

# AT THE ZOO

By RUTH MILLER

**T**HERE is a large cemented enclosure at the Zoo, the goal of all children. For here one buys tickets at a little cubbyhole, and stands in queues for rides on the Shetland ponies, the donkeys and the elephants. Three ponies, and three donkeys, and two vast elephants go on their little circular tours every few minutes, round the shrubberies in the centre of their dusty road, and back again to hoist the next children in the line, with their little red tickety tickets, and then round again, and again. The little ponies shake their heads and their fat rumps shine in the sunlight. The donkeys shuffle with their heads down, grey and greywhite and brown. The elephants plod, scuffing the dust in their trunks, the children on the seats on either side of their backs swaying. One of the elephants wears a bright red carpet with faded tassels.

There is a long line of benches under the trees where the grownups sit and wait for their children to return from each trip. There is the continual pop and skitter of bottle tops from the kiosk nearby. The sun shines and the trees lift against the sky.

A tall man, with a ~~top~~ dressed in the uniform of the Zoo keepers, stands in the centre of the cement enclosure, with a long stick in his hand. He helps the children get into the queues, and watches as they climb on to the animals. But most of the time he is far too busy to give them much attention. Because it is his job to chase away the little African piccanins who come crowding in all the time. They are thinlegged, most of them, and dressed in khaki shirts and pants. A couple of them in rags, with the black skin showing through the holes, the patches triumphantly sagging away from the stitching. They are all without shoes. And they come to this place of glory as all children in the Zoo grounds come. But they are not allowed. There are little white notices, lettered in black, which say: "For European children only." The playground with its swings and shutes and jungle gyms has these notices too, but they are not so often invaded. It is the animal rides that call and entice forever.

So the little piccanins brave the stick of the tall man in the uniform, and laugh if they can manage to dodge it as he swings it, biting, through the air at their bare black legs. They run away, but as soon as his back is turned, they sneak back again, and creep nearer and nearer to the little queues of white children. And then they stand quite still, or squat on their haunches, geared to an agile flight, but absorbing and tasting with their eyes. They watch the

white children climb on to the ponies, and the donkeys, and up the high steps on to the elephants, and they watch them ride away, and they watch as they come in again for the next batch.

Some of them have as much as a ticky on them, so they could afford to buy a ticket for a ride, if the notices and the keeper were not there. They cannot read the little white notices which say: "European Children Only," so the thoughtful authorities have placed the tall keeper there to read this message to them with his stick.

## **THE BAFABEGIYA**

By DAVID BOPAPE

**I**N a broad organisation such as the African National Congress one does not expect complete unanimity on every idea and every activity. In fact disagreements discussed in a healthy atmosphere and hammered out on the proper occasions can lead to nothing but good. If this was not so then it could truly be said that dictatorship and despotism by the leadership has replaced the democratic procedure of decision by the majority after a proper airing of conflicting views. Where a genuine desire exists on the part of all Congressmen to iron out disagreements a way can generally be found to let all viewpoints be heard and a democratic decision arrived at.

But in the present-day Congress and in years past minority groups have exploited minor disagreements on policy, have intruded personal rivalries and jealousies, and have even spread slander and made malicious attacks on democratically-elected Congress leaders in an attempt, not to reconcile conflicting points of view and strengthen Congress, but for such purely ulterior motives as capturing the leadership of Congress.

This type of manoeuvre even goes several steps further.

Such dissidents not only fail as individual Congressmen to carry out the organisation's decisions, but they form factions within the organisation to win support for their point of view and to undermine the influence of the Congress.

Such an organisation is the Bafabagiya.

From the outset its promoters tried to lure into its ranks the most courageous and heroic of Congress members. By the adoption of the title (Bafabagiya means "We Die Dancing") by which Chaka's crack regiment had been known the impression was