NY CARLSBERGFONDET

FACTS

Date: 3-4 September 1938

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Diary location: Danish National Gallery

Creator/key person: Ernest Mancoba

General comments: Rules of transcription: Spelling errors kept, followed by correction as [sic: corrected spelling] Necessary insertion of missing punctuation marks added as [,] Necessary paragraph breakage as [/P] Illegible words indicated with [illegible] Scratched out letters and words not transcribed Full name of person mentioned [First + Last name]

Mentioned people: Gerry Brand T. C. Mehta

3-4 September 1938

SUMMARY

On 2nd September 1938, Ernest Mancoba boarded a ship that left Cape Town, South Africa, for Southampton, United Kingdom. It arrived on the 19th September, 1938. Mancoba kept a travel journal of the voyage.

TRANSCRIPTION

[3 Sep]

At breakfast, A [Abraham] and Watson absent [,] both feeling seasick - N looks as hard as nails - I discover a queer self over confidence and complacency which makes me uneasy - He stares glassily too long at people and his movements at table seem to be a result of deliberate coaching and practice - He closes his mouth because probably he was told so and munches with the deliberateness of an animal - He is careful not to speak with food in his mouth etc – He never opens a conversation.

After breakfast we play bridge – Four [,] 2 Indians and 2 Africans - N soon picks up the essentials of the game but he is disturbingly inattentive – he gazes around like an infant [.] When the band strikes up he drums his hands on the table and with a backward and forward sway of upper body keeps time to the jazz tune - I win at Casino Grand Sweepstakes.

We sit on deck N + I and I soon learn he is off to Yale to study "Race Relations" - I try to open a conversation but he seems to be avoiding a discussion — I ask if he has a standpoint - he says no he is detached as a scientist shd [sic: should] be — I wonder & tell him of my dislike for the whites as a group, and I am disappointed he does not bother to know why —

I potter around until dinner time [.] Again no A [Abraham] & W [Watson]. The menu is queer [,] has queer names [,] meaningless to me - I remark on this say why the waiter did not bring the things one after the other without bothering to question as we who have had no alternative to the inimitable mealie meal [a porridge made from corn meal] in South Africa. He replies that there are people who did not take certain kinds of foods. This was pointless as we at least did not know what would come next.

I asked him if he would like to travel on a Japanese boat to study Race Relations – No there was no need for that [,] one could always go to Japan etc.

After dinner took down some biscuits to A [Abraham]. He told me he felt better lying down - His girl told him to take biscuits and Worcester source [sic: sauce] on the voyage or against sea-sickness - He had prepared a mixture himself [,] but did not work – He was big eater and missed his

food badly.

Hanged around till tea-time – N + I talked together [.] I told him I wished to keep away from cluster of whites – He wondered why & said I was going to live with them in Europe I might as well get used to it straight away.

I told him bluntly I had a strong aversion and couldn't help it — I asked him what the whites had done with Africa — Oh very well for themselves but also much for the Africans [.] I should not be on the boat if it was not for the Europeans. I should not be able to criticise them were it not for the work they had done if in Africa - etc etc — They could not help but do it. I protested. If they wished progress. The "Father of the Natives" version of trusteeship bunk all over again and I wonder at the simplicity of this man — No wonder he has lived all his life in the Reserves — and he has never been personally thwarted in his few primitive requirements. Does mere education civilize the Blackman — I wonder —

Mahtu [sic: T.C. Mehta] arrives late to tea [.] N stands up and tells the waiter to bring a cup — He is callous. Mathu [Mehta], sensitive fellow seeks our company. Speaks of books he has read specially on Black Problem in S.A. [,] mentions review in Forum on Africa Peril Abercrombie [H. R. Abercrombie "Africa's Peril: The Colour Problem", 1938] — I ask to see the Forum. Mathu [Mehta] brings it along [,] I read it—segregation (see cutting).

We discuss race relations Mathu [Mehta] + I. Gandhi & Nehru. He admires Gandhi's earlier life in London.

He picks up photograph of N's in academic gowns and all the odds and ends — remains of medieval education frills — I tell him of my aversion to educational tabs — education as means to an end — Welcome function for African doctor in Native village but people soon find his charges too high — higher than the old mission doctor's.

He tells me his father wishes him to be more a social success [,] a family honour more than for the people — He shows the usefulness of knowledge of law — He on his way to Lincolns Inn^1 in London. Tells me Watson the West African down with see sickness –

Standing in the passage I see Watson just disappearing into his cabin like Conrad's Nigger of the Narcissus [Joseph Conrad, "The Nigger of the Narcissus: A tale of the Forecastle", 1897] —

Abraham down with sea. s. [sic: sea sickness] anxious to know of result of



Test Match Eng. Vs SA. [sic: rugby test match between England and South Africa] excited to learn of SA success 19 to 3. He is sorry Gerry Brand did not play — It strikes me as queer as G. Brad [sic: Brand] as S African might have brutalized many a coloured person in his time — Humans are strange creatures —

Meet on upper deck other two Indians -

They thought N somewhat queer — His stare [,] strut etc. We sat in smoking room expecting music but none — I felt very strange uneasiness knowing that tho [sic: though] they did not say they hated the idea of niggers in their midst — I whisper to Mathu [Mehta] that if they had a Jewess on board someone would have protested against the niggers —

As some gos [sic: goes] away from the chairs near [,] I felt hot and cold with uneasiness — I have been brutalized many a time in the Transvaal — I think of an incident when I attempted to board a tram car in Johannesburg to get to Rosettenville to break the news to my sister of the passing of my mother [,] as I reached for the steps the driver jerked the car and shook me off, to the amusement of standersby.

We discuss the Xtian [sic: Christian] religion and agree it was the result of fears in the pre scientific period of human history — out of place now except to bluff the simpleminded — X explains the systems of religion in India.

Mathu [Mehta] is as sensitive and uncomfortable as I [,] we get up and leave the smoking room to my immense relief. I get down to my cabin — and vow never again to sit in that Devils Hole —

4 Sep.

[/P] Up for breakfast still no Watson and Abr [Abraham]

After breakfast sat on desk (we four) — X tells me a white passenger had been speaking to him and told him it was hard to believe an African capable of studying art and appreciating and doing a doctorate in Philosophy — These hypocrites who have reduced the African to near animal stage now turn round & say it is hard to believe the African to be human —

We read on the deck cold wind blowing all the sunny places occupied by whites on the decks — I go downstairs and see Watson [.] he had vomited much from sea sickness, he looks terribly [illegible] down — He is glad to



see me and he says he has missed me much because of the interest I have shown in West Africa — We talk [.] He believes the English best Colonial administraters [.] Compares the Belgian and French Colonial policy with English — Africans in both have migrated to English Dakar & Ashanti.

I tell him of N — He says Xtians [sic: Christians] have brought advantages and disadvantages e.g. Slavery abolished — But Methu [sic: T.C. Mehta] intervenes — it is more profitable to have wage-slaves.

We talk of African fetishism which served a useful purpose in keeping intact the African society morally and physically — W [sic: Watson] tells of how in his country a woman will not sleep with a man who is not her husband because She would offend the fetish and die — He points out nevertheless the cheapness of human life in African Society e[.]g[.] when a king died [,] his councillors got a number of other people killed to accompany the king — Nevertheless Xtian [sic: Christian] nations still wiped each other out in Wars — But the Africans knew how to adjust themselves to each other as individuals — The League of Nations let wars drift and had no practical suggestion to make to stop war and yet Xtian [sic: Christian] —

Early missionaries asked us to throw away all fetishes — In Accra there is a cenotaph to the War dead and a ceremony is conducted in which the chief citizens took part and the Governor laid a wreath and then walked backwards to a point before giving his back to the cenotaph. This looked like worship of the pile of stone — like a fetish to the African contradictions.

W. [Watson] shows us his passport and I tell him how difficult it was to get a passport for a "native" in SA [.] 3 months — with thorough investigation by all gov [sic: governmental] departments [.] He is astonished. He tells how had planned to travel round Africa by the East Coast and then to London. But at CapeTown he was refused passage in all boats travelling via the East because he would be the only black on board and S Africa whites resented travelling with blacks. He felt he was grateful to us for even though his plans were upset he still would have stopped in CapeTown longer than the month. He showed a letter of introduction to the Governor of ----- for his white departmental chief.

W. [Watson] gets sick again and he vomits convulsively [.] We ask him to dress up – and walk him up & down the lower deck [,] the upper deck is crowded with whites. He feels better and goes back to his Cabin.

It's lunch time - N still down - After lunch we play bridge [,] the band



strikes up a tune – Dinner.

An officer comes along to assist in the election of a Sports Committee – Mathu [Mehta] in a queer way surprised us by bawling out SV Naidoo – My foot and Naidoo's flick confusedly at Mathus [Mehta's] shin. Still he bawls out the second time [,] but to our relief no one takes notice of him - I think inactivity begins to tell on his nerves - The game is dull & we go down - sleep

 $^{\rm 1}$ W. Sze: A society of barristers in London, named after the estates Inns of Court and Inns of Chancery where students and apprentices of law stayed

The mine ends with fort Save the king and the Mursolu go doo steers a finger of fire disaffer on the baves night into the night. at breakfort, a and bation absent loth feeling seasick - I looks as hard as leaderen A discover a queer self over confidence Which makes we measy He stare, glassik too live at people and his movements at table seen to be a sepult of deliberate coaching and practice He does his pout because probably he was told so and munches like a stat bill, the deliperaten of antita guiral-He is careful not speak Like booth Tis month etc. He have dens a Conversation I after breakfort be play bridge - Four State Indians and Dapicans - N soon ficks up the essertials of the gave but he is destublingthe inattentived the gaves around like an infant When the band stocks up be down, this hands on the table and bill a backword and forwards swan of upper body keeps the state be sit on deck N & and Ison lean the s Mt hale to study "Race Kelations - Iting tooper on log versation but he seens to be avriday a discussion -Lask, if he has a standgrout he same no the is detached as a scientist she be I wonder. I tell him

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hight a shell get used tit straight away Itald him blinth Shad a shore aversion and could alt help it - Darked tim what the phile Led done with aprica - Ohe very well forthersels but also much for the african Ishred not be athe toat if it was not for the England I shall not be able to criticise then be, also the the it not for the book the had doe of a africa etc etc - Ha could not help but I do it, Ipstested, Atta insted progress. He "fatte of the hattve" version of trusteechip bunk all over again and Stonder at the publich of the pass - No toda be has lised all the life in the performes - and the has never been personally threated in his Jess princhive requirerents Does here education mother the Black hars - Inonder-Mother comes late to tea n Alards up and tells the wails this a cup - He's callers mathen persitive fellow seeks our Corpany - Steaks i SA. Mention rebier i Torun on Africa Peril Alectombie - Jask to see the Forum. Mathin frings at along Iread it - segregation (see cutting) Ne discuss race relations mather 19 - gandhi + Nehon - He admines gandhi's earlier life in London



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after breakfor sat on deck (we four) - have X tells Jeaking this and tild his at way hard & believe an african cafable I study up ast and appreciating and doing a doctorale A Philosoph - Hese hypocrites the have reduced the aprican to near aniral stage This ture sound & say it is hard to believe the africant be human -We read on the deck cold used blowing all the Asac Annu places occupied by white a the decks - Ido dorastairs and see Watson he had youited much for sea suckness he look tinth, there down - He is glad to see me and le says he has pissed. We much because of the alexest shave shown of best ofrica - we talk De believes the Esglish best alonial adamstrates Capares the Belgian and Treach Colonial John bill Exclish - african i both have migneted to Sochet Baker + asbarti-I tell his of N_ He pays Xtrans have brought terestiti and advantages and deadvantages eg Alasky abolished But Methu stavers - it's more propitable to have wags-slaves. We talk of African fetishim which served a useful perfore in perefic intert the african society



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the East because he would be the one black on board and SAMMa thile reserted travelly with blacks- He Harles us for fill he was grateful this for even though he plant stere upset he still world have the feed in Capet on linete than the month. He showed the letter of introduction of the sovener of - for his white departmental chief -W. gets sick again and he vorits convulsicely We ask his to dress ap - and balk his up + down the love deck the upper deck is conded with these He feels better and goes back to his Cabin -It's tunch tire - N still down - after larce be play bridge the band Makes up a time - Dimore It & the half of bidge again after a bad gave Malt an officer comes along to assist in the electro of a Sport Committee Mathie in a gran bay pulmised his the bashing out SV Naidon - my fost and Mindoo's flick conforged at Methin shin. Still be barb at the second time but to a relief to on his nerves - The game is dall the go thanken - Sleep Selft 5/4 go down alle treakfast tralk to pathy dolls me al tragare of bridge - Te Sit Corner - Datoos Comes, ala to the writing table - a huge form of reality which makes the