

WHITE PARADISE HELL FOR AFRICA ?

By Nsekuye Bizimana

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White Paradise
Hell for Africa

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Foreword

I found it, until my stay in Europe, quite obvious that my country should do everything possible to resemble this continent in every aspect. I was not alone in this opinion. Almost all my countrymen had the same view. In our eyes, the Europeans led a life full of happiness, without any complaint. That is why each of us desired to taste this sweet life-style.

As it would take a long time for our land to reach the standard of Europe, the quickest way to experience this happiness was to fly to Europe and stay there for a few years. One of the possibilities we had was to study on this continent. It is no wonder therefore that all school-leavers in my country wanted to go to study in Europe or North America. I belong to the chosen few who received the so much desired scholarship to study in Europe. Since then, I have been in Europe for more than 15 years, so, I have been able to get to know the white man's world closely. I have gathered experiences in town- as well as in country-life. I have talked to different people, young and old. Not only have I lived as a student but also as a worker in industry and as a scientist. In this way, I have penetrated a world quite different from that of a mere student. Of course, I have had contact with the 'famous' white women, of whom we heard in Rwanda that they run after blackmen. I have met rich and poor, employed and unemployed. The experiences in Germany were not enough for me. I have visited other countries, not only those in the non-communist West 'beloved' in Rwanda but also in the 'hated' communist East.

Books, lectures, radio and television programmes about Africa, the so-called Third World and international relations have strongly attracted my interest. I have met not only my countrymen but also discussed things passionately with other Africans and many people from the Third World. I have not neglected to deal with the topic Development Aid with Europeans of different political affiliations as well as with other foreigners of different origin. The question has always emerged, whether the industrial countries really want to help the less developed countries. The question "What is really development?" has also been raised. And many more....

All these experiences have convinced me that the main cause of the infernal situation presently in Africa lies in the fact that we Africans still believe, even 25 years after independence, that progress simply means copying white people, because for us, they live in paradise on earth.

It is simply not true that life in industrial countries is so sweet. Certainly, we have our problems but the industrial countries also have immense difficulties connected with their life-style and social structures.

To want simply to adopt the life-style of industrial countries would definitely lead us to a catastrophe. On the one hand, we cannot succeed in changing Africa into a second Europe in a short time, since our technological backwardness is just too big.

On the other hand, if we fix ourselves to the whites, we will fail to make our own discoveries on the basis of our means, ability, history and traditional skills.

We know the result of such a policy: not only have we failed to solve our old problems such as hunger and disease but also we have even added new ones similar to those in the industrial world such as loneliness and destruction of the environment. Africa will soon turn into a real hell if... Of course we are the main culprits for these developments but the industrial countries must also stand in the dock. Naive Africans believe that the exploitation of Africa ended with colonialism. What a big mistake! I do not see it that way: it is even constantly stated in many serious newspapers in the industrial countries.

It is not only disappointing that the material wealth of the industrial countries comes into being through the impoverishment of other peoples but also that the rich countries unscrupulously export their modern problems such as toxic waste to the poor countries. Where is the moral superiority of the 'wise' white man over the 'primitive' black man? The situation is serious enough to drive one to despair. What can be done? I quite often asked myself this question and was often frustrated to find out that I could not find the right answer. In any case, the more I thought about it the clearer it became to me that no positive changes can occur in Africa before the African people lose their illusions about Europe and other industrial countries. Unfortunately this is not yet the case.

In the course of my thoughts, it occurred to me that I might make a small contribution to dismantling these illusions by writing about my experiences and those of other Africans in the industrial countries, whereby West Germany is taken as the main example. That is how this book came into being. Apart from these experiences, the book contains my thoughts about another way for Africa which I would like to put up for discussion. Many critics may say that there are already many books on this topic; and now yet another one? It is quite right that several authors have dealt with this topic before, but this is no reason for not to writing about it once again.

In the first place, many problems which shake the world today, such as destruction of the environment through various factors, were not so serious at the time when most of the books on the right development of Africa were published. Secondly, I hope that more people will be made aware of the situation if more of them occupy themselves with the topic. Finally, it must be said that as long as a problem is not solved, it will always be talked about. It is to be hoped that the problems stated in this book will be solved so that no one will need to write about them any more. I have intentionally avoided writing a strictly scientific book because I am convinced that one can make one's ideas better understood through a simple popular book than through a more academic work published in a certain pattern.

In my descriptions of experiences in industrial countries, I often talk about myself and my country. I did not intend to place myself in the foreground, neither did I intend to suggest that my country is important. I simply preferred to refer to things I exactly know. Nevertheless, other people from the Third World, not only those in Germany but also those in other industrial countries (the book has already been published in German and French), have confirmed that they have had similar experiences. In this connection, I want to ask those with more experience of the world to help me by informing others; for example, through discussions about the contents of the first two chapters.

This book relates mainly to Africa. Nevertheless, other people from the Third World may find out that we are in the same boat, as far as the basic problems are concerned. So, in writing my book, I thought that my solutions might also be of importance to other countries in the Third World. I do not, however, want to give the impression that I am well-informed about the whole world.

Many people have asked me whether I wrote this book on my own, a question probably related to the fact that many people do not believe that an African would be able to. I answered that I did, and I was not lying. However, I had to let the text be checked by other people, since I had to write it in foreign languages.

That is why I want to take this opportunity to thank D. Collin who helped me review the French edition. I also want to mention R. Bethge, M. Schalla, C. Kuhn and K. Pandtke who corrected the German text. The English translation was done by S. Morris and FS. Mushayavanhu. I thank them very much, especially Mushayavanhu, for their commitment. My thanks go also to H. Mbukeni Mnguni, T. Desai and especially to P. Stanway for having helped me in the last corrections of the English version. Last but not least, I am very grateful to the many African and European friends for the very informative conversations which gave me the courage to publish my ideas. I want to mention in this connection T. Bararugurika, K. Mwanyongo, T. Nosrat, J. Parbey, G. Okwuosa and Charangwa without forgetting my loving wife C. Bankundiye.

I want to mention one other question: if I criticize life in the industrial countries so much, why am I still living there? This is a justified question. I will answer it on another occasion. At present, I only want to mention that I am staying in Europe for reasons beyond my control. They are not the usual reasons, nor is it enthusiasm for Europe which is holding me here.

The accusation that I do not know anything about Africa anymore, since I have stayed in Europe too long, is unjustifiable, because I visit my home country every other year for three months.

And now, dear reader, I want to wish you a lot of fun in reading this book. I hope that the contents will have a positive influence on your personal behaviour. Letters to me may be addressed to the publishing house.

Yours,

Nsekuye Bizimana

Berlin, 29th August, 1989

Our class photo in 1969. The white lady, too, is a pupil and not our teacher. Only four of us Africans gained the highly sought- after scholarship to Europe.

Chapter I

How we first got acquainted with Europe

1. How I learnt that I would be able to study in Europe

It was about half past seven one evening in April, 1969. We were still at school, which was quite usual at this time. There were still two months to go before our grammar-school in Kigali would dismiss its pupils for the final time, with their leaving certificates. The school had three main subject areas. Apart from economics, there were natural sciences and a third subject area consisting mainly of latin and natural sciences, which is what I was studying.

That evening one of the Belgian priests who supervised us during private study came to us with a pile of papers in his hand. Usually these supervisors came only when one of us was being noisy. However, that was not the case this time. Examination time was approaching and everybody's thoughts were directed towards his text and exercise books: there was simply no time to make any noise. So, we wondered what the reason for this sudden visit could be.

The papers which he was carrying around with him were not just the usual papers. We realized that when the four of us, for whom they were intended, received them. Of those four, I was sitting furthest front, and so I received mine first. I realized that they came from the Ministry of Education, who in turn had received them from the Common Market (nowadays known as the European Community). The Common Market placed money at the disposal of our government every year to enable pupils just finishing grammar-school or a similar institution to go and study in Europe.

It was three months after we had written to the Ministry of Education about the subjects we wanted to study at university. One had to state three subjects, and the office of the Ministry of Education chose one of them according to the needs of the country. If the chosen subjects were not yet offered at our only university in Butare, the government sent its future students abroad. In this case the studies were normally sponsored by the countries in question. Private and international organizations, for example UNESCO and the Common Market, also made some scholarships available.

To obtain a Common Market scholarship, one had to fill in forms like those which the priest brought with him. When school finished, one sent one's certificate off and waited until the final reply came from Brussels.

**2. Even nowadays every Rwandan
would like to go to Europe:
In his eyes, Europe is a paradise on earth**

The number of our people who would like to go abroad is still very large. Without exaggerating, one can say that most of our students would like to study in Europe or North America. But this cannot obscure the fact that our citizens can now be found all over the world.

We know Uganda very well: the country where our young men used to earn their dowries. Diplomatic relations between Rwanda and Burundi have become so good that people can travel to and fro without hindrance. The number of Rwandans who have been to Tanzania and Zaire has increased considerably. One can even find Rwandans everywhere in Europe. My fellow-countrymen are studying in many different countries, be it in Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Russia or Denmark. If one is by chance in Canada or the USA, one does not need be surprised upon hearing Kinyarwanda (the national language of Rwanda) spoken. The Chinese and the Japanese also know about our way of life through Rwandans who live there. There are also some Rwandan citizens living in Australia.

In my day, however, that is between 1960 and 1974, only a few Rwandans managed to get abroad.

Whoever came back from Europe was given a welcome fit for a king. In the first government after independence there was only one Cabinet Minister who had studied in Europe.

I will never forget how we all dropped tools in order to go and admire a woman from our area simply because she was wearing trousers. She introduced a new fashion into the country by so doing. This woman was one of the women teachers who had been sent to Belgium for a six month's teaching practice. She was one of the first from my country to get a glimpse of Europe.

Even though she had only been in Europe six months, this woman from our village had gathered enough money to buy not only the trousers but also other interesting articles. Other women of a similar social standing could not even dream of possessing such things. Her necklaces, bracelets, shoes and clothes were unique. Every woman who saw her certainly grew envious of her possessions. Her radio was also better than the locally manufactured Mera-radio. Everybody said: "Europe must be a beautiful place."

This conclusion was understandable. All nice things that we had in the country came from Europe. We owed everything to the white man, be it bicycles, motorbikes or films.

In view of such facts it is clear that a white skin meant wealth and superiority in our eyes. Besides, there was not a single white man in the country who was poor. They all had very nice houses. None of them had to walk, because they all had fine cars. None of them had to hoe the fields; they all had well manicured fingers and

hands. Their salaries were to be envied. At the week-end they could choose between hunting and swimming in Lake Muhazi. In the summer-holidays it was possible for them to fly home to visit parents and other relatives. Not a single Rwandan could possibly imagine that there were white people in this world who could be poor, stupid or sad.

The films about Europe which we saw at grammar-school gave us the impression that Europe was the best place in the world. The houses there were not like our huts. They were very clean. In beauty they even surpassed the houses of our ministers. The roads in Europe were far more numerous than ours and tarred. There were innumerable cars there, whereas in Rwanda, a person owning a bicycle had cause to be proud. The food in Europe could not be compared with that of our Belgian priests, even though they did not eat badly. In Europe, one ate meat daily. At our grammar-school, although we ate like kings compared to the rest of the population, we were happy if we got a piece of meat once a week. Bread was for the white man what sweet potatoes were for us. In Rwanda, one eats sweet potatoes almost every day. At boarding-school we had the privilege of eating bread every morning but, unlike the Europeans, we ate it dry, dipping it in tea to make it soft.

During the lessons about European economics our teachers, who were nearly all Europeans, taught us that one out of every three people in Germany owned a car, and in the USA it was two out of every four.

In foreign newspapers which we were often able to read, such as the French Paris Match, there were pictures of every kind. There were also advertisements for every imaginable product. We were less interested in the advertisements than in the photos of the beautiful girls which were shown there. We were between 18 and 20 years old. If it was not time for examinations, we spent our time choosing the girls we liked best. Our young teachers told us that we would be able to choose freely from these girls, if only we got the chance to study in Europe. White women were supposed to like black men very much.

All these things which we heard from our teachers, read in the magazines and saw in the films, together with the wonderful things which arrived from Europe, made this continent look like a paradise on earth to us. Each one of us wanted, at all costs, to take up his further education there. Some people were even heard to say: "If we were lucky enough to see Europe, there would be nothing else left in the world worth seeing, so we could then die."

When it became known which pupils were going to get scholarships for Europe, these future Europeans' became very proud, and the others rather envious. This envy was in some cases so great that it negatively affected the old bonds of friendship between people.

3. The long wait before leaving for Europe

The 26th of June, 1969, was the final day at our grammar-school. Those who had passed the final examinations went home hoping to go to university in Butare or abroad. In September of the same year the names of the successful applicants for Butare University were made known. The next month the first of the recipients of Common Market scholarships left. From then on the rest of them, who had so far received no letter (myself included), hoped that they would soon be able to leave.

The departure dates were made known over the radio. But some of us did not have a radio at home. We did, however, all manage to hear the news, even at night. The few neighbours who had radios were not in the least bit disturbed by our presence in their homes almost every night.

October and November went by. In the middle of November some of the remaining recipients of Common Market scholarship were called up and sent to Europe. From this moment on, because we had not yet been called up, we thought that that was the end of our scholarships. We therefore started to collect money from relatives and friends in order to pay for food on the way back to Kigali. All political matters are settled in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. We wanted to find out there what would happen to our scholarships. We all lived a long way from each other and for some of us it was up to 125 miles to the capital. However, we still walked there. We would have liked to have gone by bus if we had had enough money and if there had been enough buses. Those of us who were from as far away as Butare or Ruhengeli for example, were several days on the road. We took shelter at night with villagers or in church boarding-houses. We ate just once a day. That was enough. That had to be enough. Our purses held us in check.

Once in Kigali we sought for accommodation at our relatives'. They were almost invariably from our village or from the neighbourhood. Accommodating us for the first few days was no problem, but a longer period of time presented difficulties. On the other hand, we had to wait there a long time, because the authorities in Kigali told us that news from Brussels might come any moment. What could we do to calm down our friends and hosts who became more impatient every day? Apart from the fact that there were hardly any hotels, we did not have enough money to spend even one night there. Their reaction was understandable, for life in Kigali was so expensive that coping with several visitors for a longer period of time was not easy. Besides, other acquaintances arrived occasionally, asking to be put up for the night, because they too had no alternative. We therefore remained only a few days in Kigali.

How happy we were to be home again! We could now eat, drink and sleep knowing that we were not getting on anyone's nerves.

After recovering from this journey, we turned our attention to the radio again. We went so often to the neighbours' radio that some of them started to make fun of us. That happened to me too. They said: "That's the end of his scholarship. He doesn't

need to make any more journeys by day or night to the radio.” Some people even doubted that I had got my school-leaving certificate.

My friends knew that I had passed my Abitur (final examinations A-levels), but they had lost hope that anything would come of my scholarship. They started to advise me to forget about studying and look for a job instead. Although those who tried to convince me that I would not be able to continue studying grew more numerous, I was deaf to them, and still remained hopeful.

December, also, passed by without anything happening. I did not enjoy the Christmas and New Year celebrations very much. After the holidays I decided to look for a job. In those days it was easy for grammar-school graduates (one of the highest levels of education at that time) to find reasonable employment. I did not go and listen to the radio any more. I submitted my application for a job to the Ministry of Labour and waited for a reply telling me when I could start work. This, however, also took a little while.

Then one day, on the 15th of January, 1970, as I was helping my father with the house work, the glad tidings came: I had been called up on the radio. I had to present myself as soon as possible at the Ministry of Education in Kigali, the reply from Brussels having arrived. I had to get ready for the journey.

I had become so resigned that I did not believe the story until I heard the announcement myself when it was repeated in the evening. I cannot describe how great my joy was. I straight away started to collect money again, receiving something from almost everybody, and my parents even giving me the money which they had put aside in case of illness. I received so much, that I could even go by bus to Kigali. There I met my class-mates who had also been waiting and who had also been on the point of despair.

Although we wanted to study in Belgium or France, on this day we learnt, to our dismay, that our journey would take us to West Germany. Nobody wanted to study in West Germany. Our teachers almost all of whom were Belgians had told us that the Germans, “those Nazis”, were wicked people. However, we accepted our scholarships, hoping that the Germans would not turn out to be as bad as they had been depicted. Moreover, our main concern was being able to fly to Europe, and it did not matter quite so much to which part of it.

After filling in the scholarship forms in the office, we had to attend to other formalities. A doctor had to certify us healthy enough to withstand the pressures of strenuous study. Everybody was worried that the doctor would discover that he had some disease and order him to stay in the country. Fortunately, the medical examinations did not give rise to any objections to a journey to Europe.

The next thing to do was to apply for a passport. Passports were not issued to everybody, but only to people who had a valid reason for going abroad. Studying was considered to be a valid reason, so students did not have any difficulties in obtaining passports. Now and again, however, it still happened that a passport application was refused without explanation. We were therefore happy upon receiving

them. We felt relieved that an obstacle to our departure had been removed. We also needed a visa for Belgium, as a night's stopover in Brussels was included. We did not need an entry visa for West Germany because of an agreement between my country and that one.

We had two weeks in which to attend to these formalities. The 4th of February, 1970, was the planned date of departure, and those who had not by that time got everything sorted out could not expect the aeroplane to wait. And, of course, if somebody missed his flight then that was usually the end of his scholarship, unfortunately. In those days the Belgian airline SABENA was the only one to fly to Kigali, and that only once a fortnight.

Fortunately we completed every thing sooner than we had expected and still had time to go home to say good-bye to relatives and friends. Many gave us money so that we would not starve on the way. I had heard that food was provided free of charge on the aeroplane, and so I used all the money to buy a nice suitcase. I did not dare to take my old cloth bag, which I used to use in boarding-school, onto the aeroplane. I was even ashamed of my simple clothing and was worried that I might not be allowed on. This was because I had heard that only passengers in suits were allowed to board aeroplanes. If I had had enough money I would have bought myself one. Things being as they were, I contented myself with the clothes I had worn at the A-level presentation ceremony. They were almost all second-hand, but this did not bother me so much. Of the other five fellow-students who were with me, three were wearing similar clothing to mine. The ladies checking at the entrance to the aeroplane did not, however, pay any attention to our appearance but only to our boarding-cards.

4. The experience during the long-looked-forward-to journey to Europe, and the first impressions of Europe and of Germany

It was about half past ten on the 4th of February, 1970, a date I will never forget, as I entered an aeroplane for the first time in my life. I had up until then only seen this wonderful machine from below. The inside seemed to me to be an enormous hall full of beautiful chairs. At a quarter to eleven all passengers were on board, many of whom were Europeans on the way back home. The aeroplane now prepared to take off, and everybody had to take his seat. It was not difficult for us newcomers to find out where our places were. The 'aeroplane girls' had amongst other things the task of showing the passengers to their seats. Another of their duties was to show them how to fasten the safety-belts. There was, namely, a belt on each side of the seat, and the two had to be joined together, to prevent the passenger from being tossed about in case the aeroplane started to rock.

At about a quarter past eleven the sound of the engines could be heard and soon the aeroplane started to move forwards. Before taking off it rolled along the ground

very fast until it had gathered enough speed to lift itself into the air. This rolling along the ground at take off and landing was the nicest part of the whole flight. Being in the air was not as nice as driving a car. Once the aeroplane was in the air, we were relieved to think that nothing more could go wrong with our scholarships. It had occasionally happened that some students had been stopped at the airport and their departure prevented.

Up in the air we could see the whole of Kigali through the windows. We could still recognize the houses, the streets, the animals and the people, but the higher the aeroplane flew the smaller everything became. The people were soon reduced to no bigger than mice. It did not take long till we could not see Kigali anymore. We flew over other parts of the country but did not recognize where we were. We marvelled at the fact that the pilots could find their way around. ,

After a little while we were so high that we could not recognize anything at all beneath us. Only the larger of the lakes, such as Lake Victoria and the larger of the rivers, such as the Nile, could easily be made out from the land. How magnificent it was to observe Lake Victoria with its bays and little islands, and the Nile! Magnificent it was too, to see the beautiful clouds up there. One got the impression they were mountains of cotton wool. Who could have imagined that clouds, just like mountains, really did consist of valleys and steep sides? We could not, however, confirm that rain comes out of the clouds as we did not see any traces of it.

Another phenomenon attracted our attention: the sun. Seeing the sun rise and set from up there is certainly one of the most beautiful experiences one can ever have. Some people might think that it is warmer up there because the sun is nearer. But that would be a great mistake; it is even colder than in Canada or Russia, which are among the coldest countries in the world. Our captain informed us.

Apart from the temperature outside, he told us at which height we were flying and at what speed. When one looks at flying aeroplanes from the ground one has the impression that they are flying slowly; even a car seems faster. One does not realize that they are travelling at 500 miles per hour and that they are usually at a height of 30,000 feet.

We flew via Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, and arrived at Athens at eight o'clock in the evening, local time. We immediately had our first contact with European cold weather. This cold was harsher than morning chills in the dry season in Rwanda. Unfortunately, we could not visit the city, because this stopover was only to unload some passengers and take on some new ones. We occupied ourselves during the waiting-time by taking in the fine airport of Athens.

There was no comparison with the airports of Kigali or Bujumbura! Both of these airports had only one runway, whereas Athens had several. Lamps of different colours lined the runway. Red and violet dominated. Their purpose was to mark out the runways at night and in fog. All these lights, lit up along the runways in their many different colours, produced an image which was hard to forget. It is also a wonderful sight to fly over illuminated cities at night at low level!

We remained two hours in Athens, and then flew on to Brussels, where we arrived at eleven o' clock in the evening, local time. We found ourselves in the middle of Europe. The cold chilled us to the bones; and the jackets which we were wearing were useless against such cold and offered absolutely no protection. Even those who were wearing suits did not fare any better; they were shivering and freezing just the same as us. However, this ordeal did not last long; SABENA had ordered taxis to take us straight away to the hotel. They were soon there, and we could warm ourselves up in the cars.

On the way to the hotel we were amazed at how beautiful and how large the city was. It was nothing to compare with Kigali or with Butare, the second largest town in our country! Two-storey houses were the largest ones in Kigali, and there were so few that one could count them on the fingers of one hand. Brussels, however, consisted almost entirely of large multi-storey buildings. We asked each other when our country would be developed enough to be able to build such impressive houses too. Furthermore, we said: "The people living there certainly have a nice life." We also saw traffic signals, which we had until then known only from books and hearsay, and we praised the way the pedestrians, the cars and the cyclists obeyed them. The shops were packed with very nice things. The food-shops were especially enticing; and everyone secretly said to himself: "I'll soon be buying some of this fine food and be able to taste it anytime I want to."

The drive to the hotel was over in a moment. Our attention was caught by all these new things. The taxi-driver helped us to carry our suitcases into the hotel. That was the first time that we saw a white man carrying anything for a black man. In Rwanda all whites had servants who relieved them of all kinds of physical work. We were amazed how nice and unassuming the white people in Europe were. The whites in Rwanda behaved like demi-gods. The night-porter in our hotel was nice too. He gave us our room-keys, telling us that we could be woken up if we so desired. This, of course, we did desire so as not to miss our flight the next morning.

On entering our rooms we stood there as if bewitched. Not even the most well-to-do in our native country had such beautiful rooms. "It's incredible", said one of our colleagues. The floor of the room was covered with a fine clean carpet. Carpets were unknown in Rwanda. The floor was either entirely bare or decorated with a less beautiful locally produced cover. One wall of the room consisted of just a shining mirror, and one could see oneself everywhere. Most people in Rwanda did not even know what they looked like. The bed was simply wonderful, so big that one could sleep in any position. It felt more comfortable than the traditional Rwandan sleeping equipment. Another advantage was that it did not creak whenever one turned over, as did our beds in the boarding-school, and one did not need to leave the room to take a shower, as there. Bath, shower, soap and towels were all readily available in the room. We were delighted also with the telephone with which we could contact the night-porter. Then we realized that we had a machine before us of which we had

until then only heard: a television. We pressed all the knobs to see if it functioned at all and if anything was inside it.

Finally, we sat on our beds looking at it all and thinking that we would shortly be wealthy. The thought often cropped up that the other students who did not get a scholarship abroad would miss something in their lifetime. Indeed, these new experiences put us in a state of elation which seemed to grow endlessly. For us, who were used to travelling many miles on foot and who were used to simple and basic things, Europe was like being with Peter in Heaven. We thought that life would continue to be so rosy, and on our first night in Europe we dreamed of the fine things which were awaiting us.

At seven o' clock we were woken up by telephone. We showered and after that went to breakfast. The food which we had until now received since first boarding the aeroplane reminded us of the food which we had seen in films at boarding-school. We were not disappointed: European food tasted wonderful. We ate everything up. After breakfast we went by taxi to the airport. The next stop was going to be Frankfurt.

We flew over Europe by daylight, but it was hardly different from the flight over Africa, apart from the fact that Europe had many skyscrapers, such as those in Brussels. In the aeroplane we did not need any more explanations from the stewardess about how to operate the various appliances. But we were still frightened as the aeroplane began to rock. One got the feeling that it could crash. On looking out of the window one realized that bodies would be beyond recognition after that.

We first stepped onto German soil at about midday, local time. At this moment it was one o' clock in the afternoon in Rwanda; Rwanda and western Europe are only one hour apart. Those of us who had watches had to turn them back one hour, if they had not already done so in Brussels. One hour is within reason; it seems incredible if one has to turn one's watch five or six hours back, as for example when one flies from Rwanda to the USA. We had learnt about these time differences in school in preparation for our examination but had always thought that such things had been created by the white teachers in order to make the lives of us black pupils more difficult, and that they had no real practical meaning.

Frankfurt airport was also very large and had many runways, as in Brussels. The facilities there had been built so complicatedly that it was difficult for us foreigners to manage. We did not even speak one word of German. We stood there helpless, wondering what we should do. Suddenly we saw a young lady approaching us. We had been saved: she spoke French.

"Are you the young men from Rwanda who have spent last night in Brussels?", she asked us, and then continued: "Are your names Mr. Kagame, Mr. Ndahayo, Mr. Harelimana, Mr. Museruka, Mr. Senkware and Mr. Bizimana?" We replied: "Yes!"

We were amazed at how well she spoke French and how perfectly she pronounced our Rwandan names. One of us said in our native language: "You see, the whites, especially the Germans, are far superior to us and far cleverer than we' re!"
The

young lady had perhaps sensed this compliment and said with a smile: “I’m Mrs Muller from the Goethe Institute in Boppard. That’s where you’ll learn German. I’m one of the teachers. Please come with me. We’ll travel to Boppard together.”

We went from Frankfurt to Boppard by train. It was not so far that we would have to fly. It was not only the first time that we had travelled by train, it was also the first time that we had seen one. “;Who could have imagined that there could be such a long thing which can transport so many heavy things?”, one of our companions cried. In front of our eyes a train was gradually pulling away, and we waited a long time before the end of it came. That was all unimaginable for us! It took one and a half hours for our train to arrive in Boppard.

Boppard was like a small village compared to Frankfurt or Brussels. But it was still, in spite of its relatively small size, as big as Kigali is today. But unlike Kigali, Boppard is situated on a river, the Rhine. We even thought that the houses were too near the water. That should not have astounded us, because most towns in the world are built near water. Cairo in Egypt is on the Nile; Daressalam in Tanzania, Lagos in Nigeria, and Accra in Ghana are all ports. One can also get to Budapest, Vienna, Paris, London and Rome by water.

I wondered why people live near water, and remembered what our history teacher had told us: “Ships used to be the main means of transport. Countries which used to have a large fleet of ships, such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and later England, exercised power accordingly. Other countries, such as Germany, which had less access to the sea, were strengthened by modern technology.”

On the way to Boppard we noticed that the trees had no leaves. “That’s normal in winter”, the natives said to us later. At school we had learnt that not only do the trees lose their leaves in winter, but that it also becomes very cold. One could only go out specially dressed. In Rwanda we had heard of such special clothing for winter, but had been unable to imagine what it could look like. A third characteristic of winter was supposed to be the appearance of snow. We had seen the phenomenon of snow in films, and it looked as if somebody had strewn white powder everywhere. We thought that this ‘flour’ consisted of many hailstones stuck together.

So far we had seen almost everything to do with winter. We were now waiting for just one thing: snow. The clouds seemed to have heard our conversation and to know about our yearning for snow. A couple of days later it started to fall. Everything turned white. It was very nice to see everything white. But directly after this snowfall it became colder. It became unpleasant for us. We were still wearing our dry season clothes from Rwanda and had still not received any scholarship money to buy suitable clothing. Therefore we avoided going outside as much as possible. When it became slippery, we had to struggle against falling. Our smooth shoes from Rwanda could not cope. We fell down at least once every day. Through a stroke of luck none of us was injured or broke a leg.

5. One year later: still admiration for Germany

a. In Boppard

In order to learn German quickly, we were distributed to different families. The Goethe Institute hoped that this separation would force us to speak German, because we would not be with our fellow-countrymen so often. As our families showed us to our living-quarters we realized straight away that we had been gravely mistaken in thinking that we would continue living like in the hotel in Brussels. Those of us who were lucky had a room to themselves. Most of us had to share the room with somebody else who was, in most cases, from a completely different country such as Japan, Thailand or Indonesia. As a result, the first two weeks or more were spent without our talking to our co-inhabitant, not out of spite but because of our still very limited abilities in German. At first we could hardly speak any German, and communicating with Asians in French or in English was extremely tiring. Apparently they were not very proficient in foreign languages. But sooner or later we managed to talk to each other.

They told us that they were very dissatisfied with the living conditions. They were especially unhappy about having to share a room with somebody, about not even having their own writing-desk and about the lack of a bath or shower. “We were better off at home”, they said. Anyway, the parents of some of them must have been very rich, because they received up to 2,000 DM per month. In those days nobody in Rwanda could send so much money to his child.

We Rwandans at the Goethe Institute did not complain at all. Our living conditions were still far better than those at our grammar-school, even if it was nicer in Brussels. All Rwandan school children had to live in boarding-school because there were so few schools and because the catchment area was so great. At our boardingschool we had to sleep with up to sixty people in one dormitory for at least five years. Sometimes there were bunk beds. The showers were in a different building from the main one, and we often had to wait a long time until the others had finished and it was our turn. Moreover, in boarding-school one was subject to strict discipline.

In our German families we were not subjected to any discipline, and we could go out and come home again whenever we wanted to. A further advantage here was that we did not need to do any housework, as in the boarding-school. The gardening, cleaning rooms, making the beds and washing etc. were no longer our jobs. Surprisingly, the landlady did all that. In Rwanda such menial tasks were never carried out by the whites, but by their numerous servant-girls.

We had, therefore, reason to feel happy. We felt even happier when we received our allowances. After counting the money and calculating what it would be in Rwandan francs, we still did not feel as rich as the Asians, but anyway at least as rich

as our ministers back home. We got 600 DM altogether, which corresponded to the salary of a minister in Rwanda.

We went shopping straight away with the aim of buying lots of things, especially winter clothing. We said to each other: “We’ve far too much money, and there’s even bound to be some left over.” We soon noticed that 600 DM, even though it was a lot in Rwanda, was not very much in Germany. Wages were higher in Germany, but prices correspondingly higher too. We had to pay, for example, 200 DM for a winter coat and a pair of winter shoes. We also spent the rest of the money very quickly. We unconsciously compared the German mark with the Rwandan franc, and therefore automatically undervalued the German mark. It took quite a long time until we learnt to adjust our view of the deutschmark.

It had even happened that we had bought things in a shop, had them packed, and then, at the till, realized with embarrassment that we did not have enough money, even if we included all the pfennigs.

The shopkeepers in Boppard did not seem particularly surprised by that. They were used to such occurrences because every two months many students from far off countries arrived at the Goethe Institute. However, we counted our money with greater care afterwards, that so as to avoid similar situations.

We spent our money on things which we had always desired at home in Rwanda but which we could then never afford. Beer was one of these things. This is perhaps difficult to understand for a European, Europe being a beer-continent. In Rwanda we drank Urwagwa and Ikigage, alcoholic drinks made by the peasants out of bana-nas and millet. Primus-beer was similar to European beer but could only be afforded by the upper class in Rwanda. I can still remember how we saw government officials drinking beer in pubs, and saying to ourselves: “When shall we be in a position where we’ll be able to afford a beer?”

Well, we could now do that in Boppard. We drank as much beer there as we wanted to, and even tried out whisky, the drink that, at home, was reserved for the cream of the upper class. We could even do more than these people could. We drank not only Johnny Walker, as they did, but also other kinds of whisky such as Black and White, Bourbon Kentucky, and many others whose names I cannot remember. We quenched our thirst with Cinzano and Martini too. Boppard was a wine-growing area, and so we got to know wine for the first time.

At first it was hard to decide which kind of wine to drink because there was such a wide choice. We could choose, for example, between white and red wines and between sweet and dry ones. We tried everything which we could get hold of and, so to avoid getting drunk, made sure we ate good nutritious food. That was and still is the formula in Rwanda.

Everybody assumes that we had our meals with the families with whom we were staying. We too had expected this, but we were mistaken. We received breakfast in the Goethe Institute itself. This consisted of rolls, marmalade, cheese, cold sausage, tea and coffee. We were very happy now that we could eat like our Belgian priests in

Kigali. We were nevertheless the only ones who liked the food and also the only ones to eat everything up. This did not bother us. Instead, we said: "If they want to, these Bazungu can just leave everything. They've been brought up that way, and are full because they've eaten too much of such things."

Upon using this word Bazungu (feminine: Bazungukazi) to designate the other students (we were the only blacks), one of us pointed out that it was wrong to include the Turks, Greeks or Thais with the Bazungu because: "The real Bazungu are the whites, such as the Europeans and the North Americans". We proceeded to discuss this point, without eventually reaching agreement.

It is true, however, that all light-skinned people in Rwanda are called Bazungu. Every white man who goes to Rwanda will keep hearing this word as he goes along. Literally translated, Muzungu (plural: Bazungu) means: somebody who supersedes somebody else. After the First World War the Germans had to give up their colonial possessions and were replaced in Rwanda by the Belgians, and the word Bazungu was used to describe the latter because they had replaced the Germans.

Our grandparents explained the origin of this term in this way.

In the course of time the definition of this word was expanded to include all light-skinned people. The main characteristic of the new colonial masters was affluence. Other foreigners such as Arabs, Greeks or Indians, who entered the country also became rich quickly. The term Bazungu was no longer applied solely to the Belgians, but also to all these other rich foreigners. These days the term has been expanded even further to include also well-to-do blacks.

The word Bazungu has, therefore, nothing to do with the skin colour, but is an expression of wealth, although it is also applied to poor whites, for all whites are rich in the eyes of Rwandans. This expression implies that the person in question has come to wealth by crooked means, and, especially in the case of the black Muzungu, that he feels above Rwandan tradition.

Seen in this light, there were plenty of Bazungu at our language school. There were a large number of students who were able to pay for their education themselves, whereas we depended on our scholarships. These people paid for their lunch and supper themselves, whereas the Goethe Institute had to take care of us.

We did not consume these meals in the school but went into town. Three restaurants had been earmarked for us there, and we could choose between them. We paid with vouchers which we received every month from the office at the Goethe Institute. Each voucher was worth one meal. There was plenty of food and it tasted delicious. We started with soup, followed by the meal itself. We were served with potatoes, rice, or spaghetti, and salad. Meat was always present mainly beef, pork, and from time to time game. On Fridays fish fans could have a feast. We could choose between a glass of beer, a glass of wine, a cup of tea or coffee for a drink, or between Fanta or Coca-Cola for those who preferred soft drinks. For dessert there was fruit. We were living, as we used to say, like God in France. But not for the whole month!

We bought too many and often unnecessary things, so that at the end of the month there remained only pfennigs in our purses. We could apparently not yet budget our money competently. No wonder: we had never possessed any before. But, when one is confronted with a problem, one is forced to search for a solution. We found one. Some students, who had stayed in Boppard longer, knew some snack bars where one could eat more cheaply and which also accepted our vouchers. Here, one could get three meals for one voucher. However, one had to be content with a rissole with chips or rice. When things were very tight, we ate only goulash-soup with a roll, or just chips or rice with some meat sauce.

One might imagine that we were barely motivated to learn during the periods when we were almost fasting. Nothing of the kind! I would even go so far as to say that the Rwandans who came to the Goethe Institute after us were well received, because we had left behind the impression that the people of Rwanda are diligent, respectable and intelligent. Indeed, we often went out, but only after studying very hard. We knew only too well that we would be sent back to Rwanda if we did not pass the language course. None of us wanted to return home so quickly. One should remember how difficult life had been for some of us before we came to Europe. Moreover, life was, in general, pretty good for us in Germany. Thus, we learnt and learnt and learnt: We even had some advantages over other students in our class.

Our grammar-school was based upon the French educational system. As well as our native language, we had to be fluent in French, with English as a second foreign language. In my branch Latin was also compulsory. The French and the North Americans in our class in the Goethe Institute spoke only French or English, the Turks only Turkish, and the Asians could just about communicate in English. For many people, concepts such as nominative, genitive, dative and accusative were to-tally new. They had not learnt Latin.

Theoretically, the German language should have been easier for us, but I still have to say that it was very difficult at first. We had planned to learn fifty words every day, so that by the end of the month, we would command a vocabulary of 1,500 words. We did not succeed. Words went out of our heads as fast as they came in. As soon as we learnt a few words, we noticed, to our regret, that we had forgot-ten some of the others. And that, in spite of repeating them continually. At school, at home, on the street, in the restaurant, in the pub and in the disco we repeated to ourselves the words which we had just learnt. Whether sitting, standing or lying, one asked oneself: what are the German words for goat, window, lion, woman etc.? Upon meeting each other, we would do little apart from asking each other such questions.

Learning words was a problem, but an even bigger problem was forming sentences correctly. In Kinyarwanda, French or English the verb comes earlier in the sentence, but in German at the end, especially in subordinate clauses. An English-man will say for example: "I have always thought that I would be well received in all countries which belong to the Commonwealth." A German says the same thing like

this: “I have always thought that I in all countries well received be would, which to the Commonwealth belong.” Sometimes the sentences are so long that one is actually waiting for the verb, because one still does not know what the interlocutor wants to say, although he has already been speaking for quite a long time. One then breathes a sigh of relief when the verb finally comes.

It took a long time to get used to this way of talking. But upon closer scrutiny, we realized that such sentence forms were not new to us. We remembered Latin. The main difference was, of course, that we constructed similar sentences in Latin and then translated them but never applied them in any conversation.

We found German pronunciation easier. Kino, aber, Frau, Land, Kind, Fenster, Geld: if a Rwandan reads these words loud as if they were Kinyarwanda words, he would at the same time pronounce them in the German way without even knowing it. By this I mean that German and Kinyarwanda pronunciation are very similar. It is not like in French or in English, where one writes one thing and reads another. A further problem which we did not have, either in Kinyarwanda or in German, were the nasal sounds as in French.

“If one wants to learn a language quickly”, said our landlady, “one should procure a girl friend, who speaks the language fluently. One can improve one’s knowledge of the language while taking a walk or dancing together.”

To us, that was an indirect challenge to look for a German girl friend. This lady herself could not help us, because she did not have a daughter. She did not have any children at all. She was not even married, and we were amazed at how people still referred to her as Fraulein. Such an old lady and still called Fraulein! (Fraulein means Miss.) She was over 60 years old, but this title did not seem to bother her in the least.

One of our colleagues made the comment: “In Germany there are so many women of that age who haven’t got a husband, because most of the young men died in the war. For our landlady it’s no disgrace not having a husband, because the war and not one’s own bad character or ugliness can be blamed for it.”

This same colleague knew a lot in general about the history of Germany. He had apparently been paying a lot of attention during history lessons. We did not know as much as he did, because we found the history lessons very boring. We had preferred to read crime or romantic novels quietly under the desk during this time.

We also learnt from him that a big festival called Karneval (carnival) took place in this area at about this time of year. Our landlady said also: “The festival starts in November and reaches its climax just before Lent starts. The carnival then finishes, with everybody jolly. The girls are especially nice. It’s in about two weeks’ time.”

We waited impatiently during these two weeks, because we were rather curious about what was going to happen. These two weeks seemed like a year. When the days of the festival finally came, nobody needed to tell us that it was the carnival. These days had a different feeling about them. We even got time off from the Goethe Institute to have fun and to take part in the carnival festivities.

Our school was on top of the hill, whereas the carnival took place down town on the Rhine. We went down, towards the town centre. We heard the loud fanfare music from quite a distance. We quickened the pace, so as not to miss anything. The town centre was so full that it was not very easy to get through. The students from the Goethe Institute were there, as well as the locals. Even though the festival took place every year, they never found it boring. The carnival was also a tourist attraction, tourists coming from other parts of Germany and from nearby countries. Even the Rwandan students in Belgium came to the Rhineland to take part in the carnival. And, naturally, there were lots of journalists and photographers there. In spite of the crowds, everybody was very considerate to everybody else, and a happy atmosphere prevailed.

Especially worth seeing and hearing were the fanfare trumpeters, marching along the Rhine and practically all main streets in the town. They reminded us of the fanfare at our grammar-school and of that of our soldiers when they marched on national holidays. In contrast to them, the fanfare trumpeters in Boppard were equipped with very complicated instruments, which accounted for better sounding music.

People loved this music and these marches and danced spontaneously to their rhythm. They did so especially well after having drunk alcohol. All the pubs were open until late at night. People were even drinking on the streets, in snack bars too, and some of them had even brought drinks with them which they distributed to passers-by. They were talking, laughing and singing and were, as one says in England, completely high. One word was to be continually heard among the loud talking: "Prost". They said it upon banging their bottles or glasses together. We already knew this word, although we had only been in the country four weeks. The Rwandans, a people fond of drinking, learn words like these very quickly.

"Everything is so nice and fine. Only one thing is missing: the carnival princess", said the onlookers. They were waiting for the carnival princess. We wondered: "What kind of a person is she, why are they all waiting for her?" But she did not come so quickly. Her arrival was first announced at about one o'clock in the afternoon.

Before that, various trade- and political groups marched up and down the main street of the town. The wine-merchants appeared with two large work-horses carrying numerous barrels of wine. That was the first time that we had seen such large animals. A horse was as big as two Rwandan bulls put together. These horses were decorated all over similar to the specially bred cattle of the king of Rwanda, Inyambo. Other horses followed, this time transporting beer-barrels. They were likewise decorated. Small horses came too, carrying children on their backs. Between these horse processions, there appeared many groups of people: young, older, and older people; all ages were represented. The political groups appeared with various placards. The placards had caricatures of their respective political opponents on them. Of course, we could not understand them very well, because

we neither knew the names of the German politicians nor what they represented. Moreover, to us it was unthinkable that we could have caricatured our bosses.

We were just watching all this when we suddenly heard loud applause. It was not difficult to guess what was happening. The carnival princess appeared. Everybody wanted to see her. She was in an open car and was accompanied by two girls dressed in white. Behind her rode finely dressed cavaliers, on horses which were decorated from head to foot. The carnival princess waved to all of us, and her attendants distributed sweets, chocolate, cigarettes and similar things. They threw these all onto the street, and everybody was occupied with picking the things up. The children were particularly joyful. We too were happy and said: "These people are really rich. They've even things to throw away. "The only time we were lucky enough to get such things in Rwanda was on the name-day of our grammar-school's guardian saint, Andrea. There used to be a raffle, and some of us won something.

The appearance of the carnival princess was the culmination of the festival, but not the end of it. The celebrations continued in the pubs and in the discos. Nobody needed to be embarrassed about being drunk on this day. It was like in Rwanda at Christmas and New Year. Surprisingly, the people remained nice and considerate in spite of their alcohol consumption, and no quarreling started. Not only the young danced, but the older ones too stayed on stage. They danced tirelessly. They did not notice the cold outside, going out onto the streets to dance when they had had enough inside. The young people behaved similarly, sweat streaming down their faces. Even the ugly ones found a partner to dance with on this day. The girls tried not to tease or disappoint anybody. It was, anyway, not easy to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly. On carnival days everybody wore unusual clothing and was painted beyond recognition. Everybody was supposed to have fun without being recognized.

We enjoyed ourselves but not to this degree. Indeed, we went into the pubs and discos and observed how jolly the Bazungu could be, but we did not take part in the gaiety. We had only been in Germany a short time and had to first of all get used to the people and their mentality.

The carnival was at its most intensive for three days. At the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, all the fun stopped and the routine returned.

We continued to go to the discos after carnival time had finished, but we did not yet have the nerve to dance. As we began to lose our inhibitions, we discovered that the girls wanted to have absolutely nothing to do with us. We then tried not even asking them to dance with us. Instead, we just went and looked at the Germans dancing, and then went sadly home.

One day something happened. Six of us Rwandans were sitting in a disco called Safari when I suddenly heard someone say: "Look lads, there's a pretty girl sitting all by herself and looking bored. Why don't you try to ask her for a dance?" That was one of my fellow-countrymen talking to his friend, who then replied: "You also want to dance. Why don't you go and ask her yourself?" The discussion continued, as

neither of them had the nerve to ask her. Both of them were afraid of being turned down. We continued drinking our beer, until suddenly one of these two stood up and went over to the girl. He asked her if she would like to dance with him. He had quite certainly repeated this sentence to himself many times beforehand, so as not to give this girl the impression that he spoke bad German.

The girl had a very pretty face and wore spectacles. She was leaning against the wall and so one could not make out how tall she was. When she saw the man approaching her, she smiled at him, and the young man returned the smile. She promised to dance with him but he would have to come back in five minutes' time.

Our friend came proudly back to us and said, beaming: "As I've told you, the Germans work according to the clock. She told me that we could dance in five minutes' time." Fortunately he was wearing a watch. How could he otherwise have known when the five minutes were up? Perhaps one of us would have helped him out, although each one of us was wondering why he himself had not approached the girl. Our friend sat down again and stared at his watch. What he was about to do, namely dance with a Muzungukazi, he had so far only dreamt of.

The first minute went by. It was like an hour for him. Then the second minute went by, and the third also. At the start of the fourth minute we said to him: "Get ready, it's nearly time!" After five minutes he stood up, the girl also, and they met on the dance floor. As they were dancing, we realized that the girl was not so tall. That was a positive point in our eyes, because some German women were so tall and robust that we feared them, the Rwandans being usually small of stature.

They were both dancing with great pleasure and seemed to be inspired by the music. First came fast music and when it slowed down, they moved closer to each other and continued dancing, as if they had known each other for ages. Girls did not usually like dancing slowly with complete strangers. We therefore thought that the girl had fallen in love with him. They were talking to each other in a very affectionate way. What our young teachers had said, that the Bazungukazi run after black men, had happened. We wondered what they were talking about. Maybe they were both telling each other that they liked each other, or perhaps that they would meet again soon afterwards. They continued dancing without exhaustion but at some point or other they stopped and returned to their seats.

We were curious to hear from our friend what had happened. But he was not so happy when he came back this time. We supposed that the girl had said at the end of the dance that she did not want to see him again. It did not take long, however, until our curiosity was satisfied. He seemed rather shocked and said: "I can't understand the women here in Germany. Are they all like that?" We replied: "What do you expect from them then? She was, after all, kind enough to dance with you, after all the previous ones had turned us down. Or did you want to have her straight away? That's not the way it goes."

We were not on the right track with our questions and comments. Our friend had other worries: "She's a funny back", he replied, and then proceeded to explain that

he had the impression that she was suffering from Inyonjo (humpback). He continued: "Tell me, can the Bazungu also be afflicted by such terrible illnesses? ! I thought that such terrible deformities only occur among poor Africans, and not among the chosen white race."

We too had been convinced that there are handicapped people only in Africa. How could we have known that there are also handicapped people among the Bazungu? We had never seen any in Rwanda. Such people as this girl would never have been sent to Africa. Our teachers had also never mentioned the problem of deformed people at home.

This nice girl was sitting at her place again. She seemed sad and started smoking cigarettes. She appeared to be wondering why our friend did not go over to her again and talk to her. We urged him to go and comfort her, but he had already decided not to develop this relationship. He remained in his seat until we left this pub.

That was how one of us first made contact with the Bazungukazi.

During the next few days, we also had hopes of soon being able to make some-one's acquaintance. We often went out, but nothing ever came of it. We finally despaired and rather stayed at home. We wondered now and again if it were really true, that the Bazungukazi liked black men a lot. If it were so, why did they always turn us down? Sometimes we were angry, especially when we saw that other foreigners did not have this problem. We even had to stomach an unpleasant surprise one day: we caught one of our female teachers kissing one of our Turkish colleagues passionately.

We were very shocked, for that exceeded the power of our imagination. Such a thing would have caused a tremendous scandal in Rwanda, and the teacher in question would certainly have been dismissed. Such relationships between teachers and pupils simply are not allowed to happen. Our teacher, however, was not embarrassed and continued as if she had not seen us. The next day she did not even apologize, and continued teaching as if nothing had happened.

The days passed, and our knowledge of German improved the whole time. One now had enough self-confidence to go out alone, if the others had no time or did not like to. In most cases, however, one was left sitting alone in the pubs and had to go home without ever having been talked to. That was not like in Rwanda, where one started talking with all kinds of people, known and unknown, in pubs. The Germans only did such things when they were drunk. Only then did they manage to approach somebody and start talking. Observations such as: "You black, me white, doesn't matter, everybody human. " were always present in their talk. One thought one had met really nice and non-racist people. One was also pleased to hear the compliment that one had learnt German fast, even though the German language is very difficult. One talked the whole evening, and then went home with the feeling that one had found new friends. Often we arranged to meet again another day.

On such a day, one did everything to get there at the time agreed on, even if one

Rwandan students in Boppard – the first time in a boat and still very enthusiastic about Germany and Europe

was in the middle of examinations. One went to the pub and waited, but the other did not turn up. It sometimes happened that he did come, but did not want to talk to one. His promises had been made under the influence of alcohol. One went home, angry and disappointed.

We had a further problem: to distinguish the Bazungu. Sometimes we thought that the person, whom we had arranged to meet, had not come, although he was actually there, because we could not distinguish him from the others. It would probably be similar for a white man, if he had to live in a black country. For him all blacks would look alike, and he would have a good excuse, for not keeping his appointments.

This kind of excuse would not have been plausible in Boppard. The Rwandans were the only blacks in the whole town, and almost everyone knew us. There must

have been another reason why these people did not want to meet us again. Were they, when not under the influence of alcohol, too inhibited to talk to 'niggers'? Did they first loosen up when they had taken some alcohol? Were they racists who did not want to be seen too often with negroes? Were they afraid that they would often have to pay for the latter?

We could find no answer to these questions, but we were all agreed upon one thing: at any rate it was good that we did not see all these people again whom we met in the pubs, since later some of our colleagues got to know real boozers and even had to lend them money. They never saw their money again. Since then, we knew that among the Bazungu, rich as they may be, there were people who did not repay money which they had borrowed, just like in our country. In future we were very careful whom we trusted with our money. The myth of the good, rich, honest, decent and superior Bazungu started to wobble a bit.

The Goethe Institute taught up to the third and final level of German. Each of these three courses lasted two months. After successfully completing basic courses I and II, one could start studying one's academic subject. We had been advised to take the final course first, but we did not want to stay much longer in this village Boppard. Nothing happened here and we wanted to go to a big city, the more so after we had visited Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and Koblenz. Those were real cities and life there was exciting. There were lots of blacks there, and they seemed happy. "Why wouldn't we be happy there too?" was our question, with the logical answer: "We've to leave Boppard as quickly as possible." But we did not leave so soon, because the director wanted us to complete the final language course, come what may.

This final course passed very quickly. The weather became more agreeable after the middle of April. It was no longer cold and the evenings were lighter. When we had first arrived in Boppard, it had still been dark in the morning when we had gone to school at nine o'clock, and it had been dark again when we had gone home at half past three in the afternoon. The days had been very short. We had heard about this at grammar-school but had not been able to imagine it at all. It was a good experience for us. How nice it was in summer, going for a walk at ten o'clock in the evening along the Rhine and looking at the ships! We found it very strange at first, and even thought that our watches were not working properly. But no, the watches were not broken. It was summer, when the days were very long. Rwandans do not know about such phenomena. In our country day and night are always the same length, and day changes very suddenly into night.

Another event also caught our attention. Since the middle of April, the trees had, slowly but surely, started to get leaves. Already at the start of June they were in full bloom. This rebirth of nature was not only limited to plants, it extended also to human beings. One could see that they were glad to discard their heavy and cumbersome wintercoats and dress in lighter clothing. People often went for walks and young lovers were seen giving each other flowers and kissing. The general atmosphere

was pleasant and very friendly. Our teachers in the school in Rwanda had told us that springtime and summertime were the favourite seasons for the Bazungu. We could now confirm this.

The birds too did not like winter but preferred spring and summer. “Every year, just as winter is starting”, our teachers had said, “the birds migrate south, and return when winter is over.” There were, indeed, very few birds to be seen when we arrived in Germany. When the days started to get lighter and sunnier, they became more numerous. In summer, it was fun listening to the various songs.

For the Germans the return of the birds is a quite normal event. We were fascinated by the fact that the birds covered great distances and later returned home without going astray. We wondered if they were even the same birds which had flown away from here earlier. Some people in Boppard assured us that they were, by and large, the same birds. They explained that some birds had been marked at the beginning of winter and that the same birds had been found again when they returned at the start of spring. We were even more amazed to hear that special pigeons, so-called homing pigeons, were used to carry messages in earlier times.

“All the things which actually exist in the world!”, we thought. What happened to the Rhine at the end of winter was spectacular too.

Melting snow, accompanied by rain, caused the Rhine to overflow its banks. All the houses which were on the banks of the river had their cellars flooded completely, and the houses themselves were standing a yard deep in water. Not only did the people have to leave their houses, they also had to remove all their possessions. Damage was estimated to run into millions of deutschmarks. They said it was a long time, at least twenty five years, since that had happened. The river took about a month to subside to its normal level. Such natural catastrophes occur in Rwanda too during and after the rainy season, but I had never seen anything on this scale.

August was our final month in Boppard. But then where would we go to? That was the question we were all asking, so far without a reply. Assessing our position was difficult, because we still knew far too little about Germany and its universities. We wanted to leave the village of Boppard, but nothing so far indicated that we would gain a place in a larger town. Therefore, our eyes were constantly directed towards Cologne.

Cologne was namely the headquarters of the Carl-Duisberg Gesellschaft (CDG). This organization took care of those who received scholarships from the Common Market and from the German government. The people directly responsible for us were stationed there. They had sent us to the Goethe Institute, and sent us our scholarship allowances through it. We were now expecting from them to offer us places at a university and hopefully one in a city where something really happens.

We waited anxiously. Around the middle of August, we received a visit from Mr. Meyer from the CDG in Cologne. Seeing him brought a feeling of relief, because we would now hear where we would be sent to. But that was not to be the case. Only those of our colleagues who were to study engineering, two in all, were put at ease:

they were to be sent to Aachen. They breathed a sigh of relief. One of them even knew that Aachen was near the Belgian border. His sister was studying in Belgium. His joy, at the thought of being able to live and study there, was understandable. Now he could visit his sister whenever he wanted to. Apart from that, he would be able to hear all the latest news from Rwanda. There were many fellow-countrymen studying in Belgium, who could easily exchange news from Rwanda. But also the general connection between Rwanda and Belgium, due to colonization, was well developed. In Boppard, we hardly heard anything from Rwanda, apart from letters which we received.

We also hardly heard anything from Mr. Meyer about our fate. It was the wish of our government that we who were not to study engineering should study veterinary medicine. Mr. Meyer stated that the CDG was trying to arrange places for us at the Free University in Berlin. That was very nice, but we were not thrilled at the idea of Berlin. Berlin, according to our language books, was situated right in the middle of a communist country, and at school we had learnt (and were convinced of the fact) that communism was the wickedest thing in the world. We did not want to be communists, and hopefully God would save us from such a fate!

Mr. Meyer realized straight away what we were worrying about, and pacified us by saying: “You don’t need to be worried. Berlin is a nice place. Most interesting things take place there, especially in the field of music, art, and, of course, politics. No president visits Germany without going to Berlin. Berlin is, actually, the capital of Germany, and certainly the centre of events. Moreover, West Berlin is not communist and will never be, and the Berlin Crisis will never be repeated.”

He said this in a very convincing manner and we believed him. We hoped, however, that we would be lucky enough to be turned down by the Free University in Berlin, so that they would be forced to look for places for us elsewhere.

b. In Saarbrücken

After we had completed the final part of the language course, we were sent to Saarbrücken to wait. At first we found this town more interesting than Boppard. It is much larger, and we were pleased to meet other Africans there. Apart from this, everyone had his own room and we just had to share the showers and kitchens. We cooked our own food and did not bother at all with restaurants, because they were rather expensive. We had to pay cash, with no discount and not with vouchers like in Boppard.

We found cooking difficult. In Rwanda, the kitchen is usually the domain of the female. We had not had to cook at boarding-school, either, because cooks had been provided. Nevertheless, cooking was not completely new to us.

At boarding-school we had belonged to various youth organizations, the most popular being the boy scouts, of which my two friends and I had been active members.

We used to spend one week-end in three out in the forests and had to look after ourselves. Amongst other things, we had to pitch tents, organize games and songs and prepare the meals ourselves.

So, we had had some experience of cooking, and now got used to cooking quite quickly. The meals were, indeed, very tasty, even better than the meals at the university in Butare, where the students one can almost say had the misfortune of being unable to cook for themselves, because they had cooks.

We thought we would only have to stay two or three weeks in Saarbrücken, but it turned out to be two months. This long period of waiting reminded us of the time we had had to wait after completing A-levels. Sometimes we even got worried that we might be sent home if places of study could not be found for us. This was a very boring time for us. We were still learning German, but what could we do when we were tired of studying?

After just three weeks in Saarbrücken, we realized, in spite of our initial impression, that Boppard was actually more beautiful and had more to offer than Saarbrücken. In Boppard we could go for a walk along the Rhine when we were fed up with studying, and pass the time by watching the tourists getting tipsy on the wine. In Boppard it was relatively easy to make contact with the Germans. In Saarbrücken it was almost impossible, perhaps because there was not as much wine.

The situation in the dance-halls was similar to that in Boppard. Women did not want to dance with us. We stopped completely going to dance-halls, as there was no point, and anyway the competition was so keen. There were many foreigners in Saarbrücken. There was also a Goethe Institute, and the CDG had a large hostel there where we lived, and where most new arrivals were put up. Most of these foreigners were men, and they all wanted to get to know Germans, especially in the hope of getting girl friends.

It was not easy to fulfil this desire. But as often happens, there was the exception to prove the rule. Among the many foreigners whom we met in our hostel, we got to know a student from Zaire, the country neighbouring ours. He was studying in Saarbrücken and had already been there three years. I cannot remember anymore what he was studying, but I can remember that he had succeeded in procuring a German girlfriend who was both nice and pretty.

We wondered what he had done to this woman. She was always running after him, even though he did not treat her very well. She spent every week-end with him in the hostel and even came during the week to collect his dirty clothes which she would wash for him. Our friend would hardly ever cook, because his girl friend did it for him. We regarded him as something special. One of us made the comment: "He's a real man. He satisfies this woman completely. German men are too cool for her."

We kept all this to ourselves, but our admiration for this student from Zaire betrayed us. He felt flattered and became very arrogant. One day, while he was telling us stories of his female conquests, he said boastfully that he needed to sleep with

a woman only once for her to have twins. He described his excess of potency with the following words: "One time, twins!" He said that he had 'made' four or five children within three years. He reassured us that we should not give up and that we, too, would one day have many girl friends. "We've to sleep with the white man's women, just like they slept with our women in colonial times!", he said, and we just needed to have confidence. We asked him if he could give us a couple of tips, but he replied that each person had to try out his own methods.

We did not try out anything. We stayed at home, instead.

c. In Berlin

Towards the end of October, the news that we had been accepted in Berlin, finally came. The CDG sent us our aeroplane tickets two days later. We were now all set to fly to Berlin and were eager to find out what this city was like.

The flight was a pleasant one, without any unusual happenings. We had become used to flying and to the European scenery. As we approached Berlin, we noticed from the air to our satisfaction that Berlin was a really big city. It was the largest German city we had seen so far. Only Athens, Brussels, and perhaps Frankfurt were comparable. We straight away remembered Mr. Meyer's assurance, that Berlin was actually the capital of Germany and that everything happened there. Measured in terms of its size, of the variety of its inhabitants and their vivacity, in short, of the whole atmosphere, Mr. Meyer seemed to have been right.

Mr. Meyer had also told us that the people in Berlin are pleasant and friendly. We had the opportunity to put this to the test straight away at the airport. We had to go to the branch of the CDG in Berlin, on Wittenbergplatz. We did not know how to get there. Taking a taxi was out of the question, since we did not have enough money. We had no other choice but to go by bus or by U-Bahn (underground). We looked around for a time-table. When we found one, we were not able to decode it. But we had no time to despair. Lots of people hurried to us, and each wanted to be of assistance to us. Ready to help they asked: "Where would you like to go, and what can we do for you?" We showed them the address of the CDG, and were told that we had to take bus no.19. Some of the people were also going that way and said they would accompany us. Many buses departed from Tempelhof airport, but bus no. 19 departed more often. So, we did not have to wait very long, and it was a shorter journey to Wittenbergplatz than we had expected.

Upon arriving at the CDG, we were pleased to be received in a friendly way as well. The person responsible for us received us in a large room, and asked whether we preferred tea or coffee. We decided to drink tea. We would actually have preferred beer, for, even though such a lot of tea and coffee is grown in

Rwanda, the Rwandans have never learnt to drink them. This may sound strange. Rwandans prefer beer or Ikingage or Urwagwa even early in the morning.

Anyway, we drank tea in the CDG, and it tasted very nice, perhaps simply because the conversation was very interesting. This man confirmed that we had definitely obtained places for study at the Free University, but that we would have to go to studienkolleg in Brentanostreet first. He explained that studienkolleg is a sort of school which prepares foreigners for study at university, and this course normally lasts one year. We also talked about the accommodation situation in Berlin. "It's very difficult, not only for foreigners but also for Germans, to find a flat in Berlin, because the demand is far greater than the supply", he said to us, and then continued: "Students normally find it more convenient to live in students' hostels, but the waiting list is long."

We started to look sad, but he cheered us up by saying that they had reserved rooms for us, where we could pair up with fellow-countrymen. This reminded us of our living conditions in Boppard and we were once again disappointed. But we soon pulled ourselves together and gave him the impression that we were more or less in agreement. He insisted that his hands were otherwise tied, and that it would be best for us to accept this offer for the time being and then later to try our luck elsewhere.

He was even so nice as to drive us in his car to the students' hostel. It looked similar to the one in Saarbrücken. The whole place was full of people of different nationalities, and Africa was strongly represented. We had neighbours from Togo, Burundi, Kongo, Zaire, Zambia and from Arabic countries, such as Tunisia and Algeria. The thought that living together with all these different people would enrich our knowledge of the world comforted us, when we thought about living two to a room. We were otherwise still in good shape, and were still fascinated by Germany after one year, in spite of a number of problems.

6. The pleasant time in studienkolleg

There were still two weeks until studienkolleg started, and we thought we would be able to use this time to look around the city. We could not do that, however, because we had to take and pass the entrance examination for the studienkolleg. The subjects in which we were to be tested were German, physics, chemistry and mathematics.

We were, of course, rather disturbed, because we had no idea what kind of questions there would be. It was more than a year since we had done any physics, chemistry or mathematics. We were hopelessly ignorant as to where we could get some information. We thought about it, and it suddenly occurred to us that there was a simple solution.

We certainly were not the first CDG scholarship recipients who were about to

start university. Why should we not turn to the CDG ? We found out it was a fantastic idea, after we rang the CDG. And what a coincidence! We found out that two students from Somalia, both veterinary medical students and also Common Market scholarship holders, had taken and passed this studienkolleg examination the previous year. We now had to hurry up and get in touch with them. A stroke of luck: one of them had a telephone. We telephoned him and asked him how the examination was.

“We were also very uneasy before this examination”, he replied, “and we’ d nobody who could advise us.” He went on to say that we did not need to be frightened. A-levels and the language examination in the Goethe Institute are far worse, and in comparison to that the studienkolleg examination is child’ s play. Finally he gave us the encouragement: “You surely know what one and one makes? Well, you’ ve already passed. Get through studienkolleg quickly, and we’ ll meet at the university in a year’ s time.”

Those were soothing words. We believed them too, but that still did not prevent us from learning everything we could, day and night, or stop us being nervous right up until the examination. “The examiners, who are the main source of worry for pupils and students,” we thought, “are always full of surprises.”

But there were no surprises for us. We realized that after seeing the examination questions. They really were child’ s play. Apart from that, we were not worried that the other examinees would do better than us. It had become obvious, in talking to them, that their knowledge of German was quite miserable. We were right, we passed the examination with grades one or two, whereas grade four would have sufficed as a pass. But the examination was not so easy that everybody passed. Some failed. These results confirmed our suspicion that grammar-school education in Rwanda was on a par with international standards, although Belgium certainly did not send us its best teachers.

At studienkolleg we were split up into four classes according to our, subjects. Those who wanted to study agriculture, human medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy or biology were grouped together. There were about twenty of us. The lessons were relatively simple for us Rwandans. It was, in the main, a repeat of what we had learnt at grammar-school, but with the difference that it was in German. It was not always so easy for the other colleagues; especially Latin caused them a great deal of trouble. It was the first time that they had encountered this language, and Latin was, unfortunately for them, compulsory for all future medical students.

During lessons we behaved very politely to all our teachers, as we did in the Goethe Institute. Our other fellow-students were also respectful towards the teachers. They seemed, as we did, to be still shy towards Germans. One exception was Oskari, who came from Iran, who actually enjoyed arguing with the teachers. He accused them of being jointly responsible for the deaths of many people in his country who were being slain daily by the Shah. The discussion became more

intense during the lessons on politics. As far as he was concerned, these lessons in politics had only one aim, namely to germanify and to americanize the new foreigners. We were unable to agree or disagree with Oskari. We had never heard of this Shah, whom he was talking about. And as for the Americans, we only knew that America had lost a very good president with the death of Kennedy.

We had no idea of politics. We were politically apathetic. And, anyway, one of the conditions, to which we had agreed before leaving Rwanda, in order to get the Common Market scholarship, was that we should not take part in political activities during the course of our studies.

We involved ourselves in politics, however, without knowing it, as we later realized. The headmaster of our studienkolleg went on to his pension upon reaching retirement age. While a successor to him was being sought, the deputy headmaster assumed responsibility. All the teachers wanted to retain him as headmaster, but the Senat (local government) decided to install somebody else. This decision met with some resistance. The authorities within the school wrote a letter to the Senat asserting that all the teachers and students were for keeping the present headmaster. Teachers and students signed this letter.

Only Oskari swam against the current. This chap was not even frightened that some teachers might fail him in the examinations. He did not sign the letter, on the grounds that he would in no way support CDU-people. He preferred the SPD candidate.

CDU, SPD: we had often heard these words, without actually knowing what they meant. In time, partly through our lessons in politics at studienkolleg, we learnt that the CDU is the party of the Christians, whereas the SPD is that of the Non-Christians and the Socialists.

Although Oskari had always criticized the CDU for being the party hostile to foreigners, we thought we should support the CDU candidate, because we were catholic Christians. Infidels, communists and socialists were repugnant to us.

That was the state of our awareness in 1971.

In spite of our activities and efforts, the Senat got its own way with its candidate. Not knowing the exact background details to this decision, and having anyway only a few months left in studienkolleg, we were not so sad about it. On the other hand, our teachers were disappointed, but they thanked us anyway for our support. We remained on good terms with them the whole time we were there.

Nothing else exciting happened at studienkolleg. I can just say that it was a fine time for us, even though health problems made it a hard three months for me personally.

7. German medicine: a cure for everything?

When in Africa, one believes that German medicine in particular and European medicine in general, are very advanced, and that European doctors can heal everything as if by magic. This belief was partly due to the general admiration of the Africans for Europe, and partly due to some products of modern medicine, such as penicillin, pain killing tablets, and malaria medicines, which had proven themselves to be quicker and more effective than traditional cures. Surgical know-ledge in modern medicine also played its part in consolidating this belief. In 1970 there were only two doctors in the whole of the Republic of Rwanda who could operate, and both were Europeans. Naturally, they were very famous.

The white doctor is still famous in Rwanda today. On the whole, modern medicine is accepted without criticism. The well-to-do even refuse to be treated by their fellow-countrymen. They rather fly to Europe to be healed, even if it is only a small ailment. Even the birth of their children has to take place in Europe. There are also a large number of highly placed government officials who are sent to Europe on some trivial pretext or other at the expense of the public.

Modern medicine was and still is in. On finding out that I was to go to Europe, I was happy that I would, amongst other things, be able to be properly examined and treated there. Head-aches, back-aches, stomach-aches, in short all aches and pains, would be removed and I would feel happy and carefree.

For Rwandans, there were only two diseases, which were the source of all evils: malaria and worms. If one did not have fever, it was not malaria but worms. People said that worms attacked not only the organs of the abdominal cavity, but also the lungs, the heart, the eyes and the brain, which meant that practically every illness in the body could be caused by worms.

I occasionally had head-aches and stomach-aches. "Every pain must be got rid of", I said to myself. I went to the doctor near our students' hostel. I did not have fever: so it had to be worms. I expected the doctor to give me a strong remedy for them. But when I told him that I had worms and needed a strong remedy, he was shocked. "What put that idea into your head?", he asked me with astonishment. I told him that only two diseases existed in Rwanda, and that I could only be suffering from worms, because I did not have a high temperature, the sign of malaria. This interpretation seemed to him to be naive, and he answered, that he would rather examine me himself. Although I was a bit offended that he did not believe me, I let him.

I had to take off my shirt and he felt me from head to toe. He spent most of the time on the upper part of my body, not only examining with his hands, but also listening to my heart and lungs. Listening to my heart, he stared at me as if he had found something unusual. He listened a bit longer, as if to make certain. Finally he told me, that something was wrong with my heart. "It even seems so

bad, that I'll have to send you for x-ray", he continued. He took a sample of blood, and I had to bring him a specimen of stool the next day.

On hearing these words, I felt as if struck by lightning. I could not understand how I could be suffering from a heart disease. I had absolutely no pains in the vicinity of my chest or directly in it. I passed this news on to my colleagues and friends in the students' hostel. They were also shocked, but of the opinion that it could not be true. They said to me in consolation: "You don't need to be afraid. You know how fast you can run up the stairs! People with a heart condition can't do that. They've even to pause on the way. There's probably nothing wrong with your heart, and if there's, it can't be so bad. Let's just wait for the results of the x-ray."

I thanked my friends for the moral support, and hoped that their opinion was right. However, I remained uneasy and waited impatiently for the x-ray appointment. When the time came to go to the radiologist, I was surprised to see that the x-ray apparatus belonged to him. The few bits of medical equipment in Rwanda were all in hospital. "It's just that the Germans are not as poor as we're", I explained to myself.

On this day, the doctor would not have earned very much, I thought. His practice was not that full. That was a piece of luck for me. It was my turn straight away. It was not the first time that I had come into contact with x-rays. My lungs and heart had been examined by x-ray in Kigali in accordance with Common Market health authority rules, and again in Boppard at the follow-up examination. Apparently, there had been nothing seriously wrong till then. I could not find out straight away whether the present doctor had discovered something new. He gave me a large envelope with the x-ray photographs. When I enquired about the results, he replied that the doctor who was treating me would explain.

When I got home, I was tempted to open the envelope, to look at the pictures and read the doctor's comments. I hesitated. I was frightened that my doctor might notice it and be terribly angry with me. It also occurred to me that x-ray pictures are, anyway, not easy to understand. Certainly, we had learnt some medical terms in studienkolleg, but we had not learnt how to interpret x-ray photos. I had enough reasons for not opening the envelope. So, I did not do so. I waited until the day of my next appointment at my doctor's. I had been given the appointment the last time I was there. I had to wait another three days partly in hope, partly in fear.

On the fourth day I heard from my doctor that his suspicion had been proven true. When he received the envelope with the x-ray photos, he opened it with great curiosity. He looked at the photographs, read the accompanying letter, looked at the photographs again, and read the letter again. He repeated this game four or five times. Then I saw that the game had come to an end. It became serious.

His face became nervous, and he said rather quietly: "What we suspected has been verified. You've certainly a heart disease, and it's even worse than I thought. You know, or rather you'll learn during your studies, that the left side of the heart

is fully separated by a partition from the right side of the heart, and that both halves of the heart consist of an auricle and a chamber. In your case, the auricles are connected, which is otherwise only so in the case of foetuses. That results in fresh blood mixing with used blood, and the body will therefore not be supplied with cleansed blood. This leads to the permanent tiredness and a lot of head-aches.”

I listened attentively to this speech and became very worried. The doctor took me by the shoulders and consoled me by saying that there were excellent heart surgeons in Germany who could correct this defect easily enough. He picked up his telephone straight away and rang Klinikum Neu-Westend, to make an appointment for me there. After exchanging a few words, an appointment was made, though in a month's time. This seemed to my doctor to be a long time to wait, but he could not do anything about it, he said. The professor there was so famous that his calendar was almost always totally booked up.

When I came home, I could not eat anything at all. I felt so afraid, especially at the thought that I would soon have to be operated. I could hardly sit still. I started thinking about the problems and chances of success of a heart operation. Of course, I had absolutely no idea about these things. I only knew of the famous South African heart surgeon, Professor Barnard, who not only performed heart operations, but also carried out heart transplants. Apparently, he had had many successes. I thought that he might help me if need be. However, I soon dismissed this thought when I remembered that the whites in South Africa, with their policies of racial segregation, had little inclination to help blacks.

My fate therefore rested in the hands of German doctors. I bought a book about heart diseases and their treatment, in order to become familiar with what the German doctors were able to do in this field. I occupied myself with this book for two or three days after which it took its place on the book-shelf. I could not understand anything at all, not even with the help of medical dictionaries. I even accused myself of having wasted my money in buying it. These thoughts were, however, unjustified, for I had assumed that I would be able to understand the book with the use of a dictionary. I had not known that doctors have got their own language, which it is not easy for the layman to understand. Apart from that, I lacked basic knowledge of the subject. Accordingly, I could neither lay bare the secrets of my illness, nor estimate my chances of surviving such an operation.

My curiosity was first satisfied when I went to the Klinikum. My appointment with the professor was at ten o' clock. But I was already sitting outside his consulting room at eight o' clock. When the two hours were up, I thought that it would soon be my turn. That was not the case. It was not my turn at eleven o' clock, at twelve o' clock, at one o' clock, but at two o' clock. I certainly became a little impatient with all this waiting, but was happy to be able to go in to see him. I gave him the x-ray pictures and the letter from the doctor.

He apologized for having made me wait so long. That was because it often takes longer than planned to examine patients, he explained. He first read the letter

from the doctor and then looked at the x-ray pictures. He seemed rather relaxed about the whole thing, and I thought that everything would be alright. Then the idea occurred to me that the professor possibly did not have any time to waste on examining 'niggers'. After only five minutes, he sent me to younger doctors and nurses for further examinations.

I underwent further examinations there, from examinations of my body by hand, sounding my lungs and heart, to measuring my heart with an electrocardiogram under varied conditions. They explained to me: "The electrocardiogram serves to show the performance capabilities of the heart."

After all these examinations, the nurses told me that my heart was very healthy, and that my electrocardiogram results were better than those of most students who had been tested experimentally on the machine. They continued: "What you need to make yourself feel better is love, love, and more love. 'You' ve to find a girl friend as quickly as possible."

I did not respond to such jokes, of course. I could not understand how one could joke in such a way with a person who was so seriously ill, instead of having pity on him. I remained quiet and waited for the professor to say the final word. The professor read the results of the examinations closely, compared them with the x-ray pictures, and finally said to me confidently, that my heart was actually healthy. What a relief the sentence gave me! I could breathe again, laugh properly, and was really happy! If I had not have been there with the professor, I would have jumped for joy through the roof, and if I had been white, my face would have turned completely red. I thought about the nurses again. They were not actually cruel people as I had at first thought. On the contrary, they too had been glad that I was not the seriously ill patient that my doctor had said I was. That is why they made such jokes.

That evening I could share the joy with my friends. We went out to a restaurant in the city to celebrate, and drank as much as we could. We toasted to my health. Amongst other things, we talked about my doctor and came to the conclusion, that only the doctors in the hospital had any idea, and that those with private practices were, in reality, just making business. The only difference between doctors with a practice and other businessmen was that the former had guilty consciences if their slovenliness was proven. Some people might not even agree that every doctor is so sensitive.

Anyway, my doctor had a guilty conscience after reading the findings of the doctors of the Klinikum, and did not know how to talk to me after that. His face turned bright red. For quite a while he said nothing. Then all of a sudden he decided to give me his opinion. He said that he had acted according to his conviction, and apologized for being too hasty with his diagnosis. "I'm, nevertheless, still sceptical about the findings", he continued, "and I'll not feel totally at peace until I see that Klinikum Steglitz comes to the same results."

That meant that I had to go to hospital again, this time to Klinikum Steglitz, and be examined once again. On the one hand, I was fed up with these eternal examinations; but on the other hand, the egoism inside me wanted to take advantage of the lavishness of medical facilities here, because I knew that I would never have this opportunity in Rwanda. An appointment was made in Klinikum Steglitz.

In Klinikum Steglitz I was also thoroughly examined. They found out that my heart was slightly larger than normal, according to the x-ray, but that this would not interfere with its function. The doctors attributed the state of my health to a possible psychological disorder. They said, I possibly did not feel well because I had left my home and friends and did not like Germany so much.

I started wondering if all that was really true. Suddenly, I was surprised to notice that the doctors at the Klinikum Steglitz used a similar language to that of the nurses in Neu-Westend. I surmised that it must be true, because they all said the same thing without having talked to each other beforehand. But after further consideration I concluded that it could not be true at all.

First of all, I had not gone to the doctor with any particular complaints, but because I had already planned in Africa to have myself properly examined and treated in Europe. Secondly, the argument that I had left my home and friends did not hold water. I felt fine in Germany, and held admiration for the phenomenal technical progress of this country, and had no thoughts at all of returning soon to my native one. I did not feel lonely, either, without my friends from Rwanda, because I had made new friends from Rwanda here. Thirdly, the argument about the girl friend should not, logically, have been a problem for me, because I had lived in a boarding-school in Rwanda as had all pupils at the secondary school, and was therefore used to being alone.

I said all this to the doctors in Klinikum Steglitz too, when they suggested I should go to the psychiatric department of the Klinikum. They listened to me attentively and found my reasoning plausible. Nevertheless, they recommended me to go to a psychiatrist, for safety's sake. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, I did not want to go to a psychiatrist because psychiatry, in the eyes of Africans, is associated with craziness. I did not feel crazy and did not want to be thought of as crazy, either. But I let myself be persuaded.

The psychiatrist was a nice lady, and so I enjoyed going to her, for quite a long time, three months in all. We talked about everything under the sun. She asked the usual questions: "How are you? How long have you had these complaints? Have you any difficulties with your study? Do you feel lonely? Has anybody in your family committed suicide? Have you a girl friend? Would you like to have a girl friend? Do you feel discriminated against by the Germans? Do you feel homesick? etc."

I answered these questions truthfully, but viewed the whole thing as a conversation and not as a treatment. The psychiatrist probably noticed this and prescribed a few tablets, so as to give me the impression that I was being treated.

I had never taken any so-called psychopharmaceutical medicines, and I thought they would be really good for the psyche and for the whole body in general. I took some on the same day, but suddenly realized that these things were not for me, that psychiatric treatment can be a very hazardous business, and that one can quite easily be driven mad by such things. Immediately after I had swallowed the tablets, I felt very tired and listless, and had trouble thinking straight; if I had had a car, I would have been unfit to drive.

This first and last experience with psychopharmaceutical medicine left me with a distinct aversion to all medicaments which are intended to influence the brain. Also later, when I heard that there are things one can take at examinations, supposedly to improve one's memory, I rejected them outright.

To appease the psychiatrist, and to prevent her prescribing any further pills for me, I told her that the ones which she had already given me worked wonders and that they would suffice. I hope that she did not prescribe them for other people thereafter, with the conviction that they were effective. In this way, false conclusions can easily be arrived at in the field of medicine.

That was my first experience with modern medicine.

I was still convinced of its superiority to our African medicine but now saw its limitations in curing all complaints and illnesses. I recognized too, that one had to judge white doctors upon their individual merits, and not, as is widespread in Africa, to assume that all of them can perform miracles.

8. Germany gradually shows its other face

After getting over this fear of a heart ailment, I was able to summon all my energy and devote myself completely to my studies at studienkolleg. But it became more and more difficult to concentrate on studying in the evening, in our one-room flat where two of us lived.

The person with whom I shared the flat was neither at school nor university. He was, like most of the inhabitants of this home, receiving further training, in the form of a practical, for his job. Like most German workers, he got up at five o'clock in the morning, because he started work at seven o'clock. He came home at five o'clock in the evening. His daily work was then completed. He only needed to eat, drink, listen to music, and watch television. He had, unlike me, no homework.

I got up at seven o'clock in the morning, because lessons at studienkolleg started at half past eight, and was home again at four o'clock in the afternoon. It was then that my day really got going. I often had so much homework, that I sometimes had to work till midnight. Having such completely different daily routines, we inevitably disturbed each other in this single room. I often wondered how we would cope with each other when I started at university, where I would have an even greater work-load.

At boarding-school in Kigali, we had no problems, even though it was more crowded, because we all had the same programme. We got up together, showered together, ate together, went to lessons together, and played together: in short, we did everything together.

My countrymen in this home did not find life with their flat-mates any easier. To get out of this burdensome situation, we applied for rooms in other students' hostels. We expected to get some since the veterinary students from Somalia stayed there.

We had not miscalculated: half a year later, we received positive replies to our applications. We were, however, to be accommodated in three different students' hostels. I moved to Schlachtensee, whereas the others got rooms in Sigmundshof and Wedding. As a result we were quite separated from each other. Nevertheless, we counted on making new friends among the German students who lived to a larger extent in these students' hostels, in contrast to the CD G homes, where only foreigners lived.

Whatever had made us feel so certain that we would soon get to make friends with Germans? Should it be easier to make friends in Berlin than it was in Saarbrücken and Boppard?

One would think that we would have used our free time profitably during our days at studienkolleg, where the subjects were not that tough, by getting to know Berlin and, as one might say, patrolling the city. We did just that. We went out a lot, to the museums and the zoological garden in the daytime, and to discos and various pubs in the evening.

In the discos, we had just as much bad luck with the girls as in West Germany. (When the Berliners speak of West Germany, they mean the other part of the Federal Republic of Germany without West Berlin, whereas, in the general sense, West Germany means the whole Federal Republic of Germany). When we asked the girls for a dance they only said: "No thank you". They apologized for not feeling like it at the moment, or said that they wanted to finish off their cigarettes, or that they had to keep an eye on their girl friends' handbags. We soon realized that these were only excuses, because these same girls danced upon being asked to by German boys.

We did not find that so bad anymore. We had already encountered it in West Germany. We only felt annoyed if they actually insulted us directly. Some of them, when asked to dance, did not hesitate to say: "Piss off, you ape!"

Luckily, our German was not yet good enough to understand all these insults. Where should we have learnt them? Swearing was not taught at the Goethe Institute. One learns such language only in special circles. Most of the time we were with other foreigners and apart from Scheiße (shit), a word which one heard everywhere all the time, we knew no other swear-words. It was perhaps better so, otherwise we would have sworn back at them, and who knows what would have happened then?

We tried our luck in all the discos, but it was the same everywhere. We were also

refused entry in some cases on the pretext that we were not dressed properly. In such cases, we went home, determined to appear in our best clothes the following Saturday. (We usually went out on week-ends.) We would appear the next time in a smart suit, with freshly creased trousers, tie, and polished shoes. Before leaving home, we would stand a while in front of the mirror, admiring ourselves, and were convinced that the girls would not turn us down, and, of course, that we would be let into the discos and pubs.

The efforts which we had made were in no way acknowledged by the men who stood at the entrance to these discos which were hostile to foreigners. They still stopped us from entering. The pretexts were similar everywhere.

Sometimes the disco was, ostensibly so crowded that the law prevented any more people being allowed in. When Germans came, however, they were let in with the claim that they had made a reservation beforehand. We would wait at the entrance, hoping that some people, tired of dancing, would eventually leave. Some did, but we still were not allowed in, this time with the excuse that it had been too full before because they had earlier let in too many people. They further added that they would have problems with the police who often called at that time to check. Another excuse, which they had at hand to justify the refusal to entry; was that the disco was only for those in possession of a club card.

I believed all this, until something happened one day. I was, by then, at university, and had made friends with a German who was studying the same subject as I and who came from West Germany. He wanted to put an end to his isolation by getting to know as many people as possible. One Friday evening, I was at his place, and we were talking about this very problem of getting to know people in Berlin. He then mentioned that he knew a good disco, where lots of lonely girls and women went, and so we decided to go there the next week-end.

When Saturday came, I put on my best clothes again, and was certain that I would not be denied entry, because I was with a German. That was a big miscalculation, for, as we got there, my German friend was allowed in, while I had to wait outside like a dog. When my friend protested against this, he was told that only club members were allowed in. "I'm not a club member either", he said. "All Germans are automatically club members", answered the other. Stressing that I was not a downand-out but a respectable student of veterinary medicine, did also not impress him. One had the feeling that he was just carrying out an order from above.

We left very disappointed, and went to an ordinary pub, where everyone was welcome, and drowned our anger in SchultheiB-beer For my German friend this was the first time that he had experienced such a fuss. Visibly moved, he said to me: "I didn't know that there were such places in the Federal Republic of Germany where foreigners are not welcome. I come from a small town where there are hardly any foreigners and, as a result, hardly any problems with them. It must be very difficult for you in our country"

From this day on I knew that Berlin was not such a nice place as Mr. Meyer had

depicted it. In Boppard and in Saarbrücken, we could, at least, go in everywhere, even if the girls did not want anything to do with us.

After this incident, one of my fellow countrymen developed a hatred for the Germans and even adopted radical slogans, saying: “Woe betide the first German I meet in Rwanda when I return home.” He emphasized that our Belgian teachers at grammar-school had been right in saying that the Germans were wicked people.

Indeed, we could not understand why we were being treated in such a manner, whereas the whites in Rwanda could do as they pleased. At any rate, in the days that followed, we became more cautious on visiting discos and pubs, and avoided those which were known to be hostile to foreigners. We did not want to be permanently insulted just because we had a different skin colour.

We told other foreigners, who had been in Berlin longer, of our discontent. What we could not grasp, above all, was how they could bear such a situation for so long a time. They replied, that one should not lose sight of one’s main aim just because of a few idiots. We came to Germany to study and not to have fun. “Give priority to your studies”, they added, “and the other things will come automatically. After you’ve been here for a while, you’ll get girl friends, like us. You’ve just to keep on trying, on the street, at the university, on the bus, or in the U-Bahn. Try not to be so angry if you’re sometimes denied entry, for the people in such places, especially the women, are always so self-important, arrogant and stuck up, that they wouldn’t accept you anyway. So be choosy as regards the places you go to.”

The essence of what he was saying, which served as tips for us in future, was: “First studying, better pubs and discos and more courage with women.” As for the part about courage with women, I had the opportunity to prove it a few days later.

I was in the waiting-room at my doctor’s, and next to me was sitting a beautiful woman. I wanted to talk to her but felt inhibited. Above all, I did not know how to break the ice. Like most of the waiting patients, she also was reading a magazine, in which she seemed to be engrossed. I was afraid that I might interrupt her so I hesitated, and hesitated, and hesitated. The other patients would certainly stare at me and listen inquisitively to what I would say to her. What would I do, if she simply said to me “Leave me in peace”? It could turn out to be embarrassing. Anyway, prepared for the worst, I spoke to her and asked if what she was reading was interesting. Her reaction was inviting, and this daring step paid dividends.

We talked about the magazine which she was reading, and other topics. Of course, the others were eyeing us secretly, and straining their ears, as I had expected, though obviously feeling uncomfortable, for when I glanced back at them they buried themselves immediately in their magazines again. But that did not bother me. The main thing was that the woman I was talking to was friendly to me.

When she went into the doctor, she indicated that she would wait for me afterwards (it was my turn after her), and that I could go home with her to meet her family if I had time. Naturally, I was overjoyed, and accepted her invitation with great pleasure. We went by U-Bahn.

When I first saw the U-Bahn, it reminded me of our first train journey from Frankfurt to Boppard. The two trains were similar, the only difference being that one was above ground and the other under ground. We used to go from Boppard to other towns, such as Koblenz and Cologne, by train quite often. We were used to buying the tickets in the train itself, and assumed that it would be the same procedure in the U-Bahn in Berlin. We often went by U-Bahn without paying, wondering all the time why no ticket-inspector turned up. One of us commented: "West Berlin, contrary to East Berlin, is a free city and, accordingly, many things here are free." Mr. Meyer had also said that West Berlin was a great city. Did he also mean that one did not have to pay in the U-Bahn? I was sceptical!

We asked our home-mates who knew more about Berlin than we did. They laughed their socks off at our ignorance. After that they explained: "At every U-Bahn-entrance there are ticket-offices where you can buy tickets, and if there are none, you've to use the ticket-machines." They also warned us that being caught without a ticket could cost up to twenty marks. We had been lucky the whole time, in encountering no inspector.

On this day, I did not travel illegally. The lady paid for my ticket. During the journey she told me why she had invited me to come with her: "You foreigners have a very difficult time in our country. Germans are very rich, which gives them the idea that they're superior and that foreigners are the worst garbage. They're, in reality, rather sick, or, to be precise, insane. They can't get on with each other at all. Each one claims to know more than the other, and everybody wants to be better than everybody else. They're completely incapable of making contact with other people. You've seen it for yourself in the doctor's waiting-room and here in the U-Bahn. The people sit silently without talking to each other. But my family and I are more open and more tolerant and prefer foreigners to Germans. In your country there are not as many behavioural defects as here. For instance, my mother-in-law is a habitual thief, and whenever we know she's going to visit us, we always hide all valuables, lest they disappear. Isn't it terrible that one has to behave like that towards one's mother-in-law? My other problem is that I don't go to work, and have to beg every pfennig from my husband. I find it terrible that the present I give him at Christmas has been bought with his own money. Thank God that the children will soon be big enough for me to go to work again, and regain my self esteem. With the money which I earn then, I'll be able to invite people such as yourself and to help them out by giving them some of my money. Cross your fingers for me!"

I must confess that I did not understand so much about these problems which the woman spoke of. I could say something about the hostility to foreigners, for I had had my share of it myself, but I could not confirm that the Germans were insane. For me they were not insane. They were very logical. They had invented many kinds of complicated machines, they were well dressed, they drove their cars with the great discipline for which they were well-known. How could they, then, be insane? I sometimes did find it unusual that they hardly talked to each other or laughed, but still that did

not indicate madness to me. It was, rather, a sign of their upbringing and their wisdom, in contrast to us Africans, who talked to everybody, whether we knew them or not.

As regards her problems with her mother-in-law and with human relationships in general, I was surprised to hear that the Germans had similar problems to us in Rwanda. We had always believed that the whites, being 'superior people', had more affection for each other and fewer conflicts. The numerous people walking along the street hand in hand, and the many young people kissing each other tenderly, attested the unusual cohesion of these people.

Such things did not happen on the streets in Rwanda, and if the whites living there do it, it is seen as a sign that they have more affection for each other than the 'primitive' blacks do. If this was the case, why was there so much talk in Germany about divorce? And about suicide? Can one really kill oneself just because one's partner has run away? There are surely more fish in the sea!

One did not hear much about suicide in Rwanda, because it happened very seldom. It is actually strange, that poor people such as the Rwandans, do not commit suicide, while the rich people such as the Germans, do. Many things were still puzzling me about this. I also could not understand this woman's wish to earn her own money, because it was usual in Rwanda for the men to earn the money and for the women to take care of the household.

We changed the subject and started to talk about Africa. For many Germans, Africa is simply a large park with lots of forests and animals. This woman thought so too. She had seen African animals only in the zoo, she said, and they looked so sad in their prisons. She wanted to see the animals living free in their natural paradise of Africa. "That must be a fine sight", she continued, "I'd love to live with the animals in Africa. That was always my childhood dream."

She then asked: "How many times have you seen lions, tigers, zebras, and elephants?" Many Germans think that these animals roam about all over Africa just like the dogs do in Berlin. They think that they are seen everywhere and every time. This is not the case. People would be surprised if they realized that I first saw African wild animals in Europe, after I had left Africa.

My fellow-countrymen and I really did see these large African animals for the first time in the Frankfurt zoo, during the time we lived at Boppard. It is also no exaggeration to say that 90% of the people of Rwanda, and of other African countries, have never seen a lion, leopard, tiger, elephant etc. at all. That is because, contrary to the widespread opinion in Europe, these large wild animals are not to be found in all countries in Africa, and in those countries where they do exist, they are always concentrated a long way from settled regions. One can only see them from a jeep. Which average person in Africa can afford a ride in a jeep? It now becomes clear why so few Africans have seen their animals. It is actually paradoxical that almost every European has seen African wild animals, whereas hardly any African has:

We talked about animals until we arrived. Her husband greeted us, and his wife

told him how she had met me. He welcomed me and was also happy to meet me. His wife made some tea, while we men talked about Rwanda and its history. He got his atlas out and I showed him where Rwanda lies.

He noticed that it is a small country, just south of the equator, squeezed in between many other countries. He thought it was unfortunate that the country had no access to the sea, where it would have been possible to spend a nice holiday on the beach. On the other hand he thought that it was wonderful that the country is highland, because he liked mountains very much. The average height of Rwanda is, by the way, 5,500 feet.

The tea tasted nice, and we enjoyed every sip. Suddenly I heard the sound of shouting children from outside, and I remembered that this woman had told me about her children, but that I had not so far seen anything of them. I had not had any time to ask where they were, either. The children rang the door-bell, their mother opened the door, and the children came in shouting "mamma".

They had not noticed that there was a visitor, but when they did, they suddenly lost their tongues. They looked this black man up and down, for it was certainly the first time that they had seen one in their own home. They were a bit frightened to come closer to me. "There's no need to be afraid", said the mother. "That's a very nice man from Africa, whom I met in city centre today. He wants to study veterinary medicine, and he'll be able to attend to your guinea-pigs. Come here and say hello to him", she continued.

The children did as she said and gayly shook my hand. Within a short time we were the best of friends. They told me about their guinea-pigs and brought them out of their cages and we played with them. I noticed how much children in Germany love animals, whereas African children are markedly neutral towards them and prefer to play with other children. At any rate, that was a new experience for me, and I enjoyed this afternoon very much.

After the cup of tea I prepared to leave. We said good-bye, agreeing to meet again soon. We met often in the future, and became good friends. Indeed, from then on, I was no longer bored. I would visit my fellow-countrymen, or, if they were all too busy, I would meet this family or another family which I also met at about this time.

The place where we first got to know each other was, once again, the waiting-room. The nice lady who was sitting next to me, was also waiting to be called out to be x-rayed. She was reading something, as is usual in the waiting-room, but was apparently not so interested in what she was reading. She opened the book, read a few lines, closed the book, looked left and right, sat there thoughtfully awhile, then rubbed her eyes, opened the book again and read a few lines, and started the procedure all over again.

I somehow started talking to her. She was obviously happy that somebody had spoken to her and shown some interest in her. She closed her book for the final time, and we sat there talking to each other.

She asked me the standard questions, which every foreigner has to answer when

engaging in conversation with a German for the first time, and she also got the standard replies. “Where are you from?” From Africa. “ But Africa is large, where from exactly?” “Rwanda.” “Uganda?” “No, Rwanda, next to Uganda, not Idi Amin and next to Tanzania. “ “Tanzania, ah! What are you doing here?” “Studying. “ “What?” “Veterinary medicine. “ “Good, but that’s a difficult thing to study! Are you going to return home when you’ve finished?” “Yes. “ “That’s right! Africa needs you. You speak German very well! Did you learn German at home?” “No, only here. “ “You’re good. German is very difficult...”

Even though she had complimented me on my good German, she still spoke slowly, clearly and rather loudly, presumably because she had noticed that I did not understand everything well. Ursula - she had just disclosed her name to me - was a teacher. She then lowered her voice, to ask me why I had come to Klinikum Steglitz. She did not want everybody to hear my private details.

I told her, as doctors use to say, my case history. She also appeared concerned that my doctor had made too hasty a diagnosis, without being completely certain. She also had been sent by her doctor to Klinikum Steglitz, because he did not know exactly what was wrong with her. She was suffering from eternal stomach-ache.

We both went to be x-rayed, and later as we were on the point of saying good-bye to each other, she insisted that we get to know each other better. She asked me if I had a car and where I was going to, but before I could answer, she suggested that I go with her in a taxi, that was, if I did not object, had no car of my own, and wanted to go in the direction of the zoo. I could not afford a taxi, and therefore hesitated. Her intuition told her that my hesitation was due to the financial consideration. “You don’t need to pay”, she said urgingly, “and I don’t need to pay either. The health insurance bears the burden.”

We got into a taxi which was at that moment at the entrance to the Klinikum. During the journey I was wondering the whole time why the health insurance had to pay for the taxi. I was also in a student health insurance scheme, but mine had not paid for a single taxi-ride for me. The teacher gave me a quick lesson in matters of health insurance: “The health insurance company pays for such journeys, if the doctor treating you deems it dangerous to travel in a crowded bus or underground. That’s usually so if one is critically ill.”

That caused me to think of the health system in Rwanda. We had hardly any doctors, hardly any medicine and absolutely no means of transporting the sick. In contrast to this, an ill person in Germany is king. He is examined and treated by the most up-to-date methods, and, if need be, supplied with a taxi for transport. How good sick people in Germany have it!

The journey to the zoo took a quarter of an hour. When we got out Ursula invited me for a cup of tea. I had time, and so I immediately accepted. We went to a restaurant near the central station and sat outside, it being spring. While drinking tea, one could enjoy the warmth of the sun and also look at the passers-by.

These passers-by were quite interesting to me. It was fun, comparing their

different clothing. Some were dressed smartly, others shabbily. Their hair-styles were also remarkable. Some looked exactly like the model heads in the windows of hairdressing salons, others were curly, or even partly shaven, and dyed in different colours. There were not only Germans there. It was a meeting point for all nations. Not even the most intelligent person in the world could command all the languages spoken there.

Ursula noticed that I found the people interesting and, indeed, I felt at home here. She warned me: "This place is quite dangerous. The Bahnhof Zoo (main station) is the haunt of boozers, male and female prostitutes, drug addicts, beggars, and, not to be forgotten, the pick-pockets. Do take care of your purse."

Until then I had not seen any pick-pocket and was amazed to hear that they existed in Germany. I had thought that pick-pockets existed only in poor countries. One other thing was totally new to me: male prostitutes! I wondered: 'Are the women in Germany so obsessed with sex, that they've to go to male prostitutes? Why haven't we come across such women yet?' People might not believe upon hearing it, but I had no idea about homosexuality, let alone about male prostitutes in the field.

While I was thinking about these things, I noticed that Ursula's thoughts were elsewhere, and that she looked very sad. I assumed that she was thinking about her illness. It must have been a very serious one, if her doctor had deemed it necessary to prescribe taxi transport for her. As I spoke to her she did not talk about her illness, but about something else: "You see this huge crowd of people - Berlin has two million inhabitants - can you imagine how painful it's to feel lonely in such a crowd? One feels like one to two million, in other words, like nothing. If one were to live alone in a desert, one would find one's loneliness natural. But in such a mass of people?"

I asked her in amazement, if the Germans really had such problems in their own country getting to know other Germans. That sounded strange. Our case was different, because we were strangers in this country, and the local inhabitants mistrusted us and felt superior, and therefore discriminated against us. Upon reflection, I saw that I still could not understand one thing: Ursula had told me that she had a husband. Why, therefore, was she complaining of loneliness?

"It's true that I've a husband", she replied, "but we both feel alone. Peter, my husband, doesn't originally come from Berlin, and has left his parents, relatives and friends all in West Germany. I'm not originally a West German citizen. I come from the German Democratic Republic (GDR - East Germany), and actually escaped. Peter and I swam together across the river Danube from Hungary to Austria, and then we came to West Germany. It could almost be said, that I'm too a foreigner in this country, because I'd to leave all my friends behind over there. But even though ; y I'm not completely happy here, I prefer it to over there. One doesn't have any freedom there. The police are everywhere, and control everything. One gets sent to ' prison for every small offence. Have you seen the wall yet? Go and have a look at it, and you'll see how awful the communists are."

Ursula did not have any difficulty in convincing me that the communists were terrible people. I knew it, as I have already mentioned, from my schooldays and from the church. As far as her loneliness was concerned, it was nice that she had added me to her friends. I visited her family the following week-end.

Ursula and Peter had made extensive preparations for my visit. They had bought a lot to drink: different kinds of wine, and two kinds of beer, SchultheiB and Barenpils. The food was certainly going to taste wonderful. Ursula was in the kitchen preparing it carefully. I could smell from a distance that it was beef and rice. The salad had not been forgotten, either. Peter's cooking ability would be judged on its taste. I helped him to wash the lettuce. I had, in the meantime, got used to cooking, and did not find it strange anymore that German men helped their wives with the cooking. The food was almost ready, and we went to the dining-table. The painstaking preparations were crowned with success. The meal tasted marvellous. I had not eaten so well for a long time. The last time was in the restaurants of Boppard. But, since then, we had cooked quick and simple meals.

Even though Peter and Ursula were over thirty, they behaved like young students, simple and uncomplicated. We soon started talking about how to enjoy ourselves, and we decided to go into town after we had finished eating. That suited me too, because I lived near there. My friends intended to show me the parts of Berlin which one does not easily discover as a tourist.

The evening was not boring, since Peter was a real wag. I had not met such a person in Germany before. He told jokes non-stop: good ones as well as bad.

For example, we were sitting in a Chinese restaurant, after having soup, when he suddenly asked me, if I could put the whole of my little finger up my nostril. I could not manage it, but was amazed to see that he could. Ursula then became a little bit angry with him and asked him not to make jokes in such bad taste. I had not noticed that Peter had lost part of his little finger in an accident: that was how he was able to push it right up his nostril.

It was very late when they dropped me off at home. But I could sleep till the next morning, because it was a Sunday. We remained good friends, even when I started studying at university.

At the end of July, 1971, we finished with studienkolleg. We were glad that we would soon be able to go to university, and we were especially happy about our good certificates. How could we celebrate? It had to be something special, but not with alcohol. We had drunk so much on the day we received our certificates, that we could not face any more.

One of us Rwandans had been more industrious than the rest of us during the studien college time and had passed his driving licence on the side and bought himself a small second-hand car. That was quite an achievement for a Rwandan. Who, in Rwanda, could afford to buy even a second-hand car? No wonder, that the Rwandans think that Germany is a large park with so much money, that one can pick it up as one goes along, for our friend had been saving for only one year and he was

driving in his own car. In Rwanda it took not just one year, but two, three, four or more lifetimes before one could even start to think about buying a car.

Our friend was now one of these one out of four German citizens who were motorized. He suggested visiting friends in West Germany, as a way of celebrating our good examination results. We were not, however, so certain that he would get us there in one piece, because he had only just passed his driving-test. He assured us that he would drive very carefully, and that he was certain that we would get there. We waived all risks and set off two days later.

The first point of call was Aachen. We wanted to see what had become of our colleagues from the Goethe Institute, who were studying engineering there. The journey went excellently, contrary to our expectations, and we got lost only once. The drive along the motorways, where the cars seemed to go almost as fast as aeroplanes was, of course, an experience in itself.

In Aachen we were first confronted with the problem of finding out where our friends lived. But that was no reason to panic: we had been quite a while in Germany and knew, how to find our bearings. We asked where the students' hostel was, and heard from students there where we would find our friends. It was not difficult to get there. Aachen was after all much smaller than Berlin, and we could find our way around Berlin alright.

When they saw us, they could hardly believe their eyes. They were so happy. We embraced each other in the Rwandan way, as is usual when people meet again after a long interval, and went to the pub to drink some beer and to talk about everything under the sun, as is also the Rwandan custom.

We talked about old times in Boppard, this town which we first did not like and later grew to love, after we had left it. We talked about Aachen also. The impressions of our friends could be summarized thus: nothing ever happens. A proper town for students, and especially for diligent students. Our friends were very diligent. They wanted to finish their studies quickly, and then be off. The great enthusiasm for Europe had gradually faded away. Above all, the discrimination in pubs and discos was hard to take. They had similar problems to us, but, in contrast to them, we were starting to get to know nice people in Berlin, and life was gradually becoming more pleasant. We stayed three days in Aachen and saw a few things which were of note. We did it all in one day, and the other two days we just enjoyed ourselves.

Finding a place to sleep was no problem. We slept at our friends' wherever we found room, and if need be, together in one bed, as one does and often has to do in Rwanda. In villages, the children sleep in beds all together, the boys in one, the girls in the other. In Germany everybody has his own bed. We did not expect our own beds at the next place we were planning to visit, Stuttgart. We would again sleep wherever we found room.

Our friends in Stuttgart were, on the whole, doing all right although, as they told us, they were not especially well liked in this city. Coloured people had a difficult

time in Stuttgart, since the big fight in particular, which had taken place between black American soldiers and Germans.

It all started in an American disco as a German unintentionally trod on the foot of a black American. If he had apologized, he could have avoided the worst. But because he did not, the American felt his pride injured, and that sparked off the aggression of the soldiers, which had probably been building up for a long time. These two started fighting, and in no time at all it was a proper brawl between any-thing black and that which was white, regardless of whether they were male or female, boy friends or girl friends. After a while the fight spread to the street, and passers-by were caught up in it, even if they did not know what it was all about. The blacks, who left their cars in the middle of the road in order to come and help their countrymen, also did not know what it was about. Not even the German police were able to stop the fight. It eventually took the American Military Police (MP) to break up the fight.

The Rwandans did not take part in the fight. They did not have anything at all to do with the black soldiers. The Americans were soldiers, the Rwandans civilians. The former came from America, the latter from Africa. The former were supposed to protect the people with whom they were fighting, the latter were guests of the people with whom the Americans had been fighting. The former were in the army, not because they were especially patriotic, but because they had had no chance of learning any other job in their home country, the latter were studying because they loved their native country and wanted to help it out of poverty.

In spite of these numerous differences, they had one very important common denomination: the colour of their skin. This common skin colour ties them both to a similar fate, whether they want it or not, and regardless of what they are and where they are. Black is and remains black. The ordinary man on the street cannot distinguish between black Americans and black Africans, between educated and uneducated blacks, and between good and bad blacks. If a black African steals or gets into fights, the black American has to atone for it and vice versa.

Our friends had, therefore, to tread very carefully in Stuttgart, for in the eyes of the locals they were the ones who beat up their fellowmen. Luckily they were known in their institute for their diligence and were accordingly treated well.

Our final destination was Boppard. We could not go back to Berlin without first visiting this town where we had spent our initial period in Germany. We owed our knowledge of the German language to this town.

The journey there was without problems, and we were, in general, content. We wondered, however, where we would spend the night, as we no longer had any acquaintances there, and not enough money to spend on hotels. We knew also that the Germans, contrary to the Rwandans, did not just let people stay in their homes if they did not know them very well. Everything happened differently, however.

My three friends went first of all to see the families with whom they used to live. They were very well received, for it was seen as a great honour for the town that we

had thought about Boppard again. A small celebration, consisting of a nice meal and abundant wine, was organized, and before my friends even mentioned the problem of where to stay, they were all offered beds for the complete duration of the visit.

I, too, went to see the old lady at whose house I used to live - not the same old lady known as Fraulein, but another family with whom I later stayed - and discovered, unfortunately, that she was not there. In a nearby butcher's, I asked where she could be. The town was so small that almost everybody knew everybody else. I learnt that she had not been seen for a long time, and that she was probably still in hospital.

I had no idea where I could spend the night. We pooled our last few marks, and there were just enough to pay for a hotel. It was not so easy, however, to find a vacant room, not for reasons of racism, but because all the rooms were occupied. It should not be forgotten that Boppard was a centre of tourism in summer, and even the elite of society held it in high esteem as a holiday resort. This meant, unfortunately for me, that all hotels were chock-a-block full, and I had no other choice, but to spend the time in pubs until they closed, with the intention of sleeping in our car afterwards. My friends, too, thought that this was the best plan.

We visited our old discos, Safari and Bacchus-Keller. In Bacchus-Keller we had the good fortune to meet a pleasant couple with whom we were quickly able to strike up a conversation. We no longer had inhibitions about speaking German, as before, for we could, by now, make ourselves understood without difficulty.

We told them that we had studied at the Goethe Institute a year before, and how our yearning for the old Boppard life-style had brought us back again. "We've until now", we continued, "found everything marvellous - the weather, the atmosphere in the town and the pleasure which the families we know have taken in seeing us again - but we still have one problem: our friend has been searching, in vain, for a room everywhere, hotels included."

It was a shame, they thought, that I should be stuck like this, and they wondered how they could help me out. They knew a little hotel which was relatively unknown and where we could possibly find a vacant room.

We went there straight away and these young people introduced me to the lady who owned the hotel. She was about forty and looked exceedingly warm-hearted. "I'm very sorry", she said, "I've already lent all the rooms, but I still have one little room in the attic, where you can sleep if you don't mind."

My answer was obvious. It was, in any case, nicer there than in the car, and, as an African, I was used to sleeping in less comfortable places anyway. I was even more joyful when I heard that it would not cost anything. She said: "I've children who like to travel too, and perhaps one day they'll be in similar difficulties, and, who knows, perhaps you'll be able to help them out? Berlin is certainly worth a visit."

This lady's way of viewing things impressed me very much. My friends too. They said: "Not everybody in Germany acts only out of self-interest and for money,

as we've supposed until now. There are also some who act out of love for mankind, as in Rwanda."

The fact that this never happened again during our whole time in Germany shows how unusual it was.

When I finally met my old landlady from Boppard, she, too, was very happy to see me. She had been released from hospital. As I approached her she did not at first recognize me. She was rather old, approaching eighty, and her memory was not at its best anymore. Moreover, she regularly received new lodgers, and had one from Thailand at this time. But when I told her who I was, she remembered me, and recollected also that she had called me Johnny because it was too difficult for her to pronounce my real christian names Jean Marie Vanney.

She now knew whom she had in front of her, and started to tell me about every-thing that had happened to her. "Look at these stones", she said and showed me three stones as big as nuts in her hand. I thought at first that somebody had been throwing stones at her. "My dear Johnny, you'd never have seen me again", she con-tinued, "because I'd have died a long time ago, if these stones hadn't been removed from my gall bladder."

I held these stones in my hand and felt quite ill at the thought that such large things could be found in a human stomach. I felt even worse when I then thought that people in Rwanda would die of such an illness, not only because the facilities for operating on such stones do not exist, but also because they could not even be located in the first place. I realized it would take a long time for medicine in Rwanda to reach this standard. Nevertheless, I was happy for this lady who was so kind, wise and as worthy of respect as my grandmother.

Leaving Boppard signified the end of our pleasant short holiday in West Ger-many. Our thoughts were now directed towards a presumably hard time at univer-sity. After about two years of preparation, - a time which automatically prolonged our stay in Germany by two years -, we were finally able to start studying our sub-ject.

On the other hand, our class-mates from Kigali, who had gone to university in Butare, France or Belgium, could bring their studies to a close much more quickly than us and begin working. People back home had no idea of the education system in West Germany, and the prolonged length of study gave the impression that stud-ents found it so nice there, that they did everything within their means to extend their stay ad infinitum in order to keep on enjoying the German paradise. Studying in general, and studying veterinary medicine in particular, was, in reality, anything but a paradise, as we were soon to discover.

9. Difficulties at the start of studying

In the first semester (term) there were a hundred of us students, more than 90% of whom were Germans. This was frightening, not because we were the only blacks amongst a mass of whites, but because we were afraid that we would not be able to compete with such highly intelligent people as the Germans.

One of us Rwandans who had allocated himself the task of encouraging us whenever problems arose said: "We need not fear. I'm certain that we'll manage it. We did just as well as the Belgian students who were with us at grammar-school in Kigali, and our feelings of inferiority towards the lighter coloured skins of the Asians at the Goethe Institute turned out to be unfounded. Indeed we were actually superior to them in the language course."

This was true. We were anxious to see if his prophecies would turn out to be right or not.

At grammar-school in Kigali the first schoolday had been reserved for pupils and teachers to get to know each other. The actual lessons had started on the second day. The new boys would introduce themselves to the older boys, telling them their names, where they came from, and which primary school they had been to. The older boys related their holiday experiences and adventures to each other. It was a real day of joy. We were also happy to see each other again. We were all really good friends and had been missing each other very much.

At the university in Berlin things were different. Most professors started straight away with the subject matter in the first lecture. They showed us books which we presumably had to buy. I say presumably, because we could only presume this, since we understood nothing at all. The German spoken here did not seem to be the same as that in the Goethe Institute or studienkolleg. The professors were like talking machines. We had beer., till then, used to people speaking slowly and clearly to us.

At the end of the first day we went home in absolute despair. Other students did not seem to have any problems at all. They zealously made notes in all lectures. Even those students who were sitting on the floor were industriously taking notes on their laps, just as we had done at primary-school.

These students had to sit on the floor because the lecture-hall was overcrowded. This was particularly the case at lectures heard by both the human and veterinary medical students. These slight inconveniences were observed only at the beginning of the semester, when the students were keen. Attendance dropped off gradually as time went on.

We were amongst the hard workers, with no more going out to discos or pubs. We concentrated all our energy on only the subjects for which we would receive written certificates (Scheine). These Scheine were the proof that we had successfully participated in practicals in those subjects. They were a prerequisite for admission to the examinations in these subjects.

The Schein-subjects in the first winter-semester were anatomy and chemistry, and

we went only to lectures in these two subjects. At home we occupied ourselves fully with the preparation for the practicals in these two subjects. Other lectures and practicals, which were not compulsory, were set aside for the time being.

Every Saturday from nine o'clock until three o'clock we had a chemistry practical. It consisted of a series of exercises such as certifying heavy metal, neutralizing lixivium and acids, calculating molecular weight etc. We had to complete these exercises within a certain time and hand in a protocol of them to the professor's assistant by the following Wednesday at the latest.

That was very hard for us, not only because of language difficulties, but also because we were not used to using such equipment. Our grammar-school in Rwanda could not afford to let us carry out such experiments, and at studienkolleg we were shown only limited techniques. We also noticed that some German colleagues were having similar problems, which was probably owing to different standards of education from one grammar-school to another in Germany.

In view of these initial difficulties we decided to split up, in order to work more with the Germans. This would improve not only our language but also our knowledge of the subjects.

This turned out to be a good strategy. Our German friends and the professors' assistants were, in general, very helpful. I still remember how we used to meet every Sunday afternoon in a Kneipe (pub, restaurant) in Dahlem to write up the protocol of the chemistry practical. To make things easier, we made use of old protocols from senior students. We also used this opportunity to ask them questions and found it unfortunate that hardly any could speak French. Our knowledge of chemistry gradually grew and we passed the written examination to this practical.

I was the odd one out unfortunately. I received my Schein only after repeating the examination orally. But what did it matter? Passed was passed, and I was very happy at having passed this first hurdle.

And how was anatomy?

The anatomy practical was also very strenuous. We were split up into groups of two students, and each group received the carcass of a dog. In the course of the semester we were supposed to isolate the different parts of the dog's carcass. We had a three hour practical every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and, at the end of each one, the dog was laid in formalin, a liquid preservative.

One always had to reckon with head-aches, so vile and putrid was the stench of the formalin. But we consoled ourselves by thinking of the medical students who had to deal with human corpses for months on end. Many of our acquaintances related how they could not sleep at first, because they could not stop thinking about the corpses. Some even had to end their studies, but others, like ourselves, just got used to the situation and to the smell in the course of time.

Considering the extreme precision with which we had to dissect the corpses, we often wondered whether it was really necessary for our future professions.

“What is disease? Disease is damage inflicted upon the body. To know if damage

has been inflicted upon a body, one must first of all know how the body is in its normal condition.”

Our anatomy professor cheered us up with such observations, as he noticed that we were not particularly enthusiastic about his anatomy practical. He usually added that we would not notice the necessity for anatomy until at a later stage in our studies. He would say: “Without anatomy there’s no surgery and no pathology. In an operation one must not sever nerves, otherwise partial or complete paralysis might result. A good pathologist, who among other things has to determine the cause of death, must know what the body normally looks like. The science of anatomy teaches us all this.”

The repeated request to take this anatomy course seriously convinced us in time that a basic knowledge of practical anatomy would serve us well in future.

We reminded ourselves also that our colleagues at the university of Butare who were studying human medicine did not have the opportunity to receive such a fundamental training. Although Rwandans, like everybody else in the world, wish to have well-trained doctors in every branch of medicine, they are not prepared to put the bodies of their dead at the disposal of science, even though they know that this is a necessity for training their future doctors. That is why they only learn anatomy from books.

When we started the anatomy course, we Rwandans were amazed to see that we had a dog to practise on. We were, indeed, surprised to see that the dog was of such importance in anatomy as a whole and in the lectures. The dog is of no consequence in Rwanda, and we did not want to waste our time on it. Dogs are even despised, and if a person wants to insult somebody, he calls him a dog. This is just as much an insult as being called a pig is for a German. Vets in Rwanda get very annoyed if they are referred to as ‘dog doctors’.

Nevertheless, we future Rwandan vets at a German university had to concentrate all our energy on learning about the dog. We did not like it, and we wanted to end our studies. The German students, on the contrary, were in raptures at the prospect of treating dogs. Fifty percent of our colleagues were women, and most of them had a dog at home.

“The whites”, commented one of our Rwandan friends, “are completely different from us blacks.” He could not understand how some of these female students brought their dogs with them to the university to caress them at break. Their nicely cleaned cars were always full of dog smells and the seats covered in dog hairs. Our friend also could not explain the fact that German women discriminated against him just because he was black, but that the same women did not mind taking their dogs onto their laps and stroking them everywhere the whole time. He also found it very illogical and paradoxical that German dogs ate not only better than African children, but than the whole of the African population.

Another of our colleagues who was prone to making jokes in contemplative moments said to him: “It would have been better if you ii come to Germany as a dog.”

We did not break off our studies after all. Firstly that would have required the agreement of the Common Market; secondly, we were uncertain whether we would be allowed to study another subject; thirdly, in the event of returning home to Rwanda we would certainly run into difficulties with our people there. They simply would not believe our stories about the dogs, and would say: “Don’ t tell us fairy stories about dogs in Germany; nobody would do such a thing.” They would just believe that we had misbehaved and had been expelled for that. We were encouraged to continue upon hearing that we would move on to other animals towards the end of the semester. We finally got used to the dog and learnt from it as if it were nothing in particular.

We did not, however, get used to the weekly oral anatomy-test which took place every Friday and which was known as Testat.

There is no doubt that anatomy remains in the memory of most vets as one of the most difficult subjects of their whole study. We did not have to write a protocol to the practical, as we did in the chemistry practical, but we did have to memorize a lot of names instead. For instance, we had to know and be able to point out, amongst other things, on the bone of the upper thigh: 1. caput femoris, 2. collum femoris, 3. trochanter major, 4. fossa plantaris, 5. condylus lateralis, 6. fossa muscularis cranialis, 7. trochlea patellaris.

We learnt these names off by heart, but had forgotten them again by the next day. Knowing Latin did not help much, either. You can imagine how strenuous it was if you realize that we did not have to learn just one bone but the bones of the whole body, including those of the individual vertebrae, and not simply those of the dog, but also of the cat, the goat, the sheep, the cow, the horse, and the chicken. We had to learn at least ten thousand names just for the bones.

Therefore, it was no wonder if one got them all confused during a test. For example, humans have twelve ribs, dogs, goats and cows thirteen, and horses eighteen. It happened, however, that during a test dogs and humans got eighteen ribs, whereas horses only twelve. That was not a cue for the other colleagues to laugh, for everybody knew how much we had to learn, and everybody would make such silly mistakes themselves sometime. Apart from bones, one had to know about the muscles, intestines, blood circulation system, and nervous system, and that for all domestic animals.

That was a difficult task, and we only managed to achieve the anatomy-Schein by working day and night. Neither the German students nor the other foreigners found it any easier.

We were not, in fact, the only foreigners in our semester. Scandinavians, North Americans and Asians were represented. We heard that every German university could accept up to eight percent foreigners according to the law.

Rwandans liked to talk with other foreigners, in particular to find out if they had similar language or subject difficulties. We told them also about our experiences in the Goethe Institute and in studienkolleg. They knew the Goethe Institute, even

though they had learnt German at some other cheaper language school whose certificates were also recognized by the Free University. The Goethe Institute was far too expensive for them. Amazingly, they had never heard of studienkolleg: they were these 'special' foreigners who did not need to go to studienkolleg.

In the Federal Republic of Germany foreign university applicants are divided into two categories: those foreigners whose A-levels are recognized and who need only to reach a certain level of German before they can start studying at university; and the other foreigners who, in addition to having to reach a certain level of German, have to have their school-leaving certificates scrutinized at studienkolleg. Foreigners who come from industrial countries belong to the first category, and foreigners who come from poor countries belong mainly to the second category.

Rwandan students disagree with this categorization. That became clear in Bonn in 1983 at a gathering of students which the embassy there had convened. The students asked the ambassador to call upon the German authorities to waive studienkolleg for Rwandans in future, because they were not of an inferior standard to the 'special' foreigners.

In the case of our students at the Free University I would agree with this assertion. I must confess, however, that studienkolleg was actually of use to us. After six months language tuition our German still was not good enough to start studying the difficult subject of veterinary medicine, where one has to take tests almost straight away. It was also obvious that the foreign students who were placed in the first category had to combat considerably greater difficulties than we did. Some of them even had to repeat the courses several times. I can still remember how one of our anatomy professors who had been in Africa a long time paid us a compliment when he told the other students that the Africans are more intelligent and more diligent than is generally assumed in Europe.

Put simply: it would be better and fairer if all foreign university applicants could have the opportunity of proving the worth of their school-leaving certificate through, for example, an examination. After passing such an examination, each student could decide at his own risk whether he wanted to start studying straight away or not.

What one of our Rwandan colleagues did towards the end of the first semester was also of his own free will. He decided to break off his studies and to return to Rwanda for good.

For him life in Europe was not the paradise which he had imagined, but more like a hell in which everything was very difficult. He could not stand sitting in his room the whole semester with his books. He could not stand being called 'nigger'. He could not stand the uncommunicative people in Europe. He could not stand not being allowed into all establishments. He could not stand the feeling that the dogs were of more value than he himself. He could not stand not having a girl friend in Europe.

As is often the case, and the more so in a country like Germany where there is so

much of it, he turned to alcohol. He became a drinker. Berlin is an especially good place for drinkers, because pubs are open around the clock. Our friend found his local, gradually got to know many of the regular customers, and, to his misfortune, became friends with them. Of course, when he was drunk he paid for everybody. He did not pay cash. The landlord wrote down what he had drunk, and who knows, perhaps even more than that, and he paid at the end of the month.

Living this way, it was obvious that his monthly grant was used up after two weeks. He did not go to university in the first two weeks of the month, if he still had a few coins left in his pocket. When his money was all gone, he turned to us, his brothers in Europe. We helped him without any 'ifs' and 'buts', as is the African tradition. In time we grew angry because we realized that he spent the money only on alcohol, without changing himself. We were dismayed when we noticed that he was not even eating properly anymore.

In Rwanda he would have been cursed by his whole family and by all friends and relatives. We cursed him too. We did not want him to go to the dogs, and were also concerned about our reputation at university. The few blacks in our faculty were an object of attention, and everybody would soon know what was happening. In order to get him to eat regularly, we did not give him money but instead tickets for the university mensa. But he was already too far gone: he sold the meal-tickets to other students. While we were deciding what to do next, he surprised us with his decision.

We had not seen him for almost two weeks, when he came to us at our institute one day, and said he had something important to say: "I've gone down the drain so quickly in this country", he confided to us, "and I can only pull myself together at home. I've, therefore, decided to go to the CDG straight away and ask for an aeroplane ticket home."

This took us so much by surprise that we did not know what to say at first. We felt that Europe was not the paradise of which we had dreamt at grammar-school, but we also knew that if we could hold out, a brilliant future was waiting for us as the first vets in Rwanda. We had the same wishes for our colleague, and, therefore, tried every possible means to persuade him to reconsider.

It was too late: he had already made his decision a long time before, and there was no turning back. He received his aeroplane ticket and was off.

His leaving was a great disappointment to us, of course, and we called him a coward. It was only later that we realized what a praiseworthy decision this had been, when we saw what happened to other Africans who could not cope in Germany, but who had not the strength of mind to depart. I may mention that he, his wife and their four children are getting on very well and he found himself again in Rwanda.

After his departure there were only three of us left together. Nothing else of note happened during this semester, not even what is known at the university of Butare as 'baptism'.

All newcomers to the university were baptized. How were they baptized? This

was quite dastardly and I could even call it partly criminal. The newcomers had to obey the older students in every way. They had to keep the lecture-rooms clean as well as the private rooms of the older students. Amongst other things, they were neither allowed to talk nor smoke in the presence of their superiors, and could even be made to do their washing or wipe their table if tea had been spilt on it.

That was not all, however. On the actual day of the 'baptism', about two months after the start of university, the novices had it even worse. They had to drink beer out of shoes, run in their underwear through the town, women included, walk long distances on their knees, and perform other sadistic acts. In the evening they could wash themselves, and reconciliation took place during the celebrations which followed. These novice students did not forget this episode, and waited impatiently for the next batch of novices, in order to take their revenge upon them.

Many an arrogant European might see this as a case of uncivilized Africans carrying out a barbaric custom. This custom is indeed barbaric, but has nothing to do with Africa. It has been imported from Belgium and France. I was told this recently by Rwandans who are studying there.

This is a first-rate example of how Africans accept everything that comes from Europe, Japan or America, and attempt to imitate it or even better it. We discussed this point with a medical student from Togo and he said ironically: "The blacks will be happy only when they're whiter than the whites." His friend from Tanzania added in support: "If somebody filled up cans with German shit and wrote on them made in Germany, I'm sure that we'd still be clamouring to buy them."

This man from Tanzania had not been exaggerating. The blind admiration of the Africans for the Europeans was once more made clear to me, when I returned home to Rwanda for a holiday at the end of the next semester.

This second semester, like the first, was characterized by hard work. In the holidays between the first and the second semester we went over the lectures in botany and zoology which we had missed.

In zoology we were surprised to hear that what the Rwandans said about worms attacking the organs was not just an old wives' tale, but, to an extent, the truth. Take the mawworms, for example, which make their way through the intestinal wall, the abdominal cavity, and the lungs and migrate back to the intestines again; or the liver leeches, which, as the name implies, live in the liver.

In the botany lectures, we were fascinated by the phenomenon of photosynthesis, which is the method by which plants extract carbon dioxide from the air with the help of the sun's energy and use it for growth. Humans and animals, too, benefit from photosynthesis because oxygen is produced in the process.

The second practical in this summer-semester was in physics. Apart from the complicated electrical circuits, with which we had to get acquainted, there was nothing unusual about this practical, except perhaps that the professor in charge of it was extraordinarily strict. He used to ask us theoretical questions during the practical, and those who could not answer them well enough were sent out straight away, and

had to repeat in the holidays those sessions which they had missed. This was a matter of consternation for us, because if one were thrown out of the practical more than twice one had to repeat the whole semester. Luckily, we received our physicsScheine without delay.

Also without delay, that is after two semesters, we took the examination known as Vorphysikum. We were tested in chemistry, physics, botany and zoology. This examination, generally accepted as an easy one, was also for us no problem. We took no chances, however, and developed our own strategy to improve our chances. For the oral examination, which took place in groups of four, we joined forces with an Indonesian, and entered as an all-foreigner group. The point of this was to prevent any German from taking advantage of our language handicaps, for we had noticed that the Germans were able to compensate a possible lack of knowledge on the subject by their superior rhetoric. We were also speculating that no professor would dare let all four foreigners in a group fail.

I do not know how much this strategy actually helped us. We might even have obtained just as good results if we had been grouped together with Germans. In any case, we had no time to think about it, for our hearts were in Africa after the last examinations.

As recipients of Common Market scholarships, we were entitled to a trip home once every two years, provided that we could prove that we were keeping up with our studies. So far our studies had been a great success, since we had passed all examinations well, and we could claim a journey home after two and a half years in Germany.

10. Homesickness in spite of material comforts

We could have done with this journey home much earlier. In fact, we would have liked to have visited home after one year, though not for good, for the strain of homesickness was already starting to tell after three months in Germany. Who would have thought that, in view of our original enthusiasm for Europe, we would become homesick for Rwanda so soon?

We surely had everything in Europe. We had considerably more money than at home, where we had practically none. We were well-dressed, which was not the case in Rwanda. We could satisfy our hunger, which again was not the case in Rwanda. Each of us had not only a radio, but also a cassette-recorder and a record-player, whereas at home we did not even possess a Mera-radio. Here each of us had his own room, instead of having to sleep with up to sixty other people in the same dormitory. Winter did not bother us: we had gradually grown used to it. Also the fact that we did not have girl friends was not really the main reason why we wanted to go home: we did not even have girl friends at home in the way Germans have girl friends. (In Germany a girl friend is much the same as a wife). Not even loneliness made us want

to go home: we were three good Rwandan friends and had also gained some German ones anyway. German hostility to foreigners was not the reason for our national and emotional feelings either: we had, in the meantime, realized that not all Germans were overbearing.

For all that, we did not have everything in Europe. The thing that was missing was the same thing that was driving us home. Those who have travelled a lot know this feeling which always drives one home again. One can travel the whole world, see and do everything, but, at some point, one feels the unavoidable pull of one's home. Home not only in the broader sense, but also in the narrow sense i.e. the place where one was brought up and where one's personal history began. For us, home was the place where we were born and grew up, the place where our primary school was, and the boarding-school, where we did our A-levels.

How we thought about the good old times at grammar-school when we received letters from our old friends at Butare university! Boarding-school was not as bad as we had thought. We had wanted to get our A-levels over with as quickly as possible, and go on to university where we would be free. But, actually, this time at boarding-school was one of the finest.

In Germany, one of the countries in which we wanted to study at any price, we missed the *esprit-de-corps* (sense of togetherness) which had been all-too-evident at boarding-school. We had helped each other solve all sorts of problems, whereas at the Goethe Institute it was every man for himself. We used to present a front of solidarity against our teachers and despise anybody who tried to seek favour with them. In this way we were able to enforce many of our aims. We prevented the expulsion of some schoolboys who had been labelled as our leaders. We made successful pro-tests against harsher examination conditions, and we prevented American corn-flour, which had been sent to Rwanda as economic aid, from being used at our boarding-school. In our eyes, this corn-flower was not fit for human consumption, but was 'pig food'. This stuff which they gave us had often gone bad and was some-times covered in grubs. At the Goethe Institute, on the other hand, there was not any solidarity even in the examinations, and at studienkolleg Oskari was completely at the mercy of his teachers. At any rate, he would not have received any support from us.

We had not get bored at boarding-school, even without television. Our activities in different youth organizations occupied our spare time. Some of us used to go camping in the forests at the week-end and others were active members of the SECA (African Catholic Youth Organization). So, boarding-school did not mean isolation from the rest of the world.

This youth organization, in which I was actively involved, supported the socially deprived in our society, as well as having the general aim of helping to develop the country.

The socially deprived were, first of all, the old and the disabled, who had no relatives to fall back on. We visited them at home and helped them with their work.

We built proper houses for some of them. One day a year is dedicated to lepers in Rwanda, and the members of the SECA organized a fete (party) for them at their hospital, which was thirty miles from the capital. We brought them presents which we had bought with money collected in churches in Kigali. We danced, sang, recited poems, and even put on a theatrical performance for them. Everybody had the opportunity to display his own special talents.

Our contribution to the development of the country was teaching adults how to read and write. We were able to play the teacher's roll every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon.

We also helped those citizens who could already read and write. Kayibanda, the first president after independence, used to say: "The more the masses are enlightened, the easier, quicker, and more effective will those in charge of development find their work in all fields, and the less the masses will allow themselves to be exploited. They'll then support with self-confidence the efforts of their leaders and development will take place in a more democratic atmosphere." (The numbers in brackets denote the sources of information as they are given at the end of the book)

Committed to the spirit of our president, we thought about how we could best make clear to the population the problems of our country and possible solutions to them. We came to the conclusion that we could best reach our goals by visual means. We began to collect various pictures and information about Rwanda, a lot of it from the Ministry of Information and organized an exhibition about the government's plans for the following five years. To our great satisfaction, this exhibition was well received, not only by the grammar-school pupils but also by the rest of the population in the capital.

We made use of our spare time at boarding-school with similar creative activities in the youth organizations. We were not occupied with such serious problems all the time, however. We also had fun in between. Saturday was the big day at boarding-school. Every Saturday evening we could hear on our own boardingschool radio-station (Radio Mumena) news about what had been happening during the week. The news was usually boring and we knew most of it anyway. The music programme which came after it was more exciting.

This was not non-stop music. Every record was accompanied by commentary, and only requested records were played. It was the custom to call upon one's friends to dance to one's favourite record.

The commentary could be for example: "Thomas Bagira would like to have a reconciliation with Anaclat Senkware, who broke his leg while playing football, and calls upon him to dance with him to the next record."

It could also be, at the instigation of the editorial staff: "We've received letters from our friends who left to study in Germany last year. They're doing well and send

greetings to each and every one of us. Let's dance to the next song all together in memory of them and wish them good luck and success in the land of the white man. "

One could also request a song for a friend in the following way: "You've not received a letter from your girlfriend for a long time, and neither have I. Let's not allow ourselves to become sad because the holidays are just around the corner and we'll soon be reunited with our loved ones. For now, let's both dance to the next song and immerse ourselves in the world of music. "

The messages could also be sad if, for example, a friend had failed an examination or lost a relative. One might hear something of this nature: "Berwa! I've, along with your other friends, just heard what has happened. We're also deeply saddened, and wish your father well in the other world. And you, good friend, try not to take it so hard. To ease your pain, we'd like you to accompany us in dancing to the next song. "

Most messages were related to the circumstances and often humorous.

Hence, the dance-floor in our common-room at grammar-school was packed with fine young dancers every Saturday evening, who had put on their best trousers, shirts, ties and shoes after having a shower. They waited expectantly for surprises: nobody knew what the next song was going to be, or if he was even going to be called upon to dance.

Unfortunately, Rwandan folklore was neither played nor danced to. Foreign and exotic music was much more in demand. We could all do the disco-dances from Zaire and East-Africa, as well as European dances such as the Charleston, Rock'n Roll and Waltz which we had learnt from our young Canadian teacher. We did also Greek dancing, especially after having seen the film *Alexis Sorbas*, in which the main actor, Anthony Quinn, had spectacularly demonstrated it.

We learnt it quickly: the Europeans are right when they say that Africans have music in their blood. To every rule there is an exception, however, which goes to prove it. This was also the case in our boarding-school.

Not all the grammar-school pupils took part in the dancing. The philosophers, as we called these people, some of whom having acquired nick-names like Einstein and Descartes, preferred to play chess the whole evening.

Saturday evening lasted a long time. After the evening meal we looked at films, mainly American westerns and documentary films about Europe which showed only the nicer side of life there. The film-show came to an end at about eleven o'clock in the evening, and at half past twelve we had to go to bed. If we had not seen any horror films, we slept well, looking forward to the millet-beer the next day.

With our midday meal on Sunday we could, in fact, have our weekly ration of alcohol. Afterwards we used to go for walks outside the boarding-school in small groups, and in the evening we lamented the passing of the week-end and were already looking forward to the next one.

That was how we amused ourselves at grammar-school.

In Germany, we admired the architecture and, thus, spent a lot of time looking at

the buildings. We also used to like going for walks along the Rhine, where the calm of the water inspired us to compose poetry. We went to the cinema. The choice of films here was much larger than at boarding-school. In the evening, we used to watch television. It was nice to see important football matches on television and not simply listen to them on the radio, as we had done at boarding-school. Television made it possible for us to see famous singers, of whom we had until then only heard, and judge their talent for ourselves. We could even see them personally at the various

A group of young boy scouts from our grammar-school

concerts. There was no money in Rwanda to attract such people. We also tried opera, but were not very taken with it: it was completely alien to us. We preferred the theatre. We were pleased to be able to see our large African wild animals at the zoo. Who knows? We might not have seen lions, nor elephants, nor hippos etc. had we stayed in Africa all our lives.

One can see that we had an enormous number of things to do to fill up our free time. We did exploit the opportunities but were still not quite happy. We yearned for the old boarding-school atmosphere, the old black milieu and the simple, natural, uninhibited behaviour of the Africans. During the course of our upbringing we had unconsciously developed a love of the mountains, and now we suddenly realized how much we missed them.

We were longing to see if the countryside had changed at all, if new roads had been built, if any progress had been made in the cattle- and goat-breeding techniques, or if anything at all had happened in the country.

We wanted to laugh with our old friends again. Europeans laugh in a different way from Africans, if indeed they do laugh at all, and they laugh about completely different things. A European comedian would have to be retrained if he were to exercise his profession in Africa.

We wanted to see what had happened to our village. Who had got married? Who had had children? We also wondered whether the old folks and those chronically ill were still alive. We wanted to go home. A nagging voice inside us kept repeating: "You' ve got everything, but you' re still worth nothing in this foreign land."

11. Home again after two and a half years

The nagging voice finally found some peace as we landed at the airport in Kigali on the first of August, 1972. We realized straight away that something had been lacking in our lives. The sun and the air were far more agreeable in Kigali than in Berlin, and the laughing, simply-dressed black people created a hospitable atmosphere. We found ourselves at home in our villages. Not only relatives but also all our friends had turned out to give us a warm welcome. In Germany, solely Mrs. Muller had welcomed us. The difference was obvious: we were at home.

Each one of us went directly to his village from Kigali. Mine was sixty miles away. I did not have to go on foot as in previous times, but could now afford to pay for transport. Apart from that, my relatives had collected some money to pay for my journey home.

On the way home I enjoyed the sweet fragrance of Rwandan trees whose scent differed from that of European ones. I drove with great pleasure through the mountains, along the same tracks which I had covered by foot during my grammar-school years. The countryside had become more cultivated.

Upon arrival, I received the same treatment as the teacher did when she returned

from Belgium. The whole village had gathered there. They wanted to see if my stay in Europe had lightened my skin - blacks do, indeed, become slightly paler in winter, though Europeans may hardly notice it. They wanted to see if I could still speak Kinyarwandan, and they were amazed that I could still remember the names of the people in the village. They were also hoping to have a sip from the many drinks which my parents had prepared for the occasion. My close relatives were, in turn, curious to see what I had brought for them from Germany.

I also had to answer many questions about Europe and the white people: “Do the Germans drink ‘Urwagwa’ like we do? Are there similar plants in Europe to ours? Do European farmers hoe their fields as we do, or do they use machines? Do they have hills? Do you have white girlfriends? What are they like? Are there poor people in Europe as there are here?”

I answered the last question with yes, but they refused to believe that poor people existed in Europe. On the contrary, they were more than ever convinced that Europe is a paradise, where milk and honey flow for everybody. Not even my explanation that one had to work very hard to get anywhere, in spite of technical facilities, and that one could not enjoy life properly, had any impact on them.

Not only had they never heard of the word stress, but they had also never been in stress situations. The main criteria for their judgement were industrial products from Europe. The things which I had brought with me from Germany, for instance, were a testimony to the superiority of European culture. They admired my fine suits, my clothes, my watch and my camera. And, of course, everybody asked me to bring something of the sort from Europe for them next time. They were especially fascinated by my cassette-recorder which had the opportunity to prove its worth two weeks later.

My parents had organized a little party for me. We had slaughtered two he-goats, and my family had prepared millet-beer and banana-wine in large quantities. The party took place in the evening, as is our custom, and we ate and drank as much as we could. The alcohol quickly had its effect and made us want to sing and dance. One person led and the rest acted as the chorus, with the lead singer continually changing. Man danced with man, woman with woman, and also mixed. Even the small children danced. Everybody took part.

I wanted to do something to immortalize the memory of the evening, and my cassette-recorder provided the technical means. A couple of days ago I listened to this seventeen-years-old-tape-recording again, with the nightingale voices of the village inhabitants.

Hearing their own voices for the first time was a wonderful experience for them, and in the following days many people, especially children, came to me, asking me to make recordings of their voices. I could have enticed all the children of the village with my cassette-recorder, and I could have done the same thing with my camera. Children and adults alike were harassing me to be photographed. My standing amongst the villagers rapidly rose, and I was no longer simply another black person

for them, but a Muzungu. My fellow-Rwandans who were studying with me were also considered to be white negroes.

We were now looked upon as white men, not only because we could use these complicated machines as well as white men could, but also because we had assumed the behaviour and life-style of white men. We had indeed become alienated by our predominantly European education at grammar-school and by our studying in Europe. We were not even able to sing and dance to Rwandan folklore as well as the rest of the villagers.

What did they sing and dance to, actually?

Love played an important part in this, and so, to celebrate my return to my family, they sang: “Bapfakurera (my father) was deep in sleep, when he heard a fine and beloved voice, and he knew from whom when he opened his eyes. There was Bizimana, his beloved and brave son, who, in spite of his long absence, had never ceased thinking of his family and of the whole village. Here he’s, our dear one, we’ ll never forget him, and we’ ll always stand by him, even in difficulties. Hurry up, finish your studies and return and stay close to us forever. “

The solidarity of the villagers was also extolled, and those who behaved otherwise were condemned. When somebody in the village got married it was customary for the younger people to organize a special party for him. New songs were composed to welcome the bride, who had to leave her own village to join her husband. The girls in her village cried at this parting, whereas the girls in the village of her husband welcomed their new friend lovingly.

At such village parties the disappointments and annoyances of young men who had been jilted in favour of richer suitors were sung about too, and later on, when we would all be dancing frenziedly, we would turn our attention to the heroes of the country. The greatest hero at that time, when I was at home. was undoubtedly President KAYIBANDA.

12. Further understanding of the life of the Germans

At the end of the holidays I flew back to Germany with my three companions. Flying was no more such a thrill for us, and we did not get impatient, either, when it seemed to take such a long time. We said to ourselves: “It doesn’ t matter when we arrive. No parents, nor children, nor friends are waiting for us at the airport. The elation on meeting an old friend again and large welcoming parties, things to which the Rwandans are used, are the exception in Germany. And, besides, nobody would down tools to go and welcome somebody.”

Anyway, Ursula probably would not be able to come to the airport, even if she wanted to, as she was very ill. I had visited her in Klinikum before leaving for Rwanda, and she was nothing but skin and bone. I had never seen anybody so emaciated. I wondered during the flight whether she were still alive.

The day after arriving back in Berlin I telephoned Peter, only to have my fears confirmed. Peter did not say much, except the following few short words, sorrowfully: "Ursula is no longer alive. She's dead."

I picked up the threads of my life in Germany again with such sad news.

This event naturally took its toll on me, for I had become good friends with this family in the course of time. At Ursula's request, Peter had often invited me to come and eat with him when she was in hospital. Peter took her death very badly, although he had known for a long time that she was very ill. He had loved his wife very much, and after her death he could see no point in going on living. At any rate, he saw no point in maintaining friendships, not even with me. We did not see each other again for a number of years.

In spite of its two million inhabitants, Berlin is small enough to allow one to bump into one's friends now and again. Six years later I met him in a Kneipe at Savignyplatz. I was sitting there with a few African friends, when I suddenly saw a couple laughing. The man was bearded and looked like Peter. I hesitated going to greet him, although I did not need to. He had a tell-tale characteristic, and I only needed to look at him: his little finger betrayed him. I went towards them both, but Peter did not recognize me. It had been such a long time. But as soon as I mentioned Ursula's name, he realized who I was. I was happy to see that he had gained a foothold in life again.

The new semester brought with it lectures and practicals, just as in previous semesters. We felt fresh and full of the energy we had gathered at home. We still had to continue working hard, however, and it did not get any easier. When we did not have any lectures or practicals, we went to the university library to read. That was a large unfriendly room, but we still found it ideal for our purposes. All the books which we needed were available, and if one had not understood something, one was able to consult colleagues. In spite of the multitude of people sitting in there, there was a calm compared to which a church would sound like a beer-hall. This was far different from our boarding-school, where we talked as loudly as we could if our supervisor was not around, often on purpose, to annoy him. Here, everything functioned without supervisors. How praiseworthy!

The atmosphere in the students' hostel, however, was not worthy of such praise. Even though everybody had his own room, it was not easy to find the peace necessary for studying. There was simply so much noise! The person who lived next to the kitchen had bad luck indeed. When somebody was cooking, eating, drinking, or if a celebration was going on, it was absolutely impossible to study. The noise was not only created by the fourteen people living at the side of the corridor, who all had to use the same kitchen, but also by numerous visitors which some of them had.

The person living next to the showers and wash-rooms also had bad luck. Those who showered late at night, together with those who got up early, made sleeping difficult for him, and problems were compounded by the thin walls which were not sound-proof at all.

Something else bothered me in the students' hostel. Human relationships left something to be desired. In this respect, students in Butare were far more advanced than students in Europe. Whereas social relationships with each other in Butare went without saying, we Rwandans had reluctantly to concede that life in German students' hostels followed the motto Everyone for himself and God for us all.

It was not the usual thing just to visit one's next-door neighbour, as it was in Butare. One had to have a reason first, before knocking on one's neighbour's door. Either the common telephone in the corridor had rung, and one had to tell one's neighbour that he was wanted on the telephone, or one was bringing him a packet which the postman had left.

One could not even use the common television as a pretext: almost everybody had his own. Each time one knocked on somebody's door, one was met with the usual retort: "What is wrong?" This isolated way of living was taken so far, that one went into the kitchen, which served as a common room, only if nobody else was there. One did one's cooking quickly, ate quickly (some even took the food into their rooms), and returned quickly to one's room, where one was secure and undisturbed. Some people even locked their doors behind them straight away.

In the kitchen one had one's own little cupboard to store one's things in, and, of course, these cupboards were kept locked. It was only the unsuspecting new arrivals, who did not yet know how life in students' hostels is, and who at first bought no locks and left everything open. They soon realized that they would have to change their ways, because their things were quickly stolen.

This happened to me too. I was surprised to see that the future 'elite' of Germany the future doctors, politicians, judges, pharmacists, economists etc. were so dishonest. Their behaviour was not exactly exemplary in the field of hygiene, either. In most students' hostel kitchens, one would be entitled to ask whether humans or pigs lived there. This was also confusing for foreigners, who had heard so much about the famous German order and cleanliness, and who, instead, saw only the opposite.

The kitchen was especially dirty at the week-end, when one had enough time for cooking. The floor was a disgrace, because the char lady was not around to clean it, and the piled-up dirty crockery was not exactly appetizing either.

Conditions in the kitchen and the incompatibility of the individuals, who had been thrown together by coincidence, led frequently to tension among the corridor inhabitants. Sometimes it was men against women, sometimes women against each other, or men against each other. There was often tension between individuals, which, in some cases, went so far that they were no longer on speaking terms with each other.

We tried to defuse the situation at so-called corridor meetings. We discussed all the problems, and everyone was obviously disturbed at the way in which we were living. Each meeting would produce well-meant resolutions, which were, unfortunately, kept for only a few days.

Due to this students' hostel atmosphere, or perhaps also to difficulties with the studies, some students, mainly Germans, turned into proper boozers. These boozers were to be seen almost everyday in our students' hostel (also known as Studentendorf - student village) in the so-called Club A-18. It was questionable whether they would even finish their studies. Some had been there for more than thirty semesters.

Such a thing was unimaginable at our university in Butare: he who cannot keep up with the schedule is thrown out - there are enough people waiting for a place at the university. Students' pubs in Butare were the meeting places of students, which was not the case with our Club A-18. Many people did not like to go there because that was the meeting place of the boozers. Women, especially, felt ill at ease here, as they did in general in students' hostels in Berlin (in Berlin, women made up only 30% of all students).

Like many men, women did not usually stay very long in students' hostels, but soon moved into private flats. Most foreign students, however, remained in students' hostels even if they did not like it there, for it was very difficult for students, and even more so for foreign students, to find private flats. What our man at the CDG had told us about the difficulties involved in finding a flat in Berlin proved to be true: wealthy Berlin and wealthy Germany suffered from a lack of accommodation.

We realized that, whereas students in Rwanda and Africa in general were respected and regarded as 'beloved sons of the nation', students in Germany were regarded as the wretched. They had to accept the most menial of jobs. These were usually given to them by the student Labour Exchange for only a short period of time. When looking for a flat, one had to try and conceal the fact that one was a student, because all landlords were afraid that poor students could not pay their rent on time. Students, especially those in Berlin, had earned themselves the reputation of being lazy and of leftist inclination through their numerous strikes, especially during the years of student revolt in the sixties.

A German friend told me that it was not advisable, in a disco, to tell women that one was a student, because they did not want to be burdened by poor students whom they might eventually have to feed. This was in strong contrast to Rwanda where a woman was happy to have a poor student on her arm, to whom she could devote herself: this was an investment for the future, since he would later marry her.

In Africa, students are seen as the presidents, ministers, directors, doctors, etc. of the future. Students there have many privileges bestowed upon them by the state, which ensures that they keep quiet and do not get involved in student revolts as they do elsewhere in the world. All the students in Rwanda receive a grant and have their own room. They do not need to cook or wash up, since they have servants and chambermaids to do that for them.

They do not need to do any work which involves getting their hands dirty. They just have to read books and pass their examinations. They are full of their own self

importance and behave towards the rest of the population in the same manner as do German medicine-, dentist-, and veterinary students, who assume the airs of doctors after one semester, if not already during the first few days at university, and act with condescension towards other students.

Foreigners in German students' hostels behaved less arrogantly towards each other, displaying an extraordinary amount of solidarity. This made it easier to integrate new arrivals in Berlin into the communities of their fellow-countrymen.

The Africans who lived in my students' hostel made up a large family of between fourteen and twenty members. We cooked together, often went to the pub together and organized parties amongst ourselves. Other groups, of whom the Iranians were the largest, did likewise.

Upon my return from Rwanda, the other Africans in Studentendorf organized a small party for me. This evening was especially pleasurable, because I became acquainted with a woman who was to become my future girl friend. And with that, I experienced for the first time in three years what our young teachers at grammar-school had told us about white women.

It is ridiculous to insinuate that white women are always running after black men. There are many African students who have to return home without even having had one girl friend while abroad, in spite of their boasting of the contrary.

Luckily, this woman with whom I got acquainted was also studying veterinary medicine and was almost at the same stage as I was. This meant that we could attend many lectures and courses together. She was an ideal girl friend, and I was blissfully happy, but not for long.

Another African often came to see us, and I welcomed him as a brother, as is usual in Africa. I found out one day that his visits were not to me but principally to my girl friend.

One afternoon after lectures, I asked her to come with me, whereupon she replied that she did not want to but would, instead, go and see her new boy friend who was also an African, and who also lived in Studentendorf. She cadged a lift from somebody who was going that way, and with that she was off.

This relationship, which had developed so quickly, came to an equally sudden end. I was not used to dealing with people this way and felt badly hurt. Back home, it was usual for human relationships to develop slowly, but they were more robust in character and lasted longer. I had been with this woman for only two months.

I was also very cross with this other African for treating a brother in this way. He had certainly learnt this type of behaviour during his five years in Germany, for it was totally untypical of Africans in Africa. The other Africans also condemned this pig', as they called him, and consoled me with the thought that I would soon find a nicer girl friend. Two German girls, whom I knew in Studentendorf, said that that could happen to everybody.

It still annoyed me, though, to see them both cycling past my house. But why bother? I did not want to jeopardize my study because of this girl. I found solice in

the thought that I would have a far greater choice of women as a graduate student in Africa than I would ever have abroad. I tried to forget her as quickly as she had forgotten me. I concentrated on preparing for the Physikum examination (the preliminary medical examination).

It was said that each of the four universities in West Germany where one could study veterinary medicine - Berlin, Hannover, GieBen and Munich - had its own tradition and its own peculiar difficulties. Hannover, for example, was noted for the strictness of its clinical subjects, whereas Berlin emphasized the pre-clinical scientific subjects, this being the reason for up to half of the students failing the examination.

The Physikum was also the stumbling block for our friends from Somalia. We Rwandans did not want to have this fate, and so we decided to put off lectures and practicals for one semester in order to prepare intensively for this examination.

It might be thought that six months would have been enough time to prepare for this examination. That was not so. We were examined in anatomy, biochemistry, and physiology -that is well over 2,500 text book pages. It was impossible to know everything about subjects like physiology even after years of study. But we kept swotting right up to the very last moment. Even then we were not certain of what we had learnt.

Every examination day was accompanied by dread. Our German colleagues could also not avoid getting caught up in it. For some of them, the examinations were a serious physical and mental strain. One, whom I knew, was physically sick before the examination - something I had not seen until then - and two others suffered from skin rashes during the whole examination period. Some Germans even broke off their studies.

We slogged on, all of us passing except one colleague, who had to repeat two subjects. He was more successful the second time, and was able to celebrate together with us after his final examination. We were joyful at being able to stay together in the same semester, a thing which made studying easier for us.

After the Physikum examination, we started with the clinical semesters, which take place in the hospitals themselves, and where one is introduced to methods of treatment. This was the practical side of the scientific theory which we had learnt so far. It now started to become clear why this scientific theory was necessary.

Many students had previously complained about having to learn so many unnecessary things, but it now became clear, for example, that the knowledge of chemistry and biochemistry helped considerably when learning about medicines and drugs. Before administering medicines, one has to know, amongst other things, which parts of the body are affected by the medicine, whether a biological change is effected, and how to clear the body of the by-products. One can make use of one's knowledge of chemistry and biochemistry in order to answer these questions.

Biochemistry was also of assistance when learning about feeding animals, where we had, among other tasks, to determine the amounts of food. A knowledge of

chemistry and biochemistry is also necessary when examining the quality of animal products (meat, eggs and fish).

In the same way, a sound knowledge of anatomy is necessary to be a good surgeon. He has to know the nerve-network and which muscles it serves.

Physiology also plays a large part in medicine, especially in sport medicine, for example with racing horses.

At this point, I must confess that I realized quite late how important the galenic practical was, and that I should have taken it more seriously, because one learns here how to manufacture medicine oneself. The knowledge of how to manufacture medicines is of paramount importance to countries like mine, where medicines are scarce. On the other hand, this practical was of less significance for the German medical students, for the pharmaceutical industry takes care of this almost completely.

I believe this applies to all subjects: only when one has started to work, does one realize that one would have had fewer difficulties had one paid more attention in one subject or the other.

Otherwise, students are pretty much the same everywhere. They do not study in order to acquire knowledge, but to pass examinations, and are happy when it is all over.

The clinical period lasted six semesters. After each of the three years, one took one part of the three-part state examination, Staatsexamen.

In Berlin, the examinations in pharmacology and pathology especially presented extraordinary difficulties. The pharmacologists were very strict and with no mercy at all, and it sometimes happened that a complete group of four students failed. I was lucky and passed the first time, whereas my Rwandan colleagues had to retake this examination.

Pathology, on the other hand, presented no problems, and, with that, all obstacles to our becoming vets were removed. On the 10th of June, 1977, we took our final examination.

Towards the end of our studies we had some interesting practicals in West Germany, of which the agricultural practical at Oldenburg on the Baltic Sea, the clinical practical at the veterinary school in Hanover, the slaughterhouse practical in Braunschweig, the practical at the veterinary examination office in Kassel, and finally the practical with a vet in the country near Kassel, are the most worthy of mention.

We Rwandans favoured practicals in West Germany because, firstly, the Common Market paid all our expenses, secondly, we wanted to get to know Germany better, and, thirdly, we could gain experience with more agricultural animals than we could in Berlin, where we were practically limited to dogs and cats.

The two weeks in Futterkamp were really a nice time for us. Half the students in our semester were there on a large farm, and during these two weeks we could get to know each other much better. In the evening we would all go to the discos and

pubs. We could milk the cows by hand and, for us Rwandans, being able to use the milking machine, which we saw for the first time, was a special thrill. We had the opportunity to assist when sows were giving birth. The women students liked stroking the piglets under the red lamps where they were kept warm, and made sure that their mother did not crush them.

We did not stay on the farm the whole time. We spent at least one week visiting various farmers' cooperatives in Schleswig-Holstein. We were especially impressed by the great 25 hundredweight bulls which were used for insemination purposes, and by a stud-horse whose value was estimated at 500,000 DM. Nobody in Rwanda would pay so much money for an animal!

On every visit we were treated as vets. There was more than enough to eat and drink, and some people-put on lots of weight. Others had to deal with a hangover caused by too much alcohol the previous evening, and they found out that fresh sea air was good for the purpose. We Rwandans often went with them because we had never seen the sea from close-up -Rwanda is land-locked. We also visited some coastal towns, where we were able to eat whale meat for the first time. Time flew by, and we left Futterkamp very reluctantly.

Our stay at the veterinary school was less enjoyable. There were two of us Rwandans and we lived together in a students' hostel specially for veterinary medical students. The atmosphere here was no better than in our Studentendorf. In fact, it was possibly even more strained. There was a heavy sense of competition amongst the students of the same subject, with everybody looking over his shoulder at everybody else.

In Berlin, there was no sense of competition at our institute. At examination time everyone helped everyone else, and exchanged lecture notes. We did not experience any discrimination on the part of the German students or professors, and those who had cars always took us with them from lecture to lecture. The various lecturehalls were scattered over a wide area, and we often had only fifteen minutes between lectures.

We were lucky to have such hearty German colleagues. Many other foreigners, especially those at technical colleges, complained about discrimination not only on the part of students, but also on the part of professors. At some technical colleges passing an examination depended upon whether one was a German or a foreigner. I recalled the case of a Kenyan student who was studying at the technical college in Wurzburg - the only black student there -and whom the students and professors wanted absolutely nothing to do with. He eventually cracked up, recovering only when he returned home to Kenya. Studying in a small conservative town where there are hardly any other foreigners can be one's undoing.

The students and professors at the veterinary school in Hanover were not as nice as their counterparts in Berlin. The veterinary school in Hanover is the oldest one in Germany, and this leads to a certain arrogance amongst the students there, who

automatically brand Berlin students as ‘stupid communists’, Berlin having a leftist reputation.

We Rwandans were treated likewise by the veterinary medical students in Hanover. I do not believe, however, that the Hanoverians are any better than the other veterinary medical students, and my opinion is substantiated by conversations which I had with students from Hanover, who were in Berlin for a couple of semesters. Many of them did not appear to have grasped the simplest of basics, although they all had such big mouths.

The practical in the country showed me that job experience, which was difficult to get in Berlin because of the limited number of animals available, was very valuable. One cannot say that country vets trained in Berlin make more mistakes or are less well disciplined than their colleagues from Hanover. Everybody has to be shown the ropes during his first year of work, and how good one is depends to an extent on how good the boss is, and how much effort one puts into one’s work.

As far as practical experience during our training is concerned, I can only conclude that students in Berlin were allowed to do considerably more with the animals, whereas most of the examinations, treatment and operations in Hanover were earmarked for the ‘big’ professors or senior assistants. The clinic for small animals in Berlin was exemplary. It offered everybody the opportunity to take part in practical work at the week-end.

In general, the attitude at our institute was completely different from that in Hannover. The relationship between professors and students in Berlin was of a fraternal nature, and one did not have to attend examinations in a black suit and white shirt with black tie, as one did in Hanover. In retrospect, we were glad that the CDG had found us places at the university in Berlin, even though we had been a bit dubious at first because of its position in the middle of the communist GDR.

The practical at the slaughterhouse in Braunschweig, which lasted six weeks, was less eventful, and one can hardly call it an attractive job. The work here was nothing other than normal production-line work. We had to dissect and pass judgement on certain parts of the carcasses of the animal which had just been slaughtered, in order to categorize their quality and their state of health. At least, my Rwandan friends and I learnt here that slaughtering can be quick and clean if the right equipment is available.

In Rwanda, slaughtering is done outside, allowing flies and other insects to eat their fill. Slaughtering a cow takes hours, and the whole village gathers round, in order to each get a piece of meat, which is a rare commodity. Children are there too because they are curious and like meat, and dogs know that something is happening, and come to beg.

The slaughterer is not full-time, but does this only on occasions. That is why German slaughterers were, in our eyes, brutal, when one considers that one man kills millions of animals in his lifetime. We wondered whether an argument with a German slaughterer might not be lethal, since he would certainly, sooner or latter, have

become immune to killing. In any case, those of us who enjoy meat should know that the people who prepare it for them have to work under extremely difficult conditions.

We were looking forward to the practical in the veterinary examination office very much. This kind of veterinary work was certainly more important for our country than clinical work, we thought, because we have very few medicaments. The motto “prevention is better than cure” seemed very apt, and the main task of such examination offices was the prevention and control of animal and human epidemic diseases of viral, bacterial, parasitical or mycotic nature.

We were not disappointed. In Kassel we were able to get acquainted with methods of examining eggs for worms, which are a serious problem in Africa. We could also learn the technique for recognizing rabies and what to do with rabid animals in order to prevent the spreading of such a dangerous disease.

A German bull. African politicians visiting industrial countries marvel at such enormous bulls, in exactly the same way as African veterinary students in Europe do. Without realizing that these thoroughbred animals are extremely prone to tropical diseases, and often without advice from national experts, they order them for the purpose of improving their own cattle. It is difficult to imagine that meat from such bulls does not taste better than that of good African cattle.

We also took part in a vaccination campaign against a contagious illness of the intestine found in cows, called paratuberculosis, and which can cause heavy economic losses. We spent several days in the food examination laboratory and in the laboratory for leukaemia. Leukaemia is a blood disease in which the white blood cells swell and proliferate, and it was widespread in cows in Hessen.

We could not complain about the way in which we were received in the laboratories. Everybody was so helpful. It was a vet, who had been an assistant at our institute in Berlin two years earlier, who arranged this practical for us, and it was the same vet who put us in touch with country vets around there, which gave us six further weeks of practical experience.

This practical with the country vet was very informative. It became immediately apparent that the job was a hard one. In contrast to most African vets who often spend their time in offices and have little to do with the actual animals, German country vets are on the go day and night.

We officially started work at seven o' clock, first of all visiting the patients, whose owners had just telephoned. The two-way radio informed us of new cases we still had to visit on our way. The farmers did not ring at the same time but usually first telephoned when they noticed that something was wrong with their animals, which resulted in the vet's being kept busy the whole day.

It often happened that in the evening, just as we were taking off our working-clothes and having a shower, the telephone rang and we had to put our working-clothes back on and go out again. Either a cow had a bulging stomach from eating unsuitable grass, which could lead to the bursting of the animal if the vet did not do anything about it straight away, or a cow was having difficulty calving.

Most of the calving took place around Christmas, which meant that we were woken up two or three times a night around Christmas and the New Year. In the summer, too, we had plenty to do in the evening, because the farmers, busy harvest-ing while it was still light, only noticed in the evening when they came home that their animals were not eating properly, or that they were giving too little milk or that they had temperatures. They would then telephone the vet.

It went on like that for the whole year, and the vet had only three weeks' holiday in which to enjoy his hard-earned money.

Apart from the fact that we were extremely busy, everything went well with the work. Difficulties only cropped up when we had to operate on pigs or cats. These two kinds of animals were especially sensitive to narcosis and often died. You can imagine how frustrating it was to find out from an angry farmer that a sow which we had operated on the day before had died. It was also very awkward having to tell somebody, who had left his cat with us the day earlier to be operated upon, that his dear little cat had died in the meantime.

Personally, I found having to certify pregnancy and artificial insemination of cows very difficult. If an old cow was no longer 'economic', it was slaughtered. First of all, however, one had to certify whether the cow was pregnant or not. One did this

Rwandan veterinary students returning from inoculating cows near Kassel.

by feeling the abdominal viscera through the anus by hand. That was not easy for a novice like myself, because everything felt the same and it was extremely difficult to recognize anything. Telling a farmer that his cow was not pregnant, and then finding out at the slaughterhouse that it was, resulting in the farmer losing his calf, was a serious mistake.

With artificial insemination, it was difficult introducing the straw containing the sperm into the uterus, because the opening was so small. A lot of practice was necessary to avoid simply releasing the sperm into the vagina. At the latest, one knew one month afterwards whether one had done it right or not: if not, the cow was on heat again.

If this happened, the farmers had some good gossip material about the vet. I noticed that people in a village, here as in Rwanda, as opposed to in Berlin, were very interested in the private concerns of other villagers and gossiped about such things very much.

A farmer's wife, for example, told me how bad my vet was and how many animals her family had lost owing to his mismanagement. On the other hand, however, one farmer suggested I marry the vet's daughter, so that I could later take over his practice.

I felt very flattered by this suggestion, because I had supposed that the farmers would reject me as a witch-doctor and not recognize me as a proper one. I did not want to consider this suggestion at all, as I was set on going home to Rwanda and, after all, the vet's daughter was still very young.

I got on so well with the vet's family, that they proposed that I take over the practice the following summer during the holidays. I could, first of all, stay with them and take care of the practice of another vet in the vicinity, while he was on holiday. My vet's family would go on holiday three weeks later, and I could then take care of his practice while living at the other vet's. The two vets had previously relieved each other at week-ends.

I supposed them to be very good friends of each other, but it became clear to me while I was relieving them that each was competing intensively against the other, each denouncing the other in the presence of the farmers too. Their wives were conducting an equally vicious campaign.

I think that that is the main problem of German country vets. They are not able to get along with each other and form a joint practice. Doing that would enable them to divide the work up better, and they would not have to work the whole time and fear losing their customers. The efforts of young vets to move towards more cooperation are commendable.

We got to know the Germans in West Germany much better through these practicals, just as we did the Berliners through jobs in Berlin.

Why did we need to take on side jobs, even though our grants were sufficient? Actually, the Common Markt did not allow us to take on side-jobs while studying at the same time, and it could have withdrawn our grants had it found it. But we were

amazed to see that colleagues from Somalia worked on the side, although they were under the same regulations as we were. We asked them how they had got permission. “We didn’ t get permission”, they replied, “we’ re doing it, in effect, illegally, but the CDG does actually know, and is turning a blind eye to it, as most scholarship holders do it too. One runs into problems with the CDG only if one has problems with studying”

That prompted us to earn some money on the side and to save something in case of difficulties at the university and Brussels’ withdrawing our grants. We went to the Heinzelmännchen, a Labour Exchange for students at the Free University, and looked for work.

At the Heinzelmännchen we were amazed to see how many students were looking for work, and not only Germans, but also many foreigners from all over the world. We later learnt through conversations with them that most foreign students did not get a grant, and that we were, actually, privileged.

You can imagine how difficult it was to study and at the same time have to finance one’s studies by doing jobs on the side. That is the main reason why these students take longer to complete their studies.

The work offered was mainly menial. One could, however, pick up interesting and clean jobs during the ‘golden years’ of West Germany. But since 1978/1979, when things started to decline, it has become more difficult for students to find work. Foreign students in particular have been affected, because those employers still looking for workers have not been keen on foreigners. It was more pleasant during our time of study.

One of the nicest jobs which we had was at the lottery-office. Lottery does not exist in my country, and on hearing that one could win up to half a million marks, we eagerly started playing, in the hope of soon becoming millionaires. We soon realized after a few weeks that it was not easy to get rich in this way, which is actually obvious, because, otherwise, all Germans would already be millionaires. Our job at the lottery-office was to put the filled-in lottery-tickets into machines, which sorted out winners and losers. Another group of students had to check through the losing tickets once more, because the machines sometimes made mistakes.

This job was well-paid and not so strenuous. The only problem was that it was always on a Sunday. We had to be there at half past seven in the morning, which meant sacrificing Saturday night, which was particularly unfortunate, as most student-parties took place on Saturday evening. Only in this way could we arrive at work with a clear head. If one made a mistake which was easy to detect because winners who had been classified as losers, always inquired one was banned for a period of time. One could also be sent home for arriving late.

The work at Gilette was less fun. Here, one had to sit at a conveyor-belt and pack razors and shaving accessories. This work was unpleasant, because one had to work continuously and quickly. If too slow, one was cursed for letting material pile up, since that automatically slowed down the others.

Particularly disturbing was the fact that one turned into a machine, always performing monotonous movements automatically. The criticism of our teachers at grammar-school about work on a conveyor-belt now became clear. If a Rwandan comes to Germany as a tourist and sees the people with their nice clean hands, nice clothes, nice suits, nice cars, nice flats, nice food and lots to drink, he will tell his fellow-countrymen, upon returning home, that the people in Germany lead an enviable life.

People like myself, though, who have had a glimpse inside German factories, would not see the situation as simply as this. Without doubt, the work of African peasants is far more humane, purposive and satisfying than working on a conveyorbelt, even though they have to work hard and without machines, their hands get dirty and hard, they wear dirty clothes, do not possess any luxury articles, have meagre food rations, and do not even realize how comparatively lucky they are..

Unfortunately, there are many people in Germany who do such work.

We did not like this work at Gilette, the more so after we realized how inhumane the bosses were. Anybody who came five minutes late had half an hour docked off his pay, and if anybody became dizzy due to the movement of the belt, as happened to a Turkish lady, the person in question would simply be told off and not even allowed to go home to rest. The most important thing was the worker's output, their health was of no consequence.

The shift system from six o'clock in the morning till half past two in the afternoon, from half past two in the afternoon until eleven o'clock at night, from eleven o'clock at night until six o'clock in the morning gave us one more reason to leave Gilette after one week.

In contrast to this, delivering packets was fun. It was hard work, sometimes having to climb up lots of steps if there was not any lift, but our German work-mates were very nice.

After sorting out the packets at the post-office according to areas and then streets, we used to go to Tschibo for breakfast and a cup of coffee. We would then get to grips with the work, and the sooner we finished the better, because we could then go home early (and still be paid for the full time.)

We found this job interesting because we got to know Berlin through it. We saw that not everybody was as well off as those in Zehlendorf or Dahlem or Wilmersdorf (residential areas), and that many of the houses in Kreuzberg, Wedding and Tiergarten (working-class areas) were only fit for demolition.

It was also interesting to see the reactions of the various people to whom we delivered packets. We saw how most people had a safety-chain on their door as well as a little spy-hole. When we rang the bell, old ladies, who were living there alone or were alone during the daytime, would look through the spy-hole to see who was ringing the bell. When they realized that it was a black man or some other foreigner, they would creep back to their rooms as if nobody were at home. Unfortunately for them, however, we too could see through the spy-hole, and so would ring

continuously and shout: "Postman!" until the old lady would finally get fed up of hearing the bell ringing and open the door a little with the safety-chain still attached. She would then accept the packet and pay the charge. Some of them closed the door again as soon as they noticed that the postman was black and returned to their rooms cursing.

We found this behaviour very upsetting, of course, but when we told our German colleagues, who in the meantime had been delivering packets to other flats, about this, they reacted with surprise and said: "You're making unnecessary problems for yourself. Next time it happens, you don't need to worry; simply drop a note in their letter-box, and they can collect their packets themselves from the post-office."

Not all old ladies were so strange. Some were very open and wanted to talk with us, asking lots of questions about Africa. They were amazed that black people could get along in a country full of whites, and praised our knowledge of the German language. We could see that they were lonely and were glad to have the opportunity of having contact with other people. They would thank us for being so nice and give us a tip. The tips especially increased at a time when there were lots of reports on tele-vision about starving people in Africa. Such pictures obviously moved some people's hearts.

Doctors and firms, on the other hand, gave us a very cool welcome when we delivered packets to them, and seemed as if they had never heard of the word 'tip'. We did not get any tips either when we worked for Coca-Cola delivering crates of Coca-Cola, Fanta and Sprite to pubs, even though this work caused us to sweat profusely.

There was no sweating attached to the job I had at the race-course in Mariendorf. I was glad to be doing something which was connected with animals, even though I did not have anything to do with the horses directly. I was in the restaurant at the race-course, not as a cook or a waiter, but clearing up the glasses from the grand-stand and from the tables, and sometimes pulling beer.

I did this every Sunday from two o'clock until seven o'clock in the evening, and every Wednesday from six o'clock until ten o'clock at night. It was interesting to observe the people betting, and, after a while, I got to know most of them because they were regulars. Many certainly frittered away their savings, and at the end of the evening they would all be drunk. They would be overjoyed if they had had a win, or would otherwise seek solace in their beer glasses. I was often invited to drink one with them.

There were originally five of us sent by the Heinzelmännchen to the race-course, and I was the only black one. After two weeks the work was supposedly finished, but the director asked me to move things into his office and to report there to him next time, but to tell nobody of it. I continued working at the race-course until I got fed up. This experience showed me that, in some situations, a black person may be preferred by some people.

During my time at the race-course I saw also that the food in restaurants is not always in accordance with the health regulations. Cooks are cooks the world over, even in the restaurants of the elite like the one at the race-course. When the cook is busy, it can easily happen that, for example, a piece of meat falls to the floor. The cook will then pick it up, wash it a bit, and continue to cook it. Who is to say that a delicious soup or gravy at an exquisite restaurant has not been salted with the cook's own sweat?

Such things happen every day in big kitchens, and, even though the meal looks good, it is not always necessarily so.

A young German who was sitting next to me recently when I was waiting at the airport, ready to fly to Bonn, was of the same opinion.

I was drinking some milk when he said to me: "Why are you drinking this milk? It's not the real thing. If you want to drink real milk you've to go to the farmers like those in my village. Real milk loses its freshness after two days, and the long-life milk which we get in the city has been boiled, which destroys its most important components. Believe me, I used to be in the food industry. If you work there and see everything that takes place, you'd lose your appetite for industrialized food. Do you know how crisps are made? At one stage in the process they look like chewing gum. It's very sad to have to criticize not only artificial foodstuffs in our society, but also the destruction of the environment and the stupidity of our citizens, who can think of nothing else but money. I for one don't want to stay in this 'kaputt' country; as soon as I've earned some money I'll try my luck elsewhere."

The next chapter will enable us to understand the worries of this young man and why he was rebelling against his society.

Chapter II

The poverty of the rich countries

1. Not all that glitters in the West is gold

a. Hostility to foreigners

The job at the race-course was easy. One did not need to use one's head, and at the end of the day, one could forget the work completely. Writing my doctorate was a different matter, however.

Just after our final examinations we had to decide whether we wanted to go home immediately or start working on a thesis for a doctorate. A doctorate was actually superfluous to us, because Rwanda was modelled upon a French system, whereby one automatically received a doctor title at the end of one's studies even if one had not written a thesis.

This was all too much for one of our colleagues. Two months after his final examinations, he was able to do the Germans a favour, who feared their jobs were being taken away by foreigners, by flying home with his family and making one more job available for them. The two of us who remained here decided to write a thesis. The prospect of gathering practical experience through working together with German scientists was particularly attractive.

After years of hard study, one can be under the delusion that one knows almost everything, and definitely more than those who have not been able to enjoy education to such an advanced degree.

When Rwanda attained independence, it had very few specialists who had been educated to a higher level. There was no other choice, but to elevate such people to more pretentious positions. Since then, many young university graduates have returned to Rwanda from Paris, London, Moscow, Berlin etc. These people are known as Intiti, which means people who are too clever by half. The Intiti behave very arrogantly towards their older colleagues, even though these older colleagues have gradually accumulated a lot of experience and might even know more than the young 'black Europeans', who, to some extent, have forgotten the realities of Africa.

After working with these older people for a couple of months, one begins to appreciate their knowledge and experience. The driver of an old vet, for instance, could probably recognize a cow with East Coast Fever- a serious disease contracted by cattle in East Africa - easier and quicker than an intellectual vet fresh from Europe who probably knows the disease only from books and pictures.

I noticed, also, that the technicians in my laboratory knew appreciably more in their particular field than I did.

My Rwandan friend had meat hygiene as his thesis subject, and I was allotted the subject of immunology (the study of resistance mechanisms of the organism) which I was to study at the Federal Health Office.

When I started I thought that I would be able to complete the practical work in a year, but that proved to be an overoptimistic assumption. I did not have much luck with this subject, and had not made any substantial progress after one year. I had to examine the effectiveness of vaccines, using completely new methods which had so far not been tested in veterinary medicine in Germany.

Nobody was in a position to help me, so I had to test the methods myself. I often used to work from seven in the morning until eleven at night, and went home each time with the same feeling of frustration I had had the previous day. That went on for a whole year, and I often thought of giving up. Indeed, I would have done so if my professor had not prevented me.

He supported me when I applied to the authorities to visit laboratories abroad, where these methods were already in use, so that I could familiarize myself with them. I wrote to the appropriate scientists abroad and received positive replies, enabling me to go for the first time to Denmark, England and Holland.

I was looking forward to Denmark because the Scandinavian countries were well-known for being less racist than other European countries. It was said that they allocated more money for aid to developing countries than other industrial countries did, even to countries which were not under the influence of the West, such as Tanzania for instance.

I had another reason for looking forward to Denmark, namely, that I had met a Dane at a meeting of European vets in Berlin. He lived in Copenhagen, which was where the institute that I was to go to was situated. I would be able to visit him and perhaps even stay at his house.

Everything went as I had hoped. He had a large flat and I was able to stay at his place without further ado, and it was only a ten minutes' walk to the institute.

I was received with great friendliness at this institute, and everybody took pains to explain everything to me. The directing professor even found time to talk with me about everyday things and not just specialized veterinary topics. I was very impressed by Copenhagen and the Danes.

When I told this to my Danish friend, he warned me against being over-impressed, because, as a black person, I could easily have negative experiences. "The Danes", he said, "are particularly unfriendly towards Germans and foreigners from outside Europe. That's especially so in the case of the Eskimos, who come from Greenland, our only colony, and are, as it were, the Turks of Denmark."

I was dismayed to hear this about people famed for their tolerance. The experiences of the next few days showed me, though, that my friend was right, and that one could make great errors of judgement in many things.

As for the bit about unfriendliness towards Germans, I witnessed an argument in a jazz-club between a drunken old Dane and two German youths who had come to Copenhagen as tourists. The old Dane told them that it would be best to exterminate all the offspring of Hitler, whereupon the youths left the club in anger.

I could easily put myself in the shoes of these innocent youths, not only because of my negative experiences in Germany, but also because I myself, as my Danish friend had predicted, became the subject of discrimination.

I was in a car, waiting at a crossroads to turn left. It was my bad luck that the man waiting behind me on a motor-bike could not stand blacks. While I was waiting at this crossroads, he let his motor-bike roll into the back of my car on purpose. I felt offended, since such a thing had never happened to me in Germany. I could not even curse him because I could not speak any Danish and he probably could not understand English. The only thing I could do was drive away quickly.

This incident incensed my Danish friend too, but, for him, it only underlined his previous warning to me. "You see", he said, "I warned you. This bloke was obviously a rocker. You'll have to beware of the rockers and similar people with leather jackets, because they're out to provoke everybody. My Eskimo friend was also molested by them."

The Eskimos were conspicuous in Denmark because of their smallness of stature and their Asian looks. The first time I saw some in the centre of Copenhagen, I thought that they were Koreans who had come to Denmark just like the many Koreans who had come to Germany to work (there are, for example, many Korean nurses there), or that they were Vietnamese who had fled their country because of the war. I had imagined Eskimos to look different, or at any rate not to look Asian.

These Eskimos, who had come to Denmark to work, must often have been driven to wonder whether they were actually human or not, and many of them must have wished that they had never been born, because they were treated like garbage.

The Eskimos were not alone in their suffering. One could hear it on the radio, see it on the television, read it in the newspapers, hear it from people themselves, read it in letters from friends, and experience it oneself: the Turks in Germany, the Molaccans in Holland, the North-Africans in France, the Congolese in Belgium, the Koreans in Japan, and the blacks in England and in the USA all suffered the same fate. They were all welcomed when the economies of these countries needed them, only to be treated like a banana skin, which one throws away after having consumed its contents, when the economies began to slump.

In the light of this, the Belgians, French and English, who have been trying to convince Africans that the Germans are the worst people in Europe because of their Nazi-crimes, are themselves, in a historical as well as in a present-day context, not beyond reproach. The colonial history of these countries was extremely bloody, and the way they treat foreigners these days is just as bad, if not worse (one hears of many murders) than what the Germans did.

Regardless of a criticism of German hostility towards foreigners, one may add

that black Africans in Germany are not having it as bad as those in France, Belgium or England, partly due to the fact that there are fewer of them, and partly due to the fact that they are there temporarily as students and not as workers, which is not the case with blacks in these other countries.

We Rwandans were, therefore, glad that fate had brought us to Germany, even though our Belgian education had not prepared us positively for this. One can change one's opinion.

When Africans in Europe meet other Africans - it does not matter in which country - they complain about the wicked and racist whites. They are, of course, entitled to make such criticism, but they should at the same time look at themselves with a critical eye. For they are those Africans, most of whom belong to the bourgeoisie upon returning home, who often treat their fellow-countrymen, many of whom have never had any opportunity in life, in exactly the same way as that in which they have been treated in Europe, if not worse.

On an international level, the events in 1982 in Nigeria, when more than a million foreign workers, mainly from Ghana, were suddenly told to leave the country, show that black people too can be ruthless, even though blacks are, in general, more hospitable than whites, and even though an African in another African country would not, in some cases, attract attention through his colour or his language (complete nations in Africa were divided at will by the colonial masters.)

I would say that there is arrogance and racist elements everywhere, the more so the richer the country in question. The arrogance of the industrial countries towards Third World countries is based, indeed, mainly on their superiority in the production of industrial goods which the Third World countries need to have at all costs. Among the Third World countries, the one who possesses more of these goods looks down upon his less fortunate countrymen.

In view of the apparently unavoidable disdain of host countries towards people from other countries who are looking for a better life, one can only say that, in the long run, one lives best at home in spite of all the difficulties.

Only he who has been away from home for a long time can arrive at this conviction and love his native country with all his heart, because only he realizes that, when all is said and done, his native country is his final place of refuge. The prodigal son can always return home.

The importance of one's native country is shown by the fact that refugees never stop thinking about where they have come from even though they might have built themselves a livelihood up in the new country. All their relatives are still there, and they also have to live with the fact that a slump in the economy or a change of government could mean expulsion for them. The refugees from Burundi and Uganda whom I know in West Germany also long for peace in their countries.

One day, I met a Vietnamese who had been saved by the Cap Anarnur and then been taken under the wing of the German Red Cross. He had been in Germany for a couple of months but was not managing to cope with his new situation very well.

His main thoughts were directed towards his native country, and he asked: “When will peace finally return to my country? What can these people who are fighting with each other possibly hope to achieve?”

b. Alcohol, a national epidemic

Germany was not the paradise which these Vietnamese had expected. For me likewise, Denmark was not what I had expected. All in all, however, I had a pleasant time there: the longer one is in Europe, the less one expects from the people; as the Germans say, one develops an elephant-skin.

At week-end we went to see my friend's parents, who lived sixty miles away from Copenhagen in the country. I got to know his whole family, they were very nice. The father, too, was a vet, which gave me a chance to see how a Danish veterinary practice works. I noticed that the cooperation between Danish vets functions far better than amongst German ones.

I remained four weeks in Denmark. Three months later, in the summer holidays, I went to Denmark again by car, this time travelling through the whole of Denmark and staying mainly at camping-sites. The climax of this holiday was the Tivoli, the world-famous Danish amusement park.

The Scandinavian countries are unsuitable for somebody who likes to drink alcohol during his holidays, because their governments have put up the prices of all drinks which contain alcohol, in order to combat the alcohol consumption of their citizens. The prices in Sweden were even more extortionate than those in Denmark, which led to Swedes often coming to Denmark, where prices were relatively low for them, in order to satisfy their craving for alcohol. That was why one met very many drunken Swedes in Copenhagen, and why the ships from Copenhagen to Sweden contain hordes of swilling Swedes.

In no way is the problem of alcohol restricted to northern Europe: it is widespread throughout all industrial countries. The statistics show that, in West Germany, 4.2 million men and 600, 000 women (2) are suffering adverse effects from alcohol, and the consumption of pure alcohol per person in Europe has increased since 1950 from 3.271 to 12.741(1982) per year. (2) It is also alarming to see that teenagers and even children are drinking alcohol in ever-increasing numbers.

When we first came to Germany and noticed that so many Germans drank, we thought first of all that it was because they had a lot of money. After a few months, it became clear to us that most boozers did not have enough money to pay for their beer, and that money which they borrowed was never paid back. Our Rwandan colleague, who gave up studying because of alcohol problems, could write a very long book about these other Germans who are completely unknown in Africa. We often came across such people in Berlin, in the Club A-18, in the pubs in Kreuzberg, Lichtenfelde, Moabit, and at the main station (Bahnhof Zoo) etc. When we expressed.

Our displeasure at this addiction to alcohol, we heard that most of them remained at home in hiding, and that all levels of society and both sexes were affected.

As for the boozers whom we knew, it was very disturbing to see how they had completely gone to pieces, how little self-respect they had, and how little sympathy

Alcoholism in the industrial countries.

other people had for them. We were amazed that nobody was prepared to take care of them. We could hardly believe that they were Germans, because the Germans were known to us as an orderly, clean, disciplined and intelligent people.

Of course, the question as to why these 'civilized' and developed people drank so much cropped up. The answer to this came from other Africans, who had been living in Germany a longer time and told us: "What the white people in Africa tell us are

nothing but fairy-tales. One first learns the truth about Europe when one has personally lived there a long time. Technical progress has made life easier for the whites in some respects, but it's also created some problems. Many people cannot cope with these problems, and the reaction is to reach for the bottle. "

The alcohol epidemic is one of the consequences of the problems to be found in industrial societies. Some countries, those of Scandinavia for example, have introduced measures to restrict alcohol consumption. This has happened in England, the next country I was to visit, too. It is immediately apparent that there are many restaurants in England which are not allowed to sell alcohol and those which may can do so only at certain times. Even in London, one hardly sees anybody drinking in the morning, in the afternoon between two o'clock and five o'clock, and in the evening after eleven o'clock. Germans are very surprised when they come to England, because alcohol is available almost round the clock in so many establishments in Germany.

c. Stress

The first place I got to in England was London, but my place of study was to be Cambridge. This town is famous throughout the world for its very high academic level. This was why the students at Cambridge behaved like the veterinary medicine students in Hanover: very arrogantly. The veterinary physiology scientists, with whom I spent three weeks, were far less pretentious than the students, and I got on with them very well. They filled me in on everything which they had so far published, but, like all research workers, they said nothing of their current projects.

The person with whom I had been corresponding even found time to show me the town in his car. We also went to museums in Cambridge. The English appeared poorer than the Germans, but, in general, they were far more polite. This politeness could be seen at bus-stops, where everybody waited in a queue, and nobody pushed when a bus came. I admired the way this functioned so simply.

The Germans, on the contrary, cannot feel proud of their behaviour at bus-stops and ticket-counters etc., where especially elder people suffer most. It is even worse in Rwanda, where everybody is frightened of being left behind to wait two days or longer for the next bus.

In Cambridge I got to know a black man. Indeed, it would have been strange if I had not met any black people in a country where the blacks are as populous as they are in France, or as the Turks are in Germany. (I was in the south of France for two weeks in the spring of 1974 and in Paris for three weeks in the summer of 1978 and again in the winter of 1983.) In contrast to Germany, where the Turks are in almost all cases restricted to menial work, the blacks in England have a variety of jobs, such as, bus-drivers, conductors, policemen, but also road sweepers and beggars.

My African friend was lucky enough to be qualified in a profession. He was, like

myself, a vet, and came from the Sudan. He had already been busy a year working on his doctorate, and lived in the same home as myself and even on the same corridor. So, we had many things in common and were able to get along and do many things together. He, too, had to put a lot of work into his doctorate, and was often at it more than ten hours a day.

He would be absolutely exhausted when he came home, and would go straight to bed. Sometimes I would not see him for a couple of days, because he got up early and came home very late. I saw more of him at the week-end, but the first thing which he always said was: "The work, the work, the work."

He had been in Europe only one year and was still amazed how much the Europeans work, saying: "What we Africans do isn't work. It's only playing children's games. If we want to achieve something we'll have to work as hard as the Europeans."

I, too, had noticed that Europeans have a more fervent inclination towards work than the Africans do. That is especially true of African bureaucrats who spend most of their time doing nothing, whereas African farmers, who work from early in the morning until late at night, should actually be proud that it is their hard work and industry which keeps Africa from falling apart at the seams.

The Germans' application to hard work was noticeable not only in the case of the farmers, who have to milk their cows at five o'clock in the morning because the milk is collected at seven o'clock, and who have to reap their harvests until ten o'clock in the evening in summer: they work just as hard in the factories (not only at Gilette) coping with shifts too. In famous scientific institutes, such as the Max-Planck Institute, they are working around the clock, and doctors and vets never have any peace, be they at work in hospital or in their own practices. In our laboratory, too, we sometimes worked until ten o'clock in the evening, as well as on Saturdays and Sundays.

I have gained the impression that the people of other European countries work less than the Germans, although scientists seem to be the same the world over: each one would like to be the first in his field, and works until exhausted.

An outsider like my friend from the Sudan admires these people who work hard, but somebody who has been in this environment for a long time, such as myself, knows that too much work is accompanied by a lot of medical and psychological problems. One problem has been mentioned already: a human being can turn into a machine, marked by lack of sensitivity and orientation, and by indifference, as described in *L'Etranger* (The Stranger) by Albert Camus.

When we read and analysed this book at school, our French teacher told us that we would be unable to understand such things because we lived in a relatively harmonious situation. Of course, we could not grasp what our teacher meant. Only after having lived and worked in Europe a couple of years can one even start to understand what Camus was trying to say in this book.

The medical consequences of overloading one's system are, amongst others,

physical damage sparked off by stress. The heart and blood circulation system are especially endangered, and most people in industrial countries (in Germany: 50% of deaths) die of cardiac infarction or illnesses connected with the blood circulation.

d. Loneliness

Loneliness, the main illness of 'civilized' people, is also connected with the problem of overwork.

On the subject of loneliness, the Nobel-Peace-Prize winner for 1979, Mother Theresa, has said: "The people of the third world are derided because they can't feed themselves. The people of the industrial countries have a far worse kind of hunger which they can't stay with their technological achievements: the hunger for love, security and community. "

Thinking about these words of Mother Theresa, I found a similarity with what Ursula had said to me when we were sitting near the main station: "You see these crowds of people-Berlin has two million inhabitants-can you imagine how painful it's to feel alone in such a crowd? One feels like one to two million, in other words like nothing. "

In those days I could not understand Ursula. Indeed, it took years and years to notice that loneliness is a problem in industrial countries, and that many people cannot cope with it. And when one does become aware of the problem, one becomes aware, at the same time, that many people in these countries have been 'dead inside' for a long time, and that they are only 'moving body masses'. One starts to understand also why people take pep-pills, sedatives, and alcohol, just to be able to talk to each other and to bear life. One must ask oneself whether or not technical development has brought these people more happiness or more sadness.

As a foreigner in these countries, one first notices loneliness in oneself. One feels lonely when one starts to miss one's family and best friends. One feels lonely, when contact with the locals is absent. One feels lonely, when one has not mastered the language and when the locals make no allowances for the fact. One feels lonely when one is insulted in the underground, on the bus, or on the street, and nobody is willing to defend you. One feels lonely when everybody is aware that you are sad, but still nobody approaches you to ask what the matter is. One feels lonely when one realizes that one has to cope with all these problems alone anyway.

One always says to oneself: "Shit, to be a foreigner", and is convinced that the local population does not have any such problems. Sooner or later, though, one realizes that this is the main problem of these people who otherwise have everything.

In Berlin, one begins to be aware of this problem at the very latest, when one has seen the lonely-hearts advertisements in Tip and Zitty (magazines for Berlin). The numerous adverts for marriage partners and girl or boy friends, for example, in the

German newspapers Die Zeit or Berliner Morgenpost draw one's attention to the problem of human communication in industrial countries. Similar adverts appear in newspapers in other industrial countries.

This method of getting to know people was completely strange to us Africans. In Africa, one gets to know people, whether in the city or in the country, through the many friends which one already has. We, therefore, thought it would be similar in Europe, and that people who place such adverts in newspapers were simply jokers.

Just for fun, some of my friends placed such adverts in newspapers (for instance, Lonely black African, 24 years old, would like to get to know a nice German lady.) and were surprised to receive serious replies.

Our conversations with these lonely people, who had answered the adverts and who, in tears and in desperation, told how Germans had everything except the most important thing, namely love and security, gave us the impression that the Germans were unhappy despite their material affluence.

Conversations which one had with other people in the bus, in the underground, at international meetings, at student parties, at work or simply by chance, when people would suddenly start talking on their own initiative about their private problems, led us more and more to the conclusion that the Africans were making a big mistake when they believed that Europe was a paradise where everybody was infinitely happy.

On the contrary: sometimes living in Europe gets on one's nerves so much that one thinks that Europe is the hell described in the Bible. I do not believe that there is ever a foreigner who has never said "ScheiB Deutschland!" (shit Germany). One even hears such words quite often from Germans themselves.

Cases like Ursula, Peter and the lady whom I met at my doctor's are no exception. Just look at the number of people in Germany (ca. 10% of the whole population) (3) who take part in so-called psycho-therapeutical groups simply to get away from their loneliness. One can really do big business with lonely souls.

Loneliness which characterizes students' hostels is by no means limited to Students. West German workers living in homes in Berlin are even less communicative. In other European cities, too, people communicate little, if at all, with their neighbours.

It is the older generation, often living alone, which bears the brunt of the consequences. There are many old people in Europe who die and their death remains unnoticed. The longest time which I have heard about was seven years.

A friend of mine from Iran said: "The worst thing is when the dead person had been living next to you." When he came back from university one day, he saw strangers breaking open the door of his neighbour's flat, and he first took them for burglars. When he saw that it was the police he realized that something was wrong. Everything imaginable went through his mind except that his neighbour had died and that they had come to carry his corpse out.

One can imagine how he reacted when he heard it. He could not sleep properly

Animal grave-yard in West Berlin.

for the next few days, complaining bitterly about German society and hoping that he would not grow old in Europe.

The more often one hears such stories, and the more people one knows in the town, the more one understands why so many old people have dogs and why they are so attached to them (Berlin holds the record: over 120, 000 dogs). I understood, also, why the dog is so important in veterinary medicine.

Dog owners do not need to worry about undiscovered dead in their flats for too long, because the dog would arouse the neighbours' suspicions by its continuous loud barking, and even if the neighbours were not worried about the person, they would notify the police, if only to put an end to the barking.

Most people from the third world who are living in Europe see the dog as a symbol of a brutalized industrial society. The dog is supposed to supply that which humans are no longer capable of, namely love, affection and security. Love for an animal turns into an exaggerated love of oneself and a hatred for other people.

Because 'civilized' people prefer to go on holiday to Spain, or to go on Safari in Africa, fly to the brothels of Bangkok, own a house, drive a Mercedes, or have lots of money in their bank accounts, they do without troublesome screaming children and prefer to buy a nice little dog.

This holds true especially in Germany. In spite of the adverts Say yes to love, say yes to life, say yes to children, and in spite of the car stickers Have a heart for children, the country seems to have already decided to produce more computers than children. The balance-sheet for 1983 reads, on the one hand, 'The economy is gain-ing momentum', on the other hand, 'The Germans are dying out'. One of the richest countries in the world has simultaneously one of the lowest birth-rates in the world.

e. Crisis in the family

"Why bother having children?", asks the elder generation of Germans. "We look after them with heart and soul when they're young, and when they grow up they leave us, regardless of whether we're healthy, sick or infirm, and lead their own lives. When they're old, will they also complain that nobody is there to take care of them? They don't think about the fact that they themselves may one day be old and also be very ill. "

If these people could live with their children, they would play with their grand-children and not with their dogs. In spite of the many happy families which I have met, a crisis of family-life in Europe is evident. The concept of the extended family has died out in the industrial countries. The family has been reduced to just a few close members, and even these have difficulties getting along with each other. When one hears how many people get divorced in Germany each year (according to Stern, no. 18, 1985, every third marriage goes wrong!), and if one assumes that at least one of the marriage partners and the children almost always suffer badly because of this,

one starts to realize just how much unhappiness, hatred, and mistrust is caused by divorces.

Even partners who do not divorce do not only think of love. There are often cases of brutal confrontations within the family, with the wives ending up in special institutions for battered women, of which there are over one hundred in Germany.

Christmas is a family festival when everybody is happy, according to the books at the Goethe Institute and according to television, but for those who know Germany, Christmas is really a festival for businessmen who make large turnovers because everybody feels obliged to buy presents. This is why non-Christian countries, such as Japan, have also introduced Christmas. The German government is happy when people have done lots of buying.

For those who are alone, however, Christmas is sad, a day on which they really become aware of their loneliness. And for many, Christmas is a day of family arguments, when old wounds open again on seeing people with whom there have been disagreements in the past. For some people, Christmas brings thoughts of suicide. Doctors in detoxication departments in hospitals do not paint a picture of happiness at Christmas because they spend the festival treating people who have tried to end their lives. For many, Christmas is, indeed, the time when they end it all.

f. Tired of living

Suicide, attempted suicide, and thoughts about suicide are part of daily life in industrial countries. People talk about somebody who has committed suicide as if it were a non-event, a normal death. The inhabitants of wealthy countries are not happier, if statistics are anything to go by.

Whereas in Kenya (1970) 0.2, in Egypt (1977) 0.3, in Guatemala (1977) 0.3, in Spain (1978) 4.1 persons per 100, 000 of the population committed suicide, the statistics read for South Africa (1971) 10.8, for West Germany (1979) 21.5, for Switzerland (1979) 25.1, for Austria (1979) 25.1, and for Hungary (1978) 43.2. (4)

One can forget such statistics easily and is prodded into thinking more deeply about them only if one has known somebody personally who has committed suicide. I came into contact with this problem. I knew two Germans, who jumped in front of an underground train, one of whom was a well-known person. I also knew two veterinary medical students who hanged themselves, one of them in our institute, and the other in Studentendorf. I still feel deeply moved every time I think about the death of a young woman who was at a party at my house in 1982, and who electrocuted herself a few weeks later. The attempts at suicide I have heard of are great in number.

Why do more people in rich countries commit suicide than in poor ones? Why are people unable to love each other in industrial countries? Why are there far more

lonely people in these places? One keeps asking oneself such questions when confronted with this problem.

The first reason, as already mentioned, is the fact that the people are under pressure to achieve. If one works a lot one has little time left over for other people, even if one is in need of company. That could be the case if, for instance, somebody is ill or has a personal problem and would dearly like to talk about it with somebody else.

A person who is perpetually under stress and who never gets the better of his work cannot be at peace and have a friendly disposition which other people would find attractive. A man who can think only of his career loves his work more than his wife or children. When he comes home, he is often so tired that he does not feel like talking to his wife, and, instead, switches on the television and drinks his daily ration of alcohol. They live together and, at the same time, separately. One hears of "lonelines together". Children, too, do not see their father very much, as he never has time for them. If they annoy him with questions, he fobs them off with presents: he can afford it. People who overwork, also have little time for friendship with others outside the immediate family.

If one is ill and in need of somebody, there is nobody there to help. One gets very lonely. One starts to wonder what the point of so much work is, and the thought of suicide can always crop up and, if one is unlucky, be lethal.

g. Big cities and brutality

People in big cities are particularly affected by loneliness, whereas those who live in villages are able to cope with it better. When I was working as a vet in a village in West Germany, I noticed that the people there knew each other, that they always said hello to one other, and that they behaved in a more friendly and a more easygoing manner than town-dwellers. One could hardly imagine these people getting depressed easily, or that, if one of them died, he would not be missed until his corpse started to stink.

There is, nevertheless, one great difference between European and African villages. In Africa, people do not have such pieces of apparatus as television and radio to amuse and entertain them, and there is, therefore, far more contact between the inhabitants. They talk far more with each other, and there are hardly any lone wolves. The village festivals which could be compared to European people's festivals, lead to a very strong feeling of togetherness, with everybody taking part in the singing, dancing, drinking and eating, regardless of whether they are young and without any commercial intentions.

This feeling of togetherness is never apparent in Berlin, Paris, London or other large cities in Europe or America. One does not even know one's neighbour, nor what he does, nor how he lives. Conversation with neighbours is limited to good morning,

good evening. They often walk past each other, without exchanging a single word; and if one of them has had a bad day, he might not even bother to respond to a greeting, or might react angrily with: "Who allowed you to greet me? You don't even, know me!" The people in these large cities live in permanent fear, and they say hello as quickly as they can and run into their flats.

This is the case in my present flat, which I moved into at the beginning of 1982. Nobody says more than good morning or good evening, except when they have had something to drink and are jollier and more self-confident. The main problem of these people is, actually, that they are inhibited, and if one really tries, one can get into conversation with them, but it is tiring always to have to force them into it.

This fear of one's neighbours goes so far that, if somebody is making too much noise, they are afraid to ring that person's bell and ask him to be a little quieter. They either tolerate the noise or, as is often the case, notify the police.

Is this omnipresent fear without reason? It is not: many horrible things happen. Women are raped or murdered, small children are raped, murdered or cut up into little pieces, old people are attacked and assaulted, houses and flats are burgled, and raids on banks at Christmas-time are routine. Everyone has at sometime or other paid the price for having had too much trust in others. The crime rate is high.

There really are reasons for having no trust. At the root of it all lies the way in which people from all walks of life have been thrown into a big melting pot willynilly and the continual moving from one flat to another. One remains anonymous and unnoticed and people become indifferent to their neighbours. One minds one's own business and goes one's own way, even if one sees somebody seeing on the street, vomiting in the underground or on the street, abusing somebody else, crying, kissing passionately, having sex openly on the street, stealing from a shop, falling on the street drunk, or otherwise.

Everybody knows what people are capable of when they feel unobserved by people who know them. One can refer to actual examples.

How many Muslims in Europe eat pork or drink alcohol because they are a long way from home and feel that nobody is watching them? How many Africans in Europe like to talk about their supposed wealth at home because they know that Europeans cannot prove otherwise? How many Africans in European cities, who have given up studying or who have not even studied at all, tell European women that they are doctors, in order to create an impression? Foreigners everywhere in the world do many things which they would not dare do at home because they think that nobody is watching them.

One cannot even begin to count the number of frauds which take place in the big city, or the number of European men and women who deceive each other.

Away from home, German tourists do things, too, which they would never do at home to such a degree: consume almost unlimited amounts of alcohol, bath nude everywhere, and visit sex-clubs frequently. These tourists, most of whom have worked hard for their money, pretend to be kings when on holiday, leaving the

impression behind them that they are millionaires, because nobody actually knows what they do at home.

Hotel waiters in Nairobi and Mombasa can hardly believe their eyes when they see what the tourists get up to, because they had expected better behaviour from highly 'civilized' people. Anyway, they look forward every summer to the European women who are somewhat reserved towards black men in Europe, but who drop off their clothes in front of all and sundry in Africa because they cannot be seen by their countrymen.

In Gambia, tourism had to be restricted, because so many civil servants gave up their jobs in favour of earning money from the emancipated Scandinavian women as male prostitutes. They would just lie around on the beach and wait.

What conclusions can one draw about development workers who behave in de-veloping countries as if they had climbed the summit of human intelligence, because the local inhabitants cannot prove the opposite? In the kingdom of the blind, the man with one eye is king.

All these forms of behaviour, to which people tend when they feel unobserved, and which manifest themselves more in anonymous places, complicate life in the big city and lead to mistrust and uneasiness. People are forced to be careful, which, in turn, may lead to loneliness.

h. Sexual frustration

My friend from the Sudan in England also felt lonely. He had similar problems to those which we had in Germany at the beginning, with the difference that he was completely alone. His work had prevented him meeting fellow countrymen or any-body else. When I was there I tried to get him to go out. We did this a couple of times, but in England, as in Germany and Denmark, we were unwelcome in many dance-halls because we were black.

This no longer annoyed me. I had since realized that this kind of discrimination is to be found in all western countries. I had experienced it also in France and Belgium as well as in Holland and Canada. In this, the whites seem united. Even world-famous personalities like Harry Belafonte are refused entry (in Vienna in 1983) simply because they are black or dark complexioned.

Blacks could find consolation in the fact that most western cities have pubs especially for them. There used to be at least three in Berlin. But we Rwandans did not go there very often because we found the atmosphere of competition in such places unpleasant. Many of the black men would compete fiercely for the few white women who were there. We were of the opinion, anyway, that the women there were not worth knowing because they all seemed similar to my first girl friend who just wanted to go with every black man she saw.

My Rwandan friend got angry about this and said: “These ‘nigger women’ are real whores, they just don’t ask for money. They’re obviously just as incapable to differentiate between blacks as are their little half-cast children who call every black man papa. They think that they’ve married the whole of Africa when they marry an African.”

Another friend from Somalia defended these women: “We’d leave these women alone. The blacks living in these countries would be worse off without them, and it’s, anyway, irrelevant whether one is a whore for the blacks or for the whites. Things aren’t any different in German pubs. Every man there is trying to carry a woman off home with him.”

This was true. If a woman goes on holiday to Paris, for example, and returns home without having been chatted up by anybody, she is convinced that she is so ugly that everybody rejects her. It is so bad in Paris, and most of the culprits are white French.

There are also pubs in Berlin, such as Joe’s Bierhaus, which are well-known as places where one goes if one needs a woman for the night. Most conversations conclude late in the evening with the words ‘Are we going to your place or to mine?’ There are similar places in all large western cities. There are even magazines which give tips on where and how one can pick up a woman most easily.

In Rwanda it is not easy to find a woman for just one night unless, of course, she is a professional whore. Even then, one has to find somebody who knows his way around, because prostitution is frowned upon there. Relationships between boys and girls develop slowly and lead normally to marriage, not simply to sex and fun.

Most Europeans think that Africa is sex-mad: “They’ve so many children because they’ve so much sex, and a black man is a sexual superman!” I must say that this picture is, in the main, false, and that countries of the western world are overtly much more sexually free than are African countries, and that sexual behaviour differs from country to country and from tribe to tribe.

First of all, one must accept that having lots of children has nothing to do with lots of sex but is simply owing to the fact that the people do not use contraceptives as they do in industrial countries.

Furthermore, one must appreciate the fact that Africa is at least three times as big as Europe, and, if there are large differences between the Germans and the French and the Italians and the Swedes etc., these differences must also exist within Africa. One also has to take account of the influences of religion and ethnic culture on sexual behaviour.

In the northern Muslim countries, for instance, polygamy is allowed, even though sexual relations are forbidden before marriage. In the southern countries, in particular in Central Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and a part of Tanzania), where Christianity dominates, sex before marriage is equally frowned upon, pornography unknown and living in sin for a while condemned.

In between these two large groups there are others where sexual behaviour is

more or less up to the individual to decide, as in Zaire or in Ghana, where liberalization has taken place mainly in large cities.

In Rwanda it is practically impossible to exercise one's sexual instincts to the full. One never gets the chance, because one always has lots of visitors and the children are usually at home. Having an affair is not as easy as in Europe, even if one sometimes says that the neighbours' children look similar, because everybody knows each other very well (social control), and, anyway, one can very easily get a reputation as a trouble-maker.

Sex, however, does not have negative connotations in the Rwandan mentality. Every man has to satisfy his wife. In the old days, on a wedding day the young men of the village would gather around the newly-wedded couple's bed and listen to the efforts of their friend. The bride was supposed to resist at first. The next day, all the young people would drink to the health of the new family, and congratulate their friend on his performance. This eavesdropping would give friends an appetite for marriage.

One cannot liken this custom to the European degrading sex shows such as those on the Hamburger Reeperbahn. It was done neither for financial benefit nor as an occupational therapy; it was simple, natural fun for these full-blooded young people, and, anyway, they were not allowed to look actually inside the hut. Moreover, this tradition took place only on the wedding day.

Even though this was the bridegroom's first sexual contact with his bride, and even though he had received no instruction from his parents, he was not particularly stressed by the whole affair because he would probably have been enlightened by the wives of his elder brothers or by female cousins. And if, during the course of this enlightenment, children had ensued, this did not particularly matter either, because children belonged to the whole family and the other men would not be jealous.

Many Rwandan sexual customs were labelled as primitive traditions" and done away with by the catholic church. Customs, such as that which I have just described, still exist only in out-lying parts of Rwanda where the church has not been able to exercise so much influence.

Another custom, which is known as cutting the grass, has also almost disappeared. Young girls of eleven years of age or so used to go out into the bush in order to cut grass for the bed, as they termed it. They did not only cut grass, but were mainly occupied with carrying out a certain procedure which is called *gukuna*. This involved pulling each other's labium of the vulva, and the object being to enlarge and lengthen it. Just as breasts are supposed to cover the whole chest, the labium of the vulva was supposed to occupy the whole genital area. If a girl had not completed this task, that would be reason enough to declare a marriage null and void. Mothers, therefore, made sure that their daughters did not neglect it.

Rwandan men like such women because the enlarged exterior sexual organs can be stimulated in a special Rwandan way which enables both partners to receive maximum enjoyment. Rwandan women, too, prefer making love this way.

This custom is practiced in Rwanda, Burundi, and the surrounding parts of Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire, and is just the opposite of the custom of some tribes in the Sudan, Mali, Chad, Kenya, Central African Republic etc. namely cutting off the clitoris.

I think this is very brutal, and an end should be put to it. European feminists, though, should inform themselves better, if they wish to maintain credibility, because this cutting off of the clitoris takes place neither in every African country nor in every African tribe, as many of them seem to believe.

Girls at boarding-school did not practice *gukuna*. The nuns made sure that such customs did not take place : the Bible forbade one receiving enjoyment from one's own body. Most of the Rwandans who had been europeanized could not make love with their women in the Rwandan way either, because they had never learnt it earlier and were too embarrassed to start learning it now.

I was once speaking to a Rwandan doctor about this, and he found it a great pity that elements of our culture are disappearing in this way. The churches' role in such things in Africa must be severely condemned.

Many school-children have been thrown out of grammar-school because of ostensibly taking part in illegal sexual games out of school. It was forbidden at our boarding-school to put one's hands into one's pockets and to sleep on one's stomach, because one might then start playing with one's own body. Anybody who was caught inadvertently putting his hands into his pockets had to carry heavy stones in his hands all day, and anybody who slept on his stomach had to stand the whole of the following day facing the wall.

We had always thought that European children were brought up the same way. During our stay in Europe, we realized that this, along with many other things, was not true. It is no wonder that we started to question the whole teachings of the Church.

We were punished for things which we did not even know about. We heard about many things, such as the widespread European practice of do-it-yourself, for the first time in Berlin. Most Rwandan young men are still ignorant of such things, even today.

These same young men have also no idea about homosexuality. A Rwandan student in America once wrote in *Kinyamateka*, one of our most important newspapers, about life in America. Amongst other things, he wrote that many people had homosexual relationships, above all in cities such as San Francisco.

He had touched upon a subject which was totally unknown to his fellow-countrymen. They asked, naively, how it is done, and if homosexuals have children if they are married to each other.

I can understand this reaction, because I, too, had no idea about such things when I first came to Europe. I can still remember hearing about it from Ursula for the first time as we were sitting in the cafe near to zoo. The longer one stays in Europe, the more one hears about it (homosexual demonstrations in West Berlin against section

175 which limits the rights of homosexuals), and one can even be accosted on the street by such people.

I have made inquiries to see if such sexual relationships occur in Rwanda, and have ascertained that children of the same sex carry out sexual games with each other, but these cannot be considered as serious sexual relationships (they are separated according to their sexes when they are eight years old, anyway). They soon grow out of this homosexual phase. According to Hausner and Jezic: Some men from the Batutsi tribe are an exception to this, in so far as they maintain bisexual relationships. Their women do not complain about the male to male relationships.

Though Europeans and Americans may disagree, homosexuality is also not that widespread in many other African countries. Different reporters on the ways of contamination of Aids came also to the conclusion that homosexuality hardly plays any role. This can be taken for example from an article in *le Monde* of the 15th of June, 1988, on the findings of the Fourth International Aids Congress in Stockholm.

If one thinks a little bit about the causes of widespread homosexuality, one could come to the conclusion - as have many Africans and Asians with whom I have talked about this - that homosexuality is a phenomenon of decadence associated with affluence. The rich and the powerful have so many women at their feet that they become fed up, and then start to turn their attention to people of the same sex, to children, and to animals (the desire to experiment).

This is why famous people such as Caesar, Humboldt and Leonardo da Vinci were homosexual or bisexual. We know about Caesar's liking for Cleopatra, the paradigm of feminine beauty, and also about his homosexual practices.

One can see similarities between the Batutsi, who wielded power in Rwanda for a long time, the widespread homosexuality of the Romans and Greeks when they used to rule the world, and the populations of the western industrial countries who are the most affluent these days.

The few cases of homosexuality which exist in Rwanda are restricted to men. Rwanda is so small that nobody can remain anonymous (there are hardly any secrets there), and the number of homosexuals is so small that one knows them all in Kigali: a few young men who go with the whites for money, and not through natural inclination.

These young people in Rwanda and in other African countries should be warned of the danger of certain homosexual practices, such as anal intercourse, which can damage irreparably the muscles of the anus and thus make defecation uncontrollable. These practices, as reported by Randy Shitts in his studies on the origin of Aids in America (*Spiegel*, 29.02.88), are also favorable not only to Aids infection but also to contagious infection of the liver (hepatitis B) and different infections of the intestines such as amoebiasis and lambliaisis.

Homosexuals in Rwanda are particularly despised. I, personally, have nothing against gays and lesbians who are by nature so, but I cannot condone homosexual

relationships if they are there because it is fashionable, for financial reasons, as a protest against the other sex, or just for a change, as is often the case in western countries.

While we are talking about the different reasons which lead to certain kinds of sexual behaviour, we can ask "Why the white women go with black men?"

One thing which my Rwandan friend said about such women is true: when a white woman has been with black men, she is labelled as black forever, and never returns to the white men. She smiles at every black man no matter where she meets him, be it in Munich, Copenhagen, New York or Bangkok. It is not difficult for a black man to tell if a white woman goes with black men or not.

The usual explanation for this is: black men are very potent. Are black men really more potent than white men, or is it only the vivid imagination of the whites?

What I have just said about 'negro women' applies equally so to the women who have Asians or Arabs as boy friends. They remain, so to say, always in the Asian or Arab camp. Does this mean that the Asians and Arabs are also very potent?

I, personally, do not believe that the whole thing has anything to do with potency: it is the forming of a habit which plays the crucial role. I can hardly imagine that German women, who go to African discos etc., where they have learnt to dance to African rhythms and move their behinds like women in Zaire do, could enjoy themselves in German discos. Equally so, German women, who are used to Indians and their peaceful meditative attitude to life, cannot get on with hectic German men. And she who has got used to the sharp Indonesian or Arabic cuisine would like to have it forever.

Potency plays a subordinate role, but many Third World foreigners still believe that whites have problems with it. One keeps running into men and women who go to psychotherapists in order to solve their sexual problems. The numerous adverts for sexual stimulants (love drops, Yohimbin, sexual tonics: "a man has to be fit both at work and in bed") imply a demand for them.

This weakness in sexual matters results from the way of life in industrial countries. In countries which are industrialized to a lesser extent such as Italy, Greece, the south of France, Hungary, South America or Africa, the people are more vivacious than the inhabitants of the northern industrial countries. Too much bodily or mental work can overstrain a person, resulting in distraction from sex. Migrant workers from the south who have spent a long time working hard in northern industrial countries develop similar problems to those of the indigenous inhabitants there.

This lack of interest in sexual matters is then compounded by too much sexual freedom. The peep-shows, sex-shows, sex-films, sex-magazines, enlightenment of children in sexual matters at a very early age, naked bathing, group sex, and exchange of sexual partners, are all things which increase sexual problems in these countries.

Western countries like to talk about human rights, but when one sees how they

behave in sexual matters, one can only be shocked at their attitude to sexual freedom, where human dignity and the sexual act itself have been flagrantly disregarded. The sexual act does not involve human relationships any more. It is a game, just like any other, which can be carried out publicly and in a brutal fashion without any feeling.

One of the results of this regard for sex is certainly the ever-increasing number of sexual crimes, particularly in cities. Permanent confrontation with sex, no matter where one looks, leads to the arousing of sexual desires, which cannot be satisfied because one does not possess enough charm or money. Violence is then the only road left open.

Group sex and exchange of sexual partners make the problems of sexual frustration even worse, because one is unable to calm down and concentrate on one partner after previously having led such a chaotic sex-life. The problem can really turn serious when one needs help but finds that there is no one person who is willing to commit himself to the extent which one desires. Chaotic sexual habits can often result in a total loss of interest.

These days in western countries one hears feminists complaining about increasing sexual violence against women. Such complaints are, of course, justified, but should not be the provocative way in which modern women dress, in order to appear sexy, be criticized too, because this certainly contributes to the level of sexual crime? There are more cases of rape in summer than in winter.

Bathing naked is also no solution to 'civilized' human being's sexual complexes and fears. That is the conclusion which one draws when one observes naked men and women on the beaches who are too inhibited to talk to each other, although they would obviously like to. Beaches reserved for naked bathing are as quiet as a church. Some people go there in order to show off their beautiful bodies, but when one looks at them a little, one notices the ugliness of the human form, and that it cannot compete with the beauty of animals. The saying: Clothes make the man is not without reason.

Upon first seeing these naked bathers, we Africans wondered why our ancestors were labelled as primitives by their colonial masters, simply because they were running around half naked. Could these naked bathers be called primitive whites too?

Children automatically get caught up in these sexual exaggerations. I would not like to advise Africans, or other peoples of the third world, to look upon the way in which children are brought up in industrial countries as a model for themselves. Children in the latter have to get used to life with all its hardships at an early age. They are 'grown-up children'. They are expected to be able to cope with the problems which arise out of their parents' divorce. They learn at an early age of the worth of money, and worry about their future. The increasing number of children who are suffering from psychological disorders and the growing suicide rate of children are the result. In sexual matters they know everything. Even if their parents do not

enlighten them, they can buy pornographic magazines and books at every street corner.

Reflecting upon my younger days in Rwanda, where the sexual world was gradually unveiled to us, I conclude that gradual enlightenment is preferable and of far more benefit to children. My main criticism of this endless unmasking of sex is, however, the total decline of morality. Parents even sexually abuse their own children.

According to recent publications, experts are of the opinion that every fifth woman in the USA (that's 20%) has been sexually abused in her childhood, and that the perpetrator was in many cases the father or a close relative (Newsweek, April 1984). In West Germany, a little girl is raped every four minutes, and the perpetrator is, again, often the father or a close relative (Spiegel 16th of July 1984; Miter als Titer by Barbara Kavemann and Ingrid Lohstoter, Rowohlt publications 1984).

The figures in other industrial countries will be similar, and the reason why such cases often take such a long time to come to light is that the victim has often been threatened with punishment if she dares open her mouth. When the victims grow up they gather enough courage to open their mouths in public. Various organizations (such as the self-help group Wildwasser in West Berlin) have been formed as a result of such publications, and they have as their aim the protection of young victims of sexual assault by their parents, relatives, and other perpetrators of sexual violence.

One of the reasons why adults indulge in sex with children is the fact that they are afraid of being rejected by a normal sexual partner for not having satisfied him or her. Indeed, a society, in which one has to prove oneself in all things, bed included, can lead to a fear of failure in sex, and so to a fear of sex itself. That is why many men feel obliged to swallow potency pills, and many women feel obliged to behave in an overtly sexy manner.

My friend from Mali, who has had affairs with various European women, can testify to this, if what he says can be believed: "White women are almost all the same. You hardly have to touch them, and they start emitting sounds to demonstrate how sexy they're. But it's quite obvious that it's all put on. They're, in reality, frustrated sexually, and that's why they've to put on a show each time."

This acting is probably influenced to some extent by the western pornographic culture.

White women who become the girl friends of black men are, in the main, frustrated in one way or another. An analysis of their typical modes of behaviour will help us to understand this.

Most of the white women who are encountered in black pubs or discos are women who are on the periphery of their own society, and who have no chance of being accepted by men of their own race. Therefore, they try their luck with foreigners, including Africans.

Sometimes they are fat, having tried unsuccessfully many methods of losing weight. Sometimes they are unemployed and feel more at ease with poor Africans

than with rich members of their own race, or hope that marrying an African will result in a job in his country. Sometimes they are elderly women, whose chances of catching a white are severely reduced. There are also white women who have been sexually disappointed by white men, and who then turn to black men. Finally, in order to complete the list, we have to mention the small group of white women who meet black men by coincidence, and develop feelings of love for them, just as they would otherwise do with men of their own race.

Even if it is true that many of these women in the final group mentioned may be of a better character than many black women, mixed marriages remain controversial.

On the surface, there should be no objection to two people who love each other, marrying and living together. But as we know, many ideas, which are good in theory, are not so easy to apply in practice. That is so with marriages between white and black.

Marriages between Americans and Europeans of different colour are not so problematic because both would come from similar cultural backgrounds. A prospective marriage between an African and a European, or an African and an American, on the other hand, deserves serious consideration beforehand.

The survival chances of such a marriage are higher if the couple set up home in Europe, because the black partner would have already had a fair amount of contact with European culture at school. The couple would, therefore, be able to adapt to life in Europe more easily than to life in Africa, and life in a city would, anyway, be easier than otherwise, because cities are often quite cosmopolitan and anonymous. Problems remain - discrimination, uncertainty, homesickness, blaming one's partner for racism - but at least, as far as West Germany goes (and probably other industrial countries), one can say that marriages between Germans and foreigners are reasonably successful. The divorce rate of such marriages is even lower than the rate of German-German marriages.

Setting up home in Africa can also work, if the conditions are right. In some African countries where European influence is still considerable, marrying a white woman can be a good move: one can improve one's image, have a career, and have access to European facilities. One lives like a European.

In other countries, those who bring European marriage partners home with them receive no privileges. They have to live as the locals do, and if the European marriage partner cannot manage, that is his or her problem. European women, in particular, are affected. In Rwanda, special consideration used to be given to such women, and extra help used to be given to their husbands in order to make life more tolerable for their wives. That has all changed, partly owing to the influence of Rwandans who, during their period of study in Europe, were not treated particularly well.

It can happen that a Rwandan is sent with his white wife into the bush, where European comfort is absolutely unknown. Such wives have to eat as the locals do,

often getting diarrhoea. They have to walk as far as the locals do, up to twenty miles a day, and the white woman gets blisters. They have to fetch water as the locals do. They are ridiculed, because they are supposed to be superior as whites and because such work is normally left to the blacks. They feel the pinch of loneliness far more than in Europe, a problem compounded by a lack of knowledge of the local language and a consequent inability to communicate properly with the locals. Most Europeans are not a match for such difficult living conditions.

It is easier if the husband can get a good job in Kigali. But, even here, the Rwandan women will try to get rid of the white ones. They are jealous, and do not want to let the few intellectual men which the country possesses be wasted on white women.

This jealousy is actually justifiable, considering the fact that many black women do not find husbands because more black men marry white women than black women do white men. This applies especially to the middle and upper class, which is, in a way, a political problem. ("How can one be against the interests of France when one has France in his bed everyday?", my friends in France often argue when this topic is raised.) The statistics of 1987 (National Data Book, U.S. Department of Commerce) show that the number of American black men who marry white women is four times greater than the number of American black women who marry white men. (I could not find the data concerning the proportions in Africa because Africans, contrary to the Americans, find these statistics unnecessary) The Rwandan women at least find consolation in the fact that most of their countrymen who married white women have black concubines.

Can a white woman stand all this?

And the mentality? The woman belongs to the whole family, and if and when one finally gets rich, one has to be prepared for lots of visits from relatives. The wife has to welcome them all and play hostess, otherwise she is viewed by the whole family as arrogant and unworthy. This gets on the nerves of Europeans, who sooner or later need their peace. There is also friction between man and wife. He behaves like his fellow-countrymen and, instead of coming home straight away after work, he goes with the other men to a pub, leaving his wife, who has until now been accustomed to punctuality, sometimes waiting for him until two o'clock in the morning or later.

In view of these extremely harsh conditions, it is obvious that life for a European woman in Rwanda or in other African countries can be quite unpleasant. Very few European women have so far managed to stick such conditions in Rwanda, and those who have were mainly Russians who were not used to luxury at home anyway.

As long as they are still in Europe, many German women find this natural way of life very nice, but when they get to Africa, they see what it actually involves. Their African men do not divulge the truth to them either, preferring instead to glorify Africa, which actually appeals to people who are looking for an alternative way of life.

Such Africans, who spend their lives deceiving European women, can only be condemned. They do not further international understanding. Most of them are

people who came to Europe with a scholarship and, as did our friend from Rwanda, use it for pleasure instead of for study. At least, our friend had the strength in him to pack his bags and go home. Many of the others are not even honest enough to admit the truth, and blame their failure on a racist society. That cannot be true, because, if one really wants to, one normally achieves one's goals. Many do not want to admit their weaknesses, that they are poor, or that they live by exploiting white women. They maintain that their parents are rich, that they are the sons of tribal chiefs, that they are doctors of medicine or dentists who have studied in Germany; all this, and not even speaking very good German. When they are caught out and asked if they have not got a guilty conscience, they nearly always reply in the same fashion as did the Zairian student in Saarbrücken: "Africa is exploited, and the whites in Africa behave in a similar way, if not worse, towards our sisters."

As far as Rwanda is concerned, this accusation is justified, and, thus, criticism has to flow in both directions. White men and development workers in Rwanda, have, in general, similar difficulties with women to those which Rwandans have in Europe. The difference is that, whereas we have relatively more possibilities to form relationships with people from all levels of society, in Rwanda white men have to content themselves with prostitutes. The few intellectual Rwandan women that there are do not feel inclined to go with them and, at the other end of the scale, peasant women are very reserved towards all foreigners and speak no foreign languages. When these black whores notice that their friends have a lot of money, they try their best to get proposed to. The marriage works out fine as long as the couple remains in Africa. Things get more complicated when they go to Europe.

Only then do the black women realize the truth about their husbands. They see that their husband is not the king he was in Africa, with his servants and all. In Europe, his wife has to do all the work herself. This change of conditions causes her enormous difficulties at the beginning. Getting used to the German mentality is also a problem. She might also have problems with her parents-in-law, who do not fully accept her. In the land of application forms and bureaucracy, how should this woman, who can neither read nor write, and whose knowledge of French hardly goes beyond words like moi (I) and bon (good), find her way around? She cannot even read the numbers on the buses.

The black woman certainly did not know about these problems while she was in Africa, and, of course, her husband, who was anxious to play the king, had not informed her. Now, she stands all alone. Some of these women go overboard and land in psychiatric clinics. Others find their European husbands deliberately pushing the marriage onto the rocks. One meets African women who have hardly been a year in Germany but are already talking of divorce.

Violence often plays a part in such marriages too. In the summer of 1983, I heard of a German who had mutilated his Kenyan wife about her shoulder with a fork, simply because she had been talking to an African, her 'African brother', as she referred to him. If an African man were to do such a thing to his German wife, one

would read all about it the next day in the headlines of the BILD (the most popular newspaper in Germany): BARBARIC: NEGRO MUTILATES HIS GERMAN WIFE WITH A FORK:

i. Able to read but still illiterate

Such national popular newspapers are to be found everywhere in the West, and sales figures are always high. In France it is France Soir, in England The Daily Express and in Quebec (Canada) Le Journal de Montreal. They are all equivalent to the Bild in Germany, or to the B.Z. in Berlin.

I have often wondered why such newspapers are so popular. The answer is: these newspapers are full of articles which appeal to the average man on the street, who comes home tired from work, and who has no time or energy for more worldly pursuits such as politics. The recipe for success in the newspaper world is to fill the pages with news about well-known personalities, women and sex, sport, crime, the West's superiority over the East, suicide, and about catastrophic events (weather, aeroplane accidents, earthquakes etc.). These are the things the common-or-garden man desires to be informed of.

The interesting thing about these papers, especially for newly arrived foreigners who still have language difficulties, is the way in which information is presented: simple and to the point. One does not have to bother very much about thinking. I can still remember that the first newspaper I got hold of in Germany was also the Bild. It seemed to me easier to read than other daily newspapers.

I once took it with me into the cafeteria at the Free University mensa and bumped into one of my German friends, a law student whom I had got to know in the university library. Seeing that I was carrying a copy of the Bild he said with vexation: "Are you out of your mind? Do you really read such newspapers? I don't want to have any relations with you."

That was three years after my arrival in Germany. It can in fact take that long to become interested in political life there. Most foreigners, including those who have spent time in East Bloc countries, know only the Bild, until somebody makes them aware that one has to read other newspapers to gain an objective picture.

My German friend's criticism woke me up from my 24-year-long sleep, and I started to become interested in politics. In the following months I found out who the Shah was. I could agree or disagree with Oskari. I could decide on the merits of candidates from the CDU and the SPD, a thing which I could not do at the studienkolleg. I could draw comparisons between the world of the communists and that of the capitalists. I realized how one can get a distorted picture of the world through ignorance. I also realized that politics stands at the centre of everything.

My Sudanese friend in England used to like reading the Daily Express too. No wonder! He was fresh from Africa where such variety in the newspaper landscape

does not exist. I told him that he would do well to read other newspapers in order to get a more balanced view of things.

In this way, we could often discuss politics. We were also able to engage a white South African woman, who was living on the same corridor as us while she was busy with her doctorate, in conversation about South African politics. We asked her if she thought it was bad that there was no racial segregation in England, if she thought it was bad to have to live by the same corridor as blacks and if she would mention this to South Africans when she was back home, and we asked her why the whites in South Africa are so arrogant and why they view themselves as superior.

The woman felt very uncomfortable and she was visibly nervous, but was skilful at manoeuvring herself out of these tight-corners. Her answers were the same old answers South African politicians give: “What the press in western Europe writes is all rubbish. It’s only the propaganda of other whites who are envious of us. We get on very well with the blacks, and they’re far better off than the blacks in the USA or in other African Countries.”

After that, she did not want to be persuaded into political discussions. In fact, she avoided us completely and we left her alone.

j. Overconsumption of drugs, cigarettes, tablets and tobacco

I stayed five weeks altogether in the British Isles and finished off with a week at various museums in London. I was pleased with my visit to England, although I was already dreaming of my next port of call by the time I came to leave: Holland.

I loved the land of the Dutch very much. People there are uncomplicated and very friendly, and in spite of overpopulation (13 million inhabitants), one does not really notice the masses around one. The houses are built simply, and the fact that the Dutch are not paranoid about security (chains on the door, curtains covering the windows etc.) shows that they do not live a life of perpetual fear. They do not roar along the roads in their cars, as is the case in Germany, and almost everybody rides a bike anyway, and pedestrians are much respected. It is similar to Denmark in this respect.

After visiting Holland, I knew which country would serve in many respects as a model for Rwanda. It is a fact that life in Africa would be much more pleasant if its leaders were as modest and considerate as are the Dutch.

In Utrecht I was given a warm welcome at the research institute. I was able not only to learn about the methods but also to take part actively in the research itself, since I had been given certain tasks to complete during these two weeks. I got more out of my time here than I did at any of the other institutes which I had visited, even though I did not produce any spectacular results.

I made use of the two weeks in Holland to get to know the whole of the country. I had gone there by car and covered every corner of the land.

Teenagers in the West with drug problems. Photo: Ullstein

My general impression of Holland would have been favourable, had I not been in Groningen. I realized there that Holland had not achieved its reputation as the centre of the drug scene in Europe for nothing. I shall never forget the shock I got when I saw a corpse on the floor of a toilet in a Groningen pub, skin and bone, and the deadly needle still stuck in its arm.

That was one of the numerous victims of drug abuse in western Europe. In 1984, the number of drug addicts in Germany was estimated at 60,000, and are still on the increase. (3)Those who have seen the film *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (We the children of Bahnhof Zoo) know how bad this illness is. I had never taken the drug problem so seriously, but now I would oppose anybody who tried to introduce such things into Rwanda.

In spite of warnings from the health-authorities, nicotine consumption in the industrial countries is still very high, due to addiction to it.

There are stories about drugs in some African countries. They are probably unconcentrated natural drugs, which are far less dangerous than those which are taken in Europe. One still has to oppose the consumption of drugs, however, and lend one's support to politicians such as the Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, who are against the use of drugs in their countries. In 1976, our president was obliged to speak sternly to foreign lecturers at the university of Butare because they were introducing the consumption of drugs there. To regard the consumption of drugs, in Africa, as an element of progress, would be yet another example of misguided emulation.

If one traces the motives for this ever-increasing use of drugs in the West, one comes back to the same reasons as one does in the case of alcoholism, smoking, and

pill consumption. As regards the consumption of cigarettes and tobacco, many foreigners from the Third World are disturbed at hardly being able to find a pub in western Europe which is not full of clouds of choking smoke. People simply smoke too much

This phenomenon of self-narcotization by any means possible is also connected to overindustrialization.

k. Overindustrialization and damage to the environment

Since ever-increasing technology does not necessarily mean more happiness, since ever-increasing technology may even mean more anxiety for humanity and since ever-increasing technology generates disturbances to mankind, the people in the industrial world, try to create happiness and to suppress their problems, in the ways mentioned.

Technology does not provide the right answer, neither do politicians, who tell people that more technology and more economic growth are the solution to their psycho-social problems (mainly present in industrial societies).

Mechanization has made life easier in many ways. Cars, aeroplanes, telephones, radios, televisions have all brought people nearer to each other. One has to acknowledge that such inventions have been of great service to humanity. Also, the discovery of various medicaments for use in combatting dangerous epidemics such as the plague, tuberculosis and smallpox has been a relief to mankind. On the other hand, one could assert that industrial countries now have too much, and often superfluous, technology, and that they have become strongly dependent on it and tend to see it as the solution to all human problems.

The main problems of the populations of industrial societies cannot be solved by technology: stress, loneliness, depression, lack of orientation, sexual frustration, alcoholism, drug addiction, greed, oversmoking, overeating and overambition.

Machines can reduce stress by taking over the workload, but in practice, it is often the other way around: since robots replace humans the competition for the few remaining jobs intensifies. It would not be right, either, for robots to relieve people completely of work because people need work, not only as a means of survival but also as a means of occupation and self-realization.

An unemployed person in an industrial society, even though he might receive enough unemployment benefit, gets frustrated very quickly because he feels superfluous, useless, ridiculed and despised by society. Pensioners in Europe who cannot occupy themselves (and that means most of them) get bored, and when they have had enough of television, they sit at their window looking out at the outside world. Their main occupation is to try and find out what the neighbours are doing. Obviously, a lack of something to do can lead to silly thoughts.

The problem of loneliness, also, cannot be solved by more technology. Old ladies

living alone, who are in dire need of human contact and who comfort themselves with a dog and who live in permanent fear of attack and of dying alone, cannot remove their anxiety through the TV programmes which are ever-increasing in number and constantly improved. Potential suicide cases cannot be saved by the ever-increasing display of consumer articles. We have already seen how the suicide rate in consumer societies is higher than in the less industrial ones. Neither can a person in search of real love be content with faster cars.

A person suffering from depression or lack of motivation can also not be revitalized through anti-depression tablets. They might help in the short term, only to lead to a deterioration of the situation in the long one. Potency medicines or learning new sexual practices cannot help people with their problems of impotency. Artificial sexual organs and life-size blow-up dolls cannot be an appropriate substitute for a human partner.

New arrivals in the western world from the third world or from the East Bloc, where such articles are not available, wonder in amazement if there are actually people who buy such things. It is perverse, but there are actually people who do buy them, otherwise this industry would have gone bankrupt a long time ago. It even appears that this industry is thriving, but the question still remains, whether these people really become satisfied or rather even more frustrated?

Pills are available against the alcohol habit, against smoking and drugs. Do these pills really break the dependency or do they actually destroy the body even more? Tablets for stemming one's appetite are also no solution to the 'civilized' man's overeating problems. Obesity problems increase hand in hand with using machines: there is a machine for almost everything, supposedly to relieve its master. There are, for instance, machines to cut bread, to slice onions, to shave, to grind coffee beans, to mix milk, to switch the television on and off, etc. The question arises as to the need of such machines. The 'civilized' human being hardly needs to move and so cannot help but put on weight.

Eating sweets leads to fatness, as well as to bad teeth. The effectiveness of the many tooth-pastes, which the adverts praise so much, is limited, and the dentist laughs all the way to the bank. Sedatives do not help against the stress caused by permanent strivings for more and better, and the dissatisfaction is made more acute by sophisticated advertising.

The overmechanization of the industrial countries has a further disadvantage: damage to the environment.

Damage to the earth is caused by the use of artificial manures which, in a way, is unreasonable in that one produces more than what one actually needs, with the result that the excess has to be destroyed or kept in warehouses at immense cost.

Car-exhaust emission and industrial smoke lead to air pollution, and this, in turn, leads to damage to the forests and to respiratorial illnesses. In veterinary medicine, air pollution is apparent in the increase of lung diseases, mainly cancer, and mainly in small dogs, whose heads are at about the same level as exhaust pipes. Doctors

complain about the increase of the respiratorial illness known in Germany as Pseudo-Krupp, especially in small children in highly industrial areas.

Water is, likewise, contaminated with all kinds of oil products and chemical waste. Waterbirds and fish are dying. Another danger lies in nuclear power stations. The problem of disposal of radioactive waste has never been solved, although nuclear power stations have been in existence for a long time. The disposal of old medicine too, is, not always simple.

Hidden behind luxurious life in the industrial countries: a lot of highly dangerous waste. Photo: Landesbildstelle Berlin.

Environmental problems were, at first, not taken seriously. In Germany, one is indebted to the Greens for their managing to make citizens aware of this imminent problem in spite of massive resistance from certain quarters. Since the Greens have been in Bundestag (West German Parliament), one hears words like acid rain, lead-free petrol, and catalysator. But, the measures which the government has suggested are still insufficient to prevent the oncoming environmental catastrophe.

One of the consequences of air-pollution by industrial and car-exhaust fumes is the dying of forests.

2. The West - also a paradise for East Bloc citizens?

When I came back to Berlin from Holland, I had enough practical experience to finish off my doctorate. In the summer of 1980, I had completed my practical research with the help of my professor and my laboratory colleagues. I had planned to take part in a tropical veterinary medicine seminar the next year and, following that, to return home.

‘ However, did not want to go home without having seen socialist countries, in order to be able to form my own opinions about the life of the people there, since I had seen that the information in the western press about the socialist countries was often of a propagandistic nature. In the summer of 1980 I went with a fellow-countryman for eight weeks by car to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. I was also in Moscow for a week in 1983 and in 1987, and have visited East Berlin now and again.

It was possible to spend a wonderful holiday in Poland. As a tourist, one could do almost anything without having to dip too deeply into one's purse. Everything was cheap. Food and drink in the interhotels were excellent, and one paid three marks in Poland for things which would otherwise cost thirty marks in the West. There are two explanations for this: the prices in the East Bloc countries are low because the people there earn less, and, as a tourist, one can multiply one's money by changing on the black market. At that time in Poland the black exchange rate was five times the official one.

Finding somebody to change with was not difficult. The locals could tell straight away who was a foreigner. One was continually asked if one had dollars or deutschmarks to exchange. One kept on seeing people disappearing for a while around a corner and then walking off separately. It was not difficult to guess what they had been doing: they had been busy trading with currency.

We had been warned to be extremely careful with blackmarketing: some of the operators might be state security officers, others might give counterfeit money or simply run off with the money they took. That would all have been very unpleasant because it would have been impossible to prosecute such an operator, as the whole thing was illegal. In Warsaw and in Krakau we met people who were crying because all their money had been stolen.

We were a bit more cunning, because we had been warned in time. We did not change all our money at once, but little by little, according to our needs. We also chose the people we dealt with carefully and only dealt with people who did not arouse suspicion, for example with students. First of all, we checked to see whether the money they gave us was genuine. We also met some African students who organized the exchanging for us. They were also good partners for an informative conversation about life in Poland and in the East Bloc in general.

They complained about the lazy, deceitful and corrupt Poles, and praised the efficient Germans, who had done so much for their country since the war. They were

envious of us, and felt inferior to us, simply because we were living in the West. That reminded us of the respect which Africans in Africa have for the whites, simply because the whites have certain machines which Africans do not have.

“You’re in clover”, they told us, “you can easily buy a car, a good hifi-set and nice records. You need neither sleep in overcrowded rooms nor clean the students’ hostel yourself, and if you do a dirty job, in a factory for instance, you get paid very well for it. We can only study and later go home just as poor as we came. Anyway, one isn’t allowed to take money out of the country here. Those who’ve studied in the West, on the other hand, are rich when they go home, and can use their savings to start some-thing up straight away. You’re lucky!”

We tried to explain to them that we still had certain problems in the West, among others the hardest conditions of study, with a higher quota of failure than in the East, in spite of the relative affluence. But, just as we had been unable to believe at grammar-school that there are whites who are sad and unhappy, we were unable to make clear to these students what life is really like in the capitalist world. In any case, we later found out that most of the colleagues of these students, who broke off their studies in the East to study in the West because of dissatisfaction with the socialist system, could not make anything out of it. They could not even complete their studies!

It was not only the African students who were full of adulation for the West but also the Poles themselves, and, if anything, with even more enthusiasm. The Poles were not just after western money but also after western products. For them, the West did not mean freedom, of which one hears so much in the West, but material consumer goods. One might conclude that, if they had more of these than there are in the West, they would only sing about Karl Marx and Lenin and forget all about the West and its freedom.

In order to improve their image, the Poles tried all the time to get their hands on pp ducts; from the West, regardless of their quality. They tried, for example, to imitate western fashions of dress. At that time, American jeans and cigarettes were manufactured in Poland under licence, and everybody wanted to wear jeans and to be seen in public with a Marlboro or some similar cigarette between his fingers. They normally had to make do with Polish cigarettes at home, since western cigarettes were prohibitively expensive. One was often approached by individuals offering to buy the clothes which one was wearing. Women could be seduced with cosmetics and sweets from the West, and it goes without saying that whoever had a fast car was king.

There were similarities between the Poles and the citizens of other East Bloc countries. This became obvious from our conversations with young people who had come from the USSR and the GDR and were staying in the same students’ hostel as us.

It was conspicuous how isolated the Sowjets we met were from the rest of the world. For many of these young people, a holiday in Poland was a very special

event: they saw black people for the first time in their lives. When one of them saw us, he hurried back to his fellow-countrymen to report that he had discovered something unusual, and we suddenly found ourselves surrounded by twenty or thirty smiling Sowjets who scrutinized us with untiring curiosity. They even wanted to touch us to see if we were genuine.

We would have been angry with them if we had not thought back to the first time that we saw whites. That was still in our childhood, and we observed them from a distance with tears in our eyes because we were frightened. Adults would exploit this fear of the whites in order to exercise control over the children by saying: "Stop crying, or else Ntarumanga will come!" Ntarumanga was the name of a white being which devoured children and sold their blood. I have also heard that the Germans say similar things, like "The black man is coming!", in order to stop their children crying.

In October, 1983, when I was in Moscow, I went to Red Square and met many citizens from all over the Soviet Union. They, too, were in Moscow for the first time, and when they saw me and my African friends who were living there, they reacted in a similar way to the young Soviet tourists in Poland. Many people in the Soviet Union living away from Moscow have never seen the mod cons which are part of day-to-day life in the West. They were just as curious and interested in western products as are the citizens of Rwanda and other African countries.

Africans studying in the USSR as well as businessmen from the West find this a favourable situation. There are many black visitors to Berlin in the months of February, March, July, August and September, and the Bahnhof Zoo looks like the main bus station in Kigali or somewhere else in Afrika. Africans living in Berlin are used to bumping into people on the street, or in the department store BILKA, speaking their native language. These are all African students attending universities in the USSR, and who are in Berlin, Rome, London during their holidays on shopping expeditions. These acquisitions are then sold to citizens in the USSR. African diplomats in East Bloc countries participate in such activities to an even greater degree. 'HOW THE SOVIETS CREATE AFRICAN CAPITALISTS' was the head of an article in *New Africa* (October 1987), which reported on the business activities of the African students and in which the author found it a pity that these students will become more capitalist than their fellow-countrymen in the West. I also had this impression.

The Soviets are interested in musical instruments, but even more so in jeans. One can do good business with jeans, because a pair costing 30 deutschmarks in the West is worth between 150 and 200 deutschmarks in the USSR. The number of pairs of jeans which students can take with them is limited, however, but there are various tricks which one can employ, for instance wearing two or three pairs of jeans at one time. People with an eye for business profit handsomely. Montana and Levis jeans are most in demand because jeans increase in value the more American the name sounds, even if the quality of such an article is, in fact, not so good.

Young people from the GDR, whom we met in students' hostels in Krakau, were also after western goods. They listened attentively as we talked about life in West Berlin, and they dreamed of being able to walk, at least once in their lives, down Kurfurstendamm (the main street in West Berlin) and windowshop there. One could see that they regretted that they had not been born in West Germany.

Despite the fact that the standard of living in the GDR has increased remarkably (the GDR leads among eastern countries and, in terms of the standard of living of an average citizen, even surpasses that in some western countries such as, for instance, Great Britain) and that tourist exchange between the two German countries has increased (over 1 million East Germans, young people included, could visit the West in 1987), many in the GDR still want to emigrate to the West.

The desire to live in the West, which is generally observed in the East, is, for example, illustrated by the fact that many women want to marry foreigners, in order to leave their present 'hell' and enter the paradise' in the West. Some German women in the West complain that Rwandan men are reluctant to marry German women, but in the USSR at least half of our students end up marrying Sowjets. Back home in Rwanda people are starting to ask what kind of special powers these Sowjet women exercise over Rwandans.

In their defence, the men say that they could not stand it the whole time without a woman, and journeys home were not permitted very often. The girl friends, dreaming of a better life abroad, do everything to stay with their boy friends and often get pregnant to force the marriage.

Foreign students, however, do not only marry because of the children but sometimes out of pity. Women in the Soviet Union, as elsewhere in the world, are looked upon as whores if they are with foreigners. They are discriminated against, rejected by Sowjet men, and if they are students, run the risk of failing their examinations. Only by marrying foreigners can they circumvent these difficulties. The authorities smile upon such mixed marriages, because it means an increase in the number of Sowjet ambassadors' in the whole world. About half a million Third World students are at Sowjet universities. The Sowjet authorities are sometimes able to force a marriage indirectly: if one has had a Sowjet girl friend for a number of years, one cannot just leave her in the lurch, as is the habit in the West, otherwise one might not receive one's university leaving certificate.

Women in the GDR, Hungary and Poland also try to get out of the socialist world by means of marriage. At least half of the African students in the GDR have got married or deposited children there, and many Africans take Polish or Hungarian wives back home with them. It is also a well-known fact that frustrated foreign males in West Berlin go across to East Berlin where their chances are considerably better, because East German women are eager for as much contact with the West as possible.

In this respect, the West is a centre of attraction and everybody wants to go there. That is why there are so many applications in the East Bloc countries to emigrate to

the West. Ex-East Bloc citizens aggravate this situation. Many of them, after working hard and saving for a long time, buy themselves luxury articles, an old Mercedes car for instance, and then visit their countries of origin again in order to show their former fellow-countrymen what progress they have made in such a short period of time. Hardly a week after they have returned to their newly-made homes in the West, these same people will then start complaining again about the harshness of life in the western world.

The western press, especially the West German one, likes to report about the Berlin Wall and about the fugitives from the East, in order to show that the West is better than the East in every way. They do not bother to report about the fugitives who, of their own accord, go back to the East after having lived in the West a while. The press keeps silent about those who are stuck in the West because they dare not go back, and who develop a psychosis because they are disappointed about what they have found.

Happiness, as the case of Ursula showed clearly enough, depends not only upon consumer goods but also upon the satisfaction of the soul. It is understandable that one might feel unhappy after having left friends and family and finding it hard to make new friends. It is also understandable when one realizes that one is not welcome. GDR fugitives in West Germany are often disliked because they receive certain privileges which the West Germans do not. One cannot, for example, understand why they have better chances in finding a job, place of apprenticeship or flat. The reason for all this is simple: propaganda.

The flow of refugees from eastern to western Europe should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the West Europeans themselves are also searching for a better world. Some sell all their possessions and go to India, in order to seek happiness in meditation and Yoga. The power of religious sects is growing all the time. Some people flew to the USA searching for the right path with Bhagwan (after problems with the American government he returned to his country, India), after having been disappointed in the Christian church. Some people hope for a more purposeful life in developing countries as development workers.

Many people are unhappy with the state of affairs in Europe, and look towards the Americans for guidance. American disco music has distracted the younger generation of Germans from their original folklore. If jogging or stretching is all the rage in America, it is imitated in western Europe. If there are lots of TV programmes in America which show nothing but advertising and sex all day long, these, too, have to be imitated in western Europe. For very many West Germans, life in West Germany is not what the Africans and many people from the East imagine it to be. They emigrate to Australia, Canada or New Zealand. One also runs into Americans everywhere. It seems that the whole world is on the move in search of a paradise on earth! This trend, however, is most pronounced among Africans, of all people.

3. East Bloc politics - an alternative to West Bloc politics?

“Communism is the basic evil on earth”, we heard in school and in the churches in Rwanda. One comes to believe that capitalism is, therefore, the ideal system. Only after a while in the West does one notice the amount of deceit there, and start to wonder if that what one has heard about communism was not rubbish. An alternative to capitalism could, perhaps, be socialism.

In the following pages, we shall examine, whether this form of government can avoid the problems found in the West and, as a result, present itself as a model for African countries.

My comparison of the two systems is based on my experiences in the respective countries, my conversations with African students there and ex-residents (there are so many in West Berlin) and on several books which I have read.

I often refer to the two books from Fischer-Ruge *Alltag in Peking = Everyday life in Peking* (6) and *Alltag in Moskau = Everyday life in Moscow*(7), because I find them credible.

The descriptions of this American woman, the former member of US-President Johnson's staff, correspond to what I once anticipated and later found out and to what many other unbiased visitors from the West and from Africa have related. Well-known German journalists such as Werner Hofer and Fritz Pleitgen, who are well-informed about these countries, do confirm that Fischer-Ruge stayed as near to reality as possible in her report. Both books became bestsellers, in English- as well as in German-speaking countries.

In my comparison of the two Worlds, I was at first interested in knowing whether the socialist education creates a society more tolerant towards foreigners.

a. Hostility to foreigners

As a foreigner in the West, one receives more help and cooperation from the Left. If one is harassed or attacked on the street one is lucky if somebody with leftist sympathies is around, because such a person is more liable to stick up for a foreigner. If a foreigner is involved in a car accident, there is always the risk that, if arrogant people, who believe in the superiority of their race, were driving behind, they will deliberately make a false statement against the foreigner.

That is the case in West Germany, though there are some foreigners who report about nice experiences in really conservative regions, such as Bavaria.

If these findings are transferred to the East Bloc, one has to come to the conclusion that the foreigner is treated better in the East.

The East Bloc countries can really shout about the bad treatment of foreignworkers in capitalist countries, because they have a good conscience as far as the matter is concerned. They do not turn against foreign-workers simply because

they have none at all or, in some cases, only a very few. But Third World students in the East Bloc have to put up with the same, if not worse, problems of racism than their fellow-countrymen in the West.

During my journey through the East Bloc countries I came across hostility towards foreigners only in Poland. At a dance, a Pole tried to provoke me into a fight by pushing me all the time, and in another pub, somebody tried to trip me up. My African friends in Poland told me to be especially wary of Polish men because they were extremely jealous.

These friends of mine were, at that time, also putting up a visitor from Senegal who was studying in Rumania. He told us that racism in Romania too was bad, and that the Bulgarians were even more brutal. In Bulgaria, a black person would not dare to walk along the street alone at night. If all what I heard is to be believed, African students in Hungary seem to have the easiest time of it.

I myself was surprised to notice how hospitable the Hungarians were. I asked two young Hungarians where the House of Parliament was and they asked me to come with them. They bought me a ticket for the underground and we all went there together. After showing me the building, they departed quickly because they were actually on their way to the cinema. My Rwandan companion also witnessed the Hungarian hospitality.

He had a friend in a small town about 120 miles away from Budapest, and he went to visit him. He arrived in the evening, but, unfortunately, his friend was not there and he was unable to communicate with his friend's family. He went to the tourist office to try to get a room in a hotel. All rooms were occupied. But my countryman did not have to sleep outside. The functionary in the tourist-office took him home with him, fed him and put him up for the night. The next morning he continued his journey, and it had not cost him a single penny.

African students in the Soviet Union are altogether not happy with Soviet hospitality. When they talk about the Soviet Union, it does not take long to detect their pent-up hatred of the Soviets, and many vow to take revenge when they return home.

We also hear about riots against foreigners in China. In 1980, two African students were murdered in Shanghai just because they had talked to two Chinese women. The government immediately evacuated the other African students there to other cities. In any case, all foreigners have to be careful as far as sexual partners are concerned, for Chinese in China are not allowed to marry foreigners .(6)

As far as general discrimination against Africans is concerned, it appears to be more pronounced, the less contact the people have with Africans, as is the case with China and the greater part of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the more that people know about each other, the closer they draw together and the slighter the prejudices become.

The populations of countries which did not have colonies in Africa, such as the socialist countries, are at the same stage as the colonial masters were when they first

came to Africa: “The blacks are primitive monkeys which have to be civilized”. For many Sowjets, all African students are primitive monkeys which have been brought to the Soviet Union in order to be dressed and trained to be human beings.

By the way, my Rwandan friend in Kiev told me about the following incident in a bus: “It happened during rush-hour, and the bus was absolutely full. Three Africans were occupying part of a long seat. When the passengers at the back told those in the front to sit down so that the air could circulate better, voices were to be heard saying that they didn’t want to get dirty next to these monkeys. The Africans were really angry, cursed and said that the communists were very primitive. The word communist was obviously the Achilles’ heel of the Soviets since they want to be regarded as one of the best peoples on earth. Most passengers criticized those who had insulted the Africans, and so immediately took up the places which were free next to them. “

“Such incidents are commonplace in the Soviet Union”, my friend continued, “and the best policy is often to react sarcastically, in order to show them that one knows a little bit more about the world. Thus, upon being told that people in Africa live in trees and not in houses, Africans often reply that it’s true and that the Soviet ambassador has an extra large tree because he’s a high-up functionary. “

Such insults as monkey are not to be heard so very much in the West, but they may crop up. Statements like wogs go home and the like are, for example, quite common in some parts of Great Britain.

White people in both the East and the West call the Africans monkeys because they cannot cope with modern life. But African students in the Soviet Union have the opportunity now and again to take a rise out of the citizens of this world power because most of them have no idea how to operate modern gadgets.

I myself witnessed an incident of this kind at Moscow airport. We had just left the aeroplane and were waiting for our luggage in the waiting-room. But there were no benches to sit on. We Africans stood the whole time and the Soviets sat on the conveyer-belt. It took about three quarters of an hour until the luggage came. When the conveyer-belt started to move, the Sowjets were scared out of their wits, jumped up quickly and ran off as if possessed. It was, apparently, the first time that they had been in an aeroplane or seen such artifacts as those at the airport.

This showed me how unfair it is to regard all communists in the world as dangerous, as the West does. These people were actually harmless, and even if some of them did treat foreigners roughly, it was simply because they had a distorted picture of the world.

“If one gets to know them better, they’re even nicer and more hospitable than the Rwandans”, my Rwandan friends in the Soviet Union assured me, “and they’re not ashamed of drinking out of the same bottle as a black or sharing a cigarette with a black, as are the whites in the West.”

The importance of human contacts is also illustrated by the fact that the citizens of Moscow, who have more contact with foreigners, behave differently towards them than do the other Soviet citizens. The inhabitants of large cities in the West can

also get on better with foreigners, because they have more to do with them than villagers who might never even have spoken to foreigners. Finally, the younger generation, used to travelling round the world, sees things in a different light from their parents, many of whom have never left their home towns.

Access to better information would assist in the dismantling of prejudices. False or one-sided information, on the other hand, leads only to more arrogance on the part of the rich northerners towards the poorer southerners. If one were, for example, to ask the average German what he knows about politicians in Africa, he would probably reply: ‘ All politicians in Africa are corrupt criminals like Idi Amin and Bokassa. ‘

This attitude has been shaped by continual and unnecessary articles in the western press about these two politicians, principally aimed at ridiculing Africans. The fact that both politicians came to power with the help of the West is not mentioned. Idi Amin was the darling son of the English and was supposed to replace the socialist Obote. Bokassa, a French citizen who returned to his home country France after losing power, was at the service of his boss and friend, French ex-president Giscard d’ Estaing. The affair of the diamonds, which Bokassa gave him eventually led to the French president’ s downfall.

Good presidents, such as Nyerere, who has been awarded international prizes, seldom receive mention. In 1982, he was awarded a prize in New Delhi for his fight to improve the living conditions of people in the Third World. In September 1983, he became the second African to receive a prize from the Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees. If it had been Lech Walesa, not only television and radio but also the resources of the entire press would have been mobilized in order to achieve maximum publicity, just because he is against the communists.

Despite its poverty, Nyerere shared what his country had with refugees who had fled to him in trust. At the prize-awarding ceremony, he said that there was only one of Tanzania’ s eight neighbouring countries which had not sent refugees to him. He had refugees from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Malawi and Zaire.

Everybody was treated well, and I am of the opinion that many a German Home Secretary would have done well to have done practicals at the side of this man who has received international recognition for his services to humanity. They might learn how to go around with refugees.

Africans are not happy, either, about pictures on European television of famine in Africa. A Rwandan friend of mine in Vienna (he had been in Europe just seven months) said: “ It’ s no wonder that every European thinks that the Africans are here to escape starvation and that they’ d be grateful to the Europeans for saving them. “

Europeans should, at last, realize that not all Africa is starving, and that starvation anyway, as we shall see later, is the result of a bad development policy on the part of the Europeans. Europeans should actually feel ashamed of what their politicians are doing in Africa.

Africans also get angry about the picture of Africa portrayed in newspapers, films and television. The cameramen search out the most deprived part of a country and present it in Europe as being typical of that country. The whites would not be very pleased if Europe was presented in Africa as the continent of the boozers, tramps, whores, male prostitutes and drug addicts, all of whom are to be seen at west European railway stations. But the unsatisfied strata of western society have to be consoled by being informed that there are people worse off than they are.

This strategy is also pursued in the East Bloc. On the one hand, East Bloc politicians try to win over African students who are studying there by means of political education, and on the other hand, they make African countries out to be worse than they really are, in order to dampen their own people's discontent with material shortcomings.

Another thing which adds fuel to the hatred of foreigners is the fact that the populations of industrial countries, regardless of whether they are in the East or in the West, believe that foreigners in their country live from social hand-outs which keeps the indigenous population poorer.

If people read about something else other than sex, murder, football, earthquakes and the like, or communist propaganda in the East, -in other words, if they were not illiterate even though they can read and write, they would know more about international politics. They would know that so-called development aid serves, first and foremost, the industrial countries, and that Third World countries that have reached a certain stage of awareness would be prepared to end all economic connections. 1973, the year of the oil shock, showed for the very first time how poor the rich countries really are. Without raw materials, the willingness in the West to work hard is of no avail.

b. Stress

Concerning Chinese industry

When I saw the expression of frustration on his face (an impatient western diplomat at a bank in Peking), I remembered how I had often felt just the same. But meanwhile, I knew that one could not do anything to make the Chinese, who worked slowly but continually, hurry. Whenever I showed irritation in a shop because the shop-keeper seemed to move in slow motion, she showed no reaction at all and continued without any haste. Thus, I learnt from experience that patience was the only solution. Fischer-Ruge (6)

Driving from Hungary back into Austria, we noticed straight away that we were going from one system to another: more luxury, but at the same time, more hectic and unfriendliness. The women in the tourist centre in Vienna were dressed more fashionably and looked very smart, but they were not anywhere as well-balanced and easy-going as their counterparts in Budapest. People in the socialist countries did not drive as fast as they did in the West, either.

One must admit that capitalism is a good system as far as production goes. One sees that the people in the East work less than the people in the West. And even those doing conveyor-belt work in the East work less, because the conveyor-belt moves more slowly. In offices and institutions belonging to the public sector in the West, less work is done than in the private sector. It is also necessary to distinguish between humane professions, such as that of the social worker, where relationships between the colleagues are usually amicable, and professions, like that of the technician, where the output is the only consideration.

Those people who are not forced to live and to work in such hectic conditions can still find room for love, friendliness, pity, time to listen, humour and imagination. These human qualities are more apparent in the Third World and in the eastern countries than in the western ones. It is, however, still necessary to provide for basic food requirements and other basic needs. On the whole these needs have still not been satisfied in developing countries and those in the East Bloc.

Many people in the West joke about socialists' standing in queues waiting to buy things which are in short supply, but is not the joke really on these people who sacrifice their lives to producing things which are all too often to be destroyed?

The farmers of the EC-countries work themselves to death, contaminating the earth with dangerous artificial fertilizers, so as to produce large quantities of food-stuffs. They succeed, too, but the excess production has to be stored in warehouses at a cost of millions of pounds (as has already been mentioned), and, worse still, sometimes even has to be destroyed. A double loss: the production and the destruction costs. Should one congratulate these people who cause huge amounts of food-stuffs to be destroyed and at such a cost too, knowing full well that other humans in the Third World are starving to death for reasons beyond their control?

Even the technicians have no reason to feel proud, since they intentionally produce machines which easily break down, so as to keep the mass production-economy going. This is the way the valuable raw materials of the earth are wasted. If this squandering form of society suddenly spreads all over the earth, there will soon be no natural resources at all. Most European countries are, indeed, fine examples for showing that raw materials can really be exhausted. Forests are being cut down in Africa so that people in the West may get enough advertisements in their letter-boxes, which go straight into the rubbish bin without even being read.

The starving millions do not see eye to eye with this throw-away society. Bottles, furniture, manufactures of every kind are simply ditched!

Underproduction is just as bad. If basic needs cannot be provided for, because of

a lack of basic products, destabilizing criminality can all too easily be the result of the predicament in which the people find themselves, leading to corruption, as we noticed during our visit to Poland. That is why I believe in a pragmatic economic form as an ideal system. The capitalist believes that people can be satisfied only by consumer articles, and the socialist believes that people are basically good and act out of charity. Both are wrong. Money does not bring happiness. The soul too has to be satisfied. Those politicians who in public seem to be rough, such as Ronald Reagan, Helmut Schmidt and Margaret Thatcher, are, in reality, not so; they, too, are emotional and sometimes cry back-stage. I would like to bet that every one of them has said at some time or other: "To hell with this elbow society!" On the other hand, one must concede, as did Andropov and Gorbachev (Perestroika), that a certain amount of material incentive would allow production to increase, without turning human beings into slaves of consumption.

I find such a mixed system, in which both the elements of socialism and capitalism are present, as is being attempted in countries such as Hungary, Yugoslavia and Sweden, the most realistic. In any case money must not be allowed to accumulate in only a few hands. More about that in the next chapter.

Such a system, I think, would reduce loneliness in the West.

c. Loneliness

Human relationships in China (under Mao) and in America

The American shock: from the day I left Peking, till my return a year later, China held me enthralled. Old friends told me I had changed. According to them, I was now calmer and less extroverted. But I knew the changes were much more fundamental. I was more lucid. I was no longer restless, no longer hectic or determined to defeat my competitors. Obviously, the placid nature of the Chinese had influenced me The obsession of people with material possession bored me. I was content to wear jeans, have walks and to lead a simple life without any trivialities, which had not been the case before my stay in China. The Chinese possessed only the basic minimum and showed me how happiness could be derived from things which money cannot buy. I missed the Chinese warm-heartedness and the close family relationships. A father would never walk hand in hand with his married son along the street in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Whereas Chinese children rarely opposed their parents, American children had no respect and would even be rewarded with presents for it Once, when I left my purse hanging on a shopping-trolley, one of the other customers ran up to me

and said: "Where do you think you're? You're in the area with the highest criminality in the country. " It did not take long before I had to pay for my carelessness. Twice within three months, our house was burgled and I craved for the good days in Peking where I could leave my door unlocked. Fischer-Ruge (6)

Loneliness should not really be a problem in socialist countries. The people have more time for each other, because they do not have to work so much. Indeed, one gathers the impression, especially when driving through villages in eastern countries, that an esprit-de-corps similar to that of African villages, is present. The sense of solidarity in East Block countries can be witnessed, for example, by the fact that when one finds articles at favourable prices, one does not buy only for oneself but also for the neighbours.(7)

The lifestories by Kessler and Miermeister of the former GDR citizens who moved to West Germany Vom 'GroBen Knast' ins 'Paradies' (8) (From the 'big prison' to the paradise') shows to what extent mutual help is a part of life in socialist countries. Lena K., for example, says: "Time and time again, I see that people here are incapable of going about with those weaker than themselves. The weak are pushed aside, this happens at all levels, and the system encourages it. For me, a weaker person is somebody for whom I've to make allowances and whom I've to help. I consider this my moral obligation. I've been brought up that way and I find it good. "

Though we have mentioned already, that the African students in eastern countries tend to become more capitalistic than their colleagues in the West, they show, in practical life, more solidarity towards one another than the latter, mainly due to the structure of life in the eastern countries.

They automatically helped us to find accomodation on our journey through the East Bloc. I well remember, one afternoon in Danzig, asking a Nigerian medical student where I could find a cheap restaurant. He took me back to his house and cooked a meal for me.

I would not expect to find such spontaneity amongst African students in the West. They greet each other, of course, but have become contaminated by the behaviour of the whites -frightened and suspicious.

We Rwandans were also hospitable to other Africans whom we met in Germany. We would always approach them and exchange telephone numbers and addresses without further thought. This went on well till our first shock. One day, one of us had his savings book and passport stolen by his fellow Africans who were supposed to be friends.

That showed us that Africans who had lived here for a while were completely different from those who had just come from Africa. We became more careful, and

the naive, smiling, friendly and good-natured Africans were on their way to becoming hardened Africans adapted to the western European way of life. This changing of the nature of Africans in the West is so apparent that it is even possible to estimate how long one has been in Europe merely by observing his behaviour.

Distancing oneself from other Africans leads to one getting entangled in loneliness, and some even isolate themselves completely. In July, 1983, a Nigerian student died in Berlin, and his body was not discovered for a week, since he had lived in isolation.

This could not happen to an African in the East Bloc. They have to share rooms, anyway, and mistrust is hardly a problem: they are all students.

Africans in the West, on the other hand, have various occupations. Some are students or workers, whereas others lead a shady existence in crime, deception, prostitution or pimping. This situation is more pronounced in big cities.

One also senses the negative influence of city life in East Europe. Loneliness increases and neighbours have less significance. The inhabitants of socialist countries, however, have more contact with each other, as they live in council houses according to whichever branch of industry they are in. Getting to know people is also easier than in the West because the people there are less inhibited. Only very few people have to place contact adverts in newspapers. Difficulties only arise when one tries to have contact with a foreigner, as the state does not desire it. There are fewer dogs around as a substitute for human companionship; one notices that straight away, for example, on going from West Berlin to East Berlin. There are probably no cases of undiscovered corpses, since few people live alone and the state always has its paternal eye on them anyway.

Relationships within the family are usually better than in the West. Fischer-Ruge mentions a Russian mother who did everything for her children and said: "Now they can enjoy the best years of their life. When they get married and bear children, they'll do the same for their children as we've done for them." (7) According to many Africans in the Soviet Union, this is typical for parents in this country.

In order to maintain the fabric of the family, obstacles are placed in the way of those wishing to move from one town to another. Local inhabitants are given preferential treatment when it comes to employment. But in eastern countries, especially in the GDR, there are old peoples' homes, as in the West, and likewise a generation gap.

The state of marriages is not what it used to be, either, just as in the West. The emancipation of women in East Bloc countries (they earn as much as men and have access to all professions) has led to a feeling of detachment and sexual freedom.

As a result, increasingly more families disintegrate. The divorce-rate in the USSR and the GDR is conspicuously high. It even surpasses that of western countries. According to statistics, one in every two marriages in the Soviet Union dissolves. (7) However, for the sake of completion, it has to be said, that there are many fake-marriages in this country in which people get married only in order to get a flat, after

which they get divorced. Married couples are given preferential treatment in the distribution of housing.

High divorce rates may also result in sexual frustration. It is, however, probable that this is less the case in the East than in the West, where there is advertising with sexual connotations (the strong man and the sexy woman), where people live in energy-robbing stress and there is less spontaneous contact between the sexes.

At any rate, the fact that sex is not unscrupulously exploited and commercialized in the East, as it is in the West, deserves mention. Even though prostitution exists, there is no organized sex mafia or white slave traffic. There are, at least for the normal population, no public sex shows, no sex films and no sex video-cassettes in the godless countries, in marked contrast to in the freedom-loving Christian countries of the West, where all these flourish, even though the Bible forbids it. It is also worthy of praise, that socialism does not see to satisfy its citizens' sexual needs with perverse artificial products.

The socialist is commendable in that he is not always on the look-out for business. Socialism also scores good points in that it dampens down criminality.

In the East, one does not need to live in fear of one's life, because the level of criminality is insignificant. The worst city in the world, in this respect, is not Moscow but New York. The leading power in the western world is, indeed, a criminal society. According to Hamacher and Hans Werner(9), 78% of America's citizens do not even feel safe in their own apartments, 80% of them are afraid of walking along the streets in their hometown at night, and 35% do not talk to any strangers because of this fear.

The tourists from New York whom I met in London and Berlin verified that criminality in New York is so bad that one is the whole time in danger of being murdered. The black man sitting next to me on the bus from Toronto to Ottawa in the summer of 1982, and who had just come from New York, said too, that going to New York was, in a way, suicide."The best thing to do", he continued,"is to run around completely naked so that everybody can see that you possess nothing, otherwise one could lose one's life for the sake of a dollar."

The high level of criminality in the USA is a well-known fact, not just because of frightening incidents which one hears about in New York, Chicago and Texas, but also because of the numerous assassinations carried out on leading personalities in the country: J.F Kennedy, R. Kennedy and M. L. King to name but a few. Ronald Reagan was lucky to survive.

There is also cause for concern in western Europe, even though things are not quite as bad as in the USA. One has to be especially careful at train stations in western Europe, and at underground stations too, such as those in London, because they abound in dangerous criminals.

Certain parts of large cities, such as Paris and London, with their eight million inhabitants, should also be avoided. In 1975 I visited Paris. I was at a square named Barbes, and asked a policeman the way. He was amazed to see me simply sauntering

around like that in such a place and warned me to take care of my wallet. I became acquainted with the dishonesty of the Parisians in restaurants there. You always have to check your change, as it is often short.

Italians are not known to be very honest, either. The Sicilian Mafia, the terror acts of the Red Brigade, and the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II, as well as the many pick-pockets in Italy's tourist centres, are all testimony to the violence in the country where 'The Holy Father' has his headquarters.

To sum up, one sees that the more policies tend towards social equality, the lower the incidents of criminality in the country. Countries such as West Germany, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, which have well-developed systems of social security, have fewer criminality problems. There are fewer pick-pockets than in other western countries, and one does not get ripped off quite as much in restaurants. Destitution drives people to crime, which goes a long way to explaining the predicament of the USA where a social welfare net is practically non-existent and people are forced to turn to crime in order to survive.

Destitution is one of the causes of the voluntary departure from life in industrial countries. A direct comparison of East and West Bloc suicide-rates is not possible, since the East Bloc does not release any statistics about them. It is, however, certain that suicide exists in both Blocs and that resentment of life has also something to do with industrialization since it hardly exists in developing countries. Why Hungary has the highest suicide-rate in spite of the apparent satisfaction of its people and their relative freedom of movement remains a puzzle.

A section from Fischer-Ruge's book(') reflects the typical opinion of the Soviet citizens about the problems in the West:

In the previous weeks, the late TV programmes had shown demonstrations by the unemployed in America, queues of hungry people waiting for food at churches, and needy old people staggering along the streets of New York with paperbags in their hands, looking in rubbish bins for something to eat.

A taxi-driver told me that he was disgusted by the programmes and took it for propaganda.

"How can it be that such things exist in your rich country?", he asked in disbelief. "Here, everyone must work. Some work well, some badly, but everyone gets his pay and no one has to starve. "

'And", he continued, "I don't understand why the unemployed demonstrate. They look all right. They're dressed well and none is hungry. If they can live so well without work, why should they work?"

d. Abuse of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, cigarettes and pills

Horrifying cases of drug deaths, such as the one which I experienced in the toilet in Holland, do not exist in the East Bloc. The lack of hard currency curtails the drug business.

Alcoholism is, however, also a problem there. They certainly drink less than people in the West, but those who drink generally take stronger drinks. There are so many alcoholics that one bumps into them all the time on the street or in the pubs.

When I was in Krakau I saw a police-car regularly picking up boozers from the street and carting them home. "In the Soviet Union", said my fellow-countrymen who were studying there, "it's quite normal to run into drunkards stuck in the snow with bottles of vodka in their hands. However, Russians drink for social reasons and because of the extreme cold and not so much out of frustration as people in the West do. The alcohol problem even existed well before the October Revolution."

Fischer-Ruge also reported on alcoholics on the street in soviet countries, for instance, in Siberia: Most of the men lay on the pavement and were not able to get up. When Lena saw the astonishment in my face she explained: "This is normal in Siberia. The men are bored and spend their free time drinking."

As far as tobacco and cigarette-consumption is concerned, the people in the East Bloc poison themselves with nicotine just as much as those in the West; and just like in the West, there are areas (places) where smoking is prohibited to protect the nonsmokers.

The eastern countries do not have to wage a war against unnecessary consumption of tablets. Pharmaceutical production is only as high as is necessary. As a result, it does not amount to any misuse.

e. Overindustrialization and environmental problems

With the exception of the highly developed armaments industry, the East Bloc is not overindustrialized. Technology is kept at a low level. Animals are, for instance, still used for transport and agricultural work in Poland. Superfluous production does not occur, and the exploitation of raw material is probably less than in the West. Handwork-and handicrafts are encouraged, as they are in developing countries.

A lot of the heavy machinery there is partly backward and they are dragging behind in the combat against damage to the environment, as they do not possess the appropriate technology. Environmental problems are not limited to the West alone.

There is talk about damage to the forests in Czechoslovakia which is caused by acid rain due, among other things, to the coal industry. This industry is a source of worry in the GDR too, where people living near industrial sites often have bronchial complaints. Similar situations are reported in other East Bloc countries. I personally

Air-pollution caused by industrial emission.

discovered that the smell of the exhaust fumes in Moscow was so intense because exhaust pipes are often in a miserable condition. Poland is just as bad.

The East also has difficulties still in disposing of radioactive waste, as well as in disposing of dangerous chemical waste produce from the pharmaceutical, chemical and armaments industries.

How fatal atomic power stations can be became apparent after the accident at Tschernobyl in 1986. Not only the Soviets still suffer from the effects today but also the rest of the world, on account of the international circulation of foodstuffs.

In the West, people are aware of the threatening environmental catastrophe. It is regrettable that, despite Gorbatschow's glasnost, people in the East Bloc are not sufficiently informed about such problems. The governments there are reluctant to display their weakness. But only when most people realize the full extent of this danger will it be possible to take effective measures against it, measures which will have to be paid for.

f. Freedom or dictatorship?

The main criticism of the socialist state system is its dictatorial nature. The state con-trols almost everything and insulates itself from exterior and interior influences in order to push on with its policy of a planned economy.

At first glance, the state control seems abominable, but upon closer scrutiny, one realizes that it is, in some respects, a good thing.

One should understand that the existence of dictatorship in the East Bloc is due to the various states there being afraid of losing all their people if liberalization were to take place. Everybody would go to the West and would not return for a long time, as it would take a long time for them to discover the negative side of consumer socie-ties. Meanwhile the socialist societies, with the aid of western propaganda, would collapse.

Not only the Soviets and their satellite countries, but also the Chinese, live with this fear. The Tagesspiegel (Berlin newspaper) reported in 1982, for example, that the government in Peking was concerned about students who had studied in the West returning to China with a different outlook on life.

It would also be pointless for the Third World countries to contemplate sending many of their people to the West, because this would only arouse new desires in them which could not be satisfied, and the people would be robbed of their former ascetic peace of mind.

Countries such as Rwanda and Tanzania, which only issue passports to people with a valid reason for going abroad, are doing something good for their citizens, protecting them from evils, and, as we shall see, even from death. On the other hand, countries like Ghana, which issue passports to all and sundry, according to their liberalistic principals, are imprudent.

This can result in the whole population leaving the country, but if an economic slump befalls the countries to which they have migrated, the whole population will also be sent home again. In 1982, more than one million Ghanaians were expelled from Nigeria. Politicians must be able to foresee such developments and adopt appropriate measures to avoid surprises similar to that facing the Ghanaian government.

A lot of the black women in West Germany working in sex shows, peep shows, and in prostitution, are, in general, also from Ghana. These women did not know what their fate was going to be when they applied for passports. They are victims of western businessmen who enticed them to Europe with promises of a better life, only to exploit them in the sex business.

Some of the refugees who died in a fire in a Berlin prison on New Year's Eve 1984 would still be alive today if they had not been issued with passports for the journey to Germany.

Most refugees are the victims of ignorance. Western businessmen lure them with promises of a good job in Europe. They sell everything they have to pay the fee demanded for covering lawyers' costs (to get residence permits) in the hope of being able to make a new start to life in the unknown western 'paradise'.

It all comes to a sad end when they realize that they have been taken in. The new life is not what they had expected. They have to put up with worse conditions than those back home, and they can hardly decide to go back home because they have nothing more there anyway. Even tragedies may result, such as that on New Year's Eve, 1984.

The Ghanaian guest-workers in Nigeria, the black sex women in Europe and the pro forma refugees in the West are all examples of how one can jump from the frying-pan into the fire, and show the dangers of allowing chance to decide upon migratory patterns. The state should play a role, and should even introduce unpopular measures to avoid the worst.

The Berlin Wall, 'a symbol of the inhumanity of the socialist system', according to the western press, was not built by the GDR for fun, but because the most needed people in the country -doctors, pharmacologists, judges etc. - thought of leaving for the West, where they would be able to earn more money. No sensible government would allow that to happen. (Well over two and half million fled from the GDR before the Wall was constructed in 1963. (1°)) Even African governments tried, - before the present economic crisis, to win back their intellectuals, who wanted to go '- on living in the West.

The way in which the West Germans use the Wall to scorn the GDR is unfair. It is common knowledge that the Wall and the division of Germany have far more to do with the Second World War than with the communists, who themselves were persecuted in the war. At least the person who wrote on the western side We have the -'. Wall too thanks to our Adolf! was honest.

Critics of the GDR would like to see the East Bloc countries introducing

capitalism. Is this really their wish or is it simply political propaganda? The answer is obvious. Every capitalist country complains about the East, but they are the ones who go to Moscow, East Berlin, Budapest... to conduct business; and how come the embargo against the East did not work?

There is no doubt that the East Bloc countries would be able to produce just as many consumer goods as the West if they were to change over to the capitalist system. That would be to the disadvantage of the West, since the West would lose important markets in the East, unemployment in the West would rise, and international competition would be even harder.

The Europeans and the Americans are already so worried about the little Japanese that the concept of trade-protection is gaining in importance, and the free West' with its 'free trade' is under pressure. Each country is trying to reduce its imports and at the same time increase its exports.

It is not in the interests of humanity that more and more societies turn into 'consumer' and 'throw-away' societies. The insane armaments' race between the East and West is already viewed with abhorrence, and the situation would take on new proportions if East and West were to engage in competition over consumer goods, many of which would be superfluous anyway. Full-swing senseless production and destruction on both sides would accompany the already senseless production of armaments.

The main drawback of a state controlled economy is that the workers are not motivated sufficiently to produce, with the result that bottlenecks occur in the production of basic foods, such as vegetables, fruit and juice, and basic articles, such as soap, washing-powder and ballpoint pens.

I was amazed to see how my friends who were studying in the Soviet Union bought crates of articles for everyday use in West Berlin such as toilet-paper, washing-up liquid, tooth paste and ballpoint pens, which they took back with them to the Soviet Union, since all these things were in short supply.

The working man in a socialist society often thinks that it is the other people who are profiting from his work and therefore does not put his back into the work. The spirit of innovation, which is often of great advantage to humanity, is dampened because the state is responsible for all the planning.

This is why I mentioned earlier that certain reforms, with elements of private ownership, are necessary in the socialist system in order to get round this problem. I would also plead for a change in the direction of socialist media information, so that the West should not always be depicted only from its bad side but also from its good one too.

One-sided reporting on life in the West leads to exactly the opposite of what the authorities desire, namely admiration for the West, since the people tend to dismiss such reporting as propaganda'. If, instead, people were allowed to see life in the West as it really is, they would not find as much fault with their own system, and the state would not have to assume such an overbearing role.

The good side of the West is that it allows its citizens a lot of freedom. One can even write a book like this without fear of the consequences. One can travel the whole world, move from flat to flat (as long as one can afford it), get divorced as often as one wants, change one's partner and, at a whim, start up in business if one so fancies, choose one's religion, and elect one's politicians. In short, one can do lots of things which are not possible in the East. And there are certainly fewer political prisoners in the West than in the East.

Upon closer examination, however, this freedom is not what it first appears to be, and one is not as free as one first thinks. For instance, one has to beware of one's superiors, the more so in these times of mass unemployment, because it is not so easy to find another job if one is dismissed.

An interview with German soldiers at the time of the KieBling-Worner affair in February, 1984, illustrated this fear of superiors quite clearly. Some soldiers would not open their mouths for fear of damaging their future career-chances.

As far as political freedom goes, one cannot place West Germany on a pedestal, because the communist party has been stamped as dangerous, which is not the case with the communist parties of France, Spain, Sweden and Finland. One can also call to mind a lot of cases of people thrown out of their professions in the public service (e.g. teachers) for being members of the German communist party.

Politicians in the West keep on saying that the people of the Third World are not mature enough for democracy, but if a Third World person were to analyse the election results of various countries in the West, he too might wonder if the people there are mature enough for democracy.

Thatcher was voted in for a second term in Great Britain, since she had won the battle of the Malvinas Islands against the Argentinians. Was it such a brave deed, on the part of the English to beat a militarily inferior Argentina? Can a man be viewed as brave for beating his wife if he is stronger than her? Should one congratulate an adult for hitting a small child? It would, of course, be an act of bravery if the British were to triumph against the Soviets. That would be a real occasion for the British to exult their Mrs. Thatcher. Things would never be allowed to get that far, though, because the whole of the British Isles would be obliterated.

Reagan's popularity reached new heights when his troops marched into Grenada, and the dollar exchange-rate took off too. He could increase his popularity by invading Nicaragua and Cuba. Why not? He could also take western Europe: he has got the means. Noises have been heard from Washington to the effect that the Americans could not give a damn if their high interest rates damage European economies or not.

Strong-man politics wins votes. Hitler, for example, came to power in Germany not through a coup d'etat, as in Africa, but by normal democratic means. One can see what democracy too may lead to.

Making all kinds of promises to the people is also a method of getting into power. The conservatives in Germany won the election of March 1983 with their tactics of

change and the imminent improvement of economy. There is no difference between those who believe in eternal growth and those who, in 1933, believed in German domination of the whole world. Economic growth does not continue forever; it appears to have reached an end, independent of politics. Even in cases of real economical growth, there are losses in other fields - e.g. destruction of the environment - which soon or later have to be repaired at a high cost.

The reason why wrong political decisions can be made in the West is that many people are insufficiently informed about politics (to be able to read and still be illiterate). A lot of information is available, indeed too much. This is why one has to be especially well-informed politically in order to be able to decide what is right and what is wrong.

Sometimes the information is also presented in a language to which not everybody has access. Not every German can understand the weekly magazine Spiegel, for example. Not every German can understand the simplest of instructions given by a doctor, since the latter uses medical jargon. The language of left-wing political parties, the Greens included, who are supposedly trying hard to increase their communication with the population, is too academic and only reaches a minority. All political groups seem to have difficulty in finding a simple and clear language to describe the day-to-day problems of life.

It is the practice in the West to organize a television duel of candidates in the runup to an election, in order to show how democratic one is. I would like to know how many of those watching fully understand what is being said. Even the specialists cannot follow, not to mention the ordinary citizens. In West Germany, FJ. Strauß was famous for his grasp of facts and knowledge of statistics on tax, growth rates and wages. This created a good impression in Bavaria, since everybody thought: "This man is exceptionally intelligent because he understands all about statistics and money. He'll certainly ensure us higher interest rates."

Everybody understands at least a little bit about money, but it becomes more difficult when the discussion turns to the number and characteristics of missiles. The viewers, for whom the whole matter is too complicated, take the easy way out by concluding that the Americans must be right because they were good to them after the war.

While watching these political discussions, the television viewers hardly notice the brusqueness of the politicians themselves. These 'exemplary' citizens attack and curse each other so much that it is no wonder that the younger generation behaves the same way.

Sometimes one can hardly tell the difference between the Bundestag (German Parliament) and a German kindergarten. Some sit there making paper aeroplanes, others read their Bild while others, at the same time, are busy making speeches with great commitment. Sometimes, a member of the opposition calls Chancellor Kohl a good-for-nothing man, and all the opposition MP's clap, including those who have not been paying attention and who have no idea what they are clapping for.

Sometimes, a member of the ruling party retorts that the opposition needs to take extra lessons in German history.

In western houses of parliament they hardly ever confine themselves to the point. As elsewhere in the world, real discussions are held back-stage. One often hears the criticism in the West: "One can vote as much as one wants, but the people at the top will still do whatever they want to, anyway"

Political decisions in the West are based far more on economic than on human considerations. Almost everything which creates more money and jobs is allowed and supported, even if it has been found to be hazardous to people.

It does not disturb the politicians that children are employed in advertising as long as this leads to other children's becoming consumption-addicted and keener to buy things. The aim is a good balance-sheet at the end of the year, for which the citizens will be praised.

Politicians are willing to allow women to be depicted as simple and naive beings, with nothing but the words consumption, consumption, consumption in their heads. Only the accumulation of capital counts.

Western politics, based on egoism and a love of money, leads to a sort of addiction from which it is very difficult to free oneself. It may sound absurd, but one really can say that money and capital rule the West. Put another way: The dictatorship of capital rules the West.

Everybody has come to realize how much damage cars cause to the environment, and there is no longer any doubt of their role in the depletion of forests in Europe. The obvious solution to this problem would be a reduction in the number of cars on the roads and greater use of public transport and bicycles.

Most people are unwilling to entertain this thought, since they have become slaves of their own cars, and they do not even like discussions about environmental problems because they fear that any eventual measures taken will cost them a lot of money. The car industry maintains that damage to forests is pure fiction. They are primarily concerned with keeping their cars moving and their turn-over increasing.

The lobbies of the various interest groups play a decisive part in political decision-making. An example is the difficulty surrounding the agreement of the EC on agricultural policy. Member states are unanimous over the need to restrict agricultural production in order to avoid the senseless and expensive destruction or storing of agricultural products. That can only happen at the expense of European farmers, however, and, because each of the politicians involved is worried about his chances at the next election, nobody dares make a move for fear of upsetting the farmers.

This is a clear example of how democracy in the West is limited, because other lobbies also exercise similar power and influence. What is the point of democracy if one is prevented by democracy itself from doing what is just and reasonable? In other words: by the fear of losing votes? In a real democracy one has to be able to say no to votes!

Western countries often label those of the East as imperialists and dictators. Can

one refer to countries which have good relations with people like Idi Amin, Bokassa, Pinochet, Marcos etc.. who have a lot to answer for, as democrats by conviction' ?

Unfortunately, the countries of the ' democratic' West are often on friendly terms with many of the nastiest murderers on earth, and cannot be viewed as superior in their behaviour to the countries of the ' dictatorial' East. Neither do the latter base their foreign policies towards countries in the Third World upon their ideology of helping oppressed peoples. Their stance towards the apartheid regime in South Africa is, indeed, praiseworthy, but equally unpraiseworthy is their support for minority governments as in Burundi (black apartheid). During the social revolution in Rwanda in 1959, they stood on the side of the monarchy (which was toppled) even though they themselves had fought against the Czar.

One is able to conclude that both Blocs are imperialist and that they are only pursuing their own economic interests. It must be said, though, that Africa has suffered more under the West than under the East till now. Slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid and the Israeli threat to the Arabs in northern Africa can all be attributed to the West.

This comparison of these two antagonistic systems has shown that neither of them is good enough in practice to serve as a model for countries in the throes of development in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It should be mentioned, however, that the socialist system comes closer to the highly-valued traditional life of most people in the Third World. In its efforts to improve standards of living, the Third World has not paid enough attention to this dimension of life, the overall result being not only failure in the effort to remove the old problems but also the addition of further problems which are characteristic of the industrial countries.

The wrong road to development taken by the Third World will now be looked at, taking Rwanda as an example. After that a model, which could be adopted by other countries in the Third World, will be constructed for developing countries in Africa.

Chapter III

African response to modern life

1. The history of Rwanda: Monarchy, Revolution, Republic

Rwanda, a country which I have already broadly described, is known to very few people in Germany and Europe. Our neighbour, Uganda, on the other hand, is well known to the whole world, even as far as China and Japan, due to its dictator Idi Amin. Rwanda and Uganda are often confused with each other because their names sound similar.

This confusion and ignorance about Rwanda was often a source of unpleasantness for us on crossing the German-German border, because the authorities, especially in the East, needed up to two hours to find out where this little country lay. This should, actually, be embarrassing for the Germans because Rwanda is a bit of their own history.

Rwanda, Burundi and Tanganyika (today part of Tanzania) formed so-called German East Africa from 1884 till 1919. After 1919, Rwanda and Burundi became mandates of the League of Nations, later the United Nations, and were administered by Belgium. On the first of July, 1962, both countries became independent. As is the case with many African countries, various tribes live in Rwanda. These tribes became unified in the course of time, an occurrence which had nothing at all to do with the famous conference in Berlin in 1884/1885 at which Africa was divided up like a cake, regardless of the already existing constellation of peoples.

It is said that the Batwa, who constitute 1% of the population, were the first inhabitants of Rwanda. They were mainly hunters. Then came the Bahutu, forming 85% of the population and living mainly on agriculture. Far later came the nomadic Batutsi, who constitute 14% of the population and who tended large herds of cattle. The Batutsi were able to dominate the other tribes and introduced a feudal system, with themselves on top.

A similar development took place in the neighbouring country, Burundi. In Rwanda, however, resistance to the Batutsi regime was organized in 1956, leading to the bloody events of 1959 between the Bahutu and the Batutsi, which culminated the abolition of the monarchy and the founding of the republic on the 28th January, 1961.

Some authors conclude that mainly the Bahutu were responsible for the huge loss of life in Rwanda between 1959 and 1964. Russell writes: The Bahutu were responsible for the worst case of genocide since the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. (11)

Nsanze comments: The gruesome deeds carried out against the Batutsi were enough to shake even the coldest of hearts. The number of victims alone makes Rwanda guilty of one of the bloodiest acts of genocide of our times. (11)

People who write such things perhaps do not know what the Nazis did to the Jews. When I was in Poland, I made use of the opportunity to visit the worst of all the Nazi concentration camps, in Auschwitz. I was stunned to see what a human being can do to another, and I can say for certain that the fighting between the Bahutu and the Batutsi during the years of revolution was not as bad.

In any case, depicting the events in such a dramatic way does not contribute to efforts at reconciliation. Instead, one should point out that this feudal system was so unjust that every sensible person, regardless of his tribe, realized that it had to be changed for the good of the country.

Indeed, the 400-year-long Batutsi domination of the Bahutu was degrading as well as gruesome. A notable historian on Rwandan history, de Lacger, states in his book Rwanda: The king would kill with his own bare hands in order to try out a new weapon, in order to show his skills with a bow or a spear, or in order to get rid of an old friend with whom he had fallen out or a woman whom he was fed up with, even though she might still be clinging to him desperately. He drove his spear into his servant's foot in order to demonstrate his power. (12)

De Lacger also criticizes court life: It is not the people who had allowed traditions to lapse or to become brutalized. Cynicism had become the characteristic of the rich and the powerful. Polygamy, immorality, perverse behaviour, intrigues and murder were the main characteristics of life at court. One lived in perpetual fear. The king was frightened of being poisoned and the courtiers had at their throats a knife which could slit them at any given moment. (12)

A feared but popular king of Rwanda was Rwabugiri. He attained fame through his many victories over what were then the Congo, Uganda and Tanganyika. The territories which he had conquered were returned in 1919, however. At court his word was law. He killed his enemies and anyone suspected of disloyalty. He did not even feel any pity towards women, and he killed the mother of Rutalindwa without batting an eyelid.

Shortly before his death in 1895 Rwabugiri proclaimed his son Rutalindwa as his successor. Because Rutalindwa was still too young to rule, his mother was supposed to conduct the affairs until he was grown-up. But Rutalindwa had no mother, so, somebody had to step in for her. Kanjogera, Rwabugiri's other wife, was chosen. She came from the Batutsi sub-tribe Bega, whereas her husband and Rutalindwa came from the Batutsi sub-tribe Banyiginya.

Kanjogera had a son of her own called Musinga, whom she wanted to put on the throne instead of Rutalindwa, and her two brothers, Rukinankiko and even more so Kabare, wanted to help her. It is said that Kabare did not like the Banyiginya because Rwabugiri had had him castrated. He did this because he had dreamt that Kabare would have a son who would become king.

These three gained the confidence of the young and inexperienced Rutalindwa very quickly, and were able to depose him after only three years.

This was a very bloody event. Heremans describes it in the following way: The king and his people were in Rucunshu. Kabare, Kanjogera, and Rukinankiko and their followers were living nearby. One evening Kabare gathered his warriors and they attacked the king's huts. At first, luck seemed to be on the side of the king. Kanjogera had given up and was about to commit suicide, but the cold-blooded Kabare stopped her and forced the fighting to continue. An arrow suddenly struck the king in his thigh, wounding him. Had he continued to fight, things might have turned out differently. But because he stopped, his warriors felt abandoned and they, too, soon gave up. Rutalindwa did not want to fall into Kabare's hands because he feared terrible torture. He killed his wife, his brother and his children, and finally killed himself with a spear. One of his men burned the huts containing the bodies. (13)

Musinga did not reign until the end of his life. In 1931 the Belgians removed him because of disobedience and replaced him with his son Rudahigwa. Rudahigwa died in 1959. With his death, the hour of change practically struck: his successor, his halfbrother Kigeli V remained in power only a few months.

Despite the presence of Europeans in Rwanda, torture, forced labour and lawlessness still menaced the Bahutu. The Christian church gave the Bahutu a new outlook on life, however, and the first intellectual Bahutu, who had been at schools run by priests, took over the view that all people on earth are equal, regardless of whether they are Bahutu or Batutsi and that the only king is Jesus Christ.

These teachings destroyed the Bahutu's belief in the godliness of the Mututsi-king and in his ability to control rain and fertility of the land. They gathered courage to claim the same rights as the Batutsi.

In 1957, they published a historical document, The Bahutu Manifesto, in which they demanded the introduction of democracy. In the same year the church in Rwanda and Burundi published a pastoral letter on charity, in which the injustices of the rulers in these countries were unmasked. This made a conflict between the Bahutu and the Batutsi unavoidable.

If the Batutsi had been a bit wiser the conflict could have been solved peacefully. Instead, however, their reaction to The Bahutu Manifesto came on the 17th of May, 1958, in the form of a clumsily-put-together and very arrogant letter in which they insulted the Bahutu: How can the Bahutu possibly claim equality? Our relations with them have always been on the basis of their serfdom; there is no possibility of a brotherly relationship with them.

The course of events led to the formation of four important political parties in 1959. The UNAR wanted to keep the monarchy in its present form; the RADER wanted a democratized form of monarchy. Extremist Batutsi were in the UNAR, whereas those Batutsi who were prepared for reform, and that means mainly the Banyiginya, who had suffered heavily under the Bega, were in RADER. APROSOMA and PARMEHUTU were the parties of the Bahutu, of which

APROSOMA stood for limited democracy alongside the monarchy, and PARMEHUTU was for the abolition of the monarchy and the introduction of democracy without any compromise.

Two previously unknown names dominated the political scene from now on: on the side of the Batutsi, Rukeba, who was the president of the UNAR, and on the side of the Bahutu, Kayibanda, who was the president of PARMEHUTU.

Relations between the Bahutu and the Batutsi became very strained during the ensuing political debates, and one little incident was enough to ignite the bomb. On the first of November, 1959, a member of PARMEHUTU by the name of Mbonyumutwa was attacked by young Batutsi. It was put about that he had been killed, thus preparing the way for a bloody revolution.

The Christian church, which represented approximately half of the population, was for a peaceful solution to the conflict, but was undecided on which part it should support. At first, Brussels stood behind King Kigeri V who seemed moderate. He became more extremist, owing to the influence of his advisors, and was unwilling to make any compromises, in the hope of attaining independence immediately with the support of UNO, which might have enabled him to maintain his grip on the intellectual Bahutu. This caused Brussels to change sides.

The fact that the intellectual Bahutu were reluctant to have independence thrust upon them straight away, even though they had good reasons for wanting it, brought Rwanda into disrepute, because the decolonization movements in other African countries were in full swing. The Batutsi, who had more experience in international politics than the Bahutu newcomers, were thus able to win the hearts of most developing countries very quickly. Nevertheless, the revolutionary Bahutu kept their heads and, under the leadership of Kayibanda, were able to push through their demands for local government elections in July, 1960, under the auspices of the UNO.

PARMEHUTU gained 70% of the votes and, therefore, felt powerful enough to claim the right to govern. At a gathering in Gitarama on the 28th of January, 1961, the Bahutu parties dethroned the king and proclaimed the republic. That was the so-called coup d'etat of Gitarama.

The king opposed the coup and took his complaint to UNO. On the 25th of September, 1961, a KAMARAMPAKA (final discussion) took place in the presence of UNO-observers, to decide upon the monarchy or the republic. Hereafter there was no more discussion, the Republic of Rwanda came into being, and its first president was called Kayibanda.

The new strongman of Rwanda did not have an easy task before him. Everything had to start from scratch. The infrastructure of the new democratic republic had to be worked out, the constitution had to be drawn up and decisions had to be made on education and schooling. Administration buildings had to be built, as Kigali consisted of only a couple of houses, since the Belgians had ruled Rwanda and Burundi

from Bujumbura. Preparations had to be made for independence. The president also had to do something for the people who had given him their confidence.

On the first of July, 1962, Rwanda became independent - a reason for the Rwandans to be happy but this happiness was accompanied by fear, Rukeba being the main cause. After the Batutsi had been defeated at the KAMARAMPAKA, they fled to neighbouring countries. If they had been a bit cleverer and accepted the new situation, further bloodshed would have been avoided. They had been brought up to feel superior in every way to the Bahutu and to expect to govern, and they were probably unable to bear this humiliation.

With the support of the Soviet Union and China, and under the leadership of Rukeba, they attacked Rwanda from all sides until 1964. Their final attack in 1964 was nearly successful. The rebels came to within 15 miles of the capital but were repulsed by the young national army. They did not return, and president Kayibanda was now able to concentrate on the development of his country.

The Bahutu and the Batutsi lived at peace with one another once more. Kayibanda held nothing against the Batutsi, even though they have never liked him, since he was the cause of their fall from power. Kayibanda was only against the Batutsi regime, its methods and arrogance. This is also the opinion of many foreign observers. For example, Decraene writes in *Le Monde* on the 7th of July, 1973, that he committed himself to defending the intellectual Batutsi against extremist Bahutu in the party and in the army. Schooling was not the exclusive right of the Bahutu, a fact proven by the large number of Batutsi intellectuals today.

Nothing unusual happened during the next few years, until, in 1967-68, difficulties arose with Mobutu, the president of Zaire. European mercenaries, together with Katangan (Zairean) soldiers, had fled to Rwanda after the attempted coup in Zaire. Mobutu arrogantly demanded that Kayibanda deliver them immediately, otherwise he would reduce Kigali to rubble and ashes within minutes.

I can still remember these events in 1967. We were still at grammar-school when we heard that Mobutu's fighter-planes were going to devastate Kigali if Kayibanda refused to return the insurgents. Certainly, it was impossible for Rwanda to defeat Zaire, a country 80 times as big. We were afraid, and the whole country was tensed up waiting for what the president would decide on. Everybody realized that it is not easy to be president. He could not deliver the insurgents to the Zairean government, since he knew what Mobutu would do with them, and, on the other hand, risking war with Zaire would endanger the whole country.

After diplomatic efforts at a solution to the problem failed, the revolutionary Kayibanda decided not to return the refugees. On the 10th of January, 1968, he declared among other things: Everybody, including ourselves, knows that we are a small country. However, in our respect for signed agreements, in our behaviour and in our search for a realistic solution to a problem, we assume greater proportions.

Uncertain of support from his own people and under pressure from other African countries, which had welcomed the decision of 'the little president without

Nyerere and Kayibanda: Two of the rarest of African presidents, who have distinguished themselves by their simplicity and commitment to the masses. Shining examples for the young generation.

spectacles' as Mobutu had called Kayibanda, (spectacles meant intelligence in his opinion), he did not attack Rwanda.

Kayibanda still was not left in peace. The new dictator to the north started to put pressure upon him. After his coup d' etat against Obote in 1971, Idi Amin demanded recognition from Kayibanda's government, in order to strengthen his position within the Organization of African Unity.

A resolute Kayibanda said categorically no, explaining that he did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of Uganda. Idi Amin closed the mutual border for three months, blocking Rwanda's main export-route. Under pressure from Kenya and Tanzania, the border was later reopened.

Kayibanda's only real friendship was with Nyerere. It was based upon their similar political outlook. In its 1964 programme, PARMEHUTU had condemned exploitative capitalism in the West, and had denounced at the same time dictatorial socialism in the East. Kayibanda, like Nyerere, was in favour of humane socialism, which would be based upon satisfying the basic needs of the people and freedom of speech.

Getting on with Burundi to the south, where the monarchy still oppressed the Bahutu, was difficult. After a coup d' etat in 1966 led by Micombero, there was hope in Kigali of improved relations between the two countries, which did actually materialize. But the events of 1972 in Burundi, during which the Batutsi killed up to half a million Bahutu (14), including children, clergymen and intellectuals, annihilated the relations. Tension grew and duals on the radios of the two countries, between Micombero and Kayibanda, took place.

Inside Rwanda itself, old conflicts between the Bahutu and the Batutsi were revived by the grizzly events in Burundi. Problems were compounded by regional differences between the Bahutu in the north and those in the south. This situation caused General Major Juvenal Habyarimana to take over the reins on the 5th of July, 1973.

President Kayibanda died on the 15th of December, 1976. His death meant the loss of a man who had fought on the side of the simple citizens. That is why he was given the nick-name RUBANDARUGUFI (the lower people).

2. Rwanda: 16 years later

16 years have gone by since the fate of the country was placed in the hands of the military. People in the West are shocked when they hear of a military government because the military is always held to be brutal and incapable of governing a country. In Rwanda's case, one can only call it good luck, because we have, so far, been blessed with quite sensible presidents.

With Kayibanda, Rwanda had, undoubtedly, a good start into the independent

future. This is the view held not only by his countrymen but also by the foreign press. His work and ideas are to be found in the book published in 1972 by Paternostre de la Mairie: *Le Rwanda Son effort de development* (1) (Rwanda, its efforts at development).

Barnes praises his energy and writes among other things: Even though he might have looked weak, this old seminarist did not lack energy. He displayed it against the Batutsi chiefs and on many occasions in his dealings with foreign policy. (15)

Decraene in *Le Monde* of the 7th of July, 1973, recognizes his humility and perpetual sense of justice: Although he was in power for 13 years, Kayibanda kept the life-style of a simple peasant. This uncomplicated and modest man, who did not like public appearances, felt most at ease in his village, to which he returned every evening, preferring it to the presidential residence in Kigali. He lived there in a simple house with his only wife, who gave birth to their ten children and who, like the other village women, kept working on the land. He was a dedicated catholic and believed deeply in justice and equality. This democratically inclined president was never contested, and every Muhutu identified with him and was thankful to him for his courage during the monarchic times against the Batutsi regime.

Hausner and Jezic also draw positive conclusions about Kayibanda's period of government: The fate of the country has been in president Kayibanda's hands since independence. Some say he is a moralist of Christian character. Others call him a racial fanatic. Many call him a socialist with a message for the future of his country. Certainly, he is more than just one of these various descriptions. There are very few Third World leaders who understand how to instil national awareness and how to use it for the benefit of the country like he does. The proposition that Kayibanda is Rwanda is certainly not only fiction.

A dictator perhaps, who is occasionally reluctant to take measures which might appear reminiscent of authoritarian colonial politics. He is evidence against Fanon's theory that African dictators are an expression of their mistrust in the masses. He is also evidence against the theory that their only interest is in exercising power and that they have no real communication with the masses. (5)

Kayibanda's successor, General Major Habyarimana, enjoys, likewise, great respect at home and abroad. People wonder what would have become of our country if another officer had taken over instead. Habyarimana is not another Bokassa, Idi Amin or Micombero. His government is a military government but most of the ministers are civilians. Compared to its neighbours, General Habyarimana's Rwanda can allow itself to be seen, and many European visitors admire the development so far attained and say with praise: "Nobody starves here."

Habyarimana's political aims were to restore peace between the Batutsi and the Batutsi, to reduce tension between various parts of the country, and to bring about reconciliation with our neighbours, in order to devote himself entirely to the country's development.

In order to promote peace between the two rival tribes, Habyarimana dissolved

the PARMEHUTU party and founded the United Revolutionary Movement for National Progress (MRND) to represent all Rwandans irrespective of their tribe and background. President Habyarimana has spent an enormous amount of energy on his efforts to unite the Bahutu and the Batutsi. The Batutsi were allowed, more than during the time of Kayibanda, to participate in the politics of the country.

The politics of national reconciliation, necessary as a precondition for development, has, on the whole, been a success. Since president Habyarimana took over there have been no more open conflicts between the Bahutu and the Batutsi. A lasting peace between both tribes would only be guaranteed, however, if the neighbouring government in Burundi carried out a similar policy of reconciliation with the Bahutu.

It is regrettable that even after the change of power from Micombero to Bagaza, and despite Bagaza's speeches on reconciliation, those in power do not intend to accommodate their fellow-countrymen, the Bahutu. The massacres of the Bahutu by the Batutsi army in August 1988 also show that, even under the new president Buyoya, the successor to Bagaza, the oppression of the Bahutu is continuing. Almost like in apartheid-ridden South Africa, the small Batutsi minority has a monopoly in government, army and education. Burundans whom one meets abroad are either Bahutu refugees or Batutsi students on government scholarships.

The reasons for this rivalry between the Bahutu and the Batutsi are ludicrous. The main point of conflict is, that the extremist Batutsi still believe that just because they are physically larger (taller) than the Bahutu, they must be more intelligent and are therefore born to rule.

These extremists should take a look at the Bahutu Kayibanda and Habyarimana who have served Rwanda very well while, at the same time, the Batutsi government in Burundi has not even been able to feed its population: Bujumbura relies on Rwanda for agricultural products, even though the two countries have similar climatic conditions. The Bahutu peasants in Burundi, living in a state of permanent oppression, have no motivation to make greater efforts, since they know that they could be slaughtered at any time without warning, as happened in 1972. The events of 1988 in Burundi have justified this fear.

One also need not feel superior just because one is tall. History has given us ample examples of small people who have had an enormous influence on their times. For example Mahatma Gandhi, Lenin, Mao, Nyerere and Kayibanda. The Chinese -d the Japanese, also small of stature, are highly regarded all over the world and show no signs of inferiority complexes. Indeed, the notion of a superior race is a fundamental error. The most famous proof of this is the failure of Hitler's theory that the Arians, being large, blond-haired and blue-eyed, were best suited for governing the world. This alone should be reason enough for the governing powers in Burundi to start thinking seriously.

The Bahutu are on a par with the Batutsi. Bahutu and Batutsi in Rwanda, who have succeeded in reconciling themselves to each other, should try to influence their

colleagues in Burundi by means of diplomatic activity, in order to bring about a change in the rigidity of their thinking. The problem can only be finally solved in this way.

President Habyarimana also made efforts towards solving regional conflicts, which were going on at the time of the change of power. These tensions between the north and the south are simply an expression of the African attitude to the extended family. When a man becomes president, the other members of his family and his friends expect him to secure good jobs for them whether they are qualified or not.

During Kayibanda's period, his ministers gave preference to people who came from their areas, and the president often had to swap his ministers around in order to get a mixed selection of employees in each ministry. He managed to maintain this unbiased attitude quite a long time, his critics say, and only towards the end of his time did he succumb to the will of people from his own area, and this probably only because he was getting tired in his long fight for the betterment of his nation. (16)

Every African president is exposed to this danger, especially those who have been in power a long time. Indeed, one risks isolation if one distances oneself from the people of one's village and from one's long-standing friends. One runs the risk of having no one who is able to inform on the mood of the nation, for example. That is why strict presidents, such as the former president of Tanzania Nyerere, are very lonely.

Dumont wrote about him in 1982: Mwalimu Nyerere often appears very lonely with his dream of UJAMAA. His colleagues do not bother to tell him about the difficulties they have in instituting socialism.(17)

On the other hand, if one allows oneself to become totally dependant on people from one's home area, one makes enemies of people from other areas and, even worse, one dare not get rid of one's friends if they are incompetent.

President Habyarimana tried to combine both of these possibilities. His personal friends counted amongst his closest colleagues and he still managed to follow the motto confidence is good but control is better. He would often happen to turn up at some project or other unannounced in order to see for himself how the people were getting on, and obviously such people work more diligently if they know that the president may come along any time.

This active style of leadership is far more effective than government from the capital, even though one cannot have a complete overall view of things. The problem of regional tension can only be solved by consistent decentralization, which would enable the people themselves to check the functioning of their leaders directly. We shall be dealing with this in more detail in the next part of this chapter.

The new man in Kigali has had considerable success in his policies of conciliation with neighbouring countries. He has good relations with Mobutu and Buyoya, the successor to Bagaza with whom he also had had good relations during his term of office, and our country has never had any problems with Tanzania anyway. Habyarimana was also able to pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence with Idi Amin, even

though things became a little bit strained between Uganda and Rwanda after Obote came to power again. Since Museveni started governing, the tension has eased.

When Habyarimana took over he promised to continue with progressive policies. In overcoming economic problems he wanted, as did his predecessor, to take the same middle path between the ideologies of East and West, and “a change for continuity” was talked about. The difference between Habyarimana and Kayibanda was that the former tended more to the right, and the latter more to the left.

Habyarimana had a fair amount of success with his policies. Kayibanda had to start development from scratch and Habyarimana continued where he left off. Positive developments can be registered in many branches of the economy.

The capacity of Kigali international airport has been more than quadrupled. Not only Sabena, as was the case when I first flew to Europe, lands and takes off from there, but also Air France, Aeroflot, Ethiopian and Kenya Airways. Rwandans, at least those who live in the capital, have become used to aeroplanes because they see them almost every day, and more and more Rwandans are flying too. Many people now know that one does not have to wear a suit to go onto an aeroplane, as we were told when we were at grammar-school.

Rwandans are especially proud of their enlarged capital. In 1962, the year of independence, Kigali had 6,000 inhabitants and in 1988 there were already 250,000. Apart from this, more roads have been built, and almost all in Kigali are asphalted. As far as cars go, the scene on the streets in Kigali is similar to what we saw when we arrived in Europe. The Germans no longer have a monopoly of Mercedes cars.

There are lots more nice houses in the capital, and lots of small industries have been set up. All western products are to be found in the shops and are more available than in East Bloc countries.

Rwandans living in Kigali, as well as those living elsewhere in the country, find the way the town has developed staggering. The words of my old friends, whom I met in Kigali in the summer of 1982, after a five year absence from Rwanda, reflect the general feeling in the capital. They asked me proudly: “Can you see what we’ ve built during your absence? The Europeans are no longer ahead of us, and there’ s no more need to yearn for Europe, since Kigali has become a little European island in Rwanda.”

Visible progress has also been made in the provinces by means of community work in the traditional way Umuganda, which is responsible for the construction of community institutions such as council offices, schools, health centres, etc..

In the provinces, the quality of housing has been improved from huts to stable houses, and general hygiene practices have been instituted. More and more Rwandans are being educated at home and abroad, and the number of subjects taught at the national university has increased.

If they apply the same economic criteria for judging development as their colleagues in the West, the authorities in Kigali have reason to be pleased with the results attained so far. But if they were to look at the development from a human

point of view, they would have reason for worry and reflection because this development, apart from the fact that it has been paid for with debts, has brought many problems.

The influx of every imaginable western industrial product, from bicycles, washing-machines, hifi-sets and sweets to cars, has led to even greater admiration of the West. People want to acquire these fine things more than ever, but only a small portion of the population can afford them.

So, Rwanda, along with most African countries, has aroused in people desires which it is unable to satisfy. One only desires something if one knows of its existence. Advertising has further aggravated the hankering for these western products. The people are of the same disposition as a hungry dog who is continually shown a piece of meat but never given it.

The result of all this is the creation of an arrogant bourgeoisie, and the application of every imaginable trick to get one's hands on money, not only because one needs to buy food but also because the human being is now evaluated like in the West according to the principle The more you have, the better you are. We call these tricks Guteka Umutwe, which means relieving somebody of his money by falsification, deceit, lying and corruption.

Those with transport vehicles buy food at rock-bottom prices in the villages and then take it to the capital or even to neighbouring countries, where they sell it for 10 or 20 times as much. Others buy the harvest from the peasants, store it in warehouses, and later sell it back to the peasants at a handsome profit.

Peasants do not know the value of money. In Rwanda, where land is a very serious problem because of the high density of population, one can exploit this weakness and offer the peasant what is, in his eyes, a relatively large amount of money for his land, and he will accept. He has never seen so much money before in his life, spends it all quickly, and at the end of the month has neither money nor land, while someone else is making enormous profits with the latter.

Women used to be known for their reliability in money matters, but these days many of them are in prison for having siphoned off state money. Marrying has far less to do with love than with money, and many Rwandan women marry a white man, for example, in order to get their hands on the rich white man's money, but almost all have Rwandan lovers.

The mania for money goes so far that an ever-increasing number of women turn to prostitution, and some men even offer their wives for sale as sex-ladies. Many men are pleased to see other rich men craving for their wives, because this might be a good source of income. Young girls, known as Urunyogwe (young vegetables) in Kigali are particularly exposed to danger, since they can be enticed very easily by cars, western records and cassettes, and small presents. It is mainly these girls who produce illegitimate children.

Corruption is gaining ground in the towns of Rwanda, and money reigns. One can even witness corruption on the streets.

In the summer of 1983, I was able to witness in Kigali such an event: The taxi, in which we were travelling, was stopped by a policeman, who asked the driver why he had no TAXI sign on his car. The driver beckoned the policeman into a corner and offered him 3,000 francs to let him go. While they were busy discussing the amount, another policeman of higher rank came and joined in, and asked what was going on. When he heard that it was about the taxi sign he told the driver to continue, since it was not such a serious offence. The younger policeman had not been able to get even one franc.

Some people are so preoccupied with money that they can think of nothing else. The anecdote of a doctor who wrote out a wrong prescription illustrates what has happened to our country. Instead of prescribing medicaments for the patient, he wrote five sacks of cement. He was preoccupied in his thinking with his new house, which he was just having built. In recent years, having a house built and then renting it to somebody has become very profitable, and there are even houses which can pull in as much as 2,000 deutschmarks a month: a lot of money in Rwanda, a country where a graduate academic earns 500 marks a month at the most.

This striving after more money, come what may, has inflicted serious damage upon our culture. De Lacger, who at one time asserted that Rwandans possess higher moral values than the Europeans, such as politeness, dignity, humility, hospitality, candour, self-respect and the spirit of sharing, would certainly curtail his praise today.

As in the West, almost everyone thinks of himself only. This new attitude to life is known in Kigali as *Umuntu ku giti ke* (everybody to his own tree) or *Umuntu ni Nyiramwigendahaho* (each person has to take care of himself).

The people have learnt to convert everything into money. They seldom give anything away for nothing, and if they do so, they calculate what it has cost them. If one lends money to somebody, one does not get it back, or only after they have used it for profit-making ventures.

Egoism is gaining ground in our country: nobody does anything unless he personally intends to gain from it. The spirit of solidarity amongst our people is threatening to collapse.

In earlier times, if the shouts of somebody being assaulted during the night were heard, the other villagers would run to his aid. These days they cannot be bothered because it could well be only a mock assault, in order to lure the other villagers out of their houses, so that the houses can be robbed in the meantime. Criminality is so bad, particularly in Kigali, that people cannot sleep at night for fear of burglars, who might break in at any moment. Dogs are used more and more as house-guards.

In previous times, somebody who suddenly became ill during the night would be taken by the other villagers to hospital straight away, even if it were 30 miles away. These days, nobody would be willing to take an old person living alone to the doctor, since the old person would be unable to return the favour.

Sexual entertainment has come so far to the fore in Kigali that warned couples

continually swap partners, just as they do in industrial countries. Divorces and all the associated problems are on the increase in the capital. Worse still is the increasingly common occurrence of sexual diseases, resulting from the continual changing of one's sexual partner and increased contact with the world outside. The Belgian doctor at our grammar-school who, in 1966, predicted that such diseases could assume epidemic proportions if nothing were done about them, is now being proven right.

The impact of this warning lasted only a couple of weeks, and then it was forgotten, as is, unfortunately, often the case in Africa. When I visited the university in Butare in 1974, I noticed how frivolously even the medical students equated gonorrhoea with a cold. Sexual diseases, without mentioning Aids, have turned into a serious problem these days, especially those which have been brought about by imported therapy-resistant strains.

Particularly feared are the European tourists who have been collecting bacteria not only from Bangkok but also from other cities in Africa larger than Kigali, such as Lagos, Nairobi, Dakar and Accra. Of all these, the French are the most unwelcome, ever since the incident of Gitarama. Workers from the French construction company Batignole, which was building a road from Kigali to Butare, infected many women in the area around Gitarama with a previously unknown sexual illness, which came to be known as Batignole. Treatment proved so ineffective that some of the women even died.

Suicide, as a way out of a frustrated life, has become an alternative in Rwanda. One hears of numerous attempted suicides as well as some actual ones in Kigali.

Problems of the soul have arisen as a result of this new way of viewing life, namely out of self-interest and self-gratification. Not even the church can be exonerated.

At the time of the revolution in 1959, the church was on the side of the weak and the oppressed, energetically opposing those in power. It has abused this role in modern Rwanda so much that more and more people, above all the young and intellectuals, are distancing themselves from it.

The church has become greedy for money and demands more and more from the credulous. It has also been connected to sex-scandals in the country, preaching on the one hand against sex before marriage and against divorce, while at the same time many of its catholic priests have irresponsibly fathered children.

One can justifiably ask if development has made life easier or more difficult for us. It is consoling that the damage done by faulty development planning in Rwanda has been limited, so that it is not yet too late to correct the mistakes. The main culprit in all this is Kigali, the town which rural Rwandans call AMAHANGA (abroad): not only because it looks foreign but also because of the widespread European mentality of its inhabitants, contrasting strongly with that of the villagers who have remained relatively Rwandan.

President Habyarimana has personally taken steps to reduce foreign influence on Rwanda. He has opposed mass-tourism with all its wicked implications. He had not,

Habryarimana will go down in Rwanda's history as the president who, with some success, made the greatest efforts to bring the Bahutu and the Batusi together. He now has to dedicate himself to narrowing the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor.

until the summer of 1988, when he unfortunately had to give in to pressure from the rich, given the green light to the introduction of television. He is of the opinion that the introduction of television is expensive and will bring more foreign influence because, Rwanda, not having enough money to produce its own programmes, will be forced to use foreign ones. For him, the wealthy have to make do with video-recorders.

Many disco-pubs in the country have been closed in order to do something for the battered morality of youth.

Criminality in Kigali is being countered by police night-patrols and by traffic-policemen.

Alcoholism is being fought by limiting the hours when one can drink or buy alcohol, as in Great Britain.

The authorities are trying to get a grasp on corruption by introducing more stringent controls.

In spite of such efforts, some of which have been successful, our country is still exposed to the dangers of faulty development, as are other African countries. Africa will be able to avoid these dangers only if it gets the courage to develop its own philosophy of life and to live accordingly. Africans have to stop believing that progress means copying the white man in every way.

3. Which way, Africa!

a. General comments on politics in Africa

25 years after independence; Africans are still raving about life in Europe, North America and Japan, and have complete trust in the culture of industrial countries. For them, development means imitating the industrial countries as far as possible in order to achieve the same results.

Blind imitation of industrial countries has not helped Africans to solve their problems, as the example of Rwanda has shown. Instead, it has created new ones. A small upper-class elite has been formed which can afford the same things as those in industrial countries, and which is sick in a similar way to the 'civilized' people. Simultaneously, a very large class of poor people has come into being, their poverty increasing from year to year.

It does not seem to matter whether these countries have chosen the capitalist or socialist road. All African countries, with the possible exception of Tanzania, where the rich are relatively poor, have a very highly developed bourgeoisie. Starvation problems abound not only in socialist Ethiopia, Mali, Burkina-Faso and Mozambique, but also in capitalist Uganda, Somalia, Kenya, Senegal, the Sudan and the Central African Republic.

One should not be led astray by economic statistics about gross national products,

according to which some countries are richer than others. These figures are absolutely irrelevant as far as the actual economic situation in a country is concerned, and tell you only how much money each citizen would have if the total amount were divided equally amongst all citizens.

Rwanda, for example, is officially one of the five poorest countries in the world, and Nigeria is the richest country in black Africa. In reality, however, the average Rwandan citizen is better off than the average Nigerian citizen, and the apparent statistical wealth of individual Nigerians is explained by the fact that wealthy Nigerians are billionaires whereas wealthy Rwandans are only millionaires. The wealth of the former Nigerian Minister for Transport, Dikko, who was drugged and packed away in a diplomatic coffer in an attempt to get him back to his home country, is estimated at 1.5 billion dollars, whereas Rwanda's yearly budget comes only to 200 million dollars.

Black African countries which are considered to be very rich, such as Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Kenya and Gabon, are not always to be envied. Problems and diseases associated with development are to be seen most clearly in these countries, even though they have lots of money. Criminality, corruption, prostitution and moral decay are all part of day-to-day life in the cities, and especially in the slums.

Lagos, the New York of Africa, is the second most criminal city in the world. It would be fair, as far as criminality goes, to compare Abidjan with Chicago, Nairobi with Dallas, and Dakar with San Francisco.

The environments of these countries are suffering heavily from the effects of too much traffic, the use of dangerous artificial fertilizers and preservatives in agriculture and from industrial fumes. This damage to the environment is in part worse here than in industrial countries. In order to get an idea of the size of the traffic problem one should note that there are so many vehicles in Lagos that a numbered system had to be introduced, whereby only cars with certain numbers could take to the roads on certain days. Everyone can imagine how serious the environmental problem is in such a town and also how many traffic accidents there are. It is said that one can even come across the bodies of victims of traffic accidents lying by the roadside in Lagos.(18)

The development of these so-called rich African countries is, anyway, only an illusion, since most of the installations and industrial plants don't belong to them but are merely the investments of industrial countries. These countries become even more dependent on foreigners. During times of world economic crises they are the most endangered. As one knows, falling from the 20th floor is worse than falling from the 2nd floor.

The general economic dependence of African countries on foreigners (which is the result desiring to imitate the industrial countries) is the main reason for their progressive backwardness. On this subject a journalist from the African Magazine Africa Now asked one of the great men of Africa, Nyerere, in December 1983, if he could see a way out of the increasing dependence of Africa on other countries, in

view of the fact that the African countries still continue to make these same mistakes.

Nyerere replied: Our problem is that we are dependent on imports. A certain amount of importing is necessary for young countries trying to develop in the 20th century, but this must be kept to a minimum. They (the Africans) can see what the British, the Germans and the Americans have built up; if they want to have the same kind of society, they will be for ever dependent upon them. To withdraw from this dependence, then would be impossible. They can only break away from this dependence if they, first of all, define what kind of a society they want, and then import only that which is absolutely necessary for taking the first steps. If enough African countries were able to make this decision, we would reach our goal. But the industrial countries mislead us in our attempt at creating a basis to our society, by telling us that we can import. Yes, indeed, we can import, but what? What do we want from abroad? Do we want bicycles or Mercedes-Benz? Do we import in order to remain dependent or to become independent? The choice has to be made, but it is difficult for countries standing alone to stick to their choice.

I think, we Africans have to listen to Nyerere because he knows what he is talking about. If we only want to turn Africa into another Europe, Japan or North America, we will always be dependent on these countries. Our chances of competing with them are very bad because they are at least 100 years ahead of us, technologically speaking, and getting further and further away all the time.

Each year a new car, computer, robot, musical instrument, television, camera, tank or fighter aircraft comes onto the market. If we wish to be like the industrial countries, we shall have to buy all these things; and once we have started there is no stopping, if only for the reason that all of the acquisitions will eventually need spare parts and replacing.

Those countries rich in raw materials will be alright as long as they can sell them. When the raw materials run out, it will be like falling from the 200th floor. The actual economical situation of Nigeria is a good illustration. Those countries with few raw materials can last out a while, with the price normally being that a large part of their populations have to go hungry; the bourgeoisies of these countries eventually fall off the 200th floor too.

We have to put a stop to these policies of self-destruction, not just because we have no chance of competing, but because the way of life in these industrial countries which we are striving after has negative consequences in spite of the undeniable technical advantages (cf. chapter 2). The traditional way of life, on the other hand, has clear advantages over a mechanized way of life.

African politics must be conducted in a way skilful enough to harmonize the values of African tradition with those imported from abroad. The way is through doing without many things from abroad.

Instituting such policies would necessitate a complete change in the way of thinking of most Africans who, until now, have believed that their way of life is bad

and that of the white man ideal. That would mean a revolution in Africans' mentalities, and it is very difficult to conduct a revolution when one is alone. This is why African countries must unite as Nyerere pointed out and seek a common strategy.

An example taken from the daily life of Tanzanians shows clearly how important it is to maintain the African esprit-de-corps. They refused to buy garments which had been manufactured in their own country, but were eager to buy the same articles when they had a tag on them Made in Nairobi because they thought that they originally came from Europe and would automatically be of better quality (most cloth in Kenya is of European origin).

If not only the Tanzanians but also the Kenyans, the Ugandans, the Rwandans and the Burundians were to institute a policy of self-sufficiency, it would be easy to persuade the population of this whole part of Africa to buy African goods first of all. That is not the case at present, however, and one has the impression that African countries are mutually destroying each other.

Most African countries are at loggerheads with each other, since some call themselves socialist in the East Bloc sense, and others capitalist in the West Bloc sense. These countries should by now have realized that categorizing themselves as either eastern or western aligned has only brought them war and famine. Listening to people who tell us that the Soviets are bad and that the Americans are good, or viceversa, is not a wise thing to do. Africans should have no illusions: in spite of surface tensions, the countries of the East Bloc and the West one get on quite well with each other. Their relations with each other, are, at any rate, better than their respective individual relations with any Third World country.

While African politicians are barred from the capitals of the East or West, according to which camp their own countries are in, leading personalities of the two antagonistic systems visit each other regularly. Trading agreements between the Blocs are signed almost daily. We saw, too, how quickly the USA rushed to the help of Great Britain instead of Argentina, their southern neighbour, during the Malvin Islands War.

In this respect, my friend in Moscow also said: "The dismay of the Russians on seeing the Germans losing to the Russian-trained Algerians in the World Cup 1982 shows that they're first of all European and then socialist."

If Africans wish to survive, they have to learn that they are first of all Africans and that any other role they have is subordinate to this one. They do not need to argue about foreign ideologies, anyway, because they have their own. One simply needs to travel through African villages to see that.

The true Africans, to echo the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi (for him, real India was not Calcutta, Bombay, New Delhi but the entirety of the Indian villages) are not those who live in African cities, not the blacks in the search of white women or white men in Europe, not the African intellectuals who like to talk about how nice Africa is but still remain in Europe, but the entirety of the African peasants who still walk around unceremoniously in their traditional attire and who feed the continent.

Honnecker and Von Weizacker (Leading personalities in East and West Germany respectively): In spite of surface tensions, the countries of the East Bloc and the West Bloc get on quite well together. Their relations with each other, are, at any rate, better than their respective individual relations with any Third world country.

These peasants have succeeded in extracting that which is good out of capitalism and that which is good out of socialism. They all have their own possessions but have not forgotten how to share with other human beings, as is the case in the West. They do not want to live in a forced community as in the East, either. That is the African ideology. Why force another ideology and concept of life on them?

Africans quarrel also because some of them speak French and others English. Such quarrels are unnecessary because, in these international times, there is no point in anchoring oneself to either France or England. The willingness to learn from all countries in the world, including our African neighbours and other Third World countries, is the correct way.

The politics of some countries such as Tanzania, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda and Burundi are praiseworthy, whereas those of Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Kenya, Angola or Ethiopia, all of them countries who align themselves either with the West or with the East, are not. In the former are to be found development workers from all over the world, a policy which makes it hard for any foreign country to monopolize the developing one.

It was a good thing for Rwanda, for example, that the Chinese were able to take over as soon as the French construction company Batignole was revealed to be working very slovenly on its project (building a road from Kigali to Butare). The competition between the French and the Chinese benefitted the Rwandans greatly. But the African countries must make sure that the help and various activities of foreigners in their country are coordinated smoothly. They should not be allowed to do what they want simply because they have brought money with them, as is often the case.

It is also worthy of mention that African countries these days do not send their scholarship recipients only to France and Great Britain but all over the world. African students are to be found nowadays not only in France, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden, but also in the Soviet Union, Japan, USA, Canada, Hungary, both Germanies, Rumania, Cuba, China and Korea: in short, almost everywhere in the world.

Most of these students are trained in a language other than English or French, and when they return home, they either have to brush up in French or English, especially as far as specialist literature is concerned, or implement their own native language with perhaps a view to moulding it into a scholarly one.

The arrogance towards countrymen who have trained elsewhere of those who have studied in French- or English-speaking countries is coincidentally leading to a new positive state of awareness regarding the native language. One used to be ridiculed for having a poor French or English accent and tried to copy people like de Gaulle, Mitterand, Nixon, and others. (More details about it in Fanon's book *Black Skin / White Masks* in the chapter *The Negro and Language* (19)) These days, any criticism is in many cases repelled self-confidently with the retort that one is neither French nor English and that one also does not intend to become so either.

The African ideology: Part of the harvest is taken to market to be sold, the money being used to buy things needed for daily life. The other is consumed by the community. Those people who criticize the tradition of eating and drinking together as unhygienic should consider some of the sexual practices to be found in industrial countries (kissing, oral and anal intercourse) which are also not particularly hygienic either.

Most African countries have many native languages, which often bear hardly any relation to each other, and this means that it will be hard to lessen the dependence on French or English, since such languages are required as common denominators for communication. The problem is that each individual tribe would like to have its own language become the national language, but so far no agreement has ever been reached.

All these countries should turn towards Tanzania for guidance. Contrary to the Nigerians and the Ghanaians etc., the Tanzanians do not rely upon English as a means of communication. Nyerere actually succeeded in getting the 90 different tribes of his country (four times larger than Great Britain) to agree on using the Swahili language. Why can other countries not act similarly? Even more: Why, for example, do black Africans in the East not agree on Swahili and black Africans in the West on Haoussa, languages, which are spoken by most black Africans?

Regional common African languages are more urgent than ever, not just to strengthen the awareness of the Africans, but also to enable close cooperation of Africans on a daily basis in these trying times on the African continent. The publication and exchange of information in these languages would reach more African minds, including those of little education, who can speak neither French nor English. This solution becomes all the more obvious when one takes into account that many things cannot be expressed in French or English anyway. This, of course, does not mean that other local languages ought to be abolished.

Regional cooperation in Africa, independent of the political persuasions of the individual countries, is, in some fields, definitely unavoidable, if Africans do not wish to get more and more in arrears. Just as capitalist West Germany cooperates with communist East Germany and Czechoslovakia in trying to protect the environment, African countries have to club together in combatting the desertification taking place in the north and in the south of the continent.

No African should look upon the hacking down of forests on the Ivory Coast and Zaire for export with indifference. In Rwanda, for example, a large reforestation programme has been implemented not only to provide firewood but also to prevent unfavourable ecological changes in this area. What is the point of reforestation if it is not done in neighbouring countries too?

One should not sit back and look at the hungry masses in the country next door, since there is always a chance that they will flow over their borders in search of food. The phenomenon of rural exodus into the cities of Third World countries, and the phenomenon of economic refugees moving from southern countries to more affluent northern ones, are phenomena which corroborate this theory. Why should not there be migration from hungry countries to richer countries within Africa? The migration of refugees in Africa, the continent with the greatest number of refugees in the world, is only a symptom of trends in future.

The fear of a total collapse of life on the black continent is a further reason for African politicians to join forces in order to get to grips with their common problems.

They have the choice: Everyone for himself into a catastrophe, or together towards a better future.

The most immediate task must be the wrenching of Africa out of its stupor of infinite admiration of the whites' mechanical innovations. Only by coming down to earth can the African start to get to grips with the problem. Every African must become aware of the fact that life in the industrial countries, in spite of or because of mechanization, is not a paradise, that his traditional way of life has many benefits, and that the only way forward is to harmonize the best of both cultures. Only when Africans have attained this awareness can they be self-confident enough to start thinking about what kind of society they would like.

The task of waking up to a new state of awareness sounds very easy, but it is the basic problem of Africa. Nyerere's words, which I quoted earlier, must be remembered: The choice has to be made, but it is difficult for countries standing alone to stick to this choice.

One of my professors said to me that I should hurry up and finish my studies in order to warn my fellow Africans against making the same mistakes as the Europeans, before it is too late. I replied that it is extremely difficult, even with the best of intentions, to remove the conviction which has been present for over 70 years, that everything that the white man does is correct and to be followed.

He understood what I said and remarked: "I understand. Your people are like my children. I can warn them about something a thousand times but they only believe me when it's too late. Children do not believe that fire is dangerous until they've burned their fingers, that a knife is sharp until they've tried it for themselves or that alcohol makes them drunk until they've tried it for themselves. Just imagine what would happen if one only believed what one had experienced oneself."

The answer to that question is: there would be chaos. In Africa there are, indeed, many chaotic situations which arise only because the warning of the specialists is ignored. Dumont's book *L'Afrique Noire est mal partie* (20) (published in English under the title *False Start in Africa*) is a good example.

Popular education is made all the more difficult because many industrial products offer more comfort than the traditional way of life and their negative effects only become noticed later.

It is quite understandable that an African peasant would hardly believe that a car, this construction with which he can complete in two hours a journey which would otherwise take three days on foot, damages the environment.

It is also difficult to convince him that medicines which somebody has sent him are extremely dangerous, since he has been taking these European products for ages and is still alive.

How is one to convince this peasant that overindustrialization of his country has no point because of damage to the environment, when these industries manufacture wonderful things which he would love to have and the environmental problems are not directly visible anyway?

This difficult task of educating the African population shows the predicament of a good African leader who is trying to help his people with their consent. His task is made more difficult by the interference of foreign powers.

In spite of these difficulties I still believe that it is possible to find our way out of the cul-de-sac. I place my hope in African intellectuals who have lived a long time abroad and who have obtained a general view of the situation. These people can either save or slaughter Africa because, during their time abroad, they have got to know all the tricks with which one can gain wealth and have also realized which way Africa should go.

Similar to the European tourists who send postcards home from their holiday resorts in order to point out proudly to their friends where they are, most African 'intellectuals' relate so many stories about the fine' life in Europe and America that some of them are nicknamed havebeens.

People are given this derisory nickname havebeens because they always interrupt conversations to point out how everything was better in London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam ... when they were there.

These havebeens put on such airs because they know that Africans admire Africans who have been to Europe just as much as they admire the whites themselves. Fortunately, many Africans have been to Europe these days and the admiration for the 'white blacks' has subsided a bit, at least in the cities. The myth of these people is gradually ebbing away, especially since many of the academics with European degrees have become unemployed.

It is in their own interest that the African intellectuals should help accelerate this process of waking up because, in the case of their country's coming apart at the seams, they would then have to run around the world looking for another country in which to take refuge. Those who have seen so much of asylum and refugees in Europe should be the ones who make the greatest effort to prevent their own countries from slipping into the quagmire.

African intellectuals have to tell their fellow-countrymen all about life as it really is in industrial countries, while at the same time taking care that they do not do that which they condemn.

Africans who have lived a long time in affluent foreign countries are united in the conclusion that Africans should be wary of western luxury articles, and should use the money they have saved for projects which benefit the community. These same Africans, upon returning home, are the first ones to crave for such articles, however.

African intellectuals like to talk about the oppression of Africa by the East and by the West. If they only took a look at themselves they would realize that they are also involved in the exploitation of their fellow-countrymen. The attraction of luxury articles is, unfortunately, very great.

Instead, they should take a lead from Kayibanda, for example, the symbol of humility in Rwanda, and Nyerere, the symbol of African wisdom. They should also look over towards India where a man called Mahatma Gandhi used to live. He

should be the perfect example for every African intellectual who returns home after studying in an industrial country. Even though Gandhi studied in Europe, he returned to his own people and lived like they did again.

Gandhi, Nyerere and Kayibanda have one thing in common: They have practised what they have preached. This is the key to success, and this is why I am convinced that it is possible to influence Africans, if their intellectuals act according to their words.

Only in this way can the gospel of alternative politics in Africa be sown on fertile soil. This would yield a good harvest, which would taste far better than that imported from abroad.

Even though the problems of the various African countries do not appear to be similar, I believe that there are important problems common to all of them: their leaders are more concerned about holding onto power than about their people, and more stress should be laid upon agriculture, medicine and education.

Power is sweet, and that is why governments all over the world, in the East as well as in the West, try to hold on to it as long as possible. In the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries the upper class tries to hold on to its monopoly of power for ever. Rulers in the West are not honest politicians either; they lie to their country-men and make promises at election time which they have no intention of keeping. All this in order to remain in power as long as possible.

Neither western democracy nor the eastern so-called dictatorship of the prole-tariat is of any consequence for good leadership in Africa. It is, however, crucial, as Kayibanda often pointed out, that the masses reach a stage of awareness, for only an aware people is able to respond to democracy properly and make it resistant to dictatorial interests.

Most of the wars which take place come about simply because people are stupid and prepared to go along a path of self-destruction. Those on the left in West Ger-many are correct in saying: "Imagine there's a war and nobody goes to take part." There would then be no war.

People who cannot see things in perspective can be completely manipulated and manoeuvred into pointless wars, all in the name of democracy and freedom. The American invasion of Grenada in 1983, ostensibly to save democracy there, which was supported by the whole nation, confirms this.

Experiences with democracy and the multi-party system according to the western model, have shown in Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana that such a form of government is unsuited to solving the problems of Africa, because elections were manipulated and the parties were less a concern of political persuasion than of allegiance to the different tribes.

The military used the ineffectiveness of the civilian governments in getting to grips with the problems as a pretext for grabbing power. In spite of magnificent speeches in which they promised to turn Africa into a paradise, the military has

never managed to improve life in any way. The opposite has happened: things have become worse.

I am, nevertheless, not against military governments, as long as they know their way around politics in Africa as well as further afield (this is often not the case), and as long as they are not naive enough to believe that Africa's problems can be solved by military disciplinary measures, as applied in the army.

Military governments which fulfil this precondition and which have good intentions should not allow themselves to be rattled by criticism from industrial countries which scoff at African ones, calling them corrupt and military-ruled Banana Republics. These countries forget all too easily that they, too, have, in the past, been governed by the military.

The first president of the USA, George Washington, was a General. That was also the case with de Gaulle, president of France. Breschnev of the Soviet Union, and Helmut Schmidt of West Germany, both attained military rank during the Second World War. General Jaruselski of Poland is a more recent example.

There are some examples of a democracy which functions relatively well within a one-party system in Africa. The ones that first come to mind are the PARMEHUTU of Kayibanda and the CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI of Nyerere. If Rwandans were asked, sixteen years after its dissolution, if the party of Kayibanda the man whom Decraene, with good reason, described as the most democratic president with a conviction for justice and equality had championed democracy for the citizens, the answer would certainly be positive. Tanzanians have the same sentiments about Nyerere's party.

The disadvantage of the multi-party system is that the parties involve themselves in political intrigues and that, instead of looking after the people, they are more concerned about manoeuvring to oust the other parties from power. As Nyerere said, Africa cannot waste time on such manoeuvrings. On the contrary, the citizens must unite in one party and do everything to allow the expression of different opinions.

(21)

Indeed, the existence of several parties is not crucial for democracy, but, as has already been pointed out, the will and the common-sense of an educated and democratically brought-up people is. If willingness, common-sense and education, all of which are a precondition of the ability to listen to other people and to accept the decisions of the majority, are lacking, then the existence of several political parties would not help very much. German experiences during the Weimar Republic (1919 - 1933), during which time the various parties were unable to cooperate, are proof; this situation allowed Hitler to start constructing his dictatorship with all its wellknown terrible consequences.

The decision-making processes in African villages show that our ancestors could be democratic without belonging to several political parties. The village chief did not simply issue instructions but first made his decision after a long discussion which normally took place with other village elders under a tree. Quarrels amongst

individuals were sorted out in GACACA, the Rwandan name for a village gathering, where everybody was free to give his opinion, and decisions and judgements were made in a democratic way.

Intellectuals in Africa, instead of arguing whether their countries should be Marxist, Leninist, social democratic, liberal, Christian or Muslim, should direct their thoughts towards finding a development model which would most closely correspond to the principals and attitudes of the African way of life.

Take territorial organization as an example.

Nyerere's plan to reorganize the people into villages, the so-called UJAMAA, is a brain-wave. It is necessary, in large African countries, to bring the otherwise scattered populations closer together in order to make the task of providing for their basic needs of water, schools, health-centres etc. easier. This is also a measure against the growth of African cities, where people gather at random just as they do in industrial countries.

Africans cannot be blamed for taking to city life, since the cities, most of which are ports, were built by the colonial masters. Daressalam, Lagos, Abidjan, Accra, Harare, Dakar... were all built in colonial times.

The blame for the expansion of the cities after independence can, however, be laid at the feet of the Africans. They believed it to be a sign of progress. Now that the many disadvantages of life in cities are known (cf. chapter 2), a better housing policy will have to be introduced soon.

The first step will have to be putting a stop to the expansion of those cities which already exist, in order to effect decentralization and to bring about an even development throughout the whole country.

90% of Rwandan money is in Kigali, since everything is concentrated in the capital. The ministries, the army headquarters, some secondary schools, the central administration of the churches, the biggest hospital, the central veterinary examination office, the central slaughterhouse, the best shops, most of the few industries which there are in Rwanda (sweets, wine, coffee-roasting, tobacco, soap, shoes, plastic industries) are all situated in Kigali.

No wonder that so many young people have left their villages to seek work there. The authorities should have thought of something in order to prevent this rural exodus. They should have distributed the above-mentioned activities throughout the whole country.

What can be said of Kigali can also be said of other African cities. 90% of the money in Africa circulates in its cities and, this is why the tendency is always to move from the villages into the cities. This problem cannot be solved by military intervention, as in some countries, but rather by allowing all areas of the country to develop evenly.

The most conspicuous example of a successful policy of preventing rural exodus was given by Mao's China. His consistent decentralization policy kept more than 80% of the population in the countryside.(22)

Decentralization policy is also evident in capitalist countries: Switzerland and West Germany. As far as West Germany goes, one notices that people in the south are proud of Munich, whereas those in the north are proud of Hamburg. West Berlin is for those living in the eastern part of the country what cities in the Ruhr area are for those living in the western part of it. Frankfurt is in the middle of West Germany and Stuttgart a little bit to the south of the country. All of these cities mentioned have between 1.4 and 1.9 million people.

Urban development in other European countries is not as evenly distributed. It is not right that everything in Great Britain is concentrated in the south, namely in London. The French have made the same mistake - everything is concentrated in the very north, namely in Paris. The populations of Paris and London are approximately 8 million, which means 13 to 15% of the total population.

When I told my friends in Rwanda about the even development of German cities, they were of the opinion that this could be done only because Germans had enough money. This line of argument does not hold water. One can have little, and still distribute that little evenly. Cities a million strong are not being demanded of the Rwandans. It would be marvelous to see lots of towns about 50,000 strong instead of one large city with a population of a million people. Small is beautiful.

My Rwandan friends are not different from other Africans in thinking that towns have to be large and imposing, radiating power. They also believe that the capital must be large. They are wrong. Bonn, the capital of West Germany, Den Haag, the capital of the Netherlands, Ottawa, the capital of Canada, Washington, the capital of the USA and Bern, the capital of Switzerland are just some examples of small ones.

Africans have to take decentralization seriously because it is the answer to some of their numerous problems. Regional and tribal conflicts can also be effectively eradicated.

West Berliners feel superior to other West Germans ('Berliner Schnauze') (Berliner snout) because they are living in the old German capital. They would be even more arrogant if West Berlin had been allowed to develop more than other towns such as Hamburg and Munich. Londoners and Parisians exude a similar arrogance towards their fellow-countrymen in the provinces.

The situation in Africa is similar. Those areas endowed with fine modern installations despise the areas without. As a result, tension develops between different areas within a country, which is known as Regionalism. In many African countries, regionalism corresponds to Tribalism (tension between tribes), because different tribes live in different regions. Developing one region would mean furthering the tribe which lives in this region.

If politicians decide to pursue a policy of decentralization, they must take account of all regions, and, therefore, of all tribes. **THAT IS WHY THE POLICY OF DECENTRALIZATION IS A VERY GOOD WEAPON TO USE AGAINST REGIONALISM AND TRIBALISM!**

Decentralization has further advantages for Africans. The fact that so much is concentrated in the capital means that most of the intellectuals fight for a job there, whereas very few are prepared to go out into the country to assist with the development of the rural population. The same phenomenon is also to be observed in industrial countries. In many West German cities, such as West Berlin and Hamburg, there are many doctors who are out of work, since they are unwilling to work in the country where they are needed. There are no good cinemas, no good theatres, no good political and musical events there.

An even development of small towns in Africa would secure an even distribution of the intellectuals throughout the whole country. They would work more efficiently, since they would be doing it of their own free will and not under pressure, as is usually the case.

The towns would be within easy reach of those living in the countryside, which would contribute to the attainment of political awareness. They would gain the feeling that the town-dwellers would be helpless without their work. No longer would the peasants allow themselves to be exploited by traders who buy up harvests and then resell them in the capital at gigantic profits: they would now be living near the towns, themselves, and would know more about the actual prices. They could even take their harvests to market themselves, since the journey would no longer be so far.

Intellectuals with good ideas for development could make these known amongst the population far more easily. Mutual trust would spring up, and mutual complexes would be reduced. City-dwellers otherwise exploit the rural population quite a bit, without the latter even realizing it. Decentralization offers the possibility of keeping a check on the authorities.

Even development of small towns in Africa would safeguard the family bond, a thing so much praised by foreigners, because everybody would try to find work near his family.

Indeed, African cities are destroying family relations. Some members go to the cities to look for work while others remain in the village. The contact is automatically disrupted. One has to bear in mind that African countries do not have very good transportation- or telephone-systems. Children who are born in the city hardly see their grandparents, for the latter still live in the villages. It sometimes happens that the children grow up solely in the cities, and when they go into the countryside and see, for example, a cow, they think it is a dog with horns.

The family bond is the Africans' greatest pride, and they should pull all stops out to prevent it from falling apart. My recommendation is that, as well as providing for an even development of the towns, people coming from the same place should remain together in the city and that the intellectuals should remain in their places of birth as far as possible.

I know that this will run up against a lot of opposition.

Those holding the vanguard of liberty in Europe would say that it inhibits the freedom to live and work where one wants.

I would reply to them that I do not think much of all this talk about ‘freedom’ any-way, because total freedom is unattainable and there are few people in the world who know how to implement it. Can the young people in Europe really claim to be able to handle their freedom, when they leave their sick parents all alone in order to live where they can earn most money and have most fun? Africans could do without this egoistic freedom’ and devote their efforts to their far more valuable families instead.

The idea of guiding settlements of people is not new. In the Soviet Union, for example, the workers of a company are housed together, and those seeking work are given preference in their own town. Foreign workers in western Europe also stick together as far as possible. They live in what are known as ‘ghettos’ of foreign workers. I, personally, do not find them so bad, because they allow the oppressed foreigners to stick together; they feel more secure here than elsewhere.

The family lives of these foreign workers should, actually, serve as a model for ‘civilized’ people. Even though they are not so highly thought of, foreign workers are seldom confronted with problems of loneliness, depression and a lonely death, as are their indigenous counterparts. That is why the policy of the West Berlin Senat of separating foreigners forcefully is inhumane. Many foreigners are forbidden by law to move into the areas of Kreuzberg, Tiergarten and Wedding.

Others would criticize my suggestion for maintaining family cohesion on the grounds that it encourages regionalism and tribalism in Africa. This is not true, however, since I also call for equal development of the whole country.

In order to promote relations between families and regions, cultural events should be organized. It is high time, anyway, that people from different regions got to know each other. A great number of Africans have hardly ever been out of their places of birth. And if there is regionalism and tribalism in Africa at all, then it exists in the capital where the heavy-weights are fighting for important positions. The masses do not see any of this.

If relations between the different regions were strengthened, the people would realize that they are all actually suffering from the same problems, namely poverty and exploitation, and they would show more solidarity towards each other. Further-more, increased encounters of people from different regions would lead to more inter-regional marriages which would also help to unite the country.

There are also those who would reject an intermingling of families in the cities, with the argument that rich and poor could not live next each other, as that would mean shabby houses’ standing next to fine villas, and that would stick out like a sore thumb.

One could retort that this is how it is in the villages, namely no intentional segregation of rich and poor, but there are still human relationships. The rubbish bins of the rich are not full of left-over food, as they are in the cities. They give some to

their neighbours and, in the case of a burglary, they would be able to depend upon the latter's help. There is mutual dependence, and if somebody in the village has a car, all the others are also happy about it, as they know that the owner will willingly use it to take the ill to hospital.

These days, towns in Africa and Europe alike have their poor and their rich areas. Those who live in Zehlendorf, Dahlem and Wilmersdorf in West Berlin feel superior to those who live in Kreuzberg, Wedding and Tiergarten. Similarly, in Kigali, Muhima and Gakinjoro are for the lower class. It is even worse in other African towns. In Lagos and Nairobi, for example, the poorest live in horrible slums, whereas the elite live in magnificent villas.

This discrimination against the poor by the rich is intolerable. When one looks at some of these villas in Africa, one might come to believe that it is high time for African architects to curb their ambitions and construct cheaper and simpler houses. Some of the houses are so wonderful that I have not even seen the like in Europe! Things cannot go on this way, especially in small countries like Burundi and Rwanda, since large agricultural areas will be commandeered for wonderful villas with large gardens, leaving hardly any land for farming activities.

The idea of basing intellectuals in their places of origin has the advantage that they will approach their tasks in a more disciplined and efficient manner, since they will know the people personally who will benefit from their efforts. They would otherwise be working for the state. What is the state, actually? No president is able to explain what it is. The definition is so abstract that nobody knows for what he is working and sacrificing himself. There is no wonder that people line their own pockets.

In Rwanda, the best government functionaries are the teachers, since they are employed in the schools of their native towns. They take their work seriously because their families and friends keep an eye on them. They are not able to go sick, get drunk, not turn up for work or be lazy so easily, since they will be given the blame if their pupils fail their examinations.

This natural bond between the intellectuals and their people should be exploited in order to improve the morale of the functionaries. The way things are in Africa today does not make sense. State functionaries are employed and transferred at random. A feeling of responsibility cannot develop.

Some people object, by saying that one cannot be a prophet in one's own village. They fear that, for example, a doctor whose patient dies would be accused of intentional malpractice if the doctor were in his native village and there had happened to be a dispute between a member of the doctor's family and one of the patient's family. Such a doctor might also run up against difficulties with the conservative village elders. His close relatives would want the best medicines and the best treatment, and this could generate envy and anger amongst other villagers.

What applies to doctors applies also to the rest of the country's intelligentsia. Indeed, the implementation of intellectuals in their home villages or home towns

could lead to problems. But the existence of the problems and the fact that the organization of the country binds one to one's native village means that one has to apply oneself totally to one's job in order to convince people by means of dialogue that self-interest is not the correct path to take. It is high time that this path is started on because nepotism is partly responsible for the worsening of the general situation in Africa.

There are those who refrain from working in their native villages because of the possibility of such frictions. They need not fear, since problems associated with work exist everywhere, and if one flees from them one will find oneself on the move all the time, always searching in vain for a more peaceful place of work. No, fleeing from problems is not a solution. Responsibilities have to be shouldered, and mastering problems can be a pleasure.

Employing intellectuals in their own villages raises another question. Different areas have developed at different rates in the course of time. Some have too many educated people and some too few. The surplus in one area could go voluntarily to other areas in the role of 'development helpers' for a certain time, thus giving the area with the shortcoming a chance to make up the shortage.

My recommendations of policies of decentralization and maintaining the family fabric should be looked into seriously if Africans do not wish to be beset with the same social problems as industrial countries (as described in chapter 2). Self-destruction through alcohol and drugs, self-hate, suicide, separations, unregulated sexual relationships and, in particular, loneliness, are all avoidable if one has learnt from childhood in one's family to assume a sense of responsibility towards one's fellow-countrymen.

As far as loneliness goes, Africans should note that, once the fabric of the family is destroyed, it is extremely difficult to remedy it. Proof of this is the unsuccessful efforts of young people in the West to solve their problems of loneliness in society by living in communes, similar to Africans with their families. These attempts founder because the relationships between these young people are, actually, artificial and it is difficult for them to adjust after an egoistic upbringing.

The new structures in Africa would make it possible to return to the old form of democracy. One could sort out quarrels, and especially the most private of these, within the family instead of at court, as is the case in industrial countries. The villagers would be able to resume responsibility for themselves, as used to be the case. This would also be a product of political decentralization. The central government, now relieved of many burdens, would be able to concentrate all its efforts and energy on foreign policy, national defence, determining the guiding principals of domestic policy and uniting the whole nation by means of a healthy political awareness.

In this new system the citizens would only elect the representative for their district, and it would be the delegates themselves who would elect the president. The process of electing representatives would, first of all, consist of organizing people in

their respective professions, each of which would elect a committee member. The representatives would be chosen from these committee members, and their constellation in parliament would depend on the stage and direction of development of the country in question; in other words, most of the representatives in Africa would come from work in agriculture and the health service.

Qualified specialists would also be able to give their opinions in parliament, since African politicians often make decisions which do their respective countries more harm than good, due to lack of specialist information.

If, for example, an African president were to visit a breeding farm in Europe and return absolutely thrilled at the idea of breeding similar fine animals in his own country, he might be able to persuade members of parliament that it would be a good idea all the more easily if they had no idea of agriculture and veterinary medicine. If, however, there were ample agricultural and veterinary experts in parliament, they would be able to put forward a professional point of view. Political mistakes are made in Africa because such systems do not exist. One can well imagine that Africa would no longer go hungry if more fanatical agriculturalists were recruited into the political decision-making process.

People in the West talk about democracy and elections all the time, implying that Africans would like to vote at any cost. The people of Rwanda were glad to see Habyarimana abolishing the election of representatives after he had taken power. The people realized their incompetence in electing representatives, since the candidates were not necessarily from the locality. They were often unknown, and to get to know them so quickly was not so easy either. One also had the feeling that they were only campaigning for the positions. When Habyarimana reintroduced elections five years later and called upon the people to elect representatives and a president, they complained again. On the other hand, they moaned about no longer being able to elect district representatives.

This example from Rwanda demonstrates that Africans would accept a well-thought-out system such as the one just described, because they do not vote simply for the sake of voting.

Even if such electoral systems would bring Africa sensible leaders, that would still not be enough to extricate it from its present economic problems. Nyerere often told European journalists about Tanzania's predicament: "What we need are not good ideas but the money to translate them into reality."

Indeed, the oil crisis of 1973 was particularly hard on countries with few raw materials, such as Tanzania. A barrel of oil used to cost two deutschmarks before 1972 and today it costs over thirty six deutschmarks, with the prices of industrial products having risen accordingly. Tanzania has problems not only with its supplies of oil but also with spare parts for its machines.

One sees once again how important cooperation amongst African countries is. Those rich in raw materials should sell oil to their poorer neighbours at a reduced price; in turn, the latter could sell the former agricultural products, which would

certainly be cheaper than importing them from far-away Europe. African countries, by means of a joint strategy, would be able to extract good prices for their raw materials, as did the oil-producing countries for their oil in the seventies.

As far as development is concerned, Africa should not depend too much on help from outside. President Habyarimana often say that Rwanda can be developed only on the strength of its own sons and daughters. These words have to be remembered because nobody would be prepared to help Africa in the case of a real and long-term crisis.

East Bloc countries cannot spare so much because they have their own bottle-necks in supply. The ideology of capitalist countries forces them to destroy products rather than give to the poor in order to restrict supply and thereby force prices up. Western countries' democracy also forces them to be miserly. A party advocating reduction of its citizens' incomes in order to help those in the Third World would have no chance of being elected.

I remember a discussion I had with a student from Chad just after the socialist Mitterand' s electoral success in France in 1981. My friend was of the opinion that the socialist president would do more for African countries. Eight years later, the situation in French-speaking Africa has not altered at all. I knew this would be the case because I knew that even a socialist president would not jeopardize the standard of living of his people just for the sake of development help for Africans. We know, also, how the Germans groan when they are told that a few pfennigs will be taken out of their wage-packets.

As far as development help is concerned, western politicians find themselves in a prison of their own making with their hands tied. That is why they are continually calling for donations to charities.

But donations alone can hardly help Africa, which is why Africans have to help themselves; and, anyway, history has shown us that no country has ever helped another to attain strength. Nobody helped the Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, French, English, Germans, Japanese, Americans or Soviets to the top of the table.

A certain amount of cooperation with industrial countries is, however, definitely necessary, since their experiences can be of use to Africans in some areas of development. But development help, as it has till now been applied, has done more damage than good to Africa.

One seldom hears about such development projects as that of Mother Theresa in the poor parts of Calcutta, which are carried out with great commitment and devotion. They do exist. There are some people from industrial countries who are devoting themselves to improving the lot of suffering people in the Third World. At the same time as criticizing development help in its present form, one should not forget to thank these people.

Their good deeds are, unfortunately, overshadowed by the misdeeds of their fellow-countrymen. Present-day development aid is pushing African countries into

even fiercer economic dependence and mainly serves the purpose of securing new outlets for industrial products of the West.

So many development projects envisage using materials from the industrial countries, and if these are not available, the projects come to a halt. So called self-help projects, which try to draw raw materials locally, remain on the periphery.

Worst of all is when the industries see the chance of making gigantic profit in the developing projects. In the fields of agriculture and medicine, innumerable fertilizers, preservatives and medicaments which are forbidden in their countries of origin, since they are dangerous, are used with the argument that new and superior products are too expensive for poor countries.

Money is the only thing which interests these people. How many people have died of poisoning and how many people are suffering ill effects, while their African leaders are at the same time cultivating friendship and even love between Africans and Whites?

Erler's descriptions in his well-known book *Todliche Hilfe* (23) (Deadly Help) are true and not simply confined to Bangladesh. We in the Third World can only praise this woman who was courageous enough to give up her well-paid job as a consultant at the Ministry of Economic Cooperation because she could not face the inhumanities of development policy any more. If more people in industrial countries who are associated directly or indirectly with development help could resist opportunism and the temptation of thinking only of themselves, development help procedures would have improved a long time ago.

Erler explains her summary resignation in the following way: My decision to turn my back on development help was the culmination of years of experience in development politics and of numerous discussions inside and outside the Ministry of Economic Cooperation. Events which took place during my last official trip to Bangladesh provided the occasion. My only remaining solace, that at least my projects had contributed towards reducing hunger and misery, was exposed as an illusion. I saw how every single element of the projects for which I was responsible, served only to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. In Bangladesh, that can mean the difference between life and death. I could no longer suppress the discernment that development aid only harms those whom it is supposed to help, whole countries as well as individuals. It has to be stopped straight away. The people of the Third World would be far better off without development help.

The western countries are happy when countries of the Third World condemn the Soviet Union for only sending them weapons. This is to be condemned, but western countries are also to be condemned for aiding and abetting the killing and poisoning of human beings in the Third World with dangerous chemical products.

Development help is also a rewarding business for the so-called development experts who are supposed to be more qualified than the so-called development helpers. When one hears how much these development experts get paid, one can only dream of a job as a development expert.

They earn, at least, between 8,000 and 10 000 deutschmarks tax-free per month(24), whereas their African colleagues have to content themselves with 500 deutschmarks a month. In comparison, the chancellor of the FRG earns 12,000 deutschmarks a month. More than half of the western development aid is used to pay these experts. (24)

There is no wonder, therefore, why more and more people in the Third World are starving, although, according to official figures, they are receiving more development aid. Of course these experts would never want to leave 'primitive' Africa to live in the paradise' of the industrial countries.

The competence of white experts in Africa is being increasingly doubted. In Kigali, it is said that their car number plates, which always begin with IT, stand for Imbeciles in Transit, or Icara Turulye (Sit down and let's eat Rwanda up) or Injira Turulye (Come in and let's eat Rwanda up). IT really means Import Temporaire (temporary import) and indicates that the development experts' cars are exempt from customs duties, since they are supposedly only staying in the country for a short time, even though most of them remain for a very long one.

The opinions of Kigali's inhabitants about the development experts are not exaggerated. Apart from the fact that they are paid far too much, most of them spend their time driving around, thus earning themselves the nick-name development tourists.

These development tourists are a special source of annoyance to African intellectuals who have been abroad a long time and who, therefore, know how things are in their countries of origin, and for whom the pretentious behaviour of these experts is immediately transparent. The next pages will show in detail what these experts are all about.

One cannot accuse the development helpers of earning too much, since they have to content themselves with modest conditions. They are, actually, more idealistic in their approach to the work than are the development experts. They must, however, field the criticism that many of them, even though they are unqualified, claim qualifications which they do not possess. For example, many a dental technician calls himself a dentist, and many nurses and teachers pretend to be doctors. Deplorable, such subjugated Africans!

Something else for which they can be criticized is that many of them turned into development helpers on being unable to cope with life in their own countries. Development help can, therefore, be seen as a form of therapy for those who have picked up psychological illnesses in industrial countries. But, is somebody who is ill himself in a position to help others?

It is, further, lamentable, that these development helpers who are tired of civilization try, either consciously or unconsciously, to teach Africans to calculate everything, an art which has only led to their own downfall. These people who are tired of civilization should rather devote their energies to changing their own societies,

difficult though it might be, otherwise every country in the world will turn out that way and there will be no place left to flee to.

Development helpers also believe that their alternative attitude to life endows them especially with sexual generosity, which is not the case at all. Another group of development helpers which go to Africa are those who are without work in times of recession in their own countries. Finally, there are those who turn to development help as an adventure.

The practices of development help are in need of reform. More money should be spent on self-help and less on lining the pockets of the development experts; more qualified, experienced and committed personnel, and less arrogant experts should be sent to developing countries. These suggestions would also be in accordance with the desires of many Europeans who work untiringly and with great commitment in their own countries on the groundwork for development projects.

b. Hunger - a problem with no solution?

All African politicians like to give eloquent speeches about the importance of agri-culture within African economies, with hardly anything ever being accomplished in this direction. Most of the money is spent on the army and for importing luxury goods for the African bourgeoisie.

It is shameful that the so-called 'elite' of Africa can drive Jaguars, Rolls Royces or Mercedes, can look at television and video, and can fly their private jets, while, at the same time, fertile Africa is not even able to feed its children properly.

It is shameful that Africans have to import food from South Africa, the country which they despise so much on the international pulpits.

It is shameful that rich countries such as Nigeria, Gabun, Algeria, Morocco and Egypt, all of whom could expand their agricultural enterprises in order to feed themselves and brother countries, allow themselves to become totally dependent on food imports.

Who controls the quality of these imported foods? Who is in a position to say whether or not these foodstuffs have been impregnated with hormones and other chemical residues ?

The veal which had to be withdrawn from the market in EC-countries in 1980 because growth hormones had been used on the animals, and because of which the Permanent Secretary in Bonn had to resign, was stored in EC-warehouses in Brussels. Who knows if this meat has not been sent to Nigeria, Gabun, Morocco or some-where else in Africa in the meantime?

Those African countries such as the Ivory Coast, who are ostensibly promoting their agriculture, are going about it the wrong way because they are doing it under total dependency on imports. Relying upon agricultural machines means that work comes to a halt if the machines and their spare parts can no longer be paid for.

Employing machines in agriculture is also objectionable on the grounds that the rich, the only ones able to afford them, take away the land from the poor.

There is also room to criticize the fact that precedence is given to the production of export-intended cash crops such as coffee, tea, cocoa, flowers and so forth, rather than to the crops which are needed to feed the indigenous population. Such a policy increases the risk of famine in Africa, and the foreign exchange which is earned does not serve the masses but is used to acquire luxury products from abroad in order to satisfy the desires of the ruling classes.

World opinion alone should be enough to pressure the African bourgeoisie into solidarity with their starving compatriots and to do without luxuries. This should also help to relieve their consciences, for any normal person must surely feel uncomfortable at living it up while, at the same time, those around him are dying of starvation.

A limit to luxury and a restricted defense budget would mean more resources available for investment in agriculture as well as in the economy in general.

The use of artificial fertilizers in African agriculture must also be looked into more closely, not only because they are expensive, but mainly because they cause irreparable damage to the land itself. For instance, Africans are sold fertilizers containing heavy metals, although the various development organizations are aware of this and the development experts say nothing against it, and although the fertilizers have long since been withdrawn from the countries where they were manufactured.

The many preservatives applied to agricultural products, such as dried beans and millet, in order to protect them from vermin, present a further menace to Africans. Again, these are dangerous products which have been banned in their countries of origin.

A typical example is DDT. DDT was banned in Europe more than 25 years ago, as it causes cancer, deposits itself in the fat tissues and can hardly be dismantled by the natural mechanism.

Yet, incredibly, almost every family in Rwanda uses DDT as an agricultural pre-servative. That means every Rwandan runs around with DDT in his body. It is a wonder that they have not all kicked the bucket. The situation must be similar in other African countries.

There is no point in complaining to the chemical companies about the state of things, since the answer is always the same: "Of course, there are better products, but you can't afford them." The brutal arrogance of the chemical and pharmaceutical companies should also provoke Africans into thinking about reorganizing their agriculture.

The new motto should be: More harmony between plants, animals and human beings. The plants would provide fertilizers for themselves and, at the same time, be a source of food for humans and animals alike. The manure and organic waste from the animals would help the plants to grow better, the people would take care of the

plants and animals, and perhaps even use their own organic waste, too, to stimulate plant growth.

Since the discovery of inorganic fertilizers, the old method with organic waste has been totally disbanded.

Countries such as Rwanda complain about having no money for fertilizers for replenishing their soil. But if one goes to the main slaughter house in Kigali one finds piles of horns, bones, hooves and other animal waste products. Why is this waste which contains many minerals, not used to enrich cow manure, put to use?

I know it is taboo, but when one is confronted with starvation, one has to pull all stops out and consider using human excrement as a fertilizer. Why should Africans shy away from doing so when they already consume, from China and some other Asian countries, food produced with the use of human excrement, as also with the use of milk and meat from European cows fed with chicken droppings?

I would also have nothing against planting trees at cemeteries, so as to grow more firewood. Improved cattle-breeding can lead to considerably higher agricultural yields, and the smaller ruminants should not be forgotten either, because they provide good manure.

I am of the opinion that one should, first of all, exhaust all agricultural techniques

If one would also collect all organic waste in African towns as is the case in China in order to use it as fertilizer, one should save much hard currency in Africa and the soil there would be less contaminated.

which are simple, cheap and harmless, before starting to look to Europe for ideas. Specializing and single-crop farming, as practised in Europe and in some areas in Africa, should be avoided, because only certain soil nutrients are used and because some microorganisms, which would otherwise be used by other plants, die, preventing these plants' being grown there later. The progressive impoverishment of the soil, through the lack of certain components, means an ever-increasing dependency on fertilizers.

Stress must be laid on simultaneously cultivating several crops which benefit from each other.

A banana tree, for example, which is a short-rooted tree needing a lot of water could be planted with a tree which has long roots and which would draw the water to within reach of the shorter banana tree roots. Plants which shun the sun could be grown together with other plants which have long branches and large leaves.

A lot of imagination has to be applied not only in agriculture and animal-breeding but also in the techniques for preserving the produce.

As far as preserving food is concerned, Africans first of all have to make use of the old traditional methods. Many of these are easy to apply, cheap and harmless. One example is the method of preserving millet.

First of all it is immersed in water for a week, and then it is stored until it starts to germinate. This is then mixed with ashes from banana leaves and dried. Millet treated in this way is resilient to vermin.

Why not experiment with the use of ashes from banana leaves as a preservative for other seed fruits instead of using DDT?

Another example: the use of chalk instead of DDT has been found to be very effective in Rwanda as a preservative for dried beans. The peasants say these beans are resistant against vermin for more than two years. (25) Why should other African countries, too, not use chalk (if they do not do so already) to protect their beans and maybe other agricultural products? Apart the fact that chalk is cheap and not toxic, the parasites also do not develop resistance against it.

Animal-breeding development projects, too, follow the models of the industrial countries. The big mistake made here is that it is thought that by simply introducing European breeds to Africa, production can be accelerated.

If this way of thinking were to be applied to human beings, the logical conclusion would be to cross strong and robust whites with weak and skinny blacks in order to improve the stature of the weaker blacks. This new race would also be weak and skinny, though, if it had nothing to eat.

The lack of feeding stuff is the main problem of animal-breeding in Africa. Animals in Africa would yield lots of meat and milk if they had enough to eat, just as black people, like Muhammed Ali, can become strong and capable of great achievement if they have enough to eat. Efforts at increasing animal production must, therefore, start with an improvement of feeding stuff production and not with the importation of foreign animal breeds - that leads nowhere.

Feeding stuffs do not need to be imported because they can be produced locally. Animals such as sheep, goats, cows and rabbits, which consume plants inedible for humans, should be concentrated on, and not those animals, such as chickens and pigs, which compete with humans for food.

Foreign breeds of animals are suitable only in very few cases. Most African breeds of cows give very little milk, but crossing, for example, with the Jersey results in a considerably improved milk yield if the cow is fed properly. Here, too, however, the pros and cons have to be weighed up, because most imported animals are vulnerable to tropical diseases. It can easily happen that freshly-imported animals are dead the next day. The cross-breed offsprings, too, are often delicate. Favourable conditions are provided if, for example, the breed in question is subjected to climatic conditions similar to those in Europe, for instance, in mountainous regions.

I would not have the same goals as the Europeans in matters of animal-farming. High performance takes its toll on the health of the animal and the quality of its products, just as it does on human beings.

Mammary gland illnesses caused by milking machines, hoof diseases caused by wet and dirty cowsheds, difficulties while giving birth caused by lack of freedom to move, and milk fever caused by an excess of calcium in the milk around the period of birthing, are but a few examples of sicknesses affecting the modern-day cow. Other animals have similar problems.

As the young German, whom I met at the airport in Berlin remarked, the milk of high-performance cows, the meat of three month old chickens or one year old pigs, the eggs of professional egg-laying hens, all have a different taste to those of animals which have been allowed to live naturally.

A pleasant compromise has to be found as regards the health of the animals and the quality of the taste, between traditional and modern animal-breeding techniques. An average output in an average length of time should suffice, the more so when one considers that the prime function of keeping animals is for their dung. The theory that one definitely needs animal protein has had its day. It has become evident that vegetarians, such as Mahatma Gandhi and other wise men in India, can live in the best of health to a high age.

Compassion for animals induces a sense of respect for them amongst humans. It should never be forgotten that animals are our companions and that they should, therefore, not be exploited to the maximum.

Africans, also, need lessons in compassion for animals. The methods applied in slaughterhouses in Africa are scandalous (when one of them is being slaughtered, the others are allowed to look on) and transportation methods, of chickens for example, equally so. More compassion for animals does not, however, mean that Africans should suddenly go to the other extreme and view animals as substitutes for human companionship, as is often the case in the West.

Animal-breeding development projects were also used in the name of development aid as a means to get to large profits. Breeds common in industrial countries

were always advised. Because the animals get sick, the necessity for medicaments and vets from Europe is ensured. The unrestrained use of many different insecticides in pest control programmes is brutal.

Africans have to recognize their bad habits and improve them. For example, the transport of chickens could be organized in a better way than that depicted here: they are simply tied to the luggage-rack.

The tsetse fly is the most sought after pest in Africa. It infects humans and animals alike with sleeping sickness. This illness affects exotic animals as well as indigenous ones. The tsetse fly is to be found in the bush and in the forest, which means that animals can only be kept on the edge of settlements and at the edge of the desert.

These 'clever' development experts could think of nothing else than spraying whole areas with every kind of insecticide in their efforts to combat the tsetse fly. Nigeria served as the guinea-pig country and other countries, such as Niger, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast were singled out for active campaigns. 200,000 sqkm of Nigeria have been sprayed to date, an area almost as large as West Germany (248,000 sqkm). Helicopters were used on 15;000 sqkm.(Statistics from seminar for Tropical Veterinary Medicine in West Berlin in 1981).

Africa's warm climate presents favorable conditions to insects and other parasites which render life on the black continent difficult. The tsetse fly, especially a problem in the dark areas of the map, makes cattle-breeding in these areas practically impossible.

This was a project of gigantic proportions, the manpower, insecticides and aeroplanes all having to be paid for. But the tsetse flies are still laughing about it. Their resistance to DDT, DIELDRIN, ENDOSULFAN and other insecticides has improved, and, as a result, they can reproduce even more prolifically now.

But those who planned the campaign are not moaning. What they wanted was only money, and they have got it. The losers are the Nigerians who have not only spent millions but, in addition, will not be able to use this large area of land again, for a long time, as these poisons do not disintegrate easily.

On hearing such stories, one starts to understand why Nyerere once said: "I hope that my country doesn't discover oil." Oil-money enables people, indeed, to commit many similar follies, all in the name of progress.

The environment initiatives in West Germany are causing a stir because damage there has exceeded an acceptable level. They can now realize why well-informed African intellectuals have similar worries.

They can also understand the worries that the successes of the environmentalists in industrial countries could mean danger for Africa. Defeated companies and industries could simply be relocated in Africa. The revealed intentions of western countries to export poisonous waste to the Third World justifies this assumption.

It is also being said that the EC would like to dump its radioactive waste in the desert in China. After China comes the Sahara or the Kalahari, and the strong desert winds would take care of the distribution of it throughout Africa. What a rosy future Africa has!

Less dangerous methods could have been implemented in combatting the tsetse fly. There are hardly any tsetse flies in Rwanda because the whole land is consistently under cultivation: the tsetse fly can only proliferate in undisturbed ground. If the money, which has been spent on insecticide campaigns, had rather been used on planned cultivation programmes in bush and forest areas, we would have made a bit more progress.

Only more recently, thoughts have been heard about breeding sterile male tsetse flies which would then be released in the hope that female ones would mainly mate with them. Attempts are also being made to develop breeds of cattle which are resistant to sleeping sickness. These research programmes are praiseworthy because they do not damage the environment.

The technique employed for fighting ticks is also another scandal. Ticks transmit the dreaded East Coast fever. These parasites are bloodsuckers and cling to the animals. To get them off, the animals are driven into dips full of insecticides.

This method is very controversial. After a while the ticks are no longer affected by the insecticides, and moreover the insecticides get through the skin into the fat tissues, and are also deposited in the milk. It can happen that animals die directly after dipping because of strong internal intoxication.

The worst part of it all is that the whole thing is unnecessary for the local animals as long as they remain in their localities, because they are already resistant to such

endemic illnesses. Furthermore, those owning only a few animals could remove the ticks by hand.

The nomads, who frequent the whole of the Sahel-zone in the main, present more of a problem because they possess up to 300 heads of cattle per family and are permanently on the move, searching for feeding stuff. On the move the whole time, the animals are especially vulnerable to diseases they come across in new areas, since they do not possess any natural protection against them.

The nomad problem is a problem which concerns the whole of Africa. Their large herds of cattle contribute to the progressive desertification of Africa through overgrazing and overtrampling of pastures. Politicians in the areas in question are called upon to convince the nomads, by means of intensive dialogue, to settle and keep fewer animals but of a better quality.

Exotic animals are also far more susceptible to illnesses transmitted by ticks. That is why cross-breeding indigenous animals with those of an exotic breed at all costs is very risky.

The use of hormones to increase the quantity of meat in most animals has certainly got to be mentioned when one tackles the topic about scandals in cattlebreeding. It is well-known that the use of hormones on animals in western Europe is completely prohibited. But the same European countries export without scruple hormones for use in meat production in Africa and other developing countries.

The people who buy such meat are cheated in two ways: firstly, because of the unhealthy hormone residues; secondly, because of the high water-content of such meat. One is amazed to see that it shrinks to half its original size after being fried. Maids have even been dismissed because their masters have suspected them of eating the other half.

Africans have to be extremely careful before adopting new means and methods in agriculture. To the question of which organizational structures to apply to African agriculture, there is the answer, according to the African ideology. Put simply, this means that cooperatives should not be forced and large farms should not be formed. The existing agricultural system should simply be improved.

In settled African societies, such as those in southern and central Africa, every peasant family has a piece of land upon which it grows various kinds of food and keeps a few animals. The products are mainly for its own consumption and only a part of the agricultural produce is taken to market where it is exchanged for money in order to buy things which the family cannot produce.

Even though every peasant family has its own bit of land, the agricultural work in the African village is carried out in cooperation with the neighbours. There is a harvest festival. Each of them can eat with the others. Even if one is very hungry and has little to eat, one always gives a little bit to the others as a symbolic gesture. Nothing is worse than to be called a lone eater. If somebody has had a poor harvest this need not to be a cause of worry because he can rely on the help of the others.

West Europeans cannot understand such ways because they calculate and program everything and give little away, for fear of getting their calculation wrong. Each of them brings his own sandwich to work and eats it by himself.

It would be very bad to destroy this spirit of mutual help by forced collectivization of the land because, despite the unique hospitality, every African is proud to have something of his own.

The role of the government in increasing productivity should be to provide the peasants with information of new discoveries in agriculture and to provide necessary medicaments and vaccines etc. which the peasants cannot produce on their own. Voluntary cooperatives should also be encouraged by means of tax incentives.

Work animals instead of tractors should be used for cultivating large areas of land. It is strange that black Africans always choose between machines or hoeing by hand. Machines should be rejected because they are too expensive and because they cause a high degree of dependence on abroad. It would, anyway, be ridiculous for small overpopulated countries, like Rwanda and Burundi, in which every piece of land is made use of, to incorporate machines into their agriculture. To those amongst my fellow-countrymen, who propound so loudly the introduction of agricultural machinery, I ask: "What would you then do with the peasants if you could import machines which can cultivate the whole land in one month?"

When considering introducing work animals or machines in order to make work easier, the question of work as an occupational therapy must always be put first. If need be, everything should be left as it is, if this is the only way of avoiding unemployment.

The attachment of peasants to their work can be seen through the reaction of those who are on a visit to their functionary-children in the city. They cannot just sit around, as do most city-dwellers but prefer to help with the household work and want to return as quickly as possible to their work in the village.

The land is limited, therefore, small agricultural cottage industries have to be introduced in order to occupy those who cannot be accommodated by agriculture.

The soja oil extraction and the marmalade industries in Rwanda demonstrate the fact that complicated technology is not always necessary in order to reduce poverty. Even though only primitive methods are used, these industries function very well and do not burden the environment.

Other examples from other fields provide encouragement to continue with the so-called appropriate technology. If one leaves cow dung in the open it decomposes, releasing methane gas.

If one put this dung into a pit and covered it, leaving only a small opening, one could collect the emitted gas as a fuel. The same thing, by the way, can be done with human excrement. I was able to visit such a successful biogas unit in Byimana (Rwanda).

Up to a third of all firewood could be saved in Africa if the traditional cooking method using three stones, which allow a large part of the heat energy to be lost, were replaced by an oven.

Finally, thoughts have to be directed towards harnessing the energy of the wind and the sun. It must, surely, be possible to make use of this cheap source of energy which does not harm the environment.

These examples show that Africa could improve the quality of life of its inhabitants in many ways, if its gaze were not riveted on the industrial countries and if it did not crave for the same technological advancements.

Each village should have a chain of such small industries. In this case, the peasants would be able to sell their agricultural products to the workers in industry, and both would benefit from and be pleased with the relationship. This dependence on one another would unite the village. A certain degree of autonomy should be given to the latter.

It is high time that the people learn, as indeed was traditionally the case before the government started to intervene, to shoulder the responsibility for their own development and to generate an objective discussion about the need for cooperation as a basic means of survival. This will not work, however, without decentralization and without the dispatching of qualified personnel into the villages, for specialist consultants are necessary for the organization of the modern village.

Since there are regions which have not been so well-endowed with nature, the role of the government would be to direct fiscal money from comparatively rich areas to not-so-rich regions, just as in West Germany some Bundeslander subsidize West Berlin.

While we are talking about taxing rich areas, we might as well say a few words about what should happen to rich people.

I am not among those radical revolutionaries who say that they should be killed because they have pillaged the country. Many Africans are not aware that killing their own intellectuals means an economic loss and a new colonization of their country, since foreigners have to be brought into the country to refill the vacant positions.

I would legally confiscate a large part of their wealth by introducing a property tax, as in Sweden, the country with the highest taxes in the world, with property taxes up to 80%.

The rich of Africa would not be able to complain about having their money, for which they have worked so hard, taken from them. These people have always to remember that they got their riches at the expense of their fellow-citizens who gave their lives during the decolonization wars. They have at all times to be prepared to do the same for their native country.

Indeed, a nation might send its soldiers to the front to defend the country (i.e. to defend also the wealth of the rich), or it might see fit to mobilize the whole population in times of catastrophe (bad weather, earthquakes etc.). This same nation is obliged to appeal to the patriotism of the rich by requiring them to do without luxury articles (Mercedes, villas, jets etc.) in order to combat the worst kind of national catastrophe there could be, that of famine. Patriotism has to hold true for all classes.

There are those who would protest against such measures, arguing that the morale of private enterprises would suffer if they had to pay too much tax.

That is true, but it should be our aim to dampen the exaggerated love of money, an attitude which is in itself not typical of Africans but has been imported from the West. This is proven by the fact that if a typical African gets a job where he earns more money than usual, he does not bother to come to work anymore after his first pay day until his money has run out. He works in order to live and not in order to pile up money, as do the people in the West who, in the same situation, would work themselves to death in order to accumulate capital.

We should, however, take the middle path in matters concerning tax, as indeed in other matters, by which I mean that we should not tax too much because this could have a crippling effect; on the other hand, the formation of a powerful bourgeoisie, as in the West, must be prevented. Such bourgeoisies form A STATE WITHIN A STATE, which means that they control almost everything (the dictatorship of capital).

But let's come back to the subject of agriculture and close it with a few words about the nomads.

The nomadic peoples, by way of exception, will have to alter their ways of life and settle down. They will have to reduce their stocks of cattle and start cultivating crops. They can pass on their deep knowledge of cattle-breeding to the agricultural workers who will, in return, teach them about the cultivation of crops. In this way, Africans will be able to attain their goal of a harmonious life between animals, plants and human beings.

c. Health for all, but how?

The steps which will have to be taken in the world of veterinary medicine in order to improve the performance and health of farm animals are similar to those which will have to be taken in the sphere of human medicine.

Medicine in Africa follows the western pattern. Fine hospitals and modern health centres are built, doctors are trained at universities all over the world, nurses at the best nursing schools available, and Africa waits for medicines to arrive from the West; if these do not come, everything grinds to a halt and the people die in thousands.

This kind of health policy, known as curative medicine, is not suited to Africa. It cannot be paid for, induces dependence on abroad and partly leads to further health problems. Africans should adopt the motto prevention is better than cure. Every African should be given health-training, which would enable him to prevent illness by means of preventive steps.

Industrial countries must also attach an ever-increasing importance to preventing

illnesses, since the hope and trust which have been accorded modern medicine ever since the plague and smallpox were conquered and since the successes of, for example, Robert Koch (tuberculosis 1882), Rontgen (x-ray, Nobel Prize 1901) and Alexander Fleming (penicillin, Nobel Prize 1945), is being misplaced from day to day.

Modern medicine is unable to heal chronic illnesses. High blood pressure, rheumatism, epilepsy, cancer and multiple sclerosis remain unsolved illnesses in spite of intensive and expensive scientific research and there is no sign of success as yet. 'The medicaments so far used have very strong side-effects.

No year goes by in Europe without the publication of a list of medicaments which are to be withdrawn from circulation because of their dangerous side-effects. Before agreeing to a long and drawn-out course of treatment one has to decide whether one would prefer to die of that illness or rather of the medicines which one has to take.

Technical medicine is also unable to do anything for illnesses of the spirit which have, themselves, been caused by the mechanization of the world, as noted in the second chapter.

Many civilization-illnesses could be avoided if 'civilized' human beings were willing to make certain changes to their modern life-style.

Cancer will not be conquered by more expensive research but by consistently carried-out environmental policy. Illnesses of the circulatory system would decrease if people had more exercise, paid more attention to what they ate and did not live in a state of stress so much. Illnesses of the spirit would also decrease if methods of upbringing were not so egoistic. If as much money were spent on propagating mutual love as is spent on propagating love of consumer articles, people would be far happier. Many European doctors, who take their work seriously and who have other things apart from money in mind, are extremely frustrated because they know that they can only achieve real success if important structural changes take place in society.

Another reason why Africans ought to switch over to preventative medicine is to avoid having to take medicines which have already been prohibited in the West.

In the December, 1983, edition of DER UBERBLICK a quarterly publication of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienste (AGKED), there was a report about dangerous medicaments which are on sale in the Third World with Kenya as an example. The author criticized, amongst other things, the use of Cofta, Mexaform and Dianabol.

Cofta, one of the three cough-mixtures which are available at all kiosks in Kenya, contains chloroform. The official reason for the addition of chloroform is the improvement of the taste of this otherwise bitter cough medicine, but in reality, the reason is its anesthetizing effect. The numbed cough-mixture takers are happy that they are no longer disturbed by coughing and that they can sleep better. They do not realize that consequential damage is done to heart and liver.

Mexaform, taken against diarrhoea and manufactured by the Swiss pharmaceutical concern Ciba Geigy, damages the central nervous system. In Japan, in 1972,

a court of law sentenced the company to paying approximately 150 million US dollars in compensation to over 10,000 afflicted people. This medicament is still being manufactured in Kenya by the Kenya Swiss Chemical Company, an offshoot of Ciba Geigy, and sold without prescription.

Dianabol, a hormone-compound stimulating growth, also a product of Ciba Geigy, has had the reputation for over 20 years in Kenya of being a wonder drug which not only stimulates development in children with growth defects but also stimulates the appetite. Up until its withdrawal in 1982, it was on sale as a vitamin C compound with additional hormones, and intended primarily for Kenyans who were suffering from lack of appetite. This drug is unsuitable for combatting growth defects which are caused by hunger. It also has very bad side-effects. Possible consequences of the use of hormones are: a permanent change in sexuality; stagnation of growth; anaemia; an increased risk of tumours of the liver.

One finds such medicaments not only in Kenya, but also in most Third World countries, especially in those which are in the western camp.

In order to document the inconsiderate doings of the producers of chemical products and medicaments in the Third World, the Swedish journalists Anna-Maria Hagerfors and Thomas Michelsen undertook a journey in East Africa in 1981. They spoke with doctors, representatives of the pharmaceutical industries, visited farmers, leaseholders and managements of large plantations, interviewed chemists, biologists and agriculturists. They extended their information with statements from organs of the UN, from aid organisations and consumer protection organisations. They compiled the results of their study in a very commendable book (I do not know if an English version exists) with the German title GIFTEXPORT/Pharmaka and Pestizide fur die Dritte Welt (26)(Poison export/Medicaments and pesticides for the Third World). The original title is Gift over tredje varlden, 1983. All chemicals in use in East Africa and their dangers are thoroughly discussed.

In the foreword, it can be read the following: Only for Export Medicaments as well as preservatives which multi-international firms sell to the Third World are marked with this direction. Poisons whose use have been abolished in the industrial countries are offered to the poorer countries and sold with the meanest methods of marketing

The pharmacies are full of old, useless, unnecessary and expensive medicines. In Tanzania and the Sudan, about 600 people die yearly from the side-effects of only one of the innumerable dangerous medicaments, which go over the counter without any warning

In the Kenyatta-Hospital in Nairobi infants are brought in now and again with tablet poisoning mainly caused by an overdose of aspirin, which is regarded as a cure for everything and is sold in bars and kiosks. In Kenya alone, hundreds of people die yearly of aspirin poisoning.

According to WHO, only 20 preparations in a developing country are indispensable. The total list of basic medicaments consists of 220 preparations but in the Sudan

The first big drug scandal in Europe occurred in the sixties, when women who had taken a sedative called thalidomide (Contergan) gave birth to deformed babies. There are, of course, children who have been deformed due to such drugs in Africa and in other Third World countries. They remain unidentified as such, or their deformities are attributed to evil spirits.

alone, for example, 11,000 medicaments are registered. The developing countries spend up to 60% of their health budget to buy medicaments from the West...

The pharmaceutical industries threaten: "If we can't sell you slimming tablets, appetite stimulants and vitamin tablets, you wouldn't get vital medicaments from us. " They do not hold back from threatening with the stopping of development aid from their countries...

It is scandalous that poor people, in an effort to help their sick friends and relatives, have sold their last possessions in order to procure these medicines, without realizing what additional damage they cause.

Those most at risk from fraudulent medicines and unhealthy food articles from the West are those belonging to the upper and middle classes, even if they believe themselves to be well-informed about everything, because they are the ones with the money to buy all these things.

There is no cause for malicious pleasure on the part of other citizens, however, because this wasted money could have been put to better purposes, for instance, in initiating a programme of preventive medicine.

The body has at its disposal a whole range of defence mechanisms against intruding pathogen agents. The completeness of these mechanisms could be compared with an army. Just as an army is divided into the air force, navy, infantry and military counter-intelligence with special units such as the border-police, the paratroopers and the anti-terror unit, so is the body's defence system divided into various departments with their various tasks. One has to differentiate between those mechanisms which protect against all pathogenic agents indiscriminately, the so-called unspecific defence system, and those which specialize in only certain kinds of pathogenic agents, the so-called specific defence system.

Devices, such as hair in the nose and slime on all mucous membranes which are able to prevent pathogenic agents from entering the body by pure mechanical means, chemical devices which are present in all bodily fluids and destroy various germs as does the acidity in the gastric juice, and the natural germs on all body skin which serve similar purposes, are all part of the unspecific defence system.

The specific defence system consists of special means of defence which the body produces on contact with specific germs. They are only of use against these certain pathogenic agents. If the tuberculosis pathogenic agent, for example, attempts to enter the body, the body will, first of all, mobilize the unspecific defence system while simultaneously attempting to organize special units against the agent as a reserve force, just as in the army the best soldiers are kept back ready for the crucial battles.

If the body is quick enough in organizing the special units it can win the fight. In any case, these special units are an extra help. This is why it is easier to get over an illness if one has already had it before. It is not so bad to keep on going down with the same illness because this keeps the body fit and keeps the earlier pathogenic agents in check.

Preventive measures should consist of reducing contact with pathogenic agents to a minimum and strengthening the specific and unspecific defence systems.

Hygiene in Africa today means incorporating sewage-systems not only into towns but also into village-planning. It also means combatting parasites not only with chemicals, but first and foremost by biological means (for example, killing the tsetse flies through tilling the land in Rwanda).

Exaggerated personal hygiene by overwashing oneself, as some modern African women do, can endanger the body's defence system (they spend as much time in water as do fish and crocodiles). This destroys the protective layer of acid on the skin, thus allowing pathogenic agents to enter the body. A little bit of dirt is healthy.

Many different cosmetics are also dangerous to the body.

Skin-lighteners are a clear example of how creams and soaps can contain serious health risks. For ten years doctors at the Kenyatta-Hospital in Nairobi have been certifying an ever-increasing number of Kenyan female patients with malfunctioning kidneys, all of whom had been using skin-lighteners (Der Oberblick, December, 1983). Such skin-lightening creams can also lead to a progressive destruction of the skin.

Products which sleek out the hair or which curl the hair so that it looks as if the person has been standing in the rain, must all be viewed with suspicion. The use of all possible beauty products is also responsible for the increasing number of African women with beards.

African women should distance themselves from all these dangerous products and be content with their natural looks, which are not bad anyway, and use simple and proven kinds of soaps to wash themselves. Following fashions has its attendant dangers. One should not make a guinea-pig of oneself!

Only orderly personal hygiene can help prevent illnesses. Strengthening the unspecific defence mechanisms, among other things, through one's diet and deliberate hardening of the body, can also help.

The food diet plays a large part in health matters because not all the means of defence can be built up if the basic ingredients are not there. In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, mistakes are made in the quantity as well as in the quality of food.

People in industrial countries eat far too much. Their bodies receive all that is necessary but become burdened down by the fat which deposits itself. Many people cannot walk properly because they are too heavy. Many, especially the old, have become bow-legged through weighing too much. Many of them cannot breathe properly because their big stomachs inhibit the action of the lungs, as is the case with pregnant women. Doctors do not enjoy doing operations on the intestines if the patients are fat. They have to search their way through the mass of fat tissues in order to get to the diseased organs. Fat operation wounds also heal badly. The excess of certain fats, such as cholesterol, also means more stress on the circulation system.

The upper class in Africa is well-fed, but, even though they might proudly point

Many black women dream of becoming white women. They, therefore, do everything possible to imitate them. For instance, they lighten their skin or smooth their hair with cosmetics.

to their large stomachs as signs of affluence, their bodies are suffering from the excess of fat all the same, just as in the 'civilized' world. The remaining people can be roughly divided into two groups: those in areas threatened by famine, who not only have to improve the quality but also the quantity of their food intake; and those, mainly, in Central Africa, where there is ample food and where efforts have to be concentrated mainly on improving the quality, such as Rwanda.

The Duke of Mecklenburg, Adolf Friedrich, at the end of his research journeys into Central Africa during the colonial period, described Rwandan agriculture as follows: Rwanda is the most interesting country of all the former German East-African protectorates, and indeed of the whole of Central Africa, to which it ethnographically and geographically belongs. A land of milk and honey with cattle-breeding,

bee-keeping and good harvests. A densely populated hilly country, of good quality agriculturally speaking, with an uncomparably fresh and healthy climate. An area of fertile soil with many inexhaustible water courses, offering prospects to the white settler. (27)

What the Duke wrote is still true even if the soil is a little bit older. Indeed, almost everything grows and prospers in Rwanda, as in some other parts of Africa. Nevertheless, a survey of the whole of Rwanda would show that many people still have deficiency symptoms, even if they have enough to eat.

They suffer a lot from bleeding gums, which is a sign of a vitamin C deficiency. Their eyes inflame easily, pointing to a lack of vitamin A. Their bodies are poorly developed and they fall ill easily, pointing to a general lack of vitamins. Vitamins are indispensable to the body's metabolism, though, and have to be taken in with food because the body cannot produce them.

Rwandans suffer from a lack of vitamins, in spite of the fact that their food is rich in vitamins, because they prepare it the wrong way. Cooking everything destroys the vitamins, which are sensitive to heat. Fruit could provide them with a vitamin intake. But the importance of fruit is not recognized and men insist that fruit, such as bananas, are only for women and children. They do not think much of lettuce, saying that it is for the ruminants.

Similar prejudices exist in other African countries. Africans have to depart from the mentality that the best thing to eat is meat with fufu (cassava-flour-pure or manioc-flour-pure). This dish is found throughout Africa and not only does it contain no vitamins, but it also produces goitre. The incidence of goitre in parts of Zaire, where fufu is eaten practically every day, is a prime example. Fufu hardly contains any iodine.

Food thinking must be reformed in Africa and the recent discoveries of science, which deals only with the absolute needs of the body, should be taken into account.

Reform does not mean that Africans should strive to imitate the food habits of the whites, which is, unfortunately, happening in many countries.

For example, sweet-manufacturing industries are springing up all over Africa. The upper class eats just about all the sweets which are available in industrial countries, and, what is more, they are proud of it.

Those who cannot afford them should not be too sad, because they are circumventing a lot of tooth-ache. Every year, billions are spent at dentists' (in West Germany, according to the Barmer Youth Magazine, it was 15 billion DM in 1985), and these are all self-inflicted injuries. To look for a white with good teeth is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Dentistry is destined to be the profession of the future in Africa, since Africans all want to destroy their fine teeth by eating what the white people eat. In twenty years' time they will be a toothless people because they cannot afford dental treatment. But things do not have to come to this if sweets are left alone. That should not be too difficult, especially for those who are not used to sweets.

Sugar is sweet, but tooth-ache and obesity are bitter!

Africans do not need to drink tea or coffee, either; millet gruel is more nutritious and tastes nice. They would save a lot of money and remain healthier if they were to do without foreign drinks. Indigenous African drinks are just as good as French champagnes and British whiskies.

Smoking, at least among children and women, is not an integral part of tradition in Africa. I cannot understand why so much money is spent on the cigarette and tobacco industry in Africa, especially in times when the health risks of smoking are becoming so apparent. The younger generation starts smoking because it thinks that it is a sign of progress. This has to be stopped before it is too late. Many of these smokers do not realize that their lungs turn the same colour as their fingernails and teeth do.

A correct food intake, from the qualitative as well as from the quantitative point of view, is an important contribution to a strong unspecific defence mechanism. Of no lesser consequence is conscious body inurement.

Africans think that real life consists of sitting around, letting others do the work, eating well and drinking well, and riding around in a car in the company of beautiful women. This parasitical attitude can only be condemned, not only because of its exploitative nature but also because of its unhealthiness.

The rich in Kigali are taken aback on hearing about the pains of goutte (gout), whereas the poor laugh about it. Goutte is a metabolic disease whose main symptoms are painful swollen articulations. In Africa, it is mainly observed in those whose only exercise consists of walking about their house and who otherwise go everywhere by car and eat too much.

It has also been observed that the delivery problems of African women increase in step with the increase in the level of 'civilization'. Many of the beautiful women in African cities, who are extremely arrogant and totally westernized, have a long scar reaching from the pubis to the navel. This scar is not a tribal marking: it is from a Caesarean operation. At the other end of the scale, peasant women hardly notice their pregnancy. They give birth mostly without complications, quite often at home and after a day's work. Similar comparisons can be made in the animal world.

Traditionally kept African animals give birth more easily and with far fewer complications than imported or domesticated animals. Wild animals can reproduce wonderfully without enlisting the help of a vet, so wonderfully that their numbers sometimes have to be culled, as happened in Sweden in 1980.

One can see how healthy natural living is by observing simple peasants (those in famine areas not included, of course): their life expectancy is greater than that of the 'civilized' Africans.

Of course, not every African can be a peasant or an artisan, but this natural and healthy way of life should be aspired to, whatever. One should do a lot of sport, such as cycling, which is very beneficial and which I would like to see popularized in Africa.

How nice Africa would be if the people would get out of their cars and on to bikes!

Millions could be saved and put to use in agriculture. Social relations would be improved, because car-owning and car-driving induces a sense of superiority. Just think how many lives could be saved which would otherwise be lost through traffic accidents in Africa! Children would be able to play on the streets again, and women, who were dependent on the whims of their menfolk for a lift, would be released. The polluted air of African cities, worse than that of the cities of industrial countries, could be breathed again. The threat of desertification in Africa from acid rain caused by exhaust emission would disappear; and, finally, would not the sudden appearance of lots of Africans on bicycles be romantic! It would be said that the Africans had finally come to their senses. Nyerere's dream that Africans should ride bicycles rather than drive Mercedes-Benz would be fulfilled.

Cycling would be feasible in Africa because most areas are flat and, even though mountains exist in some African countries such as Rwanda and Burundi, most towns are built on flat places. Cycling would not be a sign of extreme poverty: nobody ridicules the Chinese, the Dutch or the Danes who have adopted the bicycle. They do not feel inferior to Germans, for example, who race along the motorways at terrific speeds.

Cars would, of course, be necessary for long journeys, but short distances could be covered by bicycle easily enough. The idea of cycling should catch on amongst the population. It would simply have to be introduced in a subtle way and the obedient Africans would soon be convinced. Burkina Faso under Sankara, the country with more bicycles and small motorcycles than elsewhere in Africa, is a good proof that what I am saying about cycling is not an illusion.

Yoga is another sport which I would recommend for bodily fitness. I have already stated that developing countries should not orientate themselves only towards industrial countries in their efforts at progress. They should take also a cue from other developing countries. They could adopt the yoga practices of the Indians. Yoga consists of many bodily exercises which seem to be like gymnastic ones. They differ, however, in that they are conducted slowly, with a high degree of concentration and under the application of certain breathing techniques. If everything centres on the concentration, it is referred to as meditation. Autogenous training in western countries is a form of meditation. The fact that yoga is spreading throughout the whole world and that more and more books on yoga are being published in various languages shows how effective this Indian discipline of the body is.

Yoga strengthens not only the unspecific bodily defence mechanisms but also the spirit and has healing properties. Yoga cannot liberate one from one's worries, but it can provide enough energy to look for solutions to problems. Meditation, in particular, leads to spontaneous inner pleasure and lightness. Almost every chronic illness can be healed, or at least relieved, by yoga. I say this not only from the descriptions of various yoga-books but also from my own experiences.

One should not expect miracles of yoga straight away, however. It takes a lot of

hard work - weeks for some people, months for others before the effects of yoga are noticed. By then, one has become a devoted disciple.

Yoga would be a good sport for poor people as one needs only one's body and lots of time; and time is in abundance in developing countries. The people there could simply replace some of their time which is normally dedicated to prayer by yoga.

There are certainly many other inexpensive sports which can easily be taken up and which would serve the purpose of hardening the body. This would lead to a

A natural way of life is commendable, for health reasons also. Unlike their European counterparts, natural African women hardly ever experience complications when giving birth. This woman who is bruising manioc gave birth two weeks later without complications.

strengthening of the unspecific defence mechanisms which would, in turn, act as a barrier against pathogenic agents.

The specific defence mechanisms are strengthened through daily contact with all kinds of pathogenic agents. Vaccination campaigns against certain illnesses would act as a booster.

Vaccinations can be very useful, but the way in which such campaigns are carried out in Africa needs to be improved: a lot of money is wasted with all too little effect. The reason for this is that specific antibodies are composed of proteins, but if a person is suffering from a lack of these already, vaccination cannot help in producing further antibodies. There is, therefore, no point in vaccinating under-fed people. The best vaccination is good food.

Orderly hygiene and good specific and unspecific defence mechanisms can successfully ward off most illnesses. The longer life expectancy in China after the revolution, as in industrial countries, is explained mainly by progress in hygiene and dietetics and only to a lesser extent by actual medicine. If all possible precautions were to be taken in Africa, whilst bearing in mind the harm which the modern style of living can do, there would be considerably fewer illnesses and diseases.

It can still happen that a person is taken seriously ill even though everything possible has been undertaken in the way of precautions. Then is the time to turn to curative medicine i.e. to go to the doctor. What kind of doctor? The traditional one or the modern one?

The ideal solution would be a mixed practice where a modern doctor cooperates with a traditional one. It is a fact that modern doctors can neither recognize nor treat some illnesses. Very often only the traditional doctor in Africa is able to treat cases of poisoning, as only he knows the antidotes. The traditional doctor can often make more headway than the modern doctor with psychologically-ill patients. Women suffering from sterility have often been unsuccessfully treated in modern European clinics, only to return to Africa and be cured by the witch-doctor.

There are some illnesses, however, where modern medicine is superior. The witch-doctor is helpless where surgery is absolutely necessary. Broken bones, tumors, stones in certain organs, and some other mortal diseases can all be treated better by the modern doctor.

Not all the medical apparatus to be found in industrial countries is always necessary, contrary to what many African medical students think. One can often get by with simple equipment.

The ideal of cooperation between traditional and modern doctors, who will complement each other, is, so far, only theoretical. In reality, they are at each other's throats. In this rivalry, doctors trained in modern methods hold certain trump cards because Africans overestimate the abilities of the white men's medicine (people even prefer a white doctor to a black one even though the latter might know more). That is why many modern black doctors behave arrogantly towards witch-doctors.

This arrogance is similar to that of modern doctors in Europe towards nature-

healers. A report on the first channel of West German television in 1983 called Patient healed, health insurance does not pay showed unequivocally that treatment by natural remedies can be successful, particularly in the treatment of chronic illnesses which modern medicine cannot help.

The case of a woman was taken whose leg had swollen up so much after she had been slightly injured that the doctors were considering amputation. Her husband was against this and the decision was made to fly the patient by helicopter to another hospital which employed natural remedies. It proved to be worth the effort: the treatment was successful and the woman could keep her leg. The family had to fight against the health insurance company for reimbursement of the treatment costs, however, because they recognize only official medicine.

In the same report, similar successes in the treatment of patients who had been on high-blood-pressure tablets for years were shown.

A certain amount of progress has been made in the sphere of cooperation between traditional and modern medicine in some countries, such as Tanzania, Madagascar, Ghana and Rwanda. More and more modern doctors are realizing the importance of elements of traditional African medicine, partly because they feel cheated by the pharmaceutical concerns and by their harmful medicaments, and partly because of the dependence on the countries which manufacture these medicaments.

Even the pharmaceutical industry has realized the importance of natural medicine and is researching hard into it; a fact which followers of natural medicine in the Third World are not enthusiastic about.

Dr. Lozoya, the director of the Unit of Biomedical Research in Traditional and Herbal Medicine in Mexico City appealed to researchers in this field in the Third World not to sleep away this development. In his article in *Wealth Health*, June 1983 with the title *The future is learning from the past* he writes the following:

The new era of natural products, of 'biodrugs', has begun, and it is the pharmaceutical combines which are developing much of the relevant research technology. For those of us investigating this field in the developing countries, the question arises: will we in future have to spend scarce currency on reimporting our own plants and extracts? Are we going to lose the battle once again?

In the middle of the present century, when the great pharmaceutical industry was growing up, we lacked the technology and scientific knowledge to manufacture drugs. Our role was limited at best to providing raw plant materials. Today it is in the countries of the Third World that the tradition of using medicinal plants survives in its least adulterated form, and this makes it easier for us to identify the plants which need to be scientifically evaluated. Drugs of the types that are now being studied by modern science could be manufactured with the level of technology already attained in many developing countries. All the evidence shows that the gulf between traditional medicine and scientific medicine is at last beginning to close and need no longer be regarded as an obstacle in the path of scientific progress.

In their search for cures to illnesses these young African doctors should not restrict themselves to traditional and modern medicine alone. They should make use of the healing properties of yoga as well as learning from nature-cure practitioners in the industrial countries. And is there any reason why they should not investigate the possibilities of Chinese medicine?

It is no secret that many chronic illnesses can be relieved if not cured and that many operations, such as the Caesarian operation, can be carried out without anaesthetization and painfree by means of the Chinese needle-medicine - the so-called acupuncture.

The Chinese working in the hospital in Kibungo (Rwanda) cannot complain about a lack of success with their acupuncture. Their activities have become well-known and there are always long queues outside their practices. Those people who used to suffer from permanent head-aches are especially grateful to them.

'World Medicine' together with maximal efforts in the field of the prevention of sickness should lead to a mastering of most medical problems in Africa without great financial cost. Health offices should be moved to the villages wherever possible, so that the doctors can be responsible for their own people. The organization of health matters in this way would be more efficient than either a centralized or a private system.

When one hears about the slovenliness in state hospital in Kigali, one can only turn to the private sector. A nurse on night-duty supposedly told another nurse in the restroom to see to a patient who was in his death throes. A while went by, and the nurse still had not moved. When her colleague spoke to her again, she replied in a particularly inhuman way: "If the patient was in his death throes a little while ago, he must have kicked the bucket by now." Cases also come to light now and again of instruments and cotton-wool's being left in a patient's abdominal cavity after an operation.

A purely private health service does not necessarily lead to better treatment.

In West Germany, doctors get paid according to the number of patients they treat, thus leading to overcrowded practices. The average patient gets only a few minutes of attention, and it is no wonder that doctors produce false diagnoses, as in my case. I was not the only victim of this profit-orientated medicine; other friends had similar experiences, among them a Rwandan who was told that he had cancer of the bones although, in actual fact, he only had a broken bone which was taking a long time to heal.

Rumours of private hospitals with financial troubles, where operations are carried out on corpses in order to collect the fees from the health insurance company, show that a private health system financed by insurance companies also has its flaws.

Corruption scandals involving doctors and chemists conniving to extract more money from the health insurance company by handing out cheap medicines, although expensive ones are written on the prescription, are further evidence of the

Who knows that there is acupuncture for animals too? Acupuncture not only for animals but also for human beings would help Africans to reduce costs in medical service.

weaknesses of the West German health system (the court case in Bochum in 1983).

The health system which I am recommending for African countries has the advantage that the citizens would be able to keep an eye on their doctors and that the doctors would, therefore, think twice before doing anything silly. The doctor would not dare prescribe prohibited medicines for his fellow-citizens or order hospital equipment for his own private use. This system would promote human relationships between patient and doctor, and the patients would not just be cyphers, as is often the case in industrial countries.

Such a system would also make sense in veterinary medicine. The vet would have better contact with the animals and their owners, leading to a greater sense of fulfilment. The above-mentioned steps for improving the health system can all, generally speaking, be applied to veterinary medicine.

Better hygiene and food diets should guarantee animal health and production. The best way of hardening up animals is to put them to work. Animals should assist the farmers with their farmwork and transport. In the case of animal illness a lot of money can be saved by first making use of traditional cures and similar natural remedies borrowed from foreign countries. Acupuncture can also be used on various races of animals.

d. Perception is all it needs

Success in veterinary medicine, human medicine, agriculture and other branches of life can only be attained in Africa if people know what they are working towards. That is why education has just as important a part to play in the development of Africa as have agriculture and medicine. But here, reforms are also overdue.

Africans should not get complexes if white people scoff at them for not being able to read and write or if 'civilized' Africans say that they have a culture superior to theirs.

These Africans who can neither read nor write are not stupid at all. They might know little about international politics, but their counterparts in industrial countries, who can read and write, often know less than they do.

Almost every African peasant, for instance, knows the name of his president. In Europe, one meets people who do not know the name of their president. So much fuss is made in West Germany about the Berlin Wall that one would assume that all white people are sufficiently informed about it. There are enough North Americans, however, who think that the Wall is somewhere in France. Africans' admiration for life in the West, as has previously been mentioned, is matched by the admiration of those in the East for the western paradise even though they can read and write.

There are many more examples of similar attitudes held by both white and black, in spite of the ability of the whites to decipher written signs.

Old people in Africa often do not trust the banks and prefer to keep their money at home. In Germany, one is often amazed to hear of break-ins in the homes of old people and the thief making off with up to 100 P00 DM. Just as in Africa, these people keep their money at home because they do not trust the banks either.

Africans believe that medicines can best be administered by syringe and that tablets and other methods have less effect. As a vet in West Berlin, one comes across similar opinions. The old ladies who bring their dogs to the vet insist on doctor's administering an injection, not only tablets and juices. In order to set the dog owners' minds at rest, the vet administers not only the required tablets but also an injection of a salt solution. As could be expected, the old ladies return a few days later to thank the doctor and say how helpful the injection was.

Whites should not scoff at Africans who cannot read nor write, not only because they are not necessarily stupid, but also because there is a lot of illiteracy in their own countries also. 1% of West Germans, 600,000 people, are illiterate.

It is even worse in the USA. According to recent investigations by Jonathan Kozol, which have been published in his book *Illiterate America*(28), there are 30 million American adults who are illiterate - 30% of the adult American population. The USA is the 40th, out of a total of 159 countries which belong to the UNO, in the matter of illiteracy.

In view of the high rate of illiteracy one might ask whether it is at all possible to refer to democracy in the USA, if so many people are excluded from the elections. There is no doubt that illiterates have a harder time in 'paper countries' (which is what the industrial countries are) than do their counterparts in the Third World.

The masses in Africa could assume more self-confidence in their relationships with 'civilized' Africans. Even though they have no idea of white culture, they are the embodiment of a whole wealth of African culture.

There used to be a very famous musician in Rwanda called Sebatunzi. He used to play fine original music. It would be foolish to dub this man stupid simply because he could barely read or write and could hardly speak any French.

The power of the average African memory is illustrated by the way in which the history of African countries is passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, and the old folks remember every detail. Modern man cannot keep pace; he needs, as the advertisements on German television tell him, a potion such as Voltax in order to get rid of his forgetfulness.

The modern African man cannot compete with his fellow-countrymen in the emanation of dignity, even though his fine clothes give him a tidy appearance. Since the death of Gashakamba, the old man of our village, nobody has been able to exercise authority over the village inhabitants. Apart from being able to read and write, this man had no other formal education. His upright and decent behaviour as well as his wisdom kept the whole village together, and everybody had respect and trust in him. African intellectuals get their own way with the people by using strategic manoeuvres and lies which they have learnt in industrial countries and not by means of persuasion

as practised by the old sages. When such people lose their positions they are looked upon-with contempt and treated accordingly.

The African masses should be proud of being able to speak their native languages, in contrast to their intellectuals. These people who have learnt many languages are no longer able to speak their native language properly, and the language which they speak is nothing but a hodgepodge of several languages.

These African intellectuals no longer know where they belong. When they are in the company of whites they praise the mentality of the Africans (where I am from it is like this), and when they are in the company of their fellow-countrymen they allude to the white men's culture in order to show that they are something special.

On the subject of love and human relationships these 'primitive' people are exemplary, even if their women do not dress according to the latest fashions in Paris and Rome, even if couples do not feel the need to demonstrate their love in public by kissing, and even if they do not walk hand in hand along the street as intellectuals might do in imitation of whites.

Justice in Africa has not increased at the same rate as have the number of Africans who have learnt all possible laws by heart in various countries throughout the world, and if these intellectuals continue to govern their countries with foreign cultures there is no reason to suppose that the situation will improve.

Despite the praise, the masses of Africa also need a certain amount of enlightenment in order to make their way through today's world of increasing international complexity.

As far as popular education is concerned, I would not spend a penny on teaching adults to read and write. I would devote all my attention to the young. If they learn to read and write, their parents and relatives will do so too, provided that efforts are made to keep the family intact. I can still remember as a school-boy reading the newspaper out loud in front of grown-ups in our village. The revolution of 1959 is, at least in part, a tribute to this newspaper information.

Village gatherings have to take place regularly, just as they did in earlier times, in order to discuss in more depth what has been read as well as other matters. In this way, the masses can be educated at little cost. One has to pay attention to the quality of the newspapers, of course, and gossip-papers, which make fools out of the people, and too many different newspapers should be avoided.

Three or four reasonable newspapers in a country should be enough, and more only serve to confuse the people. Public discussions should serve to clarify, among other things, questions of religion and women's emancipation. Many white women believe that African women are oppressed and need to be liberated.

Anybody who goes to West Africa, however, will be astonished to see how free women are there and to witness the power they possess in society. Not only do they carry out most of the agricultural work, they are also the ones who dispose of the

yields. The markets are theirs, and they can buy what they want to with the money which they have made. There is no trace of oppression by their menfolk. These women in so-called matriarchal societies, such as in some areas in Ghana, where women have the say in family matters, are more emancipated than their European counterparts who can only talk about emancipation. In patriarchal societies, such as in most East African countries, women might have less say than those in West Africa, but they are not as oppressed as the outsider might think.

Many aspects of a society can only be understood after one has lived in it for a long time. The first two chapters have shown how Africans understand the whites only after they have been living in their countries for several years. The big mistake which the whites make is to judge everything according to their own standards and ways of thinking.

One can therefore understand the behaviour of German animal protectors, who flew to the Phillipines, rescued dogs from the slaughter house and brought them home with them. They were glad to be able to save these animals from slaughter, and did it because the dog is the favourite pet in the country where they come from and is not to be slaughtered or eaten. How would they react if Indians were to come to German slaughter houses and start loading cows into aeroplanes in order to protect them from nasty German cow-eaters? Cows are holy in India and are neither slaughtered nor eaten; there are even homes for old cows. It would also be narrow-mindedness on the part of the Germans to be enraged if a tourist from China were to look at a nice fat dog on an old lady's lap and say how nice the dog would taste. Dogs are a source of meat in China.

Different countries, different customs, according to a German proverb. This say-ing should also hold good in assessing the situation of women in other countries, and all the more so if one does not know anything about life there.

In patriarchal societies of Africa, men have their own ways of showing respect for women. It should not be forgotten that traditional African society protects the weak, and nobody can dispute the fact that women are physically weaker than men.

This regard for the weak means that hard work, such as chopping wood and build-ing houses is reserved for men, and special consideration is given to women during pregnancy. It is usual in Rwanda that women lie on the side of the bed nearest the wall and men on the side nearest the door, so that the men can best confront burglars.

A man who hits his wife is not exulted and encouraged to continue but treated as an outcast by other members of the family. In the case of serious family quarrels in Rwanda, women do not flee to a Frauenhaus (home for battered women) as they do in Europe, but go to their parents or parents-in-law. The husband is punished by the whole family if it turns out that he was at fault in starting the quarrel, and before his wife returns he has to swear never to do it again.

A wedding in white is a sign of progress for Europeanized Africans. They are not curious about the significance of the individual ceremonies (the wedding cake, exchanging wedding rings, etc.), but simply go along with everything without knowing why.

That women normally remain together is also not a sign of oppression. There are many problems with which women can better get to grips if they are by themselves. It is not good, anyway, for husband and wife to be together all the time, since this can lead to indifference towards each other.

Mixed societies produce more scenes of jealousy. Married people in cities in Africa wear wedding-rings to prove their faithfulness, those in the village do not. Jealousy is especially noticeable in industrial countries. If a man talks to the wife of another man for a long time, her husband often comes and kisses her all over in order to show the other man that she belongs to him and to warn him off.

In view of this I find the separation of the sexes, as in traditional African society, easier on the nerves.

It is not a sign of oppression, either, if only men go to the pub, because the women are usually gathered at home at that time in order to do their drinking there. The home is their pub, and in Rwanda the millet-beer is reserved exclusively for the women, whereas banana-wine is for the men.

Many African countries can, anyway, be proud of the fact that their societies do not drive women to alcohol, as is the case in industrial countries, in the East just as in the West. These emancipated female alcoholics in rich countries definitely have more to suffer than the supposedly oppressed African women who are not allowed to go to the pub.

Some European women feel more emancipated than their African counterparts because the latter have to bear children. They even call them breeding-machines.

I think this is extremely arrogant, and it is once again typical of Europeans who like to judge everything according to their own criteria. What counts in their countries are not children, but money, self-love, entertainment, theatre, cinemas, travelling and cars. Does the African woman really have to do without children simply in order to strive for such an egoistic way of life?

The phrase breeding-machines gives the impression that women suffer in pregnancy and at birth. Anybody who knows Africa well will also know that natural women, as has already been pointed out, hardly notice their pregnancies and that they give birth without complications. On the other hand, African women who, like white women allow themselves to be experimented on by the pharmaceutical industry (taking all kinds of hormones which disturb their female biological system) experience difficulties at child-birth.

It is well-known that the problem of birth-control has not been solved yet. Research continues because side-effects have, until now, always been considerable. They range from involuntary barrenness, menstruation disorders, increased risk of cancer, loss of sexual appetite, chronic head-aches, to permanent psychological stress caused by the regular taking of tablets. Pill-taking has overstayed its welcome in the industrial countries. Such phenomena can always be expected when nature is heavily interfered with.

Child-birth is no psychological burden for African women. On the contrary: It is a source of special joy for them. There is nothing worse than wishing barrenness upon an African woman. That is why all the white birth-control propaganda does not work. By the way, it is only a result of the fear that their own populations will soon become extinct.

Motherhood is acknowledged in Africa and, just as the elder people are no longer called by their names but by titles such as *Muzehe* (Swahili), mothers are not referred to as Mrs. but as *Mubyeyi* (mother in Kinyarwanda).

Giving birth to a child is also a matter of great joy not only because the children will be able to look after their parents later, but also because families, in general, in

contrast to those in industrial countries, are still very warm-hearted and gentle. Conflicts between the generations are not the problem which they are in industrial countries. Parents do not behave like dictators to their children. Good parents recognize the special needs of the younger generation, and good children realize that parents sometimes see things differently, since they belong to another generation. Compromises have to be made.

All the talk in Europe about emancipation has had some effect in Africa. Young girls have left home and gone to cities to look for work, even though they were without any qualification. Many have turned to prostitution, and most of these have given birth to children from different men, as they could not afford expensive contraceptives. These fatherless children present the state with an unsolvable problem.

All this talk about emancipation is also responsible for female alcoholism in cities as well as in villages. These women, who have damaged their health by using all kinds of creams which are supposed to make them look like white women, are also the victims of talk about development and emancipation.

The fact that some African women find themselves in a beauty stress - they desire the finest of clothes, a handbag complete with mirror (so that they can look at themselves wherever they are and put their lipstick on), wigs (to make their hair appear like that of white women), and creams - can be traced back to the wish to look like the free and emancipated white women.

Some of those who are rich and financially independent do not even want to get married anymore, just like their white counterparts. They have a good time while they are young and when they are older they start looking desperately for a partner, all in vain, of course - similar to unmarried European women of about forty years of age. It is a particularly risky business having anything to do with such women because they are very aggressive and unbalanced. They, too, blame their misfortunes on society, as it has become the fashion in Europe these days.

African women who blindly imitate white women obviously do not make any contribution to solving Africa's problems. They have to realize that the word emancipation do not simply mean imitating the white women.

Basically speaking, the African man's respect for his wife is no less than that of the white man for his wife. There are many female members of parliament in Africa, and they often hold positions in governments. There is sexual equality in education. In 1964, a woman became Minister for Social Affairs in Kayibanda's government. In Zimbabwe, the Minister of Tourism is a woman, and in Burkina Faso, women hold the posts of Minister for Finance, Sport and Social Affairs etc.

Why, therefore, is it said that Africans oppress their womenfolk? I do not suppose that women in industrial countries have more say in politics, let alone in economics. In Rwanda, there is motherhood-leave, just as in industrial countries, and women who breast-feed their babies get an hour off each day to do so.

The respect of Africans for their womenfolk can also be seen in, among other things, the fact that it has not occurred to them to get their women to dance naked

Miss Las Vegas allows herself to be admired at the International Tourist Exhibition in Berlin 1983. Some African countries (Kenya, Nigeria, Zaire, etc.) have already started to have their “Misses”, just like the Europeans. Do things really have to be that way?

in peep-shows (a western phenomenon). Women are not depicted in advertising in Africa as stupid, consumption-oriented beings, either. Women as sex-objects are unknown in newspapers. There is no corner kiosk in the West where there are no pictures of naked women on show! In Africa, with the exception of a few countries (Kenya, Zaire, Nigeria ...), there are no yearly beauty contests where women are classified according to the size of their breasts, of their behinds, their noses, the length of their legs, their hair and the colour of their eyes, as if they were breeding-bulls set for mating.

Those European women who call African women breeding-machines should, first of all, see to the deplorable state of affairs in their own countries. There is a saying in Rwanda: Before tending to a neighbour's burning house, one should put the fire out in one's own home.

Of course, women have to play a more significant part in African politics. In these troubled times on the black continent every scrap of brain-power is needed, and women certainly are not less intelligent than men. They are even more suited than men to some professions. The popular education of African women must result, however, in an intellectual emancipation which sees original African solutions for African problems.

I support Kossodo's opinion that the biggest danger that African women have to fight against today on their way to real emancipation comes more from outside than from inside.

She writes in her book *Die Frau in Africa zwischen Tradition and Befreiung*(29) (African woman between tradition and liberation): As long as the western countries and this includes, in this sense, the European East Bloc countries - only offer Africa their technology and their methods of economics in order to expand their political influence and their zones of influence, and as long as they - in the case of developing countries - see the cultural contribution only in the supply of material greed, the situation of the African woman will get worse and worse.

Kossodo is a black American woman who has extensively researched into women in Africa. Her results have been published in the book mentioned above. After reading it, I felt confirmed in my opinion about the position of women in Africa. She came to the same realization as I did: The position of women in Africa was first enquired into under the influence of colonization, Islamic and Christian religions and the development of technology.

Speaking of religion: it is not only dangerous to women or to Africans alone but to all people. That is why it is necessary to include religion in any consideration of alternative ways to develop Africa.

At face value, there is no objection to social organizations, such as the church, which preach morality and charity. On closer examination, though, one discovers that the way in which those who hold the reins in these religious organizations exercise power leads to the stupefaction of their believers, with the aim of simply furthering their own interests. One has to admit that Karl Marx was right when he said that religion is the opium of the people, and that people should be wary of church officials.

Jesus Christ would be very sad if he could see what humanity has made of his teachings.

The well-known religious wars in Europe from 1562 till 1598 between Catholics and Protestants were waged in the name of Christ. In reality, these wars were simply struggles for power, and the common folk went along with them because they were too stupid to realize that religious wars are senseless. Knowing that quarrels

between these two branches of religion are, in the main, over and done with today, one wonders what the people involved in these religious wars died for.

Galilei, the famous Italian scientist, who was the first to state that the earth rotates on its axis and revolves around the sun (contrary to the teachings of the church of Rome) was also a victim of the inquisition in the name of Jesus Christ in 1633, even though he was telling the truth.

Missionaries laid the ground-work in the colonization of Africa and Latin America, all in the name of Jesus Christ. Was the Christian religion really so superior to indigenous religions that the use of force was warranted?

The bloody strife between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland also takes place in the name of Jesus Christ, again illustrating that the lessons of history go unnoticed. The bitter fighting between Christians and Muslims in the Lebanon also goes to show what use religion is.

Religion was the root of bloodshed between Hindus and Muslims in India after independence, and it is also responsible for current tensions between Hindus and Sikhs, which culminated in the assassination of India Gandhi by fanatical Sikhs. The bloody conflicts between the Buddhist Singhalese and the Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, too, take place in the name of religion. Disunity within the Muslim faith gave rise to the war between Shiite Iran and Sunni Irak in 1980.

How many Gods does the human being need?

All these unnecessary religious wars with their accompanying cost in human life prove that religion blinds people. The fact that these conflicts are hardly related to matters of faith and are really about the division of power shows that religion's main preoccupation is money.

Religious battles are also going on in Africa today, in the Sudan for example, between the Christians in the south and the Muslims in the north. It must be evident that these wars in Africa have far less to do with religious faith than with money and political power.

In those African countries which are not engaged in religious wars, the profession of clergyman provides a good opportunity to escape poverty. This is equally true of the purveyors of colonial religions and traditional African ones.

Traditional priests act as, amongst other things, fortune-tellers. Ministers and other high officials go to them to find out how long their good fortune will last. To what extent the predictions of these priests are true it is impossible to say, since, in some cases, predictions have been known to have come true. One thing is certain, and that is that most of them exploit their rich fellow-countrymen. They reveal to their close friends that they are not in the business of telling the truth and that it is up to the customer whether he believes what he hears or not.

Modern priests are not less affluent. In times of colonization, missionaries sought out the best spots in the country and made their bases there. Although the natives originally rejected foreign religions, have they gradually accepted them and, these days, Africans count as being the most devout.

Religion is the opium of the people", said Karl Marx. Concrete proof of this in Rwanda: The managers of Sulfo (a small cosmetic company in Kigali) obviously realized that Rwandans are so enslaved to Christianity that pictures of Jesus and Mary could be used to attract attention to their products. (Sulfo passé – la saleté's" efface = sulfo goes through it and the dirt disappears.)

Christian countries in Africa - Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi - cannot be compared to industrial countries in matters of faith. In Africa, they go to church every Sunday, they know the Bible by heart, and they believe every-thing the priest tells them. The priest receives the best eggs, chickens and vegetables as presents for his spiritual services, even though he has his official income. The bishop likes to let his ring be kissed. The faithful are willing to donate whatever the priest demands of them, and they are easily intimidated by threats of withholding the sacraments. They are also very much afraid of hell. And if one dares criticize all this, one is labelled a communist.

It is also annoying to see what a fine life priests lead, a life which does not conform to their teachings. They give the impression that religion is a business just like any other, and that he who believes it is a fool. The upper classes, too, behave in a very deceitful way. It is difficult to determine where their sympathies lie, since they go to the modern priests as well as to the traditional ones. One thing which is quite clear is that they make use of the churches as places to show off their wealth in. On important holy days, on church weddings or at christenings they put on their best imported clothes and invite photographers, video teams and cameramen round, in order to be immortalized in these clothes.

Unconditional faith in teachings of the church has the effect of closing people's minds to the progress-oriented educational process, since their attention is solely riveted on the teachings of the church.

The inhabitants of Rwanda, for example, cite the prophecies of the Bible in explaining the changes for the worse of our society, changes whereby increased contact with western consumer-oriented societies has led to increased egoism on the part of Rwandans, leading in turn to more family quarrels. The Bible says that a time will come when brothers will turn against their sisters, parents against their children, and everybody against everybody else. This viewpoint makes life particularly comfortable for the politicians because it absolves them from direct responsibility for this development.

To believe that the fate of the people of the Sahel could be influenced by increased prayer in Rwanda is also naive. Lots of prayers are said for this famine-struck region because the people believe that rain will come through the power of God.

On the subject of the problems in the Sahel, a friend from Mali told me that it is difficult to convince his countrymen who believe in the traditional religion that various measures must be taken to prevent desertification, since they believe that drought is the will of God and that it is impossible to fight against the will of God.

Although I have previously mentioned that Africans do not need to follow the industrial countries' example of having small families, I must now qualify this statement. There are a few African countries where overpopulation looms on the horizon, and these have to think about birth-control. However, it is not necessary for them to limit the size of their families to that of western countries but simply to keep

them down to a moderate size. Simultaneously, sound policies have to be set in motion, since if they were, there would be enough food for all.

There are also difficulties arising from religion, as well as the problems already mentioned, which make winning over the minds of Africans on the question of birth-control such a daunting task. Most Africans believe that God makes children and that, if he does that, he will also provide them with enough to eat.

That the catholic church refuses to enter into discussion on this subject, and simply tells Africans to continue having children without telling them how they should feed them, is an outrage. The catholic church would be more credible if it were to make use of some of its riches, which it has acquired through various conquests, in helping the poor. If the pope only reduced his travelling, the money saved could be used to save a large number of African children from starvation.

The Bible, with its numerous contradictions, also serves to keep people in a state of ignorance. The Christian anti-socialistic parties of western Europe can explain their capitalist tendencies by referring to the words of Jesus Christ: To those who have will be given, and from those who have not will be taken away or the poor should not be envious of the rich because the first will be the last and the last will be the first in heaven.

The Christian socialists Kayibanda, Mugabe and Kaunda also refer to the passage in the Bible where is told to love one's neighbour as oneself. The liberation theology of Latin America which is based upon marxism and which goes against the church of the rich in Rome, demonstrates its solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

The contradictoriness of the Bible's teachings is also to be seen in the way that the white church in South Africa refers to it in order to explain its racist attitude towards blacks, by saying that they are the dammed children of Cain.

Even if it is too much to expect Africans to give up their faith in God (a knowledge of biology, medicine, politics, history, psychology and comparative theology are all prerequisites of atheism), it should be within reason to ask them at least to remain awake and to allow themselves no longer to be exploited by the religious mafia. Indeed, if God really exists, he certainly would not want his people to become further entrenched in their poverty only to enable those at the top of the church to continue living like princes.

One must also ask Africans to learn to view life more realistically - without becoming science fanatics as happens in industrial countries - and not to explain things away by the unlimited power of God. This can be achieved by appropriate education.

Africans could gradually be turned away from their false interpretation of the causes of death if, for instance, films on elementary medicine were shown in the vil-lages. Among other things, the various organs of the body and the different causes of illness would become known. Most Africans have no idea of the various causes of illness and death and tend, therefore, throughout most of Africa to put the death of a neighbour down to his having been poisoned by a foe. If the people had a better

Whereas, in Rwanda, a central role in advertising is played by Mary and Jesus, this role is occupied by women in the West. Would African women also appreciate this in Africa?

grasp of the rudiments of medicine, such poisoning stories would disappear, taking with them unnecessary enmities which have ultimately been restricting Africa's development.

Education must be the means of teaching Africans that, for example, the enemy's magic is not responsible for a woman's infertility, for someone's insanity, for a dastardly illness or for sudden death. Africans have to realize that these medical problems are normal occurrences to be met, not only in humans and animals but also in plants, all over the world, even in the countries of Europe, where the enemy does not use magic any more.

Africans have to be taught to stop imagining that there are supernatural powers to protect them against their enemies. It is, for example, nonsense to believe that the president of Togo, General Eyadema, possesses special magical powers which protect him against opponents simply because he has survived an aeroplane accident as well as an attempted assassination. Such things happen all over the world and are just as subject to the law of chance as are other events.

Ulli Hoeness, the manager of the football club F C. Bavaria, was once the sole survivor of an aeroplane accident. Lenin, an atheist, and also Pope John Paul II, the boss of the catholic church, survived shots from a gun. The same applies to Ronald Reagan, and it is only by chance that, in 1984, Margaret Thatcher escaped an attempt on her life by a bomb which took the lives of five others. Magic did not play a part in any of these cases.

It is a funny state of affairs if African presidents wear special animal skins and carry 'magic' sticks around with them in order to create the impression that they have special protection against potential insurgents. This is self-deception! If they really did possess supernatural powers they would certainly exercise them against the apartheid regime in South Africa and against other alien powers which render life more difficult on the black continent.

As far as supernatural powers are concerned, Africans should not allow themselves to be misled by the fact that a few sick people have actually been healed by witch-doctors without the use of medicaments. Modern psychiatry often employs similar methods. By techniques of hypnosis, it is possible to influence the brain, and thus the whole organism, for awhile. Modern medicine's use of placebos (dummy medicines) for imagined illnesses shows how a patient can be treated successfully without medicines as such.

Africans must realize that, superstition once existed in the industrial countries of today (Galilei was a victim of the inquisition because his scientific discoveries contravened the beliefs of his time) and that these same industrial countries were able to advance technically only because they gradually managed to free themselves, to a greater extent, from superstition. We, too, must be able to liberate ourselves from these religious obstacles, not only from the traditional but also from the modern institutions, since scientific discoveries are in part needed in order to advance our standards of living in a reformed organization of life.

To achieve this, measures have to be taken to avoid establishing new religions in Africa and to weaken those which already exist, be they traditional or colonial. In this respect, it would be quite enough if our level of religiosity came down to that of western Europe.

The aim should not be to kill the traditional priests, as did the Christian church, in killing, for instance, six million witches in the Middle Ages, but to enlighten the people so that they do not go to the priests any more.

As far as colonial religions, which are normally organized and therefore more difficult to combat, are concerned, enormous taxes could be levied on their immense wealth, the people's attention could be drawn to their exploitation and one could appeal to national feelings.

All peoples of the world have their moral codes, with the exception of Africans and Latin Americans. The Chinese and the Japanese have Buddha as their ideal, the Indians have Krishna, the Soviets have Lenin, the Arabs have Mohammed, the whites have Christ, the colonized Latin Americans and black Africans, as to be expected, have the whites' Christ, or, just as bad, Mohammed as their ideal.

All that has to change. Black Africans are certainly technically underdeveloped, but there is no reason why they should have an inferiority complex vis-à-vis other cultures' moral values. It is high time that they develop their own morality on the basis of their own traditions. Put another way, every black African country has to give itself a MORAL SIGNPOST.

This signpost should include the positive traditional values which are praised by foreigners (for example, respect for the aged, fondness of children, spirit of community etc.), as well as a condemnation of negative aspects of the traditional way of life (superstition, monarchic tendencies, female circumcision, the killing of pregnant young girls etc.), and be related to some of the famous figures out of African history who should be seen as a model for the young.

Instead of encouraging black Africans to live according to the Christian, Arabic, Marxist or Asian way of life, one should encourage them to find their orientation according to this SIGNPOST. Those religious ceremonies, which are really a veiled means of obtaining and retaining power for some, should be replaced by more traditional village festivals (celebrating births, deaths, harvests etc.) which would allow the people to develop a common spirit and, in so doing, suffocate the encroaching western ideology of Each man for himself.

This moral signpost is absolutely necessary in order to define the positive values of African culture, about which African politicians say so much without pinpointing them. They have to be formulated on paper, so that everybody becomes aware of them and so that children can become acquainted with them in their early years. This moral signpost is also necessary in order to safeguard African values from the destructive influence of alien societies which have other moral viewpoints. Finally we need a moral signpost to keep our nations intact: there is the danger that African

students, upon returning home from studying abroad, tend to try and influence their native societies with what they have learnt abroad.

This moral signpost has to be a book of guidance for the unity party, which we mentioned earlier. The president and his ministers have to swear on this book of morality, and not on the Bible or the Koran, before they take up their posts. This moral signpost should be the basis of the various development projects. If this were so, it would be realized that many of the stupid mistakes which have been made in Africa could have been avoided.

Whereas, on the one hand, religious fanaticism is slowly receding in some African countries, the growth of another kind of fanaticism is being observed with consternation, namely that of football.

When I was in London in 1979, a football match between England and Scotland took place and the Scots lost. Hardly believable but true: the resulting tension between Scots and English over this football match left two people dead. All pubs in London had to be closed because of the fear of further brawls between the fans of the two teams.

Great Britain is not the only country suffering from football fanaticism. Most industrial countries have already witnessed nasty incidents at football matches. In West Germany, too, deaths have resulted from football rowdiness. The brutality of football fanaticism was further illustrated in May, 1985, in Brussels during a game between England and Italy: thirty eight people died and several hundreds were injured. The catastrophe of Sheffield (Great Britain) too, in April 1989, where 94 persons died and more over 170 were injured, shows the brutality of football fanaticism.

About the time when I first left Africa, a similar development was taking place in Africa, where football was not as widespread as in industrial countries, and all in the name of progress. Expensive trainers and players were being bought from other teams and other countries. Football is taken seriously not only by men but also by women. Even politicians get caught up in the tension, and political quarrels have often resulted from football events. Buses transporting opposing teams have even been doused in petrol and set alight by the hosts, just because the opposing team won.

I have often wondered why football is so close to the African's heart. There are other games, such as volleyball and basketball, which are just as good. The reason: colonization. The colonial masters used to like playing football and so they taught Africans, too, to be crazy about it. In the USA, on the other hand, where the Colonial masters had no influence, the people developed their own kind of football and discarded the European kind which they know as soccer. Asians, people who hug their traditions, are also unmoved by football.

Further football enthusiasm in Africa would be detrimental to the continent's development, since heads full of football have no room for other things. Some Africans maintain that a lot has to be invested in football so that we can one day

become world-champion. This is not necessary, and I doubt, anyway, that it would be possible, since the results of international matches are often agreed on beforehand behind the scenes with the football mafia playing a considerable role here, as was the case in the World Cup in 1982. Third World countries have hardly any chance.

I would like to say a few words about one other kind of sport: boxing. The reactions of spectators, who scream in ecstasy each time one of the boxers is hit hard, displays the innate brutality of human beings towards their fellowmen

Boxing is a bad sport, not only because it trains the spectators to harden their hearts when someone suffers, but also because the boxers themselves are in great danger. How many boxers die somewhere along their boxing career, and, of those who do make it to the top, how many get injured? The best example is Mohammed Ali who, after a brilliant career, is now suffering from the consequences of damage to his central nervous system. If Africans want to construct a humane society, they have to be able to say no to certain inhuman kinds of sport. It would be even better for them to develop their own sports.

The young, in particular, are heavily influenced by foreign sports, thoughts and social trends, since young people are less capable of criticism. Extra precautions have to be taken to protect the young from decadent phenomena which infiltrate from abroad. Youth has to be warned against a falsely conceived freedom. Freedom does not mean no longer getting on with one's parents, becoming an egoist, sleeping around, or unlimited consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs...

African youth has to be protected against advertising: it takes on a perverse character in the Third World. It is even sadistic to keep on telling somebody without money what he could buy if he had some.

The deceptive way in which advertising campaigns are carried out in the Third World can only be condemned. The organizers of such advertising know very well that the people in these countries have an absolute faith in the industrial ones. They believe everything uncritically, whether it is a potion to increase their powers of memory and prevent old age, or whether it is clothing which will last a hundred years.

African youth has to be protected not only against these unscrupulous advertisers but also against other western businessmen. African youth should be kept at a distance from films containing violence, terror and pornography. Such things are not even good for adults. The negative effects of such films can be seen from the following examples.

Looking at too many westerns at boarding-school led us to think that Red Indians were wicked people who had to be killed. Also, when karate and kung-fu films were still allowed to be shown in the cinemas, children in Rwanda went onto the streets and continued playing only karate and kung-fu with each other. When the film *Roots* was shown in Germany (a film about black slavery in the USA), German children on the streets would call blacks KITA KUNTE (one of the main slave actors in the film).

Interference on the part of industrial countries when African countries try to take measures to protect their youth against such evil influences is incomprehensible. For example, in the spring of 1983, president Habyarimana ordered most of the discos in the country to close -they were mainly patronized by development helpers, and prostitution as well as pornography was rife in such establishments - and sent all the Rwandan women involved to a re-education home. There were howls of complaint not only from French and American diplomats in Kigali but also from newspapers of the left and the right in Europe. They accused Rwanda of racism because, they said, these women had really been taken away since they have been going out with white men.

It was a stroke of luck for the whole of the Republic of Rwanda that the president kept his hard line and made his opinion clear: "I didn't know that development helpers need loose women in order to carry out their work. We don't want such loose women in our country and whoever thinks that he can't manage without them will have to pack his bags and go home. "

Our president's stance has nothing to do with racism. It is simply the expression of worry of the country's father, who is trying to protect his children from ruin. He, along with the whole of the Rwandan population, is of the opinion that such shameless sexual games as in Hamburg or Paris offend the dignity of mankind. By the way, he is not alone in his opinion. Robert Mugabe had to take similar measures in his country in the same year.

Politicians who are true to Africa have to maintain their hard line in this matter, since those journalists who put forward the case for total sexual freedom are also the same people who scoff at countries such as Kenya which have become sex countries for whites. Kenyans certainly are not proud of pornographic pictures of their women which appeared for example in STERN on the 28th of June, 1984.

The West has to realize that avoiding imitating a large part of the white's habits and way of life will ultimately be to the good of Africans. People should not be allowed to carry guns around with them as is the practice in the USA, for instance. In sexual matters, not only the moral question but also the problems of venereal diseases and fatherless half-caste children should lead to further consideration.

Venereal diseases in Africa are the legacy of colonialism. Such diseases did not exist in Africa before the white man appeared on the scene. And these days, it is mainly the town-dwellers who suffer such diseases, in other words, those who come in contact with foreigners.

These diseases affect Africans more adversely than they do Europeans, since they do not have the money needed for treatments and since pathogenic agents develop more resistance with the increasing use of all possible antibiotics. As already mentioned, Rwanda first become acquainted with the resistance problem through Batignole.

The ever-increasing number of fatherless half-caste children is also threatening

the social structures of African countries. Such children have the misfortune to be neither accepted by blacks nor by whites. When a poor Rwandan woman gives birth to such a baby, she hands it over to a rich welfare organization, in the belief that a white child needs special food in order to grow. There are quite a few such children in orphanages in Kigali, and the situation is even worse in other African countries. There are many fatherless half-caste children in Mombasa, Abidjan, Dakar. They seem to be partly a remembrance of the foreign currency which tourists have allegedly left in the country. In view of this increasing problem, the various development organizations should perhaps consider whether it would be better to dispatch only people with permanent partners.

Youth has to be enlightened as to the far-reaching consequences of a free sexual life, by means of such tangible examples. African school education also needs to be changed.

After independence, Africans continued with the school system of the old colonial masters. This school system was oriented mainly to the needs of the industrial countries and not to those of Africa. For instance, there are too many doctors of law, literature, social science, economics, politics, nuclear science, aircraft engineering and other sophisticated technologies in Africa. At the other extreme, there are very few doctors, vets, biologists, pharmacists, agricultural engineers, teachers and, above all, very few skilled craftsmen.

In times of massive unemployment these academics in Africa are, of course, superfluous, even though there is still a lot of work to be done on this continent, unlike in the industrial countries where almost everything has already been accomplished. The people still do not have enough to eat, the deserts of Africa are penetrating further into the interior, and the health of the people leaves something to be desired. A properly trained youth force would have sufficient tasks to go at. Those Africans who have received training in such crucial subjects are, however, restricted in exploiting their qualifications to the full because their training has often been tailored to fit the prevailing conditions in the country of training only.

It needs to be repeated: our fine doctors who have been trained in the best schools of the world are of absolutely no value if medicine and equipment which formed an integral part of their training are later lacking for financial reasons. It is also a disgrace that African pharmacists are primarily occupied with selling medicaments, as they are in industrial countries, instead of being engaged in research into traditional medicine. It is also apparent that our agrarian and veterinarian engineers know far more about potatoes, coffee, cocoa, tea, horses, dogs and cats than they do about sweet potatoes, manioc, yams, lentils, goats, camels etc. They are, therefore, only able to contribute to an improvement in the food situation of Africa in a limited way. Similar shortcomings are also to be found in other areas of training.

That is why the African school system has to be reformed in such a way that syllabi will better meet the needs of the corresponding countries. Agriculture, medicine, handicrafts, appropriate technology, African culture (the African moral signpost),

history of the industrial countries, together with all the negative consequences for Africa, are all subjects to which priority must be given.

Some African countries, such as Nigeria, Congo, Madagascar, Mali, Togo, Rwanda and Burundi have tried to carry through educational reforms along these lines but have fallen short of their aims. Their failures can be attributed to many causes.

Several countries simply started to use their national language as the means of teaching. This is a commendable move in itself, but, in view of the financial and economic situation, it is difficult to realize.

Indeed, if we want to liberate our educational processes from colonialism, we have to make use of some of the scientific knowledge accumulated by the white civilization (as has already been said) and this is mainly accessible in foreign languages, of which English is the main one. Translating all books of science into over a thousand African national languages would prove prohibitively expensive. One solution would be to choose a language common to several countries, as the Arabs have done. Otherwise, scientific subjects must continue to be taught in an alien tongue. Researchers in industrial countries too are all dependent upon English.

There are other countries which interpret adaptation of education to the requirements of the peasants to mean that children should be taught the skills of their parents in school. This, too, is wrong because the children could just as well stay at home and learn these skills more thoroughly and intensively directly from their parents.

A good school-reform programme would consist of enriching traditional skills with elements of modern science. To this end, research would, first of all, have to be undertaken e.g. into techniques for improving the cultivation of sweet potatoes, yams and lentils etc., into improved methods of application of the various African medicinal plants, into developing an African moral signpost etc. and into improving the breeding of camels, goats and antelopes etc. A reform can only begin when concrete results are available, and the first of all steps must be that of retraining the teaching body, so that teachers become acquainted with the new material.

These are prerequisites for revolution in the educational system, which is, in turn, a prerequisite for an improvement in the living conditions of Africans.

A deterioration in educational standards must not be allowed to result from school-reform, as has already been the case in some countries. Indeed, Africans will have to attain even higher standards in education than the whites in order to ward off attempts by foreign powers at neocolonization of Africa. Such attempts will always be imminent as long as Africans remain naive and possess no definite strategy for survival.

Politicians, even if their intentions are of the purest, have to scrutinize their decisions very closely before presenting them to the people. If the steps taken turn out to be the wrong ones, due to poor preparation, a breach of confidence between governed and governing will ensue, a breach which will be very difficult to heal.

We find an example of this in the recommendations of the governments of Kenya and Rwanda for the use of Depo-Provera birth-control method to their respective peoples.

Depo-Provera is a new method of contraception from the American Em Upjohn. Women receive an injection which leaves them infertile for between three and six months. This is thought to be a perfect method of contraception and suitable for the Third World since women there often have difficulty in remembering to take contraceptive pills on a daily basis. Millions of women in over seventy Third World countries are injected with Depo-Provera every year.

Depo-Provera is, however, an evil medicament. It causes menstruation chaos which, in some cases, leads to dangerous haemorrhages. Women become far more prone to infections, diabetes, head-aches, depression and vertigo. It often results in long-term infertility and even permanent sterility and an increased danger of cancer.

Since many women are breast-feeding or pregnant at the time when they receive their Depo-Provera injection, it means that this dangerous medicament is passed on to the children. It causes damage at child-birth such as diseases of the heart, curvature of the spine and, in the case of the female foetus, masculinization.

Powerful side-effects were first noticed on test animals, which led to the prohibition of its manufacture in the USA and of export. However, in order to continue marketing it in the Third World, production was transferred to Belgium.

When the government of Kenya and Rwanda recommended Depo-Provera to their peoples, they assured them, at the same time, that it was completely harmless. It has, however, in the meantime, got about that Depo-Provera is extremely dangerous and the first casualties are already at hand. The people are not only angry with their government but also convinced that the white man is determined to exterminate black people by the use of every conceivable poison camouflaged as medicine.

Contradictory opinions of specialists giving technical advice also gives rise to uncertainty among Africans. They do not know whom to believe. These specialists should first agree amongst themselves before they start passing on their knowledge to others.

To conclude the subject of education I would like to voice my praise of some of Africa's politicians who have shown the world that politics can be combined with honesty and that it does not automatically lead to lying. Those other African politicians who blindly imitate the demagogic style of eastern and western power-politicians should, instead, emulate their African colleagues who have the courage both to admit their mistakes and to announce their desire to correct them.

The word demagogic is known throughout Rwanda thanks to president Kayibanda who perpetually uses it because he abhors it, and not thanks to the colonial masters or to any development helper.

In 1971, on completion of the second development plan, Kayibanda said to his

ministers that the media should not be used as an instrument of demagoguery but should serve the national democratic development.

It also requires recognition that president Kayibanda, unlike politicians in industrial countries who shield their ministers from offensives led by the opposition and by the population at large, had the courage to criticize his ministers and other high-ranking officials publicly, sometimes.

His Independence Day speech on the first of July, 1968, was also to be seen as a warning to colleagues who showed signs of using their positions for self-enrichment: Intrigues, corruption and petty-demagoguery are the worst kinds of cowardliness; personal enrichment is an irony, an insult to an underdeveloped people which expects a lot of its most privileged children whom it has elected as its leaders, technical experts, development organizers and teachers of democracy. Personal enrichment, egoism and intrigues will all serve to disunite the fighters for democracy and set Rwandans against each other; only emancipation of the people can unite us.

Nyerere was similar to Kayibanda. He admitted his mistakes. He did not reply to student unrest by sending in the police; instead, he went to see the students personally and held an open discussion with them. In Arusha in 1977, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the declaration of his socialist course, he warned against arrogance, incompetence and laziness within a leadership apt to reject the most reasonable of requests, to regard itself as God and to overlook its own fallibility.

Such direct politics are only possible in a one-party system. In a multi-party system, tactical manoeuvring is necessary in order to maintain one's profile. Strangely enough, this is referred to as the art of politics.

Politics without demagoguery would ensure that Africans were brought up used to the idea that politicians are only human with human weaknesses and shortcomings, and that they should be valued not only according to their mistakes but also according to their willingness to correct them.

Africans need such original concepts, not only in politics, agriculture, medicine, education and technology but also in other dimensions of life, in order to improve their standards of living and to contribute to stability and peace in the world.

e. Conclusion

The idea that new ways have to be found to achieve real and balanced development in Africa is not completely new.

In 1961, before most African countries had attained independence, Fanon pointed out in his world-famous book *Les damnés de la terre* (30) (*The wretched of the earth*, Macgibbon & Kee / London 1965) that the choice for independent Africa in its development efforts did not lie between capitalism and socialism. Instead, it had to try and set its own values, whenever possible.

In his writings, he issued a warning to the new politicians of Africa:

So, my brothers, how is it that we do not understand that we have better things to do than to follow that same Europe?

That same Europe where they were never done talking of Man, and where they never stopped proclaiming that they were only anxious for the welfare of Man: today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their triumphs of the mind.

Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe. Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction.

Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth.

If we, want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and Latin America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.

But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.

If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe.

Moreover, if we wish to reply to the expectations of the people of Europe, it is no good sending them back a reflection, even an ideal reflection, of their society and their thought with which from time to time they feel immeasurably sickened.

For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.

One year after *Les damnés de la terre* was published, Dumont's work *LAfrique est mal partie* (20) appeared. This caused just as much commotion amongst African intellectuals as did Fanon's book. He cautioned the new people in power in Africa against simply taking over the positions of the old colonial masters and continuing the same colonial policy towards the people. He pointed out, amongst other things, the necessity of adapting education to the requirements of Africa instead of simply taking over the colonial education system.

Nyerere's Declaration of Arusha(21), in 1967, made it clear that he was intent on going about things in a similar way to that suggested by Fanon and Dumont. To mobilize Tanzanian awareness *LAfrique noire est mal partie* was translated into Swahili (*AFRIKA INAKWENDA KOMBO*, East African Literature, Bureau Nairobi, 1974) and used as a course book in schools.

Kayibanda was also of the opinion that developing Rwanda did not mean turning the Rwandans into French, Belgians, Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans or

Russians. The way he lived, largely in harmony with the traditional Rwandan way of life, demonstrated this. During the first national congress for cultural matters in Rwanda, in January 1971, he stressed once again the importance of a nation's culture.

He said: "If a nation loses its culture it loses its soul, and the loss of the soul means the loss of the most intimate and important strength. It'll be blown around like chaff in the wind by every conceivable idea or thought, and will have no longer any base upon which to build. It cannot democratize things which no longer exist or which are in a state of total confusion. All changes which accompany development happen by coincidence and at random, and neither the masses nor the leaders have any means of guiding the necessary changes."

The former West German Minister for Development, Erhard Eppler, too, said in his book *Wenig Zeit für die Dritte Welt* (31) (*Little time for the Third World*), published in 1971, that the countries of the Third World could only overcome their poverty by going their own way and not by imitating the industrial countries.

Of the military strongmen in Africa, president Mobutu came to attention with his policy of Authenticité (authenticity). He declared the guiding principles of this at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1973.

He said: "The Africans, victims of brainwashing during colonial times, have to recover their identity in all its dimensions, including religion, since the European way of life, so highly prized by Africans, hasn't brought happiness to Europeans themselves."

Despite grandiose speeches and the warnings of various authors and despite unusual measures taken by a few committed African politicians, hardly an African country has corrected its wrong course. The Europeanization, and more recently the Asianization, of black Africa continues at an ever faster speed, and Africans become more and more estranged daily. As to Asianization, Kim Il Sung is gradually conquering the hearts of blacks: mass movements, techniques of enthusing the population, demonstrations of support for a regime and the personality cult as in North Korea, are things that have all been integrated into the national cultures of Zaire, Togo, Rwanda etc.

In his most recent book *UAfrique étranglée*(17) (*Strangled Africa*) Dumont summarizes the last 25 years Africa for the Africans, and concludes that his former predictions, which he made in his first book *LAfrique noire est mal partie* of the imminent dangers facing Africa (famine, desertification, criminality, moral decay, dependence and alienation) have all come true. He is sounding the alarm-bell again.

Many things have contributed to this false development, but I shall never tire of repeating -since it has to be driven home to the Africans - that their deeply entrenched inferiority complex towards the white man is chiefly responsible.

Not only the population at large, but especially the ruling bourgeoisie suffer from this lack of self-confidence. The latter is convinced that its way of life is

enviable. On the contrary: Africans who are wiser and have more experience of the world can only smile at this.

Some of the bourgeoisie kill their children by giving them overdoses of drugs, in the misguided belief that the more medicaments are used the faster the healing is. Many of the bourgeoisie cultivate large bellies on purpose; they do not know that it is now known to be unhealthy.

Members of the African bourgeoisie think that they can escape being labelled as Niggers by apeing the white man in all possible ways. They do not realize that whites will respect an African more if they see that he has learnt to accept himself as he is, through the process of self-awareness.

Nyerere has become probably the most respected politician of black Africa due to his originality. No book dealing seriously with Third World problems escapes making reference to him at some point. Jimmy Carter, the former president of the USA, once said: "Nyerere is certainly one of the most intelligent politicians, not only in Africa but throughout the whole world. Having to rule 'the negroes' was simply his bad luck."

Members of the African bourgeoisie are naively trying to ensure the future of their children by pillaging their native countries and stashing the loot in banks in Switzerland, England and the USA. Time has shown, however, that they may be miscalculating.

If a sudden change in power relationships occurs, as in the case of Sekou Toure in Guinea at the end of 1983, the children and relatives might have no time to flee abroad. This suits Switzerland perfectly because it can keep the contents of the deposed head of state's bank account for itself, which is one of the reasons for the amazing economic stability of this little country.

The African bourgeoisie is also mistaken in thinking that it can lead a magnificent life abroad with riches stolen from its native country. In recent years, there have been many cases of such national bandits being pursued as far as their chosen countries of refuge. The Central American dictator, Somoza, was murdered in his country of refuge, Guatemala, and Dikko of Nigeria was almost abducted from London.

The African bourgeoisie is also making a mistake in believing that the common folk marvel at their immense wealth. The people are slowly but surely realizing that this wealth is not the result of hard work but, as Fanon put it, the result of organized and protected looting.

One has to make allowances in condemning the African bourgeoisie, however. Many of them do not realize what they are doing. If they did, they would behave differently. Young, inexperienced and naive African countries are gradually gaining in awareness. There were very few Africans who really knew Europe when their respective countries gained independence. I believe that I have demonstrated sufficiently with this book that admiration of the white culture can only disappear if one learns more about Europe.

The words of mature presidents such as Kayibanda, Nyerere and others who knew all the time how things really are, have, in the main, fallen-upon deaf ears. Who could possibly have understood them?

President Kayibanda knew all along that a country like Rwanda, which is overpopulated and without great raw material reserves, could only solve its problems by avoiding reliance on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and if the elite were willing to restrict their needs.

The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (well-known West German newspaper) wrote on the 6th of March, 1964: Kayibanda fought poverty by means of an austerity programme. He provided a shining example for his people by setting his salary and those of his ministers considerably lower than were those of counterparts in most other African countries. His official car is a Volkswagen.

We could not understand Kayibanda then, and especially the 'educated' blamed him for preventing them from becoming as rich as Africans in other countries. Since 1984, Rwandans, like most of those in Third World, have been pressurized by the IMF into tightening their belt. This will prove difficult because there is no end to austerity in sight. I agree with Dumont: The party is over in Africa.

The experience of Africans in industrial countries is of vital importance for their own countries. In view of this fact, I would like to appeal, once again, to intellectuals who have had a chance to see the world to pass on their acquired knowledge to their fellow-countrymen.

Much more than ever before needs to be written about Africa's relationship with the industrial countries. This needs to be done in a simple and intelligible style, unlike those of European authors who write in a complicated manner, restricting the accessibility of their writings to a minority. It is paradoxical to maintain that one is writing for the common people and to choose a pedantic style.

Let us encourage ourselves to read more and become politically informed. It is a bad thing if we can always find money for records, cosmetics, video-cassettes and alcohol but are too stingy to afford books which will enlighten us! We must never forget that life for Africans can improve only when they really see what makes the world tick. Let us also make use of every opportunity to get our politicians to read more, for they would certainly alter many things if they only knew more about them.

Our chances, these days, of being heard are far better than ever before. The number of Africans who have been to industrial countries and share our views has greatly increased.

The so-called world economic crisis should not cause us to panic. It is not really a crisis. Why should there actually be one? Money is still available. There are sufficient raw materials, and the know-how to satisfy the basic needs of the whole world is also there. There are still industrial products which have to be destroyed. There is, therefore, no reason for a crisis. The only crisis is one of the world economic order, which is trying to see to it

Some of the dangerous pesticides which are used unscrupulously in the Third World return to their countries of origin, as is made clear by the case of jute bags with traces of DDT in them. That must also be the case with tea and coffee, since DDT and similar products are used on tea and coffee plantations in the Third World to kill insects.

that rich countries become richer and the poor ones poorer. The possibilities of exploiting the Third World have been taken to their limit: it is so deeply in debt that it can no longer afford to buy the products of industrial countries. Not the Third World but the economic systems which have been forced upon it face failure and crisis. It is high time to look for other ways of living.

Seen in this way, the world economic crisis offers Africa and the other countries of the Third World a good opportunity. Third World countries will not have money enough to continue doing the same stupid things. They will have a much more sober attitude towards industrial countries, since these will hardly be in a position

to play teacher to the Third World while they themselves are unable to solve their own problems. Finally, the Third World will be able to cite critical alternative movements in the First World in presenting new and original policies to a suspicious population.

Regarding Africa in particular, maximum mobilization of all our forces will be necessary, for our continent is faced with far more natural difficulties than are others.

The Sahara and Kalahari deserts occupy proportionately more surface area than do others in other continents. The land is more susceptible to erosion and the effects of the wind. Africa's climate offers favourable breeding conditions to many dangerous parasites and insects. The diversity of the various African peoples hinders communication and cooperation. The sheer size of most African countries makes education of the people a phenomenal task, and building up the infrastructure is very expensive.

The list of natural difficulties is infinite; nevertheless, I am sure that, if Africans behave in a more patriotic way and develop more self-confidence, they will be able to get the better of their problems.

Finally, I would like to direct a few words to industrial countries. They should not act as if the current events in Africa have nothing to do with them.

The white African bourgeoisie should not think that the increasing friction between rich and poor on the black continent will not affect them. Expressions such as Fool in transit show what future aggression will be directed at. Africans are gradually realizing that their predicament is not simply a quirk of fate but is mainly the consequence of lethal development policies which have been thrust on the developing countries by the industrial ones.

Such inhuman policies also directly affect the industrial countries. For example, some of the dangerous chemicals used in the Third World return to the First World. Traces of DDT which have been found in the fibres of jute-bags, since this insecticide is used on jute plantations in the Third World, clearly demonstrate this. Reports were also circulating about unacceptable amounts of DDT, as well as of other insecticides, being detected in western women's breast milk. Western women's breast milk is said to be even more hazardous than that of European cows.

Contamination of these women's milk comes about through their eating habits. They consume milk and meat which come from animals which have mainly been fed on feeding stuffs (manioc, soja, nuts...) which have been imported from the Third World. These feeding stuffs were produced with the help of noxious fertilizers and insecticides. This has given rise to the expression food chain.

The industrial countries should not view the increasing desertification of Africa with smugness; climatic irregularities are already having an effect throughout the world (cyclonic winds, floods, confusion of the seasons, hailstones as large as hen's eggs etc.). Who knows how conditions will alter in Europe if Africa, owing to an egoistic development policy, turns into a big desert?

There is only one earth, and progress in the media and transport are making it smaller; changes in one region have consequences elsewhere. It is difficult to imagine that, in this world of ever-decreasing size, certain regions continue to become richer and richer, and others poorer and poorer. I agree with those who say that policies based on egoism, whether on a national or an international level, are doomed to fail.

Afterword

Four years have passed since the original version of this book appeared. Since then many significant changes have taken place in the world. I have not managed to take all of them into account in preparing the present English version, but I wish to take nothing away from the previous content, since I would like all of it still to be read. These changes, however, are going to have a marked influence on the future of our planet, so I would not like to end this book without devoting a few words to them.

These changes have mainly to do with the new policies followed by Gorbachev. Two concepts typify these policies of the socialist countries: Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (re-shaping). More democracy and private enterprise should help to raise the standard of living in these countries. This corresponds to the middle way which, in this book, I have proposed for African countries and, hence, for other countries in the Third World. However, considering the effects till now of these reforms in socialist countries which have seriously tried to adapt to the new policies, I seem to have been mistaken.

To summarize, the following may be said: As far as democracy is concerned, there has been progress, but the economic situation has suddenly worsened, with the result that the rich have become much richer and the poor much poorer. In part it has led to food shortage. Many speak of revolutionary conditions. This economic factor seems also to be why conflicts over nationality have broken out in the Soviet Union, especially in republics in the Middle East, since some peoples feel themselves to be worse off than others. In China too, the rich have become much richer and the poor much poorer due to Teng's policy of reform. In June this year students in China were protesting not against socialism but against corruption, speculation and the accumulation of money in an ever smaller number of hands on account of the new policy.

What has been done wrong? Many say the reforms came much too late. Others, such as myself, say: "Better late than never. The mistake is rather that the reforms have been pushed through too fast." At any rate the situation after the reforms in socialist countries should be a warning for African reformers to plan reforms only after a careful study of local conditions.

The bad results so far of the reforms in eastern countries should not be taken as an excuse for saying that we in Africa need no reforms, since the resulting situation could be more catastrophic than ever. There is no way of getting round it: Africa too needs its Perestroika and its Glasnost. The question is only: How are they to be introduced successfully? Nor should it be assumed that, since the socialists are striving for reforms, socialism has collapsed and capitalism would be the ideal system for us. If we would only reflect for a moment, we would realize

that till now most African countries have followed the path of capitalism. What has this led to? The answer is plain. If things go on the way they have, this could mean even the end of Africa.

Do we Africans really want this to happen? I hope not.

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