GOD OF HUNGER

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Digital edition first published in 2011

Published By The Electronic Book Company

http://www.theelectronicbookcompany.com

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Synopsis

(The following passage is quoted directly from a reader's report)

'God of Hunger is a fascinating and imaginative novel which take us to different settings and allows the reader to view the story through the eyes of different sets of characters, seeing the unfolding history of the end of colonial Africa from the points of view of the Greek and Polish communities as well as other expatriates, in a period when German rule had given way to British, which in turn was about to be replaced by native independence. The struggle of the non-Africans to find a role for themselves and continue the colonial system by subtler means seems to be the message of the novel, and their struggle a microcosm of twentieth-century world history.

The book tells the tragic life story of Theo Kokopoulos. Theo is the son of Kostas Kokopoulos, an ambitious expatriate Greek who has lived in Tanganyika since the 1920's, having been part of the great migration that followed the end of the First World War. We first meet 'KK', as he is known, on the verge of independence, as he angles for position in the new government, hoping to nudge it towards a Soviet-style Socialist utopia. The narrative follows his son, Theo, through his upbringing, in which he finds himself torn between his power-hungry, anti-Semitic father and Misha, a survivor of the Holocaust. In a sense Theo seems to represent the vulnerability of the post-war world, torn between two conflicting directions. In the end, neither side gains full control, as he contracts cancer; despite moving to London for specialized treatment, Theo dies.

In this opening part we are treated to a bravura display of historiography, as the events of the main narrative are woven into the world events of the twentieth century: the demise of Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans, the Greco-Turkish conflict, the rise and fall of British Southern Africa, the emergence of apartheid and the imprisonment of Mandela. The breadth of reference is striking- even Blackadder Goes Forth is quoted at length.

The focus shifts away from the Greeks, simultaneously dividing between Polish expatriates and the Tanganyikan natives moving for independence. It becomes clear fairly quickly that the author is just as interested in the Poles as in the Greeks, and although he seems to have shot many of his European historical bolts in the first part, he has plenty left. He weaves a compelling tale about a family of Polish émigrés. The lives of Marisha's lovers mirror Theo's in some ways; they have a passionate devotion to hunting game, as well as men.

The symbolism maintains its intensity when we return to 'KK'. In a strange, idiosyncratic and ambiguous manner, his death and the bizarre scenes in which

he is mummified seem to represent the fate of the European enterprise in Africa.

In conclusion, *God of Hunger* is an extraordinary work of literary fiction. Obviously it isn't aimed at a popular readership. It is idiosyncratic, complex and makes fairly significant demands on the reader. But it is very intelligent, erudite, and manages to compel the reader's involvement from the very beginning. The sense of history is grandiose without being grandiloquent; a quality which it owes to its basis in well drawn human characters. I recommend this novel highly.'

Prefatory Notes

God of Hunger takes its title from the street name of Tanganyika's First Minister and Tanzania's first President, Julius Nyerere: *Mungu wa Nja*. The father of the nation, who is justly lauded for creating unity out of a variegated tribal polity, but was responsible for the gross impoverishment of his country.

The book may be read as a string of ancient Anatolian stone worry beads twirled in remembrance of the dead; souls alleviating God's hunger. The stones are inscribed with names as they appear in chapter headings. As characters, all are drawn from lithomancy.

The beads are strung onto Tanganyika; the thread that binds them together. Having been superseded in 1964 by Tanzania, the country of the book belongs entirely to mythology.

Tanganyika emerged out of German East Africa in 1918 after the defeat of the Central Powers.

It was the Germans who invited the Greeks to their colony to work on the railways inland from Dar-Es-Salaam, on the Indian Ocean, to Mwanza on Lake Victoria and Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika, retracing the slave route from Ujiji, where Stanley found Livingston, to the coast. Whence again, from Tanga, to Moshi beside Kilimanjaro and Arusha beneath Mount Meru.

Greeks, as foremen, were employed on the French construction of the Suez Canal and after its completion in 1869, transferred their skills to the building of Germany's colonial railways. They were later offered land and settled in Tanganyika to make their living in growing coffee at altitude, or sisal on coastal plains.

In 1921, when Ataturk, in the course of creating modern Turkey, defeated Greek forces intent on resurrecting Byzantium, many exiles from Anatolia joined their kinsmen in Tanganyika, a Mandated Territory under British governance.

To this entity were sent, in 1942, Poles; mainly women and children, the remnants of a massive forced exodus, in 1940, from Eastern Poland which was occupied by the Red Army under the terms of the Secret Protocol of the Nazi Soviet Pact of August 1939.

A census taken in Tanganyika ten years later, revealed that Greeks and Poles made up the majority of its European population, then at its height, when life for most was as good as it was going to get; Tanganyika resembled a ship sailing erratically on oceans of history while its passengers believed that the captain had a true bearing on their destination. Under the tropical sun a few

flourished, more wilted, while most simply got by, in a country to which they went with feelings of trepidation, from homelands they often recalled, to a place they never forgot; a land which now bears little trace of them. This book is dedicated to their remembrance.

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I was born (1944) in Tanganyika arriving in the UK in 1963 to attend the Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology. Finding the fenland winter too cold to bear, I spent much of my first year identifying the college with the best heating system and found it at Keele University where the Nissen hut accommodation was served by the largest radiators in the land. Keele then allowed its undergraduates a Foundation year during which I discovered History, the love of my life after Merrilyn, whom I met at Keele. We married in 1969 and were blessed in 1972 with a daughter, Sophie. The family home of forty years and more is in Staffordshire where, at various colleges, I have taught African Politics and Government, International (European and Non-European) Political History and modern Polish, British and German Diplomatic History.

In writing this book I have relied mostly on memory; on remembered conversations within a family where story telling was the main source of entertainment. We did not listen to the radio. Nor to the gramophone. We also read next to nothing. Perhaps this was because when night fell regularly at 6 (or at 12, by the Swahili clock) the paraffin lamps gave inadequate light for that pastime? Or was it simply because talking in the dim flickering light had the added attraction of shadow play on our lime washed bedroom walls?

There were some two dozen books in the house; a set of *Golden Pathway* which a slick salesman off-loaded as the best source of knowledge for our betterment. The Wedgwood blue, hardbound volumes, were never consulted save for a look at each coloured frontispiece. Strangely, many years later, I saw a play in Nantwich, in Cheshire, based on the unread contents; it was all very English. There was also a three volume set, in Polish, recording the battle for Monte Casino whose summit was taken by Poles. Next, a book in Greek entitled *Hellenes Abroad (Tanganyika)*, written by John Tsondos, published in Nicosia, no date of publication. It contains material I have long treasured such as mention of every Greek in the Territory, including many photographs, including one of our family. There was also a tome called *Greeks in Africa*, in English, published by a Greek publishing house in Alexandria, in 1955, listing every Hellene in every corner of the continent. The photographs show men in short sleeved shirts, knee length baggy khaki shorts *(kaptulas)* and knee high long socks. Women in flower patterned light cotton dresses, and couples often leaning on the bonnets of automobiles, one foot on the running boards, *a la* Bonnie and Clyde. The American limousines, box-bodies and pick-ups are straight out of fifties movies. My Godfather owned a brown Hudson which had a massive steering wheel on which was mounted a glass globe the size of a small paperweight, enabling the driver single-handedly to swing the wheel

within which a concentric chrome ring could be pressed to sound a melodious note of warning. This true *limousine* had immensely comfortable bench seats where his chickens, flying in through open windows, loved to roost when the limo was static. The designation De Luxe, a hallmark of the age, was proudly emblazoned on the sides of a long bonnet; he loved to use the term which he pronounced as *delooxaria.* Fords, Pontiacs, Chevrolets and Studebakers there were a plenty. The only Cadillac in town belonged to Mr. Subzali who owned the concession for the marque. My cousin and I would gaze at the chrome hub caps, the size of today's television dishes, on display in a long glass cabinet in the showroom of Subzali Motors. No ducal silverware, polished to its most dazzling shine, could ever surpass the glittering beauty of those wheel dressings. As for white walled tyres, soon covered in red earth which rendered them pink after every wash, these were the height of automobilistic aspiration. Coming away with glossy brochures of the latest dreams from Detroit was sufficient compensation, especially as each had an exchange rate of one for four Eagle comics, three Beano or Dandy, two War or Cowboy comics or one Classic.

Other reading matter at home included a photographic record, in a series of six tomes, of the Second World War, in which my brother George and I recorded our response to each image with an exaggerated system of marking as though we were teachers assessing work in blue crayon, from A quadruple plus to D quadruple minus. We were thoroughly beaten for the defacement of books otherwise unread. Lastly there was a children's book of poetry. Preparing me for kindergarten, my father insisted on teaching me to memorise Little Boy Blue. He pronounced meadow as *meedow* and when I repeated the word at my first declamation in school the teacher laughed so raucously that I wet my shorts in terror. I also cried from laughter when listening to my father's version of Olivier's Henry by Shakespeare, which he had seen on screen, first at The Victory, then at The Paradise and again at The Metropole; each time the funnier; drama was only ever rendered as comedy at home.

It was linguistically confusing to grow up in a household in which, around the dining table, five languages, all jumbled up, could be heard: 'Pass me a glass and the jug of water please', with Polish, Greek, English, Warusha (akin to Masai) and Swahili words in the same sentence. (Purists will wince at my usage of Swahili. I would however point out that I write it as it is spoken on the streets; Colonial Officers in Tanganyika, who had to pass an examination in the language, were taught a written form few understood and a pronunciation all locals found risible.)

I have long since held that all children should first be taught just one tongue, English. The world's language, taught to a high standard, giving everyone a full command of its vocabulary, grammar and syntax; a language for all seasons; fit for every purpose, from rap to Queen's Speech. Yet, for all that, our domestic

tower of Babel prepared me well in the art of national identity and the science of international history.

In this book, I have attempted to render words or statements in Greek, Polish, and Swahili as they would be pronounced by a native speaker. For example: instead of *hoi poloi* which confusingly *sounds* to the Anglophone as 'the posh' rather than meaning 'the many', I suggest *ee polee*; the way Greeks say it and I would bet a *thrahma (th* as in the) to an *evro* that when a Sapho or an Omeeros (Homer) is resurrected through some frankensteinian sparking of dry old DNA, we shall discover that that is how they would have pronounced the Greek language. In the meantime, I would, with great respect, suggest that Classicists listen to the modern Demotic before attempting to speak the Ancient.

In matters Greek, the book owes much to I.N. Tsondos, *Elleenes En Tee Xenee* (Tanganyika) *(Greeks in Tanganyika)* and to *Greeks in Africa*, but most of all from papers held in private archives which were proffered to me in Tanzania in 1987 and in research material I had collected, but did not use in penning *The Kidron Bible*.

The Polish story is based on previous work, now out of print, to which I have copyright: *Poland, 1939-1947,* the English translation of Garlicki's *Jozef Pilsudski,* the New Edition of Zajdlerowa's *The Dark Side of The Moon* and on two lengthy video-recorded interviews: Sir *Frank Roberts, A Diplomatic History, 1939-1968* and *The Dark Side of the Moon* whose surface was lightly trod by that most graceful of women; my mother.

My opinion of Julius Nyerere is mainly informed by conversations in 1987 with members of Tanzania's masses, *ee polee,* or, if you insist, *hoi polloi* and on T.S.Eliot's notions of culture and social structure. The central question highlighted in his preface to the original, anonymously written, edition of *The Dark Side of The Moon*, published in 1946, is: 'What happens to a society, a nation, when its apex is forcibly removed?' A question I have attempted to answer in *'T.S. Eliot's Model of Society in the light of Polish Experience'*, published in the first volume of the journal, Text and Context.

The consequences of gross social engineering (by which I mean the eradication or attempted metamorphosis through state policy of *any* layer of humanity within the imagined triangle) perpetrated upon a nation has been of long interest to me; ever since, as a boy in my beloved grandmother's care, an august lady who was my main link in Eliot's transmission chain of culture, I first learnt of my grandfather's murder at Katyn.

That atrocity has indelibly coloured my take on political history in Europe and in Africa.

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John Coutouvidis, The Boat House, Barlaston, Staffordshire

13 April, 2011

For my Parents and in memory of my Godfather

GOD OF HUNGER

Kokopoulos

John Konstantine Kokopoulos, otherwise known as KK, was blessed from an early age with an inquiring mind, a great appetite for learning, a heightened drive for adventure and the resilience of a peasant. His parents worked on the Argenti estate, the richest in the fertile plain of Hios (Chios) known as the *Kamvo*, famous for its *Mastiha*, a shrub whose sap produced a chewing gum produced mainly for the harem market.

His father laboured on the land and his mother served as housemaid in the big house. The spirit of the place was Tuscan; cultured, elegant and civilised and ahead in every manner of life, though not in philosophy, to all other inhabitants of the island of Hios.

Despite the material poverty of most Hiotes few could doubt the richness of their identity; their intellectual heritage. Hios is the island of Omeeros and Sapho. It is also the birth place of Christopher Columbus and many other seafaring adventurers. And it is also the island from which Kolokotronis, so named after a shot from a Turkish musket stung *(kotroni)* his posterior *(kolos)*, took on the might of the Ottoman fleet in the fight for modern Greek political and religious freedom which came in hard fought stages between the first quarters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries after centuries of Turkic occupation.

It was the Ottoman Turks who had shaped the third largest piece of intellectual furniture in the Hiot mind; an oriental orientation in manners and music. The first piece, alluded to above, was crafted by classical Hellenism and the second by the Greek Orthodox Church.
To be a modern Greek is to be of the Greek orthodox faith. It goes without saying until questioned when it becomes clear that whilst nation and faith are one, the church hierarchy is rarely respected. Priests are tolerated, Metropolitans and above barely so. And God and his saints and angels are best understood as a Greek Testament gloss on the Animism of the Ancients. And everywhere, the Evil Eye.

As a boy, KK had little time for religion but, like most islanders found the long Sunday service a boon chance for the exchange of news and gossip. Participation in the liturgy came naturally and automatically; everyone knew the order of service by heart but not by mind. The Classics were another matter.

The philosophers and dramatists were exercised with deep understanding even when recited from memory. KK could from an early age recall the *Iliatha.* It was understood by him to be about what we would now call male bonding. Accordingly, the world was set as a stage for men to act upon, each swearing allegiance to comradeship in arms whilst reaching for the lone status of a hero.

Women were venerated as mothers, tolerated as sisters or wives and fought over as trophies should they be identified as such in comparison to other prizes such as a heifer or an iron tripod in ancient times or a caique in the near present of KK's youth or a good rifle later on in his life in Africa.

How he yearned for a boat of his own on his expeditions to the bay across the harbour of Hios; the bay of Tsesme. What drew him there were the wrecks of the Turkish fleet sunk in 1770 by a 'search and destroy' mission sent out by *Katherinee,* the Great Empress of Orthodox Russia.

Few islanders had the courage to dive for treasure in the shallows closer to Turkey than Greece. Indeed, not many had precise knowledge of it. KK had both.

His interest in local history had come to Count Argenti's attention for two reasons. Firstly, Argenti was forever working on a history of Hios and had a ready ear open for new information concerning the island. And secondly, as the Governor of the only school on the island, he was given reports of the academic progress of its pupils only to find KK at the top of every list.

The boy was invited to visit the big house and was questioned by the Count on various aspects of learning which confirmed the reports he was getting from the school; Kokopoulos, J.K., was extremely bright. And so began a pedagogic relationship by which the boy visited the Count after church each Sunday to exchange views about the text lent and read over the previous week. And so it was that the history of the world centred on Hios became an open book to the boy who impressed the Count on other subjects too.

The *mastiha* trees at the top end of the estate always furnished less gum than the average yield. This was because they grew along a ridge raised above the plain and in that position were more vulnerable to desiccation over the summer months. KK's father often reported on the Count's concern about these trees. Wishing to repay his lordships kindness to him, KK gave the matter much thought and came up with a solution after a year's experimentation. He had observed that unkempt trees in peasant gardens higher up in Monastir appeared in better shape than the Count's marginal rows. Could it be that the piles of stones that littered the un-harrowed ground around the less cared for trees held the answer to the problem of desiccation?

The boy requested the Count that he allow his father to place gravel around the base of each tree along the ridge. This was done and the following year's yield of gum had risen significantly from these rows; the gravel kept the moisture around the roots.

It was then that the Count took an even greater interest in the boy, suggesting to his father that he, the Count, would send KK abroad for further education, having in mind a college in Damascus ran by a German order of monks. They provided a well-rounded general education and the opportunity to specialise in practical disciplines of which farming in a dry climate was one in which the college had developed a far reaching reputation.

When put to KK, the proposal was not welcomed. He had not thought of his own future and resented others, however well meaning, to plan it on his behalf. So one evening he stole out of Hios town and crossed the bay to Anatolia, one nautical mile away, in a dilapidated skiff which had long been beached at one end of the harbour.

The crossing started well but gradually the boat filled with sea-water and half way across sank, leaving the boy to swim the rest of the way. It was not that he found it arduous to do so but would have preferred a drier landing at his destination at the village of Katopanaya, a kilometre and a half south east of Tsesme.

Katopanaya was a village inhabited entirely by his country men who had originally come from Pontus to cultivate virgin land around the Mother of God, above and below:

Anopanaya and *Katopanaya*, two ancient chapels, one on a hill and the other by the sea.

Between massacres, the last had occurred on Hios in 1822 and the next was to come in Smyrna in 1921, life for Greeks in Turkish hands was safe and largely self regulated. Provided taxes were paid and first-born sons offered up for military service when required by the Sultan, Hellenic communities got on with their lives unmolested. But woe betide an occurrence out of the ordinary which could cast doubt and suspicion in the official mind.

KK's nocturnal adventure roused the ire of the village elders. They did not want the authorities on their backs at a time of high alert with talk of war after the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince at Sarajevo earlier that week. The boy could be mistaken for a spy and to harbour such would endanger them all. The elders weighed the matter up. Was the protection of a fellow Greek runaway whose presence would not go unnoticed by the local *Muhtar* worth risking all? Clearly not.

The next day KK was led to the Muhtar's office in Tsesme castle and there handed over to be dealt with by him whilst during the same night as KK's arrival in Katopanaya, word crossed the bay to Hios in the boat of a *Katopanayousee* fisherman, such that Count Argenti's pleas on behalf of the boy were already in the hands and pockets of the Muhtar.

The Turk twirled his moustache and struck a pose of bellicose authority without uttering a word. He dismissed the elders with a swing of his right hand and indicated with his left to the sentry that the boy should be led into the cell. There he was left to contemplate his fate in fear of dire punishment until the door was opened at dawn of the second day of his incarceration. He was led out of the castle, across the square and onto the quayside where Argenti's motor launch was moored. Without a word being said, he was escorted aboard, his manacles removed, and left among friends who took him back to the island.

A large bribe apart, Argenti had assured the Muhtar that KK would be sent away to college in Damascus where he would also be under the watchful eye of Turkish authority.

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All that was about to change. The Ottoman Empire became an ally of the Central Powers and when the Great War ended, it was broken up into its constituent parts which became new nation states exercising various degrees of autonomy within a supposed new world order headed by the United States and the Soviet Union but still under the sway of the victorious European empires: Belgian, British, Dutch and French.

The ending of the war in 1918 coincided with KK's graduation from college. He emerged well rounded and grounded; trained as an agronomist and educated in arts and languages.

Throughout his five years in Damascus he kept up a regular correspondence with his Hian mentor, Count Argenti. Between regularly stated assumptions that KK would return to the island and take over the management of his estates, Argenti kept the young man abreast of his writing.

Whilst KK was in college the Count had published *Massacres of Hios* describing the holocaust of 1822 and was now working on an account of the wars of Greek independence extracts of which he would include in his letters to KK. This material fascinated the young man but neither the promise of a well paid job on the land nor access to the library at the big house would draw him back to Hios.

KK sensed greater opportunities in the brave new world opening up before his very eyes in the Near East. On graduating, top of his year, the young man was

offered a teaching post at his college but left after a year to seek his fortune in Egypt where he arrived in the spring of 1919.

His journey from Damascus took him first to Jerusalem and then to Alexandria, via Gaza.

Alexandria was the appropriate *entrepot* for a Greek into Africa. It was still very much a Hellenic town with the grandest Greek community on the continent, seat to a Patriarchate with dominion over Africa, embellished with Greek schools and colleges, hospitals and theatres. And *kaffenia* throughout the centre of town, clustered around the ancient harbour where once stood the *Pharos* and much else long known but destroyed like the great Library and unknown but very much alive in the minds of Alexandrians such as Alexander's tomb and the palace of his pharaonic successors. And then there was Kafavy the first of the Moderns whom T.S.Eliot emulated and with whom E.M. Forster copulated.

But it was neither the Classical past nor the Modernist present that made a living for the Alexandrian Greeks. It was cotton, grown on the alluvial soil of the delta deposited and watered by the Nile that was Alexandria's rich sustenance. KK was clearly interested in its cultivation and he sought out the great cotton masters like Salvago and Benaki to ask whether or not opportunities in growing the fibre existed for one like him. 'Only as an *eepalilos* (employee) otherwise try the Sudan; land in Egypt is not for sale to new arrivals.'

A disappointed KK left Alexandria for Cairo and, out of necessity, found employment with the Hellenic Enterprise Company (HEC). In a short space of time he made his mark as the most able clerk at head office and found himself being groomed for a role in management.

In this capacity he was invited to attend, as the firm's representative, at many important social functions and it was at one such occasion that he fell prey to the charms of Lady X, the mistress to the head of British intelligence.

KK was not warned off the affair but was warned by his bosses not to divulge company secrets to Cairo's loveliest *femme fatale* whilst being encouraged to develop relations with his part-time lover for the sake of the business; on her arm he had entree to the highest social gatherings in Cairo. Not disappointing his employers, the suave young man's suaveness was rewarded by rapid promotion to the office of the Chairman's personal *cabinet.*

KK, groomed for the high life in Cairene society never lost his head to its many diversions, taking instead personal advantage of contacts within the cultivated elite.

His erudite lover taught him a great deal of the ways of the world. And also of ancient history, an interest he had cultivated in Hios and in Syria. Outside her bed-chamber Lady X was a world-authority on the ancient civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Apres l'amour one afternoon, KK fell to browsing through the books on her bedside table. He leant back to face her and enquired about the contents of the thinnest book in the pile.

'My darling, it is the oldest story in the world. Gilgamesh was a great person ruling at Uruk, in Sumer, in Mesopotamia, in ancient Iraq. Through his journeys and feats Gilgamesh gained the reputation of one above all other men. For a time he thought of himself as a god. Yet he came to realize that the immortality he had hoped for was impossible and returned from his searching to his city and resigned himself to the inevitability of death. Hamurabi, of whom we know a great deal more, did likewise. A great man who built a great empire. And in building the walls of Babylon with bricks bearing his name he clearly thought of immortality. But when his job was done he resigned himself to death. He showed no fear when he died. His servants, preparing his body for the funeral, found an amulet on the floor of his bedchamber. It was of Gilgamesh overpowering a buffalo. You see, Hamurabi was a great huntsman. He compared himself to Gilgamesh; hunter and creator. That is how he wanted to remembered amongst his own people. As God.'

Our Ancient Greek Gods must have inspired him.

'Not so my darling boy. Babylonian Gods are older than yours.'

'Older than Homer's? (He had learnt to anglicize Omeeros in Anglophone company. 'We Greeks were the very first thinkers and writers. The first post-barbarians.'

'Sorry to disappoint you my darling but even on that score you are mistaken.'

She told him of the latest finds on the islet of Salamina where the palace of Ajax had just been accounted for and in whose bay indeed lay the wrecks of Xerxes's ambitions. The historical value of Homer's verse and the prose of Herodotus was confirmed with each passing season. But what was new to the world was that archaeologists working on the island's acropolis were reported to have found traces of human organic matter on and beneath its base; evidence enough to suggest that earlier temples *and* the temple to Athena may have been a place of barbaric rites.

'The question is, my dear boy, could it have been a site for the ritual murder of humans?

‘Are you saying that Greeks were barbarians?’

She laughed as she said, ‘I’m afraid so.’

KK took badly to the statement. He got out of bed and got dressed and was about to go out without a word when she declared her love for him and suggested they immediately leave Cairo for Alexandria there to be alone together.

He melted to her declaration of love and to the prospect of a few hours out of Cairo.

That evening in Alexandria they went for a stroll along the Corniche in the direction of Montaza. Hunger overtook them when they got to King Farouk’s palace which was shuttered. There was no restaurant or bistro to be found. Just a fisherman’s charcoal burning brazier serving up grilled slices of octopus. A drink of arak was obtained from a small shop, the only one open. Neither shop keeper nor *al fresco* chef replied to their attempts at conversation. It was a twilight lacking in *joie de vivre*. A quietude both found unnerving.

At last there was a sound to break the monotony of their repast; the doleful sound of a church bell. They left the corniche and headed uphill toward the cross showing above the cupola above the surrounding roof tops.

They entered the church to find it full of worshipers. Women on the left and men on the right. Refusing to be parted KK and Lady X stood at the back crossing themselves at points in the priest’s intonation only he understood, whilst all the while an assistant priest waved the censor billowing with smoky incense; first at each icon in the screen behind the altar then at the congregation.

The *Papas* deap bass was joined by the three tenor voices to his left who swept prayer and smoke up into the dome where Christ Pantocrator received with unmoving eyes the scene of devotion beneath.

The depth of His gaze, the severity of His face, the company of His unsinging angels told of the risen Christ in mourning. For his people below.

Byzantine frescoes and mosaics did not allow the lightness in which the artists of the Western renaissance portrayed God in Heaven. There was none of Giotto’s blue wash as background to the Angelic host adoring Mother and Child which inspired sinners to seek repentance through familiar prayer aimed at the beguiling, light shedding Dove, central in the décor of Heaven. A feminine décor. A forgiving décor.

Not so by the artists of the Eastern naissance. Here the child Jesus was never a babe in arms. More a miniaturized portrait of the man charged from birth to

deliver judgement over mankind. His mood always sombre even when lit by the sheen of gold leaf and the sparkle of gemstones.

Under the judgemental Deity, the couple allowed themselves to surrender to the service. And when it ended, left only when obliged to move out of the church by the swelling crowd heading for the portico. In the gloaming outside, KK asked, the passers-by to account for the memorial service; midweek and mournful.

Eventually an elderly man said, 'A *mneemoseeno* for the old man.'
'What old man?'

'The holy man. Our hermit. Do you see that distant hill?'

'Yes.'

'He lived in a cave up there. And prayed each day. Throughout the day. Asking God for forgiveness.'

'What had he done that merited such an existence and constant prayer?'

'Ah, my dear. As a young man he, like many others emigrated to America. Like them, in retirement, he returned to his city. But unlike the rest who spoke only about the glory of the New Rome, New York, he said nothing but *anathema* to the place. There he saw and heard things which he believed offended God. So he took to his cave and gave penance for all the sins he had witnessed.'

'A Saint?'

'Perhaps.'

Lady X asked the old man, 'Will we go to heaven?'

'For you two, I think it is here on earth.'

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Calmed by the experiences of the evening in Alexandria equilibrium in feelings about each other returned to KK and Lady X. They walked back to the Corniche along a street of large villas and booked into the Cecil Hotel for the night which further repaired the frayed bond of feeling between them. In the morning they returned to Cairo.

There Lady X suggested a week's pause from lust while she returned to the Chief of British intelligence.

KK knew his place in the order of her life and showed only faked signs of remorse at separation, knowing full well that she would return to him with fresh news and gossip and the occasional morsel of hard information he could report to the Chairman.

In time KK came to know from Lady X much of what passed between the Chief Political Officer at GHQ, Middle East Command, Cairo, and London. And Paris. And Constantinople, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Damascus, Beyrut and New Delhi.

This information was as precious as gold to the head of the Cairene business community who had been watching the fate of the Ottoman Empire with increasing interest since the Allied victory in 1918. He well understood the value of inside knowledge at a time when into the political maelstrom of the post war world were cast the protagonists of the modern age.

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In many ways the cosmopolitan KK was truly representative of it. Born a Greek under Ottoman rule, he went to a college in Damascus run by German monks whose language and ways he took to heart and mind. He took advantage of the education on offer. He read widely adding to his chosen science, philosophy and theology. His intellectual interests migrated, gradually exchanging religious belief for an equally religious interest in political ideology enhanced by a keen interest in language and history; by the time he left college he was fluently a German, Arab, Frenchman, Russian, Anglo-American and a Turk. He found no difficulty in acquiring this multiplicity of cultures. What taxed his brain was the duality of modern knowledge, materialistic and spiritual, and its inherent contradictions. These the young man would resolve in time. And time was on the side of the philosopher within. But not of the man of action, without.

A new world was fast in the making and the speed of change required rapid decisiveness for anyone wishing to take advantage of the possibilities on offer. Intelligence was all and KK was well positioned to read the runes as supplied to him courtesy of the mistress to the Chief Political Officer in Cairo.

*

Cairo and New Delhi were the centres of British power in the East and traffic between the two was reaching saturation point in 1919. Lines were becoming blurred. How far did Cairo's remit run? To Afghanistan? No, that belonged to the India Office. But what of the former German Territories in East Africa, soon to be renamed Tanganyika Territory?

Dar-es-Salaam, or, Haven of Peace a name which captured KK's imagination the moment he read it, was long a bone of contention between sets of British officials. For strategic reasons the War Office wanted a say over the entire

crescent from the mouth of the Ruvama, north to the headwaters of the Litani, Jordan, Tigris and Euphrates and the litoral around the Arabian Peninsula; the entire sweep of land and water was seen as vital for the protection of Egypt and therefore of India.

Ever since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Cairo's contingent of British civil servants was on a par in numbers to New Delhi's, the most precious jewel in Britain's imperial crown. But which of the two British bureaucracies was to administer the territories becoming available East Africa?

In his reports from Kabul, the British Minister appealed for advice about this very question about which Lady X told KK.

The third of many more Afghan wars was taking its bloody course when a certain 'Professor' Barkatullah was mentioned in dispatches:

'He is a native of Bhopal, Central India. Worked as teacher of Hindustani in Tokyo until expelled by the Japanese. Moved to America where he let no opportunity pass of vilifying our rule in India. Claims to be a German subject and German diplomatic agent in Kabul. Holds a German passport issued at Dar-es-Salaam. Was Foreign Minister in the provisional government of India formed in Berlin and led by Mahendra Pratap. Now 'Head of Afghan delegation in Moscow', presently in Tashkent seeking Soviet aid from Chicherin. (Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs).'

The 'Professor' was now back in Dar-es-Salaam, was calling for a Jihad against the British throughout the Orient. Loud echoes were being voiced in Egypt and in India. Moreover, in his call for a general Muslim uprising, the 'Professor' was being encouraged by Moscow. Was East Africa to go red?

Ever since the success of the Bolsheviks in taking over the Russian state there came a call from Lenin and his henchmen for the end of colonialism. Persians, Turks, Arabs and Indians were encouraged to overthrow 'the imperialist robbers and enslavers' of their countries. All secret treaties involving Tsarist Russia as an ally of Britain and France in the Great War, including the Sykes-Picot agreement which over the Middle East between Imperial Russia, Britain and France, were made public. The planned partition of Turkey and Persia was denounced and Constantinople, which was to be taken into Tsarist care, was declared 'a Muslim city for all time'.

'All Russian Congresses of Communist Organizations' were convened to mobilize Muslim opinion throughout the East against Great Britain whose forces were still in the field in support of the Whites in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. This meant that the Middle East became, in 1919, the theatre of an all but undeclared 'cold' war, a cold war between Britain and the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. And, as the Persian revolution of 1906 and

the ‘Young Turk’ revolt of 1908 had already shown, the Middle East was potentially the most vulnerable point of British imperial power; nationalism was in the air. The palace revolution in Kabul and the Third Afghan war in the spring of 1919 gave renewed cause for concern. And as though all this was not enough, Cairo had from May of that year to deal with the redefinition of territory formerly held by the Ottoman Empire.

Kokopoulos had up to the minute information paper on many these subjects. But it was fragmentary. He was particularly interested in the news about Tanganyika which he had decided on a whim that it was the country for him. His relationship with Lady X had run its course. And of this and of his intention to leave he informed his employer, who, try as he might, could not convince KK to remain in Cairo. He did nevertheless welcome his ambitious young manager’s recommended strategy as set out in *The Final Report, 13 August, 1919, by J.K. Kokopoulos to the President of the Board of the Hellenic Enterprise Company in Alexandria concerning business potential in the Middle East and East Africa:*

Sir, It is my privilege to send you my final report before beginning my journey up the Nile to East Africa. Your kindness in providing me with letters of introduction is greatly appreciated and I can only hope to return your kindness when settled at my destination.

Regarding developments about which I have, to the best of my ability, kept you informed, I wish here to present in summary form, matters, which, in my view, are vital to your interests. ….’

The report concluded with a recommendation to invest in the ports of Dar-es-Salaam and Alexandretta.

Explaining how Dar-es-salaam was becoming strategically important he offered his services as agent to the Hellenic Enterprise Company in a place little developed which would require enormous quantities of cement for construction of the modern port and the closest manufactory of cement was in Cairo and owned by the HEC.

With regard to Alexandretta, he argued, that the port was destined to be the answer to the troubled question of access to the markets of the new Middle East, especially in the case of Mesopotamia to which, by sea the obstacles were: ‘(1) the distance from European markets; (2) the unhealthiness of the Persian Gulf; (3) the dues of the Suez Canal. Nothing can change the first; the British are not likely to modify greatly the second and third. And for these reasons engineers are much preoccupied with schemes for giving to Mesopotamia direct access by pipe and railways to a Mediterranean port.’

‘So far as I can learn, the subject as a whole has so far been very imperfectly studied. I am not sure that, as regards pipe lines, it has been studied at all. A great deal, indeed, is known and much has been done with the Baghdad Railway; and its eastern section - if it were connected with Alexandretta, and the port of Alexandretta were improved and modernised - would provide the natural outlet to the commerce of Northern Mesopotamia.’

‘The wars fought by the British have exhausted them economically; *Ee Englezi eene denekiethes* (the English are empty vessels). The Americans are not interested in our region. The French are and have every intention of making money here. I would advise an early visit to Alexandretta which must stand the best chance of becoming the port to service the railhead and pipeline east. Your capital, Mr. President, would in my humble opinion be best invested in the French zone. …’

‘On this subject, I am confident of my intelligence.’

‘I remain, your ever faithful Servant,

J.K. Kokopoulos, Deputy Head of the Intelligence Unit, HEC.

*

Handing the paper to the Company Secretary in person, KK spent his last night in Cairo at the Greek Club. No one there, apart from his boss and his lover, who remained behind at the room they shared, knew of his imminent departure from Egypt.

Under the influence of heightened delight at the thought of leaving, he divulged to a friend, Armenis, whom he had met in the course of business dealings, his inner most thoughts.

Both secretly despised the Cairene establishment and shared the belief that a revolution on the model of Lenin’s should and would take the city, but that until it did, there was money to be made in the Middle East.

Armenis was doing very well in the oil trade. He had a finger dipped in the oil of Mosul and another in the new drillings in Persia and he encouraged KK to join him in his business as a broker. To no avail. KK wanted to farm and was going south to East Africa.

He had earlier thought he would try farming in Palestine where there was much fertile land to be had with fewer restrictions than in Syria or Mesopotamia. But he had not counted on the rapid move into the country by Zionist interests who had the capital to buy up land from the Arabs at a premium he could not afford.

He talked openly to Armenis of his despair of what was happening in Palestine and of his pro-Arab sympathies. Fluent in Arabic he knew just how the Jews were perceived by Arabs and knew, from his reading of telegrams, well before they did, how, in his words 'they were *mezethes* (entrée dishes) at the Zionist feast.' He spoke also of his deep resentment of the Anti- Hellenism amongst certain leading Zionists and within the British Foreign Office which then vehemently opposed the expansion of Greek territory east into Thrace and into the Anatolian *sanjak* of Smyrna.

Wound up in anger, KK divulged to Armenis the contents of a telegram which had that day been copied to Cairo from the British Charge d'Affaires in Prague.

David Trietsch, a prominent Jewish Zionist, had proposed Jewish colonization of Cyprus, arguing 'that many people in England regard Cyprus as a doubtful asset. If, however, by means of Jewish immigration and colonisation the country could soon be made to flourish again it would become a most valuable possession, and by the same course the Jewish and the Moslem populations combined could in a short time outnumber the "so-called Greeks" and bring the anti-British propaganda to a standstill.'

This touched a raw nerve. Nothing raised Greek emotions more than 'The Cyprus Question', To *Keepree-a-ko*. Kokopoulos now well oiled, ranted:

'If only the Germans had won the war! With their backing we would have got all we wanted from a weak Ottoman Empire open to dictates from Berlin which would also have put paid to Zionist dreams. Damn the *Evrei* and damn the British.'

Armenis looked at KK with shock and surprise. Never had he witnessed his friend break into drunken babble.

Wishing to steady him, Armenis asked, 'So, tell me, what you are going to do?'

The question helped KK regain his balance.

'There are great possibilities in German East Africa. Greeks have lived there under German rule for a long time. This new place …. Tanganyika may now be under British mandate, but the English presence is only nominal. Fundamentally the country is Germano-Arabic in its ways. Ways which suit me best. And there is land to be had from the new masters. I go to Dar-es-Salaam to make my fortune in East Africa.'

*

KK said goodbye to El Misr (Cairo) by visiting three of its most beautiful Mosques: the Gamia Sultan Hasan, the Gamia Rifaiyeh and the Gamia Emir Kijmas el-Ishaki. He read their Holy calligraphy and spoke to as many of their

Holy men as he could find; all marvelled at his command of the highest refinements of the holy language.

Taking leave of this greatest of Arab cities, also the largest in Africa, Kokopoulos boarded the train to Aswan, 552 miles and sixteen hours away. He wanted to see the dam at the head of the First Cataract whose completion in 1912 he emulated in a scale model across one of the many furrows on the Argenti estate when he was still in Hios.

The dam was a dream come true to the amateur engineer. One and a half miles long, it held back six million tons of water affecting the level of the river as far as the Second Cataract at Wadi Halfa, 210 miles to the south of Aswan and inundating many villages. Was the human cost of construction worth it? To this question Kokopoulos gave the reply of an emphatic yes. An answer that was to trouble his mind when he and his labourers were forcibly evicted from his first farm in Tanganyika, though even then he never doubted that humans had to be sacrificed in the cause of 'progress'. KK marvelled at great schemes. And here in Aswan a chain of five locks at the dam's western end allowed through the steamer in which he continued his journey after many days of feasting his eyes on the dam of his young dreams. Yet there was one more to be seen of which he had only learnt about when at Port Sudan to which he had done a detour by rail from Wadi Halfa. Close to the principal port of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was a settlement of West Africans at Takroorie. This settlement, a racial anomaly, sufficiently interested the amateur anthropologist in Kokopoulos to make the detour. The inhabitants of Takroorie were indeed from West Africa. A moving population of pilgrims to Mecca across the Red Sea. The pilgrims worked in Port Sudan for about a year to pay for the next stage of their journey of devotion. Their village was built around a desert oasis, with waterhole and palm trees under which Kokopoulos learnt of the development of new works of irrigation at the mouth of the Gash which lay on the railway from Port Sudan to Khartoum, 500 miles away. That project was another he had to see.

First, the train ascended a range of volcanic mountains through a long succession of narrow valleys inhabited by the Hadendowa and their flocks. These were the people who wore their hair in original Afro-style and who were referred to in Baedeker as 'Fuzzy-Wuzzies' whom Kokopoulos sought out when he paused a day at Halya Junction on the water-shed dividing the Nile from the Red Sea. After Halya he stopped at Kassala on the River Gash at the upper end of the Atbara basin which was being developed for agriculture in a manner Kokopoulos wanted to study in case he could apply what he saw in Tanganyika.

The Gash which rises in Eritrea and flows through the Abyssinian highlands had, over millennia deposited a huge delta of silt, 10 to 20 miles in width, where it entered the Sudanese plains. Kokopoulos discovered that the river ended 90 miles north of Kassala where, what water remained, drained into the

desert. He was told that during nine months of the year the river dried up as did the plain. But after the floods which take place in the ninety days from July to October, the fertility of the soil, rich with the goodness of Ethiopia, is phenomenal. Kokopoulos learnt that Sudanese engineers had just completed a channel to regularize the lower Gash. From this channel the water was led across the central fertile delta by a series of canals controlled by sluice gates. Irrigation was effected by discharging the flow from these canals through subsidiary channels. The areas selected for cultivation received one year's flooding in every three, in a system of rotation. Cotton, which takes six months to mature, could be grown in a single flooding.

His mind brimming over with matters agricultural, he took a detour from Atbara junction along the loop line to the ruins of Napata which re-occurred in his other dream; that of becoming an archaeologist.

*

About the ninth century, B.C., the Ethiopian city of Napata, near Karima on the Dongola bend of the Nile, reached its apogee. Kokopoulos also knew that the royal capital then moved to Meroe which became a centre of great wealth and rich culture and which flourished well into the seventh century, yielding to archaeologists Egyptian, Greek, Meroitic and Roman objects of great refinement, the best of which, from the royal baths, Kokopoulos saw in the museum in Khartoum. But first he walked down the ancient streets to the ruins of the Temple of the Sun, seen whole by Herodotus. Kokopoulos then journeyed to Naqa, inland from Meroe near the country palace of Musauwarat. Naqa struck him as the most perfect ruins in the Sudan to whose capital, Khartoum he next travelled.

"The longest kiss in history." That is how the confluence of the Blue with the White Niles is described in Arabic literature and Kokopoulos stood for hours admiring this act of love which gave life to Egypt.

The merging waters surrounded by desert re-affirmed his view of history; man at the mercy of the Gods of Hunger.

*

Later that day Kokopoulos crossed over to Omdurman by boat as the new seven-span bridge was still being constructed.

Omdurman. The place of slaughter. Where the banners of Islam declared the first *jihad* against the infidel British imperialists. Kokopoulos paid homage to the Mahdi whose tomb was in ruins and visited the house of the Khalifa Abdullahi which had become a museum for Mahdia and other historical relics. He then crossed over again to Khartoum, saw the plaque at the spot where Gordon fell and caught the steamer to Juba via Kosti.

Could the latter have been named after a Greek? *Konstantinos, Kostas* (its diminutive …), Kostakis, *Kostaki, Kosti?* Perhaps so. As it happened, a Greek of that name traded in antiquities from a small shop in the centre of town. His most prized item was a large fragment of a frieze depicting Meroitic lasciviousness. Kokopoulos had seen the series of images from which it came in the Royal Baths at Meroe. He described these to his compatriot before heading south again to Lake Victoria.

After resting at Kampala, he took the train to Mombassa on the Kenya coast. This was Swahili country where his knowledge of Arabic helped him to find a dhow which took him south to Dar-es-Salaam.

He did not stay there long because there was news of new land being released to settlers in the north. He took another dhow to Tanga, terminus to the railway line which ran to Arusha at the foot of Mount Meru, whose summit is some four thousand feet lower than that of its close neighbour, Kilimanjaro; the gleaming mountain, Africa's highest peak.

*

When Kokopoulos arrived in Tanganyika in the late summer of 1920 he owned nothing more than what he wore plus a change of clothes, boots and a number of books all wrapped in a Bedouin prayer mat held tightly folded and wound around by a chord fashioned from the tendons of a camel's forelegs. His savings had been transferred from Cairo to Dar-es-Salaam and with these he fitted out a mule train with the necessities of life and tools for work on the land leased to him a hundred and fifty miles or so out of town, south along the main track from Arusha to Babati and then right, into the bush. He hired as headman a German speaking Chagga who had served in von Lettow's militia. He, the *manyapara,* took on five more men and a boy from his village. The boy, Martin, was an orphan from a mission settlement run by German Lutherans on the mountain behind the town. He had worked as a houseboy for the Fathers and also filled in for the cook who, with a key to the drinks cupboard in the pantry, often slept through his shift.

*

Men, boy and mules set out from the castellated compound of the Meru Hotel one Sunday morning, crossed the ford of the stream marking the boundary between uptown and downtown and stopped again at Aziz's garage. Here worked two brothers apprenticed to Mr. Aziz who also ran the local cinema at which the brothers earned extra wages by supplying live sound effects to silent movies from behind the screen. On one famous occasion they shouted 'here comes the lion' and, as they roared, a spear hurled from the front seats reserved for natives found its target on the screen.

Aziz made the bulk of his money by exchange. Whenever a vehicle came in for repair he would encourage the driver to wait at the nearby hotel whilst the

vehicle was being serviced. Most drivers took the welcome break and while they were away, Aziz and his apprentices went to work swapping good parts with castaways kept in the garage. Magnetos were common currency in this trade; newish for old. Linkages, pipes and shafts likewise. And when time permitted, valves, bearings and pistons. This exchange depended on reports from one of the boys sent at regular intervals to the hotel. Were he to witness a poker game fully absorbing the attention of the vehicle's driver the car would get the full works over the pit. Aziz's standard of work was such that vehicles would only falter many days or miles out of town leaving their stranded occupants to seek further assistance at other garages in the territory many of which were also owned by Aziz of Arusha.

Kokopoulos who had developed a habit for poker had made the acquaintance of the two brothers across the card table at the Hellenic Club. He stopped at the garage for one last hand.

The game was played in the service bay after the garage had shut and continued until it opened the next day. Only then did the mule train leave the town behind and headed for the undulating hills around Oljoro and Monduli and the plains of Masailand.

The track was flanked by myriads of grazing antelope, mainly Thomsons and Grants gazelles.

Ahead was the escarpment Greeks called *Ee meghalee aneefora*, the great climb. Here the mule train stopped for the night.

While his crew prepared camp, Kokopoulos took Martini on their first shoot. Kokopoulos had equipped himself with a 9.3 Mauser rifle and a twelve bore shotgun, neither of which he had used before. Nor indeed had he shot game before. Not that he let on. So off they went in the hour before nightfall.

Clear of the camp in the making, Kokopoulos was first struck by the sound of the bush. A constant wind flowed hissing through the grass, guinea fowl busied around making metallic sounds punctuated by the arrested braying and coughing of zebra. He stood on a bluff with Martini at his side and looked. Green clumps of thorn in a sea of fresh grass. This was the sea. The trees the rocks and the gazelle, shoals of fish. That is how he saw it. As he had seen beneath the surface of the still waters around Aquaba where the right prong of the Red Sea curved back on itself. He floated quite still in the platinized light on his first foray into the *porini*, the African bush. The boy stood beside him and took in the glory. A shot thundered across the plain. An impala buck fell and quivered. A minute's silence sliced the air and separated beast from man as the plain then erupted in the chaotic movement of animals in fearful flight.

Martin whooped with delight as he ran to the *nyama* (meat). He placed the shotgun he was carrying carefully on the slope of a nearby anthill and inspected the evening's feast with delight. "Shall I get the others to carry it back?' he asked his approaching *bwana*. Kokopoulos, delighted at the boy's German on which he had not reckoned, believing the *manyapara* to be the only other honorary Teuton on his payroll, erupted into speech. He too was excited. The two walked back together and parted company at camp as Martin peeled off with one of the men to bring back the meat.

Preparations in anticipation of a good night were well advanced at camp. Two fires flamed. One for Kokopoulos, the other for the *watu* (men); both for grilling meat and against predation from leonine royalty and their hyeanous court jesters.

Martin did the honours for Kokopoulos and excelled in producing grilled fillet and liver of impala served to the quadraphonic sound of frogs under a huge chandelier of crystalline stars.

The boy stood by and was rewarded with grunts of satisfaction from his master who spoke when he had finished eating and said the unexpected: "Where is the shotgun? Martin threw his right hand to his brow and his left to his mouth and sank slowly to a squat. He could hardly breath and struggled to say he was sorry. "Sorry!" barked his master. "You will be sorry. Go and find it! And do not return until you do."

The shotgun was in its case, in the tent. Kokopoulos had retrieved it while the men were butchering the impala. But he was going to teach the *bastarthaki,* little bastard, to be more careful in the future and it would be a lesson he would not forget. It was a lesson in sadism unknown to neither the boy nor the men who fell silent around their fire as the lesson proceeded.

Martin stood on legs weakened by fear and said through a choked throat. "It is dark, bwana. I cannot look for it in the dark. It is dangerous. But I know where it is and will bring it to you at daybreak."

"You will fetch it now. It cannot be left. A beast may trample on it. The dew may harm it. I must have it now."

Martin turned his back to the fire and looked out over the darkness beneath the celestial horizon. His eyes strained to see beyond the dance of light from the fire. Nothing. "Bwana, it is dangerous. I cannot go into the bush feeling a way like a blind person. Please bwana. Forgive me for what I have done. Please. *Tafazali sana, bwana*." The Swahili was lost on Kokopoulos. But the boy's pleas pleased him into further sadism. "You will not be allowed back into the camp until you have brought the gun back to me. Go and find it, there's a good boy, Martini."

Just then a lion bellowed an unmistakable deep bass call of regal wrath and authority which overwhelmed all other sounds of the night and silenced the men around their fire. Martin yelled out to them for help and the *manyapara* rushed across the camp, past the tethered mules, to where Kokopoulos sat facing the bewildered boy.

"What is it bwana? Why is the boy Martin shouting. What is it young man…?"

"Mind your own business. I am teaching him a good lesson. Never to leave my gun unattended. It could save his life one day. And mine. And yours. And the others."

'He left your gun? Where?'

"At the kill."

"But that is half an hours walk away. In the night! Did you not hear the lion, bwana? It is dangerous for the boy to leave us for the danger of the dark …."

"Give him one of the lamps."

"But bwana, that is not right. How can he manage? A boy, with a lamp …? Please bwana, I shall fetch you the gun at daybreak. It will still be there."

"Will it? I can tell you it will not. He must go and find it now! The longer he waits the close the lions will approach our camp. They can smell the mules. I need the shotgun in case they come. And come they will."

The boy, his spindly arms straight by his side, palms turned outward, looked at the *manyapara* through eyes running with tears, his heart about to tear.

"Come to me, Martin," said the headman.

"Don't you dare", growled Kokopoulos at both as he reached under his wicker safari chair and drew up his rifle.

"Go and find the shotgun. And you get back to the men. Now."

Martin fell to his knees and the headman rushed to lift him as he heard the rifle bolt slide back and forward. The former soldier knew there was now a bullet in the breach and then he heard only what he could have known from experience; the click of the safety catch being released. He stood attention. And saluted Kokopoulos. "Permission to stay with the boy, bwana."

"Yes, if you wish. Go with the boy. Without a lamp."

“I will stay with him *here*, bwana.”

“Oh, will you? Then I too will stay where I am.”

Neither the *manyapara*, nor Kokopoulos spoke again that night. Nor did they sleep. The boy had remained on his knees until he collapsed around the headman’s feet.

And that is how the dawn found all three, one prone on the ground, one standing and one seated.

*

The scene was witnessed in the light by the other men who had kept watch on the stand off from the moment their headman had run to Martin’s rescue. They had not dared to intervene but neither had they returned to their fire, except to replenish it and their employer’s as a deterrent to marauders.

The men had sat between the tethered mules and the sadistic scene absorbing its message; the bwana was not quite right in the head nor in the heart.

When the sun had cleared the horizon a listless gaggle broke camp and loaded the mules for the next stage of the safari south. Not a word was spoken until Kokopoulos declared, ‘Right, let us go.’ To which the *manyapara replied*, ‘What of the shotgun.’

“Ha! I went to collect it myself while you were all asleep. Useless bunch of ink faces.”

‘What did he say?’ called out one of the men. *“Alisema nini?”*

“Alisema seesee ni watu bure; tunayo sura la weeno.”

(He said we were a useless ink-faced lot.)

“What was all that about?” asked Kokopoulos, yet unable to understand Swahili and dependant in speech and hearing on his two German speakers, Martin and the *manyapara.*

“I told them that you want to make good headway today.”

“That’s the spirit. Lets move.”

*

The line of men and mules started to scale the incline of the escarpment. Kokopoulos led from the front and had to keep urging the line behind to keep

up with him. The men's minds seared with the silver heat of the risen sun. Their eyes were unwilling to look beyond the haze of dust. All heads were down. All spirits low. All except the spirit of Kokopoulos. He felt on top of the world as he observed the Great Plains stretch below the escarpment to the hills around Monduli and up to the peak of Meru. He was hoping to see Kilimanjaro beyond that extraordinary mountain whose height at about 15,000 feet was made up only of a fragment of its former cone. In his mind's eye he projected geometrically a point in the heavens and reckoned on at least double its present height. The invisible mound of Kibo, at just under 20,000 feet would have been in Meru's shadow in the days when the rift valley was being formed. They were in the rift valley now and would keep to their right its west wall. What a country! What magnificence. What power of creation, what munificence of nature. He knew, from his reading, of the other volcanoes around; the great caldera of Ngorongoro, The spewing cone of Oldonyo Lengai; the mountain of God. He prayed aloud: "Great God, Father of us all, I give thanks for all this beauty. Give me strength to make a success of my life in this, your most beautiful land. Give me patience to civilize the natives, your children too, whom you have put in my care. *Amin*."

*

Kokopoulos took his civilizing mission evangelically; after all he had been educated at the Lutheran Seminary in Damascus.

On graduation, he joined the college faculty. His tutors had instilled in him the way of the Lord whose worker he had become: *O thoolos tou Theou*. (th as in the, th as in theatre)

And the Word for KK became German. And therein lay the way, the truth, and the life. Who, in the 1920's, would deny that German culture was the very highest in the world? Literature, music and science was best mastered in German and to be German in thought word and deed was to be Godly; chosen by God as His soldiers. To do battle for Him and for culture. *Kulturkampf.* And Kokopoulos had *kultur* by the spade full. Well read in the Arts and Sciences he would bring light to darkness and nowhere on earth deserved the light more than the continent of *Afrika*; the dark continent.

And so he strode out in the light of an African day happy in the knowledge that he had that dark night taught his natives the very first rule that was to govern their relationship to him: Obedience. Through Fear. And in fearful obedience they would grow by his knowledge. Was he not the very model of modern man? Well versed in the best Germany could offer he would bring progress to his people.

He looked behind to see them left behind. But what could he expect of this sorry band? Look how they dragged their feet! Lazy creatures. I shall make modern men of them and the method is through work.'

He paused as he recalled the everlasting debate at college about the work ethic in particular and the Protestant ethic in general. This appeared to pose insurmountable problems for some priest-lecturers in his faculty: the basic principles of the Christian ethic was founded on the conception of goodwill to others; 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' When applied to international politics by those who believed themselves to be in the mainstream of the German intellectual world the problem of reconciling the unending struggle for a Greater Germany with the Christian love of one's neighbour could only be solved by rejecting some if not all principles of Christianity This solution was being formulated at the turn of the century a train of thought which minimized the principles of Christianity in order to free Germany from the moral inhibitors hindering the application of *Deutschland Uber Alles*.

When himself a tutor he recoiled before too bold an enunciation of this position but, as a Germanophile, took the road of thinking that everything which was good for Germany was also for the good of Christianity; his was a Germanised Christianity and culture.

Kokopoulos reached the top of the escarpment well ahead of the mule train. Three telegraph poles came into view. He now saw them as his guides in the otherwise bewildering vastness of the plain of knowledge.

The first was his beloved Pastor Lehman whose book, *God of the Germans* he had translated. He recalled his prayer published during the war: "It might come to pass that we succumb in this fight of righteousness and purity against falsehood and deceit. But should this happen let us assert before the Almighty that we should all die happy in the consciousness of having defended Germany against the world."

The second was Germany's celebrated novelist, Thomas Mann of whom Kokopoulos knew as recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Bonn and as member of the League of Nations Committee on Art and Literature: Mann stated that "Culture is a spiritual organization of the world which does not exclude blood savagery. It sublimifies the demonic. It is above morality, reason and science."

The third, Alfred Rosenberg, chief editor of *Volkischer Beobachter*, avidly read in the seminary's common room:

"All German education must be based on the recognition of the fact that it is not Christianity that has brought us morality, but Christianity that owes its enduring values to the German character."

And though a Hian by birth, Kokopoulos was German in character ever since his character building sojourn in Lutheran Damascus.

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He expected to see the mule train appear behind him, but there was still no sign of it. 'Lazy bastards.' So he moved on a little further to take in the view from a hillock beside the track in whose direction south he faced. To his left a vast *mbuga*, a chaos of trees, shrubs and grasses. To his right in the extreme distance the emerald cliff line of the Great Rift. He knew it so well north from the Palestinian tip of the Red Sea, to Sodom and Gomorrah and into the crystalline emulsion of the Dead Sea whence the valley met the blessed Jordan running down from the heights above Galilee. The cradle of Christianity. Many were the times he would drop to his knees begging for the Son to appear. Once in a boat on the Sea he thought he saw Him walking on the waters. Then, swimming in the Jordan and calling for John's blessing, he thought he felt the Prophet's hand upon his head pressing him gently into the holy stream. And floating in the Dead Sea he re-affirmed his faith in the arms of an angel.

*

Angelos. Angeloothee Mou. That is how he first addressed the woman he was to marry. She was angelic, but in the one regard he had not bargained for; she did not enjoy the physical side of affection. But she accepted his hand in marriage when he came to her house and threatened her parents with a hand-gun which he said he would use if they did not give their blessing to the union he proposed. The family was not willing to call his bluff and so the marriage went ahead as he had planned. But not before he had established a farm in the wilderness (where concessions of land were priced at the level he could afford) thus proving his good intentions as a provider.

The weight of that responsibility he felt with pride as he mustered his men on the next stage of their journey south. They had reached the top of the escarpment covered in dust and perspiration only to find him beckoning them on. He was determined to show them his staying power; his iron will.

He allowed a break for the mules to water at a nearby pool. The men drank from their water bottles. He refused to drink when offered his bottle by Martin.

"Let's move. Come on. There's still half a day's to march before camp."

The sun drilled directly into the tops of skulls. Men muttered. Mules brayed. But they followed their indefatigable leader.

Kokopoulos was hoping to reach the point on his route where there was a junction between the track he was following and that to Ngorongoro. There, at Makuyuni, he planned a break, intending to rest his column while he went to look at evidence of an early settlement, called Engaruka, at the base of the rift wall.

*

Kokopoulos knew that early Iron age cultures had appeared in East Africa within a few centuries of their spread south along the valleys of the Blue and white Nile and down along the Great Rift Wall and into its volcanic heartlands and hinterlands where the settled tribes in the fertile foothills of the range of the Aberdares, Mount Kenya, the Ruwenzori Mountains and Mounts Mbulu, Meru and Kilimanjaro flourished to his day. Of all the many mountain tribes Kokopoulos came to most highly rate were the Dongo.

He had often to call on their metallurgical skills when setting up his farm at Dongobesh. Once out on a hunt in his first petrol driven vehicle, a Model T pick-up truck he drove into a gully and smashed the front suspension. It was welded back in place in sufficient strength for him to return to Arusha for new parts to be fitted. No one at the garage believed him when he recounted how a Dongo blacksmith had taken the metal tube of the valve out of the spare tyre, melted the metal in a crucible made from a spanner head over a charcoal fire kept glowing by the use of bellows made from the skin of an impala and had joined the broken suspension back together in a weld that held as good as new.

Kokopoulos had also seen Masai at Maserani forge their *simiis* (spears) in a similar manner, starting from the remnants of a railway line cut away during the construction of the section across the Temi River, not far from the terminus at Arusha.

He asked what if they had not found the piece of line?

'Then we would have looked for ironstone as we were taught by our fathers and forefathers who brought this knowledge with them from afar.' 'Where?' 'The grasslands along the great river.' And that is why Kokopoulos believed Masai hailed from the Nile Valley, from below the fourth cataract where, according to Greeks, *ee Mavree Afreekee* (Black Africa) departed from the continent's Mediterranean littoral. And in terms of a different civilization, distinct to that at Memphis and Alexandria, African culture flowed south from Meroe. There he had seen carved images of dark skinned men; Nilotics, like the Masai, as noble in stature and profile as Alexander's Macedonians.

Kokopoulos, as a boy on Hios, would have shepherded his family's small flock of sheep and goats which were kept at night in the summer in exactly the same type of enclosure as the thorn *bomas* of the Masai, Warusha and Meru, tribes around the beautiful mountain on whose slopes, years later, he had his coffee estate. In the evenings there he would look at the purpling mountain called Meru and link it in his mind to the civilization at Meroe from whence he believed his Nilotic neighbours hailed.

It was the *bomas* that further drew his mind to his Greek homeland where from the time of Mycenae permanent enclosures for man, beast and plantation were

made of stone. And here they were at Engaruka; Mycenean structures he recognised immediately as terraces and shelters for the protection of domesticated plants and animals. And why there, at Engaruka? Because the place was littered in stone. Just as in the area around the Great Zimbabwe of which he knew. Though more magnificent, the ancient citadel in Rhodesia resembled Engaruka which resembled the walls around Meroe. Stone was the key; the availability of stone was the common denominator of these ancient edifices which, in stone, were given permanence in time; Mycenaen time.

*

Kokopoulos took Kandowere with him on his visit to Engaruka, leaving the others to rest awaiting their return.

They left their main camp at Makuyuni at daybreak and trekked along a small but distinct track towards the rift wall on the horizon. Their objective was a small stream, a thread of permanently flowing water called *Mto wa Mbu*; the river of gnats. And it was as its name suggested. Only worse because amongst the myriads of gnats clouding its surface by day were countless mosquitoes patrolling its banks by night.

It was at this campsite that Kicheche Kandowere proved his worth to Kokopoulos. Undeterred himself by the insect life on the banks of the *Mto wa Mbu* he built a cylinder of smoke around his master who slept virtually unmolested while his servant stayed up all night feeding the smoking fires with green and dry branches.

Kokopoulos had had his breakfast before he realized the configuration of the night. He said nothing to Kandowere but remembered two things from the experience. The first was Kandowere's utility as a servant. And secondly proof of everything he had heard about Africans having a higher tolerance of pain and discomfort than Europeans.

No alternative interpretation crossed his mind.

"Fungal safari. Kandowere. Twende." (Let's get moving.)

"Ndio Bwana." (Yes, Sir.)

So on they went taking the right fork along the stream rather than heading up the escarpment to Ngorongoro.

In two hours they came to the ruined city. Starting from the track Kandowere slashed through the *porini* with his *panga* revealing to Kokopoulos terrace after terrace and the unmistakable structures in stone of huts and houses. Up and up to the base of the escarpment where a natural boundary stopped further construction. It was at this terminus that Kokopoulos turned to survey the

ancient petropolis, the African Mycenae and as he turned, a lioness charged. It seemed as though she had been perching on the ruins of the terminal terrace. As she leapt he fired his Mauser from the hip and shot her in mid flight, dropping dead at his feet. Kokopoulos showed no outward emotion. And Kandowere merely said, '*Asante Bwana.'* But he knew then that this *mzungu (white man; European)* was quite without fear and admired him for life for his inner strength. And spread the word to all around that Kokopoulos was a *dume*, the highest accolade to manhood; a warrior, a true man. Kokopoulos placed a boot into the open jaws of death he had just conquered, lit up a *Nyota* and thought back to how it must have been in northern Greece. He had experienced in life a scene he had as a boy seen depicted in mosaics at Pela, Philip's capital. As he stood over the lioness the thread of time swept through his soul and, at that very moment, he understood his place in history.

*

'Aya basi. Twende.' (Okay. Let's go.)

His vocabulary in Swahili over the time of the safari from Arusha sufficed for his commands and by the end of the journey to Dongobesh, Kokopoulos was able to understand what was being said about him by the men to whom he was a hero. Harsh, but heroic. His bidding was to be done without question; the prerogative of a *dume*. (Alpha male.)

From Makuyuni, where the two explorers rejoined the main safari, there was left a journey of some hundred miles south to Dongobesh.

The track first went through grassland full of plain's game with zebra, wildebeest, various gazelles, Thomson's and Grant's predominating. Then towards evening the landscape changed to thorn scrub and date palm which coincided with the appearance of three hills shaped and sized like the Giza pyramids. These were to the left of the track. And to the right the ever present rift wall.

Kokopoulos ordered a halt and told the men to pitch camp in a grove of palms while he and Kandowere went to bag a meal.

Camp and meat came together in an hour. A young hartebeest was served up under fronds through which the Milky Way shimmered as lions coughed and boomed and hyenas cackled until the break of dawn.

Kokopoulos had lain awake all that night. Thinking of the Jordan and the Nile. And of ancient towns. And of the ancients' constant appeasement of the Gods of Hunger as depicted in their art and religious customs. And in the long distances in time and place where there was no sight of life; no sign of history; just of *ereemeeia*; emptiness.

The thought filled him with fear. And doubt in his ability to make a success of what lay ahead. He knelt to pray just as the sun flashed an emerald light across the far eastern horizon.

*

The next camp was at a place called Magugu where there was a junction in the track, north to Babati and right to Magara right at the foot of the rift escarpment at the head of Lake Manyara.

Land at Magugu and Magara had been offered to Kokopoulos as alternatives to Dongobesh but he declined because the best land was already taken by compatriots called Manoli and Mantheaki he had yet to meet but of whom he knew, through contacts in Arusha, as pranksters and comics. Kokopoulos sought solitude. He had no taste for fun and games and Dongobesh was virgin land untouched as yet by white hand.

Nevertheless he called a halt on Manolis's farm which was right beside the track, just behind a *duka*, a small shop, ran by an Indian family. The farm labourers who sat around the front of the shop playing what appeared to be a chequer-like game, shifting pebbles around hemispheres carved out in regular pattern in a log halved along its main axis. Others just sat and smoked while one of there number plucked at a comb of metal strips attached to a sound box the size of a hand.

Bwana Manoli was away in Babati visiting Bwana Zavakos but they were welcome to camp here for the night and of course the Bwana was welcome to use the house where the Mpishi (cook) would be called to prepare a meal.

The house was a hovel distinct only from a native hut by its corrugated iron roof. It did however house a toilet. The pedestal was cracked and the fissures were filled with *mastiha* the chewing gum from Hios. Manolis was also a Hiot. This much Kokopoulos knew. He knew too the faint but unmistakable scent of *mastiha* packets of which were piled on the window ledge behind him as he sat to relieve himself laughing out loud at the resourcefulness of his absent host. Kokopoulos left a note of appreciation and helped himself to chewing gum which lasted all the way to his land.

On the third day of travel, the safari made further progress, past Kibauni towards Babati, thence to his virgin farmland.

Theophilos

The land meant everything to KK, and over a lifetime of toil he became one of the most successful farmers in the Territory. It was in the capacity of an expert agronomist that he wrote to Julius Nyerere, who had on the eve of Tanganyika's independence, invited KK to join his administration.

He sat back from his desk greatly relieved for having completed the letter and report. He swivelled around on his chair and looked along the long verandah to see the mountain glowing in the evening sun, its summit high above the trees. Below them row upon row of coffee bushes. He could see by the colour of the berries on the end of the plantation closest to the house that he would have to set the camp to start the harvest by the end of the week. He opened a new pack of *Nyota* and by the time he lit this, the strongest and most pungent of all cigarettes, birds had stopped singing and the generator had started its night long puffing, muffling the sound of dogs in the camp. The night had begun its normal rhythm. In an hour Martini would serve supper, after which they would gather for poker and play until the break of dawn when the raucous shouts and laughter and the festival of frog and insect choirs calmed to a murmur. When for a brief moment all was perfectly still and silent. But only for a moment. The moment it took the gods to harness their horses to the chariot of the new day which broke along a vast horizon of fire to the song of garden birds, punctuated by more distant crowing, barking, and cawing. By the time the *hondo-hondos* had flown crankily into the tall trees around the mill, the daylight poured white hot out of the celestial blast furnace into the liquid blue heaven and bathed everything below in a transparent shimmer of energy.

Kokopoulos thrived on it. Still only in his sixties, K.K. drew it into his tough body and worked hard each day after a short sleep between dawn and breakfast at ten thirty. Sustained thereafter only by black coffee and *Nyota* he touched no food until the evening. He waited for it hungrily in the hour he gave over to musing about the day.

The hour gave him time to replay the day in solitude. Each memorable exchange with the world a montage in the mind to be seen again from the stalls rather than the stage.

That day, as for the past ten, he had worked on a letter to the young man he so admired and by whom he was soon to be appointed as a political adviser to the government- in- waiting.

After a lengthy disquisition on past political, social and economic trends KK concluded:
"I cannot but state that from our vantage point in mid-twentieth century, the history of the last hundred and fifty years has been a contest between liberal democracy on the one hand, and popular democracy on the other.

While both schools affirm the supreme value of *isonomy* - equality before the law - the difference between the two is in their different attitudes to politics. The liberal approach assumes politics to be a matter of trial and error. The democracy of a People's Republic on the other hand, is based upon confidence in political prescription; *ab initio* it admits to political totality. A predominant collective purpose; all social acts are measured against an all-embracing and coherent ideology and politics is defined as the art of applying this philosophy to the organization of society.

Distilling the lessons of history we would be wise to be aware of the un-anticipated outcomes of any revolution. *Uhuru*, our cry for freedom, may well lead to something unforeseen if we adopt liberal democracy. We cannot afford the luxury of political ends arrived at by trial and error. We have no option but to lead our people to nationhood with the least offering of choice. Aware of the past, let us steer a steady course to nationhood.

What kind of Nationhood?

Of the *disciplined* kind. Not the Western European kind based on liberal or social democracy. In forging our national politics let us instead emulate the discipline of the Bolsheviks and speak of and create a nation in which party, state and people are one and the same thing.

In matters economic let us keep in mind the resolve of the Meijis; Japan's rulers who demonstrated an unwavering sense of purpose. Their example is perhaps too elitist, but worth bearing in mind. At present, we must emulate the Bolshevik experiment: concentrate our energy to transform our fundamental element: the peasant. Let us, like the Soviet Union, resolve to better ourselves as a nation of peasants.

How? By admitting to the abiding character of all peasants throughout the world: their innate conservatism. And by destroying it.

We shall not progress as a nation unless we transform our peasant society.

How? Get rid of the tribal system and its customs. Go for a top down transformation. Destroy the power of the Chiefs. Instead of the party, it is they who still wield influence at village level. Get rid of them and the glue of tradition begins to weaken. Replace them with party loyalists answerable only to the centre.

Next, dissolve the tribes. Each with its customs and loyalties, each is an obstacle to national unity. That requires a new dispensation: a mixing of the people. Let us move them out of their tribal areas and into new surroundings. It happens in towns. It must also happen in the country. How?

Create new villages and populate them with peasants from different regions and tribes. Let us organize new villages requiring them to adopt uniform structures, processes and promises. Yes to civil rights and yes to trade unions run by our cadres and therefore answerable only to us; that way the Party remains in charge.

What other reforms? First, Education. Our peasants are in the majority, illiterate. Let us give them Schools; the ability to read the Party literature and a tractor manual. Nothing more.

Second, we must provide modern means of agriculture. We must equip our peasants to follow instructions towards agrarian reform. Clearing the ground. Mentally and mechanically.

Each village to be given a tractor, plough and trailer. Water to be laid on. Fertilizer and seed made available. The price to the village? Loyalty to the centre. The cost to the exchequer? None. We will tap the goodwill of the world. India. China. America. And above all Western Europe, especially Scandinavia. These nations have a rigid social conscience which will provide all our meagre requirements. But let us not allow the outside world entry into our country. Everything must be under our own control. No need for a myriad of foreign influences. Too many voices. Too much choice. Let us keep it simple. Let us translate all manuals into Swahili. Indeed, let us translate all foreign influence into the national. And all national life into the parochial. Meaning? The new village will have new means of production and a new sense of purpose. That is sufficient. As participants in the new dispensation the people in the countryside must feel partners in the new state of affairs. In that sense the state withers away as all participate in its work. The prescription must be activity and reward at the local level; work and you will eat; shirk and you will starve.

Third, control the towns. Town life, presents dangerous diversions.

Here we must be as resolute as in the countryside in not promising more than we can control. The urban intellectuals will demand democracy. Here lies great danger. By demanding all kinds of political alternatives it is the intelligentsia who foment dissension, and, ultimately, revolution. Like De Tocqueville, we should never wish to find ourselves sitting on a rumbling volcano. Let it be extinct and cold like our snow covered Kibo. And to that end, the gaining of political quiescence let us also admit that the great Rousseau was wrong. His view that men are naturally virtuous until they are corrupted by evil institutions, leads to the conclusion that if they are permitted to determine policy it will inevitably be virtuous. Not so. It is the state and only the state that should decide national policy; the state, as De Tocqueville admitted, must predominate over all other opinions. Of course he called for checks and balances. And I am sure that our constitution will embody these, as indeed does that of the Soviet

Union; Lenin and Stalin gave people every constitutional right imaginable. But that is window dressing. The real question is:

What of democracy?

I have clearly shown that the direction we should take is towards a centralised democracy. And the problems this raises in the liberal mind can be avoided if we define our democracy as a *laocracy*; not people, but nation. *Laos* is Greek for nation. As a Greek I know that classical democracy was but a nascent *laocracy*. And as a citizen of this country I know what our party stands for. In name, the Tanganyika African National Union: TANU. Why not rename our country Tanunya?

The motto for Tanunya should be: One Party. One Nation. One People. All in the service of the state. And the state in the service of the people; a true *laocracy*.

In the long term all else is the rumbling of a destructive volcano and, in the short term, a diversion of valuable energies and resources which we can ill afford.

Let us therefore focus our efforts on a transformation of the countryside in ways that I have respectfully advocated in my short cut through history; from the eighteenth to the nineteenth and into our century; the twentieth century will not for nothing be called the century of history.

Such changes will require the thinking out of a unifying ideology in which all of us may find intellectual satisfaction. …'

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Tomorrow he would go into town and post his missive.

News of his appointment as an adviser to the TANU leader would be out by then. Kokopoulos wondered how people would take it. Faces of friends and foes cultivated over the years passed through his mind's eye. None, though was as vivid as the image of his son, Theo.

A wild thing. Clever. And fearless. He had shot his first buffalo at the age of twelve. Stole out early one morning on the farm manager's motorbike, his father's .375 rifle, custom built by Holland and Holland, strapped across slender shoulders; rifle as tall as the boy. He made for the old farm at Dongobesh, now laid to waste because of re-infestation by the tsetse fly, the carrier of sleeping sickness whose alleged threat to farm labour so nearly ruined his father's early fortunes.

The boundary of the old farm lay along the nascent Karumera River, so called by the Dongo people when Kokopoulos first beheld it and said, with arms outstretched. *'Ee kalee mou mera.'* (My good day. *Kaleemera*; karumera; to this day Greeks in the region are often referred to as Karumeras; as derived from the greeting.) It flowed from a spring into a shallow valley presenting wild life with the first of a series of permanent watering places. The stream then became a river fed by more underground water and went on through gorge and plain to become a lake at its southern end. River source and lake supported among the highest concentrations of buffalo in Africa. And to those who hunted, the buffalo was the undisputed king of beasts. Utterly fearless, ferocious when angered and highly intelligent in pursuit; often doubling back to snare the unaware hunter and when wounded fights death longer than any other big-game. No match for a boy. But this was no ordinary youngster.

He had mastered his father's arsenal when first able to lift a firearm. First the .45 pistol with a kick like the farm donkey.

Then the twelve bore shotgun. Then the 9.3 Mauser. And finally the .375, the weapon of choice against two tons of charging flesh and bone. Whilst other children played with building blocks, Theo arranged bullets by size and weight. Spell bound by the shine of brass cases or the reds and oranges of Elley Kynoch cartridges, numbered 2 to 12 he played with live ammunition for hours on end. Best of all he liked to differentiate between hard and soft nose bullets, imagining the impact and resulting damage just behind the shoulder, or, if the head was momentarily raised the explosive entry at the point the neck sat on the fore-legs. And better than playing with ammunition was the dismantling and cleaning of guns. Instead of jig-saw puzzles this boy could put back together a play-room floor scatter of gun parts faultlessly, without pause. Mind dizzy with the dull glow of gun-metal and smell of cleaning oil. And the feel of smooth butt and breech. All this behind closed doors.

Out in the open he impressed at target practice and at game spotting when out on a hunt with his father. At whose side he learnt all there was to know about the tracking and killing of animals.

When Kokopoulos had come to Tanganyika in his and the country's twenties that is what most young men did; hunt to their heart's content. The Territory was one great zoological Eden. Its name meant the wilderness. On the coast it was called the *Nyika*. Up country the *Pori*, or *Porini*. Ask a Greek to characterize Africa and invariably he would reply, *Porinia* my boy, *Porinia*. And Tanganyika was the *Manna*, the Mother, of *Porinia* or *Pori Tupu* as said by all inland tribes: 'Just Wilderness. Nothing but.'

It was to the hunt that young Greek bucks gave their emotional loyalty. To them nothing else about Africa mattered.

With but few exceptions women cursed the bush and its harshness. It was they who sought emotional solace in tales of softer country and climes. It was they who yearned after a Europe of home counties along a certain Pontus, Rhine, Vistula or Thames. It was they who spoke to children of a better life under northern skies.

All such talk was lost on Theo. In any case he was by now quite Anglicised; as much Thames as Temi. Primary school in Arusha, at which he was now in the final year, was an English establishment. Headed by Cyril Hampshire, who had just completed the education of the seniors with a slide show of frogs copulating, it inculcated the merits of being British. To children who in the main were all things but, as revealed on Sports Day. Loyalty to House, North and South, would be eroded by parents cheering on their progeny in Greek, Afrikaans, Italian, Dutch, Norwegian, German, Flemish or French. (Belgians from the neighbouring Congo.) All in loud voice over the more polite exhortations of British parents whose children rarely won an event in the heat of such international talent. *Pali tous kertheesame*: 'We beat them again!' would be heard again and again afterwards in the Hellenic Club.

The young Theo was not popular at its functions. Once he chose to pee into prams parked outside, once dousing a sleeping infant who cried inconsolably at the shock of that rude awakening. In fact Theo was gaining the reputation of being a young sadist and deserving of his nick-name, Satan. On another occasion he stood, wielding a stick, over a flock of juniors forced by him to eat the flowers bedecking the stage.

His parents looked forward to his imminent departure to secondary school. As a boarder.

It was this that prompted Theo to go out and hunt. He well understood the accolade *bunyu*, that quality of fearlessness so rated by men of all colours. Being a *bunyu* in the *porini* was the height of male accomplishment. Such ambition was on Theo's mind as he coasted on the farm manager's motor-bike, a big shaft driven machine, down to the stream. It was about the time they would be having breakfast on the farm. Even this was not in mind however, much as he delighted in the set ritual of half a paw-paw, doused in lime juice and sprinkled with sugar. Followed by fried egg, bacon and the steak and liver or kidney of whatever gazelle hung in the meat safe; usually a dik-dik or tommy. Martini could cook like no other. Even his toast was perfect, arriving warm and crisp at the table. But and all that could wait for tomorrow.

The sun had just cleared the tops of the yellow-fever trees that grew beside the water. There was already a shimmer of heat in the air above and the stones below. In an hour the smelters doors would open and soon after the sun would strike down as a hammer upon an anvil. Now was the best time to hunt. Or later

that afternoon when the sun was at the same angle over the trees on the other side of the valley.

He leant the motor bike on a tree, cursing the scent of spent fuel filling the air with the alien molecules any game would detect. Peeling off his jacket and the sailor's hat to which he had grown attached, he sat still, rifle now at his side. No sound except for the doves, almost like cicadas in their unceasing song, one linking to the next and the next. Flies flew at him for his sweat. And he felt the sting of the tsetse. An unmistakable bite and swelling; red pin-prick in the middle of a pale swelling which immediately needed to be scratched. He held off. Nothing would cause him to move a finger. He just crouched. Listened and looked. He was quite alone in his cylinder of heat. An hour, maybe more, passed uneventfully. A baboon bark broke the calm. Shit, shit, shit. Noisy and nosey bastards, baboons. He shut his eyes, hoping they would not come his way. They did not. Then the reeds in front swayed against the breeze. Above them he saw tips of horn. A tick bird flew up and down. Its unmistakable red beak clearly visible against the green shards which separated to reveal the proud head of a kudu, large ears turning this way and that, and tall twisting horns now against the sky absolutely still. He felt tempted to draw the gun up from the ground, but kept still. The beast moved forward. It was large. It was beautiful. Gunmetal grey to light mauve, white striped haunches, vast liquid eyes, rimmed with flies. This was a trophy to be had; a hat and coat hook matching his father's kudu head on the verandah. As for the meat, the camp would go wild. But no. Kudu was not big game. Let him drink and move over for the real thing.

Nothing more for hours. More stings. More sweat. More flies. But he no more than flinched. It was past mid-day now and even the doves fell silent in the stupor of mid-day heat. Branches and trunks crackled in protest. There was no breeze. He became drowsy, but an empty stomach and parched throat kept sleep at bay. They would be worried about him at the farm and this thought kept the balance tipped further against the closure of his eyelids. He knew full well he would get an almighty beating. But this did not deter him from remaining fixed to his spot. Through the soporific phase, he fought the battle for wakefulness, which only the very strong could win. He was a tough little shit. That is what senior boys had called him and he was proud of it, 'Gutsi': a tough little shit. That was him. He went on thinking in this vein when all of a sudden he heard the sound of hooves on boulders.

They had arrived. Not a herd. More a gang. He counted five. Then six. The last had the biggest boss and very large ears under decent horns. One ear was torn and bleeding and hung limp. There must have been a scrap. This was a gang of young bulls. They were loud in their movements and showed no caution as they trotted to where the stream widened into a shallow elliptical pool. Right in front of Theo.

He tensed every muscle and quickly regained his keenness. Sharp juices coursed again through his veins. He stopped breathing. All power went into his eyes. He lifted the rifle horizontally off the ground and brought it up to his shoulder at the same time as lifting himself onto his knees. Slowly he brought one leg forward and placed the butt to his shoulder winding the sling of the gun once around his left arm. He paused to look and listen. The gang snorted and shoved oblivious to his presence. Five heads went down to drink. The big one remained on guard sniffing the air with neck outstretched like an expanded accordion. Tail whisking flies off his back, shoulder muscles trembling and rippling to achieve the same on his flanks. His nostrils ran with mucus. His muzzle shone bright black. The lashes on his eyes were long. A strong bovine smell pervaded the air. As Theo had hoped, hardly a breeze, more a waft; what flow there was came towards him. He put cheek to butt and still held the same lungful of air as he shot at the big one's neck still outstretched above the rump of the next in front. He moved the bolt and the next round was in the breech before the *porini* crashed to the sound of fury of bullet and buffalo. The silence of the sun gave way to a clap of thunder as that of lightning striking at very close quarters. The bull collapsed, neck broken, spewing blood from a vital artery.

Theo dared to breath again, his attention now fixed on the other five. They wheeled this way and that. Eyes protruding, tiny black irises on egg sized lumps of white. Nostrils ajar. Ears scooping the air in circular motion. Every sense at its sharpest pitch. The milling around continued for another minute or two. Then stopped. The moment of crisis had arrived. His quarry lay still and now it was his life which was at stake. Theo had seen a gored body, spiked again and again to pulp.

What would the rest of the group do? What would he do? There was no question of another attempt at a kill. But he decided to shoot just above the group. To the left and immediately to the right, and once more in quick succession. The beasts went berserk and crashed headlong into the surrounding bush each in the direction of its last heading, radiating out from their fallen leader.

One thundered past him. Close enough for the mosaic of dried mud, above the splash marks of the stream on its haunches, to be visible in all its detail. Theo bowed his head, rifle in right hand, bent double with knees on the ground. He closed his eyes against the dust which filled the entire scene, blotting out the sun. Then silence. A long still silence through which the running stream could in due course be heard again. Nothing else. He opened his eyes. They stung with dirt. And with the tension of focused looking. He tried to stand but nothing moved beneath his waist. He fell to his left keeping the rifle aligned along the top of his body. There was one round left in the breech and so he took out the box of bullets lodged in one of the large pockets on his khaki shirt. Still lying on his side he fed six new rounds into the rifle. All soft nose, as selected the

night before. He used the rifle as a crutch to straighten up and managed to stand though his knees quaked uncontrollably and fell down again as cramp took control in both calves. The pain was piercing and completely debilitating. He lay there sweating profusely into the dust and onto the pebbles causing dark streaks which he noticed as he turned his head to the ground in silent anguish.

He dare not make a sound. They would be back. Then he heard a familiar sound. Way in the distance. Unmistakably his father's Chevy pick-up. In his calmer moods he and his cousins would lie in a ditch at night by the Great North road, while the adults played cards at Manolis's, to compete at vehicle recognition. Between them every truck, car and tractor would be correctly identified well before it passed by. (Once their game was interrupted when Manoli came out for a pee. It was raining in the hills beyond his farm where it never rained. "Why Lord do you continue to punish me? Make it rain here too,' he begged plaintively while his water ran in a rivulet into the ditch where the boys were hidden. Out they leapt causing Manoli to quake, first in fright then in rage. No one ever forgot that story; KK made sure of that.)

Now at the river, Kokopoulos heard his son calling: *'Baba. Etho. Etho. Baba'.* Here father.

Vre to Bastartho. Etho eise? More bravo! Kai emees se psaksame sto Babati. 'Well, you little bastard, and there we were looking for you in Ndareda.' (The village closest to the farm where the young Kokopoulos often went on the motor-bike to buy tins of condensed milk, his favourite sweet thing.) Off came the belt. But it got no further than that. The old man realized what had happened. He had experienced a killing ground many times before and this had all the signs of success in the face of great danger. He could not but feel relieved and strangely proud as well as angry; emotions which got in the way of the beating first thought of.

'You little bastard. What the hell have you done here? Bloody hell. You bloody little fool. How in hell did you manage it? At your age!' He strode towards the dead beast. Looked back at his son who was now on his feet, forgetting all pain of cramp in anticipation of worse to come, and said, 'Damn good shot.'

It was the only time Theo remembered his father uttering a word of praise. Soon buried in a growl of threats and curses which continued throughout the journey home to fetch the men who would attend to the dead beast.

News was already out in the camp. Knives were being sharpened. Women danced. Children and chickens ran around as though headless. Dogs barked. Theo's mother was the only person standing still. But as the Chevy came to a stop she ran towards the passenger door, opened it, clouted her son, both arms flailing and then clutched him to her ample breasts. Each as big as the lamps on the old Buicks as it was often remarked away from Kokopoulos' ears.

The heat had gone out of the day and out of the situation. The buffalo was taken off the tractor drawn trailer which had been sent to the kill. On the ground it looked much bigger than Theo had remembered. The head carried amply sized horns. A hole was dug to bury it so that worms would, in time, strip off all flesh leaving the skeletal head as a trophy for the house. Theo saved the limp ear for himself.

The carcass was skinned and jointed. The house got the *salala* or fillets, kidneys, liver and heart. The rest was shared out amongst the farm labourers. The whole camp stood around the jointed buffalo. Its blood dark on the red earth. Its guts dragged in a contest of strength by the dogs. The strong smell of bovine innards filled the air. Flies everywhere. Smiles on every face. The coming night promised a celebration of drink, meat and dance. The *ngoma* drums were already out. But before the primeval and animistic rituals of joy at the sight of flesh came prayers.

American missionaries visited the farm once a month and today was their day too. The crowd came away from the scene of slaughter and encircled the black Pontiac whose interior held Jim and Beth, portable organ and reams of literature as give away presents.

Jambo, Jambo. Habari watu wa Yezu. (Greetings people of Christ.) Bloody hands clasped soft white freckled arms in an exchange of greetings. Soon Jim and Beth stank of dead meat. Their clothes and limbs became stained with blood laden fly prints as they continued with the service. The body taken off the cross lay on the ground that evening, enveloping the communicants with the scent and sight of death; the blood and body of man merged with blood and body of buffalo.

The missionary's organ puffed to the rhythm of Beth's unsteady feet, slippery with gore. 'Oohhhh wee haaave a friend in Jeeezus' rose above the sound of yelps, chatter and cackles. Then a prayer. 'Oh Lord Jeezus, look down on your congregation and give us your blessings.' The congregation could not have been better blessed. 'Aalleylooia. Amen.' To cap it all, out came the pamphlets and picture postcards. Jeezus walking on water, turning water to wine, feeding the five thousand. The Nazarene's miracles were witnessed by a parade of Dongo revellers and there was great magic performed that evening.

Kwaheri watu wote.Tu ta onana mwezi ngine. (Goodbye all. See you next month.) And off they went to neighbouring farms. And reported on the exploits of the young Kokopoulos. And that is how it got back to school.

*

Upon completion of primary education, European youth, with the exception of the few who left for Europe, went to secondary school at Kongwa; Kongwa

European School to give it its full title. It was both a town and a school. Set in the middle of the country where Masailand ended and Gogoland blazed. A most unlikely setting for a school: it all started with the shortage of edible oils in post Second World War Britain. Nuts were decided upon by nuts in Whitehall who proposed that Gogoland should grow groundnuts on a massive scale. Forty eight million pounds were spent levelling the *porini* with pairs of great caterpillar tractors linked by massive ball and chain. The machinery was bought in and brought from the Philippines where the US military had left them after having used them to level Japanese defences on a progression of pacific islands.

A railway was built; a fifty mile spur off the central line at Dodoma. An airfield. And the second biggest town in the territory after the capital, Dar-es-Salaam. Roads, hospital, staff club with swimming pool, rugby ground, cricket pitch and a generating station to light up the night between six and six.

The plantations, laid bare for groundnuts, each thousands of acres in extent were called units. There were twelve of them each with housing for men and women, machines and animals. A veterinary station was set up at Mpwapwa through which the slave route had passed not so long ago; a well beaten track across this half way point between the lakes and the ocean.

No farmer in the territory believed the project would work. Kokopoulos, advised strongly against it arguing that Gogos grew nuts on specific patches of ground. It was a mistake to expect the same on a scale from horizon to horizon. Especially in times of drought, more frequent even than the floods which washed tilled earth away into *dongas*.

Not a nut was ever picked. Instead Kongwa became the site for a secondary school for European children.

Theo wanted to go to the Prince of Wales in Nairobi, the top public school in East Africa. The fees were prohibitively high and so he went to board at Kongwa. First by bus where he entertained his new found chums by extracting from his trousers the penis of the relief driver who snored throughout, oblivious to the world. He then tied catapult rubber to the arm of his seat and gently placed a noose around the exposed organ which swelled with every sway of the bus. Young boys looked on big eyed in fear at the sheer size of the exposed organ. Prefects on the bus who may otherwise have intervened were party to the scene as Theo's guests, each given a tin of condensed milk from his haversack topped up in Babati where he got onto the bus. By the time of the overnight stop at the railway hotel in Dodoma all the sweetener had been consumed and Theo, like everyone else, fell prey to prefectorial diktat. But he had made a name for himself and when news of the buffalo had done the rounds that name had a *cachet* no other junior could match.

Next day it was onto the train and welcome to school. Juniors were placed in Rutherford under the care of the P.E. and dance teacher who wore no underpants.

Word got round that he was having an affair with Matron. One morning, just after the other boys cycled off to school (bicycles were a compulsory requirement given the distances between buildings set aside for education in the former town) Theo climbed a tree in sight full outside her flat and witnessed a sight which made him feel peculiar.

Then he caught sight of a cleft branch in front of him; perfect for a catapult.

This well fashioned weapon was made of the whittled branch to which two strands of rubber a foot long and half an inch wide were whipped with strings of rubber from the same inner, tyre found by Theo in the Housemaster's garage, and connected at the other end by a piece of leather, off his belt, into which the carefully selected stone was placed. Pulled like a bow this relatively innocuous looking artefact could at twenty paces propel a stone through a panelled door. He fired and found to his delight that it had found its target as man and woman leapt out of bed, yelling in the shock of the missile penetrating the privacy of the flat.

*

His second shot pierced a reptilian skull.

The occasion was church on Sunday; every Sunday morning. Lines would form up by House (Rutherford, Wilberforce, Nightingale and Livingston), Roll call taken and uniform checked (all-white, in a land of red dust or mud) the lines led off past the art-room, around the rugby pitch, across the *donga* (a dry river bed), up the hill and into Church. A two mile sweat followed by hymns, prayers, psalms, readings and a sermon; the full C of E breakfast.

This particular morning, Holy Joe, the vicar, took up the theme of the first lesson which was about the proud Pharisee who thanked God in prayer for not being like other men. For the life of him Theo could not understand the problem presented by the bearded old fool in the white *kanzu*. What was wrong with being grateful for being special? Theo believed always that he was better than anyone else. It had not crossed his mind to thank God. He just was born a good shot, physically tough as nails, mentally alert and with a temper none could appease; all giving him a sense of omnipotence in any confrontation.

Then he heard a leathery rustle in the eaves above his head. The glint of an eye. The flicker of a forked tongue. A clawed foot and horny leg. Out it came. All of four feet in length plus the crenulated tail. A giant iguana. It froze on the beam above the priest. A murmuring throughout the congregation was muted by the Vicar's rising voice about the iniquities of pride.

From his right hand pocket, Theo took out the catapult and from his left a *nyab*. He would use his best ammo and a marble was better than a stone; he only wished he had a ball bearing.

In one swift and smooth movement he pulled, aimed and let go. Above the swish and slap of recoiling rubber there was the unmistakable sound of target found. The creature sprang up and fell straight down onto the lectern and onto the floor where it quivered and froze.

Girls to the right screamed in fear then wailed in a collective hysteria which soon turned to laughter at the realization of what had happened. The priest had turned as white in the face as his surplice, but stood his ground and with a surprising presence of mind asked Miss Jones on the piano to turn to an unscheduled hymn: 'Lord dismiss us with Thy blessing'. He announced the number to the congregation who took it up with a fervour known only to boarders. This was their favourite hymn, invariably sung at the end of each term. That and 'Stand up stand up, for Jeezus, The buggers at the back can't see'.

The entire school craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the boy who had plugged the iguana. Outside Theo was mobbed by his mates and new found admirers. Prefects called for order and eventually escorted the boy back down to the dining rooms where staff had assembled for lunch. The teacher on duty was Cheesy Chambers. Cheesy because of the smell of his bare feet through ill-ventilated sandals. Children were known to retch when he stood by them correcting a geometrical problem. He thought that they were just afraid of his predilection for the cane which he used on the hands of girls and bums of boys with gay abandon.

Theo was led up to the top table where the Captain of School solemnly explained why the school was assembled in the Mess, early for lunch. I will now say Grace, said Cheesy: 'For what this miserable little Greek boy is about to receive, may the Lord make him truly thankful." The School Captain handed him the cane kept in the cleaner's cupboard. 'Bend over.' The cane went up as high as the ceiling light which tinkled on contact. And down it swooshed. Again, again, again, again and again. Six of the best. Such as drew blood across Theo's buttocks.

He made not a sound. He straightened up and went to his table. The prefect on duty got up and walked round to Theo's place taking with him the table's own tomato sauce and tin of butter: two commodities provided only in parcels from home to juniors who gladly gave up their precious gifts in exchange for not having to fag for their seniors at table. This symbolic gesture sealed Theo's reputation as the school's tough little shit. From then on the respect proffered

made his position in school unassailable. It gave Theo an authority few could question.

He on the other hand, framed questions of a different sort. What coursed through his mind were the words, 'miserable little' Greek. A worm turned in his mind and caused a sensation of resentment he had not felt before. It returned again and again as more such slights reached his attention. Theo witnessed yet another insulting outburst in geography, a class, which he attended because a new teacher called Brownfield liked to show films rather than do the work himself. (The Shell Oil productions were particularly good on the making of desert landscapes; especially the one about locusts which completely besplattered the angular windscreen of the Dragoon Rapide spraying and filming the swarm. This film was invariably trailered by a short from the Moody Institute which used trick photography to make plant life bearably interesting.)

Brownfield clouted a Greek boy at the start of the class. He had taken three classes that morning, one after the other: Classes three, two and one. He had taken the register and in each had to again ask the name of a boy who spoke very quietly. The name was Vuterakis. In the third class, Theo's, Brownfield walked up to the boy and said I suppose *your* name is Buterakis? 'Yes, Sir,' came the reply at which Brownfield unleashed a clout across the boys face, uttering: 'I will not allow snivelling Greeks to make a fool out of me.' Yet, truth be known, there were three gentle quiet-spoken Buterakis brothers in the school each in a separate class.

At lunch break, Theo put together the sequence, by talking with the boys involved.

That night, Friday, Theo loosened the nuts connecting the brake pipes to the brake drums on the wheels of Brownfield's car. The next day Brownfield drove off to the staff club, at the edge of Kongwa. The car and its occupant overran the corner and hit the baobab tree at the junction between Millionaires Row, where Brownfield lived, and the main road to the club. On Monday Brownfield appeared at breakfast, face blue with bruising. Before taking grace he said that he could have been killed and would the person or persons who had sabotaged his car come forward for pity's sake. He had to have been joking.

It was much later on in Theo's school career that revenge for individual slights took on a political form. It was on the occasion of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a man called Ramsay who looked more like a rugby forward than any priest the school had ever seen. This appealed to the boys who met the genial man on his rounds of the classes. Then came the service in church. And not a single Greek girl or boy knelt for prayer; all stood like a sparse copse in a field of ground nuts.

After the fiasco, the head-teacher went bananas. He had the Greek orthodox nationals assembled before him in the gym. And what is the meaning of this and what is the meaning of that? The reason was staring him in the face. Theo had found in himself a new motive in life other than his love of the chase; the born huntsman had grown into an *agent provocateur*. And this new found knack for clandestine organization surprised even himself.

The call for a boycott of the head of the English church at prayer was his.

He answered the fuming Cyril Francis: 'In Greek church the congregation does not kneel for prayers. So when you asked the school to do so, we Greeks remained standing.'

This brought applause from Theo's congregation which wound up Francis even tighter. 'I will not allow you to ever again disrupt the life of the school. You are forthwith expelled. Do you understand? Or shall I talk more slowly or more loudly?' Again the insult. Again not lost on Theo who went home to a hero's welcome at the Greek Club.

Feingeld

It is widely held that the snows of Kilimanjaro were first revealed to European eyes when Rebman looked up from the plains in 1848 to be dazzled by equatorial glacis. But so had an ancient Greek geographer, albeit many centuries earlier. The discovery of equatorial ice was also reported by yet another Hellene. Writing about the sources of the Nile in his Second book, Herodotus, the proto-historian, tells of snowy equatorial peaks he calls Crophi and Mophi. Could his have been the last ear to a chain of voices stretching back to him from Kibo and Mawenzi on Kilimanjaro? The father of history is suspected by some to have also been the first disembeler. He does admit: 'The Greeks in general have a weakness for inventing stories with no basis of fact.' Yet surely, such disarming candour is but proof of his effort at objectivity.

Yes. Kibo first belongs to the Bantu and Nilotic peoples living on its slopes. Then to Greeks. Then to Germans. And only then to any Anglophone: A Johnny come lately as far as Greeks in Arusha were concerned. And when the film, 'Snows of Kilimanjaro' was screened at the Paradise cinema, Ernest Hemingway's son, Patrick, a White Hunter based in Arusha was stopped in the street and told in no uncertain terms that the Greek flag which had been planted on the summit during filming by an ardent patriot should have appeared on screen, thus proving Hellenic provenance.

The Zambezi was also included in Greek claims to Africa; when Livingston discovered the Victoria Falls he noted in his diary meeting a Greek trader doing business at the very site of the 'smoke that thunders'.

'What *Victoria* Falls?' they would ask at the Greek Club: 'Papadopoulos's Cataracts!' And so it went on in that salon of proud Hellenic discourse, just twenty miles from KK's coffee farm at Kingore below the slopes of Meru from which the great iced pudding of a mountain could be seen.

KK had acquired his coffee estate from a German who had decided to return to his semi-detached fatherland.

There were a considerable number of Germans in the vicinity. All had been under close observation of the British authorities during the run-up to the Second World War as it was well known that the German Consul in Dar-es-Salaam often came to visit, recruiting fifth columnists, for Adolf Hitler. It was even better known that from 1933, when Hitler came to power until 1945 when he committed suicide, all assemblies at the German School would end with hearty Sieg Heils, arms outstretched. Moreover several Nazis came to stay after the war. And, good medics though they were, former Nazi doctors and nurses came to practice far away from bunkers and camps. Fluent in their language, Kokopoulos knew them all. And that is how he had acquired a library of Nazi film and literature.

His all time favourite film was Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. He would sit mesmerized by its screening, as did his cronies who demanded of him a translation of the sound track. They particularly liked the sight of the serried ranks of spades and asked him for the words which accompanied that portion of the film:

" … My Fuhrer, I announce that 52,000 workmen have answered the call.

Hitler: Heil Workmen!

Main Speaker: Heil, my Fuhrer!

Shoulder spades! Lower spades!

Choir: We stand here ready to carry Germany forward into a new age. One people, one Fuhrer, one state, Germany!

Main speaker: Today ... together at work.

Choir: On the moorland.

Speaker: And in the marshes.

And we in the sand.

Choir: In the sand.

Step forward, stalwart German worker.

Speaker: We are planting trees.

Choir: Murmuring woods.

Speaker: We are building roads.

Choir: From place to place.

Speaker: We are creating new lands for the farmer.

Choir: Fields and forests - acres and bread….

Choir: We are true to our Homeland, to the Earth, felling the forests, ploughing the land and sowing the seeds. We are building our homes on firm ground, forging the old bond in fire - the bond between Man and Earth…."

These sounds and sights appealed greatly to the farmers around Kokopoulos. At first they laughed at the sight of disciplined spades. Then reflected how much better Tanganyika would be with such a disciplined and well motivated labour force.

Kombos said "I will erect a platform in my yard and take a salute each morning as I send my people, shouldering their *jembes* (hoes), off to the fields …" And they all laughed at the thought.

But at the end of one viewing and with the script in hand Manoli once asked KK "And where did all this choreography lead? To war and destruction and the murder of millions including the obliteration six million Jews."

KK replied, "I don't know about that. The numbers are too large. We as farmers know what six million of anything is. It can be very small; I once calculated, when considering the crop for Kiru estate, that a pound of tobacco seeds contained six million seeds. It can also be very large, I use on average 60 *gunias* (sacks) of fertilizer in any one year. They weigh as much as I do; 60 of me. Now I am told that the gas chambers and furnaces started working in the spring of 1943 and did so until the end of the war. Two years to process about 5 million of me; the missing million were killed in other ways. Call a working year 300 days which gives them a workload of 8000 a day. That is not far off the entire European population of this country. Impossible."

A bound volume of Rosenberg's speeches, which once belonged to AH, was among the bile that disgraced his upper shelf of books. He would delve into it now and then when his cronies came for poker he would declaim choice passages in a harsh voice which sent them into paroxysms of laughter. Yet his interest in what Rosenberg called ethnic cleansing, was, to him, no laughing matter. He had yet to declare publicly his handle on Party strategy. Let them laugh.

German ways in Tanganyika made Greeks laugh. Many who had been settled onto land which they developed as coffee farms remembered how German officials paced out the land numbering in a loud voice exact lengths and widths by their exact leather booted strides. Manoli told a variant whereby he was paid by the local land officer to accompany his measuring with music; a wind-up gramophone playing German recordings at 78 rpm. A favourite, which Manoli still had and played was, he surmised, about a German officer at the trenches being homesick.

There were trenches here too. On the south-eastern flanks of Mawenzi, close to the road to Taveta and Voi from whence, left to Nairobi, or right to Mombassa.

The Greeks knew of the trenches as the place where Vasili went to blow out his brains during the depression. Suicide was not uncommon then, especially

amongst farmers like Vasili who lacked the influence required to live in debt to the Land Bank. He could barely sign his name let alone conduct a conversation with pomposity itself, Colonel Beston, the manager. Here was the epitome of the *kokinokolee*; 'the red-arses' as Greeks called the British. Pinky-white skinned despite years under the tropical sky, British officials were a white race apart. The Boers called them *roineks* because their necks were invariably red. The Greeks imagined naked lily white bottoms turning red in the mid day sun when, it was said, mad dogs and English men were out and about.

"Never", shouted Frixos, looking at his hand of cards while following the discussion about the *Englezi*, so often the topic of conversation over cards at the Hellenic Club. *"O Anglos* is no fool. At midday he will return to his 'hello darling' and his dog. Then eat his lunch. Then listen to the radio or *zleep*. At *half-pas-four* he will drink his tea with his 'bye-bye darling' and go to the gymkhana club. Not to play cards all day and night like us. He will go to see Bob and Dave and Mickey and arrange a game of golf. After a round, walking for his health, he will order his *veeskey* and soda and talk some more. Quietly. Not like us, shouting *all-ov* the time. Then when the sun goes down his *bibi* will join him for a sundowner. Then they sometimes play a game called a qviss. After that they eat and *zleep*. That is how to live. Not like us. *Upendown* all the time. They are regular people. Just like the Germans. But kinder."

All agreed that is how it was. And how good and proper it was. Until someone would begin to take the piss. 'Yes, they love their dogs more than their *bibis* or children. And what is golf? A bloody waste of time. No profit in hitting a small ball with a stick. And is it not better to shout and scream than to murmur in some dark corner? They are strange people. As old Mihali, *O Makaritis, Theos Seehoreseton* (God rest his soul), used to say, 'They sing about bananas: *Vee* have no bananas today. For he is a jolly good fello. *Ke so se* all of us.'

With memories of the muddled banana song, tears would run into the folds of raucous faces and overflow with *ke so-se* all of us: 'and God save us all' to their ears. A pause would again erupt into hilarity at the thought that the lack of bananas would have the British asking for God's mercy.

'Morre ratsa. What a race! And yet they run a great empire. Bravo.' All agreed and agreed to roars of more laughter that a Greek empire would be a great shambles. They had no problem in accepting the British as their political masters. People of integrity and good order unlike themselves, though they would threaten to smash the face of any *xenos* (foreigner) who dared cast a slur upon Greek honour. Amongst them were guerrilla fighters escaping revenge for acts committed in the civil war in which eyes were gouged out for much less. *Adartes* who also took on the Reichswer in acts of resistance equalled only by Poles, for whom Greeks held no especial respect. Lusting after the girls of the Polish refugee camp at Tengeru was all that Poland meant to them. But Germans they respected.

What it was about them was their absolute consistency. No other race had it. The British gave you the benefit of the doubt. Not so their cousins. To the Greeks the resolute discipline and, indeed, harshness in pursuit of policy was remarkable. Because of its clear underlying logic none could question nor doubt its outcome. The German method always achieved its ends. Or came damn close to doing so.

Hero in this regard, and example to all, was a German whom Greeks called *Von Lekko*; General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.

When war broke out in 1914, he commanded 3000 men, mainly indigenous native infantry trained to excel in hardship. He knew that no action fought in east Africa could be decisive in the grand sense, but if he could tie down as many troops as possible it would prevent them being used in the main show in Europe.

With Britain, Portugal and Belgium as allies, German East Africa was surrounded on land. And by sea after the *Konigsberg* was finally destroyed by British gunboats in the Rufiji delta; not however before her crew had dismounted all her guns and ammunition which made a welcome addition to the fire-power of von Lekko's land forces.

These were concentrated around Kilimanjaro where there was ample food, and from this base they made raids across the Kenyan border, cutting the railway many times and capturing the frontier town of Taveta. The British countered by attacking Tanga on the coast hoping to take Von Lekko in the rear. They failed dismally. After a few days march from Kilimanjaro and some very heavy fighting the Germans destroyed both blades of the British pincer at Tanga and Jassini. British loses were substantially greater than von Lekko's who left to lick his wounds back at base on the hospitable slopes of Kilimanjaro.

By 1916 the King's African Rifles were reinforced by troops from India and South Africa. Command was given to the famous Boer leader and former *kommando*, General Jan Christian Smuts. To Smuts's shame von Lekko out *kommandoed* him. Refusing to disperse his troops in engaging Smuts's dispersed advances, Von Lekko refused even to be drawn into a set-piece battle. Skirmishing all the time he chipped away at Smuts's forces and his reputation.

When Nigerian and East African reinforcements arrived Smuts pushed on again. At the Rufiji he was engaged by Von Lekko in some very heavy fighting. Smuts crossed the river licking his wounded pride. He then relinquished his command stating that the campaign in East Africa was finished and left for England.

For Von Lekko no such option existed. Only overwhelming odds, including being bombed from the air. As the sheer weight of numbers against him piled up he crossed the Ruvuma into Portuguese East Africa. He drew British columns south with him outgeneraling them completely in a year long chase swinging back into German territory and south again into Northern Rhodesia. On 13 November 1918 he was told of the Armistice and twelve days later capitulated to General Edwards at Abercorn. 115 Germans and 4227 Africans of whom 819 were women had engaged forces often ten times that number. Living off the land in classic guerrilla fashion for the duration of the war.

Given full honours of war, Von Lekko and his officers were allowed to keep their small arms. His was an unconquered army which he repatriated with full arrears of pay before returning a lone hero to Weimar Germany, soon to be forgotten there in the trauma of defeat and revolution.

In Tanganyika his memory was kept alive by admiring Greeks none more so than Theo, who repeatedly visited the Kilimanjaro trenches as a teenager; just a barrack room historian or a Herodotus in the making? Only time would tell but there was no doubt he had an interest in history which he expressed by courting the company of men with history to tell.

*

One such was Misha Feingeld who lived not far from Kokopoulos's coffee farm. Misha took great exception to K.K.'s anti-Semitism but felt it to be unwise to tell him so directly. Instead he spoke to Theo who had asked him at the Greek Club to tell him about the war. Misha, born and raised in Poland had, like the Poles in Tengeru, just seven miles down the corrugated road from Misha's house, found his way with them to Tanganyika.

*

In all there were 6,000 Poles in the country; mainly women and children. Three times as many as there were Greeks. Together they made up one half of its European population, at its height in 1949.

*

Misha explained:

"When the Red Army invaded Poland on the seventeenth of September, 1939, I was taken into Soviet captivity with around a million and a half others. About 68,000 made it to freedom in Persia in 1942. I was one of the lucky ones. In Karachi I was given a choice. Jerusalem or Tanga."

"I decided to stay with the many Polish beauties who had survived rather than peel off with Begin for Jerusalem and join his anti-British Haganah; I am not brave. Not like your father. But what purpose in his courage? Despite his education, I cannot understand why he knows so little of the world. I have

heard him speak such cruel nonsense about us. I was a young Jewish man in Poland and what happened to Poland and its people was an ordeal beyond the comprehension of many like your father.'

'Tell me about it Misha. About the ordeal. But before you do, what is *anti-Semitism*? I asked my father once and he told me it was said of people who dared to speak their minds; people who were critical of the *Evrei*. But he also said that the term did not really apply if, like him, you admired Arabs because they too were Semites.'

'Look, Theo. I do not get on with your father. He is just playing with words. anti-Semitism means more than being critical of us. It is an ordeal we had to bear in a war which nearly destroyed us as a people; a nightmare which will forever haunt us. And other people too - The hostilities which began in Poland on 1st September 1939 then spread to Northern Europe Norway and Finland, to Western Europe - France and Belgium, spreading thereafter to the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the Far East lasted over 2,000 days. The estimated number of lives destroyed is in excess of 50,000,000. These are huge numbers."

Theo replied, "I realize that. But another question I want answered is "where was *Mungu* in all this? Do you believe that God would allow it?"

"Ay, Theo. That is a big question. I'll tell you what. Come to my place one day and we can talk about these things better than in here; the bar is no place for such discussion."

"Okay. Great. Why not now?"

"Yes. Fine. I was hoping to find Costas Zourkoskas here, but they tell me he is in Nairobi with Michaelides and Co. to see Mama Africa at the Flamingo. So let's go."

The conversation continued in the car.

"You were asking if I believe in God. Yes I do. But like most people I have occasional doubts. You see, I am also a communist. Do you know what that is?"

"I think so. I speak to a number of guys in the Greek Club who call themselves communists. They fought in the mountains. In the Greek civil war. And they are here because they cannot go back. In case they are murdered in revenge for murders they committed."

"Yes. That would definitely happen. Some things are never forgotten. Especially not in the villages of the Mani where vendetta was invented. The

same would hold in the Polish countryside. In Poland too there was a civil war of sorts for many years, even before the war of 1939-1945 broke out. There was great poverty amongst the working classes. That is why I became a communist. And that is why communism came easily to Poland. Because of the gruesome experiences of that war.

It was not just the killing by bullets that caused death. There was great famine too. From 1941. April, May, June of that year saw dreadful conditions in Poland during the weeks preceding the harvest and the forthcoming Russian campaign of the German army which was squeezing every last morsel of food out from Poland in preparation for that event. While I cannot talk of famine conditions in the months between September 1939 and July 1941, it is perfectly clear that after the summer of 1941 there is a very marked deterioration in living conditions in Poland. Statistics which give an idea of their deterioration show a dramatic rise in prices.

By how much?

Let's do it this way, Theo. If you take July 1939 to equal 100, then by the next year prices had quadrupled; in July 1940 the price index stood at 400 and more each year. Do you understand?" "Sure. But not really why this caused famine."

They drew into Misha's drive up to his house on the hill.

"Don't worry I will explain. Let's go in."

Misha led Theo onto the verandah which looked out over coffee as far as the eye could see. Not Misha's. Farming did not interest him as it did the Greeks. Down below was Komnenos's place. A descendant of a once great Byzantine royal family he was now in dire straights with the Merus. For two reasons. First because he had an affair with a Meru woman who continued to live in his house. That was a condition forced on him by her clan who told him that if she were to be ejected in favour of any other woman, he would have his throat cut. And second because of the dispossession, by government order, of Meru land on which the Komnenos estate stood, in favour of European farmers.

Misha was openly involved with this land question. He and an American missionary friend of his, who was also a communist, were compiling an account of the injury done to the Merus. It was soon to be published. But Meru affairs were for another day.

"Which chair would you like?"

Theo settled into a settee made of zebra hide.

"We were talking of the huge rise in the cost of food. Yes?"

Theo nodded his assent. But his mind not fully engaged with Misha's flow off words. Not until he lost sight of the Fish Eagle circling above the distant dam.

" … Okay let us say that bread in 1939 cost one shilling. In July 1942 was up to 2000 shillings. Huge. Just imagine if your mother had to pay so much for one loaf of bread.'

"Shit"

"Yes. But the price of anything became meaningless because of shortages. And I mean shortages *Bwana*. Throughout September 1941 sugar and meat were unobtainable and a year later for the month of September 1942 a person could get only ten pounds by weight of anything to eat. *Eysh bwana Theo, kikapu moja. Bas*. Think of it Theo. A basket of turnips from the market for a whole month. That would be it. We would die. People did. In their tens of thousands. Of hunger. Especially the Jewish population which was given ever less to eat. The Jews were going to die anyway. In Poland their plight from 1942 worsened when the systematic killings began in earnest in the concentration camps. This was the holocaust."

Theo looked worried.

"You have heard of it?"

"Yes. Of course. Not only that; holocaust is a Greek word and we use it about Smyrna. … Destruction by fire, *olokafston*. Yes, I have also heard the grown ups speak of the concentration camps and I read a book called 'Treblinka' which a Polish woman gave me to read. I had nightmares. I had to run with this machine strapped to my chest and if I rested I was told my mother and grandmother would be hanged in front of everybody. They would swing about with their guts hanging out. And then I was taken to a factory where the machine held me really tightly. It got hot and I slowly melted. Misha were such things done? I mean did these things really take place in the camps. Gassing. Making soap out of people?"

"Yes Theo."

"My father says these things are *arloumbes*. Fibs."

"Theo your father does not know. He does not want to know. He has other interests. You have asked me to explain. And I will. Imagine we are sitting in a big posh room in a big posh house. Like the Michaelides place. In that room are important people like Mickey Davis, the Provincial Commissioner, the Commissioner of Police etc.etc. They sit around a beautiful polished table. In their uniforms. In their suits. A proper meeting. Have you seen one?"

“Yes. I went with my father to the Town Council and I could see such a meeting through the windows as I sat in the car waiting for him.”

“Good. Such a meeting was held at a place called Wansee. In a posh house by a lake about the size of Duluti. That house was near Berlin. The men talked. On 20 January, 1942. They talked about the final solution of the Jewish question. That is what they called it. The Final Solution. In other words “We have been trying to get rid of the Jews. It is taking too long. We must come up with a plan to get rid of all eleven million of them as quickly and as efficiently as possible.”

This is what the minutes say.

“What are minutes?”

“Sorry. The British call minutes the notes taken by the secretary at a meeting. A record of what was said. But why they call them minutes I do not know. Ask your old man. He attends lots of meetings.

Misha paused for a second. Looked up at the ceiling and said at Theo “What these words actually meant was that all these people were to be killed by the most dreadful means. By a long drawn out process of suffering first in trains and then in camps, there to be poisoned in gas chambers and disposed of in furnaces.”

“What do you mean by trains, suffering first in trains, why suffering?”

“Theo, Theo, Theo. You have much to learn. ….. They collected people onto station platforms and forced them onto trains. Into cattle trucks. And when thy got out this is what you would see … Misha reached for a well marked book and read a passage:

"It was early in December, 1943. The winter was extraordinarily severe, the temperature falling to 30 degrees of frost (C). I saw a train full of deportees enter the camp station. It was composed entirely of cattle trucks, sealed without water, lavatories, or any heat. The journey had lasted three days and three nights. The people confined in it were mainly women and children. When the trucks were opened, there got down from them spectres who could scarcely stand upright, all dirty and emaciated, in a state of terror. They began to undo their baggage. I approached them and saw that it was frozen children, frost bitten. One, two, ten, twenty, thirty or more. None of the mothers wept, they were as if petrified. Two half dead children had great lumps of ice on their cheeks: it was their tears frozen on their pale faces."

Theo flinched and paled. Misha went on:

"And now imagine that at the inauguration, the opening of the first crematorium, which occurred in March 1943, was *celebrated* by the gassing and cremation of 8000 Jews from Krakow. Prominent guests from Berlin, including high-ranking officers and civilian personalities, attended and expressed their highest satisfaction with the performance of the gas chamber. They used the spy-hole in the door of the gas chamber. After which spectacle some vomited …."

Misha got up red faced. "Oh Theo. I cannot talk any more."

The boy could see how upset he was. And he too stood up.

Misha turned his face from him but stretched out his hand holding the papers. "Here take these notes with you. Read them in your own time and in your own time come again to talk. It is better this way. You will be able to tell me what you think and I can explain anything that will puzzle or concern you. Goodbye, Theo."

"Goodbye, Misha."

*

Knowing that his father was away in Nairobi on business, Theo went to the coffee farm that night. His visit pleased his mother very much though she did notice how pre-occupied he was and left him alone in his bedroom. Theo made a note of three points in the minutes that he could not fully understand: What exactly was the Jewish problem? Who was in charge of the Final Solution? And what was it in practice? Also he wanted Misha to explain the term *Lebensraum*. His father could have provided answers but he dare not ask him for fear of another row sparked by the revelation that he had obtained the 'minutes' from Misha.

Next day he went to see him. And put his questions to him. Misha did not quite know how to tackle them in their rawness and decided to cast them in the wider context of yesterday's discussion.

"Look Theo, … in the end,… by the end of the war, 6 million Jews perished in the German death camps on Poland's soil. In 1945, that nation's population was 24 m compared with 35m in 1938. Some 3m Jews, including nearly all of the pre-war Jewish working class had been killed. Poland lost 1 in every 5 of its pre-war citizens during the war - mainly in the period 1942-45. Think about it. When next in the Greek Club count around the room; one in every five of your friends removed. And I will not stop there. You have got to get the story in context. This war, as I told you yesterday, was a huge killer."

"The fate of the people in the Soviet Union suggests suffering on a somewhat smaller though comparable scale. The Soviet casualties, Russian and the other

nationalities of the Union, show 20m dead and 10m wounded in a country with a pre-war population of 200m; decimation in its most literal sense, Theo; one in ten destroyed."

At first puzzled, Theo looked at Misha and nodded to show he understood, for the first time, the meaning of a word whose meaning he had not had to define before.

Misha wiped his glasses, returned them onto his nose and continued: "Leningrad was blockaded by the Germans from 1941-1943 and one million Leningraders starved to death out of a pre-war population of 2.5m. The same in Stalingrad."

"But Stalingrad was also a catastrophe for the Germans at the turn of 1942/43. The surrender there of the German armies made plain to large sections of the civilian population at home in Germany that the war was lost.'

*

Misha sat back in his armchair and Theo copied him. They looked at each other. Misha spoke first. "Do you want a drink? I will get what you want. *Ena bira*? Theo smiled. Yes please, *mia bira parakalo*. They both had one.

And both drank in silence. And drank in the silence as each went over what had been said. Theo had not ever in his life had the experience of being spoken to at length. With such care. With such purpose. He had heard the phrase 'sitting at the feet of a teacher' as when they spoke at the club of Socrates or Aristotle. But he had never experienced the act of which his compatriots spoke of with such pride but never practiced; poker was too great a diversion for any debate to develop beyond the initial stages of dialectical display.

*

"Okay, Theo. Now to your questions. Answers won't be easy. Well, one will. *Lebensraum* means living space. The Germans demanded more room. In Europe. Sometimes you may hear that they wanted a place in the sun. This meant that they wanted this country back. But apart from the crowd in West Kilimanjaro I do not think Hitler wanted former colonies returned. He wanted to spread out in Europe at the expense of other nations and for this he went to war. Notice he, he, he. Hitler was a dictator.

You know what that means?"

"Yes of course."

"Okay. This man also wanted to get rid of all Jews. Why? Because he hated us. Why? Because he saw us as being different from Germans. Of course we are if you look at our religion. But we are, basically, just like any one else. Just

people. Special to ourselves. Like Greeks are special to themselves. Which also makes them not German. And you can be sure that if Hitler had won the war there would be no Greek alive today. No Pole, Russian, Rumanian. Yugoslav, Czech etc. etc. They would probably have starved to death or at best remain alive as slaves who would be worked to death. He called non-Germans like these *untermensch*, not human; sub human.'

Misha coloured. Then paled. And continued after the swift passage of emotion which Theo failed to recognize though he did reciprocate in as fleeting a show of discomfort when Misha said next: "People here are sometimes spoken of as monkeys. Once that is said *anything* can happen to them. You treat them differently. They are said to feel pain less. Or can go without food and water for longer than us. Or can work in the sun all day etc. etc. You know exactly what I am saying!'

Theo changed his posture in the armchair. He did not rise to Misha's accusation. It was an unspoken assumption amongst whites that blacks were able, from birth, to endure such conditions without complaint.

Misha continued: 'And what I am saying is that *Hitler just took the next step*. He wanted a racially pure Germany. Many people, before him and around him, believed in developing people like horses or dogs or cows. You know, breeding out bad characteristics to get a stronger or cleverer or more productive animal. But we were also seen by Hitler as an infection which weakened Germany as in the defeat in the First World War. He blamed us for it. I wont go into that debate. No need. Just know that Hitler wanted to clear Germany and his conquered lands of all Jews *regardless of how the war was going*. What do you Greeks say? *Valtakatopootapass*?"

As over the offer of a beer in broken Greek, Theo again smiled at Misha.

"Well done. … well said: *Valto kato pou to pass*? Yes. A saying. Put it down, where are you going with it? Or in other words, *hold on, this is crazy*."

"Yes. Mad. But it was more than just a saying. The madness was put into practice. How, you ask. I have thought a lot about this and in the end found a simple answer: Human nature. Everyone around Hitler knew what he wanted. So if you were clever you did things for him before he even gave the order. In fact there is no paper signed by Hitler ordering the murder of millions. He did not need to issue it. His cronies, the ambitious ones, the *arschlocks*, got together and worked out how to do it. There were 11 million of us to kill. Living all over the place. How do you deal with such numbers? Build factories of death. You can only do it industrially. Think of Tanganyika Packers just down the road. They kill hundreds of cattle and pigs every day …"

“Yes I have seen the factory. I have a friend there. The cows come in a line. They are shot in the head. Put on a conveyer hanging up by a hook, skinned, gutted, jointed and out of the other end as sausages or steak…”

“Exactly. The same principles apply. Collect us like cattle onto cattle trucks and take us by train to the factory. Line us up, undress us, lead us into windowless rooms which we are led to believe are shower rooms, hence the sense of undressing, pack us in, bolt the door and pour in the gas like you do on the farm by tractor when you fumigate a crop. Half an hour later get other prisoner slaves to shift the mess into the ovens so that a body becomes dust for ease of disposal. …’

Comprende amigo?”

“*Jeezus*. Bloody hell.”

“Yes. Bloody Hell.”

*

Many years later, when Theo was in a cancer ward in England, he was reminded, whilst watching television, of the conversation he had had with Misha:

Baldrick: Permission to ask a question, Sir.

Black Adder: Permission granted Baldrick.

Baldrick: ... The thing is, the way I see it, these days there's a war on. Right? And ages ago there wasn't a war on. Right? So, there must have been a moment when there not being a war on went away, right, and there being a war on came along. So, what I want to know is, how we got from the one case of affairs to the other case of affairs?

Black Adder: Do you mean how did the war start?

George: The war started because of the vile Hun and his villainous Empire building.

Black Adder: *George, the British Empire at present covers a quarter of the globe, while the German Empire consists of a small sausage factory in Tanganyika. I hardly think that we can be absolved from blame on the imperialistic front. ....*

Baldrick: I heard that it started when a bloke called Archie Duke shot an ostrich 'cause he was hungry.

Black Adder: I think you mean it started when the Archduke of Austro-Hungary got shot.

Baldrick: Na, there was definitely an ostrich involved.

Black Adder: Well, possibly. But the real reason for the whole thing was that it was just too much effort not to have a war ... You see Baldrick, in order to prevent war in Europe, two separate blocs developed. Us, the French, and the Russians on the one side and the Germans and Austro-Hungary on the other. The idea was to have two vast opposing armies, each acting as the others deterrent. That way there could never be a war. (But) There was a tiny flaw in the plan.

Baldrick; what was that, Sir?

Black Adder: It was bollocks.'

Faramdoula

A year after his expulsion from school Theo received a letter from a school friend. A Perso- Iraqi by the name of Nooshin, 'Noosh'. He too had attended Kongwa European School. The son of Dr. Faramdoula, the physician to the First Minister, he was not considered a racial anomaly by the school authorities but from the first day he was vilified as a *wog* by his schoolmates. He withstood the taunts with annoying stoicism such that a mastiff of a boy called Randy Milner challenged him to a fight. No one had ever prevailed against this edifice of thick bone and muscle. So when, at break, news got around of the impending fight all the boys who formed the circle with which such contests took place bayed for the obvious outcome; the only thrill came from being there to witness the damage done. "I'll kill you you bloody chut," from Milner was taken up in a chorus of "Go on Randy, kill the bloody *chut*."

As was the custom, blazers were given to seconds. Noosh looked around but no boy dared to do the honours for him. All except one. 'Here, give it to me', said Theo. And with that the fight started. Randy Milner's face broke into a sneer of contempt as, fists up, he approached the boy.

Noosh, kept his arms by his side. "Come on you funk. Put them up so I can smash you to kingdom come." Nothing. Noosh just circled around the brute of a human pachyderm. It was galling to Milner to find his first punch, which would have felled a tree, fly into the air making him look stupid. He became properly angry. All anger hitherto was just for show. He rushed at Noosh expecting to collide. Still nothing. Milner tripped into an empty space and fell like a sack of flour onto the red gritty earth which sandpapered his arms, thighs and nose. He looked monstrously funny as he got back onto his trunk like legs. Saliva spilt out of a corner of his mouth, forcing him to lisp, 'Yous suckin ssit'.

A group of juniors could not contain their shock and amusement at the sight of their sweating, swearing, snivelling hero now screaming: I'll get yous for this yous sucking ssit. Noosh smiled and parried yet another thunderous punch with a side step, making Milner swivel around the Perso- Iraqi boy's right leg which stood rooted to the ground. Down went the big white boy. Again and again until he lay on the ground hoping his tears of exhausted frustration would be taken for sweat. No one was fooled. The game was up. The world had changed. And Theo had sensed it first. He walked back to class with Noosh. The two became friends and remained friends for life.

After both had left school Theo was not surprised to receive a letter from Noosh who invited him to Dar-es-salaam where Dr. Faramdoula had his practice and where the family lived in airy comfort under palms in a large thatched bungalow raised off the ground on chest high posts. Up short stairs onto the verandah, Theo was greeted by a tall slim lady, her young daughter Yasmin, youngest son Fadhal and the pomegranate of her eye, Nooshin.

"Welcome to our home Theo. Noosh has told us much about you."

The eyes of the two friends met, one showing concern in his eyes by what may have been said and the other returning a reassuring look suggesting that nothing but good had been imparted. Come and sit down. You must be tired after your journey. Would you care for tea? Care for tea! Such language. Such civility. Such serenity. All new to Theo. There was nothing like this at home. When foreign guests came and a party was hosted the situation was far from civil or serene. Throughout the proceedings the *Xenee* would be smiled at while in Greek Theo's mother would provide a running commentary. *E, morre. Pesane sto faghee sa ghourounia. Ma aftee ee kokeenokoleeee then trone sta speetia tous. Erhonte s'emas kai mia kai kalo. Vre papse gheeneka. Ase tous na fane. Tee se niazee? Tee meee nyazee. Oreeste. Tee me nyazee. Pote tha feeghoune. Na eeseehasoume* (Well I never. They are in the trough like pigs. These red-arses do not eat at home. They come to us and shovel it in. Shut up woman. Let them eat. What is your problem? Well I never. What is my problem? When will they leave? To give us peace and quiet.) And so it went on. A nerve wracking undercurrent of criticism punctuating the occasional. 'Yes. Welcome. Please. Have more. Help yourself. Of course ..'

Life in the Kokopoulos household was hardly ever harmonious. Conversation was unusual. Communication within the family was hardly ever conducted at normal decibel levels. It was either shouts and screams or long brooding silence; followed by shouts and screams. Peace settled on the house in the afternoon when mother read her romances *Romantzo* and *Theesavros* sent out from Athens as journals printed on cheap paper. Stories of the heart interspersed with cartoons of Zacharias and *Ee Hondree*, his fat wife, cookery and embroidery read to the accompaniment of sounds from the roof caused by the expansion of corrugated iron being pounded by the midday sun. Father would be at the workshops stripping down a tractor, shouting at his son for a spanner whose size was never specified. There was sadism in the hot, oily air. And peace again at night as KK listened to the BBC World Service and Theo serviced the guns. In times between it was shouts and screams or silences like a distant volcano between explosions.

At the Faramdoulas tranquillity was the norm. Speech was soft and none softer than in the mouth of the father who returned home after surgery to greet his house guest. *Howw arrre youu? Gladd tooo meeet youu.* And your *famileee*? Theo heard speech as soft as the breeze from the overhead fan. And he liked it. As he liked the house. And its contents. Each room panelled in delicate embroidery or fine weave. The Faramdoulas, he came to learn, were dedicated collectors of Persian art: 'This one is from Isfahan. That from Ter'an. Tiles from Quom.' Edged with a script Theo had not seen before. More beautiful than Greek in its flow and flourish. 'What did it say?' 'Ah, quotations from the Holy Quoran. Come let us eat.'

They sat on large well filled cushions around a low scented table. Theo was heard to inhale and the Doctor said ‘Camphor wood. It was given to us by a close friend from Oman who now lives on the island. As you know Zanzibar was long held by the Sultan of Oman. First he lived in Moscat and then chose to build a new palace for himself and his family in Zanzibar town. Theo did not know but he nodded his head in pretence that he did. And so it went on into the night. Between courses ‘we thought would remind you of your mother’s Anatolian cuisine: Tomatoes and Peppers stuffed with saffron rice, raisins, currants, walnuts and almonds. Bamias and Meliganes too. And, last at table, pomegranates, a fruit from Persia which arrived from its deserts in carefully packed gift boxes; gifts from the family at home.

Theo looked at the side table. ‘As you can see illustrated on this set of ivories is the story of a wonderful picnic between the Prince and his chosen one.’ Then coffee on the verandah. ‘In the Greek style. Just how we drink it. At last Theo found himself with the familiar and asked authoritatively Arabica? Yes, from Yemen. We call it Mocca. The talk of coffee led to questions about how things were up country, about the farms and about the mood of the farmers. ‘How did the doctor know we had two farms and that one was coffee?’ thought Theo, on his guard for the first time that evening. So he asked. And obtained a direct answer. The Bulsaras know your father and his family. They are close friends of ours. They all stayed with us last week.

‘Yes I know them too. In fact my aunt works with Mrs. Bulsara at the curio shop. She has a grandson. I played with him from time to time. He tried to teach me the guitar; he is very musical. I have not got the patience so it did not last long. …’

Theo said more than he had expected to say, but he found that talking once again relaxed him.

Of the mood of the farmers he spoke about the formation of the European Union but said little of his father’s role in it. The old man and he had not spoken since the expulsion; there was shouting but no speaking.

‘What about you young Mr. Kokopoulos? A man at the start of adult life. How do you see your future? I am interested to know because the same question I put to Nooshin and Fadhal.’

It was a question no one at home had ever asked him and one he never gave an answer to beyond the confines of his skull. He loved the wilderness, the *porini* and was glad to have the farm at Ndareda even though it was short of water. It was a place he could hide away from his father and if the rains came he was sure to produce enough to live on. He would like a new car. A Chevrolet Impala. Convertible. That was the baby. The girls in Arusha would go out with

him then. Take a chick to the flicks and then they would sit in the car. And look at the stars. And listen to the radio. Then he would drive her back home. Open the door for her. Nice and easy. Show the parents he cared. He would respect her. Next day he would ask permission to take her for a milk shake at Subzali's new Milk Bar. He could even check out the new white walled tyres at the garage next door.

As to politics, Theo had given little thought. But on one point he was clear: when asked 'would you join the European Union?' he said '*no way*!'

The last thing he wanted was to be with his father. The Doctor was taken aback at the force of the reply and desisted questioning his guest any further. Mrs. Faramdoula intervened with the suggestion that Theo be allowed to settle into the guest suite.

At daybreak Theo woke up to the sound of a call he had not heard before. He listened: *Mwa-l -aakbaa . Mwaaalakba*. Several times. One joining into the other; louder in the breeze when it strengthened; less so when it dropped. Then he heard the ring neck doves whose *coo-coo's* took over completely and were themselves replaced by the sounds of the house. By the time he got out of bed, washed and got dressed it was no longer a golden dawn but a silver morning. He walked out of his rooms onto the verandah and saw Noosh, Fadhl and their father walking back through the grounds of the house, the sand paths neatly swept by the gardeners already at work.

'Good morning, Sir,' he said to the doctor. Then, 'Hiya Noosh. Hiya Fad.'

They returned the greeting all together, asking about his rest and what he wanted for breakfast. A question taken up again by the mother who repeated the morning's first exchange of words. At the breakfast table set out on the verandah, the doctor said: "Nooshin tells me you were very interested about the trenches on Kilimanjaro. I am too. Although, as you know, I am a doctor, I also dabble in history; each week I give a talk to a group of people at the mosque where we prayed this morning. You saw us returning. Perhaps the call to prayer woke you? This evening in fact I give a talk. Come along."

"With Noosh and Fadhal?"

"Yes. Sure."

Theo was not sure. But why not? And so they went to the mosque after a day at the reef snorkelling and harpooning.

*

'This evening we have a special guest. Our guest, Theo. The son of Mr. Kokopoulos an important man in the north. Theo is interested in history. As we

are. Tonight, because he knows of the history of the Germans and the British, I thought I would begin by distributing a table of events as an aid to discussion about the war of 1914-1918. This table will be the basis of discussion tomorrow evening and from there we will move on slowly looking at the problems which then arose and which affect us all today. So if you would take one and pass it on I would be very grateful.

Tonight, however, I will begin our class by considering how our political masters, the British, came to control such vast parts of the world in a process we referred to last week as Imperialism.'

'When dealing with the British Empire at its height at the beginning of the century it is, firstly, important to realise that India held a key role in its construction. She financed over 40% of Britain's total deficits and produced nearly one fifth of Britain's income from overseas investments. The English were imperialists on a tight budget and their policy and strategy reflected this. Throughout the formative period, between 1815-1880, Indian frontiers were deliberately extended, largely to keep secure their investments, and it is not surprising that threats - real or imaginary - to the security of the sub-continent were a major pre-occupation of successive British Governments for the whole of the 19th century and into the next and India remained the key to British foreign policy at the turn of the century, especially in relation to Imperialism in Africa.

Indeed, British control of Egypt, the Sudan and Uganda (he pointed to a large map on the wall) which thus coloured the map of Africa red, as you can see, from Cape to Cairo) may be explained strategically; the route to India via the Suez Canal, opened to shipping in 1869, had to be secured.'

Theo, who found sitting cross-legged on the floor rather uncomfortable, adjusted his posture at this point in the lecture familiar to him; many Greeks owed their origins in East Africa to the Suez Canal. They were employed by de Lesseps on its construction and soon after by the Germans on their railway projects in Tanganyika. Everyone in Arusha knew that the richest man in town, Platanyiotis had made his first million as a building contractor on the line from Dar-es-Salaam to Moshi. Was he not called *Bwana Kokoto* (Mr. Gravel) by Africans? And did he not have a gorgeous pouting daughter who was being courted by Stamatis the son of the baker from Usa River? The Elvis look-alike who drew a knife to Platanyiotis's throat when he announced that Lola was to be married off in Athens? What a stir it caused at the Club …!

The Doctor droned on:

'In the period between the mid 1880's and 1912, European powers extended their influence (or Empire) over Africa in what is commonly known, as I have

already pointed out to you, as the "scramble for Africa". This term is in many ways misleading. …'

Theo's mind was scrambling to find an exit and found it by following the maze in the pattern of the rug on which he sat.

He came to again at the mention of Tanganyika:

'On the 24th of April 1884, Bismarck, the German Chancellor, ordered the annexation of Luderitz's settlement at Angra Pequena in South West Africa. The rest of the German Colonial Empire or rather the formulation of Germany's theoretical claims to African Empire followed in quick succession. German South West Africa was established in 1884. German East Africa, between 1885 and 1890. This was of course our future country, Tanganyika.'

'These possessions marked a radical change in German attitude - even as late as the 1860's there was little sign of interest in or aspirations toward overseas gains. To quote from a speech by Fredrich List in 1850:

"... But why turn one's eyes to lands overseas, when on our south eastern frontier we find immense stretches of country towards which we could easily direct our surplus population and capital ..."

At this Theo sat up. The Doctor's talk was vaguely falling into place behind Misha's words; the concern over living space, lebensomething … lebenroom… lebensraum. That was it. He drifted in and out of a *dwall*; a reverie. Memories of far off days returned. Sounds familiar to that time which resonated with Lebensraum: *Larobungotonye. Ero. Sobai. Larobungotonye*. Words from his childhood. Taught to him by his Warusha nanny, *Yeyo*. Only much latter did he realize that she greeted him with a swear word of the highest order. It was after he had ambushed her on the path back from the market, yelling *Takwenya Yeyo* (Hello Yeyo) at the top of his voice. From on high up a *mapera* (guava) tree which grew along the path to the market.

He would hide in its branches chewing on its fruit. From his hideaway he would observe life below. Best thing was when a *Yeyo* or *Ndito* (Masai or Warusha for females: *Yeyo*, a woman, *Ndito* a girl; *Ero* meant man.) decided to have a pee. They would simply stand legs apart and water the ground under their skirt. And that is what gave their leather skirts the quality sought after exclusively by German tourists who would sniff the skirts on sale in the curio shop in Arusha. No smell, no sale. Which led Theo to buy up fresh skirts and get the men in the labour camp to pee all over them at ten cents a skirt which he sold onto the shop where his aunt worked. He made ten shillings a skirt which she sold for a hundred to seekers after the real thing. It was good business. But not enough to make him rich. That was his ambition …

*

The Doctor continued: "Why the change in the direction of outlook? An explanation for the outburst of German colonial activity may be given as the rising enthusiasm amongst Europeans for colonies; colonization was fast becoming the new political mode amongst the big powers and naturally Germany had to emulate France and Britain, both of whom had vast empire in Africa; so Germany took control of our country."

*

Theo emerged dazed from the meeting room of the mosque. The warm evening air blanketed his thoughts and it was only on the Doctor's verandah, shuttered and cooled by fans, that he began to talk.

He expressed an interest in the choices facing Berlin in the scramble for Africa and he said how close the history of imperialism seemed to him given the fact that 'here we are in former German East Africa.' an entity he was only dimly aware of. He admitted to developing a taste for history and said, rather weakly, that he looked forward to the next talks.

The Doctor was quick to attempt to lift the boy's sagging interest.

'Its not so much history that is my objective, Theo. It is how we are to respond to that history which has left a legacy of doubt in the minds of the African majority about our motives for being here; you and I. On whose side are we? Were we? We are to be governed by people who have been on the receiving end of history. That is why I am holding these classes. I want young people like yourself to have a deep sense of the past for only then will you be able to understand the present and influence the future. History, dear Theo has caught up with us who must now empathise with the victims of that history.'

'Admittedly, here in Tanganyika we have seen gentler politics than is the norm in the rest of colonial Africa. But even here we have had brutality. We are very lucky not to have had another Maji Maji rising when the Wahehe of Iringa rose up against the Germans. Under the British, Africans understood that colonialism was temporary. The First Minister had never to threaten the Government with violence as experienced in Kenya. Allah has blest us and we must repay Him by becoming good citizens."

'What about the Mau Mau?' asked Theo. 'Why did you not mention them? They came onto Mount Meru, behind our house. I was just too young to join, but those above twenty one became Special Constables. There was a parade at the Greek Club before they left for the mountain. Omiros (Homer) came back with a bullet graze to his cheek. He was declared a hero and my father asked the Greek Consul in Dar-es-Salaam to arrange a medal ceremony. But it did not come to anything. Perhaps it was because Athens learnt of his telling our Patriarch on a visit from Alexandria to go to hell? Instead Omiros got a letter

from the Governor with which Omeeros said he would wipe his rear; you must surely understand how very much we resent the British for their actions over Cyprus."

The Doctor winced and said nothing more political as drinks were brought out onto the verandah.

*

Next evening Theo went to the mosque in a lighter frame of mind. He was now determined to learn the history which the Doctor taught in a context so much more interesting than the Beaker People A&B he had been told of at Arusha School. Even at Kongwa it was all about a lot of Henrys who seemed an irrelevance.

In the meeting room of the mosque, the Doctor announced:

"This evening we shall have some refreshments. There are Coca Colas and Fantas and Seven Ups. Also crisps. And samoozas made for us by Nooshin's and Fadhl's mother. Thank you so much."

The young men congregated around the buffet table. All eyed Theo with suspicion until Noosh and Fadhl recounted stories about Theo at Kongwa. How he sided with Nooshin in his fight with the bully and how the Perso-Arab and Greek remained friends in the face of much criticism from other boys. But what most impressed the gathering was the story of the caning and his skill in sabotaging the teacher's car. This was heroic stuff. Theo was in.

After refreshments the Doctor, sensing what had passed around the buffet table said, "I just want to tell Theo what all the rest of our group already knows. We are here to think about the future of our country. How to shape it. The brightest in our community have been chosen. And I am proud to lead the course at the request of our Imam. Theo, you are our guest. You are free to come and go as you please. Nooshin will escort you should you so wish. But it is my, no, it is our great hope that you will stay to join our discussion. It is very rare for us to have someone like you. Someone who will be of great influence in our country, following in the footsteps of your illustrious father who is most concerned about the future.'

'Our aim is simply stated. It is to seek out a way of living in harmony. A harmony we share in our community. A harmonious life we want to share with all the people in our country. To do so we need to understand, *Dunia*, the world. How it worked and works and how it may be improved. Bear with us, our brother. You, who told me of visiting the war-fields on Kilimanjaro, have the makings not only of a historian but a statesman. A warrior. A man who has no fear of life least of all of his fellow men. I recounted to the community how you befriended my sons at your school. At the European school you gave your hand

to strangers unaccepted by the rest of the children. It was a brave thing to do. And your name is honoured because of your brave and kind act. It shall always be so within our group. Let us show you our appreciation.'

The group clapped their hands and the doctor shook hands with Theo who reddened a little, but said nothing. Inside himself he felt a new pride. But for the rest of that evening he could not quite understand his inner feelings. He had not thought of himself as having been good. Yet it made him feel good and he felt he should allow himself to go along with what had been said and stay. 'Stay the course' which was the motto of his house at Kongwa School, even though he had been expelled. Perhaps because of that he would stay in Dar-es-Salaam. Here he felt valued.

The doctor took the lead again: 'We know. Theo knows that the world is not simply Europe. Nor is it *Amrica*. When at school you are taught of The Great War. And when we see the examination papers you take, the Overseas School Certificates from Cambridge, the question is always about The Western Front. It is as though nothing happened to others but only to these two: Europeans and *Amreecans*.'

The theme of the discussion was again imperialism and the Doctor was to take his group "through the history of the last fifty years, my time, the time of your fathers, so that you may understand your immediate past in preparing for your future. For I see before me our future leaders. You must have wisdom to lead our community forward."

'Our continent of Africa first, and I am following up in more detail our previous meeting and a very interesting discussion I had with Theo …"

*

After a break for refreshments, the Doctor continued:

'I want now to discuss, in more detail, Western Asia, alias the Near East, or the Middle East."

Theo's mind buzzed in concert with the tube lighting which threw a white fog across the blue ceiling and green walls. He shifted his weight on the floor by finding support in his arms rather than his crossed legs. He was well practiced at sitting still. And listening. And what he heard captured his imagination. The only lesson he had ever enjoyed in patches at school was history; the only subject that had any connection with his father's interests. But where was the Doctor leading?

'The Middle East. This term was invented by Europe and has no conceptual validity, either on geographical or ethno-cultural grounds; hence, the use by me of 'Western Asia'. To us, the Islamic Heartland of Western Asia: Iran, Iraq,

Syria, Jordan and Palestine in the centre; Turkey and the Turkic nations in the North; Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Moscat the Nile states, Egypt and Sudan in the South and Afghanistan and Pakistan in the East; Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to the West.'

'Pan-Islamism, my dear students. That is the aim. The dream, which started with that self same war we have introduced into our minds tonight.'

'In 1914, the Ottoman government called upon its subjects to engage in *jihad* against the Imperialists: France and Britain. The Ottoman army was very successful until 1916. With Arab support, the Turks mounted attacks on Egypt, stopped the British advance north of Basra and inflicted a major blow upon the British in the Dardanelles. The call also created the *Khalifate* movement in India. All this from the war.'

'The Arab revolt, too, was launched in 1914. It was orchestrated by Hussayn, the Sharif of Makkah and leader of the Hashemites of the Hijaz, and supported by Britain, the southern revolt aimed to liberate the Arab lands from the Turk and to establish an independent state with Husayn as Khalifa of the world of Sunni Islam.'

'The Arab armies reached Damascus. But their dreams of an Arab Kingdom were shattered by the British and the French who partitioned the Arab lands of the empire in the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 and with the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which provided the Zionists with a clear option for a homeland in Palestine. All this before the war had ended.'

'The so-called peace-makers in Paris began their work in January 1919 and from the start they were besieged: Armenians, Greeks, Zionists, Iranians, Arabs and Turks were all engaged in lobbying their particular cause in the process of peacemaking.

The Turks rejected the peace treaty and sought help, like the Iranians, from the new Bolshevik government in Russia. Here was support for our cause!'

'Lenin had called upon Muslims everywhere to rise against their European rulers. But to the West, it was of great importance to show that this would not occur. None must try and emulate the Ottomans. Pan-Islamism was to be stopped by the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. How? By invoking the principle of Nationalism. By the creation of small national states which could provide a basis for continued influence of the European powers because these states could hardly stand alone. Divide and rule!'

'We witness riots, strikes, demonstrations, rural revolts. Inter-communal violence was widespread throughout the former Ottoman Empire from 1918 to 1920. In Turkey proper, the military leadership of Ataturk and the help of the

USSR secured Turkish state interests against Greeks and Armenians and Kurds. In Egypt there followed serious revolts in the urban and rural areas in 1919-20, which resulted in the British surrender of the protectorate over Egypt.'

'In the north, the division of Greater Syria between the French and the British served to produce revolts in Syria and in Palestine, in which Christians and Jews were targets, as well as the Europeans, and the arrival of a southern Arab army in Transjordan, led by Abdallah, son of the Sharif of Makkah served to increase such tensions.

These crises in Greater Syria coincided with revolts in Iraq in 1920.

While these were being violently suppressed - as were those in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine - the British secured the position of King for Faysal in Iraq and for Abdallah in Transjordan. This greatly distressed Husayn in the Hijaz who regarded himself as the ruler of both states - until the Hijaz was invaded by the Saudis in 1924-25.The Saudis now controlled Makkah and Medinah after 1926 and gave their name to Saudi Arabia in 1932.'

'The point I am making is that despite promises of a united Arab kingdom with its capital in Damascus, the policies of divide and rule by the British, French served only to advance their oil interests in the area; in 1929, the Iraq Petroleum Co. was formed and it incorporated the existing British oil interests in Iraq, which supplied most of British oil exports from the Middle East by 1939.

During this time attention focused on Palestine a declaration was made that Palestine would remain an Arab state and Jewish immigration would be restricted and eventually terminated. Why was this said? Because of the war. What was now required was Muslim loyalty and Muslim soldiers.'

'The war over, in April 1947, Britain handed Palestine to the UNO, whose decision to partition the area intensified Arab-Jewish violence, as the British withdrew. And on May 14, 1948 the state of Israel declared its existence. It spelt disaster for the Arabs because the declaration of an independent Israel was recognized not only by the USA but also by the USSR. War followed between Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the new state of Israel. It continues, in one order of battle or another, to this day.'

*

The question and answer session which followed revealed to Theo the most popular concern in the minds of the majority of the audience. The young especially kept asking about Palestine and how to right the wrongs wrought upon their brethren by Israel and its sponsors.

Theo felt clearly that this history was not his.

Drawn to these people by their friendliness, their gentle animation and well argued thinking, Theo nevertheless realized that his cause was different. That evening he excused himself and left the meeting heading for the Greek club in central Dar-es-Salaam.

*

As he walked back to the Faramdoulas' house, Theo contrasted the light banter and easy laughter of his compatriots with the weightier intellectual arousal the Doctor had stimulated in him through his Islamic perspective on history. The Doctor's talks made him want to know more. But not *their* more. *His* more. He too wanted a cause. But what was it to be?

Education at school had been a comparatively arid affair. He now wanted to travel. To meet more people, from different walks of life, from different countries, different religions. He wanted to watch and to listen. To make up his own mind. To draw on a deep well of knowledge, just like the Doctor. To connect and interconnect and develop his own arguments. He wanted tonight's elation to last and last, for the ricochet of ideas in his mind to never end.

What was it he had overheard at the door of the committee room at the Club on the way to the toilet? Something about the need to form a new political party. That was the telling shot as he lay down to sleep.

*

The next morning the Doctor did not go to work. His appointment with the First Minister, or rather, the First Minister's appointment with his physician, had in any event been cancelled in favour of one the following week.

Instead he waited for his guest on the verandah. Theo eventually emerged from his room. He said a gruff 'Good Morning.' No point in being too polite. He felt he had stayed too long.

'My friend. I am sorry. I thought that you, as a budding historian and statesman would be interested in what I was saying last evening. Tell me why you are not. Please sit and tell me while the *Mpishi* makes you breakfast.'

Theo was wary of speaking. Was he to share his very new feelings? He sat and looked his host in the eye taking a stab towards the truth. "It is all too different for me and I do not agree with much of what you are saying. And why you are saying it? I am an admirer of America. Where would we be without them? And what harm have the British really done that we should be critical of them?'

The Doctor smiled. Paused to answer. Stood up and walked into the house with an excuse me to his guest and returned with four slender volumes.

‘Theo. Just listen to these few words: Imperialism is, was, a long term poison. My aim is to find an antidote. I want us to move forward with new ways of living together. Just look at this set of readings. They are from books I have collected over time. The readings illustrate the greatest of all evils in relations between peoples of different colours and cultures. It is the poison called prejudice; racial prejudice.’

‘From the late 19C. To this day, racial prejudice is much in evidence in European perceptions of non-Europeans, identified as Black, Brown or Yellow, especially in relations between Europeans and non-Europeans in the imperial and colonial context. The following selection of quotations is taken from British authors’ perceptions of Africa and Africans. They range chronologically from the mid nineteenth century to the nineteen fifties. Please cast an eye over the portions I have identified with bookmarks.”

Theo looked up at the Doctor and said, “Okay. I intend to clear my mind by going for a swim. I will read what you have given me on the beach.

*

True to his word he found the passages:

‘Looking back for a moment over this great Central African city, it is quite impossible to divest one's mind of the history of the past - and so, one pauses. How different is the Uganda of to-day to that of thirty years ago! The bitter controversies and the savage persecutions of those early days have almost faded away and are now scarcely remembered, while all visible trace of them has vanished; for Uganda has passed through its fiery ordeal and has come out safely on the other side. The dark days are behind, and those who remember them prefer not to dwell upon their horrors, but to look forward to the bright prospects ahead, with ever-increasing eagerness - for the *dawn has come.*

We are thankful for the government by which laws are made, based upon purity and uprightness, and that tend to uplift the greatest of Central African people; and for the wise administration which not only helps the Uganda native to work honestly for his living, but also keeps the country at rest from wars and strife that hitherto have made Africa so dark. But best of all, we are thankful for the British flag that flutters over every outpost in the country, ensuring the blessings of peace, prosperity and religious liberty to all under its sway.’

*

‘I have performed a most unpleasant duty today. I made a night march to the village at the edge of forest where the white settler had been so brutally murdered the day before yesterday. Though the war drums were sounding throughout the night we reached the village without incident and surrounded it. By the light of fires we could see savages dancing in the village, and our guides assured me that they were dancing round the mutilated body of the white man.

I gave orders that every living thing except children should be killed without mercy. I hated the work and was anxious to get through with it. So soon as we could see to shoot we closed in. Several of the men tried to break out but were immediately shot. I then assaulted the place before any defence could be prepared. Every soul was either shot or bayoneted, and I am happy to say that no children were in the village. They, with the younger women, had already been removed by the villagers to the forest. We burned all the huts and razed the banana plantations to the ground.

In the open space in the centre of the village was a sight which horrified me - a naked white man pegged out on his back, mutilated and disembowelled, his body used as a latrine by all and sundry who passed by. We washed his corpse in a stream and buried him just outside the village. The whole of this affair took so short a time that the sun was barely up before we beat a retreat to our main camp.

My drastic action on this occasion haunted me for many years, and even now I am not sure whether I was right. My reason for killing all adults, including women, was that the latter had been the main instigators of not only the murder but the method of death, and it was the women who had befouled the corpse after death....'

*

'My opinion of him, the East African native is that as long as he is ignorant he makes a good servant. I mean ignorant from the point of view of book learning. He, the Swahili native, very quickly learns to wash clothes, iron, make beds and clean boots. He is clean in his habits and looks A.1. in his long, white *kanzu* and white cap, as contrasted with his shiny, black face. But if once you joke with him, or allow him the slightest liberty, he is ruined; he will steal and lie and generally be only fit for his discharge...I wish you could see a battalion of King's African Rifles, they are magnificent, all strapping great niggers with European officers."

*

"He introduced himself as Captain MacTavish, and took me along to the officers' mess tent, where an African was busy laying the table for lunch. As he was the first of my own Africans that I met, I examined the specimen closely.

He was very black. That was the first thing I noticed. And very healthy-looking and shiny. He had a fat, rather jolly face and looked intelligent.

But the main impression remaining in my mind was one of extreme blackness. I felt surprised as I saw him putting the white cloth on the table that the black of his hands did not transfer itself to the material. I must freely admit that his blackness oppressed me. It seemed to make him different. Africans have told

me since that the first white man they meet affects them in much the same way. They feel that there is something unwholesome and unnatural about the pinky-yellow-whiteness of his skin. So far as I was concerned the unfavourable reaction to blackness lasted a very short time. Later on the blackness or brownness came to seem as good and proper as the shades of white, pink, yellow and purple affected by Europeans. In fact, at one time, when for a period I mixed very little with white men, it began to seem to me when I went to Cairo for a visit that it was the white man who looked a queer colour.

This first African, however, looked very black to me. I still simply could not visualize the forming of any bonds of sympathy with such as he, and without bonds of sympathy the relationship of any army officer with his men is as unsatisfactory as any other human relationship."

*

"Yes. Okay," thought Theo. On the farms the old man called many an African *Sura la Weeno* (Ink Face) and he used the phrase himself. So what? As for the Kenya episode, stuff like that also happened during Mau Mau. Okay, this stuff chimed in with what Misha had said to him … but what *exactly* was Dr. Faramdoula getting at?'

The answer soon came when Theo returned from the sea to the house. After dinner he told the Doctor that he found the passages not at all shocking. That is how things were.

The Doctor looked startled. 'How can you say such a thing? Young man, our country is heading for self-rule with a great burden of illness. An illness of the mind. Of the European mind. We must cure it or else the future looks bleak. You are here as our guest because we think that you will go far in this new world. Certainly your father will. He is a good man, a force for cohesion. To us he is a hero. We know of his writing to Colonel Nasser upon the victory of Suez. And to do so in the purest Arabic! My dear Theo he is a wonderful asset. You must follow in his footsteps. I want you to influence his thinking further by what I am attempting to teach. Let me repeat to you the most important points."

"No really. My mind is full to bursting point."

"Theo please. Please. You are free to go, of course. But for the sake of our friendship hear me out."

Flames still danced in Theo's mind. He could hardly refuse this kind and civilized dispenser of generous hospitality. He was leaving them. An hour or so would not hurt. So he sat back in the chair and smiled.

"Thank you Theo. This, I promise, is my last parable for you. … The Doctor paused to collect his thoughts and said:

‘Our faith is strong. And one day we shall prevail. Not only through *jihad*. But mainly
through our peaceful principles.

Theo, I will reveal to you something about me that only my wife knows. The faith into which I was born is not Islam but Bahai. In public I am a Muslim. More than that. We are a family that, in public, attempts, by example, to straddle the Islamic divide between Shia and Sunni. But in private I am a Bahai. It is a belief in universal peace and harmony; nothing more, nothing less. But my private faith lacks the political power of Islam; that is why, in public, I am a Muslim. It has enormous power; there is no greater force for unity in the world than that of Islam; no other faith is as powerful. And what are its forces?’

‘Firstly a belief, as with yourselves, in 'One God, One Book, One Prophet' Your Issa is revered by us too, not as a son of God, but as a Prophet in line behind Ahmed. As stated in the Quran, the Holy Book of the One God as revealed to the last of the Prophets, Muhammad, in 610. …’

‘Secondly we have Sharia; the Islamic Law. Sharia derives from the Quran and from the Life of the Prophet as recorded in Hadith, the traditions, and the Sunna, the customs.’ ‘Acceptance of these has served to identify the Sunni Muslims who form 90% of the Umma. Four 'schools' of Sunni Muslim law are followed and differentiated according to region (Maliki in North and West Africa; Hanifi in the Ottoman and Mughal imperial lands; Shafi here in East Africa, parts of Arabia and South-East Asia; Hanbali in Saudi Arabia.’

‘Thirdly we have the Five Pillars of Islam: the declaration of Faith; the daily prayers; the period of fasting; the payment of alms; the pilgrimage.’

‘Other integrative factors, other things that unite us, include the Arabic language in which your father excels; the elementary and higher educational system; the legal system with its Sharia courts, officials, *qadis*, and scholars, *ulama*; the traditions associated with education, pilgrimage and trade served to link Muslim communities.’

‘Theo, I want to start a political movement, here in Dar-es-Salaam, here on the Swahili coast, here amongst the Muslim majority. I shall incorporate what I have said to you about the *Umma* into a political programme based on the Swahili equivalent of *Ujamma*: brotherhood, community, caring for our society from within. I have no wish to compete with TANU. Rather I intend that the party incorporate our movement’s ideas. I want your father’s help in achieving this. He is close to the leadership. Please intercede on our behalf. What say you?”

Theo did not want to say anything. He looked across the garden and caught sight of the ocean. He turned to the Doctor: 'I say I want another swim. And when I return I will give you a reply to your question. Please excuse me.'

"But Theo it is night you must not go to the sea. It is dangerous! You must have heard about the boy, one your school friends, who was taken by a shark?'

'Dangerous? No. I am not afraid of the sea nor of the night. Yes, I know about the boy.

… Anyway I won't be long.' He went directly toward the beach, not bothering to find his costume and towel. Who was bothered any way? The thought of him influencing his father was a joke. He walked into the sea to be pounded into freshness by the rollers. Then hunger over took his thoughts.

He returned to the house to look for a snack. The family had waited up for him. There was concern on their faces but no awkwardness. Theo asked Mrs. Faramdoula if he could have a snack. She immediately went into the kitchen while he went into his room to change out of his damp clothes. When he emerged the Doctor called out to him from the verandah, 'Ah, young Kokopoulos, come, sit. Drink? Try the *Moussaka*.' Theo felt replete and refreshed and after another coffee he took the initiative and asked to speak to the Doctor in private.

'Doctor, I have been thinking about our discussions and about the things I have heard you say. You have been very kind to me and I want to return that kindness by asking you to define at greater length your ideas on Ujamaa. Set them down on a paper which I will give to my father. But that is all I will do for you. My father and I are not close. Not at all like you and your children. There is no peacefulness in our family. I so appreciated being amongst you all in such calmness. But I must return to my madhouse. At least I have my own place to go to, but my head is in turmoil knowing that at any moment my parents can change my situation. I really must find independence for myself! And maybe I have. While I have been in Dar-es-Salaam I have made contact with my people. I have met many of them at the Greek Club and have been to the homes of one or two. I will tell you, in confidence, because I do trust you not to make trouble for me, we are about to launch a party in opposition to TANU.'

'We Greeks are men of business. And we want to form a party that will promote business. TANU, as we understand it wants to establish common ownership. This is not how money is made. So our party, to be launched very soon, is dedicated to private enterprise. There is money to be made in Tanganyika and we Greeks are good at making money. Concerns such as yours and my father's do not really interest us. They interest me as ideas, as history. I am in love with it. But it will not make a living for me. I want to become as wealthy as Arnaoutoglou and co. I have seen their houses and cars and yachts. I

have seen how it can be. So. Thank you, Doctor. I cannot be part of what you seek to achieve. Nor of what my father wishes to achieve. But thank you for your kindness. Nooshin and I will remain friends for all time. And now it is time for me to go.'

*

Theo left the Faramdoula's house and moved in with the Damaras brothers who offered him a place to stay in Dar-es-Salaam while an alternative future was further plotted.

The new party was announced in the *Tanganyika Standard*. It was featured inauspiciously on the same inside page which carried news of the conviction for the buggery of minors by a Levantine by the name of John Bohaya; kids in school had long talked of being *bohayad*. Theo was rather impressed that the link to a real person had finally being made. Another of life's little mysteries solved. And another seeking resolution: the fate of the United Tanganyika Party, the UTP.

"We stand for a prosperous Tanganyika, the right of private ownership to exploit our nation's vast resources. All welcome to join."

For the UTP to stand any chance against TANU in the forthcoming elections it had to enlist mass support. Theo had decided on a course of action hoping to attract attention to his party; if only to distinguish himself from his father. He did not want to return to his farm without something to show for his sojourn in Dar-es-Salaam. It had opened his eyes to a number of possibilities which he hoped to explore further when he returned north where the great mountain stood proud of the plains like some giant's iced pudding.

Armenis

Theo enjoyed talking and when at the Greek Club he talked with anyone not at the card tables. These were always busy in the evenings. An English MP on a visit to the Northern Province recounted how he was astounded by the amount of money changing hands in poker at the Greek Club in Arusha. The game was played with the fervour of a *Sirtaki*, Zorba's dance to you and me.

The same fervour characterised conversation, It started determinedly controlled, point by dialectic point and built up gradually to a crescendo with all claiming to have scored the direct hit, rather like Masai warriors under the influence of *kaloriti*, the drug taken before a lion hunt. Crazy is a good word for it. As when Theo asked his cronies how best to become rich quickly.

'Listen Theo, what you must do is go and talk to the Armenian. Armenis knows more about making money than anyone in town. *Bulldass*, returned Miniotis. No one is shrewder than Misha at making bucks; you cannot beat a Jew at his own game. Rubbish, said Sarikas. Go and talk to Horne. He is the richest Greek around here and he will put you right.'

The discussion raced ahead and climaxed with the quaint arithmetic doing the rounds in the Club whenever the subject of money came up: 'One Greek is equal to two Jews; one Armenian is equal to two Greeks. *Oppa*!'

After a long pause, the clinching argument, for Theo, came from Miniotis: "I must concede that our Armenian is very clever. Late one night, after cards, we were discussing Socratic philosophy when he came in for a drink. I said to him: 'Socrates tells us to live each day by practicing death. Would you agree?'

'No. I would say "live each day practicing life".'

And so Theo went, next morning, to see the Armenian.

He was not known by any other name. Just *O Armenis*. Not much was known about him. He was noted for his wealth and his way with women; kissing hands and that sort of thing. Some said he was a spy. A Communist Agent. FBI etc. But no one really knew more than that he lived alone in a castle built by an English eccentric on the slopes of the mountain and surrounded by huge lush gardens enveloped in an impenetrable wall along which armed guards patrolled with their dogs.

Theo knew Armenis well as they had often taken hunting trips together along the rift valley; Armenis trusted no one with a gun more than Theo. So when he arrived at the castle, the gates were automatically opened with calls from the guards of *Jambo Bwana, Karibu*. And welcome he was.

‘Ay Theo, where have you been? I’ve missed you. It’s time for another buffalo.’

‘I was in Dar for a while and I have come to ask your advice on how to become rich.’

Armenis cocked his head high and screeched in delight at the boy’s effrontery, which he admired. The two were like father and son ever since Theo had first hunted with Armenis soon after his expulsion from school in Kongwa. Theo was then fifteen and Armenis older than old man Kokopoulos by about ten years. Armenis had no family, at least not as far as it was known, in Tanganyika and he immediately took to the boy as a substitute son on a part time basis. And now was one of those times.

They walked into the enormous house and made for the library: “Sit and tell me.”

Theo recounted his stay in Dar-es-Salaam and conveyed his anxieties about the future, emphasizing his wish to act independently of others and of their plans. Armenis understood immediately.

‘At your age I felt exactly the same. Before they were killed by the Turks my parents had plans for me to join my cousins in America and, like them, to study medicine. I hated the idea of more academic study. I disliked school and wanted no more of books. I was ready to strike out on my own and when alone in the world, my life spared by a stay in Baku with my aunt, my mother’s sister, I took the opportunity to take care of myself. Or, rather, to see the world and some action! What a world it was! There was war everywhere. Everything was in chaos. How exciting! I understood very clearly that here was history in the making and wherever there was a fluid situation, there lay opportunities. And where better than further up the Caspian Sea into Russia. Reports from there were coming in of shortages of almost everything and of hunger.’

‘My aunt had inherited my grandfather’s *caique*, anchored at Baku. So, without her permission, and with a group of like-minded friends, we loaded her up with goats and set sail for the mouth of the Volga, to Astrakhan. For the Black Market. We made three such return trips, each time making a greater profit than the last. Then my aunt found out and we had to stop. But with the money we made we went into the Azeri country around us and bought animals, goats, and sheep, and brought them to the outskirts of town to fields that belonged to the father of one of the gang.’

‘The father was too old to care about our operation. And so we became goatherds and shepherds, caring for the animals day and night, taking it in turns, in pairs, to stay with them. We had dogs and we were armed. We did this for a little over a year and saw an increase in our flocks. Then came news of the

Revolution. We followed events in the Empire very closely because our future was at stake. Even now I could tell you how things went, but that would take too long.'

'The important thing for you to remember is that history, viewed from the Kremlin gives an early start to the Cold War; Stalin, in particular, wanted to retrieve territories that no Russian Czar would ever have voluntarily given up; territories that were taken from Russia whilst a great question mark hung over the future of the Revolution.'

'So to in Turkey where an earlier revolution was still in its formative stages and where territorial adjustments at her expense were as much resented; the Turkey of Kemal Ataturk posed as great a problem to the victors as Lenin's Soviet Union. Resentment became a driving force of global politics early in the history of our century.'

'Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, hoped to solve the Turkish question by encouraging Greek control in Anatolia. But as the Greek advance in exercise of their "Great Idea" gathered momentum, so the position of Ataturk strengthened. In 1919 he proclaimed the Turkish Republic and was busy in expanding outwards from Ankara. However Ataturk had many enemies; in addition to the Greek threat in the south the allies had occupied Istanbul in March 1920 and were co-operating with a puppet government established there.'

'It was only with the Soviets that Ataturk could ally and this proved possible after Commissar Chicherin's arrival in Ankara when a joint Turko-Soviet Army smashed Armenian hopes for self-determination.'

'The Ataturk-Chicherin relationship culminated in the Soviet-Turkish Alliance of 1921.

The ring was now securely held for a long and bloody bout.'

'By the end of the first round the Greek advances faltered. I am not sure how your friends at the Greek club will take my views. But I think your tribe were made to look foolish.'

'On the home front a plebiscite removed Prime Minister Venizelos from power and returned King Constantine to political pre-eminence. The King's known pro-German sympathies during the war were used by the French and Italians to extricate themselves from the morass in Anatolia and they announced the repudiation of their obligations towards Greece. The British government however made no such move - even when the Greeks suffered their first defeat in January 1921. It was then that France displayed an independent diplomacy.

Having dropped the Greeks, she courted the Turks. An agreement came in October 1921.

'The Soviets were unhappy about the Turko-French rapprochement. Intent on building up their own security area they reacted by sending a strong military mission to Ankara, which resulted in a new plan for joint action against the Greeks.'

'By this time the Greeks were well and truly in the imperialist trap of their own making. Withdrawal was impossible; militarily the Greeks were surrounded and diplomatically Britain insisted on Greek perseverance. In their despair the Greeks advanced on Constantinople, thus provoking a fresh Turkish offensive which ended at Smyrna amidst the worst scenes of carnage from which your people escaped to this country.'

*

Theo, who was beginning to wish for some sort of diversion from the mass of information he was being fed lurched his upper body forward of the plump cushion into which it had sunk and said: "I am finding all this a lot to take in but do you have just mentioned something I know about. Do you know that we call it *Ee Katastrophee*? (The Catastrophe.)

"Yes, of course, my boy. This is your catastrophe. We had ours five years earlier, in 1915 when well over a million of us were destroyed by the Ottomans."

Theo sat looking at the bookshelves behind the Armenian's armchair when he said:

"What you do not state is that the Turks threw us into the sea. Those who were not slaughtered by sword or bullet, or raped to death, or burned alive in their houses took to boats in the harbour or jumped into the sea burning bright with flames reflected from the city. They made for the Allied ships anchored in the bay to seek help none would give. Those with the strength to clamber up the sides had their hands smashed by British and French sailors. Only the Americans showed some compassion. Surely in all the books you have, this terror is described?"

"Yes and no Theo. Five years before, in 1915 our catastrophe occurred but you will not find a book which tells you the full horror of what happened. All seem intent on not mentioning it. Certainly not the figures which are imprinted on our minds. And that is the point Theo. Let us keep our horrors only to ourselves. There is no point in bringing to the surface matters which will result in argument or worse. The past is the past. Let it be."

“So is Misha wrong in telling me about the Holocaust?”

“To be told once is an education. To hear it over and over again is to witness an obsession. Some Jews are obsessed by the destruction of their people in the war. But Misha is not one of them. He told me of your visit to him. And I am so pleased he spoke to you. I know Misha of old and he would have told the Jewish horror story in its historical perspective. When he and I spoke of it he did not speak of Jewish blood as different from that of others. He spoke of it within the ocean of blood spilt during the war. Moreover we, he and I, agree that it is not healthy to keep repeating the story of the horror of the gas chambers with their millions of victims. That it happened no one should deny. It was absolutely dreadful. But too make such horror the foundation upon which the present is constructed is sad. And harmful. What you must realize Theo, is that history records horrors which affected every people, every nation. Few have been spared. Certainly not in the last hundred years. From the American Civil War to the present war in Vietnam, horror upon horror. But that we, you and me, are alive … that is everything. Forget the past as reason for hatred or, worse still, for vengeance. See it only as a source of knowledge in your thinking about the present. And of your future. And, sure, in that context the past has its relevance but it must not provide the dominant motive for life. Otherwise you will always be living with the dead. Live with the living Theo. Now let us get back to your education. Where were we?”

“With the Turks”

“Well done Theo. Bravo *pedee moo*.”

“Softer. Say it softly, *Pethee mou*.”

“*Pethee mou*.”

“Bravo, Armeni.”

The Armenian continued: ‘Ataturk next turned his attention on Istanbul, as Constantinople was now being called. And also toward Mosul. Rich in oil, this *vilayet* was contested also by Iraq and the dispute gave the Soviet Union the opportunity to revive her former standing with Turkey by concluding with her a new Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality.’

‘This marked the beginning of a period of truce between the Great Powers over the Middle East. However, this was not to last. The future of Azerbaijan, where we were, was now contested. It was partitioned, with the northern half, including Baku, going to Russia, and the southern half, with its capital at Tabriz, remaining in Iran. When Soviet forces re-established control of Baku in 1920, they chose its opera house as the site for a gathering of Asian revolutionaries to promote revolution throughout the Islamic, and colonial

worlds; trying to harness Islamic radicalism, the Bolshevik leader Zinoviev called for *jihad* against British colonialism.'

Recalling the Doctor's lectures in Dar-es-Salaam, Theo asked, 'Was this Zivnoviev a Muslim?'

'Bravo Theo. You are on the ball. Good question. Good boy. Z-i-n-o-v-i-e-v was certainly not a Muslim. He was a leading communist who saw an opportunity to turn the millions of Muslim subjects of the British against their masters and offered leadership in the cause of Muslim freedom. Mussolini did the same. He set up a radio station at Bari to preach *jihad* to Muslim subjects of the British Empire. Crazy.'

'Nothing much came of such appeals from the Baku congress, but it made my first fortune. The delegates had to eat and I had the meat. With the money I made, I left Azerbaijan for Persia with the Soviet delegation who adopted me as their quartermaster, so successful was I in Baku.'

'Things in Persia went well for me at first, but in response to the entry of Soviet troops in 1921 a military coup produced an Iranian regime which was sympathetic to the West. So I switched sides and became a broker between the new regime and western oil companies. Very quickly I bought into their operations and the rest is history. Which repeated itself in Iraq. There, in return for a stake in Iraqi oil, the French and the USA recognised the British military occupation and supported her Mandate of Iraq; this agreement was confirmed at the San Remo conference in April, 1920.'

'The response was a large-scale Iraqi uprising between June and October, 1920, which caused some 2,000 deaths. Peace was restored when Faysal was recognised as the king of Iraq in a British-controlled plebiscite in August 1921. I again acted as go-between in negotiations between the new regime and the oil companies, further adding to my fortune.'

Theo sat mesmerized listening to another version of the history he had heard spoken of in Dar-es-Salaam. He was pleased with himself for already knowing a little of what the Armenian was saying:

'From Iraq, I turned my attention to Egypt. There, at the outbreak of war in 1914, the British declared a Protectorate over the state and purchased Egyptian loyalties with the promise of self-government upon the cessation of hostilities. In 1919, however, Britain's dismissal of Egyptian nationalists in Paris during the peace negotiations and their subsequent arrest by the British authorities led to demonstrations, riots and strikes in Cairo. Soon political violence - which included the assassination of British officials - spread to other cities and, via the railway workers, to the rural areas.'

‘These disturbances lasted until May. After a prolonged period of inquiry and diplomacy the British eventually recognised an independent Egyptian government in February 1922, but retained 'informal' imperial control over defence, finance and the Suez Canal and 'formal' control over the Sudan to the south. I took advantage of the prolonged crisis by buying up cotton, then at rock-bottom prices, and made my profit when the markets were restored with the return of order.’

‘With this profit, I then went into coffee in East Africa where I took advantage of the trouble which had, in the meanwhile, erupted in Kenya. Wage cuts, the introduction of the *Kipande* pass system and White settler attempts to use forced labour through increased peasant taxation caused large-scale demonstrations and strikes in Nairobi by workers and peasant-labourers in June, 1921.’

‘The discontent was harnessed by a friend of mine, Harry Thuku, a post-office telephonist, whose formation of the East African Association attracted the support of the Indian community of Nairobi and farm workers from the rural areas.’

‘Thuku's challenge to settler rights over land and monopoly of political power led to his arrest in March 1922; a move which stimulated the E.A.A. to organise a successful General Strike.’

‘This was broken by police-military action at substantial cost and considerable loss of life. I made my investments when, in 1923 the British government stipulated that a future Kenya would be an African, rather than a White settler, country. The news provoked sales of settler farms which I bought on the cheap to become one of the biggest landowners in Kenya; I still am. I only left Kenya because my contacts urged me to avoid the excesses of the Mau Mau rising.’

‘So Theo, in a very long winded way I have given you the history of my time and my road in life and my road to wealth. Tell me now. In one sentence or two what it is you have learnt from what I have said?”

“Okay. Let me think. Ya. Go for it. That’s it. Go for it.”

“Come on Theo. You can do better than that. Go for it is in there. But what I said is that if you want to make big money you should take advantage of history, by learning from it. You should be alert to rapid change that becomes a turning point in history. Buy in times of crisis. Obviously we are coming to such a point here. So what can you do to make your fortune when Tanganyika is taken over by the Africans? You are at the age now as I was then. So where should you head?’

Theo scratched his left ear which had been stung by a fly in the Greek club. Damn thing itched. And on top of that he now needed to think. But nothing came to him.

'Come on Theo. Think of what is in the news: Vietnam?'

'Yes, what …?'

'What is happening there now?'

'Some kind of trouble."

'Yes. But what is in the news today?

'Shit', thought Theo. He had not been at home for a long time where he would have heard the BBC World Service.

'Please tell me.'

'Oh Theo. If you were not such a good friend I would say let us leave this business and go and shoot. But because I value your company and think a lot about you and care about your future, I will be patient and explain things to you. Because I want you to become more than a good hunter …'

The Armenians voice trailed off as he gathered up his senses to give the boy a handle on things which mattered in the world.

'There is talk, serious talk, in Washington that the change in administration will see an escalation which will change everything. This new American, Kennedy, has long thought that the US must increase its forces there.

Theo came to life. It was one thing to sit back and listen to the Armenian go on and on about his youth and the chances he took and the choices he made. Quite another to recognize that this man was really trying to help him achieve his ambition. Because he cared. For him. Theo. Just like the doctor in Dar-es-Salaam. It was so strange a notion to Theo that a grown up actually cared for him and for his future. So he put in some effort.

So he said: 'Yes. Okay. What then? They will win and drive out the Communists.'

'*You think so*? Why?'

'Why? Because the Yanks have got most power. They have won wars because of it. If it was not for them both world wars would have resulted in defeat. And what about Korea?'

‘Precisely. The Americans eventually held the ground. Army against army they will always win. But in Vietnam they will be fighting guerrillas. A different type of war which they cannot win. They would have to colonise the countryside. This they will not do. Cannot do. So they will not prevail. No, the Americans will lose the war in Vietnam.

The Vietcong will win.

‘How come?

‘History my boy. History. But enough of it for now. Tomorrow is another day. You will be my guest. Let us now go into the dining room.”

*

As they sat and waited for the food to appear Armenis remarked: “Theo, I know you need a break. I thought we should have something to eat and then go up to the crater and see what we can find on mama von Trope’s land. And if not there, on Figenschou’s. Both owe me a favour so we can go and have a look. The boys will be glad of game; as will the dogs. Come, lets go.”

Both decided to follow up news, brought to the house during breakfast, that there were buffalo again raiding maize fields on Figenschou land.

They went to the house of Sven Figenschou, one of seven sons plus Duka the daughter who made up the large family of Norwegians living, in eight houses, on the foothills of Meru. Their’s was a large spread which included some of Africa’s best shooting on the slopes of Ngurdoto Crater; Ngorongoro in miniature.

*

Sven Figenschou, ‘Figgy’, was a great friend of Theo’s at Kongwa School. They would avoid the school part as much as possible and spent most of their days exploring the boundless country round and about on their bicycles. Miss Lamb would sometimes fix them up with a packed lunch. She was in charge of the school kitchen and understood the boys’ wish for freedom from the classroom better than most. She had recently arrived from ‘home’ where she had had a bad experience with the head of the secondary modern school where she taught domestic science. That is until he made a grab for her ample bosom on a tour of inspection of her store room. She took to sabotaging his every effort at managing the school, mainly by goading her classes into taking direct action; first boycotting extra-curricular activities and then cutting school altogether. The head eventually retired on grounds of ill-health and Miss Lamb was obliged to take a post overseas.

At Kongwa her breasts were admired at a safe distance by adoring boys of whom she liked best the rebels, the free spirits, the anarchists to be. Theo became her favourite and wherever he went Figgy went too and he went too far when missing dustbin lids were traced back to his room.

Heavy metal dustbin lids, essential against rifling hyenas, were like gold dust when Figgy invented the most effective dove trap in the entire history of dry places. First the dustbin lid was set into the earth and filled with water. Two metal rods were then driven into the ground at ten o'clock and at two o'clock relative too the lid. To the exposed ends of the rods, standing proud of the ground at precisely five and a half inches, the height of a dove's neck when at rest on the ground, were attached strips of car tyre rubber; one strip per rod. The strips came to a point at the other side of the lid where they were each spliced onto a connecting piece of strong wire stretched over another metal peg sunk into the ground at six o'clock relative to the water filled dustbin lid. This was the business end of the trap. The peg here stood proud of the ground at an inch and a half. The tyre rubber bands joined by wire were stretched back over it at the highest tension possible and brought to rest against a wire already attached to the peg, brought over its tip and run back to a hide ten yards or so from the trap. Here the trapper hid and waited holding the wire taught and ready for action.

It took two days for the collared doves to settle around their new found source of water. An hour after daybreak, thorn trees all around would be grey with cooing birds. They would settle tightly packed around the rim of the dustbin lid to drink in batches of thirty or so. And thirty or so would be thwacked to death by a pull of the wire held in the hidden hand of the trapper. And as long as the lid was topped up with water another harvest of doves could be had just before twilight. Sixty or so each and every day yielding a feast of breast meat cooked on sticks around the glow of an evening fire. Anyone wanting to join in could do so on delivery of an iced coke to the trapper; prefects were exempt from this condition by dint of their authority not to report the barbeque to the Housemaster. Mr. Shuttleworth, however, would wait for the meat to be cooked before confiscating the lot whenever he was entertaining friends at sundowners.

When not killing birds for the pot, Figgy and Theo would trap parakeets on bird lines. These were sold on to Mr. Patel at the shops for ten cents a bird and he would supply *casookoo* fanciers up and down the central line (Dar-es-Salaam to Tabora via Dodoma at a shilling plus carriage.

The *casookoos* were often kept overnight in the boys' room and one night a black mamba came for them. This snake, eight feet long at death, was dangerous when cornered by the boys returning from an open air film show: A short by the Moody Institute, usually about flowers opening, or one by Shell, either spraying locusts or Stirling Moss winning the Mille Miglia or Le Mans in a Jaguar, followed by some cowpoke movie which was always spoilt by the

film burning when stink bugs gunged up the projector's cogs at precisely the point where the good guy or bad guy was about to draw. Then everyone was told to get back to their houses and no loitering for pissing contests or any such delaying tactics.

They had just got off their bikes at Hut 2, Nightingale House, when all the lights went out. It was not an unusual occurrence for the ageing generator in town to 'go down'. Anyway, they were about to go into their hut (a bungalow and therefore never called a dorm) when Figgy and Theo heard the parakeets flapping about and squawking in great alarm in the dark.

"There's something after them. I bet it's a *keecheche* (skunk)" said Theo.

"No way man", replied Figgy. "I reckon its that black mamba that lives by the bogs. I nearly plugged it couple of days ago but it disappeared in the *manyara* hedge. Its him. I just know its him."

"Shit. What do we do!"

"You turn your bike over and pedal like hell. Make sure the light goes right in. I will go and see. But first I will go and borrow Zak's *panga*." Figgy returned from the neighbouring hut with the machete and entered the illuminated doorway. To his left was a long mirror suspended opposite the door to the bathroom and as he crossed the threshold the mamba sprang up and lunged at his image in the mirror.

Figgy screamed with fright and sprung out of the hut.

"Shit Theo. That was close. He is in the bathroom. He maybe on his way out. But I cannot be sure. We'll have to kill the bastard. Bring the bike closer and point the light into the bathroom."

Figgy went back in when this was done and confronted the snake on the bathroom floor which was still wet from the prefect's use before the film show. The mamba slithered about unable to get a good position for another lunge while Figgy hacked at its body. Dark red blood, almost black, oozed into the water and by the time the snake was dead this harsh smelling mixture of blood and water flowed back into their room. Then the lights came back on. What a sight! *Casookoos* clinging to curtains and clothes. Tar like blood all over the floor. And a huge black mamba, longer than bed and thick as a leg and a head the size of a foot and shining all over with light reflected off its scaly skin.

One scratch from its exposed fangs would have meant curtains. Figgy told Theo that an African had been attacked by a mamba on the farm and had died before the pick-up truck which had been sent for had arrived at the scene. "And guess what. The Af's skin turned from black to light grey. Shit it was weird."

No more parakeets were collected; the boys stuck to hunting doves whose colour ever more reminded Theo of venom.

*

Ngurdoto Crater was the property of an aristocratic German woman, Baroness von Trope, 'mama' Trope. And what a paradise she owned. An African Eden. All the fauna and much of the flora of Tanganyika packed into a verdant soup bowl with its lake in the centre. No one but the old lady hunted here. Not because it was her game reserve but because the old lady would bag any poacher who dared cross her sights.

Baroness von Trope was highly individualistic and a powerful and ruthless character, a woman turned into a man by the demands of a manless household in Tanganyika. Able to outshoot most men. Change tractor tyres. Strip engines. And sport rugby playing legs beneath khaki shorts. This was a woman to be nice too.

The sides of Ngurdoto, however, belonged, as has been stated, to the Figenschous and Sven would hunt these forests to his heart's delight. Trouble was he had poor eyesight which meant that he always required a partner to see for him and point to the quarry at which Sven would fire hoping to hit. Misses were the norm. Woundings were common and kills rare. So hunting with Sven was a dangerous event. He always insisted on taking the first shot and would then allow companions to pick up the pieces or to follow the spoor.

Despite the team killing of the raiding buffalo, by the lights of Figi's clapped out Peugeot pick-up, Armenis and Theo were glad to return to the castle unharmed. The perils of international history had nothing on a buffalo hunt in the dark led by a dim sighted lead gun.

It was not until the next day that Armenis continued with his lesson to Theo. Refreshed by the events of the night he could now take on the Second World War in Asia which is where the Armenian started.

"… When did the Second World War begin in Asia? Well it is not a simple question.' … He trailed off again knowing full well that the boy would not be expected to know. So he continued:

'I once had the privilege of putting this question to an eminent professor of history at Tokyo University. His answer was that the first local war, that of 1931, was for the region the start of the Second World War. Local history, Theo! Look always at local history. Because it may explain the grander picture and nothing is grander than the consequences of war in the Far East. That is where the new world is being born. Out of total chaos. In China and Japan.

Where almost unimaginable suffering occurred.

Casualty figures in China are not known accurately. Some say over one hundred million deaths! In Japan there were 2,000,000 war deaths; 80,000 civilians perished in the fire bomb raid on Tokyo on the 9th of March 1944.

“Theo, there is a nursery rhyme that you may know and which Churchill sang at the time:

"Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home, your house is on fire, and your children at home."

That is the true holocaust.

80,000 more perish in the Atomic strike on Hiroshima on the 6th of August 1945, and 35,000 perish in the Atomic strike on Nagasaki on 9th August 1945. The Japanese surrendered five days later. They finally got the message.

‘What message Theo? When you think of the Japanese what comes to your mind, Theo?’
The young man took his time to reply. He wanted to impress.

‘When I was a boy most of my toys were ‘Made in Japan’. Then I remember the old man cursing furiously when his radio packed in but being mightily impressed with the new one which came from there. And now most of the new trucks and pick-ups are Japanese.

In the Greek Club we laugh that the Englezi are finished now that Riddoch’s Motors has closed; no more Fords or Bedfords only Hondas.’

‘That’s the message. And the other country to watch is China.

I think she will enter Africa. Quite soon.’

Theo looked directly at Armenis.

“Why do you think that?”

‘Why do I think so? I will tell you … Let me find something. … Ah, here is the page I want to read to you. Mao, the leader in China today, stated in 1949:

‘The Chinese, who comprise one quarter of humanity, have begun to stand up. The Chinese have always been an industrious people. It is only in modern times that they have fallen behind, and this was due solely to the oppression and exploitation of foreign imperialism and the domestic reactionary government ... We have united ourselves and defeated both our foreign and domestic

oppressors by means of the People's Liberation War and the people's great revolution, and we proclaim the establishment of the People's Republic of China. …. Our nation will never again be an insulted nation. We have stood up.'

'Can you see what Mao is saying? China is determined to be a leading power and much depends on interpreting correctly China's role in world affairs'

'I think China is on the move. Again. People forget that Chinese sea-borne exploratory expeditions reached Northern Australia, India, East Africa, Have you ever been to Gedi near Mombassa?"

"Yes. We went there on the way to Malindi. I remember the Chinese plates, white and blue, pressed into the walls of ruined houses …"

"Well spotted. But there is more to Chinese travel: they were in the Iranian Gulf and the Red Sea and the South Atlantic and could have reached Europe. But since the fifteenth century China displayed no interest in this outside world. A world which treated China roughly. Knocking her down. But no more.'

'China's emerging status as a major power should not be in doubt. Two years after his speech, two years after victory in China, Mao's army took on the Americans and fought them to a standstill.'

'Korea?'

'Yes. What about Korea? You should know.'

Theo remained silent.

'Good for business. The Korean War has made fortunes for the Greeks who were into sisal. War and revolution require rope. So dear Theo…plant sisal. It does not grow in China. Plant sisal and make your fortune and spend it on your party.

*

Theo left the Armenian's castle his brain aching from its pounding from history. He went to find his cronies who would have made for the Club. He reported what he had been told by the oracle on the mountain and most took the piss.

"It will take ten years for you to establish sisal at Ndareda. And before you make a cent you have got to set up a factory to make the rope. Do you know how much that will cost? Not only that. Sisal is losing its appeal to something called nylon. You could end up *bankaroot*."

They all laughed, including Theo. So how and where was he going to make his bucks?

Phaedra

On the 30 of June 1960, the Congo was declared independent. All hell broke loose. The temporal battle was tribal. It was fought between the federalists led by Joseph Kasavubu, head of ABAKO, his Bakongo tribal party and the MNC, led by Patrice Lumumba, His *Mouvement National Congolais* stood for a unitary centralized state. A deal between them was done and undone by their decision to leave the army under the control of Belgian officers; a mutiny broke out on 4 July. The Belgians flew in troops to the main towns to protect their human and material interests. A week later, on 11 July, Katanga declared its independence under Moise Tshombe. Here was the main source of the Congo's mineral wealth. Lumumba went wild. Car loads of Belgians streamed into Tanganyika and at the Safari Hotel in Arusha revealed rape, murder and mutilation unseen on this scale and ferocity by its local mid-morning coffee clientele. Not even on trips to Nairobi hospitals and mortuaries during the height of Mau Mau.

If it meant anything now to Theo, the Congo crisis was an opportunity to exploit. He was, after all, going to heed the Armenian's advice to exploit a crisis whilst it was hot.

He went in his Chevy pick-up from Arusha to Mwanza across the Serengeti and from the lake to Kigali in Rwanda and entered the Congo at Goma, close to the Ugandan border. Nothing was unfamiliar as Swahili bridged the frontier. But he went no further. They came to him. Held him down. And raped him. Several times over one weekend. And left him for dead.

*

'*Kir ee e Eleyson*' were the first words he heard after 'Mtombe', '*Kuma la Mama yake'. 'Mkundu Neyupe*' . Fuck him. His Mother's cunt. White Arse. *Takataka Nyeupe*. White Trash.

He came to in a white washed room without a ceiling, the paraffin lamps casting shadows all around and across the corrugated iron roof. The shadows danced slowly around and back again. There was a face close to his. Its mouth spoke to him in Greek invoking God's explanation. My child, my boy, what have they done to you. Oh my God, why? What is happening? Why?

He lost consciousness and returned to the same sights and sounds. Again and again. Each time his senses functioned a little longer before returning to the void.

Next he was aware of daylight. Razor thin bands through the closed shutters. It was hot. He did not feel hot. But he could hear the tin roof grinding under the sun just as it did at his farm house at Ndareda. But he sensed he was not there. The scents were not the same. Ndareda smelt of the maize stored in *guniyas*

(hesian sacks) in what could have otherwise passed as a dining room. This scent was like the coffee beans he smelt stored at his father's farm. Yet the voice was like his mothers. He held onto consciousness, and saw her cross the room towards him. She was carrying a jug and a glass.

'*Petheemu, Petheemu*,' my child, my child.

He felt her hand touch his arm and saw her face for the first time. It was large plain and round, framed by a mass of tightly curled hair which blotted out half the light in the room. He shivered at her touch and voice.

'*Mee fovase. Mee fovase. Karthia mou. Mee fovase*. Do not be afraid, my heart *Me lene Fedra. Eese sto speetaki mou. Tha se prosexo. Tha gheenees kala. Mee fovase*. I am Phaedra. You are in my little house. I will look after you. You will get better.'

The shivers ran like waves approaching the shore and subsided to the central stillness of a deep dark lake. Cold, cold, cold. He shook again and she gently cradled his upper body in her broad hands and arms. One behind his back. The other lightly across his ribs. Her face in the nape of his neck; her breath penetrating the gap between his shoulders and the mattress. He responded to her presence by relaxing into her gentle embrace which enveloped him until he slipped into sleep.

Whenever it was he awoke she was beside him again, this time urging him to drink.

'Ghalla, tha sou kanee kalo. Milk, it will do you good.'

He moved his head further up the pillow and then raised himself on his elbows in an attempt to shuffle up the wall behind the bed. She could see the paucity of the effort and quickly intervened to allow him success in sitting up. Broken as he was, a sense of normality in the act of sitting up and drinking briefly returned to him. And for a moment the stupor in his mind gave way to a clear vision of compassion. 'My name is Phaedra', she told him again, encouraging him to tell her his. But he made no reply, closing his eyes to drift into the void once more.

Each awakening brought more shared words and by the end of a week he managed a brief exchange about his whereabouts. She told him that he had been brought to her by Father Gabriel to whom he had been delivered in the dead of night by devout villagers from Kabale, in neighbouring Uganda, where there was a thriving Afro-Greek Orthodox community and where she managed a coffee farm; her husband had left her to visit his family in Thesaloniki never to return. She had decided to stay in Uganda and gave freely of her time to supporting the priest, Gabriel, in his ministry. He sent to her the '*in extremis*'

needy; as for example the maimed for whom the trip to the capital, Kampala, would prove too much.

She had over the years accumulated skills and provisions to deal with most emergencies.

Phaedra gave succour to him and he would lapse in and out of the void under her watchful gaze. The days passed. The *masika* (small rains) came. And went. And still he remained inert apart from taking the occasional drink of milk and *rizoghalo* rice pudding and the more occasional flow of talk. But she knew that his brain was no longer properly tethered. It rolled about his skull on the ebb and flow of pain and settled only upon the mud banks of depression. And there it eventually rested. Refusing to speak, he only, and only occasionally, accepted her milk offerings. In the course of time he shrunk to a skeletal shadow of his former self. Exposed above the bed sheet the skull suggested an adult. But she saw only his eyes hugely enlarged in their sockets and saw in them the frightened child; the son she never had.

Then one day Father Gabriel arrived with the young man's father; Kostas Kokopoulos had finally tracked him down and had come to take Theo home. Phaedra and the priest said as much as they could and explained as much as they knew none of which had prepared him sufficiently for the sight of this bed ridden spectre.

'*The e mou*, *The e mou*', he repeated, my God, my God. He knelt beside the skull whose eyes made no effort to reflect recognition. He felt for a hand but found a bundle of sticks.

Kokopoulos fell away slowly and silently onto the floor and wept and wept and wept before crawling away through the open door onto the verandah. My son, said Father Gabriel, gather yourself up. Your son cannot be moved. He is in the care of God's hand maiden. If he is to recover he will best do so here. Kokopoulos looked across at Phaedra. *Koree mou. Panaghia mou. The e mou. Sose mas*: My daughter. My mother of God. My God. Save us. And burst into the tears of a man who had not cried since childhood; a strange high pitched garbled gurgling which made the dogs bark.

The priest led him away into the heat of the day, the sun reflected in the flash of chrome and glass as the mission car reversed and set off away from the compound. Phaedra waved to the dust cloud of the departing fathers and went in to see to her son's needs.

Theo, as she now called him, turned his head towards her as she came in and, for the first time since his arrival, gave her the ghost of a smile. She thanked God: *Thoxa see The e Mou* and asked her son whether she could wash his body. He nodded his assent.

Preparations were carefully made. The door and window shut to prevent any chance of a draught, thought by all maternal Greeks to be the cause of much affliction. Though there was not a breath of fresh air, the precaution had to be taken; from the mountains of Epirus to the tropical highlands of East Africa the cry went up, "*Matia Theka. Prosexete na meen kanee revma. Tha kreeosee to Pethee*". Keep ten eyes open. Take care that the child should not chill with a draught.

Water came, hot and cold, in two white enamel jugs and was mixed in a porcelain basin standing on a metal table by the matching bedstead. A set given as a wedding present and transported from Piraeus on the honeymoon voyage to Mombassa. From thence up the Uganda Railway where the bridegroom told her at Tsavo about the man eaters of Tsavo. In the absence of lions he threw himself at her neck and growled, *Egho eeme to leontharee* I am the lion. And undid his flies to reveal a sight she had never beheld before and wished that she had still not seen. Worse, the rampant organ swayed by the movement of the carriage next approached her face. '*Faghe to rungu mou*' eat my knoberrie he growled as though presenting his mate with the best bit of kill. And kill it did. She screamed and turned her face into the antimacassar embroidered East African Railways & Harbours while he thrust around her exposed buttocks, lifting her more squarely to the seat by the straps of her girdle. He clawed at this until it slipped onto the underside of her knees and plunged into her bellowing like the king of beasts on heat. The act stopped as the train screeched to a halt at Voi Station, throwing them both down onto the floor of their compartment away from any casual look from the outside. She froze in fear and shame as he arranged his flaccidity once more into his trousers, unencumbered, in the Greek fashion, by underwear. He stood triumphant while she struggled on the floor to lift her inner garment and suspended stockings and pull down her dress which had spiralled around her waist. She then knelt against the seat beside her and stood shakily to adjust her hair and makeup reflected in the rectangular mirror below the luggage net. She could see him standing behind her and felt his hands caressing her buttocks. *Mee. Tha se skotoso .. Zo on*. Don't .. I will kill you .. Animal. She turned to face him and spat up at his face and left the compartment for the privacy of the toilet.

There she stayed. Locking herself in for the rest of the remaining long journey. After which the marriage ended. He farmed and displayed his *rungu* to other women. She found solace in the work of the church and in reading poetry. She knew by heart 'Peace', by Yiannis Ritsos which she often recited to the recuperating Theo:

The dreams of a child,
A mother's dreams,
The words of love beneath a tree in summer,
That is Peace.

It is the scent of food on the evening breeze,
when the halting of a car brings no fear,
when a knock on the door signifies a friend
and when heaven floods in through an open window
feasting our eyes on its peals of colour; the sound of bells.
That is peace.
Peace is the glass of warm milk and an open book
set before the
awakening child,
when the horizon is but a garland of light, a
blessing to the day
whose passage evokes no regrets.
A day whose roots feed the leaves of happiness
through the night
and gives sleep to the just.
Peace is the alphabet of sweet dreams.
It is the firm clasp of hands, the warm bread at the breakfast table.

Peace is a mother's smile.

Only that.

Peace is nothing else.

Invariably, at this line, he would drift off into nothingness. So on days of the bed bath no poem was read. Instead the silent poetry of caress after caress.

That day as she bathed him she noticed that his back was infested with regular lumps down the spine; a lump either side of the column, one between each rib.

She sent for Father Gabriel who came that evening, apologising for the delay which was due to a baptism at a remote village in the interior; his African flock was burgeoning, so much so that the Patriarch of Alexandria in whose diocese East Africa lay was coming to visit.

Gabriel peered at Theo who was asleep and took her at her word about the raised glands. *Tha eine karkinos*; it will be cancer. He had seen such symptoms many times before. "I will return home and send for his father. Prepare the boy's things for his journey to Tanganyika. That is if he is still alive …"

K.K. arrived two days later. Took his son, not to Arusha, but to Nairobi where the private hospital was reckoned to be up to top European standards.

The consultants there had little hope of saving Theo but "if he were to go to Geneva or London or New York, who knows?" They offered to find a placing

and together they decided on the Royal Marsden. The next day, Theo, accompanied by a nurse left Eastliegh airport for Heathrow on a private charter.

*

In between treatments, Theo lived at a hotel in South Kensington, owned by an Asian from Uganda. He had correctly read the tea-leaves in Kampala and had decamped to London well before the enforced exodus of Asians from Uganda many years later. His was an act of true intelligence; he could see the way the wind was blowing and got off the good ship Uganda before it became a ship set to sink in the gathering storm.

In fact Mr. Padhvani and family had considered sailing out of Mombassa by the B.I. liner of that name, the S.S. Uganda. However, the liner was fully booked and tickets were found on the Union Castle liner, The Windsor Castle; the choice was always between the white ships with black funnel of the British India line or crushed pink with plum funnels of Union Castle. That was still in the days when there were scheduled sailings out of Africa to Tilbury. You could go via the Cape, calling in at Dar-es-Salaam, Beira, Lorenco Marques, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Capetown, St. Helena and then north to Europe. Or by way of the Suez Canal and Home. Home to Britain. Home to civil servants on leave aboard the Windsor, Llangiby, Dunnoter, and other British castles, home on the sea to the expats and their families on a triennial tour of duty. The prospect of mixing it with them did not worry the Madhvani family unduly. After all they were wealthy, philanthropic, well established and well liked in Kampala where the gymkhana club listed them among its members, something which would not have happened in Nairobi. White settlers there kept themselves quite separate from Africans and aloof from Asians whereas in Uganda, Indians were the settlers. They had come to work on the great railway from coast to lake. Many lost their lives through accident and by the appetite of man-eating lions. And when the railway was complete they took to business as only Indians can. The Madhvani's did very well. And read the tea-leaves correctly.

There were German Jews who did the same. Misha had related to Theo how some got out before 1933 when Hitler came to power when it was already clear at the hustings prior to the elections of 1931 that Jews were to become the scapegoats for all the ills in Weimar.

"Why didn't the ones who left early warn the rest?" Theo asked Misha.

"That is a tough one Theo. I feel strongly that they should have done. I remember speaking to one of the leaders of the Berlin Jews. A man called Schlep. We all knew of him for his hospitality to the young struggling Einstein. When I heard that he, Schlep, was leaving for England I asked him why he did not warn the rest. He did not reply. But as I now reflect on it I realize that a mass exodus was impossible. Who would take us all? Later, the French offered

Madagascar and the British, Uganda. Too exotic by far. Mind you, had New York, the Jerusalem of our dreams, been on offer, we would have parted the Atlantic Ocean with our supplications and walked across!'

"Like the Red Sea?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean about New York being Jerusalem?"

"Of our dreams, Theo. In our prayers we would beg to return to the city of our kings. … The city of David. … Jerusalem. But we *dreamt* only of New York. That was the place to be. That is the place to be. …"

*

One day, passing his time in the television lounge Theo overheard a conversation at reception. He swore it was the voice of one of his school mates from Kongwa. He heard him greet a woman called Marisha, explaining to her that he had arranged a room for her at his place ….

"Hey, Jozef. Jozef!. It's me. Theo Kokopoulos. We were at Kongwa together!"

He called, as loud as his weakened lungs could bear.

"Shit, Theo. What the hell has happened to you …?"

Jozef recognized only the face he saw before him. Luckily, the face had puffed out since the Congo episode. Under the influence of chemotherapy and gold injections a certain normality returned. But the bald head and skinny neck and arms belonged to the starving Jozef had once seen at an abandoned lepers' colony near Iringa.

Theo explained that he was between treatments at the Marsden. He went back for a week each month and then rested at the hotel.

"Now we have met, please find me again. Here or at the hospital. I know that you are busy now. Good luck with *her*, Jozef."

Jozef smiled. 'You must meet her one day, Theo. She's quite a chick. I will take you to meet her when she's settled in at my place.'

*

Jozef lived with other guys from Tanganyika at 41 Sinclair Road, between Olympia and Shepherd's Bush.

A room had become vacant after the death of Cranty from hypothermia. Jozef immediately contacted Marisha at her hotel. Where he had met Theo.

Marisha moved straight in. She took to it like a duck to water. Certainly as at home in her new surroundings as the duck on the table to its former home: the water in St. James Park, a favourite hunting ground of the Sinclair Road gang adapting their African skills as poachers in London's top spots for a potential roast.

It started at Trafalgar square where the new arrivals could not believe their eyes at such easy meat. All you needed was a noose threaded through the sleeves of your army jacket and a bit of corn. "Croo, croo" and away into the tunnel. Ducks required more elaborate preparation. Same principle but into a bag slit along its base. This allowed a hand to hide in the paper tunnel and as soon as a beak pecked at bread at its mouth, quack. The best bags, tall, strong and stiff, came from the US Military PX store next door to no.41. When food ran out somebody would get a temporary job as bag boy to the Yank women, in town from their base for cut price shopping. Everybody else at Sinclair road would get whatever free provisions they fancied. Big tins of *boef stroganov* were a favourite, but after a few days anything in a tin tasted almost like anything else in a tin. So it was time again for a hunt. As easy and skilful as an Albanian in town to pick pockets.

Hajo, in the basement, was an Albanian. Though not a pick pocket he looked like one; a jackal eyed shiftiness to his thin long nosed face gave him the look.

On the ground floor lived two ladies of the night. One brunette haired called Dot and the other, a blonde called Daisy. They made a lot of money, sporadically, by leaping stark naked out of a cardboard cake at parties.

Above them lived Gina the hairdresser. Sorry. The Stylist. Her room had a bar with plastic grapes and empty straw clad Chianti bottles hanging above it. And on the wall a painting of the bay of Naples with Vesuvius smoking in the background. *Stylish*. She left no.41 to be replaced Rumpa from the Philippines.

*

Most, of the boys at Sinclair Road were virgins when they arrived in London after Tanganyika's independence in 1961. None more so than Adi Wexler who lived next door to Borisov Zakran. Here were athletes. 'Zak' had run the hundred yards at school in just a little over ten seconds. He was the only one in spikes which brought him much kudos.

Adi was equally adored. At school he excelled at the discus, posing, whenever eyes were upon his body, like a Phidean statue. Junior boys called him Charles Atlas as he did the course every day. And one day discovered that lessons six to

eight were missing. All hell broke loose. Everybody was blamed. But lost they remained.

Luckily he came to London soon after and his first outing was to Charles Atlas in Dean Street, Soho. He walked up the stairs flexing his plexes; his torso vee shaped and taut in his black nylon polo neck. Then he came to a landing. Empty but for a hatch. Pasted over it was a hand-written notice which said 'Please ring the bell for attention'. So he did all the time flexing. Up on his toes. Calves like gourds. Arms tensed showing rope-like muscles straining out of rolled up sleeves. Bull neck tense. Jaws clenched and pumping like James Dean, another of his heroes. Then the hatch opened.

"Can I help you?.' 'Yeah. I have come to see Charles Atlas. I want to shake his hand and ask him for lessons six to eight which I have lost. I am from Africa."

Eyes slit. Looking for admiration. Finding only mirth all around the office. There it was. Charles Atlas. Just a room full of women typing. The one who came to the window said.

"Not to worry, lovey. I will get you the lessons you want. Here you are.' At that moment a section of Adi's mental construct of the world crumbled into dust.

But he continued to do his exercises being particularly proud of his arse. Of its perfect half-moon silhouette with dimples.

One day, at Sinclair Road, he started what became a long standing discussion on the merits of arse muscles in sport.

Jonah and Kaz who excelled in long distance walking, also held definite views on the subject. Jonah claimed that a rounded arse was best for running. Kaz had a flat arse but he could out-run Jonah. The argument went on and on and infected the habits of the others in the building, every one of whom looked in whatever reflective surface there was to check out the shape of their arses. And when Frashka came round for the rent his opinion was sought; he too developed the fixation.

*

Frashka worked for a letting agency owned by the bookshop managed by Klucicki 'The Key'. He was owned by the Polish Government. Amongst many other deals in medicines, coffee and nylons, The Key, housed *apparatchiks* coming to London. He had allocated a decent bed-sit for Marisha *na Actonye*; she was as yet not senior enough for a place v *Ealingu*. In the event, when Jozef learnt that Marisha was coming to London he did a deal with Frashka whereby he would fix the guttering at No. 41 if Frashka would allow Marisha to take Cranty's old room. "No problem".

Cranty was an itinerant *habitué* of No 41. Like several others who had joined the British Army in Nairobi in order to get a free lift to London. There they did the bunk. Got caught and eventually discharged. With one exception. That of Jonjo who was put on a bus to Sandhurst, hated it, but ended up as *aide de camp* to an antipodean Governor General, retiring as a colonel and in retirement stalked deer and poachers on large Hampshire estates. As ever, it was always back to basic skills. Learnt in Tanganyika.

Cranty, Shaun, and Phokion, all ex-military; each ended up in Sinclair road. Not for long. Cranty died soon after. Shaun went as a mercenary to shoot commies in Angola, only they shot him first. Phokion went to Rhodesia via the Hammersmith College of Art and Building.

*

Cranty, who died of cold, survived as long as he did by joining the student rag week at Phokion's college, collecting for Imperial Cancer and taking the blue tins back to his room. He kept the room warm by rigging up a paraffin heater made of ex-PX strogonov tins and fuelled by oil from warning lamps collected on his nocturnal journeys around the centre of town. Always via the new Hilton on Hyde Park Corner to gawp at the TV screen set up outside to show hopefuls Bunny Girls walking around the casino.

His most expensive entertainment was going to the cartoon theatre in Leicester Square where you could, for two-and-six, watch Looney Tunes for hours in the warmth. Then, on the way back he would decant a few red lamps set around road-works into his army water bottle and head for home.

That winter he caught flu and took to his bed. The heating oil ran out and he froze. Someone heard him whimpering loudly one night when the sound of Rumpa had faded. One lad broke into Cranty's room. Two others were called to the scene and it was decided to roll the sick boy into the loose rug on the floor and place him into the armchair while a fire was lit in the small hearth in which the defunct heater stood behind the redundant gas heater which had been torn away from its fittings, coin box long broken on a frantic search for cash. The fire consumed the bedside cabinet and the drawers in the chest before it was realised that Cranty had kicked the bucket. Poor bloke. Memory of his passing proved quite useful; after Cranty's death the answer to debt collectors was 'he is dead' regardless of whom they sought.

*

Phokion too had arrived from Nairobi as Army recruit.

He was a boy who loved his home and was loved by all his family, so much so that, Kleo, his Greek grandmother, died on the night of his departure. Of heartbreak.

Kleo, who so loved her grandson, was present in the boy's mind as he flew the nest. He could see her sitting on her baboon skin covered arm chair telling all and sundry how Napoleon had met Cleopatra at the opera in Smyrna and how she had legs and a bosom to match hers …

"*Vre papse pia*, shush, cried out Grandfather, *tee pothia kai tee steethos*? At which she would thrust out her one breast, the other having been surgically removed, and say, '*Ne mor e, me thelane oulee. Tee eethela egho kai se peera*? 'Yes indeed. All the men wanted me. Why on earth did I choose you?' She would then stand up and draw up her dress to her knees and show her legs at whose sight he would wince and shut his eyes, especially if the scene included the undoing of her bun allowing her hair to drop almost to the floor.

She would then say in the lilting Greek of *Chesmelite*s, natives of Tsesme:

"*Ya thes malee. Kamia ehee tetia malia, kai esee anthroulee mou kleenees ta matakia sou. More Andras pou eese. Kreema ta nyata mou* …" Just look at it. None other has hair like mine and you dear hubby close your little eyes. What a man you have turned out to be. Shame to have wasted my youth on you. And if anyone else were in the room she would go into the detail of her *toilette*.

"Water", she would proudly say, "never touches my body. I wipe it all over with oil and *kolonia*. And I comb my hair through with black tea."

The joke was Kleo was only a little taller than a dwarf and the sight of her demonstrating her beauty caused all, except her beloved, to laugh.

Phokion smiled in his sleep, waking only on the approach to land. A land entirely foreign to him.

Dressed in shorts and short-sleeved cotton shirt he had embarked with, he walked down the steps of the Britannia into the cold of Christmas of 1963; the harshest British winter since 1947. No one was at the airport to meet him and after begging for help by the public telephones he got someone to connect him to the Reading number he had on a letter only to be told that transport would be delayed by the weather and that he would have to wait.

The transport never arrived and, if it had, it would not have found Phokion. He got chatty with a young West Indian who was also waiting to be met. No one came and together they went to an address in Harlesden; a number given, 'just in case' by an old auntie back home in Jamaica. By such tender mercies a bed was had for the night and for tens of following nights.

Phokion, who was so well liked, such a sweet and inoffensive boy, came to be called George. It may have crossed a mind or two to name him a rude derivative

of Phokion. But no one ever did. He was called George because that sounded better than *Yezi* which is what his mother called him.

In the evening he would do the washing up, a ritual in England that was unheard of in Africa. It struck him as strange how much was made of it. Domestic life seemed fixated on the issue of who would wash the dirty dishes after the evening meal. Phokion volunteered to break the *impasse* on the day he found the bath with the aftermath of a party and did so without complaint. He also washed up in the morning. And then went for a walk. It was a long time before he got just a little used to the surroundings. The drabness of the houses. The drabness of the people. What was this? Was it the poor quarter of London? The *Kaloleni* of London? It was grim and grimy, especially during that winter when pavements sang out a frozen tune to his footfall and all was covered in icy filth. But he had a warm room and a warm family to return to. And they laughed. And played loud music. And smoked *ganja*. And let him join in. One thing led to another and then to a job at Cadby Hall where all who needed a job in the Harlesden household found employment. Also warmth and sustenance; Cadby Hall was a huge red-brick complex of bakeries making cakes for Lyons.

It was only a matter of time before Phokion made contact with the *habitués* of Tanganyika House in Sinclair Road, *en route* to Cadby Hall from the bus stop at Shepherds Bush. One morning in February he walked behind a figure who, by his crew cut hair, he half recognised and then fully so by the voice which said out loud:

'Cacking *mafee la umbwa*.' Unmistakably Anglo-Swahili. Unmistakably a dog turd; one of hundreds out of the wretched canine arses straining around Olympia. For the dog show.

Unmistakably to Phokion's ear, the voice belonged to Jozef. A mate from school. Greetings were quickly exchanged, Jozef explained his particularly loud ill-humour that morning as arising out of an affliction which necessitated a visit to the VD clinic that morning. Phokion tittered sympathetically. The friendship that had only just been renewed was not on firm enough ground for a piss-taking belly laugh. However, by the time they had both negotiated the iced turds, Phokion had decided to accompany Jozef to the clinic in Hammersmith.

On the bus the story of the infection was told. Cranty had, a few days before he died, met a pair of usherettes at the local flick house, the Odeon on Ken High Street, and invited them to a party at Tanganyika House …

It was at the clinic that Jozef told the others that he had seen Theo in town. And all decided to go and see him at the Marsden.

*

Jeezus what a place. People moving around corridors, thin as skeletons, scraping drip stands along the floor, passing each other like fish in a pond. Young kids with no hair, pale and pained, watching telly or trying hard to speak with their parents also pained and pale in contrast to the nurses who looked pink and plump. Each trying to cheer up their charges with a cheerful smile or cheerful word, neither of which had much effect to halt the downward spiralling.

They asked for Theo's whereabouts.

"Second bed in the next ward. Are you his friends? He will be so pleased to see you. No one has visited since he came here."

Poor shit. Or so they thought until they approached his bed which was surrounded by men in white coats. What were they looking at?

Would you believe it! Theo was asleep with a woman in his arms. She was awake and blushed at the audience. She had a lovely face. Bluey green eyes. Blonde hair. Beautiful skin and as far as they could all see through the gaps in the sheet, great legs. As for her breasts, beneath the thin blouse, they were the pillows dreams are made of.

In every face there was a single thought: 'The lucky shit!'

*

Soon after meeting his schoolmates, Jozef left for home. Then, Sheila, Phokion's girl became pregnant. And soon after that the remaining residents of Tanganyika House, no. 41 Sinclair Road dispersed in various directions.

Phokion and Sheila found a room in Sydney Street on the borders of South Ken and Chelsea. It was a room with a view of two flats opposite. In one, a prig made a ceremony of pouring himself a sherry from a decanter and drinking it for hours while reading the paper. His regular as tick tock behaviour wound Phokion up. Fortunately he could shift his gaze to the other flat where, each day, right on aperitif time a model of a girl sat grinding her Indian boyfriend's *linkum*. But even this sight lost its appeal by its very regularity. That was the basic fault with life in England. Too damn regular. Everything by the clock. Phokion decided to make the break. He certainly was not going to allow the bump in Sheil's womb to grow up a regulated child in a regulated land.

He had, with Jozef, completed an HNC in Building. And with that scant diploma found himself the job of architect to the education department in Salisbury, Rhodesia. But the departure to the land of the regular sun was delayed.

*

At the Royal Marsden Theo was in his last month of life. The *karkino* had spread throughout his body. Not that he or his visitors from Sinclair Road were told. After Jozef's departure and Adi's decline it was Phokion who remained the stalwart Good Samaritan. He went each day to see Theo. And each day he would seek out the consultant.

A large red faced besuited man who, in his sadness at the decline all around took to and smelt of whisky. He also took to Theo. For his shear guts. No procedure, however painful, worried him. He had a series of surgical interventions and before the last, on his testicles, he prepared himself by asking a nurse to get him a plain white T shirt and an indelible marker.

He went into surgery wearing his logo: "Message to the Prime Minister; don't cut the NHS. Message to the NHS; don't cut my penis."

Phokion was in Theo's room after the operation. And he could see faces at the two glass apertures in the sprung doors which moved with the movement of the crowd outside. Theo smiled. He lifted the sheet to reveal written, in red, on the paper like skin of his sunken stomach: 'Oops. Sorry.'' And an arrow pointing down. And there it was. All wrapped in a bandage soaked in blood and held together with a huge safety pin.

"Phokion. Please undo it."

He undid and unwrapped yards of stained bandage only to reveal a penis in perfect condition.

A loud cheer went up outside and in rushed the medics. Clapping and cheering; in tune with Theo's sense of humour. Brave. Brave boy.

The next day, after 'phoning Phokion to tell him that he "felt a little under the weather"

Theo lay dying.

Phokion rushed to the hospital and found the consultant, glass in hand, sitting dejectedly in his small cleaners'-cupboard sized room. There was dampness to his face which told of a good heart mourning a brave heart.

Phokion now saw the truth. At each previous request to see the X-rays, he was shown the least clouded. Now he was shown the totality. Tumours everywhere. The fact was that the dying Theo had become a guinea pig. He was never going to survive and while in hospital he underwent trials of the very latest procedures; gold injections included. Should he have been cremated a tiny nugget among the ashes would have revealed.

As it was, he was interned in the ground.

*

KK was called to London just before Theo died. His wife stayed at home but he took with him Phaedra and Father Gabriel.

On arrival at Heathrow they went straight to the hospital and were taken immediately to see Theo. Or, what remained of him; a small skeletal figure. On his sides there were blisters and also around his mouth and eyes. And his nose bled lightly as he exhaled. Not enough to flow away; the red fluid went back into the nose when he breathed in.

Father Gabriel examined Theo and later, outside, he told KK and Phaedra how he had often seen, and much more so recently, the same symptoms amongst the dying in his congregation. It was a wasting disease that had no cure.

Theo died in the night.

Phaedra, asleep in her hotel, knew immediately it happened because of the howl of dogs in her dream in which she rushed, lantern in hand, out of bed into his room. There was no cover on his body which was sufficiently arched to allow her to see the opposite wall under the hollow of his back. His mouth was wide open as were his eyes. His hands and arms ran straight down the bed like two sledge blades providing support for the body domed down to his ankles. The horror of his dying was intensified by the shadows cast by the lantern; the tiny distorted skeleton became a roving giant on the white washed walls.

She screamed in terror as she flew out of the door into the star-lit compound teeming with howling farm dogs and by now the awakened night-watch men, two of whom she dispatched to fetch the priest. She dared not go back into the house until his arrival. By then dawn was breaking.

They entered the room together. “Sister, hush yourself. He is with God. You must prepare him for burial. I will contact Kokopoulos.”

Together they tried to flatten the body. It was not easy since, in her dream, *rigor mortis* had set in.

“Look away’, he said to her, as he placed a pillow on the hollow of Theo’s stomach and pressed hard. The spine in the small of the back snapped, the sound muffled by the pillow. Gabriel was a practical priest.

Next he said “Go and fetch lemon leaves. Lots.” And when she returned he stuffed them in the pillow case of the muffler which he discarded to use as a seat for the body. The lemon-stuffed pillow case he put at an angle on the bed-head and placed Theo against it.

‘The body must now be dressed and the room filled with flowers. Flowers every where.

Get the gardener to bring in whatever he may find, including lemon blossom from the orchard.

She gave instructions and proceeded to attend to the body. This she did with distaste. No longer a son to her, the cadaver was a thing to fear. Cold and damp. Puss and water ran from blisters and ulcers. She wiped his body down as best she could, urged by the priest to use methylated spirits first, followed by *kolonya*, Yardley’s cologne, so favoured by women folk in the tropics. His nose and ears she stuffed with cologned cotton wool which she also pressed to the back of the corpse’s throat. The mouth now took on the form of an open-laugh greeting, the kind a dog makes at the first sight of the master. The eyes, wide open in their sockets stayed open wide. A fresh white shirt found amongst her former husband’s belongings and it matched the new sheet covering the rest of the torso. The tableau was completed with flowers arranged around the lace bedspread and around the bed head. …

*

The wake up call came through at that moment. She awoke bathed in cold sweat. She showered and met the two men at breakfast and they told her that Theo was dead.

“Yes I already know. I saw it all in a dreadful nightmare.”

They waited a week for formalities to be complete and then took Theo back with them for burial in Arusha.

There his mother demanded to see him.

“*Zee, zee to paithee mou*”, the mother cried when she saw the body propped up at the undertakers. ‘He lives!’ There followed wails, beating of breasts and hair pulling as only Anatolians could perform; outperforming mothers in mourning throughout the great crescent of Levantine motherhood.

The funeral saw similar scenes. Added to which the Father attempted to leap into his Son’s grave, saved from falling only by Gabriel holding onto the great belt around Kokopoulos’s large waist. The belt that had so often scourged the son now became the Father’s lifeline in a tragi-comedy of truth and hypocrisy enacted around Theo’s grave. Gabriel intervened in loud voice to end the charade: “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Amen.

*

After Theo died and was taken back to Africa for burial, Phokion packed a rucksack for himself and one for Sheila ready for the trip to Rhodesia.

His final task in London was to settle accounts with the Royal Marsden. He was given access by Theo's father to KK's bank in the City and had his authority to pay outstanding bills.

Theo's treatment each month was settled in this way. But Phokion refused to pay for the last. In a letter to the consultant he simply said that in his opinion Theo had paid by giving his body up for research. The point was not challenged. KK who was sent all copies of correspondence with hotel and hospital in London sent Phokion a cheque for the last demand. "Good luck in the future and thank you for your kindness in looking after my son."

*

The money came in handy for the flight to Salisbury and the rent for a flat there.

Phokion's office was in the same courtyard as Ian Smith's. They often met crossing the lawn and exchanged greetings. Neither at the time had much to do. Rhodesia was in the calm before the storm and Phokion had only one commission for a school out in the sticks. He drew the project out for all it was worth and occupied his enormously spare time drawing and painting. He entered a competition to produce pictures for the recently opened headquarters of a mining company. And he won. At the unveiling ceremony of paintings, he was approached by a professor of art at a South African university who told him he had real talent. Would he like to join the department?

"Yes. Thank you.. But not until my son is born."

*

When Benjamin appeared war had just broken out and Phokion was called up.

His duty was to set up a 'keep' around a village on the border with Mozambique. A keep was a protective fence patrolled by himself and two other privates armed with the Rhodesian arsenal's most ancient Lee Enfield .303's. The other task of the trio of untried soldiers was to man a radio station and a landing strip for the Rhodesian Light Infantry's Allouette helicopters which had just made it from France under the noses of sanctions-busting frigates off the port of Beira.

It was the helicopters that made Phokion famous in his locality.

The thing was, a helicopter coming in for refuelling would only be given virgin paraffin. No risks could be taken with any possible contamination. Once a barrel was open, it was pumped into the chopper's tank and any left would

remain in the compound as condemned fuel. There was so much of the stuff that each hut in each village for miles around had cooking and lighting guaranteed for the duration. Not only that, out going choppers returning to base would take the sick and infirm to hospital in Salisbury. Such was Phokion's war. A good one. But it all got a bit much as tours of duty were extended and extended to the point he only saw his beloved family one day in each month.

Stuff that. As British subjects, the Phokions took the chicken run south. And south to university.

There he taught first year drawing and painting and supplemented his pay by transcribing readings from the university's seismograph, the biggest in the southern hemisphere. On one crucial day when the world awaited its readings with baited breath, Phokion had decided to give the machine a good clean. So none of us really knows whether or not South Africa had the bomb, which, it was rumoured, had been successfully tested in Antarctic waters due south of Capetown.

Choco

News of Theo's funeral in Arusha filtered through to the Tanganyikans left in London. Almost everything that happened 'back home' surfaced in conversation at watering holes in Earls Court. And in the night clubs in the vicinity owned by wealthy Jews from Persia who had settled in that part of London after the fall of the Shah.

Angie was the main attraction at La Boom Boom. She was a friend of Helena van der Merwe, Theo's squeeze of last resort. Angie on the other hand was a girl of the first resort; sought out by most clients and yearned for by Borisov Zakran, who believed that Angie was a friend to all but a lover to just one.

Zak, if you recall, was a *habitue* of no. 41 Sinclair Road, Tanganyika House. He was the ten-second man.

Still unbeaten in the opinion of his school mates who, when intending to wind him up, recalled the aid of the Adidas spikes.

*

At school Choco was Zak's equal as an athlete and surpassed him in many events when he returned from holidays with a pair of his own spikes.

The two-twenty yards was his forte. No one could catch him on the bend. Could that be because he dressed to the left? Certainly it was that swerve to the left that allowed him to avoid ever being tackled in rugby. He would walk off as immaculately turned out as when he went on.

Onto a pitch that had to be harrowed before each game so that the surface had some give;

unploughed it was hard bare red- earth, abrasive as sand-paper and 'hard as iron'.

Hard men talking. Zak, Choco and Adi.

Choco was the showpiece. Especially at rugby. Posing especially for the girls; at a co-educational boarding school, posing was an essential skill in the art of attracting attention from the sidelines.

And what better than kicking a try:

First, the head, presented in profile. Eyes looking out to the middle distance to forty five degrees off the horizon. Brylcreemed hair brushed into a *boukla* in front and a duck's arse behind, *a la* James Dean. Jaw muscles clenching and

relaxing at heart pump speed. Next the neck. Tensed to allow tendons and blood vessels to show prominently. If in a rugby shirt, collar up, Adam's apple to the fore. If in a vest the upper arm facing the fancied girl was to be kept in view at all times. Biceps in profile. Pumped up to reveal as large a ball as possible short of getting cramp. Shorts? Rolled up to the crutch exposing the thighs, all tensed up to display a ridge running right down each leg.

Then, the timing. So important to take your time before the throw or the attempt at a conversion.

This, the conversion, was the most dramatic opportunity ever afforded for a bloke to impress a spectating dame.

One of your team-mates, usually the scrum-half, (small enough not to steal the show) - lying flat out on the ground steadying the ball. Take three or so paces back and to the left. Strike a pose again. Relax. Pick up some dirt and release it to test the breeze. Start pacing back once more. Pause in prayerful mode and, even if not that way inclined, make the sign of the cross like Pele before a penalty. Not a big show of it. A little quick finger movement around the centre of the breast bone while stealing a glance of your babe or hoped for babe. Stand still. Absolutely still. Head profiled in the manner described. Relax. Run. Kick. And follow through all the time keeping your eyes on curving path of the oval projectile until it returns to earth. Not moving back to join your team-mates until it does. Then, if it fails to score, say shit into the back of your hand and look away from the sideline. If it makes the distance look straight at her and run your fingers through your hair and with the other hand rearrange your crotch.

*

Prowess at sport was everything at school; swots had no hope, no chance to attract the girls in the sure fashion of he-man sporting heroes.

School life was almost entirely un-academic; anti-academic; risibly so, as instanced by the stock answer to the question, 'Define The Second Law of Thermodynamics. Answer: "*The angle of the dangle depends upon the heat of the meat*.'' So it went on. In French and Latin all questions were served by the statement: "*We had one of those but the wheels fell off*. And in Geography, boys never got beyond the Japanese city of Kumamoto, which, in Swahili, means hot vagina.

It was only after school that the Cambridge Higher School Certificate had any currency with the girls. It was when the question of the best provider arose and that is why the dwellers of no.41 Sinclair Road faced two choices. Make your way in the world of work in London or go to college or university. This is where Zak and one other went. Adi and Choco were left behind and eventually returned to Africa. Adi went south to run a petrol station and that was the last that was heard of him.

*

Choco returned home to Dar-es-Salaam. It was where his parents ran a small run-down hotel in the run down capital of a run down country run down by *ujamaa* socialism.

*

Choco paid little attention to applied ideology. He was good at the personal variety of politics and soon made contacts in government.

His mother also had influence. She was a Swahili; people with lateral roots in Arabia. Her clan were the Obamas. Originally these were wild Hejaz Bedus who had become darker and darker skinned through intermarriage with Africans.

Rich and important on Zanzibar these Swahilis had made their fortune as agents of slave traders back in the nineteenth century when the house of Muscat played the pipes to which everyone from the coast to the lakes danced. Now, post-genocide and allied to the mainland, Zanzibar was itself being gradually exploited by the exercise of policy in the spirit of the Swahili saying: *Haraka Haraka Aina Baraka* (There is no virtue in hurrying.

… All in good time.)

Choco's mother was a woman to be humoured; in a town where there was very little of anything and nothing remotely luxurious, she found ways of supplying to the Dar-es-Salaam elite objects of their desire: wine, women and song.

Choco joined her in this trade in which he came to excel quite independently of his mother's contacts.

*

He arrived by Comet from London. The name of the ill-fated jet had special meaning for Tanganyika Greeks who were photographed regularly, every seven years by John 'The Comet' whose return was as regular as any in the night sky.

Every Greek in Africa quickly spied an opportunity to make a living. And hardly off the aircraft Choco spied his - a ship which had, just that day, been impounded against a debt owed to the government by its owners. It was anchored a mile or so out of the harbour.

In a matter of one-week, Choco had access to serviceable motor boats at the Dar-es-salam sailing club where he found favour amongst expatriates by his outlandish behaviour; in their nautical bunks and terrestrial bedrooms. He was Europeanised enough to mix easily with Europeans on a social level and exotic

enough to attract invitations home and aboard by women growing bored with life in Dar. Whom he bored with his outlandishly large tool.

One of his early conquests, a Swede who had come to help a good cause in the sun agreed that, on condition he spent more time with her, he could use her cruiser which had come out with the Johansens all the way by freight from Stockholm. (The container in which it was delivered was itself worth a princeling's ransom in Dar-es-Salaam and was traded for a large delivery of diesel which kept propellers turning at the club.)

Choco headed out to sea in company with the club's security guards modelled on the President's honour guards' uniform. These were supplied in exchange for penicillin, provided courtesy of the Swedish charity ran by Mrs. Johansen; antibiotics were virtually unobtainable in the country; in contrast to aspirins, which were prescribed for all illnesses. The aspirins came from a factory in Somalia in exchange for fish from Zanzibar purveyed by Misha Feingeld who had cornered the market for cloves through his Swahili partners on the island. The trade was fuelled by the illicit export of gems to India and the Middle East. The gems trickled through from the diamond mine in Mwadui and more recently from a new source of new gems up in the north.

These gemstones originated on a German's former ranch on the Sanya Plains, not far from the Armenian's castle gates and just a long stone's throw from KK's farmstead: Tanganite; the new gemstone. Found only in the plains below Kilimanjaro. There and nowhere else. Nowhere else in the world.

Kostas Kokopoulos had no direct involvement with the procurement of the unique gemstone.

He knew of it and had suggested its name. But it was Tanganyika and not Tanganite which he treasured, the more so after Theo's death which caused him to think of politics as a state of emergency ; there was only so much time left to him to achieve his dreams of social reform. All his thoughts and energy were ever more channelled in support of the Teacher.

Neither man gave thought to enriching themselves; as unique a thing in Africa as the gemstone which made fortunes for others.

Not least beneficiary was the foreman on Kostas Kokopoulos's farm. He went by the name of '*Kicheche*' Kandowere or just *Kicheche*: the skunk.

*

Kandowere, a peasant by birth, never missed an opportunity to make a quick cent; he became a rich peasant, a *kulak* by any other name.

He had direct access to K.K. and to his master's house. And when the gemstones started to emerge, Kicheche offered his services to Misha's agents. A place was needed to hide the stones *en route* for the wider world. Kicheche suggested the large ceramic pots on the verandah, each host to resplendent geraniums. Moreover he knew how to work the only working telephone in the vicinity. 'Kingore Three'. That was the code of the only line, for miles around, to town which could then be connected to Misha's place. Thus Kicheche became the first vital link in the gemstones' journey to the coast and beyond. And no one beyond the estate would have suspected it.

Kandowere and Kokopoulos went back a long time; well before the move to the coffee estate from Ndareda. There he was first employed as nanny to Theo and they became inseparable.

*

The sun dried fish that Misha traded on the coast were a by - product of the gemstone mines; the dynamite required to unearth them also brought fish to the surface of the sea. And uniforms onto the bodies of the security guards at the Teacher-President's humble residence (he refused to live in State House) and at the Dar-es-Salaam Sailing Club from whence Choco and the guards set out to sea in the Johansens' motor launch and made for the impounded ship.

It was a medium sized freighter on charter to Mr. V.J. Patel of Bombay and Dar-es-Salaam, registered in Pireas and owned by Raffa's father.

Raffa, was an occasional visitor to no. 41; occasionally attending weekend parties there.

These were strange affairs. Or rather parties were strange occasions to the *habitués* of no. 41. This was because none of them had much experience of these events. There was music and drink, but what after that? People just stood around chatting. It all seemed so pointless as Phokion's friend from Harlesden pointed out to him on the one occasion he attended. "You whities don't know how to party. All you do is stand around and talk. I am off to a proper party, man." And so he left, leaving the whities to talk.

That night the discussion was about the assassination of JFK. The event never lost its impact on the brains of the youths who lived at Sinclair Road. Until that moment they felt young. After it, they and the world appeared to age.

*

Choco was thinking of his time at Sinclair Road as he approached the ship.

The freighter looked at ease anchored alone out at sea within sight of the harbour. But its crew looked ill as Choco's launch hove to.

The head security guard called up for the stairs to be lowered and no one questioned his authority as the boarding party filed smartly onto the deck. As rehearsed at the boat club, the senior guard demanded of the first mate (the captain being held captive ashore) an escort to accompany him on his recce around the vessel.

He then posted a colleague on the bridge and took with him the two others as escorts. In the manner of a security chief in an American movie who said nothing but saw everything through dark glasses; the very model of a brutal officer prowling out of his blood-bespattered interrogation room.

The holds were not examined because officials had sealed them the previous day. And so, by a pre-arranged signal, simply a nod, Choco demanded a search of the crews' quarters. By the end of the tour, his haul consisted of the contents of the officers' mess, the galley and its store-room; alcohol alone amounted to fifty cases of white wine, as many again of red, a dozen or so bottles each of brandy, gin and scotch and a sizeable consignment of beer. All intended for Mr. Patel's party at the house he had just completed at Oyster Bay; *the* top spot on the coast where the richest residents had been Greeks and whose splendid houses were now ambassadorial residences.

It was the splendour house which alerted the authorities to Mr. Patel's wealth, found to be made through illicit trade across the ocean. The green-veined and marble granite blocks facing the outer walls imported from an Indian quarry gave the game away; they signalled ostentation obscene for the times through which Dar-es-Salaam and the rest of the country was passing. And as for the great notice board declaring a 'House fit for a prince constructed for Mr. V.J. Patel by the Singh Construction Company, proprietor, D.T. Singh and family. Architects: Gulam Hussein and Partners', it gave the police a bonanza of clues. The unfortunates were rounded up for crass insensitivity to Party ideology. All went to jail. And all were bailed out by enormous sums paid to state officials outside the remit of the President's office.

The offending house was commandeered by the state as were all other houses then alienated from all 'capitalists and landlords' in the country. Each property was given an official number stencilled in black to the right or left of the main entrance.

Choco's parental home and his mother's hotel were spared registration and remained in her possession.

He kept his eyes and ear open for a place of his own, but houses passed into private habitation only for reasons of state; Choco was not yet part of the national interest. But it was not too long before he found favours in high places.

He not only found alcohol aboard the freighter but also a great cache of 16 mm. film, mainly of the 'adult' variety, stored in the officers mess together with cinematic equipment: projector, sound system and screen. And it was with this *equipe* that he began to find friends amongst the top knobs. And to make a small fortune with which he eventually procured a house and car, thus becoming a member of the select few known by the *ee polee* as the *wabenzi*: owners of Mercedes Benz cars.

He set up his film club in a dilapidated timber mill. Once inside, the clientele, drawn from amongst the new *nomenklatura*: young party members, *apparatchiks* to a man and to a man fond of a burlesque show to the accompaniment of drinks served at exorbitant prices by hostesses modelled on the Bunny Girls at the Playboy Club on Hyde Park Corner which Choco had frequented when favoured by a windfall payment through the protection racket he ran from his flat at no.41, Sinclair Road.

*

At Choco's Playboy Club in Dar-es-Salaam, as at Hyde Park Corner, a roulette table did steady business whilst private booths did a bucking trade. But the business had a limited life since the derelict timber yard had been marked out as the site of the new railway station; the terminus of the Tanzam railway linking the port of Dar-es-Salaam to the copper belt in Zambia. This was to be built by 'civilian labour'; contingents of China's Peoples Liberation Army.

The railway and its coastal and inland terminii were constructed by the Chinese just as the Armenian had predicted to Theo; China was making in-roads into Africa through large projects which the west refused to support

Ostensibly, they were in Dar-es-Salaam because of the war in Rhodesia through which country Zambian copper could no longer pass for shipment out of the port Beira, itself under Frelimo siege in the same general war of liberation.

It was, incidentally, also the war which was to kill Jozef at Kapiri Mposhi, planned as the Zambian terminus of the Tanzam railway. And it was the war which also impacted on the lives of others from Sinclair Road: Phokion, who had served in the army reserve, had left to a new life in South Africa. Here too came his youngest brother. The one decorated by Ian Smith. Decorated for having made several successful contacts with the enemy; mainly Brother Nkomo's and Comrade Bob's militia men. He even tangled with the soldiers of the greatest of all vanquishers of white regimes, the greatest white hunter of them all: Mandela. It was well known in Salisbury that when Nelson Mandela disappeared from South Africa via Lobatsi on 11 January, 1962, he subjected himself to a crash course in the very latest techniques of guerrilla warfare at Kongwa, in Tanganyika.

The former European school based in the town that was built for the ground nut scheme was now the not-so-secret training camp rebuilt after Jozef and his Selous Scouts had detonated the main hall.

The same hall where Theo had been caned for disrupting the Sunday service by killing the iguana in the school church. Where the announcement was made of his expulsion for leading a Greek protest against the visiting prelate from Canterbury. Where Theo had sat at table with his best friend Nooshin, the Iraqi-Persian anomaly at Kongwa European School. Where the equally anomalous Choco, gang leader of the *bunyus* such as Zak and Adi, held court. Where the gorgeous Miss Lamb kept her distance in the kitchens. Where the hubbub of a hundred and more voices, first in English, then in various Bantu tongues, rose to a crescendo during a meal and fell away to absolute silence at a signal from the high-table. Headmaster had given way to Comrade *Komanda* who announced the arrival of the man who was Kongwa's most notorious terrorist recruit and the man who was in time to eclipse the golden aura of Mahatma Gandhi's hallowed image as the great emancipator, emerging out of the shadows of the underground resistance movement into the flashing lights of press cameras which recorded his trials and tribulations from imprisonment for the Rivonia conspiracy to release from Robben's Island; universal images of the man who was, in freedom, to become the celebrity of celebrities.

Nelson Mandela stood to address the ranks of his fellow freedom fighters seated in phalanxes at Spartan tables.

He began by questioning the strategy of civil disobedience by which Apartheid had been challenged since its declaration in 1948. It was a policy which Gandhi had pioneered during his South African sojourn and perfected in his native India. However, the enemy at home was not the colonial master who eventually succumbed to the demands of an overwhelming crowd on the streets, be it in and around Trafalgar Square or along Sir Edwin Lutyen's central parade in New Delhi.

'No. Our enemy understands only one thing: the gun. As we understood, from the moment they shot us to death at Sharpeville. We shall avenge that and every other massacre of our people by threatening every Boer with eradication. No quarter given. No deals made. No surrender until final victory: the elimination of every last trace of white power from our country. Removal of the white-man from our land. Land of our people …. Returned to our people by the gun.'

The hall erupted in cheers, shouts of 'kill the Boer', followed by an anthem composed in Kongwa: 'Bring me my machine gun, ….'

Mandela called for calm. And having signalled his acceptance of what ANC cadres had long trained for in secret, he ended by saying:

"If there is to be guerrilla warfare I want to be able to stand and fight with you. With my people.'

And so he trained for war. In Kongwa: successively, groundnut capital of Tanganyika, European school, and ANC military academy.

Upon returning to South Africa Mandela was imprisoned, for the first time, on charges of leaving his country without a passport and for inciting his people to hunt Boers; it was whilst he was in jail that the ANC formed *Umkhoto we Sizwe*: Spear of the Nation. The Big Game hunt was on.

*

Contacts between white and black hunters were very rare split-second engagements in which the first to fire had the best chance of survival.

It was also the case that the victor in one such engagement had not himself long to live.

The trigger-happy hero of Salisbury, decorated by Ian Smith for eliminating the first ANC contingent to have crossed over the Zambezi (at the time, South Africa's *de facto* northern border) from Kongwa, took his own life in the depths of his despair at ending up as white trash in Capetown; a despair he tried to alleviate by joining the political wing of very same organisation whose soldiers he had met and admired as equals on the field of battle. In South Africa he learnt to hate his own race for its indifference to his plight. He had risked his life for the sake of the white tribe's future, yet time and again he was told that he had no prospects. His was the fate of many a soldier home from the war; feted in battle and forgotten in peace. Only such as they could understand that his switch in allegiance was not that of a turncoat nor even that of an opportunist.

His first loyalty was to place; to Africa; to his birthright. He had and would again unquestioningly defend it against any attack; from abroad or from within; by black or by white. And when his position became indefensible, when he ran out of Africa in the long war which took him, a boy soldier from Arusha to veteran in Cape Town, he capitulated to death on his own terms.

He was cremated with no comradely honours save the tears of his father falling onto his khaki shirt, marking it with medals of moist sorrow. Tears of inconsolable loss. Yet too few to hold to earth his son's scattered ashes. Caught in the Cape *khamsin*, they were whipped out of sight; remnants of the ephemeral fiction that had been his life. As dust, he flew out to sea and out of Africa.

*

Through his network of contacts in Dar-es-Salaam Choco's plight at having his club closed soon came to the Armenian's notice. It was not long before the two met.
The Armenian saw in him an enterprising young man and proposed to Choco that he forget the club and supply the prohibited goods directly, from Nairobi, to the homes of his clients in Dar-es-Salaam.

Getting the alcohol across the border proved uncomplicated. It was a question of attaching an additional pick up truck to the safari convoys coming into the Serengeti from the Masai Mara; the Seronera Lodge served as a transfer point for the final leg to the coast. Choco set up a safari company and managed the operation through a Greek he had known from school. This chap was decapitated on his second outing when showing off to tourists by standing up in the open lead Land rover and waving to the clients in the big Bedfords. Not looking where the Landy was going he left his head in the branch of a tree which was skirted in matador style by the driver; *ole*.

Another friend filled the gap: Bertie von Mateus, the scion of an aristocratic German family in East African exile. He took over with equal panache but he too was killed on the job.

It was a life he very much preferred to the post that had been offered to him in Bonn where his pedigree was recognized at the West German Foreign Ministry. His parents pleaded with him to take up the offer so that he could make a career for himself in Europe rather than, as they saw it, waste his life in the African bush.

*

Bertie met his last clients in his parents' absence; they had decided to stay in Germany on a permanent basis.

He arranged two camps and a reception at the farm-house. Guns were cleaned and cleaned again. Land rover washed and washed once more. Driver in new uniform. Bertie in bespoke safari gear obtained in Nairobi; suit from Mr. Pandit and boots from Virji Velji. Only the hat was old. It was his dad's Stetson with the leopard skin band. He was ready.

Bertie realized he was to have an eventful safari the moment his clients disembarked at the farm's air strip. "Call me Tex", his arm outstretched in greeting, was accompanied by "Hi, I am Cindy." Both were the size of baby hippos and both wore glasses with lenses so thick as to suggest near blindness, suggested again when both could not locate the step into the Land rover and had to be guided aboard by the bemused driver who placed, by hand, each leading pachidermous foot onto the platform and then jacked Tex and Cindy onto their seats with a hand under each hummocky buttock.

“Gee thanks. We are all gonna have a great time together. Say what did you say your name was?” asked Tex of the driver handing him a ten dollar note.

At the farm, over lunch, Jan discussed the hunt. Top of the wish list was a buffalo head to hang over the fire place at their sporting ranch at Pagosa Springs, Colorado. ‘Its gotta be real big Jan, real big. We’ve got bison and moose in the cabin and this one will just have to look big. Right there above the fire. I wanya to know that were giving it pride of place, Jan. Cindy has set her heart on having it right there in the centre. Ain’t that right, honey? … Honey, ain’t that right?’, said Tex waiting for Cindy’s face to surface from her plate full of impala steak. Venturing no word of reply, she nodded her assent before returning her heightened redness of face to the plate. “I just wanya to find the mother of all Cape Buffalo for us Bert.”

He did just that.

There were two bulls on his land. They had crossed over the river the night before. ‘And, man, they are big. Huge. They have backs broader than this table and heads that would not get through the doors,” said Bertie pointing to the double doors through to the lounge – bar. ‘Yeesus, man. They will make you great trophies.’

Next morning at daybreak plus two hours, allowing for more steak requested at breakfast, they set off towards the stream, a tributary of the Manyara, which dissected the game-park. Jan silently cursed their lateness because even by eight the day was stale. He noted that kudus had taken to the shade so there was little hope of seeing the buffalo out in the open. He instructed the driver to head straight for the grove of wild fig on the big bend of the stream. His hunch proved correct.

Just as the bonnet of the land rover led the descent to shade and water, Bertie saw a fresh set of hoof marks in the earth on his side of the vehicle. Interspersed with the tracks were fresh droppings. Jan raised his hand in a signal to stop. He turned to his clients and said: “They will be down there. In the trees. Get out very quietly and follow me. Tex, I suggest you take one of the .450’s in the rack in front of you. Cindy, the driver will take the other one and hand it to you when you need to use it. It will give you one hell of a kick but it will do the job like no other.’

He, Bertie, already had a brand new .375 in his hands having removed it from its rack on the windscreen panel and was out of the Land rover without needing to open a door; it had a safari body introduced into East Africa by his father who had bought his original doorless hunting truck at the disposal sale of vehicles used by the Desert Rats and sold in Tobruk after the war. Bertie and the driver helped the two Americans down and the column walked and waddled towards the dark grove. Luckily the breeze was coming off the river and with

more luck the sprayings of scent wafting from the bodies of the baby hippos would disperse with the engine fumes back towards the road, away from the fig trees.

The human hippos were remarkably quiet on their feet. As Bertie counted such blessings he caught sight of a tick bird moving sideways across an invisible surface, dark as the shade his eyes were attempting to penetrate. He stopped and stood motionless with his right hand by his side, palm open to the three in line behind. They complied.

Bertie then stepped to the side and took a couple of steps backwards towards where Tex stood. "They are right ahead. About thirty yards. If you see it as we move on, take a shot. I will follow up if required. But wait until I move forward again."

He took a further step back and spoke next to Cindy, repeating what he had said to Tex, adding only that he would now talk to the driver asking him to stand beside her, rifle at the ready.

Bertie retraced his steps to the front and moved the column on. He next heard a snort. Then saw a massive head break cover. Neck arched right back, nostrils distended working the wind. Jan came back, beside Tex. Knowing full well that he could not, he asked his male client, "Can you see him?"

"I sure can," he lied.

"Okay. He's all yours. But wait 'til Cindy stands beside you."

Bertie had Tex to his right.

The driver then arranged Cindy to the right of Tex, put a soft nose in each breech and handed her the rifle.

The couple raised arms in unison and fired simultaneously ahead, both falling backwards against the massive recoil of their massive rifles.

Bertie shot at the same time. The great head reared up and came crashing down. The thunder of shots abated. Bodies straightened. Limbs relaxed. No word was uttered. There was too much sound in the ears for speech. And too much sound in the ears to hear the crash of a charge to Bertie's left. He only knew of it by the quaking of the earth on which he stood and into which he was ground.

*

His mangled body was flown to Dr. Kaska in Arusha. He was a Magyar and when in the laboratory attached to his private surgery there was something of

the Transylvanian about him; 'Look, look, *veeruses, leevink veeruses, moovink, moovink*', and he would ask you to look down his 'meekroskop' at slides he had prepared to study the damage '*veeruses*' made to healthy cells and how they could cause tumours.

There was brilliance in him few locals could recognize and when he talked of a new viral disease that he '*vas stadee*'*ink*', a disease unlike any other in its virulence and morbidity that he had ever seen in his long years in '*Aafrikaa*' none but Father Gabriel took him seriously. What the priest had seen in Theo was considered in London to have been a misdiagnosis; the cause of death was entered on the death certificate as pneumonia after a long treatment for testicular cancer. But he had erred on the right side. Gabriel's reports of a 'new form of plague as destructive as any mentioned in the Bible', may well have been the first reports of the volcanic region's dreadful new disease, even more destructive of life than its cycles of genocide; a disease which was to become the scourge of Africa, and first described by Kaska as '*veeral zarcoma'. 'Look look danzink, danzink … ze danss of det.'*

*

After Bertie perished, Choco engaged a Zanzibari manager in whose capable hands the operation was left. The safari cum smuggling business was doing a roaring trade. This satisfied Choco's requirements but was of little interest to the Armenian. He was more interested in Choco as a possible replacement for Theo.

*

When Theo died, the Armenian had lost a boy he considered a son. He greatly missed the crazy, gutsy, impetuous killer of buffalo and of loneliness. This, his loneliness, was the lurking, roaming, ruminating threat; it surpassed the most fearful of beasts in its destructive capacity.

Choco was crazy, impetuous and entertaining but no substitute for the simple pleasure of the *naïf* Theo; the foil of innocence to the Armenian's worldliness. Theo to whom the Armenian could teach so much. Talk to and hope to influence. Think about and look forward to. Alone in his castle the Armenian found comfort in the living Theo. In his absence and in his presence. The one kept his mind ticking over and the other racing. In the same way a child takes centre stage in a parent's life. When even in their absence a child may combat that greatest of threats: the loneliness that corrodes the spirit. But the death of a child, the certain knowledge that a child is dead, lets the ogre in. Only the hope of an after life could keep it at bay. But the Armenian was no believer in fairy tales. Theo was gone. Forever. And loneliness threatened to haunt him. To hunt him. Like a buffalo. It would double back and take him when he least expected. A drink or a drug would provide a sense of security. Bring on a haze of forgetfulness. Block out the day. Or the night. Until, in time, the amnesia

vaporised and let in the loathsome pain of loneliness; the tip of the horn that gored the soul.

To the Armenian, Choco was no Theo. He was too far gone in life. Tainted. But a friend nevertheless whose company Theo found entertaining. Especially when Choco talked of the boys of Sinclair Road. Their lives. Their deaths. Their loves.

The Armenian wanted to know most about Zak whose love for Angie intrigued him: A hostess. In a night club. Friendly to all. Lover to one.

"Was it really the case Choco? Was Zak really certain of her love for him alone?'

"Yeah. He thought so. Believed her when she said that she was his and no one else's."

"Was she faithful to him?"

"Nah. No way. She let me for one."

The Armenian fell silent and then asked: "Why did you not disabuse him of the thought that she was his alone?"

"You don't do that to a mate. Sure, if he wasn't my friend I would have let him know; if an enemy, for sure. But Zak. No. He was a friend. So it was a secret I kept."

It was probably that conversation; that admission by Choco, which distanced the Armenian from him.

*

The business dealings with Choco were increasingly brokered through intermediaries. The last time the Armenian spoke to Choco face to face was in Dar-es-Salaam.

Choco had invited his top clients and business associates to a dinner party at his house. On offer were dish after dish of sea-food, courtesy of Feingeld Fisheries of Zanzibar. The delicacies were served with a Riesling that had yellowed in the heat of the store-room it had been kept in; the last of Patel's booze, well past its best but palatable enough in a country of limited choice.

In order to impress his guests Choco borrowed Dar-es-Salaam's one bit of red carpet. It was leant to him because he had friends in every high place; including the Public Works Department, now very much less a public resource than once

it was, from whose main store he borrowed, in exchange for a case of Tusker, the state-visit-carpet.

Down they came along its threadbare surface from the main road and up onto the verandah. Choco's guests included, with their partners, one mute Chinese civilian representative of the Peoples Liberation Army contracted to build the TanZam line, two dour East European trade attaches, two drawling North American staffers, three tall, blonde, tanned Scandinavian do-gooders , a young Turk on secondment from the Foreign Ministry in Ankara, and two tubby , hirsute faced, sun-glass eyed commercial attaches from the Middle East, several permanent secretaries and undersecretaries, the manager of the Yachting Club, Chairman and Secretary of the Greek Club , together with the not officially forgotten founder of the now defunct United Tanganyika Party ; it was a measure of Choco's relative unassailability as host to the elite that he felt able to include the odd pariah on his guest list.

Further down that list came the Armenian and Kostas Kokopoulos. KK was Mwalimu's best white friend and now, in retirement, a minor irritant to the Regional Commissioner in the north who could never shut the old man up because he was in permanent favour with all members of the First Family to whom he, KK, had promised to cede a sizeable bit of land on his coffee estate.

Kokopoulos, the Armenian and one other were the only unaccompanied guests at the party and found themselves standing in an isolated trio at the start of proceedings.

The one other was Marisha.

She had visited Dar-es-Salaam on many occasions.

*

On this visit she was guest to the Polish Embassy which had relayed a request to London from the University in Dar-es-Salaam for assistance in organizing historical archives. Marisha had long had contacts with higher education institutions in Africa; she had, after all, started her work in international politics by her involvement with the Poland-Africa Association from which she progressed through the Polish diplomatic service to end her career as a roving ambassador for her country; a long and distinguished career made up of deftly executed shifts in navigating the shifting floes of the century's seemingly frozen politics.

After work at the State Record Office it was suggested to Marisha that refreshments being served at Choco's place surpassed any the city could hope to provide. Many of the officials were in any case invited so would she care to join them there?

She said yes to the great relief of her hosts who fervently wished to attend the only show in town.

And that is how Marisha found herself in the company of Kokopoulos and the Armenian. The trio remained together for the duration of the party for they soon realized that between themselves they closely knew, nearly all of Tanganyika's Europeans and raised a glass of addled wine to the memory of the dead who now included Theo.

Jozef

During the years spent in Wroclaw in company with the women from Tanganyika, Marisha was regaled with tales from Africa. Many of which centred on Jozef. Images which made him seem a Tarzan, a handsome, strong, fearless king of the jungle. That he was. Never at home, he would spend days, weeks, in the bush in the Selous game reserve, close to where they lived. He went alone. On foot. Slept in trees. Walked for miles, returning only when the leopard skins he collected were nearing too heavy for him to carry. He would take them by car to Bagamoyo, stopping on the way to be amongst the last East African elephants to wade into the Indian Ocean at a spot only he knew. Then he would hire a *ngalawe* which he would sail alone to Zanzibar, there to deliver the skins to the Sultan's agent, a remnant of the slave trade called Suleiman Obama, head of the clan to which Choco's mother belonged.

The skins would be taken at night from the boat and laid out in the palace courtyard. Suleiman would always ask why no bullet hole and roar with laughter to the set-piece answer, "because I only aim at the claws." Suleiman's interest in the skins was limited by his greater interest in the horns. What made the whole expedition so lucrative for Jozef was rhino horn. The skins would form a sack, stitched along the peg holes left after drying. Into this sack would go the horns. It was these that gave weight to his load and most repaid his efforts in the bush. Maria Theresa thalers. Solid silver. Business done, they would talk into the night about Africa. The *Nyika*. The Bush. Suleiman would retrace his expeditions from the lakes to Bagamoyo and thence to Zanzibar. He was proud of his slave hunting days. It was no mean feat to bring a string of slaves a thousand miles to market. Jozef listened to every detail. The roundups. The shootings with muzzle loaders. The animals. And the trek. And he, too, enthralled Suleiman with stories of his sorties into the Selous; Africa's largest game reserve, too big to patrol effectively and big enough to hunt unseen for days on end.

With the dawn Jozef would set sail for the mainland and home, repeating his expedition two or three times every dry season.

Now in London all this was but a dream. And he dreamt of going back. But to what? His home and his father's business, a long established building firm, had been nationalised. He thought of joining Shaun in Angola or going with Phokion to Rhodesia, and there was always South Africa. But none was the Eden he knew and loved.

Still, the woman he fancied was now with him. And she told him of an adventure he could not but pursue.

*

In Poland, after her work on General Sikorski's diary which had only recently surfaced in Wroclaw, (*Vrotswaf*) Marisha herself had became drawn to Africa. It was certainly the stories the women told that first interested her. But there was, also at the time, a push by the state to get involved in the continent.

In April 1961 she reported for *Vistula* a trade agreement between Ghana and Poland. Quickly followed by a visit to Poland by the Nigerian Minister of Trade and Industry. He asked her out for a meal and back to his hotel where she just laughed at his drunken attempts to pull her down onto the floor.

Next she reported on the goodwill and friendship mission to Mali, Niger, Senegal and the Ivory Coast, She declined a place on the first official Polish visit to these countries but she wrote up the record for her journal. And became a founder member in 1962 of the Friends of Africa Society. It set up the Patrice Lumumba Scholarship Fund to provide young Africans with grants for higher education in Poland. Next it organised conferences on Africa and initiated visits from Poland to the continent to promote cultural and scientific co-operation to the benefit of both. All sprung from the 'sympathy felt by the Polish people with the growth of the national-liberation movement in Africa.' So said its first statute. What it really meant was an opportunity to travel. And Marisha decided it was now her turn.

The project she had in mind involved Jozef, though he did not yet know of it. In her reading, she found mention of an eighteenth century adventurer, who, it was said, may have been a Pole, one Maurycy Beniowski, the 'King of Madagascar' after whom a street in the capital, Tananarive was named. So she applied to the Society for a grant to research this story. It was given without question as was permission for travel arranged through London. And so it was that Jozef became involved. "Would it not be nice to travel together?" She lay in his arms talking the night away. He agreed. What else could he do? He tried to interest her physically but she just talked over his frustrated efforts to overcome her coolness.

Eventually he proposed a month long trip, sailing from the mouth of the Ruvuma across the straits to Madagascar. All alone in the sun, sea, starlight.

Jozef desperately wanted the greater physical closeness this journey would afford. But even as they lay naked in bed or on a beach there was no response from her to his heated advances.

"What is it with you Marisha?"

"What do you mean?'

"Mother of God. Surely you can see what is happening and not happening!"

“Yes Jozef. I can see. But I cannot feel any emotion, physical or mental. I can only feel pain. Before you, I most recently discovered my lack of engagement with feelings when I was working on the diary I told you about.”

“I returned home from my office to find the women in tears.”

“They had been reading Sikorski’s diary and wept in unison over his anguish about his son Janusz. This young man was diagnosed as tubercular and sent to the sanatorium in Zakopane where he lived out his life. There he met, in the solarium, a precocious young woman. She, Bogumila, was not tubercular but was sent for a cure of chronic influenza and shared the sanatoriums facilities with the likes of Janusz. Her uncle was a minister in the last administration before the war and so she had access to certain privileges such as use of his automobile which he kept at his holiday villa in the resort.

“They would take chauffeured trips into the mountains to stay with the local mountain people. It was thought that life with them strengthened weak constitutions. The fact that this was a recipe for further contamination was not then appreciated.

‘The relationship between Janusz and Bogumila blossomed into a romance vividly described in the diary. Eventually, Janusz’s condition weakened. Bogumila was at his bedside when he died.’

‘I asked the women why they cried so.’

‘They replied: ‘Oh Marisha why are you so hard. Cannot you see how sad and how beautiful this episode is? Their love for each other: parents and son and he for Bogumila.’
‘I did not say so to them, but to myself I said what is there to cry about?’

*

Jozef was taken aback by this response. Yet her beauty overwhelmed his wanting to discuss the matter further. He kissed her on the forehead and they went on together. The journey was long.

In bits and pieces which he carefully stored and put together in his mind Jozef came to know this woman who captivated him. But never satisfied him.

He knew very little of what she told him and what he knew was a mere echo of what his mother told him which had evaporated from his mind in the bush on which his mind was focused. But in her constant company another country, other lives, came to inhabit his still impressionable mind.

*

She was born in Lwow. (*Lvoof*) The place held a certain fascination for him as his mother and aunts talked very often of its glories in contrasting these to the bleakness of the African environment, which he loved so much.

With the outbreak of war the city fell hostage to armed gangs of Ukrainians and a few weeks later to the Red Army. In the melee of the time Marisha's parents disappeared and she was taken by nuns into an orphanage which itself was ravaged. Only the very young were spared and she was reclaimed from the wreckage by a spinster aunt who cared for her throughout the hostilities.

At the age of eleven when memories took firm hold in her mind, Marisha could recount aspects her journey west. Looking up at the sky on their Madagascarian beach she told Jozef of the predominance of a uniform grey in everything she saw and touched. Of being constantly cold and hungry.

'There was no glass in the windows to the room we were given, by the University, in the centre of Wroclaw. To get to it we had to climb a pile of rubble and timbers which my aunt called a barricade. There was nothing to put into the fireplace but the scraps of wood I was asked to get from the street. There was no water in the whole building and I can recall joining the other residents in a queue to go to the toilet which was a plank, curtained off by a German flag. The plank sat over a large hole which was still smouldering and smoking in the street; our street. Strange how soon it became our street and our building and our room.'

'Full of strangers from Lwow and Wilno (*Veelno*). Milling about in long drab coats. There were shouts and shots. Especially at night when grey turned pitch black. I once saw a woman being dragged along our street. She was holding on to a man's leg. He hobbled on, impeded by the screaming, pleading woman. Many people watched. No one did a thing. A man followed me on my hunt for kindling. He came from behind and grabbed me around my waist by one hand and thrust the other between my legs. I fell forward screaming. People looked and passed by. He paused to vomit and his grip loosened. I crawled forward and onto my feet and ran from him. He could not catch me. Eventually I arrived at our building. I tried to climb the stairs but found myself unable to do so. My legs gave way. I used my hands and arms crawling over each step until I reached our door. There was no one in the room. In time my strength returned. I straightened my clothes and when the others returned I said I had fallen into a trench and was sorry to have torn my skirt. I was admonished by my aunt for coming back empty handed. But I kept silent. I said no more about it. The people on the street had not said a word. Like them, I became silent.

*

Silence. Cold. Hunger. Greyness. Numbness. That is it. A numbness came over me and has stayed with me, alleviated only by the arrival of the women from Tanganyika. And of course your visit to Wroclaw. Your stories raised my

spirits. Oh, Jozef, I *can* see colours now. And feel warmth. I can see you. Do you understand? *I can see you*. *I do hear you*. Maybe, one day, I may *feel* you. I hope to find feelings inside myself too. Do you understand?

Of course not. But he said yes. And suggested they went to eat at the place by the lagoon. Over the meal he asked her to explain how it was that she was orphaned and found herself transported to Wroclaw.

*

Of her parents and their end she would not speak. But said much about the move.

"After the war the recovery of the lands on the Odra and Nysa …'

'*Nyasa?*' (The lake in Nyasaland.)

'No, not Nyasa, Jozef, the river Nysa which was part of the territory, the political programme drawn up by the Polish revolutionary forces during the occupation …' 'Which occupation?…'

'Oh Jozef, don't you know anything? Just shush and listen. I will try to be more clear. The Polish government with the help of the Soviet Union successfully established Poland's permanent right to this new frontier with Germany and from the start directed the resettlement of these lands. In place of eight million Germans who once inhabited the region there are now eight million Poles. In fact, almost as many again passed through these regained territories, looking for a better life. The new arrivals included former inhabitants of devastated Warsaw and peasants from the overpopulated countryside in other parts of Poland and townspeople from Lwow and Wilno and soldiers from Narvik, Tobruk and Monte Casino who had trickled back to Poland as the time came for them to lay down their arms and settlers re-emigrating from the Soviet Union….'

Marisha continued to explain.

Jozef had learnt just to listen.

And that is how it was over those two months on the East African coast. Rather like a film for which he provided the scenery and she the script. Hair bleached, skins tanned, eyes paled into the silver blue of midday, they looked ecstatically happy as in the flicks. But the reality was different; though she did get a book out of the trip and he a thorough knowledge of spear fishing.

The book was something she had in mind when applying for the travel grant. It was to research the local archives about the 'Polish king of Madagascar'

*

At the turn of the eighteenth century a certain Count Maurycy August Beniowski published his memoirs. They became a best seller. Translated into a number of languages and published in several countries in what were, for the time, huge editions, they made Bienkowski famous as perhaps the greatest explorer and traveller of his age. Paeons of praise were written about the man and his achievements.

Marisha demolished the legend.

She discovered that he was more Hungarian than Polish and that even the spelling of his name changed per adventure: Baron Maurice Aladar became Bienow, an escapee from Russian imprisonment in Kamchatka.

He was a 'Hungarian descended from the illustrious line of the Barons Bienowski', in his biography penned on Mauritius, hence the later Maurycy. He was Baron Benyowszky in a letter to Benjamin Franklin and Count Beniowski in another to George Washington. The men of reason smelt a rat. But Louis XV, Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, Emperor Jozef II, gave him recognition, proffering titles, missions and offices. To them he was a true *mittleuropean* hero.

He died, Marisha would say, from an overheated imagination on his second visit to Madagascar.

*

Marisha and Jozef left the island separately. Their last evening together was dissimilar in only one regard to the sixty or so they had spent together on the island; they both drank enough to fumble in the dark. The next day Maria left the island for Paris and London. Jozef stayed on to fish some more and eventually joined a group of Portuguese soldiers on their return to duty at their base in Beira in Mozambique. The place was alien to him. Few of the white men spoke English and fewer black men understood Swahili. Jozef joined a convoy heading for Vila Manica, close to the Rhodesian border and the next day crossed over into Ian Smith territory.

*

'Smithy' was quite a hero to the young men in Sinclair Road. He became Prime Minister in 1964 a few months before Labour came to power under Harold Wilson. Spats between the two were hardly ever out of the papers. The two leaders met in London for the first time, in January 1965, at Churchill's funeral. Only dedicated followers of Rhodesian fashion would have known of it. The small print reported that the Queen insisted that Smithy come to the lunch at Buckingham Palace to which he had not been invited by Wilson who was shamed into asking Smith over to tea at No 10 that afternoon.

Smith talked tough between cucumber sandwiches which the crew at Sinclair Road imagined were served as they acted out the tea party over subsequent days.

"Ah shit Harold. You must be joking man. Black rule! Never in a thousand years. Shit man, I am there to maintain civilised standards. Do you really want chaos instead? Ah, no man. You can't be that thick. Ay? Can I have some more tea? Have you got *Roibosch*? Ah, shit. No matter … Shame man. I'll send you some. It's better than this oriental rubbish. Okay?"

Smith's Rhodesian Front took all the seats in the Rhodesian elections in May and now, with the full support of the real arbiters of white politics, the engine men of Rhodesian Railways, he went full steam ahead for a unilateral declaration of independence. Salisbury was fully organised for the likelihood of sanctions. Fuel stocks were built up and other essential commodities distributed. Smith had secured the support of the Portuguese president, Antonio Salazar and Hendrik Verwoerd, the South African Prime Minister, for the continuity of Rhodesia's trade routes through Mozambique and South Africa.

The question remained: how was the constitutional question to be resolved? There followed a number of last-ditch shuttles. Smithy came to London on 5 October, but the talks with the pipe-smoking Wilson ended with the communiqué concluding that their positions were irreconcilable and on television that night he told Smithy to think again. Ten days later the Gannex man was in Salisbury. Again no deal. Smithy told him, 'I do not think that Rhodesia is in a position to have one-man, one-vote tomorrow.' Wilson is said to have realized that Smith had betrayed his true sympathies with that remark.

On bonfire night Smith declared a state of emergency and five days later, UDI, the first since America in 1776. Two in the eye for London. Not too bad a record, though Wilson was livid with such rebellion in his moment of history.

He foolishly forecast that UDI would not last more than a few weeks. The boys at Tanganyika House knew better and jeered at Wilson's every turn in his quest to save face.

Smith had had *his* mended by plastic surgery during the war after he crashed his Spitfire. One eye, wide open, heavy lidded and impassive. The other, narrow, slanting and slightly hooded. The witch-doctors said there were two men in his head and that people could never be sure whose words his mouth was uttering, man's or spirit man's. Smith the man made himself clear enough to Wilson when on HMS Tiger, Wilson tried to humiliate him. He took the admiral's cabin and put Smith in NCO quarters. In their first meeting, he shouted at Smithy who rose, looked out of a port hole for a long time and told Gannex to behave himself.

The lads at Sinclair Road acted out the scene in their way. Smith was their hero and when Jozef arrived in Salisbury, after his Madagascarian sojourn, hero worship was in full flow as Rhodesia went from strength to strength during the first phase of UDI.

In passing the bookshop in Meikles, the main hotel, Jozef noticed a display of material about his hero. And one book in particular caught his eye. He recognised the name of the author. It was his former District Officer, who, the jacket revealed had retired to South Africa from Tanganyika. He bought the book and skim-read it in his room, pausing at the passage all Smith's supporters would drink to in the bar that evening:

'Rhodesia declared independence and opposed itself to the outer world gone mad. Two sentences from Mr. Ian Smith's Independence Day speech leaped at me when I heard them:

"To us has been given the privilege of being the first Western nation in the last two decades to have the determination and fortitude to say, 'So far and no further' ... We may be a small country but we are a determined people who have been called upon to play a role of worldwide significance".

Was it possible, I thought, that at last a country, this little country of Africa, would oppose itself to the Gadarene process of these last three decades (I would say three, not two: because all this began in the Thirties) Might one still hope that the rot would be stemmed, the destructive process held and turned back?

In my opinion, there are many Negroes of great ability and charm who are perfectly capable of playing a worthy part in civilized society. But they will never do so in an independent African state where the leaders are chosen by their ability to rouse the primitive emotions of a mob of ignorant, deluded, predatory savages. The flower of black manhood can only blossom in civilized conditions and - let us face it - those conditions have at present to be imposed. In Africa, they do not spring spontaneously from the people by means of so-called "democratic" processes, least of all by the subordination of white to black, as bitter experience is teaching us. In short, the African, who desires civilized standards - and a great many do not - can only reach his full potentialities under the protection of the white races. Therefore, anything which harms the whites in Africa, ultimately harms him; and the worst catastrophe from his point of view would be the destruction of the whites and their culture, which present policies are effecting over a huge area of the continent.

It is a solemn thought that, in framing the constitutions of the new, democratic, independent, African states, we are not drafting a Negro *Magna Carta*, but are signing a pile of death warrants.

Fortunately, however, a ray of light, springing from human intelligence, illuminates the sombre scene; and as the result, some millions of black men may prove more fortunate than those Europe and America have thrown away. One day, high on a mountain peak, overlooking their well-ordered, prosperous lands, they may perhaps in gratitude erect a statue to Ian Smith with an inscription of heartfelt gratitude on the plinth."

*

In the bar all talk was of the book and of their heroes, the Prime Ministers of Rhodesia and South Africa. The loudest voice in the bar stood up and proposed a toast to 'these saviours of civilisation' and went on to speak of the need to give them 'our full support.' Sounding like the recruiting sergeant for the Rhodesian Light Infantry that he was, the red face demanded that all young men should join the colours for the sake of their country which would surely need them against the 'forces of darkness.'

*

About a week later, at the same bar, Jozef was approached by two men in uniform. 'Ever thought of joining up?' …. They talked long into the evening. Jozef made it clear he was just visiting but went on talking and listening. The soldiers became very interested in his Tanganyika years and said that they would be in touch again.

Two days later there was a knock on his door. He opened it to find an elderly individual. "May I come in?' 'Yeah. Sure. Take a seat. What is it you want?' 'You'. "What do you mean?' 'Just that. I am forming a special unit and I want you in it.'

The man's name was Henderson. D.R. Henderson. He had served in a commando unit in Kenya during the Mau Mau War. He and two others disappeared into the Aberdere forest and went completely native. They infiltrated a gang and destroyed it and took its leader, Didan Kimathi, no.2 to Jomo Kenyatta, into captivity. After the 'emergency', as it was called, he went south and settled on a farm in Rhodesia, not far from Selukwe where Ian Smith came from.

Jozef knew of him. All the boys did. This guy was the ultimate bush man.

'Are you interested? I have checked on you. There are no ties. We will pay you well. You are just the ticket. We are forming a unit that will go bush up there. We know of training camps in Tanganyika that will need wiping out before they send recruits down here. Christ, man, you went to school in Kongwa. That's where the bastards are being trained.'

And that was that. That night he wrote to Marisha and told her of his decision to stay in Africa. At least for a bit. He would see her again and hoped she wanted them to be together again.

Next morning he was driven to barracks ten miles out of town. He swore loyalty to Rhodesia and joined the newly formed unit, the Selous Scouts.

This elite special force performed extraordinary service to Smith. Perhaps the most adventurous was the destruction of the insurgents training camp in Kongwa. In Tanganyika.

The town, centre for the ill-fated groundnut scheme which then became the school for European children, had again metamorphosed into the main base camp for insurgency operations against the white-ruled regimes in Southern Africa.

*

Since he had local knowledge of the country the expedition to Kongwa was led by Jozef. His group of four crossed the Rouvama River at exactly the point von Lettow Vorbeck had crossed it in the opposite direction at the end of his campaign. Indeed Jozef followed, in reverse, much of the German guerrilla's route through Southern Tanganyika in what was now the huge Selous National Park in which Jozef had hunted as a boy. He hunted there again to feed himself and his three companions. Laden with *biltong* Jozef's group then broke out of the relative safety of the game park and headed up the Ruhaha valley to the outskirts of Iringa, to a place called Tosomaganga where there was an Italian Mission whose missionaries were well known to Jozef. This was because during his final year at Kongwa the school had moved to brand new premises in Iringa from where the hike to Tosomaganga for the sake of a drink of orange juice from the missionaries was well worth the effort.

The head of the mission was Father Viyatu. In Swahili the name meant shoes. He did in fact walk a great deal in the service of his God. Entering the quarters of *Fazza Viyatu* (as Jozef referred to him mimicking the local Hehe pronunciation) the scouts silenced the sleeping saint by careful anaesthesia, using a rag soaked in ether, and then went to sleep around him on the floor, posting one look-out to sit in turn by the door. The saintly priest's writhing at daybreak awoke Jozef who very gently untied the captive's limbs. and before un-taping his mouth took him in his arms and said into his ear, "Have no fear whatsoever dear Fazza Viyatu. It is me, Jozef. With some friends. We wish you no harm but request sanctuary for a few days before we go on with our journey.' The priest relaxed. And tensed again.

''Jozef my son …." his eyes settled on the others and their equipment, "What in God's name?"

Jozef said simply: 'Best if you do not ask too much. I would never wish to harm you, but tell no one of our presence. We will stay in this room and you will come and go as normal. Bring us, from your gardens, fresh fruit and vegetables as are easy to prepare. Father, you must understand that we can, in a moment, cause hell to break out. I am no Satan. You know that. But I rely on your absolute discretion as I would in your confessional. We have no ill intentions towards you or the mission. Now go about your work and I expect to see you in the evening. Cancel any outside appointments. Say you have urgent paperwork to complete for the Bishop. Bless you Fazza,"

The good priest behaved as an Italian would. With no wish to inflame a calm situation by unnecessary acts of bravado. *Calma, calma, calma*. That was his motto and he was a true son of modern Rome.

The scouts bathed and changed into the priest's underwear. Ate biltong with the bread and tomatoes they had filched from the kitchen on the way through to Fazza Viyatu's rooms. Drink other than water was not a problem. Unlike most members of Smith's forces, the Selous Scouts were abstemious. They prided themselves on maintaining, unblemished by alcohol, the fastest of responses.

The priest returned as expected. The scouts apologised for going through his wardrobe and thanked him for the high quality of underpants.

"Ah, they are sent by my sister from Verona, but you are welcome. And here are the salads you asked for with oranges from the orchard. I remember how you liked to climb the trees Jozef …"

"Thank you father. God Bless you. Leave us now and we will not trouble you again. Father give us your blessing before you go." "Yes, my sons …"

They departed that night. The next leg of the journey was the most dangerous as they had to cut across the Hehe hills and the plains of Gogoland to Kongwa. They moved only in the dark. Exposed body parts were blackened. Monastic silence was maintained. By-passing villages they went unseen as no one in this land of spirits left the relative safety of their huts. Some dogs were roused but even they kept to the boundaries of habitation. Hyenas were a problem but they took baited biltong with relish. And so they moved between the thorns, across *dongas*, sandy plains and over rock strewn hillocks. Stars hung in great clusters like chandeliers, as though drawn by a child, to light their way. It was the dry season. Above, all was crystal clarity. The vast hemisphere of sky was fluorescent. Below the paths were easy to find. By day they slept high on the broad boughs of baobab trees. And on the sixth night they saw in the distance the dull orange lights of Kongwa.

They were now short of water but caution called a halt and they rested as best they could in the overwhelming heat of the next day. As soon as it was evening Jozef called the group together.

"First we make for the mission behind the town. There is a spring there, used mainly by baboons. Huge bloody *Nyanis* they are. We won't stay at the mission house even if the Ven. Rev. Beasley is still there. I know the mean shit well and would not mind raiding his fridge as a pay-back. He never once gave us a drink on expeditions from school. We will skirt Kongwa to the east, get to the spring and plan our attack."

Four hours later, at dawn, they were within sight of the water but so were the baboons. Along the ridge of the hollow, seen through telescopic sights, sat the big bastards. Massive. These would make a leopard think twice about taking an infant or even of making for the pool. "Fit silencers. Take out a *nyani* each. Four sacks of fur slumped where they sat.

The other guards barked but not in panic. The rest of the group went about their business; mainly dreaming, scratching, suckling or grooming. Above the big boys became restive but could not decide on what orders to give. They moved down through their tribe which now sprang to attention, bodies tensed, eyes anxiously looking to the next in line up the hierarchy.

"Let's see what happens before thinking of plugging a few more." So they waited. Then a convoy of warthogs, *ngiris*, drove in and with it the tense prelude to gang warfare. Still confused by the inexplicable deaths, the dog *nyanis* barked out the retreat. The *ngiri's* had won and when they had had their fill the scouts moved in to claim the water.

Replenished, Jozef suggested they move the dead baboons into hollows between rocks. That way they would be taken by leopard, hyena or jackal without arousing the interest of a human coming to the pool. He then briefed them on the activity of the night ahead. "We will move at sunset and climb the hill behind Kongwa there to observe activities in the town. I will leave to collect the stuff and return with it. We watch them again throughout the day and tomorrow night make the attack.

They rested in the leopard rocks where Jozef had seen the beauties on a past expedition from school. No one would seek the scouts in such a place and there were enough of them to deal with any animal claiming the same hideaway. As it was still cool, Jozef hoped to find the cave empty. It was and remained so throughout the day. He reckoned, correctly, that the leopards had long fallen to poachers.

In the last light of day they moved around the back of Beazely's mission and then across the plain to Kongwa hill. At its base Jozef left the others to make for the quarry on which all now depended.

While at school he had scoured every inch of its surface hoping to find an undetonated hole. Jozef knew from experience as his father's assistant that not everything went according to plan. His father had a small civil engineering outfit which would occasionally order infill from the quarry near Songea, owned by the Astaldi brothers, Chicho and Jan Franco.

Once or twice when driving the lorry to collect the stone Jozef would find one or other of the brothers checking the rock face for the charge that had not gone off. It was dangerous work and rarely productive. Only twice did he see a fuse being pulled out of a dud hole. In reverse order, a stick of dynamite would be placed into a drill some yard and a half in depth. Into one tip of what looked like a fudge coloured stick of rock went the silver metal case of the detonator, about the size of a .22 bullet. and attached to it, through its open end, was a fuse, white and rope like, cut to size, allowing whatever burning time was called for; usually a yard more fuse above the surface of the drill hole.

The dynamite would be tapped into the hole with a wooden stick and when the quarry face was clear, the fuse lit by an Astaldi who scarpered for cover as quickly as he could. If, say, you had laid some twenty charges across the base of the rock face, the chances were that the hand with the lighter would miss a fuse towards the end of the run when all thoughts were on escape. It was a matter then of accurately counting the blasts as they went off in turn; again an operation prone to error amid the dust and noise and beating sun.

*

Jozef was unlucky in his search but rewarded by a find beyond his every expectation. He noticed a flat rock by the quarry entrance, to one side of the lorry track. It rested vertically onto a rock shelf about four foot high. He found a metal pipe to lever back the rock which to his eyes looked artificially placed. To his astonishment he saw behind the rock a metal doorway. Padlocked. He shifted the flat rock to one side of the door frame and smashed the lock off the bolt. Inside the now open chamber were boxes of dynamite, detonators and coils of fuses. Treasure, which he again hid by replacing the covering rock.

The knowledge of his find he kept to himself but it kept him awake through many a night. Then the school was moved to Iringa and the disused quarry at Kongwa remained but a dream. Until now, when the success of their operation depended on the dynamite still being in its store. Undisturbed. And it was.

Jozef took this news to his mates on the hill and then had the best shit he could ever remember. He sat, feet dangling, between two rocks, sheer faced. Above,

the first birds of the morning. Below, central Africa and between his legs a cool updraft before the heat of the day. Job done. Almost.

They took turns to observe after Jozef explained the lay-out of his former school, now a training camp spread out below. It had not changed. Soldiers came out of the dormitory houses and walked to the mess before which they assembled for roll call. They went in.

Came out and formed up on parade. Then into the same classrooms for instruction. One change; there was no lunch break nor tea break. The soldiers returned to their houses just before sunset. Then small fires lit up the dark ground. It seemed they cooked for themselves at night. Which explained the deserted huts and abandoned fields around Kongwa; what was eaten in the night was scooped off the land.

*

The plan of action was clear; dynamite the mess hall.

*

They left it for another day's observation which confirmed what they had already seen. So as soon as the fires were rekindled the scouts descended to Kongwa. First along 'Millionaires Row', where the teachers used to live, past the music room and the science labs, where, long ago, the lads would gawp longingly at Miss Martin's heavenly bosom during her lessons and, finally, behind the mess.

Not a soul in sight nor hearing. As Jozef remembered, the mess hall was erected on wood supports, the girth of telegraph poles and a yard high. Even his memory of the brown smell of anti-termite fluid in which they were coated was correct. He signalled his column to pause and did the honours with the charges. One every sixth support, sixteen in all around the mess. As he worked he knew he was in for a tremendous head ache; several of the sticks were oozing through the waxed-paper shell as a result of age. He had worked with such before in his fathers quarry. The ooze went through the skin of the hands and into the blood stream producing the mother of all super-migraines. Milk, lots of it, was the only remedy and Kongwa had no milk. Even as a school, powder substitute was all the kids ever had once the ground-nut scheme cows died of rinderpest; one reason why the new school was built in the milk-producing Iringa.

*

'Shit, shit, shit. Its going to hurt like blazes."

Job done, Jozef signalled to his trio and together they spent the night under the mess hall floor in the space offered by the posts.

Morning arrived uneventfully. The detonation would take place when the soldiers were in mess for breakfast, each scout responsible for four charges. They would light them anti-clock wise and make for the old carpentry workshop across the road to the dormitory blocks. The base of the wood store was brick built and they would shelter against that before heading off down to the *donga* (dry river bed) towards the swimming club where the hope was that the pool was still in operation.

"Fucking hell, what a fucking blast… Jeezus Jozef, it worked a dream … Shit man those buggers did not know what hit them. Did you see the ones who went through the roof? Man. Like rockets."

The scouts went down to the swimming club, crossing a *donga* by the same baobab root bridge as Jozef used as a boy running down to swimming lessons. There was no water in the pool, just slime and frogs. But the showers worked. They stood under them and drank and stood laughing and shaking with excitement and exchanging sights and sounds of their action. Jozef was the man. He knew it and was really chuffed with himself. A smooth operation. Could not have gone better. But now, what?

They decided to move on immediately and make for the road to Dodoma and to highjack the first vehicle in sight. Faces, arms and backs of hands were blackened to perfection and they made off. A Peugeot 203 pick up farted into view and came to a halt before the line of men straddling the road. In it was an Indian and an elderly female companion; mother or mother in law off to supervise purchases in Dodoma for their *duka* in Kongwa.

Tafazalee sana, ay, ay, ay, tafazalee sana, mama ni mze kabisa .. usini pige bwana, tafazalee ... Shika mdomo. Toka. Toka. Na wewe. (Please, please, the lady is very old .. please don't hit me sir, please. Get out. Get out. And you.) Bwana do not ….'

'Shut your mouth. Get out both of you. *Haraka*. Quickly.'

They got out and the scouts piled in, Jozef at the wheel. Then the shopkeeper noticed his eyes. They were blue. Jozef clicked that he had been spotted as a *mzungu* in disguise. He also realised that he knew the man in the car. 'What the hell', thought Jozef. "Too late now."

"Mr. Patel, do you remember me? I used to buy a case of coke from your duka every Saturday. And fireworks? I put a small one up your cat's arse. Do you remember?"

"Oh, yes Mr. Jozef. How can I forget you? The cat did not return. My children cried. What are you going to do with us now?

"OK Mr. Patel. It is OK. I will take you and the old lady back to your *duka*. For old times sake. I feel sorry for her. And for you for the loss of the cat with a squib up his arse." The other scouts laughed. When we get to your petrol station you get out and fill this piece of shit and bring us a case of cokes and a big box of Aspros. Do you understand? If there is one false move I will kill you both and blow up your shop. *Una jua nita hwanya hivyo. Usi cheze na mimi. Unge taka ku cheza uta kula wiya* .You know I will do it. Do not muck about or you will eat wire. (Jozef was called Bosco at his father's place; from the saying common amongst swags in the country '*kula wiya Bosco, Shauri la Mosco*'. (Loosely translated: all power to you authorized by Moscow.

Jozef got out and allowed the Patels to return to their seats. And off they went, back to Kongwa village, three miles to the east of the scene of destruction, which marked by a tall column of black smoke. The scouts, sitting in the back of the-up looked at their handiwork with great satisfaction. The pick up was refuelled. Cokes and Aspros were supplied.

'Patel, tell anyone who asks that we have commandeered your car after the emergency in camp. Nothing else. *Shika mdomo na uta shika mboro tena. Unge sema kitu, nita li kata*. (Keep your mouth shut and you will again be able to hold your cock. Say anything and I will cut it off.) With that the scouts left for Dodoma. This time Jozef sat in the passenger seat. The ache had kicked in so it was a matter of popping the pills washed down by coke.

In town they stopped to fill up and buy what was needed. The blue eyed Jozef kept them shut nursing his headache. The others, arms and faces blackened, did the business and for all the world they looked just like a squad in town from Kongwa in a 'borrowed' car. Not at all unusual.

*

And so back to Iringa and Mbeya and the Zambian border at Kapiri Mposhi. Tricky. Taking a side-track, they stopped in the cover of the *miombo* forests which lined the main road for miles. It was time to rest. And scheme.

Kaunda's militia was not highly rated in Salisbury. But here was a proper border crossing and there was a journey of over six hundred miles to Livingstone and home at the Victoria Falls.

*

Jozef knew Kapiri Mposhi well. As a boy scout he had stopped here with a bus full of Black African and Asian boy scouts enough route for the jamboree at Ruwa Park. It was the first time he had experience of formal racial discrimination. The bus load of boys headed for the one bar in the border hamlet and the red faced asked them who in God's name they thought they were? 'You can stay', he said pointing at Jozef, 'but the rest of you *kaffirs* and *chuts* get out of my pub. Don't you know the fucking law? It's not bloody

Tanga fucking nyika here where you can screw each other senseless. In Rhodesia, 'whites only' means just that. Now *footsek*, the bloody lot of you.' Jozef left with them, again showing solidarity with his fellow boy scouts in Lusaka where he alone was offered breakfast in the main hotel. Strange jamboree it turned out to be.

He now wondered what had happened to the landlord since Northern Rhodesia had become Zambia. Things had changed for sure. Yet it did not strike him as odd that he should be in the Selous Scouts. He could hardly fight for Comrade Bob or Mandela whose cadres he had just slotted in Kongwa.

In his mind he was as African as they claimed to be but his heart could not condone a war against his own tribe. Often he thought that if he were a Black African he would slaughter any and every White in sight. And serve them right, especially in Rhodesia and most especially in South Africa. But he was not Black. He was a White African in a contest not of his making. But one which engaged his loyalty to a land, a continent, to which he was proud to belong. That other Africans rejected his claim to be African hurt his pride. In sober moments the rejection made him question his identity. White African or Pole beached up on a foreign shore? No that was his parents. *He* was born there. And would fight for his birthright. Yet when it came to the crunch he held on to his British passport, refusing to become Tanzanian. In fact in the days of transition he refused to stand up for the new anthem replacing God Save the Queen in the local cinema. He was politely asked to leave. And leave he did. To Sinclair Road and London.

*

Jozef soon realized that the place had nothing going for it except Marisha.

All the hip stuff, The Beetles, and Carnaby Street, was to him, just stuff. He could never get excited about fad or fashion. Once, he walked into a shop where a blond haired guy with a cigar in his mouth was being mobbed. Jozef could not understand that kind of adulation. When the crowd cleared and the two stood at the counter looking at shirts of many colours, the cigar face looked at Jozef, expecting to be recognised. 'Who in hell do you think you are?' Jozef thought to himself. Really, he knew from the ubiquitous telly. But he did not much care about DJ's and pop and fans and being 'with it'.

Mini skirted girls, on the other hand, he thought much of. But try as he might he just could not get closer than gawping at them - the trendy long-haired long-legged birds along Kensington High Street, always on show outside Biba's.

Disappointed in matters of love, Jozef's thoughts turned homeward once again. So, in truth, he was on the Zambian border for the hell of it, fighting for the side he believed would best keep things just as he wanted; to roam free in the

African bush. Free of the fashionable pretence and hastle he had witnessed in London.

Marisha

She arrived at the Embassy promptly at nine and was met in the hallway by the First Secretary. Greetings were exchanged but before she could draw the next breath she was shepherded into a large office occupied by the Ambassador.

He rose from his desk and walked slowly, hand extended, to meet her in the middle of the room.

“Aah. Our new Secretary. Charmed to meet you again. Welcome to London.”

“Greetings from Warsaw, Comrade Minister. It is my privilege to be in your service once more.

With that they sat down, all three, around a dark heavy highly polished coffee table on which three glasses of steaming lemon tea had already been set out.

The new Secretary’s first day in post at the Embassy in London, the fourteenth of March, 1969, coincided with the banning, of the theatrical performance and book called ‘Soldiers’; a play by the German author Rolf Hochuth.

Warsaw was alerted the night before and she was sent for immediately. As *the* rising star on the staff of *Vistula* Poland’s leading journal of foreign affairs, Marisha’s brief was simple: “turn it in our favour.’

The German playwright, made two assertions. Firstly that Churchill had ordered the assassination of General Wladyslaw Sikorski, leader of the ’London’ Poles and said that he had the evidence locked up in a Swiss bank vault which would reveal its contents in fifty years time. Secondly that the ‘*Katastrophe*’, the Dresden holocaust, had been too long ignored in the *kakography* of war. A debate about its tactical value and strategic morality was long overdue; Hitler and his generals were no angels; no more so were Churchill and his military advisers.

What, asked Hochuth, was Churchill's role in the operation code named Gommorrah? This was a new campaign which saw Bomber Command evolve, during 1942-43, the practice of area bombing over Germany. On 30-31 May 1942 Bomber Command tried out its first Thousand Bomber Raid over Cologne. To quote from the report of the Chief of Police of Cologne: ‘High Explosive bombs and incendiaries were dropped for about one and a half hours ... From the outset, bombing was spread almost evenly over the entire city area ... the attack had no recognizable centre of main effort. Residential areas ... were primarily affected. The main losses included 13,000 workers flats. The casualty rate was 469 dead and 5,027 injured."

This was read as failure in London.

As a consequence of this experience the city of Hamburg was singled out for new tactics. Many more incendiary bombs than high explosive bombs were used. High density, working class, areas were targeted and the concentration of effort led, as required, to the destruction of Hamburg, by *Fire Storm*. Forty three thousand civilians (as many as R.A.F. Bomber Command personnel lost in the war) were killed. And in what the Germans call, *Die Katstrophe*, the bombing of Dresden on 13 February 1945, killed 135,000.

'Gomorrah' was a reprisal, in part, for the bombing, by the *Luftwaffe* of urban targets - most infamously Coventry where 380 died and the 13,339 killed during the Blitz on London, in September and October 1940.

*

Marisha was more interested in quashing the allegation that Churchill had ordered the murder of Sikorski.

The self-exiled prime minister of Poland was no stranger to Marisha. She had long completed a Masters thesis which was based on the General's diary which had been given to her in Poland by his last surviving relative.

The old lady and Marisha shared the same apartment in Wroclaw formerly, Breslau, shared too by Janka, Basha and Marta; mother and her two daughters. All the women crammed into the two roomed space they called home were variously displaced persons.

Marisha and the old lady directly from the east and the threesome, from the west, rare returnees from Tanganyika via Britain.

It was they who had introduced Jozef to Marisha; rather they gave Marisha Jozef's address for when next she was in London where she needed to be, in research of British archives relevant to her doctoral thesis on which she had embarked with the vigour of an ambitious careerist.

Her entire being was geared to the cause. Poland's cause. The Party's cause. It was the Party to which she owed everything. Her education. Her salary. Her permission to travel. To London. To the archives. That is what she lived for. The contents of official files. Researching the relationship between Poland and Great Britain, now so crucial with the renaissance of revisionism in Adenauer's Germany and with the stirrings of yet another anti-Soviet revolt in Poland. She had to proceed with care as the political ground within which her career was rooted again felt uneven; the Party line again began to shift like a continental plate; East or West?

Attuned to the vibration of these potent shifts, she looked in the direction of the setting sun.

Marisha had finally written up much of her thesis on Anglo-Polish relations. It was a good basis for the task she had been given by her superiors in Warsaw: to move Poland closer to the West, especially to Britain where many were sympathetic to the Polish notion of a nuclear free Europe, as envisaged in the Rapacki Plan.

*

At her desk, Marisha read the typescript of her thesis and marked in pencil, passages which she would use in her report to the Ambassador:

‘On arrival in London in June 1940, Sikorski's wish was to consolidate his own personal triumph in retaining his position as Poland's political and military supremo. For him this was the light at the end of the tunnel through which he had journeyed since the evacuation from Dunkirk. It marked the end of a chapter in the history of the Polish government in exile. Much of what had been achieved after months of effort in France to establish the machinery of government was swept away. Yet much remained on which to build. Sikorski emerged in a particularly favourable light. His energy and clarity of mind at a time when others panicked was remarkable. That he never once considered any course of action other than to continue the fight against Germany was less so. No other possibility was conceivable. The logical conclusion of the policy which clearly emerged in France, a consistent commitment by the Polish government to pursue the war against Hitler, was nevertheless sought with extraordinary vigour. The involvement of a Polish force in Norway demonstrates this policy in practice. It also suggests real efforts to realize the government's long-standing ambition to gain the confidence of, and parity with, the British and French governments. The reaction of these governments to Polish demands for participation on the Supreme War Council shows how difficult this had been to achieve. The reasons are clear. The Polish government was weak, totally dependent on the help of its allies and sympathizers, and able to exert little pressure. Yet the need for recognition as an ally of equal rank was very real to Sikorski. He insisted on involvement around the table and in the field, not only to establish his government's credibility in the eyes of the Allies but also for the sake of Polish support at home and abroad. Sikorski had come through a most trying period and survived serious attempts to oust him. He remained as head of government and chief of armed forces after his evacuation from France.

Poland had then replaced France as Britain's chief ally, while the Soviet Union continued its benevolent neutrality towards Germany.

Despite strains between the various factions in the Polish government and the wider emigration, Sikorski, firmly supported by the British, was able to override critics of his style and policies. It was not until the question of Soviet-Polish relations came to the fore with the entry of the USSR into the war in

June 1941 that a crisis, more serious than that of June 1940, arose in the Government-in-Exile. Sikorski, again under fire for his policy and style of leadership, was at least confident of his standing with Churchill. The warmth of the relationship between the 2 prime ministers is evident at the beginning of the new year.

On 7 January 1941, Sikorski had written to seek Churchill's view of the suitability of that time for his proposed visit to Egypt and America. Seven days later he received the following reply:

'I have given much thought to your letter. . . . If I am to consult my personal feeling and wishes, I must frankly say I hope very much that on reflection you will decide to postpone your tour. It is a great help to me to know that you, as the leader of the largest Allied force in this country and as Prime Minister of our first Ally in the war, are available to give help and guidance at a time when we may at any moment be faced with a heavy attack from the enemy and the Polish Army may be called . . . to fight at our side. This, my dear General, is my personal view, but of course, I should not wish to stand in your way if you feel that your duty lies elsewhere.'

Churchill's words pleased Sikorski, as indicated by his response: 'My dear Prime Minister, thank you very much for your letter of January 24th. I appreciate what you say and I am very glad to know that you feel the Polish Forces have an important role to play in the defence of this country.' Flattered to think his presence was required in Britain he asked Churchill whether he would help him send someone in his place if he did not go to Egypt. He explained that there were nearly 10,000 Polish troops in the Middle East.

Sikorski was particularly interested in the possible use of Polish troops from there against the Germans in the Balkans.

He asked Churchill to 'include Poland among the countries which they are prepared to assist with credits and military equipment needed for the new fighting units'. and ended 'I am convinced my dear Prime Minister, you will understand and sympathise with this point of view, and not refuse your help in all these vital matters for the future of my country'.

Churchill exerted pressure on the Foreign Office to send a favourable reply: 'All possible consideration should be given to this very faithful and courageous statesman. These Polish recruits in the New World are not only a necessary source of man-power for the Polish forces, but of great symbolic significance.'

This was the kind of recognition for which Sikorski was working.

But there was a *quid pro quo*.

The British government now pressed the Polish government to come to an agreement with Russia for the sake of its own relations with its new ally.

The shape of things to come was already discernable. July 1941 was a turning point in Anglo-Soviet relations as well as the beginning of a new chapter in the affairs of the Polish government. Its fate now depended increasingly on Soviet policy. The Polish question became one of the main subjects of a dispute which was to sour Great Power relations.

As noted at the Foreign Office: "The Poles are certainly in a bad mood and dislike no longer being our No 1 ally. The best hope seems to be General Sikorski, who so far as I am able to judge, is a bigger man than most Poles, and able to rise above domestic squabbles."

Sikorski's authority was soon to be fully tested.

At 9.15 pm on 13 April 1943, Berlin radio announced to the world the discovery of the bodies of about 10,000 Polish officers buried in mass graves in the Smolensk area. According to the broadcast, German troops were taken by locals to a place called Kosogory at the northern end of Katyn wood, an area occupied by the Germans since 14 July 1941. Here the Bolsheviks had perpetrated secretly mass executions.

Two days after this statement was broadcast the Soviet Information Bureau in London discussed it as 'fabrication by Goebbels' slanderers'. On the same day that the Soviet release was issued, the Polish cabinet met to discuss the allegation of the Soviet Embassy in London. The International Red Cross was also asked to investigate. At the time General Sikorski was in the Middle East visiting Polish troops and so on 16 April General Kukiel issued a detailed account of Polish-Soviet communications concerning the Polish officers missing since 17 September 1939. Kukiel's statement ended with the words:

'We have become accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and we understand the purpose behind its latest revelations. In view however of the abundant and detailed German information concerning the discovery . . ., and the categorical statement that they (the missing Polish Officers) were murdered by Soviet authorities in the Spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the mass graves discovered should be investigated and the facts alleged verified.'

This move angered Stalin into interrupting relations with Sikorski's government. On 21 April 1943, in a telegram to Churchill, he described the behaviour of the Polish government towards the USSR as 'completely abnormal and contrary to the rules and standards governing relations between two allied States'. He was resentful that far from countering the 'infamous fascist slander against the USSR', the Sikorski government had not found it necessary 'even to address questions to the Soviet Government or to request information on the

matter'. He interpreted the simultaneous start of 'the anti-Soviet campaign' in the German and Polish press as 'indubitable evidence of contact and collusion between Hitler and the Sikorski Government' a view he saw further supported by the close correspondence of line taken by the respective press campaigns. He concluded that these circumstances led the Soviet government to believe that the London government had 'severed its relations of alliance with the USSR' and 'for these reasons the Soviet Government has decided to interrupt relations with the Government'. Three days later Churchill replied that far from Sikorski being pro-German or in league with them he was in danger of being overthrown by Poles who considered that he had not stood up sufficiently against the Soviet government. 'If he should go we should only get somebody worse. I hope therefore that your decision to "interrupt" relations is read in the sense of a final warning.' Stalin refused to change his mind. Relations between the Polish Government-in-Exile and the Soviet Union were never resumed.

The government's isolation was intensified by the tragic death of General Sikorski on 4 July 1943. The aircraft bringing him back to London crashed on take-off in Gibraltar."

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Marisha italicised the words she felt the Ambassador would most appreciate in formulating a response to the Hochuth affair:

"Sikorski's death has been the subject of much debate and, in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, foul play will continue to be a possibility which is given consideration. The matter is of sufficient notoriety to call for some comment here on the charge that the British were responsible for Sikorski's death. Stalin for one seemed to believe it. Despite attempts to implicate Churchill in the affair the British prime minister's position is unassailable. On personal and political grounds he had a real interest in Sikorski's welfare. He admired Sikorski as much as he came to dislike his successors, none of whom perished by order of the prime minister. That is not to say that assassination as a possible solution to Polish problems was never considered in British policy-making circles. Kot, who was always regarded by the Foreign Office as much more troublesome than Sikorski, is referred to in a letter dated 30 July 1940 from Savery to Roberts in these terms: 'I think that all parties are now united in their desire to reduce K's [Kot's] powers. I hope they will succeed but I am afraid we shall never have any peace until we have him bumped off.'

Though no such reference is found regarding Sikorski, threats to his life were discussed at the Foreign Office. He certainly had enemies amongst his compatriots who would have wished to see him dead. In October 1942 a Foreign Office minute records a conversation between Tytus Filipowicz and Savery in which the Polish ex-ambassador to Washington spoke of the growing unpopularity of Sikorski amongst Polish émigrés and warned of a possible threat to his life. This view was discussed as being over-emotional.

Yet the man who had come to symbolize the spirit of the Polish nation during the war was suddenly lost. Sikorski's death was a disastrous blow to the London Poles. He had given substance to the Government-in-Exile, which some had regarded as an 'ephemeral fiction'. Within the international community he was an irreplaceable Polish asset. As regards his successor Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Churchill 'showed little sympathy for his feelings or understanding of his lack of international experience. . . . He felt he owed nothing to Mikolajczyk. The words he had uttered to General Sikorski in 1940 did not seem to apply to his relationship with the General's successor.'

Sikorski displayed a sense of realism which was rare in Polish politics. His emergence as a Polish statesman of mark is significant in the history of the Polish government during the Second World War. The impression gained from the earlier part of this period is of a posturing figure whose sense of Poland's importance in the Allied cause was out of all proportion to her worth as an ally, though his demands to be treated as an equal partner in the struggle against Germany could be seen as justifiable attempts directed at maintaining Polish dignity. Throughout late 1939 and into 1941 Sikorski could have been seen as just another Pole with a grandiloquent turn of phrase, but this would not be a fair assessment. He was at his best when he talked in broad terms of major issues and in so long doing served the same purpose as Churchill did for Britain and de Gaulle for France, emerging as Poland's Man of Destiny. This went against the advice of both critics and admirers. Yet it is difficult to see how this equation between Sikorski and his country could have been avoided. In a most dark and tragic hour of his nation's history, he held tenaciously to his belief in the strength and rightness of the Polish cause and in the eventual deliverance of his country from the defeat and humiliation it had suffered at the hands of its two historical enemies. Sikorski's indestructible patriotism was inspiring. He also had the good sense to see that concrete evidence of the will to contribute to the allied cause needed to be provided, not only for prestige purposes vis-a-vis other partners in the alliance, but also for the sake of the morale of the Poles themselves. To this end he worked with persistent diligence and he was, above all, successful in his energetic pursuit of aid from his allies for the building-up of the Polish forces. In doing this he made a thorough nuisance of himself, particularly over the question of aid in recruiting an army in Canada. In short, in the period from the formation of the Polish government in France to Hitler's attack on Russia, one's general assessment of the Polish Government-in-Exile changes. The early scenes of comic opera change under Sikorski's direction to a serious representation of the Polish case. The true test of his statesmanship, however, came when the British government invited the Soviet Union on to the Allied side.

It would have hindered the allied cause had the Polish government insisted on holding out over the agreement with Russia. Sikorski's importance lay in keeping clear the path that others sought to block. He offered his fullest

cooperation over the signing of the pact with Russia, within the limits he gauged to be necessary for the maintenance of fundamental Polish interests.

By going against the strongest prejudices held by his countrymen, Sikorski showed he was not afraid of being unpopular. The agreement with Russia was more than a demonstration of Polish willingness to work for the Allied cause. It was a gesture necessary, in Sikorski's view, to obtain British commitment to support Polish interests in the new Europe that was to emerge after the war. Whatever illusions he may have had over the extent of Britain's influence over Polish fate he showed his statesmanship in appreciating his government's dependence, which inevitably characterized the Anglo-Polish alliance as it had developed, into the basis of a working relationship."

And it was this final point which Marisha felt should define the way ahead. Was it wishful to think that the two nations had again need of one another? Perhaps that was stretching a point, but there was a Labour Government in power which could now boost Poland's search for détente.

Whilst émigré Poles in Tanganyika and elsewhere hotly debated Sikorski's place in history, Poland's stock stood high in the world. The proposal, by Rapacki the Polish Foreign Minister in 1957 had called for a denuclearised zone in central Europe. It found wide support, especially from the left in Britain. Yet the proposal, discussed again in Geneva in the spring of 1962, was rejected by the United States. Now, seven years later, in the year which marked the thirtieth anniversary of the war precipitated by Hitler's attack on Poland, the Polish government published a key policy review, penned by Marisha:

"The present line of tension between NATO and the Warsaw Pact must change fundamentally towards the creation of a collective security system instead of a stand-off between two opposing, heavily armed groupings. Suspicions and prejudices, especially in the German Federal Republic, sown by almost two decades of cold war must be eradicated.

Poland has made notable contributions to the campaign for European security.

In all her proposals she has concentrated on broadening the area of *détente*. By developing and maintaining bilateral relations Polish diplomacy has placed dialogue at the top of the European security agenda. ….

What are the specific issues which could lead to greater European security?

The Polish proposals on disarmament, stemming from the Rapacki Plan call for a freezing of nuclear armaments and an atom free zone, still remain on the table, fully relevant to the requirements of peaceful co-existence. ….

Now we should focus on forging a new Anglo – Polish relationship. It is economic relations which most concern the West. The opportunities for trade and co-operation between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe are far from being explored. …

There is a real chance that Poland may once again find partnership in troubled times with Britain.'

A good start was to lay to rest the Sikorski affair.

By the end of her first week at the embassy, Marisha was able to send to her boss a well thought out response to Hochuth's allegations.

She kept to herself the thought that London Poles may well have assassinated Sikorski, despite the information Hochuth would reveal in fifty years time about Churchill's complicity in the affair; his secret locked in a Swiss vault. She hoped to be around in 2019.

*

Wishing to round off her work on Sikorski, Marisha next arranged an interview with the former Polish Ambassador to the Court of St. James and Sikorski's Foreign Minister, and figure-head of the émigré Polish community in London.

In his eighties he retained a remarkable dignity in appearance; tall, slim, erect, elegant, benign. Aristocratic to his finger tips.

In soft mellifluous tones he told her:

"On 25 August the Anglo-Polish agreement was signed. It was an unholy alliance; Poland and Britain found themselves thrown together in the special circumstances of the diplomatic prelude to the war. Nothing but fear of Hitler brought the two together. Their alliance was an attempt to play for time in the hope that they would deter Hitler from further use of force in the conduct of German foreign policy. It is only with hindsight one can say that this reasoning was wrong. It would have been better to prepare to fight the war than attempt to delay it.

On 29 August the German chancellor delivered his ultimatum to Poland. He repeated the demands he had made after Munich. A familiar scene was being acted out but this time Hitler's victim did not capitulate under diplomatic pressure. Negotiations between the two governments broke down on 31 August 1939.

In the early hours of the next day Germany invaded Poland.

On 17 September, when the relentless onslaught of the German forces had swept the government to Kuty, Poland was invaded by the Soviet army, which occupied the area agreed to in the secret protocol to the Nazi-Soviet pact. … Molotov as Soviet foreign commissar justified the Soviet action by saying that the Polish government had 'disintegrated' and had, in fact, 'ceased to exist', leaving Poland 'a suitable field for all manners of hazards and surprises, which may constitute a threat to the USSR.' ….

'The government went into exile and in London my first talk with Sikorski was to convince him that we must find some activity for the Polish troops in this country, this will help to maintain the morale of the Poles in Poland.'

Marisha responded with, 'The fact that Poles had a Government at Claridges did not achieve the desired effect … the Polish Army only consists of 16,000 men in England and 6,000 in Egypt…...'

The Count changed his tone in asking why Marisha was belittling Polish arms. The pilots and crew of the Battle of Britain whose kill ratio was twice that of the British? The naval heroes of the submarine, *Orzel* (Eagle)? The bravehearts of Narvik, Tobruk, El Alamein, of Monte Cassino?

'Why then', she asked, 'did the British not allow them a place in the victory parade? 'And why did you fail to get Churchill to acknowledge Stalin's guilt over Katyn and his own over Teheran and Yalta? The Alliance with Britain was a hollow sham. After all you wrote in your memoirs that it *was a reversal of alliances*."

The Count stood up from his chair.

"The expression used by me, reversal of alliances, is, I am afraid, used if not wrongly at least without sufficient precision.

Beck's attempt of steering Poland on a middle course between passive obedience to our French ally and allegiance to Germany had already in 1938 become almost impossible. What happened in March and the first days of April 1939, was not the reversal of alliances but the end of a system of checks and balances which had become inoperative.

We had no alliance with Germany and we had rejected several suggestions of the Hitler empire to join forces against Soviet Russia. Beck's policy was inspired in every respect by the Pilsudski tradition of maximum independence and national pride. Beck did at no time show servility to the Third Reich. He stood up for Poland and its interest until the very end."

Marisha had recorded a scoop.

Next she said:

"In November 1943 Eden, soon to depart for Teheran with Churchill, was officially told not to make, at Poland's expense, any territorial concessions to the Soviets. Significantly quite a different case was made informally by you, Sir. When you handed your memorandum to Eden you are reported as allowing the British delegation room for manoeuvre.

In your words, Sir, 'if, however, Poland's friends were to tell the Government that they must accept such and such a settlement to safeguard the future of Poland, this would create a new situation.'

How different was your response to that of Benes before Munich? What of Poland's much vaunted courage; her reputation as the one state never to bow to *force majeur*?'

The poor Count crumpled and was helped out of the room by his consort who asked Marisha to depart.

*

Her next subject was Professor Tsosnik. He was the communist republic's pre-eminent historian of Poland in the twentieth century and the host of choice in Warsaw for visiting academics. Not only did he have knowledge of and access to official archives which allowed him to make copies of sought after papers selectively available to visitors, he also was a mine of information about life behind the iron curtain. And a great *raconteur*. He spoke to her about his recent visit to the Far East.

There was, he told her, only one way to travel across the vastness of the Soviet Union. By train, taking with him four kilos of *beluga* and a case of vodka and having direct access to the dining car refrigerator; a long journey of gastronomic luxury.

Not so in Beijing. Shaking off his minder the Professor sought out a Chinese restaurant in which the natives of the city dined. He found one such establishment, entered unannounced and found himself before a blackboard menu listing a vast choice of dishes in a language of which he had no knowledge. A waiter waited to take his order. The guest pointed at random to six mysterious Chinese characters. The waiter looked most surprised and when he loudly relayed the order to the kitchens, the entire establishment fell silent. The westerner had asked for six soups. Unfazed, he imbibed each with gusto and raised his head to a sea of delighted faces.

Here was a true *bon vivant*.

The great man of Polish letters. Here was a hero amongst academics in the West who thought him a hapless victim of blanket state censorship.

Ignoring the fact that the authorities in Poland rarely deprived any writer of the freedom of expression, Tsosnik's magisterial biography of Pilsudski had just emerged after years of internment by the censor. Little wonder. His subject was the foremost Polish statesman of independent of the Second Republic, 1918-1939. As one of the founders of the independent Polish State, Pilsudski's policy involved the use of armed force; in his opinion the only measure of a nation's strength. He regarded Russia as Poland's worst enemy. His Legions became the Polish army which defeated the Red Army in the war of 1919-1920.

Clearly his subject could give offence to the Kremlin and indeed to the party in Warsaw and therefore it had to be censored.

'How have you survived such censure? Are you a Party member?'

Tsosnik looked at his watch. 'Ah. My apologies. I have an appointment at the School of Slavonic Studies. Perhaps we may continue later?'

The curtailed interview was never resumed.

*

Next on her schedule was Czeslaw Milosz.

She knew little of his literary output until her trip to Africa with Jozef when she took some of Milosz's work with her and memorised his '*After Travelling*', quoting his words to herself:

'How strange life is! How incomprehensible! As if I returned from it as from a long journey and tried to remember where I had been and what I had done. I can't manage it, and the most difficult part is trying to see myself there. I had intentions, motivations. I made decisions, performed acts. Yet from here that man seems so irrational and absurd.

As if he did not act, but was activated by forces that made use of him.

So opaque to myself, I want to guess who I was for others, especially the women to whom I was bound by ties of love or friendship. *Too late.*

We are like a marionette theatre that has been put to sleep. The puppets lie in the tangle of their strings and convey no idea of what the spectacle was like.'

As if he did not act, but was activated by forces that made use of him.'

*

The line kept emerging more and more in her mind as she went about her work. Perhaps it was the apparent freedom of life led in Britain that made her anxious about herself. But then she had never *felt* constrained in Poland nor as a Polish official outside the *Kraj*. (Country; Motherland.) Debating the future of Poland had made her think again about many other things.

How strange that the dialectics of the debate she now conducted with herself, within her self, trumped the philosophical dialectics she had been taught to memorise.

Was she simply living a life at the behest of others? Simply waiting? Simply allowing fate full play with her life? What was that fragment of a line again?

'... simply waited for fate to overtake us.'

'No,' she said to herself.

She did not want to just be remembered as the once active marionette to be wheeled out by the Embassy at celebratory occasions.

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A few months before the visit to London of Czeslaw Milosz she was asked to visit the new *Ambulatorium* at The Polish Home in Penrhos; North Wales.

There she met elderly women and men who had suffered and survived every imaginable and unimaginable horror from Auschwitz to Vladivostok.

One such person, Bogumila (whose name, *Bogoomeewa*, translates as Beloved of God) interested her most of all. She sought her out especially because she had been mentioned in a book recently published in a new edition.

Marisha recorded the interview, first asking permission.

'… Well. … But what for. … I am nobody.'

'On the contrary, Mrs.W. You are a contributor to a book called The Dark Side of the Moon; about the fate of Poles taken into Soviet exile in 1940. Please give me your opinion of the book as a record of your experience. You did agree to read it afresh. Do you mind if I record our interview?

'Yes. … The book? Ah. I will tell you about it. Yes. You can record. … First of all, you must understand that for time to heal the wounds in a person's psyche, it must blunt memories of the experiences that have been lived through. But it is sometimes possible to come across material which may help to brush aside the cobwebs of forgetfulness. …

Reading the book again at your request after so many years have passed since my Soviet exile does have this effect; every distant experience now emerges alive and real. The cause of this reaction, in my view, is the manner in which the book is drafted, facts being presented with penetrating clarity and accuracy, put together with correct and cogent assessment of the contemporary situation. Its general drift must astound every reader! Especially those who experienced this chapter of Poland's history. This book is frightening in its realism!

It also helps to restore the balance between the countless books recounting the martyrology of the Nazi policies in Poland and the very few describing the Soviet occupation of Poland and its similarly hellish consequences.'

Marisha took a deep breath.

'I am sorry Mrs. W. but I must pause in order to sort out in my own mind what you have just said. Because there's a question that never goes away.'

'What is it?'

'Is there, …. Please forgive me. I want to check that we are recording again, yes, good. My question to you: is there really equivalence between any other human catastrophe and the Holocaust.?'

"I too have had time to think long and hard about the same question. You know, my son put this question to Milosz when he met him in the Polish library on his visit to London in, I think, 1985. Yes. March. Milosz re-affirmed his opinion that although their systems differed, no distinction could be made between the Germans and Russians as occupants of Poland.'

Silence of a few seconds '… not agree.'

'Please repeat that again. I caught a malfunction on my earphones.'

"Oh. I said that I am hardly in a position to know as I never encountered a German in my part of Poland. But from what I know. From what we all know, there is no equivalence."
"You mean the Russians were worse?"

'No. No. There were tens of thousands of Catholic Poles at Auschwitz. And hundreds of thousands of Jewish Poles. There are some ladies, Jew and Catholic, here, at Penrhos, who survived. You must speak to them. By their accounts I know that there was but one true hell on earth; all other suffering was less in comparison. Just think … just isolate the fate of Jews from all else, put them in a ghetto, starve them, sicken them, work them to death - there is equivalence. But put them on trains waiting at stations throughout occupied Europe, destination Auschwitz, where you order them to strip naked in order to

gas them in what they were told were shower rooms and then burn them in specially constructed facilities … there is no comparison. Dante would have agreed. There is nothing like it in the whole of human experience. Nor in hell itself."

"But you said .. restore the balance…'

'Yes my girl. The book helps to restore. Helps to restore the balance. The sagging scale is still heavier to one side but the two should be nearer to the horizontal. The truth as history demands. It does not need to be pressed down, artificially. Just try to restore a balance to history east of the Vistula. Not to forget. To record from the beginning a story that is not told. Our story. Of more than a million and a half!

You are interested in history? Think in terms of this country. One and a half million was the total population of Wales and England combined. At the time of the Tudors. Totally gone. Leaving behind just castles and field patterns.

There was then an audible smile on tape.

"There are many Tudors here, in Penrhos. One does my shopping."

Then seriousness returned.

"One million and a half. Mainly women and children, sent to perish in the Soviet wastelands. Tell *our* story. Next to that of the Holocaust which has cast a shadow across all history to the east of the Vistula on whose young banks Auschwitz stands. A shadow that makes a complete eclipse over our history and the history of so many others. Darkness all the way to Kamchatka. The light of history must shine there too! ….

Marisha came to the end of her tape.

"Mrs. W. I was to leave for London this evening. But I shall not. Yours is a unique voice.

Which I want to hear until you say stop. May I speak with you tomorrow?"

"Yes. Of course. But not before eleven. I have my breakfast at nine and then doze for two hours. That is what you do at my age. …. I was born in the month when Lwow (pronounced, Lvoof, previously Lemberg. Lviv today) was scented with lilac …. but please leave me now."

*

"Mrs. W. I want *your* story today.

Please do not feel offended in any way. But so far we have talked, mainly, in generalities. I believe that history comes to life only when people are at its centre. I want to place you there, however much I try your patience. And I value so much your kind willingness to have your patience tried by me!'

'Oh, oh oh… Come on. Continue. 'But first what are you going to do with what I tell you? What are your plans?'

I want to complete a book on what took place in Eastern Poland during the war. And then I want to go back to Africa. May be to work there."

"What for?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean why waste time? Africa is for the Africans. They do not need you."

"Really? Why do you think so?"

"Because I was in East Africa for nearly twenty years. Between our transportation there in 1942 until 1964, three years after independence when life became impossible for us."

Long pause.

"But that is another story."

"Oh Mrs. W. Every time I think I have a sense of your life you tell me things that make my head swim. Please, please, tell me that we may talk of Africa."

'First tell me why I should not go to Africa?'

'Surely you read the papers and watch the news.

'Region after African region descends into long drawn out and dreadful ethnic conflict Somalia will be abandoned to the clan war gangsters.

Liberia too is running out of time.

What happens when South Africa catches fire?

I fear that in Africa we are at the beginning of a trend; a continent-wide revolution in which millions will die. This terrible catastrophe is unfolding in the refugee camps of eastern Zaire, where 2 million Rwandans are camped angry and vengeful waiting only to reduce the region to a state of permanent civil war.

Where will this lead? Another holocaust, and another. And another"

"I do not think so, Mrs. W. At least I hope not! But let us not get into a political argument. I am only interested in you telling me of your life in Tanganyika. Have you time for that?"

"You silly girl. Why not? I have no other engagements. My life is over.

'I am sure that you do not mean that.

'*I do*. I wake up each day hoping I had died in the night. And you will come to understand why'

'But why? Surely life is always worth living?

No that is not true. There comes a time when it is all too stupid. You will say the same one day.'

'But, here you are in a nice place and well cared for.'

'You think so? Why do they care? There is so much in the papers these days about the old. We are going towards euthanasia. And that is a good thing. They say they must care for us for civilized reasons. For moral reasons. For humanitarian reasons. But it would be much more humane to allow each of us a pill. To end life when we think it should end.'

'But surely it is wrong to commit suicide? Are you not afraid of death?'

'My dear girl life and death are like a dance. That is how I think of it. I am dancing with my partner and when the orchestra stops playing he thanks me and I return the compliment and I walk back to join my friends but never take to the dance floor again. Death! Ha. When you have seen death as many times as I you will not fear it. Of course I fear the *pain* of dying! And you will come to appreciate how much it actually takes to die. We are strong creatures and linger long before death. Too long. It is cruel when life trickles on, like spittle dribbling out of the mouths of the demented. But lucky they. The gaga do not know what is happening to them. But when you are old and not gaga, someone like me, it is cruel to *have* to keep going for the sake of principles that no longer apply to oneself; for the sake of other people, society, law, religion.'

'Are you not religious?'

'Yes. Of course. All Poles of my generation are religious. Because to be a Catholic is to be, was to be, Polish. And vice-versa. I am Polish, first and foremost. And therefore, but only secondly, religious. What do I mean by

religious? When in the railway yards of Moscow we in our cattle truck and became aware of other trains pulling up beside ours we would burst into song. We would sing the responses and hymns learnt in Church. And if the other train would reply in kind we knew we were in company with other Poles. God only comes into it when you are in an impossible situation. After all, *in extremis*, you have to appeal to someone. Something. Otherwise, as in our case you would more quickly perish or go mad. Religion is necessary for life. And I practice it every day. That is not to say I am devout. God forbid. For me there is nothing so stupid as the church. Nothing as evil. Just think of the church in history and how many perished in its name. For what? It is an institution like any other. It benefits most those who run it. And of course the less intelligent who live in fear of not going to heaven.

'Is there then no heaven?'

'Ah. You are thinking what you should think? Think of it this way. What are you? An amateur historian. Yes? Good. To be a historian you must know life. And record it. Life in the present, as we speak. And life in the past. You bring the dead to life. That is the same as heaven. That remembrance. But without all the nonsense of saints and angels. I am a Sadducee. And you a scribe. That is it.

"Why a Sadducee?"

"Just because they were devout people without believing in the heavenly nonsense of angelic hosts and the like.'

"Thank you."

'What for? I have said nothing important. Nothing you will not come to see for yourself if you become a good historian. Just be grateful for your intelligence. We are here to observe and live by our observations. That is all. So keep open your eyes and your ears and most of all, keep open your mind.

I no longer need to observe. Only to reflect. I am alone. Only memories of a previous life in a previous era. In towns and cities long absorbed into foreign lands. I am so sad. All the time. Except when my mind fills with images of a past reality. I read a lot and I am now ploughing through Bashevitz Singer's reminiscences of Jews in their pre-war communities. How I rate his writing! So much is said of Jews. But of one thing you must be sure. Of all people they are the deepest of thinkers. Each word they utter is of greater weight to what we say or write. That is also why I now call myself a Sadducee. I try to be one. To think like one. …..Of late I have spent my days remembering the lives of Jews in Poland. In my part of Poland. In my city Lwow.'

Silence.

Then she continued: "Lwow, ah, *Lvoof* the loveliest city on earth for anyone born and brought up there. Oh Lwow, Lwow, Lwow. I knew and loved it until my eighteenth year, when we were deported. I think and think and think. And remember every detail, every breath of air I ever breathed there. Every sight. Sound. Scent. Oh, Lwow.'

Rustle of paper? Tears being wiped?

Silence. For the rest of the tape. Except for, "I am sorry….. Please forgive me …. Oh please do not upset yourself …. I will leave now … But, please may I come tomorrow …" No reply. End.

The next day they talked of Polish culture. Marisha started off on a Marxist trajectory and was stopped in mid air.

'You are talking nonsense about culture my dear girl. I will tell you what culture is. Getting out of a frozen train onto frozen earth. Nothing to hold but a bundle packed long ago. Standing there just in the clothes you wore on the day of exile. You have been stripped down by history to the bare essentials. Your culture is nothing more nor nothing less than the contents of your brain. Your culture resides now in thought only. Not in any artefact. How you act and what you think and how you act about how you think, that is now your culture. Culture at the level of just being able to survive. That, in the end, is culture. We survived by our culture. Our Polishness, no, our up-bringing. That is what guided us across the face of the dark side of the moon. One's culture, that which is learnt at home and school, is a very concrete thing. It is the core of one's being. It has little to do with the theories you people propound. Life and jargon do not mix at the level of survival. …"

There was anger in her voice. She calmed down in time to the hissing and lapping tape.

' … You wanted me to tell you about my life in Tanganyika. I will now. Because I am in the right mood. In my anger I remember the predominance of bad times. I married a Greek, and from the start it was a disaster. I would say that I would prefer to repeat my Soviet sojourn than my marriage. That was hell. A psychological hell. We spoke of culture. Well our cultures were completely antithetical. He, like all Greeks thought Poles inferior yet culturally he was no great achievement. His family despised my being *xeni*, a foreigner. And a Catholic. Such as I was! In fact I was publicly excommunicated by the priest at Tengeru for allowing my sons to be baptised into the Greek Orthodox faith. That, the shame of public excommunication hurt me. I was *persona non grata* in two camps. No one tried to help me. I raised my babies in a hut. Without running water. Without light, except one paraffin lantern. No cooking facilities, except an outside fire tended by Juma. The one humane person in my early married life. Without him I would have jumped into Lake Duluti with my

boys. He, Juma, my African helper could see it was all wrong and said he would support me. And he did. When my children were ill it was he who called the doctor, while my so called husband played poker. Day in. Day out. Remember this was Africa with illnesses we first encountered in other God forsaken places like Kazakhstan. Everything turned septic. Fevers reached tropical highs I did not speak English. I learnt to speak Swahili so that I had a person with whom I could talk. Then I taught myself Greek only to understand what his family was saying about me. They called me a *prosteeha, tou thromou gheeneka*; a whore. Yet the only sex I had was with him. That is the tragedy. Physically we were driven together. He was very attractive. I had not known a man in that way. Until we two met. And once there were children what could I do? Africa was not the here and now where Social Services may intervene. There was nothing to fall back on. I got a job when I learnt English. And that stabilised my life. I was always valued as a good worker. Even he called me that. But as if he were addressing a farm labourer. Not a wife. I sewed my own clothes. And clothes for my family. And earned extra money by outfitting ladies who wanted dresses featured in magazines from Europe. I worked hard to pay for my sons' education. It was not cheap to send three to school as boarders. I worked in the Co-op. Then in Miniotis's grocery store. Then in the Revenue Office in the Boma. And finally for a Persian firm of seed merchants. I had the best of relations with Asians. In government service and with Mr. Mahmoud and his family. They, and the Africans I worked with were so much more civil to me than my husband and his family. And that is all I required. Civility. As at home in Poland. But it was never to be. In the end I left him for which act I was branded a whore"

Marisha said not a word. She switched off her tape-recorder and whispered, "I am staying another day. I will come again at eleven.

*

'Mrs. W., may I please ask you to take yourself back to the period before the outbreak of war, say, the last year of peace, 1938-9.'

'Well as far as I can remember the last year of peace was as happy as any in my life. I was a very fortunate girl. Surrounded by a loving family. Loving parents.'

'Tell me about them.'

'I was an only child of a marriage made in heaven. My father was a very serious person.

Dour. Not given to small talk. My mother sparkled socially and conversationally. It was a match of opposites whom no one or thing could put asunder.'

'How did they earn a living?'

‘My father was promoted to the rank of major on retirement from his legion, cavalry; he fought for Poland’s independence under the command of Marshal Pilsudski. He was awarded the *Virtuti Militarii*, Poland’s highest award for bravery, … he was appointed *Starosta* (District commissioner) at Sanok and inTrembowla’

‘One of the elite, then.’

‘Yes and no, … only slightly so. My father was born in a remote village to a peasant family. His elder brother took care of him when both parents died. The brother was a priest and arranged for my father to attend school and college where he qualified as an engineer. Well educated. In Poland all professional qualifications included Ancient Greek and Latin to a high level of competence! When war broke out in 1914 he volunteered for cavalry service and rose quickly … always in the service of the state …later in charge of a district in Eastern Poland.’

‘Your mother?’

‘After marriage she did good works, mainly in promoting village arts and crafts. She was very artistic.’

‘How did they meet?’

‘My father’s regiment was based in Lwow. He rented a small apartment in the city. This was to give a home to his son by a previous marriage which had collapsed. My mother and her mother came to rent a place in the same town house. She too came from a broken home. She was born in Vienna. Her father, a von Hasse, was Prussian. Her mother was a Schwabb lady whose family bred horses. The business collapsed due to an outbreak of rinderpest. They fell on hard times and relied on help from family connections. One uncle, a von Todd, took my mother and my grandmother under his wing when the marriage broke down. He had family in Krakow, then still in Galicia, part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. These were the Bobkowski’s. A brilliant lot. All very talented in many directions. The family produced a government minister, a general and one of the first women to qualify as a doctor and practice medicine. She arranged for my mother to obtain a job at the Austrian Consulate in Lwow. And my parents to be first met on the staircase they shared in the *kamienica*!’ (Town house).

‘Wow.’ ‘So they met and married. Your mother was not Polish. Did this present problems?’

‘Never. Strange as it may seem to you many subjects of the empire gave their hearts to the so called successor states after its dissolution. Galicia became a

part of Poland; its citizens became Poles. Very patriotic Poles. I too became a very patriotic Pole. We were part of an extraordinary exercise in nation building; independent Poland. You just cannot imagine the pride we took in our country. Come to life, after centuries of partition, with her spirit, a very refined spirit, intact. We all had a sacred duty to perform. That is how we saw our lives; striving after Poland's success as a very old new nation.'

'I can see how emotional you are about your Poland. But I must now ask you what may appear to you to be an unwelcome question. If so please accept my apologies in advance'

'There is nothing you can ask me for which you have to apologize. Certainly not in advance. Ah, you new Anglo- Poles. Sorry for this and sorry for that; in retrospect and in advance. Only you never apologize when it would serve a purpose at the instant an apology is due!'

'Sorry.'

'There you go.. Wait until it is necessary to say sorry.'

'Sorry. I mean, "Was your patriotism aware of other groups in Eastern Poland? I am interested to know how you, a Polish girl of a privileged family, related to the Jewish, Ukrainian and White Russian minorities prevalent in that part of Poland.?'

'Em. (pause) Em. There were no significant groups of Byelorussians in our part of Poland centred on Lwow. Ukrainians in very large numbers and many Jewish communities in the city, towns and villages.

In terms of my life as a child in school, I had many Ukrainian and Jewish friends. We Poles were taught Ukrainian. And Jewish people, outside the orthodox community, were generally indistinguishable from Poles. I was aware too that not all Ukrainians and Jews were friendly towards us. But you must accept that by saying that they were not necessarily nationalistic Ukrainians or unpatriotic Jews, We all used to mingle and mix very well. After all, Poland would not have worked without Jews. From the smallest village to largest city, Jewish business and commerce drove the economy. And on a personal level, my family, like the majority of middle class families would not have managed without the help of credit which they extended to us; my mother's beautiful clothes were made in the Jewish quarter and purchased on credit advanced by the seamstress. There were tensions too. In my teens two developments reached my ears. The high level of unemployment and its ally, the communistic parties which attracted the cleverest of radical students. Mainly Jewish young men. But Poles too. My last Polish boyfriend in Poland was an ardent communist. And, would you believe, the ministerial uncle was too! Or so he said to me when last we met. There was real concern amongst the thinking class, the intelligentsia,

that the country was failing in providing work and welfare for all its citizens. Millions were unemployed in the same way as millions were throughout Europe and America. It was difficult for Poland to take the lead in the opposite direction. Only when Hitler did was there some hope for a way out…'

'You do not mean that.'

'What?'

'About Hitler!

'What about Hitler? I thought that you said you were interested in history. Don't you know that when he came to power he gave the Germans hope and betterment talked of all over Europe. Of course there was evil. But you must have the maturity to grasp that Germany, in the early thirties, was the great hope for all who wished for a modern life. Everything fashionable came out of Germany. Her products and designs were desirable beyond the *avant garde*. Fashion in all things came from Berlin. Even the music. We danced to the tango on German radio. There was so much energy and passion evident in German life. Yes it went horribly wrong, but do not underestimate how at first we all admired Hitlerism. The slogan of an 'awakening Germany' was a slogan which affected us because the new life of the Germans gave a lift to life in Poland. And please know that the closest followers of German fashion were our Jewish middle class. They set the tone for all forward looking Poles, who, by the thirties knew enough about Stalin not to find him at all attractive. Quite unlike Hitler. ….

I find it rather strange that he continues to be seen only as Satan. There is hardly a day that passes without there being something bad on the radio or television or in the papers about him as simply an evil man. Surely we know of his other aspects!

Even I can tell you that there is not much that distinguishes him from many men of his age and circumstances. He was a patriot, loyal to the virtues, as he and many others saw them, of the Germanic empires of his day.

As a soldier in the German Army, during the First World War, he was an extremely dutiful NCO; he loved discipline and ceremonial. He took the war seriously. He was awarded the Iron Cross for bravery. In November 1918 when defeat had been announced he was in a state of psychological collapse and talked incessantly of 'revenge'. By 1919 he was employed by the Army as a spy. His assignments concerned left wing organizations and his specific task was reporting on, and even causing, riots so that the army could intervene; he was an *agent provocateur*. It was in this role that he found a most important talent; his ability to speak in public.

His talent coincided with the introduction of the microphone; another technological success for which Germans were admired.

Hitler was most admired for his phenomenal dynamism and apparent self-confidence; all who knew him were impressed by his almost unshakeable confidence -100% in public.

Also remarkable was his ability to change his mood to suit his audience, yet remaining the master.

Asserting himself over all; it was a case of "Hitler *uber alles*".

There was more to explain his supremacy over the German masses. They felt themselves to have failed, as a people. Something which Hitler so well understood.

After all Hitler was a failure in so many ways, never commissioned, never accepted to the Academy of Art, even though his landscapes were as good as the sketches produced by the young Leonardo, ...He was spurned at many elections. But in the end he got to the top by promising to make the failed Germany a success. He appealed to enough Germans to assure himself of power. He did not have to seize it. He was given it. By promising to help the masses and by placating the rich; the German elite believed him to be a good vehicle to perpetuate their control.

Once in power - helped also by a reasonably honest election - Hitler kept his side of the bargain. He got Germany going. However bad his economic policies are said to be, by 1936 the truth is that he succeeded in giving the Germans a semblance of prosperity. This was no mean achievement. Was he just a successful opportunist or was he guided by principle? Both I think. He believed in purity of race and in Germany as a great power; these principles were, in his mind, linked.

As they were in the minds of millions of his countrymen.

So why did he fail to achieve his aims? He attempted too much. He overreached himself.

War was his great mistake.

And it was Hitler who decided on war. No one else. And he got as near as any previous man of war to conquering Europe. Nearly winning a European war against all comers.

Silly man. He took most of what he wanted without war. Right up to Munich he was in the ascendant ….. But enough of this. You know the history which follows better than me."

"Thank you Mrs, W. I wish that were so. I think that you are well ahead of me. So. Lets move on to the approach of war. When, if at all, were you aware of the possibility of war? In that last year of peace were you attuned to the possibility of a German or Soviet invasion?'

"In trying to reply, I am trying to recall the impressions of an impressionable young woman, a girl, at a very impressionable age. It was the politics of the grown ups which came into my mind.

'We, they, were all very aware of the threat of invasion, from Germany. But, as I have said, not Russia. That dreadful possibility did not enter our thoughts after Pilsudski died in 1935. He never forgot to warn us. But we forgot. But war with Hitler was very much in our minds.

I believed it would destroy our lives but that Poland would endure. I remember standing on the balcony of the last official residence we occupied by the castle in Trembowla. The balcony was very long, across eight bedrooms. Each bedroom's windows were open to allow an airing. I stood by my window and remember being swathed by the light net curtains as they blew in the breeze. It was a typical August night. Warm and quite calm with the scent of gardens and fields and woods in the night air. It was the night of the full moon. All was delicately lit. And I saw a vision. All my friends walked past my window. They were walking to their death.'

Long pause.

"It must have been soon after that when your suffering began?"

"Yes, 17 September, 1939.'

"Please go back to that tragic day."

'Yes. … Yes.

'It is difficult to recall a day when emotions ran so high. We never believed such a thing was ever possible. To such an extent that in all the chaos we thought that the Good Lord had shown mercy in sending the Red Army to help us defeat the Germans in the West. To help defend our country. To be honest, I never saw a German soldier on this piece of our land. So when the Soviet army marched in we were not at all sure of their intention. Slowly it dawned on us. Each day brought a new shock."

“You and your family were arrested.”

“Yes my father was arrested. It was a fortnight after the beginning of the Soviet occupation. My father was held in his office. He was surrounded by *politruks* who were trying to extract from him information about his district. Meanwhile we were warned by a Ukrainian friend to move out of the residence; my mother, my grandmother and myself. We went to sleep at our chauffeur’s home.

In the morning somebody knocked on the door. It was a messenger from my father’s office. He handed my mother a set of keys in a leather case. I had my eyes fixed on her face and saw an expression of great shock. The messenger said something she already understood: “These are a message from your husband. He wants you to know that he has been arrested.’

“And I assume that you were next. Your mother and yourself?”

‘And my Grandmother.’

“Please describe the circumstances.”

“Yes I shall. But first I have to mention tat after my father’s detention we women were constantly on the move. Having to find shelter wherever we could. It was not easy to get a roof over our heads. Ours was a small town and, though friendly towards us, people were reluctant to take us in. Eventually a woman took us in, providing two rooms. One for us and one for our official chauffer who had served my father loyally for a long time. Any way, there we were, in our cramped quarters when, on the thirteenth of April, 1940, yes it was past midnight so it was the thirteenth, we were startled by a loud bangs on the door. The sounds awoke me from the deepest sleep into the sudden realization that something terrible was about to happen. I immediately knew that this was the deportation we had long feared. …”

“Excuse me if that was the case, did you think of escaping Trembowla?”

“Escape was never an option. Run where? To cross over into Nazi occupied territory to the west? Never.”

“What of the south?”

“You mean Romania? Yes my father was offered the opportunity of escape. By General Sikorski himself. He, like the government, passed through my father’s district. He asked for petrol, … fuel stores were in my father’s care, … for the vehicles carrying himself and his entourage. My father refused to join the convoy south. He simply told Sikorski that he would not abandon his office nor

his family. You must go to the Sikorski Museum and see the note I gave to Mrs. Oppman, the archivist. My father's response to Sikorski's offer is on the record.

He was not a man to let us down, nor his district. I have often reflected on my father's reply to the man who became our leader in exile. I fully understood his refusal to cut and run. I remember him in tears at the last review of troops in August 1939. "We have still so much to do', he sobbed quietly after the parade. My father was a hero. My hero. A quiet spoken servant of his country right to the end. To leave his post was not his way. So that is why we *simply waited for fate to overtake us*.' That was the last phrase on tape. And one that had already stuck most firmly in Marisha's mind. Often surfacing during lulls at high powered meetings.

Daudi

Marisha's next public function was to cover the visit to London by Czeslaw Milosz. He had won new acclaim with the Nobel Prize in Literature. She hoped to ask the great man about aspects of Polish culture which had interested her in earnest ever since her visit to Penrhos.

Before meeting Milosz she read several essays by T.S. Eliot.

In 1948, the year when the King of Sweden gave him the Nobel Prize and the King of England the Order of Merit and two years after the publication of *The Dark Side of the Moon*, a book to which he supplied the preface, he published his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. Here, as in his preface, he insisted that 'culture is the creation of society as a whole; it is that which makes it a society ; it is important to remember that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing more culture than the lower but representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialization of culture. The higher level of culture must be thought of both valuable in itself and as enriching the lower levels: thus the movement of culture would proceed in a kind of cycle, each class nourishing the others."

The next problem T.S. Eliot tackled in this slim volume was the transmission of culture from one generation to the next and he stated, simply, that this was the function of the family. Less simply 'it is the function of the superior members and superior families to preserve the group culture, as it is the function of the producers to alter it.'

Marisha was unimpressed. Of family she had little knowledge or experience. As for the aristocracy, how national culture fared in their absence was a question she had already given some consideration and about which she kept an open mind. But of one thing she was certain when assessing genocide, namely, that Soviet policies in Poland were incomparably milder than Nazi policies. The Germans were out to annihilate the nation; Jew and Gentile. Of the ultimate fate of the *untermensch* there could be little doubt. The Kremlin, on the other hand, sought the elimination of any opposition to Sovietization. Stalin and his henchman Hrustczov had no doubts that it was the intelligentsia, which included all intellectuals, property owners, churchmen, and all state officials and their families, which had to be destroyed in order to remodel Polish society. As to the consequences of such destruction? Marisha allowed T.S. Eliot the last word.

Commenting on revolutionary France he wrote:

"And here we may remark that when a dominant class, however badly it has performed its function, is forcibly removed, its function is not wholly taken

over by any other.' And Poland? 'There are some grounds for believing that the elimination of an upper class at a more developed stage can be a disaster for a country: and most certainly when the removal is due to the intervention of another nation.'

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Of culture and its associated social ramifications Marisha was to hear a lot more of in the course of her work; especially in her many contacts with what were being referred to in the media as 'the chattering classes.'

She did not learn much more from Milosz than she now already knew, but mention of meeting him boosted her reputation amongst the chatterers.

*

Tiring of the culture show in London and finally wanting to slough off her skin as the chameleon she was expected to emulate at sensitive meetings, Marisha flew to Dar-es-Salaam, seeking Jozef.

There was no one there to ask about him. Or no one she thought should even know he existed. She went to Songea where his family had their business, but again nothing. No one even remembered the family let alone Jozef. Her last throw was to try Kongwa where he had been to school. And there she spoke to Mr. Patel who revealed as much as he knew. It did not surprise him that people in Dar-es Salaam and Songea were different or indifferent.

He explained to her that the Teacher's, *Mwalimu's*, policies of tribal admixture and displacement meant an ethnic transformation on a national scale. No one was where they had been. But he certainly knew of Jozef and told her the tale of the great slaughter and of his escape in the family's Peugeot. He knew something of the Selous Scouts from letters he had received from family members in Zambia and Zimbabwe and suggested she fly to Harare to discover what had happened. "If you see him please tell him that I consider myself lucky to have lost my pick up and to have kept my thing." "What thing?" she asked. "Oh, he will tell you if you find him."

*

In Salisbury, now Harare, Marisha booked into the prestigious Meikles Hotel. This had remained the last watering hole where the white tribe could still exercise exclusivity through the power of the purse. It was only ministers and their entourage who could afford the prices charged. And even they, after the first exercise of privilege preferred to drink amongst their own kind.

By conversing at the bar Marisha gathered up the sequence of events in Jozef's life after his raid on Kongwa.

Jozef's Scouts had decided to risk driving through the border post at Kapiri Mposhi. It seemed that the safer trek home through the bush was decided against in favour of the convenience which was Mr. Patel's scrap heap.

But a trap had been set and the Peugeot was raked by machine gun fire. From the front of the car, only the driver escaped and it was not Jozef. He was killed. The two in the back were, like the driver, wounded. They were in jail in Harare and were at the mercy of the President, no longer Comrade, Mugabe. He refused amnesty and threatened execution. It is likely that they will remain prisoners for the rest of their lives remembered only by the scattered remnants of the once proudest detachment in Ian Smith's detached state.

The driver who got away was in South Africa. Last time anyone had heard of him, was that he worked as a security guard in Capetown for a time until he topped himself. His name always raised a laugh. Why was that?

"Well, Ma'am, after the raid he returned to a hero's welcome. Smithy decorated him with the highest order for bravery, the Rhodesia Star. It was in fact the last such ceremony before the end. But it did wonders for morale. In the *melee* of fame he took to drink and would sit here at this bar and if he took against the appearance of any guest, especially posh women, he would give them the brown eye.'

"What is the 'brown eye'?"

'Well ma'am, to put it politely, we have all got one but normally keep it hidden. He was a nutter and offended to the point of being barred. That was the end really. He got a job on the railways but was too troubled to pass exams for a post beyond fireman and when, with defeat, such jobs were the first to be given to Afs, he went south. With everybody else who could not make it here. It was sad ma'am, because these people constitute what is now referred to as 'white trash'."

"What do you mean?"

'Just what it says. Before the defeat we had jobs by right. The railways employed any white who could find no other living. You had to be thicker than a *bobeejan* not to succeed on the trains. It is the same in South Africa. The railways there are the employer of last resort for the thick *kabooroos* (Boers) and they maintain a stranglehold on the jobs for fear of destitution. So when the *whenwees* arrived.'

"What do you mean by *whenwees*?"

"Oh, sorry. The Rhodies who fled south found it bloody hard to make a go of things and would remember better lives here. Because they would begin

reminiscing by saying "When we were in Rhodesia … they came to be known as *when wees*. Do you get it?"

"Yes of course. So how did these people survive?"

"With difficulty. Most live the lives of the growing class of white poor in South Africa, people who depend on soup kitchens. The lucky few, like the driver who had military experience, joined the boom trade in providing security. I heard that Jiji,' ….

'Jiji?' Strange name.'

'Nick name. … We all had one. That was his. I don't know what it meant. He once told me that the Swahili word for village was *kijiji*. And that his wish in life was to live in a village in Tanganyika. A village man at heart. A jiji.

Anyway, he took the law into his own hands once too often when he tracked down a burglar right in the heart of one of the shanty towns in the plains below Capetown. He found him and shot him dead. I mean that is unheard of. Those places are absolutely no go areas for whites. But not for him. In consequence, however, he was promoted to guarding the main doors to his head office. That apparently did his head in. No job for a man like him. So one day he drove home, no longer himself because of the inevitable divorce, locked himself in the garage with his car running and was found dead by dustmen doing the rounds an hour or so later; curious at the smoke pouring out of the garage, they eventually found him. At his funeral several of his military mates came out of the woodwork and did the honours before he too went up in smoke. Sad."

Marisha finished her drink and said to her companion at the bar, "Joe, do you want to come upstairs with me?"

His seed was not cast upon the ground but neither did it abhor her virgin womb.

*

From Salisbury or rather, Harare, as it was then being called, Marisha flew north to the University College in Dar-es-Salaam where she was invited to speak to the History Faculty.

On this visit she was guest of the Polish Embassy which had relayed a request to London from the University in Dar-es-Salaam for assistance in organizing historical archives. Marisha had long had contacts with higher education institutions in Africa; she had, after all, started her work in international politics by her involvement with the Poland-Africa Association from which she progressed through the Polish diplomatic service to end her career as a roving ambassador for her country.

Her lecture in Dar-es-Salaam marked yet another shift in her political views over a long and distinguished career made up of executing sharp turns in successfully navigating the Cold War's political minefields. She now signalled that times they were again a changing; Warsaw wanted the Kremlin to know that it would not forget traumas that had yet to be accounted for.

*

Times were about to change in Tanzania. Nyerere had died a week prior to Marish's visit to the capital.

She began her lecture with a nod to the Teacher:

" … With a clear conscience, Julius Nyerere, this very moral and devout man, ordered his country's forces to hunt down evil in Uganda. The invasion by infantry and armour succeed beyond all expectations. It was a triumph for African arms. Well planned and executed by an impressive general staff whose soldiers entered the maze of terror and frightened away its most fearful beast, its man-devouring monitaur; the buffalo of myth made flesh: Idi Amin.

Mission accomplished, Nyerere returned Uganda to Milton Obote and took nothing in return.

Not all lived up to the Great Teacher's expectations. Just like the Red Army in its attack on Poland in September 1939 the liberators of Kampala were mazed by baubles across the border; they simply could not resist wrist watches which they took from shops and passers by and spread them up each arm from wrist to elbow.'

It was this point of comparison, as seen in photographs taken at the moment of liberation in Lwow and Kampala, with whose display Marisha began her lecture to the History Department at the University in Dar-es-Salaam.

A voice called out from the audience: "We also took transistor radios!"

Embarrassed silence from the rest.

To lighten the moment she thanked the caller and added that:

"There were no portable radios to be had in 1939 and much of what was not portable, watches apart, found itself onto trains taking all loot to the east. ….. Interesting, is it not, how time pieces are such universal objects of desire? I would say that in the west most advertisements in Sunday journals feature them. Many are diamond encrusted. But I would not (holding up her left arm to display her wrist watch) exchange my trusted Moskva for such baubles. I take it that I am in good company?"

“Yes”, said the caller. “I too have a Moskva!”

And with that the auditorium exploded with laughter.

Now at ease with her audience, Marisha continued with, ‘Stalin's Russia, The Making of a Super Power.’

‘ … Stalin's slogan was one which Julius Nyerere favoured: "Socialism in One Country" which gave the rationale for the social and economic transformation of the USSR through a series of five year plans.

She repeated with emphasis the distance Poland wished to put between herself and the Kremlin.

There was no audible response from the audience. But she could see frantic note taking in the front row reserved for members of the diplomatic corps, the most prominent groups being the Chinese and Russians.

She continued with her lecture, making points that would not pass unrecorded and unreported by the scribes; messages, sanctioned by Warsaw, of great consequence to Moscow and of considerable interest to Beijing. And to Dar-es-Salaam; all had sooner or later to confront the human costs of Stalinist endeavour; each had sacrificed a generation to a God of Hunger.

*

Marisha had said her piece. And she looked up from the lectern at the amphitheatre of faces. Lips bore a wary smile while hands gave mild applause. And no questions were asked. Marisha was far from disappointed. The agitation on the faces in the front row, especially amongst the Chinese diplomats, standard bearers of Mao’s Stalinism, was her reward. As for the muted response of the Tanzanians? That she well understood.

She had visited Dar-es-Salaam on many occasions, before and after Jozef’s death, and had come to recognise the reluctance, amongst her otherwise friendly hosts, to give vent to their thoughts and opinions.

But there was one exception to that rule; the young man who later introduced himself as Daudi Kandowere and who from that moment produced in her a feeling of desire Marisha had never experienced before.

He was the colour of a Makonde carving, before black or dark brown boot polish is applied to make *loliondo* or *acacia* look like mahogany, and he had the regal bearing of the sculpted figure she had bought that morning; a Phidean African come to life. His gaze was direct and the look of fearlessness was also scribed in his mouth, but when he smiled or spoke a kindly charm replaced the

persona of severity and transformed an inscrutable emperor into a captivating prince.

"Madam, I listened with great care to what you had to say and what you did not say. The memory of our leader, *Mwalimu*, has yet to find its solid form in the mould of our national consciousness. Your Stalin and, now, our Nyerere are men of history. Great men. Men who transformed their respective nations to give them an identity, a strength of national character which will define them for all time; Russians are Stalin's children as we are Nyerere's. You did not dwell on Stalin's terror. Are we to forgive the cost of our Father's socialism? Both sacrificed the welfare of a generation. Yes, we were not cast into camps or liquidated for speaking our minds, but the new villages *were* miniature camps and any dissent made pariahs of dissenters. We all had to speak the same political language. And there was hunger in the land. You did not call Stalin a God of Hunger as the people in the market say of the Teacher. What would you say of him?"

Marisha replied: "It would be impertinent ... disrespectful. … Presumptuous of me to express a defining view. It is for you. Your generation. It's budding historians whom I addressed this evening; it is for them to decide. It is Africans who must write the definitive histories of African people."

"Thank you madam. It has been an honour and a pleasure …."

*

Marisha could not sleep that night for fear of losing thought of Daudi Kandowere.

In the morning she discretely asked about him and found out a great deal about the young man of her dreams and of her desires from Choco whom she met in the Agip hotel; the only place in town still able to provide a semblance of European expectations of hotel service.

Not that Choco was entirely European; he was half Greek half Swahili; half caste. Hence Choco. Would Daudi be called the same were he to live amongst white boys as Choco had done in London?

*

"Marisha! How good to see you. You have the audacity to come into my office, take down your knickers and say how about it!"

For reasons unbeknown to Marisha, Choco had adopted much of the language of the sound track to the porn films he showed at his club. He would amuse himself by coming out with snippets of speech from scenes etched on his mind, trying it on with any woman within earshot; just in case …

"Oh, Choco. You naughty man! Certainly not. Not here. Not now! …." How nice to see you again. *Howww* are you? Business okay?"

Over lunch which he proposed they have together, she asked him about Daudi Kandowere.

"Yes. I know him. He is one of us. A chocolate man. An interesting story whose people you know. Remember Kostas Kokopoulos. And the Armenian?

"Yes of course. We were all together at your fantastic party."

"Well up in Arusha there are a number of chocolate people created by Greeks with Africans. And I know most of them because we were all together at the Greek school there. Daudi is much younger than me. But I knew his cousin who told me about the goings on.

There was a circle of men, including Drakos, Savas, and Kostas …"

"Kokopoulos?"

'No he never partook. Too German in his views about sex between the races. Anathema. No. It was another one. I forget now his surname. Zee … something. Anyway they all had steady friend girls with whom they had children who, as *sokolates* (chocolates) were brought up under the supervision of Father Gabriel who would not only condemn illicit liaisons in public, often clouting any offending father he came across in the street, but would insist on the proper care of the little *bastardthakia* one of whom was Daudi Kandowere.'

All others had Greek names. But not Daudi. He was the Armenian's son by a Meru woman who worked at his castle. The Armenian denied the parentage of the boy and sent him away.'

"Where?"

'Oh. Not far. He went to see Kokopoulos and together they arranged that the boy should be brought up in the care of Kandowere and his many wives. Kandowere's reputation was such that he was a credible father to the boy as it had been rumoured that he had had an affair with an Afrikaans girl who lived at the sawmill at Tengeru on mad Tsiknos's estate.'

"Why mad?"

"Ah. Nuts. He got drunk regularly and would force his wife to dance the *Sirtaki* in front of him and his guests after poker. She was an elderly cushion of a woman whom he called *arkoutha* (bear) and this poor bear would shuffle

through the jumpiest of dance rythmns and would be shot at by her husband should she stop moving before the end of the record.'

"Shot at!'

'Yeah. Not at as into her body. But at her feet. Into the floor boards which had often to be replaced because of perforation from his .45 pistol. !"

"My God."

'Yes. Quite mad.'

"So Daudi was raised on the Kokopoulos estate. By this man Kandu …"

'Kicheche Kandowere; Kicheche the skunk. Call him skunk. That was his nickname. Skunk by nature and by scent.'

"So who paid for Daudi to go through school and now university?"

'School money came from the Armenian until he died. When his Meru woman took over the estate, as arranged by her clan whose elders threatened Armenis with execution were he to refuse, she stopped making the transfers to Daudi. Under pressure from Father Gabriel, Kokopoulos took over the obligation until he died. And now Kandowere does it all. He has become a rich man. Through the gem trade.'

"The gem trade?"

'Yes. But that is as much as I am willing to say. Except to say: "You have the audacity to come into my office, pull down your knickers and say, 'How about it? '

Marisha took her leave of the lecherous Choco as a wave of disgust went through her body. The next day she flew out of Dar-es-Salaam for the last time. Daudi Kandowere sat beside her gazing back through the window at the receding curve of Kilindini harbour and out over the ocean; the ocean which bore to the coast wave after wave of new blood some of which flowed in Daudi's veins.

He looked at Marisha and she at him. There was a closeness between them which had yet to find expression.

The formal relationship between them arose through a bursary provided through Marisha to Daudi by the Polish Government.

It would fund a place on a London University postgraduate course. Daudi was set on becoming a historian.*

When *Mwalimu* died, KK decided that memory of his greatness should be perpetuated in an annual lecture which he funded.

Speakers were chosen from around the world.

The first came from St. John's College, Cambridge.

No more followed.

The visiting lecturer's theme was poverty. 'Poverty in Africa.' And he began by quoting from the Teacher's obituary in The Times:

'Members of the United Nations stood for a minute's silence at their headquarters in New York as a mark of respect for an iconic African leader, whose humility and honesty remain a guiding light for contemporary leaders on a continent still blighted by the tribalism and internecine strife that he stood against. Tributes from past and present African leaders and from heads of state from all over the world poured into Tanzanian embassies after the death of the man known at home simply as *Mwalimu*. (Teacher).'

He paused. Looked up at his audience and said words about the saintly man that were unheard of amongst the country's elite; far from the unlit nights of most lives in his benighted country.

"Ladies and Gentlemen for those of us who have closely followed African affairs I may shock you by saying that such adulation tells only a part of the Tanzanian epic. Going amongst the people, as a guest to many in towns and villages around the country, I heard it said, in Swahili, the language of the country that, 'Yes he was our *Mwalimu* but also, said in quite tones and in private, he is more often called *Mungu wa Nja*. The God of Hunger. Indeed, the son of Nyerere Butiko, the chief of the small Zanaki tribe settled around the eastern shore of Lake Victoria carried with him a family name which related to a plague of army-worms which was abroad at the time of his father's birth in 1860. Julius Kambarage Nyerere was born in March 1922 at Butiama. His mother, who could not recall the day, named him after a rain spirit because it was raining after a year of terrible drought. To this day his place of birth remains a place of spirits and of witches and of witch killings in times of hardship; only this year an Albino was ritually killed there.

Witchcraft is not my subject. Nor did the Teacher practice the dark arts. But where does he rank in the pantheon of grim reapers? Lenin. Stalin. Hitler. Franco. Kruschev. Mao. Pol Pot. Idi Amin. Milton Obote. Emperor Bokasa. Sekou Toure. Comrade Bob. Kim Il Sung. Suharto. Where should we place his

bust? Here are the famously infamous Great Leaders of our cruel century; men who sacrificed an entire generation in the name of their revolution. In the name of progress.

When speaking to my students of, say, Stalin I ask them to do a simple cost benefit analysis: Great power status: tens of millions dead. Was it worth it? Most say no. Some say yes. I have yet to put the same question to them concerning Nyerere. I am still working on a history of Tanzania.

I start, of course, with Tanganyika which changed its name soon after independence in 1961 to Tanzania, after union with Zanzibar, following a mass slaughter of Arabs by descendents of their former slaves.

And what do I find? I find that by *every* economic measure life for the majority was better then than it is now. In global terms, GDP today is well below that statistic for any year between 1939-1960. It is a fact that at the time of independence Tanganyika was in the lead of the food exporting Black African nations; today Tanzania can no longer feed its people; ninety per cent of whom work and live on the land; the majority of whom were forced into collectivised villages. Opponents of *Ujamaa* socialism launched in Arusha so many years ago, have been jailed, without trial, in their thousands.

What went wrong? In 1967, when Nyerere set out his vision in the Arusha Declaration, he advocated a type of socialism, allegedly African in origin. It was a notion based on collectivized agriculture which would provide surpluses for industrialization, fuelled also by a programme set to achieve universal literacy. The key element was 'villagisation' which in practice meant that over two million people were *forced* into collective farming; into collective living. Now, you may ask how did this differ from life in any rural community prior to the great experiment? Mainly in the fact that the village changed from being a homogenous entity in clan-tribal terms into something quite different through tribal mixing.

Moreover, in creating an economy of self reliance, Tanzania amassed huge debts.

Economically untenable, the country was saved from mass starvation mainly by well meaning Scandinavia which poured in huge amounts of cash to keep the project afloat. And China stepped in with capital projects such as the Tanzam railway, linking Dar-es-Salaam to Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia.

In round figures one third of Tanzania's economy was supplied by foreign aid. Remedy for a coup you may think?

Yes. Early on Nyerere survived an attempt to oust him by a mutinous detachment of the Army, still largely the KAR in spirit. He fled Dar-es-Salaam

for protection by the *eminence grise* of Tanganyika politics, a man called Kokopoulos about whom I know little. But I hope to remedy this in the history which I hope soon to complete.'

He looked at his audience hoping to register that fact; the marketing of academic texts was notoriously difficult, so why not give his intended book it a plug?

' … Nyerere not only survived, but attained a devoted following amongst his people. Because of him, there was free schooling, virtually free medicine ; like the NHS in the UK, free at the point of delivery but all paid for by taxpayers; in Tanzania's case, mainly by Nordic ones.

Despite this vital assistance, Tanzania became poverty-stricken. The mainly white owned estates were confiscated and became collectivized wastelands. What was not communally owned was offered in patches for the millions of unemployed and dispossessed to scratch out a meagre existence.

Yet Nyerere stayed in power until 1985 when he did the unique thing in Africa; *he retired from politics.*

So how should we rate him? Is there a redeeming feature that sets him apart from the other Gods of Hunger? ….

What is undeniably his greatest achievement is that Nyerere prevented tribal conflict; all Tanzanians speak the same language and because of the ethnic mixing implied in policies hatched and announced in Arusha, which also included eradicating the political power of tribal chiefs, the reply to the question, 'Who are you?' put to any Tanzanian, perhaps with the exception of the mountain tribes of Meru and Kilimanjaro, is almost always, 'I am Tanzanian'.

This question of identity, perhaps the most vital in the political history of any state, and I am thinking here as much of Weimar Germany as of Rwanda and Burundi, is answered well in Tanzania and will surely save the nation from sliding into bloody chaos.

If that is his greatest gift to it, the nation, it was bought at the cost of millions of blighted lives.

What was his chief weakness?

Like all Big Men he over-played his hand.

The monolithic architecture of his ideas ran away with him. The construction of his revolution ground the people into dust. He thought of humanity in terms of

his own wishes, in the image of an historic self. He lived in a world of his own. He forgot how to gauge others.

True democracy, which allows a plurality of opinions and views and remedies, was never practiced in Tanzania which was born a one party state and remains a one party state. As an aside, I have discovered that it was proposed to call it Tanunya; after TANU; an honest name for a one party state; a state of that party … but back to my Pantheon.

You maybe surprised to find included in this mausoleum of my construction Milton Obote alongside Idi Amin. …

Obote was installed in power by Nyerere who, in power, became a poor judge of human nature: Obote proved to be more dreadful than the last king of Scotland.'

(Laughter.)

The Tanzanian Army invaded Uganda to depose the mad dictator. …

On the face of it, this was a triumph beyond all expectation. But also a tragedy in its singularity: It was a unique event born of a unique individual, never again born. …

His mission on earth proved a failure. And, short of a second coming it could never, would never, be repeated. …

The Teacher's lesson was simply too simplistic, too unrealistic, too unworldly. … Had he unleashed wholesale pillage in Uganda the campaign would have made more sense to his materially deprived people. …. But he was in spirit and in praxis a saintly man who refused to bow to Mammon and expected the same of his nation.

'So where do we place Nyerere?

I wish to do him justice and to honour the memory of this decent and honest individual.

For saving his country, by personal example, from Africa's endemic problems of obscene corruption. And from the ever present threat of ethnic violence. …. For these two reasons I would not propose him for my pantheon of Gods of Hunger.

Should I do so for impoverishing his nation or for blighting the lives of an entire generation or for sustaining a one party system and thus ignoring dissenting opinion?

No, because all the other gods were more than autocrats. They were heartless dictators and cold blooded murderers at that.

To my knowledge no one went, by order of Julius Nyerere, to certain death, be it by impossibly hard labour in *lagier* or in concentration camps or by Dornier or famine by design or by plunder or Third Brigade or through torture by state security.

In comparison to the others, permanently set in my pantheon, I would say that *Mwalimu*, the Teacher should rest alone. In peace.

One last point: should he be canonized? I have learnt that moves are afoot at the United Nations to confer on him the title 'World hero of Social justice.' St. Julius? Stranger measures have been mooted at the General Assembly!'

*

KK was startled at what he had heard said of the friend by whose favours he had survived the rigours of Ujamaa and by whose policies he became wealthy.

Before independence, KK spent much energy on a battle of wills with the paramount chief of the Dongo who opposed KK's wish wanted to divert the headwaters of the Karumeru River to irrigate his new farm.

He lost the case in court. And lost access to the water when he tried several times to divert it illicitly in channels blasted through the rock by dynamite because he never could lay the last charge. The Dongo guarded the remaining granite barrier by day and by night. The chief prevailed. But only until the earliest days of *Uhuru*: one of the Teacher's first acts, almost straight after independence in 1961, was to abolish the role of tribal chiefs and village headmen and elders; KK had successfully made the case for removing the chief agents of reaction; 'the enemies of progress'.

*

In London Daudi read things differently. He identified himself with members of that uniquely nineteenth century Russian phenomenon, the disaffected intellectual; he came to identify himself as a member of the Russian intelligentsia which felt at once alienated from the ruling elite and isolated from the rest of society with which it so ardently wanted communion.

The trouble was that he, like the intelligentsia in Russia, had no coherent plan of action. He, like they, wanted to change society at home. But was it to be through gradual reform or swift counter-revolution? And, were these changes to be Western in orientation, or were they to be directed towards the realization of a liberal form of political and economic Africanisation?

The beginnings of an answer to his question came in Isaiah Berlin's lecture, *Fathers and Children*:

"Critical turning-points in history are reached when a form of life and its institutions cramp and obstruct the most vigorous productive forces alive in a society - economic, social, artistic, intellectual - and it is worn out in resisting them. Against such a social order, men and groups of very different tempers and classes and conditions unite. There is an upheaval - a revolution - which, at times, achieves a limited success. It reaches a point at which some of the demands or interests of its original promoters are satisfied to an extent which makes further fighting on their part unprofitable. They stop, or struggle uncertainly. The alliance disintegrates. The most passionate and single-minded, especially among those whose purposes or ideals are furthest from fulfilment, wish to press on. To stop half-way seems to them a betrayal. The sated groups, or the less visionary, or those who fear that the old yoke may be followed by an even more oppressive one, tend to hang back. They find themselves assailed on two sides. The conservatives look on them as, at best, knock-kneed supporters, at worst as deserters and traitors. The radicals look on them as pusillanimous allies, more often as diversionists and renegades. Men of this sort need a good deal of courage to resist magnetization by either polar force and to urge moderation in a disturbed situation. Among them are those who see, and cannot help seeing, many sides of a case, as well as those who perceive that a humane cause promoted by means that are too ruthless is in danger of turning into its opposite, liberty into oppression in the name of liberty, equality into a new, self-perpetuating oligarchy to defend equality, justice into crushing of all forms of nonconformity, love of men into hatred of those who oppose brutal methods of achieving it. The middle ground is a notoriously exposed, dangerous, and ungrateful position.'

Daudi was well aware that he occupied that position and, in that position, what was it he wanted to do for Africa?

It was Marisha who asked him the question. And suggested an answer.

'Read what I have recently completed on Poland. It may be a guide. Poland between the wars is, in my view, analogous to East African today; I think that your new hero Museveni is Uganda's Pilsudski; perhaps even East Africa's Pilsudski as East Africa seems to me very Polish.

The statement interested Daudi very much. He had done work on Pilsudski when lecturing on the decline of liberal democracy in Europe between the wars. Yet the line of enquiry suggested to him by Marisha had not, then, crossed his mind.

He took her advice and read, through the night, the papers on her desk:

‘The new Poland was a classic example of underdevelopment; her social and economic structure was predominantly rural. Of 27.2 million inhabitants, three-quarters lived in the countryside and 63.8 per cent derived there livelihood from the soil. The creation of a surplus in agricultural products for the purpose of trade, income from which could pay for capital investment in the process of modernization, was hampered by several factors. Fecundity (15.3 births per 1,000 inhabitants), illiteracy (32.7 per cent) and inefficient farming practices created limitations which were compounded by runaway inflation. This was itself partly a consequence of the war; making good the physical devastation created enormous demands which the economy was inadequate to meet. The need for new markets and the legacy of three disparate imperial economies were further factors in an inflationary spiral which continued uncurbed until 1924. There was so much to be done and so little with which to do it.

Agricultural reform was a priority. Lack of mechanization, servitude and medieval-style strip farming persisted among the peasants. Their crop yields were low and the quality of their stock was poor. Of the 15.5 million peasants the majority worked holdings of 5 hectares or less on 15.3 per cent of the land. Such units were barely self-sufficient. At the other extreme 1 per cent of holdings were over 50 hectares and occupied 52.9 per cent of the land. Of this over 70 per cent was privately owned and over half was in estates over 1,000 hectares. A redistribution of land was seen as a social necessity and was put into effect by the Land Reform Bills of 1920 and 1925. However, implementation was slow and the annual parcelization of 200,000 hectares barely kept pace with the rapidly rising population, so that by 1939 the agriculture problem was further from solution than it had been in 1918.

Between the wars the distorted vestiges of feudal values permeated Polish society as a whole. The noble owners of the largest estates had, until the eighteenth century, played a dominant role in Polish history. The parliament (Sejm) was formed from their nominees and their policies, which largely served their interests as grain-producers and landowners, included extreme exploitation of the peasants and little or no hope of agricultural reform. Interpersonal quarrelling amongst the nobility and a system of 'Liberum Veto' which meant that any member of parliament could veto a law favoured by all the rest, also made government extremely difficult.

During the nineteenth century the intelligentsia, and the officer corps which came into being during the Napoleonic Wars, emerged as influential social groups. They adopted certain of the landowners' prejudices against trade and industry, while variously supplanting the former aristocratic egotism with the democratic values of their century embodied in liberalism, nationalism and socialism.

The intelligentsia comprised a very broad membership drawn from the bureaucracy and the professions - it was the dominant urban class. Poland lacked both a strong bourgeoisie and a strong proletariat.

The political system of the new Polish State was fragmented. No party or grouping was strong enough to provide a firm basis for stable government. In the period of 1918 to 1926, when Pilsudski overthrew the parliamentary regime, no fewer than 14 governments held office.

Crisis followed crisis, culminating in Pilsudski's *coup d'etat* in May 1926.

*

Daudi realized that there was no point in his devoting his life to advocating liberal democracy in East Africa. A few days after his epiphany saw an advertisement in the Times Higher Education supplement (THES) which attracted his interest. It was a senior lectureship in European History at Rhodes University in South Africa.

He decided to apply. And was accepted. Work there started in January which barely gave him time to work out a term's notice at his London college but enough time to convince Marisha that it was something he wanted to do with or without her.

'Look, Marisha, you can see that I am not fully settled in London and that my hopes of a political career at home have receded thanks to you. South Africa is surely the place for me. Post-apartheid, it is the beacon of hope for the entire continent. I really want to get in on the ground floor of that edifice and, as an African, play my part in converting the dream of a rainbow nation into some sort of reality. Given my make-up, neither black nor white, I reckon I should fit in well.'

Marisha cried and begged for days on end that he should stay with her until the pleas and tears dried away in the heat of his resolve to depart. For him, their affair was at an end for some considerable time. For her, the end was cruel in its suddenness; she had not been expecting it.

They parted amicably enough early one evening at Heathrow.

The next morning he was in Johannesburg. By midday, in Port Elizabeth where he was met by a car sent from Grahamstown which took him to the university to be there by tea time.

Daudi was made very welcome. Especially by the many divorced women on the faculty and in town; every second white woman was second or third hand. Many still in their physical prime. Only their eyes showed the strain and sadness of rejection and loneliness. So adept did he become in the facial

physiognomy of a rejected woman that just one direct gaze was sufficient in determining his line of approach to bed: attentiveness, commiseration, reassurance, gentleness, flattery and bed.

Extracting himself from a relationship founded entirely on the mores of an opportunistic amateur psychologist always proved infinitely more difficult than ever he thought possible. His catch was invariably an octopus; she would cling on with a resolve matched only in nature by the eight armed leach from the deep.

Once free of several such encounters he decided to fish in shallower waters to be found in and about the students union.

The height of student pleasure came with Festival. Held in July it started as a student rag week and, through a series of ever more generous sponsors, from Five Roses Tea to the First National Bank, it has gained considerable popularity. Which is not really surprising, especially in explaining its appeal to visitors from abroad.

The Festival is now on the tourist trail. When all the animals in the Eastern Province are in bed for the night there is very little to do but drink; in Grahamstown at least, there is carnival. And culture. Lots of it of every kind.

On the first evening of Festival, Daudi chose to go to the poetry event at which readings by local and national wordsmiths were advertised. His choice was based entirely on the interests of a willowy blonde EngLit student he had met earlier that day at a bar half way down main street.

Samantha was refreshingly unsullied by life and rather typical of the white undergraduates at the university; children from wealthy homes sent away to what was considered by security conscious parents in Johannesburg as a safe university campus. And that, it was. There was very little about it of the rough and tumble of the metropolitan colleges. This was a white enclave which was only just beginning to open its doors to other races and even then the new intake was also rather precious; sons and daughters of a new black middle class which also wished to guard their offspring from the realities of urban sprawl and maul.

In Grahamstown, the Township, where the black majority lives, was on the other side of the valley, within sight of, but hardly proximate to, the wide jacaranda lined main street leading to the gardened campus.

Rhini township housed the university's servant class and the servants of white folk in houses bearing plaques about their historic connection to the white settlers whose history is celebrated in a huge fortress like building built as a monument to their trials and tribulations, Nearby is the Settlers' Inn where until

recently white kids swam in the pool while their parents drank beer on the verandah overlooking the manicured gardens. Black kids and their families were just beginning to make their appearance there at the time Daudi joined the history department. All was sweet with showy tolerance as white mums held beautiful black youngsters on their knees whenever they could catch one going from the pool to the bar or toilet; wet dresses and forced smiles were but a small price to pay for the privilege; the privilege of being white in Grahamstown and still the largest group within the comfortable class whose members now included a small number of the political majority. Things they were a changing, but only slowly, year by academic year.

*

After the poetry readings Daudi and Samantha joined a group of black undergraduates for drinks under the central marquee. Conversation turned to the topic of the University's name. It was being mooted that it should change from Rhodes to Ruth First.

"Why Ruth First? Why another white person? For goodness sake we know this place as neighbouring the site of a great battle fought by the Xhosa against the British. Here. Just above Rhini Township at Makana's Kopje. It is high time for a renaming. Rhini Town for Grahamstown. No more Cecil Rhodes or Horatio Nelson but Makana University, on Mandela Avenue, Samora Machel Street, Julius Nyerere Close, Comrade Bob Road. Let us knock down the signs of alien domination at the Settlers' Monument and re-name it Rhini Social Club to give the people of the township somewhere decent to socialize. And get rid of the heritage aura of the town; return it to the people. Make any house that comes up for sale available first to a township family and use the university's reserves to provide mortgages.'

'It is still all wrong. The balance of advantage must swing in favour of the majority. And here, in our audience tonight is a new employee of the university, a black man, born in Tanzania, educated in Uganda … and what is he to teach? European History ….. We demand historians to teach the history of our tribes. Our indigenous peoples have a long and proud history ….'

*

The place erupted. Daudi knew his time was up; time to get off the fence or opt out.

He decided to opt out. Why get involved? The fever of his earlier identification with the Russian intelligentsia had subsided. His mind returned to cool analytical thought: There was trouble brewing and he could chart its course. The question of national identity would be fought over and there would be conflict. If not tribal, then a class war; between the poor and the wealthy; between the townships and the suburbs. Eventually a Strong Man would take control and a God of Hunger would rule the land. These were highly probable

outcomes in the search for the nationhood of the great forgotten majority. Strange to think that the continent's most advanced economy was yet its least developed nation. Even stranger to recognize just how anomalous was the position of his country of birth; one of the poorest on the continent yet a model of social, political and cultural integration; of forged nationhood.

Of democracy, on the European model, Daudi's system of choice, there seemed slender hope. Where one party rule predominated or where one party forever held the majority, there was little room for the smaller party. The exception that proved the rule was in the Western Cape which was held by the only opposition party in parliament. Once the ANC took over this last bastion of multi-racial hope and multi-gender practice, as it surely must, that would be the end of dreaming upon a rainbow. The constitution would change by the atrophy of all the delicate clauses inserted by the chattering class at the height of its influence during the interregnum between Botha and Mandela, when both were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The liberal regulations of the constitution would remain enshrined just for appearances sake just as it was in that most liberal of all constitutions, the one devised by Stalin.

Whether or not this was a bad thing, Daudi was unwilling to say outside the lecture hall and seminar room where he got to know his students well; even those who pointed the finger at him in the auditorium during the festival.

And what he learnt of them, especially the vocal ones, was that their sincerity on matters social and political was as meagre as that year's rains. In a word they were *poseurs*.

This he learnt more and more as he met them at more and more campus parties.

"Come now, Daudi, we are modern men. Men of the globalised world. We will seek our fortunes wherever opportunities arise. Sam here is already making a fortune in mobile phones. Winnie has an internship at First National.'

'And what about you?'

'The Congo my dear boy. There are fortunes to be made there in minerals.'

'And what about the people?'

There you go again professor.

The people will benefit by the wealth we create.'

'How?'

'Taxation.'

‘What was that, Sam?’

‘Well, at least the bit we cannot avoid to pay. Ha. Ha.’

‘Winnie?’

‘Truth is, I may not stay here. I want to travel and maybe work in New York, or London. After all we are modern women and men of the world.’

‘And what of the poor?’

‘Do not concern yourself too much about them. They understand.’

‘They understand?’

‘Yes. They understand that first we must grow fat and rich after which it will be their turn. It has always been the case. And our people understand. It is in our tradition.’

‘Modern or Traditional?’

‘Hahaha, Daudi… Turn off your brain and enjoy yourself, you sweet man.’

‘Modern or Traditional?’

‘You?’

‘Very modern man. Or at least you will be by the time I have finished with you! Do you want to dance? Do you, do you want to dance?’

And she swept him off his feet.

Kandowere

While Daudi was dancing the night away in Grahamstown, a tragedy occurred at home, in Arusha; KK had died. There was no one to witness the event. And this caused a problem. Blame would be apportioned. Scape-goats would be found and sacrificed and, unless well handled, the death of this man of importance would result in nothing but problems for his *major domo*, Kicheche Kandowere.

This man about the farm had a healthy regard for figures of importance even when they were dead and the corpse of John Kostas Kokopoulos was no exception to this primary rule of survival.

Kandowere demanded to be well briefed on the event and soon discovered that it was only when Martini came into the house to prepare breakfast that KK was found seated on the side of his bed, dead.

When alive, that's where he was each morning: On the side of his bed contemplating the hour and the contents of his trolley table.

Each night Martini would set it out with a thermos of tea and a plate of Marie biscuits. Leaning up against the trolley, whose wheels were locked, stood KK's loaded twelve bore. At the point the barrel touched the trolley stood a torch on the tray. Also a box of cartridges. These items were a just in case the Somali gangsters who had been terrorizing the area should wish to interrupt KK's wakeful night. He mainly slept during the day in his armchair. On the verandah. Overlooking the estate and the two mountains: Meru close by and Kilimanjaro in the distance.

He did not keep awake at night for fear of intruders. KK was fearless and so were his pack of dogs. The shotgun and torch were a long established habit forged over decades in the bush. Threatening things could happen in the night; dogs were poisoned or carried off by leopard or hyena. Thieves took their chances. Murderers and assassins prowled in the thin light of stars. Mischief was abroad. Yet never had he felt threatened. But just in case some danger came close it would find hot lead in greeting. Many was the time at his farms in Dongobeash and Magara that he would sense a prowler and shoot through the door in anticipation of an attack. And each time the dawn would reveal a corpse of a once deadly animal; though never a human, Man had more sense than to test KK's senses in the dark.

*

Martini found him in death as he was in life at that time of day. Sitting on the side of his bed by the trolley. Words were never exchanged as Martini took the tray away to the kitchen. KK rarely looked up at his servant. But he would give

a cough; the cough of an inveterate *Nyota* smoker. But this morning there was no cough and Martini paused to examine his master.

The stillness was not strange but the silent chest was a puzzle as was the lack of a lit cigarette. The head, large, large as in life was set low on massive shoulders and faced out across the room towards the mesh door which overlooked rows of coffee.

His hair was not as neat as usual; the thin waves of grey and white revealing only a hint of skull were normally brushed by now. His eyes were open and opaque as usual and his *pua* (nose), an object to be admired for its mass, best described by Poles as a *kulfon*, was no less admirable that morning. Yet it lacked its usual redness, as did the full lips. And the master had not shaved, which was most unusual. Still, best remove the trolley from beside his knees. And it was the subsequent stillness that made Martini look again more closely at his master who, after the trolley's move, appeared to lean to one side in a most uncomfortable posture.

"Bwana Kosta. Habari zako leo. Mbona una ka hivyo vibaya?" … Why are you sitting so uncomfortably?

No reply. Just more of a lean. And then a slump of the top half onto the bed, and with the knees bent, KK's legs up went up into the air, his feet in the mosquito net.

"Mungu Mkubwa! Great God. Bwana Kosta! ..... Ume kufa? Have you died! *Mungu wangu! Ame kufa!* Oh my God! He has died!

Martini left the trolley in the middle of the room and went out to call Kandowere.

This took some time because the farm's foreman was unused to being roused so long before the workers' parade at seven-thirty, still a good hour away. And there was a matter of protocol. Here was a question of status and Kandowere, as senior *manyapara*, was number one after KK. So he did not reply to Martini's knock at the door. And anyway he was nursing a particularly pleasurable sensation that early morning.

And then came another knock and then a call from Martini.

The *shenzi*, (mongrel) thought Kicheche. Typical houseboy, sure to be complaining about something a woman would have dealt with in silence, daring not to unsettle the big man from continuing with his business.

With regret he desisted from further manipulation and eventually replied: "Yes, what do you want, *Mpishi* – boy. (Cook.)

"Haraka, Kandowere. Njo sasa hivyo! Mze ali kufa!"(Quickly. Come at once! The old man has died.)

Kandowere looked down along his belly to check that was not the case. But it was becoming so because his brain began to engage with the message coming through the door.

'Nini? Una sema kweli?' (What? Are you sure?) And with that he piled out of bed and was out of the door as soon as his thoughts had cooled sufficiently so as not to make a tent of his *kanga*.(Wrap-around shawl).

Together, the two men walked back into the house. And sure enough, the *Mze* was as dead as Martini had said; loud enough for every hut in camp to decamp into the morning mist which was soon dispersed by the hot breath of a growing chorus of ullalating women, barking dogs, cackling hens, bleating goats and mwelling children.

"Quickly. Let us get him properly into his *kiti* (armchair) before they all come to stare and before someone makes an entry.."

The two of them, one at the shoulders and the other at the knees lifted KK into the armchair. Martini lent the old man's head carefully onto the antimacassar, remarking to himself how flat the back of KK's head was. He had not before noticed this quality of the bwana's skull. But close friends and family knew it well; the head of a poor Greek, flattened at the back by sleeping on a stone floor; so it was said of all whose heads were flat at the back; every single one of them according to Kleo: "Because they were all so poor in their mountain villages, not being able to afford mattresses or pillows, let alone beds. Unlike ourselves from Anatolia who were always better off than any other Greeks and princes in comparison to such paupers." *"Tfoo, tfoo."* (She would end such statements with a little theatrical spitting to emphasise the point made in favour of her own family and tribe; always, in her mind, superior to other Hellenes. And, in any case, she never did care much for Kokopoulos who had demanded her daughter's hand in marriage by brandishing a pistol at her beloved John's head. *"Theos sihorestou.*" (God forgive him: John, her late husband, not, Kokopoulos who outlived her by more than a decade. *Theos sihorestou*.)

*

Kandowere treated the lower body with less care, his mind racing to try to turn the situation to his own advantage.

"Now listen Martini. Let no one else into the room. Draw the curtains and lock windows and the door."

"What! I am not staying with him in the dark!"

"No, you *pumbafu!* (Fool). *Funga dirisha na mlango.. Alafu ngoja karibu mlango la nyumba kama korokoni."* Shut the room up and wait by the front door of the house like a night watchman."

This Martini did, whilst Kicheche Kandowere went around the back of the house to address the gathering throng.

He spoke as their leader. Which he was. And corrupt though he was, he held the camp's respect as head foreman, likely father of many of it's children, lover to most of its women and regular supplier of *pombe* (beer) to its men. This was the key to his hold over the camp. And it was a golden key ever since he had come into considerable wealth as first link in the long chain that smuggled the gemstones (which KK had named Tanganite) from the mine near the farm to Misha's fishing operation on Zanzibar. And from there to gem cutters in Iran, India, Holland and Hatton Garden.

Kandowere stored the gems in the plant pots on KK's verandah until one day, when the regional commissioner and his party climbed out of three brand new long wheel base Land rovers, swept across the lawn and stepped up to see the old man on the verandah and inadvertently knocked one of the pots off its pedestal and down onto the herbaceous border at the front of the house below the raised verandah.

Kandowere saw this happen from his vantage point in the coffee bushes. He wet himself on the spot where he crouched rooted in fear of giving himself away.

KK, within Kandowere's range of hearing said to his visitors: 'Please think no more of it. They are only geraniums which I will ask the gardener to repot. The pot itself seems to be intact as it has landed on the soft earth of the bed. *Si kitu. It is nothing. Karibu, karibu, karibuni wote.* …. Welcome. Welcome all. Martini, *chai tafazali*. … Martin, tea please.'

As soon as the party left, Kokopoulos summoned the gardener.

Kandowere appeared instead, telling his master that the gardener was on the *cho* (loo) and that he, Kandowere would put things right immediately and in an instant he had the downed pot's cache of gems, which was in a draw string pouch made of a bulls scrotum, safely in his soiled trouser pocket.

"Thank you, Kandowere. What's that smell? It stinks of shit. What is it?"

"One of the dogs seems to have buried a rat here in the bed beside the fallen pot which brought it to the surface. I will go and get a spade and bury it deep and far away."

“Thank you. You smelly old Kicheche! (Skunk).”

“Thank you bwana.”

And with that he ran to the mill race, bathed, took the pouch to his hut and came back to finish the job just when the gardener had finished his business in the *choroni*.

*

Though Kandowere was not a hairy man, he would have said to himself that the episode was a close shave.

Then, as luck would have it, Kokopoulos died in the night.

Kicheche, who understood gearboxes very well went into overdrive. Or rather his mind did so.

The dead Kokopoulos brought opportunities which multiplied in Kandowere’s rich imagination; the corpse was a godsend. Kandowere would become Head Mganga. He would preserve the body as he had countless times preserved trophies. Kokopoulos had taught him, using the skills of ancient Egypt in which he was well versed. Together they went to Lake Natron, in Masailand, to collect the same type of salts called by the same name (natron in Masai; magadi in Swahili) as used in pharaonic mummification.

Kokopoulos had, as Kandowere and many others knew, a hypothesis that Nilotics, like the Masai, were just that, Nilotics, who made the link with Upper Egypt and Meroe down the Nile and along the rift to Lake Natron in Masailand. It all fitted perfectly, but when he presented the scenario in a paper to the editor of The Tanganyika Record his article was rejected. Rejected by the leading light of the country’s paleohistory.

He was also the local District Officer who made KK’s early life in the Territory a misery by ordering the evacuation of KK’s first farm at Dongobesh where he and Martini and Kandowere had started farm-life together inside a baobab tree.

A house was built in due course, after the paw paw trees were planted into virgin earth. Earth cleared by Dongo hands and made safe by KK’s rifle. Then came the long wait for the trees to bear fruit which they started to do on the third anniversary of planting.

That year was to see the first harvest of papain during which each ripe fruit would be scarified by razor blade attached to a long stick. Juices, the consistency of single cream, oozed out and coagulated on the fruit and were then scraped off with a long wooden spatula and allowed to drop into a canvas

trap, the circumference of the average tree's leaf cover, attached onto the trunk, halfway between crown and ground.

The juice of the pawpaw fruit contained papain which had to be solidified before export to the USA where it was used as a meat tenderizer.

Solidification required a vast kiln into which the gum like extract from the fruit, scraped off the canvas traps onto metal trays, was dried to a near crystalline form and then packed into four gallon tins, the same as the tins in which paraffin was sold.

(As scrap, paraffin tins were in African eyes a most precious commodity and would be begged or borrowed ahead of any other unguarded or unwanted item in the European household. Tins would carry water or cook the meal or roof the hut. They were as precious to Africans as the tripod was to Ancient Greeks.)

The buildings and equipment for the end process of papain production was ready for the harvest to arrive just when the District Officer appeared at the farm to order the evacuation of all its labour; the Government's responsibility.

And the cause of official concern for the welfare of KK's labour? The return of sleeping sickness. Endemic in game herds, especially in buffalo, this disease, carried by tsetse fly, was a destroyer of human life. Slower to kill than yellow fever or malaria, borne by the anopheles mosquito which would yield to DDT, the tsetse fly could only be combated by evacuation. And by deforestation. And by devastation of property. Everything that Kokopoulos had built up from scratch at Dongobesh was abandoned to the insidious forces of decay by sun, wind, rain and invertebrate appetite. All went to dust and ruin.

*

Kicheche was not minded to allow Kokopoulos to go to dust and ruin. The dead master was going to be as valuable to him in death as he had been in life. And in life he had been greatly praised. So too must he be in death; Kicheche was set on giving Kokopoulos the benefit of divinity such as held by the Pharoes of whom KK had told him.

So he decided to mummify Kokopoulos. To present him as a divinity to any who should seek further account from him. He would say that he wanted to show the greatest respect possible for the great man; assuring him of immortality by preventing decomposition. Kandowere thought even of forming a cult around the preserved corpse. None could doubt his loyalty as servant to KK; none would doubt his devotion to him in death; in preserved immortality.

In according everlasting life to him, Kandowere was intent on perpetuating the memory of KK through dedicated discipleship; a religion in the making; a timeless and time sanctioned preoccupation amongst tribes and clans from the

hills of Galilee to the foothills of Kilimanjaro and the plains beneath Mount Meru.

*

The task of mummifying Kokopoulos was no different to that of preserving the crocodile in the hall. It greeted all guests with a scare. Glass eyes gleaming, red jaws open, teeth whiter than in nature and doubly as fearsome; fourteen feet of body curved 'S' shaped, it could have been the real thing.

He had never before taxidermized a human being but Kandowere saw no difference in this regard between animal and human. He just got on with the job of producing from the corpse a good resemblance of the living Kokopoulos.

As a mummified deity his former master had one further use. He would solve the requirement closest to Kandowere's interests: a failsafe store for the gems.

The sitting Kokopoulos was an ideal safe. His entire thoracic cavity was going to be as empty as a drum and through his open mouth, set in a grimace as he exhaled his last breath in the final moment of life, Kandowere would trickle in the gems which came to him for storage. And he would extract them through the leathery anus which was neatly plugged with a bundle of dried banana leaves in the colour and form of a perfectly shaped turd.

Kandowere had fashioned Kokopoulos as a purse which was to be presented to his fellow workers in the camp as their totem.

In exchange for a vow of secrecy and certain of group loyalty, Kandowere had decided to extend largesse beyond the regular supply of *pombe* for all in his care. He now promised his people greater material wealth; double the daily wage earned on the farm in exchange for absolute silence about the totemic Kokopoulos who, Kicheche, would assure all and sundry, would wreak death and destruction should the merest whisper of indiscretion come to his ears as Head Mganga, as Kandowere now styled himself.

To ensure total conformity, Kandowere appointed acolytes in each hut to report to him each day on what was being said and what was being thought. This intelligence service was in receipt of a doubling of the double daily pay. He also appointed two deputies, two women of witches fame whom all feared and had feared well before Kokopoulos had been mummified. He assured himself of their loyalty by eliminating the only threat to his authority: the camp Mganga.

Kandowere gave much thought to achieving this end and in the end it was a matter of money. He purchased an albino from the morgue in Arusha and had her delivered to the farm. He then infused her liver with poison before presenting the corpse to the Mganga.

True to practice the old witch doctor consumed the organ in the course of his divinations.

At last, Kandowere was in control of the entire camp. He instilled fear as stick and gave money as carrot.

And here was all the money to come from?

From the mines below the farm which were now producing stones in such quantity as to fill the mummy's cavity by the end of each season, marked by the arrival of the big rains which caused treacherous flood waters to flow through the rude shafts sank into the ground by peasant farmers turned miners.

One such delivered to Kandowere a stone that was too big for the mummy to swallow; a gemstone over two kilograms in weight, the equivalent of 10,000 carats; a ruby the size of a red grapefruit. This was the stone that was to gain notoriety, being the subject of press coverage across the globe.

It gave Kandowere many sleepless nights which was rare for the camp rooster who nearly always went quickly to sleep with a smile on his face.

He decided never again to accept gems too big for Kokopoulos to swallow, leaving others to dispose of stones of such parameters. He concentrated on the routine and the routine brought him wealth, health and happiness.

End Note

This book is part of a trilogy in honour of Thioneesos (Dionysus) whose feast days in ancient Greece required the staging of two dramatics and a satiric. In my offering these are presented as The Kidron Bible, God of Hunger and Mambo Leo. Together, they constitute The Wanainchi Trilogy. They are now available from all good online bookstores from 99 cents.

If you have enjoyed reading God of Hunger, I would really appreciate your feedback. The best way to let me, and other potential readers know what you think about my book, is to visit Free-ebooks.net and write a short review or comment. I look forward to reading them all. If you're too busy to write a review, a click on the "Like" button would be very much appreciated.

Many Thanks

John Coutouvidis

January 2012

Published By The Electronic Book Company

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