

From the paw of hireling wolves

DUDLEY HORNER

Mr. Dudley Horner is a research worker at the Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg. This is the text of an address given to the Black Sash on 3rd May.

I am honoured to address this general meeting of the Black Sash. I recall the early years of your movement when its activities were attended by glamour, excitement and high hopes, and your numbers were impressive. Your ranks may have thinned but I salute the courage and tenacity of those stalwarts who have kept faith and of the newcomers who joined when you had nothing to offer them but hard work, harassment and scorn. You have kept alive not only the spirit but also the practice of dissent.

I offer for your consideration a certain viewpoint of South African society, namely, that at this stage of history, our country presents the rather unedifying spectacle of Oligarchy¹ and Plutocracy engaged in a macabre minuet. In other words, a spectacle of the few who wield political power and the few who hold financial power imposing upon the voteless masses an order which may well contain the seeds of its own destruction.

In *The Open Society and its Enemies* Karl Popper has postulated the thesis that "(Western) civilization has not yet fully recovered from the shock of its birth — the transition from the tribal or 'closed society', with its submission to magical forces, to the 'open society' which sets free the critical powers of man". If we look at political movements in South Africa since the nineteen-thirties I submit that — in terms of this argument — we see considerable retrogression. We notice, in fact, a movement from a comparatively "open", if imperfect, society to a "closed" or tribal society.

Shortly before, and during, the Second World War political opinion, freely expressed

¹ Heribert Adam's valuable analysis of the oligarchical aspects of South African society is considered in A. S. Mathews' *Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa*.

and organised in parties or movements, covered the entire spectrum from radical left to radical right. In those years we had:—

The Non-European Unity Movement; The Communist Party of South Africa; The African Democratic Party; The All-African Convention; The South African Indian Congress; The African National Congress; The Springbok Legion; The Workers' and Farmers' Party; The Labour Party of South Africa; The African People's Organisation; The South African Party (United Party); The Dominion Party; The Afrikaner Party; The National Party; The Broederbond; The Ossewabrandwag; The Nuwe Orde; The Greyshirts.

The political philosophies which were championed by the respective partisans ranged through Trotskyism, Marxist-Leninism, Stalinism, the land reform of Henry George, Fabian socialism, liberalism, pragmatic Conservatism, and on to fascism and nazism.

In the fifties the Communist Party was outlawed while other political organisations began to feel the cold breath of political harassment, some to languish and yet others to die. The Senate Act of 1955 enabled the government of the day to deprive the Coloured voters of the franchise and in so doing strengthened the ruling party's hold on effective political power.

Meanwhile, during the fifties and sixties, further political parties and movements proliferated to join what was left of the earlier organisations. These years saw the rise of:—

The Congress of Democrats; The South African Coloured People's Organisation; The South African Congress of Trade Unions; The Pan African Congress; The Liberal Party of South Africa; The Progressive Party; The Federal Party; The National Union Party; The South African Representative Party; The

Republican Party; The Front; The Conserva-
The Herstigte Nasionale Party.

For all practical purposes the seven last-mentioned parties can be regarded as right-wing splinter groups of which all but one proved not to be viable. The fate of the H.N.P. is still to be determined. If there is any significance — in current electioneering tactics the majority of its members may well return to the fold which they originally left.

It is necessary at this point to mention those events in the sixties (apparently continuing into the seventies) where people who had lost faith in the white electorate and who had despaired of meaningful, peaceful, social change turned to violence. Among the bodies which emerged were the National Committee for Liberation, Umkonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation), Poqo, the African Resistance Movement, the Yu Chi Chan Club, the Unity Movement of South Africa and the African People's Democratic Union of South Africa. The plans to upset the status quo, the incidents of sabotage and the sporadic outbreaks of violence, together with the ruthless punishment meted out by the State to these political offenders have been catalogued in Muriel Horrell's useful publication *Action, Reaction and Counter-Action*. The left, left-of-centre and African nationalist movements were decimated. It is trite to observe that unless social justice is effected peacefully in South Africa, History will validate the judgement of those whom the State banned, exiled, imprisoned or executed during these turbulent years.

A penetrating analysis of those powers arrogated to itself by the State in dealing with "subversion" at the expense of personal freedom has been provided by Professor A. S. Mathews in *Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa*. This indicates that the Suppression of Communism Act contains procedures which violate the basic rules of fair trial² and that the Act confers on the State President powers which are absolute.³ It is also noteworthy that these extensive powers have been employed against the interests of political movements other than Marxist-Leninism, for some 41

members of the now-defunct Liberal Party were banned under these measures between 1961 and 1966.⁴ Further, the Unlawful Organisations Act contains retrospective provisions which are "unique in the legal systems of all time".⁵ However, the rest of the wide network of political controls aimed at the maintenance of "law and order" pales into insignificance when compared with the draconian powers of the Terrorism Act. Mathews points out that by the enactment of this measure the criminal code was entirely rewritten and "disappearance in the night" that dreaded phenomenon of the police state" became a reality.⁶ It is not an exaggeration to maintain that "crisis government" has become a permanent feature of the "South African way of life" and that what should be emergency measures have acted to the political advantage of the ruling group.

As our society enters the decade of the seventies we have, on the national level, a political spectrum which presents a grave distortion of its realities. The four political parties range from the extreme right, through right-radical and conservative to moderate. In some three decades the system has undergone an alarming shift.

In a population of over 21 million, political power resides in the white group who constitute 17,5% of the populace while the African majority group constituting 70,2% of the people remains, to all intents, disenfranchised. However, one could go further by using the 1970 general election results as a guide. If the percentage of votes won by the United Party and the Progressive Party — i.e. by conservative and moderate elements — were to be subtracted we could conclude that real political power is the prerogative of about 10% of the populace. Were South Africa to avoid what might seem an inevitable movement towards complete totalitarianism, and were her armed forces able successfully to resist any armed incursions, invasions or any serious internal revolts, we could speculate that by the year 2 000 political power would be the privilege of only 6 — 7% of her people. This assumption would, of course, be drastically altered if the white electorate was to undergo a dramatic change of heart. There are those who point to certain developments as being indications that such a change is likely. It could, of course be argued that if we take the Senate Act of 1955 as an undemocratic measure we

² A. S. Mathews. *Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa*, p. 57.

³ *Ibid.* p. 55.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 110-111.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 71.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 151.

could consider the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968, which outlawed non-racial parties, in the same light. With these past experiences as our guide, we might expect that South Africa's rulers could manufacture further constitutional devices to curb any concerted efforts on the part of the electorate to remove them from power. It seems to me that the latter course is at least as great a likelihood as change through the ballot-box.

When we turn to the socio-economic conditions of the various population groups we see reproduced the same hierarchical pattern that obtains in the political sphere, with the slight variation of English-speaking whites still dominant in the private sector although Afrikaans-speaking whites have made fairly rapid progress in this area. The picture is complicated by the fact of State encroachment upon the private sector. It is probable that the State's activities will expand still further and the stage could be reached where political and the greater part of economic power would be held in the same hands.

In 1967/68 the estimated purchasing power of the ruling White group amounted to 73,4% while that of the African group amounted to only 18,8%.⁷ It appears from past studies that the variation in the ratio of White/African income over the last 20 years has fluctuated but has not undergone any significant change. A further indication of income distribution is afforded when one realises that in the 1966/67 fiscal year Whites constituted 98,4% of those persons with a taxable income in excess of R4 000 a year.⁸ It should be borne in mind that Africans constitute 70% of the work force and Whites 19%.⁹

It is unnecessary for me, at this point, to elaborate upon the theme of the "wage gap". The Department of Statistics issues News Releases on employment and earnings and some of these are recorded in the annual Survey of Race Relations. The Bureau of Market Re-

search at the University of South Africa has been conducting surveys of the black groups in the major metropolitan areas. It appears from their occasional press releases that the average monthly earnings of black groups with an average household of just over 5 people ranged from R78 to R87 for Africans, from R132 to R138 for Coloured people and from R156 to R227 for Asians. From the recent cost of living studies which I have seen it would probably be safe to assume that, roughly speaking, that mean measure, the Poverty Datum Line is somewhere in the region of R65 per month for African households of 5 in the major metropolitan areas, which would put the more human measure of the Minimum Effective Level in the region of R100 a month. The implications are obvious. We have had ample corroboration of the widening "wage gap" from the Prime Minister this year.

He indicated in the House of Assembly that between 1948 and 1970 the average wage of the White workers increased fourfold while that of the average "Non-White" worker increased almost threefold during the same period.¹⁰ In this respect one recalls the warning given by the Minister of the Interior last year when he pointed to the inherent dangers in a system where indigence and affluence find themselves in close proximity.¹¹

Dr. E. G. Malherbe has pointed out that the solution to the "Poor White" problem was through the education and training necessary to fit the indigent for urban industrial life.¹² Unless educational facilities, especially in vocational and technical training, are vastly improved we are unlikely to see our black population break out of the vicious circle of poverty in which they are trapped. Neither are we likely to see much improvement in conditions in those rural slums, the so-called homelands. A great deal of attention has been given verbally at least, to the question of productivity in recent years. One has to consider in this connection African pupil enrolment.

⁷ W. Langschmidt, *Some characteristics of the urban Bantu Market. Paper delivered to the National Development and Management Foundation Conference 1969.*

⁸ *Calculated from: Department of Inland Revenue Annual Report 1966/67.*

⁹ *Calculated from provisional figures given by the Minister of Statistics Assembly Hansard 4. 22/2/72 Q. COL. 305.*

¹⁰ *Prime Minister Assembly Hansard 1. 4/2/72. COLS. 388-9.*

¹¹ *Rand Daily Mail, 12 November 1971.*

Year	Class	Number	Drop-Out-Rate
1958	Sub-A	361 440	100
1959	Sub-B	261 418	72,3
1960	Std. I	238 146	66,0
1961	Std. II	200 065	55,4
1962	Std. III	153 668	42,5
1963	Std. IV	116 629	32,0
1964	Std. V	91 736	25,0
1965	Std. VI	86 311	23,9 Exam.
1966	Form I	33 773	9,4
1967	Form II	27 085	7,5
1968	Form III	19 679	5,5 Jun. Cert.
1969	Form IV	4 713	1,3
1970	Form V	2 938	0,8 Matric.

It is interesting to note that there were more Whites in Standard X in the nineteen-twenties¹⁴ than there were Africans in Form V in 1971. When we consider that Mr. S. G. Strumlin, a member of the Soviet Academy of the U.S.S.R., has calculated that: "the value of the work done by a person who had had four years of primary education is 43% greater than that of a illiterate person, 108% greater if he has had a secondary education and 300% greater if he has higher education",¹⁵ the reason for a low rate of productivity becomes apparent.

It is true that between 1967 and 1971 there has been a substantial improvement in the percentage of pupils enrolled in Std. II (35%), Std. VI (52%), Form III (73%) and Form V (96%), but actual numbers are not very impressive:¹⁶

	Matric	J.C.	Std. VI	Std. II
1971	4 065	29 800	148 374	342 636
1970	2 938	26 695	135 440	324 208
1969	2 698	22 855	119 704	299 199
1968	2 380	19 679	106 955	275 784
1967	2 075	17 178	97 604	254 413

The private sector of the economy could render valuable assistance with the educational advance of the African people but any real

¹² E. G. Malherbe, *Bantu Manpower and Education*, p. 21.

¹³ Figures for 1958 to 1968 taken from *Department of Bantu Education, Annual Report for 1969*. Figures for 1969 and 1970 taken from *Survey of Race Relations for the respective years*.

¹⁴ Taken from *Union Statistics for Fifty Years*.

¹⁵ Taken from E. G. Malherbe, *Op. Cit.* p. 14.

¹⁶ Figures for the years 1967-70 taken from the *Survey of Race Relations for 1968-71*. 1971 figures taken from *Minister of Bantu Education, Assembly Hansard 9. 28/3/72. Q. COL. 736*.

advance will depend upon a radical reapportionment of the national budget. There has been a small but welcome move in this direction in recent years.

And so, one comes to the question of whether I have aught to offer for the comfort of the advocates of a common society and I reluctantly admit: "Virtually nothing". I am not a prophet and do not forecast the sort of cataclysm against which the Minister of the Interior has warned. If an event of that nature should occur I doubt whether it would be advertised in the daily press. I do not see any of those cracks in apartheid to which some authorities refer. In the short term I would regard these slight adjustments as those which a sophisticated system makes to ensure its continued existence. It is true, that some, among them some on the government benches, believe that there are problems which successive generations will solve — that is, if there are future generations of *South Africans* to solve them.

It shows a touching faith in youth to believe that they will be able to meet successfully challenges created by the present generation. Besides which, let us not forget that the older generation has yet to let go and there are no signs that this will happen in the near future.

What seems to be a new black initiative — but I would not exaggerate this unduly — may well dispose of white proposals at some future date and set the country on an entirely different course.

In the meantime those who believe in the "open society" and register their dissent may well "Help us to save free conscience from the paw of hireling wolves whose Gospel is their maw".

BANNED — M. D. NAIDOO

Released from prison on Tuesday, 23rd May after serving a five year sentence under the Suppression of Communism Act.

Banned the same day. House arrested at nights and weekends; confined to Durban; no meetings, no parties; forbidden to enter the office of any attorney so prevented from earning his living in the profession he is trained for.