

saying, "Let the Peace Corps Pack Out of Africa!" (*Ghanaian Times*, 23 July 1963), or words to that effect. However, it is doubtful if such words are meant to be taken seriously, as they are probably merely a gesture of independence, an indication that Ghana is not really dependent on any outside nation. Generally, relations have been, and remain, on a cordial level between the American Volunteers and Ghanaians.

The Volunteers, who are distributed in nearly 50 schools in different parts of the country, have generally made a favourable impression on their pupils and others by their cheerful and conscientious approach to their duties: in a country where secondary education means as much as it does in Ghana, this ensures that popularity and respect are accorded to the Volunteer teachers.

It should be mentioned that, in addition to the teachers, Peace Corps has sent nearly twenty geologists to Ghana. These young men are helping the Ghana geological survey in its location and development of the mineral resources of the country.

In addition to Ghana, Peace Corps Volunteers are serving in many other African countries—Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Togoland, Niger and Nigeria in West Africa; and also in Tunisia, Ethiopia, Somalia,

Tanganyika and Nyasaland. All these countries have asked for even more Volunteers, which is an indication of the popularity of the projects. Other African nations have requested Peace Corps assistance. The general experience, both of Ghana and of other countries, is that the Peace Corps can make an extremely valuable contribution to the social and economic development of the new nations.

A SECONDARY, though important, outcome of the Peace Corps programmes is the effect they have on the Volunteers, who gain enormously in maturity, breadth of outlook, commitment to basic values and the like, and who usually return to the U.S. with a potentially larger contribution to make to their own society. They also become much more international in outlook, and gain an insight into, and a sympathy for, the problems of a small new nation such as Ghana.

I confess that, like most others (including, it should be said, many Americans), I received the announcement of the formation of the Peace Corps with reservations: but my close contact with the Ghana projects has convinced me that this is a splendid scheme, one of which the U.S.A. can be justly proud. ●

Words Words Words

THE coming internal censorship of books in South Africa has aroused English and Afrikaans writers alike to protest and even to threaten defiance. From Alan Paton to Stuart Cloete (in a spectrum of quality, quantity and political viewpoint) and excluding only those even further right, like Sarah Gertrude Millin and W. E. G. Louw, our writers have protested. So many books and so many writers are banned already, through stopping them coming into the country and through the Suppression of Communism Act respectively that the Government can say: "you have put up with these bans for years, why complain now?"—a classic example of a small loss of freedom, condoned, leading to a greater loss.

Two writers gagged by the Suppression of Communism Act are Alex la Guma and Dennis Brutus. Neither the novel by the former, (Mbari, Ibadan) nor the poems of the latter may be sold or quoted in South Africa. As an offering to the many in this Vorster-imposed silence, here are Ulli Beier's comments on the verse of Dennis Brutus, made at the Mbari Writers Conference, held at Makerere last year:

"Dennis Brutus often deals with political situations in his poetry, but I don't think anybody could accuse him of being self pitying or even self-centred. On the contrary, his verse is extremely restrained and disciplined, and he speaks in a quiet, muted voice which is only possible for a person who manages to stand partly outside the events that affect him.

"In Dennis Brutus' verse there is none of the outcry, the scream, the anger of protest poetry. Sometimes it reads like an understatement; yet who could fail to be moved by a subdued poem like

[Quotation]

The poem is ostensibly about erosion but the double sense is obvious. The basic feeling is one of deep sadness rather than of outrage, of mourning rather than of protest. But there is nothing feeble here; a sensation of subdued strength runs through the whole.

"If we compare Dennis Brutus's writing with that of the West African writers we have discussed earlier, he seems more down to earth, closer to pressing everyday reality. He cannot indulge in purely personal poetry, he cannot afford the luxuries of myth-making, of polished verse or extravagant imagery. He is never allowed to forget the context in which he writes, and as we leaf through his poetry we will encounter the imagery of the apartheid state on almost every page, regardless of the theme of his poem:

[Six quotations]

"Such powerful lines convey a grim sense of reality. To Dennis Brutus, happiness—or

even peace—can only be fleeting transitory moments, moments he nevertheless relishes:

[Quotation]

he needs and enjoys each small moment of respite:

[Quotation]

"All this is said calmly, quietly, without bitterness. Not even the white oppressors come in for hatred, in fact they are mentioned only once, and then with a mixture of pity and contempt:

[Quotation]

"Dennis Brutus's language and themes are almost prosy. But there is a maturity of feeling and above all a *precision* of phrase, that lifts this verse far above the common protest cry coming from South Africa. This simple precision of language produces almost a kind of transfiguration. And this is possible through the poet's quiet fortitude that pervades all:

[Quotation]

WHITE highlanders cheer Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya while in Durban SABC reporters gloat over the Kenyans who stumble down the gang-plank saying they are going to stay in South Africa. It seems a pity that those who have survived one revolution should put themselves in the way of another. Both those who stay in Kenya and those who have left might be interested in a settler story which came in a letter from Morocco the other day. The settler is a hard-headed Belgian factory owner who

makes soap out of the last drop of oil squeezed from olive stones. His wife is a second-generation Moroccan French *colon*. In 1954 as the French rats were leaving the Moroccan independence ship he said to his wife: "Now is the time to buy a bigger house than we have ever had before." And now more people than ever before can afford to wash their hands in Morocco.

One of the farmers who is staying in the Kenya no-longer-white Highlands described himself on the BBC Overseas service as 'hard-core'. He was confident enough of the new Kenya to be able to make this joke in front of Kenyatta.

And yet at the same time the book *Mau Mau Detainee* by Josiah Kariuki, which has recently been published by Oxford, has been condemned by many Kenya settlers before they have even had a chance to read it. "Why rake all this muck up again?" they ask. And the largest chain of book-shops in East Africa has refused to handle it.

But of course there are many lessons to

be drawn by everybody from this blow by blow account of life in the detention camps of Kenya. And one of the lessons has a relevance closer to South Africa. Clyde Sanger pointed it out in his review of Kariuki's book in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* written after the Havelock Mine strike:

"It is a warning to Britain to avoid the same mistakes. It could never happen again, you say? What about the hooded men who screened the strikers in Swaziland, and put them in three categories including "hard core"? The terminology and the "Little Sacks" were identical with those used in Kenya's past. Swaziland has 10,000 whites, and most of the settlers are South Africans and they own half the land. There are plenty of forests in Swaziland: and the Swazis, being descendants of one of Chaka's Zulu regiments, are every bit as brave as the Kikuyu. Mr. Kariuki's book is more timely than he could have imagined when he looked no farther than at Kenya's horizon."

Africa Diary

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A Gentle People

BESSIE HEAD

The warm, uncommitted

"Coloureds" of the Cape

WHEN I FIRST CAME to Cape Town in 1958, my friends told me that Cape Town would weave a spell around me and I should never be able to leave it. If I went away, they said, I would always come back. Their words have proved true. I have come back, again and again, not knowing what it is that draws me. Now I do know. I love the Cape because it can give me, a writer, a fierce individualist—a warmth, a love, a sense of something that is the opposite of isolation and a sense of belonging, if not to the country, at least to the human race. I have found all this among the Coloured community in the Cape.

Whites in the Cape, with the habitual arrogance of Whites, refer to the Cape as having a "liberal tradition"; meaning of course, "their liberal tradi-

tion". It would never occur to them that it is the basically gentle and un-aggressive personality of the Cape Coloured that has made them "liberal". Wherever the White has felt himself "threatened" he has never hesitated to clamour for the most ruthless army and police repression. He lives always with his fears. The fact that he is able to pride himself in the Cape on being "liberal" is because he does not fear the Coloured man.

Another fallacy of the Whites is that they are the preservers of White Western Christian culture in Africa. Culture is not limited to the West, or Europe or a White skin or Christianity. Culture, in its truest sense, in its universal sense is the expression of the *personality* of a people. The Cape Coloured has this personality and he expresses it in little gestures and habits that are unique and belong to him alone. In fact his sense of belonging to himself and understanding himself without desires to impose himself on

others gives him a wonderful sense of a relaxed enjoyment of living. In a country where the rest of the oppressed groups are hounded day in and day out, their homes broken up, their movements restricted, he has been able to live in relative peace and move about as freely as he wished. To do this he achieved a compromise with the ruling, dominant group. Superficially he has many outward mannerisms and speech similarities of the Afrikaner. But the Afrikaner did not want him and yet did not fear him so he has developed from a bit here and a bit there a personality of his own. He adapts and grows and absorbs, adding to himself all the time. He welcomes strangers, is curious and interested in them and with a quick wit and jolly humour puts on a bit of their garments. He even adopts Hollywood and all its quaint trash. Anything and anyone can live beside him: sometimes these mixtures make him a better man, sometimes they have a harmful influence. In a cold and loveless country like South Africa his warmth of heart and *genuine* friendliness is like a great roaring fire on the white icy wastes of the Antarctic.

IN SPITE OF THE ADVANTAGES, such as freedom of movement that the Coloured man has had over the other oppressed groups in South Africa, he has, either through an innate laziness,

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