

## A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

A NEWSPAPER or magazine is not merely a weight of paper and ink, a profit and loss account with accumulated assets or liabilities, even a little library of facts and opinions. It is a living creature, which develops its individual personality, sometimes irresistibly itself, so that those who own or edit it find that they are not so much shaping its character as being shaped by it themselves. It carries the moods and thoughts of those who have inhabited its pages, but alters these features with a life that is all its own, so that it grows distinct from its inheritance. Such a being one does not close down; one has to kill it. And he who has started it and grown with it, till the lives of publisher and published have inextricably intermingled, kills also a part of himself.

This is the twenty-first issue of '*Africa South*' since its founding in 1956. It is also the last. If the decision to end it is likely to distress anyone, it will surely not surprise. No magazine of opinion can survive without lavish advertisements or subsidy; that is the cost of the printed word today. '*Africa South*' has never received sufficient from advertisements to pay for more than the printing of its cover. It has been subsidised all along, by sympathetic readers and organisations, and by myself. While I was able to publish it in South Africa, I was able to contribute substantially to its cost. I can contribute no longer. In August the South African Government refused me the right to transfer any of the funds I have in South Africa to Britain.

The readership of the magazine has been loyal, and various organisations have made it possible for '*Africa South*' to survive its exile at all. Such organisations, however, have wished for some indication that the magazine would one day pay its way. I am no longer able to persuade myself that this is possible. As the readership and influence of '*Africa South*' have grown, so have the magazine's losses. Its circulation is diffuse and therefore unappealing to advertisers. Those companies which would normally buy space for 'prestige' reasons are reluctant to antagonise a government in whose territory they operate so profitably. Such at least are the excuses I have encountered. The magazine is clearly as little an economic proposition to advertisers as it has been to its publisher.

Though I have drawn neither salary nor expenses as editor, and though much of the work and writing done for the magazine by others has been unpaid, the loss increases. The cost of printing, of paper and of postage mounts, while to raise the selling price of the magazine any further would quickly shrink its readership.

I have three times received offers of a subsidy that would ensure the survival of the magazine for several years, but only on condition that a committee of one shape or another might help to determine policy. I have refused. I do not complain. I am grateful to those organisations which have given me funds on the clear understanding that their paying would not call the tune. There are few such organisations, and they are not to be blamed for setting some limit to their generosity.

I have always believed that it would be better for '*Africa South*' to die than to survive as a disfigurement of what it set out to be and, I trust, became. If the magazine has attained any influence, it has done so because of its independence or—as some would have it—idiosyncrasy. It has lived five years longer than many predicted at its beginning. It is already a small slice of history.

I do not mourn its going. I do not regret a day or a penny that I have spent on it. I am glad that I have had the chance to produce it for so long. I am grateful for having been enabled, every three months, to assault the despotism of race over race, of ruler over ruled, of violence and privilege and greed over the minds and bodies of men. '*Africa South*' has not always been temperate; it has seldom been open-minded. It has carried its prejudices proudly: its belief in the right of men, whatever their colour or creed, to determine their government; the need for Africa to free itself from the tyrannies of the present and the restraints of the past and to move towards democratic union. I believe that '*Africa South*' has helped a little—to scrape off the peeling paint of the old from Africa and prepare it for the new.

If I thought for a moment that the end of '*Africa South*' symbolised any rejection of the ideas which have animated it, I would mourn indeed. Quite the contrary; the belief in a free, unified and democratic Africa is taking possession of more minds everyday, and those who walk a different way are walking themselves out of the new Africa altogether. '*Africa South*' has attempted to convey, to East and West alike, that Africa alone will

determine its own future. Those in the West who attack African movements because they are not anti-Communist enough to satisfy the West's own standards of antagonism, discredit their objectives and injure the cause they proclaim. Those in the East who consider any refusal to commit Africa to anti-Communism as the foundation of an alliance against the West, degrade their sympathies and deceive only themselves.

If '*Africa South*' has assisted, however slightly, in exciting an appreciation of Africa's aspirations among other peoples, in encouraging the pursuit of justice and unity within Africa itself, there is no cause to mourn the magazine's end. It has served its purpose.

Ronald Segal

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The former Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman, to whom allusion was made in the article 'Anglicans and Apartheid' by Rev. Trevor Bush, published in our last issue, has asked us to state that the article was, of course, written without either his knowledge or his consent.