

And the African dance maintains itself in spite of the rigidities of misunderstanding, of colonization and oppression. Nothing can prevent her from being the living woman that she is:

24

Despite their weighting of my feet with woe
Despite the ball they've chained upon my grace
bolts upon my bearing, locks upon my liteness
my rhythm is intact: See me come and go

As the music wakens her to greater vitality, she asks to be accepted, guided, loved:

25

My mind, pulsating black, throbs—hold my hand
The black drums of my soul beat—hold my waist
The music grows, beauteous and black now
like a black child grows into a tall black man

Singling out the political dimension, one may feel that the appeal in these lines is simply to black awareness and not to the imagination of a white person; but the whole sequence invites all the people of Africa to accept her in her wholeness—to accept and to play a part. There is something overwhelming and barbaric about love, however, once it is fully aroused. Africa must be herself, and must assert herself; those who don't belong, who can't participate, may have to be swept away:

26

To love and to love lavishly, that is my need:
a sheer necessity. Let then the vultures fly
My sky is vast and blue; and what must die, let die
My earth is wide and far. Let the hyenas feed

The next poem switches to a very different mood, and shows us a different aspect of Africa's experience:

27

Oh they have ravaged me, have raped
this land and forced my children far from me, away
from my black soil and soul; proud do I walk despite
—the rainbow round my supple shoulders draped

And so my commentary might go on. As must by now be obvious, the poems are permeated (as some of Whitman's

are) with a romanticism which both idealizes and simplifies: yet the thoughts and feelings that the poems convey, and the images and suggestions that they throw up, are sufficiently related to the reality that we know—people and politics and sexuality and the African earth and the African past—for the poems to be genuinely challenging and moving. Sometimes the image is a little forced, the rhythm falters. On the whole the sequence must be regarded as a remarkable contribution to imaginative self-awareness in the Southern Africa of the late seventies.

I want to conclude not with the critic's evaluations but with the poet's music. Here are four more of the quatrains. The first evokes the laughter of Africa, associated with the love of dancing:

31

My laughter blows over the ancient highlands
stirring the birds in black and twittering trees
on Futa Jalon, Mount Tahat: my laughter,
warm, fills full the Plateau winds

The next one is a direct appeal to whites (though some blacks may feel invoked too), and it brings together the personal and the political in a daring manner:

44

Tap from my shapely body earthy and dark wine
intoxicating cupfuls: Oh let us drink, first drink, then try
to live-together: for, sober, we fashion schemes so very neat
of hate, while having drunk we humanly incline

The sequence ends gently:

49

Rest in my shade, my love—Oh come, revive
Sit in the shadow of my walls, yes come
I am for you an open door to enter by
I am your room and harbour of fresh life

and (summing up innumerable evocations) encouragingly:

50

To nurse you back to life, if you but will
I am good ears of corn for you—Bake bread!
I am sweet bunches of black grapes for you—Make wine!
I hold life out to you, full and delectable.□

INSTANT COFFEE COUNTRY

On a political map of East Africa Kenya stands out like a pearl among swine to the Western business world and the rapidly expanding Kenyan middle class comprising a multi-racial mixture of Asians, Africans, Americans and Europeans.

The past twelve years since independence have proved to be secure and prosperous ones by world standards for the middle classes.

The white settlers who remained and multiplied after Independence are still enjoying their privileged position. There is still the coast to swarm upon at Christmas, despite the nuisance of tourists many of whom come on package tours from Germany. There is still the bush despite the

VW combis, fitted with American tourists, that occasionally disturb the peace. When the holidays are over there is still the elegant house to return to, even if the gardens have been cut from five to one acre and the property needs constant patrolling by askari's and mbuakalis. There are plenty of opportunities to work up a thirst for the sundowner gin and tonic by playing tennis or squash at one of the many exclusive clubs. It provides an interest for the bored housewives and a break from giving orders to house staff and Asian shopkeepers. Many have successfully managed to avoid Africanisation in employment and by hook or by crook have obtained work permits. In the halcyon days before inflation it was no strain on the finances to send the children

to any of the reputable English Public Schools as boarders, but now some have to be satisfied with the private boarding schools run on strictly traditional lines that have appeared in Kenya. Some complain about too much interference from the Government, but are happy with their lot when they hear of creeping Socialism and Trade Union muscle in England through the headlines and articles in the Sunday Telegraph, a conservative newspaper that is very popular here.

Given this type of environment it is easier to understand how totally out of touch these people are. Since independence the population of Whites has increased at an alarming rate. The growth is attributable to the large number of expatriates who come to Kenya on contract to perform what can generally be termed "tasks requiring technical expertise". Part of their reason for being here is to train Africans to do their job when the contract expires, but for a variety of reasons ranging from falling in love with the country and the very affluent life style to the rapidity with which a promising African who is learning the job well is transferred to a department considered to be more important even though it may be concerned with something entirely different, the majority tend to renew and renew and renew as much as possible.

The Asians, although constantly worried about the chance of an Amin-type purge and total abandonment by Britain still drive their Mercedes Benz to and from their lockup shops in Nairobi and Mombasa and give service with a smile.

The emerging African middle class which consists of Civil Servants and other Government employees having been given the 'cold Shoulder' in many cases by their culturally and emotionally different white compatriots, and sometimes because of downright racial prejudice, though many believe this expression has a meaning only in South Africa, are gradually acquiring an identity and image that is not so different from the so-called 'Uncle Tom Black' in the U.S.A. The black image of success is "beating the white man at his own game." and this theme has been heavily publicised and is subscribed to by the more affluent blacks. Hence the proliferation of advertisements depicting the black executive smoking the cigarettes that everyone else should smoke and drinking the whisky that any would-be business man should drink and the popularity of the black hero films in the Shaft mould, the new and highly popular black quality magazines that discuss sex openly, and show how black girls should be dressed and have their hair arranged and show their Afro identity, how they should cook in the exciting Afro way for the next dinner party and so on. All of these have been influential in shaping the social attitudes and morals of Western Society.

This emerging middle class is important since it will be largely from their ranks that important decisions will be made about the direction in which Kenya is to go, and so far its present course couldn't suit the Western world any better, which makes the point that this type of development has been formulated even down to the most mundane underarm deodorant advert by Western minds with the specific intention of producing a friendly white rabbit from the blackness and rapidly reddening African top hat.

This Madison Avenue approach to colonialism is at present in operation in the soon-to-be-independent Seychelles where there are factories to make cigarettes, beer and tea,

but nothing to promote the Fishing Industry or the Copra Industry.

Since independence has been confined to politics as in most African States and has excluded culture and economics, politicians and their affairs are treated prestigiously. Witness the two statues of Jomo Kenyatta in Nairobi and the names of the main streets in most large towns.

Nairobi, itself, is well endowed with decadent prestige buildings which are magnets for tourism and international conferences, that without exception are sponsored with Western money and therefore ideology, provide a certain degree of spin-off that occasionally percolates to the needy sectors of society whether it be material or spiritual benefit. The recent World Council of Churches Conference held in Nairobi showed how religion and its institutions can be used as an effective revolutionary weapon or as an effective counter to reactionary authority. Whether the message will be seized upon by the widely represented and variegated Churches that flourish in Kenya has yet to be seen. All that is clear is that history has shown them to be effective purveyors of the slogans 'suffering is good for you, otherwise God would not allow it'.

Britain, inevitably, has found Kenya very receptive to commercial investment which probably accounts a lot for it being the third largest recipient of aid after the far more populous India and Indonesia. This fecundity of British industry ranging from Cadburys/Schweppes to British Leyland has the additional effect of providing home comforts for the minority white population. The British Army, for various official reasons, such as road and bridge construction, outward bound courses on Mt. Kenya and leave of absence for troops serving or about to serve in Ulster maintains a sizeable quota of men in Kenya.

Apart from its obvious physical beauty and agricultural wealth what else attracts the interest of the Western world to Kenya? Obviously ideologically it is on a par with the capitalist countries of the West but only up to a point. Where it seriously falls behind is in its welfare and social programmes. With the onset of urbanisation and all the attendant problems it produces, which are compounded because here the urbanisation is not just of people who were once rural, but of people who survived happily by following a sacrosanct traditional code of behaviour and morals that has suddenly become obsolete and there are now huge barriers, most of them financial and educational, that prevent the adoption of more suitable styles of life. Nowhere is this more evident than in Mathare Valley which lies about four miles to the north-east of the centre of Nairobi and is the home for an-almost-impossible-to-estimate population (various sources have quoted 50,000 in 1970 and 80,000 in 1974) who survive and exist in improvised shelters made from rags, cardboard boxes, discarded oil cans and drums. Originally the steep slopes of this river valley housed a small rural community that was adjudged by the colonial government of the time to be a hot bed of Kikuyu-Mau Mau activity and so were severely dealt with in the name of King or Queen or country. Now it is a hot bed for petty crime, prostitution and destitution in Nairobi. The trafficking and manufacture of local drugs is the main activity in the valley and it has produced a certain amount of cohesion among the inhabitants with the common enemy being the Police. However, there are an awful lot of misfits

for whom life has no purpose—a situation particularly alien to African culture that would normally characterise itself by the roles and function that are defined by members of the community. Such a place is paradise for missionaries, anthropologists and social workers and these people with the backing of Western-sponsored organisations have started to make an impression on the locale. There are now numerous selfhelp projects often in the form of workshops entirely staffed by inhabitants of the valley who have been trained in jewellery making and leathercraft. Their produce is sold through retail outlets in Nairobi mainly to tourists. However, statistics show these efforts to be a drop in the ocean and a critical conscience questions their value because once again here is a Western solution to an African problem even though the problem may have been the result of Western interference in the first place.

Other aspects of Social Policy which appear as anathema to the liberal West is the use of capital punishment for murder and armed robbery. Any Western tourist who has witnessed mob justice in the streets of Nairobi would pro-

bably have been horrified. The cry of "Thief" can send a whole street after a thief. If he is caught it is likely he will be kicked to death. Also the rights of workers are very restricted in relation to Western Europe and the U.S.A. since here it is illegal to strike. Is this the African solution to a problem, even if the problem arises because of the extreme contrasts and unequal distribution of wealth?

In Tanzania they are solving African problems with African solutions or so we gather. The UJAMAA projects (ujamaa = togetherness or brotherhood) have been designed to utilise the indigenous attitude of the people, which is to coexist in small communities in which there are clearly defined and strictly adhered to roles for the community members. Has colonialism and the modern day equivalent in Kenya warped this natural urge which anthropology tells us is there—the natural urge of utilising the discipline to adhere strictly to a clearly defined role. The result seems that Kenya's black successors remain subservient to a colonial structure, and the status quo remains.

TO STUDENTS, IN 1976

An address given to students of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg on March 18, 1976

by Alan Paton

It was in 1924, 52 years ago that I left this University, which then was called the Natal University College, with one campus here in Pietermaritzburg. I had a B.Sc and a Higher Diploma in Education, and I was going to earn £360,00 per annum, that is R720 per annum. If I became fluently bilingual I could earn £400,00. So I became—in the opinion of the Natal Education Department—fluently bilingual, partly for mercenary reasons, partly because I liked Afrikaans.

I have never been anti-Afrikaans or anti-Afrikaner, but I'll admit to you that I have been and am strongly anti-Afrikaner Nationalism, as it is expressed in the policy and legislation of the National Party and Government. I'm not suggesting that everything was all right up to 1948, **but from 1948 the Nationalists have been digging for themselves—and for us too—a grave, as big and as deep as any in human history, and whether they—or we—will ever get out of it alive, I don't know.** But it is because I am kind of interested in getting out of it alive, and because I am interested that you should get out of it alive, I am here tonight. In spite of my reference to the Nationalists I am not here to attack or boost any party. But I am here to talk politics, not the politics of party but the politics of survival, and not just survival but survival for some purpose. To sum it up I am here to talk to you about the politics of the just society. And I'll assume that's what you want to hear, because I am sure that all of you could be doing something else this evening, something that could be a hundred times jollier than anything will be here tonight.

When I went into the world with the B.Sc. and the Higher Diploma in 1924, we had fairly recently successfully concluded the war that was the end all war. In 1939 we went to war again, in the war that was to end racism and totalitarianism. The war was also successfully concluded, but it did not end racism and totalitarianism. It did something else though. It brought the colonial age to an end. Many of you were not then born. But the ending of the colonial age was going to make your lives quite different from mine. When I left the Natal University College, I looked forward with confidences to a life that would be spent in the relatively peaceful pursuit of my career, appointment, marriage, children, promotion, pension, retirement. Who can be sure any more? The future into which I marched so confidently appeared safe and sure to me, much safer and surer than it really was. But yours doesn't even appear safe and sure; to use a mild word, it appears problematical, and I am going to speak to you about it, but before I do that I want to speak to you about NUSAS. **I am a honorary vice president of NUSAS and I can't come here and say nothing about it, especially when I know that you are shortly going to decide whether this campus will support NUSAS or not.**

Some months ago, after the Breyten Breytenbach trial I seriously thought of getting out of NUSAS and I said so publicly. This was a serious step to take and I didn't take it lightly. I had known NUSAS and its founder Leo Marquard for fifty years. But I felt strongly that the leadership was alienating the membership, and I for one was no longer prepared to accept any responsibility for a leadership of