

In Face of Fear

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MICHAEL SCOTT'S CHALLENGE
TO SOUTH AFRICA

by

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Dedicated to all 'displaced persons', and
those dispossessed of their lands, all
fugitives from injustice and bad faith, all
who are made trespassers and vagabonds
by unjust laws

Gammans Valley,
South-West Africa
1950

My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
As the channel of brooks that pass away;
Which are black by reason of the ice,
And wherein the snow hideth itself:
What time they wax warm, they vanish:
When it is hot they are consumed out of their place.
The caravans that travel by the way of them turn aside:
They go up into the waste, and perish.
The caravans of Tema looked,
The companies of Sheba waited for them.
They were ashamed because they had hoped;
They came thither, and were confounded.
For now ye are nothing;
Ye see a terror, and are afraid.
Did I say, 'Give unto me'?
Or, 'Offer a present for me of your substance'?
Or, 'Deliver me from the adversary's hand'?
Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors'?
Teach me, and I will hold my peace:
And cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

THE BOOK OF JOB

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Preface

We challenge any statements either now or hereafter made by the Union Government in the General Assembly at U.N. to the effect that the Native people of South-West Africa concur in the transfer of that country to the Union free of any Mandate.' This statement is made by Chief Tshekedi Khama of Bechuanaland, in a letter of 24th September 1946 to the High Commissioner, on behalf of Frederick Maharero, Paramount Chief of the Hereros.

The Union of South Africa has administered South-West Africa under a League of Nations' Mandate since 1919. At the end of the Second World War the Union Government resolved to incorporate the Mandated Territory within itself. The white population of South-West Africa, through its Legislative Assembly, expressed itself anxious for the incorporation, and a referendum held among the natives was claimed by the authorities to have revealed a similar desire.

The news of the result of the referendum set up a great disturbance of submarine currents and cross-currents in the black deeps of South Africa's population, of which the foam of white people, floating gently on the surface, were entirely unaware. The sturdiest opponents of the incorporation suggestion were the chiefs of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, neighbour of South-West Africa, and the Herero people within South-West Africa. Practically no mention of this opposition, of the meetings, of the protests, the cables, the memoranda to Britain and U.N. that it produced, appeared in the South African press which hailed the firm statesmanship of Field-Marshal Smuts when he put his proposals before the United Nations in 1945 and 1946. In all prob-

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ability nothing more would have been heard had not a European clergyman, with an instinct for discovering injustice and for winning the confidence of the oppressed, come upon the distress of the people involved and taken up their cause; whereupon it became news and has remained so.

For over three years in and out of South Africa the Rev. Michael Scott has played his variations on the theme: 'The African people who have made their appeal to the United Nations have done so not in any spirit of malice or hatred towards South Africa, much less towards the white race. But when a self-respecting and independent people loses its identity and organization, when that people is deprived of its lands, its social structure and all that it most cherishes, when that people is denied all opportunity for development, whether in the old ways or along new paths, and when that people is forced into unwilling service of those who have inherited their lands, then something more vital and precious than physical health, something more indispensable than material wealth is destroyed. It is for this reason that the chiefs and elders of the people are appealing now to the United Nations. As Africans, not merely as members of one or another tribe, the danger is sensed of the growth of an oppressive form of racial oligarchy in South Africa, bringing the African people into a permanent condition of servitude in the southern half of that continent; and that at a time when Africans elsewhere are looking eagerly forward to playing a fuller part in the development of their territories, and in the building up of a more co-operative civilization than Africa has yet known.'

And yet, despite his devoted labours, despite the growing awareness in the world of human rights, despite the United Nations' thrice repeated request for a Trusteeship Agreement, the Bill on the incorporation of South-West Africa has been passed by a substantial majority in the Union Parliament. It is therefore imperative that the sordid story of this episode in the advancement of 'civilization' should be made known as widely as possible.

Michael Scott left Johannesburg at a moment's notice, early in November 1948, to attend the United Nations' sessions in Paris.

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He left me heir to all his papers—a large cardboard carton full and a 'Roneo'd' volume of material on South-West Africa—and to the duty of preparing the story for publication. I was glad to do it, though fully aware of my inadequacy for the task, especially when each mail brought the message 'Time is short', and each friend air-borne from Europe repeated it.

It would in most ways have been far, far better if Scott could have found time to do this himself, but, if he had, the reader, though his sympathies would have been entirely won for the Hereros, would have known little of Michael Scott who persistently effaces himself.

I have spent a good deal of time reading the available matter on South-West Africa, partly, let me confess, because I was not altogether sure that Scott had not perhaps taken a chance with his facts here and there; partly because I cherished a small ambition that possibly I might find a fact that he had overlooked. I wasted my time; I found neither sin of commission nor sin of omission; I found no aspect of moment which he had not already embodied in his papers on the subject.

There has been no attempt to put the case of the Government of the Union of South Africa. That its spokesmen have fully done.

This is the history of 'a landless, voiceless people threatened with moral and physical disintegration by a force over which they have no control, whose appeal is the appeal of all the African people against the oppression and bad faith of a State whose present standards are a menace to Western or Christian Civilization'.

CHAPTER I

The Country and the People

(i)

One hundred years ago Southern Africa was like a carcase filled with maggots. People were pouring into the country from every side, devouring the land and looking for more, advancing and retreating, bursts of fighting alternating with uneasy truces.

The Cape had been settled by white men of European origin for some two hundred years. They had come for a variety of reasons. The Dutch East India Company originally settled men there to maintain, by trade with the natives, a small revictualling station for ships plying between Europe and the Indies. But gradually the Colony changed its character, becoming the home of independent 'burghers' and their families who grew food and reared cattle for sale to the ships; and the Natives, superseded commercially and dispossessed of their lands, worked for the white man. A state-aided immigration scheme brought out further settlers from Holland, Germany and Scandinavia; while French refugees from religious persecution joined the flow. Many of the immigrants were men of very independent ways, self-reliant and impatient of control.

Britain took over the Colony at the close of the Napoleonic Wars and British immigrants poured in. Many of these newcomers adopted the ideas and ways of life of the earlier settlers; but others, government officials, traders, missionaries, professional men, people of urban outlook more closely in touch with contemporary liberal thought, had very different ideas and ways and the two sections found it hard to live in amity.

This influx from Britain increased the pressure on the land,

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and the more hardy and independent among the settlers, those most resentful of firm government—generally the earlier-comers of predominantly Dutch origin—moved away across the borders with their stock, their families and their household goods. This tendency to move away from controls had always existed, and was accelerated now, especially after the abolition of slavery, and it reached its climax with the Great Trek, when organized bodies of people set forth to make new homes for themselves in the interior. Behind this movement was an interaction of political propulsions and land hunger.

The vast interior of Southern Africa into which the companies of trekkers moved was no vacuum, though large areas were temporarily uninhabited. The Bantu peoples, of mixed Hamitic and Negro origin, had for some hundreds of years been flowing from Eastern and Central Africa gradually and irresistibly southwards, driving before them their Bushman and Hottentot precursors, herding them into the extreme south-west where the Europeans found them. The Europeans, moving north and east, did not come into conflict with the Bantu people, pastoralists like themselves, until toward the end of the eighteenth century. From then on there was incessant border warfare and unrest, dispute over land titles, stock theft and labour troubles. White man and black, both impelled by events at their backs, sought eagerly for land. The white men bought—often for guns, liquor or token sums of cash—land from chiefs who, by tribal custom, were entitled merely to lease grazing rights, and who often believed that this was the extent of the concession they had made. Missionaries took the part of the Natives, the government was remote, effective only in spasms and, so far as the pioneer farmers could judge, with no understanding of their difficulties.

Under these conditions the Great Trek began. The Dutch farmers, the trek-boers, were a simple people, isolated, uneducated, deeply religious, their only book the Bible. Their lives, spent in tending their flocks and beset by every danger, closely resembled the lives of the Old Testament patriarchs, independent men, a law unto themselves, and arrogant even as their God. They read that the sons of Ham were the hewers of wood and drawers of

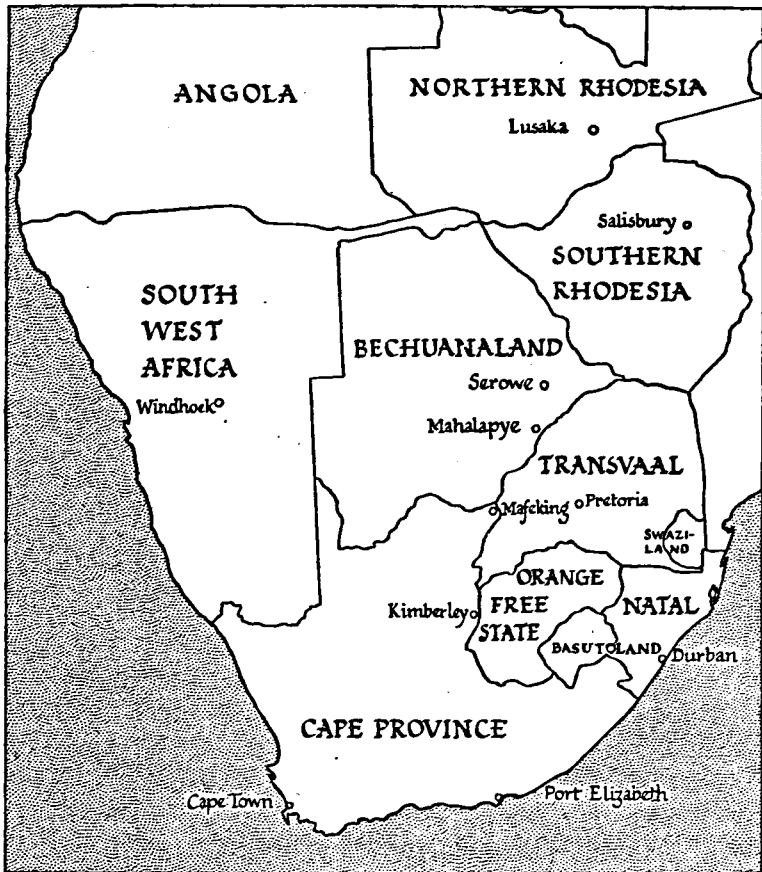
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water; they accepted and acted upon this conception and incorporated it in their religion and their politics. They closely identified themselves, the Volk, with the chosen race. They distrusted and hated the missionaries who acknowledged and preached the equality of all men before God. They knew nothing of the liberalism sweeping the civilized world, a liberalism that was to bring about the abolition of slavery, compulsory education, the formation of trades unions, and the extension of the franchise. 'Liberal' became for them a term of the utmost abuse. The rift on racial attitudes that cleaves modern South Africa developed: to begin with, roughly a division between those of Dutch and those of English origin; but since views of racial superiority are easily assimilated there is no longer the same alignment, for the creed of 'wit baasskap' has won over many adherents of more liberal origins.

The trekkers eventually set up their two major Boer Republics in the interior, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. They succeeded only in the face of great odds and horrible warfare in which they fought for their lives, for the lives of their wives and their children, and for their future, against hordes of barbarians, great numbers of whom in time became incorporated in the Republics. Obsessed with the need to maintain their racial purity and to save themselves from racial and cultural obliteration by the blacks who so greatly outnumbered them, yet whose labour was necessary to them, they firmly controlled the native inhabitants, ensuring that in every aspect of life they remained subservient to the whites. That attitude of the old Republics has persisted and to-day is the basis of native policy in the Union of South Africa, the more liberal outlook of the Cape being gradually forced into line.

Africa was being opened up: while the trekkers were struggling to establish the Republics, other European countries were entrenching themselves in Africa. Portugal had long been in occupation on the east and west coasts. Belgium set up her rule over the whole of the vast Congo valley. Britain vacillated wildly between declaring protectorates and withdrawing again, according to the relations between home and colonial governments and

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Map of South-West Africa showing territories occupied by Native tribes at the time of annexation by Germany in 1890

their respective political colours at the moment. Many of the native tribes, understanding and fearing the Boer Republican policy, and often guided by their missionary advisers, asked for British protection. Missionaries, explorers, traders, prospectors, settlers, politicians of many countries were extremely active in or about Africa. Rhodes and the British South Africa Company were pushing British influence beyond the Limpopo. Bechuana-

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land became a British Protectorate at the insistence of its chiefs: 'Shall we be given into the hands of a company whose work is to hunt for gold and the wealth of the land only?' they protested when they saw how things were going.

Germany woke up rather late in the day to the fact that there was very little of Africa left for occupation by Europe. Only Tanganyika, part of West Africa, and the sun-drenched savannah and semi-deserts of South-West Africa remained unclaimed, or claimed but indefinitely, by European powers; and Germans turned their attention particularly to South-West Africa with its more temperate climate and its strategic position.

(ii)

South-West Africa is a large country—as large as France. Its long coastline is bordered by formidable desert, shores so repellent that only two of Portugal's intrepid sailors touched there at the end of the fifteenth century, the springtime of modern exploration; and when fairer harbours further south offered good anchorage, the main stream of shipping for three hundred years passed by the barren land. Travel across the semi-deserts of the south and east was also beset with obstacles, so effective occupation by European people of South-West Africa was delayed until the last half of the nineteenth century. So much blood has drenched its sands since then that the stench of it would rise up to fill the nostrils of the world were it not for the catalytic action of the sun, shining day after day from dawn to dusk, transmuting the blood and tears and sweat into 'black' diamonds and white.

This dry, excessively sunny, and for some magically enthralling country lies on the west coast of Southern Africa within latitudes 17 and 29 degrees south, the Kunene and Okavango Rivers forming part of its northern, the Orange River the whole of its southern boundary. The Portuguese colony of Angola and the Cape Province of the Union of South Africa are its neighbours north and south, while on the east South-West Africa and the Bechuanaland Protectorate have a common frontier. In the extreme north-east an odd little ribbon of land, the Caprivi strip,

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makes a fragile link with Rhodesia. The Tropic of Capricorn runs squarely through the middle of the country.

The country itself consists of three north-south strips of territory. The Namib desert from 70 to 100 miles wide, and composed of huge sand-dunes, high mountains, and utter barrenness, runs the full length of the coast. A wealth of diamonds has been found there, and Walvis bay and Luderitzbucht are good harbours with access to the interior. On the east side of the country lies the great grass-spattered semi-desert of the Kalahari, travel across which is hazardous. Between these two is a broad stretch of kindlier country into which the population is concentrated. From the Orange River to the Swakop, just north of Walvis Bay, are the grazing grounds of old Namaland, semi-desert in the south and in the north open grasslands, with trees for the most part only along the dry river courses. The mountains of Windhoek divide Namaland from Hereroland to the north, a large valley through the mountains making a passage from south to north. The western side of the Windhoek mountains is waterless and difficult, while east of Windhoek the grassy country slopes gently down with numerous valleys carrying plentiful underground water. Northward from Windhoek stretch vast thorn-bush covered plains and savannah with isolated mountains. An arid belt divides Hereroland from the well-watered agricultural Ovamboland in the extreme north. The livelihood of all the inhabitants of the country depends entirely on the water supply, on the adequacy of the uncertain rainfall each year, and on the availability of water below the surface of the land.

The administrative distinction which exists between the Tribal Areas, Ovamboland, Okavangoland and the Kaokoveld in the north, and what is called the Police Zone, which includes the remainder of the country, is of great social and political significance. The Tribal Areas in the north, isolated by semi-desert from the rest of the country, have been comparatively free of European influences. The tribes, Ovambos and Okavangos principally, have occupied these territories continuously for several hundred years. The people, some 180,000 of them, live in large permanent villages. Their country is watered by large rivers and

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the people are primarily agriculturalists, growing millet, beans, pumpkins, melons, and ground-nuts, and rearing cattle and goats on a small scale. They are metal workers, trading into Angola for their iron and into South-West for copper. Iron weapons, endemic malaria, and a desert frontier have combined to defend them from their neighbours and maintain their independence. The Germans, during their occupation of South-West Africa, never interfered with the lives of the inhabitants of this inaccessible northern portion, and the tribal organization was uninterrupted and uninfluenced by the white man. The Union Government now administers the whole of the country, but in the Tribal Areas a system of 'indirect rule' is the policy, the chiefs' authority being largely preserved and the European administrative staff reduced to a minimum.

The rest of the country, the so-called Police Zone, was, however, brought by the Germans entirely and thoroughly under European administration, while a great many of its inhabitants were familiar with Europeans and European ways much before the establishment of German rule. These are the people whose history and relations with the administration it is our purpose to set forth.

(iii)

Late though the white man was in setting up his standard in what has with literal irony been called 'this sunny land' various dark peoples had already made their way in.

The earliest inhabitants of the Police Zone were a race of shy, wild little yellow people called Bushmen. At one time they lived all over Southern Africa, but stronger peoples harried and hounded them down to the remote south, and now these survivors from prehistory only exist in the most barren and desolate parts of South-West Africa. They live in small family bands, hunting with poisoned arrows, collecting roots, berries, insects and grubs to eat, and building rough shelters when night falls. Each band had its own recognized hunting grounds and any encroachment meant war. The Bushman hunted or stole the cattle of later-

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comers with all the cunning he had learned in his thousands of years of battle against nature. His enemies, black and white, did not understand his resentment, disliked his poisoned arrows, put him on a par with some treacherous beast of prey whose ways he had adopted, and pursued him implacably as they would the leopard for safety or the fox for fun. By such means they have almost exterminated him.

The Berg-Damaras or Berg-Damas, scattered all over the central portion of the country, are a people of mysterious origin. Their dark colour and other physical characteristics and the fact that they are cultivators rather than pastoralists, suggest that their origin is Negro. They themselves have no memory of whence they came nor any trace of an earlier language than the Nama tongue which they have adopted along with many of the Bushmen's primitive ways of life. They seem to have always lived in slavery or as servants or vassals of their stronger neighbours.

Between the Orange River and the neighbourhood of Windhoek is the traditional stamping ground of the Nama people. These people are probably an early mixture of Hamite and Bushman blood, small built, yellow, with high cheekbones and characteristic triangular faces. They once inhabited a great part of Southern and Central Africa but were forced into the extreme south, hard on the heels of the retreating Bushmen, before the Bantu migrations; and they were the chief native race found at the Cape by the early European settlers. They were called Hot-tentots, an unflattering Dutch name meaning 'stutterer', because of the curious clicks of their language.

The Namas are organized into clans, each with its head or 'Kaptein' assisted by councillors. They came to South-West Africa in two main bodies; the first half-dozen tribes were very early comers, and wandered hunting and herding their flocks in the country immediately north of the Orange River. In the early nineteenth century new migrations from the Cape began. These migratory tribes called themselves 'Orlams', the Cape Malay slave word for 'wide-awake'. And in a sense so they were, at least when compared with their relatives across the river. The Orlam tribes had been in close connection with the Europeans of the

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Cape for generations as slaves, servants, labourers or employees of one sort or another. Some were runaways, some fugitives from justice, some were part European, some had learned the use of firearms, some had come under the sway of brandy. They wore European clothes, they spoke Cape Dutch. Some had a smattering of education, all were nominally Christians. They saw the process of detribalization and dispossession that was taking place at the Cape and, wishing to retain their tribal identity and independence, they moved off with their chiefs, some also with their missionaries, and settled, with the permission of the Namas, across the border of the Cape in South-West Africa.

The Basters or Bastards, a tribe of coloured people, moved from the Cape later in the century. From the early days of white settlement in the Colony more adventurous spirits had pushed out into the lonely borderlands and had taken Hottentot wives. They were despised by the European community with whom they could not mix. They developed in their segregation great pride of origin, and their daughters spoke of breeding progressively or retrogressively according to whether they married white men or coloured. Land pressure and the humiliating exclusiveness of the more settled white Cape population drove them out and they wandered across South-West Africa until eventually, by agreement with Namas and Hereros, they set up their own little Republic at Rehoboth where they remain to this day.

CHAPTER II

The Cattle-Rich Hereros

(i)

The Hereros are the leading characters of the drama which has for three years been played in London, New York and Paris, though they have not yet themselves appeared on the international stage. They are for the moment the chief protagonists in the age-old struggle between the strong and the weak, the 'civilized' and the 'primitive', and their history must be followed in some detail to show how they came to their present pass and why they have embarked on this duel with Authority.

They have been highly spoken of as a people. A Union High Commissioner called them one of the most aristocratic tribes in Africa. A German soldier dismissed them as 'crafty knaves'; a German missionary maintained that they were 'a proud liberty-loving race, jealously guarding their independence, and with very strong family ties'. A Governor-General of the Union found 'the Herero was rather a nice person—not a fighting man, a farmer by trade and proud of his cattle'.

An Herero may tell you, if you ask him his origin, that his people emerged in pairs from the trunk of an Omumborombonga tree, the stump of which still stands on the Ovamboland border. The children of these first parents were all daughters, and these virgin daughters were in time mysteriously influenced by coming into contact with things of the outside world and then themselves bore male and female children from whom the Hereros, they will say, are descended. The animal or object which influenced each progenitress became the totem of her descendants.

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The ethnologists, however, hold that the Hereros, like other Bantu peoples, are of part-Hamitic origin, their language and such practices as filing the teeth being evidence of this. They probably branched off westwards from the main path of the Bantu migrations, and following their grazing herds came into what is now South-West Africa in the mid-sixteenth century. About their name there are many theories. Some think it to be derived from *Erero*, the past, yesterday, an ancient people. Chief Maharero (often called Kamaherero, the child diminutive) claimed his name meant 'one who is not of yesterday', 'of ancient lineage'. Hereros under oppression, it has been noted, like the ancient Roman with his *Civis Romanus sum*, would insist *Oami Omuhherero ka Omutua*—'I am an Herero, no barbarian, no stranger'. They have great pride of race.

The people fall into two sets of complex grouping. Secular inheritance was, under old custom, through the mother, while chieftainship and religious office was patrilineal. The Hereros believed in a supreme God, the powerful being who made and peopled the world. He was too remote and great to be approached or influenced except through the mediation of one's ancestors, so the religious life found expression in rites of ancestor worship. The Holy Fire kept perpetually alight among each family's huts was the centre of worship. The head of the family or the chief of the clan inherited his priestly function from his father on his deathbed and he handed it on to the eldest son of his chief wife, or if there was not one, to his own brother and his descendants. With the charge of the sacred fire went the sacred or Oruzo cattle, the most beautiful beasts picked from the herds and kept for ritual and sacrificial purposes,

The Eanda or Trust herds were inherited through the mother, and were held in trust by the chief for the use of the clan as a whole. It was possible for a member of the clan who through misfortune had lost his stock to call for a loan of Eanda cattle, so even the poorest Hereros were not entirely without sustenance. Then each individual had his own privately owned cattle which he could dispose of at will. He who inherited great possessions in both Oruzo and Eanda was a great chief indeed.

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The pagan Hereros were constantly conscious of the nearness of their ancestors, and of the bonds of family holding them to the past and to the future. Family ties and obligations were important. Women were respected and independent, and played an important part in the social life of the people. In the courts they would take an oath 'By my mother's tears' or 'By the blood of my ancestors', and a strict code of truth existed.

Cattle figure in every aspect of Herero life. Their cattle have great ritual significance; they represent the wealth of the people; their milk is the staple diet; their care is the main occupation and the livelihood of the men who love their herds and are skilled in their management. Gorges, the first British Administrator of South-West Africa after World War I, recorded: "The Herero loved his cattle and for the sake of them no labour was too great. For long hours beneath a scorching sun the Herero would draw water bucket by bucket from the water-holes or wells for his animals to drink. They dug their water-holes at the cost of infinite labour, the sharp horn of the gemsbuck being the substitute for a pick, and a gourd serving for a bucket. For days and weeks he would persevere despite terrible hardships and privation in search of one lost or strayed animal. His whole object in life was the increase and preservation of his herds, which in the favourable climate and environment of Damaraland thrive wonderfully. The killing of cattle except on religious and festive occasions, or when an ox by its strange or peculiar behaviour presaged evil, was regarded as criminal waste bordering on sacrilege. An Herero would probably have to be very hungry before he killed an ox, and probably a cow would only be sacrificed when death or starvation seemed imminent. "Gluttony", says an Herero proverb, "is the great leveller. That is why people become poor.""

Hunters who between 1760 and 1790 travelled right through Damaraland returned to the Cape with excited stories of 'countless herds of horned cattle' seen there. A hundred years later Palgrave, an emissary from the British Government to the tribes, reported: 'It is impossible to estimate the Hereros' wealth even approximately, although there is evidence enough to indicate

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that it is considerable. The poorest families in a tribe possess something, 3 or 4 cows, a few oxen, 20 or 30 sheep.' He names under-chiefs and chiefs who possessed 4,000, 10,000, 25,000 head of cattle (the last figure probably including Eanda stock held in trust for the tribe). Not without cause did the Nama call them, Homericly, the 'cattle-rich' Hereros. A German settler recalled that at the end of the last century the 'Omaruru and Waterberg districts teemed with cattle. At the sound of a rifle shot the vast herds would stampede in all directions like wild springbok, and the very earth seemed to quiver and vibrate as they thundered across the veld.'

(ii)

Devotion to his vast herds bound the Herero to a restless life; up and down and over and across the country he sought for pasturage and water, and this the more urgently as his herds grew fat and multiplied. A prolonged drought threatened calamity, the loss of his all.

The clans wandered into the northern part of South-West Africa from the east and, leaving some of their relatives, the Abanderu, on the Bechuanaland border, the rest crossed to the dry grassy Kaokoveld where they remained for some six generations. Gradually groups of the more daring, followed later by others, drove their herds farther south, to the mouth of the Swakop, to the Kuiseb and east to the well-watered pastures near Windhoek, until in the middle of the nineteenth century vast Herero herds were grazing from Grootfontein through the Waterberg to Windhoek, the Kuiseb valley, Rehoboth, and almost to Gobabis. 'Where my cattle have grazed is Hereroland' was their claim. The Bushmen in the area were driven into mountain or desert fastnesses, the Berg-Damara became the Hereros' servants—that is to say, the poorer of them did—and others were granted pasturage and gardens.

While this was happening in the north, in the south the Nama tribes, their number increased by the new arrivals from the Cape Colony, were all the time pushing their hunting and grazing

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grounds farther north. Inevitably Herero and Nama clashed in the border lands south of Windhoek.

A period of confusing inter-tribal wars followed, in the course of which European missionaries and traders entered the country and, establishing themselves with various tribes, began to interfere. The Namas and Orlams, with arms and ammunition supplied by Europeans, mounted on horseback and with a rudimentary knowledge of European methods of conducting their affairs, for long had the better of the Hereros to whom these things were quite unfamiliar. An Orlams tribe, a collection of rogues and scallywags, under the leadership of an escaped criminal and his son, Jager and Jonker Afrikander, despoiled and enslaved large numbers of Hereros, keeping them in abject bondage in Namaland for some ten years. Jonker made Tjamuaha of Okahandja, chief of a powerful Herero tribe, his vassal and in 1840 moved his headquarters to the fertile and coveted Windhoek area. Tjamuaha was regarded as a traitor and hated by the rest of the Hereros.

Traders and missionaries were constantly extending their influence among the Hereros who were acquiring in consequence some education, a good flow of arms and ammunition, and a fine taste for brandy. The tale is a sorry one of trickery and corruption practised by both white and black, to obtain land and trading concessions on the one hand, on the other arms and spirits.

Maharero, son of Tjamuaha, who in his youth had suffered much at the hands of Jonker Afrikander, managed at last with the assistance of traders to weld his people together; and after seven years of confused fighting he shook off the Afrikander yoke, freed his people from bondage and reduced his late masters in their turn to utter poverty. He then took his herds grazing to re-establish the tribe's claims to their old grazing grounds.

The Namas, inveterate cattle thieves, could not resist such an opportunity to raid some particularly fine cattle, and after ten years' uneasy peace war broke out in 1880. This time Maharero was opposed to an extremely able Orlams Chief, Hendrik Witbooi, a devout Christian according to his lights, and convinced that he had been called by God to reduce the proud Hereros. The

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fighting, notable for outbursts of anti-European and anti-missionary feeling, dragged on for ten weary years with heavy losses in men and cattle to both sides, and drew to an inconclusive fizzle of exhaustion with the deaths of most of the famous leaders including Afrikander and Maharero.

(iii)

Europeans, during this half century of perpetual warfare, were busy trading and acquiring land, establishing missions and gaining an influence in tribal affairs. They made repeated appeals to Britain for protection of life and property during the wars, while some of the chiefs also appealed to Britain for protection—protection from one another, from increasing German influence, and from what they believed to be a threat to their independence from the Boer Republics. Already one party of trek-boers had traversed Bechuanaland and set up a small and temporary republic in South-West Africa before moving on into Angola.

In 1876 the Cape Government sent a Commissioner, W. C. Palgrave, into South-West Africa to interview the chiefs on the subject of British Protection. Many of the chiefs were very ready to make Protection agreements with Britain. Maharero drew up the first Petition to the British Crown, signed by fifty-eight chiefs and elders of the Herero people. 'We want to live at peace', they said, 'with each other, and with our neighbours. We want to have our country kept for us. We wish to see our children grow up more civilized than we have had any chance of being, and so, after many meetings amongst ourselves, we have agreed most humbly to ask that Your Excellency send someone to rule us, and be the head of our country. . . . We also most humbly ask that Your Excellency will everywhere make it known that the sea boundary to our country is in your possession, and that we have given you the right to such ground as may be required for its protection, as well as for the building of towns and villages in the vicinity of all landing places.'

The Bastards of Rehoboth and several Hottentot tribes also asked for British Protection. An Orlams tribe asked for a mis-

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sionary and prayed 'humbly that it may please Your Excellency to extend your protection, under which so many nations of South Africa, and in other countries, happily and peacefully live, also to this country that we may be allowed to live in peace. . . .' Even at that time the African people knew they stood in peril from the German nation 'whose agents, pretending to come to us in the name of Jesus Christ and as traders, by deceit and treachery stole away the lands and herds of the African people'.

But the pendulum of British Imperialism was swinging off in the other direction, and all the Government did was to annex Walvis Bay and a small area around it. Further appeals from traders, missionaries and natives led the German Government to make inquiries as to Britain's intentions in a country then recognized to be within her sphere. Britain was again toying with the idea of extending her boundaries when the German Government, in 1884, stepped in and declared a German Protectorate over the greater part of South-West Africa. Palgrave was sent to retrieve the situation if possible. Maharero summoned him to Okahandja and presented him with a Deed of Cession of the whole of Damaraland. But the British Government had now decided that the German position could not be challenged. Maharero appealed to the Aborigines Protection Society, expressing his fears that the Germans would seize and destroy his country. With regard to Britain, Maharero later remarked in bitterness, 'The British flag flew here. It waved this way and that; we attached ourselves to it and we were waved backwards and forwards with it.'

The Germans tried to make Protection treaties with the tribes. 'I have heard your laws and am thirsting for the English,' Dr. Goering (father of a notorious son) was told by Maharero, who maintained that he recognized no German claims to control his country and his people, and that if Goering and his staff 'did not wish to see their heads lying at their feet, they should be out of Okahandja and well on their way to Germany before sunset'. Goering fled and sought protection at the British residency in Walvis Bay. Maharero later insisted that his signature to a Treaty

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of Cession to Germany was forged, and that he knew nothing of it.

Lewis, an Englishman supposed to be an agent of Cecil Rhodes, was at that time in the confidence of Maharero, who appointed him his representative, giving him Power of Attorney. ' . . . I, Kamaherero, with the consent and advice of my Under-Chiefs and Council, and with the assent of my people . . . do make, ordain, constitute and appoint Robert Lewis for me and in my name, and in my behalf and on behalf of my people, to do all things necessary to secure the protection of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and of Her Government of the Cape of Good Hope for me and my people. . . ' He sent for publication in the Cape press a denial that he had ceded his country to Germany for protection.

No help from Britain was forthcoming, however, and eventually the Hereros had no alternative, particularly as they were still at war with the Namas, but to give way to German pressure in return for promises of help against Witbooi.

Witbooi was more intractable and ever clearer sighted. Threatened by Goering with the might of Germany if he did not make peace with the Hereros, Witbooi wrote prophetically to Maharero: 'From the contents of Dr. Goering's letter I hear and understand that you have placed yourself under German protection and that thereby Dr. Goering has acquired full influence and power to order and arrange things . . . even to intervene in this war which of old has existed between us. . . . I greatly blame you because you call yourself the Paramount Chief of Damaraland and that is true. Because our arid country has only two names, Damaraland . . . belonging to the Herero nation, an independent nation, and Namaland . . . belonging only to the red coloured nations in independent kingdoms, just as the same is said of the lands of the white people, Germany, England, and so on. They are independent kingdoms and all the different nations have their own heads and each head has his own land and people over which he alone in this world can rule. . . . For each head of a nation is merely the representative of our Almighty God and stands responsible alone to that God, the King of all kings . . . before

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whom we all, who live under the heavens, must bend the knee.

'But dear Captain, you have now accepted another Government; you have surrendered to that Government in order to be protected from all dangers, chiefly to be protected from me in this war. . . . You are to be protected and helped by the German Government, but dear Captain, do you appreciate what you have done? . . . Do you imagine that you will retain all the rights of your independent chieftainship after you shall have destroyed me (if you succeed)? That is your idea, but dear Captain, in the end you will have bitter remorse, you will have eternal remorse for this handing of your land and sovereignty over to the hands of white people. . . . This giving of yourself into the hands of white people will become to you a burden as if you were carrying the sun on your back. . . . You will not understand and will be dissatisfied with Dr. Goering's doings, because he will not consult your wishes or act in accordance with laws and customs. This you will discover too late. . . .'

But it was Maharero's successor who carried the burden like the sun on his back, for Maharero died that year, mourned as the liberator of his people and the maker of the Herero nation. His last words to his Christian half-brother are remembered by the Hereros as being, 'Samuel will become chief after me, but I tell you that it will only be for a very short time and that he will die in a distant land. We two will stay here and be buried here. You have become a Christian and you will find your grave in the Christian churchyard. I have remained a heathen, and so I must be buried in the heathen manner. All your life you have been like a dove and all my life I have been like a snake, and a dove and a snake ought not to be gathered together in the same place.'

Maharero had been made Paramount Chief, an office traditionally unknown, by the Germans for their own ends. The question of his successor was troublesome. It seems his chief wife had no son, so that the inheritance of chieftainship and priestly office should have gone through a younger brother to one Nikodemus, an Herero sub-chief, while the secular stock should have gone to the son of a sister. Maharero was, however, persuaded as a German vassal to nominate Samuel, the Christian son of a junior

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wife, as his successor. Samuel in his youth was from all accounts not a very satisfactory individual, and the Hereros very much resented his accession. He suited the German purpose, for as a drunkard he could be induced to sign away almost any concession for a keg of rum. A friend said of him, 'I knew Samuel well; he was very fond of liquor and the Germans kept him well supplied. . . . He told me that the Germans made him drunk and got him to sign papers he knew nothing of and for which he was sorry afterwards. Samuel in his better moments bitterly complained of how the Germans had taken advantage of his weakness. . . .'

The sufferings of his people at the hands of the Germans, however, were at last to wean Samuel Maharero from German rum, and he was to lead them, once more united, in a desperate revolt. In the subsequent terror all feuds and factions were forgotten and the Hereros became indeed one people.

CHAPTER III

My Brethren have dealt Deceitfully as a Brook

(i)

Germany consolidated her position in South-West Africa immediately after a series of conferences in Europe at which certain agreements were come to with regard to the welfare of indigenous peoples in colonial territories; in the event she entirely disregarded the terms of these agreements.

South-West Africa was coveted by Germany, not for its intrinsic economic value, but for its position as a springboard for further gains. In 1914 a German professor, lecturing in England, said: 'We wanted to build up on African soil a new Germany and create daughter states as you have done in Australia and Canada.' South-West Africa was not naturally endowed to become a great dominion but what was in the German mind had been revealed long before.

In 1875 Germans in South Africa were urging Bismarck 'to send a steady stream of Germans through Delagoa Bay to secure future domination over the Transvaal and so pave the way for a great German Empire in Africa'. A German paper stated, 'For us the Boer States, with the coasts that are their due, are potentially of great significance. Their absorption in the British Empire would mean blocking our last road towards an independent agricultural colony in a temperate climate.' Indeed their whole policy for decades was concentrated on preparing a strong position from which to attack the Cape when war with Britain should eventually come.

A hostile pro-British indigenous population was a great embarrassment that had to be eliminated, and its total destruction

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and the appropriation of its lands seemed the most satisfactory way of doing this. A calculated system of divide and rule was embarked on, together with an utter disregard of native custom and tradition, and insistence on the doctrine of the absolute supremacy of any white man over any black.

Leutwein, Goering's successor, clearly expressed his policy: 'I have used my best endeavour to make the native tribes serve our cause and to play them off one against the other. Even an adversary of this policy must concede to me that it was more difficult, but also more serviceable to influence the natives to kill each other for us than to expect streams of blood and streams of money from the Old Fatherland for their suppression.'

Everything possible was done to provoke the Natives into a rebellion which could be put down so ruthlessly that they would no longer be an element worthy of consideration. This was embarked on with cynical thoroughness. The law, in the first place, laid down that the testimony of seven coloured men was required to equal the testimony of one white man, and consequently there was no recourse to justice.

As German traders and settlers flowed into the country 'sales' of tracts of land by chiefs corrupted by alcohol took place unrecognized by other chiefs, for the land belonged inalienably to the people. Maharero allowed Europeans to settle with his tribes but took care that none could claim a single foot of land on the ground that he had purchased it; while Witbooi would not sanction German farmers in his country at all. 'No Chief', said an Herero recently, 'ever attempted to sell his people's land.' Unhappily some of the younger corrupted chiefs made sales (often of other tribes' land) which were not recognized by the people and were a fruitful source of trouble. Directly out of this developed the friction over trespass. All Herero cattle straying over European boundaries (of which the cattle owners often had no knowledge) were confiscated, while Holy cattle could be redeemed by the payment of four or five ordinary cattle for each. Vast numbers of cattle were being confiscated for trespass and as punishment for insubordination and handed over to the German Land Settlement Syndicate for the stocking of settlers' farms. A

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Captain Schwabe has described trading methods that prevailed when cattle were otherwise unobtainable. 'A trader camps near an Herero village. To him are driven oxen which the Herero wish to sell. "How much do you want for the oxen?" says the trader. "Fifty pounds sterling," says the Herero. "Good," says the trader. "Here you have a coat valued at £20, trousers worth £10, and coffee and tobacco worth £20, that is in all £50." The Herero is satisfied.'

The Credit Ordinance of 1903 allowed traders one year in which to collect outstandings which could afterwards be prescribed, and 106,000 claims were made on the Hereros who were stripped of their cattle in payment.

An Herero chief, Daniel Karike, has described conditions at the time. 'Our people', he said, 'were being robbed and deceived right and left by German traders, and their cattle were taken by force. They were flogged and ill-treated and got no redress. In fact the German police assisted the traders instead of protecting us. Traders would come along and offer goods. When we said that we had no cattle to spare as the rinderpest had killed so many, they said they would give us credit. Often when we refused to buy goods even on credit, the traders would simply off-load goods and leave them, saying we could pay when we liked, but in a few weeks he would come back and demand his money or cattle in lieu thereof. He would then go and pick out our very best cows. Very often one man's cattle were taken to pay other people's debts. If we objected and tried to resist the police would be sent for and what with floggings and threats of shooting, it was useless for our poor people to resist. If the traders had been fair and reasonable like the old English traders of the early days we would never have complained, but this was not trading at all; it was only theft and robbery. They fixed their own price for goods but would never let us put our own valuation on our cattle. Once I got a bag of meal on credit, and later the trader came and took eight cows for the debt and two more cows for what he called credit.'

Samuel Kutako, another chief, told of the part land appropriation played in the engineering of the rebellion that was to

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come: 'The next reason for our rebellion was the appropriation of Herero lands by traders who took the ground for their farms and claimed it as their private property. They used to shoot our dogs if they trespassed on these lands, and they confiscated any of our cattle which might stray there. . . . Under Herero law the ground belonged to the tribe in common and not even the chief could sell or dispose of it. He could give permission to people to live on the land, but no sales were valid and no chief ever attempted to sell his people's land. Even the missionaries who settled among us only got permission to live there.'

The Herero headmen on the White Nosob River wrote to the German Governor protesting against the determined penetration and land appropriation: 'Most Honoured Governor. The undersigned Herero headmen have just come to me and requested me to convey the following to your honour: Kayata of Okatumba declares that in Easter 1900 a settler, Mr. Westphal, came to Okatumba where he built a house of poles and erected a small store therein. Five weeks ago he started to build a house of limestone. Kayata and Muambo forbade him to do this, as he had no ownership; Mr. Westphal took no notice of them. They cannot give Mr. Westphal a settlement at Okatumba as the place will remain theirs and their children's. This treatment has caused them to call the other headmen together for a Council. . . . Last week Mr. Stopke came here and he told us that he had purchased the place between the farm of Mr. Conrad in Orumbo and the farm of Mr. Schmerenbeck in Ommandjereke from the Government at Windhoek, and he demanded, therefore, that Mbaratjo and his people who live there should leave the place. In Otjivero lives Mr. Heldt. He has been there three years and has made every endeavour to buy the place. In Okamaraere, opposite Orumbo, lives Mr. Wosillo; in Omitara Mr. Gelers, and in Okahua Mr. von Falkensansen has settled lately. Otjipaue has been acquired by Mr. Schmerenbeck and Otjisaesu by Mr. Voigts. But now, the honoured Governor, where are we to live when our entire river and all our land is taken away from us? We annex a sketch showing all werfts [villages] in the area of Otjisaesu up to Omitara. These all water their cattle on the White Nosob, so we

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again ask, where are all these people to go? We see with dismay how one place after another is going into the hands of the white people and therefore, Honoured Governor, we pray you most respectfully not to sanction any further sales here in the area of the White Nosob.'

Looking over the vast empty acres of Africa it is difficult to feel with any conviction that land hunger could have played and can still play so all-important a part in its history; but it did and it still does, and the Germans used it cynically to goad the people to desperation. By petty pinpricks they carefully piled up a searing indignation, an intolerable burden of resentment.

Leutwein, practising his policy 'to influence the natives to kill each other for us', called a meeting of Herero chiefs to reach an honourable settlement of their differences. The two questions of what boundaries they desired and what punishment was to be imposed on trespassers, if not satisfactorily answered 'were fraught with the alternative danger of threatening war. . . . Such a war would result only in the extermination of the one party thereto, and that party could only be the Hereros. . . . Even to this day', recalled Leutwein in 1905, 'I can distinctly remember the ominous silence which followed my remarks, of which one could say it would have been possible to hear a pin drop.' After several days of discussion the Hereros of Okahandja, under Chief Samuel Maharero, asked that the Seeis River, the waters of which were indispensable to their herds, should be retained by them, and suggested that punishment for trespassers should be decided on by the Chief and the Governor. 'This first demand', said Leutwein, 'meant a shifting forward of the boundaries some eight kilometres. As the advantages of this change of boundary would have been of benefit only to the Western Hereros, those of Okahandja, Nikodemus [believed by many of the Hereros to be the rightful chief] on behalf of the eastern Hereros, immediately asked for the return of the Gobabis area to them. This gave me the most beautiful opportunity to put into force my *divide et impera* policy. Therefore I granted the wish of the Okahandja Hereros, and definitely refused the request of Nikodemus. As a result of this the latter went into rebellion three

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months later while the Okahandja Hereros remained on our side.'

The Rhenish missionaries in South-West Africa, unlike the missionaries in many parts of Africa, failed lamentably for the most part to win and hold the trust of the tribes among which they worked. To live and finance their missions they were obliged and even encouraged to run stores and trade with the natives and this sooner or later made them deeply suspect. Then many of them were far more concerned with furthering the political ambitions of Germany than with winning the confidence of the Natives. It did not take long for the people to realize this and irreparable harm was done to the work of the more single-minded pastors and to the whole cause of Christianity and education in South-West Africa, for the seeds of suspicion sown then are bearing their harvest even to-day. Hendrik Witbooi's father, for instance, when his missionary tried to induce him to sign a treaty with Germany, packed him off and thenceforward he and his son conducted their own services. The depth of mistrust in which the missionaries were held is shown by the fact that, though constantly living and working among the people, they still had no inkling of the volcano about to erupt in their midst.

(ii)

On 4th August 1893 Hendrik Witbooi drafted a letter to the English Magistrate at Walvis Bâÿ. His long war with the Hereros was ended and they had recently made peace. Witbooi turned his attention to more oppressive worries, which the Hereros were soon to share with him. To the Magistrate he wrote: 'I feel obliged and compelled to advise you of the position under which I now live, I mean of the position of the Germans who have come into our land . . . for I hear things which to me are impossible—things which are neither just nor good—and therefore I write to you in the hope and encouragement which is based on the old friendship which my late grandfather had with the English Government, which ancient friendship I acknowledge to this

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day. . . . We have seen and have learnt from experience that we can agree with the English in ordinary life and in business and if any nation should have a preference over this Africa this can be said of the English because they were the first to come into this land and we have become acquainted with them in business and personal friendship. . . . I require no other sort of treaty or friendship with a white nation . . . that is my view of the English Government and of the old friendship of my grandfather towards you English. . . . But now I see another man who is an entire stranger to me. His laws and deeds are to me entirely impossible and unintelligible, and untenable.

“Therefore, I hope that you will advise me of the full truth in regard to my questions concerning the coming of the German; because the works of the Germans are encroaching on my land and now even my life is threatened. They come to destroy me by war without my knowing what my guilt is. I have been told that it is their intention to shoot me. And I ask Your Honour, perhaps you can tell me why; perhaps you will know because you are parties to a treaty and of you English and Germans, the one nation can do nothing without the knowledge of the other; because I have heard that the English Government and the German Government held a big meeting [at Brussels] and discussed to whom this land Africa should be assigned—for the purpose of concluding Protection Agreements with the Chiefs; and thereupon you English surrendered the land to the Germans. You said no Chief should be compelled by force; you said that if a Chief were willing and understood to accept the Protection he could accept it. So also has it come to pass that some Chiefs have accepted German Protection. Those Chiefs to-day bitterly regret it, however, and are full of remorse for they have seen no result from the nice words which the Germans spoke to them. The Germans told those Chiefs that they wished to protect them from other strong nations, which intended to come into the land with armies and deprive the Chiefs of their lands and farms; and it was their desire to protect the Chiefs from such stupid and unjust people. But, so far as I have seen it appears the German himself is that person of whom he spoke; he is just what he describes

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those other nations as. He is doing those things because he rules and is now independent; he makes no requests according to truth and justice and asks no permission of a Chief. He introduces laws which are impossible, untenable, unbearable, unacceptable, unmerciful and unfeeling. He punishes our people at Windhoek, and has already beaten people to death for debt. It is not just and worthy to beat people to death for that. They were five people in all. Four Berg-Damaras and one of my red men. He flogs people in a scandalous and cruel and improper way. He stretches persons on their backs and flogs them on their stomach even between the legs, be they male or female. Therefore, my dear Magistrate, I write to you as a true friend, that you may know the depths of my feelings for I complain to you of the inmost heavy feelings of my heart and it hurts and pains me much when I consider that your people have allowed such persons into our country. I send you this letter and I request you to give it to the Cape Government—let all the great men of England know of it so they may have another meeting and consider this position of the Germans and if possible call these people back, because they are not following the Agreement on the strength of which you let them enter this land. . . .’

Hendrik Witbooi dispatched this letter and remained at Hernkranz, his headquarters, awaiting results.

The German Captain von Francois had received instructions ‘to uphold German domination under all circumstances, for the purpose of intimidating the others, to give one of the Native races an impression of our power’. ‘The humiliation of Hendrik Witbooi’, reports Leutwein, ‘would exercise the greatest influence on the others.’

Eight months later Witbooi sat in his house peacefully drinking his morning coffee. He had had no response to his appeal to the British, but he was not troubled for he knew the ways of governments are slow, and he waited with the immemorial patience of his race and that peculiar trust of the downtrodden and the browbeaten of Africa which for so long rested in the government of the great and good Queen. But the peace of the early autumn morning was destroyed when a strong German

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force attacked Hernkranz, firing on the huts in which the women and children still slept. "The Chief", reported Leutwein, "apparently reckoned on a formal declaration of war, and was completely taken by surprise. Yet he succeeded by judicious flight in saving himself and nearly all his fighting men. Only wives and children fell into the hands of the troops."

Captain Schwabe described the attack: "On all sides terrible scenes were disclosed to us. Under an overhanging rock lay the corpses of seven Witboois, who in their death agony had crawled into the hollow; their bodies lay pressed tightly together. In another place the body of a Berg-Damara woman obstructed the footpath, while two three-to-four-year-old children sat quietly playing beside their mother's corpse. . . . English papers laid the charge against us that at Hernkranz we killed women and children, and in hateful and lying manner alleged that we spared neither wife nor child. They had done us a bitter injustice, because if at the range we fired it had been possible to distinguish men from women certainly no woman would have been shot. The Stad itself was a fearful sight, burning huts, human bodies and the remains of animals, scattered furniture, destroyed and useless rifles, that was the picture that presented itself to the eyes."

For eighteen months Witbooi held out in a mountain fastness. Leutwein was in the meantime getting in reinforcements, and when he felt ready, in August 1894, he sent an ultimatum to Witbooi. "You have so utilized the two months of consideration given to you that you still refuse to recognize German supremacy. The times of the independent chiefs of Namaqualand are gone for ever. Those chiefs who rightly and openly recognized and attached themselves to the German Government were more clever than you are; because they have gained only advantages and have suffered no loss. I take you also for a clever man but in this matter your cleverness has left you because your personal ambition has overclouded your understanding. You fail to understand present-day circumstances. In comparison with the German Emperor you are but a small Chief. To submit yourself to him would not be a disgrace but an honour."

Hendrik Witbooi replied with all the wisdom and dignity of

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his seventy years. 'You say that it grieves you to see that I will not accept the Protection of the German Emperor, and you say that this is a crime for which you intend to punish me by force of arms. To this I reply as follows: I have never in my whole life seen the German Emperor; therefore I have never angered him by words or by deeds. God the lord has established various kingdoms on the earth, and therefore I know and believe that it is no sin and no misdeed for me to wish to remain the independent Chief of my land and my people. If you desire to kill me on account of my land, and without guilt on my part, that is to me no disgrace and no damage, for then I die honourably for my property. But you say that "Might is Right" and in terms of these words you deal with me because you are strong in weapons and all conveniences. I agree that you are indeed strong, and that in comparison to you I am nothing. But, my dear friend, you have come to me with armed power, and declare that you intend to shoot me. So I think I will shoot back, not in my name, not in my strength, but in the name of the Lord, and under His Power. With His help will I defend myself. . . . So the responsibility for the innocent blood of my people and of your people which will be shed does not rest upon me as I have not started this war.'

Leutwein replied: 'The fact that you refuse to submit yourself to the German Empire is no sin and no crime, but it is dangerous to the existence of the German Protectorate. Therefore, my dear Chief, all further letters in which you do not offer me your submission are useless.'

Leutwein stormed the Witbooi stronghold and Witbooi was brought to heel and at long last forced into the treaty with the Germans which he had so long managed to avoid. To his treaty obligations the old Chief remained faithful for eleven bitter years.

(iii)

The Governor then turned his attention to the Hereros, as the Land Settlement Syndicate wanted land occupied by Hottentots and Eastern Hereros near Gobabis. Leutwein, who had already

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paved the way by sowing dissension between the people of Nikodemus and those of Samuel Maharero, called on those Hottentots and Eastern Hereros to hand in their arms. They refused, and most of the Hottentots with their leader were killed in the punitive expedition that followed, and their lands and cattle confiscated. Nikodemus and another chief went into Okahandja to protest, and both were shot as rebels. The ubiquitous Schwabe described the people's grief as the chiefs passed escorted by a company of the German army. 'There was no male Herero to be seen, but the women were rolling about on the ground and covering their heads with sand and earth. From every house, every hut, every garden, the long-drawn blood-curdling lamentations accompanied the distinguished chiefs on their last journey. In silence, and drawn up in a great square, the guns unlimbered at the sides, the troops received us. Commandos of Hendrik Witbooi and Simon Cooper's Hottentots guarded the place. Halt! The condemned men were lifted from the cart. Proudly and with head erect Kahimema walked to the tree and there he was bound; Nikodemus, half-dead with fear, had to be carried. The eyes of the two were then bound, and the firing sections marched into their places. Present—Fire! The volleys rolled like thunder through the neighbouring mountains and two traitors had ceased to live.'

CHAPTER IV

Like the Sun on Your Back

(i)

Eight more years had passed, eight years of goading, tyranny and brutality, when Samuel Maharero decided to forsake the soothing streams of rum and brandy which flowed so copiously for him from German sources, and lead his people, once more united, into revolt. They were hopelessly armed to face the might of Germany. 'We were badly armed,' recalls the son of an old chief. 'Only about one man in ten had a rifle, and most of the rifles were very old. Very few men had fifteen to twenty cartridges. Some had ten and I know many of them who had only three or five.' Another recounts: 'The Chief knew that if we rose we would be crushed in battle as our people were nearly all unarmed and without ammunition. We were driven to desperation by the cruelty and injustice of the Germans and our Chiefs and people felt that death would be less terrible than the conditions under which we lived.'

The Hereros' first action was to notify their neighbours of their resolve to rebel. Samuel wrote to Witbooi: 'I make known to you that the white people have broken their peace with me. Hold on well as we have heard you are doing. And if God so wills it, don't let the work in Namaqualand go backward. . . . I am without ammunition. When you have acquired ammunition help me and give me two English and two German rifles as I have none. That is all. Greetings.' And again: 'Rather let us die together and not die as the result of ill-treatment, prisons, or all the other ways. Furthermore we are not fighting alone, we are all fighting together.'

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The Bastard Chief who should have forwarded these letters to Witbooi, sent them to Leutwein.

To Leutwein himself Samuel Maharero wrote: 'I and my headmen reply to you as follows: I did not commence the war; it has been started by the white people, particularly traders, with rifles and in the prisons. Always when I brought these cases to Windhoek the blood of the people was valued at no more than a few head of small stock, namely, from fifty to fifteen. . . . The traders increased the troubles also in this way that they voluntarily gave credit to my people. After having done so they robbed us; they went so far as to pay themselves by taking away by force two or three head of cattle to cover a debt of one pound stg. . . . For these reasons I became angry and said, "No, I must kill the white men, they themselves have said that I must die." This—that I must die—was told me by a white man named X.' (The name was suppressed by the German printer.)

But in the middle of his desperate preparations Samuel Maharero did not forget that his people were 'no barbarians'. One last statement he issued on the eve of battle to the Hereros: 'I am the Chief leader of the Hereros, Samuel Maharero. I have proclaimed a law and a lawful order and it ordains of all my people that they shall not lay hands on the following: namely, Englishmen, Boers, Bastards, Berg-Damaras, Namas. We must not lay hands on any of these people. I have taken an oath that their property will not be regarded as enemy property neither that of the missionaries. Enough!'

There is ample evidence that this resolution was fully observed. A sub-chief has commented: 'We decided that we would wage war in a human manner. . . and would kill only German men who were soldiers or who would become soldiers. We met at secret councils and there our Chiefs decided that we should spare the lives of all German women and children. The missionaries too would be spared. . . . We also decided to protect all British and Dutch farmers and settlers, and their wives and children and property, as they had always been good to us. . . . We gave the Germans and all others notice that we had declared war.'

Leutwein wrote: 'It seems to have been the definite inten-

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tion of the Herero leaders to protect all women and children.

Only two white women are recorded as having been killed. A Dutch housewife related how an Herero chief came to assure her that she and her children would be safe, and hearing her fears for her husband alone on his farm, "The Chief smiled and replied, "We are not barbarians. Your husband is our friend, he is not a German. I have already sent a special messenger to him. He is under my protection as long as he remains quietly on his farm. His cattle and sheep are safe also. In order not to inconvenience your husband, I have specifically ordered my people who are working for him to remain there and do their work loyally until I send further instructions." "

All this was in January 1904. By August organized resistance was over, and the chief fled away.

Von Trotha, who had taken charge, sent messengers of peace promising the combatants safe return with their cattle to their lands. Then as the people were coming in he issued his Extermination Order: 'I, the great General of the German soldiers, send this letter to the Herero nation. The Hereros are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and robbed, they have cut off the ears and the noses and privy parts of wounded soldiers and they are now too cowardly to fight. . . . The Herero nation must now leave the country. If the people do it not I will compel them with the big tube. Within the German frontier every Herero, with or without a rifle, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will not take over any more women and children, but I will either drive them back to your people or have them fired on. These are my words to the nation of the Hereros. The great General of the Mighty Emperor, von Trotha.'

There are accounts to fill volumes—sworn statements from eye-witnesses—of the barbaric relish with which the order was carried out. The details are no less horrible than those we have come to associate with the names of Dachau and Belsen, but in those days they seemed less credible.

It is only necessary to dwell on this long enough to fill out the reader's understanding of the background to black-white relations in South-West Africa. Perhaps the most illuminating ac-

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count comes not from a witness under oath, but from a German novel of the period, purporting to be a soldier's account of the campaign. The soldier, out scouting, came on an encampment of Hereros fleeing to the desert. 'Getting down on my knees and creeping for a little way, I saw tracks of innumerable children's feet, and among them those of full-grown feet. Great troops of children, led by their mothers, had passed over the road here to the north-west. I stood up and going to a low tree by the road climbed a few yards in my heavy boots. Thence I could see a broad moonlit slope, rising not a hundred yards distant, and on it hundreds of rough huts constructed out of branches, from the low entrance of which the firelight shone out, and I heard children's crying and the yelping of a dog. Thousands of women and children were lying there under the roofs of leaves and round the dying fires. The barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle reached my ears. I gazed at the great night scene with sharp spying eyes, and I observed minutely the site and the camp at the base of the mountains. Still the thought went through my head: There lies a people with all its children and all its possessions, hard pressed on all sides by the horrible deadly lead and condemned to death, and it sent cold shudders down my back. . . . Through the quiet night we heard in the distance the lowing of enormous herds of thirsty cattle and a dull confused sound like the movement of a whole people. To the east there was a gigantic glow of fire. The enemy had fled to the east with their whole enormous mass—women, children, and herds. The next morning we ventured to pursue the enemy. The ground was trodden down into a floor for a width of about a hundred yards, for in such a broad thick horde had the enemy and their herds of cattle stormed along. In the path of their flight lay blankets, skins, ostrich feathers, household utensils, women's ornaments, cattle and men, dead and dying staring blankly. How deeply the wild, proud, sorrowful people had humbled themselves in the terror of death! Wherever I turned my eyes lay their goods in quantities, oxen and horses, goats and dogs, blankets and skins. A number of babies lay helplessly languishing by mothers whose breasts hung down long and flabby. Others were lying alone still living,

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with eyes and nose full of flies. Somebody sent out our black drivers and I think they helped them to die. All this life lay scattered there, both man and beast, broken in the knees, helpless, still in agony, or already motionless, it looked as if it had all been thrown out of the air. In the last frenzy of despair man and beast will plunge wildly into the bush somewhere, anywhere, to find water, and in the bush they will die of thirst.'

'The aim of the Germans', says Festus Kandjo, one of the leading Herero headmen, 'was that they should attack the Hereros unexpectedly, and take their Chief and cut his head off and then claim the country as their heritage. . . . The German troops tried by all means to get hold of the Chief but they failed. The Herero people tried by all means to protect their Chief from falling into the hands of the Germans, until they succeeded in getting their Chief across the border of South-West Africa into Bechuanaland Protectorate. These troops protected their Chief armed only with knobkerries until they brought him into a land where he could be sheltered. The aim of the Hereros in trying to protect their Chief was to maintain their claim to the land because, as long as their Chief had not been captured or killed, it could not be said that the land had been captured.'

So Samuel Maharero with some of his leading headmen, 1,175 of his people and what cattle they could take found in Bechuanaland the British protection they had long and vainly sought. With the party went a young sub-chief, Hosea Kutako, deeply religious and proposing to enter the ministry. Samuel, however, sent back the young man to the German terror, charging him with the duty of leading the remnants of the people there. Hosea accordingly relinquished his personal hopes and took up the burden of leadership to which he remained faithful in the half-century that followed.

(ii)

At this point we must for a few moments leave the Hereros in servitude in South-West Africa, and follow the fugitives with their chief, now their acknowledged Paramount, who had 5,000 German marks on his head.

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Samuel, once in Bechuanaland, wrote on 28th September 1904 to the Resident Magistrate, 'I ask help from Queen Victoria. In olden times my father was friendly with the English Government and on this account I come to the English Government for succour and request permission to live in their country. I now ask you to have mercy on me and help me in my heavy trouble.'

Eighteen months later the fugitive Hereros, who were still in sorry plight, accepted an opportunity to be taken into the Transvaal by the Native Labour Recruiting Agents of the Union, where they would be available for mine labour. The present Chief, Frederick Maharero, son of Samuel, has given his own account of the interlude in the Transvaal. 'My father fought against the Germans and when we ran out of ammunition we had to flee our country. Our Chief was not captured and he took refuge in this territory. From long ago we have known the English people, before the Germans came. When we were in Ngamiland a white man came from the Transvaal to look for Samuel my father and to tell him that land had been set aside for and given to him in the Transvaal. Samuel was told that he was given that piece of land free to settle and live there with his people. After they had come to settle there the men, young and old, were taken by force and taken to the mines to work there. When Samuel complained that these men should be asked for from him he was told that the land on which he lived belonged to the people who owned the mines and that his people must go to the mines to work, and most of them died there. . . .

'Because many of my father's people died at the mines he left the Union and went back to the Bechuanaland Protectorate to live in Chief Khama's country. The Government offered him land at Ghanzi, but the two men who were sent there reported that there was no water. Then Chief Khama offered them land at Nakati. Samuel complained that Nakati was very far and that he would be a long way from his people in South-West Africa, so he settled to live with Chief Khama.'

(iii)

Witbooi, now well over eighty years, had been apprehensively

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watching the course of events. The ruthless treatment of his one-time enemies made him realize there could be no co-operation with the Germans. He called out the Hottentots in revolt, and he wrote once more to Leutwein: 'The reasons go far back. . . . As you have written in your letter, I have for ten years observed your laws. . . . I fear God the Father. The souls of those who, during these ten years (those of all nations and of all Chiefs) without guilt or cause and without actual war have fallen in peacetime and under agreements of peace press heavily on me. The account which I have to render to God the Father in Heaven is great indeed. God in Heaven has cancelled this agreement. Therefore, do I depend on Him and have recourse to Him that He may dry our tears and in His own time liberate us. . . . And I pray you when you have read this letter sit down quietly and think it over and reckon out the number of souls who, from that day from which you came into this land to this day—for ten years—have fallen. Reckon out also the months of those ten years and the weeks, days, hours and minutes since those people have died. . . . Furthermore I beg of Your Excellency do not call me a rebel. . . .'

Hendrik Witbooi was killed on the battlefield in a vain defence of his people's freedom; and it was Leutwein, the oppressor, who composed his epitaph: 'A born leader and ruler, that Witbooi was: a man who probably might have become world-famous had it not been his fate to be born to a small African throne.'

Thus the days of the independent Herero and Nama nations, who had grazed their herds, hunted, thieved and skirmished over the wide grassy plains of South-West Africa, came to an end. The era of the white man had begun.

The cost of this triumph of white over black, of civilization over barbarism, was to the white man some 1,400 lives and £26,500,000 in money-value. The losses to the black man were incalculable. Only 15,000 starving fugitive Hereros remained of between 80,000 and 90,000 souls when von Trotha's order was reversed; more than half the Hottentots and Berg-Damaras perished; they lost all their lands, all their cattle, all their liberty,

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their tribal cohesion, their cultural inheritance, their very existence as human beings. The Berg-Damara and Hottentots were later given small Reserves by the Germans, but the remnants of the Hereros were divided up with no sort of regard to family ties, and distributed as labourers among the European farmers. All over seven had to work, and none could select his own master. They were frequently assaulted by their employers or sent with a note to the police for a flogging, and large numbers of their women were forced into concubinage with Europeans.

The last word on this episode of colonization was said by Dr. Paul Rohrbach of the German Colonial Office. 'The decision', he said, 'to colonize in South-West Africa could after all mean nothing else but this, namely that the native tribes would have to give up their lands on which they had previously grazed their stock in order that the white man might have the land for the grazing of his stock. When this attitude is questioned from the moral law standpoint, the answer is that for nations of the "Kulturposition" of the South African natives, the loss of their free national barbarism and their development into a class of labourers in service of and dependent on the white people is primarily a law of existence in the highest degree. It is applicable to a nation in the same way as to the individual, that the right of existence is justified primarily in the degree that such existence is useful for progress and general development. By no argument whatsoever can it be shown that the preservation of any degree of national independence, national property and political organization by the races of South-West Africa would be of a greater, or even of an equal, advantage for the development of mankind in general, or of the German people in particular, than the making of such races serviceable in the enjoyment of their former possessions by the white race.'

CHAPTER V

A Sacred Trust

(i)

The war with Britain, for which the Germans had been preparing in their occupation of South-West Africa, broke out in August 1914, but not with the results that the Germans had so confidently looked for. Far from the Germans seizing the whole coveted Dominion, a South African army invaded the German springboard to conquest, and after a short and brilliant campaign by General Botha, the German army in South-West Africa surrendered to him.

The natives of South-West Africa, and particularly the Hereros, were overjoyed at the turn of events. The account of their part in the campaign is best given in the words of an Herero headman, Festus Kandjo, of Aminuis Reserve: 'In the first world war in 1914, the Union troops came to fight against the Germans in South-West Africa. The Germans who were in South-West Africa asked the Berg-Damaras, the Hottentots, and the Hereros to fight against the Union troops and to prevent them from entering the territory. All these African tribes refused to side with the German troops. The Herero people refused because they said that their Chief was now in the lands which were protected by the British people. When the South African troops reached Luderitz Bay, our Chief, Samuel Maharero, who was then in Bechuanaland, sent a message to the people of South-West Africa saying, "I, Samuel, the Chief of the Hereros, inform you that the troops which are coming from South Africa are the enemies of the Germans and you shall not fight against them. To clear away all doubts and in order to confirm that these troops

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are coming with my approval I am going to send my son Frederick Maharero and my other son Alfred Maharero to accompany these South African troops." On account of that many people were shot and some were hanged by the Germans. Although we had been shot like this we did not fear because we knew it was our duty to obey the Chief.'

Frederick Maharero recounts: "There was a second occasion [the first being for work on the Transvaal mines] when my father had to give out men; this was for the war against the Germans. Thirty of us were sent to South-West Africa. We were told we would be paid only £3 each for our services, but that if the country was taken from the Germans it would be given back to Samuel and his people. These Hereros were sent to South-West Africa to lead their people because they knew the country. Samuel asked that the promise that if the Germans were defeated the country would be given back to him be given in writing, but he was told he would be given this at the end of the war. But that was not done up to the present time.'

The Hereros (both those in South-West and in Bechuanaland) believe and have stoutly maintained that they were promised that if the Germans were conquered their tribal lands would be returned to them and the tribe would once more be united under Samuel Maharero. That this promise was made is confirmed by Dr. Vedder, a German missionary of long standing in South-West Africa, accepted by the South African Government as an authority on the country, who states: 'At the conclusion of peace at Korab in 1915, South-West was handed over to the Administration of the Union. The Hereros eagerly watched coming events. Lord Buxton, the Governor-General of the Union, visited South-West Africa. He addressed the natives at all important centres and on each occasion promised the Hereros the old freedom along with great possessions of land and unlimited herds of cattle. That was all they longed for. They laid down their work on many farms in order to make sure of being in time, when South-West should be partitioned.'¹

That this restoration never came about, but that instead more

¹ *The Native Tribes of South-West Africa*, p. 162.

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and more of the lands to which they laid claim became alienated to Europeans, has been a continual source of grievance and irritation to people whose inhuman treatment by Europeans had already made them deeply bitter, suspicious and intransigent. They cannot understand the attitude of the Europeans. An old man who lived through the extermination says, 'What we do not understand is that when two nations have been at war, such as Britain and Germany or Italy, and when one or other of those nations is defeated, the lands belonging to that other nation are not taken away from them. That nation remains a nation, and their lands belong to them. The African people, although they have always been on the side of the British people and their allies, yet have their lands taken away from them and are treated as though they had been conquered.'

(ii)

The territory of South-West Africa was ceded in 1919, by the Supreme Council of the Allies to His Britannic Majesty, to be administered on his behalf by the Government of the Union of South Africa, under a Mandate to be approved by the Council of the League of Nations. The Mandate conception was defined in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League, the first paragraph of which enunciated that to those territories which had ceased to be governed by defeated States and which 'are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization'.

The territories were classified in three groups according to the degree of development of the inhabitants and various other practical considerations. South-West Africa was placed under a 'C' mandate, the most important terms of which (in this connection) were:

Art. 2. The Mandatory shall have full power of administration and legislation over the territory subject to the present mandate as an integral portion of his territory. The Mandatory shall pro-

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mote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory. . . .

Art. 3. The Mandatory shall see that the slave trade is prohibited, and that no forced labour is permitted, except for essential public works and services, and then only for adequate remuneration. . . . The supply of intoxicating spirits and beverages to the natives shall be prohibited.

Art. 5. Subject to the provisions of any local law for the maintenance of public order and public morals, the Mandatory shall ensure in the territory freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship, and shall allow all missionaries, nationals of any state member of the League of Nations, to enter into, travel and reside in the territory for the purpose of prosecuting their calling.

Art. 6. The Mandatory shall make to the Council of the League an annual report to the satisfaction of the Council, containing full information with regard to measures taken to carry out the obligations assumed under Articles 2, 3, 4 and 5. . . .

Wright, the great authority on the Mandates System, has described its purpose in this way: 'Continuous international supervision is the essence of the Mandate system. It focuses attention upon the problems of backward areas as concretely presented by the mandated area, from the native and the world point of view. Anyone is a poor judge in his own case, and, however it may try a state has always found it difficult to visualize a subject people except from the standpoint of its own interests. The backward native has had neither the knowledge to formulate his own needs nor the power to achieve them, and the world in general has been too disorganized to find out what its interests were or to act upon them if it was told. When, as has occasionally happened, the inhabitants of a one-time backward area have acquired the capacity to formulate their interests and act together efficiently, the ruling state has seldom realized or been willing to acknowledge the situation until forced to by violence. The Mandates system introduces the novelty of a disinterested body, the Permanent Mandates Commission, to examine the situation impartially, as it develops in each area, from the native and the

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world point of view, appraising particularly the evolution of a capacity for self-government.'

This applies with peculiar aptness to the mandated territory of South-West Africa.

General Smuts, who has for long periods been responsible for the administration of South-West Africa, wrote at the inception of the Mandates system, 'The mandatory state should look upon its position as a great trust and honour, not as an office of profit or a position of private advantage for it or its nationals,' though he did, indeed, except from this the German Colonial Empire, 'inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of political self-determination in the European sense.'

(iii)

The Union of South Africa, having been given the mandate over South-West Africa, 'a sacred trust of civilization', had to work out how it could best fulfil that trust in the interests of the indigenous population.

The Governor-General of the Union originally was vested with the powers of exercising the mandate and he delegated his powers to an Administrator appointed in the Union, who governed the country with an Advisory Board of six members. In 1924 the Germans living in the country became automatically Union citizens by naturalization. In 1925 a Legislative Assembly with limited powers of government was formed, sitting at Windhoek. The Assembly consisted of 18 members, 12 elected and 6 nominated, all of whom must be European. The franchise is confined to all Europeans who are British or British naturalized subjects, over the age of twenty-one, all native and coloured persons being excluded. The head of the Government is the Administrator, assisted by an Executive Committee of four elected by the Assembly.

A number of matters, especially native affairs, are reserved by the Constitution and the Legislative Assembly is not competent to deal with them. These matters lie wholly in the hands of the

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Administrator and his Advisory Council, composed of the four members of the Executive Committee and three others appointed by the Administrator, one of whom must be an official with a special knowledge of native affairs. No native or coloured person is on the Advisory Council.

The powers of the Administrator are very wide, and in a number of these reserved subjects he is responsible neither to the local legislature nor to the Government of the Union. He fulfils a curious triple function, exercising by delegation the Legislative powers reserved to the Governor-General and at the same time being the representative of the Union Government and the head of the local executive. This Pooh-bah office is involved and confusing, and has been much criticized on the grounds, amongst others, that it obscures the Union's direct responsibility for the administration.

South-West Africa has not been an easy territory to administer. The country is a poor one, its rainfall very low, much of its area rocky and barren, its population sparse, and its distances great. The Germans, for all their talk of a little Germany, were much more interested in the strategic than the economic value of South-West Africa. This particular colonial enterprise is thought to have swallowed up some £26,500,000 of the Fatherland's money, a vast part of which went into financing the devastating native wars which themselves made any economic development almost impossible. From the conquest of the country to its establishment as a mandate, 1915-1920, a total debt to the Union of £1,810,000 was incurred. The Union, on taking over the mandate, paid this out of War Expenditure and the territory was enabled to begin its career under mandate with the encouraging credit balance of nearly a million pounds, the accumulated receipts from diamond taxation. But by 1934 the territory was £3,500,000 in debt to the Union once more, the equivalent, it has been calculated, of £116 per head of the white population, and in addition the Union had lost £6,000,000 in developing the railways, harbours and roads. The revenue from mining, till then the chief financial asset of the country, had fallen from £290,000 to £10,000. By 1937 the position was so bad that the Union

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suspended the payment of both interest and capital redemption on loans made by it to the territory. This gloomy state of affairs was due to a variety of causes. South-West Africa was caught up in the world slump of the early thirties, and on top of that a three-year drought caused great loss to the farmers, while the administration had been spending heavily on development which had not yet begun to show any return. But by then the worst was past and in 1939 conditions began to improve, the last ten years being a period of very great prosperity for the white population of the country. The large debt to the Union has been allowed to stand to enable a Territorial Development Reserve Fund to be established with a credit balance of £3,200,000 in March 1946.

Under the German administration the chief source of income was the country's minerals, particularly diamonds and copper, which provide 96 per cent of its £3,500,000 export trade, the value of agricultural products—hides, skins, wool and ostrich feathers—being only 0.3 per cent of the total. Gradually the agricultural potentialities of the country have been developed, and the rearing of the hardy and valuable karakul sheep (rightly known as South-West's black diamond) has been the source of very great wealth to the European population. These sheep are particularly resistant to drought conditions, and as the lambs are killed soon after birth, the great worry of the ordinary sheep farmer for his lambs in times of drought does not exist. The pelts are worth between 25s. and 35s. and sometimes 60s. each, and it is said that the producer makes a fair profit at 15s. a skin. Over 3,000,000 karakul sheep are owned by Europeans and the value of pelts exported in 1945 was over £4,500,000, and totals £21,000,000 since 1932.

Karakul production is primarily carried on in the more arid southern part of the territory. In the more northerly areas the traditional occupation of cattle ranching is the main European farming activity. The main exports of South-West Africa, then, are its animal products, hides, and skins, butter, wool and fish, and its mineral products, particularly diamonds. These industries are all entirely dependent on native labour.

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This sketch of the economic conditions under which the white people live is not enough without mention of the singularly light income-tax. Income-tax was first imposed in South-West Africa only in 1942, largely as a war measure. It is fixed at the moderate rate of 1s. 6d. for single and 1s. 3d. for married persons and 3s. 6d. for companies, and is not payable on incomes of less than £1,000 for married and £700 for single persons.

Thus the white section of South-West Africa's population has benefited greatly under the mandate, and to this section of the population the Union of South Africa has been extremely generous.

(iv)

The whole task of administration has been enormously complicated by the Union Government's 'unduly liberal attitude towards the German settlers', to use Lord Hailey's words. When the Union took over the mandate some 8,000 out of the pre-war German population of 13,000 remained in the country, and instead of being dispossessed and repatriated as were enemy subjects in Tanganyika and the Cameroons, they remained in possession of their farms. This might have been most praiseworthy treatment of the Union's late enemies, had it not been at the expense of her late native allies, whose lands the Germans had appropriated. Not only were the Germans allowed to remain on their lands, but there was no barrier to the entry into the country of others; nor were they subject to any political or other disabilities. In 1924 the Naturalization of Aliens Act automatically gave Union nationality to all German adult males unless they objected. The following year the Legislative Assembly was set up. In the election the Germans gained seven out of twelve elective seats and had a majority of one after the nominated seats had been filled.

In 1920 the Germans formed a cultural organization, the Deutscher Bund, which soon exerted a powerful political influence, and by 1927 propaganda for the return of the colonies was in full swing. In 1932 German became an official language and naturalization was made easier. A Nazi organization was set up in the

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territory and dragooned all German social, cultural, political and educational activities under the Nazi terror. Propaganda for the return of the colonies, provocative processions, and insidious intimidation were all quite blatantly carried on. At the outbreak of the last war the known Nazis were interned, though for the most part their wives and families were allowed to remain on their farms, and some prospered exceedingly. At the end of the war it was decided to deport several hundred of the more intractable of them, and many of these had actually been sent back to Germany when a new government in the Union reversed the order and the deportees were brought back to South-West Africa.¹

In the light of such concessions, the resentment and mystification with which the Natives of South-West Africa have watched the progress of events there during the last thirty years can be readily understood.

(v)

The first result of the constant friction between South African and German settlers has been a perpetual and disproportionate preoccupation with the affairs of the white occupants of the country, while the needs of the Natives, the true wards of the mandate, have been disregarded. To counterbalance the predominance and militancy of the German population the Union Government found it necessary to introduce Union nationals as settlers. The country was poor and not particularly attractive to them and considerable inducements in the way of loans and conditions were needed to draw people of small means. In addition to the settlers from the Union 300 Boer families, some 1,900 people (descendants of those who had trekked across South-West Africa into Angola in 1881), were brought back and settled in South-West Africa at a cost to the Union Government of £524,000. The whole heavily subsidized settlement scheme cost £1,184,186.

¹ The Nationalist Government has also restored rights of citizenship to 6,000 Germans whose South African nationality was withdrawn during the war.

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The van Zyl Commission on South-West Africa, appointed by the Union Government in 1936, pointed out that the size of the average farm was nearly thirty-two square miles, 'yet even on such huge farms it is frequently difficult to make a living, and in a great drought the carrying capacity of the veld is reduced to practically nil'.

The Germans accused the Union Government of a deliberate policy of trying to swamp the Germans by the large-scale settlement of Union nationals, while the older British population believed the Government was dumping the unwanted poor of the Union in the country. Some defended the settlement policy on the grounds that the poorer hard-working class of settlers came through severe drought far better than those with higher standards of life could possibly have done. It was the opinion of the Commission that 'without the settlement of European farmers on the land within the Police Zone there would have been hardly any development in that portion of South-West Africa. Both the nature of the country and of its non-European inhabitants are such that there can be no question of any real development without the intervention of the white man. It is largely a barren waterless country where little can be achieved without the sinking of boreholes and the erection of pumps for making more water available for man and beast. Likewise without motor and railway traffic the resources of the country can at best be only inadequately developed and, without scientific methods for fighting animal diseases arising from deficiencies in the soil, or from poisonous plants, much of the land in the territory will be worse than useless for stock-farming.

'These are all things which the white man took with him into South-West Africa and is to-day utilizing for the benefit of himself, as well as of the country as a whole. Without the white man they would not have come within the reach of the non-European, and even when the non-European is provided with them, he still requires the help and supervision of the white man to enable him to make beneficial use of them. One has only to look at the Bondelswart, Berseba and Rehoboth reserves to see how hopelessly the non-Europeans have failed to make a proper

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use of the land occupied by them. The Hereros have been somewhat more successful in their reserves, but what little success they have had has been largely due to the help and supervision of European officials.

‘With his boring machines, irrigation works, railways, motor cars, and even aeroplanes, his scientific knowledge generally and his industry and enterprise in particular, the white man has already done a great deal to develop South-West Africa, and can do a great deal more. The non-Europeans in the Police Zone should share in the benefits of this development, but owing to the wild and unsettled lives they used to lead and which they have not yet given up, they have still to learn how to function as part of a settled community under civilized conditions. It will only be to the extent that they learn to do so that they will derive benefit from the development which has taken place and is still taking place in the territory. Unfortunately, however, owing to the severe drought which the country has passed through, the European farmers are still to-day in such a bad position that many of them are unable to employ servants at a reasonable wage.’

This long extract from the 1936 Commission Report has been quoted because it clearly expresses the official attitude of South Africa towards its mandate, and a careful reading of it may elicit much of the state of mind of white South Africa.

CHAPTER VI

To Gain Space to Live

(i)

Native affairs in South-West Africa are entirely in the hands of the triple-function Administrator who is the responsible authority for the unrepresented backward majority—the wards—the head of the representative assembly of the enfranchised minority, and the go-between of these two irreconcilables and the trustee. Every Administrator so far has been a South African with a South African's race attitudes and conception of the relationship that should exist between white and black. Indeed, the Administration's representative to the Permanent Mandates Commission, referring to the bad relations between the races, is reported to have said that 'The causes appeared to be permanent. The Europeans in that part of the world were intensely anti-native and there was no difference as regards races (i.e. German, Dutch and English) except in degree, in the feeling shown. Naturally a German farmer who had lived under the German régime was more bitter against the native than a farmer coming from the Union.'

Toynbee, in his *Survey of International Affairs*, summed up the situation: 'The most dangerous pitfall', he wrote, 'in the Administrator's path was that in his anxiety not only to do justice but to show consideration to the Germans he might lose the confidence of the natives and thus be unable to prevent a situation arising in which the white population would be ranged solidly on one side against the natives on the other. . . . The conflict was further aggravated by the fact that the country as a whole was arid, so that the lands capable of being inhabited,

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whether by natives or by whites, were only a fraction of the total area. Room could not be found for German farmers except by driving the native from the less ill-watered lands into tracts in which even stockbreeding could only be carried on in favourable years, and where the native, in order to exist, must partly revert to hunting and roam at large in pursuit of game.'

When the Union Government took over the mandate, following its policy at home, it set aside Reserves for Natives, which have been somewhat enlarged from time to time. The Tribal Areas are the largest of these, but they fall outside this consideration of the land question. The land rights of the large populations of those tropical areas have never been disputed. The lands are not very suitable for European settlement and the areas are regarded and preserved as valuable breeding grounds of labour, some of the workers going south to the farms of the Police Zone, and an increasing number (at present 3,000 of the total of 10,500 available in any year) being recruited for labour in the Union gold mines. These are the administrative show places of South-West Africa; and, if disruptive forces are kept at a minimum, so also are the forces of progress. From the Administration's reports it is clear that the policy is a leisurely preservation of the *status quo*, a sort of semi-stagnation very far removed from an endeavour to 'promote the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants' as required by the mandate.

In the Police Zone, reasonably well-suited to European methods of ranching, tremendous land and colour tensions prevail. Only 19 per cent of the Native inhabitants of the Police Zone live in Reserves and so have a stake in the land; 57·5 per cent live on European farms or are in rural employment; 23·5 per cent are urban dwellers.

Lord Hailey, in an address published in *African Affairs*, April 1947, has criticized the Union policy in regard to Native reserves in South-West Africa in these words: 'There seems to be no clear view of the functions which the Reserves are intended to serve. Are they intended simply to provide areas in which the better class of native can develop as a stockfarmer? Are they intended as a resort for natives who are infirm or otherwise unfit

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for labour? Or are they intended as centres where natives can develop their own social economy and their own tribal life? If this last function is the true objective it will not be attained by the present system.' He gives elsewhere a further answer to his last question. 'There is little effort to encourage the revival of any form of tribal life. Many of the Reserves contain at present an artificial assemblage of different tribes. In theory their Boards of Headmen have a voice in the management of the Reserve, but in practice the whole responsibility rests with the Welfare Officer in charge. They have, for instance, no judicial functions.'

The Administration would seem to have itself provided the answer to Hailey's second and third questions in its statement in an Annual Report that 'men are not encouraged to remain idling in the Reserves. Only men who are physically unfit, or such as are necessarily required to look after the people in the Reserves and their stock and the stock of others who have gone out to seek work, are encouraged to remain there.'

The land ownership picture in the Police Zone at present is roughly as follows: 38,000 Europeans own 80 million acres (including government and company farms) and 139,000 natives and coloureds occupy 20 million acres. There are some eighteen reserves widely scattered inside the Police Zone, varying in size between 2,500,000 and 34,000 acres with populations between 3,000 and 88 persons. Some of the reserves are occupied predominantly by one tribe; many, particularly those in which the Hereros live, are occupied by mixed tribes.

The reserves are administered by a Welfare Officer, assisted by an Advisory Board of Headmen and elected members.

The land in Native reserves is held communally, according to native custom, and each man has the right to graze and water his beasts. No individual may acquire ownership of land in the reserves though Natives are said to have the right, never exercised,¹ to buy farms after European practice outside the reserves. Natives may move freely in their own reserves, but movement outside, or from one reserve to another, is restricted, and the Native

¹ Since the above was written two Hereros are said to have acquired farms previously owned by Europeans.

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must carry a 'pass'. The authorities argue that European movement is also restricted in that they may not enter Native reserves without a permit; but there is a vast difference between being able to range at will over all but 38 million of the country's 205 million acres, and having the right of free movement only in one of the twenty-three separated reserves. Chiefs have lately become exempt from pass restrictions and are empowered to grant passes to Natives in search of stray stock.

Natives are not directly taxed in South-West Africa. Grazing fees are charged per head of stock, which is a near equivalent to income-tax and more equitable than the poll-tax on Union Natives. This money, together with what is raised by voluntary tribal levies, is paid into each Reserve's Trust Fund for the development of that reserve. The Reserve Trust Funds were opened in 1924; in 1939 legislation made possible the imposition of a voluntary levy for reserve development; in 1947 a Native Areas Account was made in the Territorial Development and Reserve Fund and £50,000 put into it. From the Trust Funds comes almost the entire revenue devoted to the development of the reserves. Only 10 per cent of the country's total expenditure is devoted to Native affairs, and a great part of this goes to administrative costs. The policy of the Administration was put thus to the League of Nations: 'The Administration is opposed to making grants for accelerating the development of the reserves as much in the interests of the Natives themselves as of the Europeans. At the same time it holds that it would be unfair to burden the European section of the population with further taxes for Native development, when practically the whole of the Native contribution to the revenue of the territory is handed out to trust funds for expenditure on Natives,' and that it was 'the considered opinion of the Administration that it would be unwise to accelerate the development of the Native races unduly.'

Some development of Native reserves is undertaken. Boreholes, in very insufficient number, have been sunk. Stock, hides and skins, and milk are sold and in one or two reserves the Natives own their own separators. But this is all in very limited degree as it must be in view of the niggardly expenditure and

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curious official policy. The Government reported to the United Nations in 1948 that (our italics) 'four posts of Agricultural Officer have been created, the incumbents of which *will* devote their whole time to helping the non-Europeans to improve their farming methods'; and that recently introduced Swiss goat rams will probably 'be given a trial after the Agricultural Officers *who are being appointed* for the Native areas *have commenced to function*'. This, only this, after twenty-eight years of trusteeship.

It is not possible to go into every aspect of Native affairs here, but mention must be made of the extent of stagnation in education (essential to any progress in Africa) in South-West Africa. While education for white settlers is amply provided for, African education has been left in a far more backward condition than it is even in the Union. There are only five Government schools for a Native population of 330,000 while there are fifty-three Government schools for a white population of 38,000. Mission schools are subsidized, though insufficiently; but there is no secondary school for Natives in the territory and even the Teachers' Training School only provides an education up to Standard VI for teachers who are expected themselves to teach to that standard. During the thirty years of the Union Government's administration two Africans have succeeded in matriculating but that only by means of correspondence courses undertaken at their own expense.

(ii)

'It shows us', wrote Dr. Vedder in his book on the early history of South-West Africa, 'the struggle of small, barely civilized races; a struggle forward to gain space to live, a struggle upward to gain an appointed place among the nations of the world.' The struggle for space to live is still going on; the struggle for an appointed place among the nations would seem to lie in the future. We allow some of the chiefs to illustrate Dr. Vedder's theme.

Germany had allotted some small reserves to the Berg-Damaras and the Hottentots; and she evidently intended to give the Here-

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ros land for reserves. When the Union Government took over, the Hereros were at first given these lands. Their subsequent wanderings have been told of by Hosea, the leading Herero chief in South-West Africa, and Festus Kandjo, a prominent headman.

'In 1913', began Festus, 'the Germans promised that we should be given land which we could develop for ourselves at Orumbo and elsewhere. The war broke out in 1914 and nothing came of this promise. So in 1917 we left for Orumbo from Windhoek. While we were at Windhoek, in 1917, a certain Englishman got hold of the German book in which it was written that Orumbo and other places were reserved for the natives. He then approached the Herero people and told them that they have been given those places, and that it was high time they left Windhoek for Orumbo and all the places round about—Okatumba, Seeis, Okaruikakao, Otjinunaua, Okamuraere, Oputae, Orutekavahona.

'... After we had been at those places for four years we were given additional lands at Ombukazorundu, Otjiundu, Okakarara, Ovinjaikiro, Okapendje, Ovinanangrura, Pepperkorn, Orundu-uovizumba, Scheidoff, Klein Scheidoff, Otjimbondona, Kamokape, Okaruhuru, Otjozondjora, Omaihi, Otjipaha.

'When the 1914 war broke out some of our young men were expected to take part on the German side. The parents and the wives of these young men who joined up were left without food. Seeing that no ships were coming from the other countries to bring food in, the wives and children of these men were given cattle free of charge. So they derived their living from these cattle and they became their property. They were not taken back after the war. We still have the calves from those cattle to-day. When we were given those additional places there was no open water, so boreholes were put down with Trust money, and we put up the windmills. (Among those cattle there was a team of seventy oxen and we were told to hand over this team of seventy oxen to owners of the various borehole machines in order to help in moving them from one place to another. We did not receive any compensation for those seventy oxen used by the borehole mas-

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ters. Even now we do not know what happened to those oxen.) We only stayed three years in those new places. After that we were chased away. . . . We were told that the grass was finished at Orumbo and that we should now move the cattle to the new places which are mentioned above. When all the cattle had been removed to the new places, the Government put a fence between the new places and Orumbo. Then they told us not to return to Orumbo as Orumbo was to be given to white farmers.

'We wanted to know why we were being chased away from the places where there was water in the river beds or not far below the surface. We were told that the white farmers are always complaining to the Government that we Africans steal their cattle. We told them that if we steal cattle there are policemen there and there is the welfare officer who brands all the cattle and no cattle are branded without producing a certificate. At that time no Native had any chance of complaining to the Europeans. The Union Government has been and is still the enemy of the black man.

'We were then ordered to remove all our belongings from Orumbo to the new places where our cattle were, and never to dream of Orumbo again. In this way Orumbo became the land of the white man's farms. The people at first refused to leave Orumbo. But then they came from Windhoek and set our houses and gardens on fire. Although the houses were burned we remained at Orumbo for some time. But most of our cattle were on the other side of the fence and they were not allowed to return back to Orumbo. So in this way in the end we were obliged to leave there.

'We stayed for two years at the new places. Towards the end of the second year we were told that the Government was going to look for a big and fertile place and that this place was to the north-east of Gobabis—what is called Ovitore. The Government told Chief Hosea and Chief Nicanor that they should go to Ovitore with twelve men and see if it is a good country. The twelve men were chosen and they went out under the leadership of Germanus Kandirikirira and Leopold Tjiundje. Before these men set out they were told to explore the country from Makam north

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towards the east and the Bechuanaland border, and from there to Epukiro.'

Hosea interpolated, 'When they came back they told us the country is a good country and worth living in. I and Nicanor went down to Windhoek and told Mr. Smit the Secretary for South-West Africa that the country is a good country and worth living in, and that we should like to go there and live there as a nation undivided. There were no people there. It was a wild country. We were then told that the Government would inform the Magistrate at Gobabis that from Ovitore up to Epukiro will become the Herero land, and will be given to the Hereros. This took place in 1924. One of the officials, after hearing this, told the Secretary for South-West Africa that that country is the best in South-West Africa and should not be given to any natives. Then the Secretary told us that the official had said that that part of the country is good and is wanted by the white people. We were then told to go and explore north-east of Gobabis towards Epukiro.'

Festus resumed: 'In 1924 Chief Frederick Maharero, Chief Hosea, and all the leading Hereros set out for Epukiro. Epukiro itself was a Roman Catholic Mission and we thought we were meant to go there. But when we arrived at Epukiro we found there a man by the name of van Niekerk who had been specially sent by the Government. Chief Frederick and Chief Hosea left Windhoek by car with Mr. Cope who was then Assistant Native Commissioner. On our arrival at Epukiro, Mr. van Niekerk said, "No, you are not to stay here but to go further east. That is your country which has been set aside for you." On their passes though there was written "Epukiro", so they took out their passes and said, "There is no Epukiro further to the east. Where are you now sending us?" They said, "Go to the east. What is meant is the district of Epukiro." From Epukiro we travelled for about thirty miles. We found a borehole dug by the Government in the desert country.'

'We slept there,' continued Hosea. 'The following morning I and Chief Frederick Maharero and Mr. Cope went out to see the place and travelled over the whole of the country which is now

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the reserve. We came back at night and slept there. The following morning they pumped out water from the borehole. We were then told this is only the first borehole. Others will be dug and this will become your country.

Chief Frederick was then on a visit from Bechuanaland and Mr. Cope said to him, "I know your people want you back here. What do you think of this country?" Chief Frederick replied, "I have nothing to say, I am only a visitor. My Uncle Hosea will tell you what is his opinion." I then told Mr. Cope, "We are a big nation, and as such we shall not develop in country like this where there is only deep borehole water. In fact it is a desert where no human being ever lived before. It is a country only good for wild beasts. On top of that it is not healthy for the people or the cattle. Only one farm can depend upon borehole water but it is no use for a whole nation. We are the original inhabitants of South-West Africa and we know the best and the worst parts of the whole country. We know the parts which are good for cattle. We know the parts which are good for wild beasts. We are human beings and we do not want to be changed into wild beasts. Only wild beasts can live without water. We spent a lot of money on boreholes at Okakarara and the places where we were before. And when one windmill was broken at one place we used to get water from another. But here once a windmill is broken in one place where shall we get water in this place that you want to bring us? You should rather bring Europeans here and let us stay where we are, where we have put up these windmills." Mr. Cope was dissatisfied with this. He left us there and he went back to Windhoek in his car; and we travelled from Epukiro to Windhoek on horseback. . . . I told the Secretary that that part of the country has no water. Nothing can be grown there. It is unhealthy, and once the windmill is broken it is very difficult to get the parts. So please give us a place where there is more open water. [Open water means water at, or near, the surface; water which sometimes flows or which can be dug for by hand.] I told Mr. Smit, "How is it that when we inhabited South-West Africa, and the Coloured people, Bastards, were wanting land and came to the Chief Samuel Maharero, he gave

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them a country to live in which had open water? Now you want to drive us to places where there is no water. When the Coloured people came they were only a handful, but because they had a land given them by us they are becoming a big people. Why do you not do for us what Chief Samuel Maharero did for them?"

'Mr. Smit said, "Why are you so obstinate?" Then I said that what I had meant was that it was a good example of how a great leader knew how to treat a people. I said I should have to refuse to move from the places where we were.'

'I refused,' Chief Hosea went on, 'because I had seen it, and there is no water and it is not healthy. Then they came out and broke down all our windmills at Okakarara and other places. I then told them I was going back to Orumbo where there is water. On hearing this the Government sent an aeroplane to come and frighten us. I was taken to the place where the aeroplane was dropping bombs. On seeing this, I decided rather to proceed to Bechuanaland. When they heard that I had decided to go to Bechuanaland word was sent to me telling me that before I could go there permission must be obtained first from Mafeking. I told them, "While we are still waiting for permission from Mafeking, I shall go and put up at Ovitore." So all the people and the cattle left for Ovitore and I was left at Okakarara. Mr. Cope then took me to Windhoek. But while my people were still on their way to Ovitore the Government sent some of its officials to tell my people not to go there but to go to Aminuis. Whilst on their way to Aminuis two people died of thirst and a great number of cattle as there was no water.

'From Windhoek I was sent to the Magistrate at Gobabis, accompanied by a native constable, Franz Kazea, who is at present at Epukiro Reserve. The Magistrate started saying he had heard I am very obstinate. I have no respect for my elders and for the white people. "If you are that kind of man, forget all that you have been doing. Leave all that we have been saying. I am a different man with my own different ways, and to these you must get acclimatized." It was such a long story that I cannot tell it all here. After he had finished I said, "I do not want to fight

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with Europeans, but when my master treads on my corn, am I not to tell my master that he is treading on my corn? Is that an offence to tell him that he is injuring me?" He said, "I can see that by asking that question you are still obstinate. I am a different man. I shall look after you and you will go where you have been told to go."

'All this time I was ignorant about my people. I thought they had gone to Ovitore. Only after my interview with the Magistrate I heard that my people had gone to Aminuis, not to Ovitore. And so I went to live at Aminuis where I am to this day. I was shown the boundary of the reserve. Mr. Cope showed me all these things. And Mr. Cope left me at Aminuis and went back to Windhoek.

'After I had been at Aminuis for a short while I was told that I should forget about going to Bechuanaland. I was shown some open water at Aminuis. I was told "you wanted an open country with plenty of water". I told Mr. Cope, "I have seen the water. The country is big and open. But all I can tell you is that this country is not good for cattle and human beings. This information I have got from the Bechuanas who were living here before." Within six months cattle began dying in hundreds and thousands. I then took a sample of the grass and the number of the cattle which had died to Windhoek. When I took down this report to Windhoek I was told that I had only brought this report because I wanted to leave the country and to go and live in the British Protectorate, and that I should stay where I was. "Perhaps", they said, "the cattle disease will die out", or, "the cattle will get used to the district", or, I must "learn to master the disease".

'And so I have had to stay at Aminuis until this day. The boundary which I was then shown is getting smaller by the land being given to white settlers. Even if you go now to Aminuis, you will see how this land is being given to white people; and the same thing is happening at Epukiro. A borehole at Aminuis that has been taken over for Europeans was bought with our money, and I have asked the Government to refund the money that was spent on it. I have not yet got that money back. I asked

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for it in 1937. The water we have now is obtained by hand.'

That is the story that old Chief Hosea has to tell of how his people came to Aminuis. A very authentic ring will be heard by those familiar with the way in which the white man in these parts is accustomed to deal with or speak to his 'burden'.

Chief Nicanor Hoveka, of Epukiro, has related how his section of the tribe left Orumbo. 'I was the first person to leave Orumbo with my people. And this took place in 1924. We were told that we were causing a lot of trouble with the white men by stealing their cattle, and that we should go somewhere where we can develop on our own lines. We did not steal the white man's cattle. They used to stray, then when we went to fetch them back they used to accuse us of stealing theirs. . . .

'I think the case against the Administration should include the difficulties that have been placed in the way of our making progress. It is not only the lack of good land. It is the lack of education, lack of hospitals, and the low wages paid to our people. Even where I am at Epukiro we were surrounded by white farmers. Our grazing fields have been narrowed by these white farmers. The white men are coming closer and closer in. And even in the heart of the reserves, between Post No. 11 and Post No. 13 there is a place which has now been given to white settlers. We have been told now that that is a white man's farm. We made a protest to the Welfare Officer. When the Magistrate was out there we told him about this; he promised he would get in touch with the surveyor to come and survey the whole reserve.'

The Berg-Damaras recount: 'Aukaigas is our reserve. It belongs to the Berg-Damaras. From Aukaigas to Otjimbingue has been our reserve ever since the German time from 1908. The Union Government took a portion of this reserve. That was about 1924. That portion which was taken by the Europeans is named Neuhauses. . . . The Union Government promised us that there will not be any one who will take us away from Aukaigas Reserve. They said we should build dams, make water holes and roads. We spent our own money and did the work our-

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selves. The Government loaned the wheelbarrows and shovels. Then we were told we must pay for the tools. So each man had to pay 10s. a year, for four years, towards the cost of these wheelbarrows, shovels and picks. First they were told the Government was lending them, then they were told to pay. After everything was in order and dams were built there were good roads. Then the Government, when this was done, ordered us to leave the Aukaigas Reserve. Our people were told the lands will now be given to the white settlers, and we were told to leave for Okumbahe Reserve.'

Hosea's account of the unhealthiness of Aminuis Reserve is corroborated in a statement by an English farmer, a man who has lived in the country since 1915. 'The native people in the Police Zone, especially the Hereros,' he said, 'have been given the most unhealthy parts of the country to live in for their animals. They are losing thousands of large and small stock every year, also around the Epukiro Reserve not far from here, there are enormous quantities of wild dogs and other vermin which are destroying the cattle. The natives are without arms and must continually be on the watch. The native reserves of Aminuis and Epukiro are both badly infected with poisonous plants, and the natives are losing thousands of stock every year through *gallamsiekte* and *lamsiekte*. The vaccine which is supplied by Onderstepoort is ineffective. The disease is caused by a poisonous species of plant for which the vaccine is not an antidote. The only prevention against this disease is the removal of the plants. If proper instructions were given to the natives they would undoubtedly take steps to save their cattle by removing the various varieties of Kalanchoe. There are about fifty European farmers whose cattle suffer in the same way, but the native people have been confined within these sickness belts. Some of these lands could form good grazing areas, if the natives were properly instructed and the right steps were taken to remove these plants and develop their lands. But the area is much too small, the grazing too sparse, and a good deal of it is marambe land. The owner of the trading store at Aminuis Reserve is buying enormous quantities of skins belonging to natives which come from animals

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which are dying from these diseases. He tells me that the cattle there are dying like flies, and that is all their livelihood. . . . One of the Hereros, an elderly man, told Colonel de Jager that their cattle would all die if they were sent there, as they had inspected the place and knew that district, Epukiro, well.'

Speaking about the Herero agitation for land, this same European farmer said, 'The Hereros before the German war occupied the whole of this area from Gobabis to the coast of Swakopmund and from Windhoek up to the Waterberg including Tsumeb and Grootfontein. . . . The Government is now busy surveying the lands between here and Grootfontein for further settlement. If the Hereros were given the lands, say from here to Grootfontein and across to the Bechuanaland border, it would be nothing compared to what they had, but it might enable them to live and develop especially if they were given proper training and agricultural education. Some steps should also be taken to protect them from the wild animals which are at present infesting the reserves. These are mostly wild dogs and hyenas. The conclusion I have come to after thirty-three years' experience here is that anything is good enough for the natives, and no consideration is due to him in the eyes of the Government.'

NOTE

Lamsiekte is due primarily to deficiency of phosphorus in the soil, and this induces animals to feed on bones of dead animals to make good the deficiency. The bones are often infected with the bacteria concerned with decay, which are extremely toxic. No treatment is effective.

Galamsiekte is a gall condition usually caused by protozoans transmitted by ticks. There is no really effective treatment at the moment.

CHAPTER VII

The Poor Shepherd

Lord Lugard (then Sir Frederick) remarked at a meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1923 that, 'In South Africa even the educated classes regarded the natives as existing chiefly for the purpose of labour for the whites.' This attitude has not fundamentally changed either in South Africa or in South-West Africa. In South-West Africa the farming population is the most voracious consumer of native labour, which is drawn under contract from the Tribal Areas, or on a wage basis from the reserves. Twenty-three per cent of the Police Zone population live on European farms as labourers and have little contact with the reserves. The farmer allows them land on which to build their huts and graze a limited number of stock; and in addition to employing the man, he generally employs the wife and children as well.

Wages are low and conditions of labour are hard. In 1922 a Government Commission solemnly reported, 'Many of the small farmers were so poor that they had no money with which to pay their servants. It is, however, a difficult matter to impress this view on those who serve.' Another Commission in 1936 practically repeated this: 'Unfortunately the European farmers are still to-day in such a bad position that many of them are unable to employ servants at a reasonable wage.' The farmer's position has greatly improved since then, yet a third Commission reporting in 1948 roundly condemned conditions and stated, 'It would not be overstating the case to say that the Natives are unanimous in their criticism of the low wages paid to farm labourers.'

Farm labour is not, consequently, very attractive to the in-

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habitants of the Police Zone and additional labour is now recruited from the Tribal Areas, the recruits being signed up under contract for periods of either thirteen or twenty-five months, the extra month being worked without pay to refund the cost of recruitment. These recruits have no choice of employer, but must work where they are sent for the duration of the contract. A scale of minimum wages is in force for these and extra-territorial recruits, beginning at 9s. a month for light work including the work of shepherds, and rising to 13s., with food, one shirt, a pair of shorts, one blanket and medical attention. For heavy work the wages are 2s. a month higher. It is not surprising that the tribal natives prefer to walk (according to the 1948 Commission Report) hundreds of miles to the recruiting centres and bus-heads to take them to the Rand gold mines.

A recent proposal (rejected because it put wages too high) would have enforced minimum wages for Police Zone farm labourers on the following scale: males £1 per month with food or £2 without; females 10s. a month with food or £1 without; children between sixteen and eighteen years of age half the amounts payable to adults of the same sex; children under sixteen one-quarter of the amounts payable to adults. Thus the minimum wages would have run from 2s. 6d. a month and food to £2 a month without food. The 1948 Commission now proposes minimum wages for farm labour ranging from 20s. to 30s. a month with food and housing.

The work of a herdsman is often very responsible and on the Karakul farms they frequently have entire charge of most valuable herds. The Hereros have been credited with being the finest native cattle masters in the world and indispensable assistants to every cattle farmer in Hereroland, while the Berg-Damaras are said to be good and industrious labourers. The Natives themselves are very conscious and resentful of their treatment and conditions of labour, and we give some of their own accounts of these things.

An African, Joshua, employed in the Native Affairs Department in South-West Africa and with some experience of labour conditions, gave an account not of universal, nor even of com-

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mon conditions, but of what he knew from his own experience could happen. 'I shall tell you truthfully as far as I can that one question you have just put. That is something we have been dealing with for the past six months. The knowledge of the treatment of Natives in South-West Africa has spread so that all Europeans are becoming aware of that ill-treatment. Even those Europeans who were inflicting corporal punishment on their servants seemed to have stopped doing so to-day. To-day it is difficult to say what the position is generally. I can only speak of what I know before the last six months, during which the attitude of the Europeans has improved, though I do not believe their nature has changed.

'The first ill-treatment that I know of is this: here in South-West Africa we are being paid according to the colour of the skin, not according to the quantity or quality of our work. It is one of the most sad things here, we cannot report such things against the Government because there is no one to whom to report. You have to keep such things in your heart until one day your heart bursts and then you die. A Native teacher, for example—the salary paid is not according to qualification but according to the colour of the skin.

'I think you have come across many Europeans in South-West Africa. All the rich men that there are here derive their wealth from the labour supplied by the Natives because their labour is so cheap. A non-European on a farm looks after more than 700 sometimes. Sometimes there is only one herdsman and before the sunset all the cattle must be back in the kraal, otherwise he may be shot. . . .'

Questioned as to exactly what he meant by 'shot', he continued: 'These shepherds meet their deaths in many different ways. They have not necessarily been shot, but they have been killed in one way or another. I hear that things have improved because the farmers are aware that the outside world is taking an interest in these things. But I do not think they have really changed inside.'

'The sheep I have been speaking of here are Karakuls. Each sheep may be worth £4. The sun burns this poor fellow looking

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after the sheep; sometimes the rain falls and he must not take them home before sunset. Sometimes it is cold and he has no clothes or shoes. He works in rags and tatters. If each sheep is worth £4 then seven hundred sheep are worth £2,800, but what does this poor fellow earn? This shepherd looking after all these sheep earns anything between 5s. and 7s. 6d. or 8s. per month. From this he has to clothe his family, to feed his wife and his children, and in some cases the children die of starvation and underfeeding. He only gets about sixpenny worth of mealie meal per day. During the lambing season this poor shepherd must collect all the lambs from the sheep, tie them round his body and carry them home. He carries them home alive and his master kills them when they get home after separating them from their mothers. Each pelt is worth about £2. The Karakul is the black diamond of South-West Africa. The man who has most sheep is the wealthy man, but much of his wealth is derived from the labour of these poor shepherds.

‘That poor shepherd is not supposed to bring in the flock before sunset, and when he brings in the sheep, he must also bring wood the same evening, fetch water from the well; and he has got to be there again in the evening to wash the dishes after supper. The shepherd leaves his hut by five o’clock in the morning, and he gets back to his hut by 10 p.m. Do you regard such treatment as good for a human being, sir? Would you regard such a person a free person or a slave? He has no time to wash his clothes. He does not even know whether his own children are in good health because he leaves early while they are asleep and when he comes home they are asleep also. Through dirt and hunger these poor shepherds often become very sick and die.

‘When he is sick, if his master calls him and he does not run he may say he is cheeky, and he will be punished or thrashed. And if he is so thrashed and runs away and his master finds out that he has run away, he either goes out himself or he sends somebody to look for him, and if along the way he finds the shepherd he ties a piece of rope round his neck and drags him home, or he is shot dead on the spot and buried in a pit or left to become food

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for the eagles. Sometimes the shepherd goes out with the sheep and later the master follows him and shoots him dead. Perhaps that shepherd has been working for that master for a very long time, and when he asks for an increase in salary the trouble arises. If he is not treated in that way, he may be tied to the wheel of a wagon and the wheel jerked and then he is thrashed while the wheel is turning round. Or his master may invite four or five other Europeans and they all flog this poor shepherd who is only asking for an increase in salary.

'That is all I have to say regarding the treatment of labourers on the farms as worse than the treatment in the towns. I was working in the Native Affairs Department and was sending the people to the farms so I know about conditions from the people themselves. When the labourers were recruited from Ovambo-land and the reserves they had to be allocated to different farms by the Department.'

The headman, Kandjo, added: 'If a reserve does not supply enough labour it is looked upon as a bad reserve and the Headman and Board members are scolded.'

Tjipena, an Ovambo Board member, has described how the Ovambo recruits come down from Ovamboland in cattle trucks. 'The Ovambos', he continued, "arrive here from Grootfontein. They have no place to stay. They stay outside the railway station area on the veld. There is no shelter or shade from the sun. Of course, they are very poor people. They have not sufficient clothes and they suffer from the cold or the rain. At Grootfontein they get a khaki shirt and shorts and one blanket. When they come here they are waiting for their different masters to come and fetch them. Sometimes they stay two days, four days, or a week while waiting. I understand they get sixpence a day for food while they are waiting. I tried to make a case about this treatment of the people. During the war sixpence was not enough. There was little food to be had for sixpence. They were running about looking for water and wood and bread. Not knowing the ways of a town they would go to the shoemaker to buy bread. There was no one to advise them where to go or what to do in the town. I once asked that a hut should be built

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in the railway area 30 ft. by 30 ft. with doors, windows and a floor, a lavatory, water and a caretaker provided.'

Later on when Scott began his investigations he visited this place early one morning, and about it he says: 'A group of these indentured labourers were in fact sleeping on the veld. The temperature was below freezing point as there was ice under the taps—very unusual in Windhoek it is said. Most of them appeared to possess one blanket and were sleeping on concrete slabs, which was regarded as customary and the slabs appeared to have been constructed for that purpose. A constable in the South-African police remarked, "These people are sleeping just like animals."'

'The wages', Tjipena continued, 'are between 11s. and 13s. or sometimes a pound a month. I do not know how the people can live. The hours on the farm start at about five o'clock to 12 a.m., finish milking if there are big herds, then wash buckets, clean stables, take cows to grazing, and bring them back to the kraals by dark. The men who look after the sheep start at about 6 a.m. and finish at 7.30 p.m. The sheep must be brought back as the sun sets and then the lambs divided from the sheep. Then all must be counted. Sometimes there are a thousand, two thousand, up to seven thousand Karakul sheep on a farm. If a sheep is lost some farmers make them pay £1 10s. or £2. One farmer may be so angry that he sends the man to jail and then makes him pay for it when he comes out. Some of the bad farmers prefer to give the meat from the Karakul lambs to their pigs and fowls rather than their labourers if there is not enough. Sometimes the sheep and cattle have better shelter than the labourers who are not given any time or opportunity to make their own huts because it is dark when they finish the first few days. After work is finished whole meals are given out but they take a long time to cook.'

Scott afterwards corroborated the accounts of the living conditions of some of the Ovambo farm labourers and he reported that he was shown 'some typical huts on a farm, made by the labourers from any materials they could find, mostly paraffin cans flattened out and nailed to a beehive-shaped framework similar in shape to their huts of reeds and grass and mud, but

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with less ventilation and hotter under the sun. These huts were about 7 ft. high by 7 ft. in diameter. They differed from the Transvaal compound buildings in being much smaller and erected by the native labourers themselves. They did not correspond any more nearly, however, to the specifications of the Ministry of Agriculture for cattle, namely, 2 ft. 6 in. square ventilation for each beast, 5 ft. 6 in. in width, 10 ft. in height, etc. In fact the cattle sheds on this farm appeared to be structurally superior to the living quarters of the labourers.'

But to resume Tjipena's account: 'The Ovambos come here', he continued, 'to me and ask me to make a case against the farmer. They do not know the name of the farmer or the farm where they work. They tell me there is often no grass to feed the sheep or there is not enough grass. The farmer asks why the sheep have not been properly fed. They reply, "If the veld does not give the grass, what can we do?" Then the farmer beats them. That is why they run away. I asked one of them why he had got no trousers on and he told me when he came there to work he was given some but they were so much too small he could not get them on.

'These Ovambos, when they find some of the farmers do not treat them well, sometimes ask for a permit because they want to go to the police. The masters, of course, refuse them a permit and then they go off on their own to the police. When they arrive there the first question is "Where is your pass?"

' "I have no pass."

' "Why?"

' "I ran away from my master, he treats me badly."

' "Where are you from?"

' "So-and-So place."

' "All right, because you got no pass we stick you in jail. You got no right to come here with no pass, no permit, no nothing."

'They go to jail for fourteen days to one month. When that time is finished they give the boy a pass to his master. As I look at it the boy is perhaps frightened to go back on account of the beatings and because of being away for two weeks in the jail.

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Then he will come sometimes to Windhoek. Here he is asked in the street:

“Where is your pass?”

“I got no pass.”

“Why you got no pass?”

“I ran away from my master because he is bad.”

“We cannot receive you as a complainer. First of all we got to let you fall under the Pass Law. We got to show you you got to have a pass before you come here to Windhoek.”

Then he is getting another fourteen days or one month, unless he pays the fine. I have got no record of this. But this is how it is. He does not serve his sentence in Windhoek. They send him to the place nearest to his work. Then in the Courts the interpreter does not always understand. Secondly the man does not understand the law here. So you see these poor men they get the sjambok from the master, but the law he cannot make it understand. I tried to make a case through the Advisory Board but the Chairman of the Board will ask many questions I cannot answer. “Who is the employer? What is the name of the employee? What is the district? How many cases have come to your notice from that man? Did anyone see it? Did you hear it? Did anyone hear it? Did you go to them or did they come to you? Did you see it? Have you got the evidence? Why didn't you investigate at the time?” I am saying the case will die on all these questions.

‘Why should the police take the farmers' side against the Ovambos? They ought to be on both sides and inquire themselves. Why should the police threaten them and chase them away? I cannot prove this but I will try to collect evidence and make a case.’

A former Ovamboland missionary corroborated and amplified this. He said that it does happen that the police are on the side of the employers. But, he pointed out, not all farmers are bad. Some farmers even permit the Christian labourers to come to Holy Communion service on the farm with the family and neighbours. On the other hand, he maintained, treatment in the town is also often bad, and the authorities side with the employers. He quoted an instance of a man and his wife, respected

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citizens and active in good works and charitable committees. Yet the man at his wife's request beat the Ovambo servant on two successive days. When the boy with his leg bleeding complained to the police, they rang the employer who said the boy was careless in his duties and had tried to hit back when beaten, though the boy maintained he was trying to ward off the blows. The police asked what the employers wanted done. They asked that the boy should be put in jail and he was put in jail.

An Afrikaans farmer has related how he sent his Ovambo servant to the Magistrate with a note asking for his contract to be renewed; but instead the native policeman in the presence of the European sergeant assaulted him: 'This Kaffir does not want to open his mouth to speak.' 'He is', the farmer continued, 'a most obedient and well-mannered boy. I trust him and have left this farm in this boy's sole charge for two months while I went to the Union. He had charge of everything here and when I returned he accounted for every single thing on the farm.'

Sanika, the 'boy' in question, was called into the farm parlour to give his own account of the event. 'I said nothing to annoy them. I had objected to the native constable talking to my wife's daughter. This may have been the cause. I did not want to return to Ovamboland. My master is treating me well and I had no cause to complain. I am already five years in his employment.'

Such a happy master-servant relationship is not common. A farmer's wife (and do not think she is unusual, for her views are frequently expressed in South Africa) said, 'They are a lazy lot but they expect good food. They have to be constantly driven to get any work out of them. When General Smuts came here he actually went and made a most elaborate speech to the Natives. They even provided music for them. That's not right to my mind. No, you can't talk to me about the natives.'

Fortunately there is also a more tolerant and understanding attitude. 'Often', said a farmer, 'he does not know the work, does not know what is expected of him. In the house the women get impatient. They don't know the language and the Natives are not used to the ways of European houses. On the farms, too, you

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must have patience. If you have no patience you should not be a farmer anyway.'

The 1948 Native Labour Commission regards farmers' complaints of idle natives in reserves and location as unfounded. It also comments on the way in which South-West African Natives, unfit for mine labour in the Union, are given food and medical attention to make them fit for the mines or for tobacco farms in Rhodesia to the detriment of the local labour supply.

Frequently, through the length and breadth of Southern Africa is heard the wrathful accusation that the Native is lazy. In traditional tribal life laziness was a trait generally made conspicuous by its absence, for the maintenance of the life of the kraal and the protection of its inhabitants with none of the aids of civilization was a strenuous whole-time affair. But in this connection extremely significant evidence was given by experts to the Native Farm Labour Committee (1937-9) in the Union, where in many respects conditions are in advance of those in South-West Africa. The Committee reported that 'Many farmers complained that Natives were "lazy and exhibited no zeal, energy, intelligence or initiative"'. Many of the farmers frankly stated that mealie meal was the usual food supplied by the farmers and that supplements in the way of meat, milk or vegetables were irregular, and dependent upon the availability of commodities at different times of the year. The Native witnesses almost without exception said that mealie meal was virtually the only food supplied. Magistrates and Native Commissioners testified to the absence of any meat diet as frequent cause of stock theft. In general the great bulk of the farmers consider they have fulfilled their obligations in the way of feeding by supplying their Native servants with a liberal quantity of mealie meal.

'In evidence before the Committee Dr. Fox, of the Medical Research Institute, concluded, "an underfed or unsuitably fed Native is almost bound to be lazy, and less alert, or stupid. This is merely a physiological adaptation but it accounts for a good deal of the extremely inefficient labour which the country puts up with." He also stressed "the prevalence of malnutrition and diseases attributable to deficiency in their diet of dairy products

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and other protective foods". Similarly, Dr. Cluver, Director of the Institute, "When Natives are malnourished they can just keep healthy when leading lazy lives, and rest becomes increasingly important as nutrition diminishes."

A European farmer who has been thirty years in South-West Africa, gave his views on labour conditions. 'Native labourers from Ovamboland outside the Police Zone, can only be recruited through the Government's Northern Labour Organization. They have thus no freedom of choice of their employers; they are sent in batches to farms they know nothing about, and are unable to change their employers on account of the provisions of the Masters and Servants Act and the Pass Laws. Often in the case of cruelty on the part of employers there is no redress. The police are often incompetent to decide whether a case of complaint is genuine, or their sympathies may be with the white employer. A boy will probably be afraid to complain to his boss about his being cruelly treated, similarly he will be afraid to go and make his complaint to the police for fear of getting another beating; he has nowhere to go to appeal for justice. There is far too much brutal and inhumane treatment on these farms. . . . There are things being done here for which Britain will one day be held to blame and that will not be right, for it is not Britain which is committing these crimes against humanity. It is the name of Britain and the British flag which is being used to cover up the brutal and unjust rule of the Natives which is being carried on here.'

The report, already quoted, of the South-West Africa Native Labourers Commission proposes a black list of employers who consistently underfeed their Native labour, or who fail to provide satisfactory housing for them. 'With isolated exceptions,' it states, 'housing for Natives on farms in the territory is primitive and unsatisfactory and in some cases non-existent.'

The report concludes that such conditions as are revealed by its investigations 'can no longer be tolerated in a country which professes—and with considerable justification—to be very prosperous, and in which the European population has in a sense assumed a sacred trust to promote the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the Native inhabitants'.

CHAPTER VIII

Poor Judge in its own Case

Space does not permit a detailed account of South Africa's native policy but some knowledge of it, and of the conditions to which it gives rise, is necessary to an understanding of the fear of South Africa and the extreme unwillingness not only of the more knowledgeable of South-West Africa's Native people but also of the inhabitants of the British Protectorates, which lie within or on the edge of the Union, to be brought entirely under her domination.

The inhabitants of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland came under British protection at the request of their chiefs, by treaty with the British Government of the time and not by conquest. The chiefs retain considerable power and much of the administration and the disposal of tribal funds remain in the hands of the Chief and Council. There is no theoretical limit to the advancement these countries can make, but as they are geographically and economically closely integrated with South Africa and are administered by the Commonwealth Relations Office, represented by the High Commissioner to the Union, and not by the Colonial Office, their advancement in practice is extremely slow in deference to Union native policy.

In 1910, when the four South African Colonies formed themselves into the new Dominion, the British Government undertook not to hand over these Protectorates to the Union without first consulting the wishes of their inhabitants. Since then the Union has cast jealous and covetous eyes on them. When, in 1934, the South African Government asked for the transfer of the Protectorates, the Native inhabitants left no doubt of their

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absolute unwillingness to be transferred and their objection was supported by a powerful body of opinion in England which held that the promise to observe the wishes of the people in such a matter was paramount. A similar move is afoot in South Africa again and the Protectorates are extremely nervous. They regard the incorporation of the mandated territory as the first direct threat to themselves.

South-West Africa is already administered by the Union but there has always been the safeguard of the annual report to the Mandates Commission and the reassurance of an international body watching the welfare of the inhabitants, as well as the right (though the Natives seem to have been ignorant of its existence, and indeed required the Mandatory's permission to exercise it) to petition the League against any acts of the Mandatory power.

In South Africa itself the tenet was incorporated in the constitution of the old Transvaal Republic that 'there shall be no equality between black and white either in Church or State'. The other day a Cabinet Minister in an electioneering speech said of Government policy, 'Apartheid meant that the non-Europeans will never have the same political rights as the Europeans; that there will never be social equality, and that the Europeans will always be "baas" in South Africa.' No wonder, then, that deep distrust is abroad.

Besides the principle of permanent helotism actual conditions in the Union make the natives unwilling to come under its rule. Some of these conditions can be outlined for the reader by means of an extract from a long Open Letter later to be addressed by Michael Scott to Mr. Lawrence, then Minister for Justice and representing South Africa at the United Nations meetings in 1947. Mr. Lawrence had promised the General Assembly some 'facts and figures' to refute the statements made by the critics of South Africa's native policy, but he failed to produce these.

Scott wrote: 'As for facts and figures, sir, may I be permitted to quote some to show the disastrous consequences of racial discrimination in our country?

'I. JUSTICE. Can it be denied that the law itself is manufacturing criminals; that between 1943 and 1946 the daily average of

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prisoners was 26,000—twice the daily average of Britain, where the population is four times as large; that 90 per cent of these convictions are for “crimes” carrying a penalty of less than six months’ imprisonment; that our jails are overcrowded to twice their capacity, viz. Durban jail?

‘Can it be denied that in 1934, 544,397 Africans were convicted, 230,068 of them, for the following offences:

Pass Laws	54,787
Liquor possession	100,098
Native Urban Areas Act	33,217
Native Taxation Act	21,425
Native Labour Regulation Act	20,546

‘It is indeed a tragic irony that in our attempts to evade our moral and legal obligations to our African people, we should be obliged to seek recourse to an International Court of Justice on a legal technicality. How much better to face our moral and legal obligations to those to whom justice is denied and so much injustice is done.

‘II. BREAK-UP OF TRIBAL AND FAMILY LIFE. Can it be denied that the creation of a vast army of migrant African labourers is destroying both land and peoples? On the one hand it is breaking up the traditional forms and structure of African society, uprooting the people both from the soil and their own social system. On the other hand, the great colour barrier, that extends throughout our whole economic, social and political system, prevents their normal development within our civilization so that they are condemned to be landless serfs with no status save in servitude to the white race. The threefold effects of this are the accelerating influx into the towns where vast homeless masses are congregating, the break-up of the family life of the African through separation and demoralization and the spread of soil erosion through overstocking and the absence of skilled manpower.

‘III. THE RESERVES’ RURAL SLUMS. It would be morally wrong and physically dangerous to seek to evade the judgment of a Government Commission on the condition of degeneration in the reserves. “They are generally backward areas, and the

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whole atmosphere in them is one of stagnation, of poverty of people and resources. There has been little if any attempt to integrate them into the national economy; they have been largely ignored and neglected. . . . Not only is the deterioration of the reserves affecting white areas through the drying of watersheds and the spreading of soil erosion, but the general debility of the reserves' population means that the major portion of the Union's labour force is attaining a very low degree of efficiency. At the present time the majority of the reserve inhabitants are poor, illiterate and under-nourished. Many are suffering from debilitating diseases."

'IV. SHANTY TOWNS. The other consequences of attempts to erect a racial oligarchy on the basis of the servitude of the non-European peoples is the influx of landless people in search of work and wages for whom there is neither land nor home in our cities.

'Can it be denied that there are now on the outskirts of Johannesburg more than 80,000 Africans living in shacks made of sackcloth and pieces of tin arranged in lines many miles long on plots 20 ft. by 20 ft. square, and that in setting up this enormous slum camp to house Africans who have every right to be in the city where their work is, the City Council is defying the comment of the Minister for Health: "Apart from health considerations it does not appear possible that the elementary decencies and privacy of family life can be maintained for five years by families . . . hemmed in by three other families within earshot and close eyesight and in many cases with only hessian partitions for even the outer walls."

'I have lived in that Tobruk shanty town. There were there no drains, no rubbish clearance, no water, no gutters, no lights in the streets, no police supervision. While the people were for the most part orderly, murder, rape, thefts and assaults were committed with impunity. Lack of sanitation led to disease. When latrine ditches were full they were filled in and the shacks of sackcloth and wood were built on top of them. We buried children every day. . . .

'V. INFANT MORTALITY. The Bantu infant mortality rate is

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said to be not less than 150 per 1,000 births anywhere, and in some areas is as high as 600 to 700 according to the Health Commission. In Durban the rate was 483·86 per 1,000 (1943, the latest available figure), and in Johannesburg it was 496·61 per 1,000 (1941), while in another Reef town, Benoni, the Medical Officer of Health stated that the rate was about 500 per 1,000. . . .

'VII. EDUCATION. Education for white children in South Africa is compulsory and largely free up to the age of sixteen. Their schools are well equipped with classrooms, laboratories, libraries and playgrounds, and are staffed by professionally trained men and women at the rate of about one to every twenty-two pupils. The State spends about £20 a year on every white child at school.

'Education for black children is neither compulsory, nor is it free, except in the Cape Province. Schools are entirely separate and while there is one school for every 430 white people in the country there is one school for every 1,850 Bantu. Only three out of eleven Bantu children ever go to school and only about 4 per cent of these ever go beyond Standard VI—the highest standard in the primary or elementary schools. A recent newspaper report stated that more than 90 per cent of the Bantu population is doomed to illiteracy. The richest and most industrially advanced province in South Africa does the least for Bantu education. In 1945 the percentage of Bantu children in each province of school-going age at school was: Orange Free State, 48 per cent; Cape Province, 40 per cent; Natal, 38 per cent; Transvaal, 28 per cent.

'There are 4,251 Bantu schools in the whole country, of which 4,124 are purely primary schools and 67 are secondary schools. Of the 535,927 Bantu children who were at school in 1943, 51·78 per cent were in substandards (before primary school stage); 25·28 per cent in Standards I and II; and 21 per cent in Standards III to VI. Actually 2 per cent of all the Bantu children enrolled were in the four higher standards. Only 1 child in every 600 receives an education beyond the primary school. . . .

'White children are supplied with free books, but no such facilities are available to the Bantu. Almost 50 per cent of Bantu

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schools in the Transvaal have no desks at all, or proper seats; the children sit on backless benches or on the ground.

'Nowhere is racial discrimination more obvious and paradoxical than in the case of school feeding. The Government introduced a scheme whereby two types of meals could be provided at schools—the full, or sixpenny, and the supplementary or threepenny meal. Of these amounts, the Government contributes fourpence and twopence respectively and the Provincial Administration twopence and one penny. When the scheme was launched the province refused to pay their contribution to the Bantu schools on the grounds that Bantu education is the responsibility of the Government. As a result, while the majority of white schools, including those in most wealthy areas, received sixpence a day for each child's meal, the Bantu schools receive twopence a day. The Government grant for Bantu school feeding in 1947-8 will be £854,000, £6,000 less than in the previous year.¹

'VIII. BLIND PERSONS. In 1945 the Blind Persons Act was amended to include Bantu, hitherto excluded. The pensions paid to blind persons who are unable to support themselves or to be supported by their families, are:

	<i>a year</i>
White people	£60
Indian and coloured	£30
Bantu (in urban areas)	£12
Bantu (in rural areas)	£9
Bantu (in reserves)	£6

'IX. HEALTH. According to Dr. Bennett of the Mount Coke Hospital (Ciskei) in his district "ten years ago hardly 1 per cent of rural maternity cases were syphilitic. To-day 22·1 per cent of maternity cases have positive Wassermann reactions." Venereal disease is one of those whose incidence is aggravated by migratory labour. It is significant that the Bantu name for it means "the white man's disease". According to Dr. Tobias about 15

¹ The Government has now abolished school feeding for Native children on European farms, and proposes to reduce the grant in spite of increased numbers at school and contrary to the recommendations of a recent commission.

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per cent of the inhabitants of the Transkei are suffering from syphilis.

“The thin, dry-skinned child with sores all over his legs,” stated Dr. Mary MacGregor of the Umtata Health Unit, “who coughs all through the winter is a well-known picture to every Native teacher. The child is now simply taken for granted. It continues into adult life. The general standard of health is low; diseases like pellagra and tuberculosis take their toll. Women have frequent abortions, and are frequently unable to feed the living infants they do have. Medical work in the Transkei becomes increasingly disheartening as it becomes increasingly obvious that the biggest enemy is malnutrition, and the greatest lack is fresh milk. The health problem is rapidly becoming one beyond the scope of medical men.”

X. POVERTY. In 1932 a Commission predicted “an appalling problem of native poverty”. That problem exists to-day.

“The Committee has been impressed above all by the poverty of the Native community,” stated a 1942 report on urban Natives. “This poverty is a factor, the ill effects of which permeate the Natives’ entire social life.” The report also stated: “There is overwhelming evidence of an appalling amount of malnutrition amongst urban Natives both old and young. ... The Committee has been gravely impressed by the evidence it has received of the high incidence of ill health among urban Natives, of the inadequacy of the provision for dealing with declared disease and of the comparative neglect of measures to preserve health. It has seen for itself in locations and other places where urban Natives reside, conditions which can hardly fail to produce chronic ill health among the inhabitants and which favour the rapid spread of infectious diseases. What is most disquieting is that in many instances the very lowest standards of public hygiene are tolerated in locations belonging to towns in other parts of which much higher standards are enforced as a matter of course.”

“One factor stands out pre-eminently,” stated the National Health Commission in 1943, “the grinding poverty of almost all of the non-Europeans, and a substantial part of the European

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population of this country. . . . This is one of the poor countries of the world.”

‘A 1944 Commission came to the conclusion that the “vast bulk” of Bantu families were below the Poverty Datum Line, and unable from their own earnings, even when supplemented by earnings of other members of the family, to meet even minimum requirements for subsistence, health and decency, not to speak of emergency requirements or the claims of a civilized life.

‘Ten per cent of white households, 45 to 50 per cent of Indian households, 50 to 60 per cent of coloured households, and *most urban Bantu not fed in compounds or in private houses* receive incomes too low to enable the purchase of minimum-cost diets—this was the finding of the Social and Economic Planning Council in 1944, since when the cost of living has enormously increased, with practically no rise in wages for the Bantu workers.’

This brief indication of the state of affairs in South Africa must be read in the knowledge that the ‘colour bar’ closes all skilled employment in industry, in the mines, in building, to the non-European; that the professions—medical, legal, and teaching, are open only to the very few; that 8,000,000 people are represented in the Union Parliament by four Senators and three European members in the Lower House, and that even this poor token of representation of a section of taxpayers is threatened. Then the reader may fully comprehend the determination of all black folk who have so far remained outside the Union to suffer any economic hardship rather than be drawn into the permanent servitude and inferiority that Union paramountcy means.

CHAPTER IX

Do you want an Englishman or do you want a Portuguese?

(i)

The Second World War ended. The League of Nations, after a long and painful illness, passed quietly away. It died intestate and the next of kin, the United Nations, has not come into its uneasy inheritance without dispute. Its efforts to exert its authority have been watched with alternate hope and fear by the under-privileged the world over.

The defunct Mandates Commission of the League was succeeded by the United Nations Trusteeship System under which all the Mandatory countries were asked to draw up trusteeship agreements in respect of the mandated territories, replacing the old League mandate with a fresh arrangement for international supervision. All the Mandatories except South Africa, readily complied and the chief feature of the new agreements has been the maintenance of the League principle of submitting annual reports on the administration and progress of the ward territories. 'Anyone', it will be recalled Wright says in a passage already quoted, 'is a poor judge in his own case, and a state has always found it hard to visualize a subject people except from the standpoint of its own interests. . . . The Mandates system introduces the novelty of a disinterested body to examine the situation impartially from the Native and the world point of view.' This is equally the purpose of the Trusteeship system.

South Africa, however, at the first suggestion of a trusteeship agreement, was off with the bit well between her teeth. She had

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been given the task under the Mandate of administering South-West Africa as an integral part of the Union 'in the interests of the indigenous population'. Feeling among the white population had for many years been very strongly in favour of a closer integration and there seems no reason why this should not have been accomplished within the bounds of an acceptable trusteeship agreement. The Government in power (and even more the Opposition of the time) was reluctant even to consider submitting its Native policy any longer to international supervision, and incorporation and annexation alternated with integration as terms expressing the new concept. The official attitude to the principle of international supervision was expressed in the covering letter to the South African Government's answers to fifty questions on its 1946 Report put by the Trusteeship Council. 'The Union Government in forwarding these replies desires to reiterate that the transmission to the United Nations of information on South-West Africa . . . is on a voluntary basis and is for purposes of information only. They have on several occasions made it clear that they recognize no obligation to transmit this information. . . .'

The white population was overwhelmingly in favour of the change 'upon such terms as to financial relations and political representation as may be mutually agreed upon'.

It remained, to produce a convincing case for flouting world opinion, to show that the Natives also favoured incorporation.

Between December 1945 and April 1946 the Administration called meetings in various parts of the country to put to the native people its version of the proposed incorporation. The result of the consultations is claimed by the Government to be as follows: outside the Police Zone 161,290 were in favour of incorporation; within the Police Zone, 47,560 (including nearly 20,000 Bastards always particularly conscious of their affinity with South Africa) were in favour, 33,520 were against, and 56,790 were not consulted. At the end of 1946 a second attempt was made with similar results, and in May the following year a third series of consultations with the natives was held, but this time no count was taken.

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The way in which the referendum, so-called, was carried out is described by the Government. 'The consultation of the Natives was carried out by the Native Commissioners in the areas outside the Police Zone and by the Magistrates in the districts within the Police Zone. The method adopted was to consult the Natives as tribal units, tribal meeting being the form of political expression best understood and usually adopted by the Natives. The procedure was planned to explain clearly and fully to the Natives what they were called upon to decide. Usually the presiding officer first fully explained the matter to the tribal leaders, according to the nature of the tribal administration, and thereafter to tribal meetings attended by all Natives in the areas concerned. At the tribal meetings the Commissioners, through interpreters, all gave more or less the same form of address which had had the prior approval of the Administrator. Particular care was taken to emphasize that the Natives were a free people and therefore had the right to come to whatever decision they desired and to express their views without fear. In each case they were asked to discuss the matter fully themselves and not to hurry their decision.' Three and a half hours appears to have been the time they were given to make the unhurried decision affecting their whole future. The account goes on to give extracts from the Commissioners' statements.

The statement made to one gathering by the Magistrate has been supplied by a chief and, translated from the original document, it is as follows:

'TO THE NATIVES OF THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY 1946

'Meeting convened by the Magistrate and addressed by the Magistrate.

'Hereunder follows the documents conveyed to Capt. David Witbooi, and his advisers or Boardmen in regard to the incorporation of South-West Africa into the Union of South Africa.

'COPY: The representatives of the Great Nations of the World will meet in Europe within a very short time to consider matters, and His Honour, the Administrator, would gladly like to receive your answers in connection with the above so that he may inform Field-Marshal Smuts, the Prime Minister

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of the Union of South Africa, about it, when he (Field-Marshal Smuts) leaves. He may then give your decision to the Nations.

'You remember that about thirty years ago the forces of the Union fought against the Germans in South-West Africa. There raged a great war in the whole world, a war which had its origin in Germany. Germany had several nations on its side, while the Allies consisted of nations such as Great Britain, France, Russia and America. It was a bitter war but the Allies won the war. At this time the Allies concluded that the Union Forces should conquer the Germans who ruled over South-West Africa.

'Within a short time the Union forces took possession of this territory and took over the Government of the country. They found chaos in every part of the country. The different tribal organizations were destroyed by the Germans, and you had no land which you could call your dwelling place. Your cattle were taken away from you and you were not allowed to own cattle. You were on the verge of starvation and your families and relatives were scattered all over the country. You lost courage and thought you were made slaves. Gradually the Union Government restored order.

'One of the greatest purposes and tasks of the Union Government was to find the necessary area of land, and to create Reserves for the Hereros and other native inhabitants, so that they might feel free again, and so that they might find homes for their families and accumulate numerous cattle. The Union Government helped to get water where it was possible. You remember that it was not always possible, especially during periods of depression and drought, but the Union Government succeeded in creating for you better and happier circumstances. It results in open market for your cream, marketing for your cattle, and the education of your children, etc.

'After the First World War the territories such as South-West Africa, East Africa and other regions in the Far East were taken away from the defeated Germans. The Great Nations could not at once decide what to do with these territories. They soon came to an agreement to put these territories under the rule of other

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nations. These nations were not allowed to annex any of the territories taken away from the Germans, including South-West Africa. They may rule and send each year a report to the Great Nations overseas on how the former German territories are ruled.

‘It happened that the Union Government had to rule over South-West Africa and over all its inhabitants. This system is called the Mandate System. The Union Government has now governed South-West Africa for thirty years. New Zealand which was also a member of the Allies had also to rule the territories lying close to her. England had to rule German East Africa. After a short time Germany prepared for war, and for the return of her former colonies. She began to be more and more aggressive, and for the past six years she made war and one which was more serious than that which took place thirty years ago. Countries such as Japan, Italy and Austria stood on her side. She was terribly strong and well armed. Within a very short time she nearly conquered the whole of Europe and robbed the smaller nations of their possessions and made them slaves. As you know she was again defeated. The nations which fought against her are England, Russia, France, America, South Africa and the other Dominions. This time she suffered a serious defeat, and the troops of the Allies are still in Germany. These nations will now take decisions over the former German and Italian colonies. They have already had big meetings overseas about these questions, and they will within a short time have another meeting in London. They will perhaps like to know now whether you yourselves, the inhabitants of the Mandated Territory, would like to be governed by another nation or nations whose names I have named, and which want now to constitute the United Nations. It is about this that you must now decide. On that I want to have your answers. Do not be in a hurry; there is a lot of time to-day.

‘I shall give you a document on which the points which you should decide about are put in your own language. And in order to convince Field-Marshal Smuts about your decision, His Honour, the Administrator would like to see that your leaders, if they want to, should sign this document, seeing there

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will not be any chance for them to meet His Honour in Windhoek.

'Remember that the same words which I have said to you are also being said to-day to all the natives in all the Reserves within the Police Zone.

'I shall now give you an opportunity to consider the case among yourselves. If you arrive at a decision then you could send a messenger to me to say that you will give your answer. Then I shall come back to the meeting place. I would very much like to telegraph your answer to His Honour in Cape Town, where he and Field-Marshal Smuts are awaiting your answer.'

An interesting and possibly significant fact is that in the official record given to U.N. and to Parliament there is another paragraph which does not appear in the Chief's version. This paragraph runs: 'I have asked you all to attend this meeting as I wish your answer to be the voice of all the people who live in this Reserve. You must understand that you are free people and can always express your views, whatever they are, without fear. Similar meetings are being held in all the native Reserves, and these meetings are being addressed by the Native Commissioners (Magistrates) of the districts concerned. They are using the same words as I will use to-day so that all the people will understand this big question fully, and so that there can be no misunderstanding among the people of the various Reserves.'

The document the chiefs were asked to sign was worded: 'We the undersigned, Chiefs, Headmen or Board Members of the people of the Tribe, who live in the Reserve in this Mandated Territory of South-West Africa, acting with full authority of the people of the tribe of the Reserve wish to say that we have heard that the people of the world are talking about the Administration of countries such as ours, and that the Administration of those countries may be changed.

'We and our people wish the following matters to be made known to the peoples of the world:

'1. That our people have been happy and have prospered under the Rule of the Government of the Union of South

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Africa and that we should like that Government to continue to rule us;

'2. That we do not wish any other Government or people to rule us; and

'3. That we would like our country to become part of the Union of South Africa.'

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This, on the surface, looks a very happy, satisfactory state of affairs. But it needs rather closer examination.

In the first place, the Union Government refused permission to representatives of the Institute of Race Relations and to Lord Hailey to go to South-West Africa and observe the conduct of the referendum when it was in progress.

Secondly, though overwhelming numbers of the natives are claimed to favour incorporation, the majority (161,290 out of 208,850) are from the tribal areas outside the Police Zone. Now these people never came under German rule; during the mandate period they were permitted to retain their tribal life very nearly intact, and until very recent years they knew little of what was going on in South Africa or in the world. They live in a prosperous, rather idyllic if not very progressive, little backwater and are for the present well-content with things as they are—all save the few who have travelled to South-West and to the Union.

The hard core of resistance to the proposal of incorporation is the Herero people. They have been called the most intelligent and most aristocratic of all the people in the territory. They have had all too much experience of the ways of the white man, both German and South African, and enough of their history has been told to show that they have been involved with the Western world for about seventy years and are very conscious of what is going on. Small sections of other tribes have supported their resistance, notably David Witbooi, son of the valiant old Witbooi who played so prominent a part in the affairs of the country in the last century.

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The Bishop of Damaraland expressed his views on the referendum thus: "To those who know South-West Africa the significance of the figures is quite different to what appears on the face of them. The 30,000 who were against annexation by the Union are the only natives who have any idea of the meaning and significance of the matter at issue. These 30,000 are the Hereros and others within the Police Zone who have been in contact with Europeans and live under European law and administration. They are the most sophisticated and educated natives who have some idea of the issues involved. They practically unanimously expressed themselves as against annexation by the Union. The large number that expressed themselves in favour of annexation by the Union represents the natives north of the Police Zone in Ovamboland and the Okavango. These people are living apart from Europeans in their own tribal lands, and are under their own chief and headmen, and are only indirectly ruled by the Native Commissioner. They are not under European law but are under their own law and custom. These people have little idea of what is meant by the Union of South Africa and no idea at all of what is meant by Trusteeship under the United Nations Organization. They really voted for the *status quo*. They are content with indirect rule under the Native Affairs Department and are not asking for a change. These people are quite incapable of expressing any opinion on the questions submitted to them, i.e. whether they wanted to be annexed to the Union or whether they preferred the U.N. Trusteeship."

A missionary of nine years' experience in South-West Africa said: "I don't think there is any need to talk about the referendum. It was an absolute farce. That is what even one of the Native Commissioners said about it."

There are accounts of how the referendum was conducted in various places from individual Natives, and indications that disparaging remarks about the United Nations were made and misleading impressions created.

A senior teacher, one of the better informed of the Ovambo, recounted: ". . . It must be explained that the people are living in the tribal system and are uneducated people. And they see very

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few white men. They were asked whether they wanted their present boss or whether they would like to have a change. They do not understand what the United Nations is, or what the "change" would mean. They do not know that the ideal of the U.N. is that people should be educated and encouraged to develop themselves until they can conduct their own affairs; that in the Union the laws are just made and the African people must then adapt themselves to those laws. They know nothing about voting or the franchise. These Ovambo people have come to take it for granted that they should always be ruled by white people, and it was not explained to them what the difference might be between coming under the Union and coming under any other possible alternative whereby the people could be raised, and eventually taught to rule themselves.

'After the United Nations session last year (1946) one official held a meeting in Windhoek at which he said that if the United Nations took over the Government of South-West Africa it would mean that the people from these countries such as the Indians for example, who could live on the smell of an oil rag—just the smell he said could make them live—would come to South-West Africa and take away the trade and livelihood of the Europeans and Africans.'

A leading Ovambo reported: 'What they told me that they had said, was that their country should fall under the British Government, not that it should fall under the Union. The man who conducted the referendum, conducted the referendum in this way. He said the government had come to ask them who they want from among these people. Do they want an Italian? Do they want a Chinese? Do they want a Russian? Do they want a Portuguese? Or do they want an Englishman? The people replied: "We do not know the other nations, except the English people." Nothing was mentioned about the incorporation into the Union of South Africa. Taking it for granted that they were being asked if they wanted to be under the British Crown, they said they wanted to be under the British.'

'Now as regards the numbers given in the Union Government's book on South-West Africa at the time of the United

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Nations debate, I want here and now to dispute that 129,760, [the number in Ovamboland claimed to favour incorporation], more than half the total claimed, voted in favour of incorporation. Since no mention was made of incorporation into the Union it must be stated that in reality they voted against incorporation and for being brought under British rule.'

This version is confirmed by that of another Ovambo, holding an official position. 'I belong to the Ovambo people living amongst the Hereros. The Ovambos who are living here in the interior of South-West Africa were not consulted during the referendum. I have heard that leading members in Ovamboland do not know what they have agreed to. I have asked some of them what they said. Did they ask for incorporation into the Union? These people from Ovamboland replied: "What is the Union? We do not know what you mean by the Union." They said they had been asked, Do you want an Englishman or do you want a Portuguese or who do you want? They asked the Commissioner what Nation he was, and he replied that he was British, and that it was Britishers who had taken possession of the country from the Germans. They made it clear that they had given their country to the British Crown; they will only learn later that they have incorporated their country in the Union. Afterwards they were saying "we thought they meant the British Crown".'

One more short extract, again from an Ovambo. 'At the beginning of this month a man was sent to me by the Chief of the Ovondongo in Ovamboland—the man's name was Isaak Nataneel—to inquire whether it was true, as he had been told there, that the Hereros, the Berg-Damaras, and the Namas as well as others had given their country to the Union and he should do the same.'

These have an authentic ring and give a disturbing picture of which the British people in particular should be aware, for it is their name that is being used. The Government complained that much of this is not first-hand evidence, but it refused Mr. Scott permits to visit the reserves and did all in its power to prevent him from getting more first-hand accounts.

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Other people give the same sort of accounts as these Ovambos. The Berg-Damaras' account is as follows: 'We said: "What is in your minds now that you should come after a rule of thirty years and ask us whether this country should be joined to yours? The Ruler of this country is King George, the King of England. Did he send you here to ask us these questions?" We said: "You make a mistake when you come to us asking the country from us. We are the rulers of the country. If you are now informing us that the country is ours then you should give it back to us. And then we shall be able to decide what to do with it." They said: "We are not forcing you, we are asking you." We said: "Our country will not be joined to yours. We shall only wait until our children are educated, then we shall see whether they do not bring us freedom. . . . You say you would like to be the trustee of this country. We say we should like the big Nations to be the trustee."'

David Witbooi, the Nama Chief, son of old Hendrik, expressed his views on the referendum thus: 'It does not please us that the Union Government denies that I speak for all the Nama people. I am their acknowledged head although they are scattered in many parts.

'As many of us know, who sit here now, the last time I was consulted about the incorporation of this country into the Union I said that I refused. I said that it was known that my grandfather asked for Protection from the British throne, and that I thought I was standing under the British flag. When I said that, the authorities told me that they also are under the British Crown. But their treatment of us surprises us. That section of the people which has the same skin as the Rulers have a different living from ours; they still oppress us even though they say we are all under the British flag.

'They spoke a lot of words to me. They spoke about many good things. They even spoke in such a way that one could perhaps be persuaded to believe. But I refused. I said that "as long as I am living I will not believe what you say. All the good things you are telling me might be like this. For example, the Herero people and I fought many battles against one another. But after-

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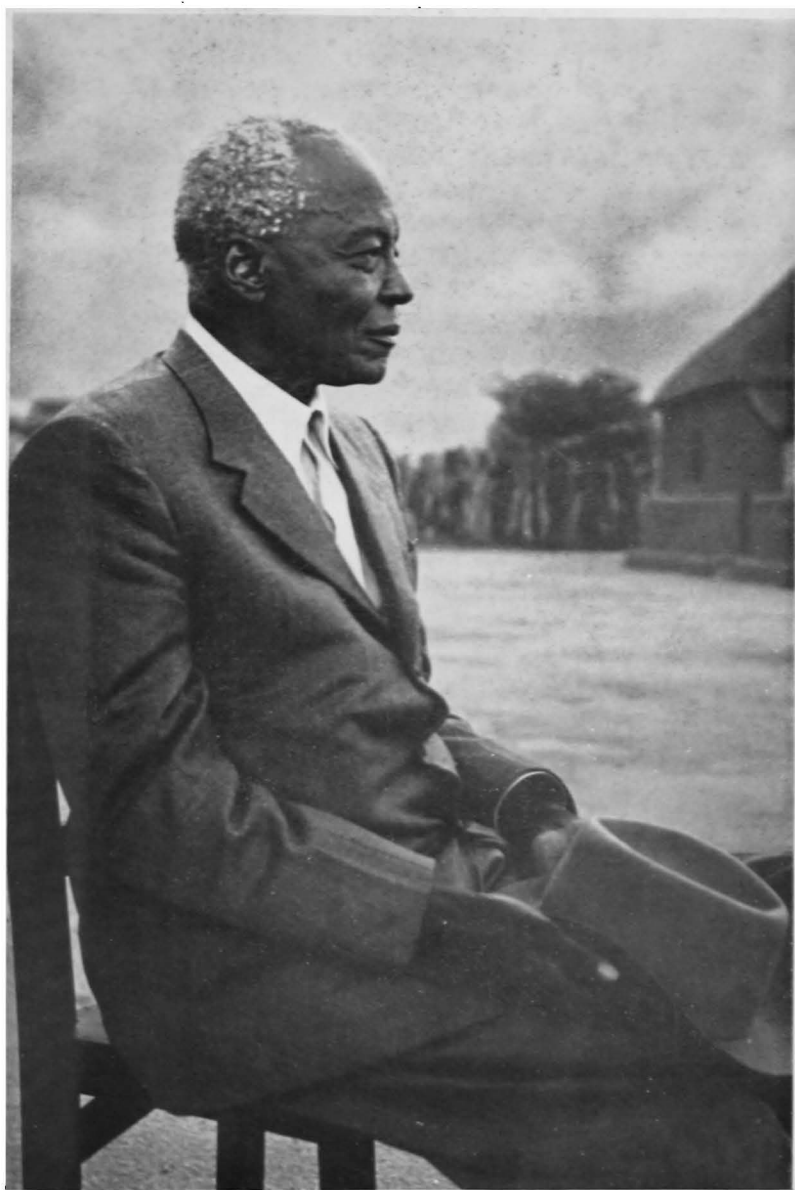
wards we have declared that we have now become brothers; that is that we have now made peace. Since then and up to to-day we live as brothers. That is the real example of incorporating my part of the country with your part of the country." The fact that a white man [this statement was made to Mr. Scott] sits amongst us shows us a spark of light that may in the far distance bring freedom to my people. And that being so I should like to ask you to act as a representative for us. The difficulties and conditions under which my people live, these I have been making known since long before my hair turned grey.'

The whole-hearted opposition of the Hereros has not been in dispute. The senior chief, Hosea, says: 'When I got up I said: "I have heard what you said, but I will not answer you at present. I will answer you when the five great powers have sent their representatives, the American, the British, the Russian, the Chinese, and the French. I should very much like to have the representatives of the Five Great Powers here when I shall give the answer of my people to this question of incorporation.'

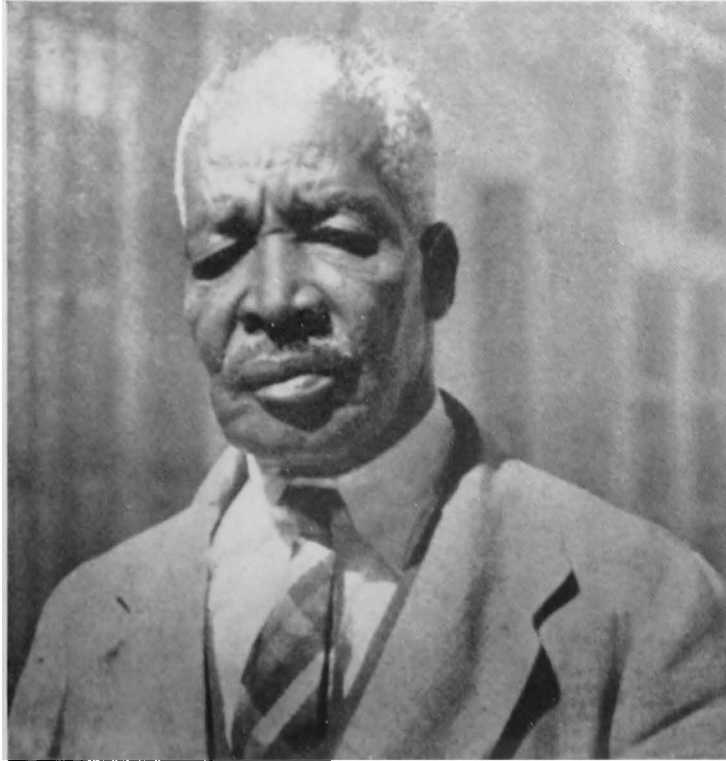
"Our fathers made a pact with the Germans when they were in this country. Because there were no witnesses this pact broke down. As you now refer to this question of incorporation, I should very much like those impartial witnesses to be present. At this stage we are unable to give you any answer."

'The authorities asked the people: "Are you all on the side of Hosea?" All the Africans present said: "Yes, we are on the side of Hosea." The hundred leaders, including myself, gathered at a meeting in the evening and decided that to-morrow we would give our answer to the Administrator. We returned to the Administrator on the afternoon of 6th March 1946. Then I presented four spokesmen to the representatives of the hundred leaders gathered there. The first was Festus Kandjo.'

Festus took up the account: 'I did most of the speaking on behalf of the hundred leaders present on that day. I said: "I am Festus Kandjo, an Herero man who lives in the Aminuis Reserve. As my statement is a long statement, I should like to know whether you will permit me to give the whole of my statement or not." The Administrator said: "I shall permit you, so what



1. Chief Frederick Maharero



2. Chief Hosea Kutako



3. Chief Hendrik Witbooi
(from an old German postcard)

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would you like to say?" I said: "This country of South-West Africa belongs to five African tribes, the Herero, the Hottentot, the Berg-Damara, the Ovambo and the Bushman. The Ovambo people inhabited the northern part of South-West Africa. The Berg-Damaras and the Hereros inhabited the central portion. . . . The Bushmen people inhabited north of Onguma to Okavango, the district called Kaokoveld. The Hottentot people inhabited the area from Kun to the Orange River. . . ." I went on to say that two of these tribes still inhabited the parts which they inhabited before. The other three tribes—the Berg-Damaras, the Hottentots, and the Hereros are the tribes which have lost portions of their lands. The portions of the country which belonged to these three tribes were stolen from them by the Germans. The reasons for saying that the Germans have stolen my country are the following: When the Germans first came to this country, the first man who came was a Reverend, Hugo Hahn. Hugo Hahn did not do other work but was only preaching the Word of God. But another man who came here was different . . . that Minister was at the same time a surveyor. This man went about preaching the gospel with his wagon. At the same time he surveyed the boundaries belonging to the Herero people. This man measured the length and breadth and the two ends which the Herero people inhabited and decided where the station for the soldiers should be placed. After he surveyed the lands this man wrote to Germany and asked the German authorities to send over their troops and their traders. These traders disguised themselves as the benefactors of the people, although in reality they were concerned with the land. These traders came to steal away the land in a cunning way. The missionaries gave information to the soldiers that they should station their men at Swakopmund, Outjo, Okaukuejo, Mamutani, Grootfontein, Waterberg, Omaruru, Okahandja, Windhoek, Gobabis, Seeis, Sandfontein and Reitfontein, Kub, Naugas, and Otjimbingue. These military stations surrounded the land inhabited by the Hereros, the Berg-Damaras, and the Namas. After they had surrounded us they asked that the guns belonging to the Africans be handed over to them to be numbered, and they took away that part which

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enables the gun to let the bullet off. After they had finished with the guns they burned the ammunition workshops of the Herero people. This shop was there before the Germans came to South-West Africa; and thus they prohibited the African people from buying bullets, guns or cartridges. After the Germans were sure that the guns had been made useless, had prevented them from buying cartridges and had burned down the ammunition workshops, they then started to shoot at Africans, one over there, one over there, who had committed no fault. The traders then started to take possession of the land where they had first been granted permission to open their trading stations for the purpose of trading with the people. And then they started taking possession of the cattle which they had taken by force when the traders started to shoot at the people who ran. The aim of the Germans was that they should attack the Hereros unexpectedly and take their chief and cut his head off and then claim the country as their heritage. The Germans were well aware that they had taken away the arms of the people, that they were defenceless and at the mercy of the Germans. The Hereros, seeing that the people were being shot in cold blood and that the Germans were taking possession of their lands and taking their cattle by force, began attacking the Germans with their knobkerries. The ill-treatment by the Germans resulted in the war of 1904.'

There followed the account, already quoted, of the Herero war and the flight of the Chief, Samuel Maharero, to Bechuanaland, and the return of his sons in the First World War.

Festus continued: 'In the second Great War of 1939, the King of England with the Allies declared that they are fighting for freedom of the world. Hearing that the King of England and the Allies were fighting for the freedom of the world, we, the oppressed Africans, thought that it was a golden opportunity to throw in our lot with the English people and to fight so that the English people and their Allies may attain their aim of fighting for the freedom of all people irrespective of colour. We gave our sons to the fight and we gave our money to assist the King of England and the Allies to win the war. Thus we hoped that we, who had been oppressed by the Germans and who were still

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suffering under the Union Government, may enjoy freedom. As the war has now ended, we would also like to be free as the other nations that have been freed. Now that the war has ended we should like that this country of South-West Africa be given back to the African people and that it should not be incorporated into the Union of South Africa.'

The Administration reports that the four Herero spokesmen expressed their opposition as follows:

Festus Kandjo: 'In 1904 the Germans stole our land. In 1914, when there was the first Great War against Germany the Germans in South-West Africa tried to persuade the Hereros to side with them against the Union soldiers who came to conquer this territory from them. We refrained from doing so because we hoped that the Union soldiers came to free us from the Germans and would return our land to us. In 1939, when the second war against Germany broke out, we supported the English and our men joined up and actively assisted in the struggle. We hoped that England would win because we thought that our land would this time be returned to us. We reckon that if the territory is incorporated into the Union our land will never be returned to us. We fear that we would then receive no consideration. We do not want the territory to be incorporated and it is our wish that our land should be returned to us.'

Alfred Katjiumme: 'We suffered much for our land. We fought against the Bechuanas, the Hottentots, the Ovambos and the Germans in the past to preserve it. I agree with Kandjo.'

Fillipus Tjapaka: 'We heard yesterday that the British flag was also part of our flag but we do not live the same way as other people under the British flag. We want our land to be returned to us and then we want to stay under the protection of the Trusteeship Council.'

Stefanus Hoveka: 'The Ovambos who agreed to incorporation did not lose any of their land but the Hereros lost part of theirs. In these times of mercy we hope that mercy will be shown us too and that the country will be returned to whom it belongs. We understand the war has been fought to free the small and weak nations but we are not free. The territory must not be incorporated.'

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These are not the words of the ignorant or the unthoughtful. Relatively uneducated they may be, but by no means unaware of what is taking place in the world. In these words we may recognize the consequence of bad faith and sense a final bid for the freedom which should be the heritage of human beings.

In an elaborate brochure produced for the United Nations, the Union Government stated that 'If there was one question that reassured more than others it was whether any change in the administration of the territory would remove them from under the shadow of the Crown of King George of England. Once assured that the change implied no departure from South Africa's partnership in the British Commonwealth of Nations, the natives declared themselves satisfied on this point.' That such an assurance could be given in face of the fact that the opposition parties in the Union Parliament¹ had declared their aim to make a Republic affords some indication of the curious outlook of those who conceived this referendum and carried it out.

Chief Hosea said: 'It is the unfair treatment by the Union Government that compels us not to take their side, and we shall never want the Union Government,' and one feels with deep conviction that there is the courageous old leader's last word on the subject.

The Hereros' request for a United Nations Commission to conduct the referendum was, of course, summarily rejected, whereupon Chief Hosea asked that four of his representatives be allowed to go to the United Nations. 'I have four spokesmen in this country and I am confident that the Herero people will contribute in order to pay the cost of these men going to the United Nations Assembly. Thus I humbly request the Government to allow these representatives of the Africans to go to America to speak for me and for my people.' The Administrator is reported to have replied: 'You have no right to go to the United Nations while you have not got your own government.' They asked permission to send a cable and were told that this could not be allowed as General Smuts would convey their words to the United Nations. They found, however, that their

¹ Now the Government in power.

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views were not adequately represented, and in despair they sent a cable¹ to the United Nations. 'We want our country to be returned to us and to be protected by either of these two countries, namely Great Britain or the United States.' The General Secretary of the United Nations replied: 'Give us your decision with regard to the incorporation.' To this Hosea cabled: 'Please let the United Nations be informed again that in South-West Africa and in Bechuanaland we would like to be under the British Crown; that we deny the Incorporation of the country into the Union of South Africa.' The United Nations sent a further cable: 'You still adhere to your decision or have you changed your minds?' to which the Hereros replied that they adhered to their decision.

Hosea was publicly rebuked for this interchange. The Secretary for the Government is reported to have said to him (on 16th May 1947): 'I am dissatisfied with you because you go behind the back of the Government. You write letters behind the Government's back. You send telegrams as well. You do these things without the permission of the Government.'

To this Festus Kandjo replied with the vivid imagery of Africa: 'We did not go behind the Government's back, but asked permission from the Government. We were denied that permission. But if the rain falls and one is outside one's house naturally one has to seek for shelter. So I sought for shelter because the Government did not grant me shelter.'

Hosea was pressed to give his oath that he would never do such a thing again. When asked if he had taken such an oath he replied: 'No, I could not take such an oath. That would have been to make me blind and deaf and dumb for them to lead me where they wanted me to go. They call me Chief but I am not free to go anywhere; I must have a permit every time.'

(iii)

The news that the referendum had been held and that Smuts

¹ On 18th March 1946. (All these cables are listed in General Assembly Document A/C 4 /37.) This was a good six months before Scott knew anything at all about the South-West Africa matter.

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was laying before the United Nations his proposals for incorporation, claiming it to be the heartfelt desire of not only the white inhabitants, but also of the overwhelming majority of the native people, spread like wildfire among the Africans of the neighbouring states.

The people of Bechuanaland were the first to react, and they reacted promptly and practically. Living on the borders of South-West Africa they were very well aware of conditions in that country, and they regarded its incorporation as being a first step to be followed eventually by the annexation of their own country. Furthermore they saw their hopes of an outlet to the sea through Walvis Bay recede and the certainty of economic stranglehold by the Union looming ominously.

The six Bechuana chiefs compiled a memorandum setting out their reasons for so strongly opposing the transfer of South-West Africa. They appointed one of their number, Chief Tshekedi Khama, to act as their representative and to go overseas to explain their position personally to the British Government.

By this time the more thoughtful of the native population of the Union were aware of the issues. Leaders of opinion there wrote to Tshekedi wishing him *bon voyage* and assuring him of their support. Professor Z. K. Matthews, for instance, African professor of African Studies at Fort Hare University, wrote, 'As one who is in touch not only with educated African opinion but with the opinion of uneducated Africans, I have no hesitation in saying that Africans in the Union would regard the transfer of South-West Africa or of the Protectorates to the Union, with its native policy as it is at present, as a great betrayal of people who have never been disloyal to the British Crown. The Union Africans have never forgotten that when Union was under consideration and when they protested to the British Government about this matter, they were assured that their position would not deteriorate. Time has proved that their apprehensions were justified. The policy of discrimination against non-Europeans continues to be preached and practised in practically every aspect of our national life. Such progress as the non-Europeans have made they have made in spite of and

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not because of Union Native Policy, and that very small amount of progress is in and out of season made the occasion for violent attacks upon the non-Europeans by European public men. Every step forward they take is looked upon as a menace to "white civilization".

'It is not contended that Union native policy will never change. It may be that the force of international public opinion may bring about a change. But what responsible Africans do say is that before the anti-democratic elements in Union native policy have been rooted out of this country, it would be criminal for any more people of colour to be brought under the jurisdiction of the Union Government.'

But Tshekedi Khama did not go to London. On instructions from the British Government he and his legal adviser were refused shipping priority, and he was told, furthermore, that even if he did get there there was no likelihood that he would be able to see the Secretary of State or any Cabinet Minister. There followed a succession of interviews and correspondence with the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, the negative results of which were to the effect that no representative of the Bechuanas could go to London, that no undertaking could be given that the British delegation to the United Nations would be instructed to present their views on the subject of the incorporation of South-West Africa.

Tshekedi cabled to London for an assurance that the full documents would be put before the General Assembly. This assurance was not forthcoming.

Armed with documents which showed, on paper at any rate, a formidable majority (208,850 for, 33,520 against and 56,790 not consulted) of the native inhabitants in favour of incorporation, the South African delegation laid its Government's case before the United Nations at the end of 1946. General Smuts, who had given notice of South Africa's intention the previous year, himself led the delegation. The arguments as to how South Africa and the small European population of South-West Africa would benefit from incorporation do not concern us here. The mandate and the trusteeship systems were designed to protect

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the interests of the native inhabitants. Claims made by the South African delegation that South Africa had discharged its trust with the highest regard for its responsibilities for the advancement of the moral and material well-being of the inhabitants, that incorporation would confer upon the population the benefits of membership of a larger community without the loss of those individual rights and responsibilities that it had previously enjoyed, cannot be supported with regard to the population as a whole. Nor can General Smuts's statement to the Fourth Committee that 'everywhere throughout South-West Africa, as is the case throughout the Union, there is full and unreserved recognition of the four fundamental human freedoms. There is complete freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom from fear. Freedom from want is the great objective of the whole area of Southern Africa, which is gradually being attained by the full development of its natural resources.'

This did not go unchallenged, and the strongest critic of the Union's proposals was the Indian representative, Sir Maharaj Singh, who had himself lived in South Africa as a non-European and was able to enumerate in detail the discriminatory practices directed against the natives in the Union. The Trusteeship Committee rejected the Union's incorporation proposals and invited her to submit a Trusteeship Agreement.

The Union Government, aware of the antagonism against its policies in the rest of the world, decided to appear conciliatory, and in July 1947 informed the United Nations that it had resolved not to proceed with incorporation, but to maintain the *status quo* and to continue to administer the territory in the spirit of the mandate; and, though it refused to submit a Trusteeship Agreement, that it would continue to submit an annual report to the United Nations. It forwarded to the United Nations a report (very abbreviated by pre-war standards) of the Administration of South-West Africa for 1946.

The matter had reached this rather negative compromise when Michael Scott came into the Hereros' story.

CHAPTER X

For Right and Justice

The end of the last chapter might well have been the end of the whole story as far as the outer world is concerned, and another small and backward people would have been engulfed in an alien world, to sink or swim unnoticed even by men of goodwill. But in the hour of the peoples' need a man, particularly fitted by training and by temperament for the task, took up their cause.

In 1943 an Anglican clergyman, Michael Scott, came to South Africa to do mission work. It was not the first time he had been to South Africa, for as a youth of nineteen ill health brought him here and he worked first among lepers for a year and then began training in Grahamstown for Holy Orders. After three years in South Africa he returned to England, finished his training, and was ordained in Chichester. His duties led him by way of what probably seemed to him the rather stagnant tranquillity of a rural curacy, through the social hot-house inevitable for personable young parsons in a fashionable London parish, to the more congenial and varied duties of his calling in the East End. There he went through the kindergarten of the preparation for the work he was later to undertake.

He was sent to Bombay as Chaplain to the Bishop, and found the grandness of the life there incongruous and rather absurd. He went to Calcutta as senior Chaplain to the Cathedral. He made friends among the Indians. He studied their religion and philosophy. He developed a very great admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, whose influence remained with him. He devoted much time and labour to investigating the appalling conditions of

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tyranny and loathsomeness existing in one of the small Indian states.

In 1939 Michael Scott returned on leave to England, and when war broke out he resigned from parochial work and in the teeth of his Bishop's disapproval, enlisted in the R.A.F. as Air Crew. 'I felt at the time that while war was necessary to defend the country and all the best traditions of Britain it was yet not compatible with Christ's Gospel to go to war, and the methods of war should not be represented as compatible with Christ's methods.' Before his training was finished, however, his health gave way and he was invalided out. His doctors recommended South Africa again, and in 1943 he went back to the country, some ten years after he had left it.

The character of Scott and the activities he engaged in are of such importance to what follows that for the moment we will leave the Hereros seeking an escape from the new threat to their future, and recall the events that carried Michael Scott along the path that eventually crossed that of the obscure African tribe whose welfare was to become for him and many others a test-case in proving the validity of the high hopes of liberation and the recognition of human dignity with which the war ended.

Scott—let us be clear about this at the outset—is a man with absolutely no personal ambition and one so self-effacing that it is difficult to persuade him to use the word 'I' if it can be avoided. He constantly makes news, but he has no wish to be news. He welcomes press co-operation in giving publicity to the matters he has at heart because he believes in the power of the press for good and in the importance of making known the truth; and, because he hates secrecy and dark dealings, he makes a point of co-operating to the full with the press and keeping it (and through it public opinion) informed of the evils he spends his life spotlighting.

Michael Scott is an exceedingly simple man, more simple than the average man can comprehend. He is a Christian in the sense that needs no qualification. The light by which he lives is that ultimate simplification: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself,' and it is the things on which he

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directs this light that we see reflected in our newspapers. Complications which confuse and distract the average man—conventions, economics, dogmas, political expediency—are seen by him in true perspective not as complications to mislead, to be compromised with, to be truckled to, but as obstructions to be surmounted, to be removed if necessary.

When Scott arrived in Johannesburg he was made Assistant Priest to the coloured community and Chaplain to an Orphanage for coloured children. He lived in a small rondavel in the grounds of the orphanage. His rondavel was on the edge of Sophiatown, one of Johannesburg's slum townships. Here and in the adjacent townships lived a population of some 36,000 people crowded together in a very small area. The conditions under which these people live is difficult to describe in a way that can be believed. The houses are crammed, with sometimes several families sharing one room. The streets are unmade, undrained and filthy. The most primitive bucket sanitation is provided. Water is not laid on to the houses, but has to be carried from insufficient taps in the streets. Most of the cooking is done on coal braziers in the streets and from the heights of Johannesburg, particularly on still winter evenings when the workers return home and begin to prepare their evening meal, the cloud of sacrificial smoke may be seen thinly veiling the glory of the sunset. The inhabitants of the poverty-stricken slum are really themselves the burnt offering of the evening ritual. Those people work in Johannesburg, a fabulous city of skyscrapers, mansions and aggressive wealth, where fortunes even in these humdrum 1940's can be won and lost in a day. The men are office workers, factory workers, street sweepers, labourers. The women work in factories or in white people's homes; they take bundles of white people's washing back on their heads to be done in their waterless little hovels. These are the working people that keep the life of the great city going; they do most of the heavy and all of the menial work. They are, with few exceptions, not permitted to do any skilled work, nor have most of them the opportunity of doing intellectual work. The men are almost all inadequately paid, 'inadequately' meaning too badly to keep themselves and

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their families above the bread line. The women therefore must either go out to work or else make money by brewing liquor illicitly. The children are not looked after and for only a proportion of them is there room in the schools. They run about the streets playing and begging and as they grow older they gamble and pilfer. Malnutrition and disease reach appalling proportions and in the squalor and poverty and overcrowding, drunkenness, crime and violences are inevitable.

At the back of Scott's rondavel was an expanse of lovely grassy rocky Transvaal country bounded by hills, the only occupants of which were the dead in a distant cemetery, and Scott, as he looked at the crowded squalor to the south of him and the hills and sky to the north, could not but reflect on the enviable lot of the dead, each with his $6\frac{1}{2}$ ft by $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by 7 ft., a lebensraum probably achieved by only very few of his living neighbours.

Such was the condition of the people among whom Scott lived in this period at the climax of the war for the four freedoms. He was not one to indulge for long in sad reflection. He went round the libraries, he dug out dusty Blue Books, and he did a great deal of study. First of all he set himself to find out what was the cause of these evils, then he looked for any suggestions to combat them, and finally he worked out his own part. It was not difficult to identify the forces that had been at work for over half a century to create these evil conditions. To his astonishment Scott found that the answers to many of the problems, the means of combating them, had also been discovered but never acted upon. It had been the practice of successive South African governments, whenever a racial or economic problem presented itself, to appoint a Commission of Inquiry of learned men (and South Africa has many learned men) to find a solution. It has equally been the practice of successive governments to do nothing with the reports of these Commissions when they get them. But they are there for anyone who is interested. The Government at that time was deeply committed to the war, a war which was being fought for principles of freedom, justice and social regeneration. Although the four freedoms had not then been formulated, the underlying ideas were in the air. Scott realized

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that these Commission reports contained recommendations which, if implemented, would go far towards the elimination of poverty, malnutrition, disease and soil erosion, and make of the country a demi-paradise, at any rate by Sophiatown standards.

* He conceived it his duty to try to organize the progressive forces in the country into a body of support for the Government in any action it wished to take along the lines of its Commissions' reports. He saw in a carefully planned and subsidized regionalism a possible solution to the problems of migratory labour, of the enormous influx of the population into the towns, of the devastation of the countryside, of the poverty, the malnutrition, the crime. He thought that with an increased development and prosperity of the country districts and a halt to the top-heavy growth of certain towns, the racial friction and mistrust would automatically be eased. Progressive tides were running strongly, particularly among servicemen who seemed in search of a wider, more creative nationalism at the war's close.

Scott formed the Campaign for Right and Justice to co-ordinate opinion in the country and the activities of many independent organizations, and to canalize all progressive thought into a united support of the Government in any enlightened course of action it might take. A scheme of Regional Planning was to provide the practical programme. The Campaign won a good deal of support from Europeans, and Scott a great trust from the natives, and for a short time an interesting part was played by the Campaign in reconciliation in industrial disputes where non-European workers were involved. Persistent rumours were, however, abroad that the Campaign for Right and Justice was the germ of a new political party. Scott, in interviews with Cabinet Ministers, had repeatedly and categorically denied that there was any such intention. When he discovered his own views on this subject completely at variance with a section of the organization he had, in the circumstances, no option but to resign. The Campaign lingered on for a few months, but without him and without Government support for the constructive programme that Regional planning was to provide, it could not survive.

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The collapse of the Campaign and the high hopes that went with it was a very deep sorrow to Scott who mourned it for many a long day. But however abortive it had been in its major objectives, it had incidentally made Michael Scott known to a wide circle of people and particularly to the more democratic institutions in the country, the Trades Unions, Church organizations, press, employers of labour, and Government and Municipal officials; and above all the non-Europeans by this time recognized him as a champion of their rights. His tall figure, in a shabby cassock, sometimes black, sometimes white, with thick boots muddied in the long walk through the streets of Sophiatown, brief-case bulging with papers, pockets often as not bulging with sweets, was known and greeted everywhere.

In 1946 the South African parliament passed what came to be known as the Ghetto Act, imposing certain economic restrictions on the Indian community. This was bitterly resented by the Indians, particularly as it was passed by a parliament in which they were not represented. To oppose it in Durban they revived the Gandhi weapon, first forged in South Africa, of Passive Resistance. It was a large-scale, extremely well-organized movement, and each night a number of volunteer resisters, men and women, would go down and camp quietly on a vacant piece of municipal ground until the police arrested them. This was carried out night after night in extremely orderly fashion by the Indians, but disturbing stories were circulating in Johannesburg of the attacks of white hooligans on the Indian resisters, and there were allegations that the police gave the Indians no protection.

Scott was asked to go down to Durban one week-end and report on events there. He had come under the sway of Gandhi in India and the whole philosophy underlying the concept of Satyagraha interested him deeply.

'I think all of us must remember the long drive down to Durban that night,' he recorded. 'We were all rather nervous for each had a reputation which was extremely inimical to the mobs which were at work in Durban and no one had the least idea of how it was going to turn out. We slept for a few hours en route at the back of a little Indian store and got up in the chill

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half light of morning feeling rather like a section of paratroops going down behind the enemy's lines. As the sun climbed high there was the range of the Drakensburg and the valley of a Thousand Hills to remind one of the infinitely long and arduous processes of creation; of the power and endurance of values one cherishes, seemingly so weak and frail in oneself. What was it besides Yusef's car that bore us on towards this white city on the sub-tropical ocean, a dream of paradise to many in northern latitudes, but also a hotbed of racial hatred and spurious patriotism?

'Everything was peaceful enough as we approached the city. The great expanse of sea shimmering in the sun looked very inviting. The gaily coloured costumes and beach umbrellas, the dark green of palm trees, and the gay abandon of the surf bathers, and the gleaming white buildings of the city all spoke of the folly of man's hates and jealousies. But that was no answer.

'Only in the offices of the Passive Resistance Council did one sense the tension which is the symptom of a crisis as deep in history as our present civilization. Dr. Naicker and the other leaders were looking tired and strained and immediately began consultations with Dr. Dadoo. Dr. Goonam, the first Indian woman in South Africa to qualify as a doctor, seemed cheerful and unconcerned and others were methodically busy about the task of organizing the scores of passive resistance volunteers who thronged the offices and for whom classes of instruction had to be arranged.

'Nothing would happen until the evening when the appointed batch of resisters would be escorted to the "resistance camp" and would there await developments.

'It seemed that there were now organized gangs of white youths who planned concerted attacks on the resisters, the operations being directed by a certain individual who was said to be a sort of underhand dealer and had a large number of ne'er-do-wells at his beck and call.

'As dusk began to fall the volunteers for the evening were formed up in a hall used for instruction purposes and were addressed by Reddy, their O.C. They were told that they were the custodians of the honour of the Indian people, that the racial

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persecution and oppression to which all the non-white races in South Africa were subjected was being challenged by the methods of non-violence of Satyagraha. If any single one of them did not feel strong enough in his spirit to go on with it he should withdraw now. No one must be weak enough to allow himself to be provoked or hit back no matter how cowardly and brutal the attacks might be, and even if the women volunteers were attacked. And no one must be weak enough to defend himself, much less to run away. If they were not sufficiently sure of themselves they should wait and go through a period of further training. No one relented and after short, matter-of-fact speeches by Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker they all marched out giving the passive resistance salute and were greeted with "Jai Hind" and "Iqubal Zindabad".

I accompanied Drs. Naicker and Goonam to the site of the camp with the intention then of observing and reporting on what happened. By now it was dark and the sea air rather chilly, or so it seemed. At first all was quiet. There were a few catcalls from passers-by in cars as they marched in file to the centre of the "resistance plot". By this time they had given up trying to erect tents and stood there in a group with only a lantern.

'After about half an hour of waiting groups of European youths dressed in sports kit—running shorts and gym shoes or football boots—gathered in twos and threes on the opposite side of the plot to where we were standing. After a while they formed into one group and began singing patriotic songs. Then we heard them being addressed by somebody. When the speaker had finished there was a silence while they assembled in some sort of formation. Suddenly a whistle blew, and with shouts and catcalls the whole formation charged and bore down upon the little group of resisters who were standing back to back so as to face in all directions.

'The attackers were mainly youths and a few girls bringing up the rear. Fine-looking youngsters some of them were, and perhaps they thought they were doing something brave. With their fists they struck the Indians in the face and about the body. No one retaliated but some tried to duck or ward off the blows be-



4. Herero Women



5. Rev. Michael Scott

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fore falling down. On the ground they were kicked. Some were still and some groaning. I did not see any of the Indian girls attacked but I believe one or two were struck. It was all over very quickly and the attackers thereupon dispersed into the general crowd, while the other Indians went forward to give first aid.

'Attempts were now made to get the authorities to intervene. Father Satchell had already made a public protest at what was being allowed to happen. He contended, as did all of us who tried to get official intervention, that if the Indians preferred to incur the penalty of what they considered to be unjust law rather than acquiesce in it, that was a form of protest which the State must recognize and afford them the protection as well as the penalty of the law.

'The authorities, however, refused to listen to these arguments and declined to take any action either against the Indians or against the gangs of youths. Inevitably, this confronted us all with critical decisions. No one could foresee where the sort of exhibition we had just witnessed was going to end. The Indian community was incensed at the cowardice and brutality of the white mob and were convinced the authorities, if not responsible for organizing the attacks in some indirect way, were conniving at them in order to break the movement.

'Some of us Europeans had encouraged the Passive Resistance Movement by speaking at their meetings and joining in their prayers. We had warned the Government that the passage of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act would have serious consequences for South Africa, both at home in the matter of race relations and abroad where such a measure, discriminating purely on grounds of race, would have many harmful political and other consequences. As a Christian one felt it to be part and parcel of our whole vast superstructure of racial discrimination in South Africa whereby it was the law itself which made criminals of the people, which created colour barriers, preventing the use of God-given talents and skills, and obstructing the legitimate development of other races. . . .

'The same sort of scenes that have been described above at the

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Resistance Plot occurred the next night, and the night after an Indian policeman who had been dressed in plain clothes was pursued by a crowd armed with sticks. He could not speak to us in hospital when we visited him, and he died as a result of his injuries. Tens of thousands of Indians thronged the streets of Durban and made a procession through the streets. A Hindu priest, a Moslem Moulvi, Mr. Rustomjee (a Parsee), Father Satchell and myself went before the coffin to the Indian cemetery. We conducted a service there and after lowering the coffin into the grave addressed the enormous but orderly crowds which had collected, appealing for discipline and restraint: . . .

“The assaults were becoming more severe. Not only had this Indian been killed but others who were not Satyagrahas were being assaulted in the streets of Durban. . . . Should they send in another batch of volunteers again, or should there be a respite to let feelings cool down? As it so often happens, a vital decision had to be taken quickly, and the responsible leaders had to take it. They stood there on the corner of West Street and were considering whether they should not take the responsibility of suspending activities for a few days. I was asked what I thought ought to be done. I was noncommittal, feeling that it was the Indian people who were being tested, not me, and that the decision therefore lay with them, who would bear the brunt of it, but I would stand by them whatever their decision was.

“They decided to go on with it, and though I was very apprehensive about what was to happen I admired them for their decision, and, to balance my increasing qualms, there came an assurance that the movement was well grounded in truth and courage. Feeling was running high and it says a good deal for the innate discipline of the Indian community that there was not a single case of retaliation against white provocateurs.

“That night attacks were even more violent. I drew up a hurried report on the position and Mr. Sorubjee Rustomjee cabled extracts from it to General Smuts and to India. . . . For my own part the only possible course seemed to be to throw in one’s lot with the Resisters.

“And so that night I found myself one of a nervous little band

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standing in the dark in the middle of an open space in that very modern city with two separate crowds opposing one another, one European and the other Indian with some Africans. There were three or four Indian girl students in this batch. In the same way as before the attackers began with a charge and a sort of high-pitched hunting cry. The men volunteers were very soon knocked down and lying huddled on the ground. The girls had not been seriously assaulted. I was dressed in my cassock and they recoiled from assaulting me just as they were about to do so. Having learned something of the spirit of the Satyagrahas by this time, I spoke to them without heat. Two girls came up and started shouting "coolie guts" and "curry guts". "Are you an Anglican? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you renegade. If I had known what your religion teaches I'd never have been confirmed." "God would never have had me," said one. "He's had me," said another.

"Two men came up and started pushing, expecting one would hit back, but they were bullies and had a frightened look in their eyes for all that they physically had the mastery of us.

"I remember one of the Indian girls, a Muslim, Zenab Asvat, after all the men had been knocked unconscious in front of her, saying to me, "It's not their fault, they don't know what they are doing." I don't suppose she had ever read the story of the crucifixion, but her religion had taught her more than those two girls, it seemed.

"I felt so sick and helpless and ashamed, and yet her remark seemed strangely to reassure me that simply by standing still there on that particular piece of ground one was enabling something to be done—yes, enabling God to do something—against the dreadful evil power which was manifest in that sadistic mob. But one knew that Zenab Asvat was right, they did not understand. Far more responsible were the religious leaders who preached the colour bar under the sign of the cross in South Africa, and the statesmen and politicians who in season and out of season play upon the racial prejudices of the people. . . .

"The assaults continued. After being charged and released we would go back to the site and be arrested again. Finally the

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assaults were stopped by reading the Riotous Assemblies Act and charging us all under that. Not one of the attackers had been arrested during the whole period in which these assaults took place. Before it stopped some of us had as many as four or five convictions. In the Magistrates' Court we were fined for the first offences, but after refusing to pay the fines, were given three months' imprisonment with hard labour for the last offence.'

In his statement in Court, Scott said: 'With regard to the personal references to myself from the Bench, and to the surprise that was expressed at my association with people of another class, namely my fellow prisoners, I must first disclaim any such superiority of class or intelligence as that suggested, and state further that my religion knows no colour bar. It recognizes no artificial barriers of race or class, indeed it must challenge any conception of racial inferiority for there cannot be "Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman and freeman, but Christ is all in all".'

Scott did his three months in Durban jail, with a small remission for good behaviour. He sewed mailbags and he cleaned latrines; three weeks of the time were spent in the prison hospital; he was allowed no association or conversation with the non-European Resister prisoners. The Penal Reform Commission was sitting at the time, so in the jail he was allowed to write a long memorandum on conditions for them.

There was much controversy within and without the Church as to the rightness of Scott's action in joining the Passive Resistance movement. One thing was obvious: he could not tie himself down to parochial responsibilities. There were many men much more suited than he to the daily round, but there was no other with his flair for smelling out and floodlighting the murkier evils inherent in South Africa's colour oligarchy. He sent in his resignation to the Bishop who, understanding the motives though not always approving the methods, accepted it and granted him instead a general licence to preach in the diocese. His resignation handicapped him financially for henceforward he must derive his entire living from occasional press articles and occasional locum work in Johannesburg parishes. From now on he refused

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all church work in parishes where there was a colour bar, explicit or implicit, in force. His own financial requirements were very small. Many people were glad to be able to offer him hospitality, but he was extremely scrupulous as far as money was concerned. For himself he would accept nothing in cash; and occasionally in those rather straitened times he sold some of his few possessions.

A symptom of the appalling overcrowding of the native townships round Johannesburg was the mushroom growth of a series of shanty towns—plague spots, whole towns erected of corrugated iron, old tins and sacking, on vacant ground, housing the people the adjacent overflowing townships could just not contain. The last of these was called Tobruk and was started by ex-servicemen in the hope that the native people themselves would be able to organize an orderly community and put the authorities to shame. Things were not, however, going too smoothly there, and in the later part of 1946 it was suggested to Scott that he might go there and observe and report on conditions and advise the coloured ex-soldier, Komo by name, who was running the place. Scott decided that to become himself entirely conversant with conditions and life there, and in order that the people might get to know and trust him, he must actually live in the camp. With his typewriter and a sheaf of paper and not much else, he took up his abode in a thin hessian shelter furnished with an iron bed, a small table and a chair, behind a small sacking church the African Congregationalist minister had erected. The minister's wife looked after him along with her family.

The camp funds, raised by subscriptions from the people, were leaking rapidly away into Komo's pocket, while the so-called camp 'police' were his loyal henchmen and with their aid he was exercising a tyranny that was feared and resented. Efforts were being made by the camp committee to dislodge Komo, who eventually decamped with the funds and the books. In the meantime the people were losing all confidence and refused to pay more subscriptions, while the camp 'police' and particularly the sanitary squads were unpaid and disaffected. Scott paid the current wages out of his savings, hoping to get the place cleaned up,

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and believing that once confidence and order were restored subscriptions would once more come in. The 'police' however remained Komo's men and he kept dissension active from the neighbouring township to which he had fled, part of the population opposing him, part intimidated by him, and part his active partisans. When strife seemed to flag he sent over a lorry load of Zulu braves who did a threatening little war dance through the streets. His evil influence was never absent. The camp 'police' were generally drunk and quite lawless in pursuing their extortionist methods. The sanitary squads gave up and sanitary conditions were appalling. There was an outbreak of small-pox, which was the only health matter the authorities concerned themselves with. The maintenance of law and order no longer existed. Scott, by his personal influence, managed to hold the warring elements in comparative check for some weeks, while he constantly urged that some municipal or government authority should take over. When things were at their most critical he received a summons for contravening the Native Urban Areas Act by living in a native township. He had eventually to answer the summons and he was convicted and given a suspended sentence against which he appealed. The trouble he had tried so hard to ward off broke out and the camp was eventually taken over by the police. Scott's activities in Tobruk had done more than anything else to focus the attention of Europeans on the conditions existing on the outskirts of their towns.

Scott's own view of the part he played in Tobruk was: 'It seemed to me and it still seems to me that the existence of between sixty and seventy thousand people living virtually as outlaws on the hills all round Johannesburg and in the most degrading condition imaginable, constitutes a challenge not only to the State but to the Church as well. It was impossible to find any authority or department of State which would accept responsibility for these thousands of Africans without land, homes or status. On the other hand it is the vocation of the Church, not only to understand the problems and difficulties in the life of her people but to enter into them and to share that life. . . . I have no regrets for the part I have played in this episode in the life of the African

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people, and with God's permission will continue to play. My admiration for the Africans, their endurance, their patience and good humour in the face of such terrible privations has been greatly increased by living amongst them. They on their part, or some of them, have learned that some of us Christians really do believe the things which are taught in our churches and schools and that they have a powerful effect in life.'

Away in the Eastern Transvaal in the Bethal, Ermelo, Standerton districts is some of the finest agricultural land in the country. It is also very near to the enormous markets of the Reef. Whole farms are under cultivation, fortunes are made by potato and other 'kings'. The land is far too valuable for the usual South African labour practice to be followed, of employing whole families on squatter terms, allowing them land for their huts and grazing for their cattle in return for a period of service. These farms have for the most part resorted to the mines' practice of housing labour recruited under contract in compounds built for the purpose. South African natives for the most part dislike farm labour of any sort because of the low wages and poor conditions, and they know to beware particularly of the Bethal district; so the labour there is recruited mainly from among natives coming into the Union from the northern territories in search of work, their intended destination being generally the gold mines. They are persuaded by the recruiters, sometimes rather forcibly, to contract for the farms. Labour conditions on certain of these farms have been revealed as a standing disgrace to a modern society. The Synod of the Diocese of Johannesburg in 1944 drew up a memorandum condemning these conditions and sent copies to the Government and other bodies with very little result.

In the middle of 1947, soon after the Tobruk affair was beginning to be forgotten, Scott began to hear complaints among the natives of conditions in Bethal. He decided the best thing would be to go down and investigate for himself. He found conditions on some of the farms considerably worse than slavery, when the slave owner has an economic interest in the wellbeing of his slaves. He wrote a report on conditions, and the press took up the story with headlines on slavery conditions at Bethal. The

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farmers were extremely indignant and asked Scott to attend a meeting which said nothing to refute the allegations, but which would not give Scott a chance to speak although the farmers had asked him to attend. He confessed that confronting these angry farmers was among the more frightening episodes of his life. The whole country hummed with the scandal, the Government made reassuring speeches and ordered an inquiry, but gradually the whole thing died down. South Africa had, however, now become Bethal-conscious. Above all, South Africa was now thoroughly Scott-conscious. He, for his part, had gained a multitude of bitter enemies, a few more admirers, and the love and trust of the oppressed. The result of his activities will not be measurable for some time, but he has undoubtedly set up a ferment in the hearts of his fellow countrymen and time will reveal whether the product is a vintage wine which mellows or skokiaan which maddens. In the meantime his enemies circulate fantastic stories about him, and the whole country is apt to ask, during a lull: Where is Scott now?

CHAPTER XI

The Heritage of Your Father's Orphans

(i)

Scott was now in Bechuanaland.

The referendum among the native people on the subject of the incorporation of South-West Africa into the Union had been held, and the Government's delegation to the United Nations claimed the support of the great majority of the 330,000 native people concerned. The validity of the referendum was the subject of a very critical dispatch to the *New York Times* from its correspondent in Pretoria, and a copy of this report was given to Scott soon after his release from jail. Hard upon this he received word that Frederick Maharero, the Paramount Chief of the Hereros in exile in Bechuanaland, wished to see him. So one Saturday in November, Scott and a party of friends set off by car for Bechuanaland.

'The country', Scott recalled, 'was very brown and parched after the dry winter season on that November morning and the road seemed very rough and dusty, though I should not consider it so now. Several hours were spent at one place digging the car out of the deep sand. Then in the Tuli block along an endless track made a century ago by the old B.S.A. Company, searching for Martin's Drift, we came upon a spruit running across the road, took off from one side and landed obliquely on the other, hitting a huge boulder with the oil sump. The oil ran out slowly enough to enable us to find a shady resting place by the Limpopo river. There we remained for many hours vainly trying to mend the cracked sump, until rescued by a tractor driver who also supplied coffee and porridge. On arrival at Serowe, after a much

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needed bath and change, I had a lengthy interview with Tshekedi Khama.'

Tshekedi Khama is the son of the famous old chief Khama who, seventy years ago, made a journey to London with two other chiefs to see Queen Victoria's ministers and get from them Protection agreements for their country. Tshekedi is something over forty years of age though he looks much younger. At first sight he is unimpressive, and only when one gets into conversation with him does one appreciate his great grasp of affairs. He had barely matriculated when his elder brother died and he was called to take over the regency. For almost a quarter of a century he has guided the destiny of the Bamangwato people (one of the six Bechuanaland tribes), and his intelligence, forthrightness, and ardent desire for his people's progress have made him a force to be reckoned with in colonial government. His experience of colour discrimination has not embittered him as it has so many intelligent Africans, nor has his position as the most prominent chief in South Africa made him in any way opinionated or aggressive. He works constantly for the betterment of his tribe, and he is shrewdly amused at the machinations (through which he clearly sees) of European officials and others to frustrate him and is not discouraged.

It is with Tshekedi's tribe that the exiled Hereros have lived and prospered for so long. The Bamangwato have a flexible system of autonomy of portions of the tribe, and through this alien tribes can be absorbed with their chiefs, granted tribal lands and in all domestic concerns remain under the authority of their own chief whose status is similar to that of a Bamangwato headman. In this tolerant, progressive atmosphere the Hereros, reinforced by a seepage of fellow-tribesmen from outside the Protectorate, have grown from a ragged 1,147 fugitives into a prosperous and respected tribe of some 14,000 souls. The tribal centre in Bechuanaland is Mahalapye where Chief Frederick lives; and here the tall, dark, graceful Herero women may be seen going about their household tasks in the charmingly voluminous print Victorian dress that has remained their national dress, as also of their sisters in South-West, since the days when it was copied

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from the wives of the German missionaries. In other ways these Hereros have adapted themselves to the Bechuana way of life.

Scott on his first visit had a long interview with Tshekedi, laying the foundation of a friendship and a mutual respect of value to both. A meeting was then arranged with Chief Frederick.

Frederick Maharero is now an old man with hair growing white. He has a fine head, a good face and a steadfast look. There is great human dignity in his every movement, and the wisdom of experience in each line of his dark brown face. He speaks no English, and the interview had to be through an interpreter.

The old chief said: 'I made a request to Chief Tshekedi to be given an opportunity of meeting you. I asked this in order to express my views on the question of appealing for the return of our lands in South-West Africa. It is the conviction of the whole Herero people that we should have our lands returned to us. And it is the wish of the Herero people living in the Bechuanaland Protectorate that we should return to South-West Africa. Our request is that our country should be administered by the British Government in the same manner as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. I expressed our views at a meeting held not so long ago with the High Commissioner in Mafeking, that our country should not be handed over to the Union but that, when the land which was ours is returned to us, we should be administered by the British Government. It is the wish of the Herero people, men, women and children, that their country should not be handed over to the Union Government. . . . These are the feelings of the Herero people which I wished to come and lay before you. It is the desire of my people and my desire that I should go back and live with them in South-West Africa.'

Scott commented on this meeting: 'But it was not the words, not even the quiet dignity of the old chief which seemed so significant. It was something very much deeper. There was a quality which revealed itself through the black-lined features which I have since found so striking in other Herero chiefs, notably Hosea. It is a quality in them which has been forged out of half a century of oppression and the remembrance of a tyranny which

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by definition of the German Consul, von Trotha, aimed at and almost accomplished their extermination.'

Scott was shown letters which had been pouring in to Chief Frederick from his people in South-West Africa, which throw an interesting light on the subject of the referendum and helped to build up his conviction that all was not as well as the Government would have the world believe. Here are the translations of some of these letters:

'Okakarara. 28.3.46.

'To the Chief—I let you know that I received your letter but have been moving from place to place between Windhoek and Okakarara. We do not sleep because we are being asked for our land so that it be made one with the Union, but we say no, we refuse. We say that the country is ours and ask that it be given to us. We had been robbed of it unjustly. The Government has not paid heed to what we say but continue in their efforts to prevail over us. Indeed we do not sleep. And from whence shall our help come? Are you making any efforts or are you just quiet about the matter? You should tell me quickly because I do not sleep. So much for this. I addressed this letter to Inan [Frederick's sister] because I was afraid it might fall into the hands of our enemies. This is all. Your country is looking up to you. Tjenaurei is keeping well and I am with him even now. He sends his greetings to all of you in your village. Your whole country sends greetings to you. I together with my children also send hearty greetings. I am, F. Tjerije.'

'Tses. 14.3.46.

'To our honoured Chief F. S. Maharero—We received your letter. Some of us have been to Windhoek to attend a meeting to discuss the country. The white people here say that the country must be joined to the Union, but we said that it could not be joined to the Union, but should be given to us as it is ours. All efforts are being made to prevail on us so that it may be joined to the Union. We were afterwards told that what was said would be placed before the person responsible for this country, Genelar

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Zumutz [General Smuts]. We returned to-day from Windhoek. This is how the reply to the chief's letter took a long time. We have heard clearly what was said and we desire very much that the chief should come. We are not at all happy. We pray that the chief should come even if it be for a few days and then go back. We want the chief very much. That is all. We are your people Alfeus Kareja and the tribe living in the Tses area, in the district of Keetmanshoop. We should look forward to your reply. Greetings.'

'P.O. Box 18, Keetmanshoop, S.W.A. 20th February 1946.

'F. S. Maharero, Esq., Mahalapye.

'Honoured Chief—The chief's letter on certain matters addressed last month to your people who live in the Keetmanshoop district arrived safely. The man to whom you had written had gone to Windhoek to attend a meeting of the headmen of the various villages, and as he could not find time he requested me to reply to the chief's letter.

'These are the words of this man and of those who live in here: Chief Frederick, the heritage of your father's orphans is about to be taken from them and because we cannot speak with one voice as we are scattered all over their country, our heritage may therefore fall to that side for which we have no liking. Let the chief despite pressing duties there come with all haste to us, we pray you, son of the chiefs of our fathers. Come quickly to us. Come, come, come. Without you your tribe cannot come together but remains scattered so please come quickly to bring us together. We shall expect you chief and do come quickly.

'I, the writer of this letter, am Jonas Gottfried Ueriondjoza Katjerungu, grandson of Kuhata, so my mother was Hainkondondu and, so that you may understand clearly, let me say this that my grandfather's Elias (Eliaroba) wife afterwards married my father's younger brother Naftali, and chief if the said woman be still alive kindly let me know, and tell her my father died on 16.5.45. With humility and respect, I am, J. G. U. Katjerungu.'

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'Ku Stephanus, Bingana, Otjihitwas. Epukiro Reserve No. 3.
17.6.46.

'I have received your letter in which you inquired about our matter. Yes, it is so; we are being asked that our land be joined to the Union, but we have refused stating that our land will not be joined to the Union at all, but rather should it remain ours only, together with those with whom we have been associating in the past. Those we like and not the Union. That is what we said. Up to now we have refused to join them. But as far as we can see the Government does not like our saying that we refuse to be drawn towards the Dutch people. The Hereros, the Namas, the Ovambos and the Berg-Damaras have all refused. We were taken according to our individual tribes and each tribe was asked individually but all of them refused and spoke in one and the same strain to say they refuse. We have been informed further that on 3rd September there will be a meeting again, that we would be stopped from going to that meeting, and that they will have their own man to speak for them while we will be stopped. This is all. The matter now rests with you. You who enjoy freedom are the people who should come here to us. Yours, N. Hoveka.'

(ii)

At Chief Frederick Maharero's request, Scott undertook the journey to South-West Africa to find out the truth about his people there, and that journey led to others, farther afield. That journey led to three years, so far, devoted to constant endeavour to obtain a hearing in the forum of the world for this little African tribe, which was to become for him the prototype of all the oppressed of the earth.

'The train journey from the Transvaal round the southern edge of the Kalahari Desert', wrote Scott, 'impressed one with the vastness of Africa, of course, but also with the fact that the habitable areas are decreasing. The desert, it seems, is spreading in three directions, eastwards and southwards into the Karoo and westwards into Namaqualand and South-West Africa. The Na-

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mib Desert on the coast is also said to be advancing northwards, and according to Dr. Ross the research station at Grootfontein, which was set up to check the destruction of the top soil and humus by the windblown sands, has already been overtaken.

'There is an inexorable ruthlessness about Nature in Africa which commands or should command the utmost respect. But man's puny and ignorant defiance is threatening to reduce vast tracts of South Africa and South-West Africa to desert. Three hundred thousand acres are being carried away to the sea by the rivers in flood every year. Irrigation and land reclamation projects require state capital investment just as the railways did in a country where thousands of miles of uninhabited scrub have to be traversed.

'After three days of travel through seemingly infinite tracts of desert scrub one finds oneself quite suddenly at Windhoek. Set in the green hills under the blue vault of heaven, this capital city with its spires and clean streets and tall trees and bright flowering shrubs belies with its beauty the hideous history of that "Sunny Land". This former headquarters of the Imperial German Government still has a very Prussian air about it. In the European city there are no slums. Everywhere there are abundant signs of prosperity. I was told there is one motor car for every four people in Windhoek.

'Only outside the town, in the Native Location, do you find any poverty. There the houses are almost all tin shanties such as we are so familiar with in the Union. There is no lighting in the streets except outside the Municipal Beer Hall and offices. There are no drains and no water-borne sewerage, the latrines constantly overflowing before the sewage carts come to clear them.

'When I first reached the location, after being directed by an official of the Non-European Affairs Department at the Municipal Office,¹ there was amazement on the faces of the young Hereros when I told them that I had recently been with their Paramount Chief Frederick Maharero, and that I wanted truthful answers for him to certain questions.

¹ Scott was accused in the South-West African press of moving by stealth 'a buck slipping into the shadows'.

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'When they had overcome their initial suspicion, certain formalities having been completed, and they had decided that it was all right for them to speak, they were almost overcome with emotion. . . . As they spoke shafts of light seemed to flit from one ugly little picture to another making a succession of stark statuesque scenes which again it was difficult to reconcile with a country of such beauty and sunshine and one so richly endowed with almost everything except water.'

The leading Hereros at Windhoek decided that the chiefs must be told of the purpose of this visit, and they set about arranging a meeting in the Aminuis Reserve where the senior chief, Hosea Kutako, lived.

Scott, in the meantime, called on the Secretary for the Government, Mr. Nesor, at Windhoek, who claimed to know him 'by reputation', and asked for a permit to visit the reserve. He told the Secretary of his visit to Chief Frederick in Bechuanaland and of the wish of the chief and his people that the tribe should be reunited and of their hope to return to South-West Africa to the lands they considered to be rightfully theirs. Mr. Nesor expressed his private opinion that they should be reunited in one tribal area, but said the South-West Hereros had refused the land offered to them. [The Hereros maintain this land is semi-desert and unhealthy for man and beast.]

The Native Commissioner gave Scott a permit to visit for one day the Aminuis Reserve and an introduction to the Welfare Officer there.

A lorry had been obtained by one of the younger Herero men who acts as spokesman when the elders of the tribe are meeting, and Scott set off with him and two or three others.

'To us all', Scott himself takes up the story again, 'there was a sort of solemnity about that journey which I only fully appreciated after we had gone some miles along the road to Gobabis. There, at a certain place, the lorry pulled up and I was asked to go with them into the bush a little way. Rather puzzled I followed these Hereros, dodging clutching thorn-bushes, until we reached a certain kind of tree. There all knelt down facing the same direction and I instinctively followed. After a short silence

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the leading young man prayed in the Herero language, and was translated by one of the interpreters.

'We were kneeling close to the place where the German war against the Herero people had begun. The prayer asked for a blessing on our journey which after so many years was being undertaken with the object of restoring the Herero people to the land and the life which they lived before a great wickedness was done to them, a thing no Herero would ever forget. After asking God to take care of the chiefs and leaders of the people and to bring us back safely along the right road, the leading young man took a handful of earth and gave each of us a little on the palms of our hands. It was taken into the mouth almost like a communion rite and then spat out. I was taken to see some rocks on which the date of the Herero war had been inscribed in German script.

'We resumed our journey through Gobabis and then, by means of a track, for nearly sixty miles. This was the roughest road I have ever travelled. There was not a moment's respite and every few yards one seemed to be thrown up to the canvas-covered roof.

'We did not arrive at Aminuis Reserve until about an hour after midnight. By this time it was too late to call on the Welfare Officer and so I was taken to Chief Hosea's kraal. One man had been sent on to warn him that a visitor was coming to see him and by the time we arrived several women were already preparing to cook a meal.

'Hosea himself was lying down, having only just been woken up; and he probably thought I was a white trader who had lost his way. I began to explain, through an interpreter, that I had come many hundreds of miles to see him; that letters had been received by Frederick Maharero regarding the referendum and his people's fears. As this was explained to Hosea his first look of amazement and incredulity slowly gave way to an expression which perhaps one will never be privileged to see again. It was twenty-five years since Hosea had seen Frederick Maharero, and that was under the tragic circumstances which are described in his recorded statement.¹ Twenty years before that Hosea had

¹ Page 75.

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escorted his chief, after they had given up the struggle against the German Army and trekked across the Kalahari to Bechuanaland. Hosea had been given his authority then. He had intended being ordained to the Ministry but had accepted this responsibility and has remained faithful to it, but almost without hope, since.

'There was no haste about his movements now. He slowly got to his feet and began issuing orders with complete self-possession. I was asked not to say anything more for the present and was given porridge and tea. After a little while the chief's councillors began to arrive, carrying their little stools and sat grouped around a brazier in the chief's hut. Then the whole matter had to be explained to them. It seemed very strange to have travelled all that distance, and after all those years of separation, to be communicating something which was intimate and personal to these two old African chiefs. And yet bound up in it was the whole history of their people, and the fate of Germany in World Wars I and II, and now the birth of the United Nations.

'There was a strange tenseness about these Africans hearing about the United Nations, they who had been relegated to the edge of the Kalahari Desert, who prayed always for the return of their land and the reunion of their people. Talking to them in that hut in the light of a full moon, it almost seemed, from their tenseness, as though they regarded the United Nations as the answer to their prayers. May the cynics blush for shame, they do regard it as God's instrument of justice and freedom for their people.

'Hosea had that same quality about him that I had noticed in Frederick Maharero, perhaps more markedly. He spoke with a quiet assurance of the righteousness of their cause. There was no excitement as he gave orders and he sat surrounded by his tribal councillors who listened intently and looked searchingly but said little. Those searching looks and that quiet assurance have followed me ever since: across the Kalahari there was the journey back to Bechuanaland to report to Chief Frederick, and to draw up the Petition to the United Nations; back then again over the desert to witness the signing of the Petition by the leaders in South-West Africa.'

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Scott during this visit saw and heard enough to convince him that the spirit of the Mandate was, despite the protestations of the authorities, remote from South-West Africa, and that grave errors of statesmanship and great injustices had been and were going to be committed. He took the greatest care that all the statements taken from the people he interviewed were correctly recorded. He wrote down what the interpreter said, had it translated back and approved by the man who had made it, who then signed it in the presence of witnesses, as did the interpreter. Many of the statements Scott gathered on these visits have been used in the course of this narrative.

(iii)

Once back in Bechuanaland, Scott reported to Chief Frederick and in consultation with Tshekedi Khama and the leading Hereros there, they planned their future action. Chief Frederick repeated that it was the desire of himself and his people that incorporation with the Union should not take place, but rather that the country should become a British Protectorate in the manner of Bechuanaland; and that the tribe, including himself and his exiled people, should be reunited and restored within their old tribal lands. 'I should not', said the chief, 'like my country to be brought under the Union Government because that Government adopts the same oppressive policy towards the native people as the Germans. The Union Government has no respect for the native inhabitants of their country as human beings. The Union Government does not want the native people to progress economically so that they may become economically independent. They restrict them regarding the cattle they may own and regarding other means of livelihood. There is nothing which the Union Government gives to native people which takes the place of their cattle. It is the restrictions and barriers which are placed in the way of the native people so that they become servants and dependent upon them which have driven the Herero people who lived in the Transvaal to cross into the country of the Bamangwato. The Union Government does not encourage education

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amongst the native people because they want the native people always to remain their servants. . . .’

The discussion turned to the question of land. The representative of Abanderu, relatives of the Hereros who live on the desert border of South-West and Bechuanaland, said: ‘I was in South-West Africa only two years ago, and I found that the land which we had previously occupied had been taken away from the people who have now been sent away from the valleys to the sandy soil where food cannot very well be grown. Our land, as it is now, is not good for us because it has been spoiled by the Union Government. . . . Our people have been driven away from the fertile valleys to the sandy regions. If our people still lived on those parts where our grandfathers lived, we should be satisfied that they are occupying the land of their fathers. The Herero people lived in those valleys until the Angola Boers were brought to South-West Africa by the Union Government, and the Hereros were pushed out of them so that they could now be occupied by these Angola Boers.

‘We had fought against the German in our own war—the Herero war—because amongst other reasons they had wanted to drive us away from these valleys where there was water and where food could be grown. We shall only be satisfied if this land which we had occupied, namely the river valleys, is returned to us. If the Government with God’s help would return this land to us we should be happy. This is our prayer to God that this land be returned to us and that we should go back to re-occupy it. These are the views I came all this way to express.’

Another headman then recounted how he came back from work on the Johannesburg gold mines to find a court case in progress between the Union Government and the Hereros about the moving of Hosea’s people from Orumbo. ‘The Hereros complained to the Court that they were asked to leave their valleys to make room for the Angola Boers. They refused and were asked a second time, and again refused. They were then pushed out by force: their belongings were thrown out of their huts and their huts were set on fire. . . . The district where this happened was Orumbo.’

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To a question as to the conclusion of the case, he replied: 'The people were nevertheless driven out of the valleys.' He affirmed: 'It is the wish of my people in South-West Africa that these lands in the valleys should be returned to them so that their chief and the people in Bechuanaland and their cattle may be able to return to us.'

Scott said to them: 'It is said by Dr. Vedder and others that the Hereros are losing their leadership in South-West Africa because they do not depart from the old ways, but are looking back to the past, and that they only want to remain a cattle-rearing people rather than to make progress in other walks of life.'

To this Chief Frederick replied: 'The Germans fought us and took away our lands. That is why they do not want to see any good in us. They converted us to Christianity but did not want to give us any education or to help us to advance. They only preached to us. The Hereros did not learn anything from them except the word "God". The Germans were afraid of the Herero people. They did not want them to become civilized as we want to-day. . . .'

The secretary of the Tribal Administration of the Bamangwato at this point broke in. 'Contrary to the remarks of Dr. Vedder I should say that the Hereros have shown their true mettle in Bechuanaland. They have made good progress, and are recognized as one of the finest cattle ranching and dairy farming people in our country.'

In consultation with Frederick and his advisers a Petition to the United Nations was drawn up. This begins by outlining the history of the Herero people from the occupation of the country by Germany. It briefly recounts the war of extermination and conditions under the mandate. The taking of the referendum is described. The petition asks for the return of the lands belonging to the Herero people from the Mandatory Power, which it accused of having forcibly driven the people away in order to settle, on the lands of its 'wards', large numbers of white farmers and Angola Boers from Portuguese Angola. The petition also asks for the return of the Paramount Chief, still living in the

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Bechuanaland Protectorate with fourteen thousand of his tribesmen. It asks that the Herero people should be re-united in one tribal area and that their tribal organization should be re-established. It claims that the sub-division of the tribe into eight separate reserves with no freedom of movement between one and another is destroying the integrity of the people. Under the League of Nations, it points out, they had a right to petition the Permanent Mandates Commission; but since the Union Government has twice refused a request of the United Nations to submit a Trusteeship Agreement for South-West Africa that right has seemingly been lost. Whose wards are we now, the people ask, and since their request to go to the United Nations themselves to state their case has been refused, the petition asks that an impartial commission should go from the United Nations. 'Rather than repeat the well-known facts and figures concerning the Union's native policy we have asked for an Impartial Commission from the United Nations to investigate and report on how far and with what effects this repressive policy is being enforced in South-West Africa. . . . We petition that South-West Africa should not remain under the Union as a mandate but that it should be placed under the International Trusteeship system in such a manner as seems good to the United Nations. Failing that, we pray it should become a British Protectorate like Bechuanaland, and failing that we ask that it be placed under the protection of the United States of America. Should South-West Africa become annexed to the Union of South Africa the native policy of the Union Government to keep the African in permanent servitude will never be brought to an end.'

(iv)

Scott hastened back to South-West Africa. Meetings of the leading Hereros were called at Gobabis, Windhoek, and Okahandja for the signing of the petition. The leaders had used the interval to discuss the matter fully and to clarify their views.

There is every year a solemn gathering of Hereros at Oka-

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handja at the graves of their ancestors, slain by the Germans. Scott was asked to attend.

'It was strange', he wrote, 'to find oneself walking in a long procession of Hereros, the women bringing up the rear in their multi-coloured dresses. Their own minister conducted the service in Herero and I was asked to give an address and say a prayer for the Herero nation. (A year later this was made the subject of a caustic question in the South-West African Assembly as to whether this gathering had been "legal".) As the procession passed through the grotto of tall palm trees where the chiefs are buried, every man, woman and child placed a branch of green leaves on top of some of the graves and stones on the others.

'Standing there in that grotto of green palm trees one's soul was sick with shame at the thought of the treatment which this proud people have received at the hands of the white race. And looking up from those fertile valleys where to-day the windmills are turning slowly in the fresh breeze of daybreak, the very undulating hills seem dominated by those imitation baronial castles built by the early German settlers when they drove the Hereros and their herds of cattle away from these hills and valleys. By force of arms, by the irrepressible, irresistible stealth of a perverted Christianity, *corruptio optimi pessima*, they stole the lands of the Hereros, drove them into the desert, deprived them of their cattle, violated their women and children, starved them, shot them. How skilfully and cunningly they were betrayed, this superb race of herdsmen, with stubborn courage in every muscle of them and proud independence in the grace and dignity of their womenfolk even to-day, in the way they carry themselves with a bundle of washing on their heads. Strange it seemed as one stood praying with them by the graves of their dead, how faithful they have been to the religion in which they were weaned from the worship of the Holy Fire handed on by successive chiefs, from no one knows whence or whom.

'The petition was signed; and after the signing a hymn was sung. The deep resonance of those African voices singing I could seem to hear afterwards all across the Atlantic.'

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*I shall love my Lord
I shall love the merciful
With power and knowledge:
I shall love unto my life's end
The Luminous One.*

*The Truth shall come,
It calls all saying
Offer yourselves to God
And enter into His Kingdom,
Which is all over the world
Proceeding from the Heavens
Yes it—together with knowledge—
Are open there.*

*He performs miracles,
Lord to His messengers
He gives courage to them
To preach what they heard
To speak even if they are killed.
Everywhere they go to carry His gospel
To all people in the world.*

Chief Hosea, standing erect in the strong sun with his hat in his hand, prayed: 'You are the Great God of all the Earth and the Heavens. We are so insignificant. In us there are many defects. But the Power is yours to make and to do what we cannot do. You know all about us. For coming down to earth you were despised, and mocked, and brutally treated because of those same defects in the men of those days. And for those men you prayed because they did not understand what they were doing, and that you came only for what is right. Give us the courage to struggle in that way for what is right. O Lord, help us who roam about. Help us who have been placed in Africa and have no dwelling place of our own. Give us back a dwelling place. O God, all power is yours in Heaven and Earth. Amen.'

Who shall say that a people who have maintained their spirit

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against all the horrors that have been perpetrated against them, who can sing as they sing and pray as they pray, are uncivilized?

By this time it was quite clear that there was no question of any of the Herero spokesmen being allowed to travel to America to convey their petition themselves. Therefore, they asked Michael Scott to take the petition for them, and to present their views to the British Government and to the United Nations at Lake Success.

CHAPTER XII

One-Man Mission

(i)

Michael Scott regarded his odyssey as beginning with the long and dusty August journey with the signed and witnessed petition in his possession back across the Kalahari to the Transvaal. That journey, begun two years ago, is far from ended.

There was little time to spare. Already it was late August and the United Nations meetings were due to begin toward the end of September. There was a delay of six weeks, six crowded fruitless weeks devoted to frantic efforts to get an American visa. As the weeks slipped away, Scott took the precaution of sending a signed copy of the petition by hand to Lake Success. Finally, when the debate on South-West Africa had already begun and he despaired of getting away, he revealed the existence and contents of the petition in a lecture at Johannesburg University, and so much excited interest was aroused among the students that the lunch-hour lecture did not end until past three o'clock.

There seemed no special cause for the persistent delay of the visa, it just did not materialize, and that in spite of a certificate from the police stating cautiously 'that there were no convictions against him involving moral turpitude in the Union of South Africa'. All efforts to find out what had happened were met with polite evasion, but subsequent events made him suspect that pressure from the Union Government, despite its speedy granting of a passport, was really behind the delay in obtaining the American visa. Finally, Scott decided to go to London and try his luck from there. Funds enough for his air passage were raised in South Africa by the Council of Human Rights and the

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Council of Asiatic Rights, and a further sum cabled to New York. Friends accompanied Scott to the airport. Almost as the plane left it occurred to someone to ask whether he had money for the journey. 'Oh, yes,' said Scott vaguely, 'it's quite all right.' But a search of his pockets revealed two pounds something, and a hasty collection among his friends was necessary to send him off adequately provided for.

The journey was for him momentous. 'Breakfast by the waters of Victoria Nyanza, over the tropical forests of Central Africa, up the Nile Valley, across the Sahara, the Mediterranean, the Rhône Valley, the white cliffs, the green fields of England; and down next morning through the cramped streets of London's southern suburbs to the Thames. Here the British Parliament presiding over the destinies of millions of all races, and with them the destiny of England is now inextricably interwoven.'

There followed two more days of desperate pursuit after an American visa, which was obtained only after cabled protests from Mrs. Roosevelt, Henry Wallace and a number of American organizations. The Indian delegation to the United Nations appointed Scott as an adviser.

Sunday he spent with his parents after an absence of five years. 'In a little Buckinghamshire village church the prayer of old Hosea Kutako was reiterated; and at the Eucharist not unfittingly was joined to something more enduring even than the traditions of England enshrined in a pile of mouldering grey stones, with a square squat tower, and the fresh white and red flag of St. George streaming in a strong west wind.'

Next day the journey was resumed. To continue in Scott's own words, 'At five thousand feet over the industrial heart of England to the western coast of Scotland, across the mountains of Ireland, and out over the Atlantic one's mind sought to fasten on those permanent factors in the matter which the words of the liturgy had expressed so reassuringly. "Beseeching thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord . . . we beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian kings, princes and governors, and especially thy servant George our King, that, under him, we may be godly and quietly

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governed, and grant unto his whole council and to all that are put in authority under him that they may truly and indifferently minister justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue. . . .”

“The words had always seemed to gather up all that was best in the history and traditions of the British people, though except on that occasion I have always felt them to be rather stultifying in their conservatism.

‘Over the lakes and pine forests of Labrador and down the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Up and down again through the clouds, in a wide sweeping circle over New York city as incredible, approaching it from the air, as from the Hudson River. Swinging down in wide circles to La Guardia Field, quite close to Lake Success, I wondered whether the great problems of Africa could be dealt with here, and whether the voices of the African people would be heard at the United Nations engrossed as it is in the tasks of restoring peace and hope to the desolate cities and peoples of Europe.

‘Confronted with the millions of displaced persons what was the question of these South-West African tribesmen going to mean to them? Bound up in it is the whole problem of Africa and the African people, the burning question of land ownership and use. Its solution cannot be put off any longer for it is one of the fundamental problems of the future of our civilization and its food production.

‘New York Broadway resounded to the tune of then popular song which was all the rage. From a thousand juke boxes in a thousand drug stores, on arrival in America, rose the cry:

*Bongo, bongo, bongo,
I don't want to leave the Congo.
No, no, no, no, no.
Bingle, bangle, bungle,
I'm so happy in the jungle
I refuse to go.*

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*Don't want no bright lights, false teeth, door-bells,
landlords, noise in my ear.
No matter how they coax me I'll stay right here.
Each morning a missionary advertise with neon
sign,
He tell the native population that civilization
is fine. . . .*

'It is difficult to convey a sense of the hectic spirit that prevails at the United Nations where all the post-war problems seem to be too big and too intricate to be dealt with seriously even if there were the will and the faith to do so. It was these—the faith and the will—which appeared to be so lacking. But it is for us, the people, to provide the will and the faith by which alone we can be saved from the hideous fate that hangs over our weary, hectic, jazzed-up Western world. Plunging in and out of overheated hotels and telephone booths, buses and subways, up and down the long corridors of Lake Success, and throughout the long sessions of the United Nations, one watched the real problems of our age being immersed in surging waves of words, of propaganda and counter-propaganda. One was afflicted with a terrifying sense of futility, of tragic comedy. This greatly affected one's own efforts, making everything one attempted to do require a hundred times more effort than normally.'

Scott was not allowed to put the Hereros' case himself to the meeting, but he had every opportunity for seeing delegates and discussing matters with them between meetings. In the meetings the opposition to the South African government's proposals was handled by the Indian delegation. He was tremendously handicapped by having no secretary or any assistance and no office of his own. Fortunately, before very long he found kind friends in various sympathetic organizations who were able to help him enormously in the mass of work which had to be done.

The South African Government did all in its power to hinder and discredit him. It went so far as to issue a sort of dossier to press correspondents who wished to know something more of this remarkable man on his 'one-man mission', as it was dubbed

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in New York. This deliberate attempt to mislead and prejudice, a copy of which a journalist of the *New York Post* gave Scott, ran as follows: 'Scott is a reserved eccentric type of man with fanatical views, is financially poor, and has no fixed abode. He is a member of all left-wing organizations and at various times has addressed meetings of the . . .' and there follow a detailed account of the meetings he had addressed in the previous two years, and his clashes with authority as a passive resister and at Tobruk, all cast in such shape as to give the most damaging impression of him as an agitator and ne'er-do-well. Several quite untrue statements were made in the course of this extraordinary document, for Scott has never been a member of any left nor any other political organization, nor had he, as alleged, approached any individual or organization to finance him in his journey to Lake Success.

How the Government's mode of conducting its vendetta appeared to some of the journalists is shown in a sworn statement from one. 'At the request of the Rev. Michael G. Scott I make the following statement regarding the attitude of the South African delegation *vis-à-vis* the press, regarding the Rev. Scott.

'When I first approached the delegation for information on Mr. Scott I was told that:

- '1. He was here only in search of personal publicity.
- '2. That he belonged "to all left-wing groups in the Union" and
- '3. That he had a police record in the Union.

'It was only after I insisted on getting the exact facts that I found that the "left-wing organizations" were the Council for Human Rights, and the Council for Asiatic Rights; that "the police record" was largely an enumeration of speeches made by him, plus a conviction for taking part in the passive resistance movement and a charge pending appeal for having lived and worked in the shanty town of Tobruk, without obtaining permission to do so. Also that he had come to New York to present the case of the Hereros against the incorporation of South-West Africa into the Union.

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'The attached clipping will show how an unprejudiced objective reporter sees the case of Michael Scott; I would like to add that the methods used by the South African delegation in attempting to dissuade me from doing this story appeared to me to be unfair as well as unwise.'

(ii)

All in all, the Union Government did not show up very well that year before the United Nations. Throughout the debates the delegates insisted on harping solely on the legal aspects of the question; the moral issues were persistently swept aside by South Africa. Volumes were spoken in the course of the debates on the subject of South-West Africa and volumes more were to come the following year. It is impossible here even to summarize what was said. Some of the speeches were brilliant in the grasp of the essentials of the situation, some exaggerated, overstated and mis-stated, weakening a case that was black enough in just its barest outline; others were notable for the disinterested humanity apparent in every line; others again were conspicuous for the amount of prevarication, evasion, appeasement, and avoidance of actual facts. All were misrepresented to the South African public and should one day be issued there in full.

At the Plenary Session on 20th November 1947 one after another of the delegates rose to challenge South Africa's conception of civilization.

Mrs. Pandit of India: 'If the Charter is to be used as a screen behind which by the aid of juridical niceties we may take shelter each time we are called upon to take a definite stand—then we are not only being false to ourselves but are helping to destroy the foundations of the United Nations.'

M. Lange of Poland: 'It is only a few years ago that the United Nations finished a successful war against Nazi Germany which championed racial domination, the doctrine of a master race and discrimination against certain people. We, the Polish nation, were particular victims of that Nazi policy. For this reason we understand to-day better than we did at earlier times the importance of racial equality.'

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Dr. Wellington Koo of China: 'There are several thousand Chinese nationals in the Union of South Africa. Being Asiatics they are subject to the restrictions contained in the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946. . . . Segregation is a principle which we look upon as retrogressive. . . .' Dr. Koo recalled that at the previous year's session he was assured by General Smuts that conversations on the position of Chinese in South Africa would take place. 'No such conversations had taken place and the Chinese representative in South Africa had been told that no such assurance had been given. . . .'

Mrs. Pandit of India again: 'Some of the noblest sentiments ever uttered by men are enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Yet when it comes to implementing these sentiments, we seek escape by demanding fresh definition of self-evident truths. We write a Charter to promote human rights and then proceed to ask for a committee to define them, for a court of justice to interpret them. . . . Whatever may be the legal position arising out of the extinction of the League of Nations and the creation of the United Nations, the peoples of the world have always understood . . . that the responsibilities of the League of Nations in the wide field of moral authority have been assumed by the United Nations. . . . Even the Government of the Union of South Africa, however grudgingly, recognizes the validity of this position by asserting that it proposes to administer South-West Africa in the spirit of the mandate. . . . Then why do they wish to take shelter behind the legal quibble? The Government of the Union of South Africa has argued that it is neither under a legal nor a moral obligation to place South-West Africa under the trusteeship system. . . . It seems to me an astounding statement to make in this General Assembly before the nations of the world, that no moral obligation exists in this matter. What would the Charter be but a medley of words, were it not to be sustained by the spirit which lies behind it and which has inspired the peoples of the world to join together to solve their problems. . . .'

Sir Maharaj Singh of India: 'I, who have lived in South Africa, know that what Mr. Evatt said is wholly incorrect. There is no such thing as a democratic government in South Africa. There

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is not a single African nor any person of non-European extraction in the Parliament of South Africa, and there is no African in the Parliament of South-West Africa. Self-government, democracy, can one use these expansive words in support of a system which outlaws the vast majority of the inhabitants of that country? . . . After all there is something much higher than economic progress; the feeling that one is a free man in a free country irrespective of race or religion.'

Mr. Lawrence of South Africa: 'I am very much concerned about my country, and when a representative goes out of his way in regard to a matter not directly relevant to the internal administration of my country, South Africa, to pillory that country and to make statements which are demonstrably false, distorted, in some cases half-truths and in other cases less than half-truths, I am not prepared to stand silent. . . .

'We have made tremendous progress in recent years. What I can say is this: that we give compulsory education to our non-Europeans; that we give old-age pensions to our people, irrespective of race, creed or colour, and this is not done on a contributory basis; that we give invalid grants; that we give pensions to the blind; that we have school feeding schemes which involve all sections of the community, thereby necessitating large expenditures which are mostly contributed by the European section of the people. We do these things, and our people, whatever deficiencies may exist in our political system, and I include all sections of the people, are living there peacefully and happily. . . . For some time past the Government has been embarrassed by the fact that streams of Africans from the Continent of Africa have been crossing our borders in the north illegally in order to take up employment in the Union. . . . Strange indeed is this voluntary influx of Africans into a country which the members of the General Assembly are asked to believe treats the non-European people with humiliation. . . .'

The reader is no doubt as aware as were the members of the United Nations of how misleading this is. Mr. Lawrence did not mention that compulsory education for non-Europeans exists only in one province; that old-age, invalidity and blind pensions

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are paid on very different scales for white and coloured; that the school-feeding allowance for native children is generally one-third of that for white children. But Mr. Lawrence's Government had provided him with a poor case. It must have made him uncomfortable if he was present when a black West African argued the case of his people for an hour in faultless English, and then when questioned on a large number of technical matters by the French delegate, replied fully in equally faultless French.

The upshot of it all was that South Africa was for the second year urged to submit a trusteeship agreement, while the Trusteeship Council required the answers to fifty questions to amplify the Union Government's rather short report for 1946 on the Administration of South-West Africa.

(iii)

Scott, when the debates on South-West Africa were over, wrote an open letter entitled 'Barriers to Justice', to Mr. Lawrence, South Africa's Minister for Justice and the leader of her delegation in Lake Success. In it he said: 'You may recall that before the final debate on South-West Africa I took the liberty of appealing to you to take the Assembly fully into your confidence regarding the facts and the magnitude of our racial problems in South Africa. You replied, if I may remind you, that while the purpose of my mission here was "obscure" you hoped I would "confirm and expand the brief impression which the limitations of debate have made practicable for me".'

'I realize that in some quarters the purpose of my coming to Lake Success has been misunderstood and even misrepresented by some to constitute an act of disloyalty to my country, my race and my religion, since I have chosen to take the part of those who are engaged in a dispute with my own Government. The only personal reference I wish to make to this here is to say that I trust that whatever is done will one day be found to be in the permanent and deepest interests of our country.'

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'I am sure you will not resent this. As a politician you will appreciate the need for standards and values more enduring than considerations of party political expediency. I trust that others of our countrymen will come to recognize this too who at present can only find resentment against those who dispute their claims to "white supremacy" in Africa.

'I believe that our country is facing imminent peril on account of the accumulated consequences of past neglect and mounting racial antagonisms. And I believe it is a duty to God and to our people to make known the truth and to ask for the intervention of the United Nations. Our efforts to secure the bare minimum of reforms have so far failed or are too slow in realization to offset the great dangers now confronting us in our present crisis.

'Also the fact that Africans were denied the right to present their own case at U.N. accounts for my being here and if some of those opinions which I have represented appear to you exaggerated or ill-informed, I can only say I should regret it, if it were so, as much as the misrepresentations which have appeared in the Government's official statements to U.N. May I give one or two examples?

'(a) During the final debate in the Assembly, Sir Maharaj Singh remarked: "I was surprised to hear Mr. Evatt talk of self-government in South Africa. . . . I, who have lived in South Africa, know that what Mr. Evatt said—I am sure he said it with the best of motives—is wholly incorrect. There is no such thing as a democratic government in South Africa. There is not a single African nor any person of non-European extraction in the Parliament of South Africa, and there is no African in the Parliament of South-West Africa. . . . 'Self-government', 'democracy'—can one use these expansive words in support of a system which outlaws the vast majority of the inhabitants of the country?"

'In challenging these statements, sir, you said to the Assembly: "When a representative goes out of his way . . . to pillory my country and to make statements which are demonstrably false, distorted, in some cases half-truths, and in other cases less than half-truths, I am not prepared to stand silent before this forum

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of the world. . . . Let me give a few facts and figures," you remarked. I did not find any mis-statements in the speeches of the Indian delegates. Looking through the verbatim record of the debate I have not been able to find any distortions or half-truths in Sir Maharaj Singh's remarks, while on the other hand, no facts and figures are recorded in your reply.

'(b) Nor are there any such facts and figures quoted in the *Union Government's Statement to the United Nations General Assembly, 15th September 1947*. In this document it is stated that "separation in the Union has not been devised as an instrument of oppression, but is in fact a means to the achievement of the very object of this (the Assembly's) resolution. The distinctions which are being drawn there do not proceed from any oppressive intent and have no oppressive effect, but the preservation of cultural identities by differentiation, and by separation into different areas and different groups within which each race can develop in its own way and work out its own destiny with a minimum of racial friction."

'Are we really justified, in our present situation, in appearing before this world tribunal with this plea? I have just received the report of a debate in the Synod of my Church two weeks ago, in which the following statement was made by the Father Superior of a Missionary Order and was not contradicted: "A state of tension now exists so grave that any little spark may set off an explosion. Race relations have reached breaking point, and I think it is the responsibility of the Christian community to work and stand for the improvement of those relations."

'As for facts and figures, sir, may I be permitted to quote some to show the disastrous consequences of racial discrimination in our country?'

Scott then proceeded to give an outline¹ of conditions for natives in the Union of South Africa, showing how false were many of the impressions given in Mr. Lawrence's speech. He concluded: "This will not be published until after the debates in the Assembly so that it cannot be said its purpose is purely propagandist or so timed as to influence South Africa's case. I

¹ See Chapter VIII, pp. 94-100.

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had hoped . . . that a full and frank statement of our critical situation would be placed before the United Nations. Both the debate on South-West Africa and on the treatment of Indians in the Union, as well as the Government's report on South-West Africa, have convinced me that this is not the intention of the Government's delegation. Therefore it seems right that the correction of official statements to U.N. should be made by those in the Union who believe in the United Nations as an instrument of peace and emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the world. . . .

'I shall continue to press for a Commission consisting of representatives of the five Great Powers to visit South-West Africa if the Union Government can be persuaded to permit this.

'The "trustworthiness" of some of the representations that were made there have already been challenged, and I am therefore submitting a report consisting of facts and opinions of the African people in that territory, since it appears that the Government's own report to the United Nations is, in some important respects, deficient and misleading.

'The question of the lands belonging to the African people is not a subject included in this report. But it is a vital question and one which must affect the whole future development of our civilization in Africa, whether it is to be for African development or for white supremacy. The African chiefs were sufficiently aware of the importance of this issue to send me by air across Africa, Europe and the Atlantic to appeal to the United Nations to send an Inquiry Commission to Africa, and I shall not return until I am satisfied that that appeal has been heard by the Trusteeship Council to whom your report has now been sent.

'We have existed for too long as a semi-feudal backwater of civilization. Our task in South Africa will be surely, at the risk of some unpopularity, to make our people aware of the forces that are moving mankind in the direction of emancipation from the terrors of arbitrary race-rule and unreason in opposition to the eternal purpose of God and His universe.

'We may gain the whole world of gold and diamonds, but what shall it profit us if we lose our soul—if we destroy both land and people?

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‘There is divine wisdom in the folly which puts last things first. Even yet it can save us from reducing our country to a desert of natural and human frustration. While we are in the world, we yet are not of the world.’

(iv)

The meetings ended and the delegates hastened home to their various countries for Christmas. Scott had a short rest with the Prentices, an American family who had been of inestimable assistance to him and his work in New York, and whose deep admiration for him he warmly returned. Without the help and hospitality of these friends the practical difficulties of his task would have been multiplied.

He was alone in their house during the few days of New York’s heaviest snowstorm. After the rush and excitement of the United Nations meetings he found solitude and isolation and opportunity for reflection. He wrote: ‘For my own part marooned as I was there was nothing for it but to meditate and moralize about this great fall of snow and the impotence of this vast city, and between whiles, for exercise, to go out and dig a passage down the drive. I spent a good deal of time thinking about the enormous number of words that had been uttered during these debates on the problems of South Africa and of Hereros who for me had become symbolical of all the landless and dispossessed people in the world. Words signifying all the passions and emotions, hopes and fears of humanity, words like snow crystals of all shapes and sizes, and I could wish they had as much power as the delicate fluttering flakes whose accumulated mass had seemingly brought civilization to a standstill.

‘Nevertheless something was required by the people, some moral force which would bring our rulers to their senses—to some sense of responsibility to truth and to those ideals for which, encouraged by the elder statesmen, two generations of our youth have been offered up. Where can be found the moral force that the world requires? How can the hopes and fears and the longings of mankind for peace and the opportunity to live as children

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of God or as human beings, at least, not monsters, be turned into a power which can be brought to bear upon those who are responsible for the organization of peace?

'Non-violence is much too negative a word to describe Satyagraha. Similarly, passive resistance is a description of only one aspect of a movement of the human spirit rather than a definition of the movement. . . . How, some are asking, can truth and non-violence prevail against all the power of a modern state? Perhaps the question would be better put the other way round. How can force, even if wielded by a powerful organization like the State, prevail against the truth? . . .

"Love" is hardly a term which can be used any longer to describe a religious concept of creative or moral purpose, while sacrifice seems to imply a value inherent in suffering and savours somewhat of dualism. As Gandhi has consistently pointed out, there is no value in suffering as such, it is rather the readiness to suffer, to sacrifice the self rather than the principles which are of common concern, which is of value. . . .

'All these concepts—love, creative purpose, self-sacrifice, non-violence are bound up in the word "satyagraha". As Gandhi conceived it, it is the Way of Life, rather than a mere political tactic, just as Christ's Gospel is a Way of Life, and performs its function to perfection only when it is completely subordinated to that purpose. This is the profound religious truth which in God's good time will unite East and West. . . . "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," Christ said. "What is Truth?" asked Pontius Pilate. But it was not only a metaphysical question and Pilate was not only an administrator of the law; he could therefore evade the issue by washing his hands of responsibility. The irresponsibility of the law-makers—of the rulers of this world—must be challenged by the peoples of the world or there will be another crucifixion of humanity.

'The organized power of the modern State, with its limitless capacity to pervert the truth and men's minds by every scientific means of communication, is driving men towards the madness of self-destruction. This hideous strength can only be met by the utmost detachment from the things of this world and the most

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selfless submission to a power which is greater than the physical force that is available to the modern rulers of the darkness of this world.'

(v)

'It was a bright cold morning the day I left New York with only low-lying grey morning mists. The huge orb of the sun like a great pale moon gleamed through the mist, the sky was a robin's egg pale blue, and the countryside still blanketed white with snow. I had formed a warm friendship with Prentice and had learned there were many things which we had in common, and which some day may be written about. We casually waved as the engines roared, making speech impossible. Then the plane took off, circling that vast urban agglomeration and out and over the Hudson River for the Azores and Lisbon. Down to the hot red earth of the west coast—on to Ashanti—Leopoldville and Elizabethville on the Congo, over the Rhodesias and the border of the Transvaal and down again to Johannesburg, the great City of Gold, seeming so small and insignificant after New York.'

CHAPTER XIII

The Brother Amongst Us

Back in South Africa once more, Scott's first concern was to carry his report of the first round of the battle to those in South-West Africa whose fight he had been appointed to engage in.

He stopped in Cape Town and gave an account of events to the Native Representatives in Parliament. Mr. Eric Louw (then in Opposition but soon himself, as Minister of Economic Development, to be presenting a new Government's case at the next U.N. session) asked in a sarcastically worded question in Parliament why Scott had not been prevented from leaving the Union and demanded that answers to the Trusteeship Council's fifty questions be not given until Parliament had studied them. (This was not done; indeed, copies of the answers were unobtainable in South Africa and had to be obtained from New York.)

Scott then went on to Windhoek and found the whole course of the discussions of the United Nations, the endless time and flood of words expended on South-West Africa, had been with masterly if rather odd condensation reported at a meeting of the Windhoek Location Advisory Board by the Native Commissioner as follows: "I want to emphasize that I am not here to ask you what you think of what happened there, nor to ask you what you think of the Union Government's decision. I am simply making the statement for your information. The question as to whether South-West Africa should be incorporated in the Union or placed under the Trusteeship section of the U.N. was again discussed because U.N. had asked the Union Government

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to consider a trusteeship. The Union Government's reply was that it could not agree to place South-West Africa under trusteeship because . . . the majority of the people of South-West Africa did not want it. . . . The Union Government further stated no steps are being taken to incorporate South-West Africa into the Union and it would continue to be governed in the spirit of the mandate. . . . The Union Government's representative made it clear that the Union Government had no intention of submitting a Trusteeship Agreement."

'Chairman, "I thank Mr. Allen on behalf of the Board for his statement and hope that from now on we can forget these political agitations and get on with more worthwhile things such as the welfare of the people."

'ITEM 2. APPLICATION BY MR. LANDSBERG TO SELL DONKEY MEAT TO THE PEOPLE. . . .'

Soon after his arrival Scott was summoned to an interview with the Administrator. He understood it was to be a private interview, but in fact the Chief Native Commissioner and the Acting Secretary to the Government were also present. The Administrator complained bitterly that he had not first been shown a copy of the petition, saying that this might have obviated a lot of mistakes and misunderstandings. Scott found the whole interview somewhat unsatisfactory, and afterwards he sent a long letter to the Administrator clearing up certain misapprehensions about himself, and setting out his own standpoint. Some of this is significant.

'Firstly,' he wrote, 'may I be excused for saying a word on the subject of my own personal beliefs and actions since these appear to have become the subject of some public controversy. I believe—some may say wrongly—that my opinions and actions in these matters are truthful implications of my Christian Faith and beliefs regarding the Nature of God and Man and that they are derived directly from that Faith rather than from any system of ideas or philosophy.

'While my views on some questions have been described as "left" and "communist" by those who seek thereby to discredit them, I am not a member of the Communist Party. Nor am I

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a member of the Friends of the Soviet Union nor even of the Springbok Legion.

'I am pledged to the methods of pacifism and some time ago had occasion to declare this in a public petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of the Church of England of which I am an ordained priest. . . . I resigned my parochial work in 1940 in order to enlist in the R.A.F. I felt at the time that while war was necessary to defend the country and all the best traditions of Britain it was yet not compatible with Christ's Gospel to go to war and the methods of war should not be represented as compatible with Christ's methods. . . .' (At that time the communist parties were everywhere actively campaigning against the war.)

He explains his part in the passive resistance movement and in the Tobruk trouble. He attacks the methods of the referendum and defends the chiefs against allegations of the Administration. 'As regards the inconsistency which you see in the remarks which you quoted of Chief Hosea three years ago expressing himself favourably towards the Government as compared with his subsequent statement: I should interpret the former as rather the kind of courteous remark which is not untypical of an African chief and may even be said sometimes as a prefatory remark before voicing some criticism. I do not know whether that was so in this case and have had no opportunity of questioning him. What is clear is that when Hosea clearly understood that a formal question was being asked at the time of the referendum and one which would affect the whole future and status of his people he did not hesitate to speak boldly and in no uncertain terms. Those views he gave then and he repeated them in the petition. Hence I cannot see that this can be put forward as a ground for challenging his or the petition's authenticity or veracity. . . . Even the remarks that were made about David Witbooi do not really deprive him of the right to speak on behalf of his people. The fact that his people have been scattered and he himself, an hereditary chief, relegated to the status of a foreman is not the fault of the Nama people. . . .

'If and when the truth of their petition is questioned I trust

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it will be remembered that I believe in the truthfulness and in the good faith and intentions of those petitioners.'

With regard to South Africa, he told the Administrator: 'I love this country. I owe my health physically speaking, perhaps my life, to it and this standpoint is not taken out of malice or from a desire to embarrass the country or to bring her low in the estimation of other nations. I am afraid and regret very much that she has been brought low in the esteem of others by some of those who have represented her and defended some of her present policies. I cannot help saying that I think the referendum and the methods by which it was carried out were very ill conceived. Long before I went abroad they had served to bring this country into disrepute . . . and it seems only right that this criticism should be made by South Africans themselves rather than by people of other nations.'

Scott was anxious to get into the reserves to make his report to the tribesmen, but he was persistently refused the necessary permits. After his request, made originally on 8th March, had, in true Civil Service fashion, been passed to three different authorities, he was told on 20th March that in his interview 'his Honour the Administrator pointed out the unwisdom of your visiting the Native Reserves and his remark naturally referred also to Native Locations'. (Scott had also asked for permission to show a United Nations' film—blameless except in that it showed black and white seated at the same council table.)

To digress for a moment: the chase after the will-o'-the-wisp permits became extremely protracted and amusing, but they eluded him to the end. Even the assurance that no public meetings would be held without the police being informed was of no avail, and no success attended a request from the headmen of Aminuis themselves; indeed the administration denied all knowledge of such a request. On his return to Johannesburg Scott wrote direct to the Prime Minister, then General Smuts, who replied that the matter should 'be left entirely in the discretion of the Administrator'. The Government changed and Scott tried his luck with the new Prime Minister. Dr. Malan felt, too, that he could not intervene in a matter that 'rests entirely in the dis-

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cretion of the Administrator'. And there the matter of permits has been left for the time being.

Scott in the meantime was sitting in a tent by the Gammans River, not far from the Windhoek Location. The attempts he was making to get permits kept him there; and so did the fulminations in the press, and even threats to resort to arms against him, for he determined not to move under threats of physical violence.

'For the two months that I remained in camp in the dry river bed I came to learn something of the fears which overshadow the whole life of the African people, not so much the old fear of magic and devilry, but the new fears which civilization and the white man's judicial and political system have brought. Awakened by the sound of a low whistle and lifting up a flap of the tent, I would find there half a dozen black faces peering inquiringly through the bush. Holding their sticks and their hats they would say there was a matter which they would like to speak about.' (These statements, recorded in the lee of a bush by the light of a hurricane lamp wrapped in a blanket, have been incorporated in the appropriate sections of this account.)

'Meetings were held', Scott related, 'with the native people at night. They organized a system of watching, and when detectives were observed approaching or were known from the sounds of their motor-bicycles to be in the vicinity, silence was enjoined until the all-clear was given. Some of the precautions observed seemed to me rather ridiculous but I have not a black skin, and that their fears were real fears I had no doubt whatever. One group I had been asked to meet out in the bush one night for example: there was no moon but clear starlight. I was giving them an account of a meeting of the Trusteeship Council and it was being interpreted into the extraordinary clicks of the Nama language. Suddenly, a light flashed on and off in a neighbouring hill not more than half a mile away. There was a sharp instruction from one of the interpreters and, as by a pre-arranged plan, all scattered in different directions, running doubled up in order to avoid breaking the skyline where there was still a glow against the background of the hills. One of them kept with me as a

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guide; and after an agonized twenty minutes of stumbling amongst thorn-bushes which seemed to reach out and grip hold of one's skin, all assembled again at another place and the discussion on the Trusteeship Council proceedings continued. After a statement dictated to me through an interpreter by means of a torch light covered with a coat, the gathering was concluded with a prayer by David Witbooi: "Wonderful Almighty God, you have brought it about that we who are of different tribes should gather here as thy children. O God, thou knowest that we do not gather here of our own selves. Thou knowest the purpose for which we have been gathered here. All that we have said we have handed that to thy will. O God, thou knowest that the brother amongst us is not an African. We are asking and praying that thou take his hand and guide him in all that he is doing. Amen."

'It is not easy for those who have never found themselves on the wrong side of the law, or in fear of being found on the wrong side of it, to appreciate the full extent of the powers of the police and the pressure which they can exert both politically and morally in the individual lives of those who have no representation in the legislatures and no free channels of expression and redress. The African people, living in the Police Zone, have lived through a period of terror in which it was the declared aim of the white man's system of justice, law and order to exterminate them, to dispossess them and bring them into complete subjection. The police to-day know very well that when they speak they have the whole background of fear in the native mind to count upon and the whole force of the State behind them. Only when this is understood in all its practical implication in the lives of the native people can the influence of fear in determining their actions and behaviour be fully grasped.

'For instance I found on this visit to South-West Africa that in my absence many Hereros and other tribesmen had been called to the Criminal Investigation Department and questioned regarding their dealings with me. What I had talked to them about; who had accompanied me to the Aminuis Reserve to interview the chief there? Who had lent me a motor-lorry? Even the Bishop of Damaraland had been visited by members of the

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C.I.D. and interrogated regarding my beliefs and opinions.

Even Europeans whom he had never met were questioned, and Scott protested to the administration, 'Perhaps it is only right also to mention that two people came to see me—not natives. . . . I had never seen either of them before and could not vouch for their truthfulness. But one of them said that he had been questioned by an official of the Administration as to whether he had met and discussed matters with me, and even that he had been warned not to do so. I told these people that I had been received courteously by the authorities and that possibly they had misunderstood something that may have been said to them. . . . Others have told me of being questioned regarding my views and beliefs. If there are any such questions which any official of the Government would like to have answered, I should be pleased to answer them directly if I am able to do so. This might avoid anyone being misled by unqualified or illfounded judgments regarding them.'

The whole time Scott was in South-West Africa a violent campaign against him was being conducted in most of the Afrikaans press. Most of the comment was in laboured terms of sarcasm, none the less virulent for that; some of it reads quite amusingly in translation. These attacks expressed an opinion of Scott which is widely held in South Africa. A correspondent of one paper revealed that, 'Rev. Michael Scott visited Gobabis. . . . When this became known the police took him to the charge office and made inquiries from head office. The result of the inquiry was that the Rev. was permitted to go his way with his agitation amongst the non-Europeans. . . . The man is a trusty follower of the doctrines of Drs. Philip and Reid. But it is indeed necessary that the Rev. should start with improving his person as his appearance is miserable. . . .'

' . . . On these grounds we declare that he is a danger to us. He has traffic here again. The chances are that he will again without a thorough study of conditions, express all sorts of prejudices. He must get out of there and the quicker the better. . . .'

' . . . Until now the appearance of Rev. Scott at any place has caused nothing else but bad feeling between the Europeans and

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Coloureds. The first time was in Durban. He encouraged the Indians to break the country's laws with their "passive resistance". The second time he bobbed up in Bethal. There he exaggerated the treatment of the native farm labourers with the result that the good name of the Bethal farmers has been dragged in the mud throughout the whole country. The third time he made his appearance in South-West. The result was an indictment against the S.W. Administration at U.N. . . . Rev. Scott appears under the mantle of Christianity and brother love. He is an honest idealist who considers he has a calling to fulfil. This is the same with van den Kemp and Reid. But for that reason they and he too are not less dangerous, and the consequences of their teaching on race relations no less pernicious. Foreigners with this spiritual outlook are simply not in a position to appreciate race relations, economic, political and social, in their true perspective. . . .'

' . . . It appears unfortunately that the Rev. Scott sees himself through a magnifying glass. He is a self-appointed petitioner with the habit of presenting a biased and incomplete picture, without the authority of any government or constitutional power, but he has the conceit to expect that the Union Government should have answered his statements. He must excuse us if we see him here in the role of the ambitious frog in front of the bull. . . . Here in South-West Africa everything is quiet and peaceful. Repeatedly foreigners have studied our system of native administration. But it is only "our Peet" who is in step in the whole battalion. . . .'

Scott had constantly the feeling that he was being watched, followed, spied upon. One afternoon, eluding a watcher near his camp site, he walked to a country station, boarded a train, and alighted during the night at the nearest station, some sixty miles away, at a farm to which he had been invited. The remainder of the night he spent in the veld behind a windscreen of branches, his sleep being interrupted by the bloodcurdling screams of two jackals giving tongue a few yards from him. Next morning he borrowed two ponies and finished the journey in a two-wheeled gig.

His host, a farmer who had been for twenty-two years in the

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South-West African police, had written a long letter to him at U.N. dealing with the pressure which had been put on civil servants to favour incorporation, and with the ill-treatment of the native people in South-West.

'He was indignant but not at all surprised to hear about all my adventures and the difficulties which had been placed in the way of getting to U.N., nor was he surprised to find next morning when we returned from looking over his farm, that a police-truck had arrived and that a detective was busy questioning his wife and farm labourers about what I had been doing. We sipped coffee in awkward silence on the stoep. My friend's Herero labourers from whom I had taken down a statement had been exasperatingly stupid when questioned about me, it appeared from one or two chance remarks the detective made. When he departed I noticed he had a naked Bushman prisoner in the back of his truck. "They die in captivity," I was told afterwards. The patrolman wished me a good journey, "wherever it is you are going".'

Before returning to Windhoek, Scott took down statements from his host, from one or two of his employees, and from neighbouring farmers, including a German who had just been released from internment as a Nazi. The German said he thought it was folly to propose allowing the Hereros to be reunited; Germany had done the only possible thing there was to be done with them. Scott retorted that it was a pity that the Germans, so proficient in the arts of war, should have failed in Africa and in Europe because they could not learn the arts of peace and good government. Discussion became heated, but Scott pacified him by observing that he, at least, had survived three wars and still remained in possession of his lands.

The English farmer's statement covered a great variety of topics with a knowledge born of long residence, and a remarkable lack of prejudice for a white farmer in South Africa. Most of his observations on labour conditions, on Herero lands, and so on, are placed in appropriate sections elsewhere in this book. He felt particularly strongly on Britain's unwitting part in South-West Africa. 'This territory was given to the British

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Sovereign and it is being administered by the Union Government on behalf of his Majesty the King, hence it is only right that the conditions here should be known in Britain and all that is being done in her name. It is impossible to convey the full extent of the corruption and the injustice that is being carried on here. More people should come from Britain like yourself and see what is going on. . . . It is up to Britain to see that these crimes against mankind are stopped immediately, otherwise Britain should renounce any responsibilities in the matter whatsoever. While we allow these things to continue, there is a very real danger that the loyal natives in other parts of the continent will be turned against Britain and her rule in Africa.

‘These things are not usually discussed with Europeans by the natives, but under the surface the growth of discontent goes on and is spread from one district to another; one tribe to another; and may in the long run end in an outbreak of hatred which will do irreparable harm both to the white and black races here.

‘In the same way there is great danger of many of our loyal white people turning against us because so many promises have been made and are not being fulfilled. . . . My own opinion is that it would be one of the biggest mistakes for Britain to allow this territory to be incorporated into the Union. Her future should rather lie with the Rhodesias and other British African territories to the north. I believe that if the issues were fairly explained to the natives they would say the same. I am sure that if the natives of South-West Africa had it explained to them, that this is the rule of the Union Government, and were asked if they wanted it to become permanent, they would certainly say no—all of them, including the Ovambos.

‘I should very much like to see a Royal Commission sent out here to this country to investigate the dangerous conditions which have been allowed to develop here. Such a Commission should not merely visit the officials and be supervised wherever they go, they should come as you have done and talk with ordinary people from all communities, British, Afrikaans, German and non-European. There are many who still believe in Britain, but there are many who cannot reason things out for themselves.

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They know there is dreadful injustice and corruption of the worst kind in many places and they lose faith and give up. Britain owes it to us to help us put these things right for if they are allowed to continue it is Britain and British prestige which will suffer.

'There are many countries at the United Nations many of which have a respect for British justice as one of the bulwarks of civilization but how is it going to affect them if year after year all the evil of South Africa's rule over the coloured races is made the subject of debate in the General Assembly and lies are told in an attempt to defend what cannot be defended by our British standards. . . . I have lived for thirty-one years in South-West Africa. I love the country and my own farm. . . . My purpose in making this statement is to try and secure remedies for some of the wrongs which are being inflicted on all sections of the people in this country and to try and ensure that we British people should face the great responsibilities which are ours and which others are relying on us to face.'

This statement was signed not only by the man who made it but also by his wife.

Scott returned to his dry river bed, and sat out the threats for a few more weeks. An Ovamboland missionary about that time revealed that he had been informed by the Administration that there was a proposal to remove the natives from a block of land ten miles wide and over a hundred miles long, to create a 'sanitary belt or block'. This would, amongst other things, have meant the abandonment of all Anglican mission stations, churches and schools except two, and the building of new ones elsewhere. The missionary also added that to ask the natives of Ovamboland whether they would prefer South-West Africa to be mandated territory or a fifth province of the Union was as little understood as if they had been asked to say whether they would prefer to be Scottists or Thomists.

When these comments appeared in the mission paper there was, someone said, 'a sound like a lot of scalded cats' from the Government buildings on the top of the hill. The Bishop was sent for and asked about it. If the missionaries were going to

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interfere in politics they would have to go. In any case the Government had dropped the plan for the sanitary block. The Native Commissioner should not have made the suggestion at such a time. And, finally, when the Bishop had refused to dismiss the missionary concerned, would he use his influence to persuade Scott to leave the Territory until feeling had died down?

In view of the coming South-West African elections, and since he was quite unable to get permits to visit the reserves, Scott agreed temporarily to remove his most unwelcome presence. To the Administrator he wrote: 'I do hope when I return that it may be possible to be granted permits to visit the reserves. I was asked to do this for them by these Africans and it seems to me their point of view is as much entitled to consideration as that of any other, especially of those whose anti-native prejudice allow them to go almost to excess in their propagation of their viewpoint. When I was threatened in the press a month ago I felt it would not be right to leave and I do so now because there are other matters to be attended to and I have no wish to be used as a stalking horse by rival electioneering campaigns. But there is an important principle involved and one which I do not feel can be compromised. I think these Africans have a right to be heard and that they should be allowed to go overseas to state their own case as they requested. . . . I must thank you for your personal courtesy and express regrets for any anxiety which your regard for my safety has occasioned.'

CHAPTER XIV

Forces of Untruth

(i)

Scott returned to Johannesburg and busied himself with sorting out the material he had gathered on this last visit to South-West Africa and forwarding it to the United Nations. He held himself in readiness to go back to South-West should the permits to visit the reserves be forthcoming, and this uncertainty made it extremely difficult for him to engage to undertake any definite Church work which offered in the Diocese, beyond assisting on Sunday where the priests were busy.

In the meantime another attempt to discredit him was made, this time in the Johannesburg press. Ever since he had first taken up the Herero case doubts were being continually cast on his authority to represent them and on their right to select and authorize him to do so. The Hereros, however, had no doubts about their rights and intention in the matter and they did not intend that anyone else should have any. They, therefore, with a clear understanding of modern methods and the importance of the press, inserted the following in the *Windhoek Advertiser*, 1st May 1948.

'At a meeting held recently in the Aminuis Reserve, by Chief Hosea Kutako, the Headmen of the various Native Reserves, the leading men of the Herero community, with the Magistrate of Gobabis and the Welfare Officer of the Aminuis Reserve, Chief Hosea Kutako and the Headmen made it clear to the Magistrate of Gobabis that the Rev. Michael Scott was asked by the Chief Hosea Kutako, the Headmen and the Leading Herero men to act as their Representative and Spokesman here in South-

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West Africa and abroad at the meeting of the United Nations.

'We contend (Chief Hosea and the Headmen) that as Reverend Michael Scott was appointed by us, the Herero Nation, he should be given permission to visit the Reserves as well as the areas inhabited by our people, i.e. the so-called locations.

'Proceeding further we said: "the Authorities should make it known to the public that Rev. Michael Scott's actions are just and as we have appointed him we associate ourselves with him."

'It should be known that it is not right in a Mandatory Territory that people should be called to the C.I.D. office because they want their voices heard by members of the United Nations or because they are suspected to have had discussions with our Representative, Rev. Michael Scott.

'Is this intimidation and victimization the right procedure in a so-called democratic country? Is this democracy?

'It should also be known that VICTIMIZATION and INTIMIDATION and application of harsh methods which are not true DEMOCRATIC but MOCKRATIC cannot stop any struggle for just claims and just rights.

'It is an indisputable fact that truth will win no matter how long it takes to make the fruit of the truth visible and practicable.

'This country is a mandate and it was given to the Administering Authority for the well-being of the African inhabitants by the League of Nations. (This we have just learnt with the birth of U.N.O.) We also learned that it was given to the South African Government in order that the inhabitants may be educated and developed.

'Can ever Standard II or Standard III education in Afrikaans only by teachers with Standard VI Certificates help a nation to advance further and become useful people to themselves, to their fellow men and to their Government? No. They can only become good boys, girls and servants, and also good Jims and Johns.

'It is high time that the education of teachers or training of non-European teachers at the Augustineum at Okahandja should be improved and not remain Standard VI and no or little English as it is at present.

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'English and Afrikaans are both official languages and both to be taught equally at all African training colleges.

'The world has become too small. There is no more any dark spot or corner in the world. There is no isolated place on this globe. Let us face the right squarely and courageously and thus avoid our conscience being haunted by unjust action.

'Aminuis Native Reserve, Chief Hosea Kutako, Headmen of various Reserves, c/o Aminuis, P.O. Gobabis.'

This was given prominence in the Johannesburg press, to be followed a few days later by a report from the paper's Windhoek correspondent to the effect that the Administrator had said that Hosea had 'virtually repudiated' the statement, but the report goes on significantly enough: 'The Administrator showed Hosea the *Windhoek Advertiser's* report. In reply Hosea said: "I spoke in Herero. I don't know who wrote the letter, I speak only Herero. I do not understand English or any other language. I do not, therefore, know what is in that letter which you have showed me and which you say is in the Windhoek newspaper." The implication was that he could not be held responsible for the letter. Hosea's reply was told to me personally by the Administrator.'

The implication in actual fact was, of course, that Hosea had made his statement in Herero and had only seen the original document. When a newspaper cutting in English was shown to him he naturally, and he says so quite clearly, did not know what it was.

Some weeks afterwards Scott received the original Herero document.

Soon after the 'virtual repudiation' some interesting letters came to Scott, showing that the Hereros knew very well what they were about. A letter from S. K. Hoveka of Gobabis, dated 30th April 1948 (soon after the meeting referred to in the statement in the *Windhoek Advertiser*) contained the information: 'I have been instructed by Chief Hosea Kutako and Festus Kandjo to inform you that they and all the Hereros have informed the Administrator that they have made you their representative in all matters concerning the non-Europeans of S.W.A. We also

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requested the Administrator that he should publish your name and present position in all newspapers, and that when you come to this country you should be allowed to visit the reserves. . . .’

This was followed by a letter from a non-European friend in Windhoek who for reasons of discretion signed with a *nom-de-plume*: ‘We were very pleased to learn that many people (Hereros) attended the meeting in which you informed them of what took place at U.N. Chief Hosea and the headmen of various Reserves held a meeting with the Magistrate of Gobabis and the Welfare Officer of Aminuis Reserve in which they made clear that you (Rev. M. Scott) were appointed by them and that you should be given permission to visit the reserves and locations. The article was sent to me in vernacular and I translated it and sent it to the press in Windhoek. I sent you a copy about three weeks back, and I don’t know whether you received it or not. . . .’

Chief Tshekedi wrote on 29th May from Bechuanaland: ‘Since writing the above, Theophilus has been with me. He reports that Chief Hosea is boldly having meetings with the Hereros in the various reserves and obtaining their consent to send you as their delegate to U.N. They had a meeting in the Aminuis Reserve on the 15th of April and there were some Hottentots, Ovambos and Damaras present. Hosea had invited the Native Commissioner from Gobabis to attend the meeting. The Administrator visited Hosea on the subject of the meeting on 6th May reprimanding Hosea for his action and asking him why he does not elect one of the Commissioners as their representative, but Hosea remained firm as usual in his action. Chief Hosea is arranging to have another meeting next month. . . .’

So much for ‘virtual repudiation’.

Towards the end of May the Government of the Union of South Africa changed; the United Party, the party of General Smuts who had governed the country since the beginning of the war in 1939, gave way to the Nationalist Party of Dr. Malan, a party extremely nationalistic and republican in tradition and with an intense racial exclusiveness. The orientation of this government can be indicated by statements from speeches made before the Provincial Elections by Ministers in office. Apartheid

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meant 'that the non-European will never have the same political right as the Europeans, that there will never be social equality, and that the Europeans will always be "baas" in South Africa', said the Minister of Labour. 'South Africa and Australia were the only countries left in the Southern Hemispheres to maintain the mastery (baasskap) of the white man. . . . The white man had come to South Africa to stay and wanted to assure this through apartheid carried to its logical conclusion,' said the Minister of Defence. 'Equality of the white and coloured races in university lecture rooms was a serious development because it caused the white man to lose his sense of colour. When that happened it was the end of white civilization,' said the Minister of Agriculture.

The Government got into power on its platform of 'apartheid' or separation between the races, not in its fundamentals very different from the policies of successive South African governments since Union, but in provocative statements and attitudes and petty legislative and administrative restrictions nicely calculated to bring about in the shortest possible time a rapid deterioration in the already uneasy race relations.

The United Nations meetings in Paris were drawing near, and South-West Africa was again on the agenda. Mr. Eric Louw, Minister for Economic Development, was fiercely resentful of the international interest shown in South Africa's racial affairs, and he had in Parliament repeatedly pressed for the annexation of South-West Africa, and had bitterly opposed Smuts's conciliatory attitude. This man was selected to lead South Africa's delegation at the forthcoming sessions.

Scott at this time was gravely in doubt as to whether his part in the battle could be best conducted from within the Union or by means of another journey abroad. He went to Bechuanaland, saw Chief Frederick once again, and found he and the Hereros there were still in favour of continued representations at the next session of the United Nations. He went on to Windhoek and although he had no permits he managed to see the Herero leaders outside the reserves and found them of the same mind, wishing him to go and in the enforced absence of their own

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representatives, to present their case once again. He took with him from South-West on this occasion a touching little document from Hendrik Witbooi. 'Honoured members of the United Nations who will meet in September: In my weakness I would come to the meeting with these words. We who are inhabitants of this land, the Namas, Hereros and Berg-Damaras, have great trust and expectations in you, the Nations who will hold the meeting there. We ask and entreat, let us be the subjects of the United Nations Organization. The Rev. Michael Scott will take this matter concerning our feelings and knowledge to U.N. We have seen how fairly he treats us and speaks for us, this white minister. We trust him or we would not send him. The Rev. Michael Scott had to discuss the matter with us personally and it is our wish that he should do so. But he is not permitted to speak to us personally. It is not necessary to frighten him or to hold him in the eye constantly. They do not allow us to get together with him. Further, I say we do not want to be incorporated in the Union. Thus far we do not receive the higher education and therefore we cannot attend the "Higher" meetings. But we have great interest in, and an ambition to attend these meetings and to hear and through this to make progress. The people who during the last war were enemies, have not made peace. They also carried passes but now they are free. When will they make peace with us?'

Scott made a last visit, travelling through intense heat, to Chief Frederick to inform him of the unchanging views of the Hereros of South-West Africa. He returned in time for the Johannesburg Diocesan Synod to which he intended to put a resolution affirming the right of the Africans in South-West Africa to appeal beyond the Union to the conscience of a world tribunal. He withdrew the resolution, however, when the Bishop pointed out that it came at the end of the agenda and was too important a matter to be decided by a possibly unrepresentative house. He found great inspiration in this gathering of all races receiving their Communion together, the Chalice being administered by an African priest.

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*O God of earth and altar.
Bow down and hear our cry;
Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people drift and die.
The walls of gold entomb us,
The swords of scorn divide;
Take not thy thunder from us
But take away our pride.*

(ii)

It was now early November and South-West Africa was to be discussed by the Trusteeship Council in Paris. Scott decided to go. This was no easy decision. He knew that the Government would do all in its power to stop him. He knew he was on a black list supplied by the Department of the Interior to all shipping companies with instructions that the Department was to be informed if any of those listed attempted to book a passage overseas. He knew that the passport of Dr. Dadoo (an Indian leader) had been withdrawn at the airport and Dadoo had to make his way without it, never reaching Paris, his destination. He knew that this might happen to him, or that having got away he might be prevented from returning to the country to which he felt his life to be dedicated. But weighing heavily in the balance was the memory of the meetings with the Hereros, of the light of their faith in the United Nations, of their insistence that he should maintain his labours on their account.

His friends tried to persuade Scott to leave the country quietly and board a plane beyond the borders of the Union. But this he would not do. It was a part of his make-up and a part of his strength that he did everything openly and with the knowledge of anyone interested. He consented, however, not to book in advance—indeed he had hardly time to when he finally decided to go—but to go to the airport and hope to find room on the plane.

So on a night in early November Scott, after nerve-racking months of dawdling and uncertainty, resumed his odyssey.

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Money for his expenses was provided by the Bechuanaland Hereros, and £400 in grubby much-folded £1 and 10s. notes were on this evening counted out on a Johannesburg drawing-room floor. It was close on midnight when with two friends he set out, heavy with foreboding and oppressed with a burden it seemed difficult to get the world to share. At the airport all began well; as he bought his ticket there was only a slight lifting of an eyebrow at the sight of his name; passport, customs and currency formalities were smoothly completed; the hearts of the three grew lighter.

But as they sat drinking coffee, Scott's name rasped tinnily over the loud-speaker summoning him to the immigration office. He walked conspicuously the length of the vestibule, sensing the speculation and amusement—not all of it unsympathetic—of the travellers and their friends. Asked to produce his passport again, he maintained that as it had already been seen he could not understand why this should be necessary. The official insisted, but became embarrassed when pressed for a reason and finally admitted that he intended to cancel it, having only just received 'telephonic instructions' from the Department of the Interior that this was to be done. Scott refused to recognize the validity of such an instruction without any written authority and said he would complain to the Minister. The official made it clear that they could not prevent his travelling, but must ask for the surrender of the passport. Scott pointed out that the purpose of his journey was, as he had stated, to attend the United Nations session and without a passport he could not get to Paris but would be stranded in London: he must therefore refuse to surrender his passport voluntarily and the Department, if they wished to cancel it, must take it by force or by law. The plane was due to take off and Scott removed his luggage and left the aerodrome with a return of his feeling as he slept fitfully in the camp in the dry bed of the Gammans River and heard the cries of the jackals on the one side mingle strangely with the rhythmic harmonies of Africans singing on the other.

Scott waited two or three days in Johannesburg for the Minister to take further action, speculating on what steps besides simple

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repudiation were necessary to invalidate a passport. Then the conviction came that a passport could not be revoked except on the passport itself, and he decided to test this notion by crossing the border with his passport and explaining the position in Rhodesia.

After supper the next evening he left Johannesburg by car. Two youngsters were entrusted with the driving. They had a full tank of petrol, two spare wheels and £5; they knew the road was very bad and there had been heavy rains and they were rather nervous. 'Go,' they were told, 'you are young, you have the spirit of youth, you will get there somehow.' They drove through the night, and in the early morning rolling banks of cloud were gathering as the great red orb of the sun climbed confidently higher over the horizon. As usual there was no official and no delay at the Bechuanaland border and at Lobatsi they stopped to wash at a spring and order tea at an hotel. Scott reported to the Police Commissioner, who took down a written statement on what had happened and the purpose of the journey and, at Scott's request, inspected and stamped the passport. 'He seemed extremely interested in the whole affair, and being an Irishman made some caustic but ambiguous comments on the position. His comments on politics, race, religion, Natives and Nationalists were all so contradictory that I felt the United Nations could never possibly be reached before they were untangled, but I suspect he was merely fencing with me to find out my opinions, though whether this was for his report or for his private information I shall probably never know.'

Beyond Gabarones drenching rains began, but they pushed on through the night, jolting over ruts and boulders, both rear springs broken, and the road submerged in water which splayed out four feet high on either side. At last, faced with a lake and no trace of a road, the young driver gave up. Scott took the wheel himself and somehow held to the invisible road, driving on, with only a brief break at 2 a.m. at Serowe to explain to Tshekedi Khama what had happened, until just before first light, they reached the railway at Palapye. They parted company, Scott with his canvas bag going on his way, the others limping home

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in their battered car. 'We got through,' they reported, 'but it was Michael who had the spirit of youth.'

Scott was now in Rhodesia. His first concern was to call on the immigration officer in Bulawayo and explain once more the attempt to invalidate his passport. The immigration officer remarked that it seemed all in order to him and gave it a hearty thump for good measure with his rubber stamp.

Arrangements had been made for a plane of a private air line (which was strictly not allowed to pick up passengers in Central Africa, though in cases of emergency they had been able to do so) to take him on next day at Kasama, first stop after Johannesburg, and Scott chartered a plane to get there. A violent storm forced them down for the night in a game reserve. 'Next morning we took off in the shadows, clearing dark shapes which were trees, and there was the new comet in the SSE. A cloud rising out of the forest was the spray over the Victoria Falls; a red sun just coming over the horizon made fleecy clouds, water and spray a rosy pink, and enough blue was in the sky to be reflected in the wide stretches of the river, which falls down placidly in a broad mass and tumbles tempestuously in froth and foam over the rocky bed at the foot of the falls into the emerald green bush.' They circled round to fix the vast impression on the mind, feeling for once the sermon ending about 'might, majesty and dominion' did not overstate the experience. Scott looked to the south-west where the ribbon of the Caprivi strip would be touching the Zambesi, his last glimpse of South-West Africa, and wondered what the Africans understood of the immense distances and speeds he was travelling on this journey.

Coming into Ndola to refuel they saw taking off the Dakota supposed to pick him up at Kasama. An attempt was made on the radio to recall her, but it transpired that she had been re-routed after a warning from the police that it would be against regulations to take him on.

There seemed nothing for it but to make for the Congo to catch the next Sabena. The debates had begun in Paris and time became all-important. In Elisabethville Scott reported fully to the sympathetic British Consul, and once more all seemed well.

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Not until he came to pay for his ticket just before leaving did he discover it was necessary to pay in francs and nothing would induce the Sabena agent to risk his paying the London agent in pounds. Back to Rhodesia he, reduced to his last five francs, must go. Providence in the shape, oddly enough, of two young South Africans intervened. They thought 'the old nig' wasn't getting a fair deal and were glad to add their little weight to even up the scales of justice. Somewhere they had a Baby Austin which they thought could be 'fixed up', and bouncing along on the axles the three men were soon splashing their way through mud and water back into Northern Rhodesia. At Ndola Scott bought a ticket, spent two despairing days in an impenetrable gloom of spirit, conscious that his small store of money raised with real self-sacrifice by the Hereros, was being frittered away and that discussion had begun in Paris and he was not there. He caught the next Sabena. Watching the slow unfolding at 300 miles an hour of thousands of square miles of virgin forest and swamps and the great desert crossed by the Nile, he brooded on how young in geological time our civilization is and yet, in the speeding up of history, how little time we can afford to waste before taking some control of the processes of history and change. In London he delayed long enough to get a French visa and on to Paris, arriving in the evening just after the vote in the Trusteeship Council had been taken.

(iii)

There was a week to go before the General Assembly was to debate the report of the Trusteeship Council on South-West Africa. Those were days of unceasing work, lobbying and distributing information. It was not so lonely a task now, for Scott had an ally in Paris. Another Anglican parson, George Norton, a South African on leave in England, hearing of Scott's passport delay, hurried to Paris to deputize for him. The Chaplain of the English church, as it happened a school friend whom Scott had not seen for twenty-five years, was deeply sympathetic and put them both up, a kindness which greatly eased their financial position.

The South African case was, as in previous years, based mainly

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on the complicated legal position, evading the moral issues and avoiding facts. Once again many of South Africa's critics showed an astonishing grasp of the facts. All the old legal arguments were inconclusively repeated by both sides. Every possible interpretation of the ambiguous Article 77 of the Charter was put:

'1. The Trusteeship System shall apply to such territories in the following categories as may be placed thereunder by means of Trusteeship Agreements:

'(a) Territories under Mandate.

'(b) Territories which may be detached from enemy states as a result of the second World War.

'(c) Territories voluntarily placed under the System by states responsible for their administration.

'2. It will be a matter for subsequent agreement as to which territories in the foregoing categories will be brought under the Trusteeship System and upon what terms.'

There is plenty of scope for argument about what this article does mean as it stands, and to what extent Clause 2 modifies or cancels Clause 1a, but it was pointed out that every other mandatory power had recognized the delegation to submit a trusteeship agreement.

Attention was drawn by delegates to General Smuts's compromise undertaking that South Africa would proceed no further with incorporation, that she would maintain the *status quo*, continue to administer the region in the spirit of the mandate, and submit an annual report on administration for the information of the United Nations. It was argued that since then the situation had seriously deteriorated. Comment was made on the restoration of citizenship to 5,000 Germans; on Dr. Malan's assurance to the European inhabitants that the franchise would not be extended to the non-Europeans. Stress was laid on the disparity in economic progress of white and black; in land distribution when 10 per cent of the people own 52 per cent of the land; in expenditure when 10 per cent of the total budget is spent on 90 per cent of the population.

In its final resolution the General Assembly maintained its recommendations of the two previous years, that South-West

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Africa be placed under the Trusteeship System; noted with regret that this had not been carried out; and recommended that South Africa continue to supply annually information on its administration of the territory for examination by the Trusteeship Council. South Africa asked for a roll-call on the first part of this, which was carried 32 for, 14 against¹ and 5 abstentions.² The whole resolution was passed 43 for, 1 against and 5 abstentions. The world very clearly condemned South Africa's racial policy.

Particularly conspicuous in Paris was South Africa's attitude on Genocide and Human Rights. 'In the final General Assembly meeting on Genocide', records George Norton, 'South Africa was present to defeat an amendment tabled by the U.S.S.R. Five minutes later when the voting on the whole resolution took place South Africa was absent. . . . As the nations were called by roll-call, nearly all present answering Yes, the silence following "South Africa" was the more striking and ominous. On the Human Rights Committee South Africa absented itself almost from the beginning after its delegate had been reprimanded for maintaining, in connection with the clause: "All human beings are born free, equal in dignity and rights", that there were "degrees of dignity".'

In Paris Scott again met Professor Lemkin, the international authority on Genocide, who promised that once the Genocide convention had been ratified by thirty nations he would devote his attention to the case of the Hereros.

Looking back on the work done in Paris Scott wrote: 'We felt the strain of it at U.N. . . . It is not merely the physical strain of rushing about in a feverish attempt to get more into a day than can possibly be done but the spiritual exhaustion of knowing how strong and highly organized are the forces of untruth and how cunning and subtle and difficult to confront they are. Does that sound very fanciful? Perhaps it is; but it seemed to me often that the sheer effort of trying to exist, to stand still against the rushing torrent of propaganda required all the spiritual strength one

¹ Turkey, South Africa, Australia, U.K., Belgium, Canada, Colombia, France, Greece, Iceland, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Peru. •

² Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Honduras, New Zealand, and Panama.

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possessed. Then added to that is the physical difficulty of making all one's own contacts and appointments on a foreign telephone system, typing all one's own statements on foreign typewriters, and trying to compete with the French traffic system, buses and underground, rather than taxis, while the opposition of course has a large staff of secretaries, cars, telephones and the resources and prestige of a state behind them.'

(iv)

As at the waving of a wand the Assembly broke up, the delegates melting away to their various Christmases. Mr. Louw returned to South Africa in time for the session of Parliament at which the Bill for the integration of South-West Africa was to be introduced.

The new government had been installed with a very slender majority in Parliament, but in the country there had actually been a small majority of votes cast against it. The Nationalist Party had never approved of non-European representation, even by Europeans, so the abolition of the three Native Representatives in the House of Assembly would have been not only a matter of principle but also, its enemies pointed out, one of practical politics reducing its opponents by three. This proposal, however, was strongly opposed, for as one of the entrenched clauses of the South African Constitution, the representation of non-Europeans could not be abolished without a two-thirds vote which the Government would not obtain, nor was it powerful enough to make a direct assault on the Constitution. Mr. Louw did, however, put what must be presumed to be the Government standpoint when he stated in different speeches that the Nationalist Party 'intends to save white civilization and will not be diverted from its path by talk of a two-thirds majority'; that Dr. Malan could not allow himself 'to be bound by a dead hand of forty years ago' and that they must 'ensure that their descendants would be as white as they were'.

The matter of Native Representation was allowed to rest for the moment. Dr. Malan turned his attention to South-West

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Africa. He had a twofold cause for haste; if the Bill could be rushed through before the next session of the United Nations perhaps it would be possible to avoid another international airing of South Africa's race relations, while there was little doubt that the South-West African representative would increase the Nationalist Party majority in the Union Parliament. He had been to South-West Africa, had consulted with all sections of the white population, including the Germans (while refusing to meet any representatives of the Hereros), and had formulated the terms on which the whites would consent to incorporation.

The Prime Minister, speaking on his Bill in the House, said that he was anxious to get it through that session so as to present the United Nations in September with a *fait accompli*. He also made it clear that the Government did not intend to submit any more reports to the Trusteeship Council. Other members of the Government bitterly attacked General Smuts for having made any approach to the United Nations at all. Mr. Louw quoted at great length the criticisms of members of the Trusteeship Council which he had had to face and maintained that these derived entirely from the report submitted by the previous government. His own version of his part at the United Nations was given outside Parliament. 'When he attended the United Nations meeting in Paris,' he is reported to have said, 'he did not go crawling like General Smuts. Russians, Poles, Chinese and others were slandering the good name of South Africa and he hit back hard.'

The Bill met with strong opposition: it was wisdom to defer to international opinion and retain the friends South Africa had among the United Nations so that incorporation might eventually be carried out with international goodwill instead of in defiance of world opinion; and in the interests of peace the United Nations must be supported, not flouted. Most of the attacks on the Bill, however, were based on its political and technical defects, and on the undue haste in rushing through so imperfect a measure. That the Government was eager for the added strength it would probably gain from the new members; that the financial control of the territory would remain vested in South-West Africa; that one vote in South-West Africa would

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equal three in the Union; that the members for South-West Africa, owing to the financial reservations of the Bill, would be limited as to what debates they took part in: these were the main subjects for much detailed criticism.

But the very odd thing about the debates was how little mention was made of the rights and position of the non-Europeans, nine-tenths of the whole population. One of the Native Representatives quoted the finding of the van Zyl Commission of 1936: 'the development of the Constitution to full responsible government while the non-Europeans are still in a state of tutelage, would in our opinion be in conflict with the requirements of the Mandate', to show that responsible opinion in South Africa recognized the obligation under the Mandate of raising the political level of the non-European. It was argued, too, that the framers of the Bill showed no consciousness of the need for heavy expenditure on the non-Europeans. The Native Representatives also marshalled most of the arguments used in this book without avail. In the Senate a proposal to decline to pass the Bill unless adequate provision were made for elected representation 'of the native population in accordance with the spirit and intention of the mandate' was rejected, 31 to 7, the Opposition voting with the Government, the Labour Senators with the Native Senators.

The South-West Africa Affairs Amendment Bill is now law. Mr. Eric Louw's pious exhortation to the House, 'Let us administer the natives and the indigenous population of that country by looking after their interests and by seeing that right and justice prevail for them . . . and then I believe that we need not fear any unprejudiced criticism, and we shall not need to worry in the future about any criticism and attacks that emanate from U.N.O.', is, in our opinion, transparent chicanery in the light of the provision made in the Bill for the political representation of the non-European population. There are to be two nominated Senators, one of whom 'shall be selected mainly on the ground of his thorough acquaintance with the reasonable wants and wishes of the coloured races of the territory'.

CHAPTER XV

Trumpets Should Sound To-day

(i)

Scott, when the Assembly broke up, made his way under a lowering sky across the grey seas of the Channel. As he watched the French lights merge into the mist as those of Dover began to twinkle in the December dusk, he reflected on how, faced with these white cliffs, Napoleon and Hitler had hesitated and been lost; and he wondered when the victors who had achieved such commercial and political ascendancy in the world would realize that their future depended on their capacity to grasp a deeper doctrine than that of superior power or superiority of race.

The story of the Hereros was for Scott but a symptom of a world-wide malady, and he was resolved, using this story for the illustration of his theme, to do what he could to make a section of the British public, who were responsible for the welfare and destiny of so many millions of dark-skinned people, aware of the malady and their obligation to contribute to its cure. The next five months he spent in England, writing, lecturing and earnestly discussing the situation with all who would listen. He found unexpected allies who gave him inestimable encouragement and support; without the help, in particular, of the Quakers, who through the centuries have maintained their independence of thought and their persistent refusal to truckle to expediency, he could not have attempted a fraction of what he accomplished. In company with Paul Robeson and Dr. Dadoo he addressed a great public meeting organized in London by various associations interested in the welfare of coloured races, and was in consequence much criticized. He spoke in Edinburgh at a meeting

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under most distinguished religious and academic patronage; he was member of a deputation, composed of men notable for their liberal views and international experience, to the Minister for Commonwealth Relations to urge a reconsideration of Britain's policy on the South-West African mandate; he addressed a gathering of about fifty M.P.s in the House of Commons and showed a short film he had compiled to illustrate some of the social consequences of the migratory labour system; he lectured to many small groups of people, clergy, students and others in England and Scotland. Furthermore, a powerful section of the British press forthrightly supports—not him, except incidentally—but those principles he seeks to have accepted, and condemns the evils which he has done so much to reveal.

Dr. Malan sadly miscalculated when he hoped that the passage of the South-West African Bill would end discussion of the matter by the United Nations. The subject came on to the agenda of the General Assembly once again in 1949. Scott had done useful spadework in London and now it was necessary for him to cross the Atlantic again to do what he could at Lake Success. Besides, he had been asked to attend, on behalf of the International League for the Rights of Man, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in New York early in May. Again every difficulty was put in the way of his obtaining a United States visa, and he was privately informed that there was no objection on the American side to granting the visa but that the obstruction was due to the action of the Union Government. Dr. Malan was at the time in London for the Prime Ministers' Conference, and Scott called but was unable to see him. He therefore wrote to Dr. Malan a letter outlining his views on the danger to Commonwealth relations of South Africa's race policy and on the incompatibility of the 'colour bar' with Christianity. He asked that the authorities acknowledge the legitimacy of his taking action according to his beliefs. He mentioned the obstructions to his obtaining a visa and asked the Prime Minister to use his good offices to enable him to get to Lake Success. This letter was not answered but perhaps it bore fruit, for a restricted visa eventually materialized (not until it was too late for the Human

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Rights Commission) and he sailed for New York at the end of May.

(ii)

The leader of the South African delegation in 1949, Mr. Jooste, opened the debate in the Trusteeship Committee by defending the South African refusal to submit further reports on the grounds that the United Nations showed little understanding of the unique nature of the problem, and little recognition of the assurances that the territory would be administered in a spirit of mandate; that the information voluntarily supplied was used to criticize the administration; and that his government could not by submitting reports seem to agree that it was accountable to the United Nations in the matter. He said it was not possible that in thirty years primitive peoples, following their age-old tribal traditions, peoples who in the past have never been in contact with the great civilizations of the world, should suddenly become active participants in modern political institutions, and spoke of his government having evolved a system of indirect rule whereby the Native peoples could best become politically conscious. 'My Government, by reason of its experience and its increasing efforts to promote the welfare of the indigenous peoples of South-West Africa, is convinced of the soundness of its policy and cannot allow criticism from outside to disturb the process of development which it has undertaken.' He defended the country's segregation policy without reference to its inequalities and injustice, and said that only by a process of gradual development would the indigenous inhabitants be able to make a contribution to the European pattern of administration, claiming that in the reserves they all but ruled themselves. He asserted that the Organization's criticisms were used 'with great effect by agitators to destroy the harmonious race relations upon which a successful Native administration is dependent'.

He defended the inequalities of budget expenditure on the grounds that only 2 per cent of the revenue was contributed by the natives (apparently unaware of the unmeasurable contribution of the native labourer in the other 98 per cent). In reply to

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the criticisms of land distribution he merely pointed out that outside the Police Zone the reserves included the best water and the most fertile country in the territory. In a later speech Mr. Jooste outlined the legal and political factors of the closer integration, showing how admirable the arrangement was from the point of view of the European inhabitants. The absent Mr. Louw raised the laugh of the session when he was quoted as saying on his return home the previous year: 'I was glad to be back after three months of mixing with Siamese, Indians, Russians and God knows what.' And his primly indignant correction: 'I expressed pleasure at being back in South Africa and among my own people. As a matter of interest I referred to the diversity of races encountered at the United Nations Assembly . . .' must have been further entertainment.

The debate on a motion to submit the question of the future of South-West Africa to the International Court of Justice was interrupted by a Guatemalan proposal that the Rev. Michael Scott should be heard on behalf of the Hereros. South Africa, supported by Britain and France in particular, opposed the suggestion with all the arguments at her command. Mr. Jooste said this was not the first occasion on which Mr. Scott had endeavoured to place before the United Nations certain representations allegedly on behalf of the Hereros and other leaders. 'In fact he has for some years been most persistent in his efforts to discredit not only my country's administration of Native affairs in South-West Africa but also our administration of Native affairs in the Union. The Union Government cannot be expected to ignore indefinitely misrepresentations, whether malicious or otherwise, of race relations and policies in the Union and territory by individuals who, in any case, cannot be regarded as fully conversant with the conditions they seek to denounce.' He pointed out that the indigenous inhabitants were entitled only to address their complaints to the Administration.

The drama of the debate that followed came very largely from the fact that it was realized that something was being introduced not originally envisaged in the formation of the United Nations, an element of great potential significance—the recognition of

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the right of unrepresented minorities to appeal past their governments to world opinion. The drama was heightened by the personality and history of the man who was forcing the issue. A South African press correspondent summed up the feeling: 'It is evident that the nations with any dissident minority within their borders dislike Mr. Scott and loathe the things he stands for.' Scott's credentials were examined and, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary from the South African delegation who refused any further part in the discussion, were found in order, the Mexican delegate contributing the arresting comment that 'Christ was crucified because he had no credentials to prove he was the Son of God'.

The meeting Scott addressed was remarkable in the history of international conferences. His cassocked concentration was by no means unknown to the delegates. For three years he had been insistently lobbying, 'knocking at the door', at Paris and Lake Success. A three-year battle had been waged backstage between the powers of government and political expediency and a single man with a clear conception of right and justice and the brotherhood of man. 'At one time', commented a press man, 'the debate took on the aspect of a struggle between Mr. Jooste at his microphone and Mr. Scott sitting silent and patient at the back of the hall. The admiration of the Committee and audience was divided between the dialectical skill of the diplomat and the idealism of the clergyman.'

When, to the biggest attendance of members at any time in the whole debate, the chairman announced that Mr. Scott would be heard, he rose from the public seats and was guided to a place at the conference table. 'In a hush rarely experienced at this headquarters of international sophistication tinged by cynicism', he quietly began his seventy-minute address. Without heat and with his steady gaze seeming to look to the horizons of the world, he expressed the gratitude of the Hereros for this hearing, their hopes and faith in the United Nations. He said that many of the Africans would have liked a United Nations Commission to investigate the true facts and opinions of the people, but if that were not possible perhaps a suitable body could be appointed to

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investigate the documents he had drawn up to test their accuracy and the truth of the statements made by the African people. He related the history of South-West Africa and particularly of the Herero people, outlined the disabilities under which they suffered and emphasized that under the new régime they would have no right of appeal beyond the Union nor any elected representative within the government. Quietly he put the dispute into its world context: 'I wish these African people could be here to tell you their own story in their own way, not merely their complaints against a particular government which happens to have been given rule over them. It is the whole history of the impact of our civilization on that dark, but sunlit, corner of Africa. . . . In this vital question for Africa, there are to-day certain principles at stake which are being challenged. This matter is being watched and the principles are vital for good faith and confidence to be maintained in our civilization and for the sake of all that is now being planned for the future development of Africa. . . . One of the distressing features in that part of Africa is the falling away of confidence between the two races, between the rulers and the ruled. . . . For the Africans the question of the destiny of South-West Africa goes deep down to the fundamental principle of right and justice which involves the integrity of our relationship with the African people, as this has developed over a long period of colonial history. The great tasks confronting human civilization in Africa will require for their fulfilment good faith between the white and coloured races and willing partnership in these tasks. The concept of "the sacred trust of our civilization" bestowed upon South Africa as one of the Mandatory Powers has in it certain values which have vast practical implications for the future of Africa and especially of southern Africa. He asked that an opportunity be given these African people to state their own case before the United Nations or a United Nations Commission and that no final decision regarding the disposal of South-West Africa be reached until the petitioners have been heard; and that their land be returned to them and the territory be brought under the trusteeship system. As quietly as he had begun it, Michael Scott concluded his statement to this congress

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of mixed races and colours by repeating the prayer of the old Herero chief, Hosea. 'O Lord, help us who roam about. Help us who have been placed in Africa and have no home of our own. Give us back a dwelling place. God all power is yours in heaven and on earth.'

'Trumpets', wrote an English press correspondent, 'should be sounding for Michael Scott to-day in the kraals, shanty slums, leaky tin huts and shabby little Negro churches which sent him to Lake Success.'

Comment in South Africa was mostly bitter. 'Appeal to Emotion' was one headline; 'Allegations of Rev. M. Scott Outrage S.W.A. Residents' and 'Disgust and shame at such depths of distortion' were others. General Smuts reproved the United Nations for 'running too fast', said Scott had no *locus standi*, and that 'the Union Government speaks for South-West Africa and is responsible for it to the United Nations. Mr. Scott can only proceed by way of influencing public opinion but the United Nations is not the organization for it.' Dr. Malan accused the United Nations of abusing Smuts's friendly gesture in submitting a report 'with the purpose of launching vicious attacks on South Africa characterized by prejudice and ignorance and often obvious malice'. Then, after strangely distorting the whole tenor of the debates, he concluded: 'Really, the concern of the United Nations about the aboriginal population has reached such farcical heights that the Union Government will eventually be compelled to protect the aborigines from their embrace. . . . Once the principle having been accepted that agitators, and what is more, agitators of the Scott type, as we know him, can obtain entrance to its council chambers . . . there seems to be no limit to interference any more.'

The resolution eventually passed by the General Assembly was:

1. To ask South Africa to resume the submission of annual reports on the administration of the territory.
2. To ask the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on the international status of South-West Africa and South Africa's international obligations, and in particular:

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(a) What are South Africa's international obligations under the Mandate?

(b) How does Ch. XII of the Charter apply to South-West Africa?

(c) Has the South African Government the right to modify the international status of South-West Africa? If not, who has such right?

Dr. Malan made his position clear: 'And therefore to the demands that we must place South-West Africa under the trusteeship of the United Nations, or that we must submit reports on our administration of that territory, or that we should account for our recent legislation to raise the territory's self-governing status, by giving it a voice in all Government measures which will be valid there in future, we have only one definite and irrevocable reply—we refuse.'

The fundamental incompatibility of the two viewpoints was absolutely revealed: the protagonists argued from antipodes. South Africa pointed with justifiable but irrelevant pride to the economic and political advancement made by the European settlers in the thirty years under mandate, while dismissing with superficial reference the state of the native population. The affairs of the intrusive whites, on the other hand, were not the business of the Trusteeship Committee, which was deeply and entirely concerned with the negligible progress in economic, moral and social well-being of the indigenous inhabitants, for which purpose specifically the mandate was granted.

(iii)

Scott distilled the whole meaning of his ten years in South Africa into some lines written in New York on United Nations' Day:

SATYAGRAHA

*The spirit of the Lord is nowhere to be seen
Is lost in the night among the stars in their courses.
Is sightless and soundless, but is seen by the hearts desirous of the light.*

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*It gleams as a diamond on the dew of the morning.
To the eyes of desire of the truth, the spirit of the Lord is visible,
But nowhere to be found and kept.
Nowhere to be held, possessed, but discerned by the heart's desire,
Hidden from the hater, and the lover of his life, the prejudiced,
The knowers of all knowledge and the teachers of all truth.
The spirit of the lord is voiceless,
Inarticulate as the rushing torrent from the hills.
The spirit of the lord is not locatable
To the fickle is fitful as the flame on the marshes.
Is frail and easily extinguished
By the wrath of man working not his righteousness.
Is mighty as the mountains, reared up,
Shaped, twisted, and distorted by centuries of slow gigantic movement,
Is hardly accessible as their poised and jagged crags.
The spirit of the lord possesses those who desire it.
Is unpossessable. Fades as the manna, but ever renewable.
More precious than diamonds and rubies,
More abundant than the sands of the shore,
Golden, by the crushing and washing of the sea,
(Not by the mines of Mammon destroying land and people).
The spirit of the lord is unconfined by bars and prison walls,
By sacred aisles, and choirs and places where they sing.
It blows where it lists
To make music for the shepherds clothed in sackcloth
When the lamb of God is born.
'Gloria in Excelsis Deo, et in Terra Pax.'
The spirit of the Lord is a sword
Dividing truth from untruth, without hope, fear, or favour;
More exact than the balance, more truthful than the true;
More just than justice;
Forgiving where the Law condemns; more exacting than the Law.
To the possessors of the Law the spirit of the Lord is lawless,
Breaking with non-violence the fetters forged by fear.
Subversive to those who are fearful of the evil.
The spirit of the Lord is unreliable
To those who would, if they could, believe in its purpose.*

TRUMPETS SHOULD SOUND TO-DAY

*Too tolerant to those who are intolerant of time.
Is vague and impractical to the apostles of force.
Timid to the regiments of the righteousness of Might.
Weakness to condemners of the Way, the Truth and Life
Next a defiantly dying assassin and a lately penitent thief.
Praise be to thee O Lord for these mighty mountains
Unpossessed and unpossessable by their possessors.
For these diamonds on the cobwebs in the first light of morning,
For the four winds of heaven and the stars which cannot come down.
Praise be to thee O Lord for a generous heart in those who are fearful
And the dispossessed;
For those whom our injustice has left human yet.
Glory be to God for the spirit of the Lord is free.
It opens up new and still untrodden ways
Through the streets of the city and the prison yards,
The paths of the jungle and the desert sands.
Glory be to God for the infinity of his forgiveness
Apportioning no rewards for the evil and the good;
For the abundance of his eternal heart, pulsing in the Universe.
Glory be to God for the destiny of equality in His infinity.
For the spirit of the Lord is in the good and the evil, undefeasible,
Creating and recreating all from our defeats.*

CHAPTER XVI

Help Us Who Roam About

We come back to the Hereros, prototype of the dispossessed of the earth, of the victims of the white man's ruthless advancement of his own way of life. The story has been told, but perhaps it would be as well to sort out the main issues before we end.

(i)

The League of Nations is dead: the United Nations has taken over. South Africa has seized the opportunity of the interregnum to annex the territory granted to her as a 'sacred trust of civilization'. That is what it comes to. South Africa has always been entitled to govern South-West Africa 'as an integral part of the Union', and that, in international circles has never been in dispute. But successive governments of the Union have shown bad faith in their administration of the mandate and this has become evident time and again. The Government Representatives at U.N. in 1946 and 1947 repeatedly affirmed South Africa's intention to continue to administer South-West Africa 'in the spirit of the mandate', yet we find that Government in its covering letter to the answer to the fifty questions put to it in 1947 of its first Report to U.N. stating: 'The Union Government in forwarding these replies desire to reiterate that the transmission to the United Nations of information on South-West Africa in the form of an annual report or any other form, is on a voluntary basis and is for purposes of information only.' And again: '... the Union Government have noted that their declared intention to administer the territory in the spirit of the mandate has been

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construed in some quarters as implying a measure of international accountability. This construction the Union Government cannot accept. . . .

Immediately after this was issued, the government of the Union changed and men far less disposed to conform, even partially, to international opinion took over the reins. Their delegate repeated the soporific dose 'in the spirit of the mandate' as before. But obviously very little reliance can be placed in the undertakings of a government whose head, Dr. Malan, thinks along lines revealed in his statement in Parliament with regard to Britain's obligations to the native people under her protection. 'I now think', said Dr. Malan, 'that it would be wrong for the British Government in effect—not exactly in word but in deed—to adopt the attitude that if the natives [of the Protectorates] do not consent, they cannot effect transfer.' There in a nutshell is the state of South Africa's present political integrity.

Implicit, in any case, in the whole idea of mandate is the conception of international supervision; indeed, according to the authority, Wright, 'Continuous international supervision is the essence of the mandate system' (see p. 59), and the arguments he advances are the same as those put forward by the people who oppose the incorporation of South-West Africa.

Explicit in the mandate conception and equally ignored by the glib reciters of 'in the spirit of the mandate' is, and it cannot be too often repeated, that 'the Mandatory shall promote to the utmost the material and moral and social progress of the inhabitants' (inhabitants clearly meaning the indigenous peoples and not those settlers introduced by the Mandatory). South Africa has not seriously claimed to have done that; the strongest claim she puts forward in her own defence is that after thirty years of mandate, conditions for the inhabitants are not as bad as in some other parts of Africa, or as in some other parts of the world.

So great an authority on international affairs as Toynbee has described exactly the prevalent attitude when the mandate rule was initiated. 'In the Union, and particularly, perhaps, in the Cape Province, the traditional relations between Whites and Blacks were very much more humane [than under the Ger-

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mans], and . . . from the outset the new administration made serious and largely successful efforts to grapple with the acute racial problem which it had inherited from the previous régime. . . . These were great mitigations of the hardships to which the native was exposed, and the Administration deserved all credit for having introduced them; but the fundamental relations between the races remained the same, for at bottom the South Africans took the same view as the Germans of the position which the native should occupy in a "White Man's country", however much they might be shocked at the brutality with which the Germans had put the White Man's philosophy into practice. . . . The real difficulty was that the whites and natives stood for two incompatible social ideals and economic systems. To the Whites it seemed right that all parts of the country suitable for White settlement should be parcelled out into White Men's farms and that only land which was unsuitable for this purpose should be reserved for the native's exclusive occupation.'

Toynbee then touches the basic fallacy, from the mandate and indeed from any human or humanitarian point of view, of the Administration and of White South Africa. 'The new Administration made a more generous estimate than the old of the amount and the quality of the land which the surviving natives needed for their livelihood, but they too took the view that the proper solution for the natives' economic problem was not to live their own life apart upon their reserves, but to come and work as hired labourers on the White Men's farms, mines and railways. In other words, they demanded that the native should not only adapt himself to the White Men's economic system but should enter the White Men's service in a permanently subordinate position, and that demand was made by the entire White community. . . .'

The policy of the Administration has never been clearly set forth, and coming across the various confusing and contradictory pronouncements that have from time to time been made by those in authority one is forced to the conclusion that the only underlying principle is one of submitting to the dictates of economic and political expediency as they occur. One Administra-

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tor declared 'that the best way of bringing civilizing influences to bear on the native was to remove him from his own environment and place him in a European environment'. But elsewhere the Government has stated that its 'aim is definitely not to Europeanize the natives. They must retain their language and customs as far as the latter do not clash with the great general principles on which civilization rests.'

In the annual report on South-West Africa for 1928 it is stated that 'men are not encouraged to remain idling in the reserves. Only men who are physically unfit, or such as are necessarily required to look after the people in the reserves and their stocks and the stock of others who have gone out to work, are encouraged to remain there.'

And as late as 1938 the Government stated: 'In South-West Africa the duty to contribute to the [Reserve Trust] Funds by means of the payment of grazing fees results in the natives, the produce of whose stock is insufficient to cover the outlay and provide for themselves, being obliged to seek employment outside the reserves. This has been a potent factor in the discouragement of indolence.'

The South-West African Administration has been frequently criticized, by the Permanent Mandates Commission, by Lord Hailey, and by the van Zyl Commission to name a few of the more significant critics, for the meagre portion of expenditure, now only about 10 per cent of the total budget, devoted to native advancement. The Administration has put its curious standpoint in this matter very clearly: 'The Administration is opposed to making grants for accelerating the development of the reserves as much in the interests of the natives themselves as of the Europeans. At the same time it holds that it would be unfair to burden the European section of the population with further taxes for native development when practically the whole of the native contribution to the revenue of the territory is handed out to trust funds for expenditure on natives.' And to Chief Hosea, the Administrator said in 1933: 'I cannot ask the white people to pay for the native debts again,' and 'I cannot tax Europeans to provide schools for the natives.'

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Yet it is one of the corner-stones of modern democracy that the rich are taxed to provide for the material, moral and social progress of the poor.

(ii)

Against this general background of Trusteeship how do the Hereros in particular stand?

The Administration has said that the gulf in development between the Herero and the Bushman is far wider than that between the Herero and the European. The Hereros have been described variously as being: intelligent, honest, proud, candid, sincere, self-willed, prone to fits of depression, frugal and industrious, reliable, trustworthy, willing, good-hearted, diligent, quick of perception, liberty loving, jealously guarding their independence, and with strong family ties. There cannot be many peoples who can match that list of virtues.

Officials are disposed, however, to refer to them 'as something of a herrenvolk themselves'. To be proud, to be independent, to be freedom-loving, hardly merits that. True, they had before the white man came enslaved the Berg-Damaras, or a section of them; but they do not seem to have been very arduous task-masters, for they had given to their subjects some 200,000 acres of land as a tribal area at Okambahe, where they cultivated gardens and raised crops. It seems that for the most part it was the poorest of the Berg-Damaras who took service with the Hereros, but curiously enough they were welcome to join the Herero tribal groups as full members if they wished to submit to the necessary ritual. The Berg-Damaras' own testimony is interesting: 'We hated the Hereros, but they treated us even better than the Germans. They were enemies and conquered us after battles, but then they let us live in peace under our own chief, and they never interfered with our laws and customs. They were a savage people like us, but they were more lenient than the Germans, and their Chiefs Kamaherero, Zurua, and others were just. Only our poor people who worked for the Hereros had a hard time. The rest of us were free and could move

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about the Hereros' land, graze our cattle, and live in peace. In those days we used to help the Hereros in their wars against the Hottentots. They were not our tribe, so we often disagreed, but our chief and the Herero chiefs always settled matters. The Hereros were not a warlike people, they loved their cattle and did not interfere much with their neighbours. I have many good friends among the Hereros, but no German was ever our friend. . . .'

Another Berg-Damara says: 'We were under the Hereros but governed according to our laws and customs. We paid the Hereros no tribute or taxation, but as they were very rich and had plenty of cattle our poor people worked for them as herds and got food for their labour. . . . I will say that taking everything into consideration we were better off under the Hereros than under the Germans. . . .'

The van Zyl Commission reported that the Hereros 'have become an immoral people, both men and women, and as a result syphilis and gonorrhoea have become rife among them. . . . They were poor they said and had no money to buy clothes for their women who went to the nearest village and came in contact with "Zulus, Cape-boys, Basutos, Okavangos, Whites and all such and slept with them". . . . One of their greatest problems is connected with their women upon which the procreation and continuance of their race depend and who become physically unfit to bear children.'

But the Hereros to whom Scott quoted this were indignant that it gave only one side of the story. They recalled their history under the Germans, the men enslaved, families entirely broken up, the women forced into concubinage. They drew attention to the failure to restore their lands, to provide any but the most rudimentary education, to give technical or agricultural instruction, and emphasized the prevailing economic and social frustration.

One man said: 'The people who die are very many, but the children who are born are very few. It is since the Europeans came here that the people have been dying so fast. Before, when it was the Herero land, there were not nearly so many people

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dying.' Asked why the women have so few children, he replied: 'Perhaps it may be because the people are so mixed up. Before, the Herero people were alone. Now sometimes the women will go with more than one man. It would make a very big difference to our people if the Hereros could have their own chief.'

Another said: 'It is true that we do not get enough children as we used to do. But now we have come across many other non-European peoples. In early times we used not to have any drinks like kaffir beer. We used to eat meat in the old days and then we used to drink milk. But when the Europeans came they brought drinks with them. They brought in various people from various countries, so that we also lost control over our people. According to European laws a child when he reaches the age of twenty-one is no more under his parents' control and this has taught the young people not to have any respect for the elder people and our ways.'

And yet another, commenting on the different rates of increase of the Hereros in Bechuanaland and in South-West Africa, said: 'The people in Bechuanaland escaped the fire which has been destroying us. We have been left. They have been able to retain all the Herero customs while we have been all mixed up with other peoples by the Union Government and our authority and respect is being taken from us. We have been scattered and divided in different sections, and our young men taught other ways.'

The authorities maintain that the Hereros do not want education. One annual report on South-West Africa naïvely seems to have struck near the truth: '. . . the Hereros are continuing to show very little sympathy for the advantages of education. The suspicion that the schools are established with the sole intention of making natives more useful servants of the Europeans cannot be removed by persuasive efforts from the minds of the conservative and proud Herero race.'

Festus, a headman, however, has said: 'The Hereros were both herdsmen and cultivators when we had our own land. We used to grow mealies, pumpkins, kaffir corn, watermelons, tobacco, calabash, beans and other things. Wherever the Hereros

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lived from Okahandja to Omaruru we used to cultivate gardens. We should like our young men to be trained in agriculture.'

Another spokesman explained: "The greatest problem we must constantly touch on is the deplorable education that the youth enjoy. It is so limited that we do not see the necessity for letting it continue. The Missionary Schools, particularly those of the Phenisch Mission, prepare our youths only as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and good kitchen hands. After our efforts in everything failed to achieve the desired results, we decided to take our children out of the hands of the above-mentioned mission and to struggle further independently until such time as the Government realizes its duties towards us, and intervenes with its help. We have, however, no means of providing education, but this is the only solution that we can see for the advancement of our race. Knowing we are persecuted, put in gaol, and accused of distorting facts, we still cannot strike back, because we seek nothing but education and development.'

The Union Government has itself in a recent brochure asserted: "They are among the finest cattlemen in the world.'

In view of the history of this African people, of their undoubted capabilities and of their ambitions, and in the consciousness of the advances being made by backward peoples in the world to-day, it is tempting to speculate on what might have been. One is at liberty to wonder what might have been the course of development in South-West Africa if the money, or but a portion of it, that has been sunk in making white settlement and white standards of life possible in such difficult natural conditions, had instead been spent, in the true spirit of the mandate, on the regeneration and rehabilitation of the native peoples of the Police Zone, whose way of life is so much more simply adapted to the natural surroundings. If the people's confidence had been won, if a thorough and progressive policy of education and agricultural instruction had been embarked on, if the Namas had been given adequate lands and the Karakul, if the Hereros' lands had been restored and these natural cattle farmers had been given boreholes and intensive instruction in modern ranching, how would the country have prospered? Had South-West

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Africa been deliberately made a black man's not a white man's country, what would have been the effect on race relations all over South Africa? Idle speculation, for the opportunity was lost, and instead the attitude as set out by the van Zyl Commission prevailed.¹

(iii)

What are the main demands the Hereros now make?

First of all, for reasons which by now must be abundantly evident, they are opposed to incorporation into the Union. They ask that they should become a British Protectorate, or a ward of the United Nations, or a protectorate of the United States.

They ask to be allowed to send their own spokesmen to put their case before the Trusteeship Council. As wards of the League, they had the right to petition the Permanent Mandates Commission; while any individual now has the right of appeal to the United Nations. 'I have four spokesmen', said Hosea, 'and I am confident that the Herero people will contribute to pay the cost of these men going to the United Nations Assembly. I humbly request the Government to allow these representatives of the African people to go to America to speak for me and for my people.' He was told: 'You have no right to go to the United Nations while you have not got your own government. The delegates of the Union Government are there. . . . Those are the men who will speak for you.'

Failing permission to send their own spokesmen to the United Nations, they ask that a Commission from the Great Powers go to South-West Africa to investigate. They are told: 'These men will not come into this country. They are prohibited from coming into this country because this country belongs to a different Government.'

They ask to have their traditional tribal lands restored to them so that their tribe may once more be united and make progress as a strong unit. The official *History of a Mandate* repeats the statement made by the van Zyl Commission that the Hereros have an exaggerated idea about the position occupied by them before

¹ Chapter V, p. 65.

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the Herero War and 'they seemed to harbour a grievance against the Union Government for not having handed the whole country over to them'. There is no evidence of this demand for 'the whole country' in any of the innumerable statements Mr. Scott has taken down from their leaders. In their petition they ask for their 'tribal organization to be re-established on our traditional lands', this being, from the context, obviously the lands they occupied before the Germans came.

The Hereros maintain that they have been pushed off the best lands to make room for white settlers and that their reserves are for the most part drought-stricken and unhealthy. The Administration confirms this, and, while admitting that the ideal would have been to congregate each of the tribes in one large area, says this was impossible because 'no areas large enough to accommodate whole tribes in the Police Zone could be made available unless private [i.e. European] rights of occupation were violated, which was out of the question'. And again: 'Although many of the reserves include areas traditionally occupied by Hereros, it is true that some parts of the reserves now occupied by them are inferior as compared with other parts said to have been occupied by them formerly. The Hereros were ousted from their land not by the Union Government but by the Germans and the effort by the Union Government to resettle them was naturally limited by the extent to which land alienations had in the meantime taken place. In like manner the European settlers from the Union of South Africa obtained land which was definitely inferior to the land selected by or for the early German settlers.' One Administrator stated: 'The natives who, of course, had been the original owners of the land, which had as a result of war been confiscated by the German Government, cut up into farms and sold or allotted to Europeans, had formed the expectation that this Administration, as the natural result of the war, would similarly confiscate German-owned farms, and thus the natives would recover the lost land and homes previously occupied by them. Almost without exception each section asked for the allotment of the old tribal areas in which vested interests had accrued. . . .'

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The Hereros, both those in South-West Africa and those in Bechuanaland, insist with one accord that when they were asked to join the Allies in 1914 they were promised their lands back, and Vedder confirms that Lord Buxton made speeches to that effect all over South-West Africa. The Government argues that no documentary evidence of this promise has ever been produced, but the reason for that was given by Frederick Maharero: when his father asked for the undertaking in writing he was told he would get it 'after the war'. This the reader will recognize as being in the direct tradition of all European dealings with the natives of South-West Africa since the early days of missionaries and concession hunters.

Finally, the Hereros ask that their paramount chief, together with the exiled portion of the tribe, be allowed to return so that the whole people, the Herero nation, may once more be united in the restored tribal lands. The Government maintains that there is traditionally no paramount chief of the Hereros. But since the Germans made Maharero paramount the people have accepted the office and regard Frederick as such. The Government has said: 'The majority in the reserves belong to the Maharero group who recognize Hosea Kutako as their leader.'

The Hereros themselves argue: 'The Union Government is assuming that we may not want to have Chief Frederick to come back and be our chief. It is the Union Government which does not want to bring him to South-West Africa lest we have a chief recognized by all countries. Chief Samuel Maharero was the paramount chief of all the Hereros; why should we not want his son to come and rule over us? Whether he was the chief of one section of the Hereros, that rests with him and us and not with the Union Government.'

'Let the chief, despite pressing duties, come with all haste to us, we pray you, son of the chiefs of our fathers,' is their unchanging cry.

It is fitting to end this story of his people with the prayer from the heart of the old Christian Hosea under the burning African sun, the prayer whose echoes Scott has made resound through three continents: 'You are the Great God the Creator of the

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Heavens and the Earth. You know all those whom you have created. We are only thy creatures. You know also the good and the wrong that we do. Thou seest that we have no dwelling place—no resting place that we can call our own. O Lord, help us who roam about. Help us who have been placed in Africa and have no dwelling place of our own. Give us back a dwelling place. We thank you for bringing back this stranger to us safely. You have protected us during the hours of darkness and our visitor who has been alone in the world. Bless us in all that we are to do, and guide us with your wisdom. O God, all power is yours in Heaven and Earth. Amen.'

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