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Ancestral Worship

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Afrika Borwa

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ERNST COLE

~~ANCESTRAL WORSHIP~~

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African migration to South Africa falls

By Reuters

Pretoria, South Africa

South Africa's immigration totals for the first nine months of the year have fallen steeply, and emigration figures have increased by nearly 25 percent according to figures released by the Bureau of Statistics.

A net gain of only 499 settlers from Rhodesia was registered during the nine months. This was the difference between the 2,605 who came to this country to settle, and the 2,106 Rhodesians who emigrated back to that country.

During the first nine months of 1964, 13,555 came to South Africa from other parts of the continent. This year the figure has fallen for the comparable period by 6,541 to 7,014.

From Rhodesia alone, the immigration figure has fallen from 6,801 in 1964 to 2,605 this year.

Similar falls have been recorded for immigrants from Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, and other African areas.

The over-all immigration figure from all sources had fallen from 30,811 for the first nine months of last year to 24,332 for this year—a difference of 6,479.

It is considered unlikely, therefore, that the total figure for this year will get withing 5,000 of the 40,865 total immigration figure for last year.

The decrease in immigration from other African nations is almost solely responsible for the steep drop in the nine-month total.

From Europe during the January-September period last year the total was 15,726. This year it is only 117 less.

Young Woman Prospers as a Witch Doctor

Johannesburg Area Gives Her, at 28, a Busy Life

By JOSEPH LELYVELD

Special to The New York Times

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, Nov. 13—The turning point in her life, the young woman in the bright red stretch pants explained, came when she spent six months at the bottom of a lake in Rhodesia, getting tutored in witchcraft by three snakes.

She was only 10 years old then. Today at 28, Sarah Mashele is a leading "ngaka" or witch doctor in Soweto, Johannesburg's complex of black townships. Her practice is so successful that this year, acting on the advice of her ancestors, she was able to purchase three new American cars.

Dr. Mashele, as she identifies herself on her engraved calling cards, says she is able to cure a variety of complaints, ranging from the common run of illnesses to sterility and even desertion by a wife or husband.

Charges Are Not Modest

Her fees are not modest and, she explains, none of her clients would expect them to be, considering the miracles she performs. Her charge for a woman who is having difficulties conceiving a child, for instance, is the equivalent of \$13.50 at the beginning of the treatment, plus \$21 when it succeeds.

There is a sliding scale for cases of desertion. If the husband or wife has been gone one week, the down payment is only \$2.80, plus \$8.40 if the cure works. If the missing spouse has been absent six months, however, getting him back will be as costly as the sterility treatment.

The stylish young witch doctor has a husband, Joseph Mashele, a shopkeeper, and seven children. She says she needs all her cars because she often has to carry a lot of medicine when she goes out on calls.

Her white patients, she tells a visitor, are rarely willing to be seen calling at her "surgery" in Meadowlands Township. Their complaints, she says, are unusually of the marital kind.

When she tells the epic story of how she went from Venzaland in the northern Transvaal to Rhodesia to be tutored by the snakes, it is in the self-enthralled whisper of an actress explaining how she got her "lucky break."

The snakes wouldn't let her go until she pledged never to cheat her patients, she says.

Mrs. Mashele declares she doesn't know how much money she earns in a year because she spends it as she gets it. She has a large wardrobe. Only rarely now does she don the traditional feathered headresses and beads of her craft.



Sarah Mashele, a leading witch doctor in Johannesburg, throws bones during a session



Ernest Cole for The New York Times

Mrs. Mashele deposits money in bank. Her practice is so thriving that she has bought three new American cars in past year and says that she spends money as she earns it.

The "surgery" is much like a doctor's office. There are two nurses in white dresses, one to mix the potions Mrs. Mashele prescribes, the other to keep records on the patients—a modern innovation in the practice of witchcraft.

Mrs. Mashele just sits by, throws her bones, and orders a treatment. When a visitor pointed to a mask on top of one of her filing cabinets and asked what it was, her husband geni-

ally explained that it could be endowed with a life and movement of its own to do evil deeds.

If you didn't know what a car was and saw one parked at a curb, he said, you'd be astonished to hear it could travel at 90 miles an hour. It was the same with the mask, he explained.

The visitor must have looked skeptical. "Do you want me to send it to you tonight in bed?" the witch doctor asked, laughing. The visitor demurred.

FUND APPEAL BEGUN BY SHUT-IN SOCIETY

The National Shut-In Society began yesterday its annual appeal for funds to help the handicapped and the neglected.

The 88-year-old society is supported by small dues and its fund-raising drive. Its work is carried on almost exclusively by volunteer associates who provide comfort and encouragement to about 6,000 members.

Miss Rosalie Armistead Higgins, the appeal chairman, said contributions would help the society to provide wheel chairs, hospital beds, books in Braille and many other needs for men, women and children who are shut-in.

"Every year we send a Christmas card with a dollar enclosed to each shut-in," Miss Higgins said. "It's not much, we know, but letters from all over the country say the effort makes the shut-in feel that someone cares."

The society also publishes The Open Window, a monthly magazine that carries personal data on the shut-in and encourages friendships among its members through mutual correspondence.

Mrs. Frederick Orr of Bronxville, N. Y., is president of the society, which has its national headquarters at 11 West 42d Street. Fannie Hurst, the novelist, is a member of the society's board of directors and honorary chairman of the annual appeal.

SAVE WATER NOW!

Don't let water run while brushing teeth, shaving or washing dishes.

This week we look at life in Soweto—that enormous "city" sprawling outside Johannesburg—where many of the women are turning box-like houses into homes

how a home, who is the fountain of family and communal life. Even the gardens are the fruit of female labour. Mr. Bill Kruse, superintendent of the 15,000 people of Dube and Orlando West, told us that there were 64 entries in the gardening competition organised last year for her residents — and only one from a man.

It was the trim lawn (even on the pavement), fine standard roses, fish creepers and fussily neat dwerbeds that attracted us to Mrs. Madge Gugushe's home.

Veranda

"I'm ironing. The 'girl' deserted me today," Mrs. Gugushe said fiercely. But our admiration for her garden and highly-polished veranda soon melted her resistance to an unheralded visit in the middle of the morning.

"I did most of the garden myself. When I started I had to hide the invoices for shrubs and plants from my husband. Now he is more interested—but very lazy."

We were shown a spacious, carpeted lounge, the suite covered with plastic dustcovers, and rooms of dark stained, contemporary furniture. The firm

which painted the various rooms had given her useful tips and the result was interior decoration in restrained good taste. The wife of a sub-inspector of schools, Mrs. Gugushe has two teenage children. Although she has a nurse's awkward hours, she makes time for other interests.

"Recently I joined the Mothers' Union (a religious group). I wanted to see what those women were doing. I gave them talks on child care, the symptoms of cancer in women and on the use of clinics.

"I set aside an hour every evening for reading both newspapers and books" — and we saw well-stocked bookshelves. Titles included: "The Prize," "Battle for the Mind," "The Boberg Story," "Living Free," "Inside Africa," "Drawn in Colour," "Spartacus," "Compulsion" and "Rags of Glory."

We found Mrs. Samuel Mampa surrounded by some of the 80 children at the Winifred Kgoroodira Day Nursery.

"I start here at 7 a.m., and go home after 5 p.m., when all the children have been collected. On Fridays when I go home I clean the house and 'put in' the polish. On Saturdays I get up very early and clean off the polish. I then do my shopping in Johannesburg at the bazaars,

have lunch with my children and sometimes go on to see boxing or a beauty contest at the stadium." Mrs. Esther Nyembezi has a lovely owner-built home in Diepkloof — a Government township — but runs her own store in Dube. She has a fondness for garden parties which she gives at her home on Sunday mornings. But Mrs. Nyembezi, a former teacher, is no idle social sit-about.

Patients

"My husband is a doctor. When we left Sophiatown his patients were scattered and things were difficult. As we thought that, with no more African business would be easy, I used my savings to erect, furnish and stock this shop. That was some years ago, but I'm still struggling to make a profit. The township Africans will buy only heavy stuff like mealie meal and sugar here. They can get all the smaller lines in the city bazaars for much less."

WHY DOES SHE KEEP ON? "TO SEND MY CHILDREN OVERSEAS FOR THEIR HIGHER EDUCATION."

Esther Nyembezi likes playing the piano, knitting and does



Left: Mrs. Elias Ndlovu works at her embroidery in the bedroom of her small, neat home in Mofolo. The bedroom was simply furnished in contemporary style.

editorial work for the first African women's magazine, "Grace," which will shortly be in print.

"The township women pull their weight socially, educationally and culturally," said Mrs. Nyembezi, mounting a favourite hobby-horse.

Divorce

"We are, for instance, trying to encourage housewives to look younger. We are promoting a beauty contest to this end. So many divorce cases derive from negligence and if women bettered themselves there'd be fewer complaints that men find better-looking women in the city and won't come home."

Mr. Krause and Mr. Luyt agreed that the women were responsible for the running of the homes and even the discipline of the children. We were told that on Fridays the women form long queues outside the beerhalls to buy up the stock before the men get there — thus forcing them to drink at home.

Mofolo

We met only one man-in-the-home. This was Mr. Elias Ndlovu, a treasury clerk in the municipal office in Mofolo. Home for lunch, he showed us over the tiny four-roomed house. Its six occupants seem to do little to disrupt the shiny, neat rooms. A radiogram, a ball-and-claw lounge suite and a display cabinet filled with glasses and a few china ornaments offset the impact of an otherwise modest home.

Does dandily-dressed Mr. Ndlovu help in the home? "Oh yes, whenever I can," he said earnestly. Then we saw the golf clubs in the bedroom, heard that the course is near his place of work—and drew our own cynically feminist conclusions.



Below: Mrs. S. M. Nyembezi at work in her own shop—a gleaming, modern general store in Dube. She does a 12-hour daily stretch in her shop and cooks both lunch and the family dinner on the premises.

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NOW

Support a good cause

PROCEEDS from the gala opening of "Lilac Time" — the stage show — will go to the Happiness for the Handicapped organisation and will certainly be put to good use. The money raised will go towards the building of a recreational centre, which will house a Braille library, halls and offices, and towards a bowling green for blind and handicapped people. The premiere will be held in Johannesburg on August 7 at 8.15 p.m. and the Minister of Social Welfare and Pensions, Mr. J. J. Serfontein, is the patron-in-chief. Booking has opened but tickets are still available. Telephone the organisation's office (835-8477) as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

WHAT'S ON

... in Johannesburg

Book Sale: Happiness for the Handicapped. City Hall vestibule. 8 a.m.

Slide Show: Vanguard Club. Mrs. M. H. Michemore will show slides on her tour of Israel and Jordan. At 112 Manners Mansions, Jeppe Street. 10.15 a.m.

Charity Tea Party: Rand Women's Club. At 105 Austey's Building, Joubert Street. 10.30 a.m.

Film Shows: Independent Cultural Association. The programme includes "Numbered Tani", "Pierde Reter-Erfolge" and "Sud in der Wüste". R.P. Auditorium, B.P. Centre, corner Kerk and Loveday Streets. 8.15 p.m.

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