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BY RICHARD DOWDEN
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SOUTH AFRICA V '
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n my first evening in South Africa I came down to the hotel reception to find a black man collapsed across a chair, doubled up in pain. The hotel staff, mostly black, tried to find out what the matter was without perturbing the guests. The hotel is the biggest and most prestigious in Johannesburg, and there was a very smart (black) wedding reception beginning to gather in the lobby. After a few minutes an ambulance pulled up at the door, and its crew (white) rushed into the hotel. By chance they came at a moment when the staff were away from the desk, and I directed them to the black man still groaning and writhing in the chair. They went straight to him and began to examine him. They were just about to put him on the stretcher when the doorman (black) came back

"Oh, no," he said, "It's not for him. It's for room three twenty-five." The ambulance crew abandoned the man in his chair and ran to the lift.

"Apartheid still rules, OK," I mumbled to the doorman. He shrugged. "We didn't call the ambulance for this man. He is not a guest, he is not staff. He just came in off the street. We don't know who he is or where he's from"

The doorman tried to find out from the man whether he had any medical insurance or money for a taxi to take him to a hospital. We were just getting ready to get him into a taxi when the ambulance crew reappeared. They had been too late to save the man in room 325. They paused by the desk and saw the man in the chair. "Oh well," one of them said, "We might as well take him." And off they went!

Apartheid ambulance stories have always abounded in South Africa. Somehow, maintaining apartheid in all its pettiness, even in the face of death, showed just how poisonous and ludicrous it was.

But in the old days ambulance stories showed how apartheid allowed people to die because the white ambulance would not take a black patient or, more bitterly ironic, a white died because he would not travel in a black ambulance or be treated by black medics.

These days in South Africa it is confusing. One never knows when South Africa is going to behave as if there is only one human race, or whether some apartheid monstrosity is going to rear up from

nowhere to tell you that nothing
has changed and there is no hope.
Although this incident appeared
to end happily, the footnote is that
the white guest would have been
taken to a private white hospital
while the black man would have
gone to Johannesburg General,
adequate but sparse. Apartheid
still exists but, like a monstrous
snowman in the sun, it is melting
fast, creating weird and wonderful
patterns as it goes.
Historians will debate till the end
of time why the Afrikaners, or
some of them, came to realize that
they could not dominate South
Africa for ever. It has been a long,
slow process. An Afrikaner news-
paper editor gave me a graphic
description of how President PW.
De Klerk not only had to face the
deep conservatism of his own
constituency but, alone in his
office, must feel the stern eyes of his
father, his grandmother and his
other ancestors glaring down on
him, telling him he is giving away
everything they had striven and
died for.

When the National Party came
to power in 1948, Afrikaners felt
they had finally inherited the land
promised by God but denied them
by man for so long. With that elec-
tion victory they felt they could
finally run South Africa without
interference from the British and
protect their inheritance from the
blacks by force of law.

For more than 300 years they
had tried to escape the British.
Whatever wealth there was in the
country had never gone to the
Afrikaner peasant farmers; it had
been bought up or seized by the
British. With bible in one hand and
gun in the other, with their wives
and children, servants and cattle,
the Afrikaners journeyed by ox-
drawn wagon north and east up
onto the escarpment into Africa.

When will
South Africa
behave as if
there is only
one human
race?

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The Stock
exchange: the
gold price is
the ultimate
arbiter.

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The president is walking
on a tightrope.

Is it too late?

They escaped from the British but
met Africans migrating the other
way.

Driving on the broad tarmac
road which now runs from nor-
thern Natal to Johannesburg, you
can feel something of the exhilara-
tion those Afrikaner trekkers must
have felt when they emerged onto
the wide, open, grassy plains gently
swept by curtains of rain and teem-
ing with wild animals. Standing
here, looking west at the African
sun setting behind the mountains
of Lesotho, they must have felt
they had arrived in the most beau-
tiful corner of God's creation.
As you leave the mountains you
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cross one small stream bearing the
name which every Afrikaner is
taught from birth: Blood River.

Here in 1838 the Afrikaners
slaughtered the Zulus in their
thousands. The victory is celebrat-
ed every year by a public holiday
on December 16, the Day of the
Covenant, the supreme symbol of
white conquest of South Africa.
One of the greatest tests Mr. De
Klerk will face is whether he can
abolish this sectarian feast or
somehow transform it into a day of
reconciliation.

The president is walking a tight-
rope. The Afrikaners, hitherto one
of the most unified nations in the
world, are divided. Only half of
them voted for Mr. De Klerk at the
last election and, if he trips or falls,
more could desert the National
Party for the Conservatives under
Dr. Andries Treurnicht, who wants
to return to classical apartheid.
I asked the same newspaper editor
if the Afrikaners will circle their

wagons into a laager and tight the rest of the world to the last bullet. He assured me they won't. 'They' know when they are beaten," he said. "They are not heroic. They have always run away when necessary, and I can hear them running now. There will be no Atrikaner last stand. They will whine and complain and hold on to what they can, but they know the days of white domination are over. I know. I am one of them."

But is it too late? Many blacks are pessimistic. They recount daily incidents of racism and rejection to demonstrate that no matter what changes are made at the top, life on the street will stay the same for them. Mandla for example is a former member of Mkhonta we Sizwe, the guerrilla army of the African National Congress. He has served a jail sentence on Robben Island for planning to cause explosions. The reason he quarrels with authority these days, however, is that he drives a new black BMW and the police are always stopping him because they think he has stolen it. Even those blacks who have made money can't enjoy it as whites do. South Africa is still a white man's country in his eyes.

Two days after Nelson Mandela was released I went to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, a hi-tech building amid the skyscrapers of downtown Johannesburg. It could be New York or Frankfurt. Trees grow under its high glass roof and gold and glass lifts glide up and down in the interior atrium. On the floor of the stock exchange itself, men (white) in striped shirts scanned the prices on the blackboards above them or shouted prices to men (black) who ran back and forth along the catwalk chalking them up. They stood in groups, tense and nervous, stroking their chins or pulling their ears. At the center of the price boards glared a great electronic board which displays the health of South Africa, its thermometer, its ultimate arbiter: the gold price.

But that day another factor was worrying the brokers: Nelson Mandela. When his release had been announced the stock market had leapt in the belief that he could bring a political solution and an end to South Africa's isolation. When Mr. Mandela walked from the prison gates he called for a continuation of the armed struggle and sanctions.

Worse, he called for nationalization. The stock market plummeted.

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V SOUTH AFRICA

In these
streets the
whole saga
is concentrated
I walked through its silent
revolving doors out into the street.
Nearby is the home of one of South
Africa's biggest gold companies:
Anglo American, a wall of sheer
blue-green reflecting glass soaring
into a clear blue sky. This is the
heart of" South Africa. In these few
streets, half a mile from Johannes-
burg's busy shopping center, the
whole South African saga is con-
centrated. Here are the headquar-
ters of all the big mining compa-
nies. Most are huge granite classi-
cal castles suggesting permanbnce,
security and respectability. But
these streets are also a frontier.
Behind them is one of the (black)
bus terminals. If a black man comes
from the rural areas to the city of
gold in search of his fortune, this is
where he will arrive. The streets are
lined with petty traders selling
everything from underpants to
pears. They say you can be mur-
dered for ten cents here. A man
(black) was holding up three pop-
sicles for 20 American cents each,
trying desperately to attract the
attention of passersby. His gestures
matched perfectly those of the
Stock dealers a few yards away in
their 'castle of glass, gesticulating at
their colleagues and trying to sell a
million dollars worth of shares.
That is South Africa.
Just around the corner is John
Vorster Square, home of the noto-
rious security police headquarters.
It is a place of torture and murder
where prisoners and those brought
in for questioning would myste-
riously slip and suffer fatal head
injuries in their cells or leap to their
deaths from tenth-floor windows.
A few yards down Diagonal
Street, the only street in Johannes-
burg that cuts across the rigid
street grid, there is a Muti shop.
Muti is traditional medicine. In this
case Zulu medicine, but the Indian
owner insists that all tribes and
even some whites buy it. You have
to stoop as you enter, as the ceiling
is hung with bits of dried dead ani-
mals: monkeys,- ostrich' Aheads,
eagle claws, skins of lem-uis and
' snakes, skulls of horses and hye-
IAN BERRYIMAGNUM
A wall of blue-green reflecting glass.
nas. Along the walls are jars and
jars of powdered rocks and seeds
and chips of blackened bone.
Under a single dull bulb in a dingy
corner a man (black) stripped to the
waist pounds at a mortar and
pestle. It is a nightmarish scene and

the sweet smell of herbs mingles with something very unpleasant. A man is buying a long list of items. He names them in Zulu and the Indian proprietress knows them all exactly, weighs them out carefully and makes them into little packets wrapped in newspaper. He is a regular Sangoma, or medicine man, who makes a good living in Soweto prescribing powdered snake-skin to ward off evil spirits or herbs to cure infertility. He speaks excellent English-better than the Indian lady. He tells me how wonderful Nelson Mandela's release is and how things will change now.

The shop assistant, an old black man with stretched earlobes, tells me that is Foolish talk. "It was a big mistake to let him go, baas," he says. "This Mandela is a terrorist. He should have stayed in prison. Now he is free we will all die. You see, baas, he thinks he can rule us but Zulus cannot be ruled by interior people."

Is the old man telling me this because I am white? Is this what he thinks I want to hear, or does he really believe it? When his back is turned the Indian lady says: "That is the way Zulus feel. They will never accept to be equal with other blacks in South Africa."

I found this tribalism common in the townships and rural slums of Kwazulu. the Zulu homeland where those who support Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress are fighting a bloody war against Zulus who support Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the Zulu Inkatha movement. Observing the appalling ferocity and bitterness of the fighting, it strikes me that this presents a far greater threat to a stable future for South Africa than the conflict between whites and blacks.

On the way to the police station at John Vorster Square, I run into a spontaneous freedom demonstration. About 70 people come down the street doing the Toyi Toyi, that strange jogging dance of singing

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DANIEL LAINEIGAMMA

Whites will have to lose
some of their wealth
and slogan chanting which has
become the war dance of the town-
ships. Whites looked up a little
startled and got out the way but a
group of white policemen watched
it go by without a move. A few
months ago they would have
stopped it dead-even if that had
meant using guns.

At John Vorster Square there is a
new police poster in the window. It
shows a South African policeman
(white) holding the hands of two
children (black) and helping them
cross the road. "The police care"
the poster reads. The new South
Africa? The current reputation of
the South African police makes
this look like a sick joke-but for
the moment Nelson Mandela and
the ANC are taking that sort of
gesture as an indication that the
government is serious.

I take a taxi back to the hotel and
the taxi driver (white) explains to
me, as a guide would to a tourist,
that blacks in South Africa are not
like blacks in America. "Our blacks
are not civilized at all," he says.
"They are only a couple of genera-
tions out of the trees. It will take ,
time. There's no point giving them
votes now. You see, what you
people from overseas don't
understand is that we are paying
for these people. Our taxes go for
their schools, their hospitals, and
everything. They don't do any-
thing for themselves. And now
they say they want everything
from us. It's unfair." .

It Mr. De Klerk and Mr. Mandela
are to work out a common future
for blacks and whites in South
Africa they will have to overcome
this sort of attitude-still shock-
ingly common among South African
whites. For any sort of political
solution to satisfy South Africa's
27 million blacks, the gap between
them and the country's 5 million
whites will have to be narrowed.
That means that initially those
with money and jobs, still mostly
white and heavily taxed, will have
to lose some of their wealth to
those without, almost all black

But the political problem and the disparity in wealth overshadow a deeper and more intractable problem: the economy itself. True, there can be no economic solution without a political one first,- but if and when Mr. Mandela leads South Africa to Freedom, his first task will be to find jobs for the thousands of young blackse-and whites-leaving school each year. Professor Sampie Terreblanche, an economist at Stellenbosch University, says South Africa's industrial heartland could be the engine which will transform the whole region, creating a southern African economic community. But South Africa is dependent on foreign capital and according to Professor Terreblanche the country needs a capital inflow of \$100 billion over the next ten years to provide a 5.5 percent growth rate to keep ahead of the 2.6 percent population increase. At present the economy is cramped by sanctions and lack of confidence. There is a net outflow of \$1.5 billion a year. "Only if Mr. Mandela asks for it can we expect it," says Professor Terreblanche, "But there is a strong incentive if we make this appeal in the context of a southern African common market." With most Western aid donors and investors looking to Eastern Europe these days, it seems unlikely that Professor Terreblanche's hope will be fulfilled. Yet South Africa has wealth-resources in minerals and agriculture, capital and a skilled population, and enormous potential when freed from apartheid. Perhaps it is one of the few times in history when a dominant group has prepared to share power before being forced to. A South Africa genuinely at peace with itself, the center of a region of 90 million people whose potential can only be guessed at, is a hopeful and exciting prospect.

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More questions than answers as young South Africans face the future. Mr. Dowdm i5 Afrira Editor of The Independent.