

# The African Giant

by MAX M. KORSHAK

LAND belongs to all the people, not to a small favored group to which the rest must pay tribute. Any society that continuously denies this is like a pyramid standing on its apex and not on its base. Eventually, like civilizations of the past, it will topple over and be destroyed.

Africa has been compared to a powerful giant awakening from a deep sleep. For ages his children had been savages vying with the wild beasts for a chance to survive. But they were one step above the animals—they had the power of speech.

Some five years after the discovery of the Americas, Vasco da Gama, a noted Portuguese explorer, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, discovering the then-unknown southern tip of the African continent while searching for a new route to India. No colonization was attempted then—but 150 years later a Dutch surgeon, Van Riebeeck, started a settlement at Cape Town, planting the seed for the South African Republic.

Two centuries passed and suddenly a race began among the principal European nations—England, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany and Italy—to appropriate huge territories for colonization purposes. They set down rules of conduct to be observed by the teeming population and established mores and customs reducing the natives to bondage. But the giant slumbered on.

Although David Livingstone condemned the slave trade, he was not able to exert enough influence to improve conditions for the natives. Large

tracts were obtained by foreigners, either by direct grant from their governments; or from native chiefs through stealth, fraud or chicanery; or for nominal considerations. Titles to many of these grants, covering from 50 to 150 square miles, are still respected, and the natives are denied the right to use the land even when it is idle, unused and unimproved.

When Stanley, with the backing of The New York Times, set out on an expedition to find Livingstone, his objective was humane and worthy, but he took on a commercial sideline for the King of Belgium. He annexed the chunk of Africa now known as Congo Free State, all of which became the property of the King, who never saw it.

The rights to explore sub-surface lands are also denied to natives. These mineral rights may be owned independently, and unbelievably large areas, with promising production value, have been acquired in every part of Africa, notably in the Federation under British rule where the population totals approximately eight million.

No individual, black or white, has the right to "prospect" here without payment of tribute, although the British corporation does no prospecting of its own. It contents itself with tremendous royalties obtained for the privilege of permitting others to extract copper and other minerals and metals stored in the earth millions of years ago. Ask any sixteen-year-old schoolboy who will reap the harvest

of Africa's resources, scarcely scratched up to now, and he will not hesitate to say that the owners of the land and mineral rights will be practically the sole beneficiaries.

Some twenty years after the Livingstone explorations diamonds and later gold were discovered in the southern part of the continent. This had the same effect on its growth and development as the discovery of gold had on California in 1849—and the giant began to stir in his sleep.

Diamonds could be bought today for almost trifling sums if it were not for the fact that men high in finance, principally in England, created vast diamond and gold-producing syndicates through machinations and the help of African governments. These monopolies gave them control of both production and prices.

Nature has been over-generous on this "island" surrounded by the Atlantic and Indian oceans and the Mediterranean. Africa has the longest shore-line among the continents of the world and its mineral, agricultural and industrial wealth mingles with kingly reserves of gold, diamonds and precious stones. The soil, notably along the Nile, is rich and fertile. In its bosom are found bauxite, pitch blende, mica, asbestos, coal and hundreds of other useful substances.

The giant, on awakening, found these gifts of nature—but in addition he noticed that many white governments had enacted humiliating laws for the sole purpose of "keeping the natives in their places." Surprisingly enough the most serious discrimina-

tions were found in the South African Republic where the early Dutch colonization began. In this, the most enlightened nation, the population is divided into four distinct and separate classifications. Each man and woman must have a card of identification. It designates the class to which he belongs and carries strict penalties.

In Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—the Federation under British rule referred to above—the whites are outnumbered nearly thirty to one. Here the government of Great Britain has attempted to placate the colored population by giving them a limited suffrage, said to be far out of proportion to the number entitled to the vote. There is however, no racial discrimination in the schools or public places.

No government can endure permanently unless man's relationship to the earth is properly determined and honored by just laws. The African giant, in attempting to break his chains, has set up a thunderous rebellion which the rest of mankind cannot ignore. But it must be a matter of pride to him to know what he has become an important figure in the councils of the world.

Out of 99 delegations in the United Nations 25 are African—these comprise the largest single bloc in the UN organization. A glance at the map shows that probably more than half the continent is now composed of independent states with their own governments not in any way subject to the dictation, control or rule of any foreign authority.

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**Mme. Gustave Schlotter, widow of the Chief of Police of Algiers, who has just returned from the West Coast where she visited Henry George School classes and directors, will speak at New York headquarters on Friday, February 3rd at 8 p.m., in connection with a film about Algiers. Mme. Schlotter believes the philosophy of Henry George could be applied to all these new "upcoming republics," since the land has not yet been redistributed.**