

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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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

normal European way, but there are an immense number who would get those ideas more quickly and clearly if they were conveyed in what I would call the African medium. I am not in a position and my colleagues were not in a position, to say what these African media are, but I think they should be studied and I am quite certain that, although European methods of restoring law and order, of re-establishing a sense of security throughout the Colony are necessary, we must approach the whole problem of African progression not simply with the eyes and viewpoints of Europeans, but taking into consideration the sort of things which appeal traditionally to the African mind.

I agree very much with Mrs. Huxley—here I am digressing a little—who in her recent book called *Four Guineas* says that when the time comes for the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth to be written, and when an attempt is then made to analyse the reasons for some of its failures, one of the conclusions reached might quite easily be that we bored the African peoples.

I felt very strongly when I was out there recently, and to a lesser extent during the war, that our whole attitude to the African administration was essentially repressive, not in the totalitarian sense of the word, but repressive of the natural forms of expression which the Africans have traditionally evolved. I was greatly fascinated by seeing a young district officer who had just gone out and who had organised the only Kikuyu band I saw—a sort of percussion band. It was not a very orthodox band, it did not produce a tune I recognised, but that did not matter. What really mattered was that with that band, and with the sports grounds he was building, with the women's handicrafts classes he was organising, he was giving, particularly to the women, an interest which lay outside the normal humdrum routine of peasant life. That applied particularly to the women because they are a major problem, but it also applies to the men. My own view is that when we have suppressed undesirable practices among the Africans we have too often also killed harmless activities, interests and modes of self-expression. We have too seldom failed to take sufficient trouble to replace them with different interests more in accordance with the standards of life of civilised people. The result has been that in many cases the only outlet that the African has had has been politics, and anybody who finds his only amusement in politics is in a very bad way indeed.

We will not help the African to solve his problems by making his progress artificial, because that in the long run is not going to be of any use to him. That is why Mau Mau, in my view, for all the evil which it has brought, for all the despair which it has created, provides an opportunity for the African. If he can, as a result of his strength of character, as a result of his courage, as a result of keeping his grip on the best standards of the African tradition and of the European tradition at the same time, defeat the challenge which Mau Mau presents to him, then perhaps a sense of self-confidence will be born out of all this evil. The African will be able to feel that he himself has answered the challenge of his own backwardness, and by defeating it has established the right which he wants to have more than anything else in the world—the right to receive the respect of the other races who have had greater opportunities than he has.

In the discussion which followed Mr. Alport's lecture, when asked about his statement that we bored the African, he said that there were two influences at work—the Administration and the missionary. The missionary societies had done immense work, but in the process had vetoed the African's normal forms of expression. Undesirable as some of them were, they were traditionally his. The object of the administration was to maintain law and order and to look to the economic advancement of the African, to educate him; but very often this was negative in approach and consisted in cutting out many of the normal impulses of the African without giving him something to replace them.

A Muganda visitor said that missionaries, with the best intentions, banned African music and other forms of African art and culture, and put Church music in their place. He appreciated the suggestion that the self-confidence of the African should be encouraged, but did not this depend on the acceptance of the African by other races?