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Indians and Multi-Racial
Government

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c/o Barclays Bank
Queensway
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

When Oliver Lyttelton imposed multi-racial government on Kenya six months ago, it was something of a victory for the Asians. In the old Legislative Council, they had held six of the 28 unofficial seats---or only something less than one-fifth. But now with multi-racial government, the center of power switched from Legco to the new Council of Ministers. In this Council, the Asians had two of the six unofficial seats. Their share of the unofficial power had increased to one-third.

African leaders objected strenuously to the fact that the Africans would have only one minister, whereas the Asians would have two. "The Indians are not qualified by ability or by numbers to have second place," thundered Eliud W. Mathu, leader of Legco's six appointed African members. Many Africans said the Europeans should have the largest number of unofficial ministries---that, they knew, was inevitable--but they did not want the Asians to have more than they would get.

A struggle went on in the Indian community. The leftists urged A. B. Patel, the leader of the six Asian elected members in Legco, to refuse a ministry until changes were made to satisfy the Africans. The leftists feel that their future lies in effecting a close alliance with the Africans, against the dominant Europeans.

It seemed, though, that the wealthy conservatives made up their minds that their real interests lay with the Europeans. They felt that their property and investments would be safe only as long as the Europeans remain on the scene to guard the status quo. Indian interests, they feared, would go down the drain in the chaotic scramble that would follow any accession to power by exuberant African nationalists.

The conservatives won out and A. B. Patel, a Hindu, accepted as Minister Without Portfolio although he had said earlier that he would not do so unless African demands were met. The Muslim Indians, who have a separate voting roll and who elect two of the Asian members in Legco, accepted readily. An Indian Muslim got the Ministry of Public Works. The Asian position had been consolidated; the Africans got their third place.

The history of the Asians in Kenya has been one long struggle for political rights. Legco was founded in 1907, but no Indians served in it until after World War I.

With the end of the war, Asian demands for political representation reached a high pitch. Elspeth Huxley, putting forth the settlers' viewpoint, writes:

"On the whole the East African Indians were contented enough. It was not until nationalists from India took a hand in the matter that any real political feeling was created in the bosoms of the Indian store-keepers, clerks, stone-masons and other diligent but poorly educated people who made up East Africa's Indian population.

"The necessary stimulus came soon after the war. India, the brain-centre, was stirred by the post-war spirit of self-determination, discontent and unrest. Kenya, the distant muscle, twitched in response."

Whether the "contented masses" lacked political aspirations might be open to question. But it is certain that the upsurge of nationalism in India had its effect in East Africa. Many Indian immigrants arriving here at the time were fired with the nationalist feelings going on back home. One was A. B. Patel, who was 25 years old when he landed in Mombasa in 1923. Even today India's policies and feelings evoke strong sympathy among the Indians here.

For a while it seemed as if the post-war Indian demands were going to be met. The British government in 1922 drew up its so-called Wood-Winterton Agreement. A common voting roll would be introduced for Europeans and Asians and qualifications would be so designed so that 10 per cent of the Indians would be enfranchised at once. Immigration of Indians would be unrestricted. The Indians would have four seats in Legco, as against either seven or 11 for the settlers. It is said that the India Office in London, anxious to placate the nationalists in India, pushed through this agreement.

The Indians outnumbered the Europeans by more than two to one at the time. With a common roll and unrestricted immigration, the settlers would in time have been swamped. The settlers reacted accordingly.

The much-shouted plan for rebelling and kidnapping the Governor (though still remaining loyal to the Crown) was the outcome. One plan had it that the Nairobi Indians would be hustled onto trains and sent down to Mombasa. Ex-officers, many of them of high rank, who had settled in the colony were in charge of the planned uprising. "British troops wouldn't fire on us," the settlers said at the time and, in fact, one still hears this today whenever tempers really explode and idle talk of "direct action" ensues.

The revolt never came off, though, as the Imperial Government backed down in face of the settlers. The Devonshire White Paper of 1923 declared that the common roll was out. There would be 11 Europeans and five Indians in Legco. The White Highlands would preserve its complexion. Restrictions were subsequently put on Asian immigration.

It was the Indians' turn to be furious. They launched a campaign of refusing to pay taxes. Patel, then just one year off the boat, got one month in jail for refusing to divvy up. He later defended Indians under similar prosecutions. The tax campaign fizzled out in time, but Indians refused to take their five new seats in Legco.

It was not until 1931 that they finally did. In subsequent jugglings, the Europeans gained three more seats and the Asians one more. Six African seats and two for Arabs were created.

Now multi-racial government had started. The Asian press and Asian public halls were filled with ringing affirmations of support. The Asians were not too happy about Lyttelton's "standstill" till 1960 on the matters of franchise and the White Highlands, but still they accepted the plan. There was a lot of cooing in the bazaar, but this was soon to end. The man who lowered the boom was a one N. S. Mangat.

Mangat, an enfant terrible on the Kenya scene, is in his 50s. He studied in Canada as a youth, receiving a bachelor's degree at Vancouver in 1924. Then he journeyed to London and studied law at Lincoln's Inn.

He set up a law practice when he returned to Kenya and apparently he was quite good at his profession. Just recently he was awarded a Q. C. (Queen's Counsellor), the first Kenya Asian to be so honored. From 1933 to 1938 he sat in the Legislative Council but then, as he says, he went into "political retirement."

Mangat is a Sikh. I was tempted to call him a "detrribalized Sikh," but he once devoted part of a political speech to taking a London correspondent to task for using that expression. Suffice it to say he does not wear the beard or the turban of his co-religionists. Politically he works closely with the dominant Hindus in the Kenya Indian Congress. The Muslims, with their separate voting roll, have their own political organization.

Like all Asians, Mangat knows only too well the barbs of racial discrimination and social slights. In past years he would not have been allowed into European hotels. He is not allowed to own land in the White Highlands and restrictive covenants operate against him in parts of Nairobi.

If he were ever tried for an offense, he could not demand the right of trial by jury. It does not exist for Asians and Africans. Instead, he would have three "assessors," whose decision the judge is not bound to follow.

He is not allowed into a European hospital as a patient; rather he must go to an Asian one. If he had a European wife, she would be allowed into a European hospital for everything but a maternity case. She would have to go to an Asian hospital to give birth to her half-caste child.

The color bar is changing, though. Mangat now has free entry to European hotels and the dirty looks that Asians get from white guests seem to be subsiding. The Law Society of Kenya, formerly all-European, has opened its membership to other races and it even honored Mangat by electing him as its 1950 president.

Mangat is quite tall and lanky and is quite polite and charming. He often wears wing collars. He has a gaunt sort of look and, if it were not for his brown skin, he could be taken for another small town lawyer in the U. S. midwest.

Mangat the Asian has gone far. He has come within sight of the promised land. But his brown skin keeps him from reaching it. He is no dukawalla, illiterate in any language, sitting in a back bush shack, selling penny items to Africans. He is no poverty-stricken Indian laborer. But, perhaps, that is what makes him as determined as he is to get a hold on the promised land.

His political retirement ended abruptly on July 31. That was just three weeks after Michael Blundell had formed his United Country Party, dedicated to multi-racialism and reserved initially for Europeans only. Blundell at the time was bailing rapidly to keep his new party afloat.

On that July 31, a Saturday, the Kenya Indian Congress opened its three-day biennial meeting. A new president was elected and that was Mangat. The Sikhs were warriors back in India and the new president promptly drew a sword at the old enemy, the white settlers. But first he and the delegates had a shock to deliver to the Kenya government, which, like governments everywhere, considers itself capable of running its own affairs without the interference of others.

The following resolution came up for a vote, backed by Mangat:

"The Kenya Indian Congress expresses its deep concern at the alarming continuation of the Emergency which is sapping the moral and the monetary resources of Kenya and respectfully and seriously suggests that the British and Kenya government should solicit the good offices of the Government of India to bring the Emergency to a desirable termination."

The proposer of the resolution, D. D. Puri, declared:

"We know that 150,000,000 Africans in Africa have got faith in Pandit Nehru and the Government of India. They have seen India obtain self-government and they feel that if we can do it in India, they, too, can do it in their own country."

A. B. Patel, the Minister, opposed the motion. "However good your intentions may be, if you agree to this proposal, you will produce fiery controversy---not only in Kenya but all over the world." And right he was.

Patel went unheeded, though. President Mangat had declared:

"For some strange reason, peace-loving, non-violent India seems to be held in high esteem by the ferocious and violent adherents of Mau Mau. Perhaps they believe that India is best able to understand their imagined or real grievances.

"But whatever the reason, if the government here feels that the Mau Mau leaders are likely to listen to New Delhi with respect, then it may certainly be worthwhile to ask for Indian intervention for the solution of this dangerous and expensive problem.

"Indeed, if India's prestige with Mau Mau be really as high as it is said to be, then it is the duty of the British and Kenya governments to ask her assistance at this time.

"It would be worth millions of pounds to the people of Britain and Kenya."

The resolution got 36 votes. An opposing one, which urged that the assistance of African leaders "of all shades of opinion" be sought to end the Emergency, drew only 23 votes.

Mangat's blast at the Europeans was contained in his presidential address. It was no off-the-cuff or hastily-prepared affair. The speech had been printed in a 22-page booklet and had been circulated to the press and others several days before the Congress meeting. Later the Congress sent a free copy to anyone who asked for one.

"The bewildered Indian in Kenya has long been looking around for western culture, or the British way of life," Mangat said. "But the object of his search has eluded him. Where is this culture? Where is this way of life?"

"Is it to be found in that supercilious attitude of contempt which the European displays towards him? Does it lie in that ugly frown which the European motorist automatically puts on the moment he sees an Indian overtaking him in a superior car?"

"Or does it consist in that shabby lack of chivalry which makes him leave Indian women and children queuing on the pavement before impudent African vaccinators while he himself lounges languidly in a near-empty waiting room?"

"Is the white farmer practicing this western culture when he chases away the brown or the black traveler whose boiling radiator has necessitated the request for a canful of water? Or is he living the British way of life when, gun in hand, he bursts upon an inadvertent Indian picnicker, or African pedestrian, threatening him with action for trespass on the thousand acres of land which he got for a song anyway?..

"Is western culture that loquacity which springs forth when the European foreman drinks the Indian fundi's (craftsman's) whisky at his Christmas dinner? Or is it that rank ingratitude which makes the selfsame foreman curse the selfsame fundi because he had given him too much the previous night?"

"Is the British way of life that whiteness which fears contamination if the European was to vote in the same booth as an Indian or an African or if European children were to share the school desk with Indian or African children?..."

"Is it the exclusiveness which keeps the permanent and indigenous inhabitants of this country out of the Highlands and the residential areas by restrictive clauses, or is it that feigned impartiality which makes our City Council put extremely high valuations on Indian residential land and low values on the European-owned?"

"Is it that efficiency which builds excellent roads even in the comparatively uninhabited European residential areas in our cities or is it that deplorable indifference which leaves the Indian residential areas littered with dirt and filth?"

"Or is it, like the Nairobi Rotary Club, the professions of inter-

national service to humanity, but confining its membership to Europeans only.

"If the British way of life is none of those, then it seems that this clean and clear way finished off at Dover and never reached East Africa... I may be accused of indulging in a tirade but I am interpreting the feelings of an average Indian towards an average European.

"The Europeans can keep their culture. They do not wish to touch the eastern culture with a barge pole... We shall be waiting for them to recover from their self-imposed stupor and give our cooperation to them whenever they ask for it... The Indians are proud of their culture and civilization and they wish to retain it...

"The disabilities under which the Indian has been obliged to live in Kenya are not an incentive to the love of the country or patriotism...

"If the Federal Independence Party is founded, it is to thwart the Indian chances; and if the United Country Party takes birth, it is to preserve their unofficial ministries... And if tomorrow an existing, or a new European party announces that it shall be inter-racial, that would be to serve its own purpose.

"There is not one single act...which the European community has done for the Indians gracefully and willingly...

"Indiscriminate immigration of people of alien loyalties and doubtful industry from ex-enemy countries is preferable to them than the friendly and the diligent from India and Pakistan... Today when one walks in the streets of Nairobi one hears strange noises which are supposed to be a language spoken by people whose names are as unspellable as they are unpronounceable."

Speaking of Apa B. Pant, former Commissioner of the Government of India here, Mangat said:

"Many Europeans were afraid of that smiling, magnetic young man because he preached what every Englishman of foresight and intelligence preaches, the creation of an egalitarian society in these territories."

And, regarding Mau Mau:

"When the Europeans and the Indians arrived here they found in these green valleys a wolf-child gamboling without a care in the world, blissfully oblivious of the stunning progress the rest of Adam's posterity had made... Fifty years of imitation and emulation brought the child to a stage where he could be allowed to give his counsel in the highest parliament of the land.

"The stage, unfortunately, happened to be the stage when this child thought that he could get rid of his parents and assert himself. He rebelled against those who sought to teach him discipline and bit the hand which fed him.

"The Europeans, father-like, are obliged to punish him and the Indians, mother-like, feel deep pity for him and for the child's own good, approve the punishment in the hope that it will rid him of the old

inhibitions which seem to have overpowered him. It is certain that the child, so savagely precocious, corporally smarting and morally rebellious, will be managed eventually, but it will by then destroy a fair share of its precious inheritance and suffer a broken limb or two...

"The Indian community has expressed its opinion about the Mau Mau movement and has strongly condemned violence. Very soon, it is hoped, the African population will have open to it the legitimate avenues it needs for the expression of its opinion."

At the end of the speech, Mangat got around to the following paragraph:

"The Indian community offers sincere friendship to all the other communities and it shall be my endeavor...to promote that friendship with all the means consistent with the self-respect and the dignity of my community."

The European reaction was like that of a lion who had suddenly been pinged in the backsides with birdshot. "The bloody cheek!" various settlers snorted. People like Blundell were embarrassed by the speech. One of their selling points for multi-racial harmony was that the other races wanted to cooperate and be friends.

The right wingers screamed with delight---"I told you so." Some proposed that Mangat be given a knighthood for his "distinguished service to the European settler community." With European feelings about the Indians already exacerbated, any criticism from Indians would only serve to help the FIP and make the settlers even more wary of UCP ideas.

Group Capt. Briggs, who is strongly against the UCP, lost no time telling a public meeting at Nyeri:

"Having heard the speech of the president of the Kenya Indian Congress, can any of us really have any doubts as to what the Indians mean? Make no mistake: they want to squeeze us out and make it an Indian colony. They do not appear to like conditions in this country. Well, it is a British colony, a fact which is often forgotten. If they do not like conditions here, they should go back to India."

Some Muslim leaders, who themselves feel that a common roll would lead to Hindu domination, disassociated themselves from Mangat's remarks. So did one section of the Sikhs. The East African Standard declared that "the most telling criticism is that he should choose the present time to exacerbate racial feelings. This outburst is a singularly strange way to attain the ideals expressed when he said that 'the Indian community is determined to see that the Lyttelton Plan is a success.'"

Wilfred B. Havelock, the new Minister of Local Government, Health and Housing, had been invited previously to address the Congress meeting, so the next day he made a reply to Mangat. On the whole, at least by Kenya standards, the minister conducted himself with restraint. It was not the Havelock of the old days of free booting opposition politics.

Both Havelock and Patel, who had unsuccessfully opposed the resolution on intervention by India to end Mau Mau, seemed to have learned restraint now that they occupied positions of responsibility. In that respect, at least, multi-racial government is working.

Referring to Mangat's two references to India as "the biggest Republic in the world," Havelock said:

"One cannot help reading into such words an implied threat. This attempt will not bring about a united country. We Kenyans of all races--- and there are many of us---will not tolerate any interference from outside. As a country, our overseas ties are with Britain and with no one else, however big he may be."

Havelock said when he started to make notes for his speech, he put down that there were two kinds of Europeans---those who thought there could be a common loyalty in Kenya and those who stood for apartness.

"When I started my notes, I felt we were well on the way toward proving to the world that the former outlook was correct and then, Mr. President, I read your speech.

"A peculiar speech, if I may say so. More than half of it was a bitter and indiscriminate vituperation against the European community and the last portion quite a contradictory and conciliatory cooing. It could hardly be expected that the latter part would be taken seriously when most of your time was taken up in lashing out blindly at all and sundry...

"How can such remarks be justified when they will make so infinitely more difficult the task of we who have pledged ourselves to make a multi-racial government work---to create a Kenya nation." The UCP, he said, is not likely to get many European backers if other races continue attacking Europeans.

Referring to Mangat's charge that the Europeans formed the UCP to preserve their unofficial ministries, Havelock pointed out that multi-racial government means non-European ministries as well.

"Don't you want them preserved? Your attitude strikes me as one of complete intolerance; that you are not prepared to meet anyone half way. Could it be that you want all Indian ministries?"

Turning to Mangat's statement that Pant had been preaching "what every Englishman of foresight and intelligence preaches," Havelock said:

"Do you think it right for a commissioner of an overseas territory to preach politics in Kenya? Would you agree that the Commissioner for South Africa should preach apartheid?" (Here there was applause and one delegate shouted "No!")

Havelock said there were accusations that he could make against Indians, as Mangat had done against Europeans, but:

"Such accusations are futile and merely lead to strife and hate."

Havelock then tried to justify the White Highlands, saying, "It is the principle of reservation to any race to which you object. It follows, therefore, that you object to the reservation of the African Land Units. Since Kenya became a British colony, Europeans, Africans and Asians have been encouraged to settle and develop agriculturally in certain specific areas. This is a fundamental policy and it is not one to be altered at the behest of a minority group of the country without the agreement of all concerned."

Referring to Mangat's support for the idea of Indian intervention in Mau Mau, Havelock said:

"You say that the barbarous, savage and bestial Mau Mau hold India in high esteem. I cannot imagine from where you derive your information, but if that is so, it is no compliment to India."

In conclusion, Havelock said:

"I appeal to you and to all communities to stop squabbling---to stop raising controversial matters---and I ask you as leaders of your community---together with leaders of other communities---to bring the full weight of your people behind the new government, so that we can quash this rebellion in the shortest possible time."

Havelock got a good applause from the Indians. Mangat then made a short reply, saying:

"I wish he had come out with that several years ago. I assure him that I sincerely welcome it. Through my speech the Indian community and I have achieved our object. If I seemed to be an extremist, I assure you that I could turn moderate in 24 hours if I hear a few more dissertations like this."

Then, later, after saying it was a shame so many Kenya Indians spoke bad English, Mangat exclaimed: "It is a pity that the entire human race has not made the English language compulsory."

A few days later, Mr. Havelock was rewarded by the Europeans with a resounding vote of no confidence at a public meeting at Limuru, in his Kiambu constituency. A crowd estimated at 300 filled the hall and others stood outside to listen. Havelock contended that the FIP had packed the hall and called it a "put-up job."

Both Havelock and Blundell, who shared the platform, were criticized vigorously. Mangat's speech came up several times and once Blundell declared: "I am delighted Mr. Mangat made that speech. He is an extremist. I am going to fight extremists wherever they come from, because they can do no good for this country."

Those at the meeting were very much against Havelock and Blundell. Perhaps Havelock would have fared better on the confidence vote if he had replied to Mangat in the poor-Indian-motorist vein, or if he had told the Indians "go back where you came from if you don't like it here."

In all the uproar about Mangat, one important voice went practically unheard. E. A. Vasey, Minister of Finance and a former leader of

the European settlers, who crossed the floor to become an official several years ago, told the Kenya Indian Congress meeting:

"I suggest again that we should study the possibility of assisting (the growth of a national feeling) by the introduction of a common roll, based on reasonably high qualifications, the roll to be superimposed on the present communal representation."

Vasey is an important government official and it is likely that he echoes some thinking going on in the Secretariat. But his remark went largely unnoticed.

Mangat was not through yet, though. A few weeks later he delivered a sarcastic speech at the Patel Brotherhood in Nairobi, an influential Hindu organization. First he tore into journals that had criticized his earlier speech---and there had been many critics, in Kenya and in the United Kingdom. Then he lashed out at two Muslim leaders who had disassociated themselves from his remarks---he referred to them at one point as "a couple of less noble species of the animal kingdom."

At the Congress meeting, Mangat had said that he "sincerely welcomed" Havelock's speech. Now, though, possibly on reflection, he had some biting things to say about it. He wound up his criticisms with:

"His (Havelock's) and his community's attitude is admirably reflected in that nursery rhyme which we all know:

'Little Jack Horner, sat in the corner,
Eating his Christmas pie.
He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,
And said, 'What a good boy am I.'"

Mangat then proceeded to bestow what has been interpreted as an intended kiss of death on the pale cheek of the UCP. He said:

"In spite of all what I have said in reply to Mr. Havelock, I wish to make it clear that I deeply appreciate his sincere endeavor and the endeavors of his colleagues in the United Country Party to bring all the races closer..."

"The UCP may not be as liberal in its outlook and as broad in its vision to warm the heart of Edmund Burke; but it can, at least, be said that its sponsors are groping toward liberalism of outlook and breadth of vision..."

"It is removed from both reason and realism to assume that our European friends in the United Country Party can plump as fully or as instantly for multi-racialism as we, the Indians, can. We must allow for the fact that their angle of vision differs from ours, and that what seems only rational to us is radical to them.

"I would like to take this opportunity of assuring the United Country Party of our sympathy and support, at least, in that limited area of cooperation which their aims offer to us..."

"I can promise something else too. I can promise the very reverse

of cooperation and sympathy to the die-hards of the Federal Independence Party. With them, we, the Indians, shall non-cooperate both actively and passively. We shall resist their out-dated, reactionary policies with the last ounce of energy in our veins. We shall fight them from press and platform, and we shall never rest till we have pulled out the image of White Domination from their dangerous dreams.

"I have only one warning to sound to my European co-citizens, and I sound it with all the solemnity at my command. It is this: if they turn to the Federal Independence Party for their political inspiration, and if they deny the United Country Party the support which we believe it deserves, the Indian community, indeed, I dare say, the entire Asian community, will cut off every link of cooperation with them and arm itself to its constitutional teeth to fight them to the hilt."

Once more, Blundell and friends were acutely embarrassed. But the minister kept restrained and told interviewers: "Whether it is Mr. Mangat's intention or not, the fact is that by his methods he is only succeeding in exasperating all shades of European political opinion. I welcome cooperation, but Mr. Mangat has not yet proved that he is cooperative."

Mangat's blessing on the UCP and his "solemn warning" to Europeans to stay clear of the FIP have been interpreted as a move to sabotage the UCP. The thought is as follows:

Under the Lyttelton Plan, the Europeans still have the lion's share of the unofficial power---three, or one-half, of the unofficial ministries are held by white settlers. If multi-racial government works, the Europeans might be cemented in their position of "leadership"---or, if you prefer, "domination"---for a long time to come.

But if FIP candidates win the next general election and if, as is likely, they refuse to serve as ministers alongside two Asians and one African, then Kenya would revert to its old constitutional status. The Colonial Office would make the next move.

The pattern in the other two large territories in British East Africa is one of real parity---at least between Europeans and Asians. Tanganyika is due to embark on a new plan whereby there will be nine European, nine Asian and nine African unofficals in its Legco. In Uganda there are 18 African unofficals and nine Europeans and nine Asians.

Perhaps, these observers conclude, Mr. Mangat would like to see a return to Colonial Office rule because of the possibility that the next constitutional change in Kenya would then be along the lines of Uganda and Tanganyika. At any rate, it is pointed out, public and official opinion back in England is strongly against the FIP and its Malanist ideas. If the settlers flock to it, they would lose whatever sympathy they now have, to the advantage of the other races.

I had a little talk with Mangat in his office the other day. In response to a question, he said, "If the Europeans gravitated to the FIP, I'd welcome a return to Colonial Office rule. We can't expose the whole population of Asians and Africans to the FIP. If we sink, we'll pull them down, too."

What does he think about the UCP?

First, he said: "There's no other way for Kenya than the UCP."

Then, he said: "The language of the UCP is different. These people are a bit mellower, but underneath it's still the same."

I asked if he thought his endorsement of the UCP, and his warning to Europeans to keep away from the FIP, would help the UCP.

"Oh, no," he said. "The Europeans think if an Indian says something, it must be prejudicial to European interests."

Then why did he endorse the UCP?

Mangat thought for a minute. "Maybe I'm saying too much," he said. Then he added, amid halts, "I only wanted to tell them, well, there's no use trying to exclude other groups."

Mangat then bubbled over as he discussed his latest brain-child--- a round table conference between the FIP and the Kenya Indian Congress, for whatever that might produce.

"We mean to assert ourselves," Mangat declared. "An effort should be made. Even if we cannot reach agreement, they will have to realize they can't run away from other people in their conception of an entirely white Kenya."

Nairobi has been buzzing with amusement lately over the fact that Mangat turned up at a recent luncheon of the Law Society of Kenya with, as his guest, Leo Vigar, publisher of the right-wing magazine Comment and Nairobi chairman of the FIP.

"All through the lunch he kept calling me a scoundrel," Mangat said. "So I kept telling him, 'All right, I'm a soundrel, but what are we going to do now?'"

"You know, he had six whisky and sodas---for lunch! Hmm, maybe that's the western civilization I'm supposed to be so badly in need of.

"But, anyway, the luncheon was a success. Vigar is appointing a committee to meet with us."

It has been conjectured that Mangat's aim in this respect is only to bait the FIP into an even more extreme position. But it must be remembered that "round table conferences" are an old panacea in Kenya. Other than hot air, they produce little if nothing, but everyone is always in favor of them.

Whatever Mangat's final aims are, it is clear he means to assert himself. Some of the things he said in the famous Congress speech are true, some are grossly exaggerated, some are just not based on facts. But the feeling behind everything that he said is the same: frustration, mixed with an aggressive attitude. The Lyttelton Plan, far from salving Indian feelings, has only served to inflame them.

Indian leaders talk a bit of abolishing the color bar, but few ever invite Africans to their social functions. What they are really talking about is not the color bar in general, but the color bar that Europeans apply against Indians.

Their maneuverings for power in East Africa are not basically different from those of the Europeans. While the Kenya Indian musters arguments about democracy to support his claim for equal rights, and insists on the common roll to effect that end, his cousin in Zanzibar opposes the common roll with equal vigor because it would weaken his position.

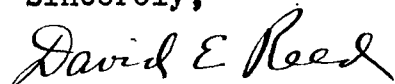
The Congress meeting and other events tended to show that Indian leaders are not backing down from their decision to side with the Europeans against the Africans---Mangat's "rebellious child," who wants, by virtue of superior numbers to run things himself eventually. But there is an important proviso in the Indian attitude, and Mangat is making that clear: they will insist on full equality with the Europeans.

The left-wing was quiet at the Congress meeting. No particularly leftist resolutions were adopted; no mention was made about the recent detention without trial of Pio Pinto, a Goan leftist.*

The tone of the meeting also pointed up another fact: Though Kenya Indians generally are sympathetic to India, a large number are quite cool toward the repeated statements of Nehru and of his Commissioners in East Africa that the local Indians should, in effect, cast their lot completely with the Africans. Apa Pant used to say the Indians "must not consider themselves as privileged people and expect, or accept, privileges at the expense of the indigenous people..."

Multi-racial government is no success as far as European-Indian antagonisms are concerned. Mangat is not finished yet with his ringing: "We mean to assert ourselves." But, for the moment, there may be a few weeks of quiet on that sector of the Kenya front. Mangat has gone off to India for a visit. The next battle will be between Europeans and Europeans, at the October "truce conference."

Sincerely,



David E. Reed

* Pinto, who used to describe himself as secretary of the Kenya Indian Congress, was editor of the Daily Chronicle, a Nairobi newspaper written in English and Gujerati. The Congress denied at the time of his arrest that he had any association with them. But he did have an office at their headquarters. He was detained under a governor's detention order and taken to Nairobi prison, the first non-African to be detained since the Emergency was declared. There is no judicial appeal; like detained Africans, he can be held for any length of time. No reason was given for the detention, but the government did say it had nothing to do with his journalistic activities---the paper was quite anti-white settler. I know that he had been in close association with, shall we say, "vigorous" Kikuyu nationalists, but have no way of knowing if they were Mau Mau.