

"Ek betrou Williams net so min soos all julle bruin goed."

They walked up the steps and through the swing doors into the charge office.

As the door shut behind them, he had a wild desire to turn about and wrench the door open and dash down the street but fear of what would follow strangled his desire and he followed submissively.

An African constable lounged at the counter, one finger exploring the cavity of a wide nostril. Behind the counter a Coloured sergeant was seated at a desk, laboriously typing out a report. In a chair, in front of a heater, sprawled another sergeant—white. On a wall, facing the counter, was a picture of the Minister of Justice, a paternal smile on his face. The trio favoured them with a brief glance, turning each to his activity.

"Give me that book you were hidiing under your arm." Matching his English.

He was no longer amazed at what was asked of him. The book was slammed on to the counter.

"Where did you get this book from?"

"From the library."

"Which library?"

"Kewtown branch. Its stamped at the back."

The policeman swished through the pages, found the stamp imprint and disappointedly returned to the front.

The Coloured sergeant looked at them, two fingers poised over the typewriter keys. He was not sure of the message: There's nothing I can do. Or was it—Don't blame me.

The policeman seemed to have run out of questions and was fluttering the pages without bothering to read the print.

The African Constable, having exhausted the possibilities of his nostrils, disappeared down a corridor, the examination promising nothing of interest.

"What are you doing with this book?"

He did not know whether he should laugh or not. Then he nervously asked himself; Oh, hell! Don't tell me this book has been banned since I last saw a newspaper?

Before he could reply, the white sergeant, without raising his head, said; "Since when is it a crime to read a book?"

Tenseñess flowed from him like a boil freed of puss, leaving relief.

Resentment and anger was ugly in the policeman's face as he shoved the book away from him. "Weg is jy!" He snarled and stomped his way down a corridor leading to the depths of the police station.

As he left the charge office he remembered that somewhere, in some book he had read, a character had said: 'the law is an ass.' He disagreed. There's nothing wrong with the law in itself. The trouble is that there are too many donkeys in its employ.

Leaving the doubtful shelter of the charge office he walked into a curtain of rain and before he had reached the corner his coat was clinging to his back. He laughed out loud as he walked in the rain, the offending book pressed to his heart and the newspaper spread over his head and shoulders, his bag knocking against his knee. ●

Words

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A RECENT ISSUE OF the Johannesburg weekly newspaper for Africans, *Elethu*, contained a straight report, headed "MINISTER VORSTER SPEAKS AT A PASSING-OUT PARADE". Prominently placed and illustrated, it quoted Mr. B. J. Vorster: "More than 28 police stations are run by Africans in South Africa. You can still be promoted to the top." (Mr. Vorster's career has been largely spent in the unintellectual atmosphere of Brakpan and Port Elizabeth's North End.) Doubters may be reassured that this is not sell-out stuff by an adjacent story, headed "POLICE INTENSIFY RAIDS IN OUR TOWNSHIPS", which goes as far as to say: "Some people even accused the police of Chicago-like tactics". But five of its nine paragraphs explain the raids ("An official told *Elethu* that the raids were primarily caused by increasing trends in sabotage".) Likewise, a strong leader, "OUR DICTATORS", attacks the UN sanctions motion, while a front page editorial statement claims that *Elethu* is "in all respects an independent and non-political newspaper", moreover, one whose object is "the promotion of the African people in all respects, in such a way that all sections of the South African community will benefit thereby". *Elethu* is published by Sabika, a company controlled by Afrikaner Nationalists and rents its offices from Saambou, another limb of the Nat business proliferation.

The almost naïve juxtaposition of the Vorster item with the police raids headline is paralleled by the placing of Chief Kaizer Matanzima's controversial "black monopoly" statement below the passage quoted above and headed "OUR POLICY: PRO-AFRICAN; NOT ANTI-WHITE". This statement of Matanzima's in which he said that Africans "wanted to take control of every department of the Transkei state" does, it must be assumed, express Verwoerd's attitude to the Bantustans or it would not have been placed as prominently as it was.

Care in presentation of the "line" is shown by *Elethu*'s omission of Matanzima's demand for a "black monopoly of trade" in the Transkei Bantustan, which must be thought unacceptable because of its potential as U.P. propaganda.

But what a great deal of trouble is being undergone, what pains taken to tell the Africans where their future lies, and to make apartheid sound acceptable. Let us not cavil, but rather wonder when Afrikaner nationalists talk about promoting African interests and show it by broadcasting Matanzima's Bantustan demands in their press. What a long way we have come since Strijdom! However much one may detest the tone and content of Nat political missionising towards Africans,

however base one may believe the real reasons for it, the wonder is that it is taking place at all. Is there no hope that some of these neo-missionaries to the Africans are themselves becoming converted or at least neutralised?

Perhaps it is a small gain; a potential fifth column, a possible counter-force to violence. What is more important is that the blandishments of *Elethu* should not be accepted by Africans; what is depressing is that after 15 years of Nat power and eight years of Bantu Education the lure of the Bantustan case may be irresistible to the weary, the faint-hearted, the self-seeking. In *Elethu* and in a number of Government-propaganda organs (*Bantu*, *Inkqubela*, *Bantu Education Journal*, *Radio Bantu*) a remarkably confident and consistent appeal to African nationalism is being made on Afrikaner terms. A few readers may wince at the Pretoria English, and may find the neurotic "sick"-Afrikaner overtones only too apparent. But do the many find it so?

THE LONDON MONTHLY, *Africa Trade and Development*, edited by Mr. H. C. Taussig, has changed its name to *New Africa*, and its January issue contains material as far ranging as its advertisements. The latter cover Canadian trade promotion, the Moskovich 407 ("Heavily built, the Moskovich-407 small car can virtually be steered with a single finger"), Polish textiles, Japanese motor-car tyres and metal windows from Birmingham. There are articles by Eugene R. Black, President of the World Bank, Kenneth Kaunda, V. Katin (on "Soviet Trade with Africa"), Dr. Joseph S. Roucek, Professor of Sociology at Bridgport, Conn. The address is 58 Paddington Street, London, W.1, and the subscription £1 per year. ●

THE LATEST *Journal of African History* contains a further vindication of Dr. John Philip, in which Mr. Harry A. Gailey Jr. of the North-West Missouri State University, Maryville, shows that Philip had won the Hottentots their freedom two days before the passing of the Fiftieth Ordinance by the Cape government. He brought about, through Buxton, the passing of a measure by the British parliament, on 15th July 1828, which was designed to "secure to all the natives of South Africa the same freedom and protection as are enjoyed by other free people of (the Cape of Good Hope) whether English or Dutch." Not only has that protection gone forever, but the freedom disappeared, temporarily, at the Act of Union in 1910. And Philip's magnificent campaign that achieved it, though for so short a time, has been constantly smeared and slandered by that most culpable of all South African historiographers, Dr. George McCall Theal and his successors. Mr. Gailey's essay will not vindicate Philip as the villain of the school history books; only a full exposé of Theal's falsifications and prejudice will do that. Perhaps more than a start has been made in an M.A. thesis accepted by the University of Cape Town in 1962. The work of Miss Merle Babrow, it seeks to reveal Theal's twisted methods and the reasons why he employed them. It must be published, and the deaf must be made to hear. ●

REVIEWS

Mastery of Form

A. E. VOSS

The Noose-Knot Ballad by H. W. D. Manson (Balkema)

H. W. D. MANSON'S latest play, *The Noose-Knot Ballad*, is a tragic ballad-drama, its form based on the ballad and its verse often echoing the insisted rhythm and reflecting the stark colours of "Edward, Edward" and "Lord Randall". The plot is a loose parallel to "The Pardoner's Tale".

The play, set in Scotland in the 18th century, tells the story of Roderick Anderson, a minister's son, Angus Morrison, an ex-mercenary, and Peter McEwan, an ex-lawyer. Thrown together by circumstance, they are all fleeing from their past. Roderick has recently killed his harshly Calvinist father, and during the course of the play it is revealed that both Angus and Peter are wanted murderers as well. Together the three fugitives have killed and robbed an old man.

In the opening scene of the play the three are on the run, hiding out on a mountain which overlooks a village.

Roderick leaves the other two to get wine and bread from the village. Before his return Peter poisons Angus' mind against Roderick and in a tense final scene, Angus stabs the innocent (in this case) Roderick.

The irony of the final act is remarkable. Peter believes that Roderick has poisoned the wine which Angus and he had asked Roderick to bring them; so he drinks Roderick's whisky only to find that Roderick, intending to make a sacrifice of himself, has poisoned his own drink.

Thus the immediate burden of the tragedy passes from Roderick in the opening scene:

"Why does your dirk so drip in blood
Roderick, Roderick?
Why does your dirk so drip in blood
And why so mad are you O?"

to Angus in the final scene:

"Fire burns and consumes the body
Angus Morrison,
Fire burns and consumes the body
But fire burns out sin O."

But the theatrical tension of the final scene and the impact of the plot (the eerie atmosphere is enhanced by the presence throughout of Roderick's *doppelgänger*) are secondary to the real dramatic qualities.

The characterisation is finely achieved, and in the characters of the three central figures and in their pasts we see what the play is really about — love.

Roderick has revolted against the oppression of his father: