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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

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Title: Black Literature in South Africa 1900-1950.

by: T Couzens

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T. COUZENS.

BLACK LITERATURE IN SOUTH AFRICA 1900 - 1950

1974.

(I would like to stress that this is something of a preliminary paper, a sort of "Notes towards ...." and that I have yet to sift and analyse an immense amount of data I have collected. Mark Twain once wrote: "Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please." In my case I have collected many facts but it will be at least a year before I know how to distort them properly.)

The magazine Drum began in March, 1951, and it has become deservedly famous since: partly for the ethos it created, partly for the writers that it fostered - writers such as Nat Nakasa, Can Themba, Casey Motsisi, Ezekiel Mphahlele et. al. But the image some critics create, and the image which seems to inhere in the popular mind (whatever that may be) is that black writing in South Africa up till 1951 consisted only of the odd and isolated literary event. There are, according to this view, a few lonely milestones at irregular intervals, such as Mofolo's Chaka, Plaatje's Mhudi, and Dhlomo's Valley of a Thousand Hills; Peter Abrahams becomes the first major writer - the precursor of the modern African novel.

This picture is an unfortunate one. When the stage of what has been called "primary resistance" to colonialism, that is, open resistance to whites on the battlefield, began to come to an end, blacks in South Africa had to resort to other forms of resistance. These took the form, for example, of political organisation, or were sublimated into such forms as separatist church movements where political and social grievances were, and still are, articulated in religious terms. One way or another, in one form or another, however, there has been continuous resistance to white rule from the first moment of contact. (This may seem platitudinous to some but within the context of South African studies it is often unknown or ignored.)

In addition, there has been virtual continuous literary creation and an even greater continuous body of writing. African literature and other forms of writing, especially that in English, stemmed from two major sources at the beginning: firstly, productions concerned with churches and missions, eg. hymns, religious translations etc.; and, secondly, those associated with journalism (which, in the early years, was often connected with the churches, also). While the church influence on literary production tended to decline over the years, journalism (newspapers and magazines) maintained, then increased its influence, culminating, perhaps, in the achievements of Drum.

In this paper I have three main aims:

1. To show the continuous tradition of writing in English by blacks between 1900 and the 1950's (even this is artificially to exclude the large amount of vernacular writing during this period. It is an artificial exclusion but to include vernacular writing, I believe, could only strengthen the argument of this paper).

2. To show the links, almost inseparable connections, between literature, journalism and politics - all three areas being aspects of the continuous "secondary resistance." Partly my aim here is to indicate that there are no sudden "peaks" or outcrops of literature, that the imaginative works arise naturally out of a continuous debate which has frequent simultaneous expression in other media. The "uniqueness" of literary works must therefore be seen in the light of the fact that their central issues are being discussed contemporaneously in other media. In other words these works are not so "unique", not peculiar phenomena or outcrops: literary productions between 1900 and 1950 are not so isolated.

The history of black writing in the Nineteenth Century is largely outside the scope of this paper: Professor Albert S Gérard's

book Four African Literatures (University of California Press, 1971) gives a detailed account of this period. Suffice it to say that black journalism began in Southern Africa in July, 1837, and was later to make famous the names of ~~Tujo~~ Tyo Soga and John Tengo Jabavu. So that by 1900 there was a fairly strong tradition of journalism.

The years 1928 to 1930 saw the publication of three of the more well-known works of the period under consideration. These were Sol Plaatje's novel Mhudi, John Dube's Zulu novel Insila ka Shaka (translated into English in 1951) and R.R.R. Dhlomo's An African Tragedy. The lives of the first two of these writers form a kind of model for the rest of the paper.

Plaatje, after being involved in the siege of Mafeking during the Boer War - an event described in his recently discovered diary - became editor of the newspaper Koranta ea Batswana. A little later he moved from Mafeking to Kimberley to edit the newspaper Isala ea Batho. This was before 1910. John Dube, having visited America, returned to found not only the first black educational institution in South Africa at Ohlange but also the independent black newspaper Ilanga Lase Natal (which still survives as Ilanga, with a very wide circulation). Both these newspaper editors were then to become founder members of the South African Native National Congress, later to change its name to the African National Congress. (From this beginning, then, and being part of a relatively small élite, black writers came to know each other well and to share similar concerns.) Plaatje's political and journalistic concerns soon led him to write his well-known book Native Life in South Africa (published circa 1917), a scathing attack on the Native Land Act No. 27 of 1913, a book in which he deals effectively with the crucial problems of South Africa - land and labour. By 1917 he had also written his novel Mhudi, which, I have argued elsewhere, though set in the 1830's, presents a critique, in model-form, of 1917 and implicitly threatens the possibility

of revolution. Plaatje's book has a relatively stable moral centre - he knows what he is attacking and goes about it fairly surely. Plaatje was still attackingland apportionment in newspaper articles in 1929.

Dube's Insila ka Shaka, on the other hand, epitomizes the problems of the writers of the Thirties, especially the Dhlomo brothers. Dube is writing an historical novel about Zulu society before the whites yet he is himself a Christian with many Western values. This conflict is the crucial one to be worked out by these writers.

Plaatje's novel and Dube's novel, then, both spring from the pens of journalists and we must hence ask ourselves what is the relationship between journalism and literature in black writing in South Africa between 1900 and 1950. Firstly, I'd simply like to say that I have picked up an extraordinary amount of material from researching newspapers and journals and would strongly recommend the technique to anyone working in other parts of Africa or, indeed, anywhere in the field of Commonwealth Literature. (Also I would beg critics to use the personal interview. The interviewing of friends and acquaintances of past writers, given careful oral interviewing techniques, can be extraordinarily valuable and must be done now or that evidence will be lost for ever as people have a nasty habit of dying.)

As regards actual influence on literature, newspapers, first and foremost, provided an outlet for educated blacks: journalism gave them a reasonably stimulating occupation with status and newspapers often printed their creative work. Newspapers probably also directly influenced their imaginative work - for good or bad. For instance, writers often wrote in the essay form. The short story, also, for obvious reasons of space, was encouraged. (The connection of the South African short story to journalism is a subject of possible interesting future research.) Further, the creative writers came to

follow fairly closely the kinds of observation and main preoccupations of the newspapers. Perhaps most importantly, because newspapers are involved in public writing, public concerns and social critique, the creative writers who sprang from them tended to be concerned with public matters rather than the private wrangles of individual psychologies and "characterization" (of course, there are other reasons for this: the peculiar make-up of the South African state, it could be argued, inflicts the public on the private life to a greater than normal extent). Further, creative writers like the Dhlomo brothers wrote under various pseudonyms which allowed for at least slight variations in style and register. For the researcher, the chronology of the newspapers is a valuable clue in the dating of a writer's works and themes. Also the newspaper chronology, or news chronology, was often the direct inspiration for particular works. For instance, "Dingaan's Day", the 16th of December, frequently inspired particular works. R.R.R. Dhlomo has a short story in the magazine Sjambok which is a case in point. Journals, too, had a kind of continuing influence. For instance, R.R.R. Dhlomo used to write a column for Bantu World in the 1930's called "R. Roamer Esq.", in which the characters Joshua and Jeremiah sometimes appeared. He almost certainly adopted these characters and technique from a similar column which appeared in the magazine Sjambok, probably written by the editor, Stephen Black; Dhlomo used to contribute to the magazine between 1929 and 1931.

There are of course dangers in this journalism. Oscar Wilde wrote that "the difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable and literature is unread." Because, too, of the usual white ownership, the newspaper's political commitment and ideology was probably at times severely constrained in reflecting black interests. Nevertheless the papers did give large coverage to and usually more or less suppprted the A.N.C. until its final banning. An anonymous article (possibly by one of the Dhlomo brothers) in 1953 in Ilanga Lase Natal on the African Press affirms this:

> As for Congress, the Advisory Boards, trade unions, sports, social and other organisations, the Press has long been their unproclaimed official organ. A well-known African politician once said that as far as his work and career were concerned he did not give a hoot about the White Press and its opinions and criticisms. The African Press was the be - all and end - all in this matter. And he feared, respected and - used it. In fact, there are African politicians who hold that the old dictum that for the politician the platform is more important than the Press, has often been proved wrong in African circles and in modern times.

Supporting the A.N.C., the Press was often less generous to such organisations as the I.C.U., the black trade union of the Twenties, however. Another danger was, of course, the élitism and incipient middle-class tendencies which pervade the writers of the time. Christianity, too, often brought a violent rejection of traditional customs.

Overall, then, journalism played a big part in these writers' lives. In the Preface to his An African Tragedy R.R.R. Dhlomo testifies to this.

> I have been correspondent of Ilanga Lase Natal for the past five year, under the nom-de-plume of 'Rollie Reggie'.
>
> As such, therefore, I have always tried to keep my eyes and ears open to mark any incident in life that may happen to affect the lives of people - especially the young - in their grim struggles for existence in this tumultuous city of Johannesburg.

As Plaatje and Dube begin to fade, the Dhlomo brothers begin their rise to prominence. Dube relinquishes the editorship of Ilanga Lase Natal while R.R.R. Dhlomo is a young columnist on the paper. On the 18th February, 1928, we find in Umteteli wa Bantu, an article by Plaatje bemoaning the quality of black leadership: in the same edition of the same newspaper we find a letter by the young Herbert Dhlomo

pointing out the need for non-political as well as political organisations to handle the extremely urgent urban problems of blacks. So Dube and Plaatje unknowingly but smoothly hand over to such writers as the Dhlomo brothers, B.W. Vilikazi, Walter Nhlapo and others.

The published works of the two Dhlomo brothers is relatively small, yet these were not isolated outcrops. They wrote almost solidly from the mid-thirties for twenty years. I have collected at least one article from almost every week of the Forties and Fifties. In all, it adds up to thousands of pages. So the two old A.N.C. founders give way to the two young imaginative writers, both involved in the A.N.C. but not quite so important in the hierarchy. What is interesting is that the two brothers developed somewhat differently, even though R.R.R. became editor of Ilanga Lase Natal in the early Forties and H.I.E. assistant editor (they almost wrote the whole paper between them). R.R.R. was four years older than H.I.E. and became somewhat more conservative politically. H.I.E. seems to have been associated with the Congress Youth League in the 1940's and, according to A.G.W. Champion in a private interview, helped engineer Albert Lutuli's victory over Champion in the crucial election for chairman of the Natal A.N.C. in 1951. Champion, the more conservative leader, seems to have regarded R.R.R. as a close friend. Interestingly enough, R.R.R., the conservative, took to writing his imaginative works, after An African Tragedy, in Zulu (though not all of his journalism) whereas H.I.E. continued to write in English. The latter remained consistently non-tribalist in outlook, writing places on the Xhosa and Sotho as well as on the Zulu.

I would now like to move on to H.I.E. Dhlomo whom I regard as a major literary figure of the Thirties and Forties and who, I believe, must occupy a fairly prominent position in the history of black South African literature. Before I do, however, I would like to make one critical caveat. One criticism of the early black writers has been

their too heavy dependence on and obsession with the English Romantics. Ezekiel Mphahlele, for instance, has written, "Even in his protest Dhlomo remains a thoroughgoing romanticist." I have little doubt, also, that the influence of the Romantics and Shakespeare will be clearly seen in the passages of Dhlomo's which follow. I would suggest that even if one believes this mars the so-called literary merit of the writing (whatever that means) one should look below the surface style and one soon quickly ignores the style in the interest of themes etc. To cite a humerous corollary of this, Mark Twain once said that "Wagner's music is better than it sounds." (A defence of the style would take too long in these particular circumstances.) What is more interesting than criticizing the style is trying to find the reasons for the early writers' "love" of the Romantics. In private conversation Mazisi Kunene has suggested to me that the first and most obvious reason is the comparative readability of the Romantics. Also, of course, there is the influence of the taste of white educators of blacks at the time - it is an interesting further fact that much white writing in South Africa at this time displays the same characteristics (a quick perusal of local journals indicates this). The Romantics also offered a philosophy of escape. I think there is another very important reason which a recent review by Mary Morison Webster of Vilikazi, the Zulu poet, misses completely (Johannesburg, Sunday Times 3.2.1974). Comparing Vilikazi's urban poems with his rural ones she writes: "He is undoubtedly at his best when he writes on tribal themes and against a tribal background." This typically sentimental literary judgement blinds the reviewer to the crucial problem facint the black poets of this time, and illustrates perhaps one of their major responsibilities - how to respond to an industrial revolution (similar to that which the Romantics faced) which was overtaking their people (Maria K. Mootry has analysed other aspects of the Romantic influence on Vilikazi and H.I.E. Dhlomo in her article "Literature and Resistance in South Africa: Two Zulu Poets", in African Literature Today: No. 6. Poetry in Africa, edited by Eldred Jones, Heinemann, 1973, pages

112 - 129). The writer who wrestles with this period of transition most courageously, perhaps, was Herbert Dhlomo.

H.I.E. Dhlomo was born in Natal in 1905. He died in 1956. He was trained as a teacher at Adams College between 1922 and 1924. He then taught in Johannesburg, became a journalist on Bantu World in 1935, and about 1941 moved to Durban, became the first Zulu newsbroadcaster but seems to have left that job fairly early (probably for reasons discussed later) to join the paper Ilanga Lase Natal for which he worked as assistant editor under his brother until his death.

His published works are only two: a play, The Girl Who Killed to Save, published in 1936, and a 40 - page poem Valley of a Thousand Hills published in 1941. A play, Dingana, was performed by the Natal University Medical Students in 1954 and was so popular it moved to the Durban City Hall. But these are only the tip of the iceberg. Unpublished manuscripts which I recently found consist of over 1200 pages of manuscript, and include 13 unpublished plays, 9 short stories, a number of essays and a book on Zulu Life and Thought. These works had never been exactly lost, but nor had they been exactly found. Dr Nick Visser and I are in the process of editing them for publication. Over and above these manuscripts I have found hundreds of pages of journalism, written often under pseudonym. Thus the sheer bulk of writing is fairly staggering. Why most of it was never published is interesting. In a private interview it was suggested to me by one who knew him well that this was a combination of two reasons: firstly, as someone said, poets are born, not paid - there was not the money to publish. (Dhlomo seems to have financed the first edition of his poem Valley of a Thousand Hills himself); and secondly, he claimed no local white publisher would handle such controversial material so that he wanted to try to get it published outside the country. Whether this is true or not (and in part at

least it seems to be so) it must be remembered, in assessing the works, that, in view of their non-publication, Dhlomo did not enjoy much public criticism by his contemporaries so that some superficial flaws which may mar the work shouldn't provoke overhasty dismissal. In addition to the above writing he published poetry and essays in journals and newspapers, wrote what Professor Gérard describes as "the first essay in literary theory by a black South African"; ran the Carnegie Library for a while and played the violin. (In his drama he includes music and traditional forms). He also had a fiarly unusual distinction for a black writer of having written a story in which no blacks appear - only whites. Other works of his have Indians and Coloureds as heroes.

The first published imaginative work of Dhlomo's that Dr Visser and I have so far discovered is a short story called An Experiment in Colour (African Observer III, 4, pages 67 - 80). Most of the major extant works, the plays, seem to have been written between the early Thirties and 1941. Some of the poetry and short stories could have been written later. An Experiment in Colour is about an African who enters the world of science ultimately to discover a kind of Dr Jekyl - like injection which can allow him to change at will the colour of his skin, between white and black. Two women of different colours fall in love with him and eventually, to break this tragic tension, he destroys the formula but gives a public demonstration with his last two injections: black to white and back to black. He is shot by a white man who shouts, "Ons will nie wit kafers in one land bie nie. Waar sou ons vrow-mense wees?" (We don't want white kaffirs in our land. Where would our womenfolk be?"). Interesting, in view of the alleged difficulty in getting publication, is the note the white magazine The African Observer felt obliged to publish at the head of the story.

> We publish this well-written and interesting piece of fiction by a Native author. We would, however, point out that the author's views are not necessarily those of The African Observer.

For none of their other feature articles was this kind of disclaimer necessary.

One of Dhlomo's prime concerns, as I have said above, was with the adaptation of his people to the new urban and industrial setting. He is not particularly sentimental about this. In an article on "Native Policy in South Africa", sub-titled "The Agrarian Question", we find him writing in 1930 the following (incidentally, at the same time, rejecting, as he did throughout his life, policies of segregation and separate development).

> It is strange that a person of considerable ability like Sir T. Shepstone should not have observed the glaring anomaly and inconsistency of the policy that sought to preserve Bantu national integrity by excluding them from civilizing agencies that surrounded them and formed their very life. The flaw in and fallacy of the Shepstone policy lay in the doctrine of an exclusive parallelism, —— develop only on your own lines. The delusion about this "tiresome" segregation is that it is opposed to evolution. The Bantu are not fundamentally different from any other group of human beings. The difference between blacks and whites in this country is only in rank and not in substance, and the argument that these two elements are different and opposed one to the other is on a par with the contention that my son who walks on all fours and can neither speak nor help himself, is different from and opposed to me, and should therefore, develop along his own lines! I desire to state emphatically that the tribalism which so many people desire to protect and prolong, must be broken down at all costs and hazards. It is one of the most formidable foes to Bantu progress. But we must do more than tear it down —— we must have a definite programme to assist and protect the detribalised people. All this cheap talk about raising all Natives in the scale of civilization, uniformly, and not allowing certain individuals to outrun their kraal brethren, is as preposterous as it is impossible.

It is these thoughts that explain the rather startling line he takes in The Girl Who Killed To Save where the Xhosa Suicide is seen as a tragic but ultimately beneficial event because it enabled the Xhosa, beaten on the battlefield by superior technology, to modernize more rapidly, to break out of tribal conservation which he sees as hindering modernization, and to adapt more quickly to the inevitable domination. In his play Ntsibane, too, he comes down heavily on the side of the converted Christian, Ntsikane, rather than on that of the pagan, Nxele. As we shall see, he seems to have modified this position somewhat, later on. One can see Dhlomo's adherence here, though, to the A.N.C. ideal of national unity rather than tribal division.

Another interesting play is The Workers. Although I have an article of his attacking Marxist Socialism in 1929, this play is almost wholly Marxist in orientation, describing incipient revolution in the compound of the factory belonging to the Nigger-Exploitation Slave Manufacturing Crookpany. (Dhlomo did own a copy of Capital). Like most of the A.N.C., however, Dhlomo was consistently anti-communist (while admiring African communalism) and he seems to have ended up in a sort of Christian - nationalist - Marxist position. His resistance to the political system was continuous.

A turning point in his life came around 1940. He became estranged from his wife about this time, an event which precipitated his departure for Durban. He seems to have been divorced about 1945. In Johannesburg he was working under the well-known liberal Dr Ray Phillips and an altercation seems to have arisen when Dr Phillips tried to interfere in Dhlomos's private life. A letter I found in the Natal archives, Pietermaritzburg, details this event and the bitterness Dhlomo felt. Dhlomo moved to Durban seemingly to work under Mr Tracey, regional director of the South African Broadcasting Company. Mr Tracey and Phillips communicated and Dhlomo felt he could not continue working for Mr Tracey. He writes:

> Both Mr Tracey and the Johburg people ... in dealing with the problem of me and my wife, are tackling a vital delicate point that touches me deeply as an ordinary human being, not as a worker. When I react as an ordinary human being (which I would not do as a mere worker) they resent it as masters, as employers, as bosses. So you see, the matter turns to be one of "Insult","Cheekiness", "Inefficiency", "Unfitness" for your work ... these good people want you to obey them and behave as a worker in a matter where you feel not as a worker, but as God's ordinary creature.

Later he continues:

> I know Mr Tracey and Dr Phillips have very great power and influence, and that they can, and have 'smashed' and broken me. I know I have no chance against them. I know I must suffer bitterly. But all this is economical, material. They cannot touch my soul, my heart. It is <u>that</u> I fear most to lose. It is my God, my all, because out of it springs the visions and the inspiration of all my creative work. And my creative work is the greatest thing I can give to my people, to Africa. I am determined to die writing and writing and writing. And no one, not even powerful men like Mr Tracey, can stop, fight or destroy that. It is the soul, the heart, the spirit. It will endure and speak truth even if I perish by blows such as Mr Tracey gives. It is of God, and I would rather keep that, keep God, on my side than all mere material but unproductive gains.
>
> I have chosen the path to serve my people by means of literature, and nothing will deflect me from this course.

This episode led not only to a poem entitled "Fired (Lines on an African Intellectual being sacked by White Liberals for his independent ideas)", but also, most probably, to a very interesting short play, called <u>The Expert</u>. The play is thinly disguised autobiography and is an attack on white social workers, race relations folk and liberal institutions. The white leader of the "Committee", one Turlips, explains to his wife the position.

Turlips: O, Jane, don't forget about the Native leaders social tonight. They will be with their wives.

Wife: You need not remind me. They just love to eat.

Turlips: Yes, give them plenty to eat, let them rest in cushioned chairs, pat them on the shoulders and use flattering words - and, simple fools, you have them in the palm of your hand. Good as it is for my success and security, how I hate their fawning, toadying, naivete and stupidity.

Wife: Really, sometimes I feel that ....

Turlips: I know, darling. But it has been our greatest blessing. Where would such men as I and other experts and officials be but for our work among and in connection with the Natives! The niggers!

Wife: Please, don't!

Turlips: You were always kind, sensitive, good, but ....

Wife: One day you may forget and say that in their presence, you know.

The dismissed black man replies later:

> That was always your doctrine and policy: to prevent Africans from thinking. We now realise that our best men are under the dictatorship of a small but influential group of Europeans who hold sway in almost every important institution and sphere of African life and activity. This small coterie, infatuated by its power and privileges, has become harsh, proud, intolerant and self-centred. They hate opposition no matter how just and intelligent. They want African leadership and talent to dance to their tune. African men of ability who render and have rendered great service, men of character, outstanding qualities, industrious habits, enamoured with a deep love of their people, are entirely at the mercy of this group and can be intimidated, suppressed and disgraced at will.

> Yet men in public positions, men chosen for their record of achievement, respected and held high as leaders and thinkers in the communities where they live and labour, are more than mere employees. They, their work and their fate are of the people.

There is a highly humorous scene where the whites of the Committee declare their real interests in front of the black sheep of the Committee.

Turlips: *Proceed, proceed, proceed.*

Prof. Self: *I stand for Bantu languages!*
I turn them out like sausages!
They help to give me bread, and prove
I am an expert wise and great!
I let the wheels of Bantu progress move
Where I may choose. So should you, mate!
(Turns to the black members.)

Prof. Self: Is it not so?

Black Ones: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. 'Tis so!

(Prof. resumes his seat. Rev. Myself rises.)

Myself: I am a missionary,
And think it necessary
To keep Jim Fish beneath us
Lest he should think he's wondrous.

To save his soul,
Is my sole goal.

Why give him freedom here on earth?
'Twould spoil him full to give such mirth!

(To the Black ones)

Myself: Is it not so?

The Blacks: Yes, sir. Yes, sir,. 'Tis so!

(Rev. Myself sits down. Mr. Falsy rises.)

Mr Falsy: I hold the Blacks should dance in their own ways
Just as they did in good old tribal days.
Their skins and customs let them still retain,
Not for their own, but for the white man's gain.
For safety and our gain and jollity,
Museum pieces let the Bantu be!
So that white tourists all may come and see!
Let this be so throughout eternity!
To keep them serfs let's build a fine big kraal
With an arena where they'll dance for all
European friends and visitors, for this
Is business and sound politics - this is!
To make it sound all sweet and fair and wise,
And camouflage it just to searching eyes,
We speak and write scientific offal deep
About it so that while the people sleep,
We do our job,
The Blacks to rob
Of their great might,
Their rich birthright.
Black men who see behind our screen and plan,
We persecute, blackmail, suppress and ban.
Do things we must for poor black fold, and train
Them all sufficiently for our own gain,
But nothing more!
For then the door
Of Truth and Life,
Despite our strife,
A few may see!
This must not be!
Yet I do fear
Some are quite near
The Light of Truth; for of their own accord
They've chosen the hard path, yet can afford
To live and do! It is such men we hate!
Let's crush and starve them tame ere 'tis too late!
They see too far!
And soon the bar
That keeps the Blacks our slaves they may remove.
This must not be although the heavens move!

(to Black ones)

Mr Falsy: Yes, sir. Yes, sir! 'Tis so!

(sits down. Mr Control stands up)

Control: I want low wages, passes and locations!
I have no time for Christian, Marxist notions
About our Native rule!
The Bantu is our mule
Who must obey
And have no say!
I hate the educated Natives!
They always harbour dirty motives!

(to the Blacks)

Control: Is it not so?

The Blacks: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. 'Tis so!

(Control sits down. Money stands.)

Money: Your views are true;
See I like you.
The Native is our tool,
Our useful patient mule!
What could we do without him!
So keep him as he is - "Jim"!
But feed him swell,
And treat him well;
That's all he needs!
You sow foul seeds
Of revolutions and reactions and sad riots wild,
If politics and social freedom you teach to this child.
He will turn clown,
And seek our crown!
So keep him down!

The role of the black collaborators comes in for heavy attack also.

All: We are the Beastiary of Base Collections!
And stand for peace in our present relations!
For why should there be strife in such relations,
When compromise weeds thorns in such relations?

(The rest take seats while Turlips continues)

Turlips: I like our yes-men!
They will not fall!
They are the best men!
Above them all!

Let's give more wages
To these black sages!
And show the rest
they are the best!

(The white members all rise and chant!)

The whites: Exceptional are these -
The men who give us ease!
They will endure!
Their jobs secure!
They live to fawn and please!

Exceptional are they
The men who seek no fray!
Exceptional!
Exceptional!
The souls who hate all fray!

(They sit down. Turlips continues.)

Turlips: You receive £20 a month, don't you?

Slima: Yes, Sir.

Turlips: From now on it will be £25.

Slima: Sweet, lord! Thank you, boss! O thank you!

Turlips: You get £25?

Nkuku Yes, Sir.

Turlips: It will now be £30.

Nkuku Great lord! Thank you, boss! O thank you!

Turlips And you Khonza will get £35 instead of £30.

Khonza Holy lord! Thank you, boss! O thank you!

Turlips: Our new friends will get increases next month if they follow our instructions and play our game.

Towards the end of the play we have the interesting intrusion, "Enter Our Lord and Saviour dressed as a common black worker" (an interesting forerunner of later uses of the same technique eg. Richard Rive's

short stories "The Return" and "No Room at Solitaire"). "Our Lord" is, of course, rejected and the liberals's ideology is revealed for the self-interest beneath.

> All: (In chorus) Money! Money! Money!
> Our lord and saviour, our god and heaven
> is Money! Money! Money! We worship,
> live and kill for Money! Money! Money!

The bitterness against what Dhlomo sees as the ambiguity of white liberalism is brought out in a stage direction.

> (He surveys a plastic-made figure of an African, takes it down, oils it, sits at his desk and fondles it. He rises, bends it this way and that; holds it up high and chuckles; lowers it, sneers, and polishes his shoes with it; models and re-models it into several shapes; punches and hugs it by turns; drops it down and spits on it; picks it up and caresses it. Makes into "dough" by adding a little of the oil. He starts as he finds that the "dough" has fastened his hands together in a handcuff-like hold. In vain he tries to free himself. He roars and fumes. Tumbles down and rises. Trembles.)

Faustus-like, the ostensible Christian Turlips eventually dies in the company of Satan. (Incidentally, I accept any possible ironies here. My defence is that I do not claim to be an expert. Douglas Jerrold once wrote: "Whenever a man exclaims that all mankind are villains, be assured that he contemplates an instant offer of himself as an exception.")

Dhlomo's poetry, too, is often fiercely political. For example, the poem Drum of Africa, published in 1944, is remarkably similar to the title poem of Oswald Mtshali's Sounds of a Cowhide Drum, written nearly 30 years after.

Sound the drum!
Sound the drum!
Boom!
Boom!
Beat! Beat! Beat!
Strive!
Fight!
Do or die!

* * * * *

Praise ye, praise them!
Praise the Spirits!
Sing ye, sing them!
Sing our Fathers!

* * * * *

The drum the voice of war!
A whole no parts doth mar!
One Tone without a jar!
O let it sound out far!
It stirs up all men's hearts!
'Tis king of battle arts!
Of sacred oxen hide,
The drum will e'er abide.
It speaks of our great Past,
Of first things and of last.
Despite the oppressor's din,
The day the drum will win!
Brave soul, it calls, fight on!
Strive till the work is done —
The task to set us free;
No docile cowards we,
Souls who will win or die,
And will not cringe nor cry.
The Cause needs men will dare,
Hold fast and not despair!
Braves who will lead the masses
Though life's stiff, guarded passes,
And serve the Fatherland,
And gain the Chosen Land.
Though troubles envelope,
Warbling of Afric's Hope,
The drum will set us free!
The drum of unity.
The Drum of Life says, "come!"
O men of might — the Drum!

Yea, 'tis the drum!
(Praise ye, Praise it)
Yea, fight we will!
(Sing ye, sing them)
Strive!
Fight!
Save the people!
Rise!
March!
Who'd be there?

His poetry is often full of racial bitterness, too.

Because I am black
You think I lack
The talents, feelings, and ambitions
That others hate.

And in a poem in 1945 he examines the political causation of the tragedy of the lumperproletariat.

THE HARLOT

I have no love for you,
You to whom my flower I give.
I need your aid ... I don't care who ...
For, though poor, I too must live.

You call me harlot,
Forget my cursed lot.
'Tis you, yes you
Proud Christian, greedy Boss, you apathetic citizen,
Didst me undo,
Though now my company you eschew ...
For you retain a system that breeds me —
despised denizen.

Yet I am Queen
I choose whom I would choose!
'Tis you, not I, who lose.
I form a chaining breeding link between
The black and white;
And in my way I fight
for racial harmony;

For in dire poverty
We are the same,
Play one grim game.
And colour counts for naught
When men in stark realities are caught;
Their eyes are open and they see
They are alike. For poverty,
Like Capital (or truth and works of art)
Reveals the naked aching human heart.

Call me unclean,
Yet I am Queen,
Your daughters, sons, wives, husbands, sweethearts know
I reign! With tears and bleeding hearts they crown my brow!
For I am Queen
Although unclean!

But Dhlomo does not ignore the traditional life of Africans. His several historical plays show his deep involvement in his people's past, his effort to understand the present by encompassing the past and his constant implicit comparison of himself and historical figures in order to place the ordinary individual in relation to his history is testimony to this. More and more he seemed to try to examine and incorporate traditional thinking into his philosophy. His ultimate solution seems to be unsentimental. He rejects separate development as an artificial stopping of inevitable process. "It is not tradition" he says in Zulu Life and Thought, "to neglect the contemporary scene." The modern African, he believed, is a mixture of the traditional and the Western. In a pencilled marginal note in a book on Shepstone, the architect of segregation in Natal, Dhlomo wrote:

> It is strange that a man like Sir T Shepstone - a man of experience, considerable ability, analytical faculty and high standing should have been under such conflicting contradictions (?). He wanted to preserve Bantu national integrity by excluding them from civilizing agencies. The flaw in and fallacy of his policy lay in the doctrine of parallelism. Parallel lines never meet and it is difficult to under stand how Bantu whose interests, hopes, aims and ambitions were identical with Europeans, could successfully develop along their own (parallel) lines.

In Dhlomo's play Cetywayo he has Shepstone's assistant, Park, criticize Shepstone's policy to his face:

> Your policy might defeat its own ends, unless it is so amended, in the future, as to be repressive. As time goes on and more Natives become educated and civilised, the European will either be engulfed by the flood of educated Natives, or devise means to keep back the bulk of the Native population and curtail the rights of even the educated, cultured and exempted Native. You want Natives to develop along their own lines. Yet even now you are compelled to dictate the lines. For the truth is that they are developing along their own lines at present. But you are against it. It does not suit you. Hence your policy. You intend making the Governor the Supreme Guardian of the Natives. At once you strike at and undermine the very foundations of Native law and custom. Your appointed Supreme Guardian is not only against the idea and custom of hereditary Chieftainship, but will have autocratic powers to make and enforce law. The African Chief is hereditary and is under the power of the tribal council. In the draft you intend creating many petty Chiefs who will have no real power but will be responsible to the Government. These Chiefs will be your police and puppets under a Native Affairs Department that will see that they never get absolute liberty and their full rights, or enter the centre of the maelstrom of progress. Thus your Native Affairs Department, set up ostensibly to protect and help the Natives will, in fact, be the Native Altar Department where Native genius and Freedom will be sacrificed. Your codification of Native law will arrest the development of that law and Native ideas and customs. I have no doubt of your good intentions nor of the success of your policy under wise and moral administrators. What worries me is that unscrupulous legislators and administrators of tomorrow might abuse your policy for their own evil ends.

In a further marginal note elsewhere he writes:

> Very few Europeans understand Bantu psychology. Missionaries, officials of the Native Affairs Dep. etc. who claim mastery over the Native mind, either tickle us to death or exasperate us when they try to analyze Bantu thought and ways of living.

While thus saying that one cannot keep Africans in the past, he nevertheless strongly accepts the traditional. He writes in his Zulu Life and Thought, finished in 1945, about the snake as an ancestor and his tone is wholly one of approval and acceptance.

> According to Zulu traditional beliefs, the dead return to life in the form of snakes of different kinds. The tribal mind was wise enough to distinguish between the ordinary snake which is an animal and the snake which was a transformed body of a dead but living soul. The souls of the dead did not enter the ordinary reptiles, but transformed themselves into special snakes. The tribal man believed in the immortality of the individual soul.

> He believed that the living and the dead had vital connections and interests and could communicate with one another - a thing, as we have observed, that psychic research is trying to teach and prove today. Zulu traditional belief taught that the living depended on the dead for many of their good and ill fortunes. But it went further and said the dead - i.e. the highest and the Holiest - depended on the living for their meaning, position and existence. The world of the spirit was only possible and intelligible because of the world of the flesh. One lived and hadits being in the other.

This idea of the close connection of the ancestors with the living (and it must be remembered that Dhlomo was a Christian yet seems to have at least partially accepted ancestor-worship) is embodied in a remarkable play called The Living Dead. The play begins with a middle-class urbanized black couple scoffing at neighbours who are off to Natal to "make a sacrificial feast for their deceased parents." One by one their children and the husband's father enter, each agitated, bringing more news of the escape of another son, Earl, from a lunatic asylum (another interesting personal projection for H.I.E. had a brother who was eventually confined to an asylum - I believe he is still alive). Tension rises. Earl appears and one by one kills his brothers, sisters, father, grandfather. This series of events

seems highly improbable and the play seems to be heading for a flop at this stage. Suddenly, however, the ghost of the grandmother appears to the lunatic son, who dies happily in her sight. She then speaks to the "Corpses."

> While I was on earth I laboured hard and faithfully for you all. I died. You buried me - and forgot all about it, save Earl who visited my resting place a few times and brought flowers. But he, too, did nothing to shelter it with a few stones or raise a memorial or offer sacrifices. Now I have come to take you all back as a sacrifice and an offering. Tomorrow you, husband, will be laid up in bed and die two days after. Kenneth, you will be stabbed to death the day after your father's burial. A month later, Selby, you will meet a fatal accident, and you, Lilian, will, from tomorrow, feel indifferent health, and, following periods of illness, will die three weeks after Selby, yourself to be followed three months later by Jessie who will die in child-bed. Earl you are a great sinner and a lost soul, but you remembered me. I drove you insane to save you from more evil, and to make you suffer and atone for the past wrongs. You will escape from the asylum, kill a person, and yourself be shot dead by a constable. My dear daughter-in-law, you will not die. I have come to call back blood of my blood and flesh of my flesh only. After Selby's death you will find a good husband and live happily, but get no children. Selby's and his brothers' children will perpetuate Mkize's name. Your families, too, my sons and daughter, will live more or less comfortably after I have brought you all back to me. Today you all live on earth, ignorant of the fate that awaits you. The dead must be remembered and offerings made to them. As they remember they must be remembered; and as they give, be given. The dead live!

So the multiple meaning of the title is revealed. The dead, the ancestors, are alive and influencing the lives of the living. The living, whom we have seen die in the play, are really still alive but their deaths, which are near, are already determined. And their deaths are determined because of a failure to pay homage to the dead

and presumably a failure to recognise the past and fuse it with the present.

Half Dhlomo's plays are historical, half contemporary in setting. Ultimately the works add up to a fusion of the past and the present. His vision is ultimately optimistic and prophetic. At the very end of Zulu Life and Thought he writes:

> The sands
> Of Time run outward fast ....
> Out of this flaming Past
> Where Shaka's soul abides,
> And secrets deep confides
> To us today, may spring
> Again a Force to bring
> Us Name and Pride and Power
> *In this afflicted Hour.*

Elsewhere, in the same book, he threatens the same fight for freedom if the powers of government do not relent.

> The Seed of Shake, Phunga, Jama and
> Mageba (praise!), Cetywaya, and the band
> Of bards of old, cannot forever live
> Oppressed. To slavery we will not yield!
> Blood boils as we behold both spear and shield ...
> We'll strike and take! if others will not give!

So the great warriors still live - this is not merely in spirit but, given the belief in ancestors, the dead warriors are still alive, homage must be made to the past because it is still present.

As Cetywayo dies at the end of the play bearing his name he testifies in his final speech to this. As Dunn, the white man, says; "This day the kingdom of the Black man ends! The White man rules and ever will!" Cetywayo replies:

'Tis only for a time!
What was will be!
We shall be free!
Each race its lord and clime
And Africa for Africa remains;
Black Kings shall watch over her vast domains,
Black bulls!
Black bulls!
No power their rush can stem!
No force can conquer them!

Whether this was an intellectual fusion only, that is, that the dead are still living, whether it was the product of poetic hope only, or whether it was a belief held with the absoluteness of pure emotion, unquestioningly believed in, I cannot as yet say.

To return to the newspapers, in 1935 H.I.E. Dhlomo joined Bantu World and probably wrote the bulk of his dramas in the next five years. In 1936 a sixteen-year-old schoolboy began contributing poems to Bantu World. One was entitled "The Negro Youth".

He stood alone
A Negro youth
What of his future?
His cap was worn,
This Negro youth.
Why was he born?

Born to lead an empty, useless life,
Born to mar the record of his race,
Or born to lead his race?
Locked are the doors,
Locked - the doors of his future.
His burden to bear,
To suffer the pain of life's cruel ways,
That is why he was born.

This sixteen-year-old received terrific acclaim for his newspaper poems. It is possibly this acclaim that encouraged Peter Abrahams to pursue a career of writing.

So Plaatje and Dube handed over to R.R.R. and H.I.E. Dhlomo. Peter Abrahams appears. One of the earliest of contributors to Drum was H.I.E. Dhlomo, with a poem called "Lindive Laughs", in June 1951. So the line of writers leads straight into Drum. The young writers could take over from H.I.E.

Sometime in January, 1955, Herbert Dhlomo wrote his last article in Ilanga Lase Natal. Because of illness his pen is henceforth silent. On 22 October, 1955, a young columnist working for the same paper, wrote a short praise poem, "To Herbert Dhlomo", in which he begged Dhlomo to write again.

H.I.E., H.I.E.,

Me and all my brothers dark,
Those that mumble in the dust,
Without a hope, without a joy,
Streaked with tears for ravaged Africa
Have, with they silence, ceased to live.

* * * * * * * *

In vain we seek the lost dream to regain,
In vain the vision yet to capture:
The Destiny of a Thousand, million dark folk
Who seek, who yearn —
Alas! A fruitless toil.

* * * *

H.I.E., H.I.E.,

Speak to us again!
Whisper thoughts yet to impower us
To live the Dream, to live the Vision
Of a free Africa over again.

The young journalist's name was Lewis Nkosi.

T.J. COUZENS

UNIVERSITY of the WITWATERSRAND

APPENDIX

Although I believe that The Expert was written during or after H.I.E. Dhlomo's crisis with the Carnegie Non-European library there is, as yet, no specific evidence for this. It was certainly written before October 1941, and he resigned from the library in January, 1941. His brother, however, had been writing satires on "experts" in his column in Bantu World at least since March, 1939. There is, though, a specific event in the play The Expert, where a black is dismissed from his job, which seems strongly to reflect H.I.E. Dhlomo's interpretation of the whole episode.

I include the following articles written by R.R.R. Dhlomo in Bantu World under the pseudonym of R. Roamer to give some impression of the two brothers's thinking at the time. I do not intend by this to indicate that the Timbuctoo University to which he refers has any connection with any university existing in Johannesburg at the time!

ARTICLE 1: Bantu World 18 March, 1939

R. Roamer talks about Timbuctoo Experts

The Safafilika Buya Hall was crowded with spectators who had come to listen to the greatest discussion on Native Affairs that ever took place in Timbuctoo University. In the chair sat Professor Y.B. Mad, the great authority on "Lines of Development." Seated in semi-circles near him were experts on the Native Question. The ~~school~~ Question itself, black and underfed with its brow lined with furrows of malnutrition, was seated on the Agenda.

When Professor Mad rose to speak the crowded hall took a deep breath, held it for a minute and then put it down again. You could hear it as it passed out of the hall like the wind passing through the leaves of a tree. The great man opened the meeting without prayer and said "I now declare the meeting wide open, ladies and gentlemen. Please confine yourselves to the point which is "How can we answer it?" As for myself, I have devoted a life-time answering this Question and I am satisfied that my "lines" are the only answer in the world." (Hear! Hear!)

Dr. U.R. Bunkum, the celebrated anthropologist, fished out from his valise a tongue which was in advanced state of health as shown by the flies that stuck to it, and put it on the table. Placing one long finger on it he said, "you all know what this is; but perhaps you do not know to which

animal it belongs. It belongs to a baboon. I brought it here with me so as to show you what a tongue looks like. I answer the Question before us easily. Force the Natives to be educated in their mother tongue until the Sixth Standard. When they reech the Seventh they will either be useless as intellectual assets or too ignorant to menace us by competition in industry or business. (Applause.)

"Will you please remove the tongue Dr. Bunkum", said Professor Y.B. Mad, with a tinge of envy in his voice. "It is collecting a lot of flies in the hall, I am sure," he added acidly, "we can settle this matter without the help of flies." (Laughter)

"Now, now, now Prof. Mad," said Dr. Bunkum, "Do not be nettled; after all my theory and yours are just the same. Your "lines" work on the same principle with my "tongues" as answers to the question." (Applause)

Rising on a point of order Mr. Know Native Well, with many years of farming experience, said "Mr Chairman, while it is agreed that this question is of great moment I believe we cannot answer it until we take the brains of a Native, put it on a scale with that of a European and weigh them on the "Low wages scientific scale" and see which is lighter and, therefore, cleverer."(Hear! Hear!)" As you all know, I have spent any amount of time and thought on the matter of "weights and wages" and I have come to the conclusion that the brain of a Native is inferior to that of a European and as such no Native should be allowed to think even for a moment that he is the equal of a whiteman." (applause)

"Indeed, according to the thickness of his dense brain and the fact that even if when he falls on his head from a great height an average Native never gets hurts, but hurts the ground instead. I think that even if we classified his brain with that of a sheep we would be insulting our harmless legs of mutton." (Roars of applause)

A movement at the back of the hall focussed all eyes on the new speaker whose claim to the title "Expert" he owed to the fact that after twenty two years as foreman of an unskilled road-making gang, could now speak the Bantu languages well in this way: "wena bona". "Ikona lova lapa." This expert drew gasps of amazement from the distinguished gathering when he said "You have missed the point, sirs. For twenty-two years I have been answering the Question quite well on the roads. I keep the nig - sorry, the Native in his place all the time. How do I do it? Simple, I make him realise that in me he is before his superior in all departments of life and that I want no "airs" of superiority from him. If he forgets this I remind him with a boot behind him or a "five shillings" on his cheeks. In this way I have answered the Question as far as we non-professors see it." (cheers)

ARTICLE 2: Bantu World 20 May, 1939

R. Roamer talks about "Expertism"

Last week the Editor called us to his office. He rang the bell once - and we knew he was calling us. If he had rung it twice he would have

been calling his office-boy to come and tell him if he has not yet bought a broom that can reach the corners when he sweeps. He rung once - so we went before the great man.

"I want you," he said, "to attend the meeting of experts that is being held this afternoon in the Safa Pick Up Hall and report the proceedings. Do not forget to take both your degrees with you in case the meeting becomes too learned for you and you have no dictionary or encyclopaedia for reference. I don't want your opinion of the meeting, mind you, but a verbatim report of the proceedings. The experts, so I am told, hate to be misreported correctly, if you understand what I mean.

We did not understand what he meant; but we said we did and then left the Presence. We hurried to the meeting of experts whose sole aim in life was to help Africans to develop along their own lines by giving them expert help all the way. In fact, all the experts there were so zealous in helping this development that they kept the Africans themselves out of the centre of things altogether.

Thus we found out that whereas there were twenty - eleven yes, twenty - eleven - committees that were formed to help the Africans to develop along their own lines, each committee had an expert as a chairman, secretary etc. etc. The Africans who were helped along this road en route to Self Development were all outside these committees with the exception of a few who were the "advisors" of the experts. "Good boys" in vulgar language.

The chairman who presided over this meeting was a great expert on "African Scowls and Grins" and had mad a big name for himself writing authoritatively on these "Scowls and Grins in Bantu Society" by conducting research work. But he had taken great care not to help a single African to write on the question himself in his own way so as to prove his capabilities and ambitions.

The secretary was also an expert on "Tongues and Lips of the Africans". The Africans themselves who were being helped to take practical (?) interest in their own "Lines" were seated in the body of the hall as though they had come to watch the development of the experts.

The chairman addressed the gathering. "I am pleased to see so many of you here to-day. That is proof, if proof were needed, that you take interest in your own development.

"As you all know we experts here are out to help you to realise yourselves and I hope one day an African will be chairman of a gathering such as this."

A Voice: Why not to-day?

Chairman: We must crawl before we can walk.

Another Voice: We shall crawl for ever more if you never let us try to walk.

Chairman: We are here to try to find ways and means of helping you to walk.

Voice: Even last year we met here to find ways and means of helping us to

walk but all the walking we saw was done by you "experts".

Chairman: Naturally. The African is still a baby and must be led wisely and carefully before we can trust him to act for himself.

Voice: In the meanwhile, all the kudos that lie along the lines of our development are won by you who are supposed to help us to do our own things in our own natural ways.

ARTICLE 3: Bantu World 16 December, 1939

R. Roamer talks about Timbuctoo Council

One of our M.R.Cs spoke words in Pretoria last week that sent us flying right back into the Timbuctoo University Council. The motion before the Representative Council in Pretoria suggested the amendment of the South African Defence Act of 1912 so as to enable the African population to take part in the defence of the Union. The M.R.C. who gave us the shock opposed this motion because he did not know the feelings of the people on that question.

Our Timbuctoo Council was presided over by Dr. U.R.A. Bum, eminent expert on Natives who had discovered their 'Lines' of development and posted them to the Public Opinion of South Africa. We had many and varied sensations in our Council. The first sensation occurred when a fly entered the council chamber through a window and fell down dead before Dr. Bum. A hasty examination by one councillor who was a witch-doctor in private life, showed that the fly had been intoxicated by the exuberance of the learned verbosity that pervaded the council chamber. Dr. Bum asked the council to rise and remember the fly in silence.

This request of the expert on Native lines of development caused another sensation for, the councillor for Dis-is-der-Limit, opposed the chairman's request. Why, thundered the councillor, should the precious time of the Council be wasted on a fly whose only excuse for existing at all was that some people failed to obey the laws of health.

The chairman said if the member for Dis-is-der-Limit thought he could make a better chairman, he had only to say so and he Dr. Bum would gladly retire in his favour. This caused an uproar which resulted in the Council forgetting the fly which had been eaten a minute ago by a spider.

The third sensation came when a councillor said he did not speak because he did not know the feelings of the people he represented.

"Good heavens'" gasped the chairman, placing his glasses on the tip of his nose and trying to look over them at this councillor. "Good heavens, how is that you came here without knowing the feelings of the people?"

The councillor bowed his head and wept like a woman.

"Please, Sir" he sobbed, "let me go home and find out what their feelings are on this question."

"But, councillor for Spukpukfontein, how did you dare to come all the way from Spukpukfontein without the feelings of the people you represent? Have you no pockets in your coat?"

"I have, Sir," sobbed the Councillor: "but I forgot to put them inside. Now I begin to feel that I represent nobody in this Council." Dr. R. Roamer rose on a point of order and asked the chairman to allow the member for Spukpukfontein to go home and collect his people's opinions, for the Council's business could not be continued while members attended without the feelings of the people in their pockets. It was a shame and nonsense, continued R. Roamer, heatedly, still standing on the point of order, to allow the Council's business to stand still just because some careless Councillors forget their people's mandates at home!" (Hear! Hear!)

"Just look at this poor motion sitting like a neglected baby on a doorstep," said R. Roamer, giving the point of order a kick because it kept on crying that he was hurting it, "is it to be left unsolved just because the member for Spukpukfontein neglected his duty and came here without his people's opinions in his pockets?" (Hear! Hear!)

The Chairman opened his mouth and yawned.

"Let us say he had them in his pockets which had holes and lost them on his way here; else I fail to see how we can continue with the motion!" (Hear! Hear!)

This was agreed to and the motion, which was now looking like an underfed puppy, was discussed and passed. Dr. Bum, in closing the historic gathering advised the councillors to be fully acquainted with their people's need and desires before attending another session as there were no motions to be wasted in future.

ARTICLE 4: Bantu World 5 October,1940

R. Roamer, Esq. On Experts

Politics were not wanted in Timbuctoo University. A politician who succeeded in getting into the University by pretending to be an expert on something soon got smelt out and was kicked outside the back door. Next to our hatred for politicians was out dislike for "experts on Timbuctians" in whatever form they adopted.

Some experts came in the form of educationalists who knew what was the right kind of education for the Timbuctians. Some were experts on the Timbuctians' social and economic needs. Others specialised in recreation and clubs for Timbuctians until they became experts on these things and refused to recognise the abilities of Timbuctians to run these things themselves. We found our going and comings in Timbuctoo mapped out and regulated by experts who loved us so dearly that they did not welcome any Timbuctian to come near us.

We used to attend many stormy meetings in Timbuctoo University and watch experts quarrelling with Timbuctians who wanted to do their own thinking in their own way. To the experts who earned their living and big names through their work among Timbuctians, such Timbuctians were "ikona muhle. Maningi cheek. Too clever."

In these gatherings expert after expert rose and in righteous and glory-be tones, urged his hearers to let the Timbuctians work among their own people without any competition from experts. Timbuctians should be encouraged to lead their people forward educationally. Socially and so on and so forth. The house would applaud these sentiments until the roof almost came down. All this was nice and received a good press in Timbuctoo Pressing Circles.

Then a few days later a Timbuctian - not moving in the circles of experts - showed signs of leadership in sporting, educational and literary circles. Naturally, he expected to be hailed as God-sent by the experts. But was he? He was not even recognised. Indeed, some experts wanted to give his position to other experts who would lead the Timbuctian carefully until he could stand on his feet. Thus we saw in Timbuctoo University able, well-talented Timbuctians relegated to the background while experts flourished as social workers, sports-organisers, demonstrators, research workers in Timbuctoo, in their praiseworthy efforts of "uplifting" the Timbuctians.

If a Timbuctian had the miracle of being allowed to do great work among his people, experts shed crocodile tears over, "No funds" available from which to give him a good salary. There were "no funds" from which to increase his work despite its dire need for expansion. There were "no funds" for giving him the necessaries of life so that he did his work cheerfully and with determination, free from financial worries.

That was when a Timbuctian who was not among the chosen was allowed to do something for his people.

But if an expert was called upon to do the same work, money just dug itself up and before you could say, Hey! the expert had a car, a house built for him and hundred and one assistants to help him in his "strenuous" work.

SACRIFICE!
That is the word. Any Timbuctian was expected to do responsible work among his people at a salary of sacrifice, plus hard-work and selflessness all found. He should sacrifice a lot for his people, he was told. Money is nothing, he was told. What was something was the satisfaction of doing his best for his people with his proper reward obtainable in Heaven when he died.

Sacrifice to the experts meant something else. An expert sacrificed a lot working among Timbuctians ostracised by his own people. But in this case sacrifice saw to it that the "ostracised" expert had a fat cheque, a solid house built for him and such "trifles" as benefits when he felt too old to work.