



# **FEDERATION OR DESOLATION**

**ALAN PATON**

**SAIRR**

**South African Institute of Race Relations  
37th Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture**

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# FEDERATION OR DESOLATION

I AGREED with a heavy heart to give the Hoernlé lecture for 1985. I had given it before, in 1979, and did not think that anyone should give it twice. But I was asked, in the most earnest of language, by both the President and the Director, to give it this year. I, being unwilling, remembered Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty', and I remembered that Wordsworth called Duty 'Stern daughter of the voice of God'. So I agreed to give the lecture.

The white people of South Africa have lived in this country for three hundred and thirty-three years. It sounds like a mystic number — 333. Perhaps it is, and perhaps good will come out of the sorrows of this year 1985. This is my 83rd year and it has been one of the most sorrowful of my life, and I would think it has been one of the most sorrowful of many of your lives also. What have we done? How have we got ourselves into this sorrowful condition, of hatred, bombs, stonings, shootings, and deep anxiety? Can we get ourselves out of it? That is the question to which I am going to address myself.

It is possible that I shall offend some of you and disappoint others, that some will think I am naive, and some that I have deserted the ideals of my younger days, or that I have 'mellowed' or gone conservative. The worst thing that can be said of me today is that I have gone cosmetic. Well if these things are said, let them be said. I am interested in only one thing on this occasion, and that is to speak the truth. I surely need not say to this audience, I shall speak the truth 'as I see it'. I am not in anybody's pay, I am not a member of any party, I am not a believer in Utopia. I just have a perverse patriotism, a deep love of a country that can be cruel and harsh and beautiful, and frightening too.

Pardon me for telling you a small domestic detail. At half-past six in the morning my wife gets up to open the house, and at a quarter to seven in the morning she brings me the morning paper. I have to brace myself to look at it. It is bad enough to read about Northern Ireland and Lebanon, but it is almost unbearable to read about Uitenhage. And the small fabled town of Cradock, where Olive Schreiner lies on Buffel's Kop, where Guy Butler spent his boyhood and wrote about it in **Karoo Morning**, where Iris Vaughan spent part of her girlhood and wrote about it in her Diary. But now one reads about stoning and burning and killing in that once quiet town. It is as though some giant hand had ripped some beautiful counterpane from some quiet bed, and had shown us what violence and ugliness lay beneath. There was someone who foresaw that these things might happen, and that was Olive Schreiner herself, who was gifted with a prescience given to few of us.

On Monday May 6 my wife brought me the paper and there on Page 2 was the unbelievable headline: 'Cheers for Police, Press, in strife-torn Township'. One could

hardly believe it. The South African Police had organised a Press tour of the black township of Kwanobuhle, Uitenhage, and here is a short report of the visit.

Large groups of blacks converged on the party's buses when brief stops were made in the township. The residents mingled freely with the Press, police and members of the South African Defence Force. Patrolling police and military vehicles were greeted with cheers and friendly waves.

That makes cheerful reading, does it not? Well let the giant hand rip off the counterpane. In Kwanobuhle seventeen black civilians were murdered in the month of April. Some were hacked to death and their corpses later burnt. Even children were not spared. In these last few months forty three schools were damaged or destroyed by fire. Seventy-eight private houses were destroyed. Churches, libraries and shops were damaged or destroyed. Seventy-three buses were destroyed by fire.

I know you find it painful to listen to this Hoernlé lecture. Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé would have found it painful to listen to it. I find it painful to deliver it. But unless we look at our country as it is, we shall never be able to make it what we want it to be.

In such times as these it is easy to lose hope. Nadezhda Mandelstam, whose husband, the poet Osip Mandelstam, died in 1938 in a 'transit camp' at Vladivostock, wrote a book about their life of unspeakable suffering under Stalin. This book she called **Hope Against Hope**. After his death she wrote a second book, and wished it to be called in English **Hope Abandoned**. In South Africa we are still writing the first book. We trust that we shall never have to write the second.

But we do not know. After Sharpeville in 1960 many of our friends left South Africa, never to return. After the events of this year more will leave. It is a sad fact — which has to be faced — that many of our young white people, English, rather than Afrikaans speaking, make up their minds in their teenage years that they will first graduate from one of our universities, and thereafter will seek their future abroad. As far as they can see, the problems of our complex society are insoluble. Or if the problems are soluble, the road towards the solution will be hard and long, and they are not prepared to travel it, when they could live in countries like Britain and Canada and the United States and Australia, whose problems do not appear to be so intractable. Some leave because they find that their life of privilege is intolerable. They are continuously aware of the gap between the rich and the poor. They become sensitive about employing servants. They long to live in a country where they are free — or relatively free — of guilt and anxiety. Some leave because they have growing sons, and they do not wish them to go into the Army, where, if they fight, they will be fighting black people. And then there are the growing sons themselves. Some of them leave the country because they do not wish to be conscripted into the army. Some of them do not want to leave the country, and they decide to serve their term in the army. I

cannot speak for them all, but the ones that I know, when they return from the army, do not like to speak about it. Some of them decide that under no circumstances will they bear arms — they are in other words, pacifists. Of this number some are willing to do substitute service, and some are not. Some of them — the bravest I suppose — refuse to perform any kind of military service which in their judgement is performed to ensure the continuance of white supremacy, and the maintenance of the laws of racial separation. These are the ones who are subject to heavy punishment for holding such views. I myself support the Civil Rights League in its proposals for a Movement ad Pacem. The League calls ‘for an end to conscription and, in the interim, for recognition of conscientious objection on the grounds of ethical convictions, as well as the granting of alternative, non-military forms of national service which further peace and development and do not uphold the present apartheid system.’ While I support these proposals, I realise that they themselves are debatable. What kind of service in South Africa does not in some way or another uphold the present Apartheid system?

Is there any solution to our problems except that of violence and destruction, if this is indeed a solution? That is the question to which I promised to address myself, but before I do so, I want to relate briefly why we find ourselves in our present situation.

We are a country born of conquest. I suppose it is only the original people, the Khoi and the San, who did not do much conquering. Why should they conquer? The land was vast, and a million antelopes thundered across its plains. The African tribesmen from the North did their share of fighting and conquering. Shaka created the great Zulu nation by conquest. The Dutch, who later became the Afrikaners, finally trekked North in considerable numbers to get away from the British who had conquered the Cape in 1806. During their trek north, and after the establishment of their republics, the Afrikaners conquered one black chiefdom after another. They set aside for the conquered foes small parts of their original chiefdoms and so created what appears to be the insoluble land problem of today. The British conquered the Zulu nation at Ulundi in 1879, and in 1905, allowed the white colonists of Natal to tear Zululand into pieces, and to take the best pieces for themselves. Nor did the British leave the departed Afrikaner trekkers alone; they conquered the Afrikaner republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899—1902, for reasons that do not bear close examination.

The British were ashamed of their conquest of the republics, which had now become the British colonies of the Transvaal and the Orange River. Within a few years of the end of the Anglo-Boer War, Britain had restored self-government to the two colonies. But something even more extraordinary was about to happen, and that was the creation in 1910 of the Union of South Africa out of the four colonies of the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River. The fact that this happened was due to three extraordinary men, Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman of Britain, and Generals Botha and Smuts of the Transvaal. This British act of reparation and

magnanimity was fatally flawed. The British Parliament gave to the new Union of South Africa a colour bar that was to dominate our history. It was the blacks who had to pay for British magnanimity. It must be recorded that W P Schreiner, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, John Tengo Jabavu, and Walter Rubusana, all went to London to appeal to the Parliament and Government of Great Britain not to entrench the colour bar in the Constitution. Their efforts failed. J X Merriman would not hear of the inclusion of a prayer to Almighty God in a Constitution that embodied a colour bar. Onze Jan Hofmeyr of the Bond protested for the same reason. It must also be recorded that W P Schreiner and all those who supported him agreed that a loose federation was the only means of preserving the Cape's civilisation policy. But in 1910 South Africa became a unitary state with a colour bar. The chief architect of the unitary state was General Jan Christiaan Smuts.

The establishment of the Union had one early consequence. In 1913 Parliament passed the Natives Land Act, by which Africans and Whites were forbidden to acquire land in each other's areas. It was virtually a declaration that no African could become a farmer in the land of his birth. It was also a declaration that 70% of the people of the Union of South Africa were to be confined to some 14% of the land. The late Selby Msimang, a member of this Institute, and Vice-President of the Liberal Party of South Africa, who lived seventy years of his long life in the new unitary state, and who lived more than thirty years under the rule of the Afrikaner National Party, and who had seen enacted some of the fiercest racial laws that the world has ever known, always declared that the Natives Land Act was the worst of them all. The white man was in effect saying to the black man, we live in the same country, but we do not want to know you or see you; we want only your labour.

The next conquest in our history was the only one that was not achieved by force of arms. In 1948 the Afrikaner nationalist conquered us all, and embarked on the great programme of Apartheid and Separate Development, and on the building of a new Utopia, where we would all realise our God-given destinies, cherish our own cultures and languages, control our own affairs, and live at peace with one another. Dr Verwoerd, our third Prime Minister after 1948, promised to show the Senate, and presumably the world, 'how the various Acts, Bills, and also public statements which I have made all fit into a pattern, and altogether form a single constructive plan'. Dr Malan, the victorious Prime Minister of 1948, said that one day the nations of the world would come to South Africa to learn how people of different languages and cultures and beliefs could live at peace with one another. I have no doubt that some Afrikaner Nationalists thought — although they didn't say so — that they were building a polity that would last for a thousand years.

Shelley wrote these famous lines:

*And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings.*

*Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

One can well look on our own Utopian works and despair. We didn't get Utopia, we got Uitenhage. We are today paying the price for those Utopian dreams. I do not think there can be any doubt that Afrikanerdom was mesmerised by Dr H F Verwoerd. Sometimes I am inclined to believe that he mesmerised himself. I dare say that many of my hearers have pondered the question of the roles played by reason and emotion in our lives. We reach the most satisfactory solution — in my opinion — when reason and emotion run together in double harness. But in Dr Verwoerd's personality, emotion — or call it passion — sat in the driver's seat and drove his intellect relentlessly towards an unrealisable goal. It is one thing to dream of Utopia; but it is quite another thing to punish, even by death, those who won't dream it with you. Many people in this country, Helen Joseph, Beyers Naude, Albert Lutuli, Monty Naicker, Peter Brown, Robert Sobukwe, Nelson Mandela, paid heavily because they did not believe in the Utopian dream. Steve Biko and others paid more heavily still, they paid with their lives. I note in conclusion that there are still people who believe in Utopia. There are still people who believe that when the State or the Party, which are called in double-speak the people or the proletariat, control every department of our lives, then and then only will we all live together in peace and happiness. I find this incredible.

In 1985 we realise — I would say the majority of South Africans realise — that the Verwoerdian Utopia has fallen to pieces. That is why we live today in a world of constitution-making. The long age of conquest has come to an end. The task that confronts the country today, and especially the National Party, is the undoing of conquest. Conquest is easy, if you have the guns. The undoing of conquest is one of the most difficult tasks that can ever confront a people, and it is the task that confronts Afrikanerdom today.

I do not suppose that the Afrikaner Nationalist would use the words 'the undoing of conquest', but that is what he is trying to do. He is doing it for religious, moral, pragmatic reasons, among which we must include the desire for survival, and the fear of not surviving. He knows that he can no longer play the role of the conqueror. He knows that the concept of conquest plays no part in the thinking of the modern Western world. He knows that he no longer has the will or the power to rule as a conqueror.

Therefore he devised a new constitution. He did it all by himself. When you have been doing things all by yourself for thirty-seven years it is hard to give up the habit. His new constitution, like the one it replaced, was fatally flawed. I shall not discuss this at length because it has already been interminably discussed. Its notable flaw is that it excludes African people from taking part in government in Cape Town or Pretoria. An even more notable flaw, and a more dangerous one, not in the constitution, but

in the thinking of those who made it, is the assumption that Africans may justifiably be excluded from central government on the grounds that they have been given the powers to govern somewhere else, the myth, comforting and dangerous, that African people have homelands where almost everything is possible. Dr Verwoerd predicted that by the year 1976 (or 1978, it doesn't matter) the apparently irresistible flow of black people from the homelands to the industrial cities would be reversed, and black people would begin an irresistible flow back to the homelands. It hasn't happened and it isn't going to happen. Something quite different has happened. Slowly the rulers of this country are being forced to the conclusion that the process of urbanisation cannot be halted and further, that it should not be halted. Has a booklet not recently been published by the National Party itself, written by Dr Stoffel van der Merwe, MP for Helderkruijn, acknowledging that the homelands can never achieve what Dr Verwoerd said they would achieve, acknowledging that many black people had never even seen a homeland, and acknowledging as farcical the claim that such people could realise their political aspirations in a homeland they had never seen. The booklet admits also that large numbers of blacks who are acknowledged leaders in their own communities have refused to become involved in the constitutional debate because of mistrust of Government intentions. So far as I know the booklet does not go further and say that many black leaders have refused to become involved because they are afraid, for their lives and their persons and their property, if they do so.

Does it help to say that some of us told these things to the National Party thirty and more years ago? It does not help at all, so I shall not say it.

In an attempt to atone or compensate for (a Nationalist would not use these words) the deep flaws in the new constitution, all sorts of new bodies are being created to bring black people into the governing process. The trouble is that you cannot compensate for a deep flaw. The only thing to do is to get rid of it. When I think of all the work and time that has been put into constitution-making by Mr Chris Heunis, I find it in my heart to pity him. I am sure that he is a decent man, but he has given some valuable years of his life to creating something that isn't going to work. It has no hope of working. It perpetuates the colour bar of the conqueror. It perpetuates also the supremacy role of the conqueror. It is already obsolescent. It is the immediate, although not the root cause, of the violence and terror of the townships. I do not like passing such a severe judgement on such an important occasion as this, but I said I would speak the truth. This new constitution is not going to work.

What alternative is there to this kind of constitution? Easily the best known alternative is that of a unitary state with a universal suffrage. It is a moral, not a pragmatic ideal. It could be realised in South Africa only by war and revolution, but those South Africans who espouse this ideal are not in any position to wage war and revolution. They will not in the foreseeable future be able to wage war and revolution, and many of them do not want to. Those who want to wage war and revolution could not succeed

unless they are given powerful aid from outside. And who will give it? The nations of the West? I do not think it likely. The USSR? I do not think that likely either, because the USSR knows that intervention would lead to a confrontation with the USA, and would mean the end of us all. Any intervention from outside could only take place as the result of a miracle, and that would be an ultimatum from a USA-USSR joint task force, which would say to us 'Introduce universal suffrage in a unitary state immediately, or we will enter your country and destroy utterly your military power.' That is not likely either. Therefore I do not see any chance of realising the moral goal of universal suffrage in a unitary state.

I realise that I am passing two severe judgements, one on the National Party and the other on the United Democratic Front. If there is to be any salvation for South Africa, it will not come from the National Party or the UDF. It will not come from any existing party or organisation. Nor do I think it will come from any new organisation dedicated to the task of salvation. I have come to the conclusion that the only hope for our salvation lies in an entirely different approach to our constitution itself. I titled this lecture 'Federation or Desolation'. That is what I have come to believe. I have come to believe that Federation is the only possible form of constitution that holds any hope for this country. I believe that the white people of South Africa made an error of the greatest gravity when they decided on a unitary constitution. I believe that the complexity of our country, the diversity of our peoples, and of our cultures and our languages, demands a federal constitution. I remind you of the views of W P Schreiner, expressed a quarter of a century ago, that a loose federation was the only means of preserving the Cape's civilisation policy. What did W P Schreiner mean by the words 'civilisation policy'? He meant — even if we would not use those words today — a policy that acknowledged all the people of the Cape Colony as members of a common society, that acknowledged that there could be no goal to which all its members could not aspire. He claimed that such a policy could only be preserved in a loose federation. Was he not right? The National Convention under the powerful influence of General Smuts and J X Merriman decided on a unitary constitution and gave a guarantee to the Cape Colony which proved totally valueless. Unfortunately the chief advocates of federation — W P Schreiner, his famous sister Olive, and Onze Jan Hofmeyr — were not present at the convention. W P Schreiner was not present because he felt that it was his first duty to defend Dinuzulu, who was accused of complicity in the rebellion of Bambatha in 1906. Davenport records that Smuts and Merriman, together with Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of the Cape, considered the federal constitutions of the United States, Canada and Australia, and regarded the American Civil War and inter-state wrangles in Australia, as powerful arguments against federalism. Thus in 1910 the unitary state of the Union of South Africa came into being, with a colour bar given to it by Westminster, and started on the fatal course which led to the Natives Land Act, the abolition of the Black and Coloured vote, the Urban Areas Act, the Group

Areas Act, the Population Registration Act. The Cape Province could have given an example to the rest of South Africa, but her own premier J X Merriman, made that impossible. Ironically enough it was the policy of the defeated Republics that triumphed.

Davenport records: 'The triumph of unitary over federal thinking is to be explained primarily by the conviction of Smuts and Merriman, who led (the Convention) from the time of the Pretoria conference onward. Both men were attracted by British constitutionalism, while Merriman was driven by his abhorrence of over-government to favour a centralised system, and Smuts became convinced that it was necessary to concentrate power at the centre to prevent the structure from being shaken apart.' How wrong could such clever men be? Our unitary state turned out to be one of the most over-governed in the world, and today is one of the most shaken apart.

It is another irony of our history that the white people of South Africa, having chosen a unitary state in 1910, are now afraid of the idea of another. They are in fact afraid of a new unitary state that might do to them what they have done to others. White people do not like to talk of this fear; some of them even pretend that it does not exist. But a man like Chief Buthelezi has no doubt that it exists, and while he would declare himself *morally* in favour of universal suffrage in a unitary state, he would *pragmatically* agree that white fear, and especially Afrikaner fear, must be taken into account. This he stated categorically in his Hoernlé lecture of 1974. I shall refer again to this lecture before concluding my own.

Is there any chance that the thinkers and leaders of the National Party would favour the creation of a Federal Republic of South Africa? They have for the moment prevented any progress in that direction by erecting the giant roadblock of the New Dispensation. They have spent so much time in planning it, and so much money in building it, that they will not readily give it up. Yet there are hints that the thinking of the National Party may be moving in that direction.

In or about September 1983, our State President, then Prime Minister, gave an interview to Hugh Murray, Editor of **Leadership SA**. Mr Botha said:

I believe in the devolution of power ... That brings me to another idea I have been propagating, which is a broader concept than what is generally understood by a 'constellation of states'. This wider constellation would include a voluntary co-operation on transport, tourism, health services, veterinary services, conservation of water and energy etc. Such a constellation could have very useful talks on these matters in general. Then we have what I term a 'confederation of states'. A confederation of states is a more regular sort of co-operative commonwealth, if one can call it that.

Here there is a hint — although an uncertain one — of a change in thinking. So far as I know the Prime Minister had never before used the word 'confederation' in talking of South African affairs. He had always used the word 'constellation'. The con-

cept was strongly — and I think rightly — criticised on the grounds that in South Africa a constellation would be a collection — an alliance — a grouping — of one rich and powerful state and, say, eight poor ones, and that the eight poor ones, or at least seven of them, would have to live on subsidies from the rich and powerful one, and that the rich and powerful one is made rich only by the help of the eight poor ones. The harsh fact is that the wealth of South Africa is to be found in certain well-defined areas, and that these are, almost without exception, to be found in the rich and powerful state.

At this point I want to tell you that Mr Ray Moseley, a veteran reporter of the **Chicago Tribune**, when he visited me at Botha's Hill to talk about the future of South Africa, brought me a message from a leading citizen of Soweto, saying that he and his friends thought that my estimate of the character and good intentions of the State President was misleading, and in fact could be harmful to the cause that both they and I championed. The message was not hostile. I think it is right to say something about this. Mr Botha has been called a hypocrite; his new dispensation has been described as a giant hypocrisy, and a cosmetic swindle. I do not believe that Mr Botha is a hypocrite. To me he is an Afrikaner who is trying to break out of the bondage of his history, a history in which the British and the Blacks were two of the greatest determinants. The Afrikaners are emerging from the morass of Apartheid, and one cannot expect them to emerge white and shining. The time is short, I know, and the times are grave, but we either make up our minds and our wills to travel the hard road ahead, or we relapse into despair, and if we relapse finally into despair, we ought to get out of South Africa as soon as possible. It is not fair to stay, and to weaken the spirit of others.

A friend of mine who is a member of the Institute, believes, as some others do, that my assessment of Mr Botha is naive. He believes that Mr Botha's sole purpose is to ensure the survival of the Afrikaner. I do not believe that. I am quite sure that one of Mr Botha's purposes is to ensure the survival of the Afrikaner, but I am equally sure that he wants to ensure the survival — together — of all the peoples of the country. He has in fact said so categorically, and I do not believe he was lying. He is an intelligent man, and he almost certainly knows that he cannot succeed in the first purpose if he does not succeed in the second. My friend, who is an intelligent man, apparently does not know that persons who have one motive and one only for their actions are extremely rare. He apparently does not know that he himself has more than one motive for passing his judgement on the State President.

I want to say a word in defence of language, because after all it is the use of language that has helped me to make a living. If you call Mr Botha a hypocrite, that is the end of all discussion. If you call Chief Buthelezi a stooge, that is the end of all discussion. If you call Bishop Tutu a charlatan, that too is the end of the discussion. If you liken South Africa to Nazi Germany, that is a prostitution of language. If this were Nazi Germany there would be no Hoernlé lecture here tonight. Beyers Naude would be dead, Bishop Tutu would be dead, Helen Joseph, Helen Suzman, the list is

very long. And as I say this I remember that Steve Biko *is* dead, Neil Aggett, Andries Raditsela, Siphon Mutsi, Zachariah Mzulane, and the people at Crossroads and Uitenhage, they are all dead. I remember that, and it fills me with shame, but it will not allow me to say that South Africa is like Nazi Germany. The Hoernlé lecture is still an occasion on which one exercises a right to avoid extreme language, and to avoid statements that public figures are hypocrites, stooges and charlatans.

There is one thing that our State President could do to give people more confidence in him, and that would be to issue what is called a 'declaration of intent'. This has been called for by many. Whether his declaration of intent would be called 'rhetoric' and 'cosmetic' and therefore disbelieved I do not know, but I do know that such a declaration would help some people to emerge from the melancholy that afflicts them.

The late Leo Marquard, past president of the Institute, in his book **A Federation of Southern Africa**, which was published in 1971 and therefore could not consider the New Dispensation, declared that the granting of fundamental rights could never be done under the constitutional arrangements of that time, and that a 'federal structure is a more hopeful alternative'. Leo Marquard did not claim that federation would solve all problems, but he claimed that federation would make them more amenable to solution. Chief Buthelezi in his 1974 Hoernlé lecture stated that he, together with President Matanzima, believed in the advantages of a federal commonwealth, such as exists in Canada, Australia, and the United States. President Matanzima has subsequently said that he would consider the return of the Transkei to the country of South Africa, only if South Africa became a federation. Chief Buthelezi said further: 'The distribution or devolution of power from a unitary centre to a number of autonomous states would greatly reduce or even eliminate altogether for a long time the obsession of all groups with central power or control thereof, which at the moment threatens the country with unrest and revolution.' That was said in 1974; it can still be said in 1985.

Chief Buthelezi said he had not come to the lecture-hall to draw maps. Neither have I. It is not a proper task for an occasion such as this, even if I could do it, which I can not. I shall content myself with giving my own views of the urgency of finding a federal solution.

I agree with Chief Buthelezi that there is an obsession of all groups with central power and the control of it. But let me speak for the white group alone, in so far as I am able. The white group is certainly obsessed by the idea of central power, and it is certainly obsessed by the fear of central power if it got into the hands of someone other than themselves. Mr Botha's new dispensation is an inadequate attempt to moderate this fear. Not long ago I spoke at a symposium of which the other members were Rabbi Mendel, Dr Beyers Naude, and the Rev Nico Smith. The two last-named took a very high religious and moral view of the unitary state. I admire them both, but believe that religion and morality are not identical with politics. They should certainly influence politics, but they do not constitute politics. The tremendous audience at the Temple

Emmanuel on that occasion obviously admired Beyers Naude and Nico Smith for their moral stand, but it was clear — to me at least — that the audience was not convinced by their politics.

I have no doubt that if South Africa became a federation of six or eight or ten states, with a federal government given as limited power as it is possible for a federal government to have, there would be an immediate (though not complete) abatement of the fear and anxiety and mistrust that so characterise our present society. I believe that there would be a great increase in confidence, both political and economic. Then, and then only, would we have a right to contemplate a federation of Southern Africa.

I would expect certain early results of a federation. I would expect a return, even if not complete, to the rule of law. I would expect the abolition of detention without trial. I would expect great changes in the security laws. I would expect great changes, amounting in some cases to abolition, of Urban Areas Acts, Group Areas Acts, Population Registration Acts. And to return to the starting point of this lecture, I would expect the wounds of conquest to start healing. I would expect a greater measure of what is called happiness in our lives. And lastly, ladies and gentlemen, I would expect a change in the attitude towards South Africa on the part of those people, both righteous and self-righteous, who now have little for us but condemnation.

I don't know whether Mr Heunis will ever read this lecture. If he does, I would not blame him if he were to grind his teeth. What the lecturer is in fact saying to him is this: 'Mr Heunis, you have worked like a dog, but it won't do; it has to be done all over again.' And he could say: 'What right have you to speak? You have never had to carry any political responsibility.' And I could say to him: 'That's true, but I have one advantage over you, I have never been a Nationalist.' And while he is recovering from that, I could say to him: 'If you knew you could save the country by doing the work all over again, would you do it?' And he would say to me: 'That's a hypothetical question, but if I knew it, I would do it.' Think seriously, Mr Heunis, over the creation of a Federal Republic of South Africa.

This is of course a formidable task. But our rulers could at least take one step towards it. They could pay close attention to the report of the Buthelezi Commission. Let me say at once that our rulers seem more prepared to do so than they were a year ago.

Speaking to the annual council meeting of the Institute of Race Relations, almost exactly three years ago, Professor Schlemmer spoke of the findings of the Buthelezi Commission. The final proposal was for the unification of KwaZulu and Natal, autonomous but not independent of South Africa, with an internal dispensation based on universal franchise, proportional representation in an all-race legislative assembly, constitutional protection for minorities and a racially-balanced executive or cabinet along consociational lines. In the legislative assembly there would be provision for a minority veto, a Bill of Rights, and a continuous testing of the constitution by an independent judiciary. I do not think it is my duty tonight to discuss in detail these

constitutional proposals except to emphasise that they point towards the final consummation, the Federal Republic of South Africa. My main duty tonight is to say to the State President, give the people of KwaZulu and Natal a chance to make such a region work, a chance to show — which chance was denied to the Cape Province seventy-five years ago — that people of different races and languages and cultures can live and work together in peace, and a chance to encourage the other people of South Africa to make other regions work, and especially, a chance to help the white people of South Africa to overcome that fear, which if not overcome, will destroy us all.

Since I wrote these words, it has been announced — and also denied — that the Government plans to create, not a unified Natal and Zululand, but two contiguous regions, one a virtually restored Zululand, and the other the rest of Natal. I wish the Government had taken the bold step of creating a unified Natal and Zululand, but I think the intention — announced and denied — to restore Zululand would be a great historical step. How ironic it is that a South African Government might make reparation in 1985 for the destruction of Zululand in 1905, an act authorised by the Government of Great Britain. And who knows? Perhaps these two new regions will themselves choose to become one.

I want to say a word about Chief Buthelezi. He has already been called a stooge, but a more sinister view of him is that he is a tyrant. I have known him for nearly forty years, and I have not observed these tendencies. I think that white South Africa should thank God that in anxious times such as these, we have a man of this stature to help us in the undoing of conquest. I have not all that many years to live, but I would be willing to live them under a Government headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi. If Natal and Zululand could be unified, what burdens would roll off our shoulders — the burden of living as conquerors, the burden of living as those conquered.

Well I must end now. When I opened the paper this morning, Monday, the twentieth of May, and read of the possible restoration of Zululand, I felt full of hope. South Africa is a country where you hope on Mondays and despair on Tuesdays. I want to close with a very short story of the late J H Hofmeyr, who, if he read this morning's newspaper — I must confess that I am not an authority on such matters — would have been filled with hope too. In 1939, when the menace of Hitler hung over the world, Hofmeyr spoke at an annual dinner in Johannesburg, and quoted to the guests the words on a tablet in an old Yorkshire church.

In the year 1652 when through England all things sacred were either profaned or neglected, this church was built by Sir Robert Shirley, Bart., whose special praise it is to have done the best things in the worst times and to have hoped them in the most calamitous.

Mr President and Mr Director, I wish for the Institute the necessary courage and vigour to continue to serve our country as it has so faithfully done since it was established fifty-six years ago, in the year 1929, by Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé and others.

**VOTE OF THANKS TO DR PATON BY MR JOHN KANE-BERMAN,  
DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF  
RACE RELATIONS**

I do not want to rub in the point that this is the second Hoernlé Lecture that Dr Alan Paton has delivered, but I cannot resist quoting from his first. He said that he would risk a small prophecy, which was that 'we will not in the future hear so much of the language of the conqueror as we have heard in the past.' I think he is beginning to be proved right. Much of the language that emanates from high official quarters today is different in tone from what it was then. When a senior minister can say in public, as Dr Gerrit Viljoen recently did, that 'I think one political lesson that has been taken to heart in recent years is that whatever change is being introduced or whatever reform steps are being taken, they are not likely to be accepted unless they are perceived by the people concerned to have been the result of negotiation', then we are inching forward towards what Dr Paton has called the 'undoing of conquest'. I say inching because we still all too often behave like conquerors at the pass offices and Uitenhage and elsewhere. Very many more things need to be undone and habits unlearned before the majority of South Africans will be convinced that what is changing is not merely language.

It is particularly good to have Alan Paton with us this evening at a time when it looks as if the Prohibition of Political Interference Act is on the way out. That is another inch forward. I was present nearly 20 years ago at his last public speech in Johannesburg as leader of the Liberal Party, which some people say is now defunct but which it would be more correct to say dissolved itself rather than expel its black members in order to conform to the requirements of the Act. The Liberal Party no longer exists but it is greatly satisfying that its leader has not only outlived the law which effectively destroyed it, but continues vigorously, as he says, to 'speak the truth as I see it.'

I think that Dr Paton is quite correct in saying that the Verwoerdian Utopia has fallen to pieces. Political and economic realities are now crowding in on us with greater force than ever before. When Dr Paton says that the new constitution, which has been in operation for less than a year, is obsolescent, I suspect that he is saying something that a growing number of our rulers are coming to realise, even if for the time being they keep the thought to themselves.

It doesn't help to say that this Institute, along with other people, warned that the new constitution would alienate black people in this country, because the task that faces us all now is not to say 'we told you so' but to deal with the situation confronting us. 'The undoing of conquest,' Dr Paton has said, 'is one of the most difficult tasks that can ever confront a people, and it is the task that confronts Afrikanerdom today.' I

would go further than that and say that it is a task which confronts all of us. The National Party leadership clearly no longer believes in its own ideology as created by Dr Malan and Dr Verwoerd. The problem we all face is not to devise or import a new one but to seek, through negotiation and compromise, a constitutional system that can replace it. This is as much a responsibility of the critics of the government as it is of the National Party and it is because the Institute wishes to play a part in that process that we invited — or arm-twisted — Dr Paton into giving this lecture tonight, so that with his years of political wisdom and experience he could inject some ideas into the debate that now has to take place.

The debate is not a new one; as Dr Paton has reminded us, it predates Union. What *is* new is that President Botha and Mr Heunis and Dr Viljoen, and no doubt others, are coming to recognise that they no longer have all the answers.

The Institute has never committed itself to any particular political formula but Dr Paton has spoken tonight of federation and you will, I hope, permit me a few remarks on that point. I do not believe that anything other than general adult suffrage is today a saleable political commodity in this country. There are divisions among black political organisations but they are all united in their stand on that issue. In my opinion, however, there is nothing morally superior about a unitary state. I do not think that whether a state is unitary or federal is in any case a moral issue. After all there are many democratic societies, among them the United States, Australia, Switzerland, and West Germany, that have federal constitutions. The important thing, I believe, is common citizenship and common nationality, not the precise form in which this is exercised. The other important things are rule under a system of just law and the ability of all adult citizens to act democratically to change their rulers. If exchanging a unitary system for a federal system is a means of democratising South Africa, then, in my view, it needs to be very seriously considered, and the Institute is grateful to Alan Paton for so firmly putting the idea back on to the political map, as I believe this very important lecture tonight has done.

I want to comment briefly on two related points that Dr Paton has put forward. The one is his challenge to the State President to give the people of KwaZulu and Natal a chance to embark on multi-racial regional government. Perhaps it is indeed time to allow this part of South Africa, while remaining part of South Africa, which is the wish of its people, to experiment in this way. If Natal and KwaZulu were allowed to experiment and if their experiment were to succeed, well, who knows, other parts of the country may be willing to follow their example. In other words, power-sharing.

Strangely enough, that concept is not new to South Africa. It is already happening all around us as white managers and black trade unionists bargain with one another across the table or even across the picket line. Unilateral white decision-making in our factories is being replaced by the closest thing South Africa yet has to multi-racial decision-making. We now have to find a formula to extend the practice into politics.

There are two fundamental realities that we have to deal with in South Africa. The one is the black anger that we see all over the country — anger which transcends all political differences between black leaders and black organisations. The other is white fear of any political system in which the white man does not have the monopoly of power, fear which is not confined to Afrikaners. These are the two most powerful forces in this country and there is no future outside of a practical compromise between them.

This means compromise on both sides, no matter which side has been guilty of perpetrating grave wrongs and brutal injustices against the other. This country is in desperate need of political statesmanship not only on the side of the oppressor but also on the side of the oppressed. But I believe the government has to take a number of steps to create a climate of confidence and demonstrate its good faith.

The first of these is to de-regulate black politics. In September last year the Council of the Institute unanimously passed a motion calling for the lifting of bans on all black political organisations. This was not a plea on behalf of any of these organisations, for the Institute holds no brief for any political organisation, black or white. It was rather a call to the government to recognise the right of black people to make political choices without the interference of the state. If the government is sincere in its intention to involve black leaders in political discussions, it needs to allow all black political viewpoints to become involved in that process. I fear that as long as some organisations remain banned, Mr Heunis's forum for discussion may find itself fatally handicapped because it is not hearing all important viewpoints.

The second thing that the government needs to do, I believe, is to respond to Dr Paton's call tonight for the issuing of a declaration of intent. Dr Paton has rightly refrained from suggesting what the contents of such a declaration might be and this is not the appropriate occasion for me to try and list its contents either. But in order to demonstrate its good faith and show black South Africa in particular and the country at large that it is seriously committed to finding a constitutional system outside the framework of Verwoerdian ideology it needs publicly to say that its intention is to seek such a formula in negotiation. To say, as the government in effect has done, that separate constitutional structures for the white, coloured, and Indian minorities on the one hand and Africans on the other are non-negotiable, is simply to invite black people to say that one man, one vote in a unitary state is non-negotiable. On the other hand, if the government were to say that the process of negotiation was open-ended and that all possible formulas would be discussed and debated, it would, in my view, be entitled to expect a similar open-mindedness from blacks. The alternative is continuing stalemate and more Uitenhages.

Dr Paton has talked tonight of hope, and in thanking him for his noble, and, I believe, very important Hoernlé Lecture, I want also to say to him that it takes a brave man to hang on to hope in calamitous times, and to salute him for doing precisely that.

## PREVIOUS HOERNLÉ LECTURES

The Rt Hon J H Hofmeyr: *Christian Principles and Race Problems* (1945)

Dr E G Malherbe: *Race Attitudes and Education* (1946)

Professor I D MacCrone: *Group Conflicts and Race Prejudice* (1947)

Professor W M Macmillan: *Africa Beyond the Union* (1948)

Dr the Hon E H Brookes: *We Come of Age* (1949)

Mrs A W Hoernlé: *Penal Reform and Race Relations* (1950)

Dr H J van Eck: *Some Aspects of the Industrial Revolution* (1951)

Professor Sir Herbert Frankel: *Some Reflections on Civilisation in Africa* (1952)

Professor A R Radcliffe-Brown: *Outlook for Africa* (1953)

Dr Emory Ross: *Colour and Christian Community* (1954)

Professor T B Davie: *Education and Race Relations in South Africa* (1955)

Professor Gordon W Allport: *Prejudice in Modern Perspective* (1956)

Professor B B Keet: *The Ethics of Apartheid* (1957)

Dr David Thompson: *The Government of Divided Communities* (1958)

Dr Simon Biesheuvel: *Race, Culture and Personality* (1959)

Dr C W de Kiewiet: *Can Africa Come of Age?* (1960)

Professor D V Cowen: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity — Today* (1961)

The Most Rev Denis E Hurley: *Apartheid: A Crisis of the Christian Conscience* (1964)

Professor Gwendolen M Carter: *Separate Development: The Challenge of the Transkei* (1966)

Sir Keith Hancock: *Are There South Africans?* (1966)

Professor Meyer Fortes: *The Plural Society in Africa* (1968)

Professor D Hobart Houghton: *Enlightened Self-Interest and The Liberal Spirit* (1970)

Professor A S Mathews: *Freedom and State Security in the South African Plural Society* (1971)

Professor Philip Mayer: *Urban Africans and the Bantustans* (1972)

Alan Pifer: *The Higher Education of Blacks in the United States* (1973)

Chief M Gatsha Buthelezi: *White and Black Nationalism, Ethnicity and the Future of the Homelands* (1974)

Professor Monica Wilson: '*... So Truth be in the Field ...*' (1975)

Professor Marshall W Murphree: *Education, Development and Change in Africa* (1976)

Dr G R Bozzoli: *Education is the key to Change in South Africa* (1977)

Dr Hugh Ashton: *Moral Suasion* (1978)

Dr Alan Paton: *Towards Racial Justice: Will there be a change of heart?* (1979)

Dr Leon Sullivan: *The Role of Multinational Corporations in the Republic of South Africa* (1980)

The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), which was founded in 1929, is an independent, non profit-making organisation. It seeks to foster processes of change towards democracy in South Africa, by promoting public awareness and practical co-operation among the various sections of the population.

To this end, the Institute's main work is the conduct and active dissemination of research. Its major publication is the comprehensive annual **Survey of Race Relations in South Africa**, which is internationally respected as an objective and authoritative work of reference. The Institute also produces regular briefing papers on various topics, and occasional special reports. Its members are kept in contact with developments in the field of race relations by **Race Relations News**, which is published quarterly.

The Institute also runs a substantial education department, which provides bursaries, sponsored by foreign and local donors, to the value of more than R1,5 million a year, for black school pupils and students.

The overall affairs of the Institute are directed by a Council elected by its membership, which includes individuals of all races, universities, churches, local authorities, trade unions, and private and public companies.

The Institute is not affiliated to any political body. This allows it to maintain working contact with a wide range of organisations. Its principal sources of income are membership fees, corporate donations, grants from trusts and donor agencies, and revenue from the sale of its publications.

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The Membership Manager  
SAIRR  
P O Box 97  
Johannesburg  
2000 South Africa