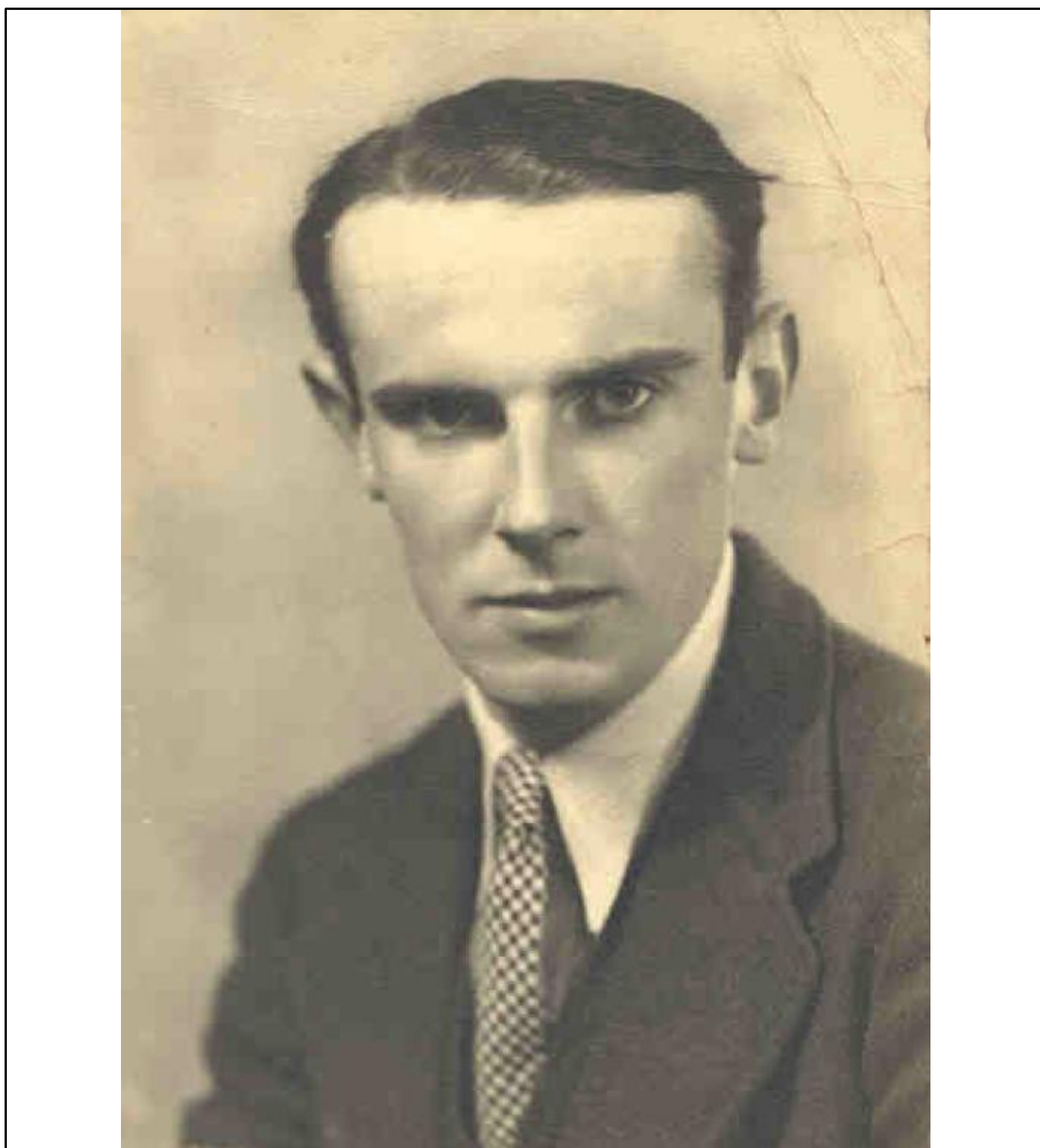


Purple Shadows

Peter Marrian



Chapter 1

Mungai arrived dead on time. In my recent experience this was unusual, but then what we were planning was an unusual adventure. I could not count the hours that I had waited at a series of political meetings for Mungai, my African political chairman, to arrive and take the platform and introduce me to the sea of black humanity that sat patiently and full of colour and laughter on the green grass or simply the deep, rich, red soil of the Kikuyu country. “This is the man we want you to vote for”, he would tell the audience, who for the first time in their lives were about to exercise the right to vote, recently accorded them by one of the many constitutions that had followed one another with such bewildering rapidity. Week after week the meetings had taken place. Those on the improvised platforms altered, but always there - sometimes playing the central part, sometimes in the wings - was Dr Njoroge Mungai, doctor of medicine with clinics of his own, educated in America, a most eligible bachelor, and amongst that small band of nationalistic leaders that was moving Kenya inexorably towards independence.

“Too soon”, said many, “wait five, ten, even fifty years and the country will be ready”. “Not so”, said the nationalists, “Already we have suffered the indignity of foreign rule too long. You do not understand the aspirations and longing of a people for the chance to rule themselves and show the world by their example that they are fit to run and develop their own country and leave in it a place for others to live and prosper but not to rule”.

The argument waxed hard across the country - at election meetings, in private homes, both hovel and castle, in bars and clubs, although these arguments often failed for want of a contrary opinion and a

voice to challenge the cry of conservatism, even reaction, that demanded the holding of the status quo for a decade or more. One might as well try to hold back the Dutch dyke by a boy's finger as stem the fervour for self determination that had been aroused by the speeches, intrigue and conditioning of the leadership. The argument had, I suppose, always been inevitable from the moment the great powers had sought to inflict their hegemony on weaker ones. Wilde may have referred, in that wonderful letter from his house of detention, to the tyranny of the weak over the strong but peoples, unlike individuals, do not appreciate the apparent contradiction and stir in one way or another, in violence or simple protest, in the name of liberty. It had flared some six years before when the ideals of Capricorn had been put to the electoral test by both myself and an attractive and vivacious red head known throughout the contest as the strawberry roan. The ideas of the elimination of racial discrimination, a common educational system, or the assertion that the concept of the 'White Highlands' in the middle of a black continent was bunk, proved too much for easy digestion and we both gained a poor percentage of the votes from our purely white electorate. But the argument had been truly joined at that time and, from then on, it grew with increasing rancour, bitterness and fear until, on December 10th 1963, Kenya became an independent country.

Shortly after my subsequent election, Mungai came to me and said "You are now our elected representative. We believe that our true leader is the old man restricted at Maralal and we ask if you will go to see him. Will you?" "Of course", I replied. "Will you come with me?" For a moment Mungai was stunned by my reply. His mother had been one of Jomo Kenyatta's great friends and he "was like a godfather to me", he told me. It was ten years since he could have seen him and Mungai was a young man, even then. The thought of seeing the legendary figure, a hero to much of Africa and in

particular to his own people, a friend and perhaps lover to his own intimate circle seemed too much for immediate comprehension but, after a moment's hesitation, he accepted.

I flew a little aeroplane at the time and my farm was between Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, a place of great beauty and the focus then of so much energy, hope and fulfilment. So here he was on time, even a few minutes early. It was to be an unforgettable day for both of us. Could Mungai really have known what to expect after so long an absence? I doubt it. And what of myself? Kenyatta had been the spearhead for the liberation of his people since the twenties. He was suspected of having been involved in Mau Mau and had been convicted in a court of law of managing it. In spite of my strongly held views of the rights of the African people, a shared future for all, irrespective of colour, my concept of social justice, call it what you will, I was still a European settler, with a farm that I ran and shared with others - a farm that marched with the Kikuyu country and the Aberdare forest and which, therefore, had been subject to attack as any by those called freedom fighters or terrorists, called as such according to one's persuasion. The man I was going to see had been vilified by large sections of the western press for nine years, was reviled by almost all white settlers and businessmen and large sections of the colonial administration but was held in high regard by the bulk of the African people and revered almost as a God by his own Kikuyu. What would I make of this man I had never met? Would I receive from those with whom I had dinner - those that would have me - the admonition "I told you so", or would I find a man in whom I could have genuine faith for the future of my country, for I counted it as such as much as any African? Would I find a man who would curb the excessive demands of extreme opinion, who would recognise the contribution of the white man in Kenya's development, both in the past and in the future, and who would have the authority to impose stability,

good government and integrity of purpose for his country? As Mungai and I soared away that morning in 1962 into the blue haze of Africa, I reflected a little ruefully that Jomo Kenyatta would have to have exceptional gifts, and so many would have to have been wrong, if he were to be the man that was needed.

Maralal was a small administrative centre, which lay a hundred miles north of my farm. It took an hour and we were met by the Old Man's guardian, a European with some administrative and military history. The visit had had to be cleared by the Government and we were expected. During the trial at Kapenguria nine years earlier, and before, there had been widespread rumours that Kenyatta had taken heavily to drink, and the uncharitable had bemoaned the fact that he hadn't been given a surfeit of brandy to finish him off. So I asked the question "Does he booze much?" The answer was laconic: a case of beer a month for his visitors. So died the first of the misconceptions. He may have been a heavy drinker in his time but during the time I knew him - and I was to be a Minister in his government - I never saw him drink alcohol. I was not so intimate with him as some others and was unaware of his night time habits but I would give odds that from the time he laid hands on the destiny of his country, moderation in all things became part of his nature.

When we arrived at the modest building in which Kenyatta was being held in restriction, out came a venerable bearded figure, somewhat portly. There was a touching reunion between him and Mungai. I was introduced and we went inside and sat at a table. The only other person present was a young girl, Ngina, who brought interminable cups of tea but took no part in our talk, which lasted three hours.

I started by saying that no one could agree how old he was, but he

obviously wasn't as old as was commonly believed, which was seventy. "I am, you know", and he proceeded to tell me how he knew, which was complicated and I forget what he said, but I have no reason to doubt that he knew his age and it was as he said. Much can be said in three hours and my impression is as strong today, as it was that morning. The violence that had been part of our lives for so long was fresh in my mind and I had at once to understand what his part in it had been. I asked him straight out if he was a violent man and he replied not at all and that he had always tried to get what he wanted for his people by non-violent means. "Why then", I asked, "did you not stop the violence?" "I tried to", he answered, "through my attorney, Pritt". He went on that he had asked Evelyn Baring, later Lord Howick, the Governor of Kenya at that time, to allow him to come out to control the excesses of Mau Mau that, it should be noted, had reached a crescendo only after Kenyatta's arrest. The request was refused and he was sent to Lokitong to begin his seven years' sentence.

This question of violence seems to me of fundamental importance in understanding the issues in Kenya at that time. Kenyatta's current speeches later referred, constantly, to the shedding of blood in the country's struggle for independence and they thereby seem to condone the use of violence as a means to an end. Yet his reply to me was unequivocal and so much of his personal behaviour since then seemed to support what he said.

Some years later I happened to meet at dinner Ian Henderson, one of Kenya's top policemen, and I asked him the same question. His reply was dramatic, considering who he was. Firstly, he said that Kenyatta should never have been convicted and that the only evidence against him was that of a self confessed perjurer and a prostitute. Secondly, Kenyatta had been under tremendous pressure from various and separate factions. Of these the most important

were the Independent Schools and the Forty Group, so called because they were about forty in number and sat around at his meetings fully armed and with significant influence on the progress of affairs. Rumour had it that the advocates of MRA (Moral Re-Armament) were hoping to get Kenyatta to go to Caux, Switzerland. The Forty Group got wind of it and informed him that he would not reach the airport. Finally, Henderson said that, although Kenyatta may have had advance knowledge of the plan to take to the forests, he was given no precise information and did not necessarily condone or approve.

Much must remain speculation, but certain conclusions can be drawn. Kenyatta was a nationalist leader, ahead of his time as far as Kenya was concerned, and had done the usual rounds - the Mayfair drawing rooms, Paris, Russia. On his return to Kenya he found the constitutional door fully shut so, like others before him, he became a revolutionary and seeking the most appropriate weapon, he elected on the oath, which to the Kikuyu is endemic and in its simple form means little more than throwing the spilt salt with the left hand over the right shoulder. Only in its extreme form does it bind the souls of the oath takers to excesses. Using, therefore, the simple first oath to bind the Kikuyu people to his will, he was in the process of forging a weapon for use in achieving independence for his people when he lost control. Then may be asked the question that occurs down the ages of history - to what extent is a man guilty of the excesses of his followers? Can the seventh oath be attributed to a man imprisoned months or even years before it was conceived? If not, then there was loss of control of a revolutionary movement, for which the British authorities placed him in jail for seven years, restricted him for another two and thus paved the way for the undisputed leadership of his country for the remainder of his life.

The loss of control is not difficult to understand. The leaders of the

great majority of states around the world today find it difficult enough to maintain their position. Kenyatta, without the help of any army, police force, special branch, or intelligence service, and prey to conflicting aspirations among his own people, must have found the path of reason and moderation almost impossible to follow. The whole of the government machine was hostile to him and a leader in such circumstances would find it difficult to withstand the clamour for more popular and extreme policies. It is very doubtful whether, in fact, he could have controlled the violence as he requested, even if he had been allowed to try.

The discussion then turned to the immigrant communities following independence. "Many people think", he said "that Kenyatta (he often referred to himself in the third person) wishes to drive all the Europeans and Asians into the sea" and he moved his hand across the table until it reached the edge. "Nothing is further from the truth. If they will accept the fact of an African government, they are free to stay and play their part in the development of the country" With the experience of the years since independence, this high sentiment has had to be modified to make room for the growing ambition for African participation at all levels of the country's development but, to this day, Kenyan citizens of whatever original race are equal before the law and, where needed, expatriates are encouraged to play a part for which they are exclusively fitted.

Systems of education, Kenya's future constitution, the place of Parliament and the right to vote, the development of the agricultural, mineral and industrial resources of the country, all these and many other subjects came within the orbit of our three hour discussion. All I can say is that, with rare exception, what was said that day has come to pass and the blueprint of what was to come had already been designed. During this time Mungai said virtually

nothing. "I wanted you two to get to know each other" he said as we flew back and I will always be grateful for the opportunity he made for me to talk privately and at length to the man in whose government I would serve and who would give Kenya a period of stability and development that was the envy of many countries within and without Africa. I detected no bitterness or rancour over the past; only a burning desire to get on with the job of building Kenya into a nation, and this sense of magnanimity pervaded his actions during the succeeding months and years.

We flew back over the plains of Laikipia with herds of cattle and game sharing the red oat grasses and Mungai looked with surprise at the tiny wooden houses, which were all that most of the great ranchers allowed themselves. On our left was the massif of Mount Kenya, its glaciers shining in the afternoon sun and on our right the length of the Aberdares from the Kinangop to Kipipiri. Both Mount Kenya and the Aberdares had wonderful forests of indigenous cedar and podocarp, planted pine within the forest estate, and bamboo so impenetrable that a crashed light aircraft could, and sometimes did, disappear without trace. High on the moorland of the Aberdares lay the wreckage of four Harvard Aircraft, their leader trapped by the down draught of a steeply rising valley and the others condemned to suffer for the failure of the one. These mountains had been the scene for the main forest activity of the recent protagonists and their forest glades had witnessed deeds of heroism, revenge and shame. They looked so innocent that afternoon and, with the activity and clamour stilled, were given over to their natural inmates - elephant, buffalo, rhino and all species of lesser wildlife.

The Mweiga airstrip is long by the standards of most farm runways and having buzzed the house to alert my wife Susie, we came in, using only half the strip, and came down the taxiway to the garden

hedge. There was the usual greeting from dogs and children, horses, a hound and a baby buffalo that had been born on the farm and become separated from its mother after our vain efforts to flush her from the long napier grass where she was a constant danger to the passing coffee pickers. The children's hard faced governess, an Austrian woman, had had little time for me until I arrived carrying the buffalo, since when I had become a paragon in her eyes. She delighted in the name of Miss Wohlfahrt and all my efforts to change the pronunciation to Walford met with indignant rebuttal. She walked the hound and played polo at weekends. Tea was on the veranda and we were made to recount in detail the events of the day. At that time, the Old Man had not made his great contribution to the welfare of Kenya and was not yet the international figure he was to become across the continent of Africa. He was little known other than through the eyes of the world's press, and certain government reports and, although he had been more accessible for some weeks than hitherto, few people had seen him. This was the time when the Kenyan settler was to say "the day Kenyatta is released I leave Kenya". In an astonishingly short space of time, and with commendable vacillation, he was to say "the day Kenyatta dies I leave Kenya". We finished our tea and Mungai took his leave. "This has been the happiest day of my life", he said, "You see, to me, he is like a godfather". Mungai was to become his personal doctor and his Minister for Foreign Affairs and was part of the inner circle of power until his rejection by the electorate in the election of 1974.

Chapter 2

I had met Susie in the summer of 1947 in the Cavendish Hotel in Jermyn Street. Rosa Fraser Lewis was in her declining years but still a remarkable old woman as she sat all day long in her high backed chair in the entrance hall - sometimes unashamedly asleep, sometimes brooding on a lifetime of memories that spanned a quarter of one century and a half of the next. Susie was a golden girl, seventeen years of age just out of a rather strict black stocking school in Toronto after the relative liberty of Girls' Latin in Chicago. She had been destined for Smith, but it was not to be. She was born in Milwaukee and had twenty first cousins.

We had just been to America where each first cousin had said "You must meet fifty of my most intimate friends". It had been enchanting and we were overwhelmed with kindness, but I only survived by taking shots of vitamin B12! But that was long after that lovely summer of 1947. I had fought a war - not very distinguished, merely a Mention and rank of Captain - in Africa, Madagascar and Burma. I had been trained as an airman in the Oxford Squadron, but was finally rejected owing to mastoids, which appeared a fine old waste of government money and the RAF's time and necessitated me starting all over again. However, the Battle of Britain would probably have claimed me. I was, therefore, all of thirty at the time and to Susie must have seemed very old. Perhaps the seeds of what was to happen were sown at that moment. Who knows? But that was to be seventeen of the happiest years and that must be more than one man's ration.

It was high summer and the little courtyard of the Cavendish was full of people who were for the most part unusual with a gay insouciance but not perhaps as gay as before the contest that tore

the world apart and changed it for what it is today, for better or for worse, but probably for worse. I had known the Cavendish briefly just before the war when I was at Oxford. One night I was at 51 The High with Frank Waldron, who was to be a life long friend, when Richard Hillary, who wrote one of the best of the war books, *The Last Enemy*, came in and spoke of a meeting with Rosa he had just had that weekend. Her advice had been robust and typical. "If you want a girl, dearie, find a jolly good tart; have none of these girls with blue blood and pink tits". Dear Rosa. How she was loved. When she found I was to be married she gave me a most beautiful Sheraton card table. It survived the turbulent years of life in Africa and was stolen years later from my house in London, SW3.

So, there we all were in the courtyard, drinking Pimms and discussing Ascot or the Test Match and in comes Susie with all the American assurance of seventeen years and the world her oyster. "You look very red", she said. I explained about Burma. She told me her father was in advertising - Irish linen and Balmain. "That will be nice for the trousseau", I said. She giggled but I was right. Just one year later, Balmain gave us dinner for three in Paris on our honeymoon and sketched on a napkin a suitable attire for our African house staff even to the thongs around the legs. Dinner over, he said "My car is at the door, my chauffeur is at the wheel, here is my card to Monseigneurs. I go home by taxi". The next night Susie had another surprise - this time Andre Terrail, who ran and owned La Tour d'Argent and had, so it was rumoured, walled up the cellars before the Germans arrived. We had a superb dinner and the same thing happened. .Such was the very best of France. A night club band played the Red Army Marching Song and I tucked 100 franc notes into the belt of some chic French chick, who wore it and little else for that purpose - except that they weren't called chicks in those days.

From Paris we went grandly to St Moritz and stayed with M. Beaune at Suvretta. The snow was late and the hotel empty. "I have made three fortunes", said M Beaune "and I am now losing a third" and with a sad, sad voice "and I am getting too old to make another". Susie had come to Kenya to look, and learn Swahili. Clever us - we used it to discuss those lovely intimate moments that honeymooners love to talk about forever. "You were really fantastic, darling". Swahili can be quite expressive and we were so secure. No one could understand, not even the under-manager, who eyed us from the next door table. One day he could resist it no longer. "Please come and have coffee", he said. "Delighted". "How interesting you come from Kenya. I loved it during the five years I spent there in the Red Cross during the war". The glint in his eye told me as clearly as the midday sun on the mountains that his knowledge of Swahili was at least the equal of mine.

But all that was later. Meanwhile there was an appendix (they promise you will hardly see the scar), flowers and a hidden bottle of gin in the London Clinic, a lunchtime visit to Susie's house in Wimbledon that became tea and dinner and afterwards the silent watching of swans on a lake by moonlight when magic was in the air and thoughts took the place of words and no fears brought shadows to our faces. I kissed her then and so it began - seventeen years of adventure and high endeavour; the carving of beauty and wealth from the African bush; the birth and upbringing of our three sons, so alike to look at and so different in character, and all so dearly loved; the danger and the holsters; the fun and the gaiety and the passions; and above all the sense of an achievement and of a life well lived together. It had to end of course - life must have something else to offer to a still young woman who was swept to responsibility and two children before she was twenty one but, meanwhile, there was endurance and loyalty and courage and, yes, love to a high degree.

So, with a child bride and soon with a family of three boys, I made a life in Kenya. That my destiny would be there had been resolved one Sunday afternoon of Henley week. It was that glorious summer of my second year at Oxford when Mods are long over and one's Finals seemed too far ahead to worry about. If only one had known the agony it would cause later. The salad days of Oxford just before the war have been beautifully described by Richard Hillary in "The Last Enemy". His memorable phrase "alert philistinism" summed it all up. We played hard and some of us got Blues. We worked the minimum to escape total censure from our tutors and got seconds or thirds. Overall, there brooded the near certainty of the second world war. Some refused to believe the inevitable; others could see no escape; all discussed Munich endlessly, particularly the Americans, who became eloquent over the failure of British diplomacy. As of then, of course, it was not their affair.

Still, for the moment a normal future had to be considered. The Colonial Service had an aura of adventure about it. Service had a philanthropic appeal to the young and Colonial was not yet a dirty word. But where? On that Sunday afternoon, Frank Loyd, like myself from Trinity, and destined to have a most distinguished career, told me he had applied for Kenya and why. It sounded good enough and the die was cast. I was successful, was sent to Kenya, released on arrival for military service and recalled three years later on the grounds that one was of more use to the war effort in the Colonial Service than in the army. "With respect, I disagree. I will never pretend to be a good soldier, but at least I have been trained as one and have never done a day's service in the Colonial Service". "Your appeal will fail". It did, twice, but when I wrote to the War Office in September 1943 and received the answer in April 1945, 300 miles inside Burma, I discovered it had been successful and I had made my point. I reckoned my popularity rating with the

Administration was as low, as my spirits were high and I resigned.

Chapter 3

I could not forget the country I had come to love and, after the war, I went to Montana to see my old friend, Frank Waldron, who had been shot in the lung with the Guards Armoured Brigade. We had been together at Shrewsbury, shared rooms at Trinity, had gone our own separate ways during the war, and had achieved that rapport of spirit, which was to stand the test of all time. "I think I'm going back to Kenya" I said. "I'll come with you", said Frank - no hesitation, no regrets, no second thoughts.

We set off some months later, when he was recovered, by sea to Capetown and then by car to Kenya, or so we hoped. New cars were like gold dust and jealously guarded by the Union. Only on certain promise to return was a car allowed out of South Africa. The country had not appealed to Frank and as we approached the Rhodesian border, at Beit Bridge, he was already muttering about the second Tobruk. "Ah!", said the customs official, "we see you have a new American car outside. Do you intend to return to the Union?". "Not if I can help it", said Frank. It was the end. Charm I never so wisely, the damage was done. We returned to Johannesburg, sold the car at a loss, flew to Nairobi and our baggage reached us nine months later. And still we remained friends!

The farm was at Mweiga, eight miles north of Nyeri and was called Mweiga Estate. It had been a soldier settler farm after the first world war and the original owner had bought it in part because it had not one, but two, natural polo grounds within half a mile. One of the original partners, Tommy Atkins, had been killed by a rhino. His son, Humphrey, later became a Conservative member of Parliament, Chief Whip and, for a time, Minister for Northern Ireland. Some years after our arrival at Mweiga, needing a secretary,

Humphrey Atkins interviewed a delightful and spirited girl, who had been secretary to Sir Evelyn Baring, and to ADCs Colin Campbell and Charlie Douglas Home. "I am so interested to hear you come from Kenya", said Humphrey. "Do you happen to know a place called Nyeri?". "Yes", she said. "And through Nyeri there is a place called Mweiga. Do you know that?". "Yes", she said again. "It's too silly, but would you happen to know Mweiga Estate?". "That's where I spend my weekends", said the girl whose name was Annie. "And that's where I came at six weeks old", said Humphrey. So, of course, she got the job and kept it until she married Tony Akroyd four years later.

The early years were filled with plans and endeavour and hard work. Frank went over the garden wall to marry a lovely American widow, Russian by birth, with two children. From England came Michael Foxley Norris whose brother, Christopher, was to climb the RAF ladder to the very pinnacle of eminence. Michael and his family stayed for some eight years. The early promise of partnership did not survive the entangling web of close proximity and we parted by mutual consent.

The farm was coffee and cattle and we added a variety of additional lines like wheat, barley, maize, vegetables, pigs and whatever else took our fancy. It is perhaps a sober commentary on the foolishness of too much agricultural diversity that to this day the farm thrives - on coffee and cattle! We were all such enthusiasts and every new idea had to be tried. It wasn't expensive in those days and we played well, worked hard and raised our families. We cared for our employees by looking after the sick, giving them a party at Christmas with sweets for the children, housing them in traditional rondavals and paying them too little, although each family had an area to cultivate, which provided food and to spare. It was a semi-feudal system and out of context with the start of the second half of

the twentieth century.

All too soon, the pervading spread of the Mau Mau doctrine engulfed us and for three years we, the white settlers, and tens of thousands of Kikuyu who had no part in it, fought for survival. To the youth of today, history holds up the struggle as one of liberation. So be it. Fashions change. Today it is the freedom fighters. However, to the remote and vulnerable old couple, ending their days by tilling a small piece of land, it was a long and lonely vigil. Still, the day came when it ended - not suddenly with a victory march, but gradually. In the end, the violence stopped and the emergence of Kenyatta healed the wounds, closed the rifts between family and family, clan and clan and laid to rest the feuds that threatened to tear the Kikuyu people apart. It was perhaps his greatest contribution.

It was strange that it was during this flood of conflict and fight for one's own possessions and personal way of life that my own conviction concerning the future of Kenya and its people crystallised to a point where I felt that only in the abandonment of political power was there any chance for economic participation in the future of the country by those not indigenous to its soil. So often in Africa the proper solution is not the obvious one and I began to feel passionately that the argument that the white man had to dictate his will by force was untenable and that to expect one percent of the population to rule indefinitely the other ninety nine percent was preposterous.

To-day the issue seems clear enough but forty years ago it was not and the Kenya situation was perpetuated for many additional years in Rhodesia (as it then was) and South Africa. The problem was greater in direct proportion to the disparity of numbers between the races. The less the disparity the greater the problem. South Africa's

20% to 25 % of white men and women provided it with the muscle to dominate the rest of the population for a far longer period than in the rest of black Africa. Similarly, in Rhodesia, the white man's 6% or 7% of the population, with an astonishing lack of perception, thought it could do likewise and the result at one time was isolation, ignominy and eventual surrender. The one percent of Kenya did not add up to even a sporting chance and on the ground of pragmatism alone it became essential that my fellow settlers should understand the gravity of the situation they were in and be persuaded to accept a policy that at first sight appeared contrary to their interests.

It was during this period when I was trying to come to terms with my beliefs, and how our future in Kenya was to be structured, that I became involved with David Stirling's Capricorn Africa Society. Much has been written of David; notably by Virginia Cowles who in 'The Phantom Major' described the exploits of him and his friends in the desert war of North Africa. A dear friend, Martha Gelhorn, once said that he had to recreate the conflicts and confusion of desert warfare in order to sustain himself. I dare say there is truth in it and certainly his life took unusual and precipitant courses. He was to become a close friend and we worked together for two years in fruitless endeavours at 21 Sloane St. But at this time I only knew that he had developed a philosophy for the future of Africa that accorded very much with my own.

The Capricorn Contract was signed at Salima in Malawi (then Nyasaland). It was blessed by the Churches and acceded to by men of goodwill and some courage. Its tenets were the removal of all forms of racial discrimination and a belief that the Old Africa should be developed on the lines of western Christian civilisation, irrespective of colour. The implications of such a philosophy in the context of Kenya's political scene at that time were far reaching. The

emotive question of land was to be solved by abandoning the sanctity of the White Highlands. Gone would be the communal rolls, whereby an electorate only voted for members of its own race. The pattern of racial education would give way to multiracial schools wherein entry would be by academic rather than by ethnic qualification. The watchword was the maintenance of standards. Land should be in the hands of the best farmers. Electoral rolls should be prepared on the basis of a qualified franchise. Civilised behaviour should be the criterion for membership of a club or entry to a leading hotel or restaurant.

It all seems a little naive now, but forty years ago it seemed vitally important to remove the grip of fear in which the white population felt itself imprisoned in the face of an overwhelming African numerical dominance. To the majority of white men and women it appeared a treasonable retreat from all they stood for. To the African nationalist it appeared yet another bit of European treachery to mock the heady cry for universal suffrage. An opportunity to stand up and be counted came in 1956, when elections to the Legislature took place. Stirling insisted I stand. I demurred. He sat Susie down in a chair at Muthaiga Country Club and subsequently announced: "She has agreed to withhold marital relations". Whether true or false, I was talked into the election and I prepared to assault the dominion of the great right wing leader, Group Captain Briggs, in my home constituency. Most of my friends were aghast. Many rallied gallantly round, not least Susie. The antis thundered: "You want to abandon the security of our land and send my son to school with the kitchen boy. You're not only a lunatic, but a traitor, sir". How could one convince them that, although change must come and much of it would challenge their way of life, the course on which they were set would lead to disaster, bloodshed and total loss. "Think, vote for Marrian", my posters said. "Think again, vote for Briggs" appeared on the

electoral morning.

It was all good humoured apart from the real die-hards, whose technique at cutting oneself and one's wife suggested it had been learnt in earlier, similar situations. Most were Indian Army colonels and above. My meetings were attended by two of Briggs' watch dogs. They asked the same questions. I gave the same answers and we got together in the bar afterwards and discussed how the meetings had gone. Susan Wood, wife of Michael Wood, who was to take over as President of the Society from Stirling, was the only other one to stand on our platform. Her constituency was in Nairobi. We both got good and fair hearings but the decision of the electorate - all white of course - was overwhelming - one vote in six for both of us. At least we saved our deposits, which required better than one vote in eight.

Capricorn was impossible politically, because it cut across beliefs held too rigidly by black and white. Black nationalism was on the move and the ideas of moderation and reason were swamped by the emotionalism of one man one vote and the thrust for power and wealth that gave birth to a concept hitherto alien to Africa. To the Europeans, settlers, government officials even it appeared as too radical and too swift an abandonment of rigidly held beliefs. To the larger Asian population, standing midway between European entrenched power and African aspirations, it offered perhaps a greater appeal than to the other two races. Although the Asian community was inward looking and sectarian, it was far less reactionary in outlook than the majority of Europeans, while at the same time having no great feeling of frustration or of being underprivileged. The Capricorn ideal appeared to offer a solution to their particular situation but they were neither numerous enough nor powerful enough to influence events.

What can one say of it with the hindsight of four decades? Firstly, it had to be proposed by someone, whatever the hostility. Secondly, it acted as a cutting edge for the more liberal approach to the problems propounded with increasing vigour during the succeeding seven years, which culminated in independence. Michael Blundell and Wilfred Havelock were the leaders of the New Kenya Party and I had an admiration for their views, although they were unable to accept fully the consequences of the Capricorn philosophy. I joined issue with Michael ultimately because I felt he refused to jump the last hurdle, but I sympathised with his dilemma of wishing to move faster than the electorate would allow. Stripped of power by electoral failure, his influence for moderation would have declined, if not been eliminated altogether. If politics is really the art of the possible, he was right and yet to trim one's sails is not always the best course and I felt he ended a distinguished political career commanding only a minority of devoted white support and never really capturing a position in the hearts of Africans. Finally, Capricorn was overtaken by events. Those that said "too soon" were wrong. It was too late for Africa in the second half of the twentieth century and Africa became engulfed by nationalistic fervour and, subsequently, by a regrettable lust for power and an appetite for personal gain that must match that of the robber barons of old.

Some years before this election there had occurred an event unique in Kenya's history. On the night of February 5th 1952, a young girl named Elizabeth had gone up a tree a princess and come down the next morning a queen - Queen of England and the Commonwealth. The story of the night was told most beautifully by Jim Corbett in a slight booklet called simply Tree Tops. He recounted how two waterbuck fought to the death until the whole waterhole in front of the tree was stained with blood. Traditionally, such an event occurs when a great chief dies. Was it coincidence or was the death of King

George 6th that night in some mysterious manner communicated to those two noble animals five thousand miles away to do him honour? How can one know? Yet events occur that seem to have no rational explanation and science daily demonstrates that the human mind knows so little that dogmatic assertion of certain beliefs is mere arrogant speculation.

Jim Corbett, a great naturalist and writer, had been her companion that night. Some years later, because my farming activities had been shared with Denys Rhodes, whose wife Margaret was her first cousin, I had the opportunity of talking to the Queen about her night at Tree Tops. She spoke so warmly about Jim Corbett that I wrote to the old man the next day and described what she had said. Immediately, I set sail for America and on arrival five days later I learnt from the American press that Jim Corbett was dead. For eight weeks, until my return, I did not know whether he had got my letter but, back in England, I got his answer, in which he said that "he would remember that very gracious lady, as long as memory lasts"; and for him it must have lasted a short twenty four hours; but I like to think that my letter was of some small solace to him at the end of his life.

Following my total rejection by the white electorate in 1956, a strange sequence of events took place in my personal position in the community. Early on in my farming career I had become interested in the Kenya National Farmers Union, which had been started by one of Kenya's more respected citizens, Will Evans. It had much the same economic aims as the NFU in Britain and represented an effort to get farmers together to speak with one voice to Government and, in particular, to the Ministry of Agriculture. I had joined my local branch and, after a few years, had become its chairman. During the years that followed the 1956 election, I was elected by popular vote to become chairman of the executive committee of the national

body, then a vice-president and then, the highest office of all, president. Although at that time we were taking energetic steps to attract African farmers into the work of the Union, it was still very much a European body. As a result of the 1956 election, all white farmers were well aware of my political views, which were shared by only one in six at that time, and yet, within a short period of time, they elected me their president. Why? Had the climate of opinion so changed that my views had become acceptable? Or was it believed that I had at last seen the light? It is only really of personal interest to myself and I still ponder the reason, but it did put me in a unique position following Ian Macleod's political surgery in 1958.

As Secretary of State, Macleod was in a position to chart the future course of Kenya's political development and, following on from Macmillan's "Wind of Change" speech in South Africa, it was apparent that Britain was moving Kenya rapidly towards independence under majority rule. The consternation among the immigrant communities was immediate and understandable. Often a lifetime's work was seen to be in ruins. With the spectre of the Congo's collapse following Belgium's withdrawal as an example, many felt it was only a matter of time before wholesale dispossession and humiliation took place. Property prices fell to near nil and those rushing to take the land had no means to buy and, in any case, had been led to understand by the lower political hierarchy that they would get it for nothing, alongside the tractors, motor cars and houses, to say nothing of wives and daughters! It was a time of hysteria and despondency and it needed a calm policy from the Union to steer a course that was to be effective.

By great good fortune I had as my Vice President Lord Delamere, son of the founder of white settlement in Kenya, to which country he had devoted nearly all of his fortune. Tom Delamere and I

decided that something must be done urgently and with the blessing of the executive committee we set off to see Macleod. We went not to challenge the political decision that had been made, with which neither of us were prepared to join issue, but to discuss the economic repercussions which would follow such radical change and for which apparently no provision had been made. The land problem was clear. There were sellers with no market and buyers with no money. The policy of the Union was equally clear. It must help those who wished to go by entreating the British government to provide funds for the purchase of land and for the establishment of an adequate settlement programme to meet African aspirations. It must help those who wished to stay by the creation, through the independence instrument and future constitution, of conditions that would enable some farmers and businessmen to continue to participate fully in the economic development of the country.

Kenyatta himself, as explained earlier, was to give great weight to this policy by publicly rejecting any idea that there would be free land and giving encouragement to those immigrants who were prepared to stay and accept the fact of an African government. We were well received by Macleod and, although no promises were made, it was clear that, whether from our intervention or that of others, the British government accepted the need for a far-reaching resettlement plan, at tremendous cost, which continues to this very day. How successful has this been? The basic fact must be recorded that during a period of revolutionary change, following a half century and more of alien rule which was resented, millions of acres of land have been peaceably transferred from one ethnic group to another, on the whole without overt compulsion and with some compensation to the seller and material help in terms of money and advice for the buyer. When one considers historically what has happened elsewhere at different times, this must rank as a rare

achievement.

Of course, there are criticisms that can be levelled at the settlement schemes. In many cases the compensation was inadequate, the subdivision too great for economic agriculture, the soil unsuitable for high density farming. The pressure on those who stayed in isolated areas became insupportable, sometimes ending in physical occupation by squatters with a government apparently powerless to evict. All this is true. What is not true is that British money, as is sometimes alleged, was misused and enabled individuals to acquire vast acreage and numerous properties. Such purchases were not made through the resettlement programme, but by private treaty. The bulk of the mixed farmers have been bought out. Some remain, but not many. There remain ranchers and plantation owners, often operating through public companies, whose shares are available on the Nairobi Stock Exchange and whose top management positions are being more and more Africanised. These larger units are of great economic significance to the government, and their professional management ensures optimum result to the benefit of the shareholders and the country as a whole.

It is perhaps too soon to evaluate the full results of the considerable reduction in size of the average farming unit. Many of the new settlers were ignorant of farming techniques and some failed and will fail. Often peasant agriculture has replaced large scale mechanised farming. What is clear is that with Kenya's burgeoning population, every family of the future cannot have a piece of agricultural land, which has been the common aspiration up until now. In fact, the trend is likely to be towards larger more economic holdings as the successful farmers acquire land from their less successful neighbours.

When Delamere and I saw Macleod, he was already suffering from

the physical disability which was to lead to his premature death. He was a man of great stature and his death was a great loss, both to British politics and the party he served so well. During the visit, there occurred a debate on Kenya in the House of Lords. "Tom, you must speak", I said. "I've been a Peer for 27 years and I've always said I wouldn't speak unless I had something to say and now I think I have". I took him, his wife Diana, and Susie to lunch at the Ritz first and we sat in that lovely room overlooking St. James' Park. Perhaps because he was speaking in his own House, Tom went off his food and then of course Diana went off hers. For some reason best known to herself, Susie then went off hers and I was left to eat a lunch for four alone.

We went down to the Lords; Diana went off to the Peeresses' gallery and Susie and I to the Strangers' gallery and listened to Tom make his maiden speech on behalf of Kenya, which he loved so well. He was brief and very much to the point and the traditional congratulations given by the succeeding speaker were certainly more than a token appreciation.

Whatever success we may have had with Ian Macleod concerning the need for a good hard look at the implications of British government policy, it was apparent that Kenya's future political course had been charted and that there would now be no turning back from an ever accelerating move to independence under a government elected by a system of universal franchise. There would be succeeding Secretaries of State, two changes of Governors, a proliferation of European and Asian parties and a jockeying for positions of power amongst African leaders before the British flag was finally lowered in the independence ceremony on December 13th, 1968. There would be new constitutions, which would give way to others, almost before they had come into being. Groups would be formed to attempt to salvage as much as possible for their

sectional interests. The smaller African tribes, desperately fearful of the hegemony of the larger and abler peoples, bonded themselves together to attempt to negotiate, with the British government, a solution that would protect their interests.

Many European farmers decided to quit immediately following Macleod's declaration and others formed parties of an extreme right wing hue, in the mistaken belief that by doing so they would ward off what they believed to be the evil day. Only one group pursued a relentless uncompromising course to full democracy - the nationalist heavyweights that believed in majority rule - one man, one vote - and would brook no deviation. These were Tom Mboya, Odinga Oginga, James Gichuru, Mungai Njoroge, Mwai Kibaki, Julius Kiano and so many others that comprised the three great tribes of Kenya - the Kikuyu, the Luo and the Kamba. For sheer ability, Mboya stood out and he had increasing influence and power until his assassination in 1969. He was a Luo and, as such, it is unlikely that he would ever have reached the pinnacle of power and become President of Kenya. He did not suffer fools gladly and he made many enemies amongst his intimates. For some time he had been the member for Nairobi, with its numerous tribal components, and he had to rely on a volatile, fickle electorate for his political existence. It was the absence of a firm tribal power-base that often gave rise to extremist speeches in which he only half believed. These outbursts usually indicated that his political position had weakened and needed a shot in the arm.

The story goes that he was set on his political career by an idle remark from a European woman who came into a shop that sold sanitary equipment for the Nairobi City Council. Looking around she only saw Tom, without doubt one of the greatest brains ever to come out of Africa. "Is anyone here?", she asked, and so was born one more nationalist, whose invective was for a long while

particularly directed against the white woman. His death by an assassin's bullet was an immense loss to Kenya and Africa and the contribution he made to Kenya's stability was second only to that of Kenyatta himself.

Odinga was another thing. Also a Luo, he belonged to the tribal aristocracy and viewed Mboya as something of an upstart from a small island in the middle of Lake Victoria. Jealousy and envy, added to hostility, were ingredients that soured their relationship and because Mboya had gone to the West for money to buttress the trade union movement, which he had started, Odinga went to China for funds for his political purposes. Odinga was a flamboyant creature and at the opening of a parliamentary session, when traditional dress was often worn, he would appear in a close-fitting frog suit, made of blue, white and red beads. Mboya would talk of African socialism and positive neutrality, but Odinga would reflect the political hues of those whose finances he tapped and clearly wished to have little truck with the West. At the same time, he was proud of his personal wealth and would refer to himself as the only capitalist of any substance in the House. He was to become Minister of Home Affairs and a Vice President and was guilty of treason many times over before Kenyatta finally had him restricted. The 'Old Man' would say "He helped me in the old days. Let him be. Anyway, I would rather have him where I can see him" He remained a member of the cabinet, until the final break when he formed his own party, the K.P.U. (Kenya People's Union), which was eventually proscribed and most of its leading adherents arrested and imprisoned, some like Achieng Oneko for many years.

Odinga was the first man to call publicly in the House for the release of Kenyatta so he could take his place as head of state. Those who had held back, deriving an opportunity from the absence of such a national figure, joined in the clamour and the election of

1961. The election, which resulted from the most recent constitution, was fought on the twin issues of Kenyatta's release and independence. Two fingers would be raised in salutation - not like Churchill's inspiration to ultimate victory, not as an obscene sign of disapproval, but to signify the two goals. It was for this election that I decided to step down from the presidency of the KNFU and offer myself as a candidate.

It was the last of the specious, almost rigged, elections. Certain seats were reserved for Europeans with a primary and a main election. The primary election concerned only European voters and the candidate was required to get 25% of the votes cast. The main election, which followed a few weeks later, was decided by a simple majority, with all races voting. My opponent was Sir Charles Markham, already a Member of Parliament, and somewhat to the right of me politically. He had a greater appeal to the European electorate than I had, but I was backed by the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which at that time was an amalgam of the three great tribes of Kenya, the Kikuyu, the Luo and the Kamba. I was pretty sure that my work as President of the Farmers' Union would get me the minimum requirement of 25% of the votes in the primary election in order to go forward to the main election and in the event I got about 40% to Sir Charles' 60%. Already there was an awareness among European voters that change had to come and to some extent the voting reflected this.

In the main election, I ran out an easy winner and at election meetings was presented to the crowds by Mungai Njoroge, the chairman of the local branch of KANU. There was, on the whole, friendly rivalry between myself and Sir Charles, although some of his more vocal supporters assumed that treachery was in the air. I had stood as an Independent, not being willing to throw in my lot exclusively with KANU at that time and finding all the European

parties unsatisfactory for reasons already stated.

I was appointed Minister of Forests, Tourism and Wildlife and it was during the time that I held this portfolio that I paid the visit to Kenyatta at Maralal described in the opening of this book. Other Ministers were drawn from Michael Blundell's New Kenya Party and the Kenya African Democratic Union led by Ronald Ngala. KADU, as it was called, was a mixture of the smaller tribes of Kenya and broadly speaking represented the pastoral people of the Kalenjin, the Nandi, the Kipsigis, the Abaluya and the coastal tribes - in fact the majority of those not comprised of the Kikuyu (with whom are associated the Meru and the Embu), the Luo and the Kamba. The grouping of KADU was a natural reflection of the fear of too much power residing in the hands of the more numerous and more powerful tribes, particularly the Kikuyu.

KANU had been invited by the Governor, Sir Patrick Rennison to join the Government, but had refused, on the grounds that Kenyatta was still in restriction. This refusal put me in a slightly ambivalent position as, although I had stood as an Independent, I had been backed by KANU and came in for some criticism for joining the Government as a Minister. However, during the election, I had experienced the immense nationalistic fervour of the Kikuyu and their love and veneration for Kenyatta and realised that an independent government without Kenyatta and the Kikuyu would be doomed to failure. I felt that my influence as a full Minister to avert such a catastrophe would be stronger than as a backbencher. This was plausible, so far as it went, but assumed that positive steps would be taken by the Government and the Secretary of State in England to reconcile the two sides of African nationalistic opinion and so bring Kenya to independence with a properly representative government.

It soon became apparent, however, that others had different ideas. The leaders of KADU, Ngala, Muliro, Moi and many others were less hostile to the colonial regime, more tolerant of the immigrant communities and less immoderate in their language. In a way, they perhaps looked to the Europeans and Asians as being their natural allies in effecting a balance of power; of being able, when banded together into a cohesive whole, to act as a counterweight to the hegemony of the larger tribes. KANU, on the other hand, knew no such bounds of moderation. Their leaders were uncompromising, single-minded and bellicose, making use of an invective that struck fear in to the hearts of the irresolute and engendered anger and frustration in those who felt with reason that their contribution to the country's development had been significant.

It was perhaps not surprising, therefore, that KADU, encouraged by some sections of the European community should look at the situation created by KANU's refusal to join the Government as an opportunity to seize the reins of power and subdue those powerful elements that they feared would engulf them. The official attitude also leaned towards KADU. Sir Patrick Rennison, shortly after his arrival, had been induced to make a most unwise statement over the radio, referring to Kenyatta as a "leader to darkness and death". In conference, Mboya was studiously offensive to him and he held little love for KANU. Rennison was a good, honest, straightforward man, whose instinct was to play for his side. He had had a fair record and had brought to independence. In the climate of pre-independent Kenya, he was hopelessly out of his depth and was unable to create the dialogue with real nationalist opinion which was so vital. Whitehall, too, appeared to be leaning towards a KADU based independent government and I became more and more apprehensive. When it was being openly canvassed that Ronald Ngala would be Prime Minister, I felt I could support the Government no longer and asked the Speaker for permission to

make a short speech of resignation - and crossed the floor of the house to take up a position on the cross benches, reserved for independents.

Some months later, after Rennison had been replaced by Malcolm Macdonald, after Kenyatta had been released and when there was a KANU/KADU coalition with myself as Moi's junior minister at the Ministry of Local Government, I found myself in London and asked Denys Rhodes to arrange for me to see his friend, Duncan Sandys, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. I told Sandys that he wouldn't hear it from many European settlers, but that if he persisted in his apparent intention of bringing Kenya to independence under a KADU government, he would have sowed the seeds for a revolution within three months. I feared that in the aftermath of such a revolution, the place of the European in Kenya would be made impossible and the British influence on, and friendship with, the new leaders would be irretrievably lost. I had a courteous and friendly hearing, but I am not sure I convinced him. However, all was to be well and, with hindsight, we avoided the mistake made in Zanzibar, where independence came with the wrong party in power and resulted in bloody revolution and communist style government.

On my return to Kenya, I went to Government House to make my confession to Malcolm Macdonald, as I had seen Sandys on the spur of the moment and without prior Kenya Government approval. Malcolm invited me to tell my tale and after I had finished, and to my intense relief, he said "I agree with every word you've said!". It was Malcolm Macdonald who set Kenya on the correct road to independence and laid the foundations of an accord between the various tribal and racial groupings that exists to this day and has survived, in an astonishing way, the death of Kenyatta in August 1978.

Malcolm Macdonald was the son of Ramsay Macdonald and served under his father as Secretary of State for the Colonies in the socialist administration of At that time he was one of the younger, if not the youngest, politicians ever to have held such a position and, since then, had been the trouble-shooter for the British Government in many parts of the world, notably in the Far East. He was a man of great ability and high principle and yet, in spite of his remarkable gifts, he was a man of modesty and simplicity. He would neither eat nor drink after late afternoon, as he said that, if he did, he couldn't sleep and to him sleep was more important than food. He refused all the honours offered to him by a grateful Government and to the end was Mr. Malcolm Macdonald.

Africa was a new continent to him and his first act on arrival was to call all parties together and say "We all want to get independence as soon as possible, don't we?" "Yes", said everyone. "How many Cabinet meetings have you been having a week?" "Oh!", came the answer with some pride "Two, twice the normal number". Malcolm thought for a moment and then said "Gentlemen, shall we have three a day?" and from that moment until Kenya's constitution was hammered out, we sat all morning, all afternoon. At 8 PM cold meats and beer were on the side at Government House and at 8:30 we settled down to the last session of the day. It nearly killed the Old Man and we tried to confine the evening deliberations to non-contentious subjects, so that he could go off to his house at Katundu and get some rest. The extraordinary dedication of Malcolm to Kenya's destiny endeared him to all parties and, following independence, the African leaders wouldn't let him go. From Governor he became Governor General during Kenya's year as an independent state, but retaining the monarchy as titular head of state, and thereafter as Britain's High Commissioner to the new Republic of Kenya - an unheard of progression.

Kenyatta's release from detention was greeted with widespread jubilation throughout Kenya, particularly amongst his own people, the Kikuyu. He had been such a controversial figure for so long that it was decided he should go to London to be presented to the House of Commons. I was one of the small delegation which took him and comprised Mboya, Odinga, Gichuru, McKenzie and de Souza. We had many meetings in London, but the most notable was when we went down to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association room in the Houses of Parliament and Kenyatta spoke about his policies for the future of Kenya and the aspirations of his people. The C.P.A. is strictly non political and the room that night was packed with MPs without chairs, sitting on the floor. It was a strange and emotional occasion. Kenyatta was still somewhat bemused by the rapidity of events that had brought him from confinement to the turmoil of pre-independent politics. His position was still not assured and a KANU/KADU alliance was to come into being before the election of 1963 swept him to undisputed power, which he exercised in ever mounting degrees for the next 15 years. He was talking to the representatives of a country that had imprisoned and restricted him for a long period of his life and they in turn had turned out in large numbers, some with a sympathetic understanding of the role he would play, some no doubt harbouring resentment against the picture of him that had been built up over the years and some perhaps just out of curiosity to see what manner of man he really was. The strain on him showed in his delivery, but the sincerity and goodwill were there and he was heard with respect and courtesy.

He asked me to speak after him and I spoke briefly. At this distance in time I cannot remember what I said, but it was to the effect that I believed the future of the immigrant races in Kenya could only be secured by an acceptance of a swift move to independence and that

Kenyatta was the leader most acceptable to his people. I had become convinced of his magnanimity in the face of great provocation and was hopeful that this would extend into that period when his power would be absolute. It may have been something of a gamble, but we were short on options and it is a matter of some satisfaction that Kenya today is not only a country of great achievement, but a country in which so many people from different countries can work, live and prosper. The European farmers are largely gone, but that was inevitable.

A country with few mineral resources, no oil and little industrialisation, Kenya has relied on its agriculture to sustain existence, growth and hope for its rapidly expanding population. Its deep rich red loam, its mountain soils, its vast plains for the ranching of cattle and, above all, its generously spread rainfall have combined to make it a paradise, when compared with so much of the continent of Africa, which, on the whole, has not been blessed with anything other than a harsh, unrewarding environment. The land, then, was the most precious asset the country possessed and, added to its economic worth, was an emotionalism that transcended all considerations. In a country that had little in the way of social security, other than through the tribal system of mutual help, even a small plot of land gave a sense of stability and security for old age.

Under the circumstances, it was inevitable that the early cry of the nationalists should have been for the return of that land to those considered by the politicians to be the rightful owners, the African people. The emotional cry went up “They taught us to pray and when our eyes were closed they stole our land”. No matter how well the land was farmed, the employment it gave, the wealth it produced, particularly in export earnings and taxes paid, it was in alien hands and this was a wrong to be righted. What has been most remarkable was that a land reform programme of considerable

magnitude has been carried out in a manner that gave hope to the new farmer and reasonable compensation to the old, that changed the face of much of the Kenya countryside, altering the broad acres of flowing cereal crops and pasture to the patchwork-quilt of small scale agriculture. There were cases of hardship, compulsory acquisition, walk-ons and inadequate payment, but, by and large, it has been a remarkable example of the transfer of many million of acres of land from the hands of an immigrant people into indigenous ownership.

Some early nationalists had hinted at widespread confiscation, but from the moment Kenyatta decreed “There will be no free land”, the land transfer programme proceeded with an ordered regularity that must be without parallel. The farmers then were bought out. Some left for other pastures. Some stayed on the land, working for the new owners, particularly when large scale units were bought by individuals. Others retired or sought new occupation within the country and so joined the businessmen, the hoteliers, the tour operators, the lawyers, the accountants and countless others who survive and work in modern Kenya.

The brief period in London apart, Kenyatta spent all his time and effort going around Kenya, holding mass meetings, explaining his policies and reassuring in particular the immigrant communities, which were in a state of considerable doubt about their future. The heart of the European farming area was at that time at Nakuru and it was here that he held one of his most momentous meetings. Introduced by Lord Delamere, president of the KNFU, he addressed himself to some hundreds of white farmers, the great majority of whom had been his most bitter opponents and critics. Such was his power of persuasion that, when he came to leave, he was given a standing ovation.

I was present and had to say a few words of greeting at a mass meeting he held at my own village of Nyeri. As far as the eye could see, the ground was black from the presence of the vast crowd, enlivened by the myriad of colours of the women's dresses, jewellery and head scarves. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene. The Old Man had come back to his own Kikuyu people and emotion was in the air. Everyone had to say something - Mboya, Odinga, Gichuru, Kibaki, even myself. I learnt in a few minutes the power that a small microphone gives to a speaker in front of such a crowd. One could make them applaud, laugh, reflect or even turn to anger, according to what was said and how it was said. There is an almost compulsive desire to please and it is easy enough to understand how young politicians could get carried away and make promises that could not be fulfilled and threats that were in essence against the common good. Not so Kenyatta. He was like the father addressing his children, the headmaster his pupils. Through all the euphoria came the lessons he was to repeat again and again - no free land, hard work, dedication to nation building, thrift. No bounty, this, to be snatched from the hands of the colonialists. As Churchill, in his great early war speeches, was able to promise little but toil and the hope of victory, so Kenyatta promised little but an African government and a start to the development of the country in line with that country's aspirations.

The great crowd grew thoughtful, even silent, but at the end the roar of applause, echoing around the green hills and amid the purple shadows of evening, gave eloquent testimony to the manner in which his words had been received.