

NATIVE UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICA  
"Conquest" By European Nations  
Fails to Bring Peace

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"What do the Natives of South Africa want?"

This no doubt is the question many Europeans and Americans are asking in the British Protectorates and in the Union of South Africa, excepting perhaps those who are in touch with Native opinion, and those connected with Native welfare work. What do the Natives want, they ask, when they read of Native strikes and disturbances since 1914. They cannot understand the change that has come over the natives.

The Native, they say, is by nature a law abiding, happy fellow who sings while he works, and laughs when he suffers. In his natural state he is a fine specimen of humanity, respectful and obedient to those in authority. He knows his place and that of his superiors, and although lazy he is nevertheless docile and manageable. It is the Agitator, the half educated and semi-civilized Native, the half Europeanized creature, who is the menace.

A Fatal Delusion

If the Natives had been kept in their proper place, and if the Missionaries had not spoiled them by giving them some education, we should have been spared all this worry, but unfortunately, the Missionaries did not leave them alone, and today we are reaping the fruits of their folly. I heard this argument by a station master employing a European staff instead of the sons of the soil, although I admit a station master should be a European who should supervise and guide the Natives in the proper direction. This also applies to the officials of various government departments.

In Basutoland we have medical men who have acquired their degrees in Edinborough. These people come home to work for their people and for the Government, but although their qualifications are as good as other medical men, they are not allowed to act as medical officers of health. The only position they hold is termed "district surgeons" to do post mortem examinations on dead bodies.

Native Discontent

As to other positions we know that many other educated people are humiliated before the eyes of their unsophisticated brothers. In Basutoland we have Basuto children born and bred there who have been educated to quite a fair standard that education can give, but before they can be given employment in the Basutoland Government they must first become policemen and receive instruction from a Native Sergeant who has never been to school in all his life!

The Native people are discontented and that is how Agitators are bred, and authorities say agitators are undesirable that the only

way out is to strengthen the hands of the Government, and deal drastically with such agitators. Some of the high officials of Basutoland used to say the same about the leaders of the Basutoland Progressive Association. As an instance of this high handed method of dealing with reformers (dubbed agitators) in 1927 the police at Leribe refused the leaders of the I. C. U. to hold meetings in Basutoland, saying Natives must be governed justly but with a firm hand.

### Drastic Suppression

Having thus argued, those Europeans who still live in the past when Natives through ignorance and on account of the conditions then prevailing appeared to be peaceful and satisfied to go contentedly about their business thinking that Native unrest can be cured by the drastic action which the government might institute against the Bantu leaders under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

They think that the mere enforcement of the Riotous Act, imprisonment or deportation of Bantu leaders will restore the "good old days," those days when Natives worked hard and suffered injustice and insult without protest, and when they outwardly showed respect for Europeans while they were burning with repressed antagonism. It does not occur to them that this unrest is due to causes for which the Europeans are responsible!

### The Call of the Whites

Let us see, therefore, how the white man brought about conditions which disturbed the old life of the Bantu people--conditions which have made the Bantu lose much confidence in the white man's sense of justice. There was a time when the black man lived his life in blissful ignorance, enjoying even the cruelty of African barbarity. Africa, including Basutoland, was a land of open veld when man and animals roamed about without fear of being locked up in gaol or in a zoo. It was a land of unoccupied tracts where cattle, sheep and goats grazed without danger of being impounded for trespassing. The black man worked only to satisfy his few wants, and rested while those wants were being satisfied.

The black man ate, drank and basked in the African sunshine or sang and danced his worries and sorrows away. He was then the happiest man in creation. He was developing along the lines of his race genius. But the white man came and said this child of nature was leading a life of laziness and indolence that was a menace to the human race.