

The West Indian Economist

The Dissenting Voice

Perhaps one of the most interesting development of the past few years and particularly noticeable this year, has been the stirrings of ^a ~~the~~ spirit ^{and} ~~and~~ dissent at the ^{non-}political level. It is still a small ^{stirring} ~~movement~~. It does not make the newspaper headlines. It is only discernable to those who look closely beneath the surface of West Indian life. It is undramatic precisely because it is not concerned with the immediate, day-to-day problems of practical politics. But for all that we see it as a major force which will gather momentum with time. What is the nature of this ^{stirring} ~~movement~~ and dissent? What ^{is} ~~does~~ it ~~dissent~~ against? And what, positively is it ~~stirring~~ for?

In the first place it is concerned with ~~the~~ values. It is a ^{stirring} ~~movement~~ of human beings trying to grapple with the intangibles of West Indian life and living. It is concerned with states of mind, with our way of looking at the world and with the moral and ethical position from which we approach the whole business of living. It is concerned with the question of what constitutes a West Indian in our time: in short one of its primary concerns is with the crucial problem of achieving and recognising a distinctive West Indian identity.

Recently Mr. C.L.R. James came up from Trinidad at the invitation of the University College and discussed ^{the} problems ^{facing} of the West Indian writer. The essence of Mr. James' brilliant lecture was that the West Indian writer was not performing to the maximum of ^{his} ~~its~~ capacity because he was nearly always a-writer-in-exile and ~~that~~ ^{for} this made ^{very} severe limitations in his approach both to his art and to the West Indies. He, the writer, finds it impossible to make a living as a writer in the West Indies. He has therefore to go abroad. His audience is composed mainly of the English, American or other Europeans who buy and read his books. He therefore gears, however subtly, however unconsciously, what he writes to the limitations of the audience for whom he writes. This makes for a pattern of writing that is essentially explanatory for ^{a trade} ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~trades~~ on the exotic or on the difference of the people about whom he writes ^{compared with} ~~from~~ the people who read what he writes. Mr. James said

that this tended to ^{turn} ~~make~~ our writers ^{into} ~~conceive~~ of themselves or ~~behave~~ as entertainers.

He called for us in the West Indies to make it possible for our writers to come home and carry on their art among us. Only thus, he felt, would it be possible for them to be true to their art. Writing for us, living among us, their whole approach, their whole angle ^{of} ~~and~~ vision would be different. There ^{we} would be more in touch with the mood and atmosphere of West Indian life. They would become participants, involved and engaged in all the main facets of the problems facing us here in the West Indies in this day and age. And because the artist, especially the literary artist, is concerned with the question of values in human life and human conduct, their contribution will be unique.

Such is the barest outline of Mr. James' stimulating and provocative lecture which we hope will be published in full before too long.

For ourselves we believe Mr. James' lecture to be the most important contribution made this year to that area of thinking known as the arts. It is a challenge to which the West Indies must respond in no uncertain terms. Failure to do so would be tragic in terms of what will be lost in the nourishment of mens hearts and minds. Progress cannot and must not be measured by material things only.

^{then} ~~our~~ ^{our} writers and artists, constitute the dissenting voice of societies against all that ^{is} ~~the~~ stupid, petty ^{mean} and outdated but institutionalised by time long usage. We need that dissenting voice ^{we need our own} to dig deep and lay bare ^{our} ~~each~~ virtues as well as our vices and to point a way to the stars.

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New Venture In Public Relations

News comes of an interesting venture by two young men in Jamaica in the fields of Public Relations and Advertising. Dieter Baum, Art Director and Stephen Danos, Account Executive, resigned recently from Art & Publicity and set themselves up as Public Relations ^{and} Advertising Consultants.

It is their belief that advertisers in Jamaica have come to the state of mind where they desire to have a far more personalised service than agencies can offer. Annual advertising billings in Jamaica have increased considerably over the past few years until they are well on the way to the £2m. mark. Although agencies have been increasing their staffs it has become increasingly obvious that, owing to the low cost of advertising space, no agency can survive in Jamaica unless its billing and the commission that it received from media also increases manifold.

D. & B. ASSOCIATES, as the new firm is called, are not setting up as yet another agency. They receive from clients a retainer computed not necessarily on a percentage basis, but rather by calculation of the work which is required of them. In the field of Public Relations, they are, without doubt, Pioneers in Jamaica and Steve Danos is one of the very few Overseas Associates of the British Institution of Public Relations residing in Jamaica.

Advertising-wise, Dieter Baum is a Commercial Artist of extensive experience, not only in Jamaica but in England, Canada and the U.S.A.

Between them, they feel confident that they can handle the most complex advertising and Public Relations problems, particularly as they guarantee their clients that they will not handle competitive accounts.

Early indications are that this venture should be successful since, only two weeks after opening the doors of their office at 42A Upper Waterloo Road, they have signed up two five-figure accounts and other smaller ones. They say that they have

no intention of taking on unlimited accounts and in fact plan to close their books as soon as a certain minimum has been reached.

UWI LIBRARIES

9/7/94

Life in the Shadow of the American Eagle

Peter Abrahams

The working week starting July 4th was the week of the 15th annual gathering of the ~~fixt~~ leaders of the thirteen-member Caribbean Community. The venue, this time, was Bridgetown, Barbados whose Prime Minister had very recently suffered a no-confidence defeat in Parliament which forced him to set a date for new general elections almost eighteen months before they were legally due. The defeat^{ed}/Erskine Sandiford called the new^{Barbados}/elections for September 6th of this year and then prepared to preside over the week's CARICOM leaders' meeting. There was some argument in the region about the appropriateness of a defeated leader facing an impending election presiding over such a regional conference. But then a turn of events and a new twist in America's Caribbean regional policy almost trivialised the argument and the proceedings in Barbados.

It was triggered by a sudden and dramatic upsurge in the exodus of Haitian boatpeople fleeing their homeland in boats of all shapes and sizes, apparently eager to be spotted and picked up by American patrol boats out there for that specific purpose. In the past the boat-people, who had been trying to escape from their homeland in small numbers ever since the 1991 military coup against the elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, tried to evade the American patrol boats. But early in June the American policy of routinely picking up the boatpeople and dumping them back on Haitian soil, was changed following massive pressure from mainly African-American

lobbyists and pressure groups. Randall Robinson of Trans-Africa went on a widely publicised hunger strike; the Congressional Black Caucus denounced the returning of fleeing Haitians to the mercies of the increasingly brutal military regime; there were demonstrations outside the White House and at the United Nations headquarters. So the American Administration came up with the idea of processing the Haitian boatpeople on board bigger ships to decide which were to be accorded refugee status, and which were to be returned. Under American law such processing would be closely scrutinised by human rights groups, and the would-be refugee would be entitled to legal representation. Processing refugees on boats outside American waters would make everything quicker and simpler, and those who fail could still be shipped back to Haiti. So the American government struck a deal with the Jamaican government ~~xxx~~ by which the processing facility, a one-thousand-bed American hospital ship would be anchored in Jamaican waters to do the processing. In theory this exercise would last not more than six months, by which time it was anticipated that the Haitian military would have been scared or otherwise forced to leave and the elected President would have been restored to power. The hope was that this could be achieved without the use of military force; but the threat of such force was always declared - so often, perhaps, that the Haitian military came to dismiss it as a bluff. In the event, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Jamaican and American governments was announced by Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson in Parliament on June 1st, and officially signed on June 2nd. There was immediate uproar in the highly politically conscious Jamaican society - and indeed throughout the Caribbean: those who approved saw it as helping to ease a terrible situation; those who disapproved saw it as collaborating in what

was an essentially racist policy of keeping Haitians out of the United States. Randall Robinson himself, as well as a number of other black American leaders, including former Mayor Dinkins of New York, came to Jamaica to lend support to the Jamaican position. Then, on the opening day of the CARICOM leaders' meeting, the Haitian floodgates burst and Haitians poured out of their country in a torrent which left the United States bemused. Between Monday July 4th (American Independence Day) and the weekend starting July 8th between ~~eight~~ thousand and ten thousand Haitians took to the sea in rickety ~~boats~~ to be picked up by American vessels to be processed. Neither patrol boats ~~boats~~ nor hospital ship in Kingston harbour could cope with the volume. And still the Haitians came.

So there was another policy shift. The processing on the hospital ship was abruptly halted. A new policy of 'Safe havens' was ~~enounced~~ enunciated under which no Haitians would be processed for adm^{ss}ion into the United States. Instead a constellation of 'Safe Havens' would be estab^lished throughout the Caribbean region where the Haitians would be kept until the crisis in their country is resolved and they can be returned to Haiti. It was announced that Panama would take ten thousand Haitians into 'safe haven', Antigua would take some too, though not as many; and it was hoped that other countries in the region would also provide 'safe havens' for the Haitians. Then, two days later, the President of Panama repudiated the agreement to provide safe haven for ten thousand Haitians; he said he had been bullied and pressured and insulted. U.S. spokespeople denied this. The American hope now must be that the new Panamanian President who assumes office next month will

give back life to their plan to keep ten thousand Haitians in 'safe haven' on the American base in Panama. Till then the only 'safe haven' they have with any reasonable certainty is the one now being built and enlarged at the American base at Guantanamo in Cuba. Cuba has long disputed America's presence, in perpetuity, on its territory; it has strongly denounced the using of part of that territory as 'detention camps'. And the principal government spokesman in the Jamaican Senate, the Upper House of Parliament, on Friday said that 'safe havens' was not part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments, implying strongly that Jamaica will not provide such 'safe havens' on Jamaican soil. All of which pushes American policy on Haiti, with its emphasis on keeping the Haitians out of the United States, up a blind alley. The military option stares them in the face; but with little warmth or sympathy from their so-called friends in the 'outer islands'. So what will they do? They had no compunction about invading Grenada in 1983 when Mr. Reagan wanted to project an America sure of itself and able to win; and they had no compunction, six years later, to go into Panama, seek out its President and take him to the United States to be tried and jailed, because, we are led to believe, he had betrayed his former friends, among them Mr. Bush. In those cases international law cut little ice. So if they really want to 'take out' the Haitian military they can, and could have done it, any time they want to. So why this enormous regional build up of a crisis? They know that ending the military rule and restoring the elected President would stop the exodus of boatpeople overnight. So what lies behind all the twists and turns? That Aristide is not a preferred alternative to the military? That the power-brokers and manipulators distrust him? How do you balance that against the fact

that the overwhelming majority of the Haitian people voted for him in perhaps the freest elections ever held in Haiti? If democracy is what this is all about then why all these twists and turns about a relatively simple matter? Anybody, any nation, which could so easily 'take out' the commies in little Grenada, the nasty Noriega in Pananama, help defeat the Sandinistas and the FNLA in Central America, and keep Cuba bottled up to the point of strangulation for more than thirty years, can surely 'take out' the brutal little Haitian dictatorship and give the Haitian majority a chance to rebuild their lives and to stop trying to go where they are not wanted. It is a small thing to do for the Haitians whose present predicament is not unrelated to past American policies and practices. If the restoration of democracy is the real aim, what is the snag?

If South Africa had been as close to America as Haiti is, if she had had to struggle and live and survive in the shadow of the American eagle, where would she have been today?

5 May 94
South Africa:
The Turning Point

Peter Abrahams

I left South Africa in 1939, shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War and three weeks after I and five other young non-white men, four of them Indians, had been charged with treason for publishing a little cyclostyled political magazine in which we urged non-white South Africans who were being recruited for the war to first demand their fair share of the democracy they were being called on to defend. This happened in Durban, Natal. General Jan Smuts was Prime Minister of South Africa. His government had been democratically elected, but by white voters only. The Union of South Africa then was a highly respected member of the British Commonwealth and Empire. All the leaders and heads of government of the Commonwealth then were white though more than ninety percent of the subjects of the Commonwealth and Empire were black and brown with a dash of yellow. The periodic meetings of heads of Commonwealth governments, always in London in those days, were all-white affairs, a sort of exclusively 'White Club' which set the tone for all the exclusive white clubs from Delhi to Bombay to Singapore to Kuala Lumpur to Cape Town to Durban to Nairobi to Bulawayo to Kingston to Bridgetown to Port-of-Spain and all around the world of the empire on which the sun never set. This empire had gone to war and it was under the laws of this empire that the six black and brown young men were charged with treason.

A brilliant white South African lawyer, who happened to be a communist and a Jew, and whose name I have long since forgotten,

got us off on a legal technicality. But we were marked; our Liberal Study Group was marked; our magazine was marked. The sergeant in the political division of the Durban police who had built up the case against us assured me that he would get us sooner or later when no communist Jew lawyer could help us. He was a dour Afrikaner and I believed him; I had seen his kind at work, and I had been at the receiving end of long questioning sessions with him. I decided to leave while I could and bribed my way onto a merchant ship which I was told plied only the East African coast. I was a stoker's trimmer which was brutal work for a less than one hundred pound body. And, extraordinarily, the political police raised no objection when I applied for the necessary permit to go to sea. The sergeant's superior was, according to the sergeant, glad to be rid of one of us. The events of this past week in South Africa brought all those details vividly back. Fifty-five years after I left South Africa at age twenty the long night of institutionalised racism had finally come to an end. Black people, my age and older, and younger, voted for the first time in their lives to choose those who would lead. I have a very strong and deep-rooted sense of the hopes and expectations with which they cast their ballots. I am sad to be the only one of the members of my immediate family to have lived to see this day. Over the long years my sense of history had assured me that this day would come; my sense of historic reality had cautioned that it may not come in my lifetime. Now the moment has come and I have lived to see it. How does it feel? Archbishop Desmond Tutu is of a younger generation than mine so I warm to his 'walking on clouds'. I remember far too many who have struggled and suffered and died to have more than a sense of quiet satisfaction that this century's worst historic evil, institutionalised racism, has finally

come to an end. I am sorry so very many, over the generations, did not live to see this day.

I know nothing in human history to compare with this methodical and carefully built-up structure by which one group of humans dominated another group of humans using nothing but skin colour to give moral, legal, constitutional and even scriptural justification for that domination and exploitation over more than three centuries. It began in 1652 with the first settlement at the Cape and the straightforward struggle between black and white for the land and the food and cattle on the land. And, as in other lands all over the earth, the white arrivals were welcomed at first; the natives were friendly and helpful at first; but it always ended in conflict, primarily over the land. The Africans and the other peoples the whites encountered, regarded land as a life-source, not property to be owned by one man or any one group of men. The whites saw it differently; and the struggle was joined. One of the most urgent problems following the end of Apartheid is going to be the resolving of the land issue. For Africans, almost more than for any other people I know of, land is the life of a people. The white intruders, for their part, saw themselves as moral, upright, civilised, christian beings and they had to invest their conquest with legal and moral justification. The natives had to become savages, kaffirs, uncivilised, inferior. And the 'colour-line' of which W.E.B. DuBois wrote at the turn of the twentieth century was born and became reality. "The Problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour-line - the relations of the

darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea..." was born largely out of this need to find legal, moral, constitutional and even religious justification. It became the underpinning of the new kind of slavery of the New World and the islands of the sea. The slavery of ancient times was not based on skin colour. And even after slavery, the colonialism in which I and my generation were born was a thing of colour.

My ship in which I was a war-time stoker took me first up the East coast of Africa; and all of East Africa was 'White Africa'. The mindset that made for the later legal and constitutional construct was in place everywhere. So Malan's Apartheid in 1948 was simply the codification of an institutionalised racism which began hundreds of years earlier. And because it was a thing of huge profitability which enriched vast numbers in Europe and provided pensions and incomes for even the middle and lower income groups in Europe, ~~even~~ those who opposed racism were ambivalent and had a vested interest. This was the greatest obstacle we faced in the many years of trying to persuade Europe of a great human evil which predated even Hitler's Nuremberg Laws. After a century of struggle Europe and ^{the} world finally faced up to the evil monster which would use laws and constitutions and even ^e Holy Scripture to justify the dehumanising of human beings. It was, I think, the ugliest and most repulsive thing that happened to humanity in the twentieth century. The one redeeming feature is that we are not carrying this problem over into the twenty-first century. That century will have grave problems of its own of which the ~~restoring~~ ^{restoring} and protecting of the environment is perhaps the greatest. I hope the people of that new century will show greater wisdom and understanding than have most of the people of our own century who have taken nature's great

gifts for granted and abused most of them grossly: we have polluted the oceans and the seas, the earth and even the heavens. If the people of the twenty-first century do not, as a matter of urgency, end this depredation and work to restore the environment, and create a more caring balance between man and nature, we may end up with the world doing the same terrible damage to the environment that the three hundred years and more of institutionalised racism has done to the black people of South Africa in particular, to the African continent in general, and to black folk everywhere on earth. The great difference^{is} that the world may not be able to recover, to redeem itself, from that danger as it has from its historic racial folly. The problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the environment - of the relation between man and nature in the search for long-term survival of the human species. My hopes are for a South Africa which will, after the period of healing, make an important contribution to this aspect of human endeavour. The experience of living in harmony with the earth is an old African gift buried by a distorted history. Now that the distortion is ending the ancient gift must be revived. Africa owes that to the world.

I worry that Mandela has so little time in which to do the great work of the transition. If he had started today's work ten years ago, or if he had a certain ten to twenty years ahead of him, I would have seen the transition in a more optimistic light. But whatever the troubles from here on they will be qualitatively different from what they were. We have passed the great turning point by consigning and degrading institutional racism to the ugly/episode in human history it was. And what a waste of creative resources it has been. Now we look to a better, more creative, more loving - though obviously a still very difficult future for all the people of this earth, black and white.

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
THE AFRO-ASIANS AND THE WEST

Jamaica is a very beautiful and a very peaceful little island. It is an island whose people stem from many races and many colours, and the striking thing about it is that its people have gone farther towards working out the problems of how people of different colours can live together in harmony and dignity and respect than any other place and any other people I know. It is for this reason, because Jamaica represents, in terms of race and colour, the antithesis of my own native South Africa that I live here with my family. We have built for ourselves a home high up in the hills of St. Andrew. It is more than twenty-one hundred feet up and it commands a view of the rolling hills, misting away into the heart of the island, to the north and west, the Blue Mountains to the north-east and the plains of Liguanea and St. Catherine to the south. I have named this house of ours 'Coyaba' which is an Arawak word meaning 'heaven', 'peace', 'tranquility' because I have found such a large measure of these states of mind on this high hill in Jamaica. At certain times of the year the view from 'Coyaba' reminds me very much of aspects of Cape Town seen from the slopes of Table Mountain. And then I remember that if I had built 'Coyaba' on the slopes of Table Mountain the house would have been designated as being in a 'European area' and I would have been evicted; but long before that my wife and I would have been hauled in front of the courts and convicted under the so-called immorality laws. And then it becomes both tragic and bizarre to realise anew that South Africa and Jamaica

are part of the same world; that I was born and grew to manhood in one, and that I had to come and live in the other to enter fully into the promise and meaning of my manhood. This is not to say that Jamaica has no problems. It has serious problems of poverty, of unemployment, of homelessness and of the despair that comes when people do not know where they are going. And without having colour bars, obvious discrimination, or sharp and overt expressions of prejudice, it yet has both psychological and economic overtones and undertones of race and colour. But for all its problems it is still easier here than anywhere else I know for a person to cross the frontiers of colour and of prejudice and be just a person.

It is partly because of this that our long veranda high up in the hills is sometimes crowded on Sunday mornings. Mostly, the people who come are Jamaicans of all shapes, sizes, shades and colours. And mostly the talk is about Africa and the racialism that is such a besetting sin of the world outside this island. Sometimes the crowd is joined by visiting Americans or Africans or Europeans or, more rarely, Asians. (It has been my joy on two or three occasions to watch American Negro friends shed that invisible but very real protective shield behind which they spend so much of their lives and function simply as human beings in a world of other human beings. They seemed so strikingly warm and gentle then and so passionately committed to their country. It made me wonder whether their white fellow Americans had ever seen this). Sometimes the visitors are journalists from far places, come in search of a story: often they come with their own preconceived mould into which to force what they see and hear. I found these

committed to the notion of a 'race war' between the lighter and darker skinned peoples of the world most guilty of bringing such preconceptions as part of their mental baggage. Thus a famous English journalist came and sat on our long veranda and, on the evidence, predicted racial violence on the island within twelve months. He later repeated his prediction in a well-known leftwing English journal, but omitting the time part. The 'evidence' was that a handful of young American Negroes of Jamaican ancestry had brought arms into the island and tried to use the local Rastafari cult to stage an ^{armed} uprising. There were a few murders and after a dramatic manhunt through the Jamaican bush the young American Negroes were captured, tried, found guilty, sentenced and executed. Not even the Rastafarians whom they tried to use had supported them. Press handling of this affair had given it its 'race war' slant. All that was three years ago. More recently, towards the end of last year, another visiting writer passed through. This one was collecting material for a book on the coming world-wide 'race war'. He had been in the United States, taking a quick look at the South; to Panama, and then a week in Jamaica. He, too, seemed singularly unwilling to admit of any ray of hope to damage the mould of inevitable tragedy he had fashioned.

The trouble is that many of us have developed a vested interest in the 'colour conflict'; it has become our 'business'; some of us make big money out of it, others become famous and important because of it. And not all of us are honest enough to either see, or want to see, that we sometimes sharpen the 'colour conflict' by the way we handle news of it or by reading

meanings into it calculated primarily to serve selfish interests. And we are sufficiently rich in ready-made villains to easily shut up anyone who questions our motives by yelling: Angola! South Africa! Smethwick! Mississippi! to show that we are on the side of the angels and the angels are on our side. And, of course, with the angels on your side there is no room for self-doubt, no need for self-criticism. Often this mental state is accompanied by an unsufferably pompous self-righteousness. Perhaps it was this pomposity in the face of a difficult and delicate problem with deep moral implications that called forth the wrath of Mr. Adlai Stevenson during that depressingly squalid debate on the Congo rescue operations at the last U.N. session.

Yet for all their pomposity those who provoked Mr. Stevenson's wrath were as convinced of the essential rightness of their position as was Mr. Stevenson of his. It is at this point that we come up against what amounts to an almost total collapse in communication. The delegates were talking about the same thing: but they might as well have been talking about totally different things. What was right and decent and moral for one side was ugly and wicked and immoral for the other; good was evil, evil good, depending which side you were on. It seemed that over the tragic Congo situation, and particularly over the U.S.-Belgian rescue operation there had ceased to be a common body of values by which to judge what was right from what was wrong. When such a situation is reached there is in fact a total breakdown in communication. Worse still, in this particular collapse each side imputed the basest motives to the other:

each was a villain to the other.

The Sunday after the news of the rescue operation and of the depressingly senseless death of Dr. Paul Carlson, among others, a friend came and sat on our long veranda and literally 'blew his top'. He was not a Jamaican or an African; he came from Haiti, an exile from the black dictatorship of 'Papa Doc'. The reason for his bitter consuming rage was because he felt the world's press (and for him it meant the Western press) had dealt with the rescue operation in terms of black and white. He said that all the fuss, the lurid and sensational headlines, the charges of savagery and barbarism, were because in this instance the victims were white. Had they not been white there would have been no rescue operation and much more subdued headlines, if any. The conclusion to his bitter and angry tirade was that the West still had one set of values for the humanity of whites and another for the humanity of non-whites.

I protested that the whites who had been held hostage had gone to the Congo to serve, that the exploiters and racialists had left while the going was good. I suggested that here again we were witnessing the age-old tragedy in which the good and the decent and innocent are made to suffer for the sins of the wicked. "But they don't make it seem like that!" he protested; "For them it is a new thing that has never happened before, come about only because of the savagery of black men!" And so he would not soften his hard attitude because the whites had made this a thing of black and white.

So our first problem, the first obstacle we face in meeting

the challenge of getting genuine and meaningful communication going between the Afro-Asians and the west, is the problem of how we see each other. Do the Afro-Asians on the one hand, and the Westerners on the other, place the same qualitative value on each other's humanity as they do on their own?

I think both sides would insist that the answer is 'yes', that each side values the humanity of the other as much as its own. After all, the notion of an almost blanket equality without any reference to a corresponding responsibility, or anything else, has become the great symbol of our age. (So who is Einstein? Just an ordinary guy like me, so why should I look up to him? Or to Churchill? Or Nehru? Or anybody else? The noble concept of the inviolability of the human person, of the equality of our humanity, has often been distorted). But one critically careful look at the world as it is would cast grave doubt on both Afro-Asian and Western claims that they place the same value on each other's humanity.

At best, and in the best of all possible worlds, the other fellow is always just a little less human, a little less perceptive, a little less sensitive, a little less gentle, a little less compassionate and thoughtful than we are. We do not necessarily hold this against him; indeed, we may even like him all the better for it, especially if it makes us feel that much more of a human being. So the Afrikaner farmer has a very real and deep affection for 'the simple, unspoiled, primitive, happy Native'. There is a kind of escalator aspect to this. The persons or societies nearest to us and ours, those we know, are always very much less foreign and frightening and alien. The fellow in the neighbourhood who speaks the same language, goes to the same school and church, wears the same kind of clothes and is the same colour is obviously

closer to us in humanity than the fellow at the other end of the earth whose habits, dress, behaviour, language, religion, way of playing, colour, are ^{is} vastly different from our own. It is asking a great deal to expect us to accord this fellow at the other end of the earth a humanity equal to our own. ^{That} that there are in fact so many of us, still a minority it is true, but a most gifted and articulate minority, who do accept without any reservations the equal humanity of all people is to my mind one of the great psychological achievements of man that has not been accorded the credit it deserves. But the fact remains that a majority of mankind, both Afro-Asian and Western, do not accord each other a qualitatively equal humanity.

It would be most surprising if it were otherwise. The history of the relations between the darker and the lighter peoples of the world, especially over the last three-hundred-odd years, is such that the striking fact is not that there has been a collapse in communication, but rather that it has been of such a relatively minor nature, not charged with greater bitterness and massive violence. But it is part of this business of not according each other an equal humanity that makes one group of people expect another to be more forbearing, more understanding, more forgiving than they themselves would ever be. The surprising thing, to me, is that there is only one Congo situation, that almost everywhere else the coming of independence has not been accompanied by really ugly pogroms against the whites who only yesterday exercised their overlordship with a torturing arrogance that only those at the receiving end really understood. I think it is important to remember that perceptive American as well as European observers who looked at the Congo when it was still a Belgian colony predicted that the driving out of the Belgians was likely to be followed by the kind of total breakdown we are now witnessing.

The foundations for what is happening in the Congo today were laid during the time of the Belgians. To say this is not to approve or to condone or to excuse. It is simply to remind that what happens today usually happens because of what was allowed to go unchecked yesterday. In this context the stand of the two or three African states whose spokesmen refused to see the Congo rescue operation in terms of black and white was, for me, a striking and pleasing surprise because it was a clear and sharp affirmation of the equality of the humanity of all men. I might have expected this of Senegal's President Senghor. He is a poet with a sense of history and, in my opinion, the one African leader whose vision goes beyond the frontiers of race and colour, where most of us, leaders and led, Africans, Asians, and whites, still stand trapped today. In the period of rampant Western nationalism, in the days when the Congo was the private preserve of a Belgian king and there were reports of Congolese being massacred in the mass, no equivalent Western Head of State took ^a clear stand as did Senghor. I note this here simply because very many opinion moulders and others in the West often demand of others a morality and quality of behaviour which they themselves have not lived up to. Unhappily we ^{are} now seeing the same thing coming into full flower in many of the Afro-Asian countries, where many of those who shout loudest about freedom and human dignity suppress these most ruthlessly among their own people.

But when all this is said we are still left with the hard fact that there was this complete collapse in communication at the last U.N. session; and we know that at other times such communication as exists between the Afro-Asians and the West is often a thin thread of political and economic manoeuvring at the government-to-government level.

And more often than not this brand of communication results in making relations uglier, ^{and} in sharpening irritation and impatience on the one side and resentment and bitterness on the other. The pattern is all too familiar to need detailing here. Some Western power (usually the U.S.) gives aid to some Afro-Asian power; inevitably the representatives of the aiding power expect some sort of acknowledgement, if not open gratitude. Sometimes these representatives are shocked and surprised and hurt when their government is subjected to abuse, or when the leaders of the receiving country either actively encourage mobs to attack their embassies or else look the other way. And of course at the international level, and in the climate of the Cold War, aid is an instrument of policy, so the representatives of the giving power do a little pressing, and this also leads to resentment from the receiver. Often the givers are perplexed by the fact that the more ^{they} give the more they seem resented and the less it seems to be appreciated.

I think the very nature of the economic relationship between the Afro-Asians and the West, and particularly the United States, makes for trouble. No really creative relationship is possible between the giver and the receiver of charity; and where the giving sometimes assumes the appearance of 'buying' the allegiance of the receiver currents of bitterness are likely to run deep. And who is to blame the American taxpayer when he gets fed to the teeth with ungrateful foreigners who not only take everything he has to give without so much as a 'thank you' but abuse him into the bargain. And yet this is inevitable in any relationship between the giver and the receiver of charity. There can be no sense of equal dignity between the giver and the receiver of charity, no real acceptance of the fact of equal dignity by either.

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This was and is an important beginning. The giving is still one way. The problem still remains the finding of ways to make this a two-way traffic, with the Afro-Asians doing a little giving as well as receiving.

Another aspect of this problem of communication has to do with the attitudes of the Afro-Asian leaders to the West; and here I think we have to differentiate between the Africans and the Asians. The present generation of African leaders are less able to turn their backs completely on the West than are their Asian counter-parts. Already there are important Asian leaders, like India's Mr. Shastri, who did not receive their training in the West; but this is still a matter of degree.

In the main, the Afro-Asian leadership (but particularly the African) is the only group that has had first-hand contact with the 'white world'. Almost invariably they have all experienced such psychological and emotional assaults on their sense of self-respect and *dignity* that they have come away children of the West, because of their training, yet nursing deep resentments against it.

This ambivalence is a key characteristic in most of the African Prime Ministers and Presidents who were often translated from colonial prisons to their high offices. It is not reasonable to expect the outlooks of these men not to have been greatly influenced by their experiences. Old hurts, even if not consciously remembered, often influence key decisions. And these are the men who do the thinking for and shape the attitudes of that three-quarters of humanity that is too poor and too ignorant to work out rational attitudes for itself. These men control the means of mass communication in what are usually single-party states made so with the tacit approval of the mass of the people in each given country. Inevitably, the prejudices and resentments these leaders have acquired in their often painful encounters with the 'white world' become prime factors in shaping the outlook of the people they lead. They know the 'white world' has a massive cultural arrogance based on colour so that a Malan or a Verwoerd can claim justification by declaring that they are defending 'Western European Civilisation! So they counter with 'Negritude' and its moral and cultural claims to a greater humanity and perception: they know from experience that the 'white world' has a stereotype of the black man so they counter with their own stereotype of the white man as someone whom history has proven to be hostile to all the best interests of all black people. And so instead of only white people being filled with colour prejudice a new situation, the other side of the penny is shown, with black people being filled with a colour prejudice directed at the whites.

One of the ironies of this situation is that although African students may encounter as much prejudice and discrimination in Asia as they do in the West, the leaders tend to shut their eyes to this. They are not as intensely and subjectively involved emotionally with Asia as they are with Europe and the United States. So it is easy to dismiss Asian manifestations of colour prejudice as stupid and backward.

This, I think, is at once the highest compliment the African leaders pay the West, as well as their harshest judgement of it: in it are summed up all their expectations and disappointments. That is why I think this generation of Afro-Asian leaders are likely to make difficult the flowering of that real communication between the lighter and darker peoples. I think when this generation of leaders gives way to a new one, that new generation of leaders will not have the same psychological and emotional involvement with the West. It will be a leadership with no memory of an intimate and painful experience of a 'master-and-man' relationship with the West. For the African it will be a leadership largely trained inside Africa, with very little, if any, emotional involvement with the West, and therefore with no ambivalence towards it. It will perhaps look more tolerantly, because it looks more impersonally, at both the virtues and the flaws of the West, and so make easier a more 'normal' relationship.

All this is on the assumption that our generation does not make such a mess of things that when the new generation takes over they find such a high wall of colour that all real communication is impossible.

I think the only way to make sure that we do not make such a mess is to keep on talking and thinking about the problems we face and to go on seeking ways and means of making the kinds of human contacts across the oceans and continents that will make each man recognise the rare and distinctive humanity of every other man. I do not think there is any more pat or slick or easy answer. This has to do with that most important of all man's journeys through the ages, the long march to self-knowledge, which has been such an important driving force in all he has done so far in his life here on earth.

Like all really fundamental challenges there is no simple political or economic or ideological solutions to this one. It embraces all these and more because it has to do with the way men look at each other. I think the realisation of this is an important beginning.

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEENTHE AFRO-ASIANS AND THE WEST

Jamaica is a very beautiful and a very peaceful little island. It is an island whose people stem from many races and many colours, and the striking thing about it is that its people have gone farther towards working out the problems of how people of different colours can live together in harmony and dignity and respect than any other place and any other people I know. It is for this reason, because Jamaica represents, in terms of race and colour, the antithesis of my own native South Africa that I live here with my family. We have built for ourselves a home high up in the hills of St. Andrew. It is more than twenty-one hundred feet up and it commands a view of the rolling hills, misting away into the heart of the island, to the north and west, the Blue Mountains to the north-east and the plains of Liguanea and St. Catherine to the south. I have named this house of ours 'Coyaba' which is an Arawak word meaning 'heaven', 'peace', 'tranquility' because I have found such a large measure of these states of mind on this high hill in Jamaica. At certain times of the year the view from 'Coyaba' reminds me very much of aspects of Cape Town seen from the slopes of Table Mountain. And then I remember that if I had built 'Coyaba' on the slopes of Table Mountain the house would have been designated as being in a 'European area' and I would have been evicted; but long before that my wife and I would have been hauled in front of the courts and convicted under the so-called immorality laws. And then it becomes both tragic and bizarre to realise anew that South Africa and Jamaica

are part of the same world; that I was born and grew to manhood in one, and that I had to come and live in the other to enter fully into the promise and meaning of my manhood. This is not to say that Jamaica has no problems. It has serious problems of poverty, of unemployment, of homelessness and of the despair that comes when people do not know where they are going. And without having colour bars, obvious discrimination, or sharp and overt expressions of prejudice, it yet has both psychological and economic overtones and undertones of race and colour. But for all its problems it is still easier here than anywhere else I know for a person to cross the frontiers of colour and of prejudice and be just a person.

It is partly because of this that our long veranda high up in the hills is sometimes crowded on Sunday mornings. Mostly, the people who come are Jamaicans of all shapes, sizes, shades and colours. And mostly the talk is about Africa and the racialism that is such a besetting sin of the world outside this island. Sometimes the crowd is joined by visiting Americans or Africans or Europeans or, more rarely, Asians. (It has been my joy on two or three occasions to watch American Negro friends shed that invisible but very real protective shield behind which they spend so much of their lives and function simply as human beings in a world of other human beings. They seemed so strikingly warm and gentle then and so passionately committed to their country. It made me wonder whether their white fellow Americans had ever seen this). Sometimes the visitors are journalists from far places, come in search of a story; often they come with their own preconceived mould into which to force what they see and hear. I found these

committed to the notion of a 'race war' between the lighter and darker skinned peoples of the world most guilty of bringing such preconceptions as part of their mental baggage. Thus a famous English journalist came and sat on our long veranda and, on the evidence, predicted racial violence on the island within twelve months. He later repeated his prediction in a well-known leftwing English journal, but omitting the time part. The 'evidence' was that a handful of young American Negroes of Jamaican ancestry had brought arms into the island and tried to use the local Rastafari cult to stage an ^{armed} uprising. There were a few murders and after a dramatic manhunt through the Jamaican bush the young American Negroes were captured, tried, found guilty, sentenced and executed. Not even the Rastafarians whom they tried to use had supported them. Press handling of this affair had given it its 'race war' slant. All that was three years ago. More recently, towards the end of last year, another visiting writer passed through. This one was collecting material for a book on the coming world-wide 'race war'. He had been in the United States, taking a quick look at the South; to Panama, and then a week in Jamaica. He, too, seemed singularly unwilling to admit of any ray of hope to damage the mould of inevitable tragedy he had fashioned.

The trouble is that many of us have developed a vested interest in the 'colour conflict'; it has become our 'business'; some of us make big money out of it, others become famous and important because of it. And not all of us are honest enough to either see, or want to see, that we sometimes sharpen the 'colour conflict' by the way we handle news of it or by reading

meanings into it calculated primarily to serve selfish interests. And we are sufficiently rich in ready-made villains to easily shut up anyone who questions our motives by yelling: Angola! South Africa! Smethwick! Mississippi! to show that we are on the side of the angels and the angels are on our side. And, of course, with the angels on your side there is no room for self-doubt, no need for self-criticism. Often this mental state is accompanied by an ⁱunsufferably pompous self-righteousness. Perhaps it was this pomposity in the face of a difficult and delicate problem with deep moral implications that called forth the wrath of Mr. Adlai Stevenson during that depressingly squalid debate on the Congo rescue operations at the last U.N. session.

Yet for all their pomposity those who provoked Mr. Stevenson's wrath were as convinced of the essential rightness of their position as was Mr. Stevenson of his. It is at this point that we come up against what amounts to an almost total collapse in communication. The delegates were talking about the same thing: but they might as well have been talking about totally different things. What was right and decent and moral for one side was ugly and wicked and immoral for the other; good was evil, evil good, depending which side you were on. It seemed that over the tragic Congo situation, and particularly over the U.S.-Belgian rescue operation there had ceased to be a common body of values by which to judge what was right from what was wrong. When such a situation is reached there is in fact a total breakdown in communication. Worse still, in this particular collapse each side imputed the basest ^{of} motives to the other:

each was a villain to the other.

The Sunday after the news of the rescue operation and of the depressingly senseless death of Dr. Paul Carlson, among others, a friend came and sat on our long veranda and literally 'blew his top'. He was not a Jamaican or an African; he came from Haiti, an exile from the black dictatorship of 'Papa Doc'. The reason for his bitter consuming rage was because he felt the world's press (and for him it meant the Western press) had dealt with the rescue operation in terms of black and white. He said that all the fuss, the lurid and sensational headlines, the charges of savagery and barbarism, were because in this instance the victims were white. Had they not been white there would have been no rescue operation and much more subdued headlines, if any. The conclusion to his bitter and angry tirade was that the West still had one set of values for the humanity of whites and another for the humanity of non-whites.

I protested that the whites who had been held hostage had gone to the Congo to serve, that the exploiters and racialists had left while the going was good. I suggested that here again we were witnessing the age-old tragedy in which the good and the decent and innocent are made to suffer for the sins of the wicked. "But they don't make it seem like that!" he protested; "For them it is a new thing that has never happened before, come about only because of the savagery of black men!" And so he would not soften his hard attitude because the whites had made this a thing of black and white.

So our first problem, the first obstacle we face in meeting

the challenge of getting genuine and meaningful communication going between the Afro-Asians and the west, is the problem of how we see each other. Do the Afro-Asians on the one hand, and the Westerners on the other, place the same qualitative value on each other's humanity as they do on their own?

I think both sides would insist that the answer is 'yes', that each side values the humanity of the other as much as its own. After all, the notion of an almost blanket equality without any reference to a corresponding responsibility, or anything else, has become the great symbol of our age. (So who is Einstein? Just an ordinary guy like me, so why should I look up to him? Or to Churchill? Or Nehru? Or anybody else? The noble concept of the inviolability of the human person, of the equality of our humanity, has often been distorted). But one critically careful look at the world as it is would cast grave doubt on both Afro-Asian and Western claims that they place the same value on each other's humanity.

At best, and in the best of all possible worlds, the other fellow is always just a little less human, a little less perceptive, a little less sensitive, a little less gentle, a little less compassionate and thoughtful than we are. We do not necessarily hold this against him: indeed, we may even like him all the better for it, especially if it makes us feel that much more of a human being. So the Afrikaner farmer has a very real and deep affection for 'the simple, unspoiled, primitive, happy Native'. There is a kind of escalator aspect to this. The persons or societies nearest to us and ours, those we know, are always very much less foreign and frightening and alien. The fellow in the neighbourhood who speaks the same language, goes to the same school and church, wears the same kind of clothes and is the same colour is obviously

closer to us in humanity than the fellow at the other end of the earth whose habits, dress, behaviour, language, religion, ways of playing, colour, are^{so} vastly different from our own. It is asking

a great deal to expect us to accord this fellow at the other end of the earth a humanity equal to our own. That there are in fact so many of us, still a minority it is true, but a most gifted and articulate minority, who do accept without any reservations the equal humanity of all people is to my mind one of the great psychological achievements of man that has not been accorded the credit it deserves. But the fact remains that a majority of mankind, both Afro-Asian and Western, do not accord each other a qualitatively equal humanity.

It would be most surprising if it were otherwise. The history of the relations between the darker and the lighter peoples of the world, especially over the last three-hundred-odd years, is such that the striking fact is not that there has been a collapse in communication, but rather that it has been of such a relatively minor nature, not charged with greater bitterness and massive violence. But it is part of this business of not according each other an equal humanity that makes one group of people expect another to be more forbearing, more understanding, more forgiving than they themselves would ever be. The surprising thing, to me, is that there is only one Congo situation, that almost everywhere else the coming of independence has not been accompanied by really ugly pogroms against the whites who only yesterday exercised their overlordship with a torturing arrogance that only those at the receiving end really understood. I think it is important to remember that perceptive American as well as European observers who looked at the Congo when it was still a Belgian colony predicted that the driving out of the Belgians was likely to be followed by the kind of total breakdown we are now witnessing.

The foundations for what is happening in the Congo today were laid during the time of the Belgians. To say this is not to approve or to condone or to excuse. It is simply to remind that what happens today usually happens because of what was allowed to go unchecked yesterday. In this context the stand of the two or three African states whose spokesmen refused to see the Congo rescue operation in terms of black and white was, for me, a striking and pleasing surprise because it was a clear and sharp affirmation of the equality of the humanity of all men. I might have expected this of Senegal's President Senghor. He is a poet with a sense of history and, in my opinion, the one African leader whose vision goes beyond the frontiers of race and colour, where most of us, leaders and led, Africans, Asians, and whites, still stand trapped today. In the period of rampant Western nationalism, in the days when the Congo was the private preserve of a Belgian king and there were reports of Congolese being massacred in the mass, no equivalent Western Head of State took ^a clear stand as did Senghor. I note this here simply because very many opinion moulders and others in the West often demand of others a morality and quality of behaviour which they themselves have not lived up to. Unhappily we are now seeing the same thing coming into full flower in many of the Afro-Asian countries, where many of those who shout loudest about freedom and human dignity suppress these most ruthlessly among their own people .

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committed to the notion of a 'race war' between the lighter and darker skinned peoples of the world most guilty of bringing such preconceptions as part of their mental baggage. Thus a famous English journalist came and sat on our long veranda and, on the evidence, predicted racial violence on the island within twelve months. He later repeated his prediction in a well-known leftwing English journal, but omitting the time part. The 'evidence' was that a handful of young American Negroes of Jamaican ancestry had brought arms into the island and tried to use the local Rastafari cult to stage an armed uprising. There were a few murders and after a dramatic manhunt through the Jamaican bush the young American Negroes were captured, tried, found guilty, sentenced and executed. Not even the Rastafarians whom they tried to use had supported them. Press handling of this affair had given it its 'race war' slant. All that was three years ago. More recently, towards the end of last year, another visiting writer passed through. This one was collecting material for a book on the coming world-wide ~~xx~~ 'race war'. He had been in the United States, taking a quick look at the South; to Panama, and then a week in Jamaica. He, too, seemed singularly unwilling to admit of any ray of hope to damage the mould of inevitably tragedy he had fashioned.

The trouble is that many of us have developed a vested interest in the 'colour conflict'; it has become our 'business'; some of us make big money out of it, others become famous and important because of it. And not all of us are ~~either~~ honest enough to either see, or want to see, that we sometimes sharpen the 'colour conflict' by the way we handle news of it or by reading

meanings into it calculated primarily to serve selfish interests. And we are sufficiently rich in ready-made villains to easily shut up anyone who questions our motives by yelling: Angola! South Africa! Smethwick! Mississippi! to show that we are on the side of the angels and the angels ^{are} on our side. And, of course, with the angels on your side there is no room for self-doubt, no need for self-criticism. Often this mental state is accompanied by an insufferably pompous self-righteousness. Perhaps it was this pomposity in the face of a difficult and delicate problem with deep moral implications that called forth the wrath of Mr. Adlai Stevenson during that depressingly squalid debate on the Congo rescue operations at the last U.N. session.

Yet for all their pomposity those who provoked Mr. Stevenson's wrath ~~were~~ were as convinced of the essential rightness of their position as was Mr. Stevenson of his. It is at this point that we come up against what amounts to an almost total collapse in communication. The delegates were talking about the same thing: but they might as well have been talking about totally different things. What was right and decent and moral for one side was ugly and wicked and immoral for the other; good was evil, evil good, depending which side you were on. It seemed that over the tragic Congo situation, and particularly over the U.S.-Belgian rescue operation there had ceased to be a common body of values by which to judge what was right from what was wrong. ~~And~~ When such a situation is reached there is in fact a total breakdown in communication. Worse still, in this particular collapse each side imputed the basest of motives to the other:

each was a villain to the other.

The Sunday after the news of the rescue operation and of the depressingly senseless death of Dr. Paul Carlson, among others, a friend came and sat on our long veranda and literally 'blew his top'. He was not a Jamaican or an African; he came from Haiti, an exile from the black dictatorship of 'Papa Doc'. The reason for his bitter consuming rage was because he felt the world's press (and for him it meant the Western press) had dealt with the rescue operation in terms of black and white. He said that all the fuss, the lurid and sensational headlines, the charges of savagery and barbarism, were because in this instance the victims were white. Had they not been white there would have been no rescue operation and much more subdued headlines, if any. The conclusion to his bitter and angry tirade was that the West still had one set of values for the humanity of whites and another for the humanity of non-whites.

I protested that the whites who had been held hostage had gone to the Congo to serve, that the exploiters and racialists had left while the going was good. I suggested that here again we were witnessing the age-old tragedy in which the good and the decent and the innocent are made to suffer ^{for} ~~from~~ the sins of the wicked. "But they don't make it seem like that!" he protested; "For them it is a new thing that has never happened before, come about only because of the savagery of black men!" And so he would not soften his hard attitude because the whites had made this a thing of black and white.

So our first problem, the first obstacle we face in meeting

the challenge of ^{getting} genuine and meaningful communication going between the Afro-Asians and the west, is the problem of how we see each other. Do the Afro-Asians on the one hand, and the Westerners on the other, place the same qualitative value ~~of~~ on each other's humanity as they do on their own?

I think both sides would insist that the answer is 'yes', that each side values the humanity of the other as much as its own. After all, the notion of an almost blanket equality without any reference to a corresponding responsibility, or anything else, has become the great symbol of our age. (So who is Einstein? Just an ordinary guy like me, so why should I look up to him? Or to Churchill? Or Nehru? Or anybody else? The noble concept of the inviolability of the human person, of the equality of our humanity, has often been distorted). But one critically careful look at the world as it is would cast grave doubt on both Afro-Asian and Western claims that they place the same value on each other's humanity ~~as their own~~.

At best, and in the best of all possible worlds, the other fellow is always just a little less human, a little less perceptive, a little less sensitive, a little less gentle, a little less ~~compassionate~~ and thoughtful than we are. We do not necessarily hold this against him: indeed, we may even like him all the better for it, especially if it makes us feel that much more of a human being. So the Afrikaner farmer has a very real and deep affection for 'the simple, unspoiled, primitive, happy Native'. There is a kind of escalator aspect to this. The persons or societies nearest to us and ours, those we know, are always very much less foreign and frightening and alien. The fellow in the neighbourhood who

speaks the same language, goes to the same school and church, wears the same kind of clothes and is the same colour is obviously closer to us in ~~inhumanity~~ than the fellow at the other end of the earth whose habits, dress, behaviour, language, religion, ways of playing, colour, are so vastly different from our own. It is asking ~~in~~ a great deal to expect us to accord this fellow at the other end of the earth a humanity equal to our own. That there are in fact so many of us, still a minority it is true, but a most gifted and articulate minority, who do accept without any reservations the equal humanity of all people is to my mind one of the great psychological achievements of man that has not been accorded the credit it deserves. But the fact remains that a majority of ~~both~~ mankind, both Afro-Asian and Western, do not accord each other a qualitatively equal humanity.

It would be most surprising if it were otherwise. The history of the relations between the darker and lighter peoples of the world, ~~xxxxxx~~ especially over the last three hundred-odd years, is such that the striking fact is not that there has been a collapse in communication, but rather that it has been of such a relatively minor nature, not charged with greater bitterness and massive violence. But it is part of this business of not according each other an equal humanity that makes one group of people expect another to be more forbearing, more understanding, more forgiving than they themselves would ever be. The surprising thing, to me, is that there is only one Congo situation, that almost everywhere else the coming of independence has not been accompanied by really ugly programs against the whites who only yesterday exercised their overlordship with a torturing arrogance that only

those at the receiving end really understood. I think it is important to remember that perceptive American as well as European observers who looked at the Congo when it was still a Belgian colony predicted that the driving out of the Belgians was likely to be followed by the kind of total breakdown we are now witnessing. The foundations for what is happening in the Congo today were laid during the time of the Belgians. To say this is not to approve or to condone or to excuse. It is simply to remind that what happens today usually happens because of what was allowed to go unchecked yesterday. In this context ~~that~~ the stand of the two or three African states whose spokesmen refused to see the Congo rescue operation in terms of black and white was, for me, a striking and pleasing surprise because it was a clear and sharp affirmation of the equality of the humanity of all men. I might have expected this of Senegal's President Senghor. He is a poet with a sense of history and, in my opinion, the one African leader whose vision goes beyond the frontiers of race and colour, where most of us, leaders and lead, Africans, Asians, and whites, still stand trapped today. In the period of rampant Western nationalism, in the days when the Congo was the private preserve of a Belgian king and there were reports of Congolese being massacred in the mass, no equivalent Western Head of State took as clear a stand as did Senghor. I note this here simply because very many opinion ^{and others} moulders/in the West often demand of others a morality and quality of behaviour which they themselves have not lived up to. Unhappily we are now seeing the same thing coming into full flower in many of the Afro-Asian countries, where many of those who shout loudest about freedom and human dignity suppress these most ruthlessly

among their own people.

But when all this is said we are still left with the hard fact that there was this complete collapse in communication at the last U.N. session; and we know that at other times such communication as exists between the Afro-Asians and the West is often a thin thread of political and economic manoeuvring at the government-to-government level. And more often than not this brand of communication results in making relations uglier, ~~than~~ ~~before~~ and in sharpening irritation and impatience on the one side and resentment and bitterness on the other. The pattern is all too familiar to need detailing here. Some Western power (usually the U.S.) gives aid to some Afro-Asian power; inevitably the representatives of the aiding power expect ^{some} sort of acknowledgement, if not open gratitude. Sometimes these representatives are shocked and surprised and ~~are~~ hurt when their government is subject ^{ed} to abuse, or when the leaders of the receiving country either actively encourage mobs to attack their embassies or else look the other way. And of course at the international level, and in the climate of the Cold War, aid is an instrument of policy, so the representatives of the giving power do a little pressing, and this also leads to resentment from the receiver. Often the givers are perplexed by the fact that the more they give the more they seem resented and the less it seems to be appreciated.

I think the very nature of the economic relationship between the Afro-Asians and the West, and particularly the United States, makes for trouble. ~~It~~ No really creative relationship is possible between the giver and the receiver of charity; and where the giving sometimes assumes the appearance of 'buying' the allegiance

of the receiver currents of bitterness are likely to run deep. And who is to blame the American taxpayer when he gets fed to the teeth with ungrateful foreigners who not only take everything he has to give without so much as a 'thank you' but abuse him into the bargain. And yet this is inevitable in any relationship between the giver and the receiver of charity. There can be no sense of equal dignity between the giver and receiver of charity, no real acceptance of the fact of equal dignity by either.

The evidence suggests that of all American leaders since F.D.R. the late President Kennedy was most acutely aware of this aspect of the aid business. His Alliance for Progress and his Peace Corps are both exercises in helping people to help themselves. And in the Peace Corps we have the very revolutionary position where young Americans go and live and work with the ordinary people to whose countries they are assigned. It seems to me that we have here the possibilities of a real beginning of that meaningful and sincere dialogue between the lighter and darker peoples of the world that could lead to each man recognising the rare and distinctive humanity of every other man. I think it is because vast armies of people in the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries sensed that the Kennedy approach ~~represented~~ represented a new beginning, a chance of getting help without paying for it with their self-respect and sense of dignity, that we witnessed ~~this~~ ^{that} worldwide tidal outpouring of grief when he was killed.

This was and ^{is} is an important beginning. The giving ~~was~~ still one way. The problem still remains the finding of ways to make this a two-way traffic, with the Afro-Asians doing a little giving as well as receiving.

Another aspect of this problem of communication has to do with ^{the} attitudes of the Afro-Asian leaders to the West; and here I think we have to differentiate between the Africans and the Asians. The present generation of African leaders are less able to turn their backs completely on the West than are their Asian counterparts. Already there are important Asian leaders, like India's Mr. Shastri, who did not receive their training in the West: but this is still a matter of degree.

In the main, the Afro-Asian leadership (but particularly the African) is the only group that has had firsthand contact with the 'white world'. Almost invariably they have all experienced such psychological and emotional assaults on their sense of self-respect and dignity that they have come away children of the West, because of their training, yet nursing deep resentments against it. This ambivalence is a key characteristic in most of the African Prime Ministers and Presidents who were often translated from colonial prisons to their high offices. It is not reasonable to expect the outlooks of these men ^{not} to have been greatly influenced by their experiences. Old hurts ^{even if} _h not consciously remembered, often influence key decisions. And these are the men who do the thinking for and shape the attitudes of that three-quarters of humanity that is too poor and too ignorant ^{to} _h work out rational attitudes for itself. These men control the means of mass communication in what are usually single-party states made so with the tacit approval of the mass of the people in each ~~given~~ given country. Inevitably, the prejudices and resentments these leaders have acquired in their often painful encounters with the 'white world' become prime factors in shaping the outlook of the people they lead. They know the

'white world' has a massive cultural arrogance based on colour so that a Malan or a Verwoerd can claim justification by declaring that they are defending 'Western European Civilisation'. So they counter with 'Negritude' and its moral and cultural claims to a greater humanity and perception: they know from experience that the 'white world' has a stereotype of the black man so they counter with their own stereotype of the white man as someone whom history has proven to be hostile to all the best interests of all black people. And so instead of only white people being filled with colour prejudice a new situation, the other side of the penny is shown, with black people being filled with a ~~counter~~ colour prejudice directed at whites.

One of the ironies of this situation is that although African students may encounter as much prejudice and discrimination in Asia as they do in the West, the leaders tend to shut their eyes to this. They are not as intensely and subjectively involved emotionally with Asia as they are with Europe and the United States. So it is easy to dismiss Asian manifestations of colour prejudice as stupid and backward. This, I think, is at once the highest compliment the African leaders pay the West, as well as their harshest judgement of it: in it are summed up all their expectations and disappointments. That is why I think this generation of Afro-Asian leaders are likely to make difficult the flowering of that real communication~~s~~ between the lighter and darker peoples. I think when this generation of leaders gives way to a new one, that new generation of leaders will not have the same psychological and emotional involvement with the West. It will be a leadership with no memory ^{of an} and intimate ^{and painful} experience of a 'master-and-man' relationship

IN SECRET AFRICA

1.

It was a hot, humid, oppressive August day in Accra in 1953. The air had the stillness of death. I walked down towards the sea-front. Perhaps there would be the hint of a breeze there. As I neared the sea-front I was assailed by a potently overpowering stench of the sea with strong overtones of rotting fish.

The houses were drab, rundown wooden structures or made of corrugated iron, put together anyway you please. With a few exceptions the builder's slide rule had played no part in the making of these houses. The streets were wide and tarred and each street had an open drainage system into which young boys and old men piddled when they needed to relieve themselves. I have seen women empty their chamber pots into the open drainage system in the early mornings. The fierce sun takes care of the germs but God help you if smells made you sick.

In the space of about eight minutes of walking upwards of fifteen "taxis" pulled up beside me and offered to take me wherever I wanted to go.

"Hi, massa! Taxi, massa!" Me go anywhere you go cheap!"

They are all private taxis with no meters and driven by strapping young men with flashing teeth. The place is full of taxis willing to go anywhere and do anything cheap.

The street traders here are women, "Mammy traders" they are called. They trade in any and everything under the sun. They sell cigarettes individually, one at a time; round loaves of bread and hunks of cooked meat on which the big West African flies make sport. They love bargaining and haggling. They are a powerful economic factor in the life of the country. The more

prosperous ones own their own trucks, some own fleets of trucks. These "mammy trucks" are the principal carriers of the country. They carry passengers as well as produce and go hurtling across the countryside at breakneck speed with little regard for life or limb. Each truck has its own distinctive slogan. I remember one which warned its passengers:

REPENT FOR DEATH IS ROUND THE CORNER

And another which said:

ENTER WITHOUT HOPE

One was named:

THE LAST RIDE

Another suggested:

IF IT MUST IT WILL

My own favourite, and I travelled in that particular truck, pleaded:

NOT TODAY O LORD NOT TODAY.

The mammy traders had been the backbone of the vast political changes that had taken place in the country.

I passed many mammy traders, many mammy trucks, before I reached the sea-front. I crossed a street, jumped over an open drain, and there was the sea. But there was no breeze, and no shade from the terrible sun. In the end I gave in to the idea of "taxi, massa taxi" and looked about. But now there was no taxi in sight. Instead, I saw, suddenly, a long procession in which women outnumbered men by something like five to one. The procession swung around a corner and came into full view, twenty or thirty yards long. The women wore white flowing robes and white kerchiefs on their heads. Their faces had been painted into grotesque masks; made up of thick streaks of black, red, white and yellow paints.

The heavy thud of bare feet rose above the hum of the sea.

Then, suddenly, the drums burst forth and there was no other sound about me. The women began to jig then dance as they marched. As the tail of the procession came abreast with me the drums rose to a frenzy. A thin, pure note from a reed rose above the drums. The whole procession became a shivering, shaking mass. The reed-note held longer than seemed human. And then suddenly, dramatically, there was silence. The thudding feet faded away out of sight and sound. There was silence and a slight racing of my heartbeat and the hum of the sea, and, of course, the overpowering fishystench.

I thought of Richard Wright with whom I had had breakfast that morning. This was his first visit to any part of Africa and his reactions led me to think that he had found his first piece of Africa rather bewilderingly unexpected, not what he had hoped for. Countee Cullen had speculated:

One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

Wright was finding the answers and finding them rather disconcerting. He had been bewildered by the casual attitude to sex. There was, he had said, too much sex, too casually given and taken; so that it worked out as no sex, with none of the emotional involvement associated with sex in the Western mind. He had shaken his head with a slightly bewildered disgust. The open drains into which young boys and old men piddled whenever they needed to had led him to conclude that Africans piddled rather more than other people. The sight of young men dancing together, holding hands, disturbed the Western puritan streak in him. Later, in his book on the Gold Coast he wrote: "It provoked in me a sense of uneasiness on levels of emotion deeper

than I could control". He had expressed to me that morning what he later summed up in his book: "I was black and they were black but it did not help me".

What Wright did not understand, what his whole background and training had made difficult for him to understand, was that being black did not of itself qualify one for acceptance in tribal Africa. But how could? And how could he be expected to when there are thousands of urban-bred Africans up and down that vast continent who do not themselves understand this? The more perceptive of the urban Africans are only now beginning to understand this, but slowly.

Being black is a small matter in tribal Africa because the attitude to colour is healthy and normal. Colour does not matter. Colour is an act of God that neither confers privileges nor imposes handicaps on^a man. The colour of a man's skin is like the day: the day is either clear or dark. There is nothing more to it until external agencies come in and invest it with special meaning and importance.

What does matter, what is important, is the complex pattern of one's position within one's own group and one's relations with the members of that group.

The tribal African is no Pan-African dreaming of a greater African glory when the white man is driven into the sea. The acute race consciousness of the American Negro or the black South African at the receiving end of Apartheid is alien to him. The important things in his life are anything but race and colour - until they are forced on him. And "mother Africa" is much too vast for him to have big continental dreams: she is about four times the size of the United States; has about 200,000,000 people who speak some five

hundred different languages. She is a land of vast mountains, dark jungles and vast deserts. In her rivers and in her jungles and in her grasslands lurk creatures which are the enemies of man: the leopard and the lion, the snake and crocodile. All this makes travel, by the old African methods, extremely difficult and makes for isolation between one group of people and another. The African who is in Britain is likely to be a deal better informed on what is happening all over the continent than would be his fellow African in any of the main centres in Africa. In terms of communications the man in the tribe lives in the dark ages.

Richard Wright was surprised that even educated Africans, racially conscious literate people had not heard of him and were sceptical of a grown man earning his living by writing. They could not understand what kind of writing brought a man enough money to support a family. Wright really wanted to understand the African but "I found the African an oblique, a hard to know man...."

My sympathies were all with Wright. Africa could be very disturbing, very hard to know; even for those who were born and grew up in Africa.

My thoughts shifted from Richard Wright to my forthcoming meeting with Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of the first black British colony in Africa to win a large measure of self-government.

It was going on for seven years since I had last seen Nkrumah in London. Then, he was a poor struggling student; now he was the head of a state that was the great African symbol for all the world. I remembered the past and wondered what changes I would find in him. Anyway, it was nine and my date with him was for nine-thirty. I would soon know.

The heat and salty rancid fish smell had made me desperately thirsty. Across the way a mammy trader squatted beside her pile of merchandise: cooked meat, sweet potatoes - a whole host of edibles - and some bottles of opaque white liquid which could be either coconut or palm juice, as well as the inevitable little pile of cigarettes which were sold at a penny a piece. I had been warned of the risks involved in eating anything sold by the street traders. But to hell with it, I was thirsty and not exactly a stranger to African germs. I crossed the street, felt the bottles and chose what felt like the coolest and looked the least opaque one.

"How much?"

"One shilling." The carved ebony face looked coldly at me with dead eyes that registered no emotion.

I pulled the screwed up newspaper stopper from the bottle, wiped its mouth and took a swig. I could not decide whether it was coconut water or palm juice. It had been heavily watered down and sweetened. But it was wet and thirst quenching. I drank half the bottle, firmly ignoring the little foreign bodies that floated in the liquid. Then I paid her and drank the rest. I put down the empty and began to move away.

"You African?" She asked in her harsh, cold, masculine voice.

I stopped, turned and looked at her face. It was as deadly cold and impersonal as before: not a flicker of feeling in her eyes. Like an African mask, I thought. But unlike Wright, I did not try to penetrate it. I knew the futility of trying. She would show feeling if and when she decided. Not before.

"Yes," I said, and added "From the south. Far, far South".

She paused for so long that I began to move again.

"You like here?"

Nationalism had obviously touched her. I turned back to her.

"No," I said.

"Why you don't like?"

"I don't say I don't like."

"But you don't like?"

I showed her my teeth, African-wise, which is neither smile nor grimace but a blending of the two.

"You like Africa?" I asked.

Now it was her turn to show me her teeth. There was a flicker of feeling in her eyes then they went dead again. She nodded. I had established my claim. Only outsiders liked or disliked Africa. It was too watery an emotion for the African. And Africa, to him or her - until a different brand of sophistication was acquired - was his or her little piece of the African earth.

I left the mammy trader and carried on up the smelly and hot street. Much and little had passed between us. Out to sea some fishing boats appeared on the skyline. About me were the citizens of Accra and of the Gold Coast that was to become Ghana. Some wore the cloth of the country - the men looking like pint size citizens of ancient Rome painted black and the women looking extraordinarily masculine - and others wore western dress.

A few minutes before I was due at the Prime Minister's office I flagged a taxi and simply said: "Kwame's office".

A pale brown West Indian miss was the Prime Minister's Secretary.

She welcomed me as though I was a V.I.P. The Prime Minister had not come back from a conference yet. This tribal business was taking up a lot of his attention. She told me with indignation how the subjects of the King of Ashanti, the Asantehene, had to crawl on their bellies for a distance of some twenty yards into the royal presence, how reactionary the tribal chiefs were and how tribalism had to give way or there would be no progress. This hatred of tribalism was a newly espoused cause for her and she dilated on it with all the fervent passion of the newly converted. If she was any indication then Nkrumah was very worried about the opposition the tribesmen were offering his western-style Convention Peoples Party.

A number of people came in. The lady stopped her diatribe against the tribes. She introduced me to Krobo Edusei (later Minister of the Interior in the independent Ghana) and Kofi Baako, a hard-faced, cold-eyed little man, the party's secretary and political theorist (who later became Minister of Information).

Then there was some bustle and the Prime Minister arrived. In something just over five minutes he had seen and dealt with these officials and I was ushered into his office. It was a big, pleasant, cool room.

Nkrumah came round his big official desk, took my hand and led me to a settee near the window. The now famous smile lit up his face.

This poised, relaxed man with the hint of guarded reserve about him was a far cry from the friend I had last seen in England nearly eight years earlier. For me, the most striking change of all were in his eyes. They reflected an inner tranquillity which was the one thing the Nkrumah in Europe never had. Then his eyes

mirrored a burning inner conflict and tension.

As we exchanged greetings, felt each other out with small talk in an attempt to bridge the gap of years, my mind went back to our London days and another friend of mine and Nkrumah's whose fate has turned out the complete opposite to that of Nkrumah. It has been a very different Nkrumah that other friend and I had got to know.

Even his name had been subtly different then. He had been our friend Francis Nkrumah, an African student recently arrived from the United States and he had not seen Africa for a decade and more. He had quickly become a part of London's African colony and had joined our little group, the Pan-African Federation, in our protests against colonialism. He was much less relaxed than most of us. He seemed consumed by an internal restlessness that led him to evolving some of the most fantastic schemes. The president of our federation was an East African named Johnstone Kenyatta, the most relaxed, sophisticated and "westernised" of the lot of us. Kenyatta enjoyed the personal friendship of some of the most distinguish names in English political and intellectual society. He was subtle, subtle enough to attack a person's principles bitterly and retain that person's friendship. He fought the British as imperialists but was affectionate towards them as friends.

It was to this balanced and extremely cultured man that Francis Nkrumah proposed that we form ourselves into a secret society called The Circle, that each of us spill a few drops of our blood into a bowl and so take a blood oath of secrecy and dedication to the emancipation of Africa.

Johnstone Kenyatta laughed at the idea; he scoffed at it as

ritualistic childish juju. He conceived of the struggle for African freedom in modern, twentieth-century terms with no ritualistic blood nonsense.

In the end Francis Nkrumah drifted away from us and started his own little West African group in London. We were too tame and slow for him. He was an angry young man in a hurry.

Then the call came and he went back to his part of Africa. Nkrumah's call had come from a western educated Doctor of Philosophy who, Wright later learned with amazed disbelief, still worshipped at the shrine of his ancestors. This gentleman was the head of the most important political organizations in the Gold Coast.

Francis Nkrumah then became Kwame Nkrumah. After a period of time he broke away from the respectable organization of successful professional and businessmen, took to native cloth and formed his own organization. He set himself at the head of the largely tribal populace and dabbled in blood ritual. There was some violence, a spell in prison, and then self-government with Nkrumah emerging as the first African Prime Minister in a self-governing British African territory.

Tribal myths grew up around Nkrumah. He could make himself invisible at will. He could go without food and sleep and drink for longer spells than ordinary mortals can. He was, in fact, the reincarnation of some of the most powerful among the ancestral spirits. He allowed his feet to be bathed in blood.

By the time I visited the Gold Coast the uneasy alliance between Nkrumah and the tribal chiefs had begun to crack. A week or so before my arrival Nkrumah had threatened that unless the tribal chiefs co-operated with his government in turning the Gold Coast into

an efficiently run modern twentieth century state he would make them ~~run~~ so hard that they would leave their sandals behind them. This was a deliberate and calculated insult against the tribal concept that a chief's bare feet must never touch the earth.

That was the beginning of the secret war. Nkrumah thought he would win it easily. He was wrong. The chiefs have not run. Instead they have effectively kept him out of Ashanti. Their opposition is more clearcut today than it was five years ago. Some of his own followers, like Joe Appiah who married the daughter of the late Sir Stafford Cripps, have defected to the tribalists. They are biding their time; waiting and watching.

And they have, negatively, scored their victories too. They have forced Nkrumah to adopt methods which, as a twentieth century Laski socialist, he should condemn and have no truck with. They have pushed him to a position where his regime is, today, intolerant of opposition. The tribal society brooks no opposition. Nkrumah's government banishes its most active opponents. As a western man leading a western style government he justifies this as a temporary expedient. But his less sophisticated Ministers like Krobo Edusei frankly talk the tribal language of strength, frankly express the tribal impulse to destroy those who are out of step with the currently accepted group mores.

And as we talked in Nkrumah's ^{cool} office that hot August day in Accra, my mind kept slipping back to my encounter, a year earlier, with our mutual friend Jomo or Johnston Kenyatta, now a prisoner-in-exile in his native Kenya. Significantly, though we mentioned many friends, both Nkrumah and I avoided mentioning Kenyatta throughout our talk. I had made up my mind not to mention him first. I had hoped Nkrumah would. He did not: which impressed Kenyatta all the

more forcibly on my consciousness as I sat in the comfortable office of the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast.

- 2 -

I had, a year earlier, flown up to Kenya from South Africa and I had felt terribly depressed as I got off the plane. Things had grown so much uglier in the Union. The barricades had gone up in the ugly war of colour. When I had left South Africa in the dim and distant past there had been isolated islands where black and white had been able to meet in neutral territory. When I had gone back in 1952 the islands had been submerged under the rising tide of colour hatreds and I had been glad to quit that dark, unhappy land which yet compelled my love.

It was in this mood that I had got off the plane. I had not seen my friend Johnstone Kenyatta for years. He had left Europe in 1946 and I had not heard from him since.

Now, there he was, just outside the airport terminal building, leaning on a heavy cane, bigger than I remembered him in Europe, paunchy, his face looking puffy. And behind him was a huge crowd of Africans. I began to move towards him when a lean-faced, lean-hipped white colonial administrator type suddenly appeared beside me and said:

"Mr. Abrahams".

I stopped and thought: Oh Lord.

Kenyatta also came forward. Both men ignored each other. Lean-face introduced himself and said the Colonial Office had alerted them that I was coming to do some writing for the London Observer and they had drawn up a provisional schedule for me. Had I done anything about accomodation? Before I could answer Kenyatta

murmured:

"You are staying with me, of course".

I was acutely conscious of the crowd of Africans in the background. A question of "face" was involved. Suddenly the old detachment that I remembered from Europe was back in Kenyatta's eyes. They seemed to say "You've got to choose, pal; let's see how you choose".

Lean-face said: "We've got something set up for you for tomorrow and--

"I live in the bush," Kenyatta completed.

It suddenly dawned on me that I had become, for the moment, the battlefield of that horrible animal, race relations. I made up my mind, resenting both sides but still acutely conscious of the crowd of Africans in the background.

"I've promised to spend this weekend with Mr. Kenyatta," I said.

Lean-face was graceful about it. I promised to call at the Secretariat first thing on Monday morning. He gave me a copy of the schedule that had been prepared for me and wondered, sotto voce, whether I knew what I was letting myself in for. Kenyatta assured me that I would be perfectly safe, that nobody was going to cut my throat. I was aware that they were talking to each other through me. I was aware that they knew that I was aware and that made me bad-tempered.

"Then I'll say goodnight, Mr. Abrahams," Lean-face said pointedly to me.

As soon as he was out of hearing Kenyatta began to curse.

"It's good to see you again, Johnstone." I gripped his hand.

"Jomo," he murmured. "Like in my book".

The hint of ironic speculation was back in his eyes. A slightly sardonic, slightly bitter smile played on his lips.

"Welcome to Kenya," he said; then, abruptly: "Come, meet the leaders of my people. They've been waiting long."

We moved forward and the crowd gathered about us. Jomo made a little speech in Kikuyu which he then translated for my benefit. A little old man, ancient as the hills, with huge holes in his ears, then welcomed me on behalf of the land and its people. Jomo translated.

After this we all bundled into the fleet of rattling old cars and set off for the Kikuyu reserve in the heart of the African bush. Kenyatta became silent and strangely remote during the journey.

We stopped at the compound of the old chief where other members of the tribe awaited to welcome me. By this time the reception committee had grown to a few hundred. About me, pervading the air, was the smell of burning flesh. Before I entered the house a drink was handed to me, one was handed to the old chief and one to Kenyatta. The old man muttered a brief incantation, spilled half of his drink on the earth, "libating" the earth. Jomo and I followed suit; then the three of us downed our drinks and entered the house.

A general feasting and drinking then commenced, both inside and outside the house. The smell of burning meat was a young cow being roasted in my honour. I was getting a full ceremonial tribal welcome. The important dignitaries of the tribe slipped into the room in twos and threes, spoke to me through Kenyatta for a few moments, and then went away, making room for others to slip in and slip out again.

"Africa doesn't seem to change," Kenyatta murmured between dignitaries. There was a terrible undercurrent of bitterness behind the softly murmured words. I was startled by it and looked at his face. For a fleeting moment he had looked like a trapped, gaged animal. He saw me looking at him and quickly composed his face into

a slightly sardonic humourous mask.

"Don't look too closely" he murmured.

And still the dignitaries filed in, had a drink, spoke their welcome to me and went out.

The ceremonial welcome reached its high point about midnight. Huge chunks of the roasted cow were brought in to us and we gnawed at the almost raw, red meat between swigs of liquor. Outside, there was muted drumming. Voices were getting louder by the hour.

Suddenly, in the midst of a long-winded speech by an immensely dignified Masai Chief from a neighbouring and friendly tribe, Kenyatta jumped up, grabbed his heavy cane and half staggered to the door.

"Come, Peter," he called.

Everybody was startled. It was clear that he had made up his mind to leave the ceremonial welcome party. I hesitated. He raised his cane and beckoned with it. I knew that this would be a terrible breach of tribal etiquette.

"Come, man!" he snapped.

I got up and became aware of the sudden silence that had descended on the huge gathering. By some strange magic everybody seemed to know that something had gone wrong.

"Jomo," I said.

"I can't stand any more" he snapped. "Come!"

I followed him to the door. I knew the discourtesy we were inflicting on the tribe. I also knew that my friend was at breaking point. We walked through the crowd of people, got into Kenyatta's car and drove off into the night.

He took me to his home. It was big, sprawling, empty place on the brow of a hill. The African moon was big and yellow, bathing

the land in a subdued light that almost achieved the brilliance of daylight. The house had nothing in it to make for comfort. There were hard wooden chairs, a few tables and only the bed in the bedroom. There were no books, none of the normal amenities of western civilization. When we arrived two women emerged from somewhere in the back and hovered about in the shadows. They brought in liquor but I never got a clear glimpse of either of them. My friend's anguish of spirit was such that I did not want to ask any questions. We sat on the verandah and drank steadily and in silence until we were both miserably, depressingly drunk. And then Kenyatta began to speak in a low, bitter voice of his frustration and of the isolated position in which he found himself.

He had no friends. There was no one in the tribe who could give him the kind of intellectual companionship which had become so important to him in his years in Europe. The things that were important to him, consequential conversation, the drink which was a social activity rather than the intention to get drunk, the concepts of individualism, the inviolability of the privacy of the individual - all these were alien to the tribesmen whose leader he was and in whose midst he lived. The people who could answer his needs as a western man had erected a barrier of colour against him in spite of the fact that the taproots of their culture had become the taproots of his culture too. So Kenyatta, the western man, was driven in on himself and was forced to assert himself in tribal terms. For it was only if he operated on terms comprehensible to the tribesmen that they would follow him and so give him his position of power and importance as a leader. To live without roots is to live in hell and no man chooses voluntarily to live in hell. And since the

western men in his land, for reasons of colour and position, denied him access to those things which competes the life of a western man he had been forced back into tribalism from which he had so painfully free himself over the years.

None of this was stated explicitly that night by either Kenyatta or myself. But it was there in his brooding bitter commentary on both the tribes and the white settlers of land.

For me Kenyatta became that night, a man who in his own life personified the terrible tragedy of Africa and the terrible secret war that rages in it.

It was largely as a result of that depressing night with Kenyatta as well as what I saw in the land later, that I confidently predicted on my return to England the ugly violence that broke out two months after my visit and shocked the world. Kenyatta was both the victim of tribalism and a westernism gone sick. His heart and mind and body were the battlefield of the terrible conflict known as the Mau-Mau revolt long before it became actuality in that beautiful land. The tragedy is that he was so rarely gifted, could have made such a magnificent contribution in other circumstances.

When I left Nkrumah, I wondered how, despite his apparent assurance, he would emerge from his approaching encounter with tribalism. He has already abandoned many democratic practices in his fight against it. But the great encounter has still to come. How much better than Kenyatta will he fare in that encounter?.

3.

What then is tribal man? Perhaps the most important single characteristic of a man in the tribal state is the fact that he is not an individual in the western sense. Psychologically and emotionally he is the present living personification of a number of forces among the most important of which are the ancestral dead. The dead have a powerful hold on the living. They control and regulate the lives and activities of the living from the grave. They hand out the rules and codes by which the living conduct their daily affairs. If there is a drought, if there is a famine, it is a sign of the wrath of the ancestors because someone has broken some rule of the tribe, some law laid down by the ancestral dead. There will be no peace, no order, no prosperity in the tribe until the ancestors are appeased. And so the Chief calls the whole tribe to a meeting where the guilty ones will be "smelled" out. Everyone in the village would be present. Neither man, woman nor child would think of not obeying the summons. They would form a circle with the witch-doctors or medicine-man and the drummers to the fore. The "smelling" out would begin with the drums. The drums are a key factor in African life. The insistent throbs of the drums would call the people to the gathering on an almost momentous and placid key at first, but working on the emotions. When all the people are assembled the throbbing of the drums would increase. They would beat in tune to the heartbeats of the human circle. The witchdoctor dressed in lion or leopard skin sometimes monkey skin - would stand near the drummers. His face would be painted in bold streaks of colour: white, black, red. There would be criss-crossing lines on his body too.

He wanders about the centre of the circle almost idly at

first. Every now and then he pauses and looks straight into someone's eyes and keeps on looking. For the person looked at this is an encounter with fate. Few if any ever stare back. Their eyes slide past his face or go glazed. They fear but are not supposed to fear. They know the ancestors are just, that the innocent are never punished, so there is no reason for fear. The fact of fearing is therefore an acknowledgement of the fact of guilt. It is not necessary for a man to know the nature of his guilt to be guilty. If he is not guilty there would be no fear in his mind, therefore the fact of his fear pronounces his guilt.

The tempo of the drums increases. The witchdoctor begins to dance, slowly at first. The tempo of the drumbeats work on the heart-beats of the human circle. The witchdoctor begins to talk in a high-pitched nasal voice. Spirits always talk through their noses. The drums and the incantations go on and on, getting faster and wilder, dominating the hearts and minds of all the circle. People begin to tremble and shiver. Some drop down in a trance and lay moaning on the ground. Everyone is possessed by the frenzy of the drums. The spirits of the ancestors are abroad.

Suddenly the drums stop. The witchdoctor stands fixed for a dreadful moment that seems without end. Then he pounces. He grabs his victim and drags him or her into the centre of the circle. The victim does not resist, does not protest. The ancestors are always just.

There may be one, there may be many victims. But once the victim or victims are "smelled" out the hypnotic spell of the drums are broken. People relax. Their hearts beat normally once more.

Now the

Now the ancestors will be propitiated and they themselves freed of the evil which beset them. Now the famine or the drought or the plague or whatever had beset the land will depart from it. And so, while the victim or victims are put to death, the rest of the tribe celebrates the passing of the great evil.

It may be that in this particular village the spirits of the ancestors rest in a sacred tree. In that case the victim would be taken to that tree and executed there so that the ancestors can taste his blood. Or his heart may be cut out and put at the foot of the tree. Or it may be that the spirits of the ancestors have entered the body of a snake thus making it sacred. In that case the living victim would be taken to the snake and left there, bound, to be executed by the ancestors through the body of the snake. Or it may be that the village is on the edge of a lake and on death the spirits of the ancestors enter the body of a crocodile. In that case the victim would be fed to the crocodiles.

The snake is a very popular symbol in certain areas of West Africa. The crocodile is a particularly important sacred symbol near the lakes of Central Africa. Wherever the spirits of the ancestors may be - and they are always in some living animal or plant - it is there that the victim is taken to propitiate the ancestors and so free the rest of the tribe of the disaster that has beset it.

Another key characteristic of tribal man is that his society is exclusive and not, like western society, inclusive. The lines are drawn very clearly, very sharply. Anybody who is not an "insider" is an enemy, actually or potentially; is someone to distrust, someone to fear, someone to keep at bay. There is no choice, no volition about this. It is something that has been laid down, something

is its head and all authority over the family is vested in him. He settles all family disputes, gives or withholds land and cattle, gives or withholds consent to marriages.

But although the family head is vested with all authority custom demands that he "hears" the voices of all the adult males before he hands out an important decision. The ritual of "hearing" the voices of the other male adults is elaborate.

I once witnessed the elaborate ritual of "hearing" at a Pedi village on the borders of northern South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

The Bapedi are a small tribe which came into being as an offshoot of the great Matabele nation-tribe which achieved the peak of its power during the latter part of the 18th and early part of the 19th century. The Matabele held undisputed sway over an area roughly the size of Western Europe until their power was smashed in the violent encounter with the Boer trekkers in the 1830s and 1840s. In their northward retreat from the advancing Boers, little villages of stragglers came into being.

These became, in time, the isolated Pedi villages on the northern borders of south Africa.

At this particular village, a young man, the third son by the fourth wife, had decided to take a young woman for wife. He had seen her work in the fields and had liked her speed and deftness. He had seen her moving, straight-backed and graceful, with a heavy pitcher of river water on her head and he had admired her brave thighs and the lines of strength of her neck and arms. He had thought to himself: That one will produce strong sons, and many of them, not a few weaklings. He had watched her secretly. He had arranged to cross her path "accidentally" a few times. He had saluted her and she had

ordained by the ancestral dead. The tribal society is therefore possibly the most exclusive society in the twentieth-century world. If you are not in the tribe, there is no way into it. If you are in it, there is no way out of it except death. To break the rules of the tribe is to court death. Dissent is not recognized. To dissent is to presuppose a society which recognizes individualism. The tribe does not recognize individualism.

The inward nature of the tribal pattern begins with the family, the foundation of the tribal ingroup. But even the family is no simple affair. A man's family can be made up of his father, his father's first, second and third wives there may be more - and the children of these. One or more of these women may be a wife or wives of a brother of his father's who had died. A man inherits the wives and children of his brothers who have died. The wives then become his wives, the children of his brother become his children, brothers and sisters to his own children by his own wife. Then there are the children's children. These and the old people, the grandparents make up the immediate family, the heart of the ingroup. Then there are the families related to his family by blood ties, the families of uncles, cousins. These have the same complex structure of many wives and brothers and sisters, many of whom are inherited. The blood link is generally carried through the males, though there have been rare occasions in the past, when women have ruled the tribes, when the blood link has been through the female side. A group of such blood-related families make up the clan. Clans have been known to be big enough to make up whole villages of people who are related by blood.

The senior male member of the family, the grandfather or father,

responded in a whispered murmur with head downcast and had gone away. Modesty, industry and the ability to bear children are the three most important virtues of a tribal maiden.

When he had satisfied himself that she was the woman he wanted confided his intentions to one or two of his closest friends under the strictest pledge of secrecy. They then spied out the land for him, dropped a few hints to the girl to find out her reactions, and investigated whether there were any rivals in the field. There were none in this case. If there had been things might have been complicated. The rival might have been wealthier, or of a senior age-group, or might have been someone whose family was closer to the ruling chief and who thus had political strings to pull. To compete against such a man might result in rejection and the humiliation and shame which accompanies it. Or it might start off a feud between the families and perhaps the clans of the two suitors. All this the third son of the fourth wife would have had to take into consideration before making a decision if there had been a rival in the field. Generally, he will decide against inviting trouble. In this case there were no rivals.

After the preliminaries, in which his friends and, possibly, a favourite young sister "spoke" to the girl for him, he approached the head of his family formally and announced his intention of taking a wife. The head of the family then called the rest of the adult males to a conference which went something like this:

Head of the family: "This young man has come to me with a matter on which I would hear you. Speak young man."

Young man, impassively: "I want to take a wife."

There was a humorist in the family, an old uncle who liked his drink. He came up with: "What for?" This drew hoots of laughter

from the rest. For a spell the young man was subjected to unmerciful teasing. A woman brought in beer and everybody drank. After a spell of nonsense things were brought to order.

Head of the family: "Enough! This is a matter of moment. So you would take a wife. Tell us, who is this woman? Of what tribe is she? Who is her father? Tell us of her family".

The young man then named the girl and the men entered into a detailed discussion of the girl's family, their possessions in land and cattle, their position in the tribe, their past. There was a frank listing of the things in their favour and the things against them. After this the head of the family invited opinions individually. And one by one the men said "I approve" or "Let it be arranged" or "So be it" or uttered a simple "Yes".

Then came the very important question of agreeing on what some people call "the bride price". In the tribe itself this is not considered as in any sense "buying" the bride. It is considered as a reasonable reward to the girl's family for having brought her up, fed her, clothed her and trained her in order, later, to go and labour in another man's fields and bear him children and serve him in all things.

The size of the reward to the girl's family was determined by the economic status of both families, the number of cattle they had, the number of fields in corn and so forth. The man in this particular Pedi family agreed on six cows and ten bags of corn as their limit. The young man had two cows of his own. An uncle agreed to contribute one. Everybody else chipped in with a bag or two of corn. The head of the family agreed to contribute two cows, making up the agreed total of six.

After this important point had been settled the senior woman

member of the family was called in and instructed to arrange the marriage talks. She took three other women with her and called on the women of the girl's family and informed them of the situation. The girl was called in and examined by the women of the young man's family. An important aspect of the examination was to find out whether she was still "untouched", still a virgin. When the women had satisfied themselves that the girl was a virgin, modest, obedient, hardworking, they reported back to their men.

A male deputation from the young man's family, led by the head and including the young man, then called on the male members of the girl's family who had had their own detailed conference about the boy and his family by then.

The subject was approached in a long-winded, roundabout manner with a great deal of elaborate speech-making. Eating and drinking was on a fantastic scale, with each group of men out to prove that they could eat and drink better than the other group. It took two and a half days of monumental hinging before they came to the point and the first offer was made. And during this time the visitors were "lent" women for their nightly rest.

The head of the young man's family opened the bargaining with:

"Well now, my brother, to the business in hand. Would you like three of our fattest cows and five bags of corn? I gave no more than two cows for my first wife and see how well she has served me. A fair offer, heh?

The head of the girl's family shook with mock laughter till tears ran down his face and gasp:

"Hear how my brother mocks! Is he not funny?"

And the men of his family agreed and joined in the laughter. And the women brought more beer and more food. Prominent among the servers was

was the young girl whose hand was sought.

At last, when everybody had had their fill of eating and drinking and talking, the matter was settled at the figure agreed by the young man's family.

Later the cattle^{was}/driven into the kraal or compound of the girl's family then were examined and approved; the bags of corn were counted and stored. And then the boy and his wife and the men of his family returned to their own compound.

For her first night with her husband the other women of the family attended on the new wife, prepared her couch. The old women gave her advice on how to please her man, forgetting that she had been taught all this at the initiation school; the young man also received unnecessary advice.

After that first night she became just one of the many women of the compound. She found her greatest companionship among the women. With them she worked in the fields and in the compound and looked after the children.

In time she will bear children which she will share with all the other women as they share their children with her. There will be no special separate and exclusive existence for herself and her husband. They will be part of the communal compound, private only in their hut at nights.

Their children will grow up as part of the communal compound, not "belonging" to them and with them in the exclusive sense in which western children "belong" with and to their parents. The family is the mother that shapes consciousness, the family is the father that shapes consciousness. The pattern of loyalties, of emotional and psychological commitments is to the family but not essentially to the woman-mother and man-father who begot the child.

In time her husband might take another wife, other wives.

In time his family might grow so big that he might build a compound of his own. He might inherit the wives of his brothers. One day he "lend" his first wife to a friend to spend the night with him. She would know how not to bear a child by a man who is not her husband. Sex has its place. It is important to the bearing of children. Apart from that it is unimportant, a brief moment of pleasure, a relaxing of a man before sleep so that his sleep is deep and relaxing. But there is significance to the first time, to the piercing and opening of that dark unknown world which will bring forth life.....

This Pedi pattern of a "hearing" and of how a marriage is arranged is universal in Bantu Africa in its broad outlines. From the Congo across Eastern Africa down to central and southern Africa it is broadly the same. There are variations, of course, but are not fundamental. It would be impossible in the space of the relatively short essay to sketch in the great variety of detail to be found between one tribe and another, across the length and breadth of a continent the size of Africa with its two hundred million people.

In some of the tribes, polygamy has given way to monogamy even where Christianity or Islam, or western ideas in general have made no impact. In other tribes, the Kikuyu of Kenya are a significant example, the institution of chieftainship had given way to rule by a council of elders until the British re-instituted chieftainship for their own political convenience - or so it seemed at the time. In what was French Guinea until the tribesmen there voted against DeGaulle's new constitution, tribalism had, to an extent, made room for the special and intimate relationship between the child and his woman-mother and man-father. This was brought out in Camara Laye's sensitively perceptive autobiography "The dark Child". And some tribes, like the

Baganda of Uganda, have evolved to the point where they have a king and a Lukiko or parliament; but this has come about after generations notwithstanding, the pattern I have outlined is still basic of the majority of tribes up and down the continent.

Another and most vital factor in the life of tribal man is his attitude to life and death. Neither life nor death is ever wholly accidental. Disaster is never natural. These are brought about by the good and evil spirits all around us. The evil spirits are preoccupied with bringing disaster on the tribe. The good with protecting the tribe. It is as though a man's existence is a slight pawn in the high jinks being played out in the spirit world. Some of this has been brought out by Amos Tatuola in his fantastic novels on West African life. To achieve their ends the evil spirits enter the bodies of ordinary human beings and work their evil through them. To fight the evil spirits the good spirits enter the bodies of witchdoctors. The question of life and death are thus taken out of the hands of mortal men.

The world of tribal man is so dominated by the spirits that some tribes will not eat birds because of the spirits that are in them; some will not eat fish; some are vegetarians; some eat meat only.

Tribal man is hemmed in, imprisoned by his ancestors. What he does, what he does not do has been predetermined for him by the dead. His horizons are only as wide as the ancestral dead permit. He is also protected by the ancestral dead. The rules are such that there are no orphans in the tribe, no misfits, no neurotics. And of course, the ancestral dead are hostile to change.

This then is the "oblique, the hard to know man", whom Richard Wright encountered on his first visit to Africa. He is the man who

raised Nkrumah to power. He is the man whose pressures led Jomo Kenyatta to the Mau Mau and then to his lonely exile. He is the man who will have a crucial say in the future of Africa.

The ancestral dead notwithstanding, change is imposed on him, how he reacts to the change, will have a powerful bearing on tomorrow's Africa.

If the men inaugurating the new ways have the sense and the patience to preserve the finer qualities of the old ways and fuse these with the new, then we can expect something magnificently new out of Africa.

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Granny Petersen was my mother's aunt by marriage. She was small, black as night, and toothless. Her face was so wrinkled, it was impossible to see through the folds of loose flesh and get a picture of its shape. She wore the numberless petticoats of her generation. This swelled her figure to a thickness that made her tiny face seem oddly out of place. In response, her shrivelled-up little body looked lifeless. But she had sharp, shrewd eyes that flickered in all directions and missed very little.

Now, as she presided over the supper-table, the oil-lamp from the central ceiling rafter shone full on her white, pepper-corn curls. Her sharp eyes glowed out of her shadowy face. Her grand-daughter, the little full-faced dark brown girl of three, sat near.

Granny Petersen finished serving. We all stood with heads downcast while she prayed. It was a long prayer. It began with the food we were about to eat. Then it went on to the house, the chickens and the eggs they were to lay, the cow and her calf. It even remembered the dog. Then granny prayed for my mother, my sister, myself, and the whole of 'that branch of the family, O Lord'. The prayer swung from our branch of the family to her own. She prayed for her son who worked on that 'devil's cart', the railway. She asked God to spare the trains he went on. He had two children to feed and clothe. And this, Dear Lord, reminded her of that wicked woman who had left her son with two young girls and gone off with another man to the pleasures of the evil city. 'You know what to do with such as her, O Lord, don't you. You will punish her and show her that sin does not pay....'

By the time Granny Petersen had finished praying, the food was cold. My mother looked at her food, then at granny.

'I'm sure the Lord would like us to have our food hot, Auntie.'

'Thank you, Angelina, but I think I've lived with the Lord much longer than you have.'

I caught the shadow of a smile on my mother's face as she bent over her food. Laughter-loving Maggie choked and begged to be excused.

We were half-way through our meal when there was a knock at the door. Things happened fast. Granny whisked the two pots under the bed. The little girl gathered up the spoons and took them to the washing-up bucket in the corner. Then granny took our half-eaten plates of food and pushed them far back under the bed.

'Now talk and laugh!' she snapped.

My mother said something. It was drowned by Maggie's laughter. Old granny opened her mouth and cackled away as though genuinely amused by something funny.

The knock sounded again.

'I think there's someone at the door.' Granny's voice was loud enough for those outside to hear.

My mother went to the door. The location priest and his wife came in.

'We thought we might call on you to-night, Sister Petersen,' the priest said.

'It is very thoughtful of you, Reverend.'

'But do not let us keep you from what you were doing,' the priest said, looking at the bare table and the fire with nothing on it.

'Yes,' the woman said. 'Have your supper and don't mind us.'

'We have already eaten,' granny said. 'But do come and sit down.'

The priest bit his lower lip as though in deep thought. 'Anything wrong?' granny asked.

The priest turned to his wife.

'You did take the medicine to the sick old man, my dear?'

A look of horror spread over the woman's face.

'Dear God, forgive me. I forgot.'

'I must ask you to excuse us, sister,' the priest said.

'I understand, Reverend,' granny murmured.

They hurried out.

'See if they've gone,' granny said.

My mother went.

'They've gone.'

m Granny got the food from under the bed.

'Seems you were right, Angelina. The Good Lord seems to want us to eat warm food to-night. I'll put it all back into the pot to warm up.'

'Why not pray while it's warming,' my mother said.

A wicked glint showed briefly in granny's eyes. She prayed. There was no need for her to remind God how hard times were. He knew. He knew, too, that she had done her best by the preacher and his wife. Why, only to-day she had walked her poor old legs sick collecting for the preacher's rent. And she had fed them three times this week. And God knew how big their appetites were and how little she had. There were others who had more. It was up to God to stir their hearts so that they, too, took a share in supporting the priest and his good wife. And God had no right to be angry with her because she could not, like Our Lord Jesus, feed half the world on five loaves and two fishes. Anyway, God should not forget she was giving the priest and his wife Christmas dinner tomorrow. As for this little thing of to-night, well, she and God understood each other. They both knew what hard times meant even if younger people had silly thoughts. Amen.

When we had finished our meal it was time for Maggie to start back. My mother and I walked down to the station with her.



The six days after Christmas were days of glory in Vrededorp. The grand carnival of coons was the heart-beat of these days.

There were six coon teams in Vrededorp that year. Each team tried to outdo the others in uniform, dancing and singing. A team was made up of between twenty and thirty men and boys. Their uniforms were of the brightest and shiniest silk materials. And each team wore a different combination of colours.

My brother, Harry, was a member of the Twentieth Street team. On my first evening back from Krugerdorp, I watched him dress. His shirt was bright red with shining green ruffs and breast pockets. A green handkerchief, tied pirate fashion, covered his head. Over this he wore a red straw hat with three tall green feathers. White gloves covered his hands. His knee-breeches were yellow, with black piping. A broad purple sash circled his waist. The ends hung down below his left knee. He wore red shoes with big shining buckles, and long white stockings that tucked under his breeches. His cheeks were rouged and powdered. Side whiskers and a moustache of burnt cork completed his turnout.

In marching position, each team made a triangle. There were eight guitarists in a line. In front of them walked a line of banjoists. This was slightly shorter than the line of the guitarists. Next came two lines of bone players. Each had an evenly shaped set of bones in each hand. They rattled these, producing a sound like that of castanets. Next came the tambourine players. They completed the orchestra. In front of them were the dancers, in two lines. Each dancer carried a beribboned stick which he twirled while pirouetting about the street. Finally, there was the leader, the apex of the triangle. He was the most elaborately made-up member of the team. His uniform, though of the same colour scheme, was different from that of the rest of the team. He was the brightest in a galaxy of bright peacocks. He did not dance all the time, like the others. But when he did, great artistry invaded the mean streets of Vrededorp, and all my world came out to watch it and be carried away by a dagga-smoking, dice-playing, Coloured boy who, for a brief moment in time, carried the gods of grace and beauty in his heart and mind and twinkling feet.

All through those six days, the lucky men, those at work, rushed home at the end of the day, changed quickly into their carnival clothes, and hurried to the meeting-places of the coon teams. There they met the unemployed who had whiled the long day away, waiting for assembly time. The teams fell in. The guitars and banjos struck up. The bones clicked. The tambourines banged and rattled. A whistle blew. The teams set off, down the centre of the street. The leader twirled his stick. Those behind him danced.

Thus, they went up one street and down another. And the folk of Vrededorp marched with them. And sometimes, when two teams met, there was a battle of dancing for the right of way. The teams would stop, facing each other. And the two leaders would dance against each other. That was a sight! They whirled and leaped; made intricate patterns with their sticks; danced on their brightly coloured handkerchiefs; on their bellies; on their hands. Right of way went to the victor. The vanquished made a passage and played the victors through. And oh, how the victorious leader danced through that human passage!

Every now and then, a team stopped in front of a house. They made a circle. The guitars and banjos played till the people of the house came out. Then there was silence. The people of the house chose the song they wanted to hear and the singer. The music struck up. The singer sang the verses alone. The whole team joined in the chorus. The soloist went around, collecting, after his song.

All the coon teams amalgamated on New Year's Eve. A giant coon procession sang and danced its way about Vrededorp into the new year. There was laughter and feasting, and great gaiety. On this, the last night of the old year, the stern coon rules were relaxed. Women and girls could walk in procession with their husbands and lovers. We, the young children, wore paper hats, waved rattles and let off crackers. I was with the gang and we had a wonderful time letting off squibs under people's feet and watching them jump.

Once, I caught brief sight of Harry. A pretty, long-haired, brown girl walked beside him. As I looked he turned and kissed her. I wondered about Emily. I shouted to him. The din of music, rattles, crackers, and human noises drowned my call.

Midnight came. Whistles hooted. People shouted and flung paper hats in the air. They went about kissing strangers. Once, I caught sight of the Reverend Rogerson. He towered above a crowd that surrounded him. He sang Auld Lang Syne at the top of his voice.

My mother had returned to be with us on New Year's Day, so I left the gang and ran home. People had been saying 'Happy New Year' to each other. I would do the same to her. It would please her. And perhaps I would be the first one. I fought my way home through the crowds.

Before the sun was up, a fleet of double-decker buses carried the great majority of the citizens of Vrededorp to a wooded green place far away from the town. There, people danced and sang and laughed and loved and drank and fed till the sun went down. Then they returned wearily. The week of glory was over. Ahead lay a year of ~~arabness~~ ^{drabness} and want before they could have another week of glory. This week would be something to remember in the lean days ahead.... The coons packed their uniforms away lovingly....

The Hills, Finally

We are hill people, my wife and I and we have been so all our lives. My earliest and most persistent memories are of the green hills of Africa going away, one after the other, each higher than the one before, as far as the eye could see and beyond into the haze of distance. And for her it is the towering green volcanic mountains of Java among which she spent her formative years. So it was natural that when we came to rest finally, to put down roots and to rear a family, it should be in the hills; and because of our natures and our needs it had to be the hills of St. Andrew in Jamaica, physically as far away from Africa as from Java, yet very reminiscent for each of us of those other faraway hill countries. She grew up eating a succulent-tasting but foul-smelling fruit (when fully ripe) called Durian; she met it here half a lifetime later in the shape of the Jamaican Jack-Fruit, and at once the gap of ^{oceans} ~~between~~ and cultures and time was bridged.

Today, and for the last two weeks, on and off, we have had a high whistling wind coming in across the sea from the south. It reminds me of the Mistral which I encountered many years ago in French Mediterranean hill country; it is also reminiscent of the Harmattan of West Africa, though much gentler on the skin and not as dry. One feels exhilarated watching the John Crows riding the high wind. Suddenly they are the most beautifully graceful creatures in the world; and the most free while riding the wind. It comes as a surprise to find, on going down to the plains, that the wind has passed so high over the city that the people there are hardly aware of it. You have to be somewhere above a thousand feet to begin to feel the wind; we are more than two thousand feet up and on the crest of a hill and with no windbreaker between us and the sea. So we feel it strongly. Behind us are even higher hills

and the people who live there feel the force of the wind even more strongly. The land here rises steeply so that less than a mile away from us, as the crow flies, the altitude is 3,300 feet. The road between our hill and the ones behind that rise to more than 3,00ft is not far off a thousand feet below us, which should give some idea of how steeply the land rises and falls here. Yet because these hills, the Red Hills, are old ones, the rise and fall of the land is not the steepest in the island. In the Blue Mountains/^{which are geologically newer} the rise and fall of the land is much steeper. And because of the very high hills and the very deep valleys there are times of the year when you wake up in the morning to look down onto cloud-covered valleys, or when you have to travel through a thick evening fog that reminds one of cold industrial countries; but this is a cleaner, less damaging fog, than the fogs I have known in cold industrial countries. And in the winter, around Christmas time, it can get very cold in these hills; and the higher you go, the colder it can be. So it is not strange, or pretentious, to find, in the hills, homes with fireplaces. But more than anything else, in good weather or bad, whether the wind is high or the air is still, there is the pervasive comforting green of the hills interspersed here and there by riots of colour as when the delicate petals of the yellow pouie fall and transform a patch of earth into a joy forever, or as when the ginger lillies and wild orchids and the wild pines are in full bloom. There is the fragrance too, of mango time, of when the citrus are in bloom and the bees and the birds keep up their delightful din from daylight to darkness. Living in these surrounds, whether we appreciate them consciously or whether we take them for granted, does influence the lifestyle of the hill folk and how

they look at the world about them.

They are, on the whole, a proud and independent people; they are resilient and clear-eyed realists. The African strain is strong in them, stronger than it is with the folk down on the plains - that is apart from Spanish Town which has always struck me as the most African town in all Jamaica. But no matter how strong the African strain they are distinctively Jamaican, a people unto themselves, bound together by generations of shared living and working in these hills. They all speak the same language which some people call English and others call Jamaican; whatever you call it, it is a kind of free enriched language that does many things that standard English cannot and that is spoken with the kind of lilt you find when Welshmen speak English.

When slavery was ended and the apprenticeship system was brought in and proved largely unsatisfactory, the ancestors of today's hill folk withdrew in large numbers from the life on the plains and created for themselves self-contained and self-sustaining communities in the hills and grew their ^{own} food on the hillsides or in the fertile valleys between the high hills. In time they carried food down to the plains to sell in order to earn money to pay the hated taxes or to buy the few things they need from the city. In time, too, and in increasing numbers, the young people refused to remain on the land and work it with their parents. Instead as soon as they could, they joined other young people from all over the island in the drift down to the plains and the city and the bright lights. The result is that today the Jamaican small farmer and the man who works the hillside land in particular is rarely under thirty. More often he is in his forties and fifties.

But we have noticed an interesting new development in the

past few years. We have been in our particular little hill community for something like eighteen years now. In that time we have watched many youngsters go to the local village school till they were fifteen and then disappear from the community. Whenever we enquired after these youngsters, parents would tell us they had "Gan a town". Recently, some of these youngsters now grown into young men and women have started returning, often with a partner and a child or two, to their hillside communities. It is a very small heartening sign because unless some of the young people come back we will not have people to work the land when the present generation of small farmers pass from the scene; and if we do not work the land and ~~try to make~~ work so efficiently as to feed our growing population then all the progress we may make in other fields will be reduced to nothing. So the return of at least some of the young people to the hills after they have had their fill of the bright lights of the city is very important. The people who now handle the country's affairs have shown themselves aware of this. They talk and plan now of making small farming ^a ~~and~~ reasonably profitable undertaking, which is what it has not been for the older generation of hill folk. They have begun to offer small farmers guaranteed outlets and guaranteed prices for their crops. They plan, too, to take piped water and electricity to all the villages throughout the country. When these things are done, when electricity will bring the blessings and the curses of radio and television within the reach of each rural hillside home, and when the members of the household will only have to turn a tap to have all the water they need for washing and cooking and watering their crops in dry times, and when these crops bring them enough money to pay for all this and then leave something over for the luxuries that enrich life,

only then, it seems to me, will our leaders have any moral right to call on the young people to return to the hills and undertake the backbreaking task of making them what they naturally and logically are and should be which is this island's food basket. To do this we will also have to do a considerable amount of rehabilitation work on our hillside land. The older generation of small farmers have traditionally cleared land by burning it. This is by far the quickest and easiest way to clear difficult terrain of thorny bush. And after the burning you usually get a good first crop of corn or yam or cabbage or pumpkin. The trouble is that when the rain comes, ^{it is torrential} and ~~land~~ comes very fast down these steep hillsides, ^{and} it usually carries all the topsoil away and down to the sea with it. I have watched this washing away of the good earth during the rainy season when the rivers leading into the sea ^{are} ~~were~~ swollen with life-giving earth and it has made me despair over the unwisdom of man. We must at the very least arrest this annual erosion of the good Jamaican earth if the hills are to sustain the people of this land. A handful of people are committed to this important job but this far political considerations have stood in the way of an outright and total prohibition of this destruction of the Jamaican earth through fire by good men who know no better. We must hope that the people who now handle the nation's affairs will see the urgency of this problem and will put a stop to the firing of the land. If the green hills are allowed to turn brown and wither and become barren rock all Jamaica will suffer grievously. There is no need for this. We need the hills for more than just food, though that is crucial. We need the hills for the sturdy breed of balanced human beings they have bred who have had so much to do with this country's stability; and we need them because they help men to be tranquil and at peace in a troubled world. ~~All men go to the hill~~

IN OUR VILLAGE

In our village things move in cycles. This does not make our village unique. Things move in cycles everywhere. But everywhere is not our village and the cycles of everywhere are the cycles of everywhere, not of our village. You do not find the rusty, sandpaper laughter of Mass Tiny everywhere; you do not find the wicked ribald stories of Miss Coollie everywhere; or the wicked love life of Ken; or the sad-making love life of Jiggs or the worldly wisdom of Daddio; and you do not find me, the privileged and grateful spectator who is also allowed to share, everywhere. You find these only in our village. At least, this is our claim and our boast. And so, for us, our village is unique. And not only for us. There are members of a strange organisation known as 'The Doghouse Club' - some of whom are regular contributors to this journal - who will attest to the uniqueness of our village. They have had the rare honour of being admitted to Honourary membership of the eating and drinking section of our village because they did not do too badly on a feast of pork and green bananas and fried salt-fish washed down with gallons of rum. In any event, the cycles in which our village move are unique because they are ours. And we have just moved into the Christmas cycle.

fifth

We became aware of the Christmas cycle on the ~~xxxxxxx~~ day of November. It happened quite suddenly and very unexpectedly. Tiny was very busy with a host of young customers whose mothers had sent them to buy a penny salt, a quattie cornmeal, tuppence sugar, sixpence bread and the like. This happens every Saturday afternoon in our village and it is Tiny's wonderful patience with the little ones that first made me take to him years ago inspite of his somewhat wicked looking face. On this fifth day of November Tiny was being as patient

and helpful as ever: parcelling up two Four Aces here, doling out kerosene oil there and carefully working out the money with little nippers who were knee-high to grasshoppers.

Just outside the shop and sort of half-leaning into the shop in order not to miss any of the goings-on, Miss Coolie sat on a low stool. You are likely to get the wrong impression of Miss Coolie if you do not know her. I got the wrong impression when I first met her in the dim and distant past when I was still a stranger and an outsider. She has a stern, leathery brown face which has turned a sort of earth colour by being constantly exposed to the wind and the rain and the sun of the hills. To strangers she would seem cold and impersonal with a hint of aggression in her manner. She has a disconcerting mannerism of staring at people with dead eyes. Strangers are prone to dismiss Miss Coolie uneasily as an arrogant peasant type. You know, my dear, the type who are making it impossible for us to have servants. But when Miss Coolie laughs or tells one of her wicked tales rich in humour then those cold eyes come glowingly alive and a shyness and warmth transforms her into an endearing person. Now, Miss Coolie sat withdrawn, puffing at a cigarette and watching the little ones do their Saturday afternoon shop.

Across the way at Lee's shop a number of young bloods were playing skittles for beer - losers buy and winners drink; and winners do not only drink but they keep on playing until they are beaten. The last time I was in one of these skittles sessions string-bean Urie Sachell and I had to down so many beers that I thought I was going to pop. In those days the skittles table had only just arrived in our village and I had had my basic training in the tough school of the Press Club. I am not so sure that I will have to do all the

beer drinking today if I were to join the crowd of young men in their skittles for beer.

Anyway, there it was: Tiny behind his counter serving the youngsters, Miss Coolie in one of her remote 'privileged spectator' moods. Daddio, the village elder and wise man, sitting on a long bench in the shade. String, our humourist with the impish face, and big Jack looking like Samson before Delilah got at him, sat beside Daddio. And they were all quiet and pensive: relaxed, unwilling to talk, unwilling to make a move of any kind. And I stood talking to M.C. our small, rotund and well loved agricultural officer, about the forty or so citrus Dusty had ~~xxx~~ planted some weeks back.

Suddenly our nearest thing to a village drunk lurched out of the bar and weaved his way down our main street swaying like a ship in a storm. The little post van came hurtling round the corner and had to ~~xxx~~ swerve violently to avoid killing our nearest thing to a village drunk. In fact, it was a typical Saturday afternoon in our village.

I waited a while, long enough for the van to unload the mail, and then M.C. and I strolled to the post office. It was fifteen minutes or so before M.C. and I again returned to the square, and in that fifteen minutes the Christmas cycle hit our village.

Tiny, the kids, Miss Coolie, Daddio, String, Jack and some of the young fellows from the skittles for beer place, were all clustered together around the post where all our important notices are hung. M.C. and I pushed our way through to see what had caused all the talk and excitement. And there it was, the annual notice of our village fair.

COME MOMMIES AND DADDIES AND LITTLE ONES TOO!

COME TO THE FAIR!

And it told us of all the wonderful things that we could see and do. For the older men there would be the shooting contest. This usually takes place on Christmas morning. For the youngsters there would be the most magnificent ~~round~~ merry-go-round swing you have ever seen. It will be completely home-made of tress cut down from our own land and tied together with wiss and other strong fibres grown by us. No part of it will be store bought. Then there will be games of chance and these too will be home-made, not store bought. There will be cakes and buns and sweet things for the kids to drink and for the older folk there will be curry goat and stronger stuff. And in the evening there will be dance contests. This year the highlights will be the quadrille and something called Mashed Potato for which there will be a prize of five pounds.

"Me entering that one!" Tiny roared. "For five poun' me goin' Mash that potato."

"Is quadrille for me," Miss Coolie said and showed us how.

"We going lose the shooting again," Daddio said ~~xxx~~ sadly. For three years running now characters have come from neighbouring villages and walked off with our shooting prizes.

Ken and some of the other young fellows starte remembering what they had done to the girls at last year's fair. And suddenly the feeling of Christmas was all about us. In a body all the grown-ups moved to Tiny's bar. Tiny set us up and we toasted the coming of the Christmas cycle. It happens every year. It is the same fair every year. We do the same things at the fair every year. And year after year the announcement of the coming of the Christmas cycle is always toasted as something new in our village.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Reynolds News anticipated, when they bought the serial rights of Father Huddleston's book, that it would be the most important on Africa to have appeared in a very long time. They were right. The book is selling strongly and the publishers expect to have sold 100,000 copies before the year is out. It has also just been published in America and is being translated into a number of European languages. It has provoked the bitter wrath of the South African Government. That Government is going to take the unusual step of publishing an 'official' reply. South African Cabinet Ministers have denounced the book. There has been a long correspondence in the Times. People have hated it for its frank revelation of the workings of an oppressive regime and just what it meant in simple human terms. Among those who have objected to the book have been many who considered themselves enlightened and 'progressive'. Yes, many so-called progressives found the searing light of truth too much for their smug complacency. But a vastly greater number of people have accepted the truth of Huddleston's book and the challenge in that truth. Of these, many have said:

"Yes, this is terrible; but what can we do about it? What are we to do?"

It seems to me the first level of action must be the political level.

Father Huddleston raised a storm of protest when he suggested at a public meeting that the Union Government should be expelled from the Commonwealth. But the need for such action becomes strikingly clear once we consider the actual Commonwealth situation today. Except for the United Kingdom, India is perhaps the most influential member of the Commonwealth. As a factor for world peace she can speak to both East and West with an authority enjoyed by no other state. Relations between the Government of India and the Government of South Africa are bitter. India has for years led the fight against the South African racialists

in the United Nations. Pakistan and a host of other, non-Commonwealth, states have supported India's stand. Indeed, over the years, Britain has from time to time found herself in the position of being the only Commonwealth country to support South Africa. There have been times when even the other white members of the Commonwealth, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, have found it difficult to support or defend the Union Government at the United Nations. South Africa has, in effect, created discord within the Commonwealth. ~~Then~~ We do not serve the Commonwealth by shutting our eyes to these hard facts and playing ostrich.

Very soon, now, the Gold Coast is likely to reach Dominion Status. The leaders of the Gold Coast are not likely to forget the insulting jeers from the South Africans about their country being a 'Kaffir state'. Nigeria, too, is on the road to being a great Dominion with over 30,000,000 peoples and vast untapped natural resources. I know most of these leaders and what they think of South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth. And in the West Indies where a Federation ~~which will be~~ will come into being in 1958, and a new Dominion be born, I recently found as pronounced a hostility towards South Africa's colour bar rule as exists among the Asians and Africans. These people all take a very dim view indeed of Britain condoning, or seeming to condone, South Africa's Nuremberg-like racial rule. Certainly, if we want to keep the Commonwealth together, if we want the coloured majority of its members to keep their belief in its ideals of freedom from political and racial oppression, then Britain must declare herself clearly against South Africa's racialism at the highest political level. Failure to do so might, and I think will, ultimately, wreck the entire Commonwealth structure. The South African rulers have often made it quite clear that they would leave the Commonwealth when it suits them to do so. Don't leave the initiative to them. Let freedom and democracy have the initiative for once! Repudiate them and there will be such an upsurge of faith in the Commonwealth as

will shock the pessimists! The effects of such action on the Union would be to create a deep crisis which might well bring down the present Government and create the conditions for a more hopeful situation. But even if that does not happen immediately, Britain's hands would be cleaner and the Commonwealth would be healthier. I am sure myself that such action would have far-reaching and positive results in the long run. Democracy cannot, today, temporise with the manifest evil of racialism and still win the ideological struggle for men's hearts and minds.

People have brought forward many reasons for shying away from this challenge. Some have said that while the Union is in the Commonwealth the other members might exert some influence to the good on it, that "we must not abandon the poor natives". The truth is, the 'poor natives' have in fact been abandoned up to now by all except missionaries like Father Huddleston. Nothing we do here can really worsen the lot of the Union's black millions. We are in fact propping up the Union's racialism, giving it moral support, by keeping it in the Commonwealth. We, democracy, the Commonwealth, have everything to gain by expelling the Union from the Commonwealth unless it abandons its frankly oppressive racial regime.

This, then, is the overall political point on which people can create a climate of opinion, can exert influence on their leaders, their M.P.s, and through them, on the Government of the day.

Mr. Strydom, the South African Prime Minister, will be at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meetings in June. The South Africans have tried for many years to gain control of the British Protectorates inside the borders of the Union. This time Mr. Strydom is likely to suggest the sharing of control of the Protectorates with Britain in a condominium. Britain's answer should be a flat refusal. And to give point to that refusal Seretse Khama's exile should be ended. It is impossible to persuade Africans that Seretse Khama was not exiled to appease

the South African racialists.

There are a host of other things, not directly political, but of great political importance, than can be done. The Musicians Union has set a fine example in this by adopting a resolution refusing to perform in the Union except to inter-racial audiences.

At present cultural bodies like the Old Vic and Sadlers Wells, and many individual artists perform for white audiences only when they visit South Africa. As individuals these people may themselves detest racialism but when they perform for 'Europeans only' they do in fact condone and encourage racialism. Yehudi Menuhin has shown that with a little courage this racialism can be challenged and defeated. His threat that if they stopped performing to Africans he would see that no American musicians visited South Africa stopped them dead in their tracks. The racialists are terribly vulnerable to a cultural isolation here. Art by its very nature does not recognise national and racial barriers. Let the artists be true to their art: let them follow the example of Menuhin and the Musician's Union and perform only before inter-racial audiences.

The same goes for sport. At Bloemfontein last year the British Rugby team played in a sports ground from which Africans were excluded. The point, here, was not that of playing with the Africans. They were not even allowed to see the game. There are many sports grounds from which the Africans are excluded from even the 'privilege' of being segregated spectators. The very least British sportsmen should do is to refuse to play on such grounds. International sporting bodies should recognise only South African teams without colour bar rules. The West Indian cricketing authority recently refused to allow two South Africans to travel with Jim Swanton's team that played in the West Indies. Cricket, like all other sports, is segregated in the Union. Weekes and Walcott, Valentine and Ramadin, would not be allowed to play in any but 'non-European' teams there,

would not have had the chance to play in any test match had they been born in South Africa. Indeed, no West Indian team can, under present conditions, play against South African team. The West Indian cricketing authority was simply refusing to condone this situation by having two South Africans in the Swanton team. Only the New Zealanders have ^{also} so far lived up to the noblest traditions of sport and sportsmanship by refusing to adjust their rugby teams to suit South African racial prejudices.

These are some of the things we can do. Refuse to condone a colour bar in sport by refusing to play to exclusive audiences. That is the challenge to sportsmen. To artists the challenge is to tear down the 'culture bar' by refusing to perform to white audiences only. And on the political level the challenge is the active and positive repudiation of barbaric race-laws as part of the body of Commonwealth values. There is something for everybody to do here.

And for those who desire to help with money, there is the Bishop of Johannesburg's fund to support Family Centres and to see that as many black boys and girls continue to get as decent and liberal an education as possible in spite of the Bantu Education Act. Those who are interested in this work have contributed £6,000 so far. For those who want to contribute, the address is:

"Justice in South Africa - African Schools Fund",
30, Old Queen Street,
London S.W.1.

Finally, there are the nearly 100,000 coloured people in Britain. The South Africans were jubilant when the immigrants first poured in and it seemed that there would be a racial problem here. But they were wrong. The challenge, here in Britain, is to continue to prove them wrong.

How long the racist regime lasts in South Africa depends, I firmly believe, on how long Britain continues to condone it. If she condones it too long the price might well be the break-up of the Commonwealth.



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February 3, 1956

NOTE TO EDITORS

Mr. Peter Abrahams is a distinguished South African novelist and poet who has recently returned from a visit to the Caribbean. The first coloured man - being a person of mixed blood - to have emerged in South Africa as a writer with an international reputation, his work has attracted considerable attention in leading American and British journals. His books include COLOURED BOY, PATH OF THUNDER, WILD CONQUEST, and his autobiography, TELL FREEDOM.

--oCo--

10/2/56.

for Edna,

Thought you might like to see this which will go all over the world. This coming Sunday's piece in the Observer will be a shortened version with the additional point the C.M. gave me.

Just heard they've decided to ^{Peter} "postpone" my Notebook so it won't appear this Sunday. There are strong influences

A BRITISH CARIBBEAN FEDERATION

[Note: The conference on the proposed British Caribbean Federation begins on February 7, and is expected to continue until February 17 or 21.]

PETER ABRAHAMS

London, Friday

From British Honduras in Central America the plane flies east, over Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico; then it curves southwards, over the Leeward and Windward Islands, veers east to pass over Barbados, then south again to fly over Trinidad, seven miles off the Latin American mainland, and then south-east along the coastline to British Guiana. Within the 2,500 mile curve are the islands of the Caribbean. By far the greatest number of these - 12 - are British. It is the representatives of these 12 British islands who will meet in London on February 7 to discuss final arrangements for federating these islands and so lay the basis for the creation of a new British Dominion.

The Leeward Islands are so small that they are treated as one colony. The four Windward Islands are slightly larger and so enjoy the status of separate colonies but share a single Governor. The two mainland territories, British Honduras and British Guiana, whose Governments have not yet agreed to federation, will be represented by observers. The Windward and Leeward Islands together have a land area of 1,224 square miles and a total population of 298,000 people. Sugar cane, bananas and citrus are the main produce of the small islands.

Each of the four Windward Islands has its own legislature, generally with an elected majority. The Leewards, on the other hand, has one central legislature but the four 'Presidencies' into which the colony is divided have smaller legislatures of their own with limited powers. I saw one of these 'limited' legislatures at work in the island of Antigua where there was a trade union-led majority. Union leaders were acquiring some of the large absentee-owned estates, cutting them up into economic units and letting them to the peasants at nominal rents. The sole condition was that the peasant should produce a certain minimum quota. If he failed the land was taken from him. This 'limited' legislature had also an ambitious housing scheme under way. Neat little Government-subsidised houses were replacing slum dwellings everywhere in the little capital and new peasant villages were springing up in the countryside where land had been acquired. And when I spoke to the Administrator he was anything but hostile to all these 'socialist' measures. His one concern was whether the next grant-in-aid would be large enough to pay for it all.

[See Federation. 2.]

For it is a basic fact that these small islands of the Windwards and Leewards cannot support themselves economically. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain from federation. Those of their leaders I spoke to are aware of this and are among the staunchest pro-federationists in the Caribbean.

The three large islands, Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica are most likely to set the pattern and supply the top leadership for the federation.

Trinidad gives the lie to the popular belief that all the British West Indian islands are desperately poor. It is rich and prosperous and has a buoyant, expanding economy. In 1939 total Government revenue was \$13,421,444 (the Trinidad dollar is worth four shillings and twopence); by 1952 this had shot up to \$66,785,400. There has been a parallel rocketing in Government spending. In 1939 the Government had an accumulated surplus of \$9,154,627; by 1952 this had risen to \$38,931,360. Government revenue for 1954 was ten million dollars more than in 1952.

Oil is the basis of Trinidad's prosperity. Twelve oil companies operate on the island. Between them they contributed 34 per cent. to the total Government revenue in 1954. Oil is also one of the great employers of labour. There are some 16,000 workers on the oil fields who are assured of steady and continuous employment. The sugar industry is the largest employer of labour, but this is of a seasonal nature. During the peak crop seasons, from January to June, the sugar industry employs roughly 20,500 people; in the out of crop seasons this figure drops to about 16,000. Last official estimates of the island's working population placed it at 216,186 of whom 14,180 were unemployed.

Wages in Trinidad are high by general West Indian standards. In the oil industry the lowest paid worker gets a minimum of 52 cents an hour which works out at about 17 shillings for an eight-hour day. Those doing more skilled work get three and four times this amount. In the sugar industry cane-cutters average 25 shillings a day. Dock workers average £1 a day, and casual labourers between 12s. 6d. and 17s. 6d. a day.

There are signs of prosperity everywhere except in the remoter country areas. New and costly houses are going up on the hills above the capital, Port-of-Spain. Land values are soaring. There is an assured, well-to-do middle-class of all shades and colours and national origin.

Trinidad was one of the last British colonies to be conquered from the Spaniards and became a British possession only in 1797. [See Federation. 3.]

I found it the most 'Latin' of the islands. No doubt its proximity to Latin America has also contributed to this. It is squarish in shape, 1,864 square miles in area and has a population of 645,300. It has had its present form of representative government since 1945. As in all the islands, the majority of its people are of African origin. But it has large Chinese and European minorities, and a larger and growing East Indian community. One hundred and fifty thousand East Indians were originally brought into the island after emancipation to fill the need for labour on the sugar estates. Since then their numbers have increased rapidly and today they are upwards of a quarter of a million people.

The attitude of the majority of the Indians to federation has created something of a communal problem in the island. With rare exceptions, the Indians are opposed to federation. In terms of political arithmetic they see themselves reduced to the status of a small minority in a federation with a population of nearly three millions. In a Trinidad outside federation, on the other hand, they have a good chance of winning power at the polls one day. They are increasing at a faster rate than any of the other communities. Essentially, this is the light in which the other groups see the opposition to federation and hostility towards the Indian Indian/community is growing. When I talked to Mr. Albert Gomes, Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, he expressed grave concern over this growing communal feeling. The sooner, he said, federation came into being, the sooner would they be able to cope with this mounting communal feeling. Trinidad, then, brings its own wealth and prosperity and a communal problem to the federal conference.

It is under two hours flying time from Trinidad to Britain's oldest and most 'English' possession in the Caribbean. The 212,000 Barbadians are proudly 'English' in habit and speech and call their island home of 166 square miles 'Little England' or 'Bimshire' with apologies to none.

The island is flat and almost drab by contrast with the exotic beauty of the other islands. It was won from no foreign power; the English settlers who arrived there in 1627 displaced no aborigines. They found an unoccupied island and turned it into a little piece of England set in the tropics. The first slaves were imported from Africa in 1636, and to this day its population is made up of the two strains, English and African, and variations on the mixture of these two.

The poorest of the big islands, the Barbados estimates for 1954-55 were: Government revenue \$15,402,391; Government expenditure \$13,156,926. This left a general net balance as of March 31, 1955 of \$5,776,225.

[See Federation. 4.]

More visible signs of its poverty are to be seen in the back streets of the capital, Bridgetown. I wandered among homes made of packing-case wood, bits of corrugated iron and sacking. In one place, a short distance from the centre of the capital, I visited an old woman who lived in the broken down body of an old car.

Before 'Hurricane Janet' hit Barbados last year, Premier Grantley Adams and his Ministers were making desperate efforts to cope with problems of housing and work. But as their estimates show, they had very little with which to work. Basically, Barbados has a one-crop economy: sugar. The sugar industry employs roughly 25,000 people during the peak crop season. During the out of crop season this figure drops to between 7,000 and 10,000. In the peak season those employed earn an average of £3.15s. 0d. a week. In the off season there is only three days' employment for the fortunate few and they earn an average of 25s. a week.

When I was there the Government was hard at work trying to build up the tourist industry. This will take time. Meanwhile many who could not make a living on the island somehow scraped their fares together and left for England. I stood at the docks one day and watched a ship-load sail for England. The faces of those on board as well as those ashore were overcast. I felt the migrants would much rather have stayed in their sunny island than go journeying to a strange land, even though they called it 'home'.

Barbados was distinctive in one respect: it was the only place in the British Caribbean where I ran up against a sense of colour. There were the usual exclusive clubs; a subtle sense of invisible barriers being up. The whites kept to themselves, and so did the blacks. But I felt that this was in an odd way a continuation of custom, a kind of 'gentlemen's agreement' between black and white. Only the young 'progressives' railed openly against it. Federation is likely to have a shock therapy effect on Britain's oldest colony, racially as well as economically.

If Barbados is somewhere in the 19th century, Jamaica, the largest of the islands, is very much in the second half of the 20th. I flew into Kingston in the final phases of the island's tercentenary celebrations. There were festivals of art, music and dancing throughout the length and breadth of the island. The night before I arrived, the United States Presidential candidate, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, had spoken at a great rally in company with the Chief Minister, Mr. Norman Manley, and the Governor, Sir Hugh Foot.

OFNS - Federation. 5.

I was taken to a party that was the most racially mixed I had ever seen: East, West and Africa met and mixed here with a casual freedom that was striking. Certainly, in terms of race relations, Jamaica can teach the world, and the English-speaking world in particular, a lesson in free and harmonious multi-racial living.

With its land area of 4,411 square miles and population of 1,500,000, Jamaica is the most important island in the proposed federation. Its population is more than that of the other islands put together and would still outnumber the rest if both British Honduras and Guiana were to come into the federal scheme. It is politically the most advanced and the only one of the territories where there is a genuine two-party parliamentary system that works. It lies on both the sea and air routes between Panama, America and Europe.

In 1943-44 the island's revenue was £5,655,431 and her expenditure £5,949,348. This left her with a deficit of £293,917. But she had an accumulated balance of £344,835. By 1954-55 the estimates had risen to: revenue £15,336,464, expenditure £15,334,486, leaving a surplus of £1,978 and an accumulated balance of £1,829,757. But her population had also shot up from 1,237,063 people in 1943 to an estimated 1,500,000 by 1955. She has a thriving tourist industry, bauxite has brought new money into the country and industrialisation projects are in hand. But her great problem is her expanding population. The bulk of Britain's immigrants from the Caribbean come from Jamaica. They are a thrustful, venturesome people, a people with big ideas.

The desire for a larger identification, the sense of West Indian-ness, is most pronounced among them. The University College of the West Indies is in Jamaica's lovely Mona valley. In many ways this is the nursing ground of the new and growing West Indian consciousness. The Jamaicans are fortunate, too, in having as their leader to this conference a man of the stature of Mr. Manley with a sweeping, West Indian vision. Indeed, the entire British Caribbean is fortunate to be able to send to the conference three men of the calibre of Messrs. Adams, Gomes and Manley. The dream behind federation is a noble dream: the creation of a new nation to grapple, as a nation, with the problems of the once isolated people of a number of far-flung islands in the Caribbean sea. OFNS-COPYRIGHT

END

WEST AFRICAN BOOKSHELF

I have just looked at the enormously long list of books that the British Council is sending out to Sierra Leone and the Gambia for its Book Exhibition. The list is twenty-six pages long and has, I should guess, at least two or three hundred books titles on it.

The first section gives titles of books dealing with Africa and the Commonwealth. Among the books in this section my eye was caught by my good friend Roy Lewis' book, SIERRA LEONE: A MODERN PORTRAIT. I expect many of you have read the book and met its author when he was out there collecting the material for it. And I don't have to tell those of you who met him that he is as charming as a person as he is as a writer. Then, too, there is Mbomu Ojike's book, MY AFRICA which has had good sales both in this country and America; and Dr. Busia's study of The Chief in the Modern Political system of Ashanti is also on the list. There are a host of other books. One I would recommend most strongly to you because I enjoyed it so much myself, is Sir Arthur Bryant's THE STORY OF ENGLAND. Lord Hailey, Earl Attlee, the Aga Khan - they and a host of others, are all here.

There are other sections: sections on sport and recreation, and on travel and adventure. Anybody interested in reading about these is sure to find something to suit his taste here. But I want to devote the rest of my time to the section with the longest list of titles: the children's section, which alone takes up twelve pages of the entire list.

I do this because it seems to me that reading is just about the most important, the most worthwhile, and the most rewarding habit to instil in children. It is a habit that opens all the ~~whole~~ world to the child: it puts all

the knowledge, all the beauty, all the fun and laughter that men have recorded, within the reach of the child. And because reading is a habit one does not generally give up once one has formed it, the child will enjoy and live with the pleasures of reading all its life. It was the beauty and happiness and inspiration that I found in reading that led me to writing books myself. And, of course, it is much easier to form habits, good or bad, when one is young. So I would urge you most strongly to teach your children the habit of reading as early as possible. And I mean reading for pleasure, for enjoyment, not just to pass exams.

How does one set about this? Nothing is simpler. When I was a boy, and I was a miserably poor boy, mind you, I used to sit at my father's feet. My mother and brother and sister were there too. The time would be in the evening, after our last meal. My father would have a book on his knee from which he would read, always beginning his reading with the magic words: "Once upon a time....." We didn't have many books in our home; and those we had were falling apart and grey with age. But what magic they contained! What magic! It was in those long-ago days that my love of a good story was born. I have always blessed my parents for this: they gave me, I know now, something more important than wealth.

My wife and I are trying to do the same for our own children. Each evening, when the day's work and play is done, we open a book and sit around the fire and read to our children. The two eldest children are ^{six}seven and ^{seven}eight now. We started seriously when they were three and four. When we started we had to choose the stories and explain them. Sometimes, quite often in fact, in the early days, the attention of the children strayed. The younger one, the boy, got bore especially quickly. But things have changed now. It is they who now get the book and find the page and call us when reading time arrives. You see, the habit has been

formed already. And they are beginning to read for themselves. I feel very richly rewarded when I go downstairs from my work-room and see one of them flat on his or her tummy in front of the fire, trying to read for him- or herself. And now they choose their own books when Christmas or birthday times come around. Of course, we still guide their taste in reading; still help in the selection of books. But more and more they are beginning to recognise and love a good story. And their collection of children's books is beginning to crowd my own bookshelves so badly that I have recently had to put one new shelf into my bedroom and one into theirs. This has led to some trouble between the elder two and the baby who is just a year old. The baby has no sense of the value of books, and when the others are not looking, or out of the room, she grabs their books and throws them around. I comfort the elder brother and sister by saying: "Never mind. She's still a barbarian. Just wait until she can understand and we'll teach her the value of books." And so we will.

I have talked in this way to show you what personal and well-loved possessions our books are: indeed, they are our friends. And we have these friends in every room of our small home: I even keep some in the lavatory! But back to the list of the British Council Book Exhibition.

I came across a number of old family favourites in the children's list. There were the JUST SO STORIES by Rudyard Kipling which we read a winter or two ago; THE BULL THAT WAS TERRIFICO by Karel Jaeger, which they got ~~for~~ last Christmas and which the boy in particular enjoyed greatly: many among those for the younger children had been read and put away for the baby. And it was very pleasing to see that THE SECRET GARDEN by F. Hodgson-Burnett, which we are now reading, is on the list too. This book which tells the story of a little girl from India called Mary and two little boys called Colin and Dickon has been a great favourite since it was first published as long ago as 1911. The

story it tells is wonderfully exciting. It takes the reader straight into the magic world of children and shows how Mary and Dickon help Colin, whom everybody thinks a cripple, back to health and the run-about life of youth. But I do hope the publishers will have this wonderful story edited and cleaned up a little before they reprint it next time. Sometimes too many words come between the reader and the story. But this is a small complaint against a really wonderful book.

Then there was ALICE IN WONDERLAND, which is shown in the list as costing 12/6 but which you can get in soft cover for 2/-: that and quite a number of others on the list we had read. But there were quite a few that we had not read, though some of them were on our bookshelves. These are pleasures to come. And many of the books we have and love were not on the list. But I think the book whose absence from this British Council list I ^{noticed} ~~missed~~ most of all was THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS By Kenneth Grahame. This, to me and my family, is one of the most beautiful books in the English language. I myself have read it a number of times, often aloud in the evenings to my wife. And my children are getting ready for their second adventure with the Mole and the Toad and the Rat and the Otter - and all those wonderful little animals that Kenneth Grahame brings alive and let⁶ talk and walk and act just like so many human beings we know. But even without THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, there is enough good reading matter on the list for any family. So start the reading habit in your children. Start it in yourself. Make it a family thing. Pick a good book and read it aloud to your wife or your sweetheart. You'd be surprised at the pleasure you'll get from it. So please begin now, for reading maketh a man - and a woman. And teach the children the love of books.

A MAN CALLED HUDDLESTON

was

A giant farewell party/thrown by the black citizens of Johannesburg for a white man last December. The cream of South Africa's black talent was at the party: the best dancers, the best singers, the best musicians. They poured out their hearts in song and dance for the white man who was leaving ~~them~~ after spending twelve years among them. And in the audience, at the Johannesburg Bantu Men's Social Centre, black and white mingled freely, relaxedly. In South Africa this was as unique as the party itself.

Racial hatred and racial bitterness are so sharp in South Africa today that ~~that~~ party was something of a miracle. The Nationalist Government have drawn the racial lines so sharply; can, and does deal so ruthlessly with those who step over these racial lines, that the meaning of that party is something rare and significant. I myself can think of no other white man or woman for whom the South African blacks would do the same today. Why did they do it for this man? And who is this man?

His name is Trevor Huddleston. He was born in Bedford in 1913. He grew up ^{he} and went to school in England; went to Oxford and, in his vacations he spent his time among the hop-pickers of Kent. This led to his interest in missionary work, so he went to India and Ceylon when he had finished at Oxford. Then he return to this country and was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1937. His first job was a curacy at Swindon where, he says: "I met, and immensely liked, the railwaymen of England." In 1939 he joined the Community of the Resurrection, a monastic order of the Church of England ~~which~~ whose members take the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. And so his link with South Africa began, for the the Community of the Resurrection had, for a very long time, done an enormous amount of educational missionary work in South Africa.

I have good reason to know what the Community did in South Africa. I have experienced it at first hand. But for the work of the Community I would still have

been in the hell-holes that are the slums of Johannesburg. Certainly, I would have had some prison record, minor or serious, for it is the fate of those who ^{born} are/black in South Africa to encounter, sooner or later, the forces of ~~law~~ a white law designed to keep them in their 'place'. But I was lucky. I escaped this 'fate'; and for this I owe thanks to the ~~men who taught~~ Fathers and Brothers of the Community of the Resurrection who helped me to an education when the State couldn't care less whether I went to school or not.

I was just one of the many poor black kids at St. Peter's Secondary School, just outside Johannesburg. We came from the slum backwaters of the richest and greatest city in Africa. We came from shanty hovels where sanitation was primitive beyond measure. But we dreamed, as do the young everywhere, of escaping from the ugliness and dirt that made up our world. But education, the key to the way out of our misery, was free and compulsory for white kids only. And so I had, at the age of eleven, after having worked for two years in a tin factory, presented myself at a number of schools where I learnt till my savings ran out. When I was broke I went back to work. I worked anywhere, did anything that came to hand. This went on till I got to St. Peter's. There, for the first time, I studied under proper conditions: I had enough to eat, enough sleep. Dreaming the dreams of youth became possible. I learnt to laugh and play. And it was all right because I was not unique in my background. The majority of boys at the school had backgrounds similar to mine, had come from the same miserable conditions, had gone to work before they went to school. At St. Peter's I - and all the other boys who were there with me, and those who had been there before me, and those who came after - we were all educated for life. We were not only taught to pass exams: we were taught all the other things that make ~~us~~ socially useful citizens out of men and women. And I never paid a penny for the schooling I got. I didn't have a penny to pay.

The general educational background to my school days was important too. There

were ~~close~~ just over 4,000 primary and secondary schools for the blacks in the Union when I was at St. Peter's. Of this total, slightly over 2000 were run by the government and all the rest by the missionaries. There exists in the urban areas of South Africa today an educated black community, literate and civilised, that is almost as large as the entire white population of the country. This we owe to the missionaries - and largely to the Anglican missionaries. Without their help this educated black community would have been only a fraction of what it is now.

Those men and women who sang and danced and performed for Huddleston last December, were voicing, in small measure, through ~~him~~ this gesture to him, the great debt those of us who are not white owe to the missionaries of South Africa. But that was only a part of it. They were performing too, expressing their warmth, for Huddleston the man and what he had, in himself, come to mean to them in the twelve years he spent among them.

Huddleston had been sent to South Africa in 1943 to take charge of the Community's Mission in Sophiatown. Sophiatown is part of the western area of Johannesburg from which the Africans were recently moved because the whites coveted the place. Men who held freehold title to their land were forced to give it up because their skins were black.

Almost from the moment of his arrival Huddleston ~~was~~ was horrified by the ugly racialism. Horror soon turned into burning Christian anger: and then it found expression. Huddleston said:

"Because God became Man, any affront to human dignity, such as racial or colour discrimination, is an insult to God himself."

It was refreshing for black folk to hear this - oh, so refreshing! The church had so long been silent so long about this manifest evil. Here, at last, was a man willing to raise his voice against an evil others condoned by their silence.

But Huddleston didn't become a church-politician. There was an large amount of educational and welfare, as well as religious work to be done in Sophiatown. He did his work and did it well. He got to know the people and they got to know him. The tall, thin-faced, cassocked white man became a familiar figure in the miserable homes of those who lived in the shanty towns on the fringes of the Golden City. In 1949 Huddleston was made Provincial of the entire Community in the Union and Superintendent of St. Peter's School, 'the Black Eton of South Africa'. This meant still more work. But there was time to organise a children's feeding scheme and the founding of ~~the~~ "The Huddleston Jazz Band"! And Yehudi Menuhin saying: "Don't forget, Father, it was the negro jazz bands that first breached the colour bar in the States."

There is love too. Huddleston developed a deep love for the people among whom he worked, and they responded by giving him their love.

Then the South African Government brought in its 'Bantu Education Act' in 1953 which became effective on April 1st, 1955. By this Act the Government required that all schools for blacks be under the control of the Minister for Native Affairs who saw "no place for the Native in European society above the level of certain forms of labour". This was Dr. Verwoerd, Nationalist Minister of Native Affairs, who also said: "If the native is being taught, in any school today, to expect that he will live his adult life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake." This was education for serfdom.

Huddleston threw himself into the fight against this Bantu Education Act. "The world," he said, "does not know the fearful lengths to which South Africa has already gone in the suppression of personal liberty. South Africa today is a police state. It is all too like Nazi Germany at its beginning. Freedom of movement no longer exists; a passport is a privilege, not a right, withheld

from those who incur the Government's displeasure."

The South African Government launched a bitter attack on Huddleston. He was prosecuted and a magistrate said to him: "Is it the function of a priest to defy a magistrate?"

And Huddleston replied: "Is it the function of a priest to remain silent in the face of injustice?"

And of the Church Huddleston has said: "The Church has failed to uphold principle against prejudice, the rights of persons against the claims of power.

"The Church is conniving at injustice and oppression, and at the policy of white supremacy because it fears to lose the allegiance of its white members."

Last December Huddleston took leave of his black friends. He'd been ordered back to England by his Community. So his friends sang and danced their hearts out for him. Now, tomorrow, the record of Huddleston's twelve years in South Africa is being published as a book. And next week it will begin as serial in Reynolds News. I think this decision of Reynolds News to serialise Huddleston's book is the greatest service any English paper can do to both the cause of Africa and the cause of Christianity. Huddleston has called his book NAUGHT FOR YOUR COMFORT. But for me, and other dark children of Africa, there is comfort in the fact that Huddleston lived as he did, and wrote this book telling of that life.

NAUGHT FOR YOUR COMFORT, the title, is taken from Chesterton.

I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea, naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.

Here is the truth about South Africa; here, too, is a great, soul-stirring Christian document of our time: a record of failure by many and steadfastness by a few. But above all, it is the record and affirmation of one man's faith and how he lived it ~~ought~~ out. And the blacks sang for him with their hearts.

The West Indian News

The West Indian News came into being at a time when all had high hopes for the future. The date for independence for the Federation had been set for May 31, 1962. Our politicians seemed to have arrived at broad agreement on the key problems. There were of course, differences. Trinidad wanted a strong federal centre; Jamaica wanted a weak centre. But even these seemed capable of resolution because it appeared that the people and their leaders had made up their minds to forge a nation out of the scattered islands of the British Caribbean.

This was the setting in which the West Indian News came into being. The intention was to draw the peoples of the scattered islands together by giving them the same daily news bulletin at the same time and with the same voices reading the news in every unit of the Federation as well as in British Guiana. In this way the Rediffusion Group hoped to give point and meaning to the federal reality by bridging the gap of time and space and overcoming the ignorance and misunderstanding and lack of information between the component units. The way in which we proposed to do this was by compiling, each day as accurate and authoritative a news bulletin as possible for all the people of the British West Indies.

The West Indian News itself went on the air for the first time on November 1962 and over the past twenty months it has, without fail, brought the news from and to the people of the British Caribbean. The Federation has collapsed, and Trinidad and Jamaica, the two leading members of the former Federation, will achieve their independence as individual states in August. Barbados and the islands of the Windwards and Leewards are now in process of setting up a new Federation of 'The Eight'.

The West Indian scene has changed vastly but the West Indian News has survived as possibly one of the most creative and constructive and hopeful after-effects of the unhappy federal venture. And it is my sincere hope, and I know that it is the hope of all those people who put the news together daily in the studios of Radio Trinidad, of Barbados Rediffusion, of B.G.B.S. in British Guiana and of Radio Jamaica, that the West Indian News will continue to bring the people of the region closer together by informing them about each other. In this sense we at the West Indian News are still federated. We still work together in unity. And even our critics and our competitors concede that ours is the best daily news bulletin in the entire region. Indeed they often pay us the supreme compliment of 'lifting' items of news from our bulletins.

As with all really good ideas the actual mechanics of putting the news together is a complex operation which has been reduced to a beautiful pattern of simplicity. Roughly an hour before the news is to go on the air I go into my little control

room which, although it is physically situated in Jamaica, is recognised as West Indian territory. At the same time news editors and the news readers in Trinidad, in Barbados, Jamaica all enter special studios in their respective territories. I then call Cable and Wireless, Barbados and they report to me of the cable link between the various territories. Then I call each of the studios in turn and the voice levels are checked and adjusted. When our radio cable links are satisfactory Cable and Wireless officially hands over the circuit to me, and the business of putting the news together begins.

Beginning with Barbados, each news editor then gives me his news for the day. We discuss this, check it, rewrite the news when necessary so that a clear and comprehensible pattern of the day's news throughout the region emerges. In this process an editor in Barbados or in Jamaica or in Trinidad often has to go back to his news room to get more information or else to check some small but important point of fact. At other times the demands of the news may be such that our Trinidad studio has to give an item of its news to be incorporated into either the Barbados or Jamaica bulletin or conversely, so that the news will come out in the most streamlined manner. Timing is a very important factor and each item of news is timed down to the last second.

When all the sorting out, the editing, the rewriting has been done, I arrange the order in which the bulletin is to be recorded for broadcast. Everything is now set. At this point I check that the operators in each of the studios are ready to record and then our news readers take over. I give the signal, the bulletin is recorded and ten minutes or so later the listener in British Guiana, the listener in Trinidad, the listener in Barbados, the listener in the Windwards and Leewards, hears:

"This is Don Proudfoot from Radio Trinidad -----" or

"This is Yusuf Ali from Barbados Rediffusion -----" or

"This is Ayub Hamid from B.G.B.S. -----" or

"This is Peter Ince from Radio Jamaica -----".

The West Indian News is on the air.

Poverty, Aid, Investment, Politics (2)

You will remember we were talking about land last time. I told you that while in Kenya land was being subdivided and sold to the Africans as fast as the Kenya Government could buy out the settlers, in Tanzania no-one owned property on a freehold basis.

If you are an investor of the kind who wants to get as much for your money as you possibly can, and most investors are that kind, then this question of whether you can or cannot buy land outright becomes important. So there are no big hotels on Tanzania long and beautiful beach fronts. This does not mean Tanzania discourages investment. Nyerere made it clear that the country needs investment but on terms that they will approve of. For instances the great sisal estates stretching from ~~Tanga~~ Tanga, near the Kenya border, to Moshi in the foothills of Kilimanjaro, are operated by private investors; and these people are very happy to deal with Nyerere's government. These investors are making money for themselves but in the process they are creating jobs in the country, contributing to its national wealth, and improving the skills and living standards of its people. Other would-be investors found the controls and supervision and the government's insistence on treating the Africans with respect, rather irksome, so they turned to Kenya where things are not quite so strict.

And here the power politics of the 'cold war' inevitably came in. Nyerere's government did not adopt an anti-communist, anti-Chinese posture. He himself insisted on his country's right to decide for itself, without pressures from anyone, what is best for its people. The result has been less American investment and less American aid for Tanzania. When I discussed this with Nyerere he was not angry about it. This was how it was. The Americans had the right to use their money as they saw

fit: if they used ~~ix~~ their aid as an instrument of their foreign policy that was their business. Tanzania's position was that she would welcome help from any source, but not at the price of becoming anybody's satellite. He knew that this was the hard way to go about it, that this way the task of defeating poverty would be more difficult. But this way also led to dignity and self-respect.

And so it is that Kenya and Tanzania seem to me to have set out on two different roads in their attempts to cope with the problems of poverty. Kenya's is the road of what is usually described as private enterprise. But, on paper at least, this will be a planned private enterprise/ economy: it will be flexible and it will borrow whatever it find useful in other systems. The Tanzanian road is a much more carefully planned economy, with private enterprise having to fit into the overall plan. The cornerstone of this road, it seems to me, is co-operative activity in agriculture and government guidance and participation here is almost complete.

In travelling through these two countries I got the feeling of a basic conservatism in Kenya and an equally basic radicalism in Tanzania. I felt that right now the leaders and people of Kenya wanted a period of peace and quietness, a period in which they can relax a little. After all, it is not so long ago since they fought a savage and bitter war for their freedom. So a desire to conserve, a wish for a time of peace and quiet and no more struggle is not surprising.

All over Tanzania, on the other hand, but especially on the streets of Dar es Salaam, I found myself endlessly sensing the mood of radicalism. I found here the exiled political leaders of South Africa; I found representatives of the banned African political parties of Rhodesia and others. This was a place of preparation for future battle, the home of refugees from central and southern Africa.

Political Power & Pan-Africanism

Jomo Kenyatta is in his seventies now. He has only been head of state for about three years now. Before that he had spent seven years in imprisonment followed by a period of banishment to a bleak and remote corner of his land. He has been one of the most abused men in the world. One Governor of Kenya described him as 'The leader to darkness'. Today he is undisputed ruler of his country and the symbol of the pride and dignity and power, first of all of the Kikuyu, and then of all the other tribes of Kenya. Everybody in Kenya knows this. Kenyatta is in power for as long as Kenyatta lives or for as long as Kenyatta wants to be in power. And when I see Kenyatta I saw how very much the Old Man enjoyed this. After the years of struggle he is enjoying the fruits. There is today a frank and open cult of personality around Kenyatta. Everybody talks about the wisdom and the genius and the understanding of Mzee (that is what everybody calls him and it means 'The Old One'), and Mzee enjoys every minute of this adulation and flattery. And it is not just confined to Kenyatta's African supporters. I attended a public ceremony where the British High Commissioner, Mr. Malcolm Macdonald spoke in these same terms. Everybody does it, the Americans too. You find pictures of Kenyatta in every shop, in every office, in every public building. It is understandable. He is the symbol of African victory; and he is a great man. It is not surprising then if this heroic old man wants to relax and take things easy and enjoy the fruit of victory. None of the young men around him, not even Tom Mboya are of his stature. So none of them dare stand up to the old man ~~about~~ over any important issue. The one person who does stand up is the Vice President, Oginga Odinga.

Odinga represents the kind of radicalism that prevails in Tanzania,

and which says that political independence by itself is only half the battle won, the other half is economic independence. In addition Odinga's Pan-Africanism is still as strong as it was before Kenya became free. Odinga has also been in contact with the Chinese and there are stories of his having received money from them.

And so Odinga has been branded as a communist, as anti-white, as some sort of agent of Peking. And whenever there is an anti-communist scare, and they are quite frequent in Nairobi, there are attempts to connect Odinga with it. The point I am trying to make is that in Kenya today Pan-Africanism has ceased to be the dynamic force it once was, partly because it is associated with radicalism and the leaders of Kenya are not radically inclined at this moment in time.

Julius Nyerere is a young man just entered on his forties. He has been in active politics for about fifteen years (Kenyatta's political life spans something like 50 years). He has not been in jail, his people did not have to fight a physical war for their freedom. He is not the leader of the greatest or most powerful tribe in his country. When they tried to make him President for life he turned angrily on the people in his parliament and said the people of the country must always have the right to sack him. He believes passionately in African freedom, not just Tanzanian freedom, and so his country has given refuge to thousands of refugees from South Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Angola, Rhodesia. He has transmitted this passionate belief to his people and out of their poverty they have somehow been able to help house and feed and clothe these refugees.

This then is East Africa today and some of its problems: I think Kenyatta is the symbol of the East Africaⁿ political victory. I think Nyerere is the symbol of the East African hope for tomorrow. And I think the greatest challenge of all is the challenge of poverty.

In 1952 Tanzania did not yet exist. What we had then was the British administered United Nations Trust Territory of Tanganyika, and the British Protected **Saltanate** of Zanzibar. In Tanganyika there were nearly 8 million Africans, a little over 70,000 Indians and 16,000 Europeans. And although things were not as bad as in Kenya at the time, a policy of what they called 'multi-racialism' had been worked out which gave the 16,000 Europeans the same number of seats in the Legislative Council as the nearly 8 million Africans had. Except for the highlands in the Moshi and Arusha area in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, the colour bar and colour prejudice were not as vicious as in Kenya. Political power, however, was as firmly in European hands in Tanganyika as in Kenya. In Zanzibar, which is ^{really} ~~an~~ ^{two} islands - ~~which is really the second of which is named~~ the second of which is named Pemba - there are more than a quarter of a ~~million~~ million Africans, about 46,000 Arabs, near on 19,000 Indians and a few hundred Europeans. Here on the islands which are about 22 miles off the coast of Tanganyika the Arabs have exercised political power for centuries. When I was there in 1952 they seemed as firmly entrenched as they had ever been.

Today Zanzibar and Tanganyika have become the United Republic of Tanzania, with the African majority firmly in control on the mainland and in both of the islands. Just before I left elections were held and I had a fascinating glimpse of how elections could be conducted in a one-party state - but I'll tell you about that later.

There was the third country that makes up East Africa: Uganda. But there wasn't time for me to see it on this trip. It was the freest of the lot in 1952. That is the background then. East Africa has ^{650,000} ~~one and~~ ²⁶⁵ ~~a half million~~ square miles and ~~fifty~~ million peoples. Next we will look at the individual countries in some detail.

Kenya: Land & People

About the middle of August of this year I made a trip in which I tried to retrace, as far as possible, all the details of a trip I had made in Kenya in/1952. I ~~went~~ ^{drove} from Nairobi to Kisumu which is Kenya's chief port on Lake Victoria. I went by way of the Rift Valley and the journey was ~~just~~ under 220 miles. It took me the best part of a day because I stopped often to check on how things were, compared with how they had been 13 years ago.

In those days all the land I had driven through had been known as the White Highlands, and it had been reserved for Europeans only. On those days the White Highlands stretched over 13,000 square miles of the most fertile, well watered and beautiful land you could wish to see. If there is any other stretch of land, anywhere in the world, that is as rich and beautiful, I have not seen it or heard of it. 3,000 white settlers farmed that vast stretch of land. This gives us an average of 2,560 acres for every white settler to farm. Bordering on this land, and living cheek by jowl with it, was the Kikuyu Reserve in which 1½ million Africans lived on 2,000 square miles of land. This works out at slightly over one ~~acre~~ acre per person for the Kikuyu. If there are still people who are not clear about the causes of the Mau Mau, which began shortly after I left Kenya, in/^{October}~~September~~ of 1952, and lasted until January of 1960, all those people have to do is to examine these land distribution figures. The war known as the Mau Mau was fought for the richest land in Kenya, and it was fought by the biggest tribe which was also the one most desperately starved for land.

There are over forty different tribes in Kenya. A few of them, the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Kamba, the Abaluhya, are in the million mark and more, but the majority of tribes range from between fifty thousand to a hundred thousand in numbers.

Most of the tribes have their own tribal regional land areas and speak their own distinctive languages, and the country is divided into seven Regions that fit broadly into this tribal and language pattern. The Kikuyu, over a million and a half strong, Kenyatta's people occupy the Central Region as well as parts of the Rift Valley; the Luo, Vice President Oginga Odinga's people, and Tom Mboya's people, and Achieng Oneko's people - also more than a million strong - occupy the Nyanza region/~~that~~ ^{that} hugs the great Lake Victoria. Then you have the smaller but still sizeable Embu and Meru tribes who live in the foothills of Mount Kenya and are tribal cousins of the Kikuyu: together they number over 600,000. These four tribes who together add up to close 3½ millions out of a total population of just over 9 millions, are the politically dominant tribes of Kenya today. And among them the Kikuyu are foremost, the senior partners, the tribe that won the war and lost 10,000 dead.

So, the greatest changes you see in Kenya today are seen in Nairobi and the Regions of the four dominant tribes. Progress is a little slower for the less tribes, life a little harder. But the dominant tribes and the constitution all make it plain that the aim is to develop the country for the benefit of all its people, not just the main tribes. But the fact that you do still have the remnants of tribalism does make this difficult. The non-African minorities - the 49,000 Europeans, and the 183,000 Indians - are learning to live under African power, and many have found it much pleasanter than they feared.

But the real problem of Kenya - as indeed of all East Africa - is the problem of poverty. And it is this problem that I will look at next.

Kenya: Poverty & Employment

On the morning of Tuesday, August 24th, I saw a milling crowd of Africans outside Nairobi's exclusive New Stanley Hotel. Police were trying to disperse the crowd but it soon reformed again. At first I thought it was some kind of demonstration, but I soon discovered that it was no such thing. These people were there because in that morning's paper there had been an advertisement saying "International Organisation requires sales representatives". And all these people had gone there hoping to get the jobs: they were job seekers of the city. The representatives of the firm that had advertised had to come down from his room and explain that his firm was looking for someone who had been to a college or who had a university degree. The crowd then dispersed in a mood of anger and frustration. ~~xxxxxxx~~

~~xx~~ Unemployment is a major problem in Kenya, and nobody in the government pretends otherwise. For instance in 1960 there were 560,000 Africans who were gainfully employed; but in 1964 the number of Africans gainfully employed had dropped to 497,000. In other words, in 1964 there were 63,000 fewer Africans in paid jobs than there were in 1960. And the population has been growing at the rate of 3% a year. All this has made the task of reducing unemployment fantastically difficult.

Poverty, unemployment and low wages nearly always go together. Jamaican workers and Jamaican trade unionists are likely to find Kenya's wage rates shocking. On August 24th of this year a supplement to the Kenya Gazette was published in which the basic minimum wages for agricultural workers were set out. There was a list of employers who were excluded from the requirements of the minimum wages regulations, and the Kenya Government was one of those excluded.

The minimum wages regulations provide that an adult male must be paid a minimum of £3 a month if he works on a monthly contract, or £3.10. 0. if he works on the basis of a completed ticket; for women the rates are £2 a month of contract and £2.6.6 on completed ticket; for young men under 18 the rates are £1.16.0 and £2.2.0; and for young women under 18 they are £1.4.0 and £1.8.0. In addition employers will not be entitled to charge for housing but they may deduct 5/- a month from wages for every half-acre of land they allow a worker to cultivate for his own use. The work week is a 46-hour, six-day week; which leave the worker with only Sunday as the day on which he can grow some food to feed his family. Let me repeat that all these are monthly minimum rates. In Kenya today the majority of agricultural workers earn the kind of money in a month that the Jamaican agricultural worker is not prepared to work for for a week.

Wage rates in towns are better, with shop assistants, office workers, clerks, earning anything between £10 and £20 a month.

And so we have the picture that the annual per capita income in Kenya is £24 as against Jamaica's £139. But in the case of Kenya where large numbers of its people do not measure wealth or earnings in money terms certain allowances have to be made. But even after those allowances have been made real per capita income is still not very much more than £30 a year. So poverty is very real, as real and as challenging as the famine that hit the Kamba people of the Machakos area when I was there. And it isn't only in Kenya. In Tanzania per capita income is £19. 6. 0. And the average Tanzanian does not expect to live beyond the age of 35 years. This is poverty indeed. In my last ^{three} ~~xxx~~ talks I will ^{discuss} ~~xxxxxxx~~ the problems created by this poverty and the plans to overcome them.

Poverty, Aid, Investment, Politics.

In 1962, talking about incidences of racial discrimination, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania said: "Our people have expected much from independence which it is impossible to give them. But I am determined that they will get one thing and that is personal respect."

Nyerere has also been honest enough to admit his country's present poverty. He it was who said publicly in his country's parliament that the life expectation of the average Tanzanian was 35, that the per capita income was £19.6.0 and that the country could not supply all its trained manpower needs from its own people. And in a Five Year Development Plan, the first of a number of such Plans, he set three main target: to raise the per capita income to £45 by 1980; to raise the life expectation to 50 years, and to be fully self-sufficient in trained manpower by that year.

Kenya too has a Development Plan; this one is for the years 1964 to 1970. The Kenya Plan is not as explicit as is that of Tanzania. It does not say what the life expectation of the average Kenyan now is or what level it is planned to raise it to. It says that if the Plan succeeds the average family in Kenya will earn £200 a year but it does not indicate the size of the average family. The Tanzanian Government plans to spend about £50million a year under its ~~planned~~ Development Plan. The Kenya Plan does not say what sums it is planned to spend. I can therefore fairly say that ~~planning~~ Development planning is much tighter in Tanzania than in Kenya, and that Tanzanian targets are very much more clearcut on the whole.

There are other very important differences in the approaches of the two countries, and land is perhaps a primary example. In Kenya there is an extensive and important Land Settlement programme. The

East Africa: The Face of Change

I returned from a six-week visit to East Africa at the beginning of last month. The previous time that I had last been in East Africa was thirteen years earlier, in 1952, the year that saw the beginning of the Mau Mau in Kenya. The world has changed greatly since 1952, and Africa has probably changed more greatly than most other parts of the world; and I wanted to go and see this change for myself.

Perhaps the best way to highlight the change is to run through a few hard facts, to show how it was in 1952 and how it is to day.

When we speak of East Africa we are in fact speaking of three countries: Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

When I was there in 1952 Kenya was a British Colony which was politically and economically dominated by white settlers. The population then was estimated at just less than six millions. Of these the white settlers numbered about 40,000; but they could elect 14 representatives to the Legislative Council. The more than $5\frac{1}{4}$ million Africans did not have a single elected representative though the Governor nominated six people to speak for the Africans. The Indians who numbered about 100,000 could elect six people to represent their interests; and the 25,000-odd Arabs had one elected and one nominated. In addition there were 26 Official European representatives. This meant that Kenya's Legco in 1952 had 40 Europeans representing the British Government, and settler interests; and 14 non-Europeans representing African, Indian and Arab interests. Today Kenya has a population of slightly more than 9 millions. It is an independent Republic within the British Commonwealth and its President is Jomo Kenyatta. It has a parliament made up of an Upper and Lower House and political representation is on the basis of "one-man-one-vote". The result is that political power is now firmly in the hands of the African majority in Kenya.

land which the Kenya Government has bought out from the white settlers who decided to leave after independence, has been divided into units ranging in size from 7 to 80 acres. These have been sold to small-holders on terms that make it easy for them to acquire and cultivate the land. So far well over $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of former White Highlands have been subdivided and sold to something like 16,000 African families. And there is at least another 3 million and more acres to be acquired when the Government can raise the money. Talks between the British Government and that of Kenya on this particular matter of money to buy out the remaining white settlers are in fact taking place right now. So land, and the redistribution of land is a key plan by which the government of Kenya hopes to grapple with the problems of poverty and unemployment. It also depends very heavily on outside grants and loan money and it is making strenuous efforts to attract foreign investment money. And since investment money and political radicalism rarely go together, it has shut down the Lumumba Institute a few miles outside Nairobi, it has become exceedingly cold towards the Chinese, and it has lost much, or seem to have lost much, of its original interest in the Pan-African movement. All this has paid off and more aid and investment money is going into Kenya today than into the other East African countries.

In Tanzania on the other hand, no one has freehold right to any land. All land is held by the government on behalf of all the people, and is available for productive use by all the people. If you are a citizen and you can farm 100 or 200 acres productively then that land is leased to you for as long as you use it well. This applies to small farms and great estates. The moment you cease to use it well it can be taken from you. This applies to all land, everywhere in the country, not even Nyerere can own a square inch. But more next time.

The Frontiers of Our Humanity

It is partly because ^{of} this ~~xxxxx~~ that our long verandah high up in the hills is often crowded on Sunday mornings. People come to meet others and to try ^{out} ^{to} the ideas of ^{the} ideas or challenge ^{to} others. Mostly they are Jamaicans of all shapes, sizes, shades, colours. Every now and then we have Americans or Africans or Europeans or, more rarely, Asians. It has been my joy on two or three occasions to watch American Negro friends shed that invisible but very real protective ^{in defence of the A.N.} shield and function simply as human beings in a world of other human beings). Sometimes the visitors are journalists from far places, come in search of a story, ^{often} ~~at times~~ with their own mould of preconceptions into which to force what they see and hear. I found that ^{the} ~~those~~ few who are committed to ^{the idea of} a race war between the lighter and darker

races of mankind are most guilty. Thus a famous English journalist came and sat on our long verandah and on the 'evidence//predicted among the people of this island a violent racial clash/. Later my friend warned gloomily in the English NEW STATESMAN of the imminence of such a clash. Nearly three years have passed and there is ^{still} no sign of it. More recently another visiting writer passed through collecting material for a book on the coming world-wide 'race war'. This one, too, seemed singularly unwilling to permit any ray of hope to creep in and in any way disturb the mould of inevitable tragedy which he has predicted for a number of years. The trouble is that many of us have developed a vested interest in the 'colour conflict': it has become our 'business'; some of us make big money out of it, others become famous and important because of it. And we are not always, all of us, big enough to either see or want to see the personal and selfish motives that sometimes ~~motivate~~ ^{constitute the foundations of} our interest in the colour problem. And we are sufficiently rich in ready-made villains to easily still all doubts that might creep in by simply yelling South Africa! Angola! Mississippi! Smethwick! to show that we are on the side of the angels and the angels are on our side. ~~The~~ And when you are on the side of the angels and the angels are on your side there is no room for self-doubt or self-criticism. Often this mental state is accompanied by an attitude of insufferable pompous self-righteousness. Perhaps it was this pomposity in the face of a difficult and delicate and painful problem with deep moral implications that called forth the wrath of Mr. Adlai Stevenson at the United Nations.

And yet, pompous or no, those who provoked Mr. Stevenson's wrath ^{as} were/convicted of the essential rightness of their position as was Mr. Stevenson of his. It is at this point that we come up

against what amounts to an almost total collapse of communication. The delegates at the United Nations were talking about the same thing, but they might as well have been talking about totally different things. What was right and decent and moral for one side was ugly and wicked and immoral for the other: good was evil, evil ~~And neither side showed either sympathy or respect for the other.~~ good depending which side you were on. It seemed that over the painfully tragic Congo situation and particularly over the U.S.-Belgian rescue operation there had ceased to be a common body of ~~xx~~ values by which to judge what was right from what was wrong. And when such a situation is reached there is in fact a total collapse of communication. *And in this particular collapse each side imputed the basest motives to the other: each was the villain to the other.* less depressingly sense-
 The/~~any~~ Sunday after the news/~~and~~ of the rescue operation and the/death of Dr. Paul Carlson, a friend came and sat on our long verandah and literally 'blew his top'. He was not an African or a Jamaican; and if there was any Negro in him the strain had been washed so thin that it was not visible to the naked eye. He came from ~~xxxxxx~~ the Haiti, an exile from the black dictatorship of 'Papa Doc'. And the reason for his bitter, consuming rage was because he saw the whole Congo rescue operation in terms of black and white. He said that all the fuss and all the lurid headlines were because the people involved - Dr. Carlson and the others - were white. If they had not been white there would have been no rescue operation, no sensational worldwide headlines. And the conclusion to his bitter and angry tirade was that the West still had one set of values for the humanity of whites and another for that of ~~non~~-whites.

I protested that the whites who had been held hostage - and many of whom had been killed - had gone ^{to} or stayed in, the Congo to serve, that the exploiters, the racialists and the money-grubbers had gone while the going was good; and *the tragedy was that it was these, the* that these had come to serve, to give,

~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ people of goodwill, those who repudiated racialism and exploitation, who had been violated and humiliated and tortured and killed. But even as I protested I understood the nature of my friend's towering rage and the reason for it. What he said was true. There was ~~and~~ a double standard in operation. There had been no such rescue operation, no thought of such an operation, for Patrice Lumumba when he had been delivered into the hands of the men of his arch-enemy Tshombe. And when Lumumba was murdered only the Afro-Asians seemed as deeply disturbed then as the West now seemed over the ~~xxxxx~~ murders of Dr. Carlson and the others. This is of course only one aspect of the complex and tragic Congo situation. There are other very important aspects: the ideological conflicts of the 'cold war' is one, the ending of fighting is another the creating of stable national and regional administrations is yet another, and so is the need to create a sense of national identity and to begin the process of getting the economy going once more. But none of these very important other aspects of the Congo problem can, it seems to me, be resolved independently of the question of standards and values in the relations between the darker and lighter races of mankind. These are, in any event, problems that will be around for a long time because there are no simple, overnight solutions to them; certainly no military solutions. Military action, inevitable and necessary as it may be, simply postpones the ~~tackling of xxxxxxx~~ ^{real getting to grips with these} these very real problems.

So where do we begin? I suggest by trying to find out why there was ~~this~~ almost total collapse in meaningful communication between the West on the one hand and the Afro-Asians on the other.

And I think the first question we must ask, and answer, is whether the Afro-Asians on the one hand and the Westerners on the other place the same qualitative value on each other's humanity as they do

on their own. And here again there are no pat and easy answers. I am certain both sides would insist that their answer to the question is 'yes'. But one careful and ~~xxx~~ critical look at the world in which we live would cast very grave doubt on the validity of such an answer. At best, and in the best of all possible worlds, the other/^{fellow}~~xxxx~~is always just a little less perceptive, a little less sensitive, a little less gentle, a little/^{less forgiving}~~xxxxxx~~ and a little less compassionate than we are. We do not necessarily hold this against him: we may/^{even}~~ix~~ like him the better for it. But there is a very real difference between ourselves and the other fellow. This is so in all societies, among all people. This is a constant; it is bedded in the structure and nature of man. And so far no social systems and no 'isms' have been able to/^{radically}change this.~~xxxxxxx~~

~~xxxxxxx~~ Each one of us - Affluent American, sophisticated European, tribal African, Asian peasant -~~is~~ unique, distinctive, different. We may not have the words to articulate this truth but we know it and feel it in the dark primeval way in which we know so many other things that we cannot explain. The fellow next door is of course less different than the fellow/^{farther}down the street, who is in turn a great deal more like us than the fellow in another neighbourhood; but the fellow in another neighbourhood/^{is more like us}than the fellow in a completely different town. And so it goes until we come to the fellow at the other end of the earth who is different from us in almost all respects - language, habits, customs; ways of eating, playing, loving, worshipping. To expect any one of us to accord this fellow at the other end of the earth a humanity equal to our own in ~~the~~ quality ~~xxxxxxx~~ is to expect a very great deal indeed. *Add to this the history of the past relations between the lighter + darker?* Given the story of man over the last three hundred years, such an expectation verges on the fantastic.

And so I should say that neither the Afro-Asians nor the Westerners as yet place an equal qualitative value on each other's humanity. Both the nature of man and his history - a history in which only yesterday black men were chattels of white men and Asians were the lowly subjects of glorious empires ^{conspired} -/ to give such an answer. This, I suggest, is the real background against which ^{to} ~~the~~ examine the collapse of communication at the last U.N. session.

~~Viewed~~ against this background the striking fact is not that there has been a collapse in communication; the striking fact is ^{been so relatively mild, that it has} that it has only just come about and that it has not resulted in far greater ugliness and bitterness. And even more striking ~~was~~ is the fact that the spokesmen of two or three African states made sharp and clear affirmations of the equality of the humanity of all men. ^I I expected it of Senegal's President Senghor. ^{but if we are clear} He is a poet and ~~so~~ a man of vision and humanity; ^{he has} and he also has a great sense of history. In the period of ^a rampant Western nationalism on the ascendancy, in the days when the Congo was the private preserve of a Belgian king and Congolese were massacred ^{in the mass}, no equivalent European Head of State took as clear a stand as did Senghor. ^{I note this here simply because} ~~It is a well known fact that~~ some people in the West often demand of others a morality and quality of behaviour which they themselves do not and have not lived up to. Unhappily we are now seeing the same thing coming into full flower in many of the Afro-Asian countries, where some of those who shout loudest about freedom and human dignity ~~are~~ suppress these most ruthlessly in their own countries.

The real point of significance for me, then, is not that there has been one dramatic instance of a breakdown in communication between the Afro-Asians and the West. ^{it has not} The point is that there has happened before and on a much wider scale.

~~inxfertxbrenxsmehxxxxxlihtxxxxxixit.~~ The real point is not that we are witnessing the terrible and tragic events in the Congo but rather that these events, that this ugliness and destruction, ~~ix~~ are largely confined to the Congo only. And I think it is important to remember that American as well as European observers and reporters who looked ^{with seeing eyes} at the Congo when it was still a Belgian colony predicted ^{national breakdown after the Belgians were driven out} just the kind of ~~collapse that has taken place.~~ The foundation^s for what is happening in the Congo today were well and truly laid during the time of Belgian rule. To say this is not to approve or to condone or to excuse. It is simply to say that ~~xxxxxxxxtrexxx~~ it is important not to forget that what happens today ~~happens~~ usually happens because of what was allowed to go unchecked yesterday; and in terms of what was allowed to go unchecked yesterday ~~I find that~~ things could have been very much worse than they are.

But when all this is said ^{we are} ~~there is~~ still ^{left with} the ~~reality~~ ^{hard fact} of the collapse in communication at the U.N. Glossing over it now might be ~~today~~ ^{the laying of foundations} the beginning of ~~today~~ ^{today} for a world of tomorrow which is divided strictly along lines of colour, with ~~that most~~ ^{the} dreadful ~~of all ultimate~~ ^{of all ultimate} prospects ~~for~~ ^{for} world war ~~in~~ ~~which~~ ~~between~~ whites and non-whites.

Working to avoid this prospect of a world sharply and clearly divided along lines of colour seems to me to be the most challenging and the most important task of the remaining years of this ~~most~~ ^{highly} revolutionary century of ours. And because it is a challenge which will, if successfully overcome, make the fellow at the other end of the world almost as ^{human as} ~~like~~ the fellow next door, it will contain the germ of that ultimate equation: Because I am human and unique and distinctive and rare, therefore the other fellow, no matter where

he is or what his circumstance, is as unique and distinctive and rare because he too is human. It seems to me that for our time in our world this is the last frontier to cross in man's long journey towards that self-knowledge and ^{self-}awareness which has been such a primary driving force in all he has done and in all he has achieved so far in his life here on earth.

The chances of crossing this frontier are greater ^{today} than they have ever been. Our means of travel are so developed we can go anywhere ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~. ~~The world is so small that~~, The means of ^{span} mass communication ~~xxxxxx~~ oceans and ~~frontier~~ and continents and words spoken in London or Paris or Washington or Moscow or Peking can be picked up almost instantly anywhere on earth. The trouble is that very, very few of the people of the Afro-Asian countries can afford to feed themselves adequately, let alone being able to buy sea or air tickets to faraway places, or radio receivers of a quality that can pick up the voices talking about the world's problems from ^{its} ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ key cities. ^{even if their money permit it.} So side by side with the great opportunity to get to know the other fellow as a human being, instead of as a faceless cipher, ^{physical impossibility} there is the great ~~inability~~ of at least three-quarters of mankind ^{being able} to make use of ~~it~~ this ~~great~~ opportunity.

There are people in the West acutely aware of this situation. And this, in part at least, is the reason for Western aid to the Afro-Asians. The other part has of course to do with the power politics of the Cold War. More often than not, though, the results of Western aid have been to widen rather than to narrow the gulf of misunderstanding and mistrust between the Afro-Asians and the West.

The handful of Afro-Asians who have been able to travel and make firsthand contact with the 'white world' have almost invariably experienced such psychological and emotional assaults on their sense of self-respect and of dignity that they have come away ~~from the~~

harbouring deep and strong and bitter resentments against the West. In the main these are today's leaders, the Prime Ministers and Presidents, men who very often were translated from colonial prisons to their high offices. It is not reasonable to expect such men to be filled with trust and understanding for the West and Western motives. A decade^{or two}/of independence is a very short time in which / to expect these men, the architects of Afro-Asian independence, to either forget or forgive. And these are the men who are shaping the attitudes of that three-quarters of humanity that is too poor and too ignorant to work out attitudes for itself. These men control the means of mass communication in what are usually single party states made so with the approval of the mass of the people in each given country. Inevitably, the views, prejudices, resentments and scars these leaders have acquired in their often painful encounters with the 'white world' become prime factors in shaping the outlook of the people they lead. They know from experience that the 'white world' has a stereotype of the black so they counter with their own stereotype of the white. And so Americans and Englishmen and Frenchmen^{and others}/are all reduced to some faceless, arrogant, aggressive, racialistic ~~men~~ ~~whites~~ 'whitemen' ~~enemy~~ whom history has shown to be hostile to the best interests of all non-whites. All failures, all economic misery can be blamed on the wickedness of this 'enemy'.

① → One of the ironies of this situation is that although African students may encounter as much prejudice and discrimination in Asia as they do in the West, the leaders tend to want to shut their eyes to this. All we need to remember to understand this is that none of the present generation of African leaders have been as intensely and emotionally and subjectively involved with Asia as they have been

with Europe and America. Paradoxically, it is possible to be objective and detached and even to dismiss as stupid and backward Asian manifestations of race and colour prejudice. It is not possible to do likewise with Western/prejudice. This is at once both a high compliment and a harsh judgement. I think when this generation of leaders givesway to a new one, that new generation of leaders will not have the same deep psychological involvement with Europe and America. It will be a leadership largely trained inside independent Africa with very little emotional involvement with ^{the West} Europe and therefore with no ambivalence towards it. It will perhaps look more tolerant, ^{it looks} because more impersonally, at both the virtues and the flaws of the West. This last assumes that our generation does not make such a mess of things that we arrive at a position where ~~there is such~~ a massive wall of colour ~~that~~ ~~there is no possibility~~ makes impossible any real and meaningful communication between the darker and lighter children of mankind who are fated to live and play out their little destinies together here on this earth.

I think the only way to ensure that we do not make that mess is for ~~us to begin a much more real and meaningful dialogue between the Afro-Asians and the West. The government-to-government basis~~

which is almost the only level of communication now, is obviously not enough. But how do we begin that other, wider dialogue which will make the ordinary man at the other end of the earth as real and human as the fellow next door? I don't know any pat answers, ~~and I increasingly tend to suspect pat answers.~~ I think ^{the late} President Kennedy's Peace Corps was a magnificent beginning. But it is still a one-way traffic, with one group giving and the other receiving; and no real friendship is ever based on that. To make friendship

possible there has to be a two-way traffic, a giving as well as a receiving. Although it is often easier to give with strings at the government-to-government level, I have a strong suspicion that many ^a ~~the~~ relationship could have been made much healthier in the long run by working out some form of quid pro quo. Help people to help themselves and then let them pay for it on as easy terms as they can stand. Hand-outs are humiliating even when those at the receiving end ask for them. There never has been any sense of equal dignity between the giver and the receiver of charity. ~~XXXXXX~~

to a kindly
How can help be given on a reciprocal basis when the West has so very much and the Afro-Asians so little? How can the Afro-Asian ^{living} peasant/at subsistence level go on a two or three weeks' holiday trip to Europe or America in order to see that ~~xxxxxxx~~ there are white people who, like him, are ^{work with their hands} poor and/worry about their children, and quarrel with their wives and have trouble with their neighbours and cannot always pay their debts on time?

~~I do not think~~ ^{we} there are short answers to these questions. If ^A there are I do not know them. What I feel strongly is that we need to talk about what makes us have the attitudes and prejudices we have we need to talk about some of the hopeful and ugly possibilities I have set down here. ~~It is only by facing situations, by acknowledging problems exist/that we can begin to grapple with them.~~ ^{by talking about them,} ~~Ma~~

They are all factors that went into the ~~making~~ of the breakdown of communication at the last session of the U.N. And I think they are ^{worth} with talking about because it is only through talking and thinking about them with sincerity and goodwill that we may glimpse ^{the} the possibilities of a solution and of a way across this last frontier of primitive prejudice that stands between each man recognising the rare and distinctive humanity of every other man.

A NOTE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN STORY

by

LIONEL ROGOSIN.

At the last International Film Festival in Venice an American documentary film shown called "On the Bowery" won the first prize as the best documentary. This was the first time that an American film had won such a prize. The story of this documentary dealt with the problem of alcoholism. The producer was a young American named Lionel Rogosin. Mr. Rogosin who is in his early thirties gave up his position as head of a milling company to make documentary films.

In 1958 Lionel Rogosin and his wife went to South Africa as tourists. What he saw interested him so much that he decided to make a film. To overcome the problems, and they could be considerable, he announced loudly in the South African Press that he was making a film to interest American tourists. On this understanding South African government officials permitted him to make the film.

Mr. Rogosin then imported a small group and began his shooting, keeping up the fiction that his film would be of tourist interest.

About a third way through the shooting of the film, the South African authorities began to grow suspicious. Mr. Rogosin then shipped what he had already shot to the United States and hastened the shooting process. They shot disjointed scenes here and there and immediately shipped these pieces to the United States. They arranged to retreat to the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland should the South Africans, who were now asking very many questions, decide to clamp down on them.

One of their principle difficulties was making contact with the African people of Johannesburg who were naturally suspicious. In the end, after taking considerable risks, the Africans accepted their bona-fides and cooperated with them. By the time they finished their shooting of the film the South African authorities were hard on their heels and they just managed to ship the last reel out of the country before Mr. Rogosin was called in and subjected to a searching questioning.

I met Lionel Rogosin in New York in April and he arranged for me to have a special view of the film. After I had seen it I felt that this was the truest picture ever made of conditions in Johannesburg and said so.

I asked him to let me have a print of the film to bring to Jamaica as I was sure that Jamaicans would like to see a really true slice of South African life.

In addition to the print I have and which you will see, a print has been sent to the United Kingdom to Father Trevor Huddleston who wrote "Naught For Your Comfort". Thus we in Jamaica have one of the free prints at present in existence.

Again let me say this is the truest slice of South African life ever filmed.

PETER ABRAHAMS.

PART "B"

Opportunities for the publication of creative writing in Jamaica are extremely limited and are as follows:-

1. Focus

In 1943 under the guidance and Editorship of Mrs. Edna Manley a number of Jamaican writers cooperatively published the first issue of Focus. This contained ten short stories, more than fifty poems, three short plays and five short essays. In 1948 the second Focus was published. This issue had roughly the same number of poems as the first Focus. There were sixteen short stories, six more than in the first Focus and a number of short plays and short essays. The latest issue published in 1956 is referred to under Part A of this Report.

2. The Pioneer Press

In 1950 the Gleaner Company established the Pioneer Press. Since its inception this publishing house has issued approximately twentyfive titles in attractive paper bound editions, well bound and printed and selling at 3/6 a copy.

Among its earliest publication were "Anancy Stories and Dialect Verse", "Fourteen Jamaican Short Stories", and the collected poems of Tom Redcam under the title "Orange Valley and other Poems". It has also published W. Adolphe Roberts' biographies "Sir Henry Morgan" and "Six Great Jamaicans".

The first novel published by the Pioneer Press "The Capture of Jamaica" by S.A.G. Taylor has been their best selling book so far, running into four impressions and selling over 10,000 copies.

W.G. Ogilvie was a Pioneer Press discovery and they published two of his novels, "Cactus Village" and "The Ghost Bank". The latter was chosen the Jamaican prize novel of 1953. The Pioneer Press also published Clinton Black's "Tales of Old Jamaica".

After this excellent beginning its publishing programme tended to taper off and the high hopes that the Pioneer Press might afford a continuous outlet for creative writing in Jamaica have considerably modified in recent years. The Council might consider whether it would not be worthwhile to make contact with the Pioneer Press in the hope that it might again supply the outlet for creative writing which the effort of its early days promised.

3. Education Publications Unit

This is a recently established section of the Ministry of Education set up for the purpose of discovering and of publishing reading matter of a Jamaican origin for school children. The Unit has so far published close on a dozen little books, some of them short stories, based on Jamaican themes. The writing is for the very young. The outlet here is largely for writers who are interested in writing children's stories.

4. The U.C.W.I. Extra Mural Dept.

The Extra Mural Department has published a few plays of West Indian playwrights. This however is more a West Indian rather than a Jamaican venture.

5. The Annual Magazines

There are a number of magazines published annually in Jamaica among these are - Ambassador, Cathay, the Jamaican Annual and Pepperpot. Of these Pepperpot is the one that offers the greatest

outlet for the creative writer and each year it has published poems and short stories of an acceptably high standard.

6. The Press

Occasionally the Gleaner publishes short stories. Generally these are of very poor quality. There was a time when Public Opinion offered a useful outlet for short stories but it no longer does so.

7. Conclusion

1. A fair conclusion would be that it is almost impossible at present for the creative writer to derive anything like the modestly reasonable income from writing and publishing in Jamaica.

2. Publishing scope for creative writing is so very limited that the young writer, or the established for that matter, must look to the outside world to achieve worthwhile publication.

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LETTER FROM JAMAICA

Peter Abrahams

The big news item of the week (and it is likely to be big news for many weeks to come) was the election scandal that broke here on Tuesday August 11th. On Monday the Daily Gleaner departed from its usual dignified pose to announce "Sensation! Sensation!! read tomorrow's Gleaner for great election fraud scandal", or words to that effect.

The next morning the editor of the Gleaner introduced on the front page the sensational story itself. The story was that one John Bertram an employee of the Gleaner Company had been given three voting cards by a subordinate official in the People's National Party head office, thus encouraging Bertram to vote fraudulently in the name of other people on the voters roll. The Gleaner made great play of the fact that some of this dirty business took place in Premier Manley's own office. The headlines suggested that this was a well organised conspiracy that was national in scope.

In the same issue there was published a sworn statement by John Bertram, and photostat copies of the three voters guide cards as well as the letter given to Mr. Bertram by Roy McFarlane a subordinate employee of the PNP to present to a woman at the Premier's office so that he should get the voting cards. This proved without doubt that the two subordinate officials involved were prepared to more than turn a blind eye at false voting; were in fact prepared to encourage it. But that is not all the story.

From his sworn statement it is quite clear that John Bertram had gone out of his way to try to trap someone connected with the PNP into taking such action. First he had gone to Mr. Vivian Blake Q.C., a member of the executive committee of the PNP and told him that due to some mistake his name was not on the roll and asked him whether there was anything he, Mr. Blake, could do to help him. Blake had told Bertram there was nothing he could do and sent him about his business. And this took place in the heat and excitement of election day; Bertram then went to PNP headquarters. He found a young man called Roy McFarlane there. McFarlane is an enthusiastic but

but inexperienced subordinate party worker. Bertram told McFarlane his story. He was a voter. He was entitled to vote. His name should have been on the roll. But due to some accident or oversight it had been left off. He pressed McFarlane. McFarlane was obviously anxious not to lose one possible PNP vote. He phoned around but failed to get hold of the person he wanted. It was then suggested that McFarlane and Bertram try to contact a PNP candidate contesting one of the Kingston seats. Bertram and McFarlane drove out to Papine which is near the University College of the West Indies. They got hold of the candidate Mr. Keble Munn and Bertram told his story again. Munn sympathised but would have no part in it. Bertram and McFarlane then returned to PNP headquarters. Bertram again pressed McFarlane. McFarlane phoned a woman, another subordinate employee, working at Mr. Manley's office. He explained that he had somebody who was anxious to cast his vote, somebody who was a legitimate voter but who through some oversight did not have his name on the roll. As a result of this conversation McFarlane told Bertram to go to Mr. Manley's office. Bertram asked for a note to take to the woman. This McFarlane duly furnished written in his own hand. Bertram then suggested that McFarlane might add a line stating that he, Bertram, might be able to bring others and that the note should provide for other potential bogus voters as well. McFarlane added another sentence to the note. Bertram took this to Mr. Manley's office in Slipe Road. He was supplied with the voting cards of three people.

Certain things emerge very clearly from this pattern of events. First, Bertram set out with the clear intention of luring someone in the PNP into committing an electoral offence. He made his first attempt at a member of the party's hierarchy in the person of Mr. Vivian Blake. If he had succeeded with Mr. Blake the sensation would have been even more sensational. But he failed. Next he tried a candidate, again someone with a very high reputation inside the party and in the country. Success there would have been only slightly less sensational than in the case of Mr. Blake. But he failed again. Finally he succeeded with two much humbler members of the PNP and the

Gleaner had its sensational story.

It is impossible for any dispassionate observer not to feel that the whole exercise was a Gleaner "set up". As the Gleaner puts it "it so happens" that Mr. Bertram is an employee of the Gleaner whose status has never been clearly defined. It so happens that Mr. Bertram took his story to the PNP-baiting columnist Vere Johns who campaigned openly against the PNP. It so happened that Mr. Bertram then made his statement to Mr. N.N. Ashenheim, the lawyer, who has powerful connections with the Gleaner. The inference is inescapable.

It is unfortunate that the Gleaner has gone about this very serious business in this manner which puts its own motives into doubt. It could have performed a very great public service if it had not set out so obviously "to get" the PNP.

Electioneering fraud, personation, and all the other trappings of election rigging are almost as old as universal adult suffrage in Jamaica. They took place in the 1944 election, in the 1949 election in the 1954 election and of course in the present election. The most responsible people in both political parties have expressed concern about this: Mr. Manley as well as Sir Alexander Bustamante, the PNP as well as the Jamaica Labour Party. People not so immediately involved in day to day party politics have for a long time called for a change in our electoral system. All the irresponsible diehards of both parties have for a very long time indeed regarded it as a legitimate means of expressing their party loyalty by cheating at the polls. Personating was comparatively rife. This is borne out by the number of prosecutions by high spirited people of low mentality on both sides of the political fence.

I know a PNP supporter in my own constituency who worked like the devil to try and get rid of the indelible ink on his index finger in order to vote again. I know a JLP supporter, again in my own constituency, who had apparently succeeded in getting rid of the ink and blandly asked his employer for time off "to go make me second mark". When I told both of them they were breaking the law both told me that the other side were doing the same thing "so why not we".

But it is easy to overpaint the picture. Personation was

~~was~~ a minority exercise. The majority of the country's people voted once and once only. It is unfortunate that in its attempt to hurt the PNP the Gleaner has almost painted the picture universal electioneering fraud. This is just not true.

The picture after 15 years of universal adult suffrage in Jamaica is certainly no less ugly than it was after twice that number of years of adult suffrage in many other civilised countries in the world. The proposition that Jamaica is a latter day state in which elections are rigged on a massive scale, political opponents beaten into submission, a hotbed of fraud at election time, is far from the truth. Those who put forward this view in the hope of partisan gain have falsely damaged the good name of a country in which there is a young, vigorous, and exciting democracy in the making. [This does not of course mean that everything in the garden is lovely. Two officials of the PNP, however subordinate, have been lured into attempts to defraud the due processes of law governing elections. They should be prosecuted. And if our courts of law can prove any others were involved, no matter how highly placed, they too should be prosecuted. I think our law officers should also investigate the position of Mr. Bertram in this affair more closely. If there is any incitement law under which he could be prosecuted, he too should be prosecuted along with the two PNP employees. The government should pay immediate and earnest attention to overhauling our electoral system. The breach of any electoral law should be punished with imprisonment without the option of a fine. Both sides will think twice about breaking the law if conviction does not carry the option of a fine. It may be relatively easy for party headquarters to raise the £10 or £20 fine; it would be impossible for party headquarters to serve the sentence of the convicted member for him.

Certainly, a clean up of our electoral system is long overdue. Certainly this scandal may help to hasten it. It is unfortunate however that our only national daily did not approach it as the urgent national matter it is.

THE CORE OF THE APPLE - HARLEM, 1959

by

Peter Abrahams

We walked slowly up the sloping land. About us lights twinkled and cabs flashed by along the broad avenue. But I felt quiet and tranquil for all the rush and bustle of New York. It was early spring but still quite chilly and a keen biting wind reached at us through our heavy clothing. I felt it sharply. It was going to take more than a few weeks to get me once more adjusted to cold climates. A few years in Jamaica's tropical warmth had thinned my blood utterly. But then, I am a child of the sun; my life began in the world of the tropical sun and all the years between spent in cold climates have not been to undo the sun-lust in me. Forty-five degrees, a few weeks out of tropical Jamaica, was still terribly cold to me.

My companion fared much better against the cold. To her the tropical sun was an ancestral memory three centuries removed; something one experienced on vacation or during a New York heat wave. She looked at me as we passed a street lamp. My face must have mirrored my discomfort.

"Cold?" she murmured with a touch of concern in her voice.

I grunted in the way men do when trying to show a woman that they are tough and that discomfort does not really matter: but I was comforted by the concern in her voice. It meant I hoped that we could go back to the old friendly footing which had disappeared when I had told her about my wife and children over dinner.

I had met her a little before six o'clock one evening four days earlier on Fifth Avenue in downtown New York. She had stood at a bus stop; small, very dark - almost black - with big brown eyes in a round face.

"Excuse me; could you please tell me which bus would take me to Harlem?"

She had pulled back a little, suspiciously. Then my outlandish accent had penetrated. She had relaxed.

"You're a foreigner...."

I decided to trade on my foreignness and pretended a greater ignorance than I possessed. It worked. She was going

to Harlem herself and I could travel with her. And if I told her exactly where I wanted to get she would direct me. "I live in Harlem," she said, smiling; "I know it well".

"Just Harlem," I had said. "I want to get to know it. I want to get lost in it. I want to get the feel of it."

"You will have to live there," she said; then, after a pause she had added: "For a long time."

She had grown curious about me and some of her suspicion had returned. Just then the bus had come. ^AAfter we had settled ourselves she turned curious brown eyes on me.

"I'm an African," I had said and told her my name.

That had rung a bell of some kind but she had remained silent until we had got off the bus at 125th Street.

"You're going to write about Harlem; about us."

She had sounded coldly impersonal, almost hostile. I had sensed some strong emotion at work and waited for more. Almost automatically we had started walking along 125th Street. About us were the dark faces of the citizens of Harlem. Here ~~we~~ were a part of the background, not distinctive as we had been on downtown Fifth Avenue. The air, the mood, the atmosphere was different from downtown New York. ^CAlmost, this was a completely different place, not a part of New York City. ^

← The long silence between us had dragged on with me waiting for an outburst that did not come. She had seemed pre-occupied with her own thoughts, hardly aware of me beside her. We had crossed the wide avenue and I had steered her into the bar of Harlem's Hotel Theresa.

With an odd mixture of defensive aggressiveness she had voiced her strong emotion over a drink. Beneath the half-angry, half-protesting flow of words had been an anxiety not to be misunderstood; an anxiety for me not to feel that the attack was personal. I had tried to reassure her on the point.

"I - many of us - did not like the article you wrote in the Africa issue of HOLIDAY....."

.....contd

"Why?"

She had looked into my eyes. Her expression had said: 'Are you really as naive as all that?'. Then she had explained with obvious self-control.

The kind of white folk who would have read the piece would fasten on to every bit of aqualloer I had introduced: the smells and the open drains. This would reinforce the stereotype they had built up in their minds of how blacks lived. Why had I not written about the finer things: the schools, colleges, hospitals. Even if what I had written were true, didn't I know how it would be twisted and used against the Africans? That's what they did with the Negro in America....

She had gone on in that vein, explaining and justifying her stand; justifying the view that we ought to edit truth in our own interests because the white folk around us edited truth in their interests.

It had suddenly hit me then with the sharp clarity of lightning that the American Negro must live in a semi-permanent state of psychological embattlement with the white world around him. I had thought: a white young female New Yorker would not carry on this kind of conversation with a white man from Europe whom she had met at a bus stop on Fifth Avenue. And it seemed to me that that was the measure of the gulf in experience between the black and the white New Yorker.

As though reading my thoughts, she had stopped talking abruptly, smiled self-consciously and got up to go.

"I am still going to write about Harlem," I had said; "So you had better help to educate me."

We had met the following evening and the following evening. We had wandered about the streets of Harlem; we had gone into drug stores and liquor stores; into fancy restaurants and cheap little places; and we had talked about Harlem and the Negro in America and Africa and freedom; and I had rediscovered my Harlem bearings. My previous visit to Harlem had been four years earlier.

At last we reached the top of the sloping land, the crest of Harlem's Sugar Hill. We turned and looked down, bracing ourselves against the keen wind. ^B [Below us, a sea of twinkling lights, 'The Black Metropolis', 'Black Manhattan', 'Nigger Heaven', 'The Greatest Negro City on Earth', 'The Capital of the Negro

World' - call it what you will - sloped away gently. It looked soft and kindly from where we stood. The darkness and fairy-tale lights effectively hid its scars and blemishes. Harlem's physical location is one of the most desirable in Manhattan. It is within easy reach of most things in New York. It is almost at the centre of the city's elaborate network of public transport and the land on which it is situated is attractively varied and raised. It covers an area of roughly six square miles that is triangular in shape. According to the W.P.A. Guide Book Harlem is that part of Manhattan Island from East 96th Street and West 110th Street on the south to West 155th Street on the north: from the East and Harlem Rivers on the east to Morningside and St. Nicholas Avenues on the west. Estimates of its population vary from between 300,000 to over 500,000. I found that the estimates of the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. were the most reliable. According to these 452,300 people lived in Harlem on January 1, 1958. These estimates show a drop of 5% in Harlem's population when compared with the 1950 Census figures which showed a total population of 475,700. An explanation of the 5% drop in Harlem's population is to be found in the fact that the Negro population of the Bronx and Queens have more than doubled between 1950 and 1958. There is significance in this flow out of Harlem.

My companion touched my arm and pointed: "409 is over there," she said.

'409' - there was never any need to add 'Edgecombe Avenue' - had once been the stylish centre, the very heart of Sugar Hill. In the great and glorious days of the Negro Renaissance when the millenium seemed just around the corner Sugar Hill had been the home of the black elite, the Park Avenue of Negro America. And the apartment block known simply as 409 had once had such distinguished tenants as W.E.B. DuBois, Walter White, Thurgood Marshall, as well as a host of well known writers, ~~and~~ ^{and musicians.} artists. There had been no question about your social and economic status if you could say - and you generally tossed it off casually - "I live at 409". Today 409 is a legendary reminder of those grand days. There is still an air of grandeur about Sugar Hill, but it is rundown; the grandeur of something that "has been". The majority

.....contd

of today's Sugar Hill dwellers take in lodgers. Those who can afford to pay the high rents without taking in lodgers have preferred to move out to suburban New York. The very modern cocktail lounges, eating places and bars have run to seed or been turned into small shops. And the present-day citizens of Sugar Hill do not send their sons and daughters to the best American universities or else abroad for their education.

Today the residential citadel of Negro financial and cultural success is Columbia University's Morningside Gardens Co-operative. But whereas the old elite of Sugar Hill were exclusively Negro, the new elite of Morningside live cheek by jowl with whites. The tenants of the Morningside Co-operative are an integrated mixing of Negro and white: 30% of them are Negro, 70% white. And there is a new "Sugar Hill" in the making on Riverside Drive.

I thought of my Harlem friend (via the Deep South) John Hendrik Clarke and said to my companion: "It took a lot of "sugar" to move up to the Hill in those days, didn't it, honey?"

She was startled and amused by my attempt to "talk American" but responded:

"It sure did, honey-child, it sure did."

As we walked down the hill, away from the vanished glory that was Sugar Hill, I thought of the girl beside me. I wondered how representative she was. How much of her feelings and opinions reflected group feeling in Harlem? How pervasive the "Nationalism" she had expressed so forcefully? How universal the sense of embattlement, of constant consciousness of the 'enemy'.

We parted on the corner of Lenox and 125th. I suggested a parting drink as on the other evenings. She did not feel like one: she had a lot to do at home. Would we meet the following evening? No; she had another date. What about the evening after? No, that was out too.

I suddenly realised this was the moment of parting. I knew why and there was no way of apologising without embarrassing.

I watched her walk away from me, small and graceful, a slightly lilting swing to her walk, like soundless music. And she suddenly seemed very lonely very alone, as one can be in big cities. It might have been about her that Langston Hughes wrote:

Lovely, dark, and lonely one,
 Bare your bosom to the sun,
 Do not be afraid of light
 You who are a child of night.

She and I had once talked about the problems faced by sensitive educated Negro girls in finding mates. The tradition among American Negroes, she had said, had always been that the girls had the better opportunities for education. Where parents could only put one of two children through higher school, and these were of different sexes, the choice had almost invariably been the girl. Thus more girls received higher education than boys. Grown to young womanhood the educated girls outnumbered educated young men. For the educated man the situation was ideal. He had a wide range from which to choose a mate. For the woman it was the opposite. Her choice was limited, competition fierce. For the sensitive this could be a situation of painful frustration.

I had told her that the position was the exact opposite in Africa. There are pitifully few educated African women. The educated African male's range of choice is even more restricted than that of the American Negro woman. In 99 out of 100 cases - and the estimate is very modest. - The educated African's wife is no more than a woman who cooks and cleans for him and breeds his children. I had suggested, half in jest, that it would solve this problem if the surplus educated Negro women of marriageable age were shipped to Africa. She had treated the suggestion with the utmost seriousness. She and some of her women friends had discussed this selfsame idea and had agreed that this was the ideal solution and it had the added attraction of fitting in with their "Nationalism".

At last she swung around a corner, out of sight. I stood watching, hoping she would look back just once so that we could wave a final farewell. But she was made of the stern stuff of the practical, hard-headed American child of our time.

The sharp wind that had chilled me up on Sugar Hill seemed to have died down, or else did not reach this low-lying section of Harlem. I felt more comfortable, less anxious to hurry to my overheated hotel room. I began to wander slowly down the street.

It was close on midnight and the streets were alive. I

had been warned, mainly by white friends, to watch out for muggers. But Harlem seemed to me much safer, much more peaceful than the jungle of my native Johannesburg after dark.

Here and there I passed groups of men talking, freely, loudly. They were relaxed, assured, as people are within the protection of home ground. Courting couples sauntered up and down slowly, window shopping. There were even a few children abroad at this late hour. And the only people who seemed out of place were the white policemen on their beat. Here, on the dark streets of Harlem, they were the 'outsiders'.

I have seen more people out on the streets after dark in Harlem than anywhere else I have been in New York City. I think one reason for this is that nearly a quarter of all Harlemites live in rooming houses. And where a whole family, even a small family, has to share one room there is not much turning space so the streets and the sidewalks must supply the elbow room until it is time to go to sleep. Rents vary between 25 and 35 dollars a week for a single room. Harlem housing is overcrowded and this can and does play merry hell with family relations as well as with health. The infant mortality rate is very high; so too are tuberculosis and all the other diseases of overcrowding, bad diet and general ignorance and neglect.

In some of the rooming houses there is the problem of theft. Harlemites have coped with this by using the pawnshops as place of safekeeping. They take their best clothes and other valuables there and only redeem them for use at the weekends.

But even this situation of overcrowding is an improvement on the days when "hot beds" were rented out on a shift system.

I looked in at Sugar Ray's. It was quiet. This was a week day. At the far end of the bar three men were involved in an intense argument on the Noble Art. There was no sign of the Sugar Man himself. One of the three mentioned the second Louis-Schmeling fight. He had seen it. His eyes lit up as he started recalling how Harlem went wild that memorable night. It must have been quite a night in Harlem!

There were more people at the bar of the Hotel Theresa. But it was just a more or less prosperous American hotel bar to me. Nothing exciting, nothing out of the way, nothing new. The

people talked and drank in small groups. They were quiet. I had a drink and wandered to Smalls' Paradise. It was crowded and there was music, loud and blaring. You had to elbow your way to the bar. You had to raise your voice to be heard. But apart from that nothing exciting happened; there was nothing exotic. There was no 'dancing on a dime', no 'bump and mess around'.

The same Edwin Smalls of Smalls' Paradise owned, in the days of the 1920s and 30s when Harlem offered the most exciting and exotic night life, in New York the Sugar Cane Club. The Sugar Cane Club had been housed in an ill-lit cellar but its fame had been so great that I had read about in a college library as a starry-eyed youth in faraway South Africa. And reading about the Sugar Cane Club and the Cotton Club and Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway and Ethel Waters; and about the 'New Negroes' who wrote books and composed music and whose poems glorified the darkness of my skin, I dreamed of Harlem as the centre of all my cultural, spiritual and racial needs. And I was one of many in South Africa, in Africa. We knew about the night life of Harlem, about the 'rent parties' and their ditties:

There'll be brownskin mammas,
High yalllers too,
And if you ain't got nothing to do
Come on up to Mary Lou's.
There'll be plenty of pig feet
And lots of gin;
Just ring the bell
And come on in.
Harlem

And we knew the/poets of the 'Negro Renaissance' - Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay. They gave voice to some of our own overcharged emotions. Thus the Jamaican, Claude McKay who became one of Harlem's foremost literary spokesman in the days of the 'New Negro':

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's teeth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!

.....contd

Or:

Oh, I must search for wisdom every hour,
Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,
And find in it the superhuman power
To hold me to the letter of your law!
Oh, I must keep my heart inviolate
Against the potent poison of your hate.

And most of us knew by heart Countee Cullen's poem in which he sums up the terrible burden of colour in his last two lines:

Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

And we made his 'Pagan Prayer' our own:

Not for myself I make this prayer,
But for this race of mine
That stretches forth from shadowed places
Dark hands for bread and wine.

And there was Langston Hughes who comforted us:

Being walkers with the dawn and morning
Walkers with the sun and morning,
We are not afraid of night,
Nor of days of gloom,
Nor darkness,
Being walkers with the sun and morning.

And gave us pride and a sense of timelessness:

I've known rivers ...
I've known rivers ancient as the world and
older than the flow of human blood in human
veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

This and much more Harlem had been to the young and sensitive and dispossessed of many parts of Africa: the deep velvet voice of Paul Robeson: the prophetic writing of W.E.B DuBois "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line.....of the relation between the lighter and darker races of mankind".

If the Harlem of the 'Negro Renaissance' meant this to us in Africa, how much more must it have meant to American Negroes outside Harlem.)

Today ^{there} is none of the inspiring glory and excitement left in Harlem. The fabulous Cotton Club died in 1938 and with it the spice went out of Harlem's night life. The best jazz is found outside Harlem today. But there is still the

Apollo Theatre, the starting point in the careers of most of the Negro stars. But when I visited it, it was involved with rock 'n roll and I did not stay. But there is still the Baby Grand, a few minutes' walk away from the Apolo on 125th. And at the Baby Grand there is Nipsey Russell. He has been in residence for the past ten years and may he keep going for the next ten. The Baby Grand, thanks to Nipsey Russell, is the only seven-day-a-week night club still left in Harlem. The band is much too loud for the space. I saw two different shake dancers on two different occasions. Both left me cold. The singer - I caught the same one three times - was no Dinah Washington or Ella Fitzgerald, and she insisted on singing at the top of her voice with the microphone almost touching her lips. But there was Nipsey Russell who began a song and then stopped it to tell us of his great idea that there had never been a "Western" with Negroes. Then he shrugged and thought it was just as well since, if such a "western" were made it would be a sure thing that the Indians would win. His patter is brilliant and touches on everything: politics, race, journeys to the moon, the whole works. And Nipsey Russell is, in true comic tradition, a fine disrespector of persons.

Nipsey Russell and the Baby Grand got as close to giving me a feel of what the night life of the Harlem of yesteryears must have been.

Of those who rose to glory with Harlem and added to Harlem's glory, very few are to be found in Harlem today. Some have died; others have moved out. Of the very few who remain Langston Hughes has had perhaps the most continuous and the most beautiful love affair with Harlem. For the outside world the outward and visible symbol of this love affair is to be found in Hughes' creation of the character of Jesse B. Simple and the laughter-studded books built around him. Inside Harlem Hughes enjoys a love and loyalty from its citizens that is accorded to no other living American Negro writer. He has stuck with Harlem. For this Harlem has put its heart at his feet.

When, recently, James Baldwin treated Hughes roughly in the New York Times Book Review in dealing with his latest

publication, I heard some really blisteringly bitter comments from Harlemites on Baldwin. One wrathful literary type jabbed at the review and explained his 'Room For Only One' theory to me.

They've sold us the idea that there's only room for one favourite child at a time. Among them there can be a host of top writers without one cancelling the other out. But we must cancel out because there's no room for more than one at the top. So we must savage each other like a pack of hungry wolves so that one should come out top and eat well".

He went on to explain in detail, naming names and citing cases. I was struck again, as I have been struck so often, by the extent to which the American Negro, especially the intellectual, is continuously looking over his shoulder as it were. Simple actions lose their simplicity. Like when I dined with a Negro lass downtown. She was charming, sophisticated and delightful company and we enjoyed an excellent meal. At the end I put down what would have been a reasonable tip in London or Paris. She made me double it and explained that it would be alright for a white man but..... And for the first time that evening there was embarrassment between us.

The actions and reactions of so many American Negroes seemed to me to be conditioned by this psychological looking over the shoulder. How the white folk around them will interpret an action, an attitude, a pattern of behaviour seemed in many cases, far more important than the intrinsic value of the attitude, action or behaviour in itself. This complicated values to a shocking degree, made for a double standard that hit me, as an outsider, with the impact of a startling revelation.

I discussed this with some of the younger Negro writers like William Branch, Lofton Mitchell and John Hendrik Clarke. It was something they had been born with and had grown up with, something they had been so familiar with that it had been just under the surface of their consciousness. The nature of its impact on me tended to surprise them, tended to make them think about it consciously. And as a result of our discussions a new dimension was added to my understanding of the American Negro

and his problems and his outlook.

The American Negro is the first historical Negro minority group anywhere on this earth. In Africa and in the islands of the Caribbean Sea he has always been a majority, even in the days of slavery. In parts of Asia Minor there had been small pockets of Negroes in the distant past, but these had all been relatively quickly absorbed into the societies around them. In more recent times there have grown up Negro minorities in some of the empire-possessing countries like France and Britian. But these were of a transient nature: people who studied and then went back to their native countries, or people who just stayed for a period of years and then went back. And there are Negroes in parts of Latin America. But the social and racial mores of Latin America do not lead them to regard themselves as distinctive from the rest of the socities in which they live. Only in America do you have the situation in which the Negro forms a distinctive minority group with a three-centuries-old historical background as such, and no other 'home' to go to. The African or West Indian Negro background has no history of mob terror such as plagued the American Negro, especially between 1889-1921 when 3,436 Negroes were lynched. No Negroes anywhere else on earth have had the experience of being both a minority and segregated against as have the American Negroes. To be sure the Negroes of South Africa are now experiencing a harsher form of segregation than probably ever existed in the South of the United States. But even they have the comfort of numbers, the comfort of knowing that when the evil day has passed, as it must, the land and the future will be theirs to shape and mould a little closer to the heart's desire. Only in America is the Negro destined to be, thinking racially, a permanent minority.

All of which makes his position in the modern world unique. It explains the psychological looking over his shoulder, the feel of a sense of embattlement which he communicates to a Negro like myself from outside the United States. If he is more racially sensitive, more racially alert, more racially aggressive, it is because he, more than the Negro from anywhere else, has had to take, sustainedly, continuously, the full

shock of being a Negro in a racially mad white world. This at once sets him apart from other Negroes in terms of the depth and refinement of his experience. The way he has stood up to this experience is at once a tribute to his resilience and his capacity for survival. It is, too, in a strange sort of way, a tribute to America which, after all, made and shaped him into what he is today.

John Hendrik Clarke it was who related all this to Harlem for me.

"When the Negro leave Harlem to go to his job downtown, he's going 'to meet the man'. That's what they say: 'I'm going to meet the man'". This is a journey into the outside world where one is alert and watchful. One goes because one has to earn a living and in order to earn a living one must 'meet the man'. At the end of the day one returns to Harlem and drops one's guard. 'The man' is not around so one can be oneself, relax, talk jive and shout across the street.

John Hendrik Clarke is one of Harlem's most gifted and most loving citizens. He came to Harlem from the Deep South and the warmth and easy pace of the South is still in his speech.

"Harlem is the Apple," he said. "When they speak of Harlem they speak of 'The Apple'. Think of it. The Apple. That is how they feel about it".

On my first visit to Harlem, four years earlier, Langston Hughes had organised a little gathering to which he had invited all the Negro writers then in New York. We had met at his home on 127th Street. There had been about a dozen of us, perhaps a slightly larger number - mainly writers with a few artists and musicians thrown in. We had listened to some music - including a couple of poems of Langston's that had been set to music - and talked stimulatingly on literature, colour and Africa. Then, half in earnest, half in jest, I had asked them what they were going to do, what was going to become of them when full integration came about.

There had been a slight awkward pause then someone involved with the N.A.A.C.P. had laughed and said: "I, for one, will be out of a job". This had broken the ice and we had discussed in light vein but with an undercurrent of seriousness

the possible implications of integration.

I had got the sense then of some uncertainty, some reservations about integration. Everybody was agreed on the principle of the matter. Nearly everyone of those present had fought against discrimination and Jim Crow, against a second-class status. There was no question about all of them wanting the status of first-class American citizens, free to live where they choose. to send their children to the school of their choice, to have equality of economic opportunity. But there was also a hint of uncertainty. Would the group sense, the group identity of the Negro get lost in integration? And how far would this go? We had talked around this inconclusively for a time, then we had gone on to other topics.

Now, in 1959 and with other people, I broached the subject again. In spite of the exceptions, school integration was going ahead smoothly. Legally, no public place in New York could discriminate against Negroes and I as a Negro certainly encountered no hint of discrimination in any public place I went to. Here and there I sensed that I was less than welcome. But that was a matter of indifference to me. They did not have to like my face, so long as they gave me prompt and courteous service - which they did. Discrimination, it seemed to me, was dying: perhaps not fast enough for those at the receiving end, but definitely dying. What then of integration, how did Harlemites feel about it?

John Hendrik Clarke took me to dine with a cheerful, big-bodied, light brown young woman one evening. Her apartment was in the once exclusive Sugar Hill area. A few years ago her name had been Mary or Elizabeth or Jane Brown or some other such respectable American name. Today her name is Arabic and outlandish and I never quite got the hang of pronouncing it, let alone writing it down. She is a Mohammedan, a follower of Islam. Her apartment is also an Islamic school where the children of the 'bretheren' are taught Arabic and the tenets of the Islamic faith. My eyes kept straying to the blackboard against one wall while we ate an excellent American home-cooked meal. On the blackboard were Arabic symbols.

Her eyes lit up and missionary zeal quite possessed her as she talked about Islam and what it means to her and her

'brothers' and 'sisters'. It was an odd experience. The surroundings were, except for the symbols on the blackboard, familiarly American. The food was good American home cooking. And the voice across the table had that easy home-grown American lilt that no foreign-born person ever quite succeeds in acquiring, no matter how long they stay. Only the content of what she said was fresh and, to me, in that context, startlingly new. Her words built up an unexpectedly new picture for me.

She was a comparatively recent convert to Islam, her conversion dating back roughly five years or so, when she had shed her straightforward American name for the unpronounceable one she now possesses. But what had happened was more than just a change of name and religion. Like all the great religions Islam is more than religious ritual. It is a way of life, a way of looking at the world, of regulating one's relations with one's neighbours. And, most important, Islam has both a great past and an important present. The Arab states of North Africa and the Middle East are an important power bloc in world affairs.

All of which is now a part of this American Negro woman turned Mohammedan. She is a part of that power bloc which is the Arab States. She shares, if only vicariously, in the influences exerted on world affairs by that power bloc. And because she has risen to leadership among the 'bretheren' she has met the diplomats of the Arab States at the United Nations. She is no longer just a member of a minority group that is often despised, insult, assaulted and discriminated against. Instead she belongs now in another social and cultural situation whose people are dark like herself, proud, unapologetic.

Call it escapism, call it self-delusion, give it any name you like. Laugh at it. But it is real. Emotionally, psychologically this woman has gone through transformation of being an American Negro and all that that means to being an Arab and all that that means.

As I listened to her it became clear to me that there was no doubt in her own mind. She was an Arab. Of course there were blind spots, issues and questions against which the mind had created a block. things pushed too far down to ever

come to the surface. I touched on one of these.

I asked her how she would feel, what she would do in the event of a conflict between the United States and Egypt or any other of the Arab States. As soon as she caught the drift of my question she shied away from it like a startled mare. She talked loudly, got up and moved about, much as a mare might rear up on its hind legs, snorting and pawing the air. I got no answer to that one. I did not expect any. I felt guilty and ashamed at having deliberately pushed quite so hard against her beautiful edifice. The need for it must have been painfully desperate. People do not build up such supports in their minds unless they find their present reality unsupportable. Certainly, I personally had not realised the mental and emotional scars the American Negro has sustained as a minority until I dug into the mind of Harlem.

I asked about integration. She was clear and definite. Equally in all respects, yes: integration, if it meant wholesale fusion, no. Few other people were as clear and definite.

It is estimated that there are about ten thousand Negro Mohammedans in New York, mainly in Harlem. Estimates for the rest of the country vary from about one hundred thousand to a quarter of a million. Most of them observe the tenets of their faith strictly. Even their critics concede that they are among the most disciplined, industrious and highly organised groups in the Negro community. They pay special attention to the training of their children.

On integration, one starry-eyed Nationalist - he was a Garveyite in the days when Jamaica's Marcus Garvey declared himself Provisional President of Africa and started his Black Star Line to take American Negroes back to Africa - gave me the lowdown in a cold flat voice.

"You know what integration means? It means that the Negro will disappear. Hell, man! Integration means we will just disappear without even darkening the American complexion so that you will notice it! We'll be gone and nothing to show for it! No, man!"

A highly futuristic view, I think, and not a very representative one. But it certainly shows that integration

will not make demands of adjustment on whites only.

Shortly before I left Harlem I walked through its streets in the pre-dawn hours one morning. The streets were empty and quiet. Its citizens were asleep, as was most of New York. I thought of all I had learnt, only a little of which I have set down here. But this little seemed to me the most important because it is the little that is at the centre: it is the state of mind. More than all the other things it was and is, Harlem was and is a state of mind. In the past it was the Mecca for Negroes from all over the white world. It represented opportunity and security in a hostile world. Hence The Apple, which is something more than just the neighbourhood where you or I grew up. It was more than that in the past than it is today. But it is still that. A place of racial security where the Negro feels safe in his numbers. Whether conditions are such that he should feel like that or not is beside the point. He does feel like that. He feels like that so badly that he tries to escape into an Islam or into an African Nationalism, both of which are equally unreal in terms of his life and experience. The psychological and emotional factors that drive him to seek after these escapes are the factors that go into the making of the state of mind which is Harlem. In this sense Harlem is, whatever else it is, the measure of the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of the Negro in America today.

Art and Life and Poverty in the Third World

All people born in the Third World are familiar with poverty. Poverty is a fact of Third World life that is common to all of us irrespective of where or to what economic or social section of that life we are born into. To be born to a very rich and powerful family in the Third World is not to be insulated against the reality of Third World poverty. There is no way of not seeing the barefoot ones, the scufflers, the starving, the tattered, as the child from the most affluent home is driven between home and school or between dancing class and parties thrown by other children from equally affluent homes. There is no way that the middleclass woman ^{to} ~~going~~ her hairdresser or to morning coffee with her class-sisters can not see the reality of the poverty that is the backdrop to her lifestyle in the Third World. And there is no way that the bright and successful professional or the go-getting businessman or the fiery politician, or the fervent man of God cannot see and smell and feel the pervading poverty of Third World life which they themselves have escaped. To be sure you can shut it out, or, more accurately, the conscious awareness of it can be dulled by a kind of acceptance and rationalisation. But however much their sensibilities are dulled, however tough and cynical and brutal they have made themselves in order to live with the reality, Third World people all know about shanty towns; they know about the ghettos; they know about hunger and unemployment; they know about hopelessness; and they know about the fierce will to survive even where life becomes the kind of savage ratlike existence that it had become in the West End of Kingston until 'the peace' was brought about. So there really is no need

to tell Third World people about Third World poverty. They know all about it; and just to tell them would be to hold up a mirror. And the mirror only reflects what is there, what you hold up to it, what you already know. To be sure you can distort this straight reality somewhat by tilting the mirror this way or that: but even as you do it you know that you are playing tricks with known reality. Of course, where this reality is not known and is not part of everyday life the 'mirror game', especially in writing, can be very successful. Third World novelists can get away with much more of the 'mirror game' when their novels ^{written for and} are/published in the First World, in Europe and North America, where the straight mirroring of Third World poverty can seem dramatic and revelatory and more creative than it really is. When the same Third World novelists are called on, as they will increasingly be, to write ~~for~~ primarily for their own Third World audiences, they will have to face the challenging fact that just cataloguing poverty will not be enough for their Third World readers. And it is at this point, I suspect, that our Third World novelists will really begin to become relevant to their own native audiences. In this respect I think the theatre has gone much further than the novel. This is so because the audience is here and now, in Kingston or Port-of-Spain or Bridgetown or Accra or Lagos or Nairobi or Dar-es-Salaam or Delhi ^{here and} or Jakarta. And that audience reacts/now, in a kind of face to face encounter with the playwright and the actors which determines for both groups just what value to place on the work offered. There is no waiting for any metropolitan seal of approval by way of sales or getting onto best seller lists or meeting with the approval of the Times Literary Supplement or the New York Times Book Review. The judgement is not received. It is native: and the first critics

and often the only critics, are the natives. And perhaps it is for this reason that drama in the Third World has from time to time shocked and jarred and challenged/~~ThirxxWorlxxdxx~~ and provoked that sudden sense of startled wonder, ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ of revelation, as though seeing some familiar thing in a new way and understanding it properly for the first, and of feeling very deeply. This is the magic that separates art from the mirror thing. And somewhere, sometime, somehow, some writer, a novelist or a playwright, is going to take this/~~the~~ almost universal theme of Third World poverty and out of it fashion a work of art so powerful and so true that what is familiar to all of us who are born in the Third World will have a new clarity and illuminating the commonplace, making us see it with a new meaning./~~xx~~ fresh sharpness, and making us feel and care, that too is the ~~xx~~ business of art.

9/7/94
Life in the Shadow of the American Eagle

Peter Abrahams

The working week starting July 4th was the week of the 15th annual gathering of the ~~fixt~~ leaders of the thirteen-member Caribbean Community. The venue, this time, was Bridgetown, Barbados whose Prime Minister had very recently suffered a no-confidence defeat in Parliament which forced him to set a date for new general elections almost eighteen months before they were legally due. The defeat^{ed}/Erskine Sandiford called the new/^{Barbados} elections for September 6th of this year and then prepared to preside over the week's CARICOM leaders' meeting. There was some argument in the region about the appropriateness of a defeated leader facing an impending election presiding over such a regional conference. But then a turn of events and a new twist in America's Caribbean regional policy almost trivialised the argument and the proceedings in Barbados.

It was triggered by a sudden and dramatic upsurge in the exodus of Haitian boatpeople fleeing their homeland in boats of all shapes and sizes, apparently eager to be spotted and picked up by American patrol boats out there for that specific purpose. In the past the boat-people, who had been trying to escape from their homeland in small numbers ever since the 1991 military coup against the elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, tried to evade the American patrol boats. But early in June the American policy of routinely picking up the boatpeople and dumping them back on Haitian soil, was changed following massive pressure from mainly African-American

lobbists and pressure groups. Randall Robinson of Trans-Africa went on a widely publicised hunger strike; the Congressional Black Caucus denounced the returning of fleeing Haitians to the mercies of the increasingly brutal military regime; there were demonstrations outside the White House and at the United Nations headquarters. So the American Administration came up with the idea of processing the Haitian boatpeople on board bigger ships to decide which were to be accorded refugee status, and which were to be returned. Under American law such processing would be closely scrutinised by human rights groups, and the would-be refugee would be entitled to legal representation. Processing refugees on boats outside American waters would make everything quicker and simpler, and those who fail could still be shipped back to Haiti. So the American government struck a deal with the Jamaican government ~~why~~ by which the processing facility, a one-thousand-bed American hospital ship would be anchored in Jamaican waters to do the processing. In theory this exercise would last not more than six months, by which time it was anticipated that the Haitian military would have been scared or otherwise forced to leave and the elected President would have been restored to power. The hope was that this could be achieved without the use of military force; but the threat of such force was always declared - so often, perhaps, that the Haitian military came to dismiss it as a bluff. In the event, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Jamaican and American governments was announced by Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson in Parliament on June 1st, and officially signed on June 2nd. There was immediate uproar in the highly politically conscious Jamaican society - and indeed throughout the Caribbean: those who approved saw it as helping ^{to ease} a terrible situation; those who disapproved saw it as collaborating in what

was an essentially racist policy of keeping Haitians out of the United States. Randall Robinson himself, as well as a number of other black American leaders, including former Mayor Dinkins of New York, came to Jamaica to lend support to the Jamaican position. Then, on the opening day of the CARICOM leaders' meeting, the Haitian floodgates burst and Haitians poured out of their country in a torrent which left the United States bemused. Between Monday July 4th (American Independence Day) and the weekend starting July 8th between eight thousand and ten thousand Haitians took to the sea in rickety boats to be picked up by American vessels to be processed. Neither patrol boats nor hospital ship in Kingston harbour could cope with the volume. And still the Haitians came.

So there was another policy shift. The processing on the hospital ship was abruptly halted. A new policy of 'Safe havens' was ~~enunciated~~ enunciated under which no Haitians would be processed for admission^{ss} into the United States. Instead a constellation of 'Safe Havens' would be established throughout the Caribbean region where the Haitians would be kept until the crisis in their country is resolved and they can be returned to Haiti. It was announced that Panama would take ten thousand Haitians into 'safe haven', Antigua would take some too, though not as many; and it was hoped that other countries in the region would also provide 'safe havens' for the Haitians. Then, two days later, the President of Panama repudiated the agreement to provide safe haven for ten thousand Haitians; he said he had been bullied and pressured and insulted. U.S. spokespeople denied this. The American hope now must be that the new Panamanian President who assumes office next month will

give back life to their plan to keep ten thousand Haitians in 'safe haven' on the American base in Panama. Till then the only 'safe haven' they have with any reasonable certainty is the one now being built and enlarged at the American base at Guantanamo in Cuba. Cuba has long disputed America's presence, in perpetuity, on its territory; it has strongly denounced the using of part of that territory as 'detention camps'. And the principal government spokesman in the Jamaican Senate, the Upper House of Parliament, on Friday said that 'safe havens' was not part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments, implying strongly that Jamaica will not provide such 'safe havens' on Jamaican soil. All of which pushes American policy on Haiti, with its emphasis on keeping the Haitians out of the United States, up a blind alley. The military option stares them in the face; but with little warmth or sympathy from their so-called friends in the 'outer islands'. So what will they do? They had no compunction about invading Grenada in 1983 when Mr. Reagan wanted to project an America sure of itself and able to win; and they had no compunction, six years later, to go into Panama, seek out its President and take him to the United States to be tried and jailed, because, we are led to believe, he had betrayed his former friends, among them Mr. Bush. In those cases international law cut little ice. So if they really want to 'take out' the Haitian military they can, and could have done it, any time they want to. So why this enormous regional build up of a crisis? They know that ending the military rule and restoring the elected President would stop the exodus of boatpeople overnight. So what lies behind all the twists and turns? That Aristide is not a preferred alternative to the military? That the power-brokers and manipulators distrust him? How do you balance that against the fact

that the overwhelming majority of the Haitian people voted for him in perhaps the freest elections ever held in Haiti? If democracy is what this is all about then why all these twists and turns about a relatively simple matter? Anybody, any nation, which could so easily 'take out' the commies in little Grenada, the nasty Noriega in Pananama, help defeat the Sandinistas and the FNLA in Central America, and keep Cuba bottled up to the point of strangulation for more than thirty years, can surely 'take out' the brutal little Haitian dictatorship and give the Haitian majority a chance to rebuild their lives and to stop trying to go where they are not wanted. It is a small thing to do for the Haitians whose present predicament is not unrelated to past American policies and practices. If the restoration of democracy is the real aim, what is the snag?

If South Africa had been as close to America as Haiti is, if she had had to struggle and live and survive in the shadow of the American eagle, where would she have been today?

A MATTER OF ROOTS : A Note on Jamaican History

Really, the title of this short piece should be: 'A Note on Some Attitudes to Jamaican History'; but that is rather long-winded for a title so let it be condensed into a matter of roots. A people's history, the story of how it came about and of what went into its making and into the shaping of its patterns of thought and behaviour, ~~there~~ is its most important single link with both the past and the future. We who are alive today are the heirs of the past, shaped and moulded by that past, and we, in turn, will become part of ~~that~~ 'the past' of another generation that will be as shaped and moulded by its past as we are by ours. This is our link with yesterday and with tomorrow. And this means that a people's history is also the seed-bed of a people's roots ~~that~~. This is so for all peoples and all countries; and it is so for Jamaica too.

And if it seems as though I am stating the obvious, it is because I have encountered some Jamaicans who seem to want to deny the obvious.

There are some, the highly sensitive, the highly intelligent and the highly creative, ^{who} ~~say~~ say that Jamaicans are a people without a past. They point to Europe, to a thousand-year-old city like Paris, and French art and French literature ^{and French culture} /become explicable in terms of a thousand years of thought and feeling, a thousand years of refinement in the delicate arts of civilised living. And they compare Jamaica and Jamaicans with the French or the English or the Germans - or even the Africans or Indians - and say: 'By comparison with them, we Jamaicans are a people without a past'.

And even the face of it this seems true, Jamaica's three hundred

years are indeed as nothing compared to the long histories of the peoples of Asia and Africa and Europe.

And looking at this the Jamaican writers blame the faults and flaws in his literature on this 'lack of a past'. The Africans, the Europeans and the Asians, he says, have rich and strong pasts to sustain their writers. And so that lack of a long historic past is turned into so sort of lack of native creative roots.

My own view is that the Jamaican artists - and indeed the West Indian artist - has just as many and just as few roots as the other artists whom he flatters by his attitude. The trouble is that his historical experience has made him invest what he has with an inferior value, and so he begins with the tacit assumption that that which is Jamaican is by definition inferior to that which is African or Asian or European. And the next logical step in the mental process is to reject that which is regarded as inferior and to try and identify oneself with that which one considers superior. And so the Jamaican who is of predominantly African origin tries to play up the African content in his past and to play down or deplore or even repudiate the purely Jamaican content of that past. The Rastas are far-out extreme representatives of this pattern. At the other end there are the ~~white~~ Jamaicans of predominately European origin who try to play up the European content of the Jamaican past as against the purely Jamaican content. And so we have the situation where the African content of the Jamaican past in the one instance, and the European content in the other instance, are given greater weight than the purely Jamaican content of the Jamaican past. The result is that that which is Jamaican is nearly always being

NUMBER OF ROOTS 3

sold short in favour of that from the outside. All you have to do ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ is watch the general tendency to accept as superior and authoritative all judgements, all opinions and all institutions from abroad. We rarely find out the qualifications of the lady or gentlemen from abroad before inviting him or her to come and judge this or that.

And have you noticed the easy and unemotional way in which a Jamaican, or a Jamaican family, will pack up and leave Jamaica without seeming to suffer the intense emotional pangs of being uprooted? It is almost as though no roots have in fact been sunk in Jamaica.

And with very rare, and with very honourable exceptions, even the Jamaicans who are politically committed often seem to want Jamaica's history to begin with 1938 and the Troubles.

It seems to me that this matter of roots, of coming to grips with the Jamaican past, all of it, and of relating it both to the outside world and to the Jamaican present, is one of the crucial problems Jamaicans have to think out. Until they do work out this problem Jamaicans will continue, often without thinking, to downgrade themselves and their past. And their latent talents will only be half used. Not until they finally arrive at the position where the African content as well as the European and Asian content become important but subordinate aspects to the Jamaican past will the roots go deep and grow strong and healthy. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ For myself, I find virtue in the concern Jamaicans show for outside value; it is good to be free of insular chauvinism. But it is not good to cultivate historical self-contempt. And there is nothing in the Jamaican past to justify it: like all of life it has both ugliness and beauty.

Family Planning: A Significant Breakthrough

Provisional figures just released by Registrar General's Office show - for the first time - a small but striking decline in Jamaica's birthrate for 1967. In 1966 the birthrate stood at 38.85 per 1,000 of population. Last year it dropped to 35.94 per 1,000. In terms of actual human births 3,926 fewer children were ^{in 1967} born/then were born in 1966. In 1966 there were 71,364 births in the island: last year there were only 67,438.

To understand the significance of these figures for Jamaica it is necessary to bear in mind that the single most important social problem facing the island is to house, to feed and to create jobs for her ever-growing population. Estimates are that ten thousand young people join the labour market every year. At present Jamaica is nowhere near creating ten thousand new jobs a year, or building ten thousand new homes a year. And Jamaicans have only just begun the job of trying to feed themselves from their own soil. ~~To have any hope of coping successfully with this key problem of providing the basic necessities of life for all her people. And,~~ of course, the Jamaican land space is the same today as it was in the distant past when it had to give sustenance and shelter to a handful of Arawaks, the first known Jamaicans. Today this same land area has to provide a livelihood for a population which stood at 1,893,077 at year's end 1967.

For the government and people of Jamaica to begin to make an impression on this basic problem of providing a reasonable living for all its people a ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~balance has to be struck between the rate at which population grows and the rate at which the ~~notion~~

national wealth is enlarged. If the population continues to grow at a faster rate than does the national wealth then the nation will be like a runner on a treadmill - working exceedingly hard but remaining on the same spot or slowing up and slipping back. To move ahead the nation has to increase its skills and productivity in both agriculture and industry on the one hand, and it has to cut down on the rate at which its population grows on the other.

Hitherto Jamaica has done reasonably well in strengthening and diversifying her economy: industry is moving at a nice pace; the critical importance of her major agricultural undertakings are clearly understood after much public debate; and at long last there is a determined and carefully thought-out drive to feed the nation from its own soil. The one area in which there has been no sign of a breakthrough until now has been on the population front.

For very many years the effort to educate the Jamaican people about family planning has been the work of a very small private group within the society, often in the face of hostility from the general populace. Because the Jamaica Labour Party in the old days condemned 'socialism, atheism and birth-control' as a family of evils, the People's National Party would have nothing to do with family planning. Now, two years ago, the Jamaica Labour Party, the party in power today, quietly reversed itself and introduced family planning as part of its national policy. Until last year very little publicity was given to the government's family planning programme. Last year the programme was put into effect openly throughout the island. And early this year came the news of the slight but significant drop in the birthrate. This is a major breakthrough for the future development of Jamaica.

WOMAN TROUBLE

I don't expect all of you to agree with me but I'm convinced that the worst kind of trouble a man can get into is woman trouble. Of course, the man has to be a little more than simply a rippling chunk of animal virility, all sex and no sensibility. He must be more than a big, beautiful body hiding the brain of a newt. If he's only body and no brain (or only an apology for one); if he's only sex and no sensibility, chances are he'll be perfectly, happily, blissfully unaware of it if he has chosen a rogue woman for partner. His sexual vanity and newt-wittedness will be her best ally as she doublecrosses him upwards and sideways and in every other direction. This is probably why the rogue female's partner is usually such a beautiful hunk of nothingness.

But every now and then one encounters a case where a rogue female has chosen, or allowed herself to be chosen by, a man of sensibility, perception and feeling. When this happens the poor man really has trouble, the worst kind of trouble a man can have. I have been watching such a situation lately. It is still unfolding itself in all its miserable ugliness and the final tragedy is still to come. At the moment the man carries a great scar across his forehead and the side of his cheek. And the end is still to come.....

I first saw the rogue female a little over two years ago. She was not much more than a child then. Fourteen or fifteen perhaps. She and her mother lived in a shack tucked away in steeply sloping forest land up in the hills. They lived in abject poverty and there was an air of hopelessness about them such as you only find in the really miserably poor. They wore rags for clothes, their bodies were dirty, their faces unwashed, their hair uncombed. They were poor in the ugliest way possible: their minds had submitted to poverty. The girl sat on a stone suckling a sickly, earth-coloured child. The piece of torn rag that passed for dress was hoiked up nearly to her waist exposing

thighs with dirty stain marks. She looked up, saw me and did not bother to cover her thighs. Her eyes were dull and bloodshot. Her fingernails were long and broken and with thick black dirt under them. And yet, beneath all the grime, dirt and animal hopelessness, there was something that made me look closely at her. She had the high cheekbones and the slanting eyes of the heart of Asia.

I said: "Is this the way to Cyprus Hall?"

She looked at me so long that I began to wonder whether I had come across a deaf-mute hidden away in the bush.

"You-come-too-far?" She slurred the words in a husky purr and the magnetism that had made me look closely at her was there again, only stronger.

Just then her mother came out of the shack and in spite of their equality of dirt and poverty and hopelessness there was no likeness between them.

"Wa' you wan' na'?" the old woman said before seeing me.

"Man-lose-him-way," she purred. "Cypruss-Hall."

"Was it the turning I passed?" I asked.

"Turning-you-pass," she said.

I turned and went back the way I came.

That night I asked some of my Rock Hall friends about the two women who lived miles away from other human beings. Big Lester just laughed and warned me to keep away from that "Chinee looking one because she bad bad" but more than that they would not tell me.

and a half

All this, as I said, happened a little over two/years ago.....

About six months ago my path crossed that of the rogue female again. It happened like this: I needed some work done to the front of my house for which I needed some masons. My friend Tiny recommended two who, he said, were the best in Red Hills. They came up and lived up to Tiny's recommendation. One was a big strapping fellow who worked like a Trojan and sang hymns all day long, giving them a sort of jazzy lilt. The other was a small quiet

fellow, all African, who looked and sounded as though he had just landed here in Jamaica from Ghana or Nigeria the other day. Knowing Africa and looking at him, you would find it hard to believe that his ancestors left that far continent three centuries ago. His appearance, his movements, his speech, his way of looking at you, his way of smiling were all of today's Africa.

One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree
What is Africa to me?

In this Jamaican Africa was all here and all now. And there was a personal gentleness and sensibility about him that aroused my interest and my warm affection. And so I tried to draw him out and we drank together and talked together quietly as men do at times when there is accord between them. We talked of the world and of work and wages, of black men and white, of Africa and Jamaica and of the meaning of life. And after a time we talked of things nearer home, nearer to the heart. And the sadness I had sensed vaguely in him became real as I asked him about his wife and children. He had, he said, a woman and two children. The younger was his own child, the elder not. Was she beautiful, I asked, half in jest.

"Too beautiful!" he said with fierce anguish and left me abruptly.

I called out and started to follow him. But Tiny checked (we had been drinking at his rumshop), me, reaching a restraining hand over the counter.

"Leave him be, mister P.....That boy got trouble. Bad trouble."

"What kind of trouble, Tiny? Can't we help?"

Tiny gave a humourless sawdust and gravel laugh that had more than a hint of bitterness to it.

"When Satan take you by the small parts no man can help you!"

"I don't understand, Tiny."

"You don't understand Jamaica woman, mister P."

"Woman trouble?"

THE PROS AND CONS OF THE WORRELL TOUR
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Peter Abrahams

The proposed visit of a West Indies cricket team to South Africa under the leadership of Frank Worrell is a stormy talking point in sporting and non-sporting circles at present. There is a great deal of highly charged feeling for and against the trip. Those who are for the trip insist that politics should be kept out of sport. Those who are against it insist that in this instance politics cannot be kept out.

The critics of Frank Worrell have, it seems to me, been unduly harsh in some cases, and downright offensive in others. Whatever we may think of Frank Worrell's proposed South African visit, however much some of us may detest the idea of the visit, this does not justify our imputing base motives to the man himself. Frank Worrell is a fine gentleman and a great sportsman. Some of the personal attack on him have been neither gentlemanly nor sporting. Though I myself disagree with the making of the proposed trip, I am sure that Worrell's motives are nothing but noble.

It seems to me that a much more useful thing than launching highly emotional personal attacks on Frank Worrell would be to weigh up the whole question as calmly and dispassionately as possible. Let us ask ourselves what good or what evil can come out of such a trip: what are the arguments in favour of the trip, what the arguments against.

Let me first list the arguments in favour of the trip.

It is more than reasonable to assume that the invitation to Worrell came from a non-white South African cricket body. The non-white South Africans are not allowed to take part in international test cricket; so, no matter how good their players might be, they cannot normally test themselves against the best cricket teams from the rest of the cricketing world. This tends to isolate them, to give them

a sense of not belonging to the international cricketing world. For Worrell to take a top-class West Indies side to play against their best would at once give a new filip to the game among them and would also help to make them feel less isolated from the international aspects of the game.

Also, if, as we must assume, the invitation came from the non-whites, Worrell could not turn it down without making it seem that West Indians are not interested in the hopes and aspirations of the South Africans. On the other hand, his taking a team there, in the full knowledge that the members of his team would have to live under conditions of racial segregation, is a clear expression of the solidarity of West Indians with the non-whites of South Africa. This would be in the nature of giving them moral and psychological support in their difficulties. The impact on the minds of the non-whites of South Africa of a group of free ~~not~~ non-white men from the West Indies coming to play with them at the risk of experiencing insult and humiliation is likely to be considerable.

Finally, as white South Africans will come as spectators to these matches it will be the first opportunity for them to see how good non-white South African cricketers are. This, in turn, might help make the whites modify their attitude towards segregation in sport. This alone would be worth the trip.

Such are some of the main arguments in favour of the trip. Let us now look at some of the main arguments against the trip.

At this very moment the whites of South Africa are under very heavy pressure from international sporting circles for practising segregation in sport. The International Olympics Committee is currently considering the question of expelling South Africa because of its segregation in sport. Brazil recently refused a South African invitation to send an all-white football team to play white South African teams. Neither the Indians nor the Pakistanis play test matches against South Africa because they do not want to even appear to condone segregation in sport. Whatever Worrell's motives taking a team to South Africa will give the appearance

of condoning segregation in sport by going to South Africa to play under conditions of segregation. In fact, Worrell's team will not be a typical West Indian team. Colour considerations will have entered its selection. It is a very safe bet that no white West Indian cricketer is on the team, that no white West Indian cricketer will have been invited or, if invited, will have accepted. Thus, in order to make the trip to South Africa Worrell would have had to introduce an element of segregation in sport, right here in the West Indies, in the choosing of his team. Thus, even before they leave for South Africa the West Indians are touched by the insidious poison generated by segregation.

The white rulers of South Africa will certainly use the presence of Worrell's team to 'prove' that all the international criticism against ^{them} is 'based' on misunderstanding of South Africa and its policy of Apartheid. Under normal circumstances it is almost impossible for any non-white person from any other part of the world to get a visa to visit South Africa. As someone who knows South Africa and the practices of its rulers intimately I have no doubt in my mind that South Africa's official agencies of 'information' are going to have a field-day for a long time to come if the visit takes place.

There is, inside South Africa, an organisation campaigning against segregation in sport. This organisation is headed by the Archbishop of Cape Town. This organisation has condemned the proposed Worrell trip because its long term effects would not be to give aid and comfort to the non-whites but would rather give the perpetrators of Apartheid a new propaganda lever~~work~~ in their attempts to deceive the rest of the world about the true nature of Apartheid.

To take this team to South Africa, however high-minded the motive, can only do harm. Some of the non-whites will have seen a good West Indies cricket team. But the majority of non-whites are likely to boycott it because the leaders of the African National Congress, the men and women who were recently on trial for treason because they condemned Apartheid, will tell them to do so.

At best Frank Worrell's gesture is high-minded but futile. At worse it can

do the cause of South Africa's non-whites harm, and this at a time when world sporting opinion has forced South Africa into a corner over its segregation in sport. The Worrell trip can and may be interpreted, both in South Africa and in other parts of Africa, as trying to help white South Africa out of the corner into which world opinion has forced it.

For myself I am satisfied, after trying to balance the question as fairly as possible, that the harm that will result from the trip will far outweigh its gains. I think also that Worrell's motives will inevitably be misunderstood in many parts of Africa. I also think that in this case we cannot evade the problem by talking glibly about divorcing politics from sport. Ideally that should be the case but we are faced here by a very harsh piece of reality. It is most important to understand that in many parts of Africa this proposed trip of Frank Worrell's will have major political overtones and undertones. That is one of the tragedies of segregation. Simple straightforward actions based on the best of motives can be twisted and distorted and so used as to become instruments of tyranny.

SHADOW OVER BIRMINGHAM

Roughly 800 men and 500 women of Birmingham's 15,000 coloured migrants are on the unemployment list today. The unemployment figure for the entire working population averages 7,000. That such a tiny fraction of Birmingham's population should have such a high proportion ~~of~~ on the total unemployment list was the most disturbing thing I found in my current researches. And a senior Ministry of Labour/^{official}I spoke to was equally disturbed and hoped desperately that no more migrants would come into the area for the time being.

This situation began to appear after the troubles in the motor industry. Till then the man in the car factory earning £12 or £15 a week was not interested in who drove the buses or loaded the railway wagons for £8 a week or less. But now the picture has changed. The man who has lost his job at Standard or Austin quite often want the lowly job for himself as there is no other going. And so, when a coloured bus driver or conductor loses or gives up his job a white worker steps in, and there is very little chance of a coloured worker, any coloured worker, getting that job again.

I came across the case of an extremely intelligent young coloured man who had worked for Birmingham City's transport service for 22 months, 18 of them as a driver. He left of his own accord and with nothing against him. Later he applied for a job as a driver to another, private, transport company - which, incidentally, is tied up with a ~~bus~~ transport service in Jamaica. He knew there was a shortage of some 700 drivers. But they turned him down. He wrote back asking why and suggesting that this was a case of discrimination. They replied saying that they did not accept his suggestion of discrimination but that they were not obliged to explain why they had turned him down.

Somebody at his union had suggested to this young man that there was an agreement between the City's transport organisation and the private one not to take each other's workers. But he himself, and he brought me friends to confirm the fact, knew of white workers who had gone from the one transport organisation to the other without the slightest trouble. It certainly looked like a case of discrimination on grounds of colour to me. And I came across many like it. The truth is that the one key reason for the employment of coloured workers - acute shortage of labour - is no longer as valid as it was during the period of really full employment. Whether they are going to let this situation lead to the growth of an industrial colour bar is a challenge that the unions and the labour movement must face, and face squarely.

In August of last year a Midlands official of the Transport and General Workers Union declared that they did not operate a colour bar but that his members would not allow all the platform staff vacancies to be filled by coloured workers. At that time there were 1,050 jobs and only 900 hands were employed.

And I am satisfied that there now exists, in Birmingham and Wolverhampton ~~an~~ ~~unofficial~~ ~~quota~~ ~~system~~ ~~which~~ ~~imposes~~ ~~limits~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~number~~ ~~of~~ ~~coloured~~ ~~people~~ ~~employed~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~public~~ ~~transport~~ ~~services~~. And in ^{last month} Sheffield/the same union called on its transport workers to "go slow" and refuse overtime till the Sheffield Corporation agreed to the introduction of a quota limiting the employment of coloured conductors to the present 103. And the union expects its coloured members to take part in the "go slow" movement against themselves!

A few months ago the Institute of Personnel Management published a report on the EMPLOYMENT OF COLOURED WORKERS IN THE BIRMINGHAM AREA. The situation was then very different from what it is now. Trouble had then not yet come to

the motor industry and there were still more jobs than people to fill them. The Report found that:

"Although the conditions revealed by this enquiry do not give grounds for very grave concern and contain many hopeful elements, it is true to say that there is some discrimination in the relations of employers and workers to the coloured people. It is a general view that if there were unemployment attitudes would harden and might easily lead to an oppressed minority of coloured people in British society...."

Already Birmingham's coloured people are feeling the chilly breath of this prospect. And this despite the fact that there were, when I was there, nearly 16,000 job vacancies in Wolverhampton, Coventry and the Black Country. The leaders of the Afro-Caribbean Organisation are extremely concerned about this situation. A few months ago the Organisation's president, Dr. Piliso, received a letter from a Birmingham citizen because he had written a letter of protest to the local paper. The letter began: "Dear Alien..." and the key paragraph read: "You come crawling to us bringing your numerous unpleasant vices, and expect to be welcomed, accepted, loved and cherished, fed and clothed as though you were doing us a favour. I would have thought that a person who descends upon us thus, would at least try to refrain from uttering arrogant, audacious (?) criticism of a people who you will never equal. We whites didn't step out of the jungle to find everything ready and waiting, we became civilised the hard way and its bred into us, thus we don't bite the hand that feeds us....But, alas Britain is going to the 'dogs' and to speed the decay the dogs are coming to Britain...."

We are not very far from the nazi or Strydom creed here, not very far at all: so please don't say it can't happen here.

I heard so much about prejudice and discrimination from Birmingham's coloured people that I went out on the streets to seek it out for myself. I hailed a nice looking young chap near the centre of the town, tried on a West Indian accent and asked for directions to Small Heath. He averted his face, side-stepped and kept moving. I tried another, older man, prosperous looking. He mumbled something and kept moving. I followed a young couple into a tea place and sat down. No one tried to turn me out. But there were unfriendly stares. I sat at a vacant table. The couple who had gone in just before me were served. Three young men came in and were served. In the end I had to turn and pointedly call the waitress. I got my cup of tea grudgingly, slopping in the saucer. Few migrants would have been as 'brash' as I was.

I went back to my game of asking directions. One man directed me to what I knew to be the wrong bus; a woman raised her nose in the air. A young Indian cross the road and came solicitously to me. He had seen me snubbed. Where did I want to go? Small Heath, I told him, keeping up the pretense. He could see I was new. I nodded. Well, these people were not very friendly. Best thing was to watch their faces before asking anything of them. You could see by their faces whether they were hostile to coloured people or not. He walked with me to the corner from where I could get my bus. He'd just been to the labour exchange. No luck. ~~No luck~~ He'd been going for some time now. He advised that it was better to ask directions of coloured people.

As the bus sped along the white conductress came along collecting fares. I knew where I wanted to get to but I didn't know or how to identify it for her. Coventry Road was very long. Two of my fellow passengers, both white, came to the rescue and pinpointed it for her. And before he got off one man leaned over and explained to me exactly where to get off. And when I finally

got to it the other one tapped me on the shoulder and said:

"Your stop, mate."

Later, I went into a post office. There weren't many people, only three ahead of me. The young chap behind the counter was tall and gangling and not long out of his teens. Except for his sneer whenever he looked at me, he seemed nice. Just as the last of the three in front of me was being served, a fatherly, middle-aged gentleman walked in and firmly planted himself in front of me. I straightened up, made a noise in my throat and looked appealingly at the youth. His eyes flickered coldly over my face then he turned with the hint of a smile to the ~~old~~ fatherly gentleman. The fatherly type firmly elbowed me out of the way and was served. It needed effort to keep up my pretense then.

On balance then, two men on a bus had been helpful and friendly. Two men and a woman had snubbed me pointedly on the street; one man had tried to misdirect me. The waitress had served me tea disdainfully after I had been made to wait till I called her: and the young chap in the post office had connived at someone jumping me in the queue. Nothing very dramatic here, nothing startling; all very small things. But it is the small things that matter in everyday life. To the person who is at the receiving end of this type of experience every day, day in, day out, for all his waking hours, at work and at play, this adds up to discrimination and prejudice. And I had only touched the fringes of it.

Coloured housewives have told me that they have paid 7/6d for a piece of meat that would cost an English housewife 5/-. And the old game of giving coloureds short change is not confined to Birmingham. All these little financial transactions - overcharging, giving short change - the coloureds

cynically and bitterly describe as paying a 'Colour Tax'.

And some of the most heartbreaking cases of the 'Colour Tax' are tied up with the housing shortage. I was told of an estate agent who bought a house for £700 and immediately sold it to a Jamaican for £1,700. There's 'Colour Tax' with a vengeance! The pickings are so good that there is an estate agent who is open on Sundays too. But attempts are now being made to cope with some of the worst abuses in housing. The recently-formed Birmingham Friendship Housing Association has recently set up four West Indian couples in furnished flats and has bought a hotel which they are converting into a hostel for coloured workers. And there are similar private housing schemes in other industrial areas, led by people of goodwill who want to frustrate the sharks who now batten on the misery of the migrants.

But for the migrants the real shadow over Birmingham is the shadow of unemployment and the birth of an industrial colour bar. It is no less a challenge to Labour and the unions.

THE WEST INDIANS -
COSMOPOLITAN LONDON
How Are They Doing?

The tall teenaged white girl held the little black boy's hand firmly as they walked along the pavement in Notting Hill Gate's Barandon Street. It was a poor working-class area and children were playing in the street. Some of the children called to the little black boy. He waved to them, tried to pull away, but the girl held him firmly till they reached the door where I stood waiting.

"You going to the McKenzies?" the girl said.

I nodded so she said: "Will you please see that he gets to his mum." and put his hand into mine. She patted him, smiled, and went back the way she had come. The little boy looked me over suspiciously. I knocked on the door again. The boy's lips curled in disgust, then he leaned forward, pushed back the metal flap that said 'LETTERS' and yelled: "Mum!". After a while we heard footstep .

"See!" he said with a little-boy sneer and the accent of a true Londoner.

The door opened and the boy's father stared at me. He was a slender, small-boned black man - of the type I had met in nearly every Jamaican mountain village I visited last year. But he was more dapperly dressed than the peasants of those mountain villages. When he spoke his voice had that soft, lifting quality that is so akin to the way Welshmen speak English.

The man's Jamaican landlord had arranged for my coming so I followed father and son up the dark little stairway to the one crowded room ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ that was home to mother, father and four children. There was a big double bed that took up nearly a quarter of the space, a chest of drawers, a ~~table~~ cot for

the youngest baby, a table and some chairs, and a new radiogram in the far corner near the window. There was not much room to move. But everything was spotlessly clean and polished, and a gay bed-cover made the overcrowded room seem cheerful. The three elder children played about the confined space. The mother sat rocking the baby on her lap.

She, too, was small; smaller than her husband and dark to a point of blackness. Neither husband nor wife could have been much over thirty but she looked haggard and worn.

The couple had been in England just over four years. All four of their children had been born here. The boy who had walked up with the teenage white girl was the eldest and knew no other home or playground than London's working-class back streets.

The two grown-ups were bitter about some of their experiences. And they had sufficiently lost the sense of being 'outsiders' to speak freely about some of the things that had hurt and upset and made them feel bitter.

They had moved often, had been so often turned away by landladies that they now would not think of asking white landladies for a place. As they talked I had the feeling that, in spite of their four years here, they had not quite overcome the problems of adjustment that faces ~~any~~ all 'outsiders' of whatever colour, who start a new life in a new land. And it was not all due to colour, though colour was a very important factor.

The man had found jobs alright; but he had run into difficulties with his white workmates. He was unskilled and competed with unskilled white workers. He was acutely sensitive of 'name-calling'. His eyes blazed when he said they had used such words as 'darker' and 'nigger' to him. His temper had got the better of him and in the end he'd had to leave. The last job he'd left had been a very

good one where he'd been a checker for a wholesale soft drinks firm. The money had been good and he'd liked the work. But the others had tried to make trouble for him. Sometimes they'd stolen cases of soft drinks after he'd checked them and then accused him of not being able to count or else of having stolen the stuff himself. I asked him whether he'd told his union representative about this. He smiled cynically and shrugged. Anyway, he'd left the job. It was best. Now he was working at keeping furnaces stoked. It was harder and money was poorer. But at least the people didn't seem to mind him working there and he got on well. Maybe it was because he was doing what they call black man's work. His general attitude was that of someone sadly disappointed, someone who had lost a fond illusion and hated to admit it.

The wife's difficulties had been of a different order. She had tried to put her elder children into nurseries. The nurseries were full. Allright, so the nurseries were full. But why did they treat her as though she had no right to come and ask for a place for her children! I told her I had seen a number of coloured children in nurseries in Brixton and elsewhere. She swept it aside and told me of her last confinement. The nurse in the district had advised her to book a bed in the hospital for her confinement and she had done so. But when the day arrived and she turned up at the hospital they suddenly had no record. And there was this other business. They'd all told her she was having too many children ("Me doan t'ink people here love chil'run") so she said allright, what should she do? They told her to go to a birth-control clinic. She'd been three or four times and so far nothing had been done. Why couldn't these people treat her like they treated other people. Her man paid taxes and insurance like any other men. Why, a clippie had pushed her off a bus when she was pregnant and she had to go back and slap the clippie to show

that even though she was black she was not going to be pushed around for nothing! And what a court case there was! She'd been fined ten bob but the magistrate had been sympathetic and she felt the ten bob had been paid in a good cause.

I mentioned the white teenage girl who had brought her son while I stood at the door. Her face softened. Her neighbours had been very good, very helpful. They looked after the children when she went out shopping or had to go to hospital or something. Very helpful, very good people. They'd helped in so many ways. Funny how some were good and helpful, and others didn't care, and others hated you.

For all her simplicity, the woman's comment was basically correct. An English sociologist, Anthony Richmond, recently declared in his book The Colour Problem that "....there is now conclusive evidence to suggest that the population can be considered to fall into three broad groups of roughly equal size. One-third is tolerant of coloured people, one-third is mildly prejudiced and one-third is extremely prejudiced". The simple Jamaican peasant woman and the trained British scholar had arrived at the same conclusion.

But the McKenzies were only one family in the 60,000-odd West Indian migrants who had come to Britain. And well over a third of them were in the London area. And the McKenzies were not as typical as they would have been four or five years ago. Then, the vast majority of migrants lived in conditions of terrible congestion, and finding a place to lay one's head was often heart-breaking. Now, very many of them own houses - and not all of them slum houses at that.

In Rayswater's Colville I met a young ex-R.A.F. type and his wife putting the finishing touches to their newly bought three-storey house. He had

turned the two upper floors into flats, installed kitchens and bathrooms and redecorated them. Now they were getting their own flat into shape. The ex-R.A.F type didn't have much to complain about. He understood the English people among whom he worked and got on well with them.

It was the same for the chap in the flat upstairs. He played happily with his ten-months-old son while his Austrian wife prepared orange juice for the child. Their home was comfortable and spacious. He was a member of a craft union, earned good wages, and proudly displayed his union card.

Life was good for these people. They had made the adjustment from the awkward uncertainty of a few years ago. They were relaxed, sure of themselves and felt less the outsiders that they felt a few years ago. The fact that London was possibly the world's most cosmopolitan city had helped greatly. But they had also survived the ordeal of prejudice remarkably well, and had won acceptance for themselves by their work and their bearing. Now they are found working on the railways, on the underground, on buses and in factories. And their situation, like the situation of the white fellow-citizens among whom they live, ranges from an overcrowded one-roomed home for a family to a comfortable two or three bedroomed house or flat for a family. Certainly, it is less easy to generalise about the conditions of the migrants now than it was a few years ago. There are still, of course, irritants: they still encounter prejudice and exclusion in many places, but there are also wider areas of friendship and understanding. And white children sharing the same classrooms and playgrounds as coloured children soon forget the difference in colour - unless their parents remind them.

And the picture, so common a few years ago, of a lost-looking lonely West Indian on a street corner of an evening is, I think, gone for good. By

BUTE TOWN? CARDIFF.

I asked the taxi-man to direct me to Bute Town. He frowned thoughtfully then shook his head. He'd never heard of Bute Town; was I sure I didn't mean Bute Street? Yes, I wanted Bute Street, but it was in Bute Town; or were there more than one Bute Street in Cardiff. No there was only one. A long street. Which end did I want? I said:

"The Bute Town Community Centre, 213 Bute Street."

The light of knowledge dawned on him and showed in his face.

"O-o-o-h! You mean Tiger Bay...."

Tiger Bay! A name of legendary associations, conjuring up a picture of wild life and vice and mysteriously beautiful half-Arab or half-Somali girls who are as handy with their knives as with their kisses. At least, so the traders in popular fiction tell us. It is because the legend has grown so powerfully that the citizens of Bute Town object very strongly to their area being called Tiger Bay. They want no part of the doubtful fame which goes with the name and which they don't deserve.

I certainly found no wild life and vice. And though some of the girls were as beautiful as legend tells, they were too prim and correct to be, or want to be, handy with either knives or kisses. I was rather let-down to discover there was nothing to the Tiger Bay legend.

Instead, I found the oldest, the most relaxed and the most integrated coloured community in the United Kingdom. Black, brown and white lived at peace as a matter of course; ^{and} they often lived in the same house as husband and wife without anybody seeing anything noticeable about it. And the coloured men and women and youngsters and small children on the streets were utterly free

of that hint of defensive alertness which is such a common thing among very noticeable minorities. There was a sense of assurance that stemmed from a sense of belonging. These people were not 'outsiders', had not been 'outsiders' for the best part of forty years. Bute Town, Cardiff, Wales was home to them as no other place on earth could be. Their roots had sunk deep.

This came out very clearly when I talked to a pretty young medical student. She wanted to go to Kenya when she finished her studies. I asked why, was it because she wanted to serve 'her people'? No. The Africans weren't her people any more than the West Indians were. She was Welsh; the people of Wales were her people. She wanted to go to Kenya simply because things seemed to be in such a mess there and she wanted to help, like many other Welsh people.

And this was confirmed by old Uncle ~~Ben~~ Beno (who came from Sierra Leone a very long time ago) who runs the Ebony Cafe where you can get the best chicken curry and rice in Cardiff. It was hard, Uncle Beno said, to get 'our children' to show an interest in Africa and her problems. Not surprising, I thought: Africa and the West Indies were only names to these young people. And the pressures of life were not harsh enough to force them into seeking escape by identifying themselves with those faraway places.

The Bute Town Community came into being during and after the First ^{WAR} World/when Britain used coloured seamen to help solve the manpower problem. After that war many settled and formed small communities in Cardiff and Liverpool. They married local women and raised families and became, as in Bute Town, integrated communities. In 1919 there were race riots in Cardiff and Liverpool. The older folk of Bute Town still remember these as 'The Riots'. Things had never been as bad as during 'The Riots'. But they'd had a hard time during the lean days

of mass unemployment in the 1930s when both workers and government officials begrudged them the ~~day~~ dole, and too many ships lay idle for them to be able to go to sea. But they had survived it all and the community had grown strong and resilient under strain.

Now, as many of the young men ~~and/women~~ find work in and around Cardiff as go down to the sea in ships. But the call of the sea is strong in many - as strong as the pull of tradition. And there are families in which three or four generations of men have gone down to the sea in ships. Those who stay on land occasionally run up against prejudice. There are still places of entertainment that exclude them. A young Cardiff-born lad told me this dispassionately: told me of a club, and of certain places in the valleys.

The community has grown and spread. Some people have been moved into new homes by the local council. Some of the girls have married coloured American soldiers and airmen and gone to the United States.

Last April a former member of the Cardiff City Council declared that "Half the houses in Bute Town are slums", and set off a lively controversy. All this had started because Eric Louw, South Africa's Minister of External Affairs, had reacted to the Huddleston book with a bitter attack urging Father Huddleston to investigate the conditions of coloured folk in Cardiff. Well, I have now done it. And here, for Mr. Louw's information, is what I found. There certainly are houses which can be described as ~~slums~~ approaching slum conditions - but by English/ standards. Compared to South Africa's black slums Bute Town is almost a model place in spite of some of its overcrowding and the fact that there are some houses without bathrooms. As Stewart Caines, the coloured warden of the Bute Town Community Centre put it: "If you call Bute Town a slum area, then Sophiatown, Johannesburg is a shanty-town - and there is no shanty-town in Britain.

And there is a twenty-year housing development plan in hand for Bute Town and no-one is questioning the right of the coloured citizens of Bute Town, Cardiff or Wales to live where they choose. So come off it, Mr. Louw; come off it!

Into this old and integrated Welsh coloured community has moved, over the past few years, something like 500 West Indian migrants. The majority of them are found in Cardiff and Swansea. I met some of them in the streets and homes and lodging houses of Bute Town.

There was a subtle, almost imperceptible difference between them and the old residents. It was the difference between a man who knew his way about a place so well that there was no need to think about it and one who had to look out for signposts all the time. But even so, having the older community there made them more relaxed than I had seen them in many other places. The older community acted as cushion, gave them confidence.

I met a tall, lean and very black man who was a bundle of energy. He was from Barbados and he'd done very well indeed. In something just over twelve months he's made such strides that he'd been able to get his own house and send for his wife and grown-up daughter. As we stood talking on the pavement of Bute Street the girl stood a little distance away. She was tentative and unsure. She had been in the country less than a week and it was all so strange and new, so different from sunny Barbados which they call 'Little England'. But papa was confident, knew his way about, had a good job, and was a man in a hurry. He would show her the ropes.

The two leading members of the older community who were with me were tolerantly amused at the Barbadian's rather self-important sense of achievement and success.

In another place I talked to a woman of really strong personality; free

in her movements, relaxed and open as the sunny land from which she came. She, her husband and their teenage soon had been here a few years. The husband worked away from home and only visited them periodically. She had tried to get the boy apprenticed so that he could learn a trade. The firm to which the boy had gone had told him they could not take him on unless he had a complete kit of tools. To get the tools would put them back something like £30. She had sent the boy back to explain they could not afford to lay out £30 just like that. Couldn't he get just the tools he would be needing to start and get the rest as he needed them and went along and earned? But somewhere along the line, unknown to his mother, the boy had got ideas about the army - or was it the navy. Anyway, one day an official letter had come and the whole thing had come out into the open.

I asked whether the boy had gone into the army. No. That was where the matter rested at the moment. It had all happened very recently. She was going to wait and see what he did. But I felt her repressed anger with the boy.

When I told her I had been in her sunlit Barbados last year her eyes misted over. She was terribly homesick. Life had been alright here. She had nothing to complain about except the doctor who couldn't find out what hurt her back so. But oh....She looked at the bleak skies outside the window:

"If I could get up and walk through this wall and walk home...." She shook her head and changed the subject briskly.

In the evenings the citizens of Bute Town generally foregather at the Community Centre which is under the joint management of the local Community Association and the Cardiff Corporation. The Centre has been in existence for over ten years now and caters for all the many-sided interests of an integrated

community - from games and dancing and television shows for the youngsters, to photography clubs and serious discussions for the oldsters. It struck me that the new migrants did not yet use the centre as much as the older citizens. But this, I felt, was simply a matter of time. For the coloured community of Cardiff's Bute Town are not hostile to the newcomers as are large sections of Liverpool's old coloured community. The citizens of Bute Town are anxious to help, and help greatly. But perhaps their greatest help to the newcomers is their very presence as an already integrated coloured community.

And there is pride in every street of Bute Town that they have given Britain her new heavyweight boxing ~~champion~~ in champion in Joe Erskine.

WEST AFRICAN BOOKSHELF

The three books I am reviewing today map out a pattern that interests me very much in the literature that deals with what is commonly called race relations. So, instead of just giving you an outline of the story of each book and then commenting on it, I propose to discuss these books as part of ~~a pattern~~ the broader pattern of what we might call the racial novel or the novel dealing with race relations.

I will begin with a brief ~~summary~~ sketch of each of the authors because their backgrounds are more important in this kind of novel than in most others. First there is Mercedes Mackay with whose voice most of you are familiar as she broadcasts regularly to West Africa. Mrs. Mackay is an English woman who has been on the stage, who has been a teacher, an artist's model and a daily help - which means that she has been the equivalent of a housemaid. She has also travelled widely. Her husband was in the colonial service and she travelled widely with him: to South, Central and East Africa, as well as spending eight years in Nigeria where she ran a radio station at Ibadan.

Next, we have A.S. Mopeli-Paulus, who is a descendant of that very African great ~~man~~, Moshesh who founded and fathered the Basuto nation in Southern Africa. Mopeli-Paulus was born in Basutoland and went to school in the Union of South Africa. He studied medicine though he never qualified, but he is a qualified art teacher. He is a member of the present Ruling House of Basutoland but lives in Johannesburg and works as a clerk to a firm of lawyers. He too did some travelling, especially during the war when he was in the South African armed forces.

And finally there is Edgar Mittelholzer, a West Indian. He was born in British Guiana in a place called New Amsterdam. As with many West Indians, it is hard to give Mittelholzer any racial classification other than West Indian; ~~mixing~~ intermarriage between black and brown and white and yellow has gone on for so long. But Mittelholzer's biographical note says that an ancestor migrated from Switzerland to British Guiana in the eighteenth century. But that, of course, is only one part of it. We are not told about the other. Mittelholzer moved from his homeland to the island of Trinidad, off the Latin American mainland. Later he came to Britain, worked for the British Council, then he went back to the West Indies and lived in Barbados for a spell. He has now very recently returned to Britain to live.

So much for the authors, and I have talked about them at some length. I hope you will see the reason for this soon. Now for a brief word about their books. Shining Trouble is Mrs. Mackay's second novel. In 1953 she published her first, a novel called Black Argosy which told the story of some Nigerian students in London. Her new novel is set in Central Africa where the discovery of gold sets off the racial troubles that are the central core of this kind of novel. And she does it all very well. Certainly, it is an improvement on her first novel.

Turn To The Bark by Mopeli-Paulus is also a second novel, and like his first it is set in tribal Basutoland. The theme too, is basically the same as that of his first novel, Blanket Boy's Moon which was published in 1953. As in his first novel, so in his second you have a youth growing away from his tribe and tribalism and coming to grief because of the conflict between the old tribal ways and the newer ways of white folk and the cities

and Christianity. And again as in the first one, so in this one the whole story hangs on the committing of a ritual murder in which the hero is involved almost against his will. True, in this novel the hero spends on three years in prison whereas in the first novel he was executed. And true, the characters and settings are different. But it is basically the same story the same author told so much more successfully in his first novel that I was frankly disappointed by Turn To The Dark. And Lesiba, the hero, is a dim shadow of a figure instead of being a person. The thing that gave his first novel, Blanket Boy's Moon, its compelling power was the fact that Monare, the hero, was a real person of flesh and blood in whom one believed completely.

When we turn to Mittelholzer's Of Trees And The Sea we turn to an old hand at the game. This is the ninth of his novels that I know of. For all I know there may be more; certainly there are no less. And one sees this immediately in the expert skill with which he handles his material, and the subtle power with which he makes his people come alive. But my own favourite Mittelholzer is still one of his very earliest books, a delightful ~~novel~~ short novel called Morning At The Office which appeared shortly after the end of the war. In that book he gaily and delightfully exposed the shade prejudices and class snobberies of many West Indians. And Mittelholzer at his best can be really glorious. But he is both a prolific and uneven writer and he can be very poor at times.

In this novel I think he falls midway between the two extremes. There are some very good and very funny things in it, but there are also some very bad patches. The story is that of a young English couple, newly married, called Wort. Roger Wort and his wife Patricia are recent arrivals in Barbados where Roger has a civil service job to do with beach control. In the course of time

the Worts meet and get to know a number of interesting old residents on the island. There are white people, coloured people and black people. And this gives Mittelholzer an opportunity to weave for our delight a fantastic tale built around race-relations, sex-relations (which are always important in race relations), and the social and class snobberies of the island - with a dash of magic thrown in for good measure. It is all fantastic and farcical and done with great skill. But I sometimes found the humour rather heavy-handed and I think Mittelholzer occasionally tried too hard to write beautifully. But if you can afford only one of these three books and asked me to make a choice, I would choose Mittelholzer's Of Trees And The Sea.

And the reason for this choice is tied up with the idea I suggested at the beginning of this talk: that of putting these three books into the broader pattern of race relations novels.

Now it is true that race relations is probably the most important problem facing our time. But I do not think that is a good enough excuse for publishing scores of rather indifferent novels on the subject. And I am afraid scores of indifferent novels are being published on the subject. World interest in the subject tend almost to tempt people of indifferent ability into churning out the stuff. And, both as a reader and a writer, I am, frankly, more than a little tired of it all. I am tired of reading bad novels simply because they deal with racial subjects. And it seems to me that the function of the novel as a art form is being perverted by this kind of writing. Essentially and at its best the novel is concerned with people, with the conflicts within themselves as well as with their conflicts with other people. The serious novel should help us to a deeper understanding of man as he is confronted by all the confusing situations of life today. And the good serious novel, it seems

to me, should be able to take his local theme, be it colour or sex, and invest it with such art as to make it new and fresh and of universal application. Unfortunately the writers of the racial novel have things too easily and so they give us fictionalised sermons instead of genuine art.

In a sense it is unfair to talk like this about the three books under review because each is a serious attempt at literature. Think of three other books on the racial theme. Think, if you like, of some of my own novels. And then ask yourself what would be left of the book if you took out of it the race-colour situation. You'd be surprised at how often the answer would be: very little indeed. Certainly, if you take the race-colour situation out of Shining Trouble there would be very little else left. And if you took it out of Turn To The Dark you would have a deal of tribal custom but very little meaning in terms of people as people. It is only with the Mittelholzer book that I felt there would still be a book left even after you have taken out all the race-colour stuff. Because first, and this makes him the novelist he is, Mittelholzer is interested in people; and only after that is he interested in whether they belong to a tribe and what colour they are and what situation they find themselves in. With him people come first. With the others the situation comes first, and is what I think is so very wrong with the race-colour novel today.

Of course, we are all creatures of circumstances, to an extent we are made by our background, our upbringing and our inheritance. That is why I have sketched the backgrounds of our three authors today. But all the people who produced great art in the past had backgrounds and circumstances to cope with. It is, I am sure, the approach that is wrong. In Othello Shakespeare wrote about a race-colour situation. But because the man, Othello, was bigger than the theme, colour, he fashioned it into a work of great art. He did the same

with anti-semitism and the Jew Shylock.

By all means let us deal with the problems or issues that interest us most. But let us also always remember that the novel, by its very nature, deals with people.. And before we can become emotionally and intellectually involved in any situation, we must first be involved with the people in that situation. Good novels are about people.....I hope the writers of Africa will see this and that my three authors will forgive me for using them to read what seems to me a most important lesson.

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KINGDOM OF GREEN

BY PETER ADRAKINS

We are hill people, my wife and I and we have been so all our lives. My earliest and most persistent memories are of the green hills of Africa going away, one after the other, each higher than the one before, as far as the eye could see and beyond in to the haze of distance. And for her it is the towering green volcanic mountains of Java among which she spent her formative years. So it was natural that when we came to rest finally, to put down roots and to rear a family, I should be in the hills, and because of our nature and our needs it had to be the hills of St. Andrew in Jamaica, physically as far away from Africa as from Java, yet very reminiscent for each of us of those other, faraway hill countries. She grew up eating a succulent tasting but foul smelling fruit (when fully ripe) called Durian; she met it here not a long time later in the shape of the Jamaican Jack Fruit, and at once the gap of oceans and cultures and time was bridged.



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1 AUGUST 1988

Coyaba
P.O. Box 20
Red Hills
St. Andrew
Jamaica

Dr. Catherine Woerber
P.O. Box 20091
NOORDBRUG
2522
South Africa

Dear Professor Woerber

This is to thank you for your letter of July 27th (I assume you have by now received your doctorate hence my formal and congratulatory style of addressing you; so much better, I think, than the safe and guarded 'Ms').

I received from the in-house editor of the American *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, in December of last year, a copy of the master proofs of your contribution and found it interesting. I wrote Mr. Jan Peter F. van Rosevelt about one correction and told him my last work was in preparation for publication. He wrote back asking me if he could inform you about the new work and I replied 'yes'; so I assumed you would be aware of *The Coyaba Chronicles* which should be published simultaneously here and in Johannesburg within the next ten days. An American edition is planned for next Spring. European publishers seem, understandably to me, ambivalent about this book. You may understand why when you read it. The South African edition is published by David Philip.

As for your questions, I hope you find at least some of the answers you seek in *The Coyaba Chronicles*. Beyond that I have very strong and deep reservations about explaining my writing. It should stand or fall on its own. What I do hope, and I say it in the *Chronicles* is that the need for my kind of writing is coming to a close. I see glimpses of the shape of tomorrow's writing from those who succeed the black writers of this century. I hope for a much freer, more open, more challenging literature - beyond race, colour, ethnic and tribal and regional difference - which would question and try to redefine the relations between man and man, man and woman, mothers/fathers and children; and all of these as they affect and are affected by nature's scheme of things; and I hope for all this from a uniquely non-Western, non-European perspective. What a tall order! I hope it will come about. But I am too old to even think of starting the process. Someone else, someone young and full of the passion and emotional and intellectual vigour and energy we had when those of our generation were in our late teens and early twenties. The big difference, the great advantage, would be that they would start where we left off. This is part of the process, the continuum we must maintain if life is to have any worthwhile meaning in tomorrow's world. But it is they, not we, who will decide the terms of engagement.

Best regards from both of us

stream. I was put in charge of publicity. Nkrumah, recently arrived from the United States, and burning with impatience, set up a West African Secretariat. When things moved too slowly for him, he went off on his own for a time. Azikiwe visited from Nigeria; Wallace Johnson came in from Sierra Leone. A very young Julius Nyrere from what was then Tanganyika came; so did Tom Mboya from Kenya. Then the great man, W.E.B. DuBois himself, descended on us. And in 1945, in the city of Manchester, he opened the Fifth Pan-African Congress. Nominally, the Mayor of Manchester did it; but that was simply a doffing our hats to the host city. The real opening was DuBois' and we all knew we were in the presence of great moment in black history.

DuBois had been there since the beginning of the Pan-African idea he was there in 1919, the year I was born, for the first Pan-African Congress. He was there for the second Pan-African Congress in 1921; for the third in 1923, and for the fourth in 1927. Those had all been Congresses called by individuals representing the hope and ideals of individuals. The African people had not yet found their voice. These individuals were the forerunners, like John the Baptist, for our Fifth Pan-African Congress with its delegates and representatives from all over Africa and the African *Diaspora*. The Fifth Pan-African Congress was the first truly representative one. W.E.B. DuBois, standing on that platform in the Manchester City Hall and tracing the long and difficult journey of the mind and spirit by which we had come to this point was one of the most moving moments of my adult life. And if it was of such importance to me, what must it have been for DuBois? What were his feelings that night? Had he thought this day would ever come when he would be speaking to a group of Pan-African delegates from all the regions of Africa? That he would live to see the dream handed over from a small group of