

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

GJ-3  
Kenya

21 March 1970  
Box 21262  
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. R. H. Nolte  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
535 Fifth Avenue  
New York 10017

Dear Mr. Nolte:

When visitors or native Kenyans ask for our impressions of this country thus far, it is very interesting how each member of the family takes a different subject to talk about. However, within the context of each expression, a similar theme appears to evolve; everyone seems to indicate somehow that our stay has been filled with many challenging and enjoyable experiences.

Although new and differing cultural demands are constantly being placed on us as we attempt to become a part of the African community, we find many of the problems facing the Kenyans to be quite similar to those we encountered in the States: namely, rapid urbanization, school deficiencies, and habitual unemployment. This familiarity at least gives us some insight into the problem if not the solution.

Kenya's land area size is a little under 225,000 square miles. It is bordered on the north by Ethiopia and Sudan, on the west by Uganda, and on the south by Tanzania. Directly to the east is the Indian Ocean with the Somali Republic touching the north-east corner.

The population of ten million is mainly African; however, there are approximately 250,000 Asian, European, and Arab people. The five major tribes, Kikuyu, Luo, Baluhya, Kamba, and the Meru make up the greatest part of the population.

Agriculture remains the most important subdivision of the Kenyan economy. During 1968 it accounted for 14.7 per cent of the total gross domestic product. According to the Government Development Plan, 1970-1974, this percentage is somewhat below the figures for the preceding two years. An incidence of coffee berry disease and an increase in use of synthetic materials are said to be the main cause of the decrease. Heretofore, coffee and sisal have been the leading products of the agricultural economy. Some of the other marketing products include wheat, maize, sugar cane, and tea.

Over the years there has been noticeable growth in building and construction, transportation, and manufacturing.



The need to share

Tourism is fast becoming one of the leaders in the Kenyan economy. At a banquet we attended at the Hilton in honor of the European press, Mr. Shako, the new Minister for Tourism and Wildlife remarked that Kenya is rapidly approaching the status of being the "crossroads mecca for international travel."

The forecasters of the Ministry for Tourism estimate that by 1974 the tourist trade will open up close to 40,000 jobs and add approximately 37 million pounds to the economy. In anticipation of this tremendous growth, the Ministry is asking for 5,000 new beds in hotels and game lodges. A request for improvement of roads and modes of transportation to and from most of the tourist attractions is also being considered.



The new Nairobi Hilton

The months of January, February and March are the high periods of tourism. During the past two months many distinguished personalities have enjoyed the wildlife sanctuaries of Kenya. Among some of the more well known have been King Frederik and Queen Ingrid of Denmark, President and Mrs. Tito of Yugoslavia, and Secretary Rogers of the United States.

We were especially pleased with the visit by the King and Queen. It so happened that at the time of their visit, we were staying at the same hotel. Subsequently, on many occasions we found ourselves among their entourage. At one point, my wife found herself in the elevator with the entire royal party. Rather than speaking to them in English and hoping to get a response, she simply smiled. She found this situation to be rather awkward. It's not every day that one is trapped in an elevator with a king and queen!

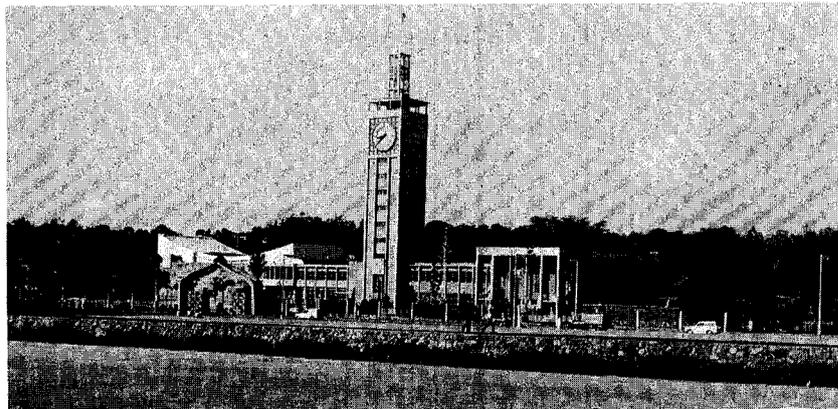
Besides enjoying all the excitement generated by the visiting royalty from Denmark to the relatively new Hilton Hotel, there were many moments when we were impressed by the resourcefulness of its staff. One situation in particular which caused some anxious moments occurred when twenty-four hours before the king and queen were to arrive, the management discovered the beds in the V.I.P. suite to be much too small for the stature of the King. Many phone calls and numerous inquiries finally resulted in a local firm's taking on the responsibility of constructing king-size beds (no pun intended) within the time limit given them. The beds--a total of seven--were completed exactly two hours before the arrival of the royal party. Hopefully, the seven beds would be enough to accommodate the King during his movement around Kenya. One could feel the tension subside when everything was finally in place.

It is difficult to relate to the African community of Kenya without making some reference to its President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. His presence and impact on Kenya became much more meaningful to me after I had the opportunity in January of attending his inauguration and listening to him deliver his address. As he brought out and discussed the problems facing the new nation at this time, it was impossible not to reflect on the advancements made during the past forty years.

During the early thirties, Kenyatta began campaigning for more African representation in Parliament. He was working mainly through the Kikuyu Central Association, one of the first African political groups. Because of his skill and forceful argument, his campaign soon led him to England where he continued the cause of his people. While there, he argued not only for more representation, but also appealed to the Carter Commission concerning the theft of Kikuyu land. Upon his return to Kenya in the early forties, Kenyatta gave up his position as General Secretary of the Kikuyu Central Association and assumed the head position of the Kenyan African Union. The fight for Africanization continued.



The Inauguration  
(courtesy of the Nation)



Parliament

The next four years of colonial resistance to the demands for greater African participation in the ruling sector of Parliament climaxed in October, 1952, with the initiation of the Emergency. The Emergency period, or the "mau mau" era, lasted for seven years. During this time span, more than 77,000 Kikuyus, including Kenyatta, were placed in detention camps.

However, while addressing the masses attending the ceremonies of his second inauguration, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta asked the "wananchi" (citizens) "to forget the past and work hard for economic independence now that we have succeeded in gaining our political freedom." Later in his talk, he gave warning to all those within the sound of his voice, "Whoever may dare to toy about with our hard-won Uhuru (freedom), whether individually or in league with anyone else, we will sure as the daylight grind like maize flour." As he reached the peak of his delivery, he involved his audience by asking challenging questions. The one which drew the most response was: "Isn't it true that much of our economy is still in the hands of foreigners, of non-citizens?" He then answered with, "As we resolutely freed ourselves from the yoke of imperialism, so we must free ourselves economically."

After his own swearing in ceremony, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta presided over the remainder of the program consisting of the swearing in of 21 high cabinet officials. Upon completion of this more formalized aspect of the program, we were entertained by the police marching band and a parade which lasted about one hour. It included military personnel from the Army, Air Force, and Navy; civilian police; Youth Corps students; Agricultural Corps; Canine Corps and many others. The bright colors of the different tribal groups along with the brilliance of the military uniforms added much splendor to the afternoon.

The following day, however, after all the pomp of the ceremony, the chief executive and his cabinet settled down to an agenda which would certainly tax their skill as statesmen for the next five years. Some of the issues felt to be most problematic and worthy of immediate attention involved the areas of housing, education, and employment.

As is the case with many rapidly growing countries, people living in rural areas look to the big cities for adventure and easy money. It is estimated that at the present rate of growth, Kenya by the year 2,000 will have over 10 million people living in urban areas. Nairobi and Mombasa, the two chief cities, will contain at least 4.5 million of the total.



Rapid  
urbanization



Urban planners are faced with at least two alternatives to ease the situation; they can either develop suitable living arrangements to accommodate the masses, or they can work towards developing the rural areas to the degree where people find it economically and socially attractive. The latter happens to be one of the pet projects of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta: that is, the return to the land of the people.



Rural Kenya

In urban Kenya, as in the United States, many people are living in conditions which are well below an acceptable standard of living. And although the Government, through an aggressive Ministry for Housing, and the private sector, through the National Housing Corporation, are spending much time and energy trying to accommodate its citizens, the problem doesn't appear to lessen. Shanty towns are constantly springing up. These structures are not only eye-sores in such a picturesque country, but they also threaten the health of their inhabitants. Recently, with ample warning, the Government began burning down these health hazards. As an alternative to this process, many critics have offered the suggestion that it would be more economical and more appropriate if the Government would maintain but refurbish these existing homes rather than destroy them. They see this as a temporary measure until better quarters can be constructed. I can sympathize with both points of view. In order to share the financial burden of this new building program, the businessman is being asked to contribute a little more than he has traditionally given. The feeling is that he should "earn his license by paying for our social service."

It is also felt that more people like businessmen should become involved in bringing about a change in the educational system. The headlines in this week's paper read: "Change All Education, Heads Urge." This appeal for change has been springing from many sectors of the African community. It is felt that the content has no relevance to the culture and daily living needs of the African. It has also tended to alienate many of the youngsters from their society. Its present structure, according to one writer, is a replica of the British way of life. It also reflects the need of the British during the last century when their objective was to produce a professional and managerial class.

The African public feel that it is high time their children learned about Kenyan history and geography. The old colonial attitude which is evident in books telling about "discoveries of European explorers" will no longer be tolerated. Subject matter must be taught from a nationalistic point of view. Accordingly, the Government is attempting to Kenyanize school staffs as much as possible.

The following diagram gives an idea of the present Kenyan Education system.

#### Primary School

Standards 1-7  
(Certificate of Primary Education Examination)

#### Secondary School

Forms 1 and 2  
(Kenya Junior Secondary Examination)

Forms 3 and 4  
(East African Certificate of Education Examination)

#### Higher School Certification

Forms 5 and 6  
(Higher School Certificate Examination)

University      1st year  
                     2nd year  
                     3rd year

Many Africans who have grown up with the system feel they spent most of their time preparing for examinations rather than concentrating on the essence of the subject matter. There is almost no emphasis placed on getting a manual skill of some type.

Mr. Taita Towett, Minister for Education, in a recent talk declared that a National Service in teaching for all secondary school leavers might be necessary to lessen the present school crisis. A 1969 report showed a total of 160,000 boys and girls taking the Certificate of Primary Education Examination and passing it. However, only 40,000 were able to go on to Government schools or Harambee schools, the latter being a part of the local drive to offer education to all.

Realizing the need to reorganize the school system and make it more viable, the Ministry of Education has taken upon itself the task of exploring alternatives. One suggestion being favorably considered asks that the Certificate of Primary Education be postponed until after two more years of primary education. This would bring the primary time period up to nine years. At this time the C.P.E. would be given mainly to see which route a student should be encouraged to pursue, either an academic career or a manual vocation. The exam would no longer be a means of preventing students from gaining more education. In order for this suggestion to become a reality, however, there would be a great need for financial support to establish more vocational schools, which are very limited in number at the present time.

In its approach to the present educational dilemma, the Government Plan, 1970-1974, sets up the following goals for the future:

- to provide universal primary education;
- to insure enough places at the secondary and higher levels to educate those with recognized ability; and
- to organize the educational system to meet the manpower needs of the country.

The World Bank has adopted these goals; and to further the drive to bring about the Kenyanization of the educational system, it has made a loan of over two million pounds. The money will be specifically used for the promotion of agricultural education, technical education, and teacher education. Money has also been designated towards developing a comprehensive educational plan. Hopefully this plan will offer suggestions which will have implications for the next logical step after school completion, that is, employment.

The prospect of the 120,000 youngsters not in school last year, coupled with the fact that only relatively few new labor market entrants are absorbed into some form of paid employment, makes the question of unemployment most important.

Along with school drop-outs, the Government will be giving attention to the following causes of unemployment:

1. the high rate of population growth
2. the increasing capital intensity of techniques of production in modern sectors of the community
3. the level and rate of increase of wages and salaries
4. the inadequate level and quality of vocational training and the inappropriateness of some educational curricula
5. social barriers to mobility in rural areas
6. the rural-urban wage differential which attracts large numbers from rural areas to the larger towns.

The prospects for the future development of the African community in a manner which will be truly meaningful to its "wananchi" is most encouraging. The serious, enthusiastic leadership of the members of Parliament, augmented by the capable guidance of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, should prove to be the workable combination necessary to bring the country closer to its potential. We all wait with much anticipation to see the country move in the future as rapidly as it has done in the past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'G'.

Received in New York on April 3, 1970.

