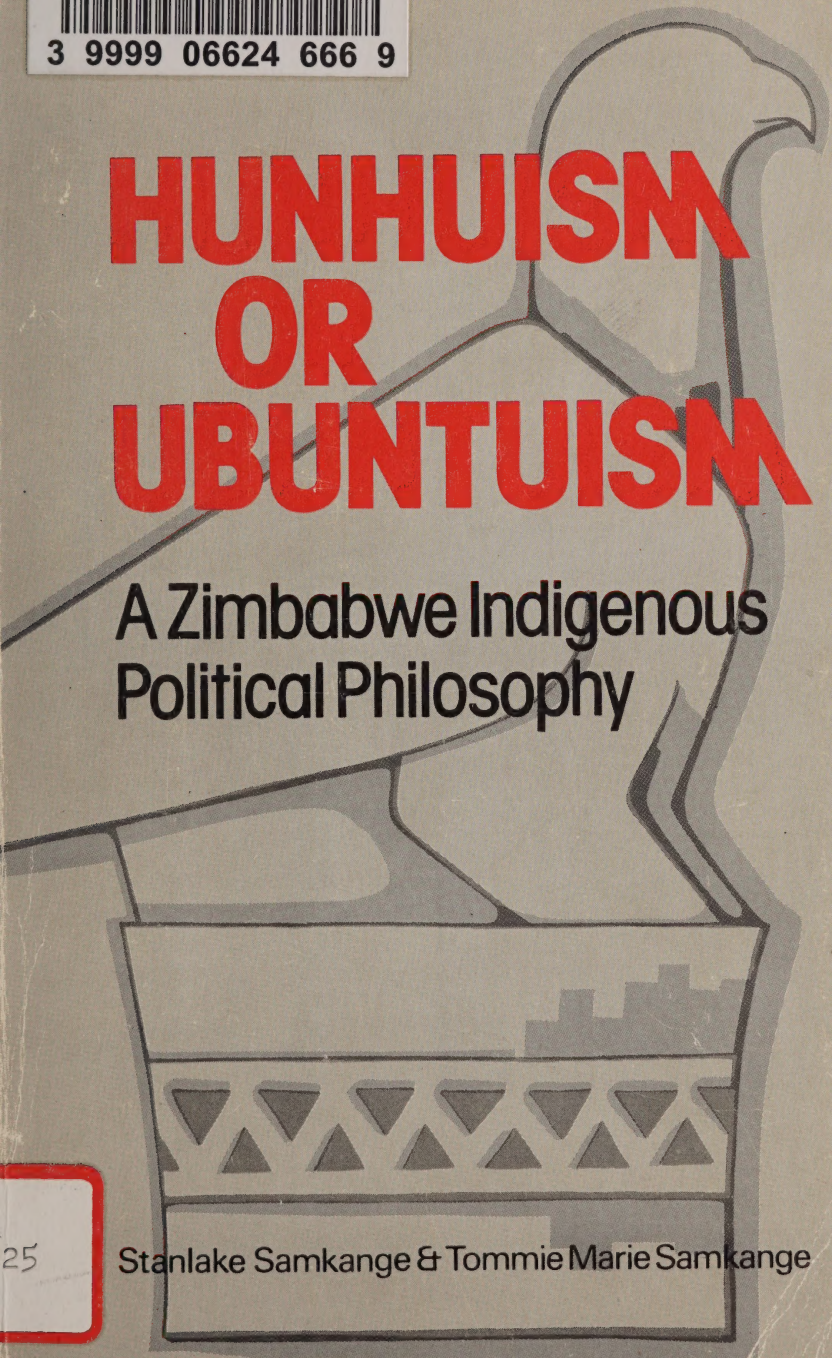
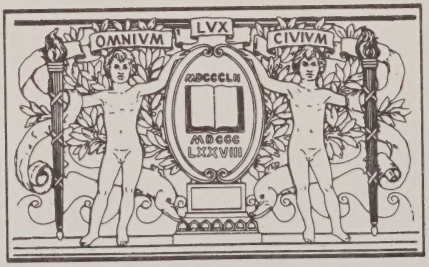
HUNHUISM OR UBUNTUISM

A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy



Stanlake Samkange & Tommie Marie Samkange



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This month (February 1980), Rhodesians are called upon to choose men and women of a political party that will lead them into a new era: the era of one man, one vote; black majority rule — and Zimbabwe. This is a great moment in the history of the country.

The question is: What political philosophy or ideology should inspire the new Zimbabweans in this new era? Should the solutions applied to the country's problems be based on capitalist, socialist, fascist, communist — Marxist, Leninist or Maoist — thinking? Is there a philosophy or ideology indigenous to the country that can serve its people just as well as, if not better than, foreign ideologies?

It is the thesis of this book that Zimbabwe has an indigenous political philosophy which can best guide and inspire thinking in this new era of Zimbabwe. This philosophy or ideology, the authors endeavour to show, exists and can be described as Hunhuism or Ubuntuism.

By Stanlake Samkange

ORIGINS OF RHODESIA

AFRICAN SAGA: *A Brief Introduction to African History*

ON TRIAL FOR MY COUNTRY

THE MOURNED ONE

YEAR OF THE UPRISING

THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER WHO WOULD NOT LAUGH

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A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy

Stanlake Samkange
and
Tommie Marie Samkange

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We are especially indebted to Heinemann Educational Books Limited, London, who first published Chapters Two and Three of this book in Stanlake Samkange's *Origins of Rhodesia.*

S.S.
T.M.S.

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Preface

AS a young undergraduate at Fort Hare University College in the mid 'forties, I described myself as an ardent socialist. I admired and read everything I could lay my hands on written by Professor Harold Laski, then a leading socialist theoretician and chairman of the British Labour Party. Thirty years later, during the abortive Geneva Constitutional Talks, I found myself one day talking to some very opinionated London-based perennial "O" Level students. I remembered how I knocked them stone cold when I declared, "I am not a Socialist or Marxist and proud of it." When I said I am a "Hunhuist" the sneers and smiles of derision that carved their faces could have turned fresh milk sour.

"What is that?" they scornfully asked.

It was my turn to be derisive. "Here you are, claiming to be Zimbabwe intellectuals. You know all there is to be known about certain white men who never set foot on African soil, one German, Karl Marx, a Russian, Lenin, and a Chinese, Mao Tse Tung. If I said I am a Marxist or Maoist or Leninist, you would immediately know exactly my political complexion. Now because I have told you I believe in what your fathers and grandfathers told you *"uhwo ndihwo hunhu"* or *"ihwo hausi hunhu;" "lobo yibo ubuntu" or "lobo kabu sibo ubuntu"* — that is being a person or that is not being a person — you laugh and jeer at me as if I have suddenly let things happen in my trousers. It is you who need your heads examined.

"Whose fault is it," I asked, "if no one knows about the philosophy of your grandfather and mine? Is it not your fault and mine? We are the intellectuals of Zimbabwe. It is our business to distil this philosophy and set it out for the whole world to see."

The object of this book is to do just that.

This is not a perfect distillation or delineation of hunhuism-ubuntuism. There are many impurities or imperfections in the end product. Still, it is a start on which others may, with advantage, build.

Furthermore, it is not our claim that everything Africans evolved under hunhuism or ubuntuism is superior to anything evolved elsewhere. This is definitely not the case. We must develop the perspicacity to discern what must be preserved and what must be eschewed in both hunhuism and Western culture.

We must also not lose sight of the fact that we live today, not in the Iron Age of our grandfathers but in a shrunken age of multi-national companies, supersonic travel and satellite communication. Adaptation is necessary; but the wisdom of centuries, we hope, will stand the test of time and space.

STANLAKE SAMKANGE
TOMMIE MARIE SAMKANGE

Salisbury
February 1980

Chapter One
We are all Africans

IN 1980, the people of Zimbabwe are called upon to choose men and women of a political party that will lead the country into a new era: the era of black majority rule, after just under ninety years of unbroken white minority rule; the era of racial harmony, after four-score-and-ten years of white supremacy and discord; the era of peace and tranquillity, after a decade-and-a-half of unbridled fratricidal strife and civil war; the era of recognised and legal independence, after fifteen years of illegal existence and no recognition by almost all governments on this earth; the era of free and unfettered economic intercourse with the world, after years of costly, devious sanctions-busting manoeuvres as the world's number one untouchable.

This is a great moment in the history of our country. In spite of everything, we are heirs to a great inheritance: a magnificent country. Nature and the toil and sweat of all our people — black, white and brown have bequeathed to us and made us custodians of one of the finest countries on God's earth.

Our problem, indeed most of the problems of the human race, stems from our inability to accept the brotherhood of man regardless of colour, creed or race. The destructions of the psychological, legal and all artificial barriers that divide us, as human beings, into antagonistic black, white and brown, must be a first priority. Unless we eradicate the myths that divide us, we condemn ourselves to eternal fratricide. Our aim must be to build a single nation of free men and women: black, white and brown enjoying a way of life enrichened by the diversity of their backgrounds.

Let us not forget that man is one species. For it was Linnaeus who,

while looking for a unit from which systems of classification could be built, made the species his unit and further grouped them to form the genus.

According to Philip Mason, "The species was something fixed and 'given'. Below the species was a subdivision, sometimes described as a subspecies, less precisely, a race. This was applied to distinguish a population which had been isolated long enough to develop some differences."[1]

According to Dr. N. A. Barnicot, "The members of a species share certain features, which are presumed to be inherited, which distinguish them clearly from other species, and interbreeding leading to the production of intermediate form does not occur in nature."[2]

We thus have, in the species, as well as in the race, shared inherited features, a clear distinction from other species, and the fact that fertile interbreeding does not occur in nature. As Philip Mason points out, "Neither of these two latter points applies to local differentiations of the same species, which will interbreed when they meet, and which will then produce a variety of intermediate forms."

Mason continues, "The importance of this for man now becomes clear. Man is one species: he shares many inherited features with other men and every kind of man is much more like a man than he is like any other species; he breeds with all other kinds of men and produces offspring who are fertile. The races of men are local variations, the differences between them are considerable... but they are not of such nature as to provide absolutely sharp boundaries."[3]

So all men belong to one and the same species; racial differences are purely and simply local variations and manifestations of men's ability to adapt themselves to their cultural and physical environments. It is, thus, important always to bear in mind the essential unity of men.

It is pertinent to point out here that even though people still talk

[1]Philip Mason, *Race Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 11.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 11.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 12.

about "the races of men" and "racial differences" there is no scientific basis for the concept of race. At best it is notional.

It was W. E. B. DuBois, who saw it all more than a quarter of a century ago when he wrote: "Science for years tried to separate men into great groups called races; at first the object was to explain human history by human differences. The scientific basis of race difference, however, appeared increasingly difficult as observation and measurement became more accurate. Three, five, twenty races were differentiated, until at last it was evident that mankind would not fit accurately into any scientific delimitation of racial categories; no matter what criteria were used, most men fell into intermediate classes or had individual peculiarities. The theory of absolutely definite racial groups was, therefore, abandoned and 'pure' racial types came to be regarded as merely theoretical abstractions which never or very rarely existed."[1]

And Ashley Montagu tells us: "The term 'race' itself, as it is generally applied to man, is scientifically without justification, and that, as commonly used, the term corresponds to nothing in reality."[2]

Robert Guthrie concurs saying: "Racism is equally a relic supported by no phase of modern science."[3]

Furthermore, we now know that Africa is the original home of man and that the mythical Garden of Eden, albeit without the snake and apple, was in Africa. For over millions and millions of years man evolved in Africa, and in response to his needs and the dictates of his environment, migrated and spread to various parts of the earth. All the same, man came from one source and has one original home — Africa. The brotherhood of man is clearly something real.

We now also know that for hundreds of thousands of years, the most important steps in the evolution of man and his culture took place in Africa and, until about 2 000 B.C., Africa was the leading continent in the world. In answer to those who ask: What has Africa

[1]W. E. B. DuBois, *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), pp. 115-116.
[2]Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 245.
[3]Robert Guthrie, *Being Black* (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1970), p. 169.

contributed to world progress? We can say that Africa gave birth to man when he made tools to a set and regular pattern and is man's original home, that the oldest culture in the world evolved in Africa. It was in Africa that man took the most important steps towards domesticating himself, thus increasing his chances for the continuation of his kind. It was also in Africa, as rock paintings clearly show, that the concept of colouring in art was born.[1] This, then, is Africa's proud contribution which, in fact, makes every human being ultimately descendent from African soil and therefore an African. There is, therefore, a sense in which we are all Africans: black, white and brown.

But as we stand on the threshold of majority rule in Zimbabwe, contemplate, grope and search for a philosophy that will permeate and radiate all our policies we ask ourselves: Who are we, this majority that will soon rule Zimbabwe? Where did we come from?

[1]L. S. B. Leakey, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 1-8.

Chapter Two

Pasicigare — Mashona Halcyon Days

BETWEEN the waters of the mighty Zambezi, in the north, and the languid Limpopo river, in the south, lies a land which is bounded in the east by the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean. Today, a large portion of this land is called Rhodesia, and its coastal strip is part of Moçambique.

Archaeologists tell us that, before the birth of Christ, this land was occupied by people they described as "Late Stone Age hunter-gatherers of Bush-Boskopoid stock who may have practised simple forms of vegeculture."[1]

About the time of the birth of Christ, however, a group of people migrated into this land. These people were cultivators not only skilled in the use of iron but also having a characteristic pottery. In archaeological literature they are described as "Iron Age immigrants". Not only were iron tools introduced at this time but Asian food crops found their way into the interior from the coast. These developments — the introduction of iron tools and Asian food crops — profoundly affected agriculture and the economy of the whole area. This, in turn, facilitated the growth of a dense population.

Although the Iron Age immigrants were, at the beginning, a few in number, co-existence over a long period resulted in the gradual absorption of the Bush-Boskopoid people.

According to J. Desmond Clark, this led to a continuity between the two eras. The spread of the Iron Age culture, in this area, became largely a matter of the Late Stone Age people changing and adapting

[1]E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.), *The Zambezian Past* (Manchester, 1966), p. xiii.

themselves to the new economy.[1] With this view Brian Fagan concurs.[2]

Archaeologists tell further of the arrival, in the fourth century A.D., of yet another group of Iron Age people whose culture they classify as A2. Although little is known of these people, it is they who anthropologists believe were responsible for the exploitation of gold deposits in this area. It is thought that several thousand sites were worked by these people over a period of about 1 500 years. The gold is believed to have been exported through Kilwa and later through Sofala, on the east coast.

Archaeology, sixteenth-century Portuguese documents, and oral tradition, all testify and confirm the arrival, at about the end of the first millennium A.D., of yet another Iron Age group of people whose culture anthropologists have classified as B1. It is this group which, they assure us, definitely spoke a Bantu language and arrived in successive waves from the north. Today, it is credited with having built, throughout this area, various stone structures of which those known as the Great Zimbabwe are only the largest and the most famous. It is this group which today is believed to have established the great Empire of Mwene Mutapa (Monomutapa to the Portuguese). And this was later superseded by the equally great Rozwi Empire of Mambo about which D. P. Abraham has said, "It is difficult to identify another Bantu state or association of states which can vie with the Empire of Mutapa for length of historical development, variety of ethnic origins and complexity of problems associated with the catalytic action of not one but two communities of exotic origin... the Arabs and Portuguese."[3]

European knowledge and understanding of Mashona history has, obviously, made great strides in the last two decades. There was a time when the building of Zimbabwe was ascribed to Phoenicians, Arabs, Europeans and even Dravidians — anyone, except Africans. It was even argued, at this time, that the Makaranga of Monomutapa could not be the Makaranga of today since there is nothing in

[1]J. Desmond Clark, *The Prehistory of Southern Africa* (London, 1959), Chapter 11.
[2]Brian Fagan, *Southern Africa, During the Stone Age* (New York, 1965), p. 110.
[3]E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.), *The Zambezian Past* (Manchester, 1966), p. xiv.

present-day Makaranga to show that they were once a great people.

Fagan has identified the Mashona as the Iron Age B1 or Period III people and therefore the builders of the Zimbabwe structures, the Mwene Mutapa and Rozwi Empires.[1]

Who are the Mashona? "The word Shona," Professor T. D. Ranger points out, "does not relate only to people who lived in the area now known as Mashonaland. It is a linguistic term used to describe a group of dialects spoken throughout what is now known as Southern Rhodesia and in parts of adjacent territories. These dialects — Kalanga, Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau — do not have a precise ethnic connotation either. Thus, when we speak of Shona people we mean all those who spoke dialects of Shona over this wide area; when we talk of Zezuru people we mean those who spoke the Zezuru dialect and who lived in a particular district of the Shona linguistic area."[2]

So the Makalanga, Makaranga, Mazezuru, Makorekore, Manyika and Vandau are the Mashona and bearers of the B1 culture which once flourished between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, stretching eastwards as far as the sea.

The oral tradition of some Mashona tribes is that they came from a place in the north called Guruwuskwa. No one is able to say exactly where Guruwuskwa is. All that is known about it for certain is that it is somewhere *"Ku chamhembe"* — in the north and has tall grass.[3] Guruwuskwa literally means "big" or "tall" grass; perhaps it is in the savannas. This is generally in accord with the view advanced by both anthropologists and linguists that the Bantu-speaking peoples come from the north, although there is less agreement on the exact area of their origin.[4]

[1]D. P. Abraham, "The Early Political History of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutapa (1850-1859)", in *Historians in Tropical Africa* (Salisbury, 1962).

[2]T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance* (London, 1967), p. 4.

[3]This is common knowledge among Mazezuru clans and is borne out in serialised articles published in the *African Weekly,* Salisbury, under the title, *"Nhorowondo dze Chipata"*, based on research among the Zwimba people by the late Jeremiah Mugugu and Stanlake Samkange.

[4]R. Oliver, "The Problem of Bantu Expansion", *Journal of African History 5* (July, 1966): 361.

D. P. Abraham has published a map of the Mwene Mutapa Empire which shows a province called Guruwuskwa lying south of the Lundi River.[1] This area is generally dry and arid and is without tall or big grass; it is therefore unlikely that it would have acquired that name.

Abraham has indulged in intriguing speculations. For instance, concerning the rise of the Rozwi and the decline of the Mwene Mutapa Empire, he says: "Changa, who exercises control over extensive territories, adopts the title 'Amir' after the successful conclusion of this operation, at the flattering suggestion of Moorish traders active in his sphere of influence. The combination 'Changa' and 'Amir' fuses into 'Changamire'. As Changamire, secure in the support of his subordinates in Mbire and Guruwuskwa, who are only willing to encourage him to flout the authority of his weakling brother in Dande, he openly proclaims himself King of the central and southern provinces. He styles his independent Kingdom 'Urozwi' to accentuate its separation from the Empire of Mwene Mutapa."[2]

There is no reason for the suggestion that Changamire is derived from a combination of "Changa" and the Arabic title, "Amir". This title, if used, would more likely be as a prefix rather than as a suffix. It would simply be "the Amir" or "the Amir Changa", in which case the name would have ended up as "Amirechanga". Even if one used "Amir" as a suffix to the name Changa, "Amir" would be pronounced "emiye". But Changamire has the "r" quite clearly pronounced and is not "Changamiye". In any case, Abraham does not explain why the Moors chose Changa, and Changa alone, to confer this title of "Amir", and never called anyone else, before or after Changa, by it.

It is also unlikely that Changamire styled his independent kingdom, Urozwi, to accentuate its separation from the Empire of Mwene Mutapa. If Changamire had to choose a name for his people he would have chosen one more flattering to them than Rozwi, which

[1]D. P. Abraham, "The Early Political History of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutapa 1850-1859", in *Historians in Tropical Africa* (Salisbury, 1962).
[2]*Ibid.*

means robbers — from *kurozwa*, to rob. Furthermore, people rarely announced that they would henceforth be known by a certain name in order to accentuate their independence from someone. Such separation merely took place and other people often supplied the name that stuck, like the Matabele, the Madzviti, the Matshangane or the Amamfengu.

Abraham puts the Shona arrival at about 850 A.D. From about the end of the first millennium to the 1830s this area was, therefore, completely dominated by the Mashonas.

L. H. Gann points out: "Hoe cultivation and small-scale industries like weaving, gold mining, pottery and the production of iron ware built up; a surplus trade in luxury goods enhanced the country's wealth."[1]

"Herds of their small but beautiful cattle," F. C. Selous believed, "lowed in every valley and their rich and fertile country doubtless afforded them an abundance of food."[2]

So it is not surprising that "the first white settlers in Melsetter listed, in 1893," Professor Ranger observes, "mealies, poko corn, kaffir corn, millet, ground nuts, beans (five sorts), eggs, fruit, cabbages, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peas, pumpkins of sorts, water melons, cucumbers, chillies, tobacco, bananas and lemons, and these all grown to perfection."

Professor Ranger continues, "At the same time, an early settler in western Mashonaland was describing the successful and varied agriculture of Chief Mashayangombe's people: 'The path wound through fields of mealies, kaffir corn, rukweza, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, peanuts and then across rice beds in the marshes.' Cattle and goats were herded and game abounded to provide fresh meat." Professor Ranger adds, "All Shona were involved in this cultivation, except specialists in the arts of government and religion. The men cleared the ground and together with the women planted, weeded and harvested. A number of arts flourished among the Shona — later, white observers claimed in the 1880s that Shona technical skills were 'really astonishing', and that they stood first 'in the industrial

[1]L. H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1965), pp. 9-10.
[2]F. C. Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South East Africa* (London, 1893).

arts of a rudimentary civilization' of all the tribes of the Zambezi. Cloth was woven from wild cotton or bark fibre; elaborate and highly ornamented pottery was made; at court centres like Zimbabwe and Khami there developed carving in ivory and soapstone and skilled use of gold for decorative purposes — gold beads, gold wire, paper thin gold plate to cover models of animals. The Shona were skilled smiths and produced hoes, hatchets, spears, arrow-heads, etc.

"Internal trade was highly developed. Shona groups especially skilful in iron working or close to rich deposits of ore would barter iron goods for cloth or tobacco; tribute was often paid to the Rozwi in these products." Professor Ranger goes on, "In addition there continued the long-established trade in gold and ivory with the agents of the Portuguese traders from the Zambezi towns. The Rozwi court and, to a lesser degree, the kraals of the chiefs, were the centre of this trade. The Portuguese brought cloth, beads, flintlock guns and other goods."[1]

The Mashona can, therefore, boast that up to the 1830s they had, for several centuries, occupied undisturbed all the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo Rivers stretching eastwards as far as the sea. This is not to say that there was not, during that time, movement, strife or war. There was. But it was movement and strife of the same people; the population remained basically the same whoever turned out to be winner or loser. The Mashona can boast that they established the great Empire of Mwene Mutapa and the Rozwi Mambos whose grandeur and achievements stand unsurpassed by anything Africa had to show at the time. Its complex of stone structures and buildings, of which the Great Zimbabwe is but an example, remains a wonder of the world. Its gold mines supplied, through Kilwa and later through Sofala, the markets of countries across seas centuries before the advent of white men in Africa. Its agriculture, arts, crafts, internal trade, religion, social and political structure were, without doubt, among the most highly developed on the whole continent. The Mashona are a people with a

[1]T. O. Ranger, "Southern Rhodesia in the 19th Century", a paper read at the Conference on the History of Central Africa, Dar es Salaam, 1967, pp. 1-2, now published in *Aspects of Central African History* (London, 1968).

proud past; a people with long and deep roots; a people with a distinct civilisation.

But in the 1830s the Mashona halcyon days were drawing to a close. There were stirrings in the south and in Zululand which were destined to break the Rozwi power and peace, and shatter its Empire to pieces — pieces that to this day remain to be welded once more into one.

Chapter Three
Birth of a People

ABOUT the year 1790, in the land that today lies within the borders of the Republic of South Africa and is known as Zululand — between the Esikwebesi and Umkuze Rivers in the mountain forests of Ngome — there lived a small and insignificant clan of people who were known as Abakwa Khumalo — the Khumalos. The Khumalo clan was divided into three: those under Chief Donda in the south, those in the centre, who were governed by his cousin Beje, and the northerners who were ruled by Donda's uncle — Matshobane.

To the east of the Khumalo clan lived the Ndwandwe people, under Zwide who was the most powerful chief north of the great Black Umfolosi River. South of this river, however, there lived another great chief, called Dingiswayo, who ruled over the Mthethwa clan, which inhabited the vast highlands between the Ntseleni River and the Indian Ocean. But strewn all over the land were clusters of scores of little independent clans ruled by hereditary chiefs. One of these small hereditary chiefs was a man called Senzangakona, chief of the little Zulu clan that lived on the border of the lands of the mighty Dingiswayo. All these clans were agriculturists. They tilled the soil, grew crops and raised cattle. In fact, a man's wealth and prestige were reckoned in terms of the size of his herd of cattle and number of wives.

When the time came for Matshobane to take a wife, he espoused, as senior wife, Nompethu, one of the daughters of Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe clan. From this union, a son was born and was named Mzilikazi.

In accordance with custom, Nompethu and her infant son were threatened with death and banished from the lands of the Khumalo

clan for as long as the boy's father, Matshobane, was alive and ruled over the northern section of the clan. This was done to protect the chief's heir apparent not only from assassination but also from undue influence by individuals and cliques within the clan. It was considered to be in the best interests of the clan that its future ruler should pass his childhood in a land other than that over which he would rule. Nompethu, not unnaturally, fled with her son to her own people — the Ndwandwes. Thus it was that Mzilikazi, the boy who was destined to be the first king of the Matabele, grew up in the royal kraal of his maternal grandfather, Zwide, among the Ndwandwe people.

As a little boy, Mzilikazi learned to look after goats under the supervision of other boys, a little older than himself. He learned the duties and responsibilities of a herd boy; the importance of not driving the goats too fast when on trek; the necessity of constantly counting them to make certain that none have strayed; the need to know one's goats so that one can recognise and identify them individually and, above all, the duty and responsibility of protecting one's goats and the satisfaction of being able to defend them from skellums such as jackals. He learned the names of trees, birds, animals, rivers and mountains. While herding goats, Mzilikazi also learned to obey the orders of his superiors (*inqwele*) without question and to fight; to fight, without hestitation, whoever was picked by his superiors or who even challenged him. He learned to live according to the herd boy's code, one of the cardinal points of which was that incidents that took place in the veld, while herding goats, were not to be recounted at home in the presence of old people. But, being a lad of spirit and courage, it was not long before the little Mzilikazi became, himself, *inqwele* and gave orders to the other boys; for the *inqwele* was, in fact, the boy who was the toughest and strongest of the group and could beat any of his mates at wrestling or give each one of them a sound thrashing when ever he wanted.

After a year or two, Mzilikazi was promoted to look after cattle. At this time, he learned to fight with sticks and to carry a spear and a knob-kerrie where ever he went, for a man who went about "carrying only his hands" was not a man but a woman.

Before long, however, Mzilikazi was considered above the age of looking after cattle. His proper place was then among other *majaha* — young men whose main occupation was hunting and fighting. During this time, Mzilikazi, no doubt, observed more closely the duties his uncle, Zwide, performed as chief of the Ndwandwe clan. He sat in on many a tribal *indaba* or *inkhundhla* — Council — in which cases were discussed and judgement given. He was often present when Zwide's war council sat and decided to *hlasela* — invade various chiefs for one reason or another. He heard the generals receive their instructions and himself became a member of their invading army and thus, not only "bathed" his spear in the blood of an enemy (an act which custom decreed was a prerequisite for the taking of a wife), but also observed how his grandfather's generals faithfully carried out their instructions and returned victorious with abundant grain, and thousands of cattle and serfs.

Mzilikazi also saw Zwide perform his duties as the spiritual head of the Ndwandwe people. He saw his grandfather go through the ritual of the ceremonies concerned with the festival of the First Fruits, and which culminated in a great dance preceded by the slaying of a pitch black bull, with bare hands, by a regiment of young enthusiastic warriors.

Thus, Mzilikazi became intimately familiar with court etiquette and the responsibilities of a chieftain as spiritual, military and judicial head of his clan.

But, as the young Mzilikazi was growing into manhood under the tutelage of Zwide, events were occurring in other parts of the country which were to place him at the head of his clan sooner than he expected.

Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthethwa clan, had as a young man travelled far — as far as the Cape where, among other things, he had seen white men train their young men for war. When he became chief, Dingiswayo opened trade with the Portuguese, and transformed initiation ceremony camps into military barracks for the training and building of an army.

Dingiswayo's army became the best trained and most disciplined army in the land, and it was not long before one clan after another

had fallen victim to its spears and was incorporated into the Mthethwa clan. Within a few years the Mthethwa clan extended from the southern bank of the Black Umfolosi to the Tugela River.

During this southward expansion of the Mthethwa clan, a young man named Shaka, was conscripted into the Mthethwa army. Shaka, preferring, in combat, to come to close quarters with his adversary rather than hurl a spear at him, so distinguished himself in the ranks of the Mthethwa army that his bravery and prowess became the song of the Mthethwa people — so much so that Dingiswayo ordered the young man to appear before him.

Dingiswayo was impressed by the athletic physique and the dignified and aristocratic bearing of the tall young hero. He was also pleasantly surprised to discover that Shaka was no common soldier but was of royal blood, being the illegitimate son of Senzangakona, chief of a little clan called Zulu and that he and his mother had been living among the Mthethwas ever since their flight from Senzangakona's land when the illegitimacy of the boy had begun to make life intolerable, if not dangerous, for them.

Dingiswayo showered the brave Shaka with gifts and cattle and promoted him to commander of his regiment. And, as clan after clan succumbed to Mthethwa hegemony so did the fame of the fearless Shaka spread, like ripples in a pool, throughout the land.

When Senzangakona died, the Zulu clan immediately appointed the heir apparent, Sigujana, chief. But, with the assistance of his half-brother, Ngwidi, Shaka had Sigujana assassinated and himself installed as chief of the Zulu clan. Shaka then reorganised the Zulu army, decreed short stabbing assegais and long ox hide shields as standard equipment for his army and ordered his men to fight only at close quarters and to conquer or die. Shaka's Zulu regiments became the terror of the land and many a clan was added to the Mthethwa empire, for Shaka still fought as a vassal of Dingiswayo.

Across the Black Umfolosi, Zwide was following the example of Dingiswayo and adding clan after clan to the Ndwandwe people. Not satisfied with his success in the north, Zwide crossed the Black Umfolosi southwards into Dingiswayo's domains and wrought havoc there. When Dingiswayo heard this, he mustered a great *impi*

to invade Zwide's lands and sent word to Shaka and bade him march his crack regiment towards the lands of the Ndwandwes. But, while awaiting the arrival of Shaka, Dingiswayo strayed into the hands of some Ndwandwe scouts, was captured and taken to Zwide who beheaded him and presented the skull to his mother who kept, as trophies, the skulls of the chiefs conquered by her son. The Mthethwa army was forced to retreat.

Meanwhile, Shaka was marching northwards, unaware of the tragedy that had befallen the Mthethwa empire in the death of its king. But Chief Donda of the southern Khumalo clan intercepted him and told him of Dingiswayo's fate, whereupon Shaka retreated with his forces.

Incensed by Donda's warning to Shaka, Zwide sent his *impi* to teach the Khumalo clan a lesson. Donda and his people were wiped out. So was Matshobane, Mzilikazi's father. Only Beje, who had got wind of Zwide's punitive expedition to the Khumalos, escaped.

Since Matshobane had been killed, Zwide ordered his ward, Mzilikazi, now a full grown man, to return to his people and occupy the throne left by his father. Mzilikazi returned to his people and had no difficulty in unseating his younger half-brother, Umvundhlela, who had usurped the throne — he had fled the land on hearing of Mzilikazi's return.

Although Mzilikazi owed his throne to Zwide, he never forgot that it was Zwide who had ordered the execution of his father. He could not, therefore, relax and enjoy the peace of unanxious slumber as long as Zwide was likely to order the massacre of the Khumalos any day. Since, even while he was still among the Ndwandwes, he had heard men talk of the bravery and greatness of Shaka, Mzilikazi, realising that Shaka was the man of tomorrow, decided to trek, with his people, to Shaka's kraal and to become his vassal. Shaka received him with open arms and from that day, the Khumalo people became Zulus.

Shaka and Mzilikazi get along very well together. The two men were alike in several ways. Both were unusually tall and remarkably well built. Both were resourceful, tough and fearless in battle. Both were unquestionably endowed with exceptional qualities for leader-

ship which enabled them to inspire and extract the best in men. But of the two, Shaka was the better leader, for he added to these qualities, a sharp and inventive mind. He was one of those few men in history who have been credited with original thinking. The two men developed a mutual respect for each other that ripened into a close friendship.

At this time, Shaka's spies reported that Zwide was mustering a mighty *impi,* under Sochangane, to invade the land of the Zulus. Shaka withdrew his army, women, children and cattle from the kraals into the vastness of their forests and rocky mountains and let Zwide's *impi* march hundreds of miles. When Shaka saw that the invaders were weary and footsore and their supply of food was depleted, he attacked them first at night and then, in a pitched daylight battle (in which Mzilikazi distinguished himself and added greater laurels to his name as a dauntless warrior and invincible adversary), destroyed Zwide's army. Those of Zwide's *impi* that survived, among whom was Sochangane, returned home to find that the Zulu army had already been there, had massacred their wives and children and burnt their kraals. Even the great Zwide fled to die a few years later in what is today the Barberton district of the Transvaal. Sochangane, Zwide's defeated general, continued his flight to the north with a number of his men and later became founder of the Amachangane people who, today, inhabit parts of the northern Transvaal, the eastern districts of Rhodesia and the Moçambique province of Portuguese East Africa.

The destruction of Zwide's Ndwandwe empire, extended the boundaries of Shaka's Zulu empire from the Tugela River, in the south, to the Pongolo River, in the north. All the clans between these rivers became known as Zulus and the land itself was called Kwa Zulu. A nation was born. From numerous, heterogeneous, independent clans Shaka had built a nation — the Zulu nation whose descendants would, for generations, proudly beat their breasts and declare, "*Ngiyi Nzula mina!*" ("I am a Zulu, myself!")

Here lies the greatness of Shaka. He built a nation. He was a military genius of the highest order. Consider his innovation of the short stabbing assegai; the method of close combat; the tactics of

evacuating his people into the fastness of forests and mountains, leaving no food for the invading army — the scorched earth policy in use as recently as World War II; the sacking and burning of enemy kraals. All these practices were to remain the standard methods of warfare in southern and central Africa, until the advent of the white man. Zwangendaba, Sochangane and Mzilikazi owed their success against northern clans to Shaka's innovations and themselves added nothing new to Shaka's methods.

If it can, correctly, be said that Shaka's military genius resulted in more blood being spilt, more people being killed (including women and children, who would have been spared by warfare), it can also be pointed out that man has, since Shaka's day, always developed and used weapons with greater devastating power than those used by his predecessors — so much so that he is now quite capable of wiping himself from the face of the earth in a matter of minutes. Needless to say, those so exterminated would include millions of men, women and children who were not even remotely concerned or involved in the conflict. Indeed, if one compares what our present day military genius has perfected for warfare with Shaka's so-called "blood-thirsty" and "ruthless" methods, the thought that Shaka could qualify for an award like the Nobel Prize for Human Warfare, is inescapable!

The extension of the Zulu Empire's northern boundary to the Pongolo River necessitated the posting of a trustworthy and proven commander in the area. This commander was to undertake raids into the adjoining territory of Sutho-speaking chiefs, particularly one named Ranisi, who was known to possess a large herd of cattle.

Mzilikazi was the obvious choice. He was a brave, able and trusted general. He was already familiar with that part of the country, since the Khumalos were northerners from across the Black Umfolosi River. Only one factor militated against Mzilikazi's appointment — his friendship with the King, for, it was known that Shaka enjoyed his company. But, not for the first time in the lives of kings, the interests of state superseded personal considerations, and Mzikikazi was given the command of the north. On the parade ground of Shaka's capital city, Gikixegu, Mzilikazi was ceremoniously

installed to his command by the King and then led his two regiments in giving the royal salute of *"Bayete! Bayete! Uyi Zulu!"* before taking the road to the north. He was never to stand face to face with Shaka again.

In his new command in the north, Mzilikazi was successful, in fact, too successful. Ranisi offered little or no resistance and his huge herd of cattle fell into the hands of the victors. Instead of sending the captured cattle to his King, Mzilikazi took it into his head to keep them. Such a thing could not possibly be hidden from Shaka, who had "very long ears". Sooner or later, messengers arrived from Gikixegu intimating that the King was aware of the cattle captured by Mzilikazi during his Ranisi expedition and expected them to have been delivered at his kraal by then.

Mzilikazi replied in no uncertain manner. He told the messengers that no cattle would be sent to Shaka and if Shaka thought that what the Khumalos had won in battle was his, he should come and fetch them himself. Mzilikazi added insult to injury by cutting the plumes of honour worn by the King's messengers on their heads and sending the envoys, shorn of their plumes of honour, to the King.

Shaka was strangely tolerant, though a punitive *impi* was sent against the rebellious Khumalo chief. This *impi* did not succeed in dislodging Mzilikazi from his mountain stronghold, access to which could only be had through a secret path. A second *impi* was fortunate in securing the services of Mzilikazi's disgruntled half-brother, Nzeni, who showed the Zulus the secret path and this led to the routing of the Khumalos. Mzilikazi was, however, able to escape with a sizeable body of men, women and children, and fled northwards, fighting on the way.

His first victim was a vassal of Shaka, named Nyoka, of the ema Ngweni clan in Northern Zululand. Mzilikazi wiped out Nyoka and most of his people, seized their cattle and grain and proceeded on his journey. He crossed the Pongolo River and entered a vast country inhabited by a number of independent clans speaking a language which was akin to that of Ranisi's people.

In the present day Ermelo district of the Transvaal, Mzilikazi struck camp for a while and augmented his fortune in grain, cattle

and serfs by successfully attacking neighbouring Sutho clans. From the Ermelo district, he journeyed further north into the present day Middleburg district where the congenial and more hospitable climate lured him into building a vast kraal which he named Ekuphumuleni — the Place of Rest. Around Ekuphumuleni, Mzilikazi established military kraals where, not only Khumalo youths, but also youths from Sotho and other conquered clans were enlisted in the Khumalo army and trained before being sent on expeditions against neighouring clans. In this way, many more clans were conquered, their women captured and their able bodied men commandeered into Mzilikazi's army. The Basutho clans, in trepidation, described their enemies as Matabele — "those who disappear — disappear behind their shields".

But Ekuphumuleni proved to be drought-stricken and within easy reach of the much-dreaded Shaka's army. So, in 1820, Mzilikazi again trekked on to the Magaliesberg district where he built his first real permanent settlement, making the Emhlahlandlela city his capital. Other important cities of Mzilikazi's new land were Enkungwini, which was situated in the environs of present day Pretoria, and Endinaneni.

Mzilikazi's Khumalos, fugitives from the wrath of Shaka, now had a land of their own; a capital city built in the pattern of Shaka's own capital city of Gikixegu; a leader to whom the royal salute, *Bayete!* was given; and a brand-new name, the Matabele. A people had been born. A state had been created — the Matabele State. These Khumalos had ceased to be Zulus and became the Amandebele.

Chapter Four

Why Africa is No Longer Number One

WE have claimed that until about 2 000 B.C. Africa was the leading continent in the world because, up until that time, nearly every important and significant step in the developement of man had taken place in Africa. Then, to use L. S. B. Leakey's words, "Africa ceased to play the dominant role in world progress, after having led for something like 600 000 years."[1]

"If that is the case," I can hear someone say, "and you claim that for 600 000 years Africa was in the forefront of human progress, why is Africa not still number one today? Why is Africa now one of the underdeveloped areas of the world?"

The answer to that question lies in the development of the Sahara.

From about 2 000 B.C. the Sahara, as well as its eastern extension across Egypt and the Sinai peninsula, began to lose rainfall and dry up. There was progressive desiccation until desert conditions formed. This effectively minimised communication and not only isolated Africa from the rest of the world, but also separated Africans from each other. They could no longer communicate frequently or exchange ideas and techniques as easily as they had before. Consequently, some important developments which took place in North Africa, such as the development of food production through cultivation of plants, remained unknown in parts of southern Africa, until the advent of the Iron Age thousands of years later. It was because of the development of the Sahara, then, that Africa lost its position as the leading continent in the world. Up until this time,

[1]L. S. B. Leakey, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 9.

nearly every important and significant step in the development of man had taken place in Africa. Now, however, it ceased to play the dominant role in world progress, after having led for 600 000 years.

Nevertheless, Africa has evolved a social system which only now is beginning to be understood and appreciated by Westerners. As the illustrious scholar, L. S. B. Leakey, told an audience at Cambridge University, England:

> In certain ways Africans were perhaps superior to their white invaders, even though their superiority was not linked with such manifestations of mental achievements as pictorial art, the theatre, writing, higher mathematics, and skills in devising methods of mass killing in wartime.
>
> When we talk so glibly of the "superiority" of the white races at the time when Europeans arrived to introduce Western civilization to the peoples of Africa, we should do well to reflect that in many ways the Africans had already reached a position which we, the so-called civilized races, are only just beginning to comprehend.
>
> The importance of family planning, as it is now called, is at long last beginning to be fully recognized in Europe and even in Asian lands as India and Pakistan. The spread of this idea stems from a realization that if there are too many children in a family, the children, as well as the mother, will suffer, be less healthy, and less useful members of the community. Long before the Europeans arrived in Africa, many Bantu tribes had already recognized the need for family planning. In my childhood days, Kikuyu Elders would explain to young candidates for initiation into adult status their law that a woman must not bear a child more than once in three years by saying quite simply, "If a woman starts another child before the previous one is more than two years old, then the child that has thus been conceived, the growing child which she is nursing, and the mother herself, will all suffer. Therefore, our law forbids a woman to have a child until three years after the previous one, unless the previous one has died in the meantime." Could anything be more physiologically and psychologically sound or more advanced than this? Does this point of view really seem to be that of an inferior people?
>
> Let us take another example. In the so-called civilized world we are just beginning to do away with the death penalty for some forms of murder. What is more, it is only relatively recently that we abolished this extreme punishment as a penalty for such lesser crimes as sheep stealing. Yet in most of Bantu Africa, long before the arrival of so-called Western civilization, only a person who was a persistent murderer was put to death. It was generally accepted that in all likelihood a person who committed one murder had suffered some extreme provocation and was most unlikely to act in such a violent way again. He and his family were then required to make the fullest possible restitution to the bereaved family but the murderer himself was not put to death. This is surely more logical

than killing one person because another is dead, in accordance with the old Biblical concept of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".

Or again, at a time when most so-called Western civilized races still held that a man had such strong legal rights over his wife that he might with impunity force her to live with him physically, against her will and within the law, most African tribes gave women far greater freedom and greater rights to live their own lives as they chose, even to considerable sexual freedom, provided they remained with their husbands and looked after their children properly.

To give yet another example, at a time when drunkenness was a major curse in many parts of Europe and America, in Africa the laws of a number of tribes forbade all except the very old to get drunk at all.

Let me remind you, too, that before the coming of the white man, social organization in many African tribes was such that tragedies such as destitute widows and orphans, unloved lonely spinsters, unmarried mothers, aged and uncared for elderly people were unheard of and indeed could not occur, while prostitution was unknown.

I have cited these few examples simply to show that Africans, who had certainly stagnated culturally and in the matter of material things for so long, and who had been so cut off from this aspect of civilization which was developing elsewhere, were by no means necessarily inferior in some respects to the so-called civilized races, although certainly different, and in some respects, even superior.

In matters relating to religious and other beliefs also, most Europeans have for many years taken the view that the Africans were inferior, or held false views. They have forgotten that what we call truth is always relative and depends upon our state of knowledge at any given point in time and space. We have, moreover, too often worked on the strange assumption that "what I believe is the truth but what the other fellow believes (unless he happens to believe as I do) is merely superstition".

It may be of interest in this connexion to recall that years before Ross claimed that he had discovered the cause of malaria, a European traveller in Abyssinia wrote the following passage, "The Natives hereabouts say that Malaria is caused by the bite of the mosquito, but, of course, we know better — it is caused by miasmas of the swamps." As I stated earlier, the many different categories of white men who came to Africa during the past hundred or so years (in some parts of Africa much longer, of course) and who have influenced it so much, have (almost without exception) been imbued with a sense of their own superiority and have consequently treated the Africans as inferiors.

They have tried, by precept in some cases, by example only, in others, to turn the Africans in the short space of a century from an Iron Age community, with many high mental as well as moral attributes and a well-planned social and political organization adapted to their own way of life, into inadequately trained, black-skinned, imitations of European politicians, artisans, and professional workers.[1]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21.

Because of the development of the Sahara, Africa is, for better or worse, no longer the number one continent of the world. During the thirty-five thousand years we in sub-Saharan Africa spent in virtual, though not total, isolation from the rest of the world, we evolved a social system that Westerners are only now just beginning to comprehend. Westerners found us "an Iron Age community with many high mental as well as moral attributes and a well-planned social and political organization adapted to their own way of life".

There must be a philosophy which inspires, permeates and radiates these high mental and moral attributes. There must be a philosophy which regulates our well-planned social and political organisations. This philosophy is what this book seeks to define. This is the philosophy we call Hunhuism or Ubuntuism.

Hunhuism or ubuntuism is, therefore, a philosophy that is the experience of thirty-five thousand years of living in Africa. It is a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations. In a world increasingly dominated by machines and with personal relationships becoming ever more mechanical, Africa's major contribution in the world today may well be in her sense of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* which her people have developed over the centuries.

Chapter Five

What is Hunhuism or Ubuntuism?

IN the early 1950s, when I was campaigning to build Nyatsime College, I often carried all my earthly belongings — a bed mattress, blankets and a suitcase in which were all the clothes I possessed — in the boot of my grey 1939 Chevrolet. This vehicle was, virtually, my mobile home. Many a time, I spent the night in it.

I remember driving through Mondoro Reserve very early one morning and soon finding my mobile home stuck in one of those ditches characteristic of "Reserve roads". After trying, without success, every trick in the book to extricate my "chova", I sought help from a nearby village. Two youngsters eagerly inspanned four oxen and, before long, my car was back on the road. I was thanking the boys profusely and on the point of giving them what they deserved and what every white man was, under such circumstances, expected to give: a very good bonsella, when an old man approached us, recognised me and greeted me clapping his hands and calling me "father". I reciprocated his courtesy.

"Now, my children," he said to the boys, "this is the father of Danny's mother. We cannot allow ourselves to accept anything from him. It can't be done. If there is anything you were hoping to buy with your bonsella, forget it. *Nokuti hahungave hunhu ihwo hwo* (because that would not be humanness).

"*Hazvingaitike* (it cannot be done)," the old man went on, "*kuti nditambire chinhu kwari iye mwana wake ndiyi naye mumba* (that I can receive anything from him whereas I have his daughter in the house)."

It turned out that the old man was Danny's grandfather and Danny's father was married to a woman of my tribe, a *tete* —father's

sister, to me. So all men of my tribe were the old man's fathers-in-law. For that reason, he had addressed me as "father".

What, for years, kept on coming back to my mind, however, was the expression, *"Hahungave hunhu ihwo hwo."* ("That cannot be the behaviour of a person, a human being or humanness.") If, kind reader, you are an African, can you recall how many times you have heard this admonition from an older person, *"Hausi hunhu ihwo hwo,"* in Shona or, in isi Ndebele, *"Kabusibo ubuntu lobo."* ("That is not the behaviour of a person or a human being. That is not humanness.")

Where does the word *hunhu* or *ubuntu* come from? Among the peoples of southern, central and eastern Africa, linguists have discovered as many as three hundred languages similar to one another. For instance, in all of these, the word for "person" has *ntu*, or a variation, while the plural has *ba*, or a variation.

A comparison of the word in several of these languages will illustrate the similarity:

LANGUAGE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Shona	*munhu*	*vanhu*
Zulu, Xosa, Isindebele	*umuntu*	*abantu*
Sotho, Tswana	*muthu*	*bathu*

Members of one of these language groups do not generally understand members of another, despite the common forms. Linguists call this large group of related languages "Bantu", and its speakers are usually referred to as "Bantu people".

On the basis of the more than two thousand roots these languages have in common, it has been concluded that Bantu people originated from a single source, and have since achieved a wide geographical dispersion with only a small linguistic divergence; their linguistic family is regarded as distinctly new.

Various other evidence has led to the deduction that the central Cameroons and east-central Nigeria were the original homelands of the Bantu people. According to linguistic evidence gathered by Professor Joseph Greenberg, the people in eastern Nigeria simply moved straight on southwards and eastwards into the Congo basin

and from there fanned out to occupy the whole of what is now Bantu Africa.[1]

Professor Malcolm Guthrie studied the concentration of Bantu word roots according to area, and, on the basis of the heaviest concentrations, he asserted that wherever Bantu people originally came from, the area in which their descendants multiplied profusely and gradually dispersed over the rest of Bantu Africa is an elliptical area at the heart of which lies the woodland region of the Kantanga.[2] This theory is supported by the oral tradition of several Bantu tribes who say their ancestors came from the north. The Mashona, for instance, say they came from Guruwuskwa, which means "big grass", somewhere in the north.

The evidence also indicates that the Bantu dispersal produced a dynamic population explosion as they pushed southward. This in turn produced a cultural revolution introducing the use of iron tools for agriculture and weapons for hunting and military purposes. The food crops included not only sorghums, millets and dry rice, native to the sub-Sahara savanna, but also southeast Asian food plants — bananas and yams, which were being grown in Africa at the beginning of the Christian era.

In the areas where the Bantu spread, they found the land inhabited by hunter-gatherers like Pygmies, Bushmen and Dorobo; pastoralists like the Hottentots and the Tatog; and cultivators like the Iraqw. Numerous rock paintings and other archaeological evidence testify to the occupation of these areas prior to the arrival of the Bantu.

The stories of some Bantu tribes also indicate the existence of a mysterious short people: *Vana wandi wonerepi,* meaning, "From where did you see me?" Children are warned that if they ever meet a strange, short man who asks, "From where did you see me?" they are to reply, "We saw you when you were far away, beyond those hills over there."

The short man will then leave them alone and go on his way, pleased that he is a big man, visible from a long distance away. But if

[1]Stanlake Samkange, *African Saga* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 163-164.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 164.

the children reply, "I saw you just now when you were right here," the short man would be displeased and might cause them harm.

Because of their superior skill as hunters and as food growers, the Bantu subdued and absorbed most of the people they found in these lands and, as a result, exhibit a very wide variety of physical types and social customs. In some areas, absorption of the indigenous older culture was only partial, and some representatives of these older types, like the Pygmies and Bushmen, are now found only in the most inhospitable parts of the land — thick forests and the Kalahari Desert.[1]

Now we know that the word *munhu* in Shona and *umuntu* in isi Ndebele means a person: a human being. We know also, it means more than just a person, human being or humanness because when one sees two people, one white and the other black, coming along, we say, "*Hona munhu uyo ari kufamba no murungu,*" or in isi Ndebele, "*Nanguyana umuntu ohamba lo mlungu.*" ("There is a *munhu* walking with a white man.")

So there is a sense in which the word *munhu* or *umuntu* stands for much more than a person, human being or humanness because a white man — *murungu* or *umlungu* — is always a person, a human being, and therefore always has his humanness. Yet we say, "There is a *munhu* walking with a *murungu.*"

Now, is there a sense in which we can say a white man lacks something which we always identify in an African? Yes, black Americans, for instance, identify something they call "soul" as being almost exclusively among black folk.

What is this thing they call soul? It is indefinable, yet identifiable among black people. Black Americans will tell you: "Tom Jones is a white man who has soul," inferring that most whites do not have soul. Even an African "from the African Continent" does not have soul. It is something found, as a rule, among black Americans.

Blacks in America have a distinctive sub-culture with the dominant themes being soul and style. According to them, soul is long suffering ("Oh Lord, have mercy"); soul is deep emotion

[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

("Help me, Jesus") and soul is a feeling of oneness with other black people. Class and political differences are minimised by soul. Style is not exclusively black, but it is typified in a combination of ease and class — the ability to look rich when one is poor or to appear to be in control when one is tense. Blackness combines both soul and style.[1] Why? Perhaps because of the unique experience the black American has had passing through a particular brand of slavery: North American slavery. From this flow soul food, soul music and soul brother.

The attention one human being gives to another: the kindness, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in the relationship between people; a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people and to life, is embodied in *hunhu* or *ubuntu*. Hunhuism is, therefore, something more than just humanness deriving from the fact that one is a human being. We will, therefore, describe more accurately what we are talking about if we use the words *hunhu* and *ubuntu* or hunhuism and ubuntuism, instead of the word humanness.

Since there are as many as three hundred linguistic groups with *ntu* or a variation in the word for person, all believed to have originated from a single source, it is reasonable to suppose that these groups — the Bantu people — by and large, share a common concept of hunhuism which varies only to the extent that individual groups have undergone changes not experienced by others. Thus, for instance, the code of behaviour, the attitude to other people and to life of a ruler, an *induna*, in a highly centralised military Nguni kingdom will be different from that of an *ishe* in a less centralised and less martial Shona state.

Let us also bear in mind that while there are certain traits or attributes which we readily identify as, or claim to be, hunhuism, this does not mean that such traits or attributes cannot be found among other people not of Bantu origin. Some traits or attributes of hunhuism are not exclusive to the Bantu even though, in its entirety, the concept is.

It is a peculiarity of the concept of hunhuism that it is more

[1]Johnetta Cole, "Culture: Negro, Black and Nigger", *Black Scholar* (June, 1970): 40-41.

discernible when described in terms of what it is not than what it is. "*Hausi hunhu ihwo hwo* (That is not hunhuism)," we are often told, usually as a reprimand. The positive side: "*Uhwu ndihwo hunhu chaihwo* (This is real hunhuism)," is rarely pointed out.

Chapter Six

The Need for a Government of National Unity

THE majority rule government that will assume office in 1980 will come to power as a result of war. It would have been so much better if majority rule had been achieved in a peaceful atmosphere and it had not been necessary for Africans to resort to war to obtain that which is their birthright. Then, more than twenty thousand people who have lost their lives in this fratricidal strife might be alive.

Still, every dark cloud has a silver lining and part of the silver lining of this war, as far as Africans are concerned, is that we have been able to get back our country the way we lost it — by force of arms. In the long run, this is very important for our dignity and self-respect as a people. No one gave us back our freedom on a silver platter. We fought and died for it, like men.

It will be pointed out, of course, that no one achieved a military victory in this war and that, at best, the outcome was a stalemate. That may be so in strict military terms. There is no doubt, however, that the war that cost the country over a million dollars a day was an economic burden the country could not sustain much longer. An economic collapse was inevitable if not imminent. Under the circumstances, it was prudent for the whites to negotiate the best deal possible before they found themselves in no position to negotiate any kind of deal at all.

History has repeated itself. In 1896, it was Cecil Rhodes' view that a military solution was not possible during the first African Nationalist Uprising. This is shown in the following extract from *Year of the Uprising* of the conversation between Rhodes and Sir Frederick Carrington, Commander of the British forces during the Uprising:

"Your large force will merely lose itself in the wilderness." (Rhodes told Carrington.) "Machine guns will not find the limit of its caves and fastness. Starvation might move the Matabele from their Matopos, but Kaffirs can starve a long time before dying. The settlers will yield to final despair and the Chartered Company go bankrupt before there arrives an end to this trouble.

"It means the ruin of the Company. They have only just, through their last issue of half million new shares at £3.10.0 paid off — among other things — their liabilities on the Matabele War of 1893. Already what was left is gone, and here they are faced with a fresh campaign that is costing the Company £4 000 a day and might in the end cost them anything up to £5 million. Where am I going to raise £5 million? My shareholders lost in the January issue of new shares. I borrowed £1 250 000 at 5%. I will be compelled to issue new shares. Where will it all end? How long will my shareholders, already shaken in their faith by the Raid, suffer this watering down of their possessions?

"The rinderpest has killed most of the cattle. Food is scarce. The nearest railway station to Matabeleland is over six hundred miles away; supplies of food and ammunition have to be brought by mule wagon at a very high cost. There is, therefore, no way the Company can avoid bankruptcy and defeat if the rebellion continues."

"And the way the natives are dug in those strongholds," observed Carrington, "fighting can continue for umpteen years."

"Something has to be done," said Rhodes. "I have decided to parley with the Matabele. I will go to the Matopos alone, unarmed, and talk peace with them."

"That's impractical," said Carrington.

"Nothing is more practical and nothing else is practical," retorted Rhodes.[1]

Rhodes went to the Matopos and negotiated a settlement which gave him the victory he had failed to win by force of arms. The Chartered Company and later the white settlers retained ownership of the country. Most of the leaders of the Uprising in Matabeleland were made Head *Indunas*. They thought they had recovered the power they exercised during the reign of Lobengula. They also believed the promises they had received about the redress of grievances. Many of their followers returned to their old homes for the first time since the overthrow of their King u Lobengula in 1893.

Of course, the Matabele did not know that they had virtually won the war, that all they had to do was sit tight in their caves and let the war drag the Chartered Company to bankruptcy. The British Government would have eventually stepped in, taken the country

[1]Stanlake Samkange, *Year of the Uprising* (London: Heinemann, 1978), p. 83.

from the Chartered Company and administered it as a Crown Colony. Then, we would never have had Responsible Government in 1923, and settler rule. As a colony administered by the Colonial Office, Southern Rhodesia would have achieved independence in 1964 when Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland got theirs and this war would never have taken place.

In 1976, eighty years after Rhodes decided to parley, to talk peace, with the Matabele at Matopos, it was Ian Douglas Smith's turn to take a good look at the economic plight of the country and decide to parley at Geneva and, in December 1977, at the Internal Constitutional Talks in Salisbury. The result was the 3 March 1978 Agreement. This agreement was a compromise. Ian Smith was not as successful as Rhodes at Matopos because Africans knew Smith's economy was grinding to a halt. He had to offer Africans the driver's seat even though he sought to make the whites continue to map the route the car must take and to control the fuel that made it run. The Lancaster House Talks in 1979 were a continuation of the process of distilling the compromise to make it look more in favour of Africans but still with the White Western World determined to be the one to map the car's route and to control the fuel that makes it run instead of the Eastern Bloc.

No amount of soul-searching, analysis or recrimination will, nevertheless, alter the fact that this war has divided us — first, into two groups: warring blacks and whites; second, into a number of very hostile political parties and, third, into very sensitive tribal groups. It is a miracle that relations between black and white are, on the whole, as good as they are. Inter-party hostility is understandable in view of the theory, current in African political circles, that the popularity of a leader or political party is always in direct proportion to the number of paid thugs, euphemistically called "The Youth", which he or the party can command to intimidate and force people to attend his rallies while striking terror into the hearts of those who do not openly profess enthusiasm for his leadership. Inordinate tribal or ethnic consciousness and sensitivity is also understandable in view of the colour and tenor of the interregnum.

According to Western ideas, what is desirable now is a clear cut

victory at the polls for one of the contesting parties which will then form a government, and for the vanquished to take up their seats in Parliament as the President's Loyal Opposition in accordance with the Westminster Model.

The African experience: hunhuism or ubuntuism, dictates a different course. In a Western court of law, for instance, the magistrate or judge, first satisfies himself what the law is on a particular point at issue, then asks himself whether he is satisfied by the evidence presented in court, that one of the parties to the dispute infringed the law. After he decides this, he passes judgement on the case before him. An African court may, in similar circumstances, also want to establish whether a law — *umteto, murawo* or *mutemo,* as distinct from a custom, *umkubo, tsika* — has been violated. This will be determined, not by one man's close study and interpretation of the law or custom in question, but by a general consensus of those present. In passing final judgement, however, the African court will take into consideration an element which a Western court would consider quite extraneous and irrelevant, and that is whether the judgement or sentence reconciles the parties to the dispute. The African court must of necessity take this into account because the disputants still have to live together in one community when they leave the court. This is a very important consideration in an African court. It is not necessarily an important consideration in a Western court.

So hunhuism dictates that the main task of the victor at the next election should be reconciliation. As Abraham Lincoln said at Gettysburg towards the end of the American Civil War, "The task of reconciliation, of bringing about order where there is now confusion, of bringing about a settlement at once, just and merciful, will demand all our wisdom, all our loyalty. It is the proudest hope of my life that I might be of some service in this task. Whatever it may be can be but a very small return for the kindness and forbearance I have received. With malice towards none and charity for all, let us all here highly resolve that this new nation under God will have a new birth of freedom and that the government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from this earth."

Let the victor at the next elections, bring together the divided, nay, warring blacks and whites of this country. Let the victor bring about amity and peace among supporters of hostile political parties itching to get at each other's throats. Let the victor encourage co-operation rather than competition among our tribes and ethnic groups. This is the task. This is the challenge of the times.

How can the victor achieve this? Hunhuism-ubuntuism indicates that he should bring this reconciliation not by regarding himself as victor and consigning others to Opposition benches but by regarding all as victors and forming a government of all — a Government of National Unity in which all political parties represented in Parliament will participate so that, with malice towards none and charity for all, we can all, with dignity, set about rebuilding and healing the wounds we have inflicted on ourselves. So hunhuism-ubuntuism points to the formation of a Government of National Unity after the elections to superintend the Reconstruction Era we shall then be embarking upon.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that the British Government have emulated the Portuguese and done an Angola on us. In Angola, the Portuguese went into a street in Luanda and said something to the effect: "People of Angola, you say you want Freedom and Independence. Take it. We are giving it to you all — the People of Angola. Goodbye." And the Portuguese walked out of Luanda and Angola. The whole operation must have taken about two minutes. And the Angolans have not yet finished killing each other clearing the mess left by the Portuguese.

At Lancaster House the British virtually said: "Southern Rhodesia has given us too much trouble over the last fourteen years. Now both whites and blacks are agreed that you should have majority rule and call your country Zimbabwe. Good. Now, let's have free and fair elections in two months. We will remove sanctions and recognise whoever wins. We will give you your independence then. But the whole business must take two months. Whatever problems you have will be the business of your new Independence Government to sort out. In two months we want to be OUT and wash our hands of your problem."

The difference between the Portuguese and the British is that the former took two minutes and the latter two months to scram out of the country. The time schedule of such an undignified exit suited the Portuguese and British, not Africans. Unless we, the people of this country realise this, and agree to co-operate with dignity in the rebuilding of our country under the aegis of a Government of National Unity, we shall continue to kill one another, as the Angolans have done all these fourteen years.

Chapter Seven
Foreign Policy

IF, within Zimbabwe, it is the task of the Government of National Unity to reconcile and unify black, white and brown, the various feuding political parties and the various divergent tribal groups, it will also be its prime objective to seek reconciliation with our neighbours; the frontline states — Botswana, South Africa, Moçambique, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi; members of the Organisation for African Unity and the rest of the world community represented in the United Nations. This is a policy consonant with our tradition and philosophy of hunhuism or ubuntuism.

When in the mid-1830s, the Reverend Robert Moffat accused u Mzilikazi, King of the Amandebele, of having massacred whole clans in the Northern Transvaal, Mzilikazi stoutly denied the charge. "It was the Mantates and other rascally nations that had made these devastations before he came to the country. He tried to convince me (Moffat) that his was a very humane government, that he, while on the sources of the Yellow River (the Vaal), had avoided the Mantates on the route northward, but, after their defeat at Old Lettako he surrounded a great number of them on their return, when he took prisoners to prevent them from doing more mischief. . . that he had received the Fikani who had been driven by white men and Kaffirs, and it was reported that they ate children, he had given them cattle on condition that they abandoned that practice."[1]

Thus u Mzilikazi professed to want to live in peace with his African neighbours and had actually avoided the Mantates on his journey northward but after their defeat only surrounded and took

[1]J. P. R. Wallis (ed.), *Matabele Journal of Robert Moffat* (London, 1945), pp. 15-16.

numbers of them prisoner to prevent them doing more mischief because his was a humane government. In spite of such protestations on the part of Ndebele kings, numerous instances, when they attacked their neighbours without provocation, can be cited. It is helpful to bear in mind, however, as F. C. Selous is said to testify in *On Trial for My Country*, that "The Matabele did not always attack other tribes for sport, as is often said. They did it, at times, out of sheer necessity. Fighting and war was, of course, in their blood. They existed and were organised as a people for nothing else. But it also happens that they had chosen to settle on land that agriculturally was most unsuitable and singularly unproductive. The rainfall was very low and droughts were very frequent. Cattle grazing, the only thing for which this part of the country was generally suited, was limited by scarcity of water and proximity to the tsetse fly belt.

"Since beef was their staple diet and a low rainfall conspired with a poor sandy soil to make the growing of grain in large quantities well nigh, if not, impossible, the Matabele attacked and sacked other tribes more to replenish their supply of cattle and grain than for the sheer fun of spilling blood. It was because of a famine caused by drought and a lung disease which decimated hundreds of cattle that three military expeditions were sent out by Mzilikazi in 1867. One was despatched to Mashonaland and the others to Bechuanaland and the area of Lake Ngami. The first two were successful, particularly the Mashonaland Campaigns which resulted in the capture of an important Muzezuru, Chief Hwata, and a valuable haul of grain and cattle. So large was the booty that it took several hours for the cattle and grain-carrying captives to pass before our eyes. Poor Chief Hwata was hauled before Mzilikazi by the jubilant warriors who expected him to be executed on the spot, but Mzilikazi surprised everyone by allowing Chief Hwata to return to Mashonaland merely on condition that in future he would pay regular tribute to him."[1]

Even if we were so inclined, a policy of periodically attacking, sacking and plundering our neighbours for the purpose of replenishing our supply of cattle and grain would be more than counter-

[1]Stanlake Samkange, *On Trial for My Country* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1966), p. 87.

productive today. So we have no alternative but to adopt a conciliatory good neighbourly policy towards all the states that immediately surround us.

As for the states far afield in Africa and elsewhere, we could do no better than follow Mzilikazi's policy: "Tell the white king I wish to live in friendship and he must not allow the Bastards, the Korranas, to annoy me as they have done. Let the Road to Kuruman remain open," Mzilikazi told Moffat.[1] So white men could come to Matabeleland. The border was open.

His successor, Lobengula, was much more explicit: "I shall not begin war. I wish to remain at peace, but if I am attacked I shall defend myself as becomes the king of a nation of warriors like the Matabele.

"I am a friend of white men. I am opening my country to them and I hope in years to come that lasting friendship and advantageous intercourse will be established between us."[2]

The Mashona attitude to neighbours and foreigners was shown by the fact that when the British South Africa Company invaders arrived at Harare (Salisbury) in 1890, the spirit mediums advised the Mashona not to be afraid of the white men since they were only traders, but to take to them a black cow and offer it to the visitors as a greeting gift. This was done and the chiefs received in return gifts of cloth and blankets. The Europeans then told the Mashona they were looking for gold and asked for help in prospecting to carry on their work. Some of the Mashona acted as guides to gold-bearing areas; others volunteered labour in return for cloth. Chief Hwata sent his relatives to serve the whites and to learn their ways.

There are clear guidelines in hunhuism or ubuntuism as to how a policy of amity with neighbours or strangers may be carried out. Marriage played a very important role. Those who married into the royal family acquired a high status in the society. So the king married or gave away his sisters and daughters to those with whom he wished to cement bonds of friendship within or without the state. Thus,

[1]J. P. R. Wallis (ed.), *Matabele Journal of Robert Moffat* (London, 1945), p. 31.
[2]Stanlake Samkange, *On Trial for my Country* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1966), p. 22.

when in 1888, Lobengula sent two of his *indunas*, Babiane and Mtshede, on a diplomatic mission to England, there was an awkward moment when the *indunas*, preparing to return home, expected the British to present them with a few English women to be taken as wives by their king. When, however, the British remained silent on the subject, one of them mustered enough courage to ask one of Queen Victoria's officials for English wives to take to Lobengula.

"When we tell the men at home," we can hear the *indunas* argue, "that we were well received by the English and that they are now our friends, the men will ask us, 'But where are the wives for our king to show this friendship?' what shall we say in reply?" No doubt the English were justly condemned as barbarians and savages who knew no better for their failure to comply with one of the most rudimentary rules of inter-tribal etiquette.

How hunhuism or ubuntuism expected people to deport themselves when outside the borders of their country is illustrated by the fact that before these same *indunas* left Matabeleland, Lobengula warned them about the impropriety of a man showing amazement at things in a foreign land and thus indicating quite clearly that such things did not exist in his country. When the *indunas* arrived in Cape Town and beheld, for the first time, the sea with mountains of angry white foam lashing upon the shores, one of them was heard to remark nonchalantly, "Ah, today the river is in flood *(Namhla umfula udzwele)*."

So, as regards our external relations, it is reasonable to suppose that hunhuism or ubuntuism dictates that we endeavour to live amicably with our neighbouring states both here and overseas. That, as a rule, we open our border to all and at least facilitate, if we do not actually encourage, inter-state marriages and that, whilst abroad, we do not say or do anything that shows our country in bad light.

Chapter Eight
Thou Shalt Not Kill

IN their famous Declaration on 4 July 1776, Americans claimed that men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". It is interesting to note that Life, the right to live, took precedence over the right to be free and the pursuit of Happiness. Mashonas recognised this because life was sacrosanct in Mashona society.

"Thou shalt not kill" is one of the ten commandments given to Moses by God. It makes life sacrosanct. People can only ignore this commandment at their own peril, Christian preachers tell us, for then, they risk suffering eternal damnation, hellfire and brimstone. So some Christians try not to kill not because there is intrinsic virtue in obeying God's commandment but because eternal damnation, hellfire and brimstone are not exactly their particular cup of tea. So, as St. Augustine observed, fear of Hell will fill Heaven; among Mashona, fear of *ngozi* makes life sacrosanct.

Mashonas believe that when a person dies his spirit lives on. So, if a person is wronged and that wrong is not righted while he is still alive and the person dies while nursing a legitimate grievance, or is murdered, his aggrieved spirit will return, after his death, to avenge itself on the person or family of those who wronged him. Such an aggrieved spirit is called *ngozi*. Until propitiated, *ngozi* is unforgiving and uncompromising. It afflicts the family of those who wronged it with one misfortune, serious illness, or death, after another, until they discover, through an *nganga* (diviner), the cause of their misfortune and propitiate it. For this reason, we have an inordinate respect for the old, aged and infirm. *"Ku kura"* or *"Yi*

kulupala" ("It is being old") is always an expression of forgiveness of an old man for something he has said or done.

Cases abound where a person who has committed a murder and, thereafter, becomes *non compos mentis* (not of a sound mind) often giving himself away. For instance, sometime ago, a woman married to a Malawian disappeared after visiting a nearby farm at Norton. The husband reported to the Police that she was missing. The Police conducted an unsuccessful search for her. Some days later, however, the Police were informed of a herdman who had lost his mind and was muttering things like: "Why did you leave me in the sun? Why did you kill me?" On being questioned by the Police, the herdman admitted to killing the woman at the behest of her husband who had a financial interest in her death and leaving her by an anthill in the sun.

In this case, the *ngozi* had acted quickly to *kutambudza* (trouble) the murderer. In some cases, the relatives of a deceased person, believed to have been murdered, plant a certain shrub on his grave. This shrub will grow leaves which will wither and fall on the grave. As they fall on the grave, a relative of the murderer dies as a result of the activities of the deceased *ngozi.* These deaths will only stop when the *ngozi* is propitiated, often after several deaths.

Even during this war, quite a number of people are known to have visited *ngangas* (African doctors) in connection with people they killed.

"Most of these young men are no longer people," an informant from the Tribal Trust Lands said. "They say and do all sorts of strange things because of the blood of people they have killed. For instance, we have a young man in Highfields whose name is Zarius. He was one of these boys. He is no longer a person. He will come into your house and say, 'I want beer.' You give him a bottle. He will open it and then say, 'No, I want one that is not opened,' or will say, 'I want blood. I see blood. I want to kill,' etc. It's the *ngozi* of the people he killed which makes him do that."

Some people who have killed, especially in cold blood, are known to have overcome their fear of *ngozi* by announcing: "This is a war. There is no *ngozi*," before killing a person. Whether you or I believe

in the power of the *ngozi* is immaterial. The point is that so many people do. Our whole culture is structured to sustain belief in the power and activity of *ngozi.*

Therefore, an African majority government that wishes to deter murder will be foolish not to use fear of *ngozi* as a deterrent. No doubt, there will be people who will oppose this and argue that the use of the fear of *ngozi* as a deterrent will give the government and country a pagan image.

That may be so. We know, all the same, that the Smith Government which claimed to be fighting to preserve Christian civilisation in this country, used to tell people in the Tribal Trust Lands to listen to what the *Mhordoro* or Spirit Mediums said about the war. The Government always made certain, of course, that what the Spirit Mediums said was what it wanted the people to believe. No one ever suggested that, because of this, the Smith Government was projecting our country as pagan to the world.

Every country in Africa has scores of *ngangas* or diviners. Most of them are as blind as a bat. A few good ones really "see" with their bones. Why should an African Government not solicit the aid of the good ones in the investigation of crime? If a murder is committed and there are no clues, why should the Police not be free to ask an *nganga* to give them a start? If they follow the lead he gives them, track down the murderer, put him in court and he is convicted, well and good. The Police have thousands of paid informers. Why should they not have *ngangas* among their paid informers?

F. W. Posselt tells us: "The services of a diviner are in constant requisition... in certain other offences. The diviner, by reason of knowledge gained from inherent spirits, is able to ascertain or interpret certain facts by means of the divining bones (*hakata*) which are merely the tokens by which the spirits express their knowledge through the diviner. The diagnosis or interpretation given through such *hakata* is generally accepted as true." It should be considered as a lead in the investigation.

Posselt continues, "There is one other test normally applied in cases of theft, or to prove the truthfulness of a person, namely, that of the *mutundu* basket or magic basket. The suspected person is

required to lift the basket; failure to do so being proof of theft or lying."[1] This is nothing more than a lie detector. In the United States, a witness can voluntarily take a lie detector and undergo cross examination. Why should witnesses here not have the same choice?

So, an African majority rule Government will do well to use fear of *ngozi* for the prevention of murder. It will use diviners or *hakata* as informers in the investigation and detection of crime. It will offer, those who so desire, the option to lift the *mutundu* or magic basket to establish their truthfulness or innocence, in cases of theft, in accordance with hunhuism or ubuntuism.

[1]F. W. T. Posselt, *Fact and Fiction* (Bulawayo, 1978), pp. 52-53.

Chapter Nine
Land

AMONG the Mashona, the real owner of the land was the tutelary spirit, *Mwari* and, to a lesser extent, the various tribal spirits. But as Charles Bullock points out:

> In practice, the human Chief, as the earthly vicar of these powers, was recognized as the landlord from whom each head of a kraal derived his right to till the soil. That was a right never denied to a member of the tribe, but a stranger — a runaway, perhaps from another country — must first approach the Chief, bringing with him a hoe. Accepting him, the Chief would send his deputy with a stave to mark the kraal site of the immigrant. Later, when the Chief made his tour, beer and a goat was given him by the newcomer, whose right of occupation was thus confirmed. But tenure conferred no right of ownership. No man could sell the land he tilled, and, when one was expelled from the tribe for witchcraft, maybe, *madutsa* or pegs were stuck in his lands to show that he had lost all claims to occupation.[1]

So, according to the Mashona, because land belonged to the spirits, it could not be taken away. *Zvinoyera.* It was something not done. It was taboo because land was sanctified by its very possession by the spirits whose remains were in it.

Thus land ownership, in the ordinary sense of the word, did not exist, and because it was unknown, it was not expected or at first recognised. Furthermore, if the land belonged to the spirits, the spirits would look after their property. They would, therefore, deal in their own way with anyone who took what was untakeable because it belonged to them.

Professor T. O. Ranger, in his study, confirms this view and writes:

[1]Charles Bullock, *The Mashona* (Cape Town, 1927), pp. 71-72.

> The system of the spirit mediums expressed the common African idea of the increased power of the dead, of their ability to communicate more freely with the divine, and of their role as protector of the land and people. The dead were thought of as forming... "the tender bridge" between the living and the divine.[1]

Europeans mistook the ready acceptance of their presence in the country as the surrender of Mashona sovereignty or land rights. They were to pay dearly for their self-deception. When the Mashona realised that Europeans were not going to be content with just being traders and gold-diggers but were actually taking the "untakeable" land, there was an uprising in 1896. It is significant that this uprising was organised and brilliantly masterminded, as Professor Ranger has ably demonstrated, by the spirit mediums of *Mwari* and the tribal spirits. The spirits had obviously decided, as the Mashona expected, that it was time to deal with those who had dared to take that which was untakeable. Their role in this uprising was expected since they were the custodians of the land and the people.

The Mashona, then, did not at first resist the white men and prevent them from taking their land because the idea that land could be taken away was inconceivable to them; their spirit mediums had told them not to worry and the spirits, as custodians of the land, were expected to deal with anyone who tampered with it. This, the Mashona believe, the spirits did in two ways. First, through the uprising of 1896-97, and secondly, through the many individual cases where some white men were alleged to have been struck by mysterious illnesses or madness, until they accepted the advice to propitiate the spirits of the land by offering them beer, blankets and black cloth. Africans talk of many such cases. For instance, there is a farm on the outskirts of Salisbury, along the Bulawayo road whose first European owner is said to have done this. The story of a white farmer, near Barwe in the Belingwe district, whose madness ceased only after the spirits of the land had been propitiated on his behalf, is another. Mashona first apparent acquiescence to white rule can, therefore, be explained.

The situation in Matabeleland was different. To begin with, the Matabele were a military people used to the idea of creating conquest

[1]Terence O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7* (London, 1967), p. 18.

states. Although they were careful enough, when they arrived, to take cognisance of the spirits of the land and accepted the *Mwari* or *Mlimu* cult together with the *Wosana* or priests, they recognised strength. As Somabulane later put it at the famous *indaba* with Rhodes, "You came. You conquered. The strongest takes the land. We understood. We lived under you."[1]

Matabele ideas of land ownership were, therefore, completely different from those of the Mashona. They recognised the right, albeit warily, of the stronger to take the land.

Yet, it was in Matabeleland that the British South Africa Company and the British Government were first forced to declare publicly an African land policy.

This policy was not to use the Matabele War of 1893 to exterminate the Amandebele or to expel them from the country. They were to be allowed to continue to live in the country. Although their military system and kraals were to be broken up, the Africans' rights were to be protected and they, themselves, treated with humanity, mercy and justice.

There was to be assigned, without delay, to the Africans inhabiting Matabeleland and Mashonaland "land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or as portions of tribes and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases, a fair and equitable proportion of springs and permanent water".[2] In other words, Native Reserves were to be demarcated.

The British South Africa Company was to retain mineral rights in all land assigned to Africans, and if the Company were to require any such land for public works, the Africans were to be ordered to move from such land to another place situated as conveniently as possible, sufficient and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, containing a fair and equitable amount of springs or permanent water especially suitable to their requirements, in all respects, as the land from which they had been ordered to move.

[1]S. G. Millin, "Rhodes Meets the Matabele", in *Under the Southern Cross,* Ed. S. E. Grenville (London, 1941), p. 57.
[2]Colonial Office Confidential Print, *Africa South* No. 461. (Colonial Office to British South Africa Company, No. 175, p. 264), May 8, 1894.

No Africans were to be removed from any land assigned to them for occupation except after a full inquiry by an order of the Land Commission. Africans were also to have delivered to them cattle sufficient for their needs.

An African could, as an individual, acquire, hold, encumber and dispose of land on the same conditions as any person who was not an African, provided the contract was signed before a magistrate.

In short, the policy was to set aside land in certain areas of the country for the exclusive use by Africans as tribes, i.e., Native Reserves, while at the same time allowing individual Africans to occupy land in those parts not reserved in this way.

In this context, the policy of creating African reserves which the British Government devised as a result of its experience in the handling of American Indian Affairs in 1763, was a notable solution to the problem.[1] It has become a permanent feature of African land policy in this country. In its original form, this policy was simply that land was set aside for use by Africans as tribes, while those who did not wish to live a tribal life had equal rights with non-Africans in the unreserved areas. In this form, this policy offered the best solution to the many problems that arise when two races, one foreign and the other indigenous, enjoying different cultures, have to live together in one country.

The policy took cognisance of hunhuism or ubuntuism in that it allowed Africans to hold land on a communal basis. It also took into account Western ideas of individual ownership. Its aim was to satisfy both African and Western ideas of land ownership.

Unfortunately, this policy was vitiated in its implementation. The land eventually assigned was never sufficient. It was always insufficient. It was never always suitable for African agricultural or pastoral purposes. And the right an individual African had to acquire, hold, encumber and dispose of unreserved land on the same conditions as any person who was not African provided the contract was signed before a magistrate, was subsequently taken away. Also, Europeans were prevented from residing in these areas.

[1]C. W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (Cleveland, 1917), p. 116; also J. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness* (Lincoln, 1961).

Now, the new Constitution puts us back where we were in 1894. This is, basically, a sound position. Not even the mineral rights the British South Africa Company retained, remain.

It will be necessary for the majority rule government, in accordance with the philosophy of hunhuism or ubuntuism, to continue to provide Africans with land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or as portions of tribes, which is suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases, a fair and equitable proportion of springs and permanent water. Important here, are the words "sufficient" and "suitable". In terms of present day politics this means acquiring more land for African use. It also means seeing to it that the concept of communal ownership of land basic to hunhuism or ubuntuism and enshrined in the 1894 land policy, is not allowed to be eroded by Western ideas of private ownership in the Tribal Trust Lands. Those who want to own land privately have the rest of the country to carve and buy up to their hearts' content.

Chapter Ten

Public, Corporate and Private Property

IN general, Africans looked upon cattle as money: wealth from which flowed power, prestige, influence, etc., in one's community. Cattle had a religious, social and economic function in African society, in addition to being *nyama* (meat). It was because of their failure to surrender to Shaka all the cattle they had won in war against Ranisi, that the Khumalo clan, under uMzilikazi, were forced to flee Zululand.[1] It is, therefore, not surprising that the strongest individual in the African state, the king, was also the wealthiest, that is, he had the largest number of cattle. He did not own all the cattle in the land, for other individuals, his chiefs, headmen and ordinary subjects, also possessed their own cattle in accordance with their rank and station.

The king's cattle and, to a certain extent, those of important state officials, such as chiefs and headmen, were, in a way, national, state or the people's property because one of the obligations of office or rank in African society was to "slaughter" and provide people with food and drink on important occasions and, generally, to feed the poor. So, in a direct way, the whole community benefitted from the wealth of individuals among them.

As Charles Bullock noted about the Abanguni: "As their subsistence was to a considerable extent dependent on the raids they made, cattle meat constituted an important part of their regular diet.

"The booty they 'lifted' had, of course, to be brought to the King, who would choose the cattle he fancied and have them earmarked as

[1]Stanlake Samkange, *Origins of Rhodesia* (New York, 1969), p. 12.

his royal property, the moiety being given to the *indunas* of the raiding *impis*."

Bullock goes on to tell us that "Many of these king's cattle were not kept at the royal kraal, but 'lagisa'd' that is sent to various cattle posts and put in charge of headmen there. It is said that Lobengula never forgot a beast he had chosen, and this may not seem so incredible if we realise that the Matabele have over forty designations differentiating between cattle of all colours . . ."[1]

Clearly, under hunhuism or ubuntuism, there was state property held by the person of the king. There was, also, family property held by one man — the *paterfamilias* or patriach, as may be — having the control of all property, but holding it only as the representative of the group. He could not in his lifetime alienate it from the group — *lobolo* was a balanced transfer. Much less could he, by a will, arbitrarily decide as to its distribution after death. In a sense there was no distribution.

There was the devolution of the family with whatever material property there might be as an adjunct; and there was the formal and religious institution of an heir who thus became the *paterfamilias* and took his place in the fullest sense possible. He succeeded to all the rights and accepted all the duties and responsibilities — personal, material and spiritual.[2]

The story of the Mystery of the Sacred Tongs told by a Head Messenger to Native Commissioner S. N. G. Jackson, alias, *Umachayisekova*, not only reveals another category of property, private property, but also some very interesting principles of hunhuism or ubuntuism. For this reason, we repeat it in full:

> Many years ago, in the days of King Lobengula, when I was a young fighting man, our regiment, the Hlati, was stationed in the Gwelo district between the Shangani and Vungu Rivers with some of the King's cattle. The cattle were kraaled together, but went out to graze in separate herds in different directions.
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> One day Nkabi, son of the late Chief Gambo, who was in command of the Gapa Military Division, was herding a troop of cattle with another man in the direction of the Vungu River. At the river they met two natives of the Balozwi and mixed

[1]Charles Bullock, *The Mashona and The Matabele* (Cape Town, 1950), p. 100.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 285.

tribes from the Somabula Forest. These people had been conquered by the Matabele and allowed to live in their old haunts, some of the able-bodied being drafted into various regiments. The King had given strict injunctions that they should not be interfered with or dispossessed of their property. One of the two natives mentioned above had a pair of tongs, brass coloured, and with bands of brass or copper. These tongs particularly took the fancy of Nkabi. His request for them met with refusal, but after some argument he took them. The owner protested, and warned him he was disobeying the commands of the King and would bring evil on his own head. Nkabi and his companion went off with the tongs and their herd of cattle. Later they stopped at a water hole for a drink. Nkabi placed the tongs in the leather loops at the back of his shield, placed the shield on the ground, and scooped up the water with his two hands in the customary manner. Having quenched his thirst, he picked up his shield and found that the tongs had disappeared. His companion declared he had not touched them. They continued homewards, but Nkabi's behaviour became strange, and before long he was completely off his head, singing and talking incoherently in a foreign tongue. He was so bad that on his return to the kraal he had to be tied up with reims to prevent him from injuring himself. All efforts to restore him to his normal condition were unsuccessful, and he was taken to his father, who was then living near the site of the present Khami Railway Station. Here again all efforts to effect a cure were unsuccessful. He talked Mashona and would even sing snatches of the forbidden Nxwala songs. He was in this conditon for about a year.

The King was visiting the Mcitjo Regiment in the Gwelo district, and the matter was reported to him. He remarked that Nkabi had, although the son of an important chief, disobeyed his orders and thus brought the trouble on himself. The King instructed Macebo, Ndodandala and me to endeavour to find the owner of the tongs. After some search we found his kraal on the southern edge of the Somabula Forest. The owner of the tongs, on hearing of our mission, asked where they were, and on our telling him we did not know, he laughed and produced them. He told us to bring Nkabi and a piece of blue limbo, which we did, having reported the position to the King. The King instructed us to tell the owner that no blame was attachable to him, but that he recovered his tongs and should cure Nkabi. On our arrival with Nkabi in the afternoon we reported ourselves to the head of the kraal and were told to wait. The owner of the tongs had pointed out that they had been taken in deliberate defiance of the King's command and that he had warned Nkabi that retribution would follow. After dark we were called. A big fire had been made in front of one of the huts. We produced the piece of limbo. A bowl of hot water was brought and some herbs placed therein. The limbo was placed over the bowl. Three assegais, ornamentally bound with wire, were driven into the ground so as to form a triangle around the fire. Three dogs were led up and one placed near each assegai. They were not tied up, but stood free beside the assegais. Nkabi, still bound, was brought into the magic triangle, we remaining as spectators outside. The owner of the tongs and another native, said to the medium through whom the

ancestral spirit had been passed to the former, went through incantations which we could not understand, they apparently appealing to the invisible spirits and endeavouring to propitiate them. They also smeared some substance over Nkabi's lips. After a time they told us that the ceremony was over and that Nkabi was cured. They gave us a pot of beer. Nkabi had refused food or beer for days. He now asked for beer. We removed his bonds and he joined us in partaking of the beer and also joined in our conversation, apparently quite normal again.

We slept there that night and left with Nkabi, who had quite recovered, next day. We reported the success of our mission to the King, who was then on his way back from the Mcitjo Regiment.

Nkabi died last year leaving a large family. When I say he quite recovered I should add that if he ever indulged in beer he became violent, but otherwise he was normal.

You ask what I think of the whole matter. The tongs were obviously a sacred heirloom of the family, and I believe that according to Mashona custom could only be held by the person to whom they were handed by the person or medium in charge of the laying of the spirit of the last deceased holder. The man who assisted the owner at the ceremony of curing Nkabi was the original medium who handed the tongs to him after the laying of the spirit of the previous deceased holder, and was the only person who could effectively remove the evil spell which Nkabi had brought on himself. The tongs were the symbol of the guardian ancestral spirit of the rightful holder, but on Nkabi wrongfully acquiring them the spirit denoted its disapproval by making him insane. I believe that this spirit brought the tongs back to the rightful owner without the aid of human agency.[1]

In this story we notice that the king had given "strict injunctions that people should not be interfered with or dispossessed of their property". Thus the king recognised the right of individuals to own or possess property. So under hunhuism or ubuntuism, we had state property, in the hands of the king; tribal, regimental or *impi* property, in the hands of the chief or *induna*; family property, in the hands of a *paterfamilias* or patriach, and individual property held by ordinary people. Also noteworthy is that the people conquered by the Matabele "were allowed to live in their old haunts, some of the able-bodied being drafted into various regiments". They were not to be interfered with. An African majority rule government, then, will take pains to interfere with the people as little as possible allowing them, as a rule, to live in their old haunts. An African government

[1]S. N. G. Jackson, "The Mystery of the Sacred Tongs", *NADA* 3 (December, 1925): 45-46.

will, in place of the king, hold state property. This means it will be in order for the government to own and run some services such as farms, railways, airways, mines, posts and telegraphs, etc. It also means that it will be in order for groups — tribes, families, companies, etc. as well as individuals — to hold property. State, communal and individual ownership of property will, therefore, be seen as consonant with the philosophy of hunhuism or ubuntuism.

To say that all property must belong to the state or must be held communally is, therefore, as much to run counter to hunhuism or ubuntuism as to say that all property must be held only by individuals. Our heritage accommodates all three categories of ownership — public, corporate and individual or private.

More than anything else, the story of the Mystery of the Sacred Tongs demonstrates the necessity to respect other people's property. This is a right that, in hunhuism or ubuntuism, was enforced by ancestral spirits, as Nkabi learnt by painful experience. People, in olden days, refrained from interfering with other people's property more than we do today. Thefts were less frequent. Even when one saw, in the forest, an apiary (*mukoko*) with honey or a snare that had caught an animal, one did not steal the honey or animal for fear the apiary or snare had been treated with *rukwa* — a medicine which made people who stole suffer like Nkabi. The point is that one was told, over and over again, as a child, not to steal because the object might be treated with *rukwa* and, not wishing to find out by experience because this might prove fatal, one left other people's property well alone.

When one was travelling and felt really hungry, it was permissible to enter a maize field along the road, make a fire in the field, cut stalks of mealies, heap them, remove the mealie cobs, roast and eat them in the field. This was not regarded as theft and, if found by the owner of the field, no blame was attached and no *rukwa* was effective under such circumstances because one was merely satisfying one's hunger.

An African majority rule Government should revive such teaching and the fear of *rukwa*, for the fear of *rukwa* will make more folk honest and more property safe.

Chapter Eleven

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

IN Shona, *"kutera"* is to surrender or to pay *mutero* (a tax). *"Ukutela"*, in Sindebele, is to pour, to surrender or to pay *umtelo* (a tax). Paying tax is something Africans did long before Europeans came to this country. First, one submitted or surrendered to the authority and superior force of another and then paid tax as a token of that submission. When a ruler agreed to pay tax to another he became a vassal of the man to whom he paid the tax: the liege lord. A vassal enjoyed the military protection of his liege lord and was entitled to rule his people without much interference from him as long as he paid his annual tribute. This is shown by what the Reverend Robert Moffat says of Mzilikazi when the Amandebele were still in the Transvaal:

"Albeit, representatives came, while I was with him, from the subjugated tribes of the Bamangwato, to solicit the aid against a more distant tribe, which had taken their cattle. By means like these, it may be said, 'He dipped his sword in blood, and wrote his name on lands and cities desolate.' "[1]

The Bamangwato tribes had a right to ask Mzilikazi for help to retrieve their cattle because they were his vassals and paid annual tribute to him.

After the Boers had driven Mzilikazi and his people north across the Limpopo, Dr. David Livingstone tells us, "The Bechuanas soon found, as they expressed it, 'that Mosilikatze was cruel to his enemies, and kind to those he conquered; but that the Boers

[1]Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1842), p. 359.

destroyed their enemies, and made slaves of their friends'. The tribes who still retain the semblance of independence are forced to perform all the labour of the fields, such as manuring the land, weeding, reaping, building, making dams and canals and at the same time to support themselves. I have myself been an eye-witness of the Boers coming to a village, and, according to their usual custom, demanding twenty or thirty women to weed their gardens, and have seen these women proceed to the scene of unrequited toil, carrying their own food on their heads, their children on their backs, and instruments of labour on their shoulders. Nor have the Boers any wish to conceal the meanness of thus employing unpaid labour: on the contrary, every one of them, from Mr. Potgieter and Mr. Gert Kriegar, the commandants, downward, lauded his own humanity and justice in making such an equitable regulation: 'We make the people work for us, in consideration of allowing them to live in our own country.'"[1]

African states had different ways or customs of taxing individual citizens. There were, also, different systems of exacting tribute from vassals. The Changamires of Mwene Mutapa, the Mambos of the va Rozvi, as well as the Amandebele of Mzilikazi, all gathered tax from citizens and collected tribute from vassals. Lobengula's system of taxation was revealed when Cecil Rhodes, Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, the famous hunter F. C. Selous, Captain Brabant and De Waal visited Chief Chibi whom Rhodes was anxious to interview in connection with the Adendorff Concession.[2]

De Waal tells us:

> "Upon the request of Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Brabant asked Chibe[3] how he happened to be placed at the head of his race.
>
> "Thirteen years ago," he replied, "my brother was taken prisoner by Lobengula, carried to Lobengula's town, and flayed alive. Since that time I have ruled over this tribe."
>
> "If your eldest brother's name was Chibe, how is it that you have the same name?"

[1]David Livingstone, *Travels and Research in Southern Africa* (Philadelphia, 1858), pp. 29-30.
[2]Stanlake Samkange, *Origins of Rhodesia* (New York, 1968), pp. 236-238.
[3]De Waal's spelling.

"Chibe is not a man's name," was the response, "both of us had other names — Chibe means headman or chief — Chibe is only a title."

After a number of questions concerning the Concession Selous asked, "What are the boundaries of your land?"

"The Lundi River on the west, the Indymasland on the north, the Simuto and Chellemanzi on the east, and the Mapan Zula on the south," answered the chief.

"Is all your land of the same character as this part?"

"Yes, all the same."

"Have you no open veld as the wildebeest inhabits?"

"No," he replied, "the open veld upon which the wildebeest is to be found belongs to the Chief of the Lundi near Matabeleland, and of Chellemanzi's land on the other side of the Indymas."

"How far?" asked Selous, "does your country extend toward the high land?"

Chibe rose from his chair and, accompanied by a few of his veteran *indunas,* walked a little way with us to a spot where we could have a good bird's-eye view of his land, and from there he pointed with his finger beyond Inyaguzwe, that is ten miles on the side of Fort Victoria.

"Do you acknowledge anyone as overmaster in all these lands?" we asked.

"Yes," answered the aged chief, "we acknowledge the great rogue as the mighty chief to whom we have to pay taxes every year."

"And who is this 'great rogue'?" asked Mr. Selous.

"The son of Umziligazi — Lobengula," responded Chibe.

"Are there also other *mambos* (chiefs) who pay taxes to the son of Umziligazi?"

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "there are many."

"Tell us to whom the regions belong over which the following chiefs rule: Chellemanzi, Guto, Umtegeni, Matebi, Sitoutsi, Simuto, Indina, Berrezema, Lomogendi, Kwelella, etc."

"All these," answered Chibe, "belong to King Lobengula, and all those chiefs must pay an annual tax to him."

I asked one of the *indunas* to show me, from where we were standing, if he could, in which direction and how far the land of Chibe stretched. This he gladly did.

"In what time of the year have you to pay your tribute to Lobengula?"

"Now," replied the *induna,* and, pointing with his finger to a kaffir camp, at the foot of the mountain, he said, "Do you see that? Well, they are tax-gatherers from Lobengula. They are Matabele men and they have come to get cattle and grain from us."

"How much must you give?" I enquired.

"As much as they demand and can carry away. There is no fixed tariff. Sometimes they are satisfied with a little, but at times they want a large quantity of everything."

"How many of them are there in that camp?"

"About sixty."

"And since when have they been here?"

"Since noon yesterday."

Mr. Selous then resumed questioning Chibe.

"Why," he asked, "do the Matabele tax-gatherers all enter the land at one and the same time?"

"Ah, that they do in order that, if any dispute arise on the amount of contribution demanded, or if any chief offer resistance, all the tax gatherers that have been sent to the various chiefs may be able quickly to assemble in order to attack and slay the rebel and to take away by force as many of the women, children, cattle, sheep, and as much of the grain, as they are able to convey to the king."

"Then you mean to say that if you refuse to comply with the demands of those sixty, all the men who have been sent out to the various chiefs to exact taxes will, immediately on receiving word of the matter, gather together, and with their combined force attack you?"

"Yes, exactly so. Every party of tax-collectors have their messengers, who in time of danger run as swiftly as they can from the kraal of one chief to that of another, to summon the men together, and in this way, within the space of a few days an army of some hundreds is raised, by which the rebellious chief is attacked and plundered and butchered."

"Thus," remarked Selous, "you must have as much respect for the sixty as for the six hundred!"

Chibe nodded. "And though," said he, "I should be strong enough to repulse and rout the six hundred, I would be very stupid if I did it, because Lobengula would then lead two thousand or three thousand men against me and would put me to death. Such has happened before to other chiefs."

"But if one of the chiefs who is subjected to Lobengula has a fall out with tax collectors, do none of the others lend their aid?"

"No, oh, no. None dare. None would risk it. If they do, they can only expect to be put to death and to have their wives and children made slaves."

We were further told that the tax collectors were the choice soldiers of the Matabele king. It was strange that we should have come there at the very time when the Matabele were going about demanding contributions.

In 1892, Chibe foolishly relying on the expectation that Longengula would not dare attack him owing to the presence of so many whites in the country who were known by the natives to entertain great aversion to cruelty and oppression, refused to pay the taxes demanded by Lobengula, with the result that a Matabele force was sent against him, his town plundered, a large portion of his people massacred, and he himself captured and slain.[1]

This, then, is how the Amandebele exacted tribute from vassals. Choice soldiers of the king were sent, in small groups, to gather tax. There was no fixed tariff. Sometimes they were satisfied with a little

[1]D. C. De Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Johannesburg, 1896), pp. 300-306.

but at other times they wanted a large quantity of everything: cattle, grain, etc.

Tax was collected at the same time throughout the country. If any dispute arose on the amount of contribution demanded, or if any chief offered resistance, messengers were sent to the other collecting parties and a force quickly assembled. The rebellious chief was attacked and slain. As many of his people's women, children, cattle, sheep and grain as could be taken, were led to the king.

If a chief successfully resisted the tax collectors' force, Lobengula sent an even larger army, numbering thousands of warriors, after him. The result was the same. Vassals knew better than to try and help one another when one of them fell out with Lobengula's tax collectors.

In all this, there were certain underlying principles. First, a ruler had to submit to be taxed. Submission could be obtained voluntarily or by coercion. Chibi's people were, presumably, coerced into paying tax when his brother was "flayed alive" by the Amandebele. Secondly, after such a submission, Chibi's people, for instance, were entitled to conduct their affairs without interference from Lobengula or any one else. If anyone attacked them or deprived them of their property, they were entitled to go to Lobengula, as Bamangwato tribes went to Mzilikazi, and ask him to help them retrieve their cattle. Lobengula was duty bound to go to war on their behalf. If Lobengula's protection made them enjoy peace in which their cattle increased and granaries filled, the liege lord was entitled to a share of the prosperity his protection engendered, hence the tax. The vassal knew exactly what to expect if he refused to pay the tax. Only if the liege lord was no longer strong enough to enforce his demands, could he get away with it.

The relationship thus conferred privileges as well as responsibilities to both sides.

Chief Chibi must, also, have had a system of collecting taxes from his own subjects. The cattle and grain to be paid to Lobengula's tax gatherers, for instance, must have been systematically collected by him. Chibi's subjects paid the tax because in his own way, Chibi afforded them the opportunity to live their lives with a modicum of

security in his land. In their own way under him they had the opportunity to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Even today, citizens of a modern democratic state, basically ask for the same thing: the opportunity to live freely and as happily as they can. To this end citizens of a democratic state elect a government in the hope that it will ensure this. To carry out its responsibilities, in this direction, the government needs money. So the citizens allow themselves to be taxed in order to give the government the means with which to serve the people's interests.

The goverment raises money for running the state by taxing the individual citizens and companies in the country as well as running state enterprises, like railways, airways, etc., at a profit on behalf of the people.

We saw that after Lobengula had been shown booty, he selected the royal herd and gave the rest to the *indunas* and regiments. So, it is in the tradition of hunhuism or ubuntuism to give cattle or grain to the people instead of always receiving from them. Furthermore, state cattle — king's cattle — were, in fact, looked after by people who could milk and inspan them even though they could not slaughter and eat them.

An African majority rule government may want to carry on the tradition of giving something to the people as well as taxing them. What can it give? Every man needs a house to live in. The government can help a man to buy his house by, for instance, making the money with which he pays for the house tax deductible. Every man wants to educate his children. The government should provide free schools throughout the whole country. If this is not possible, the money parents pay towards the education of their children should also be tax deductible. It is necessary to eat. So basic foodstuffs, like mealie-meal, sugar, meat, etc., should not only be tax free but should be subsidised. To help the victims of this war who have been torn from their houses and have lost their property, the government should not only assist them to rebuild their homes, businesses, etc., but should actually give them cattle and other livestock as a rehabilitation measure.

Chapter Twelve

Social Policy

WE have observed that in a world where relations between men are becoming ever more mechanical, Africa's special contribution to present-day world civilisation might well be in the sphere of human relations.

In a lecture at Cambridge University, part of which we have already quoted, L. S. B. Leakey reminded his audience that "In many ways, Africans had already reached a position which we, the so called civilized races, are only just beginning to comprehend."[1]

What is that position? Maybe, this is what we ought to preserve and pass on to the world.

Leakey goes on, "Let us remind you, too, that before the coming of the white man, social organisation in many tribes was such that tragedies such as destitute widows and orphans, unloved lonely spinsters, unmarried mothers, and aged and uncared for elderly people were unheard of and indeed could not occur, while prostitution was unknown."

Here, Leakey appears to be on *terra firma*, for, Charles Bullock, who was Chief Native Commissioner in this country and author of the still standard work on the Mashona, says, "There were no concubines among the Mashona, until our laws made them. Neither were there prostitutes for quite a number of years after the Occupation."[2]

Now, what is our Mashona social organisation like? It is based on the family. The father is, naturally, the head of each unit. Father's

[1]L. S. B. Leakey, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* (New York, 1961), p. 18.
[2]Charles Bullock, *The Mashona and The Matabele* (Cape Town, 1950), p. 69.

father is, of course, *va Sekuru* (grandfather), so are all his brothers and all men of his clan and age. Father's mother is *Ambuya* (grandmother), so are all her sisters and all women of her clan and age.

All father's elder brothers are "big father", and all father's younger brothers are "small fathers", as are all those he calls brothers, i.e. his cousins, and all men of their age. All father's sisters are *tete* (aunt), as are all clanswomen he addresses as sister, and all women of their age.

All elder mother's sisters are "big mother" and all younger mother's sisters are "small mothers", as are all women of the clan she addresses as sisters and all women of her age.

All mother's brothers are *sekuru* (uncle), as are all male members of her clan.

All father's brothers children-cousins, are one's elder or younger brothers and sisters so are all children of clansmen he addresses as brother and so on and so forth.

There is an accepted pattern of behaviour between any given two groups of people. For instance, there is respect, reverence and aloofness between a son and his father. A son does not treat his father like a pal. A maternal uncle *(sekuru)* is, however, treated and regarded as a fool. The status of two people, in relation to each other, is usually shown by who asks the question: *"Kuisa mawoko?"* ("How are you?") It is the business of the one junior in status to ask this question.

When a senior in status, such as a chief, asks one, "How are you?" it is because he wishes to show his respect to the individual for some reason, such as, that the chief's mother is of the man's clan in which case the man is his *sekuru.* Now, even though a *sekuru* may be regarded as a fool, no man can be superior to his *sekuru.* After all, he represents one's mother. How can one be superior to one that carried one in the womb for nine months?

The importance of all this is that there is a tendency among the Shonas to concede their higher status and always *isa mawoko,* i.e. *wombera,* and ask the question, "How are you?"

An old man, obviously senior in status, will ask the question, "How are you?"

The young man or woman asked will show embarrassment and answer, "Ah, no, how are you, my father?"

The old man will say, "No, but you are my mother (or grandmother) because my grandmother came of your people." Or he might say, "You are my father-in-law (or my brother) as my son married one you address as sister or *tete,*" etc.

So, regardless of your importance, conceding status, not being arrogant, pompous or puffed up when one meets or deals with other people, is a characteristic of a true Mashona gentleman or lady. This makes it a virtue to belittle or humble oneself. Humility is a Shona characteristic. We greet strangers with *"Changamire"* ("My Lord"), or *"Madzishe"* ("Rulers"), etc. In this we are not unlike the English. We have no problem addressing anyone as "My Lord", something which goes against the grain as far as most Americans, for instance, are concerned. They are quite prepared to call the judge "Your Honour", but would not be caught dead calling him "My Lord."

Furthermore, all this enables us to claim relationship with just about anyone and have that claim allowed. For instance, an old man tells me that I am his uncle because his mother was of my people. I immediately became an important figure in his family. His children as well as their husbands and wives and their children become my *Vazukuru* (nephews and nieces) and respect me because I gave them their grandmother or great grandmother. There is no Mashona who cannot show himself to have a *hukama* (relationship) with whoever he chooses; and that relationship will rarely be disclaimed or disallowed.

This extended family, as it is called to distinguish it from the immediate or nuclear family, is supposed to be a disadvantage in Western culture where the outlook is everyone for himself and God for us all. It is easily shown how a young man or young couple trying to "make it" in the city is unable to cope financially because of the demands of the extended family. It will, however, be even more readily shown that the young man or couple benefit more from the

extended family because the business of bringing up a child and educating it, for instance, is a corporate responsibility belonging to all and not just the father and mother of the child. Anyone who is addressed as *sekuru,* for instance, will tell a child, "No, my nephew, you do not speak to your father like that. He is your father." This is a lot better than shouting, "Now, listen. You do not talk to me like that. I am your father."

Those of us who have lived outside our cultural communities and had to bring up children in foreign lands will recall the number of times we wished we were among our own people and a *sekuru* or *vatete* whose function it is to handle a peculiar problem were with us. They say, one out of every five adult Americans is a mental case. Perhaps Africans owe their comparatively better mental health to the fact that there is always somebody in the immediate or extended family, whose business it is to listen patiently to one's problems. Western culture has finally realised the importance of having someone to whom one can talk freely and frankly without fear that what one says will come out. Psychiatrists and psychologists are now serving in this role and doing a roaring business. African society has always had built-in psychiatrists and psychologists in every family. Whenever anyone has a problem there is always some relative to whom it is proper to take that problem. It is this relative who suggests the correct attitude to adopt in terms of African culture, hunhuism or ubuntuism.

Humility and belittling one's self makes a Shona gentleman a very polite man. His awareness of the presence of different types of relatives constrains him to watch his tongue to avoid saying something beyond the bounds of propriety to any of them. Even the Shona language facilitates politeness. An elderly person is always addressed in the plural as a mark of respect — a circumstance which has often created problems for Mashonas learning English and compelled them to warn: "Look out, Mr. Pluke are coming," as the principal of the institution was seen to be approaching them. Politeness, civility and circumlocution are regarded as a sign of *tsika* (good breeding) and not as a sign of belonging to an inferior class as in some cultures. It is easier to reprimand or remonstrate in Shona

than in English. The same word will mean something different because of change of tone or pitch.

L. S. B. Leakey refers to the fact that there was no problem of destitute widows.[1] Why? Because a widow was inherited by one of her husband's brothers and if she elected not to be inherited she was looked after by the brothers, the "big or small fathers", of her children. Her children also looked after her and so did all those who called her mother. There were no destitute orphans or uncared-for elderly people for the same reason. Surely this must be a lot better than having these elderly people in an old people's home — away from relatives, friends and familiar surroundings — just waiting to die?

There were no unmarried mothers, i.e. no one had the stigma of being an unmarried mother. No one was branded "illegitimate" or "bastard" for the whole of his life simply because, through no fault of his own, he was born out of wedlock. What was important was whether or not one's paternity was acknowledged, because this determined one's *chidewe* or *cognomen.*

There were no unloved, lonely spinsters. This was so in spite of the fact that infant mortality was adjudged to be greater among boys than girls. There were no unloved, lonely spinsters for two reasons: the belief that every woman deserves to be loved and to have a husband, and the practice of polygamy. The reverse was not the case — polyandry was totally unknown among the Mashona and Matabele.

"There were no concubines until our laws made them," says Charles Bullock. "Neither were there prostitutes for quite a number of years after the Occupation." There were no concubines because a woman who cohabited with a man became his wife. The question of the man regularising the status of his wife was a different and separate issue altogether. There was no prostitution because the social conditions and climate in which prostitution flourishes were unknown.

"At a time when drunkenness was a major curse in many parts of

[1]L. S. B. Leakey, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* (New York, 1961), p. 18.

Europe and America," says Leakey, "in Africa the laws of many tribes forbade all, except the very old, to get drunk at all." Now it is the very old who are forbidden, by the cost, to get drunk while the young who can afford it get drunk every day.

An African majority rule government will, therefore, want to scrutinise very closely the trend of social policy in this land. It will not discourage the extended family. It will want to base the care of orphans, widows, the aged and infirm squarely on the shoulders of the immediate and extended family. It will not regard the proliferation of old people's homes and orphanages as the African solution to this problem. It will endeavour to review the laws and conditions that create social problems such as drunkenness, prostitution, begging by the blind and physically handicapped, etc. In other words, it will base its social policy on hunhuism or ubuntuism.

Chapter Thirteen

Education

EDUCATION of the individual was not only by members of the immediate or extended family, it was also by any member of the community. For instance, sadza was cooked and sent to the *dare* where men and boys ate their food while women had theirs in the huts. The boys learned proper table manners. Generally, they ate together according to age groups. Before eating, one washed one's hands. This was almost a ritual; you could not eat without washing your hands and, in fact, your face, for the first thing you did when you woke up was to wash your face and if you forgot to do this, or tried to eat without washing your face, the elders often sent you away. Somehow, it was considered unmannerly to try to eat food, in the presence of elders, without having washed one's face.

Water for washing one's hands was generally passed around in a bowl. The oldest person washed his hands first then the next one, in order of seniority, until the youngest was reached. If, as sometimes happened, a boy found himself having to eat with an elderly person, he showed his good manners by washing his hands and not touching the food before him. The elderly person would then decide whether to permit the boy to take food from the plate on his own or, from time to time, to hand the boy morsels of sadza to eat, or eat alone first and then leave something in the plate for the boy to eat afterwards.

Anyone, other than a boy's own father or those he addressed as "father", usually permitted him to eat with them. In that case, it was good manners for the boy not to commence eating until the elderly person had taken two or three morsels. He was also not to pick a piece of meat unless expressly told to do so. Over and above all, he was to keep on eating until the older person finished eating. On no account

was he to stop eating first or stand up while the older man was still eating, thus "leaving plates to him". This was considered an insult to an older person for which one could be thrashed.

One always used one's right hand to eat and never the left hand. The left hand was said to be "a bad hand" and was, somehow, associated with sex. From this arises the saying that one is like the left hand which washes only to get dry.

If an elder person chose to hand a boy morsels of sadza, these had to be received with both hands. It was considered bad manners to receive or hand over anything to a person older than one's self with one hand and an insult to him to use only the left hand.

Another sign of good upbringing was to show concern for dogs and reserve a big morsel of sadza for them before one ate, if this had not already been done. After one had eaten, one then called the dogs and gave them their food.

When a passerby, any elderly man, saw goats grazing in a cornfield, he drove them off the field. If he recognised some boys as the delinquent herd boys, he gave them all not only a scolding for neglecting their duty, but also a sound thrashing with a supple mutowa switch. After that, he went on his way.

This reveals an interesting relationship between old and young people and the responsibilities our society imposed on an individual. Here was a man who saw damage being done to property, someone's crops, someone he did not know, and proceeded to help by driving the goats from the field. Realising that the damage to the property was due to the negligence of the little boys, he proceeded to discharge his duty to society by doing what the parents of those boys would have done in the circumstances and that is, thrash them. Here he was acting as a parent because anyone of the age of the boys' parents was addressed by the boys as "father" and acted as such. This, our society expected and accepted.

Education of the young was, therefore, by society for society. Today, you try to correct or thrash any little boy you see doing something wrong and you will find yourself in court facing charges and accusations of having maliciously assaulted someone's child. A misguided parent who thinks he can make some easy money out of

you will, under the pretense of protecting his child and in the name of the "law" and his "rights", sue, prosecute and persecute you for trying to make his child a decent member of society. And all this will be done in the name of the "law" and "civilisation".

An African majority rule government will, therefore, wish to involve not only the immediate and extended family but also the whole community, indeed, the whole nation, in the development and cultivation of socially desirable attitudes and skills among the younger generations so that education is, in accordance with hunhuism or ubuntuism, by society for society.

Chapter Fourteen

Labour

WHITE men came all the way from their various countries in search of wealth: the wealth buried in the earth and locked in the rocks, fields and forests of our land. To get this wealth, white men needed to plough the land and grow crops; work mines and extract minerals. All this required labour: the labour of African men and women. Such labour was, naturally, not unknown to Africans who, long before the white men came, grew crops, mined gold and other minerals, erected gigantic stone buildings such as those at Zimbabwe, Khami, Naletale, Dhlodhlo, etc., and tended millions of cattle, sheep and goats.

To provide the labour for such public and large construction works, Africans had a system called *zunde* based on the participation of whole communities. They also had *nhimbe* or *ilima* when an individual brewed beer and invited his neighbours to assist him, and *majangano* when smaller groups worked at one another's fields.

Generally, people sang, joked or danced as they worked. Work was, therefore, something to be enjoyed.

So when white men first came into Mashonaland, told Africans they were looking for gold and asked Mashonas to help them in prospecting, Africans readily agreed. Some acted as guides to gold-bearing areas, while others volunteered labour in return for cloth and other things white men offered. As free men, the Mashona not only chose what they were to receive in return for their labour but also decided when and how long they would perform such labour. But, because working for white men was not as enjoyable as working on community projects, the tendency was for the Mashona to work for white men only for as long as it took to acquire whatever it was they

wished to get in return for their labour and return home. After all, they still had responsibilities to fulfil in village life, and, as far as they were concerned, life was quite congenial as it was.

Considering language difficulties, unusual routine, working conditions and an atmosphere totally different from one to which they were accustomed in their villages and communal working parties, Africans acquitted themselves with great credit during these periods of service under white men. What were the language difficulties? Generally Africans spoke no English and white men no Shona. Some white men learnt to speak Shona well. Most of them, however, resorted to the use of a language known as *"Fanika lo"* or "kitchen kaffir". Unfortunately, most white men seemed to have a predilection for the swear words in this language. Consequently, they swore most sonorously long before they learnt to greet decently.

When a white man told a Mashona: *"Wena tata lo* pick *wena diga lo* hole very deep," the Mashona was supposed to understand that he was to take a pick and dig a very deep hole. Failure to follow such instructions could result in a thrashing or flow of choice expletives. Sometimes a domestic servant was told, *"Bamba lo* chicken, *jika lo* neck *kayena, footsack lo* feathers," i.e. "Catch the chicken, wring its neck, and remove its feathers." When, however, a servant was told, *"Tata lo* suit *kamina, wena chisa yena mushe maningi sitereki,"* namely, "Take my suit and burn it really well," and the servant religiously followed the instructions, he often ended up with a master seriously trying to *"Jika lo* neck *kayena"* and a *"Footsack!"* from his job.

There were Mashona who tried to speak English, of course. "Go damn it, missus," meaning, "Good morning, Misses," they cheerfully saluted, and Bishop G. W. H. Knight-Bruce reports that "A white man who was in the country some time ago writes of a Mashona boy: 'He is such a jolly boy . . . the son of a chief's wife. He has worked for white men ever since they came into the country, and had learnt a great deal of evil. He had learnt to swear horribly in English and had been drunk more than once on whiskey.' "[1]

[1]Bishop G. W. H. Knight-Bruce, *Memories of Mashonaland* (London, 1895), p. 109.

"The chief merit of this jargon," says H. Marshall Hole, "was that it pleased both parties — the boy, who thought he was talking in English, and the master, who fondly imagined himself a kaffir linguist."[1]

What routine, working conditions and atmosphere were Mashonas used to? In Mashona society, there was a great deal of co-operation between neighbours. In a way, every individual man or family was self-sufficient and independent while, at the same time, being very dependent on neighbours. For instance, a man built his own hut — cutting his own poles, his own grass and thatching his own roof. He ploughed his own fields and his family grew its own food. He made his own weapons, fashioned his own tools and carved or weaved his own utensils. He and his wife made what clothing it was necessary for them to wear. His wife or wives plastered the walls and constructed the floors of their huts; moulded their own pottery and weaved their own baskets and mats. Man and wife were, in the first instance, their own doctor, being, as they usually were, acquainted with medicinal herbs and other remedies for the cure of simple ailments. Man and wife were their own children's school teachers since they imparted the basic knowledge, attitudes and skills on which other members of society built in the educational process and experience of their children. In short, the individual or family was an independent and self-sufficient jack of all trades, though master of none.

Only when the individual or family wanted more than what society considered to be their average needs was it necessary to call on the services of other people such as exceptionally talented women to make one's pots or weave one's baskets and mats. But, not all people wanted to draw attention to themselves in this manner because standing out above the average person, whether it be in the produce one reaped from one's fields or the fine clothes one wore or the quality and beauty of the utensils and tools in one's hut, could be very dangerous since it could give malevolent people, especially wizards and witches, the excuse they wanted to bewitch one. And

[1]H. Marshall Hole, *Old Rhodesian Days* (London, 1928), p. 53.

this fear of being bewitched, either out of jealousy or plain malevolence, did much to stifle innovation, kept everyone generally on the same footing and stultified progress. Generally, those who allowed themselves to be rich or outstanding in any way, took measures to protect themselves from being bewitched for it.

While the individual or family was independent in this way, there was, nevertheless, still great dependence and reliance on neighbours; because, even though, for instance, a man cut his own poles and grass to build his own hut, he was not expected to put it up alone. His neighbours were duty (or is it "custom") bound to lend a hand. He did not have to ask them to help him. He just went ahead and did what he wanted to do and the others knew that they were required to lend a hand. If, for any reason, no one appeared to be willing to help, which was rare, women or joking relations soon drew attention to the fact and the matter was thoroughly ventilated. Thus, most work was usually done, not single handed but in groups. It was considered a disgraceful thing not to help someone who had a job to be done. In a society where the employment or payment of people for a day's work was unknown, this was very important.

There were several ways in which hands or help for a particular job were provided. There was first, as we have seen, the tacit agreement and understanding that any work undertaken by a neighbour was to be performed by as many as were available. Thus, even without as much as mentioning it to any of her neighbours, a woman in a village could begin to carry and mix mud for plastering, *kunama*, the walls of her new hut or *kurovera pasi* (construct a new floor). As soon as she began to do this, other women would find time to come and help her and a job that could have taken days to complete would be accomplished in a matter of hours. No invitation was issued to anyone to come and help and no one was paid for their work. All the assisted person did was to say, "Thank you very much. Even tomorrow. Do not tire."

Other forms of helping each other were, however, organised. One was called *jangano*. It was most popular with women. Two, three, four or more people would agree to spend a day or more working at one another's field. Generally, very close friends did this so that they

could be together and enjoy one another's company. The host was obliged to spend an equal amount of time at the fields of each of his friends, as they had spent in his. He was also expected to provide them with food. The arrangement facilitated the speedy completion of a piece of work that would have taken a long time to perform when done by a single person. It also cemented friendships and lightened the burden of work by having it done with and in the company of one's friends.

Another form of organised working together was the well-known *nhimbe*. This was used to perform any job that required a large number of people, be it ploughing, cultivating, reaping or thrashing corn — *jakwara*. Anyone could come. Most people came to work and to have a drink, for their labour, but even those who were too old to work usually came and were entitled to a drink.

The drink brewed was mostly *musungwa* or *ngoto*, i.e., intoxicating beer, but there were always a few pots of *bumhe*, non-intoxicating or sweet beer, for those who did not take strong drink. The strong drink took seven days to brew, while the sweet drink was brewed the night before the day it was served. During the days the strong drink was being brewed, messengers would go about the villages inviting people to the *nhimbe*.

The night before the *nhimbe*, a big pot of beer, known as *musumo* would be presented to the village head. Presentation of this pot was a formal affair in which the woman carrying it would approach the headman, who would usually be sitting at the *dare* surrounded by the men of the village and others whose presence was solely due to the knowledge that the *musumo* would sooner or later be presented at the *dare*.

The woman would silently take down the pot of beer from her head, place it on the floor, kneel in front of the headman and then, clapping her hands as a mark of respect, she would address herself to the headman telling him that she was sent to *suma* — announce that there would be a *nhimbe* the following day — and that here was the headman's pot of announcement. The headman would reply saying he understood and now knew that there would be a *nhimbe* and then would formally inform the next person in status below him who

would repeat the same thing and also inform the next person in status until word got to the youngest person present. The youngest person would, of course, not be a boy, for boys were not allowed to drink with men.

A son-in-law, one who had married a "daughter of the village", was asked to preside and *chera,* that is, be the one to serve the beer to the various people who usually all drank from the same *mukombe* (cup). The first person to drink, however, was the woman who had carried the beer. This was first *kubvisa uroyi* (to remove any witchcraft), and to show that the beer was not poisoned and, secondly, to give her *matakuro* (a reward) for carrying the beer. After that, those who were regarded as sons-in-law in the village shared the next one or two cups. This was known as removing the cockroaches which, per chance, had fallen into the pot. It was their right as sons-in-law. Then the real drinking began with the first cup being given to the headman and the next one to the most senior person and so on, in descending line of seniority.

The following day, when people assembled for work, they began by drinking, first, a pot that was known as *hurura* (take off, i.e. remove your coats to work), and ended with one which was appropriately known as *chiwanano* (literary meaning "find one another") which was drunk at the village after the work was done. Beer in this pot had a greater "kick" than that in the pots consumed during the day. By this time, too, most people would be "happy" finding one another and singing most of the "bar songs" we have come to regard as part of our heritage. The *chiwanano* pot was usually followed by several smaller *nhiridziro* pots. The host always pretended that the *chiwanano* was his last pot and invited only his friends to drink the *nhiridziro* with him. Those not invited then made it their business to find out in which hut the *nhiridziro* were being drunk and to invite themselves there. Once they showed up, they were made very welcome. Some men acquired quite a reputation for being able to "smell out" where *nhiridziro* were being drunk. As many as a hundred or more people could assemble at a *nhimbe*. In this way, a job that would have taken a single family a whole season would be done in one day.

When men and women were thrashing *kupura* (corn), everyone had a right to say anything to anyone. This had, in our society, something of a Hyde Park corner effect on people. No one was immune from attack or jest — chief, doctor, mother-in-law, sister, brother — anyone could be attacked and everyone present would laugh and have a good time. Songs for thrashing corn were such as allowed individuals to sing solos or say words of their own while at the same time keeping up with the rhythm of rods simultaneously lashing the corn. Those who had good voices or could coin telling phrases were generally rewarded by loud laughter for the stinging things they said. No one was supposed to get angry or take seriously what was said when people were thrashing corn, even though, sometimes, they said things that had been on their chests for a long time. No one repeated these things anywhere else and if one did one got into trouble for it.

Furthermore, the individual or family was dependent on their neighbours for the several things they used in common, such as the sleigh oxen, *sandanga* (wagon used to carry produce from the fields), the well or spring from which the village drew drinking water, etc. Thus, such ideas of communalism as prompted the establishment of communities of various kinds in the West with, in some cases, disastrous results, were practiced by "primitive societies" like ours ages ago and have only been abandoned since we became "civilised".

Women of our villages excelled at working together and appeared to be much more gregarious than men. As a matter of fact, a visitor from another continent might have justifiably concluded, after observing the movements and activities of our women folk, that our society was dominated by them. Early at dawn, one was awakened by the rhythmical pounding beat and harmonious singing of women as they stumped mealie grains with *mitswi* and *maturi* to turn them into mealie meal.

To prepare mealie meal, women often rose early and worked in groups (*majangano*). At sunrise, they would, in most cases, have finished their work and be ready to go and fetch water from the well which was usually several hundred yards away. They went in a group and returned walking elegantly in a long single file, with water pots on their heads.

After food had been cooked and eaten women would still be seen together. They went to look for firewood together, shelled their monkey nuts together, winnowed their grain together, cooked beer for *nhimbe* together, and generally manifested a remarkable *esprit de corps*.

Work at the white man's farms or mines was completely different from all of this. White men recruited labourers from near and far: some even came from outside the country, and they were housed in very poorly-constructed, temporary huts in villages called *komboni* (compounds). White men believed an African liked living in crowded huts. "No trouble about a separate bedroom or evening out," H. Marshall Hole assures us. "He would shake down in the boys' compound with others — a crowded hut being what a native enjoys most, especially on a cold night."[1]

There were, in the compounds, invariably, many more men than women, all drawn from different tribes with different customs and backgrounds. Here, at work or in the *komboni*, the motto was: "*Mugwazo.*" ("Finish your piece work.") "*Indoda iya zibonela.*" ("Each one for himself.") There was no spirit of working together.

Scarcity of women was attended by prostitution and venereal diseases. Since people went to farms and mines to make money, beer, never sold in the villages, was sold here. Because it was not wholesome beer, drunkenness and crime became common. In the African's view, a *komboni* could never take the place of his village, or its way of life be a satisfying substitute for Shona or Ndebele culture. Since they were in no particular hurry to acquire the white man's goods or to get rich, Africans became short-term workers.

This did not suit white men who wanted them to work for many a long year, every day of the week, every week of the year because they were anxious to get rich, very rich, fast. After all, that is why they had come all the way across the Limpopo. White men never, for a moment, thought there could by anything wrong with their system, manner of and attitude towards work and, even, life that could strike

[1]*Ibid.*, p. 54.

Africans as unbecoming and cause them to treat white men with a haughty aloofness. Complained H. Marshall Hole:

> From the very beginning we found a wide difference between the aborigines of the country and the boys from other parts of Africa... The local natives had no stomach for work and treated our arrival with a haughty aloofness... the ordinary man was only concerned in obtaining cooks or waggon boys or labourers for his farm or claims, and in none of these capacities were the indigenous Mashona of any value. At first the idea of working for white men was utterly strange to them. In their natural state, and in their own primitive and inefficient way, they were cattle breeders and tillers of the soil and one might have thought they would have taken kindly to farm work for wages; but it was not so. Nor were they attracted by house work, in spite of the opportunities which it presented for picking up discarded clothes, empty tins and bottles and other odds and ends. For a long time they appeared unable to rid themselves of the suspicion that underneath the sudden irruption of white men there lay some sinister design against themselves, and even if, greatly daring, a boy engaged himself to wash up dishes or sweep up the hut of the Mlungu, he was almost certain to decamp as soon as he had achieved the adventure of a month's service.[1]

Time has since shown how right the Mashona were and should not have rid themselves of the suspicion that underneath the sudden irruption of white men into their country there lay some sinister design against themselves. White men completely failed to appreciate that African aversion to long spells of work on their farms and mines might have been due to the alien, unattractive and uncongenial atmosphere of working conditions and life they created in their compounds. And that this system of labour was, in fact, competing for labourers with the, to the Africans, much more attractive, congenial and enjoyable traditional way of working in, for instance, *zunde, nhimbe* and *majangano*. And the African way was winning all the way.

Large numbers of Africans did, nevertheless, voluntarily work for white men. Wrote D. C. De Waal: "We passed the night there, as did also a large number of kaffirs who were enroute to the gold fields. These men kept themselves remarkably quiet that night: they sat around the fires they had kindled not far from our waggons, and though there were about a hundred of them, they hardly made

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

themselves as much as heard. Early the following morning they again took up their march. We followed a little later and soon overtook them. It was a pretty sight to see them march — all in faultless step and everyone dressed in white cloth. They were young, tall, strong Matabele with beautifully shaped bodies."[1]

Lobengula permitted this, for E. M. Maund,[2] who accompanied Lobengula's *indunas*, Babiane and Mtshede to England, testified, "Matabele boys who went down to Kimberley and Johannesburg mines had to get his (Lobengula's) leave and reported again on return. They brought him back sovereigns and sometimes stones in the rough, by way of 'Tusa' or present. Some think it would have been good policy to keep Lobengula as Chief of his subjugated people in some such position as Magistrate. There would have been less necessity for Native Commissioners and he would have arranged the labour business for the mines and made it a paying proposition."[3]

It was Sir Sidney Shippard, the Assistant Commissioner, resident at Vryburg, however, who praised the Amandebele as workers when he reported: "The Matabele, of whom there are a good many engaged in gold mining here, are very fine-looking men, tall, broad-shouldered, and strong, with wiry frames. They are entirely naked, except the almost universal strip of hide, or in some cases, bunches of tails or feathers.

"They never seem to stir without a formidable knob-kerrie, which they twirl and poise with remarkable dexterity and with which a practised hand can inflict death at one blow. They seem vain of their persons, and partial to ornaments. They are fond of what they call music, and many of them have fine voices. Some of the young men, after their day's work is done, sit crooning their love ditties to the accompaniment of a curious little musical instrument made with steel strings, of graduated tone, and seem perfectly satisfied with

[1]D. C. De Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Johannesburg, 1896), pp. 104-105.
[2]Maund is an interesting person because he went to England believed to be working in competition to Rhodes. However, on the way there he became a Rhodes man; returned a fifth columnist to Matabeleland with the *indunas* where he was greeted as a hero and was made an *induna*. He was also offered fifteen wives. He declined the wives.
[3]F. W. T. Posselt, *Upengula, The Scatterer* (1945), p. 104.

their own performances. It may be said in favour of the Matabele that, although only capable of the roughest outdoor labour, they work hard for wages which the young men hope to convert into cows wherewith to buy wives. They will not steal from their own master and they can fight. There is always hope for men who can work and fight..."[1]

Africans worked hard for the wages they received, not only on the mines but also on the farms and roads. Describing part of his journey with Rhodes from Mashonaland, De Waal wrote: "We soon again proceeded. Towards evening we had some rain accompanied by thunder, but we paid no attention to the elements, and we again journeyed through the whole night, still at regular intervals obtaining our new team of oxen, as well as a new leader. It was indeed a pleasure to see how the young leaders ran in front of the oxen. A good idea of the rate at which they were running can be formed by remembering that we left Macloutsi, at a quarter-past eight on the eleventh and arrived at Palapye at three o' clock on the eighteenth — a distance of one hundred and eighteen miles. Whether by night or by day we could invariably tell when it was a Matabele boy who was leading the oxen, for he always sang whilst running, always seemed merry, and never ran slowly. Exposed to heat and cold though his naked body was, he seemed very content with his lot. It was always a pleasure to work with Matabele or Inhambane Kaffirs; they never grumbled at anything I gave them to do, however difficult the task — whatever their master told them received their amen."[2]

Clearly, then, hunhuism or ubuntuism has a tradition for hard work even though, if you listen to some white men talk, you would think no African is capable of doing a stitch of work without European supervision. This tradition of hard work must be maintained.

It is part of our heritage to work together in, as we have seen, groups varying in numbers from two to hundreds. An African majority rule government should encourage people to work together

[1]*Ibid.*, p. 59.
[2]D. C. De Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Johannesburg, 1896), p. 344.

in such groups in the Tribal Trust Lands as well as in the Purchase Areas. There is no reason why *majangano* or *nhimbe* should be the rarities they have become. Even where people now own implements like tractors, planters, etc., a *jangano* or *nhimbe* of tractors and planters can do in a few hours what a single tractor will do in days. When time is of the essence this is important.

Africans must not lose the fun in work. Our tradition is to enjoy working: to sing and to laugh. Get a few fellows to lift a heavy object, for instance, and you will find that they will get to it. Then one will say, "*Kanye Kanye madoda*" and the others will respond in unison, "*Hashu*", as they jack it up, or give them picks to dig a furrow and they will do it rhythmically in response to the often humorous and not-too-complimentary-to-whites chants of a leader. There should be more singing and chanting in our factories.

An African government will be concerned to see that workers are decently housed and not crowded in rooms. It will see that they do not spend two or three hours going to and from work forcing them to leave home before sunrise and to return long after sunset. It will be government policy to encourage workers to have their families with them wherever they are. Migrant labour will only be recruited when there is a shortage of indigenous labour. There will be adequate medical and congenial recreational facilities within easy reach of the workers. Workers will be allowed to organise themselves and bargain with management collectively.

Of paramount importance will be the government's determination not to countenance the exploitation of workers by either the government itself, as employer, or by companies and private individuals. Among the measures to be taken to avoid the exploitation of workers should be the setting of minimum wages payable in different areas of employment; the subsidisation of transport and basic foodstuffs; tax free benefits, etc.

Over and above all, it should be government policy to encourage employers to make provision for workers to have an interest in the firms in which they are working so that they can share in the profits accruing to the firms at the end of the financial year. The goal of an African government will be a happy and contented labour force.

After all, Mashonas believe that the spirit of a servant who, during his lifetime, was not paid by his master for his services, or the spirit of a person from whom something was taken or borrowed but never returned, could become an *ngozi* after his death. And this is to be avoided at all costs.

Chapter Fifteen
The Sjambok

CORPORAL punishment or flogging was, of course, known to and practised by Africans long before Europeans set foot on African soil. It was the white man, however, who invented the sjambok, elevated it to the status of a court apparatus and dignified whipping as a judicial practice; for among both the Mashona and Amandebele, corporal punishment was rarely, if ever, administered by the court and a whip was, generally, used on animals, not men.

Among Africans, corporal punishment was used to disapprove strongly or endeavour to correct the behaviour of those under one's tutelage: not citizens under one's jurisdiction. When a child erred, one often sent the child or another child to find a *shamhu* or *uswazi* (a switch) with which to administer the punishment. Elders were required to use a switch: usually a supple twig because, although it inflicted pain, it did not cause scars or permanently disfigure the body. African elders often spoke against beating children with one's bare hands because, they said, when one was angry, one could easily hurt a child that way. Care was taken to see one used a switch and not a stick *(tsvimbo* or *mubada* in Shona and *intonga* or *umqwayi* in isi Ndebele) because this was not for administering punishment but for fighting. And one does not fight with minors or those under one's tutelage. They, also, were liable to *tema mbonje* (cut a wound in the head), and that would not be punishing but fighting.

The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, in his novel, *The Polygamist*, shows how reluctant and slow Ndebele society was to use corporal punishment as readily as white men used it. In an extremely unusual case in which a son had slept with one of the young wives of his father, who was, according to Ndebele *umteto* (law) and *umkubo*

(custom), one of his seven mothers, the *induna* and presiding judge, Mlotshwa, declared:

"This one is a crime against the people. It breaks the custom of the people. It threatens every home. If this evil is allowed to go on unpunished severely we shall have poisoned ourselves. That is quite clear. The son of Matutu is only a child, and therefore this court can not order him to pay many heads of cattle to his own father."

He paused then stood up. "Mbulawa," he called. "Bring my reins!"

The reins were duly brought to him and holding them in his hand, he began: "You see these reins. We use them to tie the cattle — the beasts. We don't use them to tie human beings. We tie animals, not human beings. I am going to tie you with these reins because you have ceased to be a human being. You have become a wild animal. A wild animal has no custom. You have no custom, and therefore you are a wild animal. A wild animal goes on its mother, and you go on your mother. You have been true to a wild animal. We can not live with wild animals in our homes. Tie him up to that tree.

"Now," continued Mlotshwa, holding up a short rein whip, "we use this to tame the wild animals. We don't use this on human beings. But today we must use it on our son who has become an animal. We want to bring him back to ourselves. Mbulawa! Tshaya!"

Mbulawa administered the corporal punishment, and the son of Matutu sent shrieks of pain to the heavens. He appealed for mercy, promising he would never again do a thing like that.

"Tshaya!" cried Mlotshwa. "The wild animal in him must depart." Mbulawa beat him all the harder.

"Now leave him, Mbulawa," ordered Mlotshwa. Mbulawa stopped.

"Untie him from the tree," ordered Mlotshwa. Mbulawa did so.

"Now, son of Matutu, promise this court that you will never commit a crime of that kind in all your life."

"I do, my fathers, I do, I do."

"Now it's all over. We shall never again hold this against you. It's finished, it's finished."

"Thank you, my fathers," the son of Matutu was in tears.

"Now," said Mlotshwa, "I must come to the case of Mamsipa. I must make this quite clear to you Mamsipa, that according to our customs, you have also behaved like a wild animal. And wild animals do not have customs. A wild animal will allow its own son to make love to it, and you have allowed your son to make love to you. You have disgraced the people of the Msipa clan. You have disgraced the people of the Matutu clan. You have put the son of Matutu in trouble. The court observes that the son of Matutu does not only belong to his father, he belongs to us. We are, therefore, as his elders, entitled to punish him if he errs. But in your case, Mamsipa, our custom does not give us the same power. A woman does not belong

to every man as are the children. She belongs to her own husband. If you had been only a girl who had not as yet been taken to wife, I would have imposed the same sentence on you. But as it is, I can't. You are a man's wife."

"Indeed, indeed," cried the court.

"I no longer want her in my village," protested Matutu.

"Why?" asked Mlotshwa.

"Because of what she did with my son," he said.

"He is your son and you cannot deal with him the way you would deal with strangers. In this case you can discipline your own bull, and you may have nothing to fear."

Matutu was quiet.

"Now, men," concluded Mlotshwa, "I leave Matutu to deal with his wife in his own way in his own village. But the court must make it quite clear that Mamsipa has behaved in the manner of an animal that knows no custom. That is it, gentlemen. I have spoken."

In his village, Matutu did deal with his young wife. He thrashed her until his other wives, hostile to her as they were, pleaded: "That's enough . . . No, he must not hurt her . . . No, she is not a tree to be beaten like that . . . Gogo, Gogo," calling to their grandmother, Matutu's mother. "Go and stop him. Go, Gogo. Go, Gogo."

"You are the ones who've been urging your husband on," Gogo reminded them.

"No, Gogo. Go! Go! Gogo, go."

Gogo feebly dashed out of her hut and went to Mamsipa's hut where Matutu was flogging her.

"That's enough, my child. That's enough," said Gogo, her voice ringing full of authority.

Matutu stopped immediately.

"You thank Gogo. I was going to kill you today," he said, turning to Mamsipa.

"That's all right, my child, you have counselled her enough," Gogo said quietly.

"Come with me, Mamsipa. Come, my child." And she held Mamsipa by the hand and led her to her own hut where she kept her for a few days, before allowing her to return to her own hut."[1]

The above is, of course, a fictitious case. However, no one who knows anything about Ndebele or Shona customs can fail to see how true to life the account is. First, there is the reluctance of the Ndebele court, as a court, to impose corporal punishment in spite of the prevalence of this form of punishment in the white man's courts. It was only with the observation, "The son of Matutu does not only belong to his father, he also belongs to us. We are, therefore, as his elders

[1]Ndabaningi Sithole, *The Polygamist* (New York, 1972), pp. 37-38, 91.

entitled to punish any child who has erred", that the corporal punishment was administered.

Mlotshwa would not have ordered the son of Matutu to be whipped if he had been a full grown man and not "only a child". He was unable to mete out the same punishment to the other guilty party, Mamsipa, because "Our custom does not give us the same power. A woman does not belong to every man as are the children. She belongs to her own husband. If you had been only a girl who had not as yet been taken to wife, I would have imposed the same sentence on you. But as it is, I can't. You are a man's wife."

In other words, Mamsipa no longer belonged to everybody because she was not a child or a girl but a wife — an adult. The society regarded her as an adult even though, to her husband, she was a minor under his and her father's perpetual tutelage. The very important point here, is that, in African society, one does not thrash an adult. To whip an adult is, therefore, to treat him like a child: to humiliate him, to emasculate him and to grossly insult his relatives and friends. And yet, white men persistently, ruthlessly whipped, flogged and chastised African men on the slightest provocation; thrashed them in the presence of their wives, sons, daughters, relatives and friends. The community's anger, shame and frustration at its impotence to do anything about these outrageous acts of white men is better imagined than described.

Furthermore, in African society, one could escape corporal punishment by simply hiding behind another person — *kupotera*. The latter had, however, to be a person respected by the chastiser otherwise he was regarded as *gwenzi rapotera tsuro* (a bush in which a hare has hidden), and liable to be thrashed as a hunter's stick always hits the hare as well as the bush in which it is hiding. But when white men decided to thrash one, there was no where to *potera* (hide). In African society, there was, also, always some one, like Gogo, to whom an appeal could be made to prevent the flogging or say, "That's enough." It was considered disrespectful to continue to flog a person after someone like Gogo had intervened. That is why Matutu told Mamsipa, "You thank Gogo. I was going to kill you today."

People like Gogo also assuaged any feeling of being unwanted or rejected that victims of a flogging might begin to nurse, by taking them by the hand saying, "Come with me, Mamsipa. Come, my child," and leading them to their own huts where they remained for a few days. So, in African society, victims of a flogging always received sympathy, understanding and friendship from someone exactly at the time they needed it.

Before such sympathy could be extended, however, it was necessary for one being whipped to declare: "*Ndagura. Ngi kawulile.*" ("I will never do it again.") That is why Mlotshwa said: "Now, son of Matutu, promise this court that you will never commit a crime of that kind in all your life," to which the son of Matutu responded: "I do, my fathers, I do, I do."

And Mamsipa cried, "Oh, please, Matutu, don't. Don't. Don't. I'll never do it again."

In fact, often elders made one dig a hole, spit in it and cover the saliva with soil, declaring: "I shall never do it again," before they let one alone. Thus, the reason for the flogging was never allowed to be forgotten, and correcting behaviour, rather than mercilessly inflicting pain, was shown to be the prime aim of the exercise.

The white man's flogging had none of the above redeeming features. He used a sjambok or whip especially made for the purpose from tough hippopotamus hide or the male organ of an ox or bull. Shona oral tradition is that white men kept their sjamboks immersed in salted water so that when applied to a man's body, the sjambok not only cut the skin open but salted the wound as well.

From Cecil John Rhodes, right down to the lowest among them, white men seemed to enjoy slapping and flogging Africans for various reasons, real as well as imaginary. For instance, W. Plomer tells us that in October 1890, after a champagne supper at Macloutsi, Rhodes found, on leaving early in the morning, that his Cape cart was not ready, and went into a terrible rage, saying that all natives were alike and ought to be severely flogged, and leaving orders for the offending driver to be arrested and kept without food.[1]

[1]W. Plomer, *Cecil Rhodes* (London, 1933), p. 129.

Recounting a story in which Rhodes personally slapped an African, D. C. De Waal says: "The following morning my boy Pikenini was not lively enough according to Mr. Rhodes' fancy when the latter ordered him to bring together the horses and mules. Angry at this imaginary laziness of the boy, the Premier gave him a few slaps, and the boy, somewhat confused, ran among the horses, one of which violently kicked him in the stomach. He fell unconscious to the ground, and when we picked him up he looked as if he would not recover... It grieved me much to see him suffer, and I had anything but a kind feeling towards the Premier, who had been the cause of the accident, and who had no business what ever to interfere with the inspanning."[1]

Rhodes no doubt thought by slapping Pikenini he was impressing him and other Africans with his importance and that this would enhance their respect for him. It is likely his act, in fact, achieved the opposite effect because in African society it is undignified for a man of Rhodes' stature to slap anyone or personally administer corporal punishment. He was supposed to be more tolerant than other people simply because he was "a big man": a father to all. If you did wrong in his presence, he admonished you with the threat that he would not intercede on your behalf and save you the next time you got into trouble. For his role was that of Gogo. It was to him that those in trouble ran to *potera.* It was he who would say, "That's enough." If he was quick to slap people himself, how could anyone run or *potera* to him? How could he prevent "smaller" people from flogging others? Rhodes must, therefore, have gone down in the estimation of these Africans.

This low opinion of "the big man" must have been confirmed when, according to Africans, he failed to act his role because corporal punishment was, on several occasions, administered on his orders or in his presence. For instance, on one occasion Africans in Rhodes' party were told not to visit the huts of other Africans nearby and when a number of them could not resist the temptation, De Waal tells us, "As a lesson for the future, we decided to punish some of

[1]D. C. De Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Johannesburg, 1896), p. 211.

them corporally. Accordingly, Sam and Pikenini, the leading offenders, each received a sound drubbing."[1]

On another occasion, De Waal reports: "At half past five we were able to move on again; but the party was altogether out of humour. Roeping and Jas, the former rather unjustly, each received a thrashing for not having kept watch over the animals."[2]

Not only African civilians but African messengers and policemen, also, were flogged most atrociously. For J. S. Brabant, the first Chief Native Commissioner of Mashonaland, apparently had as unquenchable a thirst for kaffir beer as he had a sadistic love for corporal punishment. At Mtoko, in 1895, he was "greeted by four of his messengers, dressed in cricket blazers, wearing second hand boots! 'Now if there was one thing about a native more than another that annoyed Brabant,' Weale tells us, 'it was to see a raw native wearing boots!' So he had the men seized and stripped. Once he reached the Native Commissioner's camp, Brabant had these four men and all the rest of the messengers and native police flogged for their failure to collect tax and keep the district in order."[3]

Whipping is a punishment that is still extensively imposed in our courts today. The powers of sentence of the courts in respect of corporal punishment are very wide. They apply to all common law offences and to numerous other offences, including all offences committed under the Law and Order Maintenance Act.[4] In this, as we have seen, the courts of this land are continuing a practice as old as the advent of white men in this country.

An African majority rule government will want to review the role of the sjambok in our legal system. It will want to ensure, in the words of Mlotshwa, that the sjambok is used only reluctantly and only on a son who has become an animal. And that it is used only until the wild animal in him departs and he digs a hole, spits in it and says, "I'll never do it again." An African government will want to

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 250.
[3] Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7* (London, 1967), p. 75.
[4] Clare Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1955* (Oxford, 1966), p. 526.

make certain that the penal system has people like Gogo around to assuage any feeling of being unwanted or rejected that victims of a flogging might begin to nurse, so that they also receive sympathy, understanding and friendship at the time they need it.

Chapter Sixteen

The Co-operative Society Movement

SOMETIME ago, a speaker at a symposium held at the University gave a lecture on the history of the Co-operative Society Movement in this country. He marked the beginning of the movement by the enactment of the first law on co-operatives in Southern Rhodesia. This is not unlike saying that the history of Africa began when Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape in 1652. We know that this is not history but "his story".

In this country, the co-operative movement is as old as the rivers and rocks. As we have seen in our description of African village life in the chapter on Labour, even though cattle were individually owned, they were used by anyone in the village — collectively or co-operatively. The sleigh and *sandanga* in the village were built under the leadership of one man but were used by all.

Fields were ploughed, collectively or co-operatively, during *majangano* or *nhimbe*. The plants were cultivated, harvested, shelled and stored in the same manner. When anyone went to sell produce, he often took not only his own but also that of his neighbours which means that the produce was marketed collectively.

Now with a tradition of co-operative work in the villages as old and as strong as it is, the co-operative movement ought to be a great deal stronger and a lot more widespread than it is today, because it is deeply imbedded in our culture. It has a strong base in hunhuism or ubuntuism.

An African majority rule government will, therefore, see that the co-operative movement spreads its tentacles to all areas of the people's lives. Government will encourage not only co-operative working together in *majangano* and *nhimbe* but also co-operative

buying, selling, transporting, insuring, advertising, etc. It will also encourage the co-operative ownership of property, any property, as long as such ownership is likely to be more efficient, beneficial and profitable or less costly to the people than any other form of ownership.

For instance, a village, a group of villages, a Tribal Trust Lands Council, two or more farmers or a farm council can co-operatively:

1. Buy seeds
2. Buy fertilizer
3. Buy a tractor, harrow, planter, sheller, etc.
4. Buy a lorry for transport purposes
5. Open a co-operative store
6. Run a bus service
7. Run a co-operative farm.

A man who owns a tractor might plough for someone in exchange for the use of the other man's transport lorry, harrow or planter. With our tradition of using things together, it should not be too difficult to work out such an arrangement. This would be consistent with hunhuism or ubuntuism.

Chapter Seventeen

Our Point

WE hope, trust and believe we have made our point and shown that:

There is an indigenous philosophy deeply imbedded in, and inextricably interwoven with, our culture that we can call hunhuism or ubuntuism.

Hunhuism or ubuntuism permeates and radiates through all facets of our lives, such as religion, politics, economics, etc.

Some aspects of hunhuism or ubuntuism are applicable to the present and future as they were in the past.

It is not necessary for Africans to swallow, holus-bolus, foreign ideologies more suited to foreign people and foreign lands than to Mother Africa and to regurgitate them for application in Africa.

It is the duty of African scholars to discern and delineate hunhuism or ubuntuism so that it can, when applied, provide African solutions to African problems.

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