

poet and mystic of nine centuries ago, and others who have flourished in the gardens of Afghanistan, are among those who come to express the presence of a grace such men visit the world to remind us of and exemplify in their acts. Afghanistan not only provides material for the scholar; it also confers a larger sense of the history of human achievement on anyone who is ready to remove himself for a spell from the clamorous egotism of the West.

## Two Roseveare Incidents

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A visitor from South Africa to England is naturally asked many questions, and is equally naturally interested in any comments or reports of African and South African matters in the British press. Two incidents connected with the name of Bishop Roseveare of Ghana last August appear to me very significant.

The first of these is that the *Daily Mail* front page comment, discussing the expulsion of Bishop Roseveare from Ghana, went on to suggest that it is a pity there were not Ghanaian clergy trained and in positions of sufficient responsibility to make the statement needed. In other words, while someone had to point out to the Ghanaians that some of them were giving quasi-religious cultus to a human being, Dr Nkrumah, it would be far easier for the Ghana administration to hear this from a Ghanaian Bishop. It might indeed be almost impossible for them to accept it from a white man, a member of the colonial power from whose unjust domination (as they see it), they have just been liberated. We ought to hear truth and justice from anybody, and to fail to do so is flatly wrong. But there is the more excuse for the sin or failure, or whatever one is to call it, if the person who tells us the truth appears in some way himself identified with injustice. Not so very long ago a Pan-African Congress in West Africa passed a resolution to the effect that the white-organized Churches had been identified with the powers of exploitation. To expect Africans wholly to dissociate an

individual from his people, a truth from the man expressing it, is to expect much.

The second incident followed within a few days of this. Asked to comment on Nkrumah's arrest of three of his own ministers, Bishop Roseveare stated that in one case at least it appeared to be justified. This suggests to me two things. It shows that Bishop Roseveare is above any ill feeling about his treatment, and brings out again the point that, whatever the stature of the man, in every such incident that occurs we must consider the total situation, the feelings of Africa about white men as a whole. Again it implies a most important point of understanding. It may be necessary for African prime ministers or heads of state in the present crisis to do things that would be fantastic in a British Prime Minister. It may be regrettable, but inevitable.

Africa is at present coming of age, without having been given any sufficient preparation for this event by its 'guardian', at a forced pace. It is being courted by East and West with dollars and roubles in hundreds of millions; it is undergoing a sudden searching questioning about spiritual values in Christianity, Mahommedanism, Theosophy and its own ancient cults; it is goaded beyond words by the calm assumption of privilege by some white people still in authority, while the World Opinion represented by U.N.O. urges Africa's immediate independence. Twenty-five years ago, even fifteen years ago, only the minority of Africans had ever had any part in modern political life. They had their own more spontaneous forms of consultation, after which the chief—or the commissioner—spoke, and that was that. If under these circumstances political life in Africa, and so all else affected by it, is destined to be for a period, it is necessary to remember the causes, and our own responsibility for them, and accept the situation.

Without disrespect to Bishop Roseveare I wish to use these two incidents, which have caught the public notice in England as examples of the situation of the missionaries in Africa as a whole, and of the new understanding that must be brought into the work of anyone trying now to assist Africa. We too have made our mistakes, in not having an African clergy prepared, and I hope we can now have the understanding exemplified in his comment about Ghana.

The first point that seems to appear is that any true friend of Africa from the West, attempting to encourage its potentialities without imposing on it anything alien or to defend any vested interest contrary to the common good, has best hope of success if he deliberately tries to court the place of second fiddle. The second is that he should find in its

own indigenous development, however apparently confusing to the Western mind, an intense interest rather than a cause only of apprehension.

Through absorption in detail of work for very large numbers, and attachment to certain standards of 'European' efficiency in non-essentials, we have not prepared a sufficient number of Africans to play first fiddle. The *Daily Mail* was right. It is the African who must speak and take and lead, as far as possible, in all matters of the spirit and humanity, as in those of politics. It is of no use Europeans saying this too is a new 'racialism'. Our record is too compromising for us to be able to say, for a long time to come, 'what does it matter whether the Minister of Finance or the Bishop of Nansikeni is black or white provided he is the best man?'

Speaking from a missionary point of view, and personally I would apply it to culture and politics also, I see a great future for the white man who is prepared to be around to help—not to force his advice and assistance on Africa, but simply to offer his services for the joy and privilege of being allowed to be in on the birth of a new continent. He must will to see the African take responsibility not as a policy or a finesse, but as by full conviction of the latter's manhood and potentialities, and of his right to make his own mistakes. They will in any case be mistakes less outrageous to his fellow Africans than alien mistakes would be. To let the mission tractor go rusty, or to take bribes in political administration, may be offences less odious to the African than many we might make.

This brings us back to the second Roseveare incident. The condition of the sort of contribution I visualize being made by a friendly Christian—or a friendly sociologist or scientist—will be to allow not only for things being done in the African way, but according to the exigencies of the present African crisis. Shortly after becoming Prime Minister of Ghana, Nkrumah wrote an autobiography, in which he said that it might be necessary for an African leader, in the moment of confusion of the takeover, to use means that appeared non-democratic in order to establish democracy. The arrest of some of his own ministers echoes this. I do not know enough about it to say whether Nkrumah was right or wrong in this case, nor is it possible in the present to assess the real meaning of a character so complex, so friendly and so truculent, so practical and so mystical, as that of the leader of Ghana's liberation movement. But the principle as he stated it is obviously valid. In another form of crisis the French have admitted the same principle in their surrender to the authority of De Gaulle. The fact that England

can have all its revolutions in a quiet and dignified manner does not mean that Africa in 1962 can or should be able to do the same.

As in the political sphere, so it must be expected to be in the others. I met a man coming over on the ship, determined to return to Africa (a Lancashireman), who was getting away for a bit to reflect. He was irritated because the new staff in his power station were quite happy to produce or distribute electricity only three times a week, and the local ice-cream manufacturer complained that his whole establishment melted and ice cream flowed out under the doors on the other days. This is bad economics in a small and typical example, which will be repeated on a much larger scale in many spheres. It is also bad religion, for the precept of work is not only economic, but connected from the beginning with the whole of man's salvation. On the other hand the European who, up to date, has insisted on exacting hours of work from his 'boys' for too little wages, may not be in the best position to read the lesson. Nor can we expect people in a moment of elation at freedom to turn willingly to exacting work. Finally, it is possible that Africa may, legitimately, react against the feverish work attitudes of so many Europeans on positive grounds of an ideal, already expressed by some Africans, of not becoming unbalanced about wealth—making an industrial rivalry. That reaction may be excessive at first, but yet important for African contribution to world culture when the balances have been reached.

It is perhaps in it that Africa's greatest danger lies, for if it must accept loans and advice in order to feed its own people, it may become the prey to a second colonialism worse than the first. But here too, somehow, any assistant who can no longer command will have to watch the readjustment taking place in African fashion, and should enjoy the process. It can be a new experience to him to stir up energy by sympathy and assistance, without the power to command. So something new, which he might have prevented by forming things too much in his own image, may appear in human culture, and even in Christianity.

From a Catholic point of view we can never dwell too long on this matter. For us it is even more complex and confusing than for the white assistant in civil life. We see, in the danger of Communism, one far greater than that seen by the man who only considers humanity and personal freedom. We know that African may desire to become a Third Thing, neither West nor East, in culture and politics. But there is no Third Thing in the universal church. The one international authority of the

Church *de facto* centred outside Africa, must hold there as elsewhere.

We have had to date an inevitable social authority as ministers of progress. This missionaries have used confidently for good purposes, and they may find it hard to surrender it sufficiently. The missionary system has had its own very great efficiency, not only in organizing its economic basis, but in carrying out the fullest traditions of parochial duties. The state of being a missionary has inevitably given a certain paternal sense.

Nevertheless we must now see that these very high considerations have impeded us in the duty of communicating responsibility, given the missionary an instructive bent towards taking social control, and placed us in urgent need of re-orientating our methods. This should be more joy to us than to the many new types of lay assistants, educational and technical, who are now going out to Africa happily to work as second fiddle and to accept the chaos and crisis for the sake of a new world. The settler-planter and the civil servant immigrants to Africa are giving way to numbers of the new generation going out to teach and to assist in technology and social welfare, in subsidiary positions. They will watch inevitable mistakes being made by inexperienced and often very young administrators and politicians, for the sake of what is to come.

The missionary could find a most special vocation in this—as it were asking only, like St Francis, for deacon's orders in Africa. He could renew his understanding of Catholicism in it. For the time working out of Catholicism is unity in essentials with the maximum local adaptation and 'colour'. This is exactly what Africa wants—the best from everywhere, ancient or modern, East or West, with the right to use it all in an essentially African way, and still more, after the smart of so many centuries of subjection, under its own responsible leaders.

There is a very great urgency about the airing and discussion of this whole question of missionary attitude. A visit to the *Sword of the Spirit Africa Office* has impressed this upon me. Sympathizers in England who are enlightened about Africa, as in the *Sword* work which has produced such enlightenment in a fine manner, are with reason worried about missionaries who 'cry Communism' too easily, since the effect may be an attempt to hold on too much to the form of social influence described above. It is possible to dissociate the two things. There is very real danger of Communism, or even short of it of the form of mystical African nationalism that has appeared in Ghana, and which may lead to reversion to paganism of a new national-socialistic type. At the same

time it is possible to see the European Catholic and missionary contribution stirred by this very danger to the adaptation of new methods and new attitudes, such as those that seem to be implied in the two Roseveare incidents.

## Heard and Seen

KOKOSCHKA

Kokoschka is one of the few great modern painters that the art-publishing trade has not preconditioned our minds to. The usual jading influence of a torrent of monographs so bamboozles the mind that, by the time one gets to the pictures, an assessment is the last thing the mind is capable of or inclined to do. The reason for his escape from this kind of attention is, I suspect, because Kokoschka has nothing in common with the art movement that nearly monopolizes our attention, the school of Paris; he is outside the tradition of Paris, owing nothing to the discoveries of the early years of this century there. His unique personality is so secure in its own conviction that far from being in need of lateral help from a 'school' he defies any categorization at all. He cuts across any attempt to label him. The question of style which is so central to any evaluation of modern art is brushed aside with protean energy, and it is this unexpected impatience that is the most disturbing and individual quality of the retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

However extreme and exuberant the artists of the school of Paris were, they possessed that precise instinct for balance and interval in drawing and painting, that instinct for measure that enables even their more unconsidered pictures to retain an authority because of it. Kokoschka's balance in drawing and painting is imprecise; not only the more obvious lack of it in the paintings but the subtle lack of it in the drawings, gnaws away at our confidence, however attracted we are by the verve and vitality which almost persuade us that the qualities we miss are not central to the problem of all art. In Kokoschka's painting the intuition seems to have been given full scope and a decisive divorce from any idea of intellectual clarity. One might think here is the ultimate ideal of what the romantic artist aspires to be—always protean, verging on the inchoate, with more than a dash of madness. These qualities he shares with Soutine, perhaps more remotely with Altdorfer, qualities of expressionism verging on vulgarity which have never been welcomed in the Paris tradition.

The almost reassuring traditionalism of subject is deceptive; it is only when one looks deeply into the paintings that colour and the deliberate lack of