

All of this is of comparatively recent development. Between 1945 and 1954, the various labor federations in the Union of South Africa and their affiliated unions reached almost unanimous agreement to support the program of the Nationalist government to deny equal job rights and trade union rights to African workers, who represent over 53% of all workers in South African industry. During this same approximate period, the American labor movement reached agreement on a program to fight for full equality for Negro workers in U.S. industry and in the labor movement.

This decision of the American labor movement, that is the AFL-CIO, climaxed several generations of bitter experience with segregation and discrimination against Negro workers. For nearly 250 years white workers in American industry had good cause to fear the competition of Negro slaves. By 1850 the economy of eight Southern States was based on the exploitation of these slaves, not only as plantation workers, but as artisans and handicraft workers. In time the lot of the "free" white worker was little better than that of the slaves who often scorned them as "poor white trash". Laws passed by the slave states to protect free white labor had little success.

White workers in the Union (U.S. Federal) army fought bravely to preserve the United States from dismemberment during the Civil War of 1860, but deep in their hearts were fears of what would happen to their living standards when nearly four million slaves were set free. The Southern white workers fought just as valiantly to preserve slavery because they simply did not want Negro workers to be free. But the southern white worker could not improve his lot substantially without freedom for black labor.

During the generation following the Civil War, American workers made several determined efforts to form national trade union federations to foster the growth of national unions in rapidly expanding American industry. Leaders of the National Labor Union felt their main job was to protect the interests not of all workers, but mainly of whites. It discouraged, where it did not bar Negro membership entirely. Preoccupation with politics as well as faulty organizing methods caused the death of the NLU within a decade.

The successor to the NLU was the much more aggressive and flamboyant Knights of Labor. A few of its lodges barred Negro members, but as a rule the Knights accepted Negro workers

without noticeable discrimination. Within twenty years the Knights of Labor was practically dead due to a series of disastrous strikes, pre-occupation with politics, and faulty organizing methods.

Probably the main cause of the death of the Knights of Labor was the withdrawal of skilled craftsmen to form unions to protect their narrow trade interests. These new craft unions in 1886 formed the American Federation of Labor, out of which has grown the largest and the most powerful free trade union movement in the world. The unions in the AFL had little partisan interest in politics, only a fraternal interest in the lot of the unskilled worker, and generally barred Negroes from membership.

The AFL as a central labor body tried hard under the leadership of Samuel Gompers to exclude from affiliation those unions which expressly excluded Negro membership. The effort was abandoned in 1904 with the admission of the International Association of Machinists. In partial recognition of its responsibility to the untutored and unsophisticated Negro worker, the Federation declared its intention to organize Negro workers into separate local unions, bargain for them, and otherwise protect their interests until the larger white union claiming jurisdiction over the work done by the Negroes would agree to accept them.

Between 1900 and the mid 1930's AFL unions attained a total membership of only two and a half to three million. In the independent railroad unions were organized another half million workers. This little band of American workers stagnated in its prideful position as the aristocrats of labor, in its devotion to business unionism philosophy and to its craft union organizing methods. In this set-up there was little opportunity and even less welcome for the Negro worker. Similarly the labor movement seemed to be sternly indifferent to the efforts of Negroes generally to achieve political and social equality in other fields.

During this period one occasionally found Negro and white workers as members with equal rights and opportunity to participate in managing the affairs of a local union. However, as a rule, if Negro workers were not excluded entirely, they were organized in "B" or "C" locals, functioning under the supervision of the nearest white local. Of course, such members of "B" or "C" locals had little chance to take part in grievance settlement or contract negotiation.

Between 1910 and 1930 several million Negro workers moved

up from Southern cotton plantations into laboring and semi-skilled occupations in manufacturing industries in Northern cities. The rebuffs they received from the labor movement first in Southern towns and later in Northern and border states became the basis of a strong belief among Negro workers that labor unions were one of the main barriers to their progress in American industry.

The fact that the American Negro population has become largely an urban population is due to (1) the rapid mechanization of agriculture in the old slave states, thus extensively displacing both Negro and white labor, (2) the sharp curtailment of European immigration to the United States during and after the first world war (3) the extensive conversion of manufacturing processes to mass production methods.

This latter development created an almost insatiable demand for unskilled and semiskilled labor. With the curtailment of European immigration, the Southern Negro worker became the most logical labor source. The white rural job seeker entering Southern towns and cities was hired far more readily than were Negroes, who were forced as a result to migrate to Northern, Eastern and Western industrial areas. This absorption of the Negro worker in Northern industry was stepped up during the second world war and has been sustained by high employment since 1945.

Not only did the thousands of Negro workers bitterly resent their exclusion from key jobs in American industry, but before 1935 reluctantly allowed themselves to be used as strike-breakers or "scabs" in such basic industries as steel, meat packing, farm machinery and auto manufacturing. This situation often precipitated bitter and bloody race riots. And though a residue of this bitterness and suspicion remains and causes difficulties in many communities, it is often easy to over-estimate its strength and durability.

Longstanding bitterness between Negroes and whites in the steel town of Gary, Indiana, barely thirty years ago, caused the local white population to flock into an anti-Negro organization called the Ku Klux Klan. They forced Negroes from local beaches; and supported white children in a prolonged strike to force a few Negro children out of a local public high school.

Today in this same town Negro and white workers share offices in the same steel workers union. Not only is the school system integrated, but a Negro serves as president of the school

board responsible for all Gary schools. Another Negro serves as president of the Gary municipal council.

This development is indicative of the fact that few Americans actually feel that the racial situation in the United States is so complicated that the ideal of American equality cannot eventually be fully realized.

Though individual Negro labor officials and civic leaders complained constantly about discrimination against Negro workers by trade unions, the labor movement as such did not tackle the problem seriously until the late 1930's. Samuel Gompers and William Green as presidents of the American Federation of Labor always patiently and earnestly defended the status quo with the explanation that the AFL as a central labor body did not discriminate, but that it could not impose its views on the matter upon its various affiliated unions, since each was fully autonomous. The AFL could only grant equal status to Negro unions and organize Negro workers rejected by white unions.

By 1935 it was obvious to many influential leaders in the American Federation of Labor that the growth of trade unions had lagged far behind the expansion of American industry and the growth of the industrial population. Except in the highly skilled trades, America was an open shop country. A Committee for Industrial Organization was formed within the AFL to press the view that in such mass production industries as steel, textile, automobile, rubber and farm machinery manufacturing, workers should be organized in all-inclusive units regardless of race, sex, creed or skill. The leaders of the CIO would not accept compromise of the principle of industrial organization and were eventually expelled.

Now free of all craft union restraints the CIO, now the Congress of Industrial Organizations, launched vigorous and all-inclusive organizing drives in America's basic industries. Its organizing efforts were phenomenally successful. And though it organized on a basis of interracial equality, white and Negro workers flocked to its banners with an enthusiasm never before seen in American industry.

The CIO made other contributions to American trade union activity. It engaged in strongly partisan political action in support of general social welfare programs. The new labor center, through its affiliated unions, its educational, publicity, and anti-discrimination committees, actively and constantly

promoted acceptance of the Negro worker as an equal with respect to union membership. The point was emphasized that the responsibilities of union leadership and administration should be shared with him without discrimination. The CIO used high ranking Negro aids and steadfastly refused to hold an annual convention in a town or hotel in which its Negro delegates might be subjected to any form of discrimination.

This revolutionary acceptance of the Negro worker was carried one step further. The CIO welded a close bond of political unity between organized labor and the Negro masses by giving full support to every measure to achieve for Negroes that social, political, and economic equality to which they are entitled by virtue of their citizenship.

The open acceptance of the Negro worker by the CIO led many of the old diehard AFL unions to curtail, if not to drop entirely, their discriminatory practices. Many also organized workers into industrial units. Thus the International Association of Machinists which had blocked Negro apprentice machinists and held Negro employment to a minimum in the nation's machine shops, eventually opened its doors and its international union president became a strong defender of fair treatment for Negro workers.

At the time of the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955, when the two organizations had a combined membership of 15 million, including over one and a half million Negroes, strangely, a majority of these Negroes were in old AFL unions which had enrolled several hundred thousand Negro workers in the transportation, building construction, garment and service trades.

All over the United States Negroes now serve as officers of unions composed of both Negro and white workers. This fact is more common in the North than in the South. It is a common experience for Negro union officials to engage actively in collective bargaining with employers on behalf of both Negro and white workers. Two Negroes serve as vice-presidents of the newly merged American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

When AFL-CIO president George Meany went before the platform committees of the national conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties to urge adoption of policies of paramount interest to labor, he carried the fight for Negro equality with him. On behalf of the American labor movement

he recommended that the major political parties of the country support legislation which would desegregate public education in those few states where school segregation still exists; he wanted poll taxes outlawed, segregation in public facilities abolished, and a civil rights division to be established in the Federal Department of Justice to enforce the citizenship rights of Negroes and other groups.

In sharp contrast with what has been happening in the Union of South Africa, American labor is not seeking government aid to curb Negro employment opportunities. Instead, American labor again recommended that the U.S. Congress enact legislation making it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a worker because of his race or national origin. Seventeen states in the American union already have such laws in various forms, and the Federal government already forbids its personnel officers to discriminate against Negro applicants. Similarly government contractors are forbidden to discriminate on the basis of race.

Organized labor in the United States has strong practical as well as idealistic reasons for working for full equality for Negro workers. The unions would have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have organized the mass production industries without opening their doors to Negro workers. In many industrial centers this statement is equally true of the service and needle trades.

In view of the fact that workers in mass production industries could not finance for themselves the insurance, retirement benefits, and the health and housing services possible for the much more highly paid skilled workers, industrial unions were naturally more interested in the New Deal, the Fair Deal, and other versions of the welfare state. This interest also quite naturally led to intensive political action to guarantee that the Federal and State legislatures would approve labor recommendations concerning the general welfare. In many large industrial areas labor has come to count heavily upon Negro support of its candidates.

In the economic field AFL-CIO unions have been tremendously helpful in reducing segregation and discrimination against Negro workers. Scarcely a generation ago the status of Negro workers in U.S. industry was so precarious that hardly anyone questioned the statement that the Negro was the last hired and the first fired. It was no simple task for union leaders to convince many

employers that provisions in collective bargaining contracts relating to seniority and promotions should apply equally to Negroes. Other employers had to insist that the local unions respect the Negro workers' rights under the bargaining contract.

Numerous incidents have come to public attention through strikes and other disturbances on the part of white workers to prevent the promotion of Negro employees. Generally the resistance offered by comparatively few employers and white workers has not seriously hampered the trend toward complete desegregation in U.S. industry.

The first convention of the merged labor movement, the AFL-CIO, recommended that all of its affiliates negotiate non-discriminatory hiring agreements with employers. A committee on civil rights, reporting directly to the AFL-CIO executive council, was set up to investigate charges of discrimination against Negro workers and to recommend appropriate action.

Despite this long series of favorable developments, the Negro worker is still far behind his white brother, though the gap that separates them is rapidly closing. Though Negroes are 10% of the U.S. labor force, their proportion of skilled, semi-skilled and supervisory jobs is far less than 10%. Though the per capita income of the Negro population is high compared with the rest of the world, it is still a little better than half that of whites. This point is reached only after tripling the pre-war per capita income of Negroes, so that today it exceeds fifteen and a quarter billion dollars after taxes.

It should be noted that differences in Negro-white income are due only partly to discrimination, but largely to lack of training and industrial experience. Negroes performing the same work as white workers receive identical compensation. Many Negroes exceed whites in both skill and income, but in the main the Negro is low man in the American economic order.

The slow desegregation which has been going on throughout the whole of American industry obviously has not brought full equality of opportunity to the Negro worker. But not until the Supreme Court of the United States ordered desegregation of schools supported with public funds did strong, organized opposition arise to desegregation in industry.

In five of the states most affected by the court order, White Citizen Councils, founded to preserve segregation in Southern life, penetrated some local branches of the labor movement. Soon national trade union offices were facing angry demands

that the unions discontinue their support of civil rights for Negroes. The protesters were particularly bitter over labor's endorsement of proposals to withhold federal educational funds from states that refuse to comply with the desegregation decision of the Supreme Court.

At the height of this desegregation agitation many union members in Southern states threatened to withdraw from their unions, even to form a Southern Federation of Labor. It is to the credit of American labor leaders that these threats were met with patient explanation of labor's position and without compromise.

It is extremely unlikely that organized labor would reverse its policy of equal status for Negro workers. Long experience has emphasized the point that Negroes will not "make the job cheap" so long as they have the right and the freedom to protect their labor as free workmen. American labor has also discovered that an exploitation of any section of the labor force, even a minority as small as 10%, pulls down the standards of all labor.

MEMOIRS OF A TRIBALIST

TONY O'DOWD

THE most interesting account of the origins of the Bantu National Socialist Party is that which occurs in the *Memoirs* of A. J. van der Merwe. According to van der Merwe, a meeting of the Twelve Apostles of the Broederbond¹ was held in the summer of 1960, at which the subject was introduced by the following speech:—

“Brothers, I think we have all lived through the last few years with a growing realisation of two facts. First, that the Bantu are going to have a larger share of the goods of this country. Second, that the Bantu are going to decide the political future of this country. Some of us have faced these facts with blank despair. I think it will be more profitable to face them with a question. Are the Bantu to obtain their larger share at the expense of the Afrikaner or at the expense of the Uitlander², and are they going to exercise their decisive voice in favour of the Afrikaner or in favour of the Uitlander?

“I can see some of you shrugging your shoulders. You are thinking, no doubt, that these questions have long ago been answered against us—that the Bantu have long ago decided that we are their enemies and the Uitlanders, comparatively speaking, their friends. Brothers, if our adversaries had taken their opportunities, this would be true. Fortunately, they have not. The history of the Bantu in this country is a history of betrayal by that section of the white population in which they have put their faith. Whenever the Uitlander has had to choose between being true to those principles which could have won him the loyalty of the Bantu, and appeasing us, he has chosen to appease us. For these reasons, I consider that it is not yet too late.”

We have only van der Merwe's word for it that this speech was ever made, and historians are not unanimous as to the weight to be attached to van der Merwe's word. Be that as it may, the Bantu National Socialist Party was formed at a meeting held in the Lady Selborne Location, Pretoria, on the 10th October, 1961. It was a small meeting, largely ignored by the Press. *Die Transvaler*

¹ A secret society under the leadership of 12 “Apostles” to which powerful members of the Nationalist Party belong. Aiming at domination of South Africa, it was exposed and condemned by General Hertzog, former Nationalist leader and Prime Minister.

² “Outsider”, an Afrikaans word for those who are not “indigenous” to South Africa, and usually applied to the English, Indians and Jews.

was the only newspaper which published the "three basic aims" of the BNSP. These were:—

1. Unity of the indigenous nations of South Africa, both Black and White, against the alien exploiter;
2. Separate development of the indigenous peoples of South Africa, both Black and White, in such a way as to give full expression to the racial genius of each of them;
3. Replacement of the alien parliamentary system by a system of government in accordance with the organic will of the indigenous peoples of South Africa, both Black and White.

The public heard no more about the BNSP until July, 1962, when an Indian shop was burned and looted in Germiston. At first the incident took an inconspicuous place in the daily catalogue of violent crime. Then an article was published in *Drum*, pointing out the fact that the emblem of three crossed assegais which had been painted on the walls of the looted shop was the badge of the BNSP. The article went on to allege that a BNSP organizer had been spreading anti-Indian propaganda in Germiston for some months and that this man was one of ten full-time organizers whom the party was employing in the Transvaal. Where, asked *Drum*, was the money coming from? The BNSP replied with an abusive statement about "scurrilous rags, financed by alien capital and modelled on the gutter press of Europe". The question about the source of the party's finances was not answered.

The assegai emblem appeared again on the houses of three African National Congress officials who were murdered during the next three months. All three cases remained unsolved. The alarm which these events caused was increased when the party held a rally at Alexandra to mark its first anniversary. The Supreme Chief of the party, one Ezekiel Ngcobo, was escorted to the platform by a bodyguard of youths dressed in black "tsotsi trousers" and imitation leopard-skin shirts. The proceedings consisted of a two-hour harangue by Ngcobo, composed mainly of obscene abuse of Indians, Jews and Englishmen.

At the next session of Parliament, the Minister of Native Affairs was asked what steps he proposed to take to curb the activities of the BNSP. He replied that he was surprised to see that those Honourable Members who had hitherto been prepared to advocate unlimited freedom of political action for Natives were now calling for the prohibition of Native political parties. He hoped that these Members realised the degree of their own

responsibility for any undesirable trends which might appear among Native politicians. The Government's attitude remained perfectly consistent. The position was being closely watched, and agitation would not be tolerated. There could be no question, however, of preventing the Native from expressing his legitimate aspirations.

The BNSP won its first major success in the following year. A party rally in Alexandra culminated in an attack on Indian and European shops in Second Avenue. The Commission appointed to inquire into the incident reported that the presence of these shops had "created an intolerable situation". A Group Areas proclamation was swiftly promulgated and Ezekiel Ngcobo opened a large grocery store in Second Avenue a few months later.

Next came the Bethal coup. There was a minor mutiny in the Nationalist Party when the Government appointed a Commission to investigate BNSP allegations of maltreatment of African farm labourers in the Bethal district. The mutiny simmered down when the Commission sat and it was noticed that the evidence presented by the BNSP organizers related solely to farms owned by English and Jewish farmers. The Commission found that the position on these farms was intolerable and that it was essential to create a Native area in the district so as to give the African inhabitants an alternative to work for capitalist farmers. A block of English and Jewish owned land was proclaimed as a Native group area. The Minister of the Interior announced that this area "might in the future be increased by the addition of other similar land". This threat sufficed to persuade most of the remaining non-Afrikaans farmers in the district to sell out at bargain prices to Afrikaners. The local branch of the Nationalist Party rescinded its resolution of protest and thanked the Minister.

The membership of the BNSP began to increase spectacularly. In its early days, it had recruited mainly among the juvenile delinquents of the city locations, who saw it simply as a bigger and better gang than the Russians or the Spoilers. Now it began to appear to the ambitious African as the most likely road to power and wealth. Those who still boggled at its crudity and its pro-Nationalism were faced with the question "What alternative is there?" The combination of Government repression and BNSP terrorism had smashed the African National Congress beyond hope of repair. There was no encouragement to be

found among the English-speaking whites. Their Press was resounding with frantic appeals for "white unity" and for "the abandonment of the shameful game of encouraging native truculence".

The position which the BNSP had achieved by the end of 1969 may be illustrated by a small incident of that year. Ezekiel Ngcobo announced at a party rally that the smoking of alien cigarettes by the Bantu people had created an intolerable situation. He had asked the Land Tenure Advisory Board for an enquiry into the position of certain tobacco factories which were situated on land which was "historically and inalienably Bantu". Within a month, the factories which he had named were voluntarily transferred, on easy terms, to the Bantu National Tobacco Company (chairman, Ezekiel Ngcobo). The necessary funds were lent by an Afrikaans tobacco concern.

The South African Republic came formally into existence on the 16th December, 1970. The Natal Provincial Convention proclaimed the existence, as from the 1st January, 1971, of the independent Dominion of Natal. A.C.F. units were mobilised by both the Union and the Natal Governments, and an armoured brigade was assembled at Standerton. Both sides expressed the hope that hostilities might be avoided, and for ten days the opposing forces watched each other across the frontier.

In the meantime, the BNSP had called a mass rally in Durban to protest against the secession of Natal. The rally was banned and the Provincial Chief of the BNSP was arrested. The Supreme Chief appealed to the Union Government for "protection of the rights of South African citizens being oppressed by the Natal rebels". He was told that this aspect of the situation was enjoying the close attention of the Government.

On the 12th January, the Acting Provincial Chief in Natal proclaimed a general strike and called for volunteers to form partisan groups. These, he said, would receive arms by parachute from the Union Government.

On the 13th, the Natal forces were recalled from the frontier to maintain order in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Zululand. The strike call was widely obeyed, bands of uniformed BNSP members appeared in the streets of the cities and white citizens barricaded themselves into their homes. On the 14th, troops fired on BNSP demonstrators in Durban, the Acting Provincial Chief was shot while resisting arrest, and two farmhouses were burned in Zululand. On the 15th, the Union Defence Force

was ordered to move into Natal to restore order. The panic-stricken Natalians offered no resistance. The Government denied that it had ever intended to arm BNSP partisans, dealt severely with a few Africans who ignored the BNSP call to return to work and then proclaimed an amnesty for both the white rebels and the African strikers. The members of the Natal Government went into voluntary exile.

The Republican Constitution provided for the election of a Volksleier³ by white citizens, a Supreme Chief by Bantu citizens and an Aliens Representative Council by white and coloured non-citizens. The Supreme Chief had authority to promulgate laws affecting Africans only, and the right to be consulted by the Volksleier on laws affecting the country as a whole.

Ezekiel Ngcobo was the only candidate for the office of Supreme Chief. An election was nevertheless held, and he polled 98.5% of the votes cast. The Nationalist candidate for the post of Volksleier polled 92%. A new era of peace and prosperity, based on the unshakable unity of the indigenous peoples of South Africa, was announced.

On the 16th December, 1975, the Supreme Chief announced that it had been scientifically proved that the Afrikaans people could not properly be regarded as indigenous to South Africa. On Christmas Eve, aboard the *Pretoria Castle*, A. J. van der Merwe dictated the first chapter of his *Memoirs*.

³ Afrikaans for "People's Leader".

MY GREAT DISCOVERY

ALAN PATON

After much exploratory
Work in my laboratory
I made an epoch-making
Breath-taking
Discovery.

Can you not picture me?
Can you not see me there,
Wild eyes, disordered hair,
With fanatical persistence
And white-robed assistants
In masks,
And flasks
Smoking, choking
Everywhere?

I cannot give to such as you
The reasoning which led me to
This epoch-making
Breath-taking
Discovery.

Well this discovery
Was simple as could be
Five straight injections
Position, lumbar
In colour, umber
Taste, very like cucumber
Effect, inducing slumber
And if I may remind you
Five in number—
These five injections could erase
In just as many days
The pigmentation
From any nation.

I sat astounded
Completely dumbfounded
By the epoch-making
Breath-taking
Discovery.
Being a scientist, delighted
Being South African, affrighted
In Great Britain, knighted.
I seized the telephone
And in a voice unlike my own
(Not through dissembling
But through trembling)
Government, I said
The girl said, what division?
I said, no divisions any more.
She said, I mean what section?
I said, no sections any more.
She said, I'll report you,
(Or deport you,
I can't quite say
I'm not au fait
With recent legislation)
I said, you go ahead
Or I shall plunge the nation
Into a conflagration.

I know that shocked her
She said, you need the Doctor
I said, Yes get the Doctor
And all the Cabinet,
For I can change the pigmentation
Of any nation.
To cut the story short
She gave a kind of snort
And got the real big Boss
Who said, of coss, of coss,
Come up at once.

It is no kind of pret
To face a Cabinet
They were astounded
And dumbfounded.

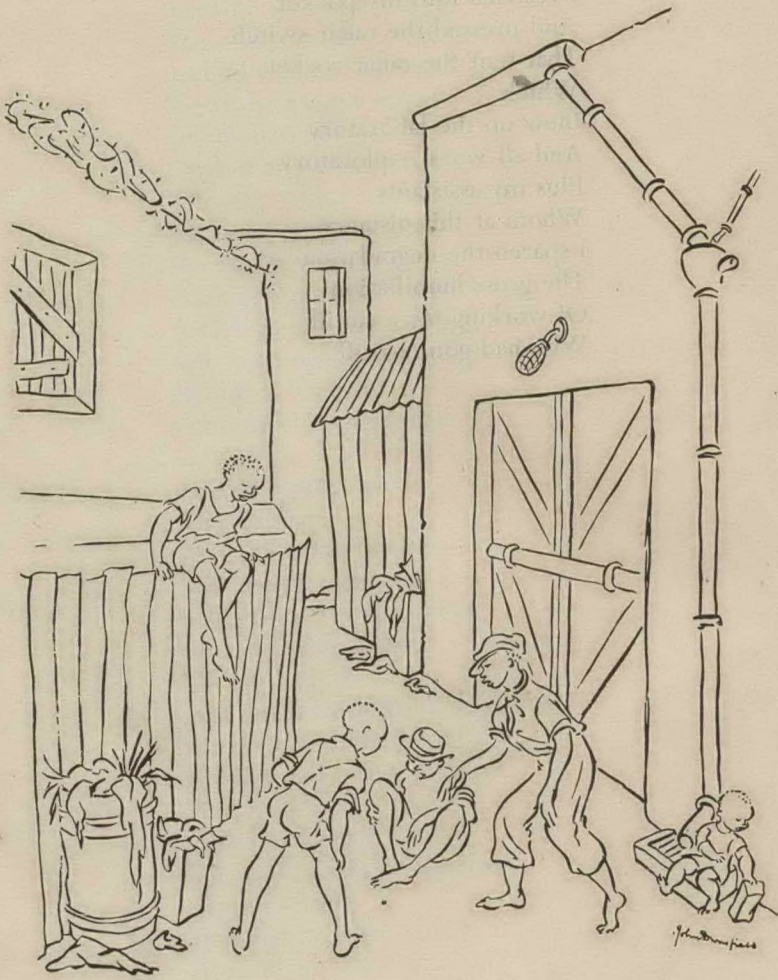
One said, Good Lord
And hummed and hawed
And one was suave
Just like the papers say.
And one was gay
And said this is the day
For if the pigmentation
Of any nation
Can suffer alteration
Why the whole fact of race
Takes on another face.
But another Minister
Looking quite sinister
Just like the papers say
Said this suggestion
Requires digestion
Let's meet another day.

And so again I met
The Cabinet
And this same Minister
Still looking sinister
Said, does this alteration
Of the pigmentation
Of any nation,
Just work from black to white
Or do you think it might
Change also white to black?
And I replied
All full of pride
The recipe can be supplied
For any shade
In beige or jade
In snow or jet
Or violet.

Then sir, he said, I here submit
A list of those to be
Changed with this recipe.
He pushed the list across
To the big Boss.
My eyes are fine

A shiver went right down my spine
The leading name was mine.

I reached into my pocket
And pressed the radar switch
That sent the radar rocket
Which
Blew up the laboratory
And all work exploratory
Plus my assistants
Whom at this distance
I spared the degradation
The gross humiliation
Of working for a caitiff
Who had gone naitiff.



STREET SCENE by John Dronsfield.

MEMO TO THE NON-WHITE PEOPLES

LANGSTON HUGHES

They will let you have dope
Because they are quite willing
To drug you or kill you.

They will let you have babies
Because they are quite willing
To pauperize you—
Or use your kids as labor boys
For army, air force, or uranium mine.

They will let you have alcohol
To make you sodden and drunk
And foolish.

They will gleefully let you
Kill your damn self any way you choose
With liquor, drugs, or whatever.

It's the same from Cairo to Chicago,
Cape Town to the Caribbean.
Do you travel the Stork Club circuit
To dear old Shepherd's Hotel?
(Somebody burnt Shepherd's up.)
I'm sorry but it is
The same from Cairo to Chicago,
Cape Town to the Carib Hilton,
Exactly the same.

IN EXPLANATION OF OUR TIMES

LANGSTON HUGHES

The folks with no titles in front of their names
all over the world
are raring up and talking back
to the folks called Mister.

You say you thought everybody was called Mister?

No, sonny, not everybody.
In Dixie they often won't call Negroes Mister.
In China before the war
they had no intention of calling coolies Mister.
Dixie to Singapore, Cape Town to Hong Kong
the Mister's don't call lots of other folks Mister.
They call them Hey, George!
Here, Sallie!
Listen, Coolie!
Hurry up, Boy!
And things like that.

George Sallie Coolie Boy gets tired sometime. So—

All over the world today
folks with not even Mister in front of their names
are raring up and talking back
to the folks called Mister.

From Harlem past Hong Kong they're talking back.

Shut up, says Gerald L. K. Smith.
Shut up, says the Governor of South Carolina.
Shut up, says the Governor of Singapore.
Shut up, says Strijdom.

Hell no shut up!, say the people
with no titles in front of their names.
Hell, no! It's time to talk back now!
History says it's time.

The radio says it's time—
 foggy with propaganda that says a mouthful
 and don't mean half it says—
 but is true anyhow:

LIBERTY!
 FREEDOM!
 DEMOCRACY!

True anyhow no matter how many liars use those words.

The people with no titles in front of their names
 hear those words and shout them back
 at the Misters, Lords, Generals, Viceroys,
 Governors of South Carolina, Gerald L. K. Strijdoms.

Shut up, people!
 Shut up! Shut up!
 Shut up, George!
 Shut up, Sallie!
 Shut up, Coolie!
 Shut up, Indians!
 Shut up, Boy!

George Sallie Coolie Indian Boy
 black brown yellow bent down working
 earning riches for the whole world
 with no title in front of name
 just man woman tired says:

Hell no shut up!
 NO! . . . NO! . . . NO!

So, naturally, there's trouble
 in these our times
 from the people with no titles
 in front of their names.

THE HEADMASTER'S BOOKS

JOHN TANN

HEADMASTER Maleketsi had twenty-four books, in addition to his pocket Bible and the other school text-books. The twenty-four books were Headmaster Maleketsi's own, and he had never seen another man with so many books of his own—not in any of the three schools near Mokolong where he had taught, or in the Mokolong Mission, ten miles away, where he had himself studied year after year until eventually he had passed his standard six certificate.

"I am very proud of my books," Headmaster Maleketsi would often say, and he said so now to his favourite pupil, Tall Kgloma, after Tall Kgloma had finished counting the books for himself. "It is not every boy at this school whom I would permit to handle my books as you have just done, Kgloma."

"Surely there is no Headmaster as wise as you in the whole of Mokolong, sir," replied Tall Kgloma. "For there is certainly none who has so many books of his own. Oh! sir,"—the boy wriggled with excitement—"Never have I seen books in such bright covers, and never have I seen books whose pages are so clean inside that a person needs to wash his hands before he touches them. It must be a task indeed to keep such books."

Tall Kgloma had made his speech, and he peeped up to see if his words had pleased the Headmaster. They had, and Tall Kgloma received a great favour. On any afternoon, the Headmaster said, when school was over, after he had washed his hands, Tall Kgloma might come into the Headmaster's room and dust the books. If he were very careful, he would be shown by the Headmaster how the covers were made, and he could then repair those of the covers which had become torn during their many years in the Headmaster's possession. The Headmaster had recently received some illustrated magazines of shiny paper from a relation of his in town, and, as Tall Kgloma could see, such things made excellent covers for the Headmaster's twenty-four books.

After that day Tall Kgloma was very happy. He spent hours squatting in front of the two cut-open paraffin tins in which the Headmaster kept his books. He dusted the books every day, handling them very carefully, and he made three new covers which the Headmaster himself wrapped round the outside of the

books. Sometimes, at first, Tall Kgloma used to unwrap the books and open them, to wonder at the cleanness of their pages and marvel at the freshness of their print. Then one day, to his horror, a page fell out of a book as he was unwrapping it. Fortunately the Headmaster was out of the room at the time, and Tall Kgloma was able to stick the page back with a little of some birdlime one of his friends had given him. From then on Tall Kgloma never opened any of the books, and he noticed after a while that the Headmaster never opened any either. Tall Kgloma wondered a little at this until he realised that, of course, the Headmaster must have read all the books long ago and the knowledge would surely be in his head. From the day he came to this conclusion Tall Kgloma regarded the Headmaster with a respect that came very near to worship.

In spring the Headmaster—for he was an old man—fell sick with a chill. Though he was ill and in bed the Headmaster gave orders that Tall Kgloma should continue to keep the books clean and in order, and for days the boy did his job in an awed silence. Then, because it was time to register the pupils for their end-of-the-year examinations, the Headmaster was up and about again. One of the first things he did was to praise Tall Kgloma for having kept his books so well.

“Not many boys would work in a room where a man lay sick, and work with the sick man’s things,” said the Headmaster. “I will reward you. The optional subject which you write this year shall be whatever subject you yourself shall choose. I will not choose for you as I do for the other pupils.” He gave Tall Kgloma a long list of all the subjects that could be written in this examination, and Tall Kgloma took the list outside where he spent many hours studying it in the bright sunlight of those hot days.

The day Tall Kgloma brought the list of subjects back to the Headmaster he found the Headmaster a little tired. But, when Tall Kgloma said that he wished the optional subject for his examination to be “BOOK-KEEPING I”, the Headmaster smiled and wrote Tall Kgloma’s name on the list.

“This will be a wonderful thing, Kgloma, for no pupil from this school has ever taken the examination of book-keeping before. I will write to the Department so that we know what work you must prepare for it.”

Tall Kgloma never heard what the result of the Headmaster’s letter to the Department was, for, though he had been about his work, the Headmaster had not been well. His chill became a

fever which dragged him to his bed in agony. Within a week of his writing the name of his first Book-keeping pupil in the examination entries the old man was dead.

For many weeks the school was in confusion. A white man from the Government came and took away the school register and with it a great pile of the Headmaster's papers. He also locked up all the schoolbooks in a great cupboard, and then he went away. No one could do any work except Tall Kgloma, and it was very difficult for him. The Headmaster's brothers had come from twenty miles the other side of Mokolong to bury him, and they stayed for two weeks deciding how his property should be divided. After a while they would not let Tall Kgloma into the hut where the books were kept because, they said, the boy only went in to steal. They were very scornful old men, and when after two weeks a white policeman came and told them that the hut and the furniture in it belonged to the Government they were more scornful still. Finally the policeman ordered them to return to their own homes by the following morning.

That night the brothers must have set the Headmaster's hut on fire. Tall Kgloma woke and ran there, thinking only of the books. The people crowded near the burning hut were in confusion: some were in favour of letting the dead man's hut burn, as was traditional; others, until it was pointed out to them that the hut was Government property, were in favour of trying to put the fire out. A man from one of the factions grabbed Tall Kgloma and prevented him from running into the flames.

The day after the fire, Tall Kgloma scraped among the ashes and found the bent and blackened pieces of paraffin tin. Under them were thick packs of burnt paper which had been books. To his joy he found that in the centre of three of the packs were cores of paper which had not been burnt up. Delighted, he carefully scraped the charred edges away and bound the brown, irregular chunks of pages into tight little packets. When he had done this Tall Kgloma felt enormously pleased, for he was sure that no-one who kept books had ever so successfully dealt with such a disaster.

A month after the Headmaster's death the New Headmaster arrived. He was a young man, a stranger to the district though he spoke their language, for he had been born in town, where he had just finished his teacher-training. The New Headmaster attended the schoolhouse every morning to mark the register, but then he would often leave two or three of the senior boys

in charge and go off to visit the unmarried girls of the neighbourhood. Once, while he was walking about the schoolroom after hearing some lessons, the New Headmaster came upon Tall Kgloma covering one of the packets of half-burnt pages of book with some shiny new paper.

"What are you doing, Kgloma?" asked the New Headmaster.

"Book-keeping, sir," said Tall Kgloma, and showed his work.

The New Headmaster looked very carefully at the packet, and when he saw what it was he laughed for quite a long time. Then he saw the pain and fear in the boy's face and stopped laughing, patted Tall Kgloma on the shoulder, and said more quietly: "Well done, Kgloma, well done. Yes, you are a fine book-keeper, indeed! Go on, boy, go on."

Towards the time of the examinations the New Headmaster spent more hours in the schoolroom, telling the boys how the examinations would be, and how a white man from the Government would come to watch them write, and how there was no need to be afraid of writing in front of the white man, but that on no account must they ask him a question, or speak to him except in salutation, for he was a very important white man who would surely fail anyone who bothered him with questions.

When the examinations came the New Headmaster always kept close to the white man to see that no one would disgrace the school by asking foolish questions. All went well until the day of the optional subject, which was the last day.

On the day of his optional Book-keeping examination Tall Kgloma went into the schoolroom with the others, all very fearful of the white man, and took his pencil and wrote his name on the handsome cover of the answer-book in front of him. Then Tall Kgloma was given his examination paper. He could not understand one word of the examination paper, and after a little while Tall Kgloma could bear it no longer. He stood up, burst into tears, and ran from the room.

"What is all this about?" the white examiner asked the New Headmaster, going to Kgloma's desk and finding there the knife, the strips of coloured paper, the string, and the chunk of birdlime which Tall Kgloma had brought in for his book-keeping examination.

"Oh," said the New Headmaster, very embarrassed, "Oh, that is just a poor boy, sir. He is very foolish, sir. Please take no notice of him."

The New Headmaster's request was fully complied with.



MOTHER AND BABY by John Dronsfield.

JUDGMENT DAY

The second canto of a South African Fantasy.

by

ANTHONY DELIUS

I

Cape Town: the nineteen-eighties: in a season
When hope is dying, if it isn't dead;
A place the politicians breed decrees in,
A once-fine chamber round a trollop's bed,
Faded saloon-bar of the kelp and waves,
The old-age home of liberals and culture,
Watched by the ghostly silver-trees and graves,
Each with an angel waiting like a vulture.
Above all broods the bare and buckled Table
About whose foot the crumbs of boulders lie,
And further down, an oak, a beam, a gable
Cling to a past not yet obliterated by
Italian beetle and estate-exploiters.
And here and there a rag of beauty flutters,
And some forgotten grace still dreams and loiters
By streams not yet converted into gutters.
But the broad sun reveals in every quarter
How man can triumph over site and shape
And with his regiments of brick and mortar
Complete the occupation of the Cape,
Where now the architectural orthodox is
Morgens of big and little sentry-boxes.

II

But April's here, and the usual South-Easter
Is wandering somewhere in the Great Karoo,
The sun leans like a solitary feaster
Over the Table above the Avenue,
And from the mountain's dolomite reflectors
Heat ricochets below to burn at will
The necks of businessmen and meat-inspectors
And bleach the beards of goats on Signal Hill,
In the squat Castle guards admit defeat
And ships drop off the end of Adderley Street.

III

The ocean, with a calm sardonic titter,
 Eyes what five centuries of trade have swirled
 In tidal marks of civilizing litter
 About "the fairest Cape in all the world",
 And in its lazy humour is a subtle
 Blend of the lispng sand and broken shell,
 And sea-weed brushed where the red crayfish scuttle,
 And the creaking of some long-lost caravel.
 White bones in their green hammocks rock below
 Where Indian and Atlantic mix their waters,
 Careless that whites ashore should grow
 Hot about who should wed their great-granddaughters
 And pour out laws that lovers from the seas
 Must match in skin the ladies on their knees.

IV

Citizens swelter in their various housing
 From Petersen's Shebeen to Ingle Nook,
 Salt River, Woodstock, Mouille Point are drowsing
 In essences of immemorial snoek,
 While flowers incandesce at Kirstenbosch
 And yellow flames burn on the cannas' wicks
 Fat Coloured women nod above the wash
 In slums from Ida's Vale to District Six,
 While ladies, possibly of gentler birth,
 Play long-drawn rubbers out in Kenilworth.

V

North from the cemeteries of Woltemade
 New suburbs make an apt continuation,
 With tombs, then houses baking bleaker, harder
 In a sort of communal cremation.
 On hot, low brows for miles of hum-drum shops
 There flickers a migraine of neon-lights,
 Round lie the homes of teachers, clerks and cops,
 The tents of the Afrikaner Israelites
 Who storm the cities of the Promised Land—
 The English, falling back upon the mountain,
 Make a confused but decorous last stand
 Beyond old Rondebosch's rusty fountain.

VI

The Bantu, on behalf of Africa,
The Coloureds—well—for Homo Sapiens,
Watch from the urban undergrowth and are
Indifferent how the tedious battle ends,
And wry old men spit in the afternoon,
Heat dreams around them like projected wrath
Remembering many who have died too soon;
Crouched down in alley or in shanty path
Youth waits its chance, the dandy, tsotsi, skolly
Plays dice, and smiles with knives at melancholy.

VII

But stricken with the high cafard, the town
Lies under heat as if beneath a feather quilt
And every gasp's like breathing eiderdown.
Even the gnus upon the mountain wilt,
Down in a hundred business occupations
The mind goes blank, dictating voices mute,
And writers writing books on race relations
Pause, falter in their feverish pursuit.
The Cape Times columnist leans forward, nods
Knocking askew his culinary bays,
A local artist drops off as he prods
To daub more colour on the Cape Malays.
Sleep claims a score of Christian committees
From plans to turn their Coloured neighbours out
There's no more pleasant pastime in the cities
Than pushing groups of other folk about,
Or, clearing out from schools for little whites
The duskier infants, sorting sheep from goats,
Bravely risking that such human slights
May make rejected children cut their throats.
Yet others plot, some liberal old ladies,
To prop our spineless liberty with stays;
Such spirit at one hundred in the shade is
Less drooping than their men's on cooler days—
God knows if it's the ultimate solution
To re-apply our corsage constitution.

VIII

Ambitious, petty, greedy or defiant,
 All were prostrated by that monstrous heat
 Which like an apoplectic Hindu giant
 Reclined on coals of burning roof and street.
 The birds—they say they're M.P.'s transmigrated—
 Who shrill all days in trees below the House
 Break off whatever is eternally debated,
 And gulp in silent session on the boughs.
 But in the House one voice goes on and on,
 Climbs hills of eloquence in bottom-gear
 Like an explanatory automaton,
 Though all now sleep who came to cheer or jeer
 The voice of Franz Hieronimus Beleerd,
 That male cicada in van Winkle's beard.

IX

Lets go inside and sit among the bored
 Reporters, damned to that worst of occupations,
 Enduring mental stupor to record
 The endless insignificant orations.
 So you're reminded of a wagon-shed?
 It's nearly what's intended to be thought,
 Since they've replaced the relics of the dead
 Empire with symbols of a less foreign sort.
 That hooded bench on which the Speaker's perched
 Is the true front portion of a tented wagon
 In which the old republics' founders lurched
 Their way across the Mountains of the Dragon.
 And when that long-lashed whip is cracked, the sound
 Restores a proper order in the place;
 The Disselboom lies on the table crowned
 With golden ox-horns, that's our local mace.
 The top hat which now supersedes the wig
 Was once Paul Kruger's State or Sunday Best,
 The Clerk, in leather trousers, wears a rig
 Exactly as the old Voortrekkers dressed—
 And as a tribute to the role of British stock
 The Sergeant wears plus-fours, like Bobby Locke.

X

Such are the changes, benefits achieved
 By the New National Ethnic Restoration
 The "Neths", a party, by themselves, believed
 The greatest boon God ever gave a nation.
 This is a claim that's open to dispute,
 Some say the people never did a crazier . . .
 But I'm not here to barrack or confute,
 Simply to note their Great Ideal's "Ethnasia",
 A country which emerges when "Ethnosis"
 Has been applied a hundred years or two
 And those with similar skins and hair and noses
 Are grouped according to the Race Who's Who,
 And labelled by their statutory docketts,
 In areas, states, reserves and special pockets.

XI

Alone high up behind us on the wall
 In place of paintings of discarded kings
 Is hung the Ethnic Anthem, sung by all
 The Neths at solemn feasts and junketings:

*"Ethnasia will last a thousand years,
 Our land is studded with its glories,
 Its monuments are separate bars
 And segregated lavatories.*

*"God has through us ordained it so
 Post offices are split in two,
 And separate pillar boxes fix
 That correspondence does not mix,
 No one has ever managed better
 To guard the spirit—and the letter.*

*"O ethnic trains and buses daily hurry
 Divided hues to earn divided bread,
 The races may not fornicate or marry,
 They even lie apart when they are dead.*

*“God may award his just damnation
For mixed or unmixed fornication,
Down here we warn the citizen
With whom it is a crime to sin,
And no man takes, with our cognisance,
A liberty without a licence.*

*“Yea, in our law men stand or fall
By rule of thumb or finger-nail,
So sensitive’s our Roman-Dutch
It notes if lips protrude too much.*

*“We’ve split all difference so fine,
No wider than a hair or skin,
To foil the trick of traits and needs
So shockingly the same in breeds—
For such success in our researches
We thank Thee, Lord, in separate churches.*

*“How wondrous is our work, our way,
And thine as well, Great Separator,
Who separating night from day
Left us to sort the rest out later.”*

XII

We won’t stay long—this heat’s too great—none see us
And the good Sergeant’s snoring with the best.
Even the trump of Judas Maccabeus
Would hardly move one double chin from chest.
For there’s Beleerd, still an attractive figure,
Genial sometimes, but never entertaining,
And still, with some gesticulatory vigour,
Explaining, and explaining, and explaining.
The pleasant voice is faulted with a treble
That puberty forgot to take away,
Frank, eager, student’s face, a youthful rebel
Beneath curled hair gone prematurely grey.
Tall with aplomb, he lectures and predicts

While slight disarming smiles disturb his lips.
None, when awake, know why he bothers so—
His party's made three eyes for every no.

XIII

But words, like alcohol with other men,
Are his compulsion, theories, words, and schemes,
Poured in dull rivers from his tongue and pen
To sail his paper argosies of dreams.
Bills, blueprints, proclamations, memoranda
Bobbed in procession on his verbal flood,
Behind them blows his restless propaganda—
And all from a strange need of guts and blood.
Statistics, numbers, races fill his vision,
Ransacked from Europe, Africa and Asia
And patched together with a schooled precision
To form a bold methodical fantasia,
His Hundred Year Design, His Master Plan
To keep the Neths the masters—and their clan.
Mistake not, he's a man of action, too,
At least, his plans come finally to motions,
He starts on what he says he'll carry through
Ignoring rights and popular commotions.
He's of the latest breed that's come to boss us,
The combination captain-pedagogue
On academic stilts, a mean colossus,
Goes resolutely deepest in the bog,
To rage there of designs for joy to come—
And suck the reasons for them from his thumb.

XIV

Did you not hear a curious grumbling sound,
As if the tired earth had heaved a sigh?
It seemed to stretch its muscles underground
And yet take half its tremor from the sky.—
No, it's weather mumbling in a misty beard
Less certain of its projects than Beleerd.

XV

Beleerd, the Ethnarch, Planner of Revisions,
The Minister of Ethnical Affairs!

Great Chief of all the racial divisions,
 Great wind that fathers all our separate airs!
 From the Cunene to the Great Fish River
 Ten million tribesmen, black and brown and yellow,
 Abide upon the nod of this law-giver,
 The Bull that can make chieftains with his bellow.
 (Good heavens! If I go on in this strain
 I'll get into his P.R.O.'s anthology
 That snaps up any Bantu praise-refrain
 Hailing Beleerd in civil mbongology!)
 Well, anyway, he's race's life preserver,
 Tradition's conservator, tribal jurist,
 The very phallus of generic fervour,
 The great divider, yet official purist.

XVI

Study now this Great White Father figure,
 Or kindly Governor of the black man's gaol,
 Locations, and reserves, those somewhat bigger
 Lock-ups, to put the blacks beyond the pale.
 Chief Keeper of the Bantu, he discusses
 Bold plans to modernise the penitentiary,
 Even give ruptured tribes some legal trusses
 And set them free inside a previous century.
 Each race, or group, or tribe in like confinement,
 Fruitful by androgynous gestation,
 Develops its own lines of quaint refinement—
 Culture begins with tribal decoration.
 This very afternoon Doctor Beleerd
 Is speaking to a measure that's designed
 To build the black man's pride in his own weird
 And boost his ethnic ethos, as outlined.
 The bill might strike some latter-day recorder
 As quite the masterpiece of its concocter;
 It legalises in the state's new order
 That fine old institution of witch-doctor.
 Native F.R.C.S.'s and M.D.'s
 Are scorned as imitation European,
 But oaths not thought of by Hippocrates,
 And bed-side manners of a different mien
 Will help the Bantu sufferer in his groans
 As more indigenous healers throw the bones.

XVII

But listen to Beleerd.

“Science can glean
Much from the age-old knowledge of these men—
Buchu, for instance, and what about quinine?
They have a wide pharmacopoeia then,
Not bottles of grey powders on their shelves
Or rows of patent salves whose worth’s unknown
To doctors or the pharmacists themselves—
The Bantu know six hundred herbs alone,
And their green bottles stand upon the veld,
Juices and tastes and scents of their own soil
Where the deep-rooted generations dwelt
And sacred long-descended snakes uncoil.
Their herbalist is the apothecary,
But the Inyanga, the witch-doctor’s more
Like our own doctor, but where we’d be wary
In fields we’re only starting to explore,
Psycho-somatic medicine for one,
These men have specialised for centuries.
Some honourable members may make fun
Of dances, monkey-tails, goats’ ovaries,
They might as well scoff at the bed-side manner.
Surely no good practitioner will think
Man’s a machine, adjustable by spanner,
A rapport’s needed, trust, a psychic-link
Between him and the sick. At any age
It’s mostly formed by sight of an appliance,
Stethoscope, thermometer, pressure-gauge,
They cure as much, perhaps, as any science.
Just the same psychological adherence
Results from bones, wands, little shields, and thence,
Aided by dance and song and strange appearance,
Inyngas build a healing confidence.
But such a nexus circles wider than
A brief accord between two minds, the whole
Environment and culture of the man
Preside to cure him through his tribal soul.
For the witch-doctor is the very nerve
Of Bantu feeling for his ethnic own,
They in themselves essentialise, conserve

Psychic symbols from which a tribe is grown.
 So, when mirimbas sound and drums
 And firelight makes shadows insecure
 Then from the masked and whirling dancer comes
 A social medicine, a psychic cure.
 Witch-doctors' aims—and they resent it!—
 Have, like Ethnosis, been misrepresented”

XVIII

At the rattle of that compelling word,
 Like an old charger when the kettle's played
 The Minister of Defamation stirred,
 Gulped, lifted a long equine jaw and neighed.
 By now the country's been defamed so long
 One Minister's entire time is taken
 Explaining why all journalists are wrong
 And even Pope and President mistaken.
 And heads of ministers on benches round
 Rear out of somnolence with glaring eyes,
 As owls are wakened by some daylight sound
 Into an angry, yellow-orbed surprise.
 A brief cantankerous stirring disarrays
 The ranks, as if in times of high abuse,
 When verbal berg-winds belly-ache the days
 And all the bitter little braks are loose.
 Before heads drop, note that line of jaws,
 Each slowly chewing on a cud of power
 And balding crowns that planned the strangest laws
 Since Hammurabai stylused on a tower—
 Easy to overlook them in a crowd,
 But some, in curious ways, are well endowed.

XIX

Smoke-darkened face, as subtle as a fist,
 And eyes as clear—and just as deep—as glass,
 There sits that forthright, smouldering chauvinist,
 Gerhardus Brandman, canonized “The Baas”.
 “Baas” is his favourite word, and “Baas” adorns,
 Festoons his blunt republican romance.
 Pretence, the prettier sophistries, he scorns

For ramrod logic—and an upright stance.
He's realised his plain straightforward dream
By devious tactics and by talking straight;
Once he was captain of a rugby team,
Which trained him to be captain of the state—
Though lacking the distinction found by some
In his precursor, Doctor van der Hum.

XX

The closest friends of this upright sectarian,
Are Mutt and Jeff of this odd ruling set-up,
A long neurotic and a short vulgarian,
And each a master of the comic get-up;
Bills which opponents hold in gravest doubt
Are those which these two laugh the most about.
One looks an aging elongated fairy,
Or, possibly, a sort of bleached giraffe,
This minute agitated, the next airy,
A tape-worm's pallor and a horn-bill's laugh.
He's "Jolly" Staak, at heart a daring spinster,
Who peers, in hope, beneath the nation's bed
For moralising clerics from Westminster
Or (Help! Police!) a handy black—or red.
The Minister of Order he, who foils
Plots mostly laid in his imagination
And with a weird and spastic ardour toils
With agitation against agitation.
For the new order he has changed the law,
Replaced it with his own judicial system,
Police are practically his private corps,
And "communists" are those who most resist him.
Yet he can joke, and no one can be cheerier
Increasing floggings, sten-guns and hysteria.

XXI

And there sits Tommy Vlenter, least a novice,
A sallow tokolos, but wordly wise,
With great dexterity and knack of office,
As head of Defamation, nails the lies.

He can be poisonous but never pompous,
 His dignity escapes him like an elf,
 He scoops the gutter first in every rumpus,
 If praise is slow to come, he'll praise himself.
 He has a human weakness for the press
 And reads his speeches there with shining eyes
 Those praising him he quotes to great excess,
 The rest—distortions, calumny and lies!

XXII

Professor Bobels isn't like these two,
 Responsibility is what he bases
 His public presence on, a broader view—
 He has a trinity of public faces.
 He is an elder of the Church, he can
 Talk like a Ph.D. of Blake and Bosch,
 And he poses as an English gentleman,
 The legal kind, that comes from Rondebosch.
 Yet he's a sort of caucus-Faustus who
 Can conjure by strange measures from the murk,
 Spare senators to show the doubting few
 Democracy can still be made to work.

XXIII

Bobels might lack the absolute belief
 And Brandman, Staak and Vlenter may have found
 A dialectic binder for their brief
 Of prejudice, ambition and more profound
 Drives and uneases of the soul rejected,
 Even Beleerd, tormented by a fear
 Of chaos within to master may project it,
 But Dimmermans is through and through sincere.
 Big, stammering, stupid, passionate man,
 Falsetto voice and agitated beard,
 He loves the blacks as much as any can—
 The fine old servants, who have disappeared,
 The ringed indunas, changing times have banished—
 He calls for what has gone to be restored,
 He cries for childhood's friends who've vanished
 With a boy's clay oxen and treasure-ward.
 Visions roll out before his mooning gaze,

So deeply has this well-intentioned claue felt,
 Sees singing Bantu city-builders raise
 New Samarkands upon the tribal backveld—
 Whatever secret doubters there may lurk, he
 Gobbles up dreams like a prophetic turkey.

XXIV

Some don't need delusions to prop invention,
 But see it clearly, white man versus black,
 Know from a past all bloody with dissension
 Where many blacks are cheap, whites get the sack,
 And since gold, war, time, poverty ordain,
 And mining towns were bone-yards of men's lives,
 Where old dreams die gaunt ribs of pride remain,
 The wronged were Afrikaners and their wives.
 So Joe Coetzee speaks out his visionless
 Hard logic of protection and mistrust,
 His syllogisms based on prejudice
 And axioms of racial disgust—
 And builds a system all the Neths agree
 Makes a Civilized Labour Policy.

XXV

There's half a dozen more administrators
 Of less distinction than the ones I've named,
 Though quite as interesting as debaters,
 Well-spoken, but not generally acclaimed.
 And round about them spread like doodle-marks
 Are variations on the standard faces.
 Some look like angry ants, some patriarchs,
 Some earnest fellows from up-country places.
 A smattering of patriot professors
 Give with the usual academic unction
 More polished apologias than their lessers
 And thus perform a sort of cultural function.

XXVI

There's nothing new about these chaps, their game is
 Played everywhere in Africa today.
 Nkrumah, Zik or Nasser shout the same as

They do to break the old imperial sway.
 The sway's no longer here, but that's no matter,
 Dead enemies are safer to attack
 And vanished threats are easier to scatter
 When others have already hurled them back.
 Thus round that staunch dead president, Oom Paul,
 These pitch their stalls, and now their silk pavilions,
 With enterprises tap a people's soul,
 Find power—and, as well, the Kruger millions,
 And still pursue with bonus, trust, debenture,
 What Neth newspapers call "The Great Adventure".

XXVII

But while they dream of riches and republics
 Or of the future great, good Afrikaner,
 Whose hand both lamb and lion-cub will lick,
 Beleerd depicts the African Nirvana;
 ". . . There will, of course, remain a need for numbers
 Of ordinary doctors for a while
 Though in no such proportion as encumbers
 The smooth switchback to the old Bantu style.
 Redundant blacks with medical degrees—
 I have arranged, in case a qualm should lurk—
 Can also turn witch-doctors if they please,
 Or be employed as clerks, or other work,
 They can't go on as carbon-copy whites,
 Cluttering up the ethnic restoration
 And whispering of foreign human rights
 As if they cured the sick by agitation.
 For rapid spread of the new personnel
 The best Inyangas will set up a college,
 And yield the secrets each concealed so well
 To make a common fund of all their knowledge.
 Nearby a Bantu industry will rise,
 For since we've shot out of its habitat
 The beast on which their medicine relies,
 They'll need a plant for making lion fat.
 Of course I'm not expecting many cheers
 From members opposite who "love the Native",
 They always keep their finest jibes and sneers
 For anything constructive or creative.

They no more wish the black among his own
 A man, than have him as their next-door neighbour,
 But want him in some sort of neutral zone
 To buy their goods and be cheap factory labour.
 Our friends will cry, "A blow at freedom!" That's
 Their usual line. But will they admit to you,
 The British—they're the model democrats!—
 Had state witch-doctors healing the Kikuyu.
 Sometimes I pray that just one man with vision
 Would rise one day among the Opposition . . ."

XXVIII

Across the way the weary Opposition
 Nods forty heads above one nice reflection
 —A dream as well—to find a proposition
 That's vague enough to win the next election;
 And round this high abstraction, brisk
 Old goats of happy expectation skip—
 The Government across the way will risk
 Too much, and crash from a stupendous slip.
 Triumph (some say) is won with greater ease,
 However many hearts and years it breaks,
 If faith's not pinned to forthright policies
 But hope is fixed on Government mistakes.
 And to the Blacks they offer neither hand
 Nor heart, for fear that someone might construe
 This to admit that others share the land—
 A fact they sometimes draw attention to.
 They are exponents of elusive bonhomie,
 Justice for all, but who gets what, none knows—
 Theirs is a true political economy
 Where all the enterprise must be their foes!
 Besides, God knows what quarrels, splits, divisions
 Might come among them if they took decisions.

XXIX

Let's say, the Opposition knows the ring
 And is, quite often, wily in debate,
 They bob and weave and use the ropes to spring
 The classic punches of the bantam-weight.
 Even with rabbit-punches, jabs and buts

Somehow they still appear too orthodox,
 While all the fans yell out for blood and guts
 They seem to deal in dictionary knocks,
 And, dodging, make their stand for "Integration"—
 Their one great truth—their wordiest evasion.
 And always when they're fiercest in the pressure
 Spirit wanes, ardour suddenly gives out,
 Their towering rightness shins it through a fissure
 Their thunderous presence fizzles to a doubt.
 They have an odd political disease
 Like epilepsy at "Integration's" sound,
 Abruptly see eternal verities,
 Then fall deranged and rigid to the ground.
 They can't decide to love or lose the black,
 And so, to solve the irritating fix,
 To free themselves and yet not feel his lack,
 They want him "taken out of politics".
 A Neth has only got to ask them "How?"
 And they retire to caucus and a row.

XXX

Three charming fellows lead the hopeful crew,
 Each points his section's genius or flair,
 One's Afrikaans, one's English, one's a Jew,
 A farmer, lawyer and a millionaire.
 Colijn's the captain and the figurehead
 Of this reef-dodging lugger of a party,
 He only swears in private, he's well-bred
 And always on the deck and looking hearty.
 And in the worst of weathers he's out front—
 There's something rather feline in his style,
 A bowsprit Cheshire Cat who bears the brunt
 Shipping the long Cape rollers in his smile.
 Or maybe he's another sort of cat,
 As imperturbable, the puzzling Sphinx,
 Whose riddle everyone keeps guessing at
 But can't decide just what or if he thinks.
 And though we ask what stirs the man? What hates?
 What gods? What love or cause impels or pulls?
 Colijn's best public passion dissipates
 Itself on fodder and imported bulls.

But can he ride us through the storm, proceeding
With no more rudder than a sense of breeding?

XXXI

Oh, Jack St. James can always cut a dash
Even without a horse, his gay whip teases,
But will he turn out dexterous or rash
When his delight amid the uproar rises?
A Peter Pan of party politics,
Came to it young, its kept him young too long,
Now age looks in, still plays the same old tricks
Impulsively, and still can play them wrong.
But one more sad behind his mask regrets
Himself lost leader of the English section,
Those for whom the old red sun subduedly sets
And maps grow chill with shadows of rejection.
These million English are a vague communion
Indifferent to leadership or goal,
Their most accomplished children flee the Union,
Search other countries for their cause and soul,
And to the pioneer premise of their fathers
Add on no better moral, finer story,
Leave our crude glaring sun and savage weathers
To bask, reflect in other peoples' glory.
Most able men, not all, who stay behind
Fix loyalty to man upon shareholders,
The other whites are voters of a kind
And blacks are some statistics in their folders.
Man may diminish while they make their pile,
Black generations brew in new diseases,
What if the legislation stinks of guile?
What? If the supertax reduction pleases . . .
Their language is looked after by the Jews,
Their politics thought out by Afrikaners,
Their colleges embalm enlightened views,
While they get on with business and gymkhanas.
Who don't pretend to "county" status boast
A brawny brotherhood of beer and games.
Their paraclete is Queen Victoria's ghost
And their philosopher is Jack St. James,
Who betters most of them in grit and wit
And patient waiting for the Neths to split.

XXXII

For Frank Sidonia gold and diamonds gleam,
 The richest man, the subtlest in the House;
 Slight, diffident as silk and it might seem
 The millions laboured and brought forth a mouse.
 But yet he has a smoothness that can trick
 Like razor-grass, and slice with a caress,
 And cut the feet he seems about to lick
 And trip with knots the Neth inventiveness.
 But still, he stays too tentative, too shy
 Of straight approaches, keeps preferring stealth,
 Hears ever at his back the warning cry
 Of pale directors nervous of their wealth.
 And so he baulks, who sees the truth so clear,
 At the same Rubicon where others shrink,
 But sponsors for the hoi-polloi to cheer,
 Like Dulles, demonstrations on the brink;
 Yet offers nothing that will hold the heart
 When the ethnic time-bomb blows the state apart.

XXXIII

And round these men spread the sub-tropic latitudes
 Where flatness, vacancy and wind are features
 With old dry beds of liberal beatitudes,
 The haunt of nervous, vegetarian creatures
 And ostriches who swell their throats and mock
 A lion's booming to the world around
 But, when their heads are slipped into a sock,
 Suffer indignities without a sound.
 And, look, a row of pretty antelopes
 Are like inverted tripods at the back,
 Klipspringer liberals on rocky slopes,
 Tread moral ledges safe from an attack.
 Leaders prefer old wildebeests or gnus
 Or pole-cats who can raise a stink at will
 And curse well-bred constituencies who choose
 This lofty breed that nibbles principle.
 However, they, though posed upon their niches,
 Climb down when called to toe the party line
 And then climb back to dream of final ditches,
 A crisis when they really do resign.

Regard them now in their uneasy slumber,
A little drooping like a horse at tether,
For liberals there have been in any number
But few kept principle and seat together,
And yet because they once were innocent
Their muse sings them this lullaby-lament:

XXXIV

Ten little liberals waiting to resign,
One went and did so, and then there were nine.

Nine little liberals entered a debate,
But one spoke his heart out, and then there were eight.

Eight little liberals saw the road to heaven,
One even followed it, and then there were seven.

Seven little liberals caught in a fix,
One stayed liberal, and then there were six.

Six little liberals glad to be alive,
One turned a somersault, and then there were five.

Five little liberals found they had the floor,
One spoke for all of them, and then there were four.

Four little liberals sitting down to tea,
One choked on a principle, and then there were three.

Three little liberals looking at the view,
One saw a policy, and then there were two.

Two little liberals lying in the sun
One turned dark brown, and then there was one.

One little liberal found nothing could be done,
So he took the boat for England, and then there were none.

XXXV

But leave all sleeping in their fitful plight
Each listening to a little siren-song,
Two parties of mistrust, one shrinks from right,
The other fears their folk may shrink from wrong.
(Alas my country in your fateful years
That these two eyes of our one people's vision
Should be, as the last chance of choosing nears,
Squinting fright and bleary indecision!)

Down deep in their subconscious thickets none
Suspects his time, his destiny is reckoned,
Nor sees pale hands press downwards from the sun
And shadows rising round him by the second.
Many illusions throng the human head,
The seed from which all light and darkness grow,
And here's a shade of minds, the forest bed
With trunks of darkness standing round them now.
Beleerd goes on, their tone-deaf nightingale,
It almost seems, indeed, that from his lips
Grey concepts, all the sift of time, exhale
The haunted dimness of a great eclipse.
On far long paths from all the world he takes
Our time's half-truths and monstrous tall confusions,
Fulfilling all our politics he makes
An elephants' grave-yard of man's delusions.
And such a weight of old grey errors grow,
A shudder seems to run below the floor.
Beleerd ignores a passing vertigo
And struggles on to add one reason more.
"Thoughts of old ritual murders cause misgiving
To some. But I can state on their behalf,
Modern witch-doctors leave their "victim" living
And now make muti from his photograph . . .
Whites must, of course, make sacrifices too,
Witch-doctors who once found our cows and sheep'll
Be fully occupied in pastures new,
The great adventure, serving their own people . . ."
At which the earth which lay around the House
Wiggles as lips do that repress a yawn
Then yields and opens its defeated jaws,
Swallows the building and surrounding lawn.

Policemen on the gate with dazed suspicion
Gape at the gape the House has fallen through,
One, holding fast, in terror, to tradition,
Shoots at a black man in the Avenue.
The civil servants wake in buildings round
Stare out, then clutch in panic at their eyes,
And hear how a great underswell of sound
Breaks outward through the town in frightened cries,
And some look up and see a strange dust trail
Like a torpedo or long finger-nail . . .

XXXVI

In the descending House the members stir
A sense of sway disturbs them—or of sinking?—
But see Beleerd still talking through the blur,
Drop off again, resolved to cut their drinking.
One, wandering to the Lobby for an airing,
Sees huge three-headed women, taloned, clinging
Outside the windows, eyes of yellow glaring,
And ghastly moaning voices reach him bringing
Weird utterances urging his improvement,
All intermingled with inchoate bellows.
Fearing another women's protest movement
He dodges back among his dreaming fellows.
Past winged horrendous freaks of divination,
Through chaos and old night they floated on,
Through all the lost week-end of first creation,
Down the dark gullet of oblivion.
And like a box-kite slowly hauled to ground
From heavens stippled with appalling fowl
The House descends the fabulous profound
To a landscape like a face within a cowl.
Throughout, their minds half-troubled by a creaking,
The members drowse, Beleerd continues speaking
The swan-song of their earthly politics,
And acts their Charon down a falling Styx . . .

AFRICA

LANGSTON HUGHES

Sleepy giant,
You've been resting awhile.
Now I see the thunder
And the lightning
In your smile.
Now I see
The storm clouds
In your waking eyes:
The thunder,
The wonder,
And the young
Surprise.
Your every step reveals
The new stride
In your thighs.

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