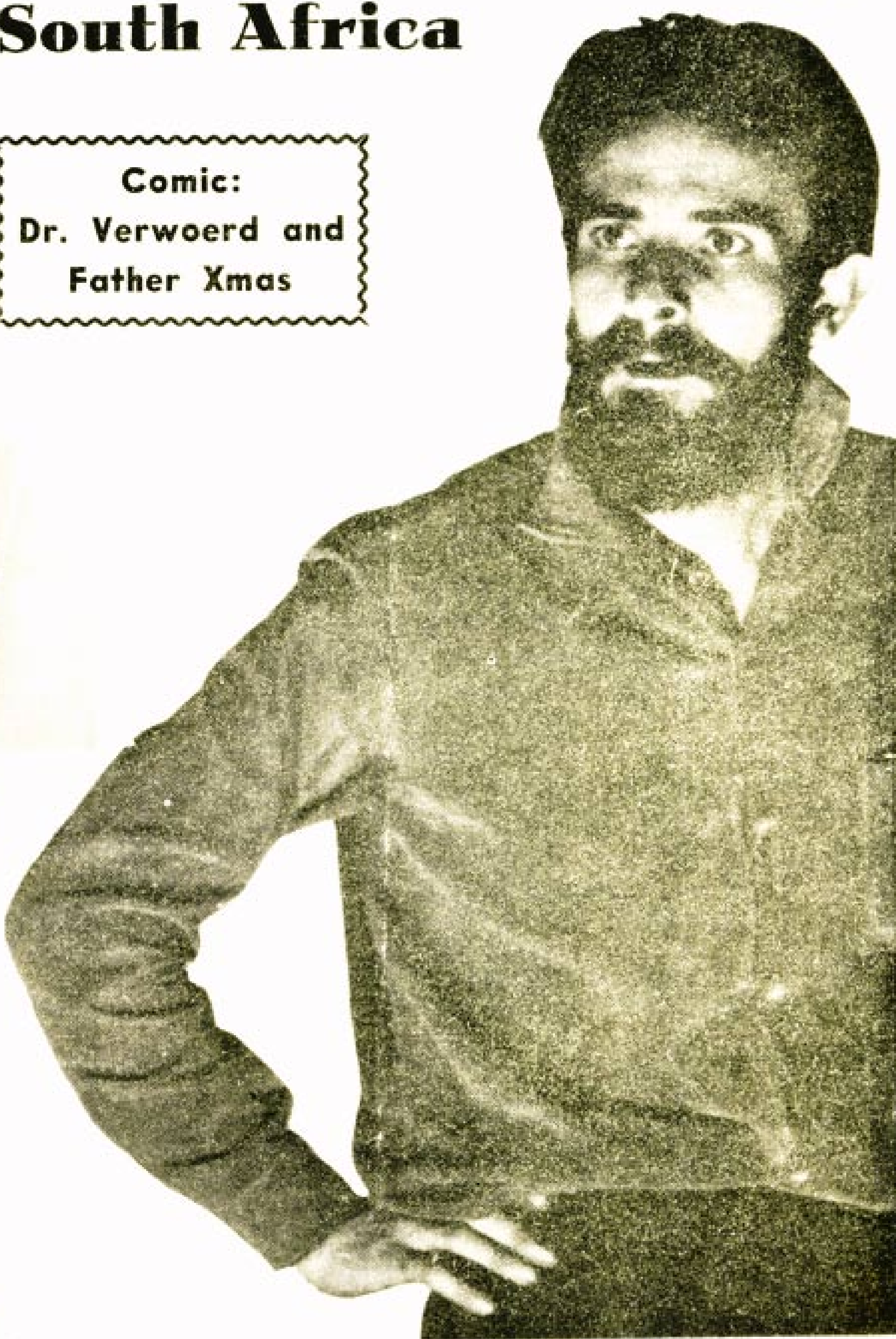
FIGHTING TALK

New Writing
in South Africa

Comic:
Dr. Verwoerd and Father Xmas



Cecil Williams speaks to
KRISHNA SHAH

HOLIDAY ISSUE

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HOLIDAY ISSUE

Writing of the New South Africa

This holiday issue of FIGHTING TALK is devoted to short stories and satire; poetry and wit: writing of the new South Africa. Whether by African, Coloured or White writers, it breathes the life — and the protest — of the embattled peoples of our country.

Apartheid talk of our peoples 'developing along their own lines' is swamped in the growth of our new writing. While 'native administrators' strain to fan dying tribalisms, and to nurse the use of a quaint, laboured idiom of a kraal (village) society which they imagine can remain intact after three centuries of White battering, the young writers of South Africa have turned their backs on the stagnant, the antiquated and race-ridden.

The myths tell that the African must labour in the factory, yet know nothing of trade unions and stay-aways. The apartheid-men say the people of the Reserves know only bliss and contentment under the Nationalists. Events — and writing of our day — show otherwise.

Our writers are using not the flowery, romantic phrases which soothe: "Verwoerd's in his office and all's right with the world" but the clipped, full-blooded vigorous language of the people of the crowded trains and townships, the jostling queues and beer halls. They write about the people under siege in the rural areas; they reflect on the ugliness of race hates and tensions; and produce for a theatre in which the colour bar is being broken down.

Ours is the most 'mixed' society on the Continent of Africa, whether the ethnic-grouping specialists can face that or not; and South Africa's cultural cross-currents are blowing up exciting new talent among all the country's population groups. Not the least exciting aspect is the ease with which White writers grasp the authentic of African situations and the skill with which Non-Whites dissect White society.

This issue produces a small slice of this writing. Some has appeared in other forms, as in the theatre (Fugard's 'Blood Knot') or in a journal published in West Africa (Zeke Mphahlele on Langston Hughes first appeared in the Nigerian "Black Orpheus"). Some of it has been published abroad and enthusiastically greeted by the critics (Charles Hooper's BRIEF AUTHORITY and Marion Friedmann's THE SLAP), only to be banned by the South African Government as unfit for South African eyes and minds! Yet other pieces make their first appearance in our journal.

OUR COVER PICTURE: Top left and right: Zakes Mokae and Athol Fugard, the brothers in THE BLOOD KNOT.
Bottom: Bashkar and Surya Kumari stars of KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER.

20 PAGES

This is an extra-large 20 page issue. Due to the printer's holidays there will be no January issue. The February issue will appear at the end of January.

FIGHTING TALK

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The Writers in This Issue:

ATHOL FUGARD's play broke the dead-weight of precedent which decreed that Black men and White could not appear on the same stage, and his two characters in THE BLOOD KNOT are the ideal ones to have done so. This thin, bearded man with the intense flashing eyes is modest, self-effacing, direct and unsentimental; talks staccato as he writes and simply doesn't see colour — in persons. This is the third of his plays to be performed and it will tour South Africa and probably London. Fugard, when he isn't on the boards stepping into the skin of one of his characters, devotes his workmanlike approach to the theatre to the Rehearsal Room of Union Artists, where this play was first tried out.

'ZEKE' MPHAHLELE grew up in Marabastad Location and the smell of its open drains permeate his DOWN SECOND AVENUE autobiography. His first love was teaching but Bantu Education stopped that. Next he was literary editor of DRUM, then lived in Nigeria for three years, teaching, writing, studying and publishing brilliantly trenchant criticism, attending conferences of the All-African Peoples' Conference and deciding what to try next. At present he is Paris-based and in charge of an African cultural project of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

DENNIS BRUTUS, the ebullient Port Elizabeth teacher under notice from the Education Department; Coloured Peoples' Congress campaigner last month served with an order banning him from all meetings; journalist, short story writer, poet (when he has the time), is probably South Africa's most effective one-man campaigner, as the guardians of segregation in sport know to their cost. His sturdiest child THE SOUTH AFRICAN SPORT ASSOCIATION has demolished organisations and prejudices entrenched decades longer than its young adversary, and if Dennis Brutus continues to have anything to do with it, will see that the colour bar in sport is the first to go.

MORONGWA SERETO is the nom de plume of one of South Africa's leading African short story writers and journalists who draws his themes from the urban townships.

MGIBE, our writer on jazz, is foremost in the development of a South African musical genre today. His work with jazz groups and choirs is helping set new standards here, while overseas Miriam Makeba and the Belafonte Choir are using his vocals and the Sheffield Symphony Orchestra is shortly to perform one of his compositions. He plays the trumpet, saxophone, timbula, violin, clarinet and piano without ever having had a lesson.

T. H. ('Harry') GWALA — First African trade union organiser in Pietermaritzburg, this 41 year old former teacher has been in the thick of African political campaigning since the 'forties; banned under the Suppression of Communism Act; arrested and brought to trial three times for contraventions of it, and yet acquitted. From one court room he was whisked straight off to emergency detention in 1960.

ALF WANNENBURGH is a young College instructor in his 'twenties; an easy mixer but not easy about race intolerance; who has been busy this year digging up material about episides in Cape Coloured political history.

CHARLES HOOPER comes of the distinguished line of battling persons in South Africa whose work in Zeerust during the crisis of the 1957-8 peasants' struggles grew into a book which throbs with penetrating understanding of the people and the issues which inflamed them. Too penetrating for the Government: it banned the book.

MARION FRIEDMANN, now in England where THE SLAP was published this year and then banned for South African readers, was prominent in Liberal Party circles as secretary of its Transvaal branch.

PHYLLIS ALTMAN published "THE LAW OF THE VULTURES" in 1952 and has not yet solved the problem of finding time to write between her trade union work for the South African Congress of Trade Unions. She has taken to "mining" her uncompleted second novel for material for short stories. Satirical writing is the thing, she feels, as South Africa is one vast satire. This is her second published satire.

CECIL WILLIAMS, outspoken South African producer of plays of protest, interviewed KRISHNA SHAH, visiting Indian producer who has brought KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER to South Africa.

RAYMOND THOMS is a student of classics and English, detained during the 1960 Emergency.

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One Brother Was Black...

From "THE BLOOD KNOT" by ATHOL FUGARD

This is a play in seven scenes, with two characters. It is an episode in the life of two lonely brothers, Zachariah (dark skinned) and Morris (fair skinned) who begin a pen pal friendship with a woman. The scenes are played out in Korsten, Port Elizabeth in an ugly tin shack: fish and chips out of tin plates, an enamel basin and packets of foot salts for the after-work footbath for Zachariah, an alarm clock that rings stridently to mark off the routine dreary existence of the two. Zachariah goes out to work; Morris stays behind in the shack, doing the chores, setting the clock, planning for their 'future'. ("A lot of people get by without futures these days" says a line in the play.)

"AH YES *THAT* WEARINESS . . ."

In SCENE 3 Morris is sitting on his bed counting a roll of bank notes and a small heap of coins. The alarm clock rings. He carefully puts the money away in a tin box . . . next he resets the alarm clock, and finally he places an enamel basin on the floor in front of one of the two rickety beds. ZACHARIAH appears . . . silent and sullen. He goes straight to the bed where he sits.

Morris: You look tired tonight old man. (Zach looks askance at him.) Today too long? I watched you dragging your feet home along the edge of the lake. I'd say, I said, that that was a weary body. Am I right old chap?
Zach: What's this 'old fellow' thing you got hold of tonight?
Morris: Just a figure of speaking Zach. The shape of round shoulders, a bent back, a tired face. The Englishman would say 'old boy' but we don't like that boy business, hey.
Zach: Ja. They call a man a boy. You got a word for that Morrie.
Morris: Long or short?
Zach: Squashed, like it didn't fit the mouth.
Morris: I know the one you mean.
Zach: Then say it.
Morris: Prejudice.
Zach: Pre — ja — dis.
Morris: Injustice.
Zach: That's all out of shape as well.
Morris: Inhumanity.
Zach: No. That's when he makes me stand at the gate.
Morris: Am I right in thinking you were there again today?
Zach: All day long.
Morris: You tried to go back to pots.
Zach: I tried to go back to pots. My feet, I said, are killing me.
Morris: And then?
Zach: Go to the gate or go to hell . . . boy.
Morris: He said boy as well?
Zach: He did.
Morris: In one sentence!
Zach: Inhumanity and prejudice, in one sentence.
(He starts to work off one shoe with the toe of the other foot, and then dips the foot into the basin of water. He will not get as far as taking off the other shoe.)
Zach: When your feet are bad you feel it.
Morris: Try resting your legs.
Zach: It's not so much in the legs.
Morris: Find a chair then. Support your back.
Zach: Chair! A chair over there! What you talking about? A chair at the gate! Wake up, man! Anyway, it's not so much in my back also. It's here. (He puts a hand over his heart.)
Morris: Ah yes THAT weariness.
Zach: What is it?
Morris: The muscles of your heart.
Zach: Ja. Ja! That sounds like it all right. The muscles of my heart are weary. That's it man! Inside me, just here, I'm so tired, so damned tired to the bottom of my body of . . . what?
Morris: Beating. That's what a heart does to a man.
Zach (Gratitude): My God, Morrie, you're on to it tonight. I'm tired of beating, beating, every day another beating. (Now he puts his foot in the basin). What's all this beating for anyway?
Morris: Blood.
Zach: It gets worse and worse, doesn't it? (Pause) I looked at the stuff once, on my hands. It was red. So red as . . .
Morris: Pain.
Zach: Ja. (Little laugh). But it wasn't mine. So it's my heart is it. Getting tired . . .

DIGGING UP THE ROOTS . . .

The pen pal venture boomerangs when the girl turns out to be White, and what started almost as a lark, as a diversion(turns to torment as the two men act out their dilemma: they are brothers, born of the same mother but separated by the gulf of colour. The White brother, Morris, forces Zachariah to probe his blackness, first to cringe from it, debase himself before it, then to glory and triumph in it.

SCENE 4.
Morris: . . . You see we're digging up the roots of what's the matter with you, now I know they're deep. That's why it hurts. But we must get them out. Once the roots are out the thing will die and never grow again. I'm telling you I know. So you've got to get it out, right out. You're lucky, Zach.
Zach: Me?
Morris: Yes, you. I think for a man like you there shouldn't be too much discomfort in pulling it right out.
Zach: Just show me how!
Morris: Go back to the beginning. Give me the first fact. (Pause). It started with Ethel, remember Ethel . . .
Zach: Is white.
Morris: That's it. And . . .
Zach: And I am black.
Morris: You've got it.
Zach: Ethel is white and I am black.
Morris: Now take a good grip.
Zach: Ethel is so . . . so . . . snow white.
Morris: Hold it! Grab it all!
Zach: And I am too . . . truly . . . too black.
Morris: Now this is the hard part Zach, so be prepared boy. Be broad in the shoulder. Be a man, and brace yourself to take the strain. Some men I knew couldn't and sustained their damages eternally.
Now get ready . . . I'll urge you on . . . keep steady . . . I'm with you all the way remember . . . and PULL! With all your might and all your woe heave, harder, still harder, Zach. Let it hurt man. It has to hurt a man to do him good because once bitten twice shy, just this one cry and then never again, just this once try to think of it as one of those

bitter pills that pull a man through to better days and being yourself again, at last, and in peace, in one piece because you'll win, you'll see, and as they say tomorrow is another, yet another day and a man must carry on, doesn't matter so much where, just on, just carry your load on somewhere and teach your lips to smile with your eyes closed, to say lightheartedly if you can, with a laugh as if you didn't care, to say . . . let's hear it Zach.

Zach: I can never have her.

Morris: Never ever.

Zach: She wouldn't want me anyway.

Morris: It's as simple as that.

Zach: She's too too white to want me anyway.

Morris: For better or for worse.

Zach: So I won't want her any more.

Morris: Not in this life, or **that** one, if death do us part, that **next** one, God help us! For ever and ever no more thank you.

Zach: Please no more.

Morris: We cry enough!

Zach: I know now.

Morris: We do.

Zach: Everything.

Morris: Every last little thing.

Zach: From the beginning.

Morris: And then on without end.

Zach: Why it was.

Morris: And will be.

Zach: The lot in fact.

Morris: The human one.

Zach: The whole rotten stinking lot is all because I'm black.

Morris: Yes. That explains it, clearly. Which is something. I mean . . . when a man can see 'why' it's something. Think of those who can't.

Zach: I'm black all right. What is there as black as me?

Morris: To equal you! To match you! How about a dangerous night, try that for the size and colour of its darkness. You go with it, Zach, as with certain smells and simple sorrows too. And what about the sadness of shoes without socks, or no shoes at all!

Zach: I take it. I take them all. Black days, black ways, black things. They're me. I'm happy. Ha ha ha! Do you hear my black happiness?

Morris: Oh yes Zach, I hear it I promise you.

Zach: Can you feel it?

Morris: I do, I do.

Zach: And see it?

Morris: Midnight man! Like the twelve strokes of midnight you stand before my wondering eyes.

Zach: And my thoughts. What about my thoughts?

Morris: Let's hear it.

Zach: I'm on my side, they're on theirs.

Morris: That's what they want.

Zach: They'll get it.

Morris: You heard him.

Zach: This time it's serious.

Morris: We warn you!

Zach: Because from now on, I'll be what I am. They can be what they like. I don't care. I don't want to mix. It's bad for the blood and the poor babies. So I'll keep mine clean and theirs I'll scrub off, afterwards, off my hands, my unskilled my stained hands, and say, I'm **not** sorry. The tremble you felt was something else you see, you were too white, so blindingly white that I couldn't see what I was doing.

Morris (speaking quietly and with absolute sincerity): Zach. Oh Zach! When I hear that certainty about whys and wherefors, about how to live and what not to love I wish, believe me, deep down in the bottom of my heart where my blood is as red as yours . . . I wish that old washerwoman had bruised me too at birth . . .

'I'D BEEN WATCHING HIM ALL DAY . . .'

Zach inveigles his White brother into meeting the White girl in his place, and a special gentleman's outfit is bought for him. But there is more to this being white than that . . .

Morris: . . . So there I was on the road. I'd been watching him all day.

Zach: Who?

Morris: The man ahead of me.

Zach: I thought you were alone?

Morris: I was feeling alone, but there was this man ahead of me. At first it was enough just to see him there, a spot in the dusty distance. A man! Another man. There was one other man on that road, with me going my way! But then the time came for the sun to drop and I found myself walking through shadows. When a man sees shadows he thinks of night, doesn't he? I began to walk a little faster. I think he began to walk a little slower. I'm sure he also saw the shadows. Now comes the point. The more I walked, a little bit faster and faster each time, the more I began to worry. About what you ask? About him. There was something about him, about the way he walked, the way he went to the top when the road had a hill, and stood there against the sky and looked back at me, and then walked on again. And all the time, with this worry in my heart, the loneliness was creeping across the veld and I was hurrying a bit more. I could see that he was wondering too, about me, and stopping more often and playing with stones, and watching me, and waiting. I was going quite quick by then. When the sun really went at last I was trotting you might say and worried, Zach, really worried, man, because I could see the warm glow of his fire as I ran that last little bit through the dark. When I was ever nearer he saw me coming and stood up and when he saw me clearer he picked up a stick and held it like a hitting stick, stepping back for safety and a good aim, so what could I do but pass peacefully. (Pause). Because he was white, Zach. I had been right all along . . . the road . . . since midday. That's what I mean, you see. It's in the way they walk as well.

'WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, MA?'

The two brothers are different. Inferior? Yet indissolubly bound by the blood knot. "There's something I need to know . . . I mean a man's got to know . . ." cries Zachariah.

Scene 6.

Time: Night. The room is in darkness. Zach (the dark-skinned brother) appears out of the darkness, goes to Morris' bed to make sure he is asleep. Then he puts on the gentleman's outfit hanging on the hook. The final effect is an absurdity bordering on the grotesque. The hat is too small, similarly the jacket which he has buttoned up incorrectly, while the trousers are too short. Zach stands barefooted, holding the umbrella, the hat pulled down low on his eyes so that his face is almost hidden.

Zach: Ma. Ma! Mother! Hullo. How are you, old woman? What's that? You don't recognise me? Well, well, well. Take a guess. (Shakes his head.) No. (Shakes his head.) No. Try again. (Shakes his head.) No. What's the matter with you Ma? Don't you recognise your own son! (Shakes his head violently.) No, NO!! (Loud and triumphant laughter). Not HIM. It's me, Zach! (Sweeps off his hat to show his face.) Ja. Zach! Didn't think I could do it, did you? Well to tell you the truth, the whole truth, so help me God, I got sick of myself and made a change. Him? At home, ma. Ja. A lonely boy as you say. A sad story as I will tell you. He went on the road, ma, but strange to say, he came back quite white. No tan at all. I don't recognise him no more. (He sits.) I'll ask you again. How are you, old woman? (Lifts his hat in an imitation of Morris.) I see some signs of wear and tear. (Nodding his head.) That's true . . . such sorrow . . . tomorrow . . . ja . . . it's cruel . . . it's callous . . . and your feet as well . . . still a bad fit in the shoe . . . Ai ai ai! Me? There's something I need to know, ma. You see, we been talking, me and him. Ja . . . I talk to

(Continued on next page)

him, he says it helps . . . and now we got to know. Whose mother were you really? At the bottom of your heart, where your blood is red with pain, tell me, who did you really love? No evil feelings, mas, but I mean a man's got to know. You see, he's been such a burden to me as a brother. Don't be dumb! Don't cry! It was just a question. Look! I brought you a present old soul. (Holds out a hand with his fingers lightly crossed.) It's a butterfly. A real beauty butterfly. We were travelling fast ma. We hit them at ninety . . . a whole flock. But one was still alive and made me think of my mother. So I caught it, myself, for you . . . remembering what I caught: from you. This old ma of mine is gratitude for you, and it proves it doesn't it? Some things are only skin deep, because I got it, here in my hand, I got beauty . . . too . . . haven't I? (The lightly closed hand is now a fist. The light fades.)

THE MAN BEHIND THE TREE

At the climax of the play the brothers act out the story across the colour line: on the one side, subservience, cringing humility, on the other, sun-basked, dressed-up preening; then a creeping apprehension, a growing awareness; then fear, terror, violence; and always the dread of encirclement; the shadows, the man behind the tree, and the falling darkness while Zach —and South Africa — stand in wait.

Morris: But it's getting dark . . .
Zach: It happens, every day.
Morris: . . . and cold . . . and I never did like the shadows . . . and . . . where are you?
Zach: Behind a tree.
Morris: But I thought you were the good sort of boy?
Zach: Me?
Morris: The simple, trustworthy type of John-boy. Weren't you that?
Zach: I've changed.
Morris: Who gave you the right?
Zach: I took it.
Morris: That's illegal. They weren't yours. That's theft. **'Thou shalt not steal'.** I arrest you in the name of God. That's it. God! My prayers . . . please. My last wish . . . to say my prayers . . . you see . . . you might hear them . . . (Morris goes down on his knees, Zach comes slowly nearer.)
Our father, which art our father in heaven, because we never knew the other one: forgive us this day our trespassing: I couldn't help it: The gate was open, God. Your sun was too bright and blinded my eyes so I didn't see the notice prohibiting: And 'beware of the dog' was in Bantu, ho how was I to know, O Lord? My sins are not that black! Furthermore, just some bread for the poor, daily, and let your kingdom come as quick as it can for yours is the power and the glory, but ours is the fear and the judgement of eyes behind our back for the sins of our birth, and the man behind the tree, and the darkness while I wait. Aina . . . AINA!

Your'e Breaking the Law

THE SLAP by Marion Friedman depicts a small South African country district of today.
Suddenly an act of violence occurs. A White farmer, idle, aggressive and emotionally confused, runs over and kills an African. Was it an accident? Or a deliberate act?
The car driven by the farmer has swerved into an African wedding party stopped at the roadside, and the victim is the best man. "The wedding party was momentarily silent, for the chatter of the best man had been stilled for ever."
Joseph, one of the main characters in the story, is the intended groom. He decides to go to the city to get advice from his brother. After the accident he disappears . . . .

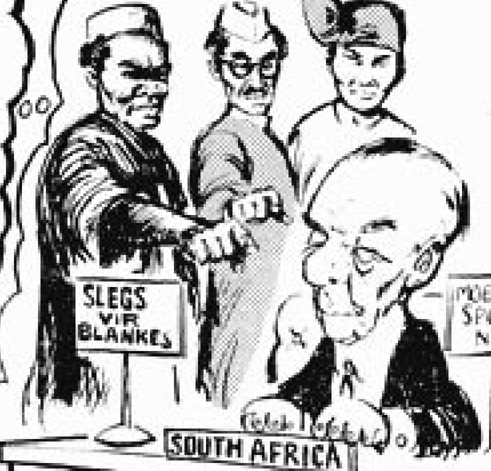
The guardians of white civilisation lay in wait for him with a punitive machine, the complex toils of which he had little chance of evading.

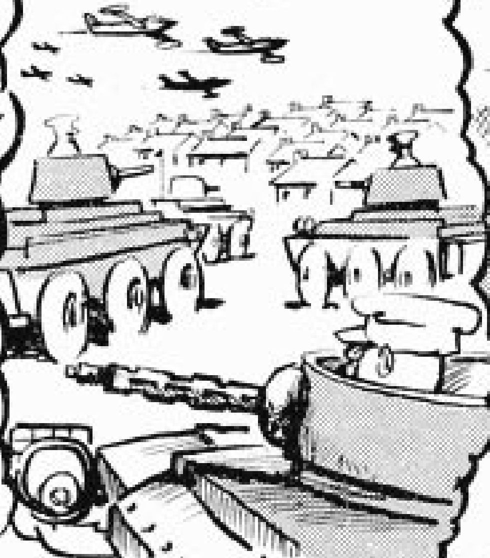
It was a machine which continued to operate chiefly because it was the law. Those who made any one part of the machine work had no conception of the working of the whole nor any but the dimmest notion of why they did what they did. Indeed, even among those whose firmest conviction it was that the machine should work, few knew any longer to what effect it worked. Its job, they said, was to keep the urban harbour free of what drifted, now visible, now submerged. But they failed to see that the machine was beginning to tear at the very fabric of the harbour itself. Nor was this strange, for a society — although men gather there for mutual protection and assistance — is not a harbour and only God or the eyes of love can see who drifts uselessly, an impediment, and who makes what contribution a human being can make to a human institution.

—Your papers, your papers, your papers . . . or jail. A permit to leave the magisterial district of Driedorings; a permit to work in the city; a permit to reside in the city; a poll-tax receipt . . . or jail. I, a constable, consider you an idle person or an undesirable person and I arrest you without a warrant. You are here on permit, you have worked on that permit for fifteen years, married, furnished your cottage slowly over those years, sent the children born in that cottage to school, and now you have lost your job? Back, boy, back to wherever you came from all those years ago; back, because if I find you here in seventy-two hours' time, you will go to jail. There is no one left in that village whom you know, no work for a clerk there, only labour on the farms? But it's the law, you're breaking the law. You haven't the rail fare ? Well then, you will have to go to jail, it can't be helped. Your family will starve? Let them go somewhere else, then, anywhere else. You should have thought of that before you gave up your job. Irresponsible of you to have a family which, as you see perfectly well now, you can't support; you're all the same, irresponsible, thriftless. Let your wife work, let the children, without her and without their father, survive the streets and the dirt and the thugs and starvation. Children shouldn't be pampered.

A latrine for every family? Well, yes of course, soon. Running water in every cottage? Yes, not yet though: it costs a lot of money. Do you know what your free hospitalisation costs us? A freehold cottage of your own? Well! Next you'll be wanting to live in Parktown! Of course, compulsory free education is a good thing, but where's the money to come from? Hardly any of you pay income tax. And the workmen for the schools? Unfortunately, we can't let you learn to build: skills are for civilised persons. And the teachers? Anyway, what do you want with book learning for your children: the chances are they'll be unskilled labourers. Of course, if you were civilised . . . but you're not. If only you were: what headaches we'd be saved! In fifty years, perhaps, in a hundred, you may be civilised and then you'll be able to move about in the land of your birth without a permit, you will have compulsory education, you will be allowed to acquire skills, you may be allowed to own land anywhere in the Union, you may have your own home with — think of it! — electric light and flush sanitation. But meanwhile, seeing that you're dirty and ignorant and feckless, we've got to protect the Western way of life from the rape which always threatens her. In my Father's house are many mansions: that's why we let you a room in the backyard. We are carrying out the will of the Lord, who sent us to Africa with a mission to lead the backward and bring the heathen into the ambit of grace and don't you forget it. That's the trouble really: you're not good Christians, whereas we labour in the sight of our Lord all the time.

a letter to FATHERTJIE





BRIEF AUTHORITY by Charles Hooper, banned book in the Republic, tells the story of the Bafurutse tribe in conflict with the government after 1957 when pass books were imposed on African women, the tribe's chief was deposed and deported, and whole villages rose in protest.

This episode tells how the pass book unit came to the Lefurutse district, how an anti-government chief was brushed aside to make way for open police rule, mass arrests, threats, fines, imprisonments, shootings and terror . . . and how the people migrated en masse from their homes.

THE DAY THE POLICE TOOK OVER

At about this time, the Reference Book Unit came back to the district, not even the most cursory attempt was made by the authorities to explain to the women required to carry them the purpose of the books. Perhaps they had recognised that this purpose is not explicable to Africans, and that threats and counterfeit jovial explanations do not commend the books. Certainly they relied on revised methods. In one village, for instance, those women who did not flee were rounded up and made to queue for passes; and when this village had been dealt with the women of the next village who could be found at home were brought across in police vehicles, and forced to join the queues. Refusal, though not unlawful, was not available as an alternative.

It was not only in this instance that women whose transgressions would normally have been dealt with by their own chiefs, were transported by the police to villages other than their own. A further village had a politically unreliable chief who managed to live in harmony with his people without the aid of bodyguards or police. Indeed, when he was not being assaulted he was in hiding, though not from his subjects. His village, therefore, was dealt with from one where bodyguards and police appeared to work together to their mutual satisfaction.

On a Friday in the middle of February as we were passing through one settlement on our way to another, a group of villagers waved us to a stop. They clustered excitedly around the car, several talking at once.

"They have taken our people away, the police were here, and the Chief's bodyguards. They beat them and put them in a police bus, many of them. They took them that way."

Bumping and twisting our way, from the main road to the church, we came suddenly upon the police camp, spread out beneath a row of wide, high trees. A policeman, who proved to be a sergeant, detached himself from a group of men milling around a table on the grass, walked on to the track, and held up his hand. We drew up and I switched off the car engine. There was silence for a moment while the policeman stood looking in. Then he jerked a thumb at the road behind us.

"You must get out at once," he said.

"Why?"

"The Chief doesn't want you in this village."

"It isn't really a matter of what the Chief wants or doesn't want. I've a congregation to care for in this place. The Chief has no legal power to prevent my entry."

The sergeant looked at me for a few tight-lipped seconds, rocking on his heels, his thumbs in his belt, and then walked away. We sat in the car waiting for whatever happened next, taking in the sights the while. Beside us, on our left, tents were pitched, and next to them stood the headquarters table where our sergeant appeared to be consulting with one of his seniors. Young policemen in various degrees of undress, some of them unconvincingly bearded, wandered around, or lay on the ground and in the tents asleep. Others, fully uniformed, mingled with the knot at the table, sat on the grass, or leaned against riot-cars puffing at cigarettes. Beyond us a row of vehicles, among them a large covered one, doubtless the "police bus", was drawn up in the shade. Between the snouts of these vehicles and a hedge, African constables and the bodyguard idled and talked, and beyond them waited the villagers from the other village. They were herded into a couple of cattle kraals surrounded by a low thorn hedge. At intervals there were guards. Behind the table and tents a row of newly-skinned ox-carcasses were suspended from the trees by ropes, where they hung dripping.

There was a tap on the window of the car. It was old William, one of our less able catechists, his useless spectacles as ever awry. We contrived, with many gestures, to get him opposite a window which opened.

"What are you doing here?" Sheila asked when the greetings were over.

"I'm bodyguard now," he replied proudly. "They catch me in my lands and make me bodyguard. Can't take Church Sunday, too busy. Only," his face darkened, "I don't like it."

William slipped abruptly away. The reason for his haste appeared: moving with surly ease, the Chief came over to the car. He dispensed with greetings.

"Have you got that letter?" he demanded.

"What letter?"

"I write letter to Commissioner."

"Well, then, I suppose the Commissioner has it. I certainly haven't had a letter from you, and nothing has been forwarded —" I was talking to the landscape: the Chief had turned on his heel.

I got out of the car and walked over to the table, where the policeman in charge stood switching his trouser leg with a cane.

"Am I being prevented from going into this village?" I asked him.

"I'm not preventing you."

"Who is, then?"

"Look, Chief," said the policeman, turning away from me, "we can't stop this **moruti** from going in. He has the right. Write that letter to the Native Commissioner, and then we'll see what happens. It's for the Native Commissioner to decide." The Chief made an impatient gesture and walked away.

"So I may go in?" I asked.

"I won't stop you," said the policeman.

We went in, jolting slowly past the riot-cars and the prison kraals. One or two prisoners signalled furtively. Sheila, whose eyes were not engaged by the road, startled me with an exclamation.

"They've got the Chief, I see!"

"The Chief from the next village?"

"Yes, in the kraal with the rest."

"I wonder why they've brought him across. Object lesson for chiefs, I suppose. There's nobody here with the authority to try him, unless police powers have been suddenly extended by proclamation — the legal authority, that is."

The whole place lay silent and apparently deserted beneath the sun. Until we reached the houses near our church, we saw nobody outside the police encampment: no women thumping their grinding-pestles, no men tinkering with carts, no singing girls carrying water, not even idle straggles of children. We came to our destination and clambered down into the sun. After a few minutes a couple of old women whom we knew approached the car. They did not come from their houses, whose doors were shut; they came from clumps of trees.

"Where are the people?" we asked.

"**Au! Baecho!** This is terrible! Some are run away from Lefurutse. Some are hiding in the hills, some on white people's farms. They are not here. This place is empty. Only we old ones and a few children. We sleep in the trees. We also want to run, but we are too old. This side, this side, this side, this side, there are bodyguards, we must stay, we are too old to creep."

One or two other women, one quite blind, joined us, distressed and dispirited. They did not ask for help, they did not say, "What can we do?" they did not even ask, "But **why**?" They stood and we stood. Conversation was desultory, fumbling, painful. There was a sort of aching, bewildered patience about them. Eventually I broached the purpose of our visit.

"We want to come here for Mass next week—it's Ash Wednesday. Is there anybody to tell the congregation?"

"It is useless, Father, there is nobody. It is desolation."

Finding no words, we stood looking across the sunny, paralysed sweep of the land, at the strangeness of familiar houses and trees and hills. Although we did not know it, we were taking our farewell of the village, and of the unconquerable grannies of our congregation, whom we hope we may one day, though perhaps not in this world, be privileged to meet again.

One of them, tears on her face, took Sheila's hand in hers, and broke the silence.

"Au! Our Mother," she said miserably, "**Lefurutse ke motlhanka** — Lefurutse is in thrall."

Police and bodyguards watched us in unmoving silence as we passed them on our way out of the village. Some way beyond their encampment four youngish men stopped us and asked for a lift. One had a fresh cut about an inch long beneath his left eye. It was bleeding steadily. The face of another was moderately bruised. The remaining two, except for the disarray of their clothes, showed no signs of mishandling, though all claimed that policemen or bodyguards had assaulted them. They had been released, they said, and told to walk home.

"Why were you arrested in the first place?"

"Congress offence."

"What's been going on back there? Were you tried for this 'Congress offence'?"

"Twenty pounds each, or two oxen — all the men. The women five pounds or two goats."

"And what about payment? You don't carry money like that around with you."

"We are given a few days to pay. Meanwhile they have kept our Reference Books so we cannot move before they get the money."

"But who tried you? The only person there with any such jurisdiction over you is your own Chief, and he looked more like a prisoner than a magistrate."

"Yes, they bully him too. The police tell us that this other chief is our new judge."

"But what has he to do with you?"

"They say he is our Chief now. They have made us one by one say, 'You are my new Chief.' They have told us they will kill us if we do not say that. We dislike those words, we stop before we say them, and then they smash us. Then when we have spoken, our new Chief says it is twenty pounds, we are his people now and we have done Congress offence. When they take our passes and write us down they let us go, little bit, little bit."

Next day a young man brought to the Rectory a letter from his Chief.

I am very sorry, wrote this Chief, **to write this letter to you. I was awakened by a group of armed tribesmen in the morning of Friday, 14th February. I was forced together with my people to attend a meeting. When we got to the scene where we were to attend we were forced to proceed to . . . All these instructions were ordered by Chief X . . . . together with the policemen who joined in the kicking and thrashing of the people. I was kicked by a policeman.**

The aged men, and women some who had small babies strapped at their backs and some expectant were severely hurt.

We were not allowed a word, the police were there and threatened us with sten-guns. They drove us very rudely up to . . . After reaching there they divided us, women were fined five pounds each or two goats and men £20 each or two oxen. Myself and few exceptionals are to go there on the 18th it is then that the fines will be imposed on me by Chief X . . . My wife fled away I do not know her whereabouts even now. My people were forced to choose X . . . as their Chief and they did so to save their lives. School children ran away, teachers also did not attend and as a result there was no school on that day. Passes were taken from men and they will not get them before they pay the fines. Father, I beg you to help us by approaching the lawyer.

Yours obedient. Chief . . .Y.

Lefurutse was in thrall. Whether with conscious intention or not, the sequence of mass-arrests, assaults, threats, and imprisonments, which conformed closely to suggestions made to the Commission of Inquiry; the fatal shooting in Gopane and trigger-happy police behaviour in other villages; the terror by night and the violence by day; the unrelenting imposition of illegal and extortionate fines; the lack of access to lawyers, and the brutal consequences of any attempt to find lawful protection; the sinister watchfulness of cordons; the widespread dislocation of agriculture and therefore the prospect of famine — all these had the effect of closing the door remorselessly on hope.

"Your advocate," a policeman told the **kgotla** of one village, "is in gaol. Hooper is under arrest. Those people who were shot in Gopane are six feet down — they can't help you. My watchdogs encircle this place." Almost unbelievably, a villager, eluding the "watchdogs" by night, came miles to the Rectory to see whether lawyer and priest had been rounded up: it was his only errand. Lefurutse was in thrall and on her knees; but not witless.

In one village the "master-servant relationship" was carried to logical lengths. Women and older girls were daily elected to wash police enamelware and clothes — why, after all, should overlords do it themselves with so many God-given natural servants at hand?

"Sometimes, Father," said a furious husband, "we do not see our wives again until next morning. If nothing else provokes attack on the police, this could. Washing their filthy dishes and trousers!" He spoke with an appalling, controlled, white-hot hatred.

Lefurutse, having no answer to guns and organised brutishness, was in thrall, in an enforced bondage; but she was not an acquiescent serf, not a "loyal kaffir." The women in the hills began to move. Old men, young men, children, grannies, joined them. Melting away by night, evading or bribing the "watchdogs", they left for other places, some managing to hide their belongings or cache them with friends who were staying; some, carrying no more than the clothes they wore. It was, without doubt, a mass migration. Lefurutse, home, was no longer a place of refuge: it was a place of torment.

African prisoners arriving in police trucks at the Johannesburg Fort, July 1961.

I saw your hands, brother, grasp at the grille —
Iron and yet not colder perhaps than they —
And so they greet this green factitious hill
Held out insensate to the alien day.

It is the cactus and the hated flag
That flourish there: they must not find your hand
Clutching a hope to plant in stealth, a rag
Of comfort even, in the conscious hand.

Pity is circumscription. I would not be
Your other jailer, so I leave it here
To wither on the pavement, willingly.
It will not blossom with its roots of fear.

RAYMOND THOMS.

"Go, Man, Go!"

by MGIBE

"Go Man, Go! . . . Real Cool! . . . Dig that Cat!!" Not so long ago, a line like that would have meant America; but get to any jazz concert in South Africa today — or anywhere where our local cats are jamming, and you'll hear just those lines. Where did it all start? That's easy. Where is it leading to? That's not so easy to answer.

Our present standard of jazz and appreciation of it had its foundations 30 odd years ago. It was then known as **Marabi** or **Tsaba Tsaba**. Two musicians, generally a guitarist and organist (or should I say harmonium player?) would go around the townships looking for a place where there was a party on. They would offer their services, and if there was no organ around the township, one would be hired and things would get under way. The music was basically rhythmic with a single melodic line built on the primary chords (I, IV, V, I or doh, fah, soh, doh). These parties went on till dawn and then the weary musicians would pack up and stagger homewards to get some rest for the next night's party. The pay of these musicians? Plenty of liquor on the house and the admiring glances of the female partygoers.

The organ soon gave way to tinny, beat-up pianos, and in addition to the guitar, a drum set was now used. It was not one of the present day fancy kits but it sufficed to add to the rhythm. Regular party throwers made it a point to buy second-hand pianos — and soon there were quite a few of these bands of musicians: those who had started the ball rolling were by then quite famous.

To the admiring fans these were the Duke Ellington, Miles Davis and Thelonius Monk of the day.

The lot of these musicians was not so smooth, though. Often they got beaten up or stabbed by jealous escorts who thought their partners were getting too friendly. I remember one incident. I was a wee little kid then and a big party had been thrown not far from my home. We sneaked out to listen to the music from the outside as the party had been thrown in a large tent. We were enjoying the music when out came a very drunk man and before we knew what was happening he plunged a knife through the tent, stabbing the pianist a number of times. The music stopped abruptly on a discord, then we heard the drum set clattering to the ground, obviously kicked aside by the drummer who was jumping for his life — then silence. Seconds after that the screaming started. That's when we bolted. The following week-end the same pianist, swathed in bandages, was at it again. They sure made them of tough material in those days.

Then the recording companies came along. Singing groups were formed and the music they sang was what was known, and still is known as, the **"Ngoma busuku"** (night music). The now internationally known **"Mbube"** or **"Wimoweh"** is an example of typical "night music." Besides recording, these groups threw lavish concerts. They were fabulously dressed in the style of the day, and would get together at a concert (about ten to fifteen groups) to compete. The joining fee was from £10 to £15 and the prize would be a live ox. These groups would sing from eight after dark till dawn, and any that did not sing to the satisfaction of the audience would be "bought off" the stage. If the group had money, which it generally did, it would bid with the audience to remain on stage, and the bidding would go as high as £5 — the group withdrawing if outbidded, or staying on despite the protests of the audience if its money talked loudest.

Though mostly **Mbube** groups were recorded, **Tsaba Tsaba** music was too, and our first jazz bands sprang up as by that time ragtime music had hit us from America. It is then we got the "Merry Blackbirds Orchestra" and others. Swing had arrived. Swing took complete control.

There were gramophone records from America and more people buying radios and listening to big band music. Fifteen piece orchestras sprang up like mushrooms and to be able to get into one, **you had to be able to read music.** This was a big step ahead. We had famous orchestras like the "Jazz Maniacs"; "African Hellenics" and others, and through the influence of immortal vocal groups like the "Mills Brothers" we got counterparts here in the "Manhattan Brothers" and later "The African Inkspots", "The Woody Woodpeckers" and others.

Despite all this Americanisation there were still a few die-hards of the old school, and the now evergreen "Tomato Sauce" was composed by an anonymous writer and first recorded by the "New Symphonic Swing Orchestra." The country raved. This was a new type of music; nothing American about it, typically African. It set a new standard running parallel, so it was said, with American swing. Pieces in the idiom of "Tomato Sauce" were composed and recorded — the big bands switched to

this in dance halls and on disc and the record industry boomed.

This type of music was then dubbed "Mbaqanga." But by then, small groups were in vogue in America. The "Bird" was already blowing his way into the hall of fame, and over here our own Kippie Moeketsi was rearing his head and making us aware of his presence. "The Shanty Town Sextette" (of which he was a member), "The Three Blind Mice" and a few other American-influenced groups were formed. So now we had two schools of music moving side by side; "Mbaqanga" and American-influenced music.

Both were encouraged by their different devotees: "Mbaqanga" by the recording companies and American-type music by "jazzophiles." Jazz concerts and jam sessions (American style) were arranged by these jazzophiles and as a result the latter group has quite a following today.

Not so long ago, the first Jazz Festival was staged in this country at the Johannesburg City Hall, and groups like "The Dollar Brand Trio"; "The Gideon Nxumalo Quintette", "the Cape Town Five" and the "General Duze Trio" participated. That was an eye-opener for many jazz fans. It showed exactly to what level our Jazz has risen. But despite this, "Mbaqanga" is still being nourished by the recording companies, so we still have the two schools of music.

Who will win the tussle? We do not know. Who knows but we might have a fusion of the best from both schools in the near future. That, of course, would be the answer. But like I said in the beginning . . . that's not so easy to answer.

'O Lord of Hosts' you've often said
'Give us this day our daily bread
When living in South Africa
Address the 'native boy' instead.'

J.T.

AGENTS

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Actors, Audience and the Play

CECIL WILLIAMS
interviews
KRISHNA SHAH
Producer of 'King of the Dark Chamber'

"I have never gone through such an emotional chaos", said Krishna Shah, referring to the last seven days and nights of rehearsals for his spell-binding production of Rabindranath Tagore's play, **King of the Dark Chamber**.

"I sat out front watching the stage and wishing I were in New York. But I knew I didn't really want to be in New York I wouldn't have missed those seven terrifying days for anything, because it was then that I finally got to know my company, my group of Indian, Coloured and African actors and actresses. Already they had been working for three weeks, a minimum of 12-14 hours a day. Yet night after night, when we finished work at 2 or 3 o'clock, not one of them had a grumble on his face and, what's more, they appeared next morning with smiles".

Perhaps Krishna did not realise, but I did, that those "grumbleless' faces at night, those smiling faces in the morning, were a reflection of his own enthusiasm, his own understanding, encouragement, his own artist's devotion to the high demands of his profession.

He is a darling man, this small, energetic, quick-talking, engaging, profound practitioner of the art of the theatre. His knowledge of the history, the theory and practice of the theatre — Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Western, classical, folk and modern — is amazing.

Actor and Audience

As his conversation moved from one subject to another, one thing stood out and that is his pre-occupation with the problem of communication between the actors and the audience. He is tremendously aware of the theatre director's obligation to ensure "acceptance by the audience", "complete communication with the masses". This, perhaps, explains how he is developing a producer's technique that is highly individual, for from the folk theatres of India and America, from Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, from Brecht he has gathered every device of the craft to achieve and maintain the total involvement of the audience in the performance onstage.

In an access of enthusiasm he blurted out, 'Tyrone Guthrie is my god." And that was revealing for, pursuing an independent path, this youth Indian director has reached the same place as the sexagenarian English director. They both believe that it is the drama director's peculiar job to invest the play in hand with any theatrical effect necessary to keep each member of the audience on his toes, entirely engaged in, identified with and at the same time critical of the affairs onstage.

"Take Tagore, for instance," Krishna went on. "Particularly to a Western audience his plays are bare, almost stark in their theatrical simplicity. I integrate dancing, music, song, mime, any embellishment to enrich the sensory experience. But it is always subservient to the playwright's intention. You will notice that I employ Brechtian 'shocks' to keep the mind of the audience absolutely awake".

"And what sort of plays do you like to produce?", I asked. "Do you choose plays that 'hold the mirror up to nature'?"

"Much more than that," came the vehement reply. "Holding the mirror up to nature is so boring. There must be comment on what is reflected in the mirror. The playwright may be making a political comment or a philosophical comment — but not propaganda, it must be subtle — and it is the director's duty to intensify that comment from his own experience".

Theatre in India

On the subject of theatre in India he expatiated ,"We've had highly developed theatre in India for 2000 years. One of our sacred books of religion is the "Bharat Natya Shastra", which is a treatise on the craft of the theatre, for theatre and religion were inseparable. Our classical traditions flourished for centuries till they were suppressed by Mogul, Afghan and Persian conquerors. Even then the theatre survived for eight centuries in the folk-theatre traditions. Then came the samples of Western theatre in the Indianised versions of Shakespeare which British amateur touring companies presented. The theatre became a potent instrument in the struggle for independence—some lovely plays came out of that".

"Could any of them be used in South Africa?" I asked.

"No, I don't think they'd be applicable. The conditions and the problems, it seems to me, are quite different, except for the constant plea for unity."

"With state aid, since liberation, there is today an abundance of theatrical activity in India," continued Krishna.

"In Bombay alone, with its population of four and a half millions, there are 80 professional and semi-professional companies, presenting a medley of all types of plays — Indian classical and folk plays, Western thrillers, Western classical, musicals and so on. Our theatre hasn't yet found its own style, created its own traditions. But with the stimulus of government-run competitions, progress is being made. Actors are not well paid, they starve, as usual".

Krishna punctuates his remarks with expressive gestures. His eyes remain brighty lit as he talks of the theatre. He speaks so eagerly that the words tumble and jumble out of his mouth. And as I nod my head in agreement with some point he has made he smiles happily. His sense of humour is quick — as one notices so readily in his production.

He is tickled to recall how he got a start in the profession. Following a world conference in Bombay on 'theatre for youth', a few years ago, a move was made in the Bombay theatrical world to jostle over the old school of actors and give youth a chance. Krishna, at that time an unknown actor, wrote a topical satirical comedy on language rights, which was expected to run for seven performances. It is still running after 530 performances! He had struck a new vein of ore and so began in India a modern experimental school of drama writing, directing and acting.

No Classrooms

Several Indian states are opening schools of drama study, "but I hate the classrom approach to theatre — you can quote me on that", says this practical director with a wicked sparkle in his eye. "I believe in learning our trade through activity, not from lectures. As a matter of fact, when I was casting for King of the Dark Chamber, I deliberately selected people with no speech and drama training!"

"In any case I find among the people here a great raw potential. You always find in any depressed minority a great enthusiasm for the theatre and an enormous capacity to work and to learn. I haven't seen any 'white' theatre in South Africa — a pity because I'd love to see it — but in London I saw King Kong which fascinated me. The African people! Acting is in their blood, this god-given rhythm is in their bodies! The potential in the Indian, African and Coloured people of South Africa, so far as I have seen, is enormous."

I asked Krishna to elaborate on a newspaper item that he was going to start a multi-racial 'rep' company in Durban.

"That's not correct at all," he replied. "We have come to work for an ill-starved community: we are here as artists, certainly not to start a theatre movement. But some of my ideas coincide with plans that Union Artists have — to start a branch in Durban. I have suggested that as a modest beginning we should get together a group of African and Indian writers—short-story writers, poets, journalists. I would conduct a seminar in the techniques of playwriting and play-directing. We would use a group of ten actors and actresses to illustrate

(Continued on page 15)

'ZEKE' MPHAHLELE ON LANGSTON HUGHES

NEGRO POET : TRUMPET AT HIS LIPS

Since 1926 when his first volume of verse, **The Weary Blues,** appeared, Langston Hughes has loomed progressively larger on the North American literary scene, and he has stayed top among Negro writers.

Unlike most Negroes who become famous or prosperous and moved to high-class residential areas, he has continued to live in Harlem, which is in a sense a Negro suburb.

There was a quite a chorus of Negro voices in the twenties, and the then 23-year-old Hughes was one of the chorus. The others were Countee Cullen; James Weldon Johnson; Angelina Weld Grimké; the Jamaican-born Claude McKay; Jean Toomer; Paul Laurence Dunbar; Sterling Brown; Arna Bontemps; Georgia Douglas Johnson, and so on.

As might be expected, a large volume of the verse that was turned out was very close to the negro situation; the fact of oppression, the fact of of the black man's rejection by the white man, the fact of rootlessness. This protest swayed between surrender and self-pity at the one end and a stiff-necked self-justification at the other. We hear Angelina Weld Grimké say in **Surrender**:

> Uncrowned,
> We go, with heads bowed to the ground,
> And old hands, gnarled and hard and browned.
> Let us forget the past unrest —
> We ask for peace.

Countee Cullen in his **Protest** says he does not long for death:

> But time to live, to love, bear pain and smile,
> Oh, we are given to such a little while.

"We shall not always plant while others reap," Cullen holds forth, echoing Shelley. Although the Negro is dark-skinned he harbours a certain loveliness.

> So in the dark we hid the heart that bleeds
> And wait and tend our agonizing seed.

And yet is was he who reiterated so often that he wanted his verse to be taken as poetry without the implications of race.

In the same idiom Langston Hughes sings:

> I, too, sing America,
> I am the darker brother.
> They send me to eat in the kitchen
> When company comes
> But I laugh,
> And eat well,
> And grow strong.
> Tomorrow,
> I'll sit at the table
> When company comes.
> Nobody'll dare say to me,
> "Eat in the kitchen",
> Then.
>
> Besides,
> They'll see how beautiful I am
> And be ashamed, —
>
> I, too, am America.

again,

> The night is beautiful,
> So the faces of my people.

All his life the fact of Hughes's negro-ness (he has actually a light complexion) has aroused in him a desire to challenge those from the other side of the colour line that reject it:

> My old man's a white old man
> And my old mother's black.
> My old man died in a fine big house,
> My ma died in a shack.
> I wonder where I'm gonna die,
> Being neither white nor black?

It is unfortunate that blunt protest, which is inevitable in circumstances of race discrimination that often expresses itself in lynchings or slow murder, seldom lifts poetry above the level of sickly, mawkish versification.

Naturally, this colour-consciousness had, at a certain point, to look for its roots, or rather try to feel Africa as the Negro's cultural cradle. In 1923 Hughes met and heard Marcus Garvey exhort Negroes to go back to Africa to escape the wrath of the white man and Hughes became one of the many poets who thought they felt the beating of the jungle tom-toms in the Negro's pulse. Their verse took on a nostalgic mood, and some even imagined that they were infusing the rhythm of African dancing and music into their verse. They were called, rather half-sarcastically and half-enviously, the "Rhythm Boys", Prof. Stirling Brown of Howard University, who was a young poet then, regarded the movement as a mere fadism. Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois roared at Carl Van Vechten, a white author, for portraying in his novel, **Nigger Heaven,** Harlem cabaret life as a show of savage, primitive passions in the rhythm of its dance and music.

This romantic mood very rarely produces powerful poetry. Only when it was dispersed and was fused with other thoughts could it result in a sober poem like Hughes's **The Negro Speaks of Rivers.** He wrote it on his way to Mexico to see his father who hated "niggers", although he was a Negro himself. This worried the son no end, and the poem is a fusion of thoughts about the father, Negroes, himself, slavery and African ancestry.

> I've known rivers:
>
> I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.
>
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
>
> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
>
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
>
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
>
> I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.
>
> I've known rivers:
>
> Ancient dusky rivers.
>
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

He came to Africa. As with most things, Langston Hughes took this continent casually, with a sense of fun. Not as Richard Wright was to take it years later when he came here and gave an account of his experiences in **Black Power** (1954). Wright took himself too seriously and expected Africans to warm to his approach immediately simply because he is black. He assessed the value of African cultures as he observed them in Ghana by Western standards and summed them up as inadequate (in spite of his own admission that he could not strike a medium for mutual understanding between him and the Ghanaians). He did not have Hughes's humility and sense of adventure.

"My Africa, Motherland of the Negro peoples! And me a Negro! Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen . . .!" Hughes exclaimed. To him the people were "dark and beautiful". But he was sad, because "the Africans looked at me and would not believe I was a Negro. You see, unfortunately, I am not black!"

The vogue for primitivism put Langston Hughes in an embarrassing position at one time, which, however, he came out of with grace. He had found himself a patron in the person of a rich white woman. She kept him comfortably in food and clothing so that he could write "beautiful things", things that came out of his "primitive soul". One day he wrote something angry against the luxuriously newly-opened Waldorf Astoria, the symbol of plenty surrounded by so

much poverty and toil. Hughes simply did not know how to satisfy his benefactor. He writes:

> She wanted me to be primitive, and know and feel the intuitions of the primitive. But, unfortunately, I did not feel the rhythms of the primitive surging through me, and so I could not live and write as though I did. I was only an American Negro — who had loved the surface of Africa and the rhythms of Africa — but I was not Africa. I was Chicago and Kansas City and Broadway and Harlem. And I was not what she wanted me to be.

This experience hurled Hughes into another emotional crisis. The first one had been that time when he was in Mexico and felt he hated his father. Desperately ill, he went to his mother and stepfather in Cleveland.

Langston Hughes left the African theme for a long time. Now that Africa has begun to take on a new significance for the American Negro, he has reviewed the old poems with their drumbeats and nostalgia. He has written new ones, and handles the lot as part of **The Poetry of Jazz,** a series of readings Hughes does, accompanied by drums. The following is in the new mood:

Africa,
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 new
Surprise
Your every step reveals
The new stride
In your thighs.

The Negro's recall of the slave days piles up imagery in such poems as **Trumpet Player**; and the "black" theme is elevated from the shallows of self-justification. There is a muted voice of protest here, coming out like the plaintive tones distilled from a muted trumpet: Here are four stanzas from the poem.

The Negro
With the trumpet at his lips
Has dark moons of weariness
Beneath his eyes
Where the smouldering memory
Of slave ships
Blazed to the crack of whips
About his thighs.
The music
From the trumpet at his lips
Is honey
Mixed with liquid fire.
The rhythm
From the trumpet at his lips
Is ecstasy
Distilled from old desire —
The Negro
With his trumpet at his lips
Whose jacket
Has a fine one-button roll,
Does not know
Upon what riff the music slips
Its hypodermic needle
To his soul —
But softly
As the tune comes from his throat
Trouble
Mellows to a golden note.

It is not often that Langston Hughes's anger mounts to a pitch. When it does, especially when he writes on the South, his protest comes straight from the shoulder, and he throws in tense and turgid word-pictures. In **Third Degree** he says:

Slug me! Beat me!
Scream jumps out
Like blow-torch.
Three kicks between the legs
That kill the kids
I'd make tomorrow.
Bars and floor skyrocket
And burst like Roman candles.

He writes much in lighthearted vein, skimming the surface of things, presenting the externals of a situation to suggest the inner meaning to the reader, never posing as a thinker. His abundant sense of satire reinforces everything he touches in this manner. At one time he will say:

I don't mind dying —
But I'd hate to die all alone!
I want a dozen pretty women
To holler, cry and moan.

In a roaringly funny satirical poem, **Life is Fine,** a man is driven by some love problem to thoughts of suicide. He goes to a river and jumps in.

I came up once and hollered!
I came up twice and cried!
If that water hadn't a-been so cold
I might've sunk and died.
But it was
Cold in that water!
It was cold!

He takes a lift sixteen floors up a building to jump down from. He yells and cries because if the building hadn't been so high, he might have jumped and died. "But it was high up there! It was high!" So he decides to go on living. He might have died for love, "but for livin' I was born". And,

Life is fine!
Fine as wine!
Life is fine!

Finally, in more pensive vein but with Hughes's deep chuckle down there at the base of his questionings:

What happens to a dream deferred
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore —
And then run?
Does it sink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over —
Like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load
Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes still talks about the beauty of being dark-skinned. He may yet help to supply the artist's answer to the dilemma in which the American Negro finds himself these days: political, economic and social integration with whites — yes; but can the Negro retain his cultural identity and avoid being swallowed up by the American mainstream? Some Negroes of culture think they want to do both. There is a good deal of talk among them about **négritude** and the enchantment it holds out to them. One Negro writer said recently at a conference of writers that, with the general improvement of the coloured man's position in the United States, it was going to be hard for those apprenticed in protest writing of the "lynching tradition" — especially the older men — to re-adjust themselves. Langston Hughes is in no such predicament. It is a long time since his poetry outlived dead-pan protest. And Hughes was never preoccupied with a two-dimensional protest.

Thula Mntanami

by T. H. GWALA

I saw the heart and the flesh of the stay-away. Isaac Ntuli, small and snow white on the head, carrying his eighty four years was there. Joseph Sithole, that tall and grey-haired man at forty four, quiet and reserved was there. The working people, the peasants, fresh from the Bantustan battles, nurses, teachers and the whole of Africa was there.

Sithole peered above a knot of people standing around Isaac Ntuli. Mandela had electrified the conference. The people had decided to demonstrate. They wanted a sovereign convention because they were sovereign. They wanted a say in the affairs of their own land. People of Africa were changing Africa and the world. Apartheid beware!

Isaac Ntuli knew and Joseph Sithole knew. They had seen some of the great changes in South Africa and had participated in bringing about many of those changes. Isaac was there when the Zulus demonstrated against taxation without representation. They had all said with one voice, "We are not paying!" He belonged to a Makholwa tribe then. He had sharpened the blade of his assegai until it was half its length. His uncle had stopped him on the way to join Bambata's impi because he was sick and weak.

Johannes Nkosi had come and had been done to death. Isaac was a kitchen boy in Durban with a long tag on his kitchen suit. It was a long way on foot from Durban to Cartwright Flats. 'Sitha somuntu ipasi' was sung then and it was to be sung by Moses Mbheki Mabhida at Cato Manor thirty years later. Blows and bullets rained on them. Johannes Nkosi remained an unknown soldier on the battlefield.

Isaac was to see South Africa tremble in that memorable week of August 1946. The giant figure of J. B. Marks had stood on Market Square. His words penetrated right into the marrow and heart of the country. He spoke of our youngsters who turned grey in the days of their prime, digging away in the bowels of the earth. He spoke of the glory and splendour of the magnates of the mines. The country was ablaze. The money lords of South Africa saw a walking revolution. They combined with General Smuts and crushed it with all their might and main. Some of the finest sons of Africa were thrown into gaol as a warning to whosoever might take it upon his head to demand to eat.

Sophiatown with all these rumblings could not be a safe home for ageing Ntuli. With ever present nostalgia he moved house back to the old home in Natal.

Here he was eaten by age when a nasty bang nearly sent the door flying right on to his nose. He had woken up in a daze fumbling for the door handle. The little boy, his grandson, slipping from the bed in sleepiness saw the dwarfish figure of his grandfather being escorted away by four armed police. And the boy cried.

"Thula mntanami . . ." A chilling lump came to the old man's throat choking him. He fumbled for words.

"Umkhulu ulande inkululeko" (Grandfather is going to fetch freedom).

It was a long indeterminate sentence without trial. The public had to be protected against him. He was not a part of the public to be protected, even at his age. An emergency!

The gaol door banged violently behind him and there was the clang of the bunch of keys in the warder's hand. He was separated from the main road by a high wall. How far the outside world was and yet so near. The clumsily hewn figure of the day warder shouted early in the morning "Vuka manje!" The jackal-looking night warder screamed at 8 p.m.. "Hei number four there I kill the gas. Stop talking. I put one, one, one!" There was dead silence followed by suppressed mumblings from Cell No. 4.

How long it was from then to today. Here he was with Sithole and younger people to demonstrate for a sovereign convention. What a decision!

Lo! and behold the might and the tom-tom drums of the state. Mass raids. Mass arrests. Intimidation. The press. The radio. Yet the granite might of the people weathering away all the threats. The grinding might of the stay-away. Women formed into shooting clubs to shoot away their panic. Money flowed out of the country. The Republic celebration looked a comic opera. Even the heavens moaned of a stillborn republic. And the children cried 'Thula mntanami . . .'

"Friends of the native talk of conferences of whites and responsible Bantu leaders. They are against apartheid but do not approve of illegal methods. They believe in the constitution and Parliament. 'Good luck and long life to you.' We who are voteless don't know what you good gentlemen mean by the constitution. Our constitution is the people. We were not there when you drew yours up in 1909. You talk of Parliament! Our Parliament met on March 25, 26. Keep us out of your Parliament and we shall demonstrate out of it. Talk of law and law abiding natives! We shall be law abiding when we died of hunger while you die of surfeit. We shall be law abiding when you endorse us out of towns. No. We are outlaws and criminals in the very land where our forefathers grew and died. Frenchdale, ingwavuma! No, gentlemen. We thank you for your friendship and advice. We can fight our own battles. Either you are with us or your advice is sheer mockery."

I looked at Sithole and Sithole looked back at me. The old man put down his Bible — a devoted elder of the Dutch Reformed Church. He was sitting on his verandah when we arrived. I thought to myself 'God sees but is too far away.'

"Yes, we are living in an impatient age. Our age is impatient with colonialism and 'friends of the native.' It is impatient with apartheid and oppression. It is impatient with those who are for a change of heart. There can be no change of heart in the changing values, the changing time, the age of space travel.

"We fight against apartheid because we love our dear land. We go to gaol because we love to live in freedom and peace."

The little boy came up to us and stood between the old man's knees looking up at his face. The weathered hand of the old man caressed the boy's unkempt head.

"But mkhulu why is father not going to work today? The other day too he was not working?"

"Thula mntanami kade eyekofuna inkululeko" (Be quiet my child, he has gone to look for freedom).

The old man knew. Sithole knew. And we all knew the unknown men who had sacrificed their bread on the altar of freedom. The children would cry because they did not know. Mothers would peer into empty pantries and would think of the great essence of life . . . . that the army marches on its stomach.

"Thula mntanami . . ." There was that far away look in the old man's eyes. His voice trembled and was drowned in his meditation.

We trembled and thought bitterly of the future!

What's It All About, Anyway?

by PHYLLIS ALTMAN

He was a white flower of civilisation, a little faded, but a flower nonetheless. His appearance was unprepossessing — his nose big, red-veined, his eyes small, his head bald, his stomach flabby; but thousands of years of civilisation had produced this ultimate perfection.

He awoke in the bedroom of his house in West Krugersdorp, alone in the big brass-knobbed, sagging double bed. Though it was difficult to focus his eyes, he eventually achieved this and for a long,idle moment contemplated the raindamp design on the opposite wall. Then he sat up, rolled his tongue around a furred mouth, cleared his throat, lit a cigarette and swore at the black bud (very wizened) who brought him coffee. This he drank noisily, while dangling his legs over the edge of the bed. Then a short interlude for yawning, scratching, stretching and also picking his nose before he lumbered through to the bathroom to shave. Finally, washed and dressed, he set off to preserve the beautiful garden in which he lived.

He caught a train to Johannesburg, and having remorselessly crushed several delicate white flowers, managed to get a seat. As he opened his newspaper, his eye was immediately drawn to the headline: "Elderly white gagged and bound by natives" and a slow, intense burning began in his blood. He read only such items and with each, his rage increased. With this evidence before their eyes, how could THEY (the outside world and the many weeds in his midst) expect HIM to give THEM unlimited licence? Why couldn't they see? Why didn't they understand? (The mayhem committed by White upon both White and Black was different).

The journey over he stepped from the train and took the long walk to his office, still pre-occupied with this lack of understanding. As for those who asked: "Why shouldn't the black buds bloom too?" he had the unbeatable retort: "Why should they?" (No, no, not that any more. Of course they should bloom, in their own areas, out of his bloomin' sight).

He passed the City Hall, subliminally noting the advertisement of a symphony concert. Now he didn't know what a symphony concert was and couldn't tell Bach from a potato flower, but symphony concerts were for him and his only (to the flowers of civilisation are given the fruits of civilisation) and the police force, the army, the air force and the navy were standing by to stop any take-over bids.

Two blocks further on the library (again unconsciously recorded). No matter that he never read a book. The police force, the army, the air force and the navy were looking after his right to read a book if he wanted to and the library was reserved.

At last the office and the little ceremony which set him up for the day — the salute from the moustached black bud who guarded the lift. He returned this with a curt inclination of the head, a tiny gesture which assured saluted and saluter that all was right with the world; their world where the blacks gave and the whites received; a pattern God-ordained, no less.

And now a quick discussion of the morning news with others of his kind that they might rage and burn collectively and be comforted and ask for understanding.

Well, he had passed his matric and although there were fine universities underwritten in his name and protected by the police force, the army, the air force and the navy, and although his heritage was thousands of years of civilisation, he hadn't really been interested and he had selected a simple task for life — he was a clerk. Ho, ho and so to work.

Towards midday, the creeping emptiness beneath his breastbone could no longer be gainsaid. So he slipped out for a quick one in the bar across the way. And it made him very happy indeed to know that the police force, the army, the air force and the navy were right on the job, guarding this particular preserve.

So on to five o'clock with only one quick snifter inbetween. Then to some serious drinking and the latest news and the frustrated anger at those who wouldn't see that at all costs, his way of life had to be preserved. All the goodly company with whom he drank agreed with him. So there!

But one must eat, and married young and divorced young, with two children whom he never saw, he had no home, save that served by the wizened bud who couldn't cook. So a meal at a cafe and then, before the emptiness caught up with him again, he took a woman from the streets, (white, of course. One never saw the others now; one had to look for them).

Soon he stood once more upon the kerb and pondered what to do. The stars danced, the earth turned, but he caught a train and went home to bed. And through the lonely hours of the dark night, as he grunted, groaned and snored, the police force, the army, the air force and the navy remained alert to cradle him — this flower, this perfection.

CECIL WILLIAMS TALKS TO KRISHNA SHAH

(Continued from page 11)

my points. At the end we would have a small company of playwrights, directors and actors. From that point it would be possible to start a repertory group, capable of writing and presenting plays which will deal with their own environment, their own problems".

Boycott?

"What about the cultural boycott which some overseas artists operate against South Africa? What are your views?" I asked.

Krishna gave a rueful smile.

"In New York we were repeatedly advised not to come to this 'jungle of cities'. But we're more than happy we came. Outside of the politically-determined restrictions, we have had the kindest of welcomes. All communities here have been so warm to us. We would certainly like to come again".

"As for the total boycott of South Africa in things of the intellect, the spirit, I don't agree with it. Race discrimination does not spring from all members of the white race and I don't see how the boycott can improve the situation by starving the entire community of anything which has an intellectual content. As an artist I believe I must give and give generously without any limitation imposed either by myself or — it goes without saying — imposed by anyone else either. So you see, I believe in freedom for the arts and the artists".

"Your production is opening the eyes of all of us, Black and White, to the artistic potential we already have in the country in the Indian people and their cultural heritage. Do you agree that cultural exchanges between countries can help to avert war and preserve peace?"

"Most certainly I do. I am especially in favour of theatrical companies from Asia, the Middle East and Africa visiting Europe and America. It is most helpful to the world situation to create understanding and sympathy among the peoples. And what better way than through the arts?"

And then with a meaningful expression on his face, Krishna gave his last word,

"Likewise inside your own country too!"

SHORT STORY by
MORONGWA SERETO

The Wanton Waif

Mabatho was not all sure what the right thing is to do in Johannesburg.

Back home at Thaba Nchu the **Verboten** were quite clear, and if a girl was in doubt, she had oodles of time to think it out. But here in Johannesburg, everything went so swift that **No!** with its agonising argumentation and its asphyxiating conscience-wringing, was too tormenting.

Yes! was so much easier . . . so much sophisticater . . .

It was two weeks that her aunt, Mistress Tabitha Mathloko, a school teacher, had sent for her to look after her snotty child, Mpho — Gift of God — hell! Otherwise there was no-one else to look after the child while the mother was at work. Her husband, a workless, shiftless ne'er-do-well, who scrounged on his wife's earnings, would hardly be able to look after the child.

But Mabatho loved children.

And she would have been undisturbed, but that in order to make up for her husband's worklessness, Mistress sold liquor. Customers came all hours of the day and night, and when Mistress was not there, Mabatho had to serve them.

It was hard work, the harrying of a bawling baby, and the hurrying back and forth at the behests of gulping, clamourous customers who had a bitter grudge against their own money.

But it was also fascinating. They were such a garrulous, gay, colourful crowd. Their daring jokes, their reckless spending, their slaps that did not just slap against her bottom, but swirled up under her dress, and sought.

It was a new, strange world that titillated her with an effervescent mixture of anger and pleasure. Funny, here in Johannesburg, you don't have to worry whether you make the right impressions or not. They go for you all the same.

But there were times of the day when the baby was asleep, and most of the interesting men — men who talk of dare-devil crimes in the city as if there was always fruit salts in their blood, or men who talk strangely, dangerously of doomful things that could be done to the Government — times when these men were in the City and the day droned drearily on.

For Mabatho, those hours were suffocating, except for Job Kambule who always came in a fancy little van at about 11 o'clock to ask for a nip.

Job was always well-dressed, always treated her with respect, and always spoke very little. But just his handsome appearance was enough to lift the heavy-chested ennui from her.

He read so . . . he sipped his brandy in such an elegant way . . . he looked up so appealing when he wanted anything . . . and he made a woman feel so fairy-queenly.

Mabatho really felt it a joy to serve Job Kambule. Sometimes at night she would feel jets of pain when she overhead Mr. and Mrs. Mathloko, her uncle and aunt, talk of him as a mere Zulu, **a refuser of the loinskin.** But she kept her irritation to herself.

One day, her workless uncle told her that he was going into town. It was another of his mysterious excursions into the City. What did he do there, seeing he does not work? But it was convenient for her. She hated having to sweep under his lifted feet, whilst he had his great bottom sunk in the easy chair, and read ancient newspapers.

That day, Job Kambule immediately noticed that she was alone, because, after all, it was only a two-roomed house into which he entered by the kitchen-plus-dining-room and went to drink in the sitting-plus-bedroom.

He did not pay much attention to the book, inevitably on his person. But then he did not also became the gauche satyr like so many a customer. When she brought his drink, he gently caught her hand and drew her to him. He ran his hand up her cheek and split his fingers round her ear. He pressed her towards him, and in a convulsive moment she clutched at his neck and bit into his cheek.

For nearly an hour she was scraping his bare back with her talons.

Days afterwards, she still wondered at the tearing things her body had showed it could demand of her.

Men came and men went. She got pregnant and did not know which it was. The uncles and the grannies came together. They were not worried over the unmarried pregnant girl; it was pride—they turned heads around and smiled at each other — this proof that their daughter was fertile. But that she should not know who did it, that was disgrace.

But after the first ten days of being blanketed, after the first few months of weaning, after the first few new boy friends, Mabatho changed.

She was no more the maid who unsophisticatedly came to Johannesburg and, wide-eyed, wondered. She was Eve who had known the Serpent and no transEden world could intimidate her. She was Salome who had asked for the Baptist's head. She was Delilah who had shorn Samson's mane.

And like in all those cases, there were just a little regret . . . just a little.

She was maiden no more.

Year after year, baby after baby came, but Mabatho was only knocked **hors de combat** for three months of a year. The gremlins of want and morality were kept at bay because there were enough men in the democracy of promiscuity, queues of them, who were only too ready to give her money and presents. Her stock reply to the standard outraged prudities was "Heck, I've only got one life to live. I mean to live it without regrets or apologies."

Then Sponono Mabuza came. She met him at a party of the elegant Esquires. When he came in she had already prostrated most of the eligible men, and the business was becoming a frightful bore. But through the odd chemistry of the psyche, she knew instantly that Sponono was her fate. And in the same instant she knew that the regular methods would not work with him.

But outside the exudation of her sexuality, she knew no other methods. Yet he talked so culturedly, so above her thinking, her life, her morals. How the hell does a girl get a man like that, impatiently she stamped the foot of her mind!

Meanwhile, drinks were going back and forth; and in corners and nooks that were not particularly off-sight, boys and girls were spooning without embarrassment. Mabatho swept a glance across all the other woman drinking, talking, singing, rowdying — women such as her, but to whom she felt that she no longer belonged . . . because of the man across the table, in the sofa yonder.

She felt she could scream to him "I'm not like them!" But she knew that she had six illegitimate children by six illegitimate fathers whom she could not sort out.

Suddenly, she noticed Redboy, the host, looming over and towing in Sponono.

"Sponono," Redboy said, "this is hellcat stuff. Care to try it? She's Mabatho — Mother of the People" — he laughed — "they should have called her Madichaba—Mother of the Nations. My dear, meet Sponono Mabuza."

Redboy did not notice her wincing, and he trailed away.

Sponono said to her "Look, this is a crummy party of clods. Come with me. I have to attend a meeting, then we can go somewhere to drink. I'll try to amuse you."

Mabatho who had never scrupled over an invitation like this before, now hesitated. What would I look like to this man if I just agree, this Apollo whom I must impress — she thought, miserably.

That hesitation impressed him.

He said "Do not fear. You're a sweet thing and I'll look after you."

They slipped out into the night. He took her to some place behind a shop where there were other people, grim-set, bearded men and women with tight faces and searing eyes.

Mabatho did not understand much of the goings-on. She just gathered enough to make her know that it was a political meeting. But she was thrilled by the fascinating way

(Continued on page 20)

Only A . . .

by ALF WANNENBURGH

Each afternoon, when the final bell rang at three o'clock, a group of children gathered outside the school gate to tease the "man-woman" . . .

Little Kathy Lawrence had been the first to see her. She had been travelling on a bus with her mother when, all of a sudden, there had been a commotion of laughter and curses on the platform, and a strange looking woman with short wiry hair, dressed in a crumpled black skirt and a yellow and brown striped jumper, had elbowed her way between the seats, bumping the shoulders of seated passengers, muttering words for the use of which Kathy would have had her mouth washed out with soap and water by her mother.

For Kathy there had been something immediately interesting about the woman, something different: no sooner had she seated herself than she began to rummage about in a battered cardboard suitcase; wildly scratching amongst its contents until she had appeared to find whatever it was that she was searching for. Then she had closed and locked it. Only a few seconds passed before she again unlocked it and recommenced her furious search, all the while making strange sounds with her tongue, and occasionally turning about in her seat to shout abuse at an unspecified enemy . . . Kathy had already counted five repetitions of this process when her mother slapped her for staring.

It was primarily because of this slap that, at school the following day, Kathy remembered the incident. She told Rowena Bester, who was her best friend at that time, about it.

On her way home from school that some afternoon Kathy, in the company of Rowena, had again seen the woman in the crumpled black skirt and yellow and brown striped jumper. She was in the middle of the road hopping backwards and forwards in front of the traffic, first on the one side, then on the other . . . Rowena also thought it great fun.

Soon they discovered that she was to be found at the same place every afternoon . . . Within a week they were joined by Janet Smith, Betty Stuart, Maureen Harrison and Sybil Swart; and within a fortnight teasing the "mad-woman", as they then called her, had become a regular afternoon sport.

At first they were content merely to stand and watch her antics; but then they found that she was often too docile to be any fun. This they soon realised, was because no one had done anything to provoke her. So they began to tease her. They began to plan their strategy beforehand: what they would do to her; what they would shout; all so that they might enjoy the wine-like pleasure of being pursued by her, oaths long enough to knit a string bag streaming from her mouth.

It was Sybil who first noticed that the woman's violent actions were not her only peculiarity; that something more fundamental was amiss; that beneath a rather forced feminity there flowed a powerful masculine current. At times her mannerisms were without doubt those of a man, and then suddenly she would seem to compose herself and enforce those of a woman. This truth Sybil felt rather than understood; none-the-less it was compelling and she began to refer to the woman as, "the man-woman". The new title was readily understood and accepted by the other children.

Once they missed her for three days; but then they found that she had changed her route, and they exacted sufficient fun from her to compensate for the three days that they had missed. Thereafter she never disappeared for more than a day at a stretch before they traced her movement.

★

On the last day of term the final bell rang at midday, and dozens of little girls dressed in blue gyms and white blouses, suitcases bulging with dull books, passed over the intricate patterns cast by the oak-trees in the playground, out through the gate, out into the holiday street.

"Cheer girls cheer,
the holidays are here.
No more Latin, no more French,
no more sitting on a hard old bench . . ."

. . . sang Kathy, Rowena, Janet, Betty, Maureen and Sybil, although none of them knew anything about Latin and French other than that they were languages. But they sang because they had learnt the words from the older children who had inherited them from the previous generation of older children, and it made them feel very grown-up to sing them. But they sang; chiefly, because they were happy; each had formed in her own mind her own little picture of the weeks that lay ahead — sandy, sunbathed, waveswept little pictures.

Down past the gaol they trooped, swinging their satchels, singing their song; round the corner, past the dry-cleaners, past the Central Police Station. And then, outside the magistrate's court, they saw her . . .

She was sitting on the kerb, her suitcase between her knees, eating a thick slice of brown bread.

Her sudden appearance intruded upon their exuberance; their song died; they paused . . .

"Let's go chaff her," said Rowena.

"Ag no man, let's give her a holiday," said Janet, who was anxious to get home.

"But she's gonna have a holiday," said Betty.

"Yes, six weeks holiday," added Maureen, who loved fun and had failed her tests.

Sybil crept up to the woman. The others followed a few paces behind. She went round and stood in front of her while the other children crowded around the woman from behind.

"Why do you eat like a horse?" asked Sybil . . . The woman continued to munch her bread . . . "Are you a horse or a cow? I think you look like a monkey," said Sybil. The children began to laugh; they screamed; they imitated the motion of her jaws; they rubbed their stomachs.

The woman lunged at Sybil, dropping her bread. Sybil skipped away and jumped up onto the retaining wall of the court. The woman changed direction and ran after Kathy, jumping and swinging her arms wildly as she ran. Kathy darted around the corner and also climbed up onto the wall. "There!" she shouted, "she told you that you looked like a monkey. You run like a monkey — you are a monkey!"

It was lunch-hour. Hundreds of office workers were roaming the streets with nothing to do — a crowd quickly formed. Typists, bank-clerks, cashiers; they stopped. Some stopped only for a minute, and then they walked away. Many of them stopped, and stayed, and laughed.

The children drew additional pleasure from the fact that they were playing to an audience. On the end of her ruler Maureen Harrison picked up the piece of bread which the woman had dropped, and she ran around her in circles shouting: "Here's your feed-bag, horsey."

Suddenly the woman stopped trying to catch them. She stopped swearing. She returned to the kerb and sat down, her suitcase between her knees.

The crowd moved gingerly forward — who knows, she might become violent again. There was pressure from behind and those in front were edged closer, ever closer, until they stood in a tight circle about her.

From her suitcase she removed a small mirror and a tube of lipstick. She placed the mirror on her knees, and then bending over it she applied the lipstick, with trembling fingers to her lips. The crowd was silent; it was a heavy, expectant sort of lull. The women replaced the mirror and lipstick in her suitcase. Then she drew from it a sheet of paper and the stub of a pencil.

The children forced their way between the legs of the crowd. Maureen still had the piece of bread spiked on the

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SPORT : THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE

by
DENNIS BRUTUS

It is not generally realised how serious a threat Sport is, or how vigilantly it is watched by the prime guardians of the security of our State — the Special Branch. The fact is that a large body of men have been detailed to keep an unsleeping eye on our sportsfields and that thousands of man-hours are spent on studying subversive movements in the field.

Of course you will say that I am "shooting a line" and will ask for evidence. There are lots of others though, who would support my statements with amply documented evidence. I will confine myself to my own limited range of experience and let it justify my claim.

In September of 1958 there was a small press announcement that the Weightlifting Federation (Non-White or non-racial —the papers weren't fussy) was to set up a co-ordinating body to fight against racialism in sport. So for weeks before the championships took place in East London, members of the Special Branch haunted Non-White sportsfields brandishing the clipping and making ominous noises. By the time sportsmen had converged on East London for the show it was evident that there were going to be very few East Londoners at the preliminary meeting: the "Fighting Port" was a very frightened port. The limit was reached when the Chairman of the Border Union was visited and questioned about one Brutus — with the chairman frantically disclaiming all knowledge! I phoned the police, asked to speak to the head of the Special Branch and demanded an interview. Eventually we saw the second-in-command — Lt. Schoombie — who apologetically explained that it was his duty to investigate strangers to ensure that they were not "suspicious characters." I didn't ask for a definition!

In the meantime another detective, whom I remember for his remarkable resemblance to a potato, called at our hotel room to ask permission to attend the meeting. As a formality we stated that it had to be referred to our executive.

Sunday morning bright and early, Schoombie and Hattingh arrived and pressed to enter the meeting room: firmly we barred the door. They hung around, offering us gum-drops, arguing and trying to peek around the door. We all got impatient. They threatened us with a warrant. We threatened to blast the story in the newspapers. Reluctantly they drifted from the hotel lounge. Later they were seen hanging around the kitchen cadging tea.

But they had not failed, as we discovered later.

Govender, the friendly well-wisher who had travelled down from Durban later appeared in a press photograph escorting an Emergency detainee to a funeral: Special Branch! And Selepe, who travelled down from Krugersdorp with an elaborate credential and who made a virulent —and irrelevant — attack on apartheid was found to come from a non-existent body. His real organisation: Special Branch.

This Selepe turned up again at our South African Sports Association Conference in Durban three months later — with six members of the Special Branch at the back busily taking notes. This time we threw him out — though there were some who sportingly called out "Give him a chance!"

The six in Durban in January were to become an accepted feature. I list only a few other occasions:

October, 1959, Port Elizabeth: Sports Conference. White and Non-White S.B's occupy front seats in the hall.

May 1960, Port Elizabeth: Homes of SASA officials — president, secretary, assistant secretary and executive member raided; all SASA paper — including blank letter-head sheets seized. Returned only several months later after protest.

October, 1960, Johannesburg: I arrive at Jan Smuts airport at 6.30, at weightlifting show at 7.30. Find Special Branch has already been inquiring about Brutus and Ragansamy. I insist that Taylor (S.B.) explain why he claims he is investigating crime. I offer to see his chief following morning. Offer declined. The home where I was supposed to be staying is visited by S.B..

May, 1961, Port Elizabeth: Home of secretary raided.

October, 1961: Secretary banned under Suppression of Communism Act.

All of this, while no doubt deadly serious to the S.B. has not been without its lighter moments. The day after the SASA stuff had been seized we trotted off to demand an interview with the Chief. Major Heiberg was very busy, but we were persevering. We saw him two days later and asked, naively, for the return of all our material. He feigned ignorance. But the files were spread out on his desk. He refused to return them. Gently, servilely, we probed him. Why? There was a State of Emergency. But why take our stuff? He was only doing his duty. But surely his were POLICE duties? He had to protect the State from all dangers! But how was sport a danger? So it went on. We probed too long and too incisively: he blew up:

"Kyk hierso, ek is die man wat die vrae vra. J't my mos nou onderkruisverhoor!" (Look here I'm the man who asks the questions. You've got me under cross-examination!) His face turkey-red, he bundled us out. (So SASA was born under the watchful eyes of the Special Branch — and has enjoyed their attention ever since!)

There are, as well, unofficial guardians of the security of the State — holding official positions in the big all-White sports bodies.

Massive Ira Emery, until this year secretary of the S.A. Olympic (and Commonwealth) Games Association and the man who boasted that for eight years he saved South Africa from being thrown out of the Olympics because of her racial policies, is a case in point.

When I saw him he complained: "If you've got a good boy, why don't you send him to Tanganyika or Uganda (I don't think he added Timbuktu) instead of causing us trouble?" And in an expansive moment he added: "You know, on the mines, when there's a good Black who does the 100 yards in very good time, they give him a watch or ten bob." Triumphantly, "That makes him a professional!" This is admittedly a rather different method but no doubt it is equally effective in preserving the security of the State.

Military Algy Frames, boss of all-white cricket for endless years was more menacing. After the gruff "Sit down my boy" and "What do you want my boy?" came the forbidding question: "Have you ever heard of MI.5?" Nervously I admitted that I had. "Well we've got our own MI.5. We know your cricket is in a mess. We know you haven't got one boy whose good enough to play for South Africa. Besides, you know that if there's one Black boy in our team to England, there'll be trouble." My parting shot was that there would be, if there wasn't, and there **was**. Boycotts and demonstrations and a loss of £17,000 in England!

God-fatherly Reg. Honey, Q.C. until this year boss of the most powerful sports in the country — the Olympic Acsociation—was more subtle in his means, but the ends were the same. But let the definitive comment come from someone else. It is by James Fairbairn reporting in the New Statesman on an interview with Honey — a classic article called "The Olympic Swindle": said Mr. Honey at the end of an unrewarding interview: "Of course we can't let the Blacks have equality. All this nonsense about one man one vote. Once that happens, the country will go down the drain."

And in a sense they are right. When there is equality on the sportsfield, or when it becomes impossible to stave it off; or when our sportsmen are deprived of the drug of sport and look at the country beyond the sportsfield: then apartheid South Africa will go down the drain.

BOOKS

From Mission to Prison

Hannah Stanton has written about the life in a small Anglican mission in Lady Selborne and even the weeks I spent in gaol with her did not bring to me so clearly the picture of her way of life and the motivation of her work in this Pretoria African township. It is a simple tale of humanity, service and love of mankind, yet weaving its way through is the thread of political awareness, for these women of the mission were not content merely to pray for the better life, but sallied forth courageously to make their protest against apartheid and police brutality.

". . . I rang up the most senior police official I could find in the directory." They made an appointment with Colonel van Wyk, the Officer in Command of the Transvaal Division of the police. "I pointed out how unwise it was for there to be more police activity in Lady Selborne" . . . We talked inevitably about the beating up of the women and I said, "Colonel van Wyk, your men wouldn't have treated cattle in the way they treated those women," and he replied, "When I am dealing with Bantu women I do not think of them as women." He used the favourite word "agitators" and Cecily said, "Believe me, Colonel, there is no need for any other agitators when your police are about. They cause far more agitation than anyone else!"

Tumelong ('Place of Faith') stood, nevertheless, outside politics. The mission was in the nature of an oasis. "Police action in pass arrests, in night raids, on two occasions in actual mass brutal behaviour to the people, was always near at hand, but we did not live with the policy of apartheid continually hanging over us."

It was only when she was in gaol, Hannah admits, that she came to realise the significance of the Treason trial and to learn something of the Congress movement. It was in a cell that she first learnt of the Freedom Charter (presented in full in her book).

This book is an absorbing account of a woman who lived out her religion in her daily life. The Christian message of the book should reach far, and with it the dramatic exposure of the South African police state, for soon Hannah Stanton's simple life in a mission led to dawn arrest; gaol, solitary confinement and deportation.

Hannah is gone from South Africa, deported, yet in her very going and in the writing of her book, she has conveyed her message. And that's what she wanted to do. Her last words in South Africa had to be to the Special Branch, for no friends were allowed to speed her on her way. But she could still, after all that she had gone through, torn from the land she had come to love so well, say, "Bless you!"

Hamba Gahle, Hannah!

HELEN JOSEPH

STAY WELL, GO WELL by Hannah Stanton. Published by Hodder and Stoughton. Price R1.85. 18/6)

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Blindfolded in Bantustan

Paul Giniewski could have been given this assignment by the State Information Office itself. It contains glowing accounts of the advantages of Bantu Education, of flourishing Bantu homelands and dedicated officials.

And yet he is troubled by doubts about implementing the policy of apartheid.

> "Perhaps it is already too late. A system that makes one lose time at the very moment when all the processes in Africa are being accelerated — no matter what may be its theoretical merit — has a fundamental defect."

South Africa, the writer says, is different from the rest of Africa. The Whites are rooted here, have no other home. Other powers colonised overseas territories; White South Africa set up its colonies in the heart of the mother country. South Africa cannot free her colonies by abandoning another Congo. For this singular situation must be found a singular solution.

But blindness makes him stop short of the obvious solution: a non-racial democracy. His solution is "national independence" for the so-called Bantu homelands. This is old stuff but there is a crazy variation: "The generous impulse that encourages the South African (and especially the Afrikaner) to desire a distinctive national development for the Bantu is a curious transference of nationalism, they are better integrated into the 'African context' than the Bantu themselves and they cannot understand why other people fail to recognise their unselfishness."

After this the final knock-out blow is the only mention of Chief Lutuli as a possible chief in a future Transkeiean Bantustan, side by side with Matanzima!

Mr. Giniewski says he wrote this book from "within the laager of the besieged". It is ther leaone that his book is likely to be accepted.

MARY TUROK

BANTUSTANS by Paul Giniewski. Published by Human and Rossouw. Price R2.10 (21s.).

The Miner Rebel

Those who enjoyed Page Arnot's account of the Scottish miners (Fighting Talk, July 1956) should read **Incorrigible Rebel,*** which describes the militant struggles of the Welsh miners.

But this is more than a history, it describes the fascinating development of Horner from a little boy who took his first job at the age of 8 to a working class leader of international standing.

The book shows him to be a modest man of rebellious character and intellectual honesty, who spent his life fighting to raise the standard of living of the British coal miners, to further the attainment of socialism, and to bring about international working class unity — for he realised the interdependence of all three.

It is salutory to be reminded that employers react to the struggles of the workers in the same way whether it be in South Africa or Great Britain or anywhere else. The vicious alliance of the Government and the coal owners, back-

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THE MINER REBEL

(Continued from previous page)

ed by police and armed troops against miners who asked no more than a wage little over starvation level' writes Horner.

He took part in organising the stay-down strikes of the miners, the hunger marches of the unemployed and the battles against company unions. He himself was in prison three times, in 1919 for 'refusing to join up for the war of intervention against the Russian Revolution', again for attending an 'unlawful assembly' (15 months) and for striking.

His reflections an jail will be of interest to South African workers from whose minds the prospect can never be far off. But Horner was allowed to study Marx while in Cardiff jail.

After 40 years he could look back on some solid achievements — the medical fund, annual holidays, training of young miners, a five day working week of 7½ hours a day, and above all, one national Union, one national agreement and the nationalisation of the coal industry.

Of special pride was the formula worked out for holiday pay, which provided for the total pay due to all miners being divided equally among all, so that "whatever difference there was between men working in the industry while on duty, that difference disappeared while they were on holiday. We never had a protest from any of the better-paid men."

Horner became a foundation member of the Communist Party in 1920 and remained loyal to it all his life. He saw socialism in progress during his many visits to the Soviet Union and to China, which thrilled him. He faces up to the 'revelation of the terrible happenings in the Soviet Union' made known at the 20th Party Congress and the Russian intervention in Hungary, and argues the case for and against. He concludes that "as the Socialist world becomes stronger, sincere Socialists should exert their right to criticise if they think criticism is due."

Shocked by a display of anti-Semitism by some Cardiff miners about 1926, he quotes Nye Bevin's comments. "Arthur, I can understand them wanting to attack a man because of his views, because a man can change his views, but to attack a man because of his race, that is sheer sadism."

This book should encourage trade unionists to continue battling along, as well as add to our general information about British workers over the last 40 years.

NANCY DICK.

* Horner, Arthur: **Incorrigible Rebel.** London. MacGibbon and Kee, 1960.

THE WANTON WAIF

(Continued from page 16)

in which her man — Sponono — spellbound the others. Apart from his immaculate English which cascaded over the audience; apart from the eloquence in his every gesture, in his dramatic poses; there was a half-satanic fire, a half-angelic glow in the fierceness of his address. This man compelled allegiance, exacted love, and the victim felt an agonising joy in surrender.

After the meeting he took her to an elite shebeen called "The Dubenheimers" where they were given a private room with plush, red velvet-covered divans and thick red curtainings.

He bought himself a brandy, and her a frozen beer, and then made love to her **only with his voice.**

The art of making love is lost in the townships, forgotten under the crush of hard living; the hardening of hearts and the coarsening of words and attitudes. A boy meets an attractive girl at a street-corner, twists her arm or wields a menacing blade, and if there is not another strongman in the neighbourhood who has already claimed her, she becomes his. A girl encounters in a shebeen or a party a man with a scroll of banknotes; he buys her drinks with no reference to the exchequer, and next morning she wakes in a strange bed, and they are in **love.** Almost instinctively now, Mabatho knew the cues and the classical responses. A man takes you from the noisy crowd by the arm into another room, and you start undressing. After that he has well-nigh permanent conjugal rights over you.

But this was not getting anywhere. Yet electric with urgent significance. Wave upon wave of that chocolate voice rode across to her and swamped her heart.

She knew with quick alarm that the thing he was asking of her was not physical, not sexual. Oh, God, if only he could touch my body; it is through my body that I can declaim the poetry of my being most eloquently, she pined.

She felt so inadequate. She felt she knew the hopelessness of ever reaching the holiest preserves of this man, and from him the ultimate most was all she wanted, or nothing at all.

With a will of screaming desperation, she tore the mystic woof, rose and said hastily "I've got to go. My auntie's child." Then she rushed out.

Tumbling back from the regions of space where he had loitered, Sponono was stunned. To himself, he said "Some boy, great lover that thou art, somewhere is a girl that you just can't enslave."

All that night, Mabatho wept, the silent, sobless weeping of the utterly desolate.

And days after that she just crumbled up, from nice-time girl to every man's relief depot to shebeen queen's advertisement sign to rags and tatters . . .

Mabatho did not care any more, did not care a damn, did not care about the six fatherless children caterwauling around her. The Providence that made them will find a way.

ONLY A . . .

(Continued from page 17)

end of her ruler and she waved it under the woman's nose. "Have some oats, horsey," she jeered.

The woman began to write — she wrote feverishly: "Calling Dr . . . Calling Dr. . . ." Each time the sentence ended in an illegible scrawl. Then she turned the paper over and continued writing: "Calling Dr. . . ." She scribbled over what she had written. "Calling Dr. . . ." Again she scribbled over what she had written.

"What is she writing?" asked a court stenographer.

"Same thing over and over again . . . Must be mad!" replied a bank-clerk in a black alpaca jacket, who had managed to push his way to the front.

Suddenly the piece of bread fell from the end of Maureen's ruler on to the paper on which the woman was writing. The woman jumped up with a scream — the crowd scattered. She ran off, sobbing, her suitcase banging against her knees as she ran.

The children did not follow. Never before had they had as much fun, and they remained to plan what they would do to tease the "mad woman" after the holidays.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, young ladies!" said someone.

"Why?" asked Maureen.

"What would your parents have done if they had seen you mocking that poor woman?"

"Nothing," said Sybil. "**She's only an old coloured girl!**"

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