

"We should ourselves be unable to obey this Law or to counsel our clergy and people to do so.

"We therefore appeal to you, Sir, not to put us in a position in which we have to choose between obeying our conscience and obeying the law of the land."

Clayton knew what he was doing. He took one of his Bishops by the arm and said, "I don't want to go to prison, I am an old man. I don't want to end my days in prison. But I'll go if I have to."

On Thursday afternoon, the day after the drawing up of the letter of protest, he was found dead of heart failure on his study floor. Alan deliberately refrains from overdramatizing this incident, but it speaks for itself. In his restrained handling of the matter Alan reminds me of the Presbyterian elder of whom it was said that "he was so upright that he bent backwards".

Here, then, is available for all our reading the magnificently

written life of this "great, strange, extraordinary man".

Perhaps the reviewer may be allowed to break the conventions of reviewing and give a personal reminiscence of Archbishop Clayton. Very troubled by a Christian book which seemed to make nonsense of the fight which he and others were putting up in Parliament, he rang up the Archbishop to ask if he could see him and talk things over. The response was warm and immediate. He went out to "Bishopscourt". The Archbishop gave him dinner, then sat with him in an alcove and talked in the moonlight. He gave him a bed for the night and the hospitality of the Holy Communion in the Archbishop's Chapel the next morning. I do not know that a solution was found of all the intellectual difficulties involved, but the strain had all gone and had been replaced by peace.

The book is aptly dedicated to David Russell.

The publisher, David Philip, has made a splendid job of the set up of the book.□

2.

THE FINAL SPRO-CAS REPORT

Peter Randall: *A Taste of Power* (Spro-cas publication No. 11)

by Marie Dyer

A Taste of Power is the final, co-ordinated Spro-cas report written by the Director. Part One brings together the detailed conclusions of the six special Spro-cas reports and some Black Community Programme documents into an elaboration of two central themes. The first is "that the South African social system is in urgent need of radical change, in the sense of a fundamental redistribution of power and resources. The aim must be to re-allocate power so that the black majority can exercise an effective role in the decision-making processes of the society and gain a more equitable share of the land's resources."

This proposition is seen as not only morally imperative but also practically necessary for future stability and peace.

The second theme is that these major changes will be initiated by blacks; that we have entered a new historical phase in South Africa in which blacks have begun to have

the 'Taste of Power' of the title, and that whites are not going to be able indefinitely to prevent them enjoying the full meal.

The special Spro-cas reports are substantial, concentrated and heavily documented works; and it is a considerable achievement to have produced a final summary as cogent and fluent as this report. In the account and indictment of the Apartheid society which develops the first theme, the combination of carefully selected details with confident and uncompromising general assertions is strikingly persuasive.

The opening section gives the Basic Patterns:

... "Every institution in our society reflects the basic patterns of enforced racial segregation, discrimination in favour of whites, inequality in the provision of resources

and facilities, and inequality of opportunity. From birth to death we live in a segregated, discriminatory, unequal and unjust society . . .”

The social structures are described under the headings of education, the economy, the legal system, the political system, and the church. Here is a comment on some of the cynical inadequacies of Bantu Education:

... “By the end of Standard Two more than half the African children admitted in Sub A will have left to join the street gangs, the newspaper vendors, the glue sniffers and the crowds of caddies who are sometimes controlled with whips and dogs as they clamour for work. Their so-called education has been useless, almost a total waste of time and money, since they are not even literate in an African language, their white masters having decided that on top of all their other disadvantages they should start learning English and Afrikaans, as well as their vernacular, during their first year at school. According to the Sprocas Education Commission this would seem to be a linguistic burden unique in the history of formal education, and one motivated by nothing more noble than a self-defeating wish to impose, and thereby entrench, the Afrikaans language.”

Migrant labour is described as the ‘single and most distinguishing feature of the South African economy’ and one that is ‘fundamentally evil in its operation’. It probably affects six million people, causing enormous human suffering and helping to perpetuate poverty. The recent increases in miners’ salaries, for instance, the report points out, have actually increased the gap between the conditions of black and white workers; and figures investigated by the Financial Mail suggest that ‘The black miner’s family in the homelands is likely to be starving’ The report quotes the conclusion of the Economics Commission Report:

... “only marginal changes are possible given the ‘white monopolisation of power’ through the white-controlled organisational and institutional network that is the ‘root cause of our irresponsible society.’”

The opinion of Prof. S.A. Strauss, of the Law faculty of the University of South Africa, is given that “the greatest threat to the basic values of South Africa’s legal system is the kind of ‘extra-judicial criminal law’ which the Suppression of Communism Act makes possible. Pointing out that the Act is employed against people who are not Communists, Professor Strauss concludes that ‘we have thereby virtually abandoned the principle of legality.’”

The political system is described as a racial oligarchy in which all significant political power is vested in white hands. It follows from this that inequality and injustice are built into the existing system. In the changes, realignments and regroupings which have begun with the development of black initiatives, this system is seen as performing a conserving and restrictive, rather than an innovating role.

‘No-one who is concerned for human dignity’ declares the report, ‘no-one who professes any of the great religious faiths, no one who claims to be concerned about the future

of our country, can be complacent or apathetic in the face of this picture of white power and privilege, and black poverty and frustration.’

The report gives illuminating insights into the processes by which the structures of Apartheid are maintained and perpetuated. It adopts the concept of ‘structural violence’ to describe some of these processes.

“Structural violence occurs when resources and power are unevenly distributed, concentrated in the hands of a few who do not use them to achieve the possible self-realisation of all members, but for self-satisfaction for the elite or for purposes of dominance, oppression and control.”

The report suggests a significant connection between the high degree of personal and communal violence in the black community, and the structurally violent conditions which create social injustice and social hopelessness. (The incidence of violence in black townships and ghettos in South Africa is estimated to be the highest in the world)

It is pointed out that the positions of authority and control in the state services, including education departments for all races, are usually filled by people deeply committed to the ideology of apartheid. Further, ‘thousands of whites are living parasitically off the whole complex system of ‘Bantu Administration’. To illustrate this parasitism, the report examines some aspects of the composition of the new Bantu Affairs Boards. The salary bill for white officials in the East Rand board alone is estimated at more than R500 000 p.a. (This does not include for incidentals like motor cars for the chairman; and this is one board out of a proposed total of 29). These boards receive no subsidies from the state but their income is to be derived from local authorities, increased levies from employers and higher rentals in African townships – income which would normally be used for township services and facilities.

“A vast, poorly paid black proletariat is enmeshed in a huge and bewildering bureaucratic machine that determines where they may live, for whom they may work and, indeed, whether they may even live together as man and wife.”

The laws themselves are described as another irresistibly powerful social process:

... “laws in South Africa, in making existing social norms and practices more rigid and authoritative, have made discrimination, inequality, status distinctions and distinctions in privilege so utterly pervasive that these characteristics have penetrated deep into the consciousness of both blacks and whites. If any one factor is to be singled out as accounting for the surface calm and lack of open conflict in South Africa, it is the rigidity and pervasiveness of inequality in the society. In a macabre sense, therefore, the authorities in South Africa are right when they maintain that the myriad laws and regulations are there to preserve ‘harmonious’ and ‘peaceful’ relations between the groups in the country. Or, as the authorities are also fond of saying, the laws are necessary ‘to preserve the South African way of life’, for that way of life is discrimination, inequality and authoritarian control. Or, as they also say, ‘to preserve white culture and western civilisation.’”

and again:

"Apartheid is justified as necessary to reduce racial friction. Good fences, it is said, make good neighbours. There is a plausibility about this argument which renders it attractive. In the South African context, however, it is vitiated because the neighbour with the biggest property decided where the fence should be, how much it should cost, who should pay for it, and who should erect it."

The section concludes with the observation that the whites are themselves victims of the system. In the rhetoric and actions aimed at self-preservation, the values of love, compassion, and humanity are replaced by those of toughness, discipline, obedience and conformity; in turn the qualities of individuality and spontaneity suffer, and white men place themselves in a racial jail in which they are less free than those they seek to dominate.

In discussing the possibilities of change from the rigid patterns of discrimination, inequality and dominance which it has described so graphically, the report begins with the new Black Strategy, which its second opening theme presented as crucial. For many years, it points out, the aim of black leaders was to win participation in the white-dominated institutional network; to attain recognition for Africans as equal citizens in a common society. Mass political parties pursuing this aim reached their zenith in the 1950's; but the white power structure effectively and progressively resisted their intentions. It appears that after 1961 most African leaders despaired of attaining these aims by lawful and peaceful means; and some, not surprisingly, resorted to violence and guerrilla tactics.

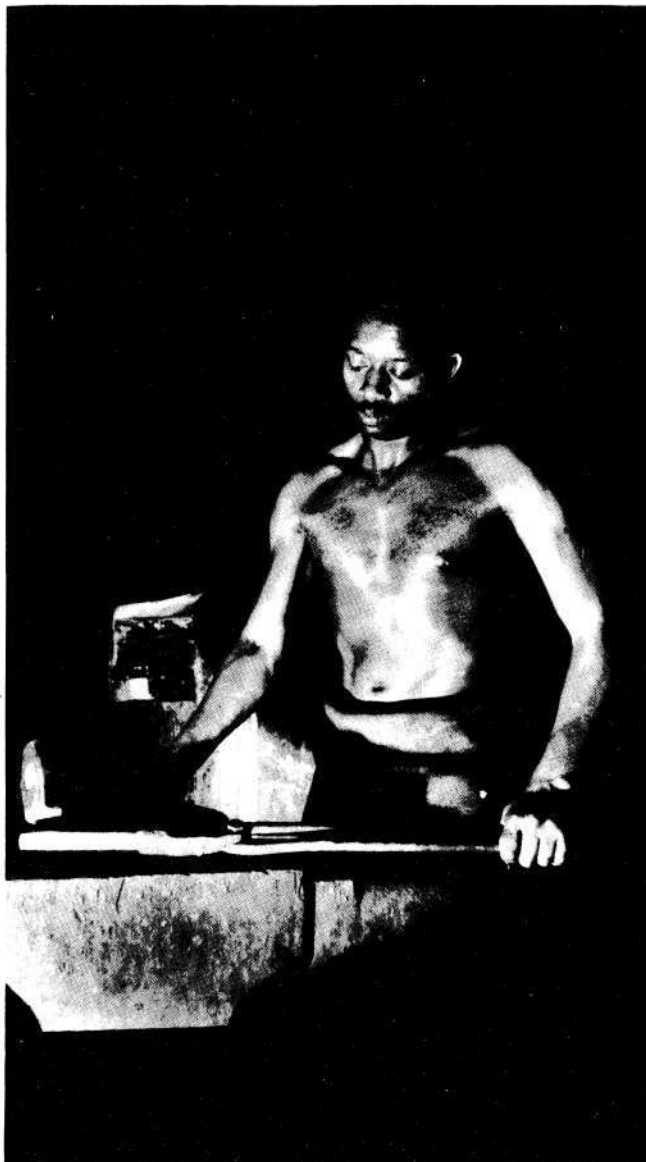
The report discerns a dramatic shift into a new separatist strategy, which aims at the creation of a black institutional network as a counter to white domination. The recognition appears to have grown that before liberation there must be unity, and unity needs organisation. The Spro-cas Black Community Programme's survey of the organisational network already in existence listed more than 70 black-controlled cultural, educational political, professional, religious, self-help, student and welfare organisations. Most of these have in common the espousal of the concept and strategy of Black Consciousness, a "a three-year-old movement which is rapidly becoming one of the most powerful forces for change in South Africa. The phenomenon is clearly much more than political; it represents a culture rediscovering itself and beginning to assert itself. Thus it reaches beyond the influence of African political movements of the '50's which the government effectively crushed. It reaches beyond the aims of politically aware and articulate blacks toward the very heart and dignity of Black culture. Its latent power is tremendous and probably cannot be crushed, although its growth may be slowed. One strong element in black consciousness is its rejection of many white values and attitudes, such as competitiveness, acquisitiveness and materialism, which have led to the moral and physical violence of South African society. Black Consciousness is not an anti-white philosophy. One is forced to conclude that it is anti-white-values."

Thus since whites have kept race at the centre of South Africa's politics for so long, the report asserts that the

quest for equality will also be carried out under the banner of race. Group politics as opposed to individual political participation will become increasingly important; it seems not unlikely that the resolution of this conflict will take the form of some sort of bargaining or confrontation between institutions representing racial interests.

In a comment revealing the pace and significance of contemporary developments, the report points out that at the end of 1970 it was not possible for the Social Commission to say whether the major lines of race conflict would be drawn between whites and all blacks collectively, or primarily between whites and Africans, with other groups in a marginal position. Now, however, the report considers it clear that at least the coloured group has moved significantly toward identification with the black cause.

The question posed by the report is thus not whether there will be conflict, but what the nature and extent of the conflict will be. The great danger is that internal pressure



will take the form ultimately of open and unregulated conflict. The report quoted Professor L. Schlemmer:

"In regard to the prospects of ultimate civil disorder, South Africa might be very much involved in a race against time, as it were. If the system can become significantly less rigid before blacks, particularly Africans, develop a political coherence and organisation, the heat of conflict is likely to be reduced. If Africans face the same intransigence as they face today when their political consciousness has developed, the degree of conflict could be considerable. It seems utterly crucial that the aim of working for conditions which will reduce the heat of inevitable conflict in South Africa will be one of the major goals of strategic action for change."

The report regards as facile the belief that economic growth in itself will bring about major changes in South Africa. However the real (though not yet legal) bargaining power of black workers is seen as a strong and practical hope. The relatively successful organisation of the Durban strikes of 1973 would seem to be an indication that the long and inevitably painful movement to build and organise this power is under way. There is a possibility that an over-arching all-black trade union would be attempted, the political implications of which would be immense. Its philosophical basis is expressed as follows:

"The classical western elements of trade unionism have to be modified to accommodate the fact that black worker interests extend beyond the factory; they extend to the ghetto where black workers stay together in hostels under squalid conditions; to the crowded trains and buses . . . to the absence of amenities . . . to the stringent, irksome and humiliating application of influx control laws . . . to lack of proper channels whereby people could equip themselves with basic skills . . . Black workers are beginning to realise how the system rests squarely on their shoulders while giving back just enough to enable them to come to work the following day."

Paradoxically, as the report points out, government policy increases the possibility of black workers to organise, through migrant labour and the housing of workers in hostels where communication can take place quickly and privately.

In a chapter headed **The New Society**, and introduced appropriately by a quotation from Andre Bieler. 'The world has arrived at a point where Utopia alone is realistic', the report describes in brief and general but explicit terms the ideal policies and aims of Education, Economics, Law and Politics, which are implicit in all its accounts and criticisms of the present system and which would be calculated to create a free, creative, and

mutually concerned and responsible community. It challenges white South Africans to decide whether this is the future society they wish to bring about, and if so to face the implications of working towards it; it challenges black South Africans to measure the vision against their own aspirations.

The report, besides recording final conclusions reached by Spro-cas, is an account of Sprocas itself and its methods; and includes a series of documents illustrating its history. It makes modest claims for the success of Spro-cas as an organisation, and for the usefulness of its proposals, and suggests especially that its systematic effort combined with flexibility of structure has provided a model for other change-orientated programmes. It lists practical suggestions provided in some Spro-cas publications – for instance Francis Wilson's proposals for the phasing out of migrant labour; and a 'Code of Management Responsibilities' drawn up by a panel convened by Dr Beyers Naude which investigated the Palabora Mining Company. This 'provides a lucid and comprehensive yardstick whereby the performances of employers can be measured in terms of their moral responsibility'.

It is not possible to assess the final significance of Spro-cas, although its impact on political thought in South Africa has been considerable. One achievement which is made obvious in the report and clearly illustrates Spro-cas's very dynamic flexibility, is the apparently easy and amicable emergence of an active black separatist movement within Spro-cas itself. Another tribute to its systematic effort is the extent and number, the scope, and the high standard of its publications. A press digest quotes a comment from **Hoofstad** whose political reporter visited a Cape town bookshop where books like the *Social Report* were selling 'like hot cakes' and being 'devoured by young Bantus and white intellectuals'. He contrasted their soft covers, eye-catching designs and cheap prices with the 'handful of books from Afrikaner intellectuals who support separate development', and which are 'not generally available, are expensive, and have uninteresting hard covers'. (He found 'Towards Social Change' to contain 'many statements which would make the Afrikaner's hair rise')

The report ends with Mr Randall's own open letter to Sir De Villiers Graaf urging the United Party to withdraw from the Schiebush Commission and explaining his own reasons for refusing to testify before it. Although in the rest of the report Mr Randall is officially a spokesman for Spro-cas, his own strong feelings and commitments are obvious, and are what give the report its life and power. It is appropriate that the report should end with a personal statement, so serious and so significant. □

