

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