

## BRIEF ARTICLES

## BAMBOO PIPES OF THE BATETELA CHILDREN

by

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THE Batetela are a Bantu people inhabiting an area extending over most of the Sankuru district of the Belgian Congo. In former times they were greatly feared by surrounding tribes among whom they made periodic raids for slaves whom they sold to Arab or Portuguese slave traders. They have never been considered outstanding in any of the arts but music has a definite place in their culture.

One characteristic instrument or set of instruments is the set of bamboo pipes used by small boys in their play. In the early days they danced to the pipes. Since then the custom has died out but the pipes themselves have remained.

The pipes are whittled out of green bamboo in six different lengths. The first and largest is called *dikummo* and is the leader. Its sound is the lowest of all. The second, called *dinda* is approximately one-half tone higher than the first. The third, called *tshiku*, is one-half tone again higher. The fourth or *nyonge* is the pipe used as a sort of accompaniment, the one which maintains the regular rhythmic beat. Its position is two and one-half tones above number three. The fifth and sixth pipes are called *yumi* and *yadi* respectively—corresponding to the names of husband and wife. The *yumi* is one and one-half tones above number four and the *yadi* is one and one-half tones above the *yumi* (number five).

The approximate relationship of the six pipes placed on the staff can be shown as follows :



Although the tones are naturally untempered, they correspond very closely to the notes on the staff above. Half tones and whole tones are used with no indication of quarter tones or other fraction of the whole tone.

To play, the leader begins the song with a combination of a vocal sound and blowing into the pipe. He plays for a while alone with this dual effect, then number four begins the accompaniment or regular rhythm. Number one and number four play together for a while to establish the rhythm, then number two begins, followed by number three. Finally the two highest pipes begin one after the other until all six pipes are playing. All of them play the melody with the exception of number four which is the accompaniment, each pipe taking its place in the melody line playing its one note. The final result is, to our western ears, a highly complicated and syncopated rhythmic pattern; but when analyzed one finds that each pipe has a very simple pattern, and the player learns this and does not deviate from it. The trick is to enter at the proper time and after he has entered it is just a question of concentrating on his own part. The rhythm is a basic two-four but the entrance timing is extremely varied :

Pipe number 1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

The pipes produce a very lovely and delicate sound and represent a lesser known type of African music, differing from the percussive type so often associated with Africa.

### KENYA'S ANSWER TO THE MAU MAU CHALLENGE

*An extract from a lecture  
given by*

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*printed in the July, 1954, issue of "African Affairs," to whom we are  
indebted for permission to reprint.*

If you are prepared to accept my premise that Mau Mau is African, that these problems are essentially part of the African scene, that we will meet them from time to time elsewhere, and that in order to understand them one has to understand Africa—it will surely follow that in order to combat them one must do so on lines which will have their influence and effect upon the African's mind. I do not for one moment say that the potentialities of the African mind are different from the potentialities of the European mind. I simply do not know. Scientists assure us that there is no difference, and I am prepared to accept that, but I would emphasise to you that with the different traditions behind the African, we must not expect their reactions to European ideas and standards to be precisely the same as would be expected, and normally would be forthcoming, from Europeans themselves.

Let me give an example of what I mean. We have criticised (in our Report) the information services of the Kenya Government. I will be quite frank. I think they leave much to be desired on a European basis, but I am not sure that, even though we applied the most effective European techniques of propaganda to the Kikuyu, they would be nearly as effective as if we used African media of propaganda. All those who know Africa will, I am sure, agree with me that the main way in which ideas and impressions and news was spread from tribe to tribe and within a tribe was through the medium of the dance and song. It may be that certain Africans would prefer to get their ideas in a