

Christianity's role in ideological struggle

THREE years ago in Asia the cold war became a shooting war. That was Korea. Last year in Africa a shooting war started in Kenya. The scale was smaller, the significance was just as great. The stage of preparation through the spreading of ideas gave way to the stage of violence and conflict.

For that reason Kenya has become the key to Africa. Here in this Eastern corner of the Continent the boil has burst but every part of the body is infected with the disease. What happens here will provide a clue as to whether the disease can be cured.

The rebellion will fail, indeed it is already clear that it has failed; it was on too small a scale and started too soon. Yet failure is not enough.

The ring-leaders will be exposed, the criminals punished, but something more is needed.

The test is whether the idea which urged men and women to a campaign of violence and murder will be replaced by another idea powerful enough to inspire the leaders of Kenya of all races, not only with a spirit of devotion and sacrifice, but with the dynamic that will bring to birth a new society. If this happens to the leaders it will be caught by the masses and Kenya may be the pathfinder for the continent.

I HAVE been asked what differences I can see here in Kenya now as compared with my first visit six years ago or with the five months I spent here at the beginning of last year. The answer is simple.

Six years ago, with one or two notable exceptions, there was an almost complete unawareness that we had moved into the ideological age. Kenya was not unique in this respect. Other parts of Africa that I visited at that time were in a similar position. The cold war had only just begun, and Africa at that time was low in the scale of priority.

It was three years later that "preparation in Africa" moved up to a high place in the communist programme.

Last year there was a new understanding of the danger threatening the Western world, but it was neutralised by the prevalent feeling "It can't happen here."

NOW it is fair to say that practically all the responsible leadership of the country realise that it is the ideas in a man's head that decide how he will act, and that in the long run it is the ideas capturing the hearts and minds of the millions of Africans that will decide the future of this continent.

There is a growing awareness that an idea in a man's head can be as dangerous as a weapon in his hand, and a realisation of the ideological truth that it is not enough to drive out a devious idea; you must replace it by an idea that unites.

In this connection the Athi River rehabilitation project is a valuable first step in the policy of reconstruction.

After many talks with settlers and government officials I have realised that something else has been born out of the Emergency. Alongside that horror and detestation of the treachery and senseless massacres there has also grown a respect and even admiration for the many acts of devotion and bravery on the part of thousands of Africans. Moreover, while there have always been many instances of lasting friendship between settler and African, yet now there is something new.

Africans, as Home Guards and Torchbearers are fighting evil in teamwork with Police, Military and Settlers.

By
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Foot

(In the Kenya Weekly News)

THE words of the Commander of the Kikuyu Guard in the Rift Valley Province, Col. T. H. Henfrey, M.C., quoted in the "Kenya Weekly News" of September 18 are impressive in this connection.

He sees "a deep new decency coming out of the fire of these months"—lasting and valuable to the Colony—and the Kikuyu Guard developing as "one of the most important factors in Kikuyu life after the end of the Emergency period."

Mr. Michael Blundell with the European Elected Members calls for "the Christian Ethic". He is right.

Unless our Christianity is based on moral standards, and they must be absolute moral standards, then it is no more than a pipe dream.

The justification for White supremacy is often based, particularly in South Africa, on the idea that the white races represent Western Christian civilisation.

But do they? My own experience in different parts of Africa, including South Africa, has been that African leaders, when they meet White men who really do represent Western Christian civilisation in its highest form, are only too ready to hand over leadership to them. In such a case the difficulty is often to persuade the Africans to take the leadership that they should.

IT must be Christian civilisation, not as a form but as a force, not as a series of ceremonies but as a way of life based on Christ's teaching and inspired by His example.

That ideology appeals to men of all religions and of no religion. They may not follow it immediately but they respect it. This is a fundamental basis of agreement for all men of good will.

Many Africans seem to have a sixth sense of spiritual perception. They realise instinctively whether a man is living in his life what he preaches with his lips. They are quick to spot the humbug of a man who talks about God's love but cannot get on with his wife, or who holds forth on the way of the Cross while he is consumed by personal ambition.

Is there any evidence that an idea strong enough to drive out hatred and overcome fear can grip the hearts and minds of the Africans of Kenya? There is certainly.

I THINK of one Kenya African whose hatred of the British was such that he took a savage delight in tearing up portraits of the Royal Family. He was ripe for any action based on bitterness and hatred.

Then he was gripped by a new idea. In his own words, "bitterness can have no part in the new Africa. Nothing constructive can come out of bitterness. It is not worthy of a young African. These things are a greater slavery than domination of any form of government." In the last year that man has done much to change the thinking of many Kenya Africans.

One of the most striking demonstrations that some-

thing new is being born in Kenya was given by the delegation that attended the Moral Re-Armament Inter-Racial Assembly held in Lusaka a few months ago with the active support of Sir Gilbert Rennie, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia.

The Kenya delegation consisted of an ex-R.A.F. officer, a well-known settler, an Indian member of the Legislative Council and a young African who played a leading part in the formation of the Kikuyu Home Guard.

These four men spoke together from the platform and it was clear that they had found a unifying idea. It was expressed by the African in the following words, "my only desire now is to seek God's plan for myself and my people. It is only when we are committed to that task that we will be able to have peace in my country and in this continent."

THE response of the settler was quick and generous. He said, "I believe that the root of our problem in Kenya is that we have given from the head downwards and not from the heart outwards. We have often reminded Africans of all that we have given them. That has been our mistake.

"Nobody likes to be reminded of what he has been given or what he owes to another person. I am profoundly sorry for my own failures in the past and commit myself now to the task of building new relationships based on absolute moral standards and the guidance of God."

The Kenya delegation made a profound impression on the conference, particularly on the African leaders from Northern and Southern Rhodesia.

Many of these men were to meet two days later to consider their attitude towards Federation and their new spirit had a noticeable effect on their colleagues in the Rhodesian African Congress.

IF this delegation is representative of an appreciable part of the leadership of Kenya, and I believe it is, then there is hope for the future.

Finally let me state again my firm belief—that Kenya is the key to Africa.

It is here that the underlying passions of this continent have come to the surface; it is on this country that the eyes of the world are fixed and it is here that the answer to the ideological struggle in Africa can best be demonstrated.