

# African Flare-up Shakes Indians THEY DON'T KNOW WHICH SIDE TO BE ON

By Anthony Delius

ONE population group in Africa has been more shaken than the Whites by the last fortnight's events in Central Africa—that is the 800,000 Indians along the Eastern seaboard.

*The flare-up of hostility in Nyasaland against Asians has given new urgency to a question which has been dividing Asians with increasing sharpness over the last three years—that is, should they ally themselves with the Africans or the Europeans?*

In 1956 controversy raged in Indian and African circles when the Kenya Indian leader, N. S. Mangat, declared, "We must end the 50-year feud with the European community and bury the hatchet . . . Our self-interest ordains that we should be in favour of the British connection in Kenya."

Africans, and even Asians, warned supporters of Mr. Man-

gat's views "to heed the oft-repeated advice of Mr. Nehru to Indians in Africa and identify themselves completely with the Africans."

"Otherwise," added these warning voices, "it is inconceivable that the Indians' fate will be different from that of their imperialist friends."

### More violently

But to many Indians it seems that, whatever they do, their fate will always be even worse than that of their imperialist "friends."

Africans have burnt Indian shops, looted Indian premises, threatened Indians generally

even more violently than they have done the Europeans.

The latest anti-Asian outburst in Nyasaland, following the anti-Asian tirades of Dr. Banda, have reminded Indians everywhere on the east coast of another massacre ten years ago—that of Indians by berserk Zulus in Durban in 1949.

Some Indian leaders are becoming convinced that Asian continuance in Africa is unavoidably linked with that of the Whites.

They have played a role second only to the Whites in the economic development of the east side of Africa.

Only half the Asian elected members have joined Mboya in his constitutional boycott of the Legislative Council, and it was the Asians who produced most opposition to Nyerere in the Tanganyika elections.

But even for those Indian leaders who have taken Mother India's advice to throw in their lot with the Africans, the last fortnight has brought an additional shock.

A letter being put about by an American group known as the "Council on Race and Caste in World Affairs" written by an eminent American Negro, Mr. C. Sumner Stone, Jr., reveals mounting resentment among African students in India against the "social apartheid" practised against them there.

This has caused all the more concern because the great majority of the 300 African students in Indian universities come from East Africa.

A point which rankles particularly among the African students is that they go to India on scholarships specially to promote Afro-Indian relations—but as "guests of the Government" they find themselves treated worse than poor relations.

### "Race invisibility"

The reaction of some Indians to this problem of Africa has simply been to advocate completely merging themselves in the African population, in the hope of becoming racially invisible.

In Nyasaland itself, Mr. A. S. Aserane, who quarrelled bitterly with Dr. Banda recently, has led a demand for minority rights for minority groups.

He was unable to accept a suggestion (made by Europeans) of a common Indian-European front for a demand to remain in the Federation, however.

Everywhere one looks along the east coast, from Durban to Mombasa, the Indians have to face this kind of conundrum.

Their interests, whether social, economic or political, do not absolutely coincide with the special interests of either the Africans or the Europeans. In their divisions and distraction, they may yet find themselves ground between the small White and immensely vaster Black millstones.