

to set up and operate any sort of effective fund-raising system.

Permission having been obtained for the erection of a school, the Government will subsidise a small proportion of the building costs, and will pay the teacher. Should the community desire a second teacher, and be prepared to pay that teacher from their own resources, permission must first be obtained from the Government. In the case of farm schools, children from farms other than that on which the farm is situated must have the permission of the owner/manager of the school to attend, and the permission of their own employer, and the permission of the Bantu Education Department. Strict conditions of service are laid down for teachers, and they may be summarily dismissed on innumerable pretexts, including of course any sort of criticism of the Government and its works. All teachers are required to keep an intensive system of records and documents; the work thus entailed being particularly heavy in the case of one-teacher schools.

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT the position in the towns is brighter. I write only of average country conditions as observed and verified by myself. But I am inclined to doubt whether any substantial number of African schools, anywhere, has one teacher to each class. And it must be borne in mind that whenever the Government refers to Bantu Education as applied in present-day South Africa, a very considerable proportion of the total number of pupils are attending school under conditions similar to those that I have described here.

I repeat that, in theory, the Bantu Education system is reasonable. But in practice one has only to see, let alone to deal with, a community of children whose entire education will be received in the space of 4 years, in one room, under one man or woman, teaching 4 classes simultaneously in three different languages and several subjects, to realise that it is a pathetic travesty of the theory. It must be remembered too, that a great many African school-children are both under-fed and inadequately clothed; and that these factors, often found in combination, are further obstacles to the acquisition of even such little learning as is prescribed for them. It is against this background of practical fact that the suppression of the mission and other private schools can be seen for the wickedness that it was. Education in these schools may not have been scientifically balanced, but how balanced is Bantu Education? Mission school education was generally given through the medium of only one language—and largely because of this it *was* an education; conscientiously given and in tune with modern standards. In most cases it was education of a high standard. The point that is continually made by the Government is that *more* Africans are now attending school than in the 'bad old days' of the mission and other schools. But which is better—that more children should be worse educated for a shorter time, or that fewer children should be well educated for a longer time? And is Bantu Education better than mission education? Is it better than no education at all? When one has seen it in practice, and at close quarters, one is inclined to wonder. ●

W. J. H. CULLINAN

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## End Street

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RHODA PRAGER

END STREET, 7.30 A.M., and the latecomers are hurrying into the factories which fill every building on either side of the street. Black, brown and white pushing, jostling and shoving to clock in on time.

Machines begin to hum and belts to move. Lays spread out on the cutting tables; electric cutters cheese paring cloth.

"Heaven help you if you gain weight . . . no seams to be let out; heaven forbid if a dress should shrink . . . today we can't guarantee materials." Cutters, machinists, pressers, checkers, supervisors; wheels turning; fingers thinking; brains remembering. And machine emergent dresses, skirts, coats, costumes, blouses . . . on and on, machines spewing chunks of material; a sleeve here . . . a skirt there . . . and a bodice rushing to get itself attached; a collar hurrying to find its place. Bundles of shapeless garments carried down to the foetid, steaming pressing rooms. The wet smell of damp cloth on wool.

Eight o'clock and office staff importantly arrive. The dust from yesterday's sweepings still rises; the throat holding smell of stale ink. In the showrooms thousands of empty garments hang emptily on their rails. Typists commence their morning tattoo, calculating machines begin their clatter. The switchboard burps. A flat, nasal voice drops through factory floors, bounces into every corner from basement to despatch; from lift to lavatory, from office to office.

"Calling Mr. Liebling, calling Mr. Liebling, please take a call." From somewhere in the building a receiver is lifted, a voice coos, "You're through now . . ." Yes, even the boss has arrived. The day is on its way. Through End Street, Market, President Streets; all those other streets bound by the weight of factories, warehouses and the rag trade.

Mr. Liebling replaces the receiver. Lights his first cigar of the day. "Did anybody promise you a cigar in Crakow? . . ." "Did anybody promise you a Cadillac in Kowno?" . . . "Did anybody promise you custom-made clothes here, there and everywhere?" "You've done it yourself boy".

It wasn't like this in the old days. Shabby Siemert Road and the house spilling over with cloth and the smell of shoddies. The machine. God how he hated it. Mirev to Minchah. Unremitting stitching and Momma always watching.

"Hurry, hurry. That order's got to go out. For today I promised."

"Yes Momma, I know, but I said I'd go out with the boys."

"With the boys he wants to go out . . . on the streets . . . with the schickses . . . better you save the money

---

RHODA PRAGER *lives in Johannesburg where she does market research.*

you haven't got. I'm cutting Levi's trousers tonight. Tomorrow he's got to have them."

"Momma, but last night you promised . . ."

"I promised . . . but that was yesterday. Today's another day."

And now? Buildings, machines, workers. Siemert Road a grey dream. Nobody promised you anything. You did it yourself . . .

9 o'clock and the travelling salesmen begin to queue. Weighted by suitcases . . . hugging their satchels. Textiles, buttons, belts and trimmings.

"It's no use, your price is dead out . . . as dead as the market."

"Listen . . . I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll cable an offer."

"We've already had an offer of one seven and a half."

"O.K. what's good enough for them is good enough for us" . . . (The boss'll never do it . . . already he's grumbling about cable expenses)

Swatch cards spill over tables and desks . . . their colours lost in the drab offices. England, America, Italy, Japan; the world and its products, countries and markets. Import. Export.

"What's the minimum quantity?"

"How much can you let us have?"

"A special price for the lot."

Shipment, January, February, March, April, May, June, July. Time cabled away. The future becomes the present and yesterday so much dead inventory swaying listlessly on dress racks. A special price for yesterday; a sliding scale today; and what can we get for tomorrow?

10 o'clock in the basement and Drobnik remembers its time to take inventory. The harsh light limns his high cheek bones and pale green skin.

"Last season's woollens and the season's before and before. It never comes to an end." The dust makes him sneeze. A rat scampers away.

"Never enough hands. How should a person measure hundreds, perhaps thousands . . . maybe even more yards without help. Measuring, cutting; running upstairs, downstairs for that illiterate who never reads a book in his life. He's forgotten how it feels to be a worker. Even a proper yiddish he doesn't speak any more."

"Calling Mr. Liebling, please take a call . . . calling Mr. Rosenblatt . . . please take a call . . . calling Mr. Goldman . . . calling Mr. Drobnik . . ."

"Hello . . . yes . . . this is Drobnik . . . well what about the Herringbone? I'm doing it now . . . about 5,000 yards . . . what d'you mean what do I mean ABOUT? I'm telling you I'm measuring it now. What's that? How can I tell you how long it'll take if they've laid all my hands off? How should I do it alone? What d'you think I am . . . an octopus?"

11 a.m. and Isadore quickly swallows a capsule. "God knows how I stand it . . . a lifetime of books and figures, bills and cheques."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Edelstein, you've had three extensions. We wrote to you last month. Unless we have

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a settlement by the end of the week I'll have to hand you over."

Good marks, bad marks, closed account, open accounts. Time, years and life dribbled away into ink, figures and paper.

12 o'clock. A voice drops into the near high-noon . . . "Calling Mr. Gringo . . . calling Mr. Snider . . . You're wanted in the showroom . . ."

"I'm telling you you can't go wrong on a line like this . . . Delrose is asking ten bob more on the same line . . . exactly."

"Yes! Delrose! How can you compare yourselves?"

"So how can we compare? . . . my dear boy we're not comparing. I ask you! is anything wrong with this garment? Take a look at the finish . . ."

"And how's the fit?"

"If anything's wrong with the fit of this dress I'll buy you a farm in Eloff Street . . . all right, if you don't like it go to the others and pay ten bob more."

"By my life I wish I could . . . only they won't supply . . . they're too independent."

"So . . . they won't supply . . . by us when we can't deliver it's also ten bob more."

"So when's delivery? With you I can wait until after the season."

"Can I help it if we're booked up? . . . so how many do you want?"

"You can give me a coupla dozen."

"Don't make me laugh . . . a coupla dozen. Don't tell me you've come all the way from Pietersburg for twenty-four dresses?" "D'you hear that . . . a coupla dozen . . . I'm telling you a coupla hundred from this line and you won't be sorry."

"Maybe I will, maybe I won't, but its a dozen here and a dozen there. After all with you it's only one sale; with us it's the public . . . I haven't got to tell you what they're like . . . What terms?"

"Who's talking about money? Have we ever worried you? Your account's good enough. I'll tell you what I'll do for you. For a quantity, maybe, a special price."

"What do you mean, a quantity? Who do you think I am? The O.K.?"

"And what's stopping you? Sam Cohen wasn't always a big macher. We've all got to start somewhere. Why make yourself small for a few schmattes? If you want to sell you've got to buy. You've got to have the heart" . . .

NOON. THE MACHINES STOP. Buildings again crowded as the workers push down dreary stairways into the warm midday sun. For an hour End Street spreads its lunch-time vitality. Workers throng the sidewalks. Hawkers splash their colours of fruit, cold drinks, bright candies. This is the workers' street and they nonchalantly throw orange peel into the gutters, spit casually in the direction of the bosses' cars. Play checkers on the sidewalks or lazily watch trucks loading and offloading; they regard with complete detachment cartons packed with hundreds of garments made by their thinking hands.

1 p.m. Office staffs relax for the lunch break . . . half the day gone and countable hours to the weekend.

"Calling Mr. Liebling . . . please take a call" drones the anonymous voice whilst its owner hastily swallows

a hunk of beigel.

The boys hang around the showroom.

"It's no good, I can't break it. Haven't opened an order book."

"The market's dead."

"And Friedenthal's made it deader."

"I told the old man he's out with his prices."

"How the hell can we sell against Friedenthal. He's killed the business."

"And how long can he carry on?"

"Long enough to give us a headache."

"The bosses should worry. They think they can push us around."

"They don't think they can . . . they do."

"For a week they should try it."

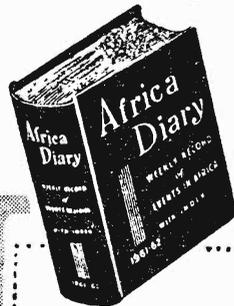
"I don't know why we do it."

"Pushed around."

"It's all in the game and if you don't like it there's always a sucker who'll step in and take your job."

2 p.m. and the street has settled down to its afternoon rhythm. Friedenthal walks up a rough unfinished stairway to an uncompleted roofgarden where builders have left their lunchtime remnants. He carefully counts the empty coke bottles; stares vaguely at a smoke-blackened tin with its old, white slough of mealie-meal. He avoids broken bricks, stacked scaffolding; little mounds of lime, mortar and cement. Around him the stepped skyline of a plunging city . . . End Street way down to Diagonal Street and in between the gritty jungle of Market Street boundaried by its animal-named warehouses. The Lions, the Elephants and the Buffaloes all waiting far below and a crocodile's jaws greedily snapping. From End Street to Diagonal Street machines in factories purr and the jungle waits.

"It's no use, Mr. Friedenthal, . . . that's not the way we want it. You've got to give us a garment that'll sell for under a pound. The public wants cheap . . . cheap today."



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"It's not like it used to be, Mr. Friedenthal. Times've changed. The war's been over a long time . . . that's all forgotten."

"But I can't do it. It's costing me more than I'm selling for. Work it out for yourself. There's my material, trimmings, and you know what labour costs. There's my overheads. I've got to meet my bills; there's my shippers. And I've got to live; I can't do it."

"Listen Friedenthal, old man, it's the production you need. After all we're not small people. We're not buying a coupla dozen. It's hundreds, maybe thousands. Look what we've bought from you already."

"And look what it's cost me."

"We'll increase the order. After all, we're ready to help. You need us, we need you. From us you get cash. You deliver the goods and we pay. Delivery when ready . . . and by the way, five percent for cash." . . .

Machines to be fed, workers to be paid; drafts overdue and five percent for cash . . . Death on delivery. The bastards. Should never let them know you need 'em.

"Money's not everything, Mr. Friedenthal . . . you've got your health." That's a lie. They've taken that too. They take everything down there.

End Street rises. The crocodiles' pantry is full.

TELEPHONES RING IN Market Street. Telephones always ring in Market Street. Taking orders, cancelling orders, giving orders. Calls to shippers, calls to brokers, calls to lawyers; there's always litigation in Market Street. And sometimes the clanging of a fire engine—fires too

in Market Street, fire bells, burglar alarms: Bells in Market Street . . . tolling.

"Have you heard?"

"Good God . . . when?"

"An hour ago."

"Yes, from Future Building."

"They say he was in trouble."

"Always was."

"How much did he catch you for?"

"Enough . . . and you?"

"Tst'Tst!"

Bells in President Street way down to Diagonal.

"Halloh, hast Du von Friedenthal gehört?"

"He might have told me."

". . . um Gotteswillen!"

". . . schrecklich!"

"I told him he was crazy to cut the price."

"I told him it didn't pay to make for cheap."

"When's the funeral?"

"The man was a fool."

"Did he have to undercut?"

"He ruined the business for others."

"And look where he landed."

"Cheap they wanted so he gave them, and it never pays." Rock bottom . . . and how much for cash?

Clothes, rags, schmattetz, lines, dresses, garments, models. A thousand names for a thin, outer covering . . . a top layer of skin. Cotton and rayon, silk and spun, wools and wovens, threads and stitching. The labour of a world. The Drums, the Drummers and the Drummed . . .

## Words

## Words

## Words

DENNIS BRUTUS'S rather sharp remarks about Noni Jabavu in one of our early issues are well known, though in South Africa no one may quote them in print, and Insight Publications is not allowed even to sell this particular back number because it contains the writings of a banned person. Her second book, *The Ochre People*, will be reviewed here shortly. At a glance, it looks a meaty follow-up, closely resembling *Drawn in Colour*—even the sprinkling of titled and other English worthies in the acknowledgements (exactly what "crucial help"

would people like "Baroness Ravensdale of Kedleston" or "Viscount Dunluce and his parents the Earl and Countess of Antrim" be to Miss Jabavu in writing her "scenes from a South African life"?) The same glance shows the same fascination in her picture of Ciskeian life and conversation as *Drawn in Colour* yielded, however blurred the object lessons on African development she so unnecessarily and faultily drew.

EARL ATTLEE found it "absorbingly interesting", Jonathan Cape, (the publisher's) blurb-writer hails it "remarkably well-written and deeply moving", this "story of the extraordinary game of cat-and-mouse (the autobiographer) was forced to play with the Nationalists, of his escape from arrest and imprisonment, and of his continuing underground activities in exile." Yes, it's Ronald Segal, who has called his autobiography (due here in April) *Into Exile*, and we suspect, has at least touched up his own blurb (in a full-page advertisement in *The Bookseller*), with haunting sentences like

'Then came "persecution"

SOUTH AFRICA'S overseas propaganda has become too clever by half, in spite of Mr. Waring's translation to the portfolio of Information. Perhaps he will reintroduce that note of farce it used to have, and which its Portuguese equivalent has happily never lost. *Portugal, An Informative Review* headlines its columns with a variety of quaint thoughts—from the sublime "Portuguese India under Foreign Domination" to the gorbimey "Fatima has Europe's largest organ." The grandiloquence of its fustian text echoes the words which inspired the name of this feature. James Duffy's *Portuguese Africa* quotes Mousinho de Albuquerque's description of Moçambique which starts "the administrative processes by which our colonies have been governed, or rather disgraced, may be summed up as conventions and fictions", and ends "And on top of all this majors and colonels and commanders, endless officers, bulky reports, countless laws, many decrees, a hundred unworkable regulations. Words, words, words."