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WAITING FOR RESETTLEMENT

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in this issue . . .

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EDITORIAL

1. THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

In the last months of 1984 a series of heavy blows was dealt to the Nationalist Party's attempt to project itself as an agent of reform. Most of them were self-inflicted by a Government whose reflex reaction to any serious challenge to its policies has, for a generation now, been to ban, or detain, or call in the police.

That reflex remained as uncontrolled in 1984 as ever and the acts of folly it set off included: – the boost given to the boycott campaign against the tri-cameral elections by the last-minute detention of some of its leaders; the slap-dash preparation of their detention orders so that, even in terms of the Government's vast security powers, they were still so inadequate that the Natal Supreme Court threw them out and released the detainees; the attempt to bye-pass this judgement by issuing new detention orders, which lead directly to the detainees taking refuge in the British Consulate, and all which followed that; the petulant refusal, in retaliation, to return the South Africans charged with arms smuggling in Britain to stand their trial, in breach of a solemn government promise given to the Court; the response to the widespread, post-election unrest in the Vaal Triangle, involving the military on a large scale for the first time, further detentions, and the subjection of whole communities of hundreds of thousands of people to the harrowing experience and indignity of having their homes and persons searched in the dark hours of the early morning; the uncompromising reaction to the massive two-day stay-away strike called in protest against all this, first through the detention of more leaders, notably trade unionists, second through the dismissal of the entire black labour force of 6,000 from the Government's Secunda oil-from-coal plant because of their support for the stayaway; the alienation of the business community, as it saw its carefully nurtured relations with the new union leaders shattered as they disappeared into detention; the threat to prosecute Dr. Alan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, for statements he is alleged to have made about the army and the police in an Australian press interview, a prosecution which, if it ever takes place, is likely to be far more damaging to the Government on the international stage than it ever will to Dr. Boesak. The list could be much longer, and probably will be by the time this issue of Reality appears.

Did all this wild lashing about in every direction mean that we were on the brink of revolution in late 1984, as some people, including some people in the Governments, would like us to believe? We doubt it very much. But what we certainly do think is that our situation at the beginning of 1985 is rather different to what it was a year ago. For one thing, government actions since last August have almost certainly succeeded in making politically more radical thousands of black towndwellers, especially of the older

generation, who were relatively uncommitted before. The success of the stayaway was surely evidence of this, for at a time when the economy is in a worse state than most people can remember, the response was overwhelming. It couldn't all have been due to gullibility and intimidation. For another thing, businessmen seem at last to have come to the conclusion that it is more important for them to get on well with their workers than it is for them to try to please the Government. If they carry on in this vein they may begin to give the 'free enterprise' system some much needed credibility in those workers' eyes. Finally, the Government's attempt to exclude urban blacks from its new constitutional proposals has proved a total disaster. That exclusion gave to its opponents of all colours and a wide range of political persuasions the one thing they needed most, a single, simple rallying-point cutting across their differences, around which to get together and organise. And how successfully they did it. As a result, as we start on the New Year, instead of standing quietly in the wings, where the Government intended them to be, black urban South Africans stand firmly on the very centre of the political stage.

1984 has seen what must surely be the final collapse of the Urban Council system, its supporters having been the first unhappy victims of anti-government wrath and violence last year. The Government has for months had a Cabinet Committee working on something to take its place. It is wasting its time. Whatever it proposes will go the same way as the urban councils. Less and less people will be prepared to risk involvement and hardly anyone will vote for those who do.

We need a revolution in 1985 all right, and the revolution we need is in the Nationalists' thinking, so that they start talking to the leaders of black people in the towns who count for something with them. If at first both sides find it too embarassing to be seen to be talking to one another, by all means let the talking be in secret. Amongst other places, it could start at Pollsmoor and on Robben Island, which shouldn't be too difficult to arrange. A suitable starting point for the discussion could be the suggestion put forward by Rev. Peter Storey of the Methodist Church recently. It was that the Government unban all banned organisations, that in return those committed to violence abandon 'the armed struggle' and that we set off anew from there. That really would give us something to look forward to in 1985. □

By DAVE WALWYN

STENDAHL MISSION : A LESSON FOR THE CHURCHES

The recent removal of 37 families from Stendahl Mission is a strong warning to the Churches not to sell off mission property without taking strict precautions to ensure that the future of the community living on the land is secured.

Early on the morning of Tuesday, 27 November 1984, these families awaited the arrival of government trucks to take them to the Waayhoek Resettlement Camp. They were to leave behind a farm which had been the home of the Stendahl congregation since November 1860. They were to be the latest victims of a widespread State policy to remove gratuitous tenants and illegal squatters from white-owned farmland in the Western district. Since the abolition of labour tenancy in July 1969, nearly 20 000 farm tenants have been evicted and resettled in the Msinga district. For most of 1969, 1970 and 1971, the district was in turmoil ' Tractors demolish kraals – 200 homeless' (Rand Daily Mail, 9/11/70). Large numbers of tenants passively resisted eviction and had to be forced out by hut burnings, bulldozers, arrests and prosecution.

This initial purge passed by the people of Stendahl. They were able to escape because at that time the land on which they were living belonged to the Berlin Mission Society.

The original grant of the farm Middel Plaats in extent 6186 acres, was registered in January 1853 and on 8 May 1860 sold to the Berlin Mission, later renamed the Berlin Missiongeselschaft. After the end of the First World War, and the subsequent collapse of the German economy, the Mission ran into serious financial problems and was forced to sell the major portion of the farm, comprising 6 000 acres, to Mr Moe in 1924. The Church retained ownership of the remaining 186 acres for the use of the Stendahl congregation. Although the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 severely restricted the right of landowners in the white sector to accommodate black people on their land, subsequent legislation in the 1950's specifically enabled the Churches to retain mission communities as legal tenants. At Stendahl, the tenants became closely associated with the mission, the mission school and the outlying preaching stations. At one stage the mission was listed as consisting of 4 Church branches, 18 preaching stations, 1 missionary, 13 preachers, 7 teachers, 126 men, 167 women, 264 children and 5 schools.

Then in 1978 the Berlin Mission Society took a decision to divest itself of its land holdings and sold the property of Stendahl Mission to Sun Valley Estates, who now own

the adjoining farm. The congregation maintain that they were not at the time consulted about the sale of the farm. The Berlin Mission did, however, obtain a verbal promise from Sun Valley Estates that they would not evict the community. How much importance was attached to this promise soon became clear when, in February 1980, five families were given notice to leave on the grounds that they were not working for Sun Valley Estates. It was only when the Association for Rural Advancement got to hear about this and approached the Church to intervene on their behalf with the new owners that the eviction notices were withdrawn.

This sudden attack on a portion of the people living at Stendahl was an ominous sign that worse was still to come. In mid 1984, the land was leased by Sun Valley Estates to Mr R.J. de Bruin, who is a neighbouring white farmer. On 18 August 1984, he served the following eviction notices on all the families at Stendahl:

> 'Ek gee jou kennis om van my plaas af te trek met al jou vrouens, kinders, vee en pluimvee voor 17 November 1984. Jy mag nie hout van die plaas gebruik nie, mag ook nie om die plaas rond loop nie'.
>
> ('I give you notice to leave my farm with all your wives, children, livestock and poultry before 17 November 1984. You may not use wood from the farm, nor wander around on it'.)

On the 7 November 1984, the community met with Mr King, who is the magistrate at Weenen. During the meeting he agreed to apply for an extension of their eviction notices to 31 December 1984. This application was refused on the grounds that removals at that time would be more difficult because of the return of the migrant workers to Stendahl over the Christmas season. On 22 November 1984, they were again approached by the magistrate and told that they would be moved on the following Tuesday.

AFRA fieldworkers were puzzled as to why the magistrate did not follow established legal procedures for the eviction. According to the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act, an enquiry must be held by the magistrate into the circumstances of the eviction before removal can take place. When asked why such a step had not been taken, Mr King replied that the community had wanted to move. This does not correlate with impressions obtained by AFRA fieldworkers during conversations with the local people. It was found that there was unanimous opposition to removal from land where many families had been living for several generations.

On the other hand, by November they were dispirited and resigned to the removal. A long process of intimidation and harassment had destroyed their will to stay and fight the destruction of their homes. When the magistrate came that Thursday to tell them that they would be moved the following Tuesday, they began reluctantly to dismantle everything they had built up over the years.

Now they will have to find new strength to start life again in the corrugated iron fletcraft huts that they have been allocated at Waayhoek, a remote and inhospitable place where even water is at a premium and work is non-existent. Using bits and pieces of building material salvaged from their old homes, they will have to rebuild their houses. Many of them will be unable to start without some capital to purchase even the most rudimentary building materials. It is hoped that the Berlin Mission Society will be able to compensate them for their homes which are now destroyed, but it will be some time before assistance is forthcoming.

The removal of Stendahl has a lesson for all the Churches. It is now obvious that the State is desperate to clear all surplus black people from the white areas of South Africa. Sophisticated and extensive legislation has been passed to bring this into effect. Verbal agreements taken between two parties, on behalf of a third, are completely useless as protection against this legislation. The Churches are under a special obligation to their mission communities because they alone are allowed to retain such people as legal tenants. If the land must be sold, then the community whose status will be affected as a result, must be consulted and kept informed at all times. Proper legal documents must be entered into by the new owner and the community to ensure that they will not be dispossessed of their right to the land. And finally, proper monitoring systems must be established to ensure that the new owner complies with the terms of the agreement.

This will be a complicated and expensive process, whose legitimacy may in the future be overturned by new legislation. Undoubtedly the best assurance that could be given to people living on Church land, is that the Church retain ownership of the property.□

by ROBIN HALLETT

THE GANGS OF CAPE TOWN

A Review of Don Pinnock's **The Brotherhoods: Street Gangs and State Control in Cape Town;** David Philip, Cape Town 1984.

Cape Town must be one of the most deceptive cities in the world. For those of us who live or have lived in Tamborskloef or Newlands or even Observatory, it is a place full of delectable memories, of idyllic images: the dawn light on the face of Table Mountain, sunset at Camps Bay, the galaxy of street lights at night viewed from the terrace of UCT, the tropical paradise of the Gardens, the Parade on a bright Saturday morning, so cheerful in its animation. But there is another face to Cape Town, the city 'where you burglar-bar your windows, don't walk alone at night, never venture into "non-white" areas and perhaps carry a gun' (p. 17). For Cape Town – 'the Fairest Cape', the genial 'Tavern of the Seas' for the brochure writers – is also one of the most violent cities in the world, with an average in the last few years of two murders a day (as many murders in this single city as in the whole of the United Kingdom, including blood-soaked Northern Ireland, in the course of a year.) Many of these killings are associated with bloody battles fought between the gangs of the Cape Flats. These gangs are the 'brotherhoods' of Don Pinnock's title. And the aim of his book is to work out how the gangs came into existence and what their proliferation implies.

Pinnock began his research, so he explains in his Preface, out of a mixture of curiosity and anger – curiosity 'about life in the streets of my home city', anger at the huge disparity in living standards between rich and poor. As the work progressed, the anger grew – anger not just at the nature of the social situation but at the terrible ravages such a situation inflicted on those whom he had grown to care for and respect. His most valued informant, Patrick 'Chicken' Edwardes, a man of 'intelligence and sparkling wit', whose 'insight into the problems of the poor' and whose 'understanding of the dynamics of the city went far beyond mine', received a five-year prison sentence. 'The thought of such a person and others like him living for years in overcrowded prison cells is one of the most painful experiences', Pinnock confesses, 'that I take away from this study' (p 1). There is a totally fallacious notion that academic research – Pinnock's book comes into this category, having originally been written as a MA thesis at the University of Cape Town – should somehow aspire to an Olympian objectivity. On the contrary, the most effective research is that which has been inspired by a strong sense of moral purpose. Academic research certainly demands discipline – a proper rigour in accumulating and assessing material, a thoughtful use of comparative studies and so on. But without a strong sense of its relevance to contemporary needs, an academic treatise is likely to end up suffering the fate of so many theses, collecting dust on subterranean library shelves.

Let me say straight away that I regard Don Pinnock's book as being of the first importance – absolutely essential reading for Capetonians who want to try and understand where their city is going, but equally essential to anyone grappling with the awesom problems of contemporary South Africa. And I would particularly recommend this book to the **apparatchiks** of apartheid, the politicians, bureaucrats and academics who for more than a generation have imposed the straitjacket of their ideology on the living body of South African society. Cape Town's problems are certainly not unique – Pinnock draws stimulatingly on research done in Chicago, Zaire and the East End of London for comparative purposes – but Cape Town's problems have been immensely aggravated by that cornerstone of apartheid, the Group Areas Act. That piece of legislation still – in this 'reformist' age – appears to be sacrosanct. I beg those who are responsible for the implementation of Group Areas to read Pinnock's book and to consider very carefully its implications.

We must start in District Six, that 'bombed site' in the heart of Cape Town on whose rubble is now being erected a police barracks and a technicon. One must resist the temptation to glamorize old District Six. After the Second World War this part of Cape Town was becoming 'squalidly overcrowded': cases were reported of a house built for five or six being occupied by as many as eighty people. There was real poverty: a survey in 1946 found 57 per cent of 'coloured' children in Cape Town suffering from malnutrition (p. 49) After the end of the war there was a rapid increase in unemployment and a concurrent rise in incidents of crime and violence. But District Six still possessed one vital and saving institution – the extended family.

In Black Africa the role of the extended family is a subject so familiar as to be commonplace to any one studying the social strains experienced in cities undergoing a rapid process of population growth. Cape Town, by contrast, looks superficially to be a very un-African city and for its black population influx control has created different sorts of strains, so it has been easy to ignore or overlook the importance of the extended family for those living in the 'coloured ghetto' of District Six. In fact, as Pinnock brings out very clearly, the extended family was an essential institution: for the very poor, the marginalized, the newcomers to the city it provided an effective system of social security and served also as an accommodation bureau and an employment agency.

An essential concomitant of the extended family was a richly variegated informal economy. 'The place has more barbers' shops to the acre than anywhere else in Africa',

Brian Barrow wrote of District Six in 1966. 'There are tailors by the score, herbalists, butchers, grocers, tattoo-artists, cinemas, bars, hotels, a public bath house' (p 21), all professions and institutions that contributed to the maintenance of a 'penny-capitalism'. This combination of the extended family and the informal economy made District Six a place where people could feel at home, where they could experience a comforting sense of 'topographical familiarity' –street corners, alleyways, shops, bars were places deeply known and cherished. This was a world in which each individual created – in the phrase of that wise observer, Dr Oscar Wollheim, one-time warden of the Cape Flats Distress Association – 'his own personal web of interlocking mutual interests'. (p 55).

In this society the extended family provided social control as well as social security. The children of parents both of whom had to go out to work could be entrusted to the care of an auntie or grannie living nearby. Youngsters who misbehaved would soon be noticed and ticked off by older relatives. But the rapid increase of population during the 1940's brought serious strains. 'Pressure began to build up over territory for hawking, shebeening, prostitution or just standing in' (p 24). It was in these circumstances and at this time – during and just after the Second World War – that the 'skollie' (a term probably derived from the Dutch **schoelje** 'scavenger') made his appearance. And with the 'skollie' the gang – the Jesters, the Goofies and others. To counter this development a group of District Six businessmen came together to form what was initially a vigilante organization, though it was known as the Globe Gang. The Globe cooperated with the police: one policeman recalled its members as being 'very decent blokes'. But before long the Globe too began to turn to illegal activities, running 'protection rackets' of every kind. Illegal activities increased as ex-prisoners, many of them new to the city, began to infiltrate the gangs. 'Young boys arrived and carried guns for no reason', one informant recalled. 'They raped and had tattoos on their faces and necks and they killed anybody for nothing' (p 29). Other more ruthless gangs, among them the Mongrels (a corruption of Mogul), emerged. A new pattern of violence had been established. It was to be hugely increased by the decision to destroy District Six.

The destruction of District Six had been adumbrated as early as 1940 by planners profoundly influenced by the leading architectural guru of the age, the Swiss Le Corbusier. Pinnock sees Le Corbusier as above all 'the urban planner of monopoly capitalism' (p 43). 'Surgery', Le Corbusier asserted, 'must be applied to the city's centre': he was speaking in general terms but his disciples in South Africa were glad to apply his ideas to Cape Town. In South Africa 'post-war urban planning', Pinnock wisely reminds us, 'was not merely the product of apartheid and Afrikaner racism' (p 43). The development of housing estates on the Cape Flats has clear affinities with contemporary town planning in Britain. But as always in South Africa notions of 'white' security were never far beneath the surface, and so 'green belts' came to be seen as 'buffer zones' or even, in the frank terminology of some planners, as 'machine gun belts'. (p 47)

The spatial growth of Cape Town coincided with and was in part related to the rapid growth of the city's industry. But the old informal economy, so vital to the life of District Six, steadily crumbled as the old workshops came increasingly to be replaced by modern factories, whose growth was in turn largely dependent on the inflow of foreign capital. The Group Areas legislation provided the coup de grace. During the 1960s more and more 'coloured' people were moved out to the new estates on the Cape Flats. Had the planners studied the social network of the old community, many stresses and strains would have been avoided. As it was, the basic unit for which the tenements on the Flats was designed was the nuclear, not the extended family. So the effect of Group Areas was, as Oscar Wollheim graphically and movingly expressed it,

> like a man with a stick breaking spiders' webs in a forest. The spider may survive his fall but he can't survive without his web . . . . Before there was always something that kept the community ticking over and operating correctly . . . . Now the family is taken out of its environment where everything is safe and known. It is put in a matchbox in a strange place. All social norms have suddenly been abolished. Before the children who got up to mischief in the streets were reprimanded by neighbours. Now there is nobody and they join gangs because that is the only way to find friends. (p 56)

The situation was put in even more haunting terms by 'a reformatory brother called Aspie':

> I was very small, you see, when my mother and my father they threw me away. There was no more money. And so okay while the years and months passed by, you see, I found myself in a stony place of sadness and madness where each dog was hustling for his own bone, you see. That's why I realized that there's only one thing for me: if I will survive I must play dirty, you see. So that's why I became a gangster. (p 9)

In the course of his research in 1982 Pinnock 'found in daily existence 280 groups who defined themselves as gangs'. Their membership varied from 100 to 2 000. An 'extremely rough estimate' suggests that '80 000 youths would define themselves as gang members or about 5 per cent of the city's total population'. (p 4) It is easy to see why gangs are formed and joined: they offer comradeship, security, excitement, status, a sense of purpose for teenagers who have dropped out of school and find themselves growing up in a society where employment and income and access to consumer goods has become a privilege rather than a right. Here Cape Town's experience links up with other cities: particularly illuminating is a study published as long ago as 1927, F.M. Trasher's **The Gang: a Study of 313 Gangs in Chicago.** But each city no doubt has its own specific typology. Pinnock provides us with a clear, though profoundly disturbing, guide to the gangs of Cape Town.

The commonest gang he terms 'the defence gang', a group formed by youths aged from ten upwards to defend a particular territory. (The sketch map of one area, Hanover Park, shows how it is divided up into no less than 16 gang areas: gang names include the Genuine School Boys, the Sexy Rexies and the Wild Ones. (p 6) The larger and stronger gangs are in a position to go on the offensive, mounting pay packet robberies or breaking into cars.

Above the multitude of 'defence gangs' are two 'supergangs', the Cape Town Scorpions and the Born Free Kids. These had their origin not on the streets but in the places to which delinquent youths are consigned, the reformatories and schools of industry. Each branch of these more

powerful gangs possesses its own citadel, a backyard protected by a high stockade of corrugated iron, where the 'brothers' foregather to smoke white pipe' (a mixture of dagga, tobacco and mandrax) and plan their operations which usually take the form of housebreaking or robbery.

At a higher level still come 'the family mafias', some retaining links with the old gangs of District Six. Their activities include protection rackets, warehouse robberies and acting as wholesalers in the drug trade. The mafias merge into the 'syndicates', 'best described as associations of merchants organized for the purpose of securing the supply or monopoly of some commodity' (p 11). Liquor for supply to shebeens is one of the commodities sought by the syndicates, but far more lucrative is the trade in dagga and mandrax. Pinnock clearly explains the economics of the drug trade and quotes the head of the Narcotics Bureau in Cape Town as saying in 1982 that the number of drug-pedlars was 'absolutely uncountable . . They're on nearly every corner in this city'. (p 12)

By the more privileged sections of society the gangs of the Cape Flats may well be seen as evidence of anarchy and degradation. For many ordinary people living on the Flats their existence is a constant source of fear. But how can society deal with them? The conventional answer lays stress on the importance of punishment and the need for more effective policing. Pinnock's researches included long conversations with staff members from the reformatories and with local policemen. From both groups he derived some very uncomfortable truths. 'Reformatories', a former staff member of Porter School, ('situated on a farm in the beautiful Tokai valley') remarked, 'are the high schools of violence, and prisons the university.' (p 72) As for the police whose problems Pinnock deals with sympathetically, they are seriously undermanned. Grassy Park, for example, a police district on the Cape Flats with a population of about 100 000, 'is patrolled by one van and two policeman every shift'. (p 79) (For those who think of South Africa a little too glibly as a Police state' it is worth remarking that in 1979 South Africa's police force of 34 646 men was 'the same size as that of New York City'. (p 78) But even 'if we had a full staff – all the men we required', one policeman pointed out,

> 'and made the number of arrests we would like to, the people at the courts would chuck up their job and go home. Because at the moment they can't cope, they're so snowed up. They're even having court on Saturday mornings! But then even if the police and the courts could cope, then the prisons couldn't because they are too full. It's crazy'. (p 80)

Confronted with this situation the State, Pinnock points out, has turned increasingly to the use of paramilitary methods, with the establishment of the Riot Squads recruited from men who have already seen active service against guerillas in Namibia and other operational areas. (p 82) This new development is intimately related to the growing importance of the military in the decision-making process at the highest level. Yet on the ground the situation becomes more complex, with a clear divide between the detectives of the SAP, slowly building up their essential network of contacts and informers, and the Riot Squads with their more violent and therefore more clumsy methods.

The gangs survive. Their exploits weave themselves into folk memory. 'They cannot be confined by the authorities to inconspicuous, powerless and therefore acceptable limits' (p 105) But do they have a political role? Clearly, Pinnock concludes, they 'are not evolving a culture of liberation'. 'We should rather say that they are constantly on the threshold of resistance'. (p 105) So what of their future? 'Any solution', Pinnock asserts, 'demands far more than well-meaning programmes of upliftment'. Progressive organizations need to make an effort to help 'street youths' to understand their problems, possibly through the formation of 'Poor People's Committees' or even of a 'Poor People's Party'. But in the long run there is really no alternative to far more drastic changes: 'a redistribution of wealth, changes in the labour process, the reorganizing of entire cities, and a rethinking of the urban-rural relationship'. 'The State cannot be waited upon to do something about street gangs. The initiative will have to come from the people they affect and from the street brothers themselves'. (p 106)

This is a short book, no more than 116 pages – and no index, a reprehensible omission in a book so crammed with detail. Brevity is an excellent quality: it ensures that a book is more likely to be read from cover to cover. But inevitably brevity leaves many issues dealt with in too sketchy a manner. More important, the book raises many questions that it could not, given its scope, be expected to answer. The book is dedicated 'TO THE WORKING CLASS MOTHERS OF CAPE TOWN, whose efforts to hold their families together in the face of harrassment and deprivation are nothing short of heroic'. One would like to hear much more about the way these 'ordinary' women succeed in coping. And what of the girls growing up in this violent society – and of all those boys, the majority after all, who go straight and do not get caught up in gangs at all? And what happens to most of the teenage gangsters when they grow up? How many of them manage to find steady jobs and a regular family life? All these are questions that need to be answered. In the meantime Don Pinnock has provided us with a book that is innovative, stimulating, or controversial (depending on the way a reader reacts to his analysis) and, in the way it has been researched, courageous.

Finally a brief note of appreciation for the generous section of photographs by Paul Koning. The faces that stare out at us, from the shabby settings of District Six or the Cape Flats, the old and the young, the mothers, the teenagers, the small children, have expressions that are sorrowing or reproachful or defiant – disturbing in their different ways for those of us who have been lucky enough to live only in the gentler, the more peaceful parts of Cape Town. □

by PAT SCHWARTZ

THE VAAL TRIANGLE UPHEAVAL

When rioting broke out in the Vaal Triangle in September leaving a trail of death and destruction, it should have come as no surprise to the civil authorities against whom it was, initially, largely aimed.

Tensions, say observers, had been rising for a month, since the Lekoa Town Council (which controls the townships of Sharpeville and Sebokeng) announced rent increases on council-owned houses, effective from September 1. Rent increases were also announced in Evaton.

In the face of unemployment and economic recession, these rent increases, channelled through community councils installed by the government, represented an inflammatory last straw.

The increases – R5,90 a month on Orange/Vaal Development Board (OVDB) houses and R5,50 a month on privately-owned dwellings – were necessary because of rising costs in refuse removal, water and electricity, said Lekoa Mayor Mr Esau Mahlatsi.

Organisations like the Sharpeville Anti-Rent Committee, the Vaal Civic Association, the United Democratic Front, the Congress of Students of South Africa, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation, the Vaal Women's Organisation and local trade unions resolved to ignore the increases.

Vaal Triangle residents were already paying an average rent of R62,96 a month, the highest black township rental in the country.

The protests began quietly enough when residents decided to hold mass demonstrations in church halls, against the increases. The council issued a directive forbidding the meetings but churchmen involved ignored the warnings and the meetings went on.

On September 2, about 100 youths in Sharpeville and Boipatong, near Vanderbijlpark went on the rampage, stoning cars and buses, bottlestores and the homes of Sharpeville councillors.

As violence and anger escalated, homes of councillors were gutted in Sharpeville and private houses, liquor outlets, a bus depot, council offices and a school set alight in Boipateng, Bophelong and other Vaal Triangle townships.

The deputy mayor of Sharpeville, Mr Sal Dlamini was hacked to death and his body placed under his car which was doused with petrol and set alight. Two youths were shot, apparently by Mr Dlamini before he died.

Rioters hacked and burnt their victims to death, stoned cars, destroyed homes and businesses, schools, beer halls and buses.

Police lashed out with sjamboks and quirts, "tearsmoke" birdshot, rubber and lead bullets.

They fired on groups of youths. In response, rioters turned on policemen, attacking individuals and fire-bombing the SAP single quarters in Sharpeville.

Within days, 26 people had died, at least 300 were injured and damage was estimated at R30 million.

Later reports suggested that hundreds of people suffering from injuries received during the disturbances refused to go to hospital because they feared arrest.

The toll of dead included infants, school children and adults, innocent passersby (including a 26-year-old mother of two who was shot in the mouth when she went to the toilet in her yard), and two community councillors.

A Councillor's house in Sharpeville; Photo, Learn & Teach.

Caught up in the tragedy were two tiny victims, a three-week-old white baby who died when the car driven by his mother was stoned and a seven month old black infant who died after allegedly inhaling tearsmoke, A 10-year-old Sebokeng boy was shot dead while chopping wood at his parents' home.

Makeshift barricades were set up in the main road near Sharpeville as youths prevented any vehicles entering the township.

The area became a battle zone with chaos and destruction rampant and a scenario reminiscent of the blitz. Sebokeng, once described as a thriving model township in which home-ownership and home improvement were well established, was left a riot-scarred disaster area.

Police reinforcements wearing camouflage uniforms and carrying semi-automatic rifles were brought in by the truckload, Sharpeville was sealed off and journalists were not allowed to enter.

A striking feature of the unrest, it was pointed out, was the varied ages of the people taking part. It was not the children's revolt of 1976; this time young children, teenagers and adult men and women joined in an across-the-board response to increased pressures and decreased quality of life.

In an unprecedented move, a group of senior cabinet ministers including Mr F.W. de Klerk, MP for Vereeniging and Minister of Internal Affairs, Gen Magnus Malan, Minister of Defence, and Dr Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of National Education and MP for Vanderbijlpark visited the area.

While concerned black and white organisations, editors and churchpeople called for redress of the grievances expressed so violently, law and order Minister Le Grange dismissed proposed rent increases as the real reason for the unrest and blamed "certain individuals and organisations".

The Azanian People.s Organisation (Azapo) and the Federation of South African women (Fedsaw) called for restraint and expressed solidarity with the black masses involved.

In a statement, Azapo's Zithulele Cindi and Imram Moosa put the disturbances into a broader context.

"Events in the Vaal complex are not divorced from the countrywide upheavals against rent increases, the Local Authorities Act, school boycotts and the attendant demands and the rejection of sham new deal by the black people," they said.

"All these represent black dissent and opposition to all forms of legislation that is designed to dispossess them of their inalienable heritage – the land."

As the disturbances escalated, businesses closed down and people in the Vaal Triangle townships went without food because they could not get into "white" areas to shop.

Despite the compliance of the Indian community with a request to close all businesses in the area on Monday, September 3, in sympathy with the rent protests, many Indian businesspeople in the townships fell victim to mob anger. An estimated 42 Indian businesses were razed and about 20 families who lived on the same properties as their businesses were left homeless by rioters who looted the premises before setting them alight.

On September 4, 92 769 pupils stayed away from 14 secondary and 73 primary schools in Sharpeville, Evaton, Sebokeng, Boipatong and Bophelong. They have never returned to school.

On September 6, a day of negotiations conducted at the Sharpeville township office while about 3 000 people waited outside, ended with the announcement that the controversial rent increases had been scrapped. A week after the first disturbances, several people were injured when tearsmoke and rubber bullets were fired to disperse crowds after nearly 2 000 people who had gathered at the Roman Catholic Church in Sebokeng for a report-back meeting on demands they had made, were told the meeting had been banned.

A total of 141 people, including children whose ages ranged between nine and 16, appeared in the Sebokeng Regional Court after the meeting.

Along with the first funerals of the victims, came more police action.

In Evaton, police used tearsmoke and sjamboks in clashes with mourners and more than 200 people were arrested.

In mid-September, 247 people appeared before a Vereeniging magistrate, sitting in the Vereeniging police station, on charges which ranged from infringement of the Internal Security Act to housebreaking and theft.

In Sebokeng, on September 23, nearly 600 of 2 000 mourners were arrested for "contravening certain restriction orders" that had been placed on the funeral of Mr Joseph Sithole.

Three days after they were arrested, 598 mourners (held under Section 30 of the Internal Security Act), who appeared in the Sebokeng Regional Court, were refused bail. They were remanded in custody until October 12, 16 days later, Several were under the age of 12.

Two days after this first appearance, 58 of them, all under the age of 16, were released, In October, two weeks after their arrest, about 500 people charged with public violence appeared in the Vereeniging Regional Court.

A month later, eleven mourners under the age of 18 were still in jail in Vereeniging because their parents could not be traced.

At the end of October, the whereabouts of 31 of those arrested was still a mystery.

Violence flared again towards the end of September. Thousands were left stranded without transport and houses belonging to a businessman, an employee of the Orange/Vaal Development Board and a police constable were set alight in Sharpeville where police in hippos and vans patrolled the township.

The allegation by the Minister of Cooperation and Development and Education and Training, Dr Gerrit Viljoen that most people who died in the Vaal Triangle came from outside the area was denied.

On the first day of the new term, in October, about 93 000 pupils in the Vaal Triangle boycotted classes. They would not go back to school, they said, unless house rents were reduced to R30 a month.

On October 25, police in camouflage moved in with sjamboks after the funeral of a 16-year-old Sharpeville boy killed in the township's streets after the funeral of another victim.

Officials of the Orange/Vaal Development Board announced that black municipalities were planning to end

One of the many shops burnt in the Vaal Triangle; Photo, Learn & Teach

the intimidation of local residents by establishing their own para-military police forces.

Violence continued in one way or another through October, vehicles were looted and set alight, a shopping centre was plundered, a school gutted and a police van attacked and damaged.

Then came the army. On October 23, in an operation codenamed "Operation Palmiet" a 7 000 strong police and army force moved into Sebokeng at 2am. Troops searched all 19 500 houses in the area, some of them twice, and arrested 354 people before moving on to Sharpville and Boipatong "because the manpower was available".

The house-to-house search in Sebokeng was aimed mainly at "revolutionaries" but none was found. The 354 people arrested were held under migration and influx control laws and other charges including possession of dagga, firearms, pornographic material and stolen goods.

Orange stickers carrying the worlds "Co-operation for peace and security" and "I am your friend, trust me" were stuck to houses and cars once they had been searched and checked and residents were also stamped with red dye.

In Sharpeville and Boipatong, residents queued in heavy rains for their "Peace and Security stamp" which allowed them to move "freely in the Vaal Triangle". Nine arrests were made in the two townships, all on criminal charges.

In Sebokeng, soldiers lined the streets distributing pamphlets calling on residents to support the bid to stop the unrest.

At the same time, in Sharpeville, 500 people marched on the township's Orange/Vaal Development Board offices.

Of the 307 people (out of a total of 358 held) who appeared in court following the crackdown, only six were charged with serious criminal offences. The rest were charged with petty offences, mainly for transgressing migration and influx control laws, or for not having or failing to produce reference books.

On November 15, the Orange/Vaal Development Board (OVDB) cracked down on the Sebokeng Hostel arresting thousands of residents. Hundreds of board police backed by the SAP and SADF carried out the raid. The hostel accommodates more than 10 000 people, most of whom are migrant workers.

Some 2 300 inmates were arrested.

What was it all about and did the death and destruction make any impression on those who could make the only changes that would count?

On the face of it, it seems not. The same old scapegoats — agitators — are being cited in the same old way and, apart from a reprieve from the rent increases, there is little for the comfort of those who sought change.

The rents row simmers on amid threats of cutting off water and electricity supplies of those who do not pay and threats of arson and violence against those who do.

A leader in the Sowetan, September 6 read:

"The only lesson, and it is a very bitter pill to swallow, is that we are all going mad.

"We are mad because the signs have been plentiful that things would go awry. We are mad because at most conferences and cocktail parties the small talk is usually: When is the balloon going up? We are mad because this Government sees itself strong enough to contain such crisis situations. We are mad because we are allowing this thing to go on; to go on with our eyes wide open.

"So is it surprising . . . that the people in the Vaal Triangle went berserk?"

Is it?□

by T.R.H. DAVENPORT

INDUSTRY AND INTELLECT ARE NOT ENOUGH

Paul B. Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial segregation and South African liberalism (Ravan Press, 1984).

'South African liberalism', writes Dr. Rich, 'has for the most part been the political expression of a small body of white educationalists, philanthropists, missionaries and social workers who have been concerned to alleviate the harsh economic and social consequences of industrialisation in a racially divided society. Although the South African liberal tradition from the time of Union in 1910 has taken over a fairly cohesive body of political values – freedom of expression, the parliamentary franchise and individual rights transcending racial or religious affiliation – from the nineteenth-century Cape, it has been unsuccessful in translating these into a political programme that had real impact on the body politic' (p. 123).

This is a recognisable summary of what most liberals would probably defend, and of the limited extent of their success, but it comes as a bit of a surprise in the last chapter of a book which has far more to do with the failure of the liberals to project these values than it has with the failure of the society to assimilate them.

The liberals are not always as easy to define as a group as our author would perhaps have liked; but he writes mainly of the Joint Councils, the Institute of Race Relations, the white Natives' Representatives, the Liberal Party, and – finally – the Christian Institute. Dr. Rich is fairly explicit in his estimate of the cumulative extent of their failure. They were unable, he states to emulate the United States and project their values as a universal standard (the extent to which this was achieved in the higher courts, if not the lower, being ignored). They were driven to make an accommodation with white segregationist thinking, with which they at first identified (e.g. Brookes), later accepted with some distaste (e.g. Hoernle), and eventually rejected but without proposing an agreed alternative programme in its place.

Because they failed to project a comprehensive political programme which offered blacks an acceptable place in society, they gradually lost their early following among the politically deprived, ceasing to be able to co-opt them after the 1920s, and running into stiff opposition from the 1940s. This was because they never reached agreement over the political role of blacks, some liberals taking a surprisingly lukewarm stance over the crucial representation bill of 1936, while liberals as a whole failed to reach a proper accommodation with African demands either during the political crisis of 1946-8 or after the Nationalist victory in 1948.

Liberals also followed divided counsels as a result of the changing insights of anthropologists in the 1920s and 1930s, tending at first to see cultural separation of the races as desirable, but opting at a later stage for assimilation (on the white man's terms, of course).

Liberals were also divided in their economic prescriptions, sometimes devoting their energies to the reserves and ignoring the problem of the towns; sometimes accepting the assurance of the neo-classical economists that market forces would remove the injustice of segregation, but sometimes feeling bound to recommend interference with those forces on the ground that they could not be relied on to do this.

CONCLUSIONS

The book ends with a fistful of conclusions which were no doubt intended to startle the bourgeois, like the question-begging reference at p. 129 to the 'survival' of the Liberal Party's 'Whiggish belief in the potential of Westminster-type constitutional systems' in the 1950s' at a time when 'constitutionalism was still an important political creed' (as if it does not matter today). This is linked with a suggestion over the page that 'an essential moral pillar of South African liberalism began to crumble in the 1960s' after the abolition of the Natives' Representatives and the banning of the congresses (as if the moral standing of liberalism was any way diminished by an arbitrary attack on its principles.) Ultimately, after the dissolution of the Liberal Party, 'with no coherent political base left, the rhetoric of liberalism increasingly took on the mantle of a charade, full of sound and fury but signifying very little' (p. 133), as if the intrinsic worth of that 'rhetoric' was properly determined by those who chose to destroy its base.

For all the loose statements and stylistic lapses in this poorly proof-read book, it is nevertheless a tight-packed study, and it is clear that Dr. Rich has read widely and deeply into the literature associated with liberalism in this century, and he has a number of stimulating – sometimes provocative – passages about the ideas and outlook of leading liberals. Edgar Brookes the Natalian is there,

in the shadow of sugar and Shepstone, convincingly converting from segregation in 1927 (p. 33), almost unbelievably devious and careerist in 1936-7, and closer to Heaton Nicholls than I imagined possible, but must

now believe (p. 65), coldly activist rather than passionately conciliatory in 1946-7, which I certainly do not believe (pp. 102-7), and with not a suggestion of the Chiristian conviction which those who knew him recognised so clearly. William Ballinger seems to start too buoyantly, in view of his early quarrel with Kadalie, but is subsequently cut down to size – credibly – when measured against Max Gordon and the flamboyant Hymie Basner. What is much harder to pass over is the relatively slight attention paid to his wife, who had a much closer relationship with her constituents – on the evidence of her massive constituency correspondence – than Rich allows, and whose activities as a parliamentarian before 1948, and likely influence on Smuts during the difficult negotiations leading up to the Fagan Report do not reflect a person 'taken very much unawares by events' so much as an alert mind weighing the limited possibilities of the situation and opting for a course which she recognised as no more than a strategy to buy ten years for real reform to take root.

Hoernle, by contrast, is handled in a few deft strokes, his honest pessimism properly stressed and accounted for, and his ability to confuse his liberal successors and provide escape routes for their later governmental opponents well set out (pp. 66-73). Similarly, the insight shown with regard to Leo Marquard's quality of mind is appreciated by this reader.

The overall impact of the book is uneven. It is the insufficiently imaginative work of an intellectually sensitive mind, and clearly a product of immense industry. The topic is not an easy one. The temptation to assume that the liberals were wrong, or hypocritical, or victims of some kind of false consciousness, would not be easy to avoid if the only alternative were to see them as the only ones in step. But the issues were far more complex than that, and at least the stage needs to be set fairly for them. Thus the author's awareness of the power of Afrikaner nationalism is greater than the solitary reference in the index suggests; but he hardly concerns himself at all with the liberals' confrontation with their most immediate political rivals, and that is to throw the whole liberal-black relationship under a distorting lens. With a lot more about white power, and a bit more about the liberal conscience, this could have been an important book. □

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by YUSSUF BHAMJEE

UNFAMILIAR PERSPECTIVES

A Documentary history of Indian South Africans Edited by Surendra Bhana and Bridglal Pachai (David Philip 1984)

This documentary history edited by Surendra Bhana and Bridglal Pachai is most welcome as a contribution to understanding the history of Indian South Africans. In a sense it follows on 'Documents in Indentured Labour' by Y.S. Meer **et al** and reminds one of the excellent collection of political documents of extra-parliamentary organisations in 'From Protest to Challenge', edited by Karis and Carter.

While the sample of documents put together by Bhana and Pachai speak solely from an Indian perspective, they are in a sense, making up for the lack of insight into this area of the history of South Africa. However the documents ultimately transcend this limited perspective by showing that the political evolution of this group of people cannot be divorced from the political evolution of other Blacks.

Although some of the documents are anecdotes, they give an account of the socio-economic, political and cultural experience of a 'non-white' group rejected by both the English and Afrikaner sections of the white dominant group. As a result of this rejection, Indian South Africans were forced to develop a broader political consciousness and came to see themselves as part of the wider Black collectivity. The continuous threat of repatriation, the imposition of the £3.00 poll tax, the immigration laws, forced segregation, the denial of economic opportunities and the withdrawal of political and trading rights forced them to develop, through political struggle, a common cause with other 'non-white' South Africans.

This development, as the documents show, involved a gradual process. When Indians were denied equal status

with whites, they demanded equality on the basis of being colonial-born South Africans. In 1914 Albert Christopher articulated the view that the future status of colonial-born Indian South Africans would be determined by South African-born Indians. In 1923 when the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) was formed to oppose the 'principle of segregation' embodied in the Class Areas Bill, SAIC enjoyed the support of the Indian community. However, in 1927 when the SAIC agreed to repatriation and again in 1932, when it participated in talks to consider the possible colonial relocation of Indians outside South Africa, there resulted a polarisation and growing antipathy between the SAIC and the Indians who had opted to make South Africa their home. As Indians permanently settled in South Africa they responded by forming the Colonial Born and Settlers' Indian Association in 1934 and declared their South African identity by claiming that they were 'nationals of South Africa'.

ALLIANCES

This historical conjuncture produced a new tradition in Indian politics which pointed in the direction of forging alliances with 'non-European peoples and other democratic forces'. This tendency having captured the leadership of the Indian Congresses by 1946 reflected itself as the dominant ideological force in Indian politics. It committed itself to struggle 'for the full implementation of the rights of all peoples of South Africa'. Hence the Xuma, Naicker, Dadoo pact of 1947. The 1949 riots not withstanding, Indian leadership appreciated that the rights of Indian South Africans could only be guaranteed when the aspirations of Africans are realised. Thus by virtue of joint political struggle in the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Indian Congresses consolidated their alliance with the African National Congress. In 1955 the SAIC was recognised as an integral part of 'the organisational forces of the liberatory movement' in South Africa. It joined the African National Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation in forming the Congress of the People (COP). As the COP these organisations adopted the Freedom Charter as their minimum programme for a future South Africa. Amongst its other clauses, the Freedom Charter declared 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white and no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people'.

However, there still exists a fraction of Indian opinion which believes that the aspirations of Indian South Africans would be best served by negotiating and participating in state created institutions; the documents show that the main-stream of Indian political consciousness identifies with the broad democratic principles of the Freedom Charter. Supporters of this approach call for a national convention which will decide the future of all South Africans. All this is captured by the documents in Part I: 'Aliens in South Africa (1860 – 1914)' and Part II: 'The Search for Equality (1914 – 1984)'.

Each part has an introduction which briefly outlines the historical period. This, and the brief editorial commentary attached to each document, allow the reader to situate and appreciate the document in its historical context, but each document is allowed to speak for itself.

INSIGHTS

The documents provide a fascinating glimpse of the trials and tribulations of Indian South Africans. The 'coolies' complaining of their low wages and poor work conditions; Hureebhukut, an indentured worker who is struck with a whip to return to work even though 'suffering from loose bowels'; Goolam Khader's dilemma that his wives would be abused in his absence; and Pethuyee Themalarajinpattanam's frustration on realising that his daughter had pickled a money-order receipt which his son had posted from South Africa to him in India – all offer insights into Indian South African life. The documents also expose the frustrations of the indentured workers by revealing the exceptionally high incidence of suicide amongst them.

In 1895 all ex-indentured labourers (workers, hawkers, traders) were denied the right of free citizen status as promised in the initial contracts, unless they paid a £3 poll tax. This burden on ex-indentured labourers and those serving indenture was compounded when their wives and children also had to pay this 'oppressive' tax. Failure of payment meant denial of free citizen status and the return of indenture or 'voluntary' repatriation.

Labourers responded to the call of women resisters in 1913, to use the weapon of the industrial strike to achieve a repeal of the poll tax. Nearly the whole of the work force in Natal withdrew their labour power. The economy of Natal was virtually at a stand-still. Pressurised by mine owners, Smuts was forced to abolish the £3 tax in 1914. The success of the worker's struggle, as Gandhi observed, lay with the workers as 'they were their own leaders'. It is a pity that this general strike is not documented in the book in its own right, for it would have added to the history of the labour movement in South Africa. This, of course, may be an omission due to the lack of documents dealing primarily with the strike.

Gandhi, Albert Christopher, Dadoo, Naicker, Pat Poovalingum, M.J. Naidoo, A Rajbansi, Dr A.D. Lazarus and Jerry Coovadia, all receive attention – so do a whole range of other personalities not so familiar.

Teachers, students and researchers of Indian South African history will find this a most useful documentation – and so probably will anybody with any interest in South African history.□

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by MARIE DYER

LITERATURE AND REALITY

Momentum — On Recent South African Writing; M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta (Eds); University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1984.

This book approaches its subject "Recent South African Writing" in ways that are partly traditional and partly new. Its centre is a collection of critical essays, mostly on specific writers or specific works — like Coetzee, Fugard, Roberts, Livingstone, Serote, **Burger's Daughter, The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena.** The essays are varied in style and stance, often original and provocative in conclusion, but together they form a solid and familiar critical ground. The rest of the book, however, consists of manifestos from writers themselves — some the subjects of the essays but very many others, resident in South Africa or exiled — describing their own attitudes and purposes; or, in the words of the editors, "how they experience and conceive of their activity". The editors' main intention here was to show "how writers are seen as responding (or not) to crises in South African affairs".

This introduces new dimensions. We are used to finding answers to questions of "What?" and "How?" in critical essays and articles. ("What are these plays or poems about?" "How do they express their meaning?") And **Momentum's** critical articles deal very adequately with these kinds of questions. But we aren't used to having a comprehensive set of other questions also being applied to literature: questions of "Who?" and "Why?" as well as "When?" and "Where?" And in considering all these questions **Momentum** brings literature firmly and fruitfully into the area of common everyday experience — and also, one might say, relevantly into the area of **Reality.**

The "crises in South African affairs" to which the writers' responses were requested were described in political terms. (Soweto 1976 was proposed as an obvious landmark.) In his manifesto Peter Wilhelm quotes Gramsci's sentence: "The old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms". The editors suggest that this expresses concisely the general feeling among all contributors about South African society.

The critical articles, varied as they are, all reveal the writers they discuss as describing, diagnosing, probing South Africa's political and social sicknesses. (Indeed, J.U. Jacobs suggests that "South African literature" is itself unnaturally forced apart, and its two streams, "indigenous literature" and "literature in exile", must flow together before it can be properly recognised and analysed.) The Black writers deal directly with political protest and resistance. Serote's novel **To Every Birth its Blood** is about present struggle and future revolution. In her essay Dorian Barboure shows how the novel combines an assertion of the value of communal action with an expression of complex human sympathy for individuals. Black South African dramatists, however, create, rather than describe, communal action. Ian Steadman gives an account of "Alternative" Black theatre which exists through the participation of the audience, so that all performances are unique and their study is closer to archaeology than literary criticism.

Margaret Lenta sees **The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena** as giving utterance to a hitherto unheard voice — the voice of Black South African women; but a voice which records its own almost immediate silencing as its heroine is progressively defeated and rendered impotent by failure and despair. Nadine Gordimer's white heroine in **Burger's Daughter** is also, in M.J. Daymond's analysis, rendered impotent at the end of the novel — but not defeated or despairing; rather with a potential for heroism in abeyance, unable to find fulfilment in the political uncertainties (uncertain to her, to the author, to the reader) of South African after 1976. And Rob Amato shows that **Master Harold and the Boys** reveals how the consciousnesses of all South Africans, Black and White, are trapped inside the sado-masochistic apparatus of their society.;

The less specifically "political" writers are nevertheless shown to be commenting on or offering further insights into South Africa's diseased symptoms. Jack Kearney suggests that Sheila Roberts's short stories explore our general morbid propensity to "stereotype" people (into other categories as well as racial ones); Sheila Roberts herself indicates that the acute political insight of Dan Jacobson in his novel **The Confessions of Josef Baisz** can jolt South Africans out of familiarity with lies, spies and treachery. All three essays on J.M. Coetzee, by W.J.B. Wood, Peter Strauss and Joan Gilmour, view his novels as presenting a critique of Western Civilization, a diagnosis of the philosophical and spiritual plight of the West.

Douglas Livingstone's poem "Giovanni Jacopo Meditates: On an Alabaster Adamastor" deals introspectively with his activity as a poet — its nature, its justification, its temptations. The alabaster statue, as Audrey Cahill interprets the poem, taunts the poet with the absurdity and meaninglessness of his activity, since political factors in South Africa today render art impossible. The poet's spokesman,

expressing (to put it mildly) disagreement, smashes the statue's head with a poker; but this very violence indicates a fundamental unease.

The poem is in fact Douglas Livingstone's contribution as a writer to the other section of the book: the collection of writers' manifestos, 25 from "resident" South African writers and 15 from exiles or expatriates. Among these writers, Livingstone's unease, defensiveness and self-doubt are often echoed (but perhaps no significant writers anywhere are ever complacent). Brevity was obviously requested: about three pages is a common length, and although there are a few expansive pieces the general conciseness makes for a characteristically pithy sharpness of expression.

Alan Paton has "no intention that his writing may be the instrument of change", but another group of writers (sometimes responding to misgivings about their social relevance) indicate modest hopes for intervention in various ways. Essop and Kunene, for example, suggest the possibility of "authentic moral renewal" through the impact of creative writing; or an assault on the racist regime through ideas, "its worst enemies". Gwala believes that "all literature is propaganda but not all propaganda is literature" and that "we find ourselves having to speak about an experience if we have to change it". Gray says that "an act of memory in a society that has lost an internal dynamic of renewal can be an act of provocation".

"Bearing witness", which Joubert finds a personally "urgent and vital task", is seen by Mphahlele as socially necessary, but very different from action: "By the time a writer has done composing a play, a story, a poem as a vehicle of political agitation, the revolution is under way. Literature may record, replay, inspire an ongoing process".

Gordimer hopes to contribute to a future indigenous culture, a literature "that would bring together these two traditions, the one that was imported from Europe and the one that springs from the rich traditional culture". Another view of the writer in relation to the future is presented by Maclennan: "Poetry may have things to say that revolutionaries wish to suppress, because poetry can go on being revolutionary when the demagogues are already into the process of orthodoxy".

No writers appear to have thought it strange or unexpected to consider themselves in a context of politics (although Fugard declares that 1976 is much too near: "We are still watching the consequences of the years 1899 – 1902"). Indeed several believe that to write at all implies, demands, a stance that is overtly political. "No genuine writer in South Africa can be a supporter of racial or any other forms of discrimination" (Rive). "Liberalism is the common disease that afflicts all writers of real ability" (Ebersohn). "Every serious writer in this country has some allegiance to a socialist vision of some sort" (Gwala).

Hardly any issue about art, literature and politics is not dealt with illuminatingly, provocatively, concisely, in one or other of the manifestos. Manifestos from exiles provide insights not only into the states of being a South African writer and being a South African writer-in-exile, but also into the state of exile itself: its griefs, vacancies and disturbances as well as its compensations. There is a degree of unanimity here from the writers on one subject – that, however long their absence, South Africa is "the soil of their imagination", containing for them "more than their origins". (For some, though, "to understand one's society one must leave it".) Strategies for dealing with nostalgia and alienation include Bessie Head's firm and forceful pegging down and developing new and different roots; but more characteristically a continual keeping in touch with South Africa – if possible with visits, or sometimes acting in the host country as informal ambassadors of the resistance, educating and informing. ("Expatriates" are careful to distinguish their problems from those of the real "exiles" here.)

For all this comprehensiveness, there are significant and notable lacks. As mentioned and lamented by the editors, political censorship and banning prevented the inclusion of available writings by and about Alex la Guma and Dennis Brutus. (Other unmentioned omissions are also a pity: a list of writers who were presumably approached and failed to respond – surely including at least Serote and Sepamla? – would have been significant from several points of view.)

The volume is dedicated to Raymond Sands, former Professor of English at the University of natal, Durban, by members and ex-members of his department. Its enterprise and achievements are triumphant tributes to the liveliness of the group of colleagues which he gathered and led.□

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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by MATTHEW COBBETT*

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN ZIMBABWE : THE BASIS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

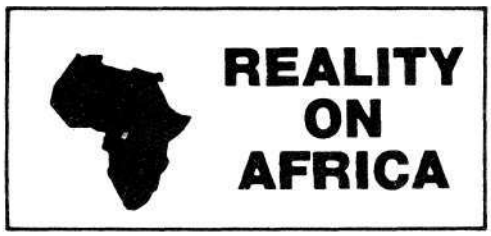
Agricultural extension is at the very heart of rural development. The success or failure of many Third World rural development plans will be determined to a significant degree by the impact of the agricultural extension services as 'change agents'. The most important link in effecting improved agricultural practices and rural development is the Extension Worker (EW). Paradoxically, it is frequently the case that the EW is the most neglected and poorly supported member within the agricultural extension services. In many development plans the pivotal role of the EW is not appreciated. Far too often the EW's productivity is poor and the desired unity of purpose between the EW and the farmer is missing. Poor productivity may be attributed to a combination of factors including low pay, poor and inadequate supervision, limited back-up services, limited and inappropriate training, lack of transport and rural isolation. These factors can seriously undermine the effectiveness of a rural development plan particularly at the crucial micro-level.

Why has this situation arisen? The answer is to be found in the way planners and government officials frequently view rural development. Far too often development planners have equated rural development with agricultural development. Success has been viewed in terms of introducing new high yielding crop varieties, improved livestock vaccines, building large scale irrigation schemes, etc. It has been assumed, falsely, that success in rural development can be achieved without the active involvement of the rural communities. In part this depends upon how success is measured. Agricultural development resulting in increased output (in the form of produce) but without the active participation of the rural homesteads is likely to result in increased dependence by the homesteads on agricultural technologists and could well accelerate rural-urban migration. To offset this tendency rural development projects or schemes should involve the rural population at all stages if optimum success is to be obtained. The ultimate goal of rural development should be to improve the standard of living (socio-economic status) of the rural population on a sustained basis. This means in turn that it is crucial to accurately determine the needs and wants of the rural population and thereafter to develop strategies which satisfy their needs and improve their well being. In other words successful rural development planning and implementation is the antithesis of centralised top-down project implementation.

WHAT IS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION?

The FAO (1962) defines agricultural extension as "an informal out-of-school educational service for training and influencing farmers (and their families) to adopt improved practices in crop and livestock production, management, conservation and marketing. Concern is not only with teaching and securing adoption of a particular improved practice, but with changing the outlook of the farmer to the point where he will be receptive to, and on his own initiative, continuously seek means of improving his farm business and home".

The above definition embodies several important points. First of all, extension is an educational process, aimed at helping people to help themselves. It is neither a service agency nor a law enforcement agency. Its major function is to assist in developing people's understanding and ability to think through their own problems and solve them. That education has a lasting effect is implied in the definition when it states that the farmer will on his own initiative continuously seek to improve his farm business and home.



Secondly, the definition outlines the scope of extension activity. Extension is concerned not only with improvement of farm business, including crop and livestock production, management, conservation, and marketing, but also with improvement of the farm home. It takes the farm and the home as a unit, because they influence each other and cannot be separated. Farming over most parts of the world is more than a business. It is a way of life.

Lastly, extension deals with all members of the family, for unless all are approached, improvement cannot be great, and in many instances, cannot be sustained. Where the migrant labour system dominates, particular attention should be given to women as they are likely to be responsible for agricultural production.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN ZIMBABWE

a. Pre-independence Resumé

The importance of agricultural extension has long been appreciated in Zimbabwe and dates back to the 1920's (Reid, 1977). In general, the agricultural extension service which was divided along racial lines concentrated on providing an excellent service to white farmers whilst black subsistence farmers were poorly serviced. The advice offered to white farmers was comprehensive with the overall emphasis being directed at proper land management and in particular, conservation. 'Conex' operated in the white commercial land ownership areas whilst extension in the black communal land ownership areas, was provided by

'Devag'. It emphasized soil and vegetation conservation and in particular the construction of contours. Over a number of years a fairly comprehensive Master Farmer training scheme was established which enabled successful participants to qualify for a smallholding in the African purchase areas. Extension personnel also emphasized the destocking and dipping of livestock which together with the construction of contours became politicised issues prior to independence. Zanu and Zapu encouraged opposition to the construction of contours in particular on the grounds that they were a manifestation of white control in the rural areas. To this day extension personnel have difficulty convincing farmers that the construction of contours is acceptable.

b. Post-Independence Situation

Three fundamental changes to the agricultural extension services occurred after independence namely, the unification of Conex and Devag to form the Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (Agritex), the switch away from white (commercial) areas to black (communal) areas and the rapid Africanisation of the management personnel.

The formation of Agritex was in line with the government's stated objective to eliminate all racial discrimination. Whilst the integration has resulted in some logistic difficulties, numerous benefits have been obtained. Firstly, it has permitted the rationalization of the service and encouraged greater efficiency in the use of limited resources and manpower. Secondly, it has facilitated greater awareness and understanding of the huge gap between the commercial and communal sectors. Thirdly, it has resulted in improved co-ordination both between ministries and with Non Government Organisations (NGO's) involved in rural development.

The second major change was the switch away from the white sector to the black sector. Whilst Agritex is charged with providing a service to white farmers the latter are increasingly obtaining their advice from commercial concerns. Clearly, however, the greatest need for agricultural extension is in the communal areas and accordingly about eighty percent of the extension effort is directed there. The service provided by Agritex to the commercial farms is generally at a specialist level. Commercial farmers may obtain advice over the phone or by coming into town and obtaining advice from the Agritex specialist or alternatively the specialist may visit the farm for a day or two. Communal farmers obtain most of their information at rural meetings or from visits by the Agritex field staff who, in contrast to the specialists, usually live in the rural areas with their clients.

Africanisation has proceeded fairly smoothly and has been speeded up by the resignation of many experienced white professional staff after independence. Whilst a large proportion of the resignations were initially due to racial considerations, an increasing number may be attributed to dissatisfaction with the conditions of employment (salaries have fallen considerably in real terms and are much lower than those offered in the private sector). More and more black Zimbabweans have become disenchanted with their salaries and they too are leaving the public service so that, despite the rapid process of Africanisation, numerous middle and senior management level posts within Agritex are unfilled. The Africanisation process has resulted in rapid advancement for blacks but it has been at the expense of practical experience. Agritex is now in the position where a large proportion of its management staff have less than five years experience and in many cases no field experience although they possess suitable academic qualifications. Given this situation, and despite a large training component within Agritex, the staff will require a further couple of years experience with a stable workforce before optimum efficiency will be achieved.

THE STRUCTURE OF AGRITEX

The broad structure is outlined in Figure 1. It is pertinent to note that Agritex comprises technical and field branches which may be attributed to the past merger between Conex (technical) and Devag (field). Integration of the two branches has been steady but slow and differences exist over how best to achieve this goal. At present the field section dominates and it is the duty of the technical section to provide the necessary expertise to upgrade and stimulate the former. For that reason I will concentrate upon the field structure only and examine the key posts therein.

a. Provincial Agricultural Extension Officer (PAEO)

This is primarily an administrative position. The PAEO is responsible for ensuring that the department's objectives at a provincial level coincide and complement the national objectives. The eight PAEO's meet regularly and coordinate with the Directorate. At the provincial level the PAEO liaises with other ministerial heads and sits on the provincial project committees which are now headed by the provincial Governor. The PAEO is responsible for the well-being of all staff (including technical specialists) and is responsible for recommending promotions and transfers. His primary day to day responsibilities lie with the three or four regional officers (RAEO) who are usually based in the regional towns.

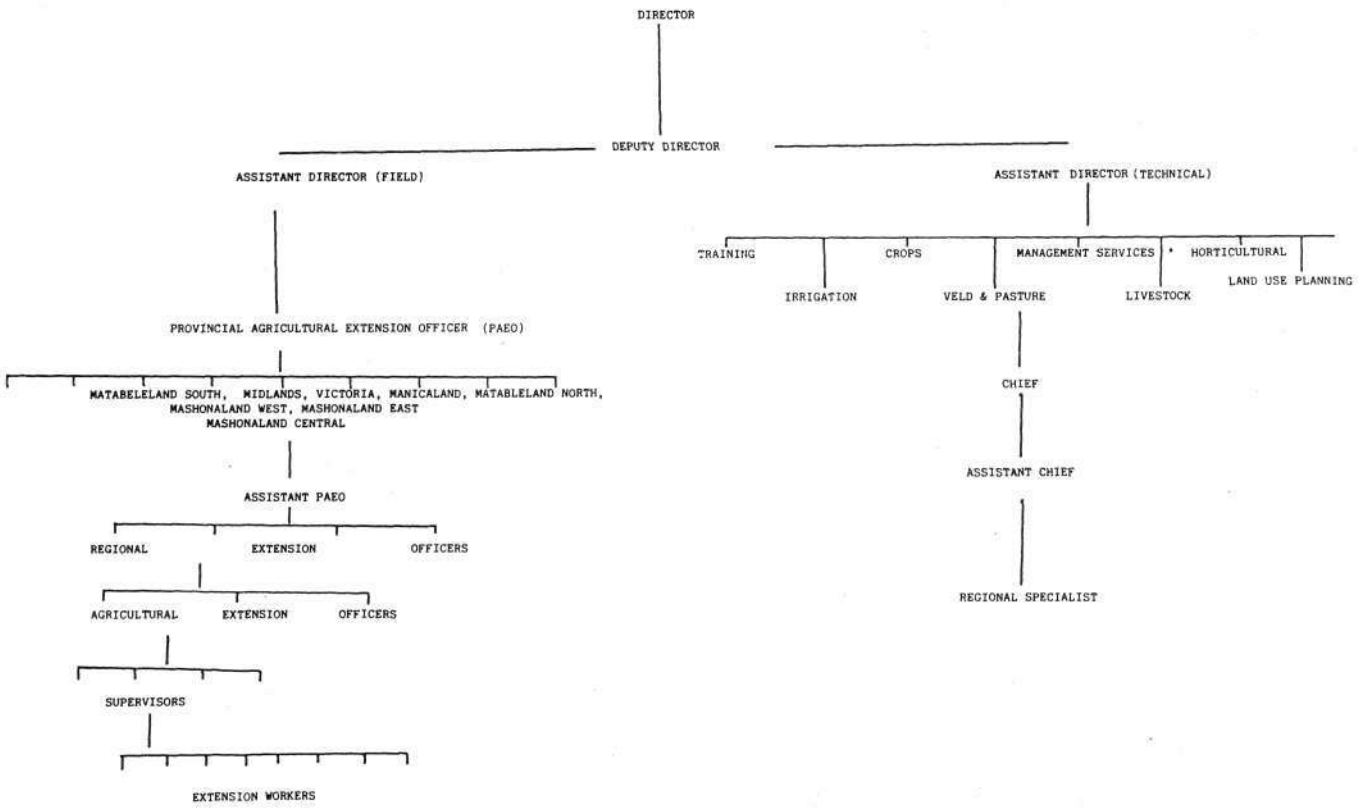
THE REGIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS (REO AND AEO)

It is the REO who assumes direct control over field staff at the regional level. The position requires a mix of field work and administration. The REO is responsible for defining the regional objectives and ensuring that they are met. Such objectives would be for example to improve the cattle off-take percentage, to improve the herd composition, to increase the number of farmer organisations, and to encourage proper tillage methods. There has been increasing pressure on the REO's to set achievable objectives within a specified period rather than to set vague non-measurable goals. The REO is responsible for calling in technical specialists when required and can commission research projects in his area. The position also requires the REO to attend inter-ministerial meetings with his equivalent counterparts and to work closely with NGO's engaged in development projects.

The AEO runs the area office and is responsible for the progress of the Agritex team consisting of Supervisors and Extension Workers at an area level. The officer is expected to spend a great part of the time in the field motivating staff. He is responsible for ensuring the success of the department objectives at an area level. An important function of both the REO and the AEO is staff training. The officers are expected to assist with the training of Supervisors and Extension Workers in liaison with the Training Specialist (Technical).

A large number of the AEO's have university degrees (frequently obtained from Eastern Europe and the

STRUCTURE OF AGRITEX WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE January 1984 Figure 1



Soviet Union) and possess little field experience. All too often the AEO's see their position as a stepping stone to some more senior position and are simultaneously aiming to further their academic qualifications in an overseas country. The dissatisfaction of the AEO's with their posts may be attributed to three factors. Firstly, they receive low salaries. Secondly, many object to being placed 'in the bush' and seek the more sophisticated social life of the main towns. Thirdly, not all the AEO's are particularly interested in agricultural extension. Given the background of many of the AEO's this is not a surprising scenario. Part of the blame for this state of affairs rests with the criteria for promotions within Agritex whereby a university degree or agriculture diploma is a prerequisite for advancement to this (lowest level) management post.

SUPERVISORS AND EXTENSION WORKERS (EW)

The Supervisors and EW's play a pivotal role in the department. Supervisors are always drawn from the pool of EW's and are senior men with a great deal of experience but usually with only limited formal education. They are usually responsible for a team of four to six EW's based in the field. They are expected to support the EW whenever he requires assistance and to act in a facilitating rather than a controlling manner. The supervisors should rotate amongst the various EW's and can replace the EW if he is on leave, sick or attending a training programme. A major worry of supervisors is the lack of real promotion prospects. Promotion to officer level is determined by whether the supervisor has the necessary minimum qualifications (an agricultural diploma or a degree). This is a sore point amongst supervisors who possess adequate experience but are unable to allocate time to further study. The Zimbabwe Government has retained for the most part the stringent requirements of the previous government governing promotion criteria.

The role of the EW is diverse. Ultimate success or failure of the extension service rests with the EW's performance in the field. This is a function of the following factors: (i) the knowledge he possesses and its relevance, (ii) the back-up services supporting him, (iii) his ability to engage in two way communication with the rural community, (iv) the appropriateness of the defined objectives, (v) the political climate. These factors are now examined in turn.

(i) The knowledge possessed by the EW should be appropriate for the community within which he is expected to work. In Zimbabwe the courses devised for EW's have tended to over emphasize technical skills, which are appropriate for the commercial agricultural sector, and have under-valued the semi-technical skills required for rural development amongst subsistence orientated communities. In particular there has been a neglect of the dynamics of traditional farming systems. Most EW's are aware of this contradiction but feel that they are expected to recommend agricultural practices which in fact they know are unlikely to succeed or be adopted. This problem has recently been acknowledged by Agritex and the newly established Management Services branch incorporates a Research Unit charged with investigating traditional farming systems and the rural economy generally. The EW is obliged to attend a number of compulsory in-service training courses and may also be nominated to participate in other non-compulsory courses in which he has an interest. In sum Agritex provides considerable in-service training for the EW's but this training needs to be made more relevant.

(ii) The EW is backed up by his supervisor and the AEO in the field. In terms of personnel he is well

supported and receives training and literature on a regular basis. The EW attends monthly meetings where he can meet other EW's. A Mobile Training Unit will visit his area for a couple of days at least once every other month showing educational films and videos. The main weakness in the back-up service rests with the poor record of Agritex in supplying the EW with the tools of his trade. EW's complain bitterly about the late arrival of crop packs, the lack of veterinary kits, measuring wheels, stationery, and teaching aids. The poor quality of their houses and offices (if they possess one) are another source of grievance as is the fact that EW's are forced to cover their large areas by bicycle. (The Government has plans to motorise the EW's by 1985). EW's are tired of being promised goods which invariably arrive late, if at all, and are of substandard quality. The provision of adequate materials for the EW is essential if his morale is to remain high.

(iii) The necessity for the EW to engage in a two-way communication with the rural community cannot be over stressed. EW's who adopt a superior, patronising attitude are bound to fail. The EW will command respect if he involves the community, listens to their wants and needs and thereafter develops extension programmes in consultation with them. It follows therefore that the EW should reside within the community and should be an integral part of that community. Agritex has begun to acknowledge that the importance of two-way communication should be extended within the department and that EW's and Supervisors should be encouraged to provide feedback from the field. Appropriate channels are being developed to permit what is frequently very useful and relevant information from the EW to filter upwards to the REO, PAEO and ultimately to the Directorate.

(iv) The setting of appropriate objectives can only be undertaken once an accurate data base relating to the specific rural economy has been compiled. Objectives should be divided into short and long-term objectives and must be realistic and achievable. The tendency has been for management and field workers to submit grandiose, non-achievable objectives primarily because they believed this would please their superiors. A secondary reason is that an element of rivalry exists between field staff who wish to be seen as being enthusiastic and dynamic. However, the setting of unobtainable objectives will by definition result in 'project' failures and frustration amongst both the field staff and the community.

(v) The EW works best with a rural community where the political climate is not oppressive. In Matabeleland, where there has been continued military presence and repression, the EW's in the field have been severely restricted in their movements. Master Farmer training sessions have been curtailed as the communities require permission to hold group meetings. As the EW-to-farmer ration is approximately 1:800 homesteads, the EW's are bound to work with groups. By depriving the communities this freedom the EW programme has been drastically curtailed and in some areas the EW has had to withdraw from the area altogether. Many of the EW's in Matabeleland have directly or indirectly felt the brunt of the military presence and as a consequence their enthusiasm and commitment towards their work has diminished. It will require several years of reconciliation and peace before anything resembling normality is restored in Matabeleland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations outlined below are based primarily on the experience of Zimbabwe. They should, however, be regarded as broad guidelines only, for their relevance will vary from one country to another.

(i) Agricultural extension should be given a central position in a rural development strategy.

(ii) As far as possible there should be a uniform agricultural extension policy throughout the country. The policy should, however, be sufficiently flexible to accommodate regional variations in soils, vegetation, rainfall, population densities and needs as defined by each community etc.

(iii) The quality of the extension staff should be high but there need not be an excessive preoccupation with academic qualifications. To this end sufficient agricultural training colleges should be established to provide appropriate skills.

(iv) In-service training is an essential component for successful extension.

(v) The national structure should be decentralised to permit regional autonomy and decision making.

(vi) Objective setting should be a priority. Objectives should be modest, attainable, well defined and reviewed annually.

(viii) A resource centre should be established to collect and analyse reliable base data which are an essential prerequisite for rural development planning. Field staff should be expected to know fully the areas in which they operate.

(ix) Field staff should work with groups and must liaise with rural communities in the setting of objectives. It is unlikely that the ideal extension ration of 1:50 homesteads will ever be achieved.

(x) Particular attention should be focused upon women who are likely to be responsible for food crop production.

(xi) The question of individual versus communal land tenure will require thorough research. The spread of commercial agricultural systems is likely to result in an increasing demand for individual land tenure.

(xiii) The extension staff should try to complement the work of other department's staff within the community. In sum an integrated approach to agricultural extension and rural development should be adopted.

CONCLUSION

The agricultural extension service in Zimbabwe although it is well established, has had to undergo a major restructuring after independence to bring it in line with government policy. The changes described have restored the past imbalances with current emphasis now placed on the development of the black communal areas. A loss of

experienced (white) management personnel has been partially offset by rapid Africanisation aided by the return of educated political exiles. There is, however, a lack of managerial experience at management level. Agritex is increasingly aware of the importance of farmer groups and farming communities and is seeking their involvement in the decision making processes. Real problems in this regard do exist. The pivotal role of agricultural extension within the rural development strategy is now acknowledged, but a shortage of manpower, finance, and political stability in Matabeleland, is preventing Agritex from operating at its maximum capabilities. Greater importance should be accorded to the EW's who undertake most of the essential work but who are poorly renumerated and serviced (other than in terms of senior staff).

The various agencies concerned with rural development in South Africa should benefit from the Zimbabwean experience. In particular the importance of appropriate in-service staff training, the necessity to liaise with various other agencies involved in rural development, the absolute necessity of involving the communities in the decision-making process, and the concept of building upon and supporting the useful knowledge and practices of farmers are issues of particular relevance for the decision-makers in South Africa.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: THE MAIN ISSUES

* Only emphasizing agricultural output	or	emphasizing the improved socio economic status of households
* Top down imposed technology and changes	or	involving communities in the decision making process
* Abandonment of traditional methods	or	researching into and building on useful traditional methods
* Setting grandiose unobtainable objectives	or	setting short-term, modest, attainable objectives based on consultation with farmer groups
* Providing individual instruction (usually to males)	or	training in group sessions with those responsible for agricultural production (usually women)
* Training extension staff once prior to going into the field	or	providing continuous in-service training as well
* Extension staff operate in isolation	or	extension staff are part of a multi-disciplinary integrated development programme □

BOOKS RECEIVED

William Plomer: **The South African Autobiography;** David Philip Africa south Paperbacks, 1984.

This book is both delightful and distasteful. The delight is inspired by the first half, which deals with Plomer's progenitors, who provide him with an ancestral and historical sense of 'identity' and context along with his 'literary' and 'political' one, and who are perhaps more interesting than Plomer is himself. It is, however, to his credit, that he gives them their due, describing them with affection and humour, displaying (without sentimentality) morality, imagination, kindness and wit. He enters into their existence from Victorian pomatum recipes to their experiences of earthquakes, death and social conscience. A variety of anecdotes are repeated with an almost Bosmanesque combination of humour, precision and irony.

The second half of the book (which concerns Plomer from birth to young manhood) describes Plomer's growing perception of dualities : upper and lower 'classes', the English and the South African, the 'Sermon on the Mount' and 'bayonet practice in the park'. The autobiography also makes evident to what extent his South African existence influenced his South African writings, such as **Turbott Wolfe** and the short story 'Down on the Farm'.

The book is distasteful, however, because of the not entirely justified arrogance which is displayed towards Kipling, Hughes and Scott and the 'bellyaching' and 'name-dropping' which occur, despite Plomer's expressed intentions to the contrary. Furthermore, Plomer's attitudes and vocabulary are unavoidably those of a colonial, albeit a liberal one. The Epilogue is inherently contradictory and simplistic in spite of his comment that Africa is to him 'a complex and violent revelation' and he ends by diminishing the socio-political role of the artist, advocating 'lawn-order' and benevolence and thus failing to do justice to himself, to **Turbott Wolfe** and to the African experience.□ M.A.Y.

William Plomer: **Selected Stories;** ed. Stephen Gray, David Philip, Africasouth Paperbacks, 1984.

In this selection of short stories, the editor, Stephen Gray, chooses stories representative of four geographical areas: South Africa, Greece, Japan and England. The South African stories comprise roughly half of the book, and stylistically dominate the collection as a whole. Of these stories, "Portraits in the Nude" in particular lingers in the reader's memory. It is a curious story, at once violent and ephemeral, and it is to Plomer's credit that he can align these two atmospheres with success. Other memorable stories include "Down on the Farm", "The Child of Queen Victoria", "Nakamura" and "A Friend of Her Father's", all of which superbly capture the essence of the land about which they are written. Slightly less successful are stories such as "Bed Number Seventeen" and "Local Colour", in which the reader suspects Plomer of attempting to suggest a profundity in a rather insignificant event, of employing suggestion to the point of obscurity – a technique which made this reviewer a little irritated and impatient. Nevertheless, Plomer's **Selected Stories** is certainly a representative selection of the author's work as a whole, and has a deserved place in the history of South African literature.□ K.I.B.