

THE WRITER OF THIS ARTICLE SEES KENYA
AS THE KEY TO

The ideological struggle in Africa

"THE STAR,"

JOHANNESBURG

21 OCTOBER 1953.

THERE ARE TWO IDEAS that have come to a violent clash on this continent. The first is the idea of White supremacy. It is based on the assumption that the White races represent Western Christian civilization, and therefore it is right that they should rule. The opposing idea is simple and direct. It is "Africa for the Africans. Out with the White man."

These two ideas have now reached the point where they may be regarded as ideologies. Men and women are prepared to make immense sacrifices and if necessary to die for them. Unfortunately each of these ideas has at its heart a falsehood.

The first one is untrue because most of us do not represent Western Christian civilization, at any rate in its highest form.

Our lives are based on a kind of disorganized materialism in which each of us is either thinking first about himself or about his own country. There is a fundamental fallacy in the second idea, because both Black and White are needed in Africa, and will be needed if Africa is to fulfil her destiny as "the continent that God kept in reserve."

Clash of weapons

I HAVE just returned from a three weeks' visit to Kenya, the little country which now occupies the centre of the African stage. There the conflict is no longer one of ideas; it is also a clash of weapons. In this corner of the continent the boil has burst, but every part of the body is infected with the disease. What happens in Kenya will provide a clue to whether the disease can be cured.

The Mau Mau conspiracy will fail. There is no doubt about that. It started too soon and was on too small a scale. The forces on the side of law and order are being constantly strengthened in numbers and by training.

But it is not enough to crush the Mau Mau: How are we to deal with the evil ideas which, largely through fear, are dominating a tribe of more than a million Africans? Can these ideas be replaced by another, equally strong, for which men and women will make real sacrifices and on which it is possible to build a new society?

The cold war

I WAS asked by some people what differences I saw in Kenya as compared with my first visit six years ago, or during the five months I spent in the country during the early part of last year. The answer is clear.

Six years ago, with a few notable exceptions, hardly anyone realized 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 there was a very strong feeling: "it can't happen here." Today people are still bewildered by the suddenness and savagery of the attack; but there is a growing realization of the ideological truth that it is not enough to drive out an idea that divides. 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. It is based on the same ideas as those behind the very successful camps for Chinese terrorists established by General Templer in Malaya.

Emergency

AFTER many talks with settlers and Government officials I realized that something else had been born out of the emergency in Kenya. Alongside the horror and loathing of the treachery and senseless massacres there has also grown a new respect and even admiration for the many acts of devotion and bravery on the part of thousands of Africans.

The Kikuyu Home Guards and Torchbearers are fighting evil in teamwork with police, military

by
Stephen Foot

and settlers. At least 1,300 Africans have been killed by the Mau Mau.

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 important factors in Kikuyu life after the end of the emergency period."

Overcome fear

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 certainly is.

I think of one Kenya African whose hatred of the British was such that he took 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 something new is being born in Kenya was given by the delegation that attended the Moral Rearmament Inter-racial Assembly held in Lusaka a few months ago with the active support of Sir Gilbert Rennie, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia.

Delegation

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 has 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 uniting 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.