

but most of them have never produced any real work. Whereas I have produced a lot of work and it took me until I was 75 to learn how to write about my experiences. Before that I had been a miner in the Johannesburg goldmines and a shaft sinker in the Freestate. I had managed a sugar cane farm in Zululand and made friends with old Afrikaner families in the Northern Transvaal. I was a fisherman for sole, pilchards and hand line fish and a good diver. I can work furniture wood to 1/50th of a millimetre and go into the forest to take out pine trees to make 35 meter masts for a three-masted schooner. What I needed I invented if it wasn't there and until I discovered that a great Xhosa Chief had sabotaged a Royal Navy troopship I had never bothered to write about my experiences. University people are useful if they study knowledge, engineering, mathematics, biology and such; letters, law, sociology, journalism and business are so much blah blah arts tickets.

I worked with a lot of black people on the land and in the mines, at sea the fishermen were mostly coloured people and the skippers were white. The first black people I encountered in my life were working in a high class hotel in Entebbe, Uganda, where I landed up with a bunch of youngsters being transported from Holland to South Africa by Dakota plane in 1950. They were tall, stately people dressed in white robes and a fez, spoke comprehensible English and were very polite to us miserable young buggers, leftovers from another politicians' war. The goldmines toughened up my relations with the black people when I realized that we were not the same. We got on well but there was no question of making a black friend, neither do I know of any of us white European youngsters making black friends, some of them acted stupidly because they thought they were better with their white skins. As I started getting around South Africa I met up with Zulus on the sugar can farm in Zululand, learned a bit of their language as they taught me about sugar cane farming but made no black friends. While diving for perlemoen around the Cape coast I took on quite a remarkable crew, 4 young fellows who had grown up on the shores of Lake Nyassa. Not much English, they swam and dived very well and one of them was a genius to my mind. He called himself Johnson and from the first day he was on board he asked me to have a look at the engine, an old 3cylinder Kelvin 66. As I could not speak his language and his English was not worth much I could not explain much about the functioning of a diesel engine, yet, Johnson appeared to understand everything I could not explain. After 2-3 weeks on board he told me, "Number 2 injector, baas, not right." Jonson was right, I showed him how to clean the thing and after another few weeks I left that engine in Johnson's hands.

I have never been able to explain how this chap who came out of the Nyassa land bush and had never seen a ship's engine could acquire such an affinity for my old diesel engine. It seemed intuitive but I tend to be aware of intuitive mechanics. Yet, I could trust Johnson with that engine but we were too different to become friends.

I met other black people when I went to the University of Cape Town in order to pick up some knowledge about marine biology. The apartheid government was then trying to get black students out of 'white' universities but there were still a lot of black students. None in engineering, chemistry or mathematics, they could only be found in the bla blah arts faculty. By that time Jozef Stalin had started to convince the Africans that white people had to be killed and with the shiploads of Kalashnikovs that this murderer of all times supplied, the great