

We are only at the beginning of things. First there must be an ideal . . . a vision. We do not have to borrow one from the white man; we have had one for thousands of years; we call it *uBuntu*. Every black African knows precisely what you mean when you mention the *uBuntu* concept. Then, there must be the translation of the ideal into action. Look at the map of Africa to-day and remember what it looked like yesterday. See what we have done . . . with these bare hands!

What do you want from the white man then?

He has nothing to give us which we can't get on our own if we persevere in the struggle. So . . . we ultimately want nothing from him. Once people are out of your mind, what can you want from them? Nothing. We want something from ourselves, from our own people, from Africa.

Chief, I don't care for high falutin talk. I want you to tell me about the grievances of your tribe I want you to tell me how to stop the strikes

We have only one grievance, Mr. Prime Minister: the violence you do to our ideal of nationhood.

Ideal of nationhood? What are you talking about? Your tribe is your nation. Don't tell me about what the white man taught you in his schools. The political reality in Africa is the tribe; not the nation.

Both of us do not get together to know each other at close range. For this reason, allow me to go back a little in our history . . . Zulu history. Way back in the eighteenth century an African prince ruled over a small clan in Natal. His name was Senzangakhona ka Jama. His clan, like all the peoples of Southern Africa at the time, was committed to the *Buntu* philosophy. His court poet defined the political ideal of nationhood for the Africans in these terms:

A cord of destiny let us weave
O Menzi, scion of Jama,
That
To heavens beyond the reach of spirit-forms
We may climb.
(So long must the cord be)
The spirit-forms themselves
Will break their tiny toes
If they dare to climb.

There was no white man in the land of the Zulus when the poet gave us this ideal of nationhood; there were no white man's schools either. The poet was speaking to the ages; to future generations. Shaka the Great built the Zulu nation on the ideal; so did Mshweshwe in Lesotho, Mzilikazi and many others. In 1912, Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme united the black peoples of South Africa on the basis of the ideal. We are building a larger black nation of Southern Africa on the basis of

this ideal; the ideal translates the *Buntu* philosophy into political action. Both the philosophy and the ideal have not been given to us by the white people; they belong to us; they are the lasting bond which ties together the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa.

I can tell you one thing, Chief: every Afrikaner will be dead before your dream comes true.

Oh no, Mr. Prime Minister! You don't have to die. The white man rejected us when it suited him; it suits us to reject him now. But we reject him differently; we offer the Afrikaner an alternative. We want a peace treaty; we want a conference of the black and white nations of Southern Africa at which we shall restore to ourselves that which belongs to us and guarantee the Afrikaner a permanent place in the African sun. We offer the Afrikaner an alternative to being the political polecat of international affairs. Our alternative is better than what Dr. van Warmelo offered us. He offered us the shadow of freedom; not its substance. He wanted to make us the vassals of the white man; this is the position to which the Afrikaner is trying to reduce Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland. He calls that freedom; we reject it. With the poverty and overcrowding in the reserves, he forces us to be communist carbon copies against our best interests. We don't want that.

The prime minister is now visibly angry with the African; he cuts him short thus:

Well, I'm a pessimist. Life is a challenge, a struggle

I can understand that. Young people everywhere are pessimistic. They are obsessed with the imminence of catastrophe; they would destroy society itself, in the endeavour to guarantee its survival. We, Africans, have been around for too long to think of an end to life. The whites are a young race; they are still concerned with ideas when we concentrate on the essence of personhood; on the person as the source of all ideas.

I don't see what all this has to do with the strikes!

Pessimism predicates fulfilment for the Afrikaner on the destruction of the African people

The phenomenon cannot take this, as he believes, lying on his stomach. He bangs his palm on his desk.

Chief! I will not allow you to say that!

My mandate is to tell you this.

The phenomenon feels like terminating the interview; he has never been spoken to like this by a black man. But then, there always is the English press which will read all sorts of evils into the abrupt stoppage of the conversation with the African. The eyes of the world are on this interview and the world sees the prime minister through the eyes of the English press.

If you talk of destruction, your people tried it on mine. They failed and that is why I sit on this chair.

You define the race quarrel in terms which cannot be reconciled.

So what?

You don't give me an alternative

To do what? To destroy the Afrikaner? You can try your luck if you are so minded.

I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Prime Minister. There was a time when we Zulus thought iron was the guarantee of continuance for our power. When the white man came with the gun we bit the dust, as people say. One day

We know what we are doing. You do what you know; we shall do what we know. You are black; we are white. You go your own way and we shall go ours. That is good for you and for us.

I would still want you to consider alternatives. Mr. Prime Minister. Would you consider the suspension of the colour bar and the pass laws as an argument to dissuade the Africans from continuing the strikes? They are gaining a momentum which nobody might eventually control

I told you that I am a pessimist. If the worst comes to the very worst . . . the white people know what to do . . . we can look after ourselves. The phenomenon has stopped rubbing his legs. He speaks in sharp, brittle tones which sound like short peals of thunder in the distance.

You asked me for proposals to end the strikes. I would not have come to Pretoria if you had not asked me. I think it would help, Mr. Prime Minister, if you appointed a commission of inquiry presided over by a judge of the Appellate Division to determine the truth behind the Boreneng murder.

Impossible! Impossible! If a commission is set up, the agitators, the liberals, and all the communists, will gang-up and use the commission as a platform from which to attack or discredit the police. I'm not prime minister of this country in order to preside over the calumnation of the police by the enemies of the state.

You appreciate that we have been given a bad name by the incident and owe ourselves the duty to defend our good name.

Let me tell you this: No Afrikaner prime minister can ever accede to your request.

How do you expect the chiefs to maintain the law, then?

If they choose treason, they must know that we have the police and the army for that eventuality.

You do not give me much of a choice, Mr. Prime Minister. I owe myself the duty to tell you what I think you do not know. I owe you, as head of the government, the duty to let you know aspects of the truth which are kept away from you by your officers. You already have made a public statement saying no commission of inquiry will be appointed. I still wish you could change your mind

Impossible!

Then, I do not have much of a choice. I have to tell the cruel truth to you, Mr. Prime Minister. I know you didn't know that the new Commissioner of Police, Paul Kritzinger, has a black wife and two sons, who are twins. Fannie and Sampie are their names. They are about fourteen years of age and live with their black mother deep in the bushveld of Swaziland. I have been to the farm; I have statements from Kritzinger's second wife

His concubine! Not his wife!

The woman by whom he has children, Mr. Prime Minister. You are at liberty to let the Commissioner of Police be privy to what I say and I mention it to you because I want my statements challenged in a court of law, since we cannot get the commission of inquiry.

Chief, do you understand what you are saying?

Yes, Mr. Prime Minister; that is why I am here.

I see.

He might perhaps want to tell you who Fannie and Sampie are.

The prime minister does not respond.

And, if he has the confidence in his prime minister which I believe he has, he will tell you that in an excess of patriotic feeling he killed Sister Anastasia t'Hooft and mutilated her

Chief! I won't allow these statements to be made to me about a white man! About the Commissioner of Police!

I want you to take action against me in a court of law, Mr. Prime Minister; I want the government to test my allegations in its own court of law and the only person to whom I can talk with any hope of seeing action taken is the prime minister of this country.

What on earth would a decent and responsible officer want to do that thing for? I don't believe you!

First, he's an ambitious man; he wanted to be Commissioner of Police. Second, he is a good Afrikaner patriot; he wanted to create the climate of opinion in which you could reshuffle your cabinet without creating a crisis in the Afrikaans community. Third, he wanted to create an atmosphere in this country and abroad in which the strikers could be shot without the complications which Sharpeville produced. He wanted to strengthen the government's hand in persuading British, American, French, West German, Italian, Swiss and Japanese investors to gang up with the whites against my people.

You talk like a communist

I love my country. But I do not want to take too much of your time, Mr. Prime Minister. I want to leave you, first, with a question. You mentioned the army and it is a mighty fine army. But don't you see what's happening in this country and all over the world? Industrialisation is moving millions of people from the countryside to the cities where they can't grow their own food; where they have to

buy food for themselves and their children. A state is able to maintain its viability as long as it can feed the city masses; that is, as long as it can convert food into the productive potential and then into wealth which must be enough to produce the food.

Whenever a state breaks the cycle and locks up the bulk of its wealth in unproductive armies or burns its accumulated wealth in wars, it reduces its ability to provide for its people and sets itself firmly on the road to final catastrophe. The British empire collapsed that way; so did the French. The Americans have not learned their lesson; they burn billions of their wealth in useless armaments programmes. They are paying for it to-day in the shortages which are becoming increasingly endemic in their economy.

China and Russia do not need to fight any war with America to destroy her power; all they have to do is to play with lightning in remote regions of the world and encourage the Americans to lock up increasing amounts of their wealth in useless arms. I see that the country you and I love is taking the slippery road to final disaster. But the Afrikaner is in a somewhat unique position; he has relative and not absolute power. He needs our labour; he needs the finance-power of the English; he needs trading partners and markets in the world. How is he going to go it alone with these weaknesses?

How do you know about what you call Kritzinger's involvement in the ritual murder?

Bashise Busengi, a black policeman, saw it all happen.

Bashise? Bashise? That's one of our finest police boys?

I wouldn't say he was a boy; not after what he told me. The pity of it all is that he's on leave at the moment.

Where is he spending it?

In Botswana

The prime minister stares angrily at the African; the latter, too, looks the white man in the eyes. There have been too many flights by black violators of the law into the former High Commission Territories. The prime minister sees the existence of the black states within the geographic area of South Africa as part of the explanation for what he regards as Bulube's cockiness. After a long pause he puts this question to the African:

What you are telling me is that Bashise has fled the country?

I have no evidence, one way or the other. But, speaking strictly for myself, Mr. Prime Minister, I wouldn't blame him if he didn't return. We Zulus say "*impangele enhle ekhala igijima.*" The wise guinea fowl keeps running as it raises the alarm.

The African rises from his seat and, standing erect before the prime minister's huge desk, turns his eyes once more to the Afrikaner's.

Mr. Prime Minister, you are, as I said, a very busy man. I do not want to take more of your time. But, I want to leave you with two thoughts. The English oppressed you when they were strong. Now that

you have power, you do to us what you found intolerable in the English. We feel as strongly about your rule as your people felt about British rule.

I can understand that; but our goals are different. You want to destroy the present balance of political, economic and racial forces. The white people will not allow this to happen. If you force the white man's hand, there will be a bloodbath in this country. De Haas was savage.

We know the whites won't allow it; they couldn't allow it even if they wanted to. For this reason and with all respect, Mr. Prime Minister, we have taken the white man out of our minds and we are going to create the destiny we want for ourselves as though the whites did not exist.

I warn you, the Prime Minister shouts, the white man is here to stay. I did not want to say this, but you force me to say it. The white man laid down his life for mastery in this land and he will sacrifice his blood again, to hold what he owns. You will have to take the gun out of his hands before you change this position.

You could talk to our ancestors about the gun; we do not need it. You reduced us to the limit of deprivation; we lost everything we had. That freed us from fear, for he who owns something is afraid of losing it. Driven to the bottom, we cannot be pushed farther down; if we move, it can only be toward the top and this is the direction we have taken. You might shoot us; you might have a bloodbath, but each time you kill us, you will also make your name uglier. We can't stop you doing that; the choice is yours. We also have our choice to make; to *xina* the white man. If you throw an insect into a bottle from which you withdraw all air, you *xina* it; it can't survive. You will drown this country in a bloodbath alright, but let me assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, we shall *xina* you.

The prime minister smiles menacingly. His chance has at last come; this is the moment to "put the black man in his place" as they lumberingly say in South Africa, to "teach him a lesson!" The prime minister's manner is coldly sarcastic.

That is why we have the finest police force in Africa to-day, Chief. If the police are too few to cope, well, I don't have to tell you that we have the army behind them; as you know very well, our army is strong enough to smash the combined armies of all Black Africa! All of them! And, if you people give us trouble, why do you think we are friends with Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Mozambique . . . over your heads? If you withdraw your labour, they'll be glad to send their starving citizens to our factories and farms and, of course, our kitchens. Don't you see what this means, Chief? When we jingle coins in our pockets . . . they will come here running . . . begging us to give them jobs on our own terms. They'll be glad to accept the wages we offer them. Let me assure you, they won't mind segregation. Make no mistake about it, Chief, those black people in the independent states

know power; they know that money is power; they know also that *we* have the money and not *you*. This is what independence means to them

I know the meaning, Mr. Prime Minister. But when everything has been said, I know also that the Afrikaner is human. This is crucial. There are points of weakness in the human make-up which no number of guns can protect. We know these weaknesses . . . we know where the Afrikaner is vulnerable . . . and it is at these points we are striking.

I must warn you . . . don't play with fire!

Well, as I said, the Afrikaner is human; he does not give us much of a choice; he defines the race problem in terms which cannot be negotiated and forces us to attack the most vital factor in his make-up: his personality. That surrenders to us the initiative to force him to define himself in ugly terms. We need no guns to do this. All we need to do is to help him make himself uglier; he can't stop us doing that now. We shape and mould his personality as we like. If we want him uglier, we go on strike; he panics and shoots us; if we want him to look ridiculous, he offers us freedom and we reject it. See what all this means? He is like plastic clay in our hands. Who wouldn't want us to use this advantage to the fullest?

You are playing with fire, Chief! And you will hurt yourselves.

The British told you that you were playing with fire; that you would hurt yourselves. You did not turn back. You paid the price for holding on to your convictions. We are doing exactly the same, Mr. Prime Minister, and nobody is going to stop us from doing it.

You don't expect the government to give you a licence to do that?

Mr. Prime Minister, you don't expect us to ask for it? Don't you see what is happening everywhere around you or in Mozambique? You have dumped us in the reserves, where we are dying like the Afrikaner in the British concentration camps. But I do not need to tell an Afrikaner that this is the price we have to pay for our freedom. This is the price we have had to pay in order to corrode the Afrikaner's personality. One of these days, Mr. Prime Minister, you will see the internal corrosion; you will see the Afrikaner personality collapse from internal corrosion . . . without a single African raising his arm; without us firing any shot.

Whistling in the dark! That's what you are doing. With so much drunkenness, tuberculosis and syphilis among your people? How can you corrode the white man's personality?

The drunkenness, the tuberculosis and the syphilis are the fire in which the quality of our personality is tested. We know we are being tested; we are passing the test; that is the glory of being an African. We survive tests which no race of men has endured. And we are proud of that. See, Mr. Prime Minister, we are the sort of people who do things first and shout afterwards; we do things . . . *kancane, kancane* . . . inch

by inch. I wish there was an Afrikaner somewhere who could grasp the implication of what I say . . . before it is too late. Good morning, Mr. Prime Minister.

De Haas does not return the farewell. The forehead-to-forehead confrontation with the black man has thrown the Prime Minister into a trauma. He is so angry he feels like kicking the African out of his office and saying unprintable things in the process. But the responsibilities of office have done much to tone down the angularities of the phenomenon; he suffers the humiliation silently.

Things begin to clear up when the African has left; at least the prime minister thinks he understands what is happening. The kaffer came on a reconnaissance mission, to probe the intellectual defences of the Afrikaner. He tore the white man's system of values to pieces and talked of alternatives, as though he were the superior of the white man. He was arrogant, provocative and threatening . . . as though he had never heard of Afrikaner *kragdadigheid*. He followed in the steps of his ancestors, Dingane and Bongoza. The phenomenon smells blood in the air each time he thinks of Dingane and Bongoza; he sees visions of Weenen, Itala, O'Pate and Mgungundlovu. These evoke terrible memories in the subconsciousness of the Afrikaner. At these places the Afrikaner's gun clashed with the Zulu's spear and the conflicts brought the white man face to face with the prospect of extermination. The Prime Minister's imagination becomes particularly active when he thinks of these same Dingane and Bongoza and of Mgungundlovu, Weenen, Itala and O'Pate from the wrong end of the assegai.

The arrogance of the kaffer! He had the nerve to tell the phenomenon himself that after all, the Afrikaner is human, like everybody, when the Afrikaner had refused to have television in his country in order to make it clear to the whole world that he was a special species of the human race! The prime minister has never been spoken to in these terms by a black man. What have things come to when a kaffer can sit in judgment of the white man's civilisation, his values and achievements? When he can say he has taken the white man out of his mind! Which race on earth can ever do without the white man? Which can survive without him? And, as if all these were not enough, the kaffer even tried to assert leadership initiatives, right inside the prime minister's office, in Pretoria, of all places!

But the black man also said disturbing things about Kritzinger. That sobers the prime minister almost to the point of frightening him, now that he is alone in his office. What if the allegations are founded on fact? What could embolden a kaffer to come and make these charges to the prime minister himself and challenge the head of the government to take action? The thought of the black man travelling all the way from Natal to make such grave allegations against the head of the police force has catastrophic implications. For a moment, de Haas recoils from the examination of the implications.

He tells himself that he knows the kaffers; they are all alike; they are all liars, like their ancestors, Dingane and Bongoza. But the implications disturb his personality too much at the level of fundamentals to be shoved out of his mind. He finds himself asking what would happen if the kaffer told the English press that he had informed the prime minister of the police commissioner's black family and crime. The English journalists would rush to Swaziland with their cameras and South African papers would be full of the scandal; the outside world would send in TV crews. The world would laugh forever and ever at him and his government.

His mind flashes back to the moment when the African boasted that the black people had transformed the Afrikaner's personality into plastic clay in their hands. He had said he did not need the guns to smash the vital things in the Afrikaner's personality. He, Willem Adriaan de Haas, must not only prove the nigger wrong; he must do it in such a way as to teach him once and for all time not to forget his place.

De Haas knows his Afrikaners; they are a tough and disciplined people who travel through life only in one direction. They have never let him down; he knows they never will. That a black man can dare to hint at weakness in the Afrikaner keeps the prime minister's temper flaming for the rest of the day.

That evening the prime minister telephones Kritzinger at his house and orders him to come immediately to the prime minister's residence to explain the kaffer's allegations which he details violently over the telephone.

I am sorry, Mr. Prime Minister, I cannot come over just now, Kritzinger replies. But to-morrow morning, you will know the truth.

After the exchange, Colonel Paul Kritzinger walks quietly to his study, takes his service revolver and blows out his brains.

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XXII. The Continuing Commitment

*U Zulu siquzi esingadli
nselewa zamuntu.*

*(The Zulu thrives on the
essence of his own truth.)*

The Zulu believes there is an ultimate truth behind any fact and this truth reflects the character of a people; he translates it into everything he does, even into the way he works or fights the white man. The moment to translate the truth into action has come.

Most outsiders think the Zulus stupid for setting themselves standards of excellence even when they are exploited and cheated. But to the Zulu, the commitment to excellence goes beyond the present oppression, to the meaning by which he understands reality and his place in the cosmic order. He takes life, as he does himself, seriously; as he says it, he has no time to waste. Whatever he is engaged in doing must be done in the best way he can. The Zulu believes he has an important job to perform in history. Life's purpose for the person is to realise the full promise and the glory of being human; this means that whatever he does must be the best he can produce.

Working to the best of his ability is designed to impress neither the employer nor anybody else; it is a simple act of self-definition and self-fulfilment; it is a stubborn refusal to accept the permanence of defeat. Among themselves, the Zulus tell each other and their children that the commitment to excellence even in adversity is the durable factor in their culture which keeps them sane and alive and which, in the final analysis, is the Zulu's guarantee of ultimate victory. Without it, they swear that they would be destroyed as a people.

There is a cruel, peculiarly South African tragedy in all this. White policy extorts maximum advantage from the Zulu's commitment to excellence; the Zulu does not get value for his labour. The whites are delighted with this. While the Zulus are politically the most troublesome Africans, they are economically the most co-operative. Most whites and very many non-Zulus in the black community agree that the Zulu is less than intelligent; that if he were not stupid he would not give more value for the little he is paid. Most white liberals are delighted with this; in their writings on the homefront and abroad they tell the world that revolution is a very long way off in South Africa.

One of the arguments they use is that the morale of the white community (the army and the police) is solid; that since the Africans

have had no military training, are not familiar with sabotage techniques in an industrial society, and have no political organisations, they are not ready to burn to ashes the power-structure the white man has established. The liberals are not complacent, though; they urge reforms, the abolition of the colour bar, the repeal of segregatory legislation, the abandonment of the Passes, equal pay for equal work and things like that. These privileges, they argue, should be granted without much waste of time; before the African starts thinking of alternatives; before he challenges the basic ideal on which white societies are founded; before he rejects the prospect of being integrated into the white minority's society.

In terms of history, the Afrikaners are nearer the African than the English and the Jews. They fought the African several times on the battlefield, where the African made it clear that he was a determined fighter and a dangerous enemy. On several occasions, the Boers do not hesitate to admit, he brought them face to face with the possibility of extermination. If it had not been for the fact that they did not have the gun, which the white man had, the Africans would have wiped out the Afrikaner or driven him into the sea. And no black nation confronted the Afrikaner with the threat of extermination in the way the Zulus did.

For these reasons the Afrikaner is under no illusions about what is going on in the black mind. The African takes conciliatory positions, talks of non-violence, demands race equality and welcomes a dialogue simply because he is a realist; he realises that he does not as yet have the gun and has not as yet organised decisive political power. The Afrikaner has set himself the goal of preventing the African from procuring the guns and from organising political power-bases. The Passes are an important weapon for controlling African activities at the latter level; so are race discrimination, the differential wage, overcrowding in the reserves and the high infant mortality rate. The Afrikaner regards this control as his only guarantee of survival and does not hesitate to read treason in any attempt to weaken his ability to control. His attitude and behaviour are characterised by all the brutality and shortsightedness seen in wars of survival.

Every five years or so he organises the great treason trials in which the enemies of his rule are accused of conspiring with the communists to subvert order. In South Africa anybody who opposes race discrimination is a communist.

The Afrikaner's attitude has created a relationship between black and white which can be described as a war of minds. Now and then, the war explodes into violence and bloodshed. As has been happening throughout the history of black-white contact, the gun prevails on the physical plane. This leaves the Afrikaner in an impossible position. His reliance on the gun and *kragdadigheid* has transformed his society into a community permanently mobilised for

war; as the tide of African nationalism rolls southward, he feels constrained to burden the country's economy with heavier armaments programmes and to tie increasing numbers of his manhood in the armed forces now further engaged in the guerrilla war on the other side of the Limpopo.

The Africans are only too delighted with this position and do everything to encourage him to lock up the country's wealth in arms and the army. They organise strikes, create an atmosphere of uncertainty, and reject the false independence he offers them in the reserves. The Zulu section of the black community argues that it is a condition of its own survival and, ultimately, that of the Africans as a whole, for the Zulus to cling to the commitment to excellence at any price. If the Zulu is punished cruelly for this, the punishment is the price he must pay in order to preserve the values which the African experience translates into action. In a war, whether of minds or of arms, unlimited sacrifice is the price of victory. The African is paying a terrible price every moment of his life; the Zulus argue that the price is worth paying; the more the Afrikaner is pushed to the corner the more violently he will think; the more he will commit himself to arming; the more he will pursue courses and policies which crack the balance based on African labour, Afrikaner political power and English dominance of the economy.

The African offensive operates at two levels: the educated classes and those who do manual labour. A consensus has developed on what to do with the white man which makes nonsense of liberal claims that white power will be around for many more years to come. The educated make it clear that the colour bar, the differential wage, and residential segregation are no longer the issues at stake in the crisis of colour; the point to be settled, they say, is the clash between conflicting evaluations of the person. They say the African refuses to be integrated into the society organised by an alien minority which is committed to a wasteful ideal of fulfilment; he elects to determine his future in the light of his choices, which are different from the white man's.

Stress is laid on the African's responsibility for giving the quality of leadership which will lead Southern Africa along safer routes to a better future. This is the subject of discussion in the trains, the beerhalls, pulpits and, strange as it might sound, the classrooms. The African is seen, no longer as the black community in South Africa; he is the citizen of the Black World, a member of black communities in Africa and the Western Hemisphere. This is the setting in which new attitudes to the Afrikaner in particular and the whites in general are developing.

The white evaluation of the person is regarded as alien, whether it is translated into capitalism or socialism; it determines the person's position in society on the basis of arbitrary criteria like race,

power, economic status or class. This categorisation of society has fouled up human relations, fouled up the air, fouled up the land, fouled up the waters and fouled up life itself. To save himself, the African has to opt out of the fouled society; otherwise he would be destroyed by consent.

It had been enough, under colonialism, for the whites to see the African, the Asian or the Indo-American from European or, more specifically, British, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish or white American perspectives. The non-legitimacy of black, brown and yellow perspectives had been taken for granted; African, Asian and Indo-American value-systems had been treated with contempt. The people of colour were expected to define themselves and see fulfilment for themselves largely in terms of the white man's system of values. But the white man's ideals and values together with the patterns of society to which they gave rise had not been evolved for racially or culturally mixed societies. They came under increasing strain or cracked in proportion as the area of white influence widened on the globe. In the resulting conflicts, the peoples of colour developed syncretic cultures to adapt to the demands of survival in the conditions created by white domination. In time the colonial peoples of Africa, the Americas and Asia found themselves divided into the traditionalists and the syncretists. The latter stood between the aboriginal value-systems and the world of the whites. At independence, the international community divided almost automatically into three segments—the demotic states based on tradition-based nationalism; the white nations; and the syncretist black and brown communities of Southern Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Of immediate interest, the argument continues in this regard, is the Afrikaner's position in the English-speaking world which has been segmented culturally into the black states of Africa and the Caribbean, the white peoples of the Commonwealth and the United States, the English-speaking Asians and the black syncretist communities of Southern Africa and the United States. English is the link which binds this vast conglomerate of races and cultures. It assumes different forms in each racio-cultural milieu and develops different perspectives. The common factor combines with the differences to create the peculiar consensus and identity which distinguish the English-speaking world from the others and to produce the distinctive rhythms which make this world a unity on given planes and the disharmonies which divide it at other levels.

Herbert Dhlomo's poems, Ezekiel Mphahlele's essays, and Chinua Achebe's fiction are read by millions of non-Africans in the English-speaking world, not because Africa is a cultural extension of Britain, which it is not, but because of the syncretic dynamic. The day is coming when the English-speaking whites will go to Africa to study syncretist English because Africa has something vital to give toward the

enrichment of the English experience. The ancient Greeks went, after all, to Alexandria to enrich the Hellenic experience.

The Afrikaner is not only a cultural outsider in the English-speaking world, to which he has little to give, he is, as a quick glance at his literature, history, press and political philosophy will show, repulsed by English. He has adopted an attitude to the race question which is as angular as it has become increasingly odious in the English-speaking world where movement is in the direction of progressive identification of the person with his neighbour regardless of race or colour. Paradise is still a very long way off, but movement is in the right direction.

In global terms, the Afrikaner is a negligible and politically expendable minority. His negative racial attitudes create the conditions which destroy his right to a place in the African sun. At the cultural level, the black people insist, he has nothing to give the Africans. His culture is only about three hundred years old, whereas the African's has its roots in the mists of antiquity. The Afrikaner realises his culture's limitations in such a way that he is scared of sharing his cultural achievements with non-Afrikaners, even when they are white. He knows that his culture is as yet so weak it can be wiped out by the African's culture or by that of the English. This awareness of weakness forces the Afrikaner to reject all outsiders in his country precisely at the moment when their goodwill has begun to be one of his guarantees of survival.

In order to continue to dominate politically in the changed power dispositions in the world he has to have a tradition of diplomacy which will enable him to create effective alliances. His ability to establish these depends, on the one hand, on what the Africans finally decide to do with him and, on the other, on the final attitude of foreign investors. The strength of the South African economy, over which he exercises political control, is determined, among other influences, by the availability of Middle East oil which can, at the right time, be used as a political weapon against his racial policies.

This plethora of weaknesses confronts the Afrikaner with a multiple dilemma; it places him in a cleft stick out of which there is no easy way. The Africans argue that it is a condition of their survival and freedom that they should keep him in this position in order to ensure that they settle the race problems on their terms. In the final analysis, this is what the *xina* strategy is all about; this is the justification of the commitment to excellence.

Those Africans who have not gone to school and who constitute the class of manual labourers are gradually dropping their suspicion of the educated. They are encouraged by the strategies of the educated and the latter's use of *umteto wesintu* to hold the Afrikaner in the cleft stick. If they had the equipment, they say, they would take the shortest route to Blood River, instead of moving *kancane, kancane* in the effort to build power-bases between which to *xina* the whites. In the meantime they refuse to be integrated into the white man's

economy in ways which destroy their Zulu-ness. They have forced the largest construction companies to yield to their demand for working conditions which preserve Zulu values. These corporations have adopted the policy of employing a chorus-leader for every gang of labourers. The practice is profitable in terms of increased production, the quality of the work and better human relations. The more progressive companies have thus dispensed with the practice of employing white foremen; they engage Zulus who function as *gosas* and foremen.

To the Zulus this is an important shift in the balance of black-white power. In the locations, the *intshumentshu* has combined with other factors to push out the white police. When the Zulus go to war they chant battle-cries. They now regard themselves as being on the march to Blood River. Whenever the white man's sirens wail and call them to work they shout battle-cries in defiance of the white power-structure. Like their educated brothers, the labourers believe that the whites foul up everything they come in contact with; when the sirens wail, these Africans protest that the white man fouls the atmosphere. Defiance is never meant to pay compliments and the cries which the Zulus hurl into space every day, all over South Africa, are not intended to flatter the whites. They are the Zulus' way of rededicating themselves to the Blood River commitment.

The commitment is not confined to calling the white man names in his hearing every time the siren sound is heard; it is expressed also in the way the Zulu works. The highly disciplined team work is, above all, a declaration of solidarity in a temporary situation of weakness. The *gosa* is the voice of destiny, of the dead ancestors, calling on the men to struggle together. Labour has been transformed by conquest into a continuing struggle with the white authority. Each time the Zulu raises his pick he believes he sets a given quality of vibrations in motion; when he strikes the ground, he plants these in the soil. The more forcefully he strikes, the deeper the vibrations sink. The belief is that vibrations, like thoughts and seed, are living things which will germinate in the soil and one day fill the air with deeds which will make it impossible for the white people to survive in South Africa. When Zulu crews strike the soil hard and do more work for less pay, it is not the money they have in mind, important as that is; they regard themselves as parts of the soil; when they work it, they send messages to it. The white man might build his structures on the soil; but because the soil is the matrix from which the Africans derive their being, it will reject the structures one day. That is the revolution the African has in mind and when it comes it will not be like anything seen or known in white history.

* * *

XXIII. Stand In The Wind And Speak To The Ages

Izinja zoshaba zidla umnikazizo!

(The hounds of ushaba eat their own master!)

Zandile now wishes she had not uttered the terrible words. The dreaded *indlondlo* snake, she had often shouted in moments of anger, lines its grave with the corpses of its hunters. Now, it seems, the moment of lining the grave is either at hand or has arrived. Each hour that goes by deepens her anxiety. It is Tuesday and her husband has not returned home. He left on Saturday afternoon and said he would be back home late that night. He did not tell her where he was going. That did not bother her much; some Zulu men did things that way. She remembers now that he took her leather shopping bag; he did that when he wanted to bring her a pleasant surprise. But then something had puzzled her; almost by accident she had seen him shove something into the bag. That was not the family clock. Saturday night had gone by and the whole of Sunday, and he had not returned. She had risen before dawn on Monday, taken the earliest train to Pretoria to be at the magistrate's court when the trials started, to see if her husband had been arrested.

The African was presumed a criminal every moment of his life in his own country, like the Jews in Nazi Germany; he was required to carry documents to prove that, wherever he was, he was not committing a crime. In the locations, and every white city had its location where the Africans were corralled, the police kept a sharp eye on the movements of the black people. As a rule, police raids were conducted in the locations every week-end; the police searched for pass law violations, vagrants, stolen goods, weapons, liquor brewed illegally and, of course, the dreaded guerrilla fighters trained in China and Russia. The police raided by night, turned houses inside out and arrested whoever did not have the right papers or any whom they did not want in the location. The prisoners would be herded into groups at corners in the streets and were later loaded into huge trucks called *Black Marias* and locked in the stocks on Sunday, loaded into the trucks early on Monday morning and driven to the magistrates' courts in the centre of the white man's cities. The police stations in the cities

did not, as a rule, drive their prisoners; they marched them handcuffed in pairs down the streets to the court houses. In the larger towns it was not an unusual thing to see hundreds marched to the nearest court house. Men and boys over 18 were marched and, more often than not, women, too, some with babies on their backs.

The law of the white man required that these raids should be conducted regularly in spite of the fact that they were responsible for some of the bloodiest clashes between the Africans and the police. The black people sometimes fought pitched battles with the arms of the law and killed as readily as they were murdered. The whites insisted on the raids for a number of reasons. First, the locations were security risks; the police had constantly to know what was in the locations and to weed out the "won't-works" who were believed to lead or organise the violence against the police. It was important for the white man's purse that no person was in the location who did not work and who, the law said, was an unproductive parasite. Third, the raids served the useful purpose of creating an atmosphere of danger in the locations in order to immunise the masses of the people against those whom the authorities regarded as the agitators. People had to live in fear of being arrested so that they should not forget who was master in South Africa. The raids were also an instrument of control to create the state of mind in which the African would collaborate in working, first, to entrench his ruin and, second, to produce the wealth which made it possible for the whites to pay handsome dividends to foreign investors.

People were arrested not only in the streets but also in their homes. Every Monday morning almost in every city, friends and relatives flocked to the magistrates' courts to check on their loved ones or to pay their fines or to bring them decent food. White employers had grown accustomed to doing without some of their workers on Mondays. South African whites had come to terms with the sight of scores of Africans in handcuffs on the way to the courts. They were not alone in doing this. Millions of Germans had watched the Nazis beat up the Jews, chase them out of their homes and march them down the streets of German cities to jail. The Germans got used to the sight; they watched while the Nazis fulfilled themselves in one extreme of ugliness after another.

The whites in South Africa watch the CNP hordes march black men and women to jail every week. The wounds this has cut into the psyche of the African are so deep one day there will be no balm to heal them. As the Africans march quietly to jail every week, they work equally quietly for the day when the infamy will go up in flames and its ashes swept into the sea. This was Zandile's prayer as she stood in front of the gate through which the prisoners were marched into the grille to await trial. She spent the whole day around the courts, moving from one corner of the iron cage in which hundreds of Africans were locked to another in the hope that she might catch a glimpse of Pumasilwe.

On the morning of Tuesday she rises early again and walks to Father Maimane. The sun has not risen when she knocks on the front door. A young girl, one of Maimane's daughters opens the door.

Is the father awake?

No. But mother is in the kitchen.

Tell her I am here.

The girl disappears down the passage to the rear of the house. Mother Maimane is a heavy, slow-moving woman in her early sixties. She listens carefully to Zandile's story, and then rises to her feet.

I must wake him up, child. Why do the people call him Father if he cannot be available when they need him most?

She shuffles down the hall and returns a few minutes later behind her husband. The old man listens carefully to Zandile's story and then rises to his feet:

Child, this sounds bad. Puma, of course, was not the type of person whom the police would treat with consideration. Let me dress up. We shall try the various hospitals in the city, to start with and, if we draw blanks, will then go to the police.

Let's start with the police, Father. They'll know if he is in hospital.

Well, child, you don't want them to know you're in trouble when you can help it.

I can't help it, Father.

Let us do that which you consider best, child. But tell me, had you quarrelled?

Not at all, Father.

He did not like your reference to the lining of the grave?

That, I know; but after we'd seen you we never talked about it again.

In the old days a whole regiment would be sent to kill an *indlondlo* on a particular route. Soldiers would die before it was killed. What did you have in mind when you talked about this to your husband?

Well, Father, the passage into law of the Passes For Women Bill killed something in me; it extinguished one flame in my life; it planted defeat in my private personal life as a woman and made humiliation my constant companion. Where I was attacked more directly than I had been in the past, I had to fight back to protect my honour!

I am listening, child.

I had to do something, Father; I wanted to go down with a white man . . . the biggest of them . . . the most powerful . . . to bring him crashing to the ground where he had thrown me!

Kill a white person?

I was ready to kill, to lie, to steal, to do anything to shatter the self-image of the white man; I was ready even to fling myself at a white man to crack his psyche

Child? Fling yourself at a white man? You are somebody's wife?

Father! Don't you understand? What does it mean to you that any white policeman can rape me in the name of the law? Don't you understand? It is no longer enough for the whites to make it a crime for us to be black; it is now a crime for a person to be a woman!

Zandile buries her face in her shawl and cries bitterly into it. Mother Maimane rises from her chair and embraces Zandile.

Do not cry any more, child. All of us are being tried and all of us feel as you do. We have no choice, child; we have to swallow the stone and survive that which no people have survived. At least for a time we have to.

Mother Maimane turns her eyes to her husband; for a moment their eyes meet and Father Maimane nods his head.

I understand . . . I understand everything. We have all been provoked painfully, for too long. We put God to shame when we yield further ground. Yes . . . yes . . . just the other day the papers said the prime minister had refused to appoint a commission of inquiry to go into the Boreneng murder . . . because the truth told would hurt the police! Ha! Ha! What do the police have to hide if they are innocent?

Zandile wipes her still hidden face with the shawl. She lifts her head slowly out of the cover and takes a deep breath.

Father, the prime minister's refusal made Puma so angry I feared he would crack. He sat alone into the night in the kitchen. I could not sleep; I dared not sleep. I did not know what he would do. You see, that breastbone of the cat he told you about had been missing for some days; without the prop, he lost his sense of direction. I was afraid, Father

Puma never really took the white man out of his mind?

I don't know if he ever tried to, for one leg was always in the experience of the mission station and the other in the underground. In a crisis, I never knew where he would stand or what he would do. After midnight he strode from the kitchen to the sitting room and back, talking to himself. I remember every word, for I was awake. He started in a low tone. I heard him say: Then came this evil, from across the oceans; this infamy; this *ushaba*! It came and in the name of Christ, he groaned, it defined us as primitives and savages; the whites showered us with a "love" we had not asked for. They "loved" us so much they stole our land; they reduced us to creatures; we had to sweat, to starve, die and rot to produce wealth for them. Where was their "love" then? How long must we endure it? O, how long?

Don't you think he went out to burn some factory?

For a long while, Zandile does not answer. Mother Maimane,

who has been standing by her moves softly to her own chair. Zandile's voice trembles.

I have never heard him shout like that. He did not do that even when he was angry with me. Father, I don't know I know nothing. I always told him that to conquer the white man, we had to use our brains; we had to refuse to fight on ground chosen by him, using his own weapons. You leave a bomb here, and kill a woman and blow up a railway line there. You strike at the outer circles of white power; you don't hit at the point of real weakness and the white man

Up to now, the Maimane homestead has been quiet, as though the old man and his wife were about the only people who lived in it. As the sun rises higher the younger members of the family wake up and make a bee-line for the bathroom. The Maimane house is a sprawling structure which functions very much like a boarding house in some respects. There are three bathrooms, one for the infants, another for the older children and a third for the adults. At this time of the morning there always is war in the bathroom set aside for the toddlers. The arbitrator always is Mother Maimane; it is her task and right to apportion positions in the queue and make peace, and fix the rules for going to the bathroom. This is no mean task in the orthodox Maimane homestead in which three sons live with their wives and children. But the toddlers in the Maimane family include little ones born in the backyards of suburban white Pretoria, who have nowhere to go and no people they can call parents.

According to African tradition, there is no such a creature as an illegitimate child. The principle worked in the old days when space abounded and each family produced its food. In the conditions created by white conquest, the overcrowding and regimentation in the locations strain the principle of legitimacy and its implications. People have less food, less space in which to live and little money with which to buy clothes.

Largely as a result, the orthodox home has begun to be one of the casualties of white civilisation in the locations. *Umteto wesintu* is cited in defence of the African's rejections of the ways of the white man. The rejections are a more complicated stance than the demand for reversion to the ways of pre-industrial societies. For good or for evil, the Africans in the locations acknowledge that they have been caught in the sweep of an industrial civilisation; they insist, however, that they should find their bearings and fix final positions for themselves in it on their terms. This is the basic point of conflict between them and the white man. They have evolved a syncretism of outlooks based largely on African evaluations of the person which have been blended with borrowings from the white man's culture.

Chief Bulube is an outstanding example of the syncretism. He comes from an Orthodox Zulu home. His father was a polygamist and his mother a Christian. His early education followed strict traditional

lines. When he grew up he went to white-oriented schools where he studied English and Roman-Dutch Law. Father Maimane himself is another example. While he preaches a rigid exclusivism in which the Africans are enjoined not to defile themselves by adopting white values, he and his followers are christians.

It is true that Christ has next to no place in Maimane's teachings; that emphasis is on the humanism in the christian doctrine. But this humanism is regarded as important because it supports the humanism of the *Buntu Ideal*. The element of selectivity is only one more dimension of the syncretism. The rejection of the "illegitimacy" principle is another. All the children in the Maimane home are taught to regard each other as brothers and sisters. In an orthodox Buntu home, emphasis is on harmony, stability and mutuality. The person lives for all and the group lives for the person. They call this a balanced society; in it, nobody is excessively rich and none desperately poor. What belongs to the person might be shared with all and what belongs to the group is shared with the person. To respond to the demands of the balance to the best of one's ability is to attain *ubuntu* or to realise the promise and the glory of being a person.

Umteto wesintu prescribes five *amabanga okuphila* (phases of becoming) as the stages by which to attain *ubuntu*. These are birth or the introduction into experience, growth or opening up and outward; and the adaptation to the demands of growth, maturity or the highest point of achievement. Then there is the decline, the winding down of experience and death or the conclusion of experience for the person. Each phase is the moment of living out a principle; babyhood expresses the excellence which inheres in the person. During infancy the child grows; opening outward characterises his personality; he needs all the latitude he can have to grow and learn and develop his personality. At the height of his power he identifies himself with his neighbour to project society into the future or to guarantee its survival. Decline is important, too, because it enables the person to reassess his life and to give it meaning; he opens himself to all experience and to all persons; he responds to the call of mutuality. Death ferries him to the world of spirit-forms. Death in the physical world is rebirth into the world of spirit-forms and death in the latter is rebirth into the physical world. The person, like all creation, is always moving between "death" and "birth" and vice versa. The cycle has no beginning and no end; it can neither be caused nor terminated because the person is a cell of the infinite consciousness.

Ubuntu denies that the person owes his existence to any power outside of himself. The consciousness does not create him; he is its constituent organ. Since an infinity is by definition a unity, the consciousness cannot be other than whole; nothing can be taken away from it and nothing can be added to it; it cannot be whole if the person

is taken out of it; it needs him as much in order to be a whole as he needs it to survive.

It is this element of mutuality which binds the consciousness and the person and which keeps the cosmic order a unity and gives rise to the mutuality principle by which Maimane sets the greatest store and which he translates into the discipline which regulates the lives of his followers. Maimane preaches that the worship of the person is the only true worship of God for God is the cell of the consciousness infinitised, while the human being is God personalised.

Maimane insists that the person defiles himself when he tries to understand himself by going outside of himself; when he regards himself as a creature. If he is a creature, he is his own creator and if he suffers, it is because of his own ignorance. He radiates self-destructive vibrations or attracts dangerous radiations to himself. The cure for self-destruction is the unending exploration of the self by the self. He recoils with horror from the white practice of regarding individuals, classes, communities and races as expendable. The injunction to his followers to avoid association with the whites is designed to narrow down the possibilities of contamination by the white man's values which divide human beings into categories, and which predicate fulfilment on a creative absolute which is outside of the personal self.

The predication is responsible for the view that some persons or groups or races are expendable. If the white man likes the evils which go with expendability, let him keep his culture to himself and let him not complain when the African refuses to defile himself by being a black carbon copy of the whites. Each person is unique and has something to give which nobody else can. What he needs to develop this potential to the best of his ability is neither the greed for power nor the freedom to become an economic cannibal battenning on the weakness or ignorance of his neighbour but to identify himself with his neighbour. He cannot do this in the white man's world, where greed has been elevated to a virtue; he therefore has to move out of the white man's world and create for himself a society in which he will make the best possible use of his life. The first step in this direction is discipline in every department of life.

As Mother Maimane puts it to the toddlers, they have to learn that if they stand in the line, they will all have their chance to go into the bathroom. Teaching these values, living according to them and upholding them has given her a position of tremendous authority in the Maimane home. The teaching is good, but the war at the entrance to the bathroom rages with fierce fury on this particular morning because grandmother is not around. Father Maimane turns to Zandile.

We should not speak of Puma as though he belongs to the past; the mistake was made by me; I started doing that. But, child, you often challenge him to take the white man out of his mind?

Father, I know . . . this is the most difficult thing to do. The

commitment to the benefits of the white man's culture are very tempting for the fortunate few. I always tell my husband that his leadership will be ineffective as long as his range of thinking is defined by white horizons. The revolution has to succeed in the mind before it can be translated into action. We have to have a very clear idea of our alternative to the white man's way of life and then map our strategy for moving to our goal. I don't think we need bombs, guns and the like to get to our goals

Of course, Puma would not agree with you there.

He does not, Father. But I'm not an advocate of non-violence; our situation is such that we cannot have the guns we need; we cannot manufacture the bombs we need; we don't even know how to put them together. Such is our education. We don't have much of a choice; we have to use our brains; we have to know our actual points of real strength and weakness and those of the Afrikaner. We have to attack where the Afrikaner is weakest; there are so many vulnerable points in his world; so many brittle points in his make-up . . . we should strike at these and shatter his psyche. We need no guns to do that

Father Maimane does not comment; he groans like a man whose soul aches, looks at his watch and takes the shortest route to his wardrobe. Mother Maimane turns to Zandile.

You are right, child. Sometimes the men are not the philosophers we think they are. We, black people, have drunk and drained the cup of bitterness. I always ask myself: What sort of human beings are these white people who fulfil themselves in self-defilement? Who regard nothing as sacred? Sometimes I feel sad when I think of the day of reckoning. People will be too angry to think of an eye for an eye then, or a tooth for a tooth. There'll only be the flames to consume the evil ways and the anger which will sweep the ashes of the infamy into the sea. They have asked for it, child, and as things stand, they will get it. We move slowly, *kancane kancane*, and, one day, things will happen.

* * *

The white policeman behind the counter seems amused when Zandile mentions her husband's name. From a drawer he pulls out a file and opens a page with a photograph, and shows it to Zandile.

Do you know this man?

Yes.

He thought he was smart; but he was not smart enough. Come; I'll show you what he's done to himself.

He leads them to the mortuary and hands them over to the constable in charge of the morgue who leads them into a chilly hall with long cement tables. He draws out a tray and points to a pile of frozen human flesh, bones and rags. Zandile does not make a sound;

hot tears trickle down her cheeks. Father Maimane cannot control himself; he cries out:

Shaka! Dingane! Were you asleep? Where were you?

The policeman signals to him to shut his mouth. The only intact portion of Pumasilwe's body is the right hand with the copper ring. Zandile takes it, kisses it, presses it to her bosom and then removes the ring from it. The first policeman waits for them at the door.

Did you recognise anything?

Yes, I did; it was his hand.

Father Maimane moves closer to the policeman.

What happened, O son of a white man?

He tried to blow up an electric pylon and the dynamite blew him to pieces instead. Playing with dynamite is dangerous, you know! Tell this to your people.

* * *

The day has come for Marietjie to be admitted to hospital. She had given Zandile a week off to prepare for the burial of her husband and Zandile has now returned to work. To Marietjie's surprise, Zandile is not in mourning apparel.

Zandile, pardon me for asking this. What do you do when mourning?

We do all sorts of things. Those of us who are christians wear black like the white people. The Pentecostals tie strips of white cloth around their arms or heads. The traditional way among the Zulus is to shave the head of a married woman when her husband dies.

You don't wear black and you have not shaved your hair?

In my case, custom does not allow me to mourn in public. My husband is a war casualty. If I mourn I shall set up anti-social vibrations; I shall be sending signals to him that I no longer expect him to fight for our cause.

After what has happened, you still felt that you could leave your children alone in the location to come and look after mine?

My mother came up to Pretoria for the funeral and my husband's oldest sister. They are looking after the children

You are so kind to me, Zandile!

Well, nooi, I have a job to do here.

* * *

Marietjie takes no note of the slightly menacing ring in Zandile's voice. The tradition of "noblemen-farmers"—of country barons—is too old and too entrenched to enable most Afrikaners to have normal human relations with the African. The tradition developed in the Cape under Dutch rule and flourished during the era of slavery

and, when the Boers moved into the interior, they took it with them and used it to regulate the relations between themselves and the Africans. The tradition regarded the man of colour as the property of the farmer, regardless of whether or not he was free. In the rural areas to-day, the Afrikaner farmer can still be heard telling his neighbour about an African who works for him in these terms:

Daar gaan my kaffer! (There goes my nigger!)

The black man is free in terms of the law, but the nobleman-farmer approach regards his labour as the private property of the farmer. Since the black man cannot be separated from the white man's possession, the farmer regards him as his property. The reduction to property creates a relationship in which the Afrikaner does not expect the African to behave like a human being. Over the centuries, this has bred an insensitivity which makes it impossible for Marietjie to notice the subtly hostile inflexions of the black woman's voice. The insensitivity characterises almost every situation of African-Afrikaner contact. The man who urinated on the Kruger monument exploited this weakness in his defence. The Africans are presumed to be congenitally stupid, and his profession of ignorance of what a statue is toned down the anger of the magistrate who gave him a light sentence and warned him that next time he is in the white man's city he should not urinate behind any stone.

Maggie and others have long exploited the insensitivity fairly freely. Each time the women in the location want a favour from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, they go to the white man's office to stress their "loyalty" to the government and proceed from there to create the conditions in the location which eliminate the visits of unwanted white educational officers.

* * *

That afternoon, Piet gets ready to drive his wife to hospital. The rich, red leather seats of his car shine bright in the warm Pretoria afternoon. Piet waits impatiently at the wheel. He starts the engine when he sees Marietjie come out of the kitchen door. She walks with difficulty but puts up a brave face until she settles in her seat. Piet already has his hand on the gears lever when his wife calls out:

Zandile! Zandile!

What are you calling her for, now?

I forgot to tell her something very important.

Marietjie! You had the whole day to remember everything!

Remembering is not my only problem. Zandile!

The African comes wiping her hands on her apron.

Remind the master about the leading waterpipe if the municipal engineer's people don't come in to-morrow morning. Don't forget, Zandile!

Is that all, Marietjie? Piet's temper has started sparking.

No!

My God!

Keep the children away from the mud, Zandile; otherwise they'll soil my carpets while I'm in hospital.

Have you finished, now? Piet feels like driving the car out.

Yes.

Marietjie wants to say something, but realises that she will be declaring war if she does.

* * *

Pretoria is surrounded by vast tablelands which are rimmed by distant mountain ranges. The city itself is laid out in a small valley between hills. That gives it a pleasant climate, not too cold in winter and not as depressingly hot as Durban in summer. There is not an experience more exhilarating than to be in the open air when the sun rises. Hundreds of African nannies pushing expensive perambulators with white babies walk the pavements of the streets in the residential parts of the city at this hour of the day to let South Africa's rulers of to-morrow take in the air. Walking the baby is one of the nanny's most important jobs. The whites value the fresh air so much they want their dogs too to have as much of it as their babies do. In the wealthier suburbs, each household usually has three servants: the cook-housemaid, the nanny, and the garden-boy. The latter is usually an elderly man who can no longer do the rough work on the roads, the railways or the factories. Walking the dog is one of the garden-boy's main duties. Every afternoon, when the weather is fine, he has to take the family dog for a walk. Though the cook-housemaid is the most important and therefore most highly-paid servant, and is also closest to the white family, she has no authority over the other servants. She is also often alone with the Afrikaner.

Like most urban Afrikaners who grew up on farms, Piet rises quite early every day. The habit serves him in good stead. The prime minister is a notoriously early riser and one of the things he likes to do is to get to his office as early as possible these days. The phenomenon does that in situations of crisis. And these are difficult days for the prime minister. His interview with Bulube is given the widest publicity possible. Bokkie, the columnist of *Die Aanslag* has complained that the editorials, feature articles, analyses and commentaries on the interview could be put together into a book as large as the bible.

The English press, contrary to customary practice, praises the prime minister for having met Bulube. Its representatives have already met the African and got the lowdown on what transpired during the conversation with the prime minister which Bulube consistently characterises as having been frank. Asked to elaborate on this remark,

he says he looks forward to further interviews with the prime minister to lay the foundations for a meaningful settlement of the problem of Afrikaner security in Africa.

The English do not like the stress Bulube lays on a conversation with the Afrikaner only. The African explains that with the best will in the world, the English and the Jews are in the position of illusory power and that real power is in the Afrikaans community. To talk to the Afrikaner prime minister is to focus on the sources of real power. The South African Unionist Party, which represents English and Jewish economic interests, proposes a Charter of Liberty which is very much like the Bill of Rights drafted by the liberals. The Charter differs from the Bill in that it rejects partition by implication; it commits the Africans to a united South Africa. The Unionists asked the Africans to subscribe to the Charter and promise that when they are returned to power, they will restore the vote to the Cape Africans and extend it to Natal, the Free State and the Transvaal.

Die Aanslag complains that the English are once more at their old game of dividing peoples in order to rule them. It urges that since the English have what Bulube calls illusory power, the prime minister should undercut the English-Jewish campaign designed to create an alliance between black labour and English capital for the purpose of isolating the Afrikaners. It urges the prime minister to give thought to the transference to the Africans of the Transkei of the English-speaking districts of Kokstad, Elliott, Maclear and others. It urges him, also, to consider ceding to the Zulus the Natal province, including the port city of Durban. The independent Transkeian and Zulu states would in turn be asked to enter into a mutual defence treaty with white South Africa. *Die Aanslag* says such statesmanlike action would reduce English opposition inside the predominantly Afrikaner state, rid white South Africa of the recalcitrant English and saddle the Zulus with the Indian problem. At the same time the independent Zulu and Transkeian states, whose shores are washed by the Indian Ocean, could be made into Afrikanerdom's most valuable allies.

The prime minister wants to have nothing to do with the devolutionists in the Afrikaans community. Devolution, he insists, is capitulation to Bulube who, the prime minister argues, has adopted the policy of setting the Afrikaners against the English in the bid to split the white united front. That is what his appeals for an African-Afrikaner treaty are all about. *Die Aanslag* urges the prime minister to meet the black leaders in the effort to open a meaningful dialogue on Bulube's proposal for a black-white treaty on the establishment of a permanent and secure place for the Afrikaner in Africa.

Piet is impressed by the concept of a treaty; the prospect of castrating the English politically and getting rid of the Indians has almost irresistible attractions for him. At the same time he wants to remain loyal to the prime minister who reads capitulation in everything

said about a treaty. Largely as a result Piet's temper has been sparking at the slightest provocation since Bulube's interview with the phenomenon.

* * *

Piet sits by the side of his bed, straightening out the conflicts in his head on this particular morning. The air in the house is already charged with the aroma of freshly made coffee. He hears a slight knock on the door. This is the sign for which he has been waiting.

Serving the coffee in bed is a South African ritual. The heavily-creamed stimulant is unlike any other brew of its type anywhere in the world. The Afrikaners made it famous; they do not brew the beverage; they cook it. The freshly ground coffee is first boiled in fresh milk to which a little salt has been added and is then simmered slowly until it is ready for serving.

After waiting for a few seconds outside the door, to enable Piet to clear up embarrassing details, Zandile enters the bedroom with the tray of coffee. She has done this every morning, from the morning after she started working for the van der Merwes. The routine is to lay the tray on the coffee table near the bed and to withdraw quietly. Most of the time when everything is normal, the van der Merwes are still asleep when she brings in the beverage.

Good morning, master.

Goeie môre, Zandile. When will you learn to speak Afrikaans?

It would cost me a lot of money, master.

Bring the cup to me, Zandile.

Piet stretches both his hands and holds the saucer in which the cup stands with his left hand while he strokes Zandile's side with the right.

Somebody's asking for trouble, she smiles.

What trouble?

Baas Kritzinger's trouble.

Don't tell me about that fool; that's what he was, Zandile.

Pretoria is better-off without him.

But he was a male.

What's that supposed to mean? That all males are fools?

No. That males love women.

That's right; just as I love you!

Impossible! You can't be serious!

You understand, Zandile These stupid laws. But I've always wanted to tell you that you are irresistible; that each time I see you, you do something to me.

Now! Now! You're being naughty; you're playing with fire.

Who will know about it?

Walls often have ears these days.

Not these

He tries to lay down the saucer and the cup to free his arm for a more powerful grip. The woman swings out of his hold and makes for the door.

Zandile! Where are you going? I want to talk to you.

Not now, baas. What will the children say?

We'll lock the door, of course.

And, in any case, that is not how you tell a Zulu girl you love her.

Understand the position, Zandile! This is our chance of a lifetime!

Are you really serious?

I mean it; every time I see you, you do something to me.

Come to my room to-night when the kids are asleep, Zandile responds.

Why don't you come over here? Near me!

This place belongs to your wife; this is her kingdom and if I come here, I degrade myself. We don't do things that way. My room is my kingdom; there I can do what I like.

What can you do there which you can't do here?

I can be free to test the quality of *your* male power. In any case, if you mean what you say, there's my room, any time when the children are asleep.

He cannot accept defeat at the hands of a black woman or any black person; at the same time to accept the challenge could be a leap to catastrophe. For a moment he cannot make up his mind. Torrid pictures of love-play with the black girls in the barnyard when he was young crowd into his mind. For weeks now, Marietjie has been concerned with her fretful health and did not want even to be touched with a hand. With his coffee still in his hand Piet walks to the window facing the drive and sips it slowly.

The crew from the municipal engineer's department have begun to arrive. Each African has a pick on his shoulder from which a shovel hangs. With the right hand each holds a metal container filled with a gallon of *Mahewu*, a brew made from boiled and fermented mealie or corn meal. This is their breakfast. They drink the fluid for lunch also. Year in and year out, they survive on *Mahewu*. Their wages, rents, taxes, bus or train fares and their other necessities make it impossible for them to buy more nourishing food. The men arrive in singles and groups of two or three and then sit down to drink their first meal of the day. The foreman, a white man, drives in about five minutes before seven o'clock. He supervises the digging out of the fifty yards of corroded water-piping leading from the street. Apart from supervising and giving instructions, he does no work. He spends most of his time either in his car or under a tree or in chatting with passers-by, explaining the peculiar working habits of the Zulus, who form his crew.

When his team has dug the trench and reached the steel pipe, the plumbers will come and the foreman and his crew will move to dig elsewhere.

* * *

The Zulus are great believers in co-ordinated action. This explains the fact that they are eleven in this particular gang. The eleventh man is the most important in the team; more important than the foreman: he is the *gosa* or chorus-leader. He is captain of the crew. He co-ordinates their exertions in a way which gives them the impact and the precision of a digging machine. Without him the Zulus work very poorly; with him they work like a bulldozer.

He never does any digging himself, as a rule. The qualities of a *gosa* have nothing to do with digging; he must be a poet, a singer and a commander of men; he controls the efforts of his crew with the power and the rhythm of his poetry, music and the quality of his leadership. Without him the Zulus will either refuse to work or complain that the employer lacks the skill to use human resources intelligently! This argument always sounds strange in the ears of non-Zulus. But then, everything the Africans do is strange

* * *

Piet is still at the window when the seven o'clock siren signals the commencement of a new work-day. The *gosa* jumps to his feet and, shouting as loudly as he can and raising his right fist to the heavens, he cries out:

Nak-o-o-o-o-ke!
Wasuz' umlungu!

(Hear, O World,
The white man farting!)

The Africans break out in uproarious laughter which means nothing to the whites who do not understand the Zulu language. The *gosa* runs in short calculated steps from one end of the row formed by the diggers when the siren wailed, to the other, chanting the praises of a pick. The form of poem composed for action is chanted in a staccato recitative whose rhythm accords with the steps of what the Zulus called the night-march before the collapse of their power. The *gosa* then jumps three yards away from the crew and turning to them he summons the men with this intonation: