

African-American Dialogue in Kenya Seeks Amity

By LAWRENCE FELLOWS
Special to The New York Times

NAIROBI, Kenya, Nov. 22— Like old friends who had stopped seeing each other without really knowing why, a group of prominent Africans and Americans have met here this week to examine the widening indifference and disillusion that seem to be separating them.

This was the first of a projected annual series of African-American Dialogues planned by the African-American Institute of New York, a coordinator of scholarship and aid programs. The meetings offer a chance for influential Americans — Congressmen, industrialists, civil rights leaders and others — to hold frank, private discussions here with influential Africans.

In four days of talks, the Africans expressed awareness that not all Americans are ignorant or indifferent about things that have gone wrong in black Africa. President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya made this point when he opened the meeting Tuesday.

"There are dedicated men who have sought to build a bridge of solidarity, linking the political ideals, the resources and the cultures of America and Africa," he said. "But they often appear to be working in a climate of indifference, felt by millions of other citizens of the United States."

President Kenyatta had given the delegates — about 40 at most of the meetings, fairly evenly divided between Africans and Americans — a provocative starting point.

Among the Americans were

many old friends of Africa. Since the meetings were closed to the press and the public the Americans felt free to list African shortcomings that few would ever discuss in public.

The Americans had expected something better out of Africa when the former colonies began winning independence, the meeting was told. The Americans had expected more results from the aid provided by the United States. They were disillusioned by the instability of independent African governments, by the way one African state after another has choked off democratic processes and individual rights, by the spreading corruption and violence and by anti-American expressions that strike people back home as unreasonable and ungrateful.

A Summation by Editor

A paper prepared by Philip W. Quigg, managing editor of the United States Quarterly of Foreign Affairs, was circulated at the meeting. It summed up the situation bluntly:

"We have grown much more skeptical in the last few years about our capacity to give useful advice, and more dubious about our power to affect the destiny of Africa."

The paper gave as an example the helpful position the United States had thought it was taking in the Congo by supporting her integrity as a nation regardless of the party or people in power, and the vilification that Americans endured from both African and European powers for "interfering" in the Congo.

Dr. Daouda Badayou, Foreign

Minister of Dahomey, said at the beginning of the meeting:

"No state has ever succeeded in putting vast means, financial and other — means that make your head swim — with ideals more noble and more generous than those professed by the United States and achieved such disappointing results."

Dr. Badayou suggested that for all its good intentions the United States was trapped by its ignorance of Africa and of African psychology and was almost bound to get into trouble.

Other Africans at the meeting expressed admiration for the United States' refusal to support either side in the Nigerian civil war and for remain-

ing uninvolved in the arguments between Nigeria and those small countries on her border that support Biafra. All neighbors, including Dahomey, are having to reckon in their diplomacy now with Nigeria's growing army.

At nearly every meeting Dr. Badarou could be seen with his arm around the shoulders of Dr. Lawrence Fabunmi, a delegate from Nigeria and director of the Institute of International Affairs there. Dr. Fabunmi addressed the meeting in English and Badarou spoke in French. But they talked to each other in Yoruba, for they are members of the same tribe.

Nov. 23, 1968

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