

South African Diary, March 17-30, 1992

When Mandela Succeeded de Klerk

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This is a "debriefing" after two weeks in South Africa. Substantive matters have been reported elsewhere. Here are a traveller's impressions (in the 18th century tradition) of exotic lands and peoples, beginning with the English at Heathrow.

The prime purpose of my trip was to deliver an invited paper at a conference at the University of (*Universiteit van*) Pretoria. Conference topic: *A Land Tax for the New South Africa?* Sponsor: The Centre for Human Rights Studies, School of Law. Convenor: Law Professor Riel Franzsen, son of gray eminence Daantjie Franzsen, who also attended. Daantjie (aka Daniel) is a semi-permanent special advisor to the Treasury Department, Republic of South Africa (RSA). In RSA today, big people are reexamining fundamental matters. "May you live in interesting times" is a curse, but interesting times are also exciting, bracing, exercising, challenging, and restorative.

To spread the overhead of the trip, my energetic sponsor, Godfrey Dunkley, arranged several other talks in Johannesburg (Jo-burg) and Cape Town, so I saw more than the tidy administrative-educational center, Pretoria. There was no time for safaris or winery junkets, but in a strange land, the quotidian is the adventure.

1. LAX to London via British Airways (BA), on red-eye. London is hardly on the great circle route to Jo-burg. There is also JFK-Johannesburg on South African Airways (SAA). It is a measure of RSA's isolation that there are only three trips a week from JFK. It is a measure of airline pricing that the cost is the same either way. It is a measure of my dull imagination that I overlooked the personal cost of the extra flight time.

LAX-Heathrow I had three seats, slept well, arrived on time. It was to be my last good experience on BA. For its transgressions, see Appendix I.

2. Oxford. Five-hour layover at Heathrow. My friend and co-editor Fred Harrison met me for a chat, impulsively decided to make it more interesting by driving me to Oxford in his elderly-but-muscular Rolls. Fred says he never drove at Daytona, but he could fool a lot of people, even allowing that driving on the left adds confusion to speed and rule-bending. (Do they race clockwise in Britain?) He easily made it there for a leisurely tea and crumpets, a short tour, a nice walk, a whiff of culture, and two lungs full of smoke.

Smoking. The first thing this fussy Yank abroad notices is tobacco in public places, even elevators. We are years ahead of the world in civilizing the weed. Good for us, but how sad that foreigners who ape our worst examples ignore this good one. Smoke-stink started in Heathrow. Fred, an Oxford alum, took me for tea to his old debating club, oozing prestige, tradition, culture, and apparently smoke, which spread as invasively and hung as heavily as in the proverbial political den.

More generally, Brits seem less concerned with physical health, or the appearance of it, than Americans. Smoking may just be part of a larger cultural difference, not all of which favors us.

While Brits tolerate smoke more than we, they tolerate noise less: take your choice, if you have one. Would you rather be shot than hanged? That's what economists today call "Freedom to Choose."

Countryside. Heathrow-Oxford, note lack of scattered subdivisions. Also lack of farmhouses. Straggling hedgerows, a few sheep and cattle browsing, that's about it. The Explainers always cite "good reasons"—you know, people who feel they must produce a proper reason for everything that is or is not, and screen out the possibility of system failure. However, it looks strangely uneconomical not to raise food intensively that close to one of the world's great markets. Can this be market failure? Planning failure? Any kind of failure? One thing for sure, it is not rain failure.

Town and Gown. Oxford streets are, of course, narrow, quaint, and picturesque; buildings wall to wall; parking scarce and costly; street life crowded and active; bookstores properly bustling. Off-street, however, we strolled through what felt like deserted ruins. The college we were in—Christ Church College, I believe—was all turned inward, like Narcissus, with nothing but empty space at the center and old, cold stone walls around us. If crowded streets are a "Tragedy of the Commons," there is a counterpart "Tragedy of the Uncommons," the deserted off-street lands. Arthur Young wrote "The magic of property turns sand into gold" (*Travels in France*, 1787), but that doesn't quite hit the mark. The gold is at the frontage or interface between common street and private property: "edge effect" is the generic term. Edges are where the action is, where life teems and trade flourishes.

Magdalen Bridge makes a peaceful, classic scene. However, there is no peace over who shall pay to repair it. Local scuttlebutt faults Magdalen College for free-riding.

Chapel. We enter a lovely, long, narrow chapel on one of the deserted campuses. I now suppose this was the Christ Church of Christ Church College, but this detail was lost in our preoccupation with editorial discussions. In the moment of silence I felt the eternal pull of faith, refuge, respite, and meditation. The old stained glass and dark vaults evoke mystery. Was I feeling the presence of great-grandmother's relative, John Henry Newman, of the early 19th century "Oxford Movement?" He must have trod these same stones, thinking deep thoughts.

I couldn't help contrasting the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, which fails to arouse that feeling. How does one find refuge in the "Park-and-Worship" lot? Where is the mystery in the face of a TV evangelist? Where are the Sheltering Arms and the Virgin mother inside a building designed to resemble a cut diamond, like the world HQ of Anglo-American, formerly de Beers' syndicate, which I was soon to see in Jo-burg? In either case, it is this world that needs our attention after chapels restore us, so it was back to daylight.

Brain drain. I comment on the brain drain from Oxford, due to high taxes (or low pay, depending on your politics). Fred answers, Oxford is filthy rich with vast landholdings, tax exempt. Can these be in the hands of rent-internalizing empire builders, hoarders who build, and build, but enter not in (remember Lydia Huntley Sigourney)? We all know their kind. On the other hand, we know spendthrifts, too. Grant us the wisdom to find the Golden Mean.

3. Heathrow again. Whizzing back, it is a relief to find there is no hour-long wait to pass through security, as there was twelve months earlier in the wake of Desert Storm. I had

associated that tempo largo snake dance with Heathrow itself, but the judgment was premature, it was all Saddam's fault. Had time for the oyster bar: prices about double what I pay at home. In the gent's loo, an unmissable huge condom vendor looms up, utterly lacking British understatement. Where, though, do passengers use them? In my seat you can't even cross your legs.

4. Jan Smuts Airport is in the chaos of construction. I was last off the plane and could easily have got lost, mingled with workmen or other passengers, and perhaps entered illegally, wandering around looking for the right way to immigration. I was surprised at the lax security.

Who was Jan Smuts? He was an Afrikaner leader who negotiated his people's way back to power after they lost the Boer War. He told British Liberal leader Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, you can have us for an ally or an enemy, take your choice. Like any good lawyer, Smuts knew the answer before he asked, for Sir Henry had opposed the war. The durable Smuts kept his word over many years, delivering South Africa to England in World Wars I and II. More cynically, one might view him as the Boer counterpart of the Indian *zamindar*, the local landowner who sells out on the understanding the Brits will respect and protect his property. He was also famous for strike-breaking. It's a complex world—I'll leave it at that.

5. Through the looking glass. South Africans view life from an odd perspective, walking upside down with their feet pointed toward the Big Dipper. Lots of things are backwards.

a. Dangerous waters. Water taps are reversed, with hot on right. Fortunately color coding, red and blue, helps one adjust.

b. Redesigning heaven. The sun is off schedule, rising about when we are going to bed. The sun is in the wrong course, rising in the northeast, setting in the northwest, standing north of us at midday. March marks the start of autumn, with Sol headed north for the winter. At night, Orion lies on his side. His sword still points to Canopus, second-brightest star after Sirius, but Canopus is now overhead (in Riverside I can see it only in January, just above the southern horizon). The Southern Cross is much smaller and less outstanding than I remember it from Biak, 1945, and looks more like a small kite. Those early sailors were a pious lot, however (when they weren't slaughtering enemies), and saw the Bible in everything.

All that is disorienting: pity the early navigators, who relied on celestial navigation and heavenly guidance. No wonder Columbus hit America six years before Vasco da Gama found the Cape of Good Hope. Columbus stayed prudently above the equator.

c. Life in the wrong lane. South Africans drive to the left, like Brits and Japanese. They shift gears with the left hand, but still accelerate with the right foot. You handle this by letting others drive, shutting up, and enjoying the scenery. Unfortunately, the leftward habit also affects pedestrians, leading to a good deal of stutter-stepping and dark glares. Fortunately, red still means stop and green means go, but see "d."

d. Belittling the dominant. Instead of targeting ethnic out-groups for ridicule, South Africans pick on "Koos van der Merwe" (Koh-us fahn dair Mairvay). Koos bears the brunt of stories that in England are told of Irishmen, in the United States of "Polacks," in Canada of Newfies, in

Alabama of Rastus, etc. (Van der Merwe runs red lights and stops at green. Asked why, he answers, "Because I thought my brother might be coming on the cross street.")

e. Redefining "African." An *Afrikaner* is not what we call an African, but a person of Dutch ancestry born in Africa. His language, of Dutch descent, is *Afrikaans*. It differs from Holland Dutch in those little shibboleths by which people identify their own kind—and they are their own kind, very much so.

There is no affinity between Holland Dutch and Afrikaners, who are mutually ashamed of the relationship. Afrikaners may be the most culturally isolated European settlers in the world.

f. Individualists at the public trough. Many whites are bilingual, but many happy isolationists speak only *Afrikaans*. They are a majority, and have dominated politics since 1948, when they retired the Anglophile Afrikaner Jan Smuts. Sons of the Pioneers (*Voortrekkers*), self-proclaimed rugged individualists, they soon learned to use government to give themselves civil service jobs and farm subsidies. Their individualism is of a group kind that will be familiar to Americans who know the persistent clannishness of Dutch enclaves here (e.g., the Southern California dairy industry). The righteous hypocrisy and double-talk of organized farmers is, of course, worldwide.

g. True individualists. Many individuals, as everywhere, defy stereotypes. Many leaders of reform are Afrikaners. The ANC leadership includes Heinz Klug and Derek Hanekom, for example. The leaders of our reform-minded conferences were mostly Afrikaners.

h. Bilingualism. International conferences are held in English, which intellectual Afrikaners speak with ease, but noticeable accents. Anglophones are affected, too, e.g., saying "Yah" for "Yes." At the Universiteit van Pretoria, in the heart of Afrikanerdom, instruction and most reading is in English, but exams are written in Afrikaans, adding a new intellectual challenge to student life. Bilingualism might not work in a less embattled society, but ties of race and class impel Europeans to accommodate each other.

Instead of goodbye, everyone says "Go well." "I thought I was going to collect it" means I thought I was a goner. An assessor is called a "valuer"; "assessor" means a prosecutor (as in Spanish). "Braai" means barbecue (Trevor and Elizabeth put on a great one). A real estate broker is an "estate agent," as in Britain, but, oddly, they have a NAREB. A minivan is a "combie." See also under "foods."

French surnames are common; they mostly speak *Afrikaans* and identify with Afrikaners: anything, apparently, to remain unBritish. These French are descended from exiled Huguenots, more Calvinist even than the Dutch. It is alleged they have a much stronger intellectual tradition than Dutch Afrikaners, because they came here as religious refugees, like the Mayflower Pilgrims, and not as ruffians, wharf rats, and penal colonists like the Dutch. Indeed, one Holland Dutchman told me in all earnestness that the French influence is all that saved the Afrikaners from remaining low-life barbarians "like the Australians." Take that, Crocodile Dundee!

The extremist racist leader is the appropriately surnamed terrorist Terre'Blanche, also appropriately christened Eugene.

h. Fractured government. Cape Town is the legislative capitol, Pretoria the administrative capitol, and Bloemfontein the judicial capitol. Inefficient, yes, but cheaper than civil strife.

i. Racism and rhetoric. Almost all the people I dealt with were embarrassed by *apartheid*, etc., and defensive. They are hypersensitive to their international reputation and eager either to refute or, without being disloyal, dissociate themselves from it. (To be sure, I wasn't associating with the Nazis, many of whom don't speak English anyway.) They seem to assume I am a TV insomniac who lives on a diet of slanted news clips, takes them all straight, and overgeneralizes like a spiteful administrator laying a paper trail. I was not there to judge, and was impressed by their efforts to rebuild a just society.

Their hospitality is extravagant and amazing: I gained five pounds I didn't need. While my hosts insisted on driving me through or by Soweto, the "Crossroads" area, and other teeming shantytowns of incredible squalor, density, and extent, they were quick to point with pride to areas with better housing, and positively glowed when I remarked that a certain block in Soweto was "not as bad as I expected." We went everywhere with Rex Ahene, a black, without incident. The glances we drew seemed more curious than hostile. Many well-meaning people have yet to learn the proper idioms and linguistic protocols of non-racism, to be sure, but a few gaffes were unintended and not to be overinterpreted. The most conservative person I met was, indeed, an expatriate American, an ex-professor turned banker.

j. Money. The famous hard rand is now soft. If the eponymous Ayn Rand chose her name to intimate she was good as gold, her day is past (praise the Lord!). Gold has dropped worldwide, and the rand with it. It used to be worth over a dollar; now, \$0.35. The annual inflation rate is in the high teens; interest rates 20% and more. Terms of trade favor tourists; Cape Towners are panting to cash in and, with sanctions lifted, probably will, especially if they can improve air service (see Appendix D). They have a crown jewel to sell.

k. Sanctions. Sanctions have not starved out the economy, but saved the people from quarreling over tariff policy. The effect of sanctions is only to do to a nation from outside what nations do to themselves in time of peace. RSA has simply become more self-sufficient, with its own electronics, its own oil-from-coal, etc. When people have good land and technical skills they can make do without free trade (much as I favor it). They have much of the best computerization from everywhere, including their own industry. The modern retrieval system at the library of the University of Cape Town sure beats California's underfunded, unfinished Melvyl system, with its beat-up old user terminals.

The most unpopular name in South Africa, and the best-known American, is Congressman Stephen Solarz. A nice Jewish lady named Solarz was especially vehement against him: he had brought her considerable embarrassment. It's the old story: we may criticize ourselves, but outsiders keep quiet. It is with high glee that they learn of his check-bouncing embarrassments.

6. The miracle of Johannesburg. Jo-burg is Bootstrap City. It should have died when its gold mines played out, like a proper mining boomtown; instead it remains as the economic capital of its nation and half a continent.

Johannesburg defies most laws of urban economics, e.g., that mines create no great cities. Explainers still cite the mines, but its mines have played out; it should now be a ghost town. It has no harbor, no water transportation, not even any gravity water supply. It is, in fact, on a ridge top, the Rand or "reef," at an elevation over 5,000 feet.

It has no sunburst of rail lines, like Chicago or Boston, "The Hub," except perhaps what it has attracted itself. It is "on the main rail line," Explainers say, but so are a thousand miles of other sites. The natural site lacks outstanding amenities, and certainly can't hold a candle to Cape Town. Jo-burg has no governmental economic base. Surrounding farmland is poor. Why Johannesburg? Why is it the largest city, the center of finance, industry, commerce, and international air travel?

As a public finance economist I may overvalue incentive taxation, but Jo-burg has it. The property tax is on site value alone, and at a high rate: they tell me it is 4%. This is what makes Jo-burg distinctive. Challenge and response: Jo-burg had to do something right in order to survive, and that is what it did. It not only survived, it became and remains Number One. Give me a better explanation and I'll back off. I haven't heard one yet.

John Stuart Mill remarks in his autobiography that he had seen many bad policies replaced by good ones, without in the least relieving the bad habits of mind of which bad policies are the result. He referred to free trade. Thus also with Jo-burg and its site value tax, most people, especially the Explainers, may live in the midst of a great applied demonstration of a principle, and never see it.

Jo-burg is not heaven, far from it. Its enlightened municipal policy has not solved the great national problems of race discrimination and black homelessness: blacks might not buy land there, or in any "white" area, until a year or so ago. However, prosperity anywhere helps people everywhere. Alan Paton rather makes Jo-burg sound like the source of the problem, but that is like blaming the Good Samaritan. Homeless blacks who drift to Jo-burg are not its products. Rather, they come there for relief and refuge. Arguably, land taxation, extended to the whole nation, would open up landownership to many more people than now, and accomplish the necessary "land reform," as yet undefined, that is in the offing.

Cape Town, by contrast, is Sleeping Beauty. It is gifted with one of the world's great sites, ideal climate, and scenery. There are only so many continents, with so many southern tips in the right latitude to replicate the Mediterranean climate (remember your "Koppen symbols" from Geography 1A?). It also has the national legislative capitol. It enjoys the business potential of New York with the climate of La Jolla, the scenery of Vancouver, and the political base of Washington (or at least Sacramento). Tourists flock there, and would do so even if the place were misgoverned by Mayor Idi Amin with Police Chief Saddam Hussein.

Actually the Honorable Mayor Frank van der Velde is a good fellow who favors changing to a site value tax. We never call it "the Jo-burg System" there—lots of jealousy—but some leaders are considering tax reform on its merits. Up to now, however, Cape Town has subsisted without that benefit, and suffers the usual consequences: urban sprawl, a fractured CBD, and acres of blight on prime land that should bear housing for downtown workers. Vast rail yards off downtown are little used, and there is no use of air space over the tracks.

7. The Referendum. My trip was spiced up by uncertainty about F.W. de Klerk's referendum on continuing negotiations to extend voting rights. I was headed for a conference on "... the new South Africa"; when I took off I wondered if there was to be a new one at all. In London I learned there was. The people I associated with were almost all greatly relieved by the outcome,

even though it could ultimately disarrange their own upper-middle-class lives considerably. Some are ready to accept that; others have confidence that good old F.W. will negotiate reasonable protections for their interests. He seems a wily old fox, all right, but I fear they may be heading toward a new era of ethnic machine politics where rent is redistributed via graft, rather than the clean, efficient method of taxation, and social dividends for all. My pitch is that the present leadership should show its ability and will to implement populist ideals under professional guidance, before they lose the power to do that, or anything else.

8. Light traffic. RSA has built itself a magnificent modern infrastructure: highways, a power grid, electric rail, water projects, etc. The uncluttered highways are lots of fun, but one wonders if they aren't out of balance with the private economy. There's no question the Cape Town City Hall is out of balance. Every little desk is surrounded by 2,000 square feet or so of floor space, under high ceilings. Mutter, if you will, moralisms about waste in government, but it reminds me first of the head office of a big private bank. Waste and unbalance have many sources.

Back to the empty highways: they are certainly of little use to the majority of blacks, who lack cars. There is a high tax on petrol, and a protected local firm, SASOL, making gasoline from coal by a process developed, I believe, in blockaded Germany during World War I or II. Maybe we'll need that someday. Ecologists say we should save endangered species to conserve genetic diversity. Likewise blockades, sanctions, and tariffs, with all their faults, conserve technological diversity.

9. Black Visibility. If this is "white country" you would never guess it from the streets and byways. Now that the pass laws are dead, blacks can wander everywhere, and do. The operative principle is fairly simple, although constantly forgotten. Drive people off the private land and you drive them onto public highways. As Henry George kept saying, man cannot live without land. They have to stand, sit, sleep, and earn a living somewhere. Where else can they go?

Reminds me of an old ditty: "A college economist planned to live without access to land. He nearly succeeded, but found that he needed food, clothing, and someplace to stand."

Sidewalks in downtown Jo-burg are covered with "hawkers," reminiscent of Taipeh. Many roadside fences, too, are draped with textiles for sale. Cape Town somehow prevents this—another difference between the two cities, although it may just be a matter of time. It is not for lack of human material near Cape Town: there are about 1.5 million squatters in the "Crossroads" area. Cape Town must have busy police and tough judges. They do allow selected street people. We heard some delightful indigenous music, calypso-like, on a sort of pan-pipe, with guitar accompaniment: nothing like the blaring, wailing, amateurish saxes you can't avoid in the dark caverns of New York or Philadelphia, or cafes of New Orleans or San Francisco.

Hawkers constitute a considerable "gray market," free of some taxes. VAT, newly introduced, is defended as catching them. This strikes me as bad policy anywhere, and more so where unemployment is pushing 50%. Marginal activity, by definition, yields no taxable surplus. Taxation can only abort it, as my host Godfrey Dunkley keeps reminding everyone. Now land rents, on the other hand...

In "peri-urban" Jo-burg, black strollers are constantly in view, wandering across fields and along roads. Where and why they are going is not clear, but one suspects they would wander less if they had places to stand still, sit, lie, and improve.

To be sure they have their "homelands." The name is not just ironic, but deceptive. They've been driven from their actual homelands, and overcrowded onto desperate leavings of land newly called "homelands" to conceal the truth. Eighty percent of the people are squeezed onto 13% of the land area, and until *very* recently forbidden to buy land on the other 87%, or even sojourn there without a pass. Now they are grandly told to let bygones be bygones, respect and firm up existing property rights, and start the game of "free market." It's now a "level playing field," where fair is fair and the best man wins—if he starts the game owning the playing field. Little wonder they don't buy the free market concept, as usually proffered them. Did you think they're as stupid as Americans?

10. Wealth and Poverty. Upon arriving in Jo-burg it was my privilege to lunch with three bankers. These are good, idealistic bankers, striving to funnel credit to the needy and, in one case, to reform land tenure. (They also treated me to lunch.) I mean them no ill when I note two phenomena.

a. Security. Entering bank offices is like entering a secure zone: I.D. required, x-rays, tags, etc. Jo-burg is a city under siege.

b. Land and conflict. Opulent Persian rugs are much in evidence. These reminded me how near we are the Indian Ocean and the source, but also how wide is the gap between rich and poor. One of those rugs is worth the price of many squatter shacks.

Don't misunderstand, I know blacks can't prosper just by taking from whites. Basically, they must increase output. "Growth, not redistribution, is the answer," goes the chant, and somehow that always means tax breaks for property, a la George Bush. Still, that by itself is empty conservative moralizing that papers over a great fundamental truth: land doesn't grow. Blacks can get more and better only by leaving less and worse to others. "They aren't making any more of it."

Whites prospered by taking land from blacks. Granted they are advanced, productive people, with a technological and institutional edge; still they would do poorly in the kind of Bantustans they have relegated for blacks. Land is the basis of white prosperity. Like all land it is stolen, only here the memory is fresher, and sharpened by racism.

Of land it is unfortunately true, blacks can get more only by taking from whites. That is the inescapable truth of nature, and the source of all conflict. Everything else is diversionary and namby-pamby. Land is where it's at. There must be massive redistribution, and it won't all be "win-win," goody-goody Pareto optimizing. Someone must end up with less, like it or not. The sooner we face the truth, the sooner we'll find solutions.

11. Home and Hardware. Host Godfrey Dunkley took us to visit his son Trevor, with wife Elizabeth. They live in peri-urban Jo-burg, in and around a sprawling ranch house on many acres of dryish land, in a compound with Trevor's brother Nigel and Elizabeth's brother and wife. The

last two live under a thatched roof, of which there are many: they are highly regarded for their cooling properties, and apparently will last as long as wood (although I got a wide range of answers to that question). The thatch is of native craftsmanship and design, even though Europeans also had such a tradition, as the surname of Britain's last lady leader should remind us. At Oxford, Fred H. had shown me a thatched cottage the natives think remarkable. In a wet climate, probably it is; in South Africa they are commonplace.

Elizabeth's brother is a colorful, athletic character, who formerly ran a reptile park of some kind. He entertained us with a cobra, which he released from a covered container, caught by the tail, and handled expertly, fearlessly. These are all resourceful, talented people who seem confident swinging from one business to another, and prospering. Trevor and Elizabeth run a business that involves intensive computer bookkeeping plus showing wares or samples from a truck that tours the black townships. This is no sheltered life.

Nigel seemed to be learning to use some sort of pistol. I gradually became aware they all carry hardware, all the time. Elizabeth, a self-possessed, engaging young wife, carries hers tucked under the belt of her jeans, demurely covered by a shirttail. That is style, like one of James Bond's femmes fatales, but the facts are less glamorous. There have been several break-ins, putatively by former ANC goons and guerrillas now unemployed by the outbreak of negotiations. Maintaining liberal politics in these conditions takes a big view of things. That's the kind of people the Dunkleys are, with sangfroid, self-preservation, and compassion, all in one. They deserve the best: hope they survive to enjoy it.

12. City under siege. We visited Stephen Meintjies' (rhymes with pint-cheese) home on a shaded street in an upper-middle-class section of Jo-burg. Stephen is co-author of *The Trial of Chaka Dlamini*, a Socratic dialogue with Georgist morals for South Africans. All the stands (lots) are walled, gated, wired, and posted. This is indeed a city under siege. The neighborhood church is similarly protected. Before underlining the irony and imputing hypocrisy to African Christians, let's recall a popular painting of our own Pilgrim fathers trudging to church in the snow, bearing arms. Here and now, as there and then, it is a matter of simple survival.

13. A Hostile Demonstration. Swinging around the Jo-burg beltway, Godfrey abruptly pulled over, announcing, "It's a demonstration by the hostiles; get out and take pictures!" That struck me as imprudent, but what does an American know? The hostiles were colorfully equipped with native shields and spears, swarming up the bank right to the edge of the freeway, looking angry and excited. The police apparently agreed with me and quickly ordered us on, but Rex got some good snaps. (My Christmas camcorder was home with dear wife, who was convinced the fascistic police would confiscate any films I took, and besides, she wanted to use it.)

Actually, there were several white men filming the hostiles from within their ranks, without apparently feeling threatened. I came to realize this was partly theater and partly recreation. It was also in memory of the Sharpeville Massacre. I also learned that "hostile" is spelled hostel. These are not exactly youth hostels for biking students, but barracks for single males working in town. "By the hostels" was a location, not an attribution of intent, although heaven knows they have cause to be hostile. Whew, another crisis passed.

14. Afrikaners close up. Holiday Inn, Pretoria, is full of Afrikaners. Dutchmen generally are big people, and handsome—at least by our conventions; Afrikaners seem bigger, and consistently blonder. They appear more physical, perhaps sensual, tending to youthful athleticism or middle-aged fat, without much in between (except the intellectuals). They come in groups, and studiously ignore you, looking through or away. They don't seem hostile, but aloof—the very word is Dutch, meaning windward, the opposite of alee. Their casual dress indicates they feel at home here, this is their turf. The men wear shockingly short shorts. The aloofness I found depressing. Were it not for our group, I would have felt very alone. They look like close relatives, but are so remote. How did we drift so far apart?

15. Foods. A superior, chewy, fresh-baked whole-grain bread is widely available. At the salad bar whole loaves are supplied: you slice your own, and hope the previous hands were clean. My gracious hostess, Mrs. Sterling, baked individual mini-loaves daily, and I could have lived on them alone, if the other food weren't so good as well. Cape Town features all kinds of fish with new names I forget, except "snouk," served as a pate spread. Stuart and his friend John, who preceded me, report enjoying good meals of zebra and antelope, which they tried "because the lions enjoy them so much," but I never got so lionhearted. Mussels at Bertie's are a specialty, with a special fattening sauce Tish and my doctor would never approve, but, as they say, it is easier to get forgiveness than permission. One hopes they come from a distance, because Cape Town sewage turns the waves gray over a considerable stretch of ocean frontage—not that Cape Town is so big, but with all that ocean out there one gets careless. Mangoes are a staple; one of Yvonne Dunkley's dangerous desserts with heavy cream is especially memorable. Godfrey remains rail-thin regardless, aided no doubt by his propensity to dip in the cold ocean, where he also lured me to burn some fat by nearly freezing to death. "Venison" abounds, but in its original meaning of wild game, not normally deer here. A "roll-mop" is herring rolled around a pickle.

Local wines are smooth as silk, and I rediscovered a pleasure from long, long ago when once I could enjoy California wine. I hypothesize the difference between wine then and now is the curse of national marketing and absentee ownership, and the associated overuse of sulfur dioxide, found on every California and French label, but missing from South African labels. The hypothesis is based on my prejudice more than research, because South Africa has no labeling laws like ours, and who knows what's in their wine? All I know for certain is my body tolerates their wines and not ours; and it used to tolerate ours.

A popular local herbal tea is "rooibos" (red bush). They say it grows only in South Africa. I like it, and exported a pack.

16. Survival rations. Jo-burg to Pretoria, the countryside is arid and bleak. It gives the same lone, lost feeling as the empty landscapes in *Star Wars*. The basic survival food here is "mealies" (a word derived from a Dutch homophone), from the local grain sorghum or "Kaffir Corn." (Kaffir is from the Arabic word for "infidel.") The "corn" is a drought-resistant grain now common in the former dust bowl of the United States. Like Samuel Johnson's oats, in the United States it is food for cattle; in the Bantustans, for men. There is a myth that a few mealies keep the

natives happy. I suppose that soothes the conscience, but it seems to me I've heard that song before, and it didn't ring true then, either.

17. U.S. Department of State. An unexpected bonus in Pretoria was being invited to a reception and dinner at the U.S. Embassy, to which I was driven by chauffeur. The host, Don Steinberg, is apparently second only to the ambassador, although I failed to catch his exact title. My good luck was by courtesy of John Strasma, a fellow conferee and good old friend from the Land Tenure Center of Madison, Wisconsin. John was there at the behest of ANC land expert Derek Hanekom, his trip underwritten by USAID. Don Steinberg turned out to be an old Angeleno and, more important, a fellow Reedie, as well as genial and personable. We hit it off famously; copy to the Alumni News.

18. Segregation. I got no feeling that South African whites have any problem associating and sharing lunch counters with blacks, as in the old South. They shake hands, share loos and queues and schmooze and booze and probably pews without apparent strain. Mews and snooze may be another story: housing is the last bastion, because it entails land tenure.

Under the former Group Areas Act the races were divided into at least five groups: white, black, "colored" (mixed), Indian, and "Malay." The "Malays" are coloreds with an admixture of oriental genes and a custom of wearing skullcaps and frequenting mosques.

The act is dead, but its inertia remains. Land use is tightly controlled in the name of "good planning": have they been studying us? The city planner carries himself like the VIP he is, with that distinctive air of importance and impatience we find at home in the director of public works and city manager. Actually I rather liked City Planner Neville Riley: beneath his swagger and reputation for power-hunger lurks a human being. It's hard for an Irishman to be a complete SOB, although it has been done.

Residential segregation lingers on. The "Malays" occupy what is now prime land, overlooking the CBD and Table Bay, and are apparently scheduled for gentrification. It would be a shame if they introduce a site-value tax and then blame it for this, its least attractive face.

The Riviera is fairly intensively developed and, of course, pure white. Isn't it odd how sailors at sea long for dry land, while lubbers on land pay top rand to be near the ocean? Guess that's "edge effect" again. Whatever, this is prime real estate at prime prices.

It will be a long time before blacks can afford to buy in this area. How fair is a level playing field when the other guys own the field? The wonderful thing about South Africa as a study is that the attributes and problems of all societies stand out in forms so exaggerated, so clear, so literally black-and-white, no one can miss the point. No one? Some people can tune out anything, and do, and will until the guillotine falls.

On a less cosmic note, the mundane parking squeeze that plagues intensive land use elsewhere is minimized here by the high price of cars and petrol, and corresponding presence of mass transit.

19. Cape of Good Hope. Only pictures and a globe can do it justice. You're on a high point with a sheer drop 1,000 feet or so to rocks and breakers in aquamarine, looking south to the pivot of the world on ice, thinking deep thoughts about infinity, astronomy, destiny, and of course economics. Chicago economists often say the value of land is all manmade, like capital, but I wonder how long it would take to make another Cape of Good Hope? It's a thrill and an inspiration, but remember, O Absent-minded Philosopher, shield your eyes from the wind, and don't fall.

On the lighter and surprising side, there are wild baboons around, cadging sugar cubes from German tourists who can't read the warning signs. Godfrey, no shrinking violet, lectures them sternly with international gestures, and they retreat in shame.

20. Back to London. I returned via London, thereat to spend two days poring over manuscripts with Fred Harrison, my co-editor. I was to have stayed at Fred's and Rita's in Teddington, but the house was occupied by relatives come to be with Fred's mother, who had just suffered a heart attack. They put me up in style, therefore, at the Richmond Hill Hotel with the swells. Richmond Hill is a renowned beauty spot overlooking green fields and a graceful bend in the Thames, just above London. Publisher Anthony Werner joined us, and we did our business strolling in a nearby park, totally free of muggers but not of joggers, who constitute their own kind of menace. It is actually quite comical to watch them chugging along; they look so damned *earnest*, as though running in a circle gets you anywhere. Ah Cruikshank, thou shouldst be living at this hour: what splendid material for caricatures. Failing that requested reincarnation, I should think a camcording with appropriate voice-overs could be a howler, and the actors are free.

Richmond Hill apartments are jammed tight together. A benefit of this is that a short stroll brings you to the nearest pub, where I had the best ale ever in my life—literally. Its subtitle is "Old Peculiar." I forget the proper name, and a good job that is, for it could make one forget everything.

A greater benefit is that another step or two brings you to some bookstores. One, a secondhand shop, is right out of Dickens, with ladders and must and all, until the owner coughs and is sorry to disturb you, sir, but it is closing time. The other sells new books and I pick one by Paul Johnson, one of his heavy histories of everything that ever happened, and why. How sad that a man of so much energy and culture should be so reactionary. This wave must be cresting; things can't go on like this much longer. Tiring of Johnson I take another step and view a flick, *Bugsy*. This is a mistake: it is coarse, sadistic, depressing, poorly acted, and I don't need to travel to London to see pictures of California. Is it only coincidence that Paul Johnson and *Bugsy* are popular in the same era? I think not.

I thought I suffered hardships on crowded, flight-delayed BA, and grumbled loudly (Appendix I). However, Fred was off for Japan via Aeroflot(!), through the chaos of a disintegrating organization. When he returns, if he does, he'll pass it off as nothing, nothing at all, really, just a day in the life of a journalist.

20. Home is where the heart is. I cherish the new friends I made abroad, but, dear Lord, how grand it was to greet smiling wife and children at LAX, and to be with them always. What a relief to tackle the pile of work I left behind and which bore on my conscience every moment. Being separated is not as bad as being in jail, but there is an analogous frustration. My garden, my workshop, my hard disk, my students, my unfinished MSS—this is where I belong and am productive. There is no greater satisfaction.

APPENDIX I: Bad BA

Brits bristle at any breath of badmouthing BA, but that is knee-jerk chauvinism. BA is just another privatized monopoly now; customers are its cattle. Normal procedure at BA is to board passengers, lock door, then perform deferred maintenance for an hour or two. Perhaps this is training passengers to endure a real highjacking. Heathrow-JHB, captain announced we could have flown all right, but some part needed replacing for the following startup, and he wasn't sure JHB was up to it—bit of British chauvinism, sat well with Brits, was not repeated in Afrikaans. After two hours we actually did take off. Next insult was to spray the cabin with insecticide, accompanied by added insult to JHB, announcing this was due to their municipal regulation (later denied). Next insult is to show "news" on screen, said news being nothing but talking-head commercials and teaser bites from films not being shown. Next insult is to block aisles with carts selling duty-frees, just when you need to seek the johns, which are undersupplied anyway. Some accountant figured out there's no money in johns and legroom and aisles and free entertainment; some economic theorist wrote this proves no one really wants them anyway. Ah, deregulation and "the market," what wrongs are done in thy names! By now I have figured out we are just cattle to BA, and will remain so until we turn into lions and tigers; better yet, men and women. It's hard to stand up and be counted, though, when there's no room to stand.

Worse things happened on return. JHB-Heathrow, one stop in Nairobi added three to four hours: one hour extra flight time, three hours locked in on the tarmac. Finally the silent captain announced the mechanics had been "tightening up tubes and things with spanners" to stop an air leak they couldn't find, and he wasn't too sure, but it was probably OK to proceed.

When they boarded Nairobi passengers, wouldn't you know, I got a 350-pound neighbor. Try as he might, he was physically unable to contain himself in his allotted space. It was a lovely eight and a half hours to London. I see some heavy fellow is suing Southwest Airlines for ejecting him: he thinks the world owes him two seats for the price of one. Bad timing to win my sympathy.

I hope he loses, but that the court orders all airlines to supply wider seats. While they're at it, how about smaller planes and more trips? These jumbos create a baggage crisis every time they land, anyway. In these respects, Southwest Airlines is exemplary: everything BA is not. It uses 737s, leaves promptly, gives you three to four inches more legroom, arrives on time, and unloads fast.

Remember "Getting there is half the fun?" That was then. Now we fly because we must, not because we please to squeeze. There are now some 1,200 commercial aircraft, worth \$2 billion, in cold storage in America, many of them in a spectacular ghost-port near Mojave, Kern County.

Excess capacity, fixed prices, reduced service, hmmm... isn't that what cartels do? Wouldn't it be better all around to use that idle capacity to give customers a break?

Deregulation and free choice

i. Customer has choice of buying various kinds of liquor in duty-free shops. Has no choice about controlling his environment.

- leg-room, is squeezed in. Could go first or business class for about four times the fare, to get maybe 20% to 30% more room.

- has no choice to clear the aisles of carts, which block access to restrooms because they are pushing sales of liquor.

- no choice of visual entertainment. That might be unavoidable, except it is forced. It is full of commercials. Crew insists people pull shades, adding to claustrophobia.

- no choice of deplaning during long stops, e.g., Nairobi.

Excess capacity in aircraft

There is vast cold storage area in Mojave Desert for surplus aircraft. Same time, passengers are overcrowded, herded, on existing aircraft, and restricted in choice of flights: routes and times.

Larger number of smaller planes would be better. Jumbos impose great diseconomies of scale, mostly on passengers: long queues.

A bias for cash

Customer comfort and convenience (and probably safety) is consistently sacrificed for goals more obviously translated into measurable dollars. Customer time has no immediately measurable value to administrators. Yet, saving time is why people fly.

Paving the road to Hell

Aka law of unintended consequences. Net result of treating passengers like cattle is to take the pleasure out of flying. Flying used to be an adventure; now it is an ordeal. We fly because we have to, not because we enjoy the process. This in turn cuts off demand.