

1 *In which the author gives a brief account of the origins of our prosperity and the reasons why the Caucasians were thrown onto the paths of exile.*

He's there, exhausted. Silent. The wavering glow of a candle barely lights the carpenter's bedroom in this shelter for immigrant workers. This ethnically Swiss Caucasian speaks a Germanic dialect, and in this age of the jet and the Internet, claims he has fled violence and famine. Yet he still has all of the aura that fascinated our nurses and aid workers.

Let's call him Yacuba, first to protect his identity and second because he has an impossible family name. He was born outside Zurich in an unhealthy favela, where infant mortality and the rate of infection by the AIDS virus remain the highest in the world today. The figures are drawn from studies of the World Health Organization (WHO) based in our country in the fine, peaceful city of Banjul, as everyone knows. AIDS first appeared in Greece some two decades ago in the shady underworld of prostitution, drugs, and promiscuity and is now endemic worldwide, according to the high priests of world science at the Mascate meeting in the noble kingdom of Oman.

The cream of international diplomacy also meets in Banjul; they are supposedly settling the fate of millions of Caucasian refugees of various ethnic groups (Austrian, Canadian, American, Norwegian, Belgian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, British, Icelandic, Swedish, Portuguese . . .) not to mention the skeletal boat people from the northern Mediterranean, at the end of their rope from dodging all the mortar shells and missiles that darken the unfortunate lands of Euramerica.

Some of them cut and run, wander around, get exhausted, and then brusquely give up, until they are sucked into the void. Prostitutes of

every sex, Monte Carlions or Vaticanians but others too, wash up on the Djerba beaches and the cobalt-blue bay of Algiers. These poor devils are looking for the bread, rice, or flour distributed by Afghan, Haitian, Laotian, or Sahelian aid organizations. Ever since our world has been what it is, little French, Spanish, Batavian, or Luxembourgian schoolchildren, hit hard by kwashiorkor, leprosy, glaucoma, and poliomyelitis, survive only with food surpluses from Vietnamese, North Korean, or Ethiopian farmers.

These warlike tribes with their barbaric customs and deceitful, uncontrollable moves keep raiding the scorched lands of the Auvergne, Tuscany or Flanders, when they're not shedding the blood of their atavistic enemies—Teutons, Gascons, or backward Iberians—for the slightest little thing, for rifles or trifles, because they recognize a prisoner or because they don't. They're all waiting for a peace that has yet to come.

But let us return to the shack of our flea-ridden Germanic or Alemanic carpenter. Take a furtive look into the darkness of his dwelling. A mud floor scantily strewn with wood shavings, no furniture or utensils. No electricity or running water, of course. This individual, poor as Job on his dung heap, has never seen a trace of soap, cannot imagine the flavor of yogurt, has no conception of the sweetness of a fruit salad. He is a thousand miles from our most basic Sahelian conveniences. Which is further from us, the moon, polished by Malian and Liberian astronauts, or this creature?

Let us cross what we might call the threshold: swarms of flies block your view and a sour smell immediately grabs you by the throat. You try to move forward nonetheless, but you can't. You stand there, dumbstruck.

Your eyes are beginning to get used to the darkness. You can make out the contours of what seems to be a painting with crude patterns. One of those daubs called primitive: clueless tourists are crazy about them. Two crossed zebu horns and a Protestant sword decorate the other side of the wall, a sign of the religious zeal that pervades this shelter for foreign workers in our rich, dynamic Eritrean state.

Let us say in passing that our values of solidarity, conviviality, and

morality are now threatened by rapid social transformations and the violent unleashing of the unbridled free market, as the Afrigelcard has replaced our ancestral traditions of mutual aid. The ancient country of Eritrea, governed for centuries by a long line of Muslim puritans, deeply influenced by the rigorism of the Senegalese Mourides, was able to prosper by combining good business sense with the virtues of parliamentary democracy. From its business center in Massawa or its online stock market on Lumumba Street, not to mention the very *high-tech Keren Valley Project*¹ and the military-industrial complexes in Assab, everything here works together for success and prosperity. This is what attracts the hundreds of thousands of wretched Euramericans subjected to a host of calamities and a deprivation of hope.

Our carpenter is muttering in his beard. What can he possibly be saying with his tongue rolled up at the back of his throat? God alone could decipher his white pidgin dialect. He is racked by the desire to leave the cotton fields of his slavery—quite understandable, but let's get back to the subject.

Still more dizzying is the flow of capital between Eritrea and its dynamic neighbors, who are all members of the federation of the United States of Africa, as is the former Hamitic kingdom of Chad, rich in oil; and also the ex-Sultanate of Djibouti that handles millions of guineas and surfs on its gas boom; or the Madagascar archipelago, birthplace of the conquest of space and tourism for the enfants terribles of the new high finance. The golden boys of Tananarive are light-years away from the black wretchedness of the white Helvetian carpenter.

You're still standing? Ah, okay! Now you recognize a familiar sound. You try a risky maneuver, taking one, then two steps into the darkness. You walk through the tiny door. You can make out the first measures of some mumbo jumbo full of shouts and strangled sounds. An antediluvian black and white tv, made in Albania, dominates the living room of this shelter for destitute Caucasians, with their straight hair and infected lungs. After an insipid soap opera, a professor from the

1. In English in the original.—Translators' note.

Kenyatta School of European and American Studies,² an eminent specialist in Africanization—the latest fad in our universities, now setting the tone for the whole planet—claims that the United States of Africa can no longer accommodate all the world's poor. You might be taken in by his unctuous voice as you listen to him, but in fact his polished statements, all cheap lace and silk rhetoric, fool nobody—certainly not the immigrants from outside Africa. His idea can be summed up in one sentence: the federal authorities must face up to their responsibilities firmly but humanely by escorting all foreign nationals back to the border, by force if necessary—first the illegal immigrants, then the semi-legal, then the paralegal, and so on.

Alternative voices have arisen, all or almost all from liberal circles which hardly needed the TV talks of Professor Emeritus Garba Huntingwabe to react against “the irrational fear of the Other, of ‘undesirable aliens,’ that continues to be the greatest threat to African unity.” (www.foreign-policy.afr, editorial, last March.) Assembled under the aegis of the World Academy of Gorean Cultures, which includes all the enlightened minds in the world from Rangoon to Lomé and from Madras to Lusaka, these voices remind us that the millions of starving Japanese kept alive on the food surpluses from central Africa could be adequately taken care of with what that region spends on defense in just three days. You may recall that the face of this network—reviled by all the ulemas, nabobs, neguses, rais, and mwamis—is none other than Arafat Peace Prize winner Ms. Dunya Daher of Langston Hughes University in Harare. In September, the young ecologist put 15,800,000 guineas granted her by the austere Society of Sciences of Botswana into the kitty of many humanitarian aid organizations. The learned society's announcement stated that this prestigious prize was unanimously awarded to her for “her struggle against the corrupt dictatorship of New Zealand, her fight against AIDS [whereas] the ecclesiastical authorities of Uganda are still preaching abstinence, and her promotion of Nebraska bananas by vaunting their native merits in the supermarkets of Abidjan . . . [and finally] Ms. Daher

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made the world aware of the tangible facts that Dean Mamadou Diouf of the University of Gao had set forth long ago in a satirical tract that has remained famous to this day.” (*Invisible Borders: The Challenge of Alaskan Immigration*, Rwanda University Press/Free Press, Kigali, 1994. 820 pp. 35 guineas.)

Dean Diouf, Ms. Daher, Ahmed Baba XV, Sophia Marley, Thomas Sankara Jr., the rappers King Cain and Queen Sheba, Hakim Bey, Siwela Nkosi and company were never in favor with the big turbans of the world. Ms. Daher deplored the silence of the political leaders of the first continent about questions crucial to the future of our planet. His Excellency El Hadj Saidou Touré, United States of Africa Press Secretary, had accustomed us to a different chant. He stated that our first priority remains keeping peace in Western Europe; and then he was relatively optimistic about signing a ceasefire in the American Midwest and Quebec, where French-speaking warlords have reiterated their firm intention of going to war with the uncontrollable English-speaking militias in the Hull region near Ottawa, the former capital, now under a curfew enforced by UN peacekeeping forces from Nigeria, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Bangladesh. The federal councilor (highest political authority of what remains of Canada)—the proud aborigine William Neville Attawag—has remained extremely vague on the question of a time frame for relaxing the emergency laws now in place. Sir Attawag has violently rejected the term “apartheid” used by newspapers completely ignorant of the conditions of life for whites in the Canada of his ancestors. And yet Human Rights Watch and El Hombre, with their long experience in this North American quagmire, relentlessly keep sounding the alarm.

Yacuba has just left his shelter. He dashed into Ray Charles Avenue, caught his breath at the corner of Habib Bourguiba Street, and is now walking toward Abebe-Bikila Square. He is wearing a shirt the same color as his chronic cold; an indigo boubou floats around his body. People turn around as he walks by, more intrigued than an ethnologist taken in by a primitive tribe in the remotest parts of Bavaria. Have no fear, our long-distance cameras are recording his every move. In less

than fifteen minutes, he'll be back in his den. Which won't prevent him from getting into trouble again.

Surely you are aware that our media have been digging up their most scornful, odious stereotypes again, which go back at least as far as Methusuleiman! Like, the new migrants propagate their soaring birth rate, their centuries-old soot, their lack of ambition, their ancestral machismo, their reactionary religions like Protestantism, Judaism, or Catholicism, their endemic diseases. In short, they are introducing the Third World right up the anus of the United States of Africa. The least scrupulous of our newspapers have abandoned all restraint for decades and fan the flames of fear of what has been called—hastily, to be sure—the “White Peril.” Isn't form, after all, the very flesh of thought, to paraphrase the great Sahelian writer Naguib Wolegorzee? Thus, a popular daily in Ndjamena, *Bilad el Sudan*, periodically goes back to its favorite headline: “Back Across the Mediterranean, Clodhoppers!” From Tripoli, *El Ard*, owned by the magnate Hannibal Cabral, shouts “Go Johnny, Go!” Which the *Lagos Herald* echoes with an ultimatum: “White Trash, Back Home!” More laconic is the *Messenger des Seychelles*, in two English words: “Apocalypse Now!”