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KENYA

By

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(from Emilie Jacobson)

auth. res. shelve
until he feels like
updating

Dawn was breaking and BOAC's VC 10 night flight 115 out of London sped south-eastward to meet the coming light of day over Africa. In the seat beside mine the bejewelled white South African matron stirred, straightened in her chair and became, once more, as selfconsciously aware of me and my colour as she had been from the moment, at London airport, when the stewardess had guided her to the seat beside mine the previous evening. We had been studiously polite to each other, careful not to brush against each other, not to make any kind of physical contact; and we had been extremely civilised about the fact that neither of us relished sitting beside the other. I do not think she minded; and I know I did not. But this was a planeload of white South Africans and my presence was a violation of the accepted and understood rules.

The only other non-white person in the plane was a young man from Basutoland on his way home from a short government-sponsored course in Canada. He had automatically gravitated towards me at London Airport. He had not been away from Southern Africa long enough to have forgotten his "place" so he jumped up respectfully, anxiously, every time a white person approached. Between my going to the airport toilet and returning something happened to the young man which made him keep away from me as though I were the devil himself. On the plane he was unobtrusive to the point of not being present, so they did not mind him. It is not a question of physical presence as such; it is the quality of the presence. If the black presence is submissive and indicates, with that tacit delicacy which is part of the currency of race relations, its awareness of being out of its "place", the white South Africans are likely to be overwhelmingly kind.

It was thirteen years since I had last made this selfsame trip but it was as familiar as my morning coffee with its precisely measured

milk and of sugar, the feel was as familiar as though I was repeating a journey made on the same day every week.

Thirteen years ago the giant plane had been a South African Airways Constellation. The route of that flight had been London-Rome-Khartoum-Nairobi-Johannesburg. Today South African Airways are not able to make such flights. The majority of black African states do not allow South African planes to fly over their territories, so BOAC operates the very lucrative London-Rome-Nairobi-Johannesburg run. Basically, this particular run is for the benefit of the South Africans, and because they are an affluent crowd and lavish spenders the service is superb. For the East and Central Africans who are far less well-off there is an adequate, though more cramped and less luxurious East African Airways Comet 4 service flying between Doris Salaam, Nairobi, Entebbe and London.

Perhaps the most striking difference between this flight and that other I made thirteen years earlier was something so invisible and elusive that it was hard to pinpoint. In that earlier journey the South Africans with whom I travelled had been sufficiently sure of themselves and the stability of their world to be able to look at me, the rogue black one in their midst, with curiosity. Thus, in that earlier journey, an old gentleman, an ex-mayor of one of the big cities of South Africa, and a gentleman who worked in Tanganyika, had struck up a fishing conversation with me. Where was I going? Who was I? What was I going to do? The 'insiders' were in fact curiously examining an 'outsider'. This time there was none of that. They were not as sure of themselves any more; and they were reticent about coming forward to find out. There was always the possibility that I was some important political figure and that any kind of exchange might lead to political

complications or even an 'incident'. There was, too, a marked absence of the casual racial arrogance that I remembered from the other time. I was no longer travelling in a plane in 'white Africa' because the idea of 'white Africa' had died between that other journey and this; and the reality, shrunk to the limits of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia had an uncertain future. Yet for all these vast, subtle, psychological changes, I could not shake off the feeling of things unchanged.

The time gap fell away as I responded to the pilot's voice and looked down and to the left at Batian and Nelion, the twin peaks of Mount Kenya. At over 17,000 ft. they were as usual, above cloud and above the snowline. The pilot's words were the same words used - perhaps by the same pilot - in that earlier journey. So why not the pilot? We went down into the massed, solid-seeming body of cloud, shaking as we hit invisible sky ruts.

On the ground the signs of change were all about, too striking not to be noticed. This was not the Nairobi airport at which I had landed that other time; this one was vaster, with one of those endlessly long runways, the familiar low-slung buildings of the 'international airport' the world over, and the air of sameness of all such. Embakasi airport was new to me, built since my last visit with the labour of those held as detainees during the period of the Mau Mau emergency. It was a monument to that war that had started within weeks of my ending my last visit, a war that had lasted nearly a decade. It seemed to me as good a job as that long road built through the Rift Valley by the Italian prisoners of the Second World War. Roads and buildings seemed, out there in the chilly Nairobi morning air, the only worthwhile monuments of the wars of the world.

I followed the crowd across the tarmac, startled (and remembering

this same reaction that other time) by how cold it could be on the Equator at over 5,000 feet above the sea.

The South Africans from Flight 115 veered right to the intransigent lounge and my brief, distant but very tangible contact with my former countrymen and women was broken. Through that night flight I had felt again something of the mood and atmosphere that is part of South Africa and South Africans. Perhaps the single dominant ingredient I sensed was a stubborn determination to defy the tide, but open eyed, aware of what was involved, not provocative yet totally unyielding. It confirmed my ancient conviction that there was no possibility of a peaceful resolution to South Africa's racial problems and at the same time that any physical engagement would mean a massive slaughter of the black majority by the highly disciplined, well armed and determined white minority.

At immigration I was caught in a French-speaking-package-tour and followed the line till a pert young African Miss, in East African Airways blue, with the strikingly chiselled lines of the Somali women, told me to go back and wait since my passport showed I was not part of the French-speaking party. I looked closely at her and decided she could not be all Somali. She was shorter, stockier, slightly bigger boned; the fine, elongated Somali bone structure had been blunted by other genes, but the Somali beauty shone through for all that. She misread my stare and seemed momentarily confused. She looked not much older than my eldest daughter, a year perhaps, or two. But men my age, and older, take young women of that age for second or third wife in those parts where polygamy is still practised. I walked away from her, back to the lounge and sat down to wait. The presence of the young woman was itself a sign of change, a warning of the future changes that

would, ultimately eliminate even the polygamous relationship between old men and young women. After a while, when the French-speaking crowd had passed through customs and there was less of a crush, she strolled casually over to me.

"You from the coast"?

I said "No".

"Kampala?"

"No".

"Dar?"

"No. Jamaica."

It was clear Jamaica meant nothing to her, she'd never heard of it.

"In America?"

"No."

She shrugged slightly and strolled away leaving me feeling unreasonable and difficult. To get over the feeling I went looking for the john. There were no 'European', 'Asian' signs as there had been at the john of that other airport in Nairobi in 1952.

There were three immigration officers. The one in the most prominent position in the centre of the three-lined passageway through to customs was African. To his right, near a wall was a white officer, and to the left of the African was an Indian in the turban of a Sikh. Last time the immigration men had been white only. I presented my passport to the Sikh gentleman. I looked beyond him and it was clear that the world had indeed changed here. The customs officers waiting to examine the luggage were all Africans.

To anyone who had known the old East Africa, the old Kenya, the old Nairobi airport certainly to me this was like stepping through the gateway of a South Africa where all the racial barriers of Apartheid

had been swept aside. Last time Nairobi airport had been one of the two main gateways into 'white' Africa: Johannesburg airport was, and still is, the other. Nairobi airport, now, was African, no longer the gateway to a piece of white Africa.

I went through to the relaxed, assured young customs officer, then a Kikuyu porter came to take my bags. He had the - for me familiar - large holes in his ears, but his eyes were wholly unfamiliar. The last time I had looked into a Kikuyu face, any Kikuyu face, there had been a smouldering and bitter anger in the eyes. I had seen and felt this bitterness and anger everywhere I went, breathed it in the air and felt it even in the red earth; but most of all, strongest of all, it had been in the eyes of the Kikuyu. It had made all of them look hard and bleak and cold and embattled. Now I looked into Kikuyu eyes that reflected a soft and gentle and friendly mood. There were other Kikuyu porters, other men with big holes in the lobes of their ears, and they were all men at peace with themselves and their world.

My arrival at Nairobi airport in August 1965 was as different as anything could be from my arrival that other August morning of long ago and far away 1952.

Nairobi is big, sprawling, very clean, very modern; and because the sky was overcast and no sun shone the eight-mile trip from the airport to the city could have been in Britain on a fine and clear sunless day, or in the flat regions of the French countryside on a dull autumn morning. Perhaps the fine road was wider and straighter and newer, but that was all the real difference. And the city, too, gave off strongly this feel of being more part of Europe than Africa. It was built by people who had conceived and planned it as a piece of Europe set on the African highveld, and they had done a firstclass job. And because they had

built it beautifully and well, with wide tree-lined avenues and open spaces were patches of neatly cropped grass soothed the eye or a riot of flowers stirred the spirit. There are few cities in Africa as well laid out as Nairobi, few that are as 'European' in its planning and architecture. But that is not really to be wondered at since its original builders did conceive of it as the main city of a 'white' East Africa. The result is that the Africans of Kenya have inherited from the white settlers one of the most modern capital cities in all Africa. Today the city area covers roughly 266 square miles and it has a growing population that now stands at something over 350,000. It boasts a fine City Hall where you can have morning coffee or lunch out in its gardens or on its terraces, or something stronger at the bars. Then there is a massive hall rigged up with those conference gadgets which makes it possible for a speech in one language to be instantly translated into a number of others. There is a National Museum which incorporates a snake park and aviary, a City Park of 300 acres and an Arboretum of 80 acres. There is the McMillan Memorial Library (not named after Britain's former Prime Minister) with close over 100,000 volumes. All these, and much more, the white settlers had made and built for themselves, and all these the Africans have now inherited.

The City centre has grown and changed so much since I had last seen it that I felt lost. To add to my confusion old names had been replaced by new ones so that what had once been Delamere Avenue was now Kenyatta Avenue, signifying perhaps, the final and complete victory of the Africans as symbolised by Kenyatta over those ^{who} fought to make Kenya a white man's country and whose great symbol Lord Delamere: and so with the defeat of the 'white' Africa idea Delamere Avenue became Kenyatta Avenue; and Hardinge Street was named Kimathi Street after

Dedan Kimathi, one of the military leaders thrown up by the Mau Mau struggle who was captured and executed by the British. There were a multitude of other changed names: the road from the airport into the city had once been Princess Elizabeth Way. Now it was Uhuru Highway. White House Road had become Haile Selassie Avenue. Such changes, I found out later, were not confined to street names only. For example the King George VI Hospital had been transformed into the Kenyatta National Hospital. These were the outward and visible evidences that state power had passed from the whites to the blacks.

I found the town a deal more friendly than on my last visit. There were ^{fewer} Europeans about than I had last time, and those I saw did not carry themselves as lords of the earth. And there were the Indians, often more numerous than the Africans, but still not as sharply forced on my consciousness as that other time. Then, Nairobi had been a town belonging to the Europeans and Indians, with each fighting for the dominant position. There were African locations, of course, but these were segregated and on the outskirts of the city, and from them came the servants who worked at menial jobs in the homes and offices and shops of the Europeans and Indians: they were on the fringes of the city, welcome when they could be useful, but not of the city, not enjoying the same rights and privileges as the other two groups.

I remembered that on that first day in Nairobi thirteen years earlier Jomo Kenyatta, the old Chief Koinange, now dead and honoured by having one of the streets of Nairobi named after him, one of the old chief's sons, myself and a handful of others, had gone to an Indian-owned restaurant. They had refused to serve all of us: the old man, Kenyatta and myself, yes; the others, no. So the others had gone. I remember the old chief Koinange had said: "This is our burden. We are either denied

'or they make us concessions. It is a heavy burden."

Now, though the Indians were still very much there, it was clear that the city, like the country, had been taken over by the Africans. Today the African population of the city is greater than its European and Indian citizens combined. And, as everywhere else in the world, there is a steady, persistent drift from the countryside to the big city.

I had spent the best part of an hour cruising about the city and I getting concerned about the taxidriver's bill so we hunted down the office of an old friend from my London days, eldest son of the old chief Koinange and now a Minister in the government. It was still early morning but already he was at his desk. He gave me coffee, telephoned some ~~hotels~~ and arranged for me to go to one. He like nearly all the present rulers of Kenya, and most other African countries, had been one of the angry men, one of the dangerous agitators of the old days. The outbreak of the Mau Mau had caught him in Britain. Because he would have been clamped into detention the moment he set foot on Kenya soil, he got out the emergency in exile, doing what he could to plead a cause ^{for which} few men in the outside world had any sympathy. With victory, and when the Pan-African idea still seemed more than an empty slogan, he became Minister of State for Pan-African Affairs. That did not last long and he is currently his country's Minister of Education. Now he was benign, relaxed, obviously happy and contented, involved in the work of nation building, anxious to conserve and consolidate what had been gained. And there was the new reserve I had by now come to expect and look for in those of my former friends who had assumed the burdens and the responsibilities and the powers of political office.

It was obvious the Minister was busy; his Permanent Secretary came

in to brief him on an important conference with either some British or American government representatives, so I left quickly. My friend promised to come and look for me after work that afternoon. I did not bank on it: Ministers of government are busy people and in Africa one often makes quick and firm promises in order to get rid of someone who might take up more time than one either can or is prepared to give.

The Minister's secretary in the outer office a young Indian woman dressed in traditional sari, which to my mind is the most feminine of all the national costumes of the women of the world. I was admiring her dress when she snapped impudently at the African porter who was helping me with my things. I closed my eyes and listened. It was like this, in arrogant tones tinged with contempt, that Europeans and Indians had addressed their African servants that other time I was here. I wondered suddenly just how deep the changes really went, chased now with a slight sense of skepticism about all I had seen thus far. Then I remembered that it was only two years since Kenya attained independence. Changes in attitudes, outlook, patterns of prejudice, generations of habit, could not be carried through at the same pace as the political changes. I reminded myself that I would have to allow for the greater time-gap needed for the adjustment in outlook to catch up with the new power adjustments.

The hotel was a couple of miles from the centre of the city, on the crest of a low rolling hill. The grounds around it were well-kept, spacious, and its facade was most pleasing. There was a playing area for children, with swing, small sandpit and seesaw. A continental European effect was achieved with two tables under sunshades outside the entrance to the hotel. Two women, one coloured, one white, and clearly American from their speech, sat talking and writing letters at one of

the outdoor tables.

Inside, an African male receptionist eyed me with a combination of curiosity and suspicion. Behind him, in the background, a tall, angular English woman was hard at work at the hotel accounts. Above the woman's head, looking directly down at anyone registering was a portrait of the President of the Republic, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. 'Mzee' is the title that he himself chose. It means 'Old One'. 'Old Man', 'Elder'. Age is more honoured in Africa than elsewhere. But the title is not and has not been made exclusive to the President. All over the country when people wanted to show respect for someone who was older they addressed him as 'Mzee'. The portrait was in one of those cheap utility frames - the sort of thing you buy if you must, not because you want to. In the weeks that followed I saw portraits like this one - sometimes a little larger, sometimes a little smaller - in every public or semi-public place in the land: every store, every hotel, every restaurant, every bar, every office, had its portrait of the President hanging where it could most easily be seen as you entered the place. With rare exceptions the frames of the Presidential portraits were all cheap, mean-looking affairs, giving the impression of a thing done because it had to be done. In a few places, usually Indian-owned, there were more than one: one in the window and one where you could see it the moment you step into the store: A sort of doubly declared sign of patriotic loyalty made doubly manifest.

The young African did not know about any reservation for me so the English woman left her books and took over. She had waited in silence until the young man and I had reached an impasse, with him insisting there was no reservation and me insisting that there was.

She said: "Oh yes, Mr. Abrahams; I had the call from the Ministry.

The room won't be empty till twelve but we can put up your things till then".

The young man looked at me with expressionless eyes that could not hide his mood of heaviness. Had the woman deliberately left things until he was on the verge of turning away the customer? And was this in order to show that he could not yet cope by himself?

Now, with her in control, everything went smoothly.

The place was old and very British. It had probably once been a large private home run with an army of servants. Its location had once been the most exclusive section of white residential Nairobi; within easy reach of the centre of the city and yet far out enough to be away from all its hustle and bustle. It could once have been the home of a top colonial civil servant or of the manager of a bank or of some very senior representative of a private business firm. As an hotel it clung almost desperately to its Britishness with a not very inspired British cuisine. And since its terms were on a full board basis there was not much the guests could do about the food they got. On my floor, the bathrooms were of that age where they looked dirty no matter how much they were scrubbed. The total effect was a genteel, clean, shabbiness. All gentlemen guests were expected to wear jackets and ties for dinner and the night life of the hotel centres around the bar.

It transpired that the two American ladies were part of a group tour of teachers from the United States. I encountered at least two other such groups during my East African journey. Apart from the American teachers there was a young Italian family with two lovely children, two or three couples of settler-type East African whites and a trades unionist from Ghana come to participate in some sort of advisory capacity in a

labour dispute between the workers and their employer, the East African Common Services Organisation, a body set up by the government of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda for the running of certain common regional services.

My room, and presumably all the others, was provided only with running water and washbasin. Toilets and bathrooms were outside, and all telephone calls had to be made, ~~on~~ received, in public at the reception desk. As far as I was concerned while 45/- a day was not a great deal to pay, it was too much for what was provided and for the quality of service. The trade unionist from Ghana, I discovered, felt the same way; and since he was not paying the bill himself he would not have minded so much if only the food had been a little better.

It took me four days to find a better place and on the fifth day I moved into the ~~Hotle~~ Pigalle in the Indian section of central Nairobi. For 40/- a day I had a spacious single room with private bathroom and toilet and a telephone in the room and breakfast as well. I also met Mr. C. A. Patel, manager general factotum of the hotel, and a passionately overwhelming protector and promoter of the interests of those he likes. He stands five foot two or three, and is thin as a rake: I doubt that any scale he stood on would register a hundred pounds weight. He is dark brown, sharp featured, emotional; his face registers, mirrorlike, every mood and feeling that courses through his mind.

We started off badly. I liked my room, I like the privacy ~~of~~ it afforded and I liked my view of the clean clear skyline of the city; so I decided to book on a monthly basis which carried a decent discount. Mr. Patel wanted a month's money in advance, and the manner of his asking for it made for the trouble: he exuded apprehension apology, self-conscious guilt.

"Does everybody here pay in advance?" I demanded.

"No sir. But we ask it of long stay customers who get the monthly discount."

"Why?"

"You see, Mr. Ebrahim, Sir, sometimes customers come and take a room for a month because it is cheaper; then they leave after two weeks and want to pay half of the month's rent which means the hotel is the loser. so we make this rule, sir."

I was mollified.

Another rule of the house was that no lady visitors were permitted into the room at night - unless the guest concerned booked the lady in and paid the standard daily rate for her. I asked Mr. Patel who had thought up this particular rule. The Italian owner, who also ran Nairobi's only striptease joint the Sombrero Club, a little further down the same road.

Understanding and communication between Mr. Patel and myself grew slowly, delicately. I sensed a particular restraint in his dealings with Africans. They were the new factors. Once they had not been entertained in places like this. Now they came in and demanded service as of right: and their behaviour was often unpredictable. Sometimes two or three would sit in the upstairs lounge and consume vast quantities of beer. Afterwards they would want to pay by cheque, and if Mr. Patel refused to accept a cheque because he did not know them (and he had experience of such cheque bringing) they would accuse him of racial prejudice and the like. Dealing with the new customers often presented strange and complex problems. If a man had a meal and then walked out of the restaurant without paying you had to know who he was, who he was

related to, whether some public figure would later come and pick up his tab. To just have him arrested could lead to complications and the charge of practising racial discrimination which could hurt the interests of the hotel. So Mr. Patel was exceedingly careful with all Africans.

He was also careful in talking about himself: it took the best part of a month for me to find out that he was forty-two, that his was perhaps the 'first Indian love marriage in East Africa because I chose my wife without the permission of her parents and mine', that he had been brought to Kenya at the age of one and knew no other country as home. Once he said to me: "How can they say I don't belong here, Mr. Ebrahim? This is my country. I don't know anything about India."

"Who says you don't belong?" I asked.

But Mr. Patel would not be drawn: he shook his head, watery eyes glowing affectionately at me from behind his thick glasses. Whenever he felt emotional his eyes grew moist.

Going shopping with Mr. Patel was a most rewarding experience. In every way he seemed to know every Indian we encountered on the streets. And when I wanted a bottle of Scotch I got it at less than the wholesale price because Mr. Patel was with me, knew the vendor and spoke to him in the voice of, and with the gestures of, the timeless huckster. I did not need to understand the language to understand what was being said. But in order to make his plea for the special discount I invariably got Mr. Patel always slipped into his own Indian tongue. Indeed, this business of slipping into one's own particular tribal tongue in mid-conversation is very pronounced in Kenya. In the midst of a mixed group of say Indians, Africans, Americans and

Englishmen, the Africans who are either Kikuyu or Lue or Kamba might, at any moment, slip into their own private tribal language leaving the rest of the group not understanding what they are saying,

In this way, I found, that which separates the Kikuyu from the Lue, the Lue from the Kamba and the Kamba from, say, the Luhya is dramatised and emphasised. Tribal language thus becomes an instrument of exclusion, of making the person not linguistically 'in' feel cut off.

Very often I received the distinct impression that slipping into one's tribal language with a fellow tribesman was in fact used deliberately, especially by members of the dominant tribes like the Kikuyu and Lue, to indicate superior status. The trouble is this is an important divisive factor in the hard business of nation-building. But everybody who had a private language, members of the various African tribes, Indians, Arabs, all slipped casually and blatantly and without apology into these private languages in the presence of guests and strangers. Once I saw a world of pain, baffled frustration, and doubt in the eyes of a wife as her husband left her out in the cold while he slipped into the language of his tribe with a male friend.

This, among other things, has led a South African-born friend of mine to declare impatiently: "These people don't want integration man!"

So I got used to Mr. Patel slipping into his own particular tribal language when he went shopping. And I invariably paid anything from fifteen to thirty-three-and-a-third percent less than the marked price of the particular item. And being a sucker for a bargain, and a performance, Mr. Patel and I often went shopping for things I neither needed nor wanted. It was something to see his eyes lighting up to

see that special 'I'll-show-you-something' half-smile to see that casual man-of-the-world slight tossing gesture of the right hand and the merest suggestion of a hunching up of the shoulders, all ending with the self-conscious cocky "you leave it to me, Mr. Peter". I was Mr. Peter when we were away from the hotel or when we were having a drink in my room, otherwise, and especially in front of the hotel staff, I was always Mr. Ebrahim, sir. He explained at once: "I got to train these young fellows, you understand, sir; and the staff don't know manners."

His staff consisted of three young Indians who shared twenty-four ^{hour} manning of the reception desk, five African waiters who coped with the dining-room and room service, two African porters-night-watchmen, an African and Indian in the kitchen. In addition, but not under Mr. Patel's control, there was the advertised Italian Chef who turned out to be the proprietor's wife, a homely old body who could only prepare really homely Italian dishes, such as spaghetti and meat sauce.

When I first looked in contact between the African and Indian staff was remote, impersonal, cold. As it became apparent that Mr. Patel and I liked each other, enjoyed each other's company, an easier, more personal atmosphere grew between his Indian and African staff. And of course I benefitted by getting from both groups a quality service I had received nowhere else in my travels.

One of the young Indian receptionists, a stockily strapping and clean-living youngster named Bushan, was getting ready to migrate to England where his father and elder brother had already settled. He was going because ^{they} were there and they wanted him but also because he did not see much of a future for himself in Kenya.

He was a youngster without any special skills or training. He could hold down a receptionist, clerical or storekeeping job, nothing more. In this he was one of hundreds and thousands of young Indians. As long as such jobs had been reserved for Indians things had been all-right, Now the Africans were pushing, and every year more African youngsters with precisely the same education as young Bushan came on the labour market to compete for the jobs that had once been the preserves of the Indians. Under ordinary circumstances the competition for such jobs would be tough and grow tougher; in the special circumstances of Kenya, where there was growing unemployment and where the government said it was time to adjust the historical imbalance that had put the African majority at the bottom of the economic scheme of things, it looked as though the competition would become hopeless for those like Bushan. And so at twenty this young man was preparing to leave the land of his birth and up-bringing and follow his father and elder brother into exile in a hostile Britain than had made it clear that it wanted coloured citizens of the Commonwealth as residents of the 'mother country'.

The day after he had gone for his injections Bushan leaned across the reception counter and asked earnestly, with the trustful innocence of the young who are pure in heart: "What you think, sir? How will it be?"

How could I tell him how it would be? That he would come across people who would call him 'coolie' and 'curry arse': that he would be rudely invited to go home; that the sky would be a leaden and heavy dull grey most of the year; that he would be lonely without the warmth of all the Indian faces about him; above all that he would be made to feel unwanted and a long way from home?

I said; "You'll have your father and your brother."

His face lit up. "Yes! And I'll cook for the old man."

"But it's not like here," I said. "You won't like it."

He thought about it, began to say something then changed his mind. He smiled bravely and looked very young and very vulnerable. I was reminded vividly of that distant time when I had left the land of my birth to seek a greater freedom than its rulers would allow me. I had been about the same age as young Bushan. The memory was a reminder of the resilience of the young.

"You'll be alright," I said firmly.

He rewarded me with a beaming smile.

The last time I saw Kenya there had been between 150,000 and 160,000 Indians. This time, and in spite of the departures since independence the official figure is 183,000. My own guess is that 200,000 would be nearer the mark. The majority of them are still, as they were then, traders. But they were, and still are, also lawyers, contractors, garage owners, mechanics, doctors, dentists, plumbers, carpenters, masons, linotype operators, clerks in post offices, banks, stores and the civil service. In the old days they held the jobs in the middle, the jobs that made the machine tick over. They kept the nation's accounts and shifted its food from one place to the other. Without their industry and their enterprise it is doubtful whether the Kenyan economy would have become sophisticated as it is, even with the settler presence. The Indians, through their stores in every sizeable population centre, carried trading through the length and breadth of the nation. And if Nairobi's plumbing and sewerage systems compare favourably with the best in the rest of the world this is largely due to the skills of her Indian workers.

It was because they controlled the retail trade of the cities and were skilled craftsmen that kept the national machine ticking over that the Indians demanded, and won, in the face of settler resistance, a share of political power. So it was that as early as 1923 the Indians won for themselves the right to elect five of their own kind on a communal basis to speak for them in the colony's legislature. They were of course outnumbered by settler representatives, but at least they had five men chosen by them to speak for them. Another twenty-one years had to pass before the first African was to sit in the Legislative Council in the company of the Europeans and Indian: and then he was not elected by his people but nominated by the Governor to 'represent' them.

It was not surprising then that the Indians showed as little interest as did the whites in the Africans. Their own fight against the white settlers, their struggle for a fair share in the running of the country, was fierce and hard enough for them not to have either the time or the inclination to be concerned about the interests of the backward tribesmen who made up the majority of the population. And there were vast linguistic and cultural gaps. So the Indians were excluded and discriminated against by the whites discriminated and excluded the blacks in turn.

But Willy-nilly, whatever their motives, in challenging the political ascendancy of the white settlers, and doing it as successfully as they did, they prevented settler power becoming as entrenched as it did in Southern Rhodesia and, earlier, in South Africa. So, negatively at least, the relative strength of the Kenya Indians contributed to the ultimate political defeat of the settlers. Today there are Indians who claim that this is exactly what they fought for. This is far from the truth. What is true is that their presence in Kenya, because it was a break on undisputed settler power, contributed vastly to the ultimate

frustration of the settler ambition to make Kenya a European enclave in the fertile and beautiful rolling highland plains of East Africa.

For me this fact, whatever the motive behind time helping to break the settler hold on Kenya, lends an especial poignancy to their present fears and uncertainties.

With the coming of independence the British government made it clear that all the citizens of the former Kenya Colony would be welcomed if they chose British citizenship. Under the Kenya constitution dual citizenship is not permitted. Thus the Indians and Europeans were put in the position of having to either renounce their British citizenship and become Kenyans or else forfeit their Kenya citizenship in order to remain British. On the face of it both the Indians and Europeans had the same alternative choices, but only on the face of it. Any white settler who opts for Kenya citizenship knows that any time the going gets rough he will be able to pack up and go to Britain. And any Indian knows that once he surrenders his claim to British Citizenship there'll be no way back to it, no matter how rough the going becomes later. So it is relatively easy for the settler to opt for Kenya citizenship: there is an unwritten, unexpressed but clearly understood escape line. The British will not let down their 'kith and kin', be they Tories or socialists. And every Kenya Indian knows there is no such escape line for him or her. For the Indian opting for Kenya citizenship is for keeps, for good or ill, with no way back. The Africans either do not or will not see the difference between the European and Asian positions, so they use the comparatively more numerous European resignations and applications for citizenship as a stick with which to beat the Indians. The Indians, they say, are less committed to the land than the white settlers; the Indians are willing to exploit the land, to grow rich on it but not to

throw in their lot with it.

For the Indians this situation has often assumed the dimensions of a cruel dilemma. I spent many days and many nights discussing it with different groups of them. At the end I was no nearer a clearcut, or even a partial, answer than at the outset. But I think I did achieve a measure of understanding of the problem, which in this case means a measure of understanding of a set of states of mind. At present, I think, the Indian problem in Kenya is a problem of states of mind. First, because most pronounced, there is the collective Indian state of mind. How this is sorted out and settled can shape the fate of the Indian communities in Kenya and perhaps East Africa as a whole.

To get to East Africa from the Caribbean it is still necessary to go by way of London; also, the High Commission offices of the places I planned to visit were in London so I had to apply to London for travel and visitor's permits; in addition many friends I had not seen in a decade and more were in London. So I spent a few days in London.

One of the people I was most anxious to see was an old friend whom I had known back in the days when London was still the political centre of Africa, and the 'agitators' were more effective there than in their own particular countries; the days when Seretse Khama and the Kabaka of Buganda were in exile there. In the London of those days we went to parties, restaurants and nightclubs with the men who are now the shapers and shakers of their African world. This particular friend, an Ismaili or Khoja Moslem from Kenya, had been in touch with and had introduced me to most of the outstanding young students and political figures in the making from East Africa. He was, at the time, the only East African Indian I knew who believed that political power should be transferred to African hands; he believed too that there

should be social and cultural integration between all the people of East Africa and he played out these beliefs in his personal relations. He had more African ^{than} ~~and~~ Indian and European friends; he shared digs with some, went on holidays with them, chased the same girls, whatever their race or colour. And because he came from a relatively wealthy family whatever he had was always available to his African friends. His views and his conduct had inevitably made him a 'dangerous coolie' to settler groups and suspect among his own Indian people.

When the political change came he went home. Now he was back in Britain. At our first meeting it was clear that something had gone seriously wrong. He was bitterly disappointed at the way things had developed; freedom and African power had not worked out as he had hoped they would. I was disturbed and surprised because my friend, more than any other East African Indian, had been with the Africans, intimate with the most influential among them, close to the mainstream of African feeling. So what had gone wrong?

We did not get far on that first meeting; but he invited me to dine at his home a few days later, promising to round up one or two other friends from the old days.

On the appointed day I travelled to the distant northern London suburb by underground, and it was as though I had travelled back in time except for one new element; there was a crystalized racial hostility in my white fellow passengers in the underground train that was uniform enough for me not to miss it. In the old days there had always been pockets of prejudice, but there had also been pockets of a counter need that had neutralised the atmosphere. Now this counter mood seemed absent.

I found the house easily enough but the name on the door non-plussed me. It was English, two-syllabled as against my friend's

four-syllabled and very Indian name, but it was familiar. If you had an Indian name such as my friend's and you wished to change it so that it fitted unobtrusively into a London suburban middle-class setting then you were most likely to change it to the name I saw on the door. I rang the bell and it was my friend's house.

My friend's plans, now, were to live permanently in Britain, to be 'called to the Bar' and to practice as a Barrister in Britain. Later we were joined by another Indian from Kenya, a barrister who had been a Minister in the government immediately prior to the African takeover. This gentleman had packed up and left the country. Now, two years later, he announced that he was going home; Britain was not and never would be home. It was a hard decision for this man to make; he had been identified with the regime before Kenyatta took over and that would take some living down for an Indian. In the new dispensation things that would be forgiven or at least overlooked if done by an African could, done by an Indian, be a very heavy burden to live with. All three of us were sufficiently intimate with the African reality to know this.

"and you can't really make a living at the bar here?" I said to the ex-politician.

"They keep the briefs among themselves." He tried to make it sound offhand, unimportant, as though being unable to make a living for himself and his family was a small matter.

"But they don't want us!" my friend exploded.

Even the ex-political type protested that this view was too extreme to be just. But my friend stuck to it, insisting with a sick kind of obsession such as something goes with blighted young love, that there was no future for the Indians in Kenya: the Africans did

not want them, and they did not want to integrate with the Africans.

When I got to Kenya I found it was not as my friend had painted it; I found no general hostility on the part of the African. They seemed much too preoccupied with their own affairs, their own problems, to devote more than passing thought to the Indians among them. There were periodic outbursts from individual African politicians against the apparent reluctance of Indians to take up citizenship; I heard gripes of how they tended to keep what they had within the Indian community. And when I raised the matter with Africans I was treated to a multitudinous catalogue of ways in which Indian behaviour rankles, from the tail-tossing snootiness of the majority of Indian women who seem to have been convinced that the only thing in every black man's mind is to rape them to the apparent inability to become reconciled to the fact that you do not patronise people who control political power, or you do so at your own peril.

Often it was the small things that seemed to rankle most. One of the most influential African Senators told a group of Indian intellectuals in my presence: "The thing we don't like about you people, the thing we find hard, is when we invite you to our homes. When you invite us and we go we drink what you drink, we eat what you eat, even though your curries sometimes upset our stomachs afterwards; but when you come to us you've already had your tea if we offer you tea, you've already had your food if we offer you food, your children won't even accept sweets from our children. It is as though you make us the new untouchables in your minds." No-one challenged the Senator's charge.

My good friend Mr. Patel said:

"You never invited me, Senator."

"I will, Patel." Then the Senator caught my eye, read my re-

action and said hurriedly: "Yes, I will, Mr. Patel."

Mr Patel turned twinkling watery eyes on me, making it obvious to all the others, African and Indian, that he **and** I shared a special non-racial conspiracy of understanding. I knew he was cheating because he, too, would, at any moment slip into his private language of race should the need arise.

Another time an Arab friend pointed out two young people to me: an attractive young Indian woman in western dress and a good-looking young African male. They were not together at the time but he told me **they** were lovers. It was a piece of interesting information because **others** had given it an importance he himself could not accept. This young couple, though both Kenyans working in the same organisation, did not get to know each other till they met in Europe. Getting to know each other led to the discovery of a community of interests and, ultimately, to falling in love. In Jamaica that ~~would~~ have been the end of that. In Kenya, even independent Kenya, it was not. I was told by an Arab friend, and it was later confirmed by an Indian journalist, that the young lovers had to meet in secret; the girl was afraid of being seen in public with her boy; she was afraid of her family's reaction and afraid of the impact of Indian public opinion on her family if she were seen with a black boy on the streets of Nairobi.

I was told, and I saw, that Indians practised communal exclusiveness among themselves. I found remnants of the caste system of India more prevalent among the Kenya Indians than among the Indians of my native South Africa. The sub-caste groups such as the Patels and the Shahs were more clan or tribal group names than family names. And the lines were almost as rigidly drawn within the sub-groups of one caste, and between one caste and another, as between the Indians as a group

and the Africans. For instance intermarriage between Indians of different castes is frowned on by the more conservative and orthodox, which means the majority. In the power scheme of things in Kenya until a scant two year ago the Africans were, in caste terms, the lowest of the low, the Untouchables.

In these terms the Europeans were the Brahmins, the aristocrats at the top of the heap; and the caste system can be seen in colour terms because the original Sanskrit word for 'caste' does mean 'colour' and the historical assumption is that the caste system owes its origin to the fair skinned Aryan people who invaded India wishing to preserve their own racial characteristics. So it was easy for Kenya Indians to see the white settlers as the Brahmins of their new homeland. Next in the four original Indian castes there are the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste of soldiers and rulers of whom very few went to Kenya. After the warriors come the ^{or Vaishyas} Vaisyas/- the merchants and traders- of whom my friend Mr. Patel's sub-group is a part, as are the Shahs, the Lahanas and the Oswals. Then there are the Sudras, the artisans and the labourers of whom the Sikhs of Kenya are such outstanding examples. The majority of Kenya's Indians are from the last two castes, the Vaishyas and the Sudras. And as it was in mother India, every Hindu belongs to the caste of his parents and nothing, no accumulation of wealth, no outstanding talent, can alter his caste status. Caste, like a person's colour is something fixed and permanent; and marriage outside a person's caste is forbidden or very severely discouraged.

On a personal and psychological and emotional level the question the new situation poses for the Indians of Kenya is: what do you do when the Untouchables become the rulers of the land? According to the caste system they are still Untouchable, will remain Untouchable no

matter how much power they have. The rub is that the new rulers themselves do not recognise the caste system, are impatient and have no room for it. For me this seemed the really important Indian problem of Kenya in particular and the East African Indians in general. And like all problems of the heart and the spirit and traditional cultural habits, it is a hard one.

It is ironic that the vastly greater Indian population of South Africa - some half a million as against Kenya's close on two-hundred thousand - have, because of the terrible pressure of Apartheid, effectively destroyed their own caste system.

As with tribalism the caste system makes difficult a loyalty greater than that of a man to his own particular in-group, and it is this greater loyalty that the Africans are waiting to see the Indians show.

What makes it particularly difficult for the Indians is that they are expected to make this demonstration at a time when they can see a clear diminution in their political influence and the ending of their special, racial right to certain jobs. They would like some sort of guarantee, some assurance that the future would be allright for them. I found no Indian who had worked it out sufficiently clearly in his own mind to be able to say 'we want this or that guarantee'. On the other hand I found many intelligent and perceptive Indians who said that things would work out in the long run. Even the ex-politician barrister, when I met him later in Nairobi, spoke hopefully of the future, was glad that he had decided to come back, announced proudly to me one day that he had made his decision about citizenship and had sent in his papers. A few weeks later the government Ministry concerned made public that there was such a pile-up of applications for citizenship that there would be some delay in processing them.

So, painfully slowly in some cases, but certainly, the Indians seemed to me to become reconciled to the new scheme of things. For some the 'bone in the throat' is more difficult than for others and it would take time to swallow it and so shed the caste-bred superiorities. But in the end they will become reconciled because this is how it is and this is how it is going to be and it is their homeland. The diehards had gone already, a few more might go, but the majority would remain and help build, as they had done in the past, but on surer foundations. Certainly Kenya needs what they have to give. Perhaps, in time, and if things do not turn sour, a significant Indian contribution might be a powerful infusion of that rare Indian quality of spirituality into what is now a stridently aggressive materialism that seems to have no time for the things of the spirit.

But the factors that can make for things turning sour are there too.

Perhaps the sizeable unemployment problem is the single most important. The hungry and the homeless and the dispossessed are liable with very little help, to turn on the 'stranger within the gate' and attack him as the cause of all their ills. Indians are a minority of high visibility and if Kenya were hit by serious economic difficulties they would make as perfect scapegoats as did the Jews in many countries of Europe in other times. And there are very highly placed politicians, some of them with pretensions at internationalism, who are not above beating up a little anti-Indian prejudice when they think it will pay a little political dividend. I was told of one distinguished Minister who went to see his Indian friend after one such nasty anti-Indian speech and explained that he did not really mean anything he said: it was just one of those things. The trouble is that a series of 'one of those things' can implant anti-Indian

prejudice very deeply in the minds of his semi-literate and not-so-sophisticated audience; and this prejudice can burst into racial ugliness in time of trouble.

But on the whole I found the situation of the Indians in Kenya a deal more hopeful than my friend in London had led me to expect. The government of Kenya has made it abundantly clear that all citizens of Kenya enjoyed all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of such citizenship. The bias in public service appointments was an administrative device to ensure that the service reflected more accurately than hitherto the true face of the nation. Beyond that I found no discrimination, publicly or privately against Indians or against whites.

Indeed, I think the whites who remained after the change were more than a little startled at how pleasant life turned out for them. There were many pointers to what they seemed to have expected. I spent an evening with a young Indian couple, a journalist and his wife who had earned her degree in a university in India though she was born and grew up in East Africa. Their small cut stone bungalow stood on an acre of land off the Ngong Road, one of the main highways in and out of Nairobi. It was a beautiful little house; the kind an aging civil servant and his wife dream of moving into when retirement comes and the children have grown up and married and gone away; the kind that an elderly woman could run without servants and without too much effort. There was evidence of a once beautiful garden on which much time and love had been lavished, and which looked all the more forlorn because of that. And as with some houses, this one gave off a distinct feel, mood, atmosphere: the feel was of a place of resigned quietude. I found myself submitting to a pervasive somnolence on each of my visits.

My friends, the young Indian couple, had moved in very recently and they had not yet had a chance to impress their own distinctive youthful presence on the place. Indeed, I gathered that they only half lived there. They were very well-to-do and their real home still seemed to be the rooms they occupied in the sprawling house of the husband's parents. They had bought this little house, because it had been a fantastic bargain, at an auction sale: the young man had got it for a sum in the region of £1,500.

I had asked curiously whether my friend knew anything about the former owner.

He had answered casually - a sort of verbal pause between showing off his fine new toy - "I think it was an old lady; they said she went to Australia. But you could pick up better bargains than this two years ago I'll show you a place.....?"

My heart went out to the old lady, wherever she was.

I came across many other such fantastic 'bargains' in what had once been exclusively white suburban Nairobi. Among others, the South African ^{writer}waiter, Ezekiel Mphahlele, currently director of a Congress for Cultural Freedom centre located in Nairobi, had 'picked' up for a fraction of what it is ^aworth, a sprawling double-story house in spacious grounds and with one of the most beautiful fireplaces I have seen away from the stately homes of England'. Another bargain finder was veteran British Journalist and by now old Africa hand Tom Hopkinson, who had moved up from South Africa where he had once edited DRUM magazine and now headed the Africa Journalists' Training Scheme for the International Press Institute. Mr. Hopkins told me that he felt happier, more secure, as a white man in an African-run Kenya than he had felt in South Africa with its white government.

Perversely, and feeling like a reactionary, I found myself more concerned, more saddened than I had thought possible, over the fate of the defeated settlers who had either hated or feared or else had so little faith in the humanity and sense of humanity of their black fellow countrymen that they had uprooted their lives and sold up ~~their~~ homes at give-away prices. Perhaps it was my reluctance to face up to one of the most fearful realities of prejudice: that it can, given the right breeding ground, go so deep and grow so strong that in the end its victims would destroy themselves rather than abandon their prejudices. Whatever the reason, I found myself a deal more compassionately involved in the fate of the white settlers. As the strutting lords of the earth I had met that other time they had engaged only my resentment, brought out only the meanest in me. Now I could speculate about them as human beings whose private tragedies stemmed from one of the greatest and most stupid public tragedies we humans have ever brought on ourselves.

In arithmetical terms the numbers of these private tragedies were small compared to the 'private tragedies' the African had experienced in the engagement. In 1952 the most reliable population figures were those of the 1948 census. This showed a European population of 29,660. By the time the 1962 census was taken the Europeans stood at 49,000. The most reliable official estimate of the number of Europeans in the colony in 1952 was the figure of 35,000. About half of this number lived in Nairobi. True, the old days of the Happy Valley crowd had gone. The wild, wife swapping parties were over; the hard drinking had toned down considerably; Nairobi had become less of 'A place in the sun for shady people'. but not all the 'hell' had gone out of it in 1952. So, in spite of disturbing talk about secret

ceremonies and oath-taking among the Kikuyu, the close on 20,000 white residents of Nairobi seemed to me to be having a pretty good time that year.

Life had been rather different for the farming half of the settlers population: harsher, more of a gamble, greater personal and material insecurity and, of course, lonelier. But even there the compensations were great, greater than most farmers enjoyed back in Britain. The land was cool and beautiful and the man with a mind to do so could carve out for himself an empire of a thousand, two thousand, three thousand acres. He was free from the fiddling form-filling associated with farming in Britain, free too of the terrible burden of British taxation, and he had available to him an apparently inexhaustible supply of cheap labour. Where he paid in cash for his labour wages ranged from between thirty-five shillings to fifty shillings per month. More often he allowed landless Africans to squat and cultivate small strips of land on condition that they work on his farm. Some of these squatters' 'contracts' gave the farmer the right to demand not only the labour of the African male squatter but of his wife and children as well. And of course, if the African squatter, or his family, received as much as a penny from the farmer it was out of the goodness of the farmer's heart.

As long ago as the late 1930s the practice of using squatter labour - which was in fact a form of peonage - had become such an integral part of Kenya farming that 20% of all settler farms on the White Highlands were occupied by African squatters.

A logical by-product of this was to give the settler with his

sprawling farm a vested interest in a large landless black peasantry. And so it was that with vast stretches of the White Highlands not fully used the settlers continued to press for more land to be set aside for exclusive European use. By the time of my first visit in 1952 the Colonial Government had 'alienated' for European settlement a total of 7,372,880 acres. 5% of this was described as uncultivable and 207,987 as not yet allocated. This left a balance of cultivable and allocated land of seven million acres. And in 1952 there were only about 3,000 Europeans who actually farmed in the White Highlands. This gives us an average land holding of 2,500 acres per settler farmer. But of the more than seven million acres only a little in excess of one million acres were actually under crop, the rest, over six million acres, were officially described as grazing. And stock farming represented only 12.9% of agricultural production in the White Highlands at the time the assumption must be that the major portion of six million acres set aside for 'grazing' were just not utilized.

It was after I had discovered these facts that I broadcast early in August of 1962, just under two months before the outbreak of the Mau Mau troubles, a warning that those troubles were in 1965, I found that about 2,000 white settlers had been bought out by Kenya Government with money provided by the British Government and something in excess of another 1,000 were just waiting for the availability of more money to sell out too. The Government has set a Central Land Board whose business it is to buy out these settler lands. In the year 1963/64 this Board bought up to 295 farms comprising a total acreage of 307,274 acres for £3,521,968 which is the equivalent of £11.46 per acre. Currently negotiations are going on in London between the British and the Kenya governments over a loan

to finance the buying out of the remaining settlers who want to leave. Some people, parliamentary backbenchers among them, feel strongly that the prices paid to the settlers are excessive. If it is recalled that the settlers originally got the farms for as little as one penny per acre these charges assume some validity. So far, because of the location of the bought out farms the landless among the Kikuyu have benefited most, which has caused a measure of resentment among other land-hungry tribes.

Two stories dramatised for me the often contradictory attitudes towards the whites as well as the contradictory position of some of those whites in the country. Both stories came out of matters raised in parliament. In the first there were questions about a white settler who had sold his farm to the government at a handsome figure and who had then stayed on at the farm as an 'adviser', living in the same house and behaving precisely as he had done when had been owner of the house. This, I was told by a Senator, was not an isolated case; there were others like it. I think the settlers who can enter into arrangements of this type will not have to be persuaded not to leave the country. Uhuru, in their cases, is very profitable business. Ironically they are employed in large numbers in the department that settler Africans on the bought land.

The kernel of the second story was a motion that came before parliament on the 30th July, 1965 and that was resumed on the 17th September 1965. The motion read:

That this House urges the Government as a positive measure against the Apartheid Policy, to introduce an amendment of the Constitution which will allow confiscation of all immovable assets in Kenya belong-

ing ing to nationals of the Republic of South Africa.

One backbencher speaking to the motion said there were scores of refugees from South Africa in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and other territories. These were people in need, black South African victims of Apartheid, and the ends of justice would be served if the proceeds from the confiscated property were used to aid these people. Others talked about the Kenyan African taxyear being forced to subsidise racialists whose sole purpose was to further the evil doctrine of Apartheid. Another recited the details of how a white South African hotelier operating in the country had refused service to Kenyatta on the eve of his becoming Prime Minister of the country. This particular gentleman had now left the country and gone back to the South Africa. But he still had his holdings in Kenya from which money was being remitted to him, thus financing, the speaker insisted, the Apartheid policy.

The Attorney-General, the government spokesman, son of a chief and British trained Barrister, said the government could not behave like thugs or thieves by taking away people's property. If there were instances of white South Africans in Kenya perpetuating racialism and the ideas of Apartheid members were to bring it to the attention of the government and action would be taken against such people. For this there was no need to change the constitution.

The backbenchers were not happy and some used very strong language to show their displeasure.

Oddly enough - and this was brought to my notice by a white South

African enemy of Apartheid passing through Nairobi at the time - neither the government spokesman nor the supporters of the motion seemed to know that in South Africa itself no African, native-born or outsider, could own freehold property.

So, all in all, things had not turned out as badly as they might have for the settlers. Of course it was nothing like the 'good old days', but then they are gone forever.

The young civil servant who extended my visitors' permit summed it up quietly for me. "Let me be honest with you: I would have fought against it ('it' being the change) five years ago, just as the other Europeans did. I was as strongly against it as they were. Now I must admit that it is right; the best thing that could have happened. I think we'll be allright now. I think you'll find that things are going to work".

We talked on easily, without restraint or inhibition. In the other corner of the little office was an African who shared the room with the young white man. He was immersed in his work; but every now and then he got so interested in our talk that he paused and looked up to listen. A private little smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. He was watchful, relaxed, completely at ease. I wondered whether these two, the black Kenyan and the white, working together in the same room, had reached the point where they could really talk to each other about those things of the mind that have to be brought out into the open before it would really be 'all-right now'.

I left them feeling they had not yet reached that point, largely because the young African had not joined our conversation much as I had tried to obliquely tease him out of his silence. But they

were working in the same room and that was quite a beginning.

When I left the city to look at the countryside, it was like going back in time. There were changes, of course a new power pylon here, a new cluster of huts there, what had been forest then was now cleared and cultivated land in one spot; but these were largely superficial, like a mild rash on a familiar face. In the main it was as it had been when I had last seen it: the great difference was that the White Highlands, the most fertile land in all the country, were no longer 'reserved for Europeans only', no longer 'White'.

You have to see this land, to see its beauty and its life-giving richness; you have to stand on a crest and watch the rolling plains sweep away to the misty distances of space; you have to breathe in the sweet fragrant highland air to begin to understand why the settlers fought so savagely to hold on to this land and why a single, poorly equipped African tribe could take on the settlers and the might of British arms, fight them to a standstill in one of the most incredible wars Africa has ever known, and win the land. The outbreak known as the Mau Mau, the war in which the Kikuyu lost ten thousand dead and a hundred thousand were rendered homeless and made political prisoners, was a war fought over possession of 13,000 square miles of this land; for whoever controlled this most pleasant and best watered piece of Kenya, controlled all of it. This was the heart of it. And it was logical that the Kikuyu should be the tribe to make a fight for it. It had all been their land. As far as they were concerned this was not a matter of dispute. They had been found on this land and they had been dispossessed of it, crowded into a small corner of it to such an extent that by 1952 population density in the

then Kikuyu reserve was in excess of 600 persons to the square mile: this would not be bad in an industrialised area, in a peasant agricultural area it was impossible. There were two alternatives: give in and submit to being moved from this beautiful land to the semi-desert area the government had already marked out in the arid north and named Yatta B1 and Yatta B2 (to which the Kikuyu leaders had themselves taken me in 1952), or else fight. If the Kikuyu had given in the chances are that Kenya would have become like South Africa - it was well on the way there in 1952 - and the history of East and Central Africa would have been different from what it is today. The Kikuyu decided to fight. The Emergency - as the colonial government called the war - began on the 20th October 1952 and lasted until January 1960.

In purely military terms it was a small operation fought out in one of the smallest Provinces of the country (the Provinces have now been named Regions. The Central Province - where Kikuyu country and white settler country bordered on each other - occupied a mere 5,000 odd square miles out of a total land area of 225,000 square miles. The war for Kenya was fought out in this comparatively small area between the one and a half million Kikuyu tribesmen and their wives and children (with active assistance from their close tribal cousins the Embu and Meru of the neighbouring Eastern Province) on the one hand and the white settlers backed by the British military on the other. However much other tribes in other parts of the country may have sympathised - and the more than a million strong Luo tribe certainly did more than just sympathise - the Kikuyu fought the war. People who lived in the other parts of the country, especially the people of the large Coastal Region, were as remote from the bloody goings-on in Nairobi and the Central Region as those of us who at the time read about them from afar.

For me one of the really striking things about the Mau Mau was its corporatenees. Within a month of the declaration of the Emergency all the known political leaders of the Kikuyu were locked up, not only the people at the top, those at the district and village level too. And yet the leaderless Kikuyu maintained a discipline and displayed a political sophistication under the kind of pressure few of the so-called more advanced nations had been able to withstand.

The British did not only fight the Kikuyu militarily, they assaulted them with all the weapons of modern psychology. They used the techniques of 'brainwashing' on a massive scale - here of course, since we were using these methods we used safe words such as 'rehabilitation' to describe them, much as the Chinese used 'self-cultivation' to describe their brainwashing methods. I had been told and I had read much of Kikuyu atrocities. Now, moving through the beautiful country, I heard from some of the victims themselves of some of the atrocities perpetrated on the Kikuyu.

It was hard to make people remember and talk, and they certainly would not have done so had I not been with some one well known and trusted. Even then it required great effort to talk; and when they did they did so quickly and briefly, anxious to get it over with and go on to more pleasant things. There is not much sense in setting down ugly details for their shock impact. Straight physical brutality - and there was enough of it - was the smallest in a world of ugly experiences: some of the refinements used in the assaults on the mind and of the person's sense of dignity were really shocking. After hearing the experiences of a few people, I too found myself not wanting to know any more. It made me understand the general Kikuyu desire to forget details, to behave as though the day-to-day events of the years

between 1952 and 1960 were a nightmare rather than the stuff of the world of waking men.

One young man whom I had met as a student of one of Kenyatta's more than 200 Kikuyu Independent Schools when I was there in 1952, met me in the bar of a once-exclusively white country club. He was a leading Senator now. Over beer he remembered, glossing quickly over the details, now he had grown to manhood, first in the forests, then in the detention camps. When I pressed him for details he turned eyes suddenly gone bloodshot on me: "We don't want to remember too much; if we remember everything we will want to go out and start killing."

And when the old man behind the bar said "it is best to forget." I abandoned my probing.

But the knowledge of common suffering, and of victory won, has given the mass of the Kikuyu a pride and confidence that is something beautiful to behold; and it is something that is not limited. From the nameless Kikuyu porter who carried my cases, to the taxi-driver who showed me the town, to the little jack-of-all-works named Peter at my first, very pukka British gone-to seed hotele, to the jovial waiter Kiriuki who served my meals under Mr. Patel's supervision and tiny forty-one-year old Bothe (father of five and whose body still bears the marks of childhood rickets) who was my 'room servant', to the doctors, civil servants, parliamentarians, there was this pride and confidence. 'Town Girls' - the local name for the prostitutes who work the budding night clubs of Nairobi. The girls who had been in the forest, or who had been couriers, were a breed apart from the others, the Somalis and the girls from the coast: they were more serious, more dignified, more reserved. I suspect they traded more than a little

on the fact that they had been in the battle. But in the main there was nothing cocky about this pride and confidence.

Such cockiness and arrogance as I found came largely from the new class of Africans who were emerging as the replacements of the former top echelon white civil servants, and inevitably, I found a fair amount of drunk-with-power pomposity in a few top politicians. But there was surprisingly little of this, much less than could reasonably be expected from men relatively new to the glories of political power.

The Kikuyu, then is the tribe that fought and won the war for Kenya's independence. It is the liberator-tribe. It is an accepted fact for all the more than forty tribes of Kenya. Not everyone is happy with this fact. Again and Again some bright and gifted person who was not Kikuyu made clear to me his feeling that, all else being equal, being Kikuyu conferred distinct advantages in the competition for preferment in business or the public service. But however unhappy, I encountered no one who either questioned openly or challenged directly the present Kikuyu hegemony. Periodically, however, signs of latent discontentment spilled over. When I was there the principal Luo tribal association (it is not called a political party because Kenya is a one-party state and the only political party in the country is the governing Kenya African National Union) held a much publicised meeting in Nairobi. Two of the three Luo Ministers in the Kikuyu dominated government were quick to dissociate themselves from any possible tribal attitudes that might come out of the meeting planning and development Minister Mr. Tom Mboya, one of the ablest and most experienced of Kenya's politicians, and himself a Luo, was the first to dissociate himself from the upcoming meeting and to denounce tribalism. It was both easy and wise for Mr. Mboya to take this stance. His parliamentary

seat is Central Nairobi with a mixed Indian and Multi-tribal African electorate. Unlike the other two, Vice President Oginga Odinga and Information Minister Achieng Oneko, he had no tribal base to fall back on. The source of Mr. Odinga's power and influence in the Government and the country, and to ~~and to~~ a lesser extent Mr. Oneko's is the tough, tightly-knit brainy Luo tribe that had to fight all comers to carve for itself a home on the shores of Lake Victoria in the distant days of the great African migrations when they came to Kenya from the Sudan by way of the Nile Valley. Today they are the second largest tribe in Kenya - 1,148,000 to the Kikuyu's 1,642,000. There are two other tribes - the Kambaa numbering close on a million and the Abaluhya numbering a million and eighty-thousand - who could have become the Kikuyu's political partners. The Luo did because they are most like the Kikuyu in certain very important respects: they are as toughminded as the Kikuyu, as intellegent, as politically ambitious, as sophisticated, as cohesive. I think they are the only other Kenya tribe who would have performed as well against the settlers as did the Kikuyu. I think it is recognition of this - one strong man recognising another - that has led to the Luo-Kikuyu political partnership.

I am not suggesting that this is a relationship thought out, or worked out in tribal terms. But however non-tribal the ideas of the leaders might be, this is how it has worked out, this is how it is. However much the leaders may wish to function only as nationalists at the national level the needs and pressures from those behind them often compel actions and attitudes that are seen in tribal terms. When one prominent member of Parliment told the press club in Nairobi in September that there could be no real unity in the country unless there was an end to the favouritism that makes a man give a job to a fellow tribesman, he

was saying in public what was more often, and more generally said in private.

It seemed to me that the government tried very hard not to act tribally. But if you are the M.P. for a Kikuyu constituency, and you are the Minister who controls the spending of money or the building of houses and schools, the pressures of your electorate and your other friends who represent Kikuyu constituencies and who speak the same language and who have been through the same struggle, all this will make it very difficult for you to deny your own when there is not enough to go round for everyone. There is not enough land to go round for every one, there are not enough jobs, not enough homes, schools. Sharing out what there is in such a way as to avoid charges of tribal discrimination becomes a difficult and delicate problem. The temptation, often, is simply to do the best you can: to take care of your own kind, those on whom you depend for power. Some of this has come into play.

It seemed to me the greatest danger for the future would be if the relatively modest economic expectations of the people were to be unfulfilled to the point where they abandoned hope.

At present, they are still living in the afterglow of the victory that brought them freedom. Wages are still abysmally low. Male adult agricultural workers and they are still the majority of workers, earn between £3 and £3.10.0 per month, with housing. The employer may deduct not more than 5/- a month for every half acre of land he allows the worker to cultivate for his own use: female workers get between £2 and £2.6.6; males under eighteen get between £1.16.0 and £2.2.0. and females between £1.4.0 and £1.8.0. All these are monthly wages which include housing of some kind, often the most primitive imaginable. But low as it is, it is a dramatic improvement on the recent past.

Monthly wages for workers in town often average two or three times those of agricultural workers, with £10 a month as a sort of crude norm for the majority of casual workers. Of course in town there is no house with the job, however primitive; rents are higher than in the country and food costs more.

One day as I sat in the dining room planning my long safari that would cover the best part of 2,000 miles of East Africa, one of the waiters paused at my table to see if I wanted anything. On his tray were half a dozen empties of a very popular beer and as many glasses out of which spirits had been drunk. In addition there was a 100 shilling note, a little damp and stained by the spilled liquor.

"Some party," I said. It was very early evening, not yet five.

"Government people," he said. Then he looked at the damp note. "One man buying and I have to work a month to make this money."

I discovered later that he had exaggerated somewhat. He earned 180/- a month. But his point was valid. They were not judging their present conditions only by bleak memories of the recent past. They were also using the standards of living of their more affluent brothers. And these are the dangerous yardsticks.

My travelling companion on Safari was a young Scot, an itinerant journalist determined to see as much of the world as possible before settling down to a steady job in one place. He had, he told me, trudged through my native South Africa, done a stint with a paper in Rhodesia, and he was now coming to the end of the line as far as his Nairobi paper was concerned. He had a couple of weeks of holiday time coming to him and he liked the idea of making the trip. He was an odd young man, ^{tall,} athletically inclined and moving with the loping gait of a lean and hungry leopard on the prowl; he tended to be round-shouldered, short-sighted (I became convinced during our journey that his prescription glasses had ceased to be of much use and I aggravated him gravely by telling him so), opinionated, argumentative, mulish, warm-hearted, idealistic and fantastically subjective and emotional in his judgement of people. He was convinced that the main interest of the man who was then his boss was to frustrate him, and he consequently resented and denounced his boss with passionate fervour. There was a streak of child-like innocence about him that made it difficult to believe that he was in fact a young man of twenty-seven. His shrewd news-editor summed him up: "Bill is mad." ~~But~~ He said it as an explanatory fact, but he said it affectionately. Bill was also an able young journalist, wrote well, and was interested in people. We had met when his paper had asked him to interview me and we had got to know something of each other in the still comparatively sacred portals of the New Stanley Hotel.

I had tried to hire a small car but the rates and terms were so ridiculous that I gave it up. The best terms I could get, and the car hire operator made it plain he would be doing me a favour and losing on the deal, was to get a car for ~~£75~~ £75, provided of course I did no more than 2,000 miles. This did not include gas, or anything else, just

the car. And the man was in fact offering me a bargain - Nairobi style - because the ~~standard~~ rate of so much per mile would have brought the cost up to £100 provided always I did not exceed 2,000 miles. Elsewhere, in other countries, I had been able to hire a car on a weekly basis at fees ranging from between £10 to £20 per week. The Nairobi car operators, it seem, have entered into a gentleman's agreement to streamline their car hire rates at a level that is bound to limit the expansion of the country's tourist industry. Kenya is a long way from the United States; air fares alone costs the tourist close on £500. If, on top of this, internal transport costs remain as unreasonably high as at present, compared with other tourist centres, only the very rich will be able to afford the glories Kenya undoubtedly has to offer the tourist. The trouble is there are only a limited number of the very rich. Those concerned with promoting Kenya's tourism may learn the hard way, as have the tourist industries in other countries, that the principle of the 'clip', of squeezing the visitor, is a thing of diminishing returns.

In the end a South African couple, Eve and Tony Hall, (she had done a stint in a South African jail as one of the young/^{white}enemies of Apartheid) came to the rescue by lending us their little Volkswagon.

On a clear, sunny morning we set out for Mombasa and the coast. We took the old traditional road that runs parallel to the railway line. It was by this road, or, rather, by this railway line, that the opening up of the country and the creation of modern Kenya had been effected. Back in the 1880s, two decades after the opening of the Suez Canal, the Imperial British East Africa Company was trading briskly with the Arabs at such coastal centres as Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and the spice islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. Naturally, they turned their eyes inland, but not to Kenya. No such entity existed.

They looked instead further inland, across Lake Victoria, to the Uganda with its well-established kingdoms and traditional systems of government. These ambitious, enterprising British merchants dreamed of a vast trading complex that would one day link South, Central and East Africa for the benefit of British exploitation. It soon became clear that by itself the Company did not have the resources to translate the dream into reality. But the Foreign Office showed no interest in East Africa until Germany made its bid for a foothold in that part of Africa. So it was to prevent the Germans from grabbing them that Britain, in 1895, made what is now Kenya, and Uganda part of the British Empire. At the same time Britain decided to build a rail link between the coast and Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. It was to work on this railway line that over 30,000 Indians were first imported. These were the ancestors of today's East African Indian community. It took the best part of four years and thousands of lives to lay the 307 miles of line between Mombasa and Nairobi.

Nairobi became the capital of the country because the men laying the line stopped there for a break in their Herculean drive to the great lake. The original plan was to go on further, but since they stopped and since where they stopped turned out cool and pleasant, a camp grew up: in time it became the city and the capital. The country, itself as much a creation of the railway as is its capital city, had no official name until it was made a Crown Colony in 1920.

The road was wider and better than I remembered it, with much longer stretches of tarmac than in the old days; but of course it was the oldest and one of the best of Kenya's arterial roads. Some of the names at the little railway sidings stirred memories of earlier speculations. I had been intrigued that a siding should be named

Sultan Hamud; I had speculated endlessly then on who he might have been and why he had been so honoured. Had he been a kind of John Henry? Performed some heroic feat that had compelled such admiration that his white masters had to immortalise his name on the spot? Or had the village predated the coming of the railway with the name a dreadful memorial of a notorious slaver? Now, more than a decade later, these speculations were still there.

Every now and then the road and the railway line parted company, so that for long stretches we could not see the line. The first such parting was near Machakos in Kamba country. And it made me realise anew how terribly poor this land really ^{is} ~~was~~ once you leave the highlands. This was arid land; not quite semi-desert but not far from it; and more than half of all Kenya was like this. Machakos was then in the grip of a famine that hit the nations headlines a few weeks later, when politicians first protested that no such thing existed, the Provincial Administrator talking threateningly of expelling the 'interfering' white man who had brought the situation to public notice, and then backing an appeal for public subscriptions to a relief fund. When the government finally admitted the existence of such a state it was possible for the United States, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ghana and others to send help. Had the 'interfering' white man not brought the plight of the people of Machakos into the open the requirements of 'face' might have led to suppression of the facts and a long period of further and unnecessary suffering for those people.

Those people - and there were many - who thought that political freedom would bring in its train, almost as a matter of course, better economic conditions have been proven wrong. Coping with the problems of poverty is going to be a longer and more difficult job.

If in these circumstances African leaders give in to the temptation to suppress unpleasant truths and put on the kind of lavish and costly show that has become all too common when they go abroad they are likely to make even more difficult what would, under the very best circumstance be an extraordinarily tough job.

A little outside Machakos, on a wide, dusty/dirt stretch of dirt road, a police ~~car~~ car came hurtling towards us at a speed that must have been in the region of sixty miles an hour. Its sirens were full on and it was a cloud of red just in the middle of the road. A truck ahead of us had pulled to the side of the road and come to a halt. I slowed down and pulled to the side to avoid this mad police car. As the car came abreast it swung towards us and a policeman waved his arm. Immediately behind the police car was another one, travelling at the same high speed, raising the same cloud of dust. This one screeched to a stop a little beyond us, reversed until it was alongside, and a hot-eyed young man demand^d angrily why I had not pulled to the side at once when I saw the police car. The young fellow's manner was rude and arrogant but by then I had realised that this must be the advance guard of the Presidential party, those who went before to clear the way, and such servants, especially in Africa, tend to be more arrogant than their masters, so I said meekly I'm sorry I didn't realise that this was what I was supposed to do.

"President's car is coming!" the young fellow snapped as their car screeched away.

A little later the Presidential limousine came hurtling by at high speed in another cloud of dust.

The Old Man had left for a holiday on the coast a few days after my arrival. He was now on his way back to Nairobi where a procession and an elaborate reception awaited him so they had to make haste to

be on time. And this is how it was now whenever the President travelled All the world that was on the road where he passed had to move out of the way and come to a stop. On the three or four days of the week when he travelled between his private home outside Nairobi to State House where, I was told, he refused to spend a night or to his office, all the traffic came to a stop along his route, coming and going.

Young Bill, my companion, was beside himself with rage, not because we had been stopped but because of the shocking arrogance displayed by the Presidential advance guard. I tried to persuade him that it would take time for such things to pass. This was how the whites had dealt with the Africans in the old days - and that was no more than two or three years back: to see a little of this in the Africans now should not be unexpected; this was, after all, how you showed, outwardly and visibly for all to see, your power and your importance. It is one of the uglier legacies, one of the least pleasant examples, Bwana left behind. But Bill was not satisfied, he still expected the African to be better than his teacher had been.

On this note of disagreement we went on, speeding down the long African road hour after hour. It seemed unending, and there was no indication that we were descending from well over 5,000 feet. In the early afternoon we entered the Tsavo National Park area and the presence of animals roaming free near and on the road made us slow down. Later we stopped for a snack lunch at a roadside club in a green place of great beauty. Taste and artistry had gone into ensuring that bar, restaurant and all other buildings blended with the natural surround: the result made the natural little lake with its crystal blue water the tranquilising pivot of this resting place in the great game reserve.

Like all such places this club had once been exclusively European

and now my presence seemed to inhibit a young couple. Gregariously, Bill tried to strike up a conversation with the man. The pair hurried out to the lake and Bill and I pretended nothing had happened, but I felt bad about having driven them away. Then a young man returned from the toilet to his nearly finished beer. I got worried when Bill again tried to start a conversation. The man was obviously reluctant; but Bill was persistent. The poor man was forced into conversation. He was on his way from Mombasa to Nairobi. He worked on the docks at Mombasa but his job was being Africanised and it was just a matter of time before he would have to get out.

Couldn't he stay? I asked: didn't he want to?

How long had he been in Kenya, Bill wanted to know.

Nearly/^{half}~~xxx~~ his life, it transpired. He was, I guessed, in his thirties now: from what he said he had been in Kenya not far off twenty years. He didn't want to leave the country. It was home. He owned a little house on the coast, a few miles out of Mombasa. But if you can't work you can't stay. So he was resigned to having to sell the house when the job came to an end. It was a small house but on a stretch of beautiful sandy beach. An African or an Indian, I can't remember which, anticipating the day of his departure had made him a ridiculously low offer. He did not quite succeed in hiding the bitterness he felt. He seemed a nice man. He had described himself as a docker but that was not the same thing as being a docker in Britain or America: in Mombasa, by virtue of the way he looked he would not be one of those handling cargo, he would be giving orders to those who did that. And because this was no special, needed, skill, he, like young Bushan at my hotel in Nairbobi could be pushed aside in favour of an African who could do the job.

He would be back on the coast in a couple of days; if we were still

in Mombasa when he got back would we drop by his little house for a drink. We said yes. We all three knew that this was polite fiction, that we^x were most unlikely to meet again, but we went through the form all the same. Then he took the road up to Nairobi, an apprehensive young white man, decent and human, caught in a cycle of history that he seemed not to understand. We took the road down to the coast, and it seemed longer and more unending. And always, whenever we passed through places inhabited by men, the changes that had^{been}/so dramatically and startlingly apparent in Nairobi and its surrounds, seemed not to have reached here. The signs of poverty lay heavy on the people and on the land. This was very much the old Africa. The political 'wind of change' had not yet stirred stirred up a corresponding economic and cultural and educational wind of change. How could it? That was the less dramatic, less glory-filled, much harder and longer job that is going to challenge the skills, the gifts, the dedication of African leadership for one, two, three, decades to come. But the political thing had to come first.

We hit Mombasa at nightfall, had trouble finding a hotel (Mr. Patel's advance arrangement for us had broken down) and ended up in one run by a Scot. It had once been quite an hotel, now it was only a reminder of that fact. It seemed to me that this particular Scot had not been as canny as the men of his race are supposed to be: he had held on to his investment too long.

Next morning it rained, and the sun shone. The ^{new} town did not interest me. It was a smaller, less attractive version of Nairobi. As I recalled last time it had been an essentially Arab-Indian town with the Europeans at the top. Now it[^]was an Arab-Indian-African town, with political power in African hands. The mayor of Mombasa, whom I had met in Nairobi was a Moslem African. The Arabs had made the adjustment to the new politcal

set up without the terrible dislocation experienced by the white settlers or the emotional ~~an~~xiety of the Indians. They had taken it in stride, accepting easily the emergence of the Africans as the new masters of all East Africa. Once they had been the rulers of these coastal areas and off-shore islands. Mombasa, the spice islands of Pemba and Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam had all been centres of Arab power. From these centres they had gone inland to subdue the tribes, capture their slaves. And because colour had no special significance for them, or race, there was a considerable ~~amount of~~ Arab-African racial/^{mixing} ~~mixture~~ down the centuries. This is perhaps the main reason for their philosophic acceptance of the change. Another reason is that Arab power at the coast has been slowly diminishing ~~extremely~~ over a long period of time: when the British came they lost a great deal of political then the Indian trader came and made great inroads into their economic power. Having learned to adjust themselves to these, it was relatively easy to adjust to this latest. And so, of all the minority groups the Arabs struck me as not at all worried about today or afraid for the future.

Later we went down to the old Arab town, a place that goes back to ~~antiquity~~ antiquity, and whose ~~street~~ narrow streets had echoed to the footfalls of ancient Egyptian, Phoenician, Chinese, Roman, Persian, and Indian traders in the dim and distant past of three thousand years ago and more. The port is one of the most protected and the buildings of the old town, grey with time, go right up to the water's edge, and below us, as they must have done a thousand, two thousand and more years ago, the dhows rode the calm water. On board one a sailor could be seen doing his laundry. A queer fellow. For as little as a shilling an Indian would wash and iron and return a spotless shirt the same day (though Bill and I had to go chasing to find our Indian laundry

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man before our departure next morning! He had just been so busy drumming up trade that he had decided return out laundry could wait till later though he knew we were leaving that morning).

It was well over twenty years since I had last been in the old Arab town. I had been very young, working on a ship, and there had been a pretty Arab girl, so pretty that I had wanted leave my ship and stay. I remember a roly-poly South African 'Cape boy' working in the galley warning me that everything would be fine until the money ran out, then the girl would throw me out, the Askaris would pick me up and I would be deported back to South Africa. He made it very vivid and very graphic so I decided not to stay. Now, remembering all this with that tinge of nostalgia we always infuse into such memories, I was inclined to linger in the old town. A tiny moment of my youth was buried there forever.

Next morning we took the coast road to Tanzania. The land through which we travelled now was lushly tropical, steamy, more akin to the Africa of the Tarzan stories. And here, on the coast ~~road~~, the rain turned the road into a treacherous mudpath through which we slithered dangerously. At one particularly nasty stretch, approaching a place called Lungalunga on the Kenya-Tanzania border, I got stuck in the mud. It took a great deal of heaving and shoving by Bill before we were free. Then the rain came down as a blinding sheet. And so it took us the whole day to travel the one hundred and twenty-three miles between Mombasa and the beautiful and quiet seaport town of Tanga at the northern end of the Tanzanian coast. The transition from Kenya to Tanzania was unnoticable in racial or economic or geographic terms. The people were the same, the terrain the same. Only the border posts told us of the difference. But then we did begin to notice a difference; two differences in fact. The Tanzanian stretch of the road seemed better, and the villages seemed more lively. Each village had as its

focal point a Tanganyika African National Union office, this 'Union' is really the country's ruling political party. I did not see a single village through which we drove that did not have its T.A.N.U. branch, which is not to say there are none. What was clear and certain was that politics here was more the business of the ordinary people at the village level than it was in Kenya. Of course it was election year in Tanzania and not in Kenya but I got the impression that T.A.N.U. was very much more of a grassroots political organisation, that activity was very strong and very important at the branch level.

What I found particularly pleasing about my time in Tanzania was the discovery of how far it had gone from tribal to national politics. It is fortunate in that it does not have such massive tribes as are found in Kenya. There are of course the Chagga, perhaps the best known among the larger tribes, and the more than a million strong Sukuma, but the remainder of the 120-odd tribes are relatively small and neither leaders nor the people now think of politics and political power in tribal terms. This is a fortunate accident of history, and ^{the} policies and attitudes of Julius Nyerere and his fellow T.A.N.U. leaders have transformed this happy accident into what is perhaps the most democratic and forward looking mass political party in that part of the world, if not in the whole of Africa.

Tanzania is a poor country. Its per capita income today is £19. 6. The average life expectation of its people is from 35 to 40 years. It has a Five Year Development Plan with three clearly stated main objectives to be achieved by 1980.

First, to raise the per capita income from £19.6 to £45:

Second, to be fully self-sufficient in trained manpower needs.

Third, to raise the present life expectation of from 35 to 40 years to an expectation of 50 years.

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To my knowledge Nyerere is the only one among the African leaders who has acknowledged the reality of African poverty without any double-talk and who has faced up to its challenges. He was the one who had the courage to say, as far back as 1962, "Our people have expected much from independence which it is impossible to give them." And then earned the right to add, by taking the hard road of refusing to be anybody's satrap: "But I am determined that they will get one thing and that is personal respect".

This was the man I had come all the way to Dar es Salaam to see. I had not written for an appointment. If he was there I knew he would see me, unless he had changed beyond all recognition and I did not think he had so I had driven the best part of a thousand^{miles}/ reasonably certain that I would see him.

Dar es Salaam is perhaps the most African of the capital cities outside West Africa. Most of the others have been built by and for the Europeans. Dar es Salaam has a warm, steamy tropical African pace and tempo all its own. A few lavish new buildings have gone up, and knowing it is reactionary to feel like this, I still did not like them. But I liked the town with its old buildings and feel of intimacy and unashamed and honest poverty and the fact that I met no beggars on the street.

An old friend from our London days, Joan Wicken, private secretary to the President, picked me up at my hotel and drove me out to the President's private home out on the seafront some distance from the town.

As we approached the great gates a guard came out with two watchdogs and walked away from us. We paused at the entrance while Joan identified herself then we drove to the largish unostentatious two-storey house. We had hardly been there a minute when Nyerere appeared, welcomed me

with warm laughter, led to the chair that was obviously the one he normally used and pushed me into it.

Then we talked. We talked about old friends, about Pan-Africanism, about the vast multitude of problems that will have to be dealt with before we finally fashion the Africa of our hearts' desires.

I knew he was unhappy about East African Federation. The prospects of the Federation of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda had seemed so bright in 1963. Now, in 1965 they were in process of dismantling the common currency and the Customs Union was in danger; so I touched only briefly on that subject and was careful not to press him.

And then we got on to the problem which seems to me central to the nature of the future development of these poor African countries. I offered it to him:

In order to achieve one of his three/^{main} objectives of the Five Year Plan, self-sufficiency in trained manpower, very precious money was being used to send bright young men out of the country to get special training. When these bright young men came back, they stepped into the places of the former expatriate colonial civil servants, received the kind of salaries these people got, live in the kind of homes these people had. Inevitably, they became the new elite. I had seen signs of them becoming the new masters, dark-skinned, but reflecting a social and class attitudes not dissimilar from those once held by the departed white settlers.

Nyerere had thought about this, had worried about this. He looked knowingly at Joan Wicken; they had obviously talked about this. Mrs. Nyerere joined us and the talk was social for a while.

Then he came back to the point. This was the dilemma. In order to carry through the African revolution we had to create a new class who could so easily become the new reactionaries, the new exploiters.

Our only hope of avoiding this is to remind this new class all the time of where they came from and how they came by their present exalted status. Our only hope of them not destroying the revolution was to inspire them with a sense of service and dedication to their countries and their people.

"The need," Nyerere said quietly, "is for a new puritanism, a secular puritanism."

And this, we all knew, would be no easy task.

Outside, distantly in the night, I could just detect the sound of the sea, though I knew it was very close.

I liked Nyerere's idea of a secular puritanism but I wondered if we were not asking too much of Africa and her peoples. It is only yesterday that the members of this new class began to taste the fruit of victory, and now we are starting to think of new patterns of self-denial and sacrifice.

I think Nyerere picked up my thought because he murmured: "We must do it."

All the way back to Nairobi, going by way of Moshi, Arusha, and across the enchanted land that lie in the shadow in Kilimanjaro, I mulled over Nyerere's concept of secular puritanism. Without it, without an idealistic and emotional commitment at least as strong as that which carried these countries to political freedom, the road to freedom from poverty could easily be blocked.

And it seemed, as so often before in other journeys in this continent that always compels my heart and mind, that all I had seen and heard were just pointers to a new beginning.