

THE

POETRY

OF

NONTSIZI

MGQWETHO

NONTSIZI MGRWETHI

UMCELELI WA BANU
(JOHANNESBURG), OCTOBER 23RD, 1920.

IMBONGI U CHIZAMA.

Nkosi mhleli wo Mteteli wetu,
Wanga ungapila n bom obude,
Mzukulwana wamadoda afela kwa-
Hoho Taru - Gatyeni hamba,
Sokulandela.

Hom zajika,
Amadoda afela izwe lawo,
Afa kunyene Nkosi yawo u Sandile

Hom bo'
Tinasokulandela kubasingabantwa
na lo Gaga u Gago Inhamba lu
Gongqoza lukwezi Xesi u Ndanda
Ko Veco u Xesi Magqagala
Umtunzi wa bantu bonke bengaka
Nje nditsho ku Sandile mna.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Kuba akuzange kupume ntamnani
Kowenu.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Kuba tina simadoda nje asizange
Siyibone kowetu imbongikazi,
Yenkazana kuba imbongi inyuka
Nenkundla ituke inkosi.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Nezi mbongikazi Tina sizibona
Apa kweli lo laita ne bhokile.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Asazi tina nokuba ngaba isono
Sontamnani saxolelwana?

Hamba Sokulandela,
Kuba ne sidenge (a fool) siyazi
Ukuba umntu olambileyo akangeze
Akokele acebise mzi.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Tsho tsho uzalwe Nkosi bantu,
Sanga eso souka asingepeli kuba

Site esakuvela kwapuma into
Eyimiyeli good on you Nkosi
Bantu.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Nawe mazi esifuba sikulu eyati
Gqi nomaweba ku Buxton,
Kwavuleka intolongo.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Mazi eyapuma izinto nge pass
Kwapuma izinto kwa tamb'ni,
Mlungu exwayi kati ngabula
Nojekwa.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Mazi eyateta e Nancefield yatsho
Amadoda e Komishoni apupa
Kakubona.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Mazi eyalandela amadoda
E-Komishoni kwada kwase Bhat
Indlovu ndifungu Ledi.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Nawe Cete nto ka Nkombisa,
Chizama bamb'i ntambo ama
Kowenu akugxeleshile kunje.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Nto ka Mbambisa Radebe Tina
Siyakwazi nase zintongeni
Ungotuswa zi ngqeqe jonga
Ukupuma kwe nkuluinja.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Mfo ka Maxeke kuba tina
Kuloku satengwa ngo daladula
Inyama ye Komponi.

Hamba Sokulandela,
Kuba lempi ifana ukubona
Yodwa unyaka ozayo Ho! Ho!
Ho! Sakubona Fish.

Hom Mazijike, izibuko libi,
Ndoka ndime Mhleli taru ndobuye
Ndivele.

Nkosi Sikeleli Africa.

CHIZAMA,

Crown Mines.

Worthy Editor of our *Mteteli*

long life to you,
grandson of heroes who fell at Hoho.
Peace! Go, Gatyeni,
we'll follow you.

Whoa! Wait a minute!
Those heroes fell for their country,
died at the side of Sandile their king.

Whoa there!
We'll follow you:
we're loyal to the royal prince
"who rumbles down Xesi's banks,
flits over Vece, the rock-strewn Xesi,
shade for all, however many."
I'm citing Sandile's praises.

Go, we'll follow you:
no traitor came
from your house.

Go, we'll follow you:
no female poet
came from our house:
the poet who rouses the court
and censures the king's always male.

Go, we'll follow you!
We first encountered
these female poets
here in this land of thugs and booze.

Go, we'll follow you:

but can we be sure
a traitor's sin can be hidden?

Go, we'll follow you:
even a fool can be sure
that no one who starves
can guide or lead a nation.

Go, we'll follow you!
We danced at your birth, lord of men!
Umteteli's bread for our table:
may it last forever.
Good for you, lord of men!

Go, we'll follow you.
You too, great-breasted woman:
your robe rattled Buxton
and prison walls tumbled.

Go, we'll follow you,
woman who protested passes;
confronted by protests the white man quailed,
and kept his revolver holstered.

Go, we'll follow you,
woman whose words at Nancefield
inspired the Commission
to dream her dreams.

Go, we'll follow you,
woman who dogged the Commission
to Elephant Bay,
I swear by Lady.

Go, we'll follow you.
You too, Cete, Nkombisa's child.
Chizama, hold tight now,

your people's eyes are on you.

Go, we'll follow you,
Rhadebe, Mbambisa's son,
master stick-fighter;
don't let yapping curs
take your eye off the massive hound.

Go, we'll follow you,
son of Maxeke:
we've been bought off with low-grade chuck,
meat slopped up in the compounds.

Go, we'll follow you:
this lot would like to be alone
in facing the coming year.
Ha! Fat chance!

Whoa! Just a minute! The ford is slippery!
I'll make a stop there, Editor.
Peace! You'll hear from me again.

God bless Africa.

CHIZAMA

Crown Mines.

1. (23 October 1920)

Translated by Jeff Opland.

Maibuye ! Afrika ! Awu !

Yimbongikazi Nontsizi Mgqwetto.

Kade simemeza naso isijwili sako ke Afrika ! Ntsimi ye Afrika, Wadliwa zintaka ke wahlakazeka umi kodwa wena ungazange umke Amazwi atshile kuk'uk'waza wena sigqibe lamaŵwe sikwas' inikisi, Yonanto ifunwa zintaka inkuku kusa ziqondele kuhlwe zingay' boni.

Simi ngama Kapa simemeza wena simi ngama Bhai simemeza wena, Simi ngama Rini simemeza wena zikwako ne Tasi zionodyuwana. Siselel' nkufa sibuyisa wena sikubamb' amehlo sithi awuboni, Umnte ke impela ubuyete emva xa sikubuyisa ngalo ishwangusha.

Uti Maibuye ? Makubuye wena izizwe zomhlaba zix'witana ngawe, Zipuma e Node zipuma e Sude kwas' empumalanga nase ntshonalanga. I Afrika ihleli ayiyangandawo kangela enc'eni wofik' isahluma, Kangel' imitombo yamanz' isatsitsa kangela yonk' into imi ngendlela.

Woz' ufe na gxebe ungeko entweni wake nyizililo uti maibuye, Makubuye wena woshukuma nomzi zihambe nendaba zime nge Jeriko. Kautsho ! Afrika kwakumlambomnina ap'umnt' engazinto ati maibuye, Kuba ndibonanje sinempau zonke esihamba ngazo zasebudengeni.

Simi ngama Monti sikony' izililo simi ngama Dike sikony' izililo, Sezizw' ezintsundu ngapantsi kwelanga u Satan adane kutshone nenkaba. Aninalutand' ! Animanyananga ningab' onxazonke abangenacala, Nikwango ntamnanlopembabeshiya niyek' amawenu nincedis' umlungu.

Nikony' izililo ? Niti maibuye nopala nisopa makubuye nina. Akuko nasiko lakumisa umzi akuko bukosi akuko ntwisento. Seninje ngenkumbi zisele kwezinye nashiywa bubuzwe nashiywa babuntu Nashiywa yimfuyo zonke ezo zinto sefizizolisa ngo Cimizingqala.

Uti maibuye ? Makubuye wena wonwaya intl'oko ulila ngabani, Nanko no Ntsikana kade akutyela zuyeke imali siqu sempundula, Mfondini wotatu lwakud' e Afrika wazonela ngani ? Pambi ko Yehova, Nalo ke ne China lize ngemitombo nalo ke ne Kula lize ngama empty.

Ukony' izililo ? Makubuye wena sala akutyelwa sabona ngolopu, Ukumbule apo waw' uvela kona afun' osiyazi bahlab' ezintl'oko. Taruni zindali zase South Afrika baf' abantu benu ! Lemk' izwe nezizwe Sikala ngakona sithi maibuye, ivuse inimba yakuma kowayo.

Taruni zintlambo zase South Afrika Taruni matafa ! Ezwe lako weta Nankosenilinywa zinqwelo zomlilo zipala ngecala njenge nkunzemfene. Baya M'afrika yaqengqelekane yonke iminyaka uminda weni nye. Hleze zingatotywa kwanemvula kuwe hleze nezibeto zifise usapo.

Camagu ke Langa ! Camagu ke Nyanya nini amagosa awesipeteyo, Yinyusen' ingxelo iye ko Pezulu nisi-tetelele nide nicokise.

Camagu ! Awu !!

Oh, bring Africa home!

For a long time now we've been calling, Africa.

Hear our wailing, Garden of Africa!!

Your crop was consumed and scattered by birds,
but you stood firm and never left us.

Our voices are hoarse from imploring you;
we track through countries, appeal to phantoms,
nothing more than chickens' scratchings,
eager at dawn, at dusk empty-handed.

We call to you from Table Bay,

we call to you from Algoa Bay,

we call to you from Grahamstown,

clutching satchels crammed with half-jacks;

we drink suicidally calling you home,

we cover your eyes and declare you blind,

you go right back to where you came from

as we call you home from the depths of depravity.

You say "Bring her home?" *You* must come home!!

All the earth's nations profit from you,

they come from the north, they come from the south,
from the east and from the west.

Africa stayed still! She's nowhere else:

look how the grass continues to sprout.

Look at the springs still bubbling with water.

Look everywhere, all's as it should be!

Will you go to the grave with nothing achieved,
raising your cry, "Bring her home?"

If *you* come home first the nation will rise

and news of its stirring will ring out of Jericho.

But tell us, Africa, where in the world

can a fool say "Bring her home?"

As I see it, we have all the signs

that mark a person as stupid.

From the Buffalo's banks we raise our cry,
from the Tyhume's banks we raise our cry
for all the black nations under the sun,
till Satan's abashed, dejected, rejected.
You display no love, display no unity,
you sit on the fence, won't take a stand.
Nothing but sell-outs, you set fires and run,
betray your own people to bolster the whites.

Are you raising a cry, "Bring her home?"
You'll cry yourselves hoarse: *you* must come home!
Gone are our customs for setting up homesteads,
royalty, values, nothing is left!
You live like locusts left by the swarm,
you've lost all dignity, your sense of a nation,
lock, stock and barrel, everything's lost:
you seek balm in the bottle that blots out all pain.

You say "Bring her home?" *You* must come home!
You scratch your head in search of a scapegoat.
Ntsikana warned you a long time ago,
"Money's the lightning-bird: leave it alone."
Child of the soil of far-flung Africa,
What have you done to so offend God?
There the Chinese sells you malt for your home-brew,
there the Indian buys up your empties.

Are you raising a cry? *You* must come home!
Spurn advice and you'll come a cropper.
Always remember where you come from:
consult the sages if you seek solutions.
Peace, hills of South Africa, your people are dying!
Nations cart off their country!
With reason we cry, "Bring her home":
To induce birth-pangs for its people.

Peace, vales of South Africa,
peace, plains of our land,
look how you're ploughed up by steam locomotives
rocking along like bull baboons.
Come home, Africans! Or will rolling years
leave you standing in the dust
while rain falls some place else
and your family falls to plagues?

Mercy, Sun! Mercy, Moon!
Stewards of our Protector,
Bear the news to the One on High,
plead our case in elegant terms.

Oh, mercy!!

(A) (8 December 1923)

Translated by Jeff Opland.

Pulapulani ! Makowetu.

*Ndiyigxotile i Kresmesi, no Nyaka
Omdala kwano Nibidyala ngezibongo.
Ndizaku zibonga mna ke ngoku nda-
ndule ke kwakona ukuqala into entsha.*
Camaguni !

Yimbongikazi Nontsizi Mgqwetto.

Taru ! Nontsizi dumezweni ngentsholo
Nto ezibongo ziyintlaninge yezwe
Indlovu ke ayisindwa ngumboko wayo
Awu ! Taru ! Sikukukazi piko e Afrika.

Esikusela amatole aze engemki
Emke nezinye intaka eziwadlayo
Uyaziwa lilizwe nambakazi yezulu
Enqenwe nazi Mbongi zada zaxelelana.

Wugqwetele Mgqwetto lomhlaba ka
Palo

Beta izizwe ngesitunzi zidangale
Ulimamcwa akuvelwa ngasemva
Nabakwaziyo babeta besotuka.

Taru ! Mdakakazi omabalaziziba
Ovumba linuka okwenyoka yomlambo
Camagu ! Nawe Ndlovu edla Pezulu
Uzibhalile noko Inkomo zakwa
Mgqwetto.

Taru ! Nontsizi bulembu e Afrika
Obuyepuzela emazantsi namaza
Wak'ubeka ngonyawo weva ubuhlungu
Wahliliza ngomlomo wawiselwa pantsi.

Taru ! Nontsizi bulembu e Afrika
Ozihlaba izibongo ekohleni
Zitsho nentaba zelizwe zikangelane
Ka wapuka imbambo macala omabini.

Taru ! Mdakakazi ngqele ese Lundini
Enje ngayo Imibete yase Herimone
Ndakhubeka ndibheka emlungwini
Awu ! Ndeva sendibanjwa ngamadid-
ndala.

Taru Mbongikazi Flamingo ka Vaalibom
Esundaza inyawo xa tsukayo
Esundaza inyawo xa ihlilayo
Zipume izilo zonke zigcakamele.

Taru ! Dadakazi lendada ze Afrika
Ub'hib'hinxalwontombi esinqe sibi
Awu ! Nontsizi bulembu e Afrika
Akusoze wende nezinto zigoso.

Taru ! Mbongikazi piko le Afrika
Sudukani bo arha ndabonelelwa

Taru ! Somikazi lomti wekiwane
Ubonga noko sidesipel' isoya.

Taru ! Nontsizi bulembu e Afrika
Isishumane mazambat' amabhayi
Kuba ayaziwa Iminyanya yakowenu
Akungetshati ungabhinqi zik'ak'a

Zipi Intombi zenu Izwi liyintoni
Sigqibe lomhlaba sifuna ukwenda
Salahlala amak'azi salahlala amakaya
Namhla sizizigudu kwa namabhungela.

Imfundo yintoni bap'onyana benu
Baqqibe lamazwe befun' inikisi
Yona nto ifunwa zintaka inkuku
Kusa ziqondele kuhlwe zingay' boni

Taru ! Nontsizi ntsizi enemizila
Egqibe izinga zonke iprofeteshu
Awu ! Taru ! Sanusekazi se zibongo
Nalo neramcwa liwabhul' amapiko

Taru ! "Chizama !" Odla inyama twada
Ayaziwa neminyanya yakowenu
Mazibuye ke ! Indlovu zidle
Zingalala ezindle zilahlekile.

Taru ! Nontsizi ntombi ka Sandile
Mntana wenkosi kwinkosi zakwa
Ngqika

Kubonga amakosi not amabhungexo
Watshiswa zinduku kumataf' akwa
Ngqika.

Awu ! Taru ! Nontsizi bulembu e
Afrika

Ntokezi etsho ngentlombe ezimnandi
Zitsho zidume nendonga ze Afrika
Irha-hal abhitye onke amadodana.

Mhlana wafa Nontsizi losibekela
Hashe lenkumanda loba lilahlekile
Awu ! Taru ! Nangaye u Ntsikana
Owayegqibe zonke izinga eprofeteshu.

Camagu ! Sinungunungu Esingowele

Listen, Compatriots!

I sent Christmas, the old year and the new year packing with praise poems. Now I'm going to sing my own praises, and then I'll move on again to start something new. Mercy, all of you.

Peace, Nintsizi, renowned for you chanting,
your poems are the nation's bounty.
No elephant finds its own trunk clumsy.
Oh peace, hen of Africa with sheltering wing!

Hen shepherding chicks
safe from the grasp of birds of prey,
the nation knows you, sky-python,
poets sneer but discuss you.

Upset Phalo's land, Mggwetho,
overshadow nations and sap their strength.
Wild beast too vicious to take from behind,
those in the know tremble in tackling you.

Peace, dusky woman with the colours of pools,
your stench reeks like the river snake.
Mercy! Elephant browsing top shoots,
you've made a name for Mggwetho.

Peace, Nontsizi, African maize tufts
waving beneath the breeze,
you stubbed your toe and felt the pain,
a slip of the tongue and they stomped on you.

Peace, Nontsizi, African maize tufts,
you strip poetry bare and expose it
and the nation's mountains face one another
as you sway from side to side.

Peace, dusky woman, Drakensberg snow

like morning dew on Mount Hermon.
I fell flat on my face looking up to the whites:
Oh I felt the cops' cuffs on me!

Peace, woman poet, Vaaibom's flamingo,
which thrusts its feet forward for take-off,
which thrusts its feet backward to land:
all the animals come out to bask.

Peace, duck of the African thickets,
ungainly girl with ill-shaped frame.
Oh Notsizi, African maize tufts,
with bow-legs like yours you'll never marry!

Peace, woman poet of nestling Africa.
Make way! *Ach*, I was used.
Peace, starling perched in a fig tree,
your poetry puts paid to feminine wiles.

Peace, Nontsizi, African maize tufts,
let spinsters wear bodices once again
for no-one knows your ancestors:
without skin skirts there'll be no marriage.

Where are your daughters? What do you say?
"We roamed the countryside searching for marriage,
we walked away from home and dowry,
now we're milked though calfless, living withnobodies."

What's education? Where are your sons?
They roamed the land searching for *niks*,
chickens scratching for scraps,
eager at dawn, at dusk empty-handed.

Peace, Nontsizi, match-stick legs scratched
from prophesying in thornbrakes;
Oh peace, poetic diviner,

like morning dew on Mount Hermon.
I fell flat on my face looking up to the whites:
Oh I felt the cops' cuffs on me!

Peace, woman poet, Vaaibom's flamingo,
which thrusts its feet forward for take-off,
which thrusts its feet backward to land:
all the animals come out to bask.

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chickens scratching for scraps,
eager at dawn, at dusk empty-handed.

Peace, Nontsizi, match-stick legs scratched
from prophesying in thornbrakes;
Oh peace, poetic diviner,

watch out, the wild bird's flapping its wings.

Peace, Chizama, who eats her meat raw;
no-one knows your ancestors.
May the browsing elephants make it home:
they're lost if they sleep by the way.

Peace, Nontsizi, Sandile's daughter,
child of one of the Ngqika chiefs.
You were thrashed on the Ngqika plains
for praising chiefs and not commoners.

Oh peace, Nontsizi, African maize tufts,
woman, Africa's walls are throbbing
with the sound of your lovely parties:
Ach shame! All the lads wither.

The day of your death will darken, Nontsizi,
the commando's horse will lose its way.
Oh peace! And to you, Ntsikana,
who prophesied in thornbrakes.

Mercy, Awesome Saint!
This then is what Ntsikana spoke of:
little red people down on their knees,
producing spells when they come to the Mpondo.

Fiery tractors ploughed our fathers' land
and the black had no place to plough.
Mercy, Heavens! Mercy, Earth!
Mercy then, Sun! And mercy, Moon!

You keep our final accounts,
present your report to the Highest,
plead our case in elegant terms.
Where else will we go, Pool Crocodile?

Sesanina ? Esisimb'onono ?

(Yimbongikazi Nontsizi Mgqwetto.)

Inkohliswano impatwano kubi
 Imbandezelo izibulalano
 Pambi ko Mgwebi ekang'ale tina
 Koba njan'na ?

Ndizakuzongoma ndibuye'ela
 Ndixelise izu'u lase Mtata
 Ndode ndiqubu'e noba Lilaukazi
 Kuba kakade alinxwa laluto.

Lento Isisizwe ngomteto we Bhaibhile
 Abangcatshi baso mabhobhe bapele
 Bagqiba. Isizwe bakupa nobuzwe
 Bupel' Ubukosi singenwe zizizwe.

Siyay' binza i Afrika makowetu
 Ngokuntamana sibulala amawetu
 Seside sanxibake—nemix'aka
 Yamawonga abulala i Afrika.

Elonxeba e Afrika libuhlangu
 Sesicenga ngamawetu libuhlangu
 Yabizwa ngomntsho ukutsho
 Nantso nayo itsho.

Naso ke Isimb'onono makowetu
 Namigudu nantoni yakowetu
 Siyashiywa sinbe e kukugxeka
 Imke ke kupele yona i Afrika.

Ucalulo lukuti kwatokungcatshana
 Iq'wesheke, i Afrika sisagxagxisana
 Inane singabhanga sike sazipata
 Tu nto nabhongo elo lokuzipata.

Zulu ! Mxosa ! Msutu ! Tye lase Mb'o !
 Bonke bayafana akunandzwe zimb'o
 Emhlabeni kunjalenja bakwantonye
 Enhlalweni kwaye Sizwe bandawonye.

Nichit' amawenu nincedis' Izizwe
 Kuba nje nifuna uk'ongwa nilizwe
 Zonk' imfihlo zetu bazaziswa nini.
 Umbuzo manditi koda kube nini.

Sesanina Afrika Esisimb'onono.
 Mondli ebulawa ngabakowabo
 Xa ndilapo Imbongi ke zinoc'uku
 Kunokuyeka ukozo lungadli nkuku.

Bangapi o Judas abafe kumdaka
 Bed'ala ngebala layo le Midaka
 Madoda nganifakane imilomo
 Azi soba yinina seso " Simb'onono "

Nkosi—Sikelela i Afrika
 Beta o ntamneni ngezihlisa zodaka
 Bavele amabala njengo Lovane
 Ufake nopawu ukuze sivane.

What's this wailing?

Treachery, animosity
oppression, blood feuding
before the Judge watching us:
what can He think?

I'll roar my basic position
like thunder over Umtata.
I'll even take a Khoi to wife,
worthless as a long-left village.

This nation's founded on biblical law,
traitors to t deserve to die.
They kill the nation, rip out its lifeblood:
our power dies, and we're ripe for invasion.

My people, we're stabbing Africa,
we kill our own through betrayal:
we court celebrity status,
honours for killing Africa.

When we use our own to suck up to whites
we inflict a painful wound on Africa.
I'm not one to shy from saying so:
your every deed proclaims it.

So there's the wailing, my people,
every effort of ours.
As we idly bicker we're overtaken
and Africa slips from our grasp forever.

Mutual insult drives us apart,
while we trash each other Africa leaves.
We'd be lost if we ever ruled ourselves:
There'd be nothing, not even the urge to rule.

Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Mfengu,
all are the same despite distinctions.
Here on earth all are one:
under this rule they suffer alike.

You scatter your own helping strangers
currying praise and favour:
through you they know our every secret.
My question then is: "How much longer?"

Africa, why this wailing,
Victim of your nurslings?
Poets, I say, are a nitpicking lot,
ignoring the grain pecking the chicken.

How many Judases have died in the dark,
After secretly toying with black people's lives?
Men, please get together and talk:
how long can we suffer that wailing?

God bless Africa!
Smear all traitors with dripping mud,
lend them chameleon colours
to brand them, then we can unite.

Peace!!

45 (22 November 1924)

Translated by Jeff Opland.

Yintsomi yo Nomeva!!

INKOKELI—EHAMBA ISITI AYIKOYIKI
—UKUBANJWA YONA KUNGATSHA—
KUCIMA!!!—

(Yimbongikazi Nontsizi Mgqwetto.)

Taru! Afrika!—Inteto zisimbo :
Mondli ebulawa ngaba kowabo : Xa
ndilapo Imbongi ke zinocaku ; kuno-
kuyeka, ukozo lungad' inkuku : Taru !
Nawe imileli ! ngasituba sesimbongi ;
asinakutula, abantwana babantu banga
pela zinuka : Kuba tina nkokeli
zangoku siagontloko siyavuta ; apo
sikona—ungatywa nasizinja : Nesi
zwe mosolule intamo xa sisukayo,
singapambani nencuka zigoduka :
Palapala!!—Yintsomi—yo Nomeva!!
Andikupinda ; ndishilo nje nditshilo :
Inkokeli eti ayikoyiki ukubanjwa :
Zekuti lakuti—tu, lona ihashe lika
Nongqai, umntu abe yinto epa-ya
yo-Mcaya onganjeni zembe : Ndine
minyaka emitandatu, namhlanje ene
nyanga esimbini ndibonga, ndenze
isitonga sisinye ; ndibongela le Afri-
ka : Eyashiywa ngo bawo Entilini ;
yaza yaba sisisulu se nuka : Ndizi-
bona ke ne Nkokeli zayo zangoku ;
ezinye ndiziva ngendaba ndingazange
ndizibone : Kate ngo 1919, kwehla
"Isipitipiti" esikula kakulu apa e
Rautini : Sopawu laka Kayin : (Pass-
port) Biza ke bafe nabantu kanobom :
Palapulani! ke!—Ndizakuteta enda.
kubonayo ngamshlo ; ingekuto enda.
kava ngo (Vasiditule)—Kate ngomhla
wesitatu ku April 1919 : Sandu-
laka tina Nkokeli za Sizwe
kanye ne Sizwe ngokubanzi saya
Egantolo : apo sasiye kulinda kona
ukupuma kwe "Kwezi le Afrika"
Kwano kwiswa komtwalo lo we Pasi-
usemagxeni : Esi sinetamba ke eliku-
lu ngenyani, siqondi mhlope ukuba
wona lomtwalo nyakuwa—sakuba
siyinyukile "Indali ka Xakeka"
Kate siselapo, sisagwal'sele, eyona nto
kode kube yiyo : Asibonanga—ngani :
Kwati—tu ndali yimbi ka Xakeka,

eyatsho saxakeka ngenyani : Amaha-
shi o Nongqai esiza kuti kanye enga
sapali etsiba izihogo—: Zabaleka
Inkokeli zona engakafiki nokufika
lomahashi apo e Gantolo : Zati ziyo-
yika ngokumhlope azafihla : Kuba
ziluvile "Utyikityo olwenziwe ngo
Nongqai e Fidasidolopu ngezolo : Zasi-
shiya ke betu kololudaka saziluxovile :
Inene makowetu ; sakutshwa kolodaka
ngamandla Esulu kupela : Amangowa-
ba wona sise Singweni lawo ngapandle
kwentandabuzo : Zaye esinye Inkokeli
zise ntolongweni, zimemeza ukuba
mazizokukutshwa, kuba ziyakuvukwa
zizifo zazo ezidala, azizakumelana ne
Samento : Zaye ezinye zingafuni
nokuhlangana nabantu ngoku ; zisiti
ziyoyika ukubanjwa, kuba zingavukwa
ngamadliso, ke zaya kutya lapapa yase
ntolongweni : Zaba njalo ke indaba
zazo Nkokeli : Zaziteta kuti, zibaleka
no Nongqai pambi kwam : Ukuba ke
zinokuyipika lonyaniso : Ndiyakwandu-
la ke ndizibize ngamagama : Ukutsho
ke makowetu ! Yintsomi yo Nomeva !!
—Ukuziqayisa, ati umntu, mna—ku-
ngatsha—kucime kwakuba kute : Ba-
lunkeleni abamemeza ingqina bengayi
pumi : O Daniel babeposwa kwimi-
ngxuma ye ngonyama ; namaziko avuta
imililo ka sixenxe, bawamele : O
Moses baposwa amaxesha alishumi, ku
mandla Engonyama u Faro : Bawa
bevuka bada bapumalela : Kodwa tina
sisabaleka ne hashi eli lika Nongqai :
Azi kunganjanina ke kwagquma omba-
yimbayi ? Kanene o Daniel no Moses
babeno Tixo wabo ? Asiyifuni ke
nati Inkokeli engena Tixo, konkena !!
Masizifundise nalento ke :—Inkalipo
mayenzilwe ngezenzo kungabi ngama-
zwi : Ukuba umntu ufuna "Inkululeko"
umelwe kukuvuka esiwa, ade aguqe
nangedolo : Ngapaya koko azimisele
tikullindela ! Dabikazi eloyikekayo
kunenene ; elaliwa ngu Mkrestu no
Apoliyoni : Camaguni !!

The tale of the wasps.

YOU CAN'T TRUST A LEADER WHO GOES AROUND
SAYING HE'S NOT AFRAID OF JAIL!!

Mercy, Africa, Victim of your nurslings! The way you speak defines you. Poets, I say, are a nitpicking lot, ignoring the grain pecking the chicken! Thank you too, Editor, for the poets' column. We can't keep quiet: our children would fall prey to wolves, for we leaders of today are hot-heads, we'd be ripped to shreds on the spot by dogs. The nation, too, must peer about before it moves on to avoid encountering wolves on their way home.

Listen! It sounds just like the tale of the wasps! I won't repeat myself: I've said it again and again. I'm left speechless at the leader who says he's not afraid of being jailed, but as soon as the tinpot cop appears on his horse, he stands aloof like a yellow wood immune to the axe.

It's now six years and two months since I exploded on the scene as a poet singing praises to Africa, abandoned on the battlefields by our forefathers, left as prey to wolves. I've seen its present leaders. I heard reports of others but never saw them personally. In 1919, here in Johannesburg, a massive riot erupted over the mark of Cain (that is, the pass). A great number of people died. Now just listen. I'm going to tell you what I saw with my very own eyes, not what I heard from some passerby. On 3 April 1919, we the leaders of the nation marched united with others to the Fort, where we were going to wait for "the dawn of Africa," the lifting of the burden of the pass from our shoulders. We had high hopes, truly believing that this burden would fall once we'd scaled the Hill of Struggle. We got there and stood around, wondering what to do next. What did we see? Another Hill of Struggle suddenly confronted us, scattering confusion. Tinpot cops on horseback charged us down, at full tilt, like bats out of hell. Our leaders took to their heads before those horses reached

the Fort. They made no bones about their fear, saying they'd been pounded by the Tinpots of Fordsburg the day before. They just left us there in the mess they'd invited us to. I tell you truly, my people, it's only through power on High that we were sprung from that mess. Without a doubt, we stood at the gates of death! And then our other leaders in jail begged to be sprung in case their chronic complaints returned if they continued to sleep on cement. And now those who are free are reluctant to meet with those inside for fear of being arrested themselves, in case their ailments return from eating prison pap. And hat's the story of our leaders: they were speaking to me, then running from the Tinpots. If they deny the truth, I'll come right out and name them. I tell you, my people, it's the tale of the wasps: people puffing themselves up, saying "Where there's fire I'll douse it." Watch out for those who urge a return to the attack then duck back inside.

Daniel was thrown into the lion's den and seven times into a fiery furnace and emerged unscathed. Ten times Moses was thrown against the power of Pharaoh the Lion. He came back until he triumphed. But we scatter before he inpot's horse!! What happens when the canons roar? Daniel and Moses had their God indeed. And we want nothing to do with Godless leaders. This too we must teach ourselves: let courage be shown through actions, not words. If you want freedom, you must struggle to rise from a fall, even from down on your kness. Above all, really gird yourself to engage in that terrible Battle of Battles, like Christians fought with Apollyon. Peace to you all!!

The tale of the wasps: perhaps Aesop's "The wasps and the partridges, overcome with thirst, came to a farmer and besought him to give them some water to drink. They promised amply to repay him the favour which they asked. The partridges declared that they would dig around his vines and make them produce finer grapes. The wasps said that they would keep guard and drive off thieves with their stings. But the farmer interrupted them, saying: 'I have already two oxen, who, without making

any promises, do all these things. I is surely better for me to give the water to them than to you."

49 (13 December 1924)

Translated by Jeff Opland.

Yaqengqelekana Iminyaka Umi Ndaweninye ?

(Yimbongikazi Nontsizi Mgqwetto.)

Bupina ubuntu, bupina ubuzwe
Upina umhlaba kwa nama Twalandwe
Bupi ubuk'osi akuko ntwisento
Akuko ntwisele tu-nto kwakuyinto.

Yaqengqelekana yonke iminyaka
Wama ndaweninye nakuwo lo nyaka ?
Washiywa lusapo, washiywa yimfuyo
Yeyama Dlagusha namhlanje imfuyo.

Watsho no Maqoma kwatiw' uyageza
Kub' engazingeni into zobugeza
Mhla nanitengisa emin' emaganda
Ngobuk'osi benu nahamba nisenda.

Zipli Bhaibhile namhla magqob'oka
Mandiyeke apo kuba ndobindeka.
Kuba ababantu nene bapesheya
Basihluta ngezo konke namakaya.

Irara ke lonto basiseza yona
Azi ke Afrika wona ngantonina
Latob' imbalele, kwatsha nemilambo
Azi atipina amabandla se Mbo

Watsho no Maqoma kwatiw' uyageza
Kub' engazingeni into zobugeza
Akoko namhlanje nesitemba yena
Salahla no Tixo Olitemba Yena.

Woma ndaweninye nakuwo lo nyaka ?
Kuntsuku ndisitsho, uti ke lo nyaka
Namhla nga "Wubuye" nok' unyaka
[lwayo]

Woyisiwe konke zintw' ezikanyayo.
Lemitshto yona iyeyamanina ?
Imanywa, iqaulwa kwakumlambo pina
Singabo nxazonke nabangencala
No Tixo kasazi sife namacala.

Yaqengqelekana yonke le minyaka
Namhla ke zulunge utsho ke lo nyaka
Ufune nembali eyakubangela
Ukuba nje kwako, nokufa yindlala.

Pindela kwasemva ap' uvela kona
Apo no Ntsikana wayolela kona
Ungacengi konke ngenxa yenyano
Kuba le yemali yeza nenkohliso.

Ngaw' fun' osiyazi bahlabane zintloko
Zenyange Lemihla Ekhona Ntloko
Ukutetela ngalo utet' ungoyiki
Ums' owoyikayo ngumzi wamaxoki.

Nandzo ke ne "Pasi" kumzi wamaxoki
Nalo ke "Uhlolo" kumzi wamaxoki
Kuba nezinye into eza "Bhulwayo"
Ndifung' o "K'ok'o" no bawo ndiza-
[layo.]

Uyayubuya !!!

Will the years roll by while you mark time?

Where's human kindness? The sense of a nation?
The land of warriors with tossing crane plumes?
Where is royalty? There's nothing of value:
all that we once had is gone!!

Will all the years roll by?
Will you mark time through this year too?
Your family's left you; your stock have left you.
They're now the stock of the Mutton Gluttons.

Maqoma said so, and they called him mad
for spurning the madness of surrender.
In the light of day you sold your kingdom
and went looking for a wife.

Christians, where are your bibles today?
I'd better stop: I get too angry.
Truly, these people from overseas
used them to rob us of house and home.

What they gave us to drink was bitter.
Africa, how have you sinned?
Drought afflicts you, your rivers dry up.
What do they say in the far northeast?

Maqoma said so, and they called him mad
for spurning the madness of surrender.
Now there's no one we can trust:
we shunned even God our only hope.

Will you mark time through this year too?
For long I've said so, now this year says:
"Though lacking faith, please come home,
those glittering baubles aren't for you."

And what about these marriages
made and broken in a day?
We've become neither fish nor fowl,
The walking dead unfamiliar to God.

Will all the years roll by?
This year says: "Gird yourself
to seek the source of your condition,
why you're so and why you starve."

Go back to where you came from
as Ntsikana said in dying.
Don't use the truth to make a deal:
this cash led us astray.

Seek the seers to tell you straight
what the ancient of days divines
so you speak fearlessly with that knowledge:
a nation that fears, is a nation of liars.

There's the pass in a nation of liars,
there's the raid in a nation of liars,
and scripture foresees more,
by my forefathers and father who sired me.

You're coming home!!

53 (10 January 1925)

Translated by Jeff Opland.