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day, January 23, 1984

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â\200\230The story of a South African farm town.is told  
Wwith laconic waspishness by a certain A M  
Daniels, in a copy of The Spectator that has  
wandered my idle way. I must, in parenthesis,  
say I was somewhat taken aback by the tone  
of the article, appearing as it did in the conser-  
vative pages of a British magazine that has  
ultra right-wing scribes like Richard West.

.. The tongue-in-cheek story with the arrest-

ing head, Black and White and Mad, ends on  
-a memorable note that is as typically South  
African as biltong. Thus: â\200\234And if you canâ\200\231t  
call a kaffir a kaffir,â\200\235  
call a kaffir?â\200\235

Who indeed? i  
dige Ignorance

South Africa a question like that is al- o PUS these days, they would have done us:

ost rhetorical. There arÃ© an inordinate num-  
ber of whites who display the same kind of  
callous disregard for the times and the manner  
in which peopleâ\200\231s attitudes have changed. The  
extraordinary thing,â\200\230as is detailed in the same  
story by Mr Daniels, is that whites believe,  
nay they swear, that they know the black man.

In the meantime, their ignorance about us  
blacks is only surpassed by an obnoxious racist  
arrogance that comes straight out of the Mid-  
dle Ages. Whites in rural areas fondly wish to  
delude themselves that they know their â\200\234kaf-  
firsâ\200\235 or rather â\200\234the kaffirâ\200\235. Many in the urban  
areas also believe this unscientific madness. A

- mention the townâ\200\231s name, but  
-away by his description of

chapel. But with the goings-on at

few lines could blow this misconception right.

through the roof, for many of them hardly  
know our first names, let alone our last.

Marvellous

But about Mr Daniels. It would have been' eatest pleasure to reproduce his piece in; tirety, word for word. It is a marvellous

job, done with the easy flow of British irony and acerbic wit. It also has style.

In brief, he says he was once in South Africa, and because of uncertain financial standing, he did a locum (standing in for a doctor who is on leave or away) for a white doctor in a small town in Natal. He mercifully does not gives the game a black university near the town and what happened there. The

facts are not completely correct, but the jobis excellently done.

I acted for a time as locum general practitioner in a small town in Natal, which be- fore its grateful alumni burnt it down in 1976

boasted a university for blacks. If he is 'speaking about Ngoye University, then we are

afraid the place was not exactly burnt down. What the students did was to burn part of its the same

nowlin

she said, who can you o

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THE  
LINE|

Aggrey  
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proud by burning the place to the ground. Less problems for us all, including some parties in very high places. '

At the airport he was met by the doctor's wife in the family Mercedes Benz a typical South African fat-cat bourgeois touch that. The doctor was an Afrikaner who had bouts of drinking two bottles of Scotch a day, which is why he heeded a locum, Mr Daniels says, with another rasping dig at this country.

I was met at Durban airport by the wife of

the doctor for whom I was standing in. She drove us the hundred miles or so to the town..

in the family Mercedes. Sitting in the back were her two young children and their black nanny. The two children began to fight and, without looking back, their mother took a swipe at them. She hit the nanpy instead of - the children, and the nanny started to cry.

Ja Kaffir

What are you snivelling for? the doctor's wife asked irritably. :

The Madam hit me.

Well, you should've kept those children quiet then, hey, shouldn't you?

That's beautiful stuff, not only because it rings true, it also has that authentic hey so

wonderously beloved of white South African:

matrons and women generally. The article goes on in this strain, giving deft vignettes of South African life that only a perceptive and intelligent outsider can spot.

Among other refreshingly lucid touches, he

tells of violence, of how South African whites -

«delight to say they know their blacks», or

kaffirs or Bantu as the case may be. The

bit that springs out rather neatly is the \_\_swipe taken at the nanny, which shows what white

he kaffir .

madams think of their nannies and what

o o

murder their little brats, who despise and maltreat the same nannies, get away with. e . He says their reference to their knowledge of blacks is couched in such a fashion that

you would think they were speaking of some: exotic species. :

They were anxious to tempt me into their world view, but only once did I slip an indication of what I really thought when a patient tried to explain apartheid on biological principles. ; ;

After all, he said, the blackbird and the sparrow, they don't mate. R

Well, there's no need to make laws about

it then, is there?â\200\235 I replied.

The tantalising bit about kaffirs, on which I opened this effort Says a great deal of the white South African mind. Why, just the other day a white train conductor dressed in this new horrid brown uniform of theirs called out cheerily: â\200\234Ja Kaffirâ\200\235, as we made our way past him. He did not even appear to be malicious. Just came natural to him/ After all he needs to call something, somebody, a kaffir at times, if only to re-assert his superiority.

Desperate

Perhaps I should end on that ineffable Daniels note about kaffirs that seems to appeal so much to me: 3 . :

You see in this country whether there is movement in the right direction, as those wise political pundits ways say, there is, and there will always be this desperate need to call somebody a kaffir.

Â© â\200\234I was assured by whites that things were gradually changing in South Africa. These changes did not meet with everyoneâ\200\231s approval, however. The doctorâ\200\231s mother-in-law complained to me that nowadays in South Africa you had to call a native a Bantu.

â\200\234And if you canâ\200\231t call a kaffir a kaffir,â\200\235 she said, â\200\234who can you call a kaffir?â\200\235 suifasnd o5 .

## COMMENT

IF THE industrial relationship be-

tween the so-called homelands and |

South Africa were not so organic,  
and indeed if these little "enclaves of  
phony independence were not a de  
facto part of South Africa, then  
we would perhaps understand  
Bophuthatswana's banning of the  
South African Allied Workers' Union in that territory.

The only reasons that the Ciskei

~ banned Saawu was that it was ex-  
- posing the political fraudulence of  
that system. There was ample rea-  
son to do that too because the coun-  
try was in shambles and somebody  
had to do something about it. In any  
case because of the general state of  
affairs in the Ciskei there is no ne-  
cessity in wasting time analysing

reasons for acts of omission and:

commission on its part.

Bophuthatswana is a slightly dif-  
ferent kettle of fish. We hold no  
brief for any of the homelands but  
Bophuthatswana has shown even in  
its constitution that it is trying to  
follow ways of democracy.

Chief Lucas Mangope is showing

that when the chips are down all  
these front states for South Africa's  
policy of divide and rule, revert to  
the norm.

If anything, it shows that all home-  
lands, in one way or the other, al-  
most automatically ape what the  
mother country does.

It is an irrefutable fact that most

Bophuthatswana workers are em-  
ployed in the mainland, something  
that should have told the leaders

from the start that they would find it

almost impossible to cut the umbili-  
cal cord with South Africa.

We find it instructive that the  
leaders are unable to take lessons  
from the examples within their own  
geopolitical sphere. For instance the

inroads into the civil liberties of people have gained a country like the Ciskei bad publicity even from conservative administrations like Ronald Reagan's.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is fighting

a rearguard battle internationally as a result of the number of booby perpetrated one after the other by himself and Inkatha. His defiance makes his position particularly defensive and even weak. It will take a long time for KwaZulu to reassert the credibility that people like Chief Buthelezi and other senior members

of Inkatha have striven courageously in fact to build up.

The moral in this should be clear to those who are used to work with the South African Government (working from within the system as it is called) and all those who in any form collaborate with an evil system such as this. They will remain tainted for as long as they exist, and inevitably they will fall into South Africa's diplomatic and political footsteps. It is a curse and an albatross they have tied round

sion budget has  
dried up â\200\224 with  
more than 50 000 old  
-age pension applica-  
tions waiting for ap-  
proval and the num-  
ber is increasing.

The homeland will

â\200\230crease on its pension  
allocation in. the next  
financial year, due in  
April, if it is to cope  
with the demand.

\_If the applicants do  
get their pensions,  
they will only: be effec-  
tive from April, re-  
gardless of when the  
pensioners applied, as  
KwaZulu, unlike the  
central Government,  
does not backdate pen-  
sions to the date of ap-  
plication, a spokesman  
for the Black Sash  
sy o &  
KwaZuluâ\200\231s budget-

those of other home-  
lands, are the responsi-  
bility of the central  
Government. Al-

sion allocation is five percent above last yearâ\200\231s, KwaZulu, in the eighth month of its current financial year, has more than 50 000

not be processed be-

need a 100 percent in-

â\200\230 I SOWETAN

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~cause money has run

ary allocations, like

though this ygarâ\200\231s pen- |

applications that can- |

Correspondent

â\200\234The applicants will have to wait and see what negotiations be- tween KwaZulu and the Government yield when the next financial year commences in April this year and by then the number will be much higher. 3

â\200\234Itâ\200\231s a very sad situa-

tion,â\200\235 comments Kwa- Zuluâ\200\231s Secretary for Health and Welfare, Dr-Margaret Chuene. | She says they have always had a backlog: |



â\200\234But we now have a '

The Black Sash has =  
\_ . blamed the Govern-  
â\200\234ment. The plight of the  
~ pensioners, the Black  
Sash says, has resulted  
from Government pol-  
icies.

One of the reasons  
for the poor allocation  
is that in the past many  
pensioners used to  
forego collecting their  
pensions partly be-  
cause of ignorance and '  
. many people were not -  
aware they had  
reached pensionable  
age.

Pretoria worked -on  
those figures to set the  
budget and budgetary  
increases and this has

ing settled communi-  
ties to KwaZulu with  
the result that pension-

terrific backlog. Itâ\200\231s a  
very serious issue be-

cause every citizen is |  
entitled to a pension.â\200\235

Dr Chuene says the  
number of " applicants  
will be much more  
than the 50 000 by next  
April as many people  
are coming forward to  
apply for pensions.  
Presently, 174 000 are  
drawing old-age :?pen-;

given a distorted. pic-  
ture.in the light of the  
changing situation  
mainly because of the  
activities of organisa-  
tions like the Blgg}{;  
Sash and pensioners  
being made aware of  
their rights. |

Dr Chuene says 'gd  
situation is exacer-  
bated |

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Y

ers arriving in Kwa-  
Zulu with their fami-  
lies are not transferred  
with their pensions.  
â\200\234The result is you  
find many people sud-  
denly flooding the na-  
tional states and they  
have to compete for  
pensions with other  
applicants,â\200\235 she says.  
er- â\200\234Another reason is  
the Govern- farm labourers are  
lily of mov- thrown out when

LIVING by the grace of God . .

] GÃ»\_Iady;

provision for their old-

ates a tremendous bur-  
den on our finances.â\200\235 |  
Dr Chuene says the |  
pension problem re- |  
sulting from mass re- 1  
movals was not unique |  
to KwaZulu. f  
â\200\234Itâ\200\231s a chronic prob- |  
lem with all the na- i  
tional states,â\200\235 she says.  
â\200\234Weâ\200\231re negotiating

. age pension. This cre- |

theyâ\200\231re no longÃ©x:â\200\234pro-\_â\200\230  
+ductive and the farm-  
~ers do not make any

1â\202¬ moment and the  
Pproblem will be solved

- the day they under-

stand the story behind  
the backlog.

â\200\234We need an in-

crease of about 50 per-  
cent so that every pen-  
sioner can be paid.â\200\235

Mrs Jill Nicholson,

enced by perisioners in

KwaZulu is the direct  
-consequence of the  
policies of the Govern-

of the Black Sash, says  
â\200\230the problem experi- |

\_\_pay period, the com-

R e ]

â\200\234The South African  
Government, whethe\_r  
it likes it or not, ls  
legally bound to pay -  
pensions to every

. South African. Its po\_l-

\_icies are resulting in  
this enormous inflow  
into KwaZulu and they  
must pay.â\200\235

Mrs Nicholson says  
the KwaZulu authori-  
ties, if they want to,  
can easily demand re-  
payment from the  
Government for every  
pension paid out.

â\200\234The South African  
Government is ulti-  
mately responsible be-  
cause KwaZulu is not  
independent and all  
those people are South  
African citizens.â\200\235 â\200\230

Says Black Sash  
president Sheena Dun-  
can: â\200\234If the homeland  
governments have no,  
money, then the South  
African Government  
must provide it be-  
cause it is South Afri-  
can law theyâ\200\231re operat-  
ing under.â\200\235

â\200\230 Zulwâ\200\231s~ former .secre-  
\tary for health, Dr |

| A Early last year, Kwa\

B | Modercai Gumede,  
her granddaug hfeâ\200\230r;ï¬\201

with the Republic at'

appearing before the  
~ Sessional Committee .  
on Public Accounts on |  
his departmentâ\200\231s un-  
authorised expendi-  
ture, said pensions had  
always been his de-  
partmentâ\200\231s â\200\234lifesaverâ\200\235.

â\200\234It was a quick way  
of saving,â\200\235 he ad-  
mitted because pen-  
Sions were not col-  
lected and these were  
subsequently dropped  
by the computer. If a  
pension had not been  
paid after the second

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