

MY DEATH WARRANT

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(The following essay is a section from the work in progress of Obi B. Egbuna, young Nigerian creative writer at present living in London. We don't expect that all our readers will agree with everything Mr. Egbuna has written—we don't either—but none can gainsay that his essay is splendidly written, stimulating and challenging. We invite readers' comments. The essay begins with an answer to 'mystery' why our political figures quarrel so much when, after all, they're all striving for 'the same thing . . .')

NO, THERE IS NO mystery. Reverend Martin Luther King and Malcolm Little were both fighting for 'the same thing'. Malcolm X was murdered, Dr. King awarded a Nobel Prize. Similarly, Patrice Lumumba and Monsieur Tshombe of the Congo were struggling for 'the same thing'. One was beheaded, the other decorated with headship of state. Freedom marchers from up north have crusaded down south to preach freedom and liberation to their southern brothers both in the United States of America and Vietnam. In these two countries, the liberators were after 'the same thing'. In Mississippi, however, they are being lauded, in Saigon they are being bombed. Nigeria and Ghana are each striving for African liberation and unity, 'the same thing' again, is it not? But one state is knighted the golden voice of democracy, the other denigrated as the nerve centre of dictatorial machinations. Surely, one does not need education here to see the glaring difference between 'the same thing' and 'the same thing'.

Nevertheless, millions of Africans, born at home and abroad, have allowed themselves to be educated down to a level of self-injurious 'the-same-thing' awareness which, apart from blinding them to the realities of their history, has indeed reduced them to a state of 'intellectual' animality from which, alas, they may never rise again. And the few, the very few, who refuse to respond to this treatment are being brutalized in various ways, shot, tortured, lynched or, in more sophisticated circles, financially persecuted, imprisoned and destroyed therein. Since this letter could easily be construed as a signed commitment to the latter camp, I am afraid that, falling into the hands of the 'King Makers', my frank writing could prove my death

warrant. I am not sure whether the thought of this frightens me or not, but I am quite certain that no people deserve to be free unless they outgrow petty intimidations.

Let me start with a staggering admission. I stopped blaming the white man a long time ago. For one reason, the white man can no longer help himself. And I say this in no sense of derision. It is a statement both in awe and love for humanity at large. Too many people, the blacks and the white liberals alike, spend a lot of time fighting this thing called Racial Discrimination but never devote one tiny second to what, to me, is the key question to the problem. What is Racial Discrimination? What are we fighting? What is the real nature of the enemy? What makes a man want to hate another person just because they are physically different and, at the same time, love his own wife devotedly for precisely the same reason: because they are physically different? Is racialism a biological something that the white man is born with while love, laughter and merriment are its genetic counterparts in the black man? If not, what is the cause of it? Is the racial problem, in the first place, capable of solution? And if so, are we competent to effect this solution? When? How? With what weapon? What strategy? And with what urgency?

The Root of Racialism

To tackle racialism without resolving these questions seems to me sheer misplaced enthusiasm. It has been said that understanding a problem is half the solution. How then can a man even begin to attempt a solution to a given problem without first analysing its causation? It is as ridiculous as trying to stick rose plants into a desert in the hope of growing one big garden of roses without attempting to find out why, in the first place, nothing grows in the desert and what must now be done to make the land productive. Failure to do this leads to greater failures. This is why we have fought Racial Discrimination for centuries and failed. And why we must fail again. Like the unthinking rose-gardener in the desert, we have been labouring and sweating to introduce a love-your-neighbour morality in a strike-to-survive community. To achieve this is impossible. Is it any wonder that most negro movement leaders in America, the Oxfam pilgrims, the Western liberal intellectuals and of course the black giants of American literature have nothing to offer their followers in the way of realization except superfluous publicity promoted by the very people who capitalize from the social evils our freedom fighters are dreaming to destroy? This is why the Negro in America considers it triumphant to be allowed to vote for the very system which thrives on Racial Discrimination. This is

why the Negro wants to identify himself with a 'prosperity' that perpetually reflects his humiliation.

This is why we still employ Gandhism in the American Negro struggles, even though history has proved time and again that peaceful resistance can only work in a society where a victimized people constitute an overwhelming majority and can therefore bring the social machine to a total standstill just by resisting passively, unlike the United States of America where, because the Negroes are in the minority, peaceful demonstrations could be going on in one street while white workers in nearby buildings carry on with their work, some guffawing over cups of coffee, legs thrown gaily on the table, not a single soul perturbed by the niggardly disturbance outside, thus the social machine rolls ahead in spite (if not because) of the peaceful demonstrations. We fail because we fight the enemy with the wrong weapon. We use the wrong weapon because the masses are encouraged not to understand the problem. They do not want the masses to understand because the status quo thrives on their ignorance which, in turn is a lucrative business—at any rate, to the leaders and their users.

The time has arrived when the Negro must go beyond analysing the intensity of his agony. We must stop groaning and supplicating and warning the white man that 'It' is coming. To echo this perennially without oneself knowing what 'It' is is self-delusion. Because 'It' will never come this way. And even if 'It' does come, he will never recognize 'It' on arrival. For this reason, he has stood by while the evangelists of this very 'It' are bludgeoned into an early grave and all he does is shake the hands of the murderer while the killer is still shaking his throat. This is the nemesis of the Negro revolution. We just don't know, and by knowledge here, I do not mean academic sacrament of some sort, for 'one does not need education to cherish the dream of freedom'.

I mean simply the elementary appreciation of the nature of one's problem before committing oneself to its solution, to make sure that the blow aimed at the enemy is firstly a blow and secondly is not going to fall on our children's heads instead.

It is no use taking up arms against Racial Discrimination without knowing, for instance, that Racialism is only one symptom of a deep-rooted disease, that the carriers of this disease are today posing as evangelists of wholesomeness and, in doing so, are contaminating the wholesome, while the latter are being 'educated' to discard goodness and go out of their way to court contamination. This is not just a Negro tragedy. It is a human catastrophe which, unless checked immediately, will pollute the whole world to an irretrievable degree.

We cannot rid society of discrimination without first curing the disease that causes discrimination. The disappearance of the rash never

precedes the riddance of the infection that produces the rash. It is a dangerous doctor who presumes to cure leprosy just by bandaging a rotting flesh and does nothing about the disease within. The most he can achieve is a healthy climate for leprous germs, a more frustrated leper and a bad attack of self-deception. You cannot destroy social germs by modernizing the design of the social machine in which the germs are incubated. The germs will only multiply, and frustration will mount till, one day, rebellion will burst forth like a volcanic eruption. Can anything illustrate the Negro dilemma more clearly?

Stanley Burch, writing from Washington in the *Daily Mail* of Friday, August 13th, 1965, said that

the American negro has run into a terrible paradox. He wins his triumphs in Congress, enlists the President as an ally and breaks down barricade after barricade. But when he goes home at night, things are worse than ever.

My personal submission is that no President, no Negro leader, no appointed conference on race, unprecedented or not, can ever find 'a way out' till they have found the way into the real root of the problem. The title of Mr. Burch's article was *Triumph and Tragedy for the Negro*. It all boils down to the fact that, for the Negro masses in America, it is great triumph on paper but greater tragedy in reality. It is even worse for the Negroes in Africa. And, I fear, the fate of the Negro, wherever he is in the world, will never change unless he changes his range of perception and the future of humanity is rather bleak unless the Negro is free.

In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, 'the emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of men.'

Before now, various attempts have been made at explaining man's inhumanity to man. But these explanations mainly reflect the wishful thinking of the group with the grip of power. As C. L. R. James puts it,

In a revolution, when the ceaseless slow accumulation of centuries burst into volcanic eruption, the meteoric flares and flights above are a meaningless chaos and lend themselves to infinite caprice and romanticism unless the observer sees them always as projections of the subsoil from which they come.

—*The Black Jacobins*

To get to the source of the race problem therefore and to understand why I agree that the hope for humanity lies in the untrammelled emancipation of Africa and the Africans, it is to this 'subsoil', particularly with reference to Africa and the Western world, that one must turn. Being African myself, the difficulty here is to be objective without seeming nationalistic to European judgement. Not that it matters (for

I have been called many things in my time without affecting what I am) but one likes to feel that the little he has to offer humanity in the way of constructive thinking and sanity (not necessarily by virtue of some superintelligence but owing mainly to his uniqueness of historical experience) is received or rejected with a vision unclouded by prejudice and suspicion.

Co-operation or Competition?

It is my experience that the basic difference between my people in Africa and the whites in the West is that the African sees life as a Co-operation while the Westerner regards it as a Competition. I am not suggesting by any means that the black man has a physiological component called Co-operation while the European is born with a Competition-saturated bloodstream. The mere fact that some 'educated' Africans tend today to be, in more ways than I care to mention, more Anglo-Saxon than the English themselves, makes this rather obvious. To put it crudely, I think that all that man has, from birth, be he white or black, is an 'awareness' or the ability to react to environment. But how he reacts to this environment depends fundamentally on the environment itself, the external stimulus that confronts him. A people are conditioned to life in the light of the economic possibilities surrounding them.

If a man is born in a society where existence depends on competition, he comes to accept life as a struggle and inevitably wants to exploit the differences between himself and other people to inflate his own ego. He stops seeing these differences just as differences but, in all good faith, as inequalities. All his education, home-training, social structure, denominational worship, club membership, every aspect of his life, is founded on 'inequality'. But in a 'co-operative' economy, it is a different story.

In my village of origin, for instance, Co-operation is the basis of life because of the way wealth is organized in the community. Essentially, we are an agricultural people. Our main source of wealth is land. Therefore land is divided equally so that every family has its share. And on the far side of the Ubu river, we have an extensive common land, Ofufe, where everybody goes to work during the cultivating season and helps to gather during the harvest, a sort of communal farm. As a result of this, my people have come to acquire over the centuries the psychological outlook that life is one big togetherness of beings. Love, not sexual love, but real fundamental love, has become the accepted norm of life, a universal thing. When there is rivalry among young people to see who is the fastest yam-bed digger at the communal

farm, the idea is not to find out which youth gets the most out of life but who puts in the most. The emphasis is on giving, not taking.

It is this mental attitude to rivalry that is noteworthy because, without grasping it, one would automatically assume that I am saying that all competition is unhealthy. It has been argued that, because athletics is a form of competition, Competition must be a healthy thing. But this argument ignores the vital issue involved which is the mental attitude of the competitors. For example, six young students could decide one sunny Saturday afternoon to go to a nearby race track and do some sprinting, just for the fun of it, to find out who is the fastest runner in the group. This is athletics. On the other hand, half a dozen other young men, unemployed, starving and desperate, could also decide to get together, put all the money they have in one hat and, depositing this 'pot of treasure' at the finishing end of the track, come to the agreement that whoever wins the race wins the money. This is also athletics. But here the mental approach is different, deadly, win or die, foul tricks not ruled out as long as you get there first and get the money, even if it means knocking down your rival's spectacles to render him half-blind. And, needless to add, whoever wins the race also wins the jealousy and hatred of the rest of the gang.

To live in a system where everything you do every day of your life—earning your living, having a shelter over one's head, acquiring every basic human need—entails this kind of deadly competition, is surely hardly compatible with real 'human' progress since it seems to me that the fundamental difference between human beings and the animals in the jungle is that man has realized that, by co-operating with one another, he can build societies, cities, beautiful cultures and civilizations, unlike the animal with the survival-of-the-fittest jungle law.

In a society founded on co-operation, going back to my village once more, man is not a means to an end, but the focus of all human endeavour. Naturally, men look forward to old age and approach it gracefully because—since the emphasis is on giving, not in extorting—it follows that the older you get, the more you shall have contributed to society and the more you are revered by the young. Far from being neglected and cast aside into a home as some disused piece of human junk, the aged are looked upon as spearheads of society and rewarded accordingly. In fact, the greatest compliment you could pay anyone in my town is to credit him with a superior age and, in so doing, surrender to him the right to break kola nuts at social gatherings, an enviable privilege of the eldest. So, life, far from being one continuous flight from the phantoms of age, is, in this kind of community, an increasing anticipation of greater respect, more love and attention, greater provision and satisfaction from those around you.

Compare this pattern of African social system with the life in the West. They are as opposite as black and white. Because of their competitive economic system, the Westerners have been conditioned over the centuries to envisage life as a man-versus-man combat. It is necessary for them therefore to crystallize the immaterial differences amongst people into some mythical inequalities in order to exploit them, not for the benefit of all, but to champion one's own material cause. 'I'm all right Jack' is the accepted norm of living. Neighbours are anything but neighbourly. The lucky ones just don't know each other. It is more fashionable to see your neighbour in terms of his acquisitive potential, a permanent threat to your ego. Naturally snobbery takes the place of love in the hearts of men and life continues as one unending battle of the Joneses. You could always tell the rank of the Joneses by the roses on the lapels of their jackets.

Within the family itself, a father is no longer a father to his children, he is rather 'my old man'. And children, one's flesh and blood, are not just children, they have become 'the younger generation' or 'the kids of today'. Whichever way you look, the rage of the battle is evident. Even when this 'younger generation' get together to 'enjoy' themselves, the competition complex once again manifests itself. They sub-divide themselves into 'Mods' and 'Rockers', pro-Beatles, crypto-Rolling Stones, anti-Animals, fighting and slashing each other's faces with razors. There are always two divisions in any gathering, 'they' and 'us'. When the 'us' are left on their own, a further sub-division takes place into 'sub-they' and 'sub-us', and then from 'sub-us' into 'sub-sub-they' and 'sub-sub-us' anything as long as the recurring decimal of division and hate is fostered. This continues till, within the individual self, the core of the human personality itself is fractured into destructive internal conflicts and sub-conflicts. Result? A deep-rooted disease which frustrates man beyond the limits of self-retrievability.

The Disease of Discrimination

This is how the African abroad must see his struggle. He is discriminated against not primarily because he is black but for the simple reason that he constitutes a black minority 'they' against a white majority 'us' in a cut-throat economy. It is no different from the way women were once looked down upon as inferiors to men in Europe. Quack theorists of male superiority were just as prevalent and voluble then as the racist theorists of today. But the truth nevertheless became triumphant when the war broke out and women went into the factory to prove their competence. The disease is not in the man but in the economic air he inhales. It takes a savage economy to breed savage

men. All discrimination stems from this same cause. As John Griffin puts it,

I could have been a Jew in Germany, a Mexican in a number of states, or a member of any 'inferior' group. Only the details would have differed. The story would be the same.—*Black Like Me*.

Yet, the self-appointed planners of world progress have ignored this basic decadence of man only to concentrate on blowing out in Africa the one flame of sanity that keeps the globe aglow. They talk about the under-development of Africa and Asia and turn a blind eye to the over-development of the West in the negative direction. We read that the African dies from malaria and leprosy, which is true. But we are not told that the European dies from all sorts of neuroses the African has not even heard about. They throw the floodlight on the African diseases of the body and shuffle into the dark the European diseases of the mind. We are warned of the fatality of the viruses of the body and left unenlightened about the more destructive fatality of the viruses of the mind. The African infant mortality is rated as astronomical but the European suicide mortality is not even on the charts. Perhaps the African is being asked to get rid of one mortality and replace it with another, evidently a more destructive one. The Western dieticians are busy sending 'expert' recommendations to the undernourished Africans, apparently forgetting to include the information that whilst one death in four in Britain is caused by Coronary Thrombosis, not to mention one in three in more 'developed' America, this form of death is known to be comparatively non-existent in Africa and that the reason for this lies in the diet. We know that one in two hundred in Britain is psychotic and one in five is neurotic but, in Nigeria, for instance, it is one in five hundred, a figure which gets worse with the 'westernisation' of Nigeria.

Confirming these figures in a television broadcast in Britain, Dr. Lambo, an African Western-trained psychiatrist, attributed this to

'a wealth of what we term psycho-therapeutic measures in the African cultures. For example, the presence and the availability of the so-called witch-doctors, whom we now term traditional healers, and other safety valves which are built-in in the cultures.'

It is no coincidence that all progressive-thinking Africans, particularly those who have come to know Europe and America as well as they know their homelands, have insistently called upon the West to please re-examine her basic philosophy of life, to pursue it unilaterally if she must and not meddle with other continental civilizations she barely understands. This repeated call is made in no spirit of arrogance or blind nationalism but out of the educated consideration that the 'Western' philosophy of life is basically destructive, anti-man,

and has nothing more to offer humanity except of course the formula for nuclear euthanasia. The African of today has ceased to be the black recluse who knows nothing about the world outside. Neither is he like the intellectual European who looks at the entire universe through a European cultural spectrum and therefore can't help but arrogate to himself the moral indispensability to pontificate to the rest of the world on matters affecting anyone, anything, anywhere, by European standards.

Born African, brought up in Africa and well imbued with the African spirit of life, the present day African knows his African traditions, customs, cultural and overall philosophy of life. And if he has spent most of his life attending European institutions of learning, schools, colleges, and universities, sometimes travelling abroad to the West to live for a while, studying, working, speaking the languages of the West, reading Western philosophers and, not infrequently, living at European homes as a member of the family, he can also claim to know the West appreciably. Because of this duality of cultural backgrounds, he is, at any rate more than anyone in the world today, in a unique position to look objectively into both cultural spheres and, after due analytical comparison, to offer the world his findings. This is precisely what he has done. He has found a Europe where there are well-developed aeroplanes, well-developed motor cars and well-developed space ships but where the most important thing of all has been ignored the development of the human being. He remembers an Africa peopled by men and women who, though bare-footed and ragged, have reached a level of spiritual development where they shake hands in warm friendship with anyone, no matter the colour of his skin. He has discovered that civilization does not mean mechanization but simply the type of individuals any society does produce.

Don't Blame the Machine!

This is not measured by the number of Methuselahs a community turns out, for what really counts is not how long you live but how well. He now knows as false the claim that social decadence is a consequence of industrialization because industrialization is merely the substitution of machine labour for human labour, only the means not the end. What matters is the end and that is where the causation lies. There is no mysterious element in the latest machine which destroys the human in the man any more than there is in the primitive tool to enhance it. He sees the mechanization of Europe as a result of the white man's fight for survival in a hostile climate and he admires the white man for his triumph.

A man cannot survive on snow bare-footed. Even to walk, the white man needed shoes, to make shoes, he needed industry, to have industry, he needed the raw materials, to get to the raw material, he had to travel the distant lands, to do this, he needed strong ships, which again called for larger industries. The overall result is mechanization. Unlike the European, the African needed no central-heating in the sun, no fur coats, no big boats to carry the Walter Raleighs to South America to get potato for staple food. Communalism is the consequence of abundance. The disadvantage of this desperate mechanisation of Europe is that the Westerners have concentrated too much on the mechanics of life and left the true picture of man behind, to have adopted the erroneous attitude that the purpose of life is to tame nature, not to improve it, hence they talk of the 'conquest of space' instead of the knowledge of it.

To crown it all, destructive competition has poisoned the social atmosphere and dehumanized man to the level of a beast with nuclear claws. So animal has man become in his reasoning that the advancement of weapons of destruction from bows and arrows to atomic bomb is indeed considered compatible with the advancement of man himself and a yardstick of national prestige. Accordingly, the 'success' of the individual has come to mean a measure of his rapacity and greatness of a nation the destructive potential of a demented class.

On the other hand, the unfortunate consequence of the non-industrialization of Africa is the comparative absence of mechanical stratification of her culture, a factor which has rendered Africa vulnerable to the invasion of foreign cultures. This, the African youth finds today is rather mournful, for it means the capitulation of humanism to bestiality, the loss of reason, the conquest of love, the deepening of the cleavage between what man ought to be and the twentieth-century man. Whether the African is talking of Pan-Africanism, negritude, or the vindication of the African personality, this is what he means. He wants Africa totally unchained so that the old continent will, once again, teach the new world the old secret of being man.

But Africa cannot do this in shackles for a chained man is an unfree man and an unfree man seldom makes a willing teacher. Here and there on the African continent, a handful of white men have carved out little segments of Europe from where they hope to dominate millions of Africans and stifle beautiful cultures which they fear to understand in the same way the drug addict fears to understand a medical treatise on heroin. In the words of Richard West (*The White Tribes of Africa*), 'they came in search of gold, overthrew the existing race by cunning and now behave as though crazed by the Niebelung curse'.

Yet the white tribesmen of Africa and their apologists in the West are the first to point out that black Africa is made up of packs of tribesmen without explaining what they mean by the term tribe. Does tribalism mean the existence of groups who speak different languages? If so, the whole world is undoubtedly tribalistic. Or does it mean the exploitation of cultural differences for the mutual hatred of each other?—in which case, again, the whole world is progressively tribalistic, and tribalism, far from being the monopoly of the past and of Africans, is in fact the vogue of our time—an age in which the ditch between peoples is increasingly being dug deeper with the nuclear spade.

A West Indian immigrant who plays a calypso record makes headline news as an invader of British culture, a man in desperate need of cultural assimilation into the British society but it is quite in order for a handful of European immigrants in Africa to expect millions of Africans to assimilate the European culture before having a vote or a say in the government of their own fatherland. Thus the European immigrant believes that the conversion of Africa into one big asylum, like the one they left behind, is the way to civilize Africa, the process of civilization ranging of course from the Sharpeville massacre to the white mercenaries in the Congo holding up little black infants by the feet and gleefully chopping them in halves.

This sort of thing is often dismissed as the irresponsible misbehaviour of the odd few. Whether a black man is stabbed in Britain or lynched in America, the same verdict is too readily volunteered. The horror is that these are not seen as extreme examples of a national attitude. The contention often advanced is that you cannot judge a people by what the minority does or says. But the fact still remains that while you may not judge a people by what the minority does, you must judge them by how the majority reacts to what the minority does.

Racialism in Britain

So 'unsympathetic' is the reaction of the tolerant majority to the actions of the fascist minority in Britain that thousands of overseas students come jolly and grinning to the country every year only to leave for their homelands a few years later with gnashing teeth and well-learned in the language of hatred. So dedicated are the British folk to 'co-existence and inter-racial harmony' that elections have been fought and won on racialist platforms, with the leader of the major political party involved standing resolutely by his decision not to reprimand this 'minority' transgression of national piety. So 'anti-segregationist' is the British national sentiment that one can seldom turn on the wireless or television without confronting racialist propaganda at its

subtlest and best, or turn the pages of newspaper without seeing the science of imagery being manipulated in its deadliest form to whip up the anti-colour epidemic already lying latent in the public mind.

A coloured boy who dies of the typhoid makes headline news, the information carefully kept out that the young man was born and brought up in Britain and, far from smuggling typhoid germs into the country while some inefficient customs officer was on duty, must have caught his disease, just like a normal white boy, while living here—thus the public imagination is skilfully steered to reach the wildest conclusions. Similarly, an African student alleged in a court of law to have started a rumpus by talking politics to a young lady against her inclination (and this is her story) was reported in a London local newspaper as just ‘pestering a white girl’, no mention of politics made. The fair-minded public-morality-protecting editor maintained to the last that he published the facts. He was right of course. Fact, as proved by the case in question, only means the absence of contradiction and never guarantees the whole truth.

Thus ‘factually’, Africa could be a jungle or a civilization, London a dignified Westminster or a filthy East End, Wimbledon a haven of beautiful nurses or a crawling ground for decrepit patients and stooping mummies bandaged in translucent stockings. With this vantage, the science of imagery, implemented and perfected from the colonial times, has been used to depict a coloured man abroad as germ-ridden, sex-maniacal and sub-human; and his continent of origin as a mere cultural and historical vacuum in which Europe swelled up.

‘One of these subtle methods’, writes Kwame Nkrumah in *Consciencism*, ‘is to be found in the account of history. The history of Africa, as presented by European scholars, has been encumbered with malicious myths. It was even denied that we were a historical people. It was said that whereas other continents had shaped history, and determined its course, Africa had stood still, held down by inertia; that Africa was only propelled into history by the Europeans’ contact. African history was therefore presented as an extension of European history.’

Commonwealth Immigration

So antipathetic to this sort of thing is the British government and so humanitarian its radical programme that it now seeks the right to deport any immigrant who has committed no crime.

So Commonwealth-spirited are they that while the streets and auditoriums of London were reverberating with the sweet sounds of the Commonwealth Arts Festival, the vaults of Westminster were

echoing with the worst anti-Commonwealth legislation on record. The British government have, in a brutish manner, withheld from the British public, the full information regarding the immigration issue. They have carefully concealed the fact that the coloured immigrant constitutes the lowest percentage of the total immigrant population in Britain. They have not told the people that the staggering number of 'unskilled' coloured labour that flocks into Britain includes a vast number of qualified professionals like doctors, engineers, nurses, social workers, etc. who, if anything, heighten the social standard rather than lower it; and, that after the Commonwealth job-grabber has been stopped from coming to settle in Britain, another job-grabber (perhaps a more competitive one) would be coming from Ireland and other European countries to take his place. While the B.B.C. is blaring about the 'language problems' of the coloured immigrant, the fact is that most Commonwealth immigrants (from the Caribbean, to mention but one) speak fluent English but their European replacements can't. Finally, if immigration is a crime, Britain has committed this crime abroad more than anyone can ever do in Britain.

All this is enough to astound a coloured observer. If history counts for anything at all and modern events are a part of history, one cannot help but believe that Australia is reserved for the whites, New Zealand reserved for the whites, United States of America reserved for the whites, most of Europe reserved for the whites, even the key parts of Africa itself are reserved for the whites by the whites with the blessing of the whites. And where the whites' physical presence is not felt, their economic tentacle is pushing, burrowing, sucking the blood of the land dwellers. Where then is the black man? This is the question every conscientious man must ask himself. Barely two decades after a voice from the British monarchy was calling on 'the brothers and sisters of the Commonwealth' to 'join hands with us' to fight the Germans, to preserve 'democracy' and 'freedom', a voice from the same throne was calling on the German people, during a state visit to Germany, to 'unite with us and share our great civilization, history and heritage', at a time when the Commonwealth generation that fought these German 'enemies' to enthrone this 'heritage of democracy' were being cast out of Britain as social problems, unskilled immigrants, law breakers, or any other sophisticated synonym of the American 'Nigger'.

The coloured man must brief himself with this information, interpret it accurately and then tackle the colour problem without confusion or leave it alone. He must face the grim fact that, in spite of pious declarations by Western political careerists before, during or after their terms of office, and the sparkingly phrased apostrophizations of certain

ideals like Freedom, Democracy, Affluence, Liberty and Freedom of Speech, there will never be freedom from coercion for the black man and no racial harmony as long as the Western basic philosophy of life remains unaltered. Any member of an 'inferior' group in the West who does not face this fact and jumps onto the band wagon of integrationists is in for a terrible experience of schizophrenia and frustration. Time will not solve it either, for Time, like Space, is only a medium in which an act of solution or pollution can take place. As such, all that time has is a quality of mutuality of application. You can employ it for good and you can employ it for evil. You might wait for a solution for another hundred years and find that the outcome of the problem is not an orientation towards goodness but a fully fledged social evil which has undergone elaborate metamorphoses.

Communalism and Socialism

The real truth is that in any society where the economic power is in the hands of a minority, that society can never be a civilization but a jungle. And one has no right to expect anything other than a jungle morality. A Negro who reasons this way must be prepared for accusations of unoriginality. It has been said before, his critics will scream. But the Negro is not interested in whether anyone has said it before or not. His problem is not to say what no one has said before or to be concerned with some sort of academic rivalry. His concern is whether what he is saying is true or false. Karl Marx may have said it before but the fact still remains that while Marx was preaching his philosophy in Europe in the nineteenth century, people, when allowed to do so by European colonizers, were living this 'Utopia' in Africa, the 'co-operative' way wealth was being distributed in African societies had already made possible a socialist man (or communalistic man, if you like). The mistake of the liberal Negro leader is his futile attempts to introduce this socialist morality into a capitalist economy. He must appreciate the fact that Feudalism, Slavery, and Capitalism are on a plane far different from Communalism and Socialism.

The first three have one underlying principle in that, whether under Feudalism, Slavery, or Capitalism, the fundamental fact remains the same—that society is divided into two segments; one working to produce the wealth, the other living on the wealth produced by the first. Feudalism, Slavery and Capitalism are manifestations of this same principle, the only slight difference being that the means of coercion between the working segment and the exploiting class alters as society transforms from one form to another, and, with them the popular slogans. Under Feudalism the slogan was the Divine Right of Kings

and Nobility, under Slavery and Colonization, it was the Christian mission to civilize humanity, in Capitalism, it is Freedom and Democracy. All three societies thrive on exploitation of man by man, no matter the excuse given by those on the privileged side of the dungeon. All the societies therefore produce men with 'competitive' mentality and diehard discriminating habits; the same jungle morality, the same dominant-class phobia.

But Communalism and Socialism are on an entirely different plane. Under these, society is not split up into two economic segments, one working to produce consumable wealth, the other parasiting on these proceeds without working. Another way to put it, at any rate in theory, is that the dominant segment of the society has coincided with the whole. Every member of the social family does work and the wealth produced thereof is owned and shared in common. This is how and why, as explained above, the psychology of social equality and inter-group brotherhood is brought about with time; and children, reared in this kind of civilized atmosphere grow up to become civilized citizens of the world. This morality is exclusive to Communalism and Socialism.

So, just as Feudalism, Slavery and Capitalism share one basic principle, namely exploitation of group by group, Communalism and Socialism share a common principle of non-exploitation, and a common morality of man's humanity to man, Socialism being merely a technically stratified Communalism in which production is intensified by machine and automation. As Kwame aptly declared in *Consciencism*,

if one seeks the social-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism. Socialism stands to communalism as capitalism stands to slavery.

It is therefore of utmost importance for those who fight segregation to note this vital difference in plane between the principle of the system in which they live and the principle they endeavour to achieve. Feudalism, Slavery and Capitalism dwell on one plane. Communalism and Socialism occupy another. You cannot introduce the morality that exists in one system into another without jumping from one plane to another. This is a revolutionary leap and calls for revolutionary impetus to implement it, not quasi-static reforms. Integration is incompatible with capitalism. Equality is a phenomenon completely foreign to the psychological constitution of the capitalist man. It is much easier to make a carnivorous animal eat grass and adopt the philosophy of vegetarianism than to make a mentality cast in a capitalist mould to practise a socialist morality. The trouble of the capitalist man is his psychology just as the impediment of the carnivorous beast to herbivorous adaptation is his physiology. The reasoning that socialism is

gradually being achieved by social reforms is self-defeatist.

The British National Health Service, often cited as one unimpeachable blessing of these 'socialist' reforms, demonstrates this fact. If the worker, at this stage a vital part of the industrial machine, is denied 'free' medical service, the chances are, as past experience did show, that a sick worker who is unable to afford the doctor's bill (or even one who can afford it but wants to save the hard earned and much needed money) will rather lie down under his blankets at home and hope for the best than go to a hospital for treatment. Meanwhile, the industrial output, efficiency, and inevitably the capitalist profit, suffer considerably. This is the true position. When a lathe machine is serviced and oiled at intervals, the object is to get the maximum efficiency out of it, not to effect gradual socialism for the lathe machines. What is more, contrary to the beliefs of a surprising number of workers, the Health Service is not a 'free' medical service but a compulsory one because the worker has already paid for it.

The option of whether one should go to a doctor when indisposed or save his money by just having a good rest at home is replaced by subtle compulsion in the name of the employer's good business and profit. So, in reality, the Health Service is not really an achievement for the worker but a crashing triumph for the employing class. Similarly, the National Assistance, far from being another accomplished item on the 'socialist' programme, is another ingenious device to stabilize capitalism. Since a hungry man is an angry man who dares anything because he has nothing to lose, jobless men are potential revolutionaries and naturally a constant source of danger to the capitalist class. The only antidote to his anger is the abatement of his hunger. But the bribery thus given him must not exceed the barest minimum in order to compel him to keep on seeking fresh opportunities to sell his labour rather than new possibilities for a bloody revolution. The National Assistance therefore is the strongest insurance the capitalist class holds against its overthrow.

Seen in this light, the much-eulogized social reforms begin to assume their true significance. We begin to see, for instance, that our gorgeous council flats are not really homes in the true sense but warehouses where the human parts of the industrial machine and the spares (wives and children) are stored overnight till they are switched on again at dawn. Every morning the worker crawls out of the warehouse with the weathered look of a slave who has conditioned himself to enjoy his own slavery. In short, social reforms do not mean Socialism; at best, they signal the mockery of socialism and the consolidation of the degradation of man by man.

Reform and Revolution

It is important that the Negro does not confuse the superficial appeasement of these psychological irritants with the achievement of his freedom or mistake what reforms do promise with what only a revolution can effect. If not, he will find himself in the same position as a London street-corner shoe-lace vendor who believed in all sincerity that, because Britain is a 'free' country, he was absolutely free to buy himself a Rolls Royce car that evening even though he was not quite sure of his fare home; or like the unemployed youngster who believes he enjoys an acme of liberty because he can talk in Hyde Park when all he has really is the verbal 'freedom' to complain about the actual unfreedoms in the land—which is anything but freedom.

The Negro who is serious about getting his freedom must eschew this sort of self-delusion. Los Angeles has been an unforgettable lesson to all those who predicted that 'this sort of thing' would never happen in the North where the Negro enjoys the highest form of social reform, particularly in an area where he is privileged to inhale the fragrance of Hollywood. No sooner had this presumption been proved wrong by events than the same wishful-thinking speculators invented another theory that it was the taste of 'freedom' that made the Negro voracious for more power. Some liberal Negro leaders, rather than admit the ineffectuality and the short-sightedness of their methods, lost little time in declaring to the world that the outbreak was a consequence of lack of responsible Negro leadership in California. The fact remains that what happened in California was not a riot but a rebellion. And the fact will always remain that wherever and whenever the Negro suddenly wakes to the realization that superficial reforms are a far cry from his objective, mere capitalist designed fiction to delude the deprived and the underprivileged, rebellion is inevitable.

A man is apt to rebel when the truth dawns on him that, contrary to his life-long belief, to raise his hand and vote has no meaning whatsoever unless it actually brings about an effective change in the social system that has enslaved him, his father and the father before him. The Los Angeles struggle was a rebellion against a fraud, against organized ignorance, against a citadel of infamy guarded by the police, against a conspiracy into which the Negro himself has been tricked both as a conspirator and a victim, against the noise of crucifixion that is being made to sound like the sweet anthem of liberty, a kick in the groin of the smiling draculas of the dollar privileged ruling class of America and another historical testimony to the world that misery can never be made palatable by rubbing mustard over the catastrophes of a long-suffering people. The rebellion was also an open repudiation of the perverted patronage of the liberal intellectual. But before the

Negro fumes too much about this perverted patronage, perhaps it will save him a little bile to remember that the Western intellectual has his own psychological problems too.

In the words of Arnold Kettle

. . . whereas, economically, professional people in Britain are nearly all wage-earners, selling the labour and not living by the exploitation of others, they enjoy certain privileges which differentiate them from the mass of industrial workers and make it relatively easy for the ruling class to persuade them that they should not identify themselves in their thinking and feeling with the class-conscious working-class movement.—*Communism and the Intellectuals*.

This is what the Negro must watch. The bourgeois intellectuals in their effort to dissociate themselves from the working class (even though they still sell their labour to a boss) and in striving desperately to identify themselves 'socially' but not 'responsibly' with the ruling class (even though they haven't got what it takes), find themselves vacillating, like an 'uncompensated' pendulum, between the two extremes, propagating abstract academicism as solutions to real problems. To them such concepts as racialism, poverty, and starvation are mere words which respond to idealistic speculations, academic exercise of 'great' minds and the compilation of a dictionary of sentences. Their greatest love is a world in which universal brotherhood, peace and freedom prevail; their greatest hatred is the means of achieving this. Hence they run with the hares and hunt with the hounds. In their intellectual smugness, they accuse you of over-simplification, if not naivety, when you analyse constructively to reduce the problems to their real economic denominator but they fail to see themselves as over-complicating a simple problem to appease the academic god. This, by the way, applies to the white liberal intellectual as well as the black. This is why their leadership has so far done the Negro revolution more harm than good and their loyal apostles gained nothing practical except sore knees and a baptism of confusion.

The Western Worker

The Western worker, on the other hand, goes to the other extreme. He claims to be ignorant, non-political and in no way responsible for the crimes and iniquities of capitalism at home and abroad. The fallacy of this claim is patent enough. The Western white worker has got away with shamming ignorance for too long too easily. No one is more realist than he is. He knows fully well that the capitalist boss on top gets a huge 'cut' while he himself gets a little 'slice'. But he also knows that the larger the 'loot' the capitalist boss plunders from abroad, the larger his little 'slice' gets. So, he is quite contented to let the boss

retain the large 'cut' while he, in his convenient ignorance, keeps a hardly static little 'slice'.

In effect, there is a conspiracy between the capitalist class and the white worker. The Western worker goes on strike only when he feels that his share of the loot needs increasing, never otherwise. It is especially noteworthy that his indignation is aroused the moment a 'foreigner', particularly recognizable by the colour, is employed to work with him and have a share of this loot. He feels that the boss, in employing an outsider, is not keeping his side of the bargain. This is why he wants the 'foreigner' out. This is why when compelled to work side by side with a coloured worker, he wants to maintain an aristocracy of labour. This is why he is prepared to go soldiering abroad to shoot, torture and slaughter innocent men, women and children to keep the British capitalist tentacles well embedded in foreign soil to promote greater flow of loot into Britain and a steadier growth of the 'slice'. This is why the British worker has made a virtue of rapacity and 'I'm all right Jack' his native slogan. This is why Karl Marx's call on the workers of the world to unite was heard in Russia and many distant lands but never in Britain where the philosopher lived, died and was buried. These expositions could be continued but what's the use? I am not trying here to call on the Negroes of the world to unite against the Western intellectual, worker or capitalist any more than I am doing the opposite. But I do believe it is about time the Negro faced and hammered out unflinchingly the real nature of his problem (which frankly is the white problem) and expose the economic and political motive behind the Western workers' attitude and the psychological handicap of the liberal intellectual who professes, probably in good faith, to be 'on his side'. If the black man does not appreciate these things today, I fear he is in for another hundred years of noisy wind and no change. The choice is entirely his.

This calamity has already started in Africa. Every year, thousands of African young men and women flock into Europe to 'receive' education. They are convinced that three years in a European study compound and an academic title will automatically graduate them in wisdom. The amazing thing is that a people who have suffered centuries of colonization will not stop to think why they were colonized in the first place, the cultural implication of their historical tragedy, why empires rise and why they fall. They do not know that, at certain intervals in human history, a people arise who, usually from economic pressure, try to make the rest of humanity accept their way of life as the best. Thus they desperately convert their culture into a commodity for sale and create the market for it.

Mostly military persuasion is employed to effect this at the beginning

and eased off gradually as other subtle methods like religious indoctrination are devised. The result is an empire comprising conquerors and the conquered, colonizers and the colonized. As new generations are reared in the colonies, the emphasis is on education. Children become units of the cultural market. And young people are literally carried from their mothers' wombs into some institution where alien concepts are instilled into their plastic mentality. The suppressors begin to capitalize not only on the raw materials of the suppressed people but on their mentality as well.

Hence a young man discards his native tongue and travels thousands and thousands of miles away from his native land and expends all his intellectual energy doing what? Studying the English language, a language in essence no more and no less a native tongue spoken by another people just as his own people back home speak theirs. Soon he 'receives' his degree and returns home an 'educated' man and a 'cultured' gentleman is made. His salary is increased accordingly and that's another lifetime gone. To such wastages of intellect has colonialism driven men.

In the language of Nkrumah in *Africa Must Unite*,

our pattern of education has been aligned hitherto to the demands of British examination councils. Above all, it was formulated and administered by an alien administration desirous of extending its dominant ideas and thought processes to us. We were trained to be inferior copies of Englishmen, caricatures to be laughed at with our pretensions to British bourgeois gentility, our grammatical faultiness and distorted standard betraying us at every turn.

Thus the indoctrination continues till the colony is peopled by a generation that accepts these measures as matter of fact.

But the story does not stop there. For soon, the colonizer finds, to his consternation, that history alters the situation in a direction he did not foresee. As young generations come up in the parent country, they realize that their national ways of life have been accepted by the world as the be all and end all of culture. And in fact they are taught in schools that this is so. And they see other cultures ridiculed and debased in films and television. What else could they be, they ask, but the master race? Sometimes this leads to fascism and, inevitably, self-annihilation. But the worst aspect of this is that these young people, since they evidently stand on the peak of human progress, soon begin to feel that there is no more room for improvement. They become bored with life generally, grow rebellious and uninspired. And this same society that once knew tough people, disciplined and made great by want, starts producing beatniks, drug addicts, and particularly in music and various aspects of culture, imitators of the people they once rejected and suppressed.

Meanwhile their counterparts in the colonies, owing mostly to economic necessity, are busy assimilating the best of the culture of the parent country and, at the same time, researching into their own history to eradicate the stigma of past humiliations and excavate evidence of their vanished greatness. If they are lucky, they uncover most of these from obscurity. But lucky or not, they find out sooner or later that the greatness of the 'mother country' is nothing more than echoes from the past. They become conscious of their own new strength in history and their over-ripeness for freedom. The inevitable ensues: Revolution! And the world experiences history's oft repeated negation of negation. The leaders of a revolution turn out to be the very men who have assimilated most from the culture they are striving to destroy.

This is only one arc in the infinite spiral of history but I think it does illustrate the point. To fulfil one's historical mission, one must know his position on this upward dialectical relay. I fear that the African youth of my time may go down in history as a generation that never knew their cue.