

Maggie was a student nurse in Durban toward the end of the period of coalitions. The Sharpeville shootings had signalled the beginning of the era of self-assertion. Those had been difficult years in the black community. No black girl dared to straighten her hair as had been the fashion during the era of coalitions. In the locations around Durban, bands of young men roamed the streets with scissors which they used freely to cut off any girl's straightened hair. There could be no greater humiliation for a Zulu girl than to have her hair cut, in public, by strangers. Maggie had never straightened her hair because she had less time for appearances and spent most of her time in the mailtrain to Zululand. But, once, she was involved in an ugly incident with the haircutters. She and another midwife were returning from delivering a baby when they were accosted by two young Africans.

Don't you know the law? one of them said, walking up to the other nurse.

What law?

The law of the people which says no Zulu girl shall identify with our enemies. Don't you have brains in your head? The white man is making a law to make you the plaything of every scoundrel in uniform. And you approve? You straighten your hair? You identify yourself with him? Well, if you don't know the law, we'll teach it to you!

The man held her by her hair and was readying himself for the first shearing when she plunged the needle of a hypodermic syringe filled with methylated spirits into his cheek. He screamed as never a man had howled before, and ran away.

Black sister-tutors were replacing the white in black training hospitals all over the country in a systematic bid to destroy English influences in the African community. The Afrikaner did not have enough trained nurses to take the place of the English, so he encouraged the training of African tutors—it was cheaper to train a black sister and had the politically desirable effect of projecting the Afrikaner in the role of a liberator of the black nurse. She was glad to assume control in the hospitals serving her people where before the English and the Jews had directed policy. The most spectacular change she introduced was first noticed in the maternity wards. After taking the particulars of an expectant mother, the midwife admitting her would ask her to describe the ceremony performed by people with her husband's family name when a baby was born. After delivery, the baby was put through the ceremony, with the nurses, the midwives and the expectant mothers awaiting delivery participating. That changed the character of the relationship between the hospital and the African community. Where before the former was regarded as enemy territory to which the African went only when face to face with danger, it became an integral feature of African life.

In the days when white matrons and sister-tutors dominated, the unmarried mother was treated as the scum of womanhood; she was

the butt of cruel jokes and was accused of pulling down her bloomers before every scoundrel with something hanging between his legs. This changed gradually in those hospitals controlled by black matrons or with black sister-tutors. The student-nurses were taught that no baby and no human being can ever be illegitimate; that each was a masterpiece of creation with as much right to live as any other; that only an unclean mind could harbour the notion that any baby could be illegitimate. Stress was laid on the link between the person and the soil, through the umbilical cord buried in the earth. The trainees were taught that earth does not have a sight more beautiful than a woman carrying a human being in her womb; the *big house*, womanhood was called.

Each woman who delivered a live baby was hailed as a heroine; she had carried her people one step nearer on the road to Blood River. Each baby born was a precious acquisition; through him the dead had risen from the many Blood Rivers and Sharpevilles in South African history to avenge the wrongs of the past. Each child was no longer an individual; he was a vital fragment of society; he lived, no longer for himself but for the community. The name which his parents gave him described a principle of fulfilment, as it had done before the days of conquest; wherever he was and in everything he did he translated the principle into action. His name and the ideal were one and the same thing; he was the living ideal.

Each person was an ideal; babies born during a particular season or amidst a particular combination of events were a total of ideas; they were blood brothers linked by their common origins, their umbilical cords in the earth, and their age. Their first duty to themselves and to society was to translate into action and to defend together the total of ideas which they incarnated. The language group was the total of totals which created the conditions in which the person could make the best possible use of his life and project himself to the future to the best of his ability. The habit of responding in identical ways to similar challenges developed almost automatically in this setting.

As the child grew up, the range of his responses widened; he assumed greater responsibilities. The schools came in to prepare him for these. The language group assumed significance once more in the life of the person; it became the person extended into society. A message passed to the group evoked a collective response; a challenge posed evoked identical responses. In a crisis, the person no longer stood alone; he readily fell back to the values of his language group, which were his guide; these imposed disciplines which he could not escape. With language solidarity thus established, race discrimination transformed all the black people into a collective of totals facing the same challenge and responding in identical ways. The change restored to the person his dignity and sense of worth and to the chief his responsibility as the mouth from which no lies issued.

For the first time in three hundred years of defeat, people like Chief Yedwa, Maggie, Bulube and Mareka find themselves at last in the

position where they can all understand the same thing when they say to each other:

Grind together, O jaws which belong together!

In the atmosphere created by the Passes For Women Bill, the slogan has a ring which most whites regard as ominous. If some think more and more of the gun, a few see in a negotiated settlement the only guarantee of Afrikaner survival. The urgency of action, either with the gun or around the conference table, is emphasised by the developing uncertainty on the African's answer to the Passes For Women law.

Each side has points of strength and weakness which create a somewhat unique balance of black and white power. The points of strength conduce to hope and point to a dialogue on final goals and a negotiated settlement. The weaknesses create a mood of pessimism and an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion in which the seismic movement toward the appointment on the battlefield increasingly becomes the fate neither black nor white can escape. The lives of most people on both sides have been distorted so cruelly for so long, to give added impact to the seismic movement has come to be the thing to live for. In this setting, the voice of reason or of morality has become the voice of the traitor. Each side regards itself as a world, threatened by the other and in a war of totals or mountains or worlds there is no room for compromise; there is no ground to be yielded. Every millimetre surrendered becomes a crack in the foundations, a defeat at the level of fundamentals.

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Every year now, during the summer vacations, groups of UBRA intellectuals travel secretly around the country meeting African leaders of all shades. The factor which emphasises the importance of secrecy is the decision of Afrikaner business leaders who share UBRA's concern about the deteriorating relations between black and white to join the academic and professional men in the sessions with the Africans. De Haas is alarmed over the development; it is such a basic rejection of the traditional CNP approach it could split the party and bring his government crashing to the ground. Kaffers exist to serve the white man and to be shot when they refuse to do so.

The prime minister is alarmed for another reason; he cannot understand the quality of a white mind which can consider negotiating with a black man. The suspicion lurks at the back of his mind that the Afrikaners who think in terms of negotiation either have mixed blood or a liaison with black women. If no other reason existed for the Passes For Women Bill, this possibility makes it impossible for him to yield ground. He attaches particular importance to the UBRA group reported by the security police to be visiting Mkambati in Natal to talk to Chief Bulube. These men are led by Munnik Bierbuyck who professes political science at Stellenbosch University.

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Chief Bulube, Bierbuyck opens the conversation, this is the third time we have met in three years. A lot of things have happened in the last twelve months and we do not seem to be moving anywhere ourselves. He stops.

We ourselves are moving somewhere. More and more people are coming over to the view that the only answer to de Haasism is the unification of all the black people of Southern Africa—from Angola, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique to Port Elizabeth. Bulube smiles.

That is remarkable as an ideal, Chief; the reality at the moment is that whether we like it or not the great powers will not allow it and it is difficult to see how the whites in Southern Africa will allow it. As you know, we take up a sympathetic view of the problems of the free African states, but with the best will in the world, they are not as yet in the position to dictate a solution to Southern Africa's problem of colour. I don't see how America, for instance, can support a state of the type you propose which would control the oil fields of Angola. And even if time were on your side, black and white are heading for another Sharpeville, now that the Passes For Women Bill is before parliament. The immediate question before us is to establish a bridge of understanding between your people and ours; to create a communion of minds among people who think alike on both sides of the colour line. If you will allow me to put it this way: it seems to those of us in UBRA that a coalition of concerned people like you and ourselves would have the resources to drill a little more common sense into the head of the government.

You've raised points on which we could conduct a public debate for at least the next twelve months!

All the men laugh.

Our starting-point is that the attitudes of the great powers and of the white nations are irrelevant for the purpose of creating a union of the black peoples of Southern Africa. The only people we are concerned with are the Africans. For twenty-five years now everybody has had the opportunity to work out a solution to the colour problem. In that time nobody has come forward with anything feasible. One reason for the failure is that people have not been thinking in terms of alternatives to de Haasism. To press for the abolition of the colour bar cannot be an alternative; the demand is negative in the first place. As such it does not address itself to the Afrikaner's problems of survival.

Second, it is predicated on African acceptance of white values. In this regard it holds out before us a future defined for us in white terms. That is not acceptable to us. We want to create for ourselves and our children a world designed by us. For more than fifty years after Union we tried to persuade the white minorities to change their mind and create a society in which no person would be punished for being

the child of his parents. They rejected our ideal; since we believe in it we have decided to march to it without the white people. What they do is their problem; not ours. Our people smashed the Central African Federation and the sky did not fall; I don't see why it should fall if the various reserve administrations come together in their own federation which will be the nucleus of the state we have in mind. That is more or less how the United States of America started on the road to unification.

And, talking about America brings me to a point raised earlier. I do not think the assumption is correct that it will always be in America's interest to have Southern Africa dominated by the whites. Washington's straddling of the fence on the conflict of colour should be as clear a warning as any the Americans can give that their real interests in Southern Africa require that they should have no permanent friends and no permanent enemies.

But, Chief, how are you going to convince the Americans that they do not need a friendly power controlling Cape Town, on the sea route to the oilfields of the Middle East?

That is not my problem at all. An African state stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean will dominate the approaches to Cape Town. If America opposed its formation, it would be up to her to decide if she wanted to transform Southern Africa into a second South Vietnam. But the point which is likely to determine American policy in the final analysis is not likely to be oil, which is a vanishing asset; it is likely to be nuclear energy. At the moment America has nearly 38 nuclear reactors which produce more than 5 per cent of her electrical power. The depletion of oil is likely to increase reliance on nuclear energy in most industrial countries and to increase the demand for metals like uranium and sodium whose sources have barely been touched in Africa.

Oil and metals aside, Chief, do you really think America will allow Russia to dominate the Indian Ocean?

I would not want to concern myself much with what America or Russia will or will not do. If they have not learned their lessons from the collapse of the Roman, British and French empires; if they continue to see world problems in terms of spheres of influence, the black, brown and yellow peoples of the world will have to evolve a consensus of their own for the purpose of by-passing America and Russia.

My own view is that America will eventually come to terms with Russia if she wants to remain a power to reckon with in the world; this is the message the American President was sending to the American people when he visited Peking and Moscow. If you can't beat them, join them; that's the American formula for survival. For us, this has this meaning: If America survives her internal and external economic troubles and, speaking for myself, I hope she does, for those brave people are trying out the most fascinating experiment in human co-existence within the framework of one ideal of fulfilment, our

business will be to confront her with alternatives it will be in her interest to take into account. If the white people hold out the strategic position of Cape Town as a bargaining point, we must balance that with the strategic value of an African state stretching from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Indian Ocean on the east across the abdomen of Africa.

This is the first time Lukas Meyer has joined an UBRA team and it is the first time he has met an African at the level of intellectual equality. The Afrikaner press, church, universities and the CNP have created the impression in his mind that the African lives in a non-world; that whenever he talks about his problems he puts on a thinking cap tailored for him by the communists. The voice of nationalism, which he knows so well, and which he hears from the African, evokes a disturbing response. He cannot resist the impulse to probe into what he regards as a delicate area in the black mind.

I can understand how you feel, Chief, he begins. We Afrikaners went through the experience which has brought you where you are. Some of us, a few of us, realise that some of the things we are doing to you are the things against which we protested most vigorously in British rule. But difficulties exist which make it hard for all of us, on both sides of the colour line, to see peoples as they really are. Although we are white, we belong to Africa; like you, we regard ourselves as one of Africa's many children. You will tell me that, if we want to belong to Africa, we must do as the Africans do. I believe you will have every reason for saying that. But how shall I be assured that I am dealing with the African and not with China, for example? How can I know that I am dealing with the real African? What makes the real African? What is it that the African really wants from the Afrikaner?

It would take an additional twelve months to answer that!

The men laugh together again.

Our attitude to the outside world is determined by our needs and not the needs of the Chinese or the Americans or the Russians or any other peoples. Our needs determine our attitude to the Afrikaner. If these needs require collaboration with America or China or Russia or any other nation, we shall work with them. If collaboration hurts us, we shall not consider it. China has problems which make it imperative that all Africans, free and unfree, should regard her as an ally. She wants to have the security which will enable her to play her rightful role in world affairs; we want to be free to do this, too. We want to create a balance in black-white relations in Southern Africa which will make it impossible for any white person or group to punish an African for being the child of his parents. China has an obviously vested interest in helping us create this balance. That she is a communist country is none of our business; the American President did not become a communist when he visited Peking and Moscow! No communist is behind the Passes For Women Bill.

History has created all sorts of difficulties for all of us,

Chief

I don't think it is my business to go around telling the white people what they should do in Africa; I don't want anybody to dictate how I should live. I want people to make their own choices. My business is to outline the alternatives in our situation. Our present position has to be seen in the context provided by the momentum of events both in our country and in the world. The African and the Afrikaner are caught in a war of worlds; it is the momentum this war has developed which determines our strategies and not the liberals or the communists or the Coloureds or the Indians or the English or the Jews.

For fifty years after Union we strove to persuade the Afrikaner to work with us to create a society in which the person would be seen to make the best possible use of his life and where merit and not colour would fix his position in the life of the nation. We adhered to these ideals because we believed they were reliable guarantees of fulfilment for every South African racial group; our ancestors had evolved these ideals and tried them out for thousands of years all over the continent. They had evolved different types of societies in response to the challenge of these ideals.

We thought we could build a mixed nation because these ideals derived from our evaluations of the person; they recognised the person as a cell of the infinite consciousness from which the cosmic order derives its nature and form. As such, he was not only sacred and eternal, he was the essence of his neighbour cast in a different mould. This gave a validity and legitimacy to the experience of his community which could not be alienated. Believe me, gentlemen, it took us thousands of years of experimentation to understand all the implications of the validity and the legitimacy.

Our ideal of fulfilment worked for the continuous enlargement of the personality. The constriction is the basis of conflict between us and the white people.

I realise, Chief, that the lives of all of us are now in a horrible confusion. I do not think it does anybody any good to point fingers and I want to say how grateful I am to see that you concern yourself with principles. But the question I am asking myself is where I could start to aid movement to some form of agreement on final goals.

I do not think it is my business or that of any African to tell the Afrikaner where to start; that is a decision which he and he alone will have to make for himself. We have chosen our goal and are going to move to it in our own way, just as our ancestors have been moving toward it for thousands of years. If the Afrikaner wants to join the progression, that, gentlemen, is his business; if he wants to stand aside and be left on the roadside while African humanity marches into the future, that is his business, not ours. See the problem this way: As children, my generation was told and we also teach our children that in a war of worlds the first precondition for final victory is the ability to

survive a fall; to rise from defeat. When we were rejected, we had nowhere to go; we turned inward to ourselves in order to develop those weapons evolved by our ancestors and to reassess those values which had always been their guarantees of survival.

If I understand you well, Chief, you are telling us that you are going your way and we must go our own way. But surely, somewhere, there must be the South African way?

I have no way of knowing this. What we say is that we are pulling out of the world in which we are not wanted and are going to create a different world for ourselves. In this setting whatever the Afrikaner does is irrelevant for the final realisation of our goal. We will reach it without or with him; he can't give us anything which we cannot get on our own if we persevere, as we have done these three hundred years, to move, no matter how slowly or how painfully, to our goal. And when we reach our goal, we won't defile our society by punishing the white person for being the child of his parents. We will open all doors to opportunity for him too, always provided he outgrows the habits of thinking which belong to the childhood days of the human species. In our world, it will be our business to tell people how to live with us.

But then, you open the door a little and shut it a little. You don't give us the opportunity to know where to fit in. Would you not agree that statesmanship would create ground where we can develop a communion of like-minded Afrikaner and African minds? These people would have the potential to sweep de Haas out of power! He is as much of a threat to you as he is to us.

I would say that such a coalition is either premature or has no place in our quarrel, now that we have chosen to leave the white man's world.

But you don't give us a chance, Chief!

We were not given a chance; we created it.

But that means war?

The Passes For Women Bill is, in fact, a declaration of war.

If you were a white man how would you solve the race problem?

I would return to Europe. . . .

But, Chief . . . you sometimes speak of a negotiated settlement?

Yes, I do; that is the tragedy of my generation. We speak the language of morality to people who do not know morality. One day a generation will arise which will speak the language the white man will understand. And when that day comes, God save the white man. My own solution is the momentum of disengagement. One day we shall bring every mine in this land, every factory, every farm, every seaport and airport to a dead stop, with these brains of ours and these bare hands. Most whites laugh when we say this; they laughed also when the Arabs said it. Let them laugh, Colonel. The conflict in South Africa is a

dress rehearsal for the coming clash between the African evaluation of the person and the white man's. We are a people walking painfully in the shadows of history. What do you think we are doing in the strikes, Colonel? We are exercising for the moment of decision and, *mark my words*, when that moment comes not one nation will stand with the Afrikaner. This is the position we have been driving him to in the years from 1912. If you understand this, you understand the race problem.

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XIV. The Professor's Diary

Izinkomo azithunjwa linile.

*(The wise rustler drives away
no cattle when it has rained.)*

The prime minister's temper catches fire on the slightest provocation these days. While the Passes For Women Bill is making good progress in the House of Assembly, now and then voices are raised in the Afrikaans community which question the wisdom of the measure. De Haas is sensitive when Afrikaners question his policies for the black people. If the doubts spread too far, the Afrikaners could reject his leadership. This would not mean the pro-English Unionist Party would rise to power. Afrikanerdom does not think that way. De Haas would be rejected and be replaced by another Afrikaner. At the moment, the tide is running heavily in the direction of extreme hostility to the African; that places de Haas at the crest of the political wave. But, with the rise of the entrepreneur class in the Afrikaans community, the day might come when the Afrikaner's preoccupation with considerations of survival will give way to economic necessity as a determinant of racial policy.

De Haas is beginning to realise that Afrikaner omnipotence or *kragdadigheid* can be affected by developments in the outside world. He still rejects van Warmelo's policy of trying to come to terms with external pressures at given levels, but he realises that external investors tend to influence the political thinking of sections of the entrepreneur class. He has come to realise that time is no longer one of the Afrikaner's allies, that, as a matter of fact, it has become one of his main enemies. He feels under pressure to establish permanent foundations for Afrikaner security before the enemies of Afrikanerdom gang-up to overthrow the balance which keeps it in control of the government.

In these conditions the passage into law of the Bill has become an act of fulfilment for him; it will enable the Afrikaner to strike at the Africans where he is sure they are weakest. If black women carry passes, the government can have effective control of the African people's birthrate and, at the same time, bring in more cheap labour to produce the profits with which to buy Western democratic connivance at the inhumanity of CNP policies.

Speed is of the essence of success here. There are Afrikaners who warn that the time could come when the Africans would regard the Pass as an instrument of genocide. Then, the Pass would be a poor guarantee of survival for the Afrikaner. Many of the people who take up this position are in UBRA and no loyal Afrikaner thinks much of them.

The general view is that they are traitors to the cause of the Afrikaner and Afrikanerdom has too many urgent survival problems to limit its definitions of traitor. Honest dissent is not known in the CNP; and treachery is punished swiftly, harshly and effectively. But some of the people who show concern cannot be disposed of so easily.

One of these is Dominie de Villiers of the Groot Kerk in Pretoria. The dominie is chaplain to the cabinet and this gives him tremendous prestige in the councils of the Dutch Reformed Church. He rarely airs his doubts in public, but behind the scenes he is known to have criticised the Bill in ways which upset some people in the government.

The real spark which sets the prime minister's temper on fire, however, is the position taken by Lukas Meyer. At a recent meeting of the caucus of the CNP Meyer spoke of the need for fundamental adjustments in Afrikaner thinking on guarantees of survival. The changes taking place in the world, Free Africa and inside South Africa called for this change; the Afrikaner, Meyer had argued, should move out of the nineteenth century and fix a satisfying place for himself in the twentieth. It had been shocking enough for the chairman of the caucus to talk of adjustments in the caucus itself, but for him to tell the leaders of the CNP that his thinking had been affected by his contacts with the representatives of the black people has catastrophic implications.

For one thing, it is communism, whatever an Afrikaner understands by communism. Most Afrikaners are too isolated from the rest of the world to see anything wrong in *kragdadigheid*. If the black, brown and yellow nations are provoked by it, since when has it been the business of the white race to consider non-white sensibilities? But when Lukas Meyer demands change, the Afrikaner has to start worrying. Meyer is too fine and loyal a son of Afrikanerdom to be a traitor or to be influenced by the communists and their liberal allies. At the same time he is powerful enough in and out of the CNP and sufficiently independent to wreck de Haas's moment of fulfilment. The prime minister does not doubt that Meyer carries enough weight in the Afrikaans community to be able to split the party. If that happened, the English and the Jews would move in with offers of a capitalist-liberal alliance. History would blame him for failing to keep Afrikanerdom united; but that same history has placed him in the position where he has to dare to do the thing no Afrikaner prime minister found possible: to place the black woman in her place.

What angers the prime minister is that Meyer does not conceal

the fact that he thought of fundamental adjustments after his conversations with Bulube.

Can you believe it, Paul, he tells Kritzinger, that Lukas Meyer sat there and listened while a kaffer told him of a black ideal of nationhood? I've never heard of it and I don't care a damn whether or not there is such a thing. The kaffer said the Afrikaner was irrelevant for the purpose of determining South Africa's destiny! And Lukas sat through all that nonsense! Don't you see what is happening? The kaffers have sewn a thinking cap for people like Lukas and Dominie de Villiers, the black agitators are defining the colour question in their own way and are forcing the white man to adjust to the definition! The black man is now to dictate the terms on which the Afrikaner must remain in Africa! Hear that, Paul! That is where your Afrikaner capitalists are taking us!

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Nobody is certain about how the Africans will react to the passage of the Passes For Women Bill. There are rumours of a national stoppage of work. Already, strikes have been reported in Natal. Ugly events have occurred in some of the province's largest locations. During one of the strikes in Durban, for instance, people who ignored the call to stay away from work were waylaid, murdered and thrown into the sugarcane fields between the city and the locations. The fear now is that the strikes might spread to the Witwatersrand industrial area. The police are taking no chances; they have reinforced their positions in the country's largest locations. The white-coloured Saracen tanks and armoured cars used by the riot section of the police force are in evidence in the largest locations. In Pretoria the police claim to have unearthed a secret plot to poison all the reservoirs, grind bottles into fine powder and to burn white homes and factories, in a desperate bid to drive the white people into the sea.

The police allege that this plot has been organised by the *Shisa Shisa* underground movement. The members of the *Shisa Shisa*, the police say, have been trained in China and are adept at the use of knives. The whites are scared sufficiently by these rumours so that the Merchants Federation issues a circular to its members, who are all white, advising them not to sell bread knives and similar weapons to the Africans. If an African carries a walking stick in the cities, the police take it.

The scare is so serious the passenger trains from Durban to Johannesburg are watched very carefully by the police. As soon as they cross the Natal-Transvaal border the coaches for the Africans are sealed and every African in them is searched; they are searched again when they alight from the train. Every railway station in the main towns has a separate, guarded entrance for the black people. African men, women and children are searched on the streets of every major city. All public

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Nobody is certain about how the Africans will react to the passage of the Passes For Women Bill. There are rumours of a national stoppage of work. Already, strikes have been reported in Natal. Ugly events have occurred in some of the province's largest locations. During one of the strikes in Durban, for instance, people who ignored the call to stay away from work were waylaid, murdered and thrown into the sugarcane fields between the city and the locations. The fear now is that the strikes might spread to the Witwatersrand industrial area. The police are taking no chances; they have reinforced their positions in the country's largest locations. The white-coloured Saracen tanks and armoured cars used by the riot section of the police force are in evidence in the largest locations. In Pretoria the police claim to have unearthed a secret plot to poison all the reservoirs, grind bottles into fine powder and to burn white homes and factories, in a desperate bid to drive the white people into the sea.

The police allege that this plot has been organised by the *Shisa Shisa* underground movement. The members of the *Shisa Shisa*, the police say, have been trained in China and are adept at the use of knives. The whites are scared sufficiently by these rumours so that the Merchants Federation issues a circular to its members, who are all white, advising them not to sell bread knives and similar weapons to the Africans. If an African carries a walking stick in the cities, the police take it.

The scare is so serious the passenger trains from Durban to Johannesburg are watched very carefully by the police. As soon as they cross the Natal-Transvaal border the coaches for the Africans are sealed and every African in them is searched; they are searched again when they alight from the train. Every railway station in the main towns has a separate, guarded entrance for the black people. African men, women and children are searched on the streets of every major city. All public