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Kenya Experiment in  
Multi-Racial  
Government

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P. O. Ngong  
Kenya

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Dear Mr. Rogers:

In British West Africa, the process of granting self-government is a relatively simple thing: you turn the power over to the Africans by stages and finally the day comes when you pack your bags, wish your ex-Colonial charges good luck and go home. The end of a long, troubled and sometimes painful process has come. The Empire has lost a Colony; the Commonwealth has gained a Member State.

But in Kenya it is not so cut and dried. West Africa's hot and unhealthy climate has been a political blessing in that it has attracted no white settlers. The Kenya highlands, however, are cool and pleasant and for half a century, European farmers and businessmen have been coming here to settle for good. Indians and Arabs have also left their homes to settle in the colony. How do these immigrant races fit into the scheme of things when it comes to granting self-government for Kenya?

There are three ways you might go about it.

One would be for the Colonial Office to hand the power over to the European settlers. If that were done, another South Africa would come into existence, with an immigrant race ruling a much larger indigenous population. African interests would almost certainly suffer. But this is out of the question for Kenya. Public opinion in England would block any such move. The Colonial Office, imbued with high ideals of promoting native advancement, would never accede to such a request from the settlers. And, anyway, the whites in Kenya, outnumbered 135 to 1 by the Africans, would find it very difficult to maintain their dominance. Their South African brethren are outnumbered by only 4 to 1.

A second approach would be along lines suggested by one passage in the Devonshire White Paper of 1923. This policy declaration, issued by a Conservative British Government, put the interests of the immigrant races secondary to that of the Africans. "Primarily Kenya is an African territory," the paper said, "and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail."

If Kenya is an African territory, then, as Africans acquired the needed education and experience, they would by right of overwhelming numbers run the government. There are 5,640,000 of them in Kenya right now (and they are still increasing rapidly), compared with only 42,000 Europeans, 130,000 Asians and 30,000 Arabs. If, in the African State of Kenya, the Africans wanted the immigrant races around, all

well and good. But the Europeans, and the others, too, could never expect to live here on anything but an equal footing with the Africans, voting with them in elections on a one-man-one-vote basis, obeying laws of what would be an African legislature and learning to get along with their African neighbors and equals.

Inevitably the economic interests of the European settlers would suffer. As one example: no African government, confronted with ebullient African self-assertion and the problem of over-population, would be eager to preserve the property rights of a European owning 5,000 acres in the Rift Valley. The European would argue that this had been waste land when he arrived in Kenya and that he, with his own capital, had turned it into a prosperous ranch. But that would make little difference. The needs of all the people must be considered, the African government would say. A European businessman, too, would have to raise wages drastically whether or not he got increased productivity from his African workers. His present profits would fall off considerably.

But the Devonshire Policy, though it is resurrected by critics occasionally to haunt the Colonial Office, has been quietly pushed aside. Instead, motivated by principle in wanting to protect the African from the settler, and motivated at least part by principle in wanting to protect the settler's position, the Colonial Office has embarked on a third course for Kenya. This is the policy of multi-racial government and Kenya now is taking a historic step in that direction.

The local people---called "unofficials" here---of all three major races, Europeans, Asians and Africans, are to be taken into the government as full-fledged Ministers, some with administrative responsibilities. They will be given a share in the actual process of governing. Hitherto the responsibility for governing Kenya has been, in the last analysis, in the hands of officials directed by the Colonial Office in London. Now some of the power is being devolved, though in a carefully-guarded way. Population figures will count for nothing. Rather each race as such is being given a share in the power. The Europeans will get the most; the Africans the least. Still Kenya will become the first of the six British territories of East and Central Africa to have an African in a territory-wide administrative position of Cabinet level.

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One reason for making the change was that the Colonial Office hoped that it might promote better race relations in Kenya. Racial fighting now runs the full gamut from the sly dig in a newspaper editorial or political speech to the burst of a Sten gun or 500-pound bomb in the forests of Mount Kenya. With all races working together in the government, better relations, it is hoped, might ensue.

A second reason was that the previous set-up in Kenya was regarded as unworkable under present conditions. Here is how it functioned:

Laws were enacted in the Legislative Council. (The Government\* though had considerable power to issue regulations.) The council was divided into "official" and "unofficial" members. There were 26 officials. Eight of them were Government (i.e., Colonial Office) officials, entitled to ex-officio membership in the Council. The other 18 were called "Nominated Officials." They were appointed by the Government from the public (they included two Asians, two Africans and one Arab), and were required, in official terms, "to accept the Government whip on major issues." If they refused to vote with the Government, they had to resign.

The unofficials had 28 seats, or two more than the officials, but racial bickering kept the unofficials from ever teaming up to outvote the Government on any important matters. Fourteen, or half of the unofficial seats, were held by European settlers. This is called "parity" here. All of these Europeans were elected.

Asians had six seats (two for Muslims, four for Hindus and other non-Muslims). All of these were elected, with separate voting rolls for Muslims and non-Muslims. The Africans had six seats as well. Their representatives were appointed by the Governor from names submitted by local African "electoral colleges." Only once in 10 years did a Governor refuse to appoint the first choice of a local body. In that case, he named their second choice. The other two unofficials were Arabs, one elected, one appointed.

Unofficial participation in governmental processes did not end there, though.

Matters of Government policy were thrashed out in an Executive Council. It consisted of eight high-ranking Government officials and four unofficials---two Europeans, one Asian and one African. Again, "parity."

Government departments were run by Colonial officials, but two men who formerly had been European unofficial leaders were taken into the Government and placed in charge of departments. With their new posts, they become Colonial servants and they severed past political ties.

The advice of the unofficials was usually sought by the Government before introducing a new measure. Efforts were made to secure prior agreement and some measures were modified to make them acceptable to all concerned. This was known as "government by agreement."

But the whole system, in the opinion of officials and unofficials, had many shortcomings. Among them:

1. Because of the inability of the unofficials to agree among themselves, they were always in opposition to the Government. But it was not the opposition one finds in Britain or the United States. In those countries, all the opposition needs is a favorable vote at the next election and it becomes the government. But no.

\* Government with a capital "G" means the official Colonial government here.

such thing could happen in Kenya. The government could only and always be the Government. The unofficials did not vote them into office; they had no power to choose or oust an official. They could only accept whomever was sent out from England, or whoever happened to be assigned to Kenya between a tour of duty in Malaya and one in Trinidad.

Among the Europeans, this bred frustration and a resulting wild criticism and irresponsible opposition. Back in England, they had always taken their right of self-government for granted; now they were up against a completely different situation. But the Africans and, to an extent, the Asians, though frustrated at times by the omnipotent Government, feared that any lessening of Colonial control would result in settler domination.

2. The inclusion of unofficials in the Executive Council, the inner circle of Government, had results that were distressing to both officials and unofficials. The unofficials were permitted to sit in, listen in and vote on matters of Government policy. But then they were free to go out and criticize that policy up and down the country---which they often did. In any British Cabinet, members are required to support majority decisions, no matter how they personally feel about them.

From the unofficial's point of view, though, he had a right to criticize. He was not a member of a victorious party. He had only been invited by the always-victorious party to join in its deliberations. But he and his associates could always be outvoted by the Government bloc.

3. A year and a half of the Mau Mau Emergency had shown that the official Government was incapable of rallying the local people of all races to complete and effective support for the campaign against Mau Mau. The Government got little but abuse from unofficials of all races. Some Europeans criticized it, quite honestly and quite rightly, for blundering and half-hearted measures. Other Europeans of a Malanist persuasion, criticized it for "not getting tougher with the Kukes---hang 'em all, I say." African and Asian members, meanwhile, accused the Government of being too tough.

When the Government and military, in an effort to deny food to Mau Mau, asked the settlers to move their cattle back from the forest, they were greeted with a chorus of refusals. Asian and European response to mobilization is anything but enthusiastic. Many Asians and Africans are indifferent to the outcome of the fight against Mau Mau. Meanwhile the Emergency wore on, month after month.

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Discontents and fears within each of the communities either persisted or grew in recent months.

The Europeans, seeing the Emergency drag along with sporadic murders of Europeans continuing, were getting more and more jittery.

The "liberal" Policy Statement issued by the European leaders last November,\* was falling into abeyance. The Europeans were feeling more and more insecure each day and their answer to this sinking feeling was to press for a greater effort to wipe out the Mau Mau gangs. The "bloody fools" in Government were incapable of effective action against Mau Mau; therefore we should be given a greater share in the direction of the Emergency effort, they told themselves. They already had some influence over this effort through their participation in the advisory Emergency Committees which function at all levels. But it would be difficult, without a careful study of each committee, to say how much.

The Europeans also had an influence over the Emergency effort through pressure they brought to bear by means of vociferous criticisms in Legco. Sometimes the Government yielded to them. Sometimes it turned them down flat---as when one European demanded the establishment of "lay courts"---i.e., "People's Courts"---to handle cases of persons accused of Mau Mau offenses. But it is certain that Government policy was influenced by these criticisms. Most British Colonial officials are hypersensitive to criticism, regardless of the source.

The Africans and Asians, meanwhile, were worried about what they considered the growing power of the European unofficials. The fact that the two settler leaders---E. A. Vasey and Major F. W. Cavendish-Bentinck---had been given jobs as Colonial officials caused them great concern. Even though these two men---Vasey in particular---soon abandoned their settler outlooks when faced with real responsibility, it did not change things for the Africans and Asians. They feared that the appointments were forerunners of a process whereby the Colonial government would quietly be put into the hands of the settlers. No similar positions had been given to Asians or Africans.

Another sore spot for these two races was European participation in the handling of the Emergency. The Africans and Asians recently asked in Legco that they be given places on the Emergency Committees, too, but the settlers and the Government teamed up to vote down their proposal.

The chief item of contention, though, was that the Europeans had the lion's share of the unofficial seats in Legco.

The participation of only Europeans in Legco had a de facto justification in the early days. When Legco was founded in 1907, and two Europeans were appointed to serve with six officials, the Africans were in no way capable of intelligent participation. Even the clever Kikuyu had just gotten their first look at such basic items of civilization as the wheel, plow and written communication. Most of the Indians then in the colony were "coolies" who had been imported to build the railway.

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The Europeans, though, were capable of effective participation. More important, they had come here at the invitation of the Kenya Government (the government wanted them to take up farming in the idle stretches of land along the railway, so as to make the railway a paying proposition). Having invited these people---who considered self-government to be a right---to make their homes here, the Government could do little but give them representation in the embryonic Legco.

But though the colony's biggest tribe, the Kikuyu, had already formed a political organization in the early 1920s, and although there already existed a small, but significant number of educated nationalistic-minded Africans in the 1930s, it was not until 1944 that an African was taken into Legco. Although many African nationalists are qualified by no one's standard but their own to run a modern state, it would have paid the Europeans to make peace with them nevertheless. After the war, the Mau Mau situation began simmering and Mau Mau is, among many other things, an expression of Kikuyu nationalism.

In 1952 the number of African unofficals in Legco was increased to six, but European representation was increased from 11 to 14. The fox was still ahead of the hounds and the hounds were getting more and more desperate.

The Asians had grievances, too, but they were not the type to use a spear or stolen Sten gun to vent them. They had always held an inferior place to the Europeans politically. In the early 1920s, the British Government toyed with the idea of granting a common voting roll for all qualified Indians and Europeans. In time this would have meant that the numerically-stronger Indians would have held the political power. The settlers reacted to the idea by making plans for a rebellion. The Government surrendered to the settlers. Communal rolls remain to this day.

All notions of democracy were on the Indians' side, but the view held by the settlers was not based on democracy: it was based on hard facts. Interestingly enough, they received the support of some Africans and some liberal missionaries. The settlers' position was that Kenya was started as a British Colony and should develop along Western lines, not Eastern lines. They knew it would be extremely difficult to compete with the Indians as equals, as the Indians had a lower standard of living, a higher birth-rate and a higher immigration rate. The Africans and missionaries said it would be a "betrayal" of the Africans to hand over political power, and with it some share in the direction of African advancement, to a "poor brown" class.

The U. S. forestalls this situation by erecting immigration barriers to groups who would undermine the political and economic position of the group already in the country. In Kenya they had already gotten in. The undemocratic expedient of relegating them to an inferior position was taken.

But although the Kenya Indians as a whole are still not at the level of the Europeans as a whole (one thing that has retarded equalization: poor whites are rigorously excluded from Kenya), more and more Indians have received good educations and are quite rightly demanding a greater share in the direction of their country's affairs.

The Indians generally are more inclined to compromise with rising African nationalism than the Europeans are. One suggestion advanced by Asians---it has support, at least for the moment, from some Africans---is that real racial parity be established on the Tanganyikan model. There each of the three races will soon have seven seats on the unofficial side of the Legislature.

Along with this, the Indians are still pressing for a common voting roll. They propose that an equal number of seats be reserved for each race. But qualified voters of any race would cast their ballots together and for candidates of any race. Candidates would not aggravate racialism by directing appeals to their own communities only. As they could use votes from members of all races, they would refrain from offending any one group. No race could be "swamped" by a more numerous race as equal numbers of seats would be reserved.

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These, then were some of the fears, hopes and problems of Kenya. The job fell to Britain's Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, to try to straighten things out. Lyttelton flew to Nairobi on February 28 and began a series of secret talks with political leaders of the various races. Big changes were in the air and they would come from Lyttelton himself. As Kenya is a Crown Colony, he could dictate terms. There would be no need for any referendum; Lyttelton had enough power.

Nairobi seethed with speculation and activity.

The Electors' Union, the Europeans' chief political organization, made with critics termed a desperate bid to stave off the granting of any more power to the other races.

The organization's executive committee issued a statement rejecting any constitutional changes now. It urged instead the establishment of a War Cabinet with over riding powers to govern the country during the duration of the Emergency. The Cabinet would consist of five or six persons under the Deputy Governor. Membership would be open to qualified persons of any race. But then some Europeans let the cat out of the bag by declaring that "obviously" no Asians or Africans are qualified.

Asians and Africans called it an attempt to seize complete control of the colony. Ibrahim Nathoo, Muslim elected member in Legco, introduced a motion in the Council opposing such a Cabinet. He withdrew it after the Government stated that "it would be difficult to accept any change without the agreement of the major communities."

As would be seen later, though it might be "difficult," it would not be impossible.

The non-European unofficials---Asian, African and Arab--- then got together and adopted a resolution informing Lyttelton that they wanted more representation in Legco and Exco and that they specifically wanted an Arab appointed to Exco. With Lyttelton hovering around Nairobi, the Europeans were on a spot. They did not oppose the motion; rather they refused to take part in the debate and in the voting. A. B. Patel, the Asian leader, declared that the matter was urgent. "Otherwise the Asian, African and Arab communities will be compelled to hold public meetings and make demonstrations in order to persuade the Government that they mean what they say---the time has come for the increases."

The Europeans, it was learned later, were privately urging Lyttelton to give them a greater share in the direction of the Emergency. Lyttelton said all right, but added that if this were done, then Government would have to be broadened to include the other races.

Finally, on March 9, Lyttelton summoned European, African, Asian and Arab leaders to Government House. It was the first time they had been brought together before him. The meeting lasted only 15 minutes. Lyttelton told them he had made up his mind. He had an offer ready for big constitutional changes in Kenya. It was his final offer; they could take it or leave it. If they left it, the status quo would continue and if any changes were made later, the Colonial Office would make them without consulting anyone. The Europeans asked for time to consult their constituents. Lyttelton said they had until 5 p.m.---5 1/2 hours. "It's a pistol held to our heads," one European was quoted as muttering;

Lyttelton got his answers that afternoon. The next morning the press was called to Government House and the wraps were taken off the Lyttelton Plan. Lyttelton, a big, husky man, wearing horn-rimmed specs, smoking a cigar and looking like a bigger and younger version of his boss, Winston Churchill, cracked a few jokes at first, then got down to business.

Originally, he recalled, a round table conference of all races was going to be held to work out changes in Kenya's constitution. But this was out of the question now as "it would certainly break down." Anyway, said Lyttelton, the "responsibility for these things is solely on Her Majesty's Government."

Lyttelton said he had decided that a multi-racial government would be established in Kenya and it would be part-official, part-unofficial. A majority of Europeans and Asians had agreed to the plan. The Africans and the Arabs had not, but Lyttelton said he would implement it anyway. African and Arab objections, he said, were not based on opposition to the idea of multi-racial government. Rather they objected to the share they were allotted.

A Council of Ministers will be set up, Lyttelton said, and it will be "the principal instrument of government in the colony." The council will consist of 10 officials and 6 unofficials. The unofficials will be chosen by the Governor and will include three



Europeans, two Asians (one Muslim, one non-Muslim) and one African. Again, "parity."

Four of these unofficial Ministers will be put in charge of Government departments with full administrative powers and responsibilities, Lyttelton said. The other two will serve without portfolio, confining their activities to Council deliberations.

On the one hand, the Lyttelton Plan represented a setback to the unofficials. Government power would be strengthened as there would no longer be a clear-cut unofficial majority. This would happen in this way:

The Council of Ministers will decide policy and these measures will be submitted to Legco for approval. But all Ministers will have to accept the principle of "collective responsibility." They will have to support, in public and private, any measure decided by the majority. Otherwise they would have to resign their Ministry. ("When a Council begins," said Lyttelton, "it cannot be fed on whisky and soda; it must be fed on milk.") Any measure adopted by the Council of Ministers will have automatic approval in Legco. With six unofficials bound to support the decisions of the Council of Ministers---which in turn will have an official majority---the remaining unofficials in Legco would never have the strength to outvote a measure.

But at the same time the Lyttelton Plan represents a gain for the unofficials. As has been seen, the two-vote majority they previously had never amounted to anything as they could never agree. Now, instead of being relegated to the airy shadows of perpetual opposition, they will be a part of the Government and with real responsibilities.

The unofficials, Lyttelton said, will receive the following Ministries: (1) Local Government, Health and Housing---to go to a European; (2) Forest Development, Game and Fisheries---to go to a European; (3) Public Works---to go to an Asian, and (4) Community Development---to go to an African. One European and one Asian will serve as Ministers Without Portfolio. The officials will retain the Departments of African Affairs, Police, Prisons, Defense, Public Service, Information, Education, Labor, Lands, Legal Affairs, Agriculture, Commerce and Industry and Finance and Development.

As Lyttelton unfolded further details, he firmly booted the Electors' Union plan for a War Cabinet out the window. "Of course a moment's reflection on what a War Cabinet is would show that it is a wholly impossible set-up," he said. "If it meant what it says, we would be setting up an authority which would immediately traverse both my responsibilities and also those of the Secretary of State for War, who is concerned with the Armed Forces operating in the Colony. Those responsibilities cannot be set aside."

But the Europeans will get something in line with their demand for a greater share in the handling of the Emergency. A War Council will be set up, with four members. These will be the Governor, the military Commander-in-Chief, the Deputy Governor and one unofficial named by the Governor. (The last post has since been given to Michael Blundell, the European leader in Legco who also is to serve as Minister Without Portfolio.) This council will "supervise the conduct of the Emergency," Lyttelton said. That is exactly what the majority of its members have always been doing.

The Lyttelton Plan also imposes a "standstill" until at least 1960 on three matters most vital to non-Europeans:

One is the common voting roll. Communal---i.e., separate rolls for each race---will remain at least until after the elections of 1960. "I do not myself think that at this stage in Kenya's development, any modern form of franchise covering the whole population of the territories is suitable for practical politics," Lyttelton said. "Supposing, though, the elections of 1960 showed the system of franchise quite inapplicable to conditions in Kenya in 1960. It would be possible to put forward other arrangements for 1961." He would not be more specific.

A second matter was the white highlands. Ministers, and this was aimed at Africans and Asians, will have to pledge to refrain until 1960 from proposing or supporting legislation aimed at ending restrictions against non-Europeans owning land in the highland areas.

The third matter was increased representation for non-Europeans. Provided this experiment works, Lyttelton said, "there will be no further changes in the make-up of either Legco or the Council of Ministers before 1960."

Defending the "standstill," Lyttelton said:

"We really should, if we can, have a period of 5 or 6 years without violent inter-racial controversy or constitution-making so that Kenya may finish the Emergency and get through the vital period after the Emergency to re-establish a peaceful and prosperous life."

Continuing with details of his plan, Lyttelton said the Executive Council will remain, and two Africans and one Arab will be added to it. But now it will be shorn of its power and its only duties will be to review death sentences and approve draft legislation.

Discussing African opposition to the plan, Lyttelton said:

"It must be clear to everyone that these proposals cannot meet the wishes of everyone in the colony. They represent the closest common factor if you like, however reluctantly. I am quite aware that my proposals do not meet the desires of the African

community. They do represent a very real attempt to start on a multi-racial foundation."

Lyttelton then made the point that Kenya will become the first of the six British territories of East and Central Africa to have an African in a territory-wide administrative post of Cabinet level. And of the three to five Under Secretaries to be created, two will be Africans and one an Arab.

The Colonial Secretary also gave a hint that the base will be broadened for the Africans to choose their representatives. He said: "During the period up to 1956, the Government will initiate a study, in which Africans will play a prominent part, of the best method for choosing African members of the Legislative Council." Since then African leaders say they expect a limited form of franchise to be granted to the African people and the veto power of the Governor removed.

The whole new set-up is to be regarded as an experiment, Lyttelton said. It will be made permanent if the public indicates its approval at the next general election by returning Legco members who are willing to continue the arrangement. Otherwise Kenya will revert to the old set-up and the Colonial Office will feel "free" to effect such changes as it sees fit.\*

Summing up, Lyttelton said:

"This represents an advance from total officialdom to partly-unofficial Government. It marks a great step in responsibility for the local people and it is the beginning of a multi-racial foundation of government. We feel that official Government has now outlived itself."

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Upcountry Kenya is known sometimes as "Blood Pressure Ridge" and some circulatory systems boiled over because of the Lyttelton Plan. However it had been ordained, and Kenya's was but to do and gripe. As has been said of other frenetic places, the redeeming feature about life here is that no one can remember what last week's crisis was about. The crises themselves are usually forgotten. But the attitudes engendered by them do not die as easily.

The African Legco members put up a fight over the plan. In a statement, they said while they accept the idea of multi-racial government, "it must be realized that Africans cannot continue indefinitely to accept third place in their own country on all matters."

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\* The next election will be held in 1955 or six months after the end of the Emergency---whichever comes later. And it appears that the latter might be the later.

The Africans disclosed that they originally had asked Lyttelton for three Ministries, but then offered to settle for two. "The one portfolio, that of Community Development, proposed for the African Minister is so small that it can hardly inspire confidence among African communities in the new Government," the statement said.

Under the leadership of Eliud W. Mathu, the Oxford-educated son of a Kikuyu medicine man, the African members then made a public demand that another African (without portfolio) be added to the Council, along with another European (also without portfolio). That would have made it 4-2-2. The Africans threatened to resign from Legco if this were not accepted. Some Europeans appeared interested in the idea of 4-2-2, but it picked up no great support. Lyttelton rejected it. The Africans did not resign.

Mathu then declared that while the African members' organization as such would have nothing to do with the new Government, it would not prevent one of its members accepting a Ministry as an individual, provided he got the support of his constituents.

The logical choice as the African Minister would have been Mathu. He had been the first African appointed to Legco and the first and only African named to Exco. Through the years he has acted as leader of the Africans in Legco and he stands considerably above his colleagues. He has always taken the middle course in Kikuyu politics and as such was a bitter foe of Jomo Kenyatta. "There is no place for extremism in African politics," Mathu said to me once. "I believe in slow, healthy development, consolidating every step." He is no "Uncle Tom" though and in Legco he has been a very persistent critic of Government and settler policy.

He may have been the logical choice, but Mathu is a Kikuyu and the Government was not going to let the Kikuyu think that Mau Mau had won them anything. Anyway, Mathu, though a consolidator of little steps, brushed aside contemptuously any talk of him taking the post. "Community development!" he says scornfully. "What's that? I'll tell you---it's nothing. And what is one African voice in a Council of 16 persons? Again, nothing." Mathu gave emphasis to his bitterness by resigning from Exco.

The Ministry was offered to Benaiah A. Ohanga, a Luo with a high school education who is a member of Legco and has been named to the Central Legislative Assembly for East Africa and to numerous other bodies. Ohanga consulted a meeting of Africans in South Nyanza. Some of the Africans urged that Africans boycott the new Government; others said Africans should hang on to what ground they had won. The latter view prevailed and the meeting told Ohanga to accept, but urged him to exert "the greatest possible pressure" to secure the appointment of a second African Minister.

Ohanga accepted. When Lyttelton left Nairobi, a crowd of Europeans and Asians saw him off at the airport. Not one African leader showed up.

The Indians were divided on the Lyttelton Plan. The right wing urged acceptance; the left urged that it be rejected until African demands for another Ministry were met. The right won out, but not without a struggle.

This struggle served to emphasize the two divergent trends in Kenya Indian politics. Most of the established political leaders belong to the right. They are older men and they generally have made a lot of money in business or the professions. They have a stake in the status quo and this had drawn them into conservatism and an acceptance of the fact that their future security is linked up with the security of the Europeans.

The left, by contrast, is composed of younger men. Its leaders are lawyers and journalists. They have no great interest in the status quo and they are much more bitter about the color bar than the older men are. Stung by discrimination and fired by the realization of nationalist aims in India, these young men have tended toward casting their lot with the African nationalists against the "common foe"---the dominant Europeans.

A. B. Patel, leader of the Asian Legco members, was offered the post of Minister Without Portfolio. (He was born in India and now is a director of several insurance companies.) Patel said he would accept. Leftists in the Kenya Indian Congress brought pressure to bear on him. Patel said "on second thought" he would not accept. Then he would consult the Standing Committee of the Congress. Finally he said he would accept and the Standing Committee endorsed the idea.

The left remained far from satisfied. In okaying Patel's participation, the Standing Committee went on to say that he should work for increased representation for Africans.

All in all, any political friendship that existed between Indians and Africans took a beating. "This has taught us not to rely on anyone to fight our battles for us," Mathu said publicly. Other Africans accused the Indians of letting the Africans down. Mathu said in private that the Indians and Europeans got together and divided up the Ministries between them.

What really irked the Africans was that while the Asians had the same number of seats as the Africans in Legco, now they would have one more seat in the Council of Ministers. "The Indians are not qualified by ability or by numbers to have second place," Mathu declared.

The Muslim Indians, less militant politically and more pro-British, gave their approval to the plan at public meetings. One of their number, Ibrahim Nathoo, born in Nairobi, is to become Minister of Works. He is an insurance company chairman and a follower of the Aga Khan.

The Arabs had, as usual, been left out. Their anger was increased by the fact that when they finally got their seat on the hitherto all-important Executive Council, the council had been stripped of all important functions.

The Arabs protested---not too vigorously---and the Governor made a "compromise offer." In the future, the portfolio now given to a Muslim Indian would be open to either an Arab or a Muslim Indian. An Arab Legco member would be invited to attend the Council of Ministers' meetings whenever matters concerning the Arabs were being discussed. And the Arab community would be consulted through the Liwali of the Coast if any further constitutional changes were under consideration. The Arab leaders accepted.

European acceptance of the Lyttelton Plan was anything but wholehearted. A series of public meetings were held by the 14 European elected members at which they gave their views. The votes taken at the end of these meetings only served to point up the fact that Kenya has no political parties or programs---it is merely a question of following popular leaders. Each Legco member got a vote of confidence---whether he had accepted or rejected the Lyttelton Plan.

However a majority of the European elected members, under the leadership of Michael Blundell, supported the plan. Acceptance of the plan cost Blundell's European Elected Members' Organization two defections. Humphrey Slade, member for the Aberdares constituency, and Colonel Ewart S. Grogan, Nairobi West, both resigned in protest. That left the organization with 11 members. (One other European elected member, S. V. Cooke, representing the Coast constituency, was not a member of the organization. Cooke seldom sees eye to eye with anyone and he most emphatically did not with Lyttelton.)

Blundell becomes Minister Without Portfolio. The Ministry of Local Government, Health and Housing goes to Wilfrid B. Havelock, born in Trinidad, the son of a Colonial Service officer. He spent part of his childhood in Uganda and Kenya and later returned to enter into business. Still later, he took up farming. The other European receiving a Ministry is Laurence Maconochie-Welwood, who becomes Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries. He was born in Scotland and runs a farm here.

Speaking on behalf of the Lyttelton Plan to his Rift Valley constituents at Njoro, Blundell told them they should reject it if they were of the belief that 42,000 Europeans could live in "constant enmity" with more than 5,500,000 other people. They should accept the plan if they thought the only chance for the European in Kenya was for him to work with, guide and lead the other races.

"I do not sell these proposals to you on the ground of idealism," he said. "I sell them to you on the ground of realism." Then he added: "It is essential to translate European political opinion from one of opposition to that of the Government, so that the settler feels it is his government and not one he can only get to do something by means of mass meetings and public resolutions."

The Electors' Union meanwhile was cool on the new plan. Brig. C. J. K. Hill, Executive Officer, said: "We thought we had a better plan in the War Cabinet. But we'll wait and see how this will work. But there's no enthusiasm for it."

There was no enthusiasm anywhere. Lunch-time conversations in Nairobi's Muthaiga Club the other day are hereby recorded to the best of my memory:

"It's a damn shame."

"Yes, it's a shame. The Indians have gotten into the inner citadel of Government."

"I'm talking about the Africans---why should we give them anything when they're fighting us?"

"Yes, why should we? But the Indians---they're the big problem. It's the beginning of what I call 'The Little India Policy' for Kenya."

And,

"Those bloody fools in the Colonial Office are the ruin of Kenya. We've got to take whatever they shove down our throats."

"They havn't a clue to what goes on here."

"It's politics---that's what it is, all politics!"

"Our young people arn't going to take this sitting down. I was talking with a young chap the other day and do you know what he said? He said, 'We're here to stay and we'll fight!'"

And,

"Why, I remember when I first came here. That was in 1919. I lived surrounded by Africans. The nearest white man or policeman was 30 miles away. Did I have any trouble? No! I was firm and I was just with them and they respected me for it."

"We've lost our will to rule."

"No, the trouble is we've tried to push the African too fast. It took us 2,000 years to get where we are. How can you expect the African to do it in 50?"

"The Hindus are to blame. They're been pitting the white man against the black man. When we gave India its independence we should have said, 'All right, chaps, you can have this independence if you take all the Hindus back from Africa.'"

"The Indians breed like locusts and they live off the smell of an oily rag. They want to make this an Indian Colony."

"The Socialists have ruined the country."

You listen to all these things for a while and then you say, "All right, but what are you going to do?" And they really don't know. You repeat Blundell's haunting question---"Do you think 42,000 Europeans can live in enmity with more than five and a half million other people?" They really don't know.

One effect the Lyttelton Plan had was to crystallize the split in the European community between the loosely-organized followers of the liberal Blundell and the "die-hards," now grouped in an organization called the Federal Independence Party.

The Federal Independence Party is the new name for the White Highlands Party, which in turn was the new name for the merged Kenya Empire Party and United Kenya Protection Association. Just as these sudden changes are a bit confusing, so is the FIP's program. Sometimes it preaches vague apartheid, sometimes it drops that and talks about the "need" for reasserting "European control, not leadership."

The FIP, at least at the moment, is not important politically. It makes a point of not discussing its membership, but it is certain that it does not attract any more than a minority of Europeans here. At the moment it is trying to rally opponents of the Lyttelton Plan into the party. Its biggest success so far has been to effect an alliance of sorts with Humphrey Slade. As Slade is a man of some ability and intelligence and one who had always taken pride in calling himself a liberal, his gravitation into the FIP camp caused a great deal of surprise. He did so, presumably, for want of organized political friends elsewhere and certainly does not agree with them very much.

The FIP, for its part, is not too happy over Slade, but his presence does give the party what it lacked before: a person with recognized political stature. Major B. P. Roberts, party chairman, said he discussed policy with Slade and: "We found there was some common ground and certain obvious differences. We agreed to put these differences into abeyance."

Events of recent weeks have shown that although Kenya's Europeans feel that their security is now threatened by having Asians and Africans in the new Government, they are not fighting back too hard. They are dispirited, confused and uncertain. Mau Mau has shown them that their old world has cracks in it and they are wondering what comes next.

They won't give an answer to Blundell's big question, but they seem disinclined to follow the FIP alternative. Despite all that has been said about him, the Kenya settler is not a rare species of villain. One would be naive to expect anyone in his position to act otherwise. Some of the settlers these days are edging toward the idea of making "peace" with the other races. "I know it's right, that it's the thing to do, but I just can't hurry myself too much," one settler said.



Blundell has failed to capture their enthusiasm for the idea of racial cooperation, but the majority seem to be following him anyway.

\* \* \*

Will the Lyttelton Plan work?

The Indians have accepted it, the Europeans have done so, though grudgingly and the Arabs have quieted down with their new bone.

But the Africans? There lies the answer to the ultimate success of any experiment in multi-racial government. And it would appear that some very extensive changes must be made---not necessarily at this very moment, but certainly in the not too distant future.

The moderate-minded Mathu says: "The African community cannot wait till 1960. We are growing---rapidly. If the door is blocked till 1960, with all the cells dividing in the meantime, you know what will happen? An atomic explosion."

The Bishop of Mombasa, the Rt. Rev. L. J. Beecher, fears an "atomic explosion" too. He told reporters in London that Lyttelton should have established real parity among the unofficial Ministers---two Europeans, two Africans, two Asians. Kenya must fashion a real plural society or perish, he said. There probably are not more than five years to do it, he added.

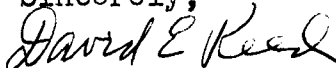
Mathu, the consolidator of small gains, would be satisfied with one more African minister now. But later? Mathu won't be pinned down. "Notwithstanding the fact that I look into the future, I deal with the present," he says.

The African extremists are not as cautious as Mathu. Most of them are out of the picture just now---they are either locked up or fighting the white man in the mountain forests. But whether they ever return to the political arena, new ones will appear. The white-brewed potions called democracy, self-determination and one-man-one-vote have had powerful effects on the Africans.

You talk with an African nationalist and he tells you, "Oh, yes, I would be satisfied with racial parity with the white and brown settlers like in Tanganyika." Then you talk with him a little longer and you wonder:

"Would he really?"

Sincerely,



David E. Reed

P. S. - As I was finishing this newsletter, the necessary legal documents were signed in London, the Ministers sworn in and multi-racial government embarked upon.

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