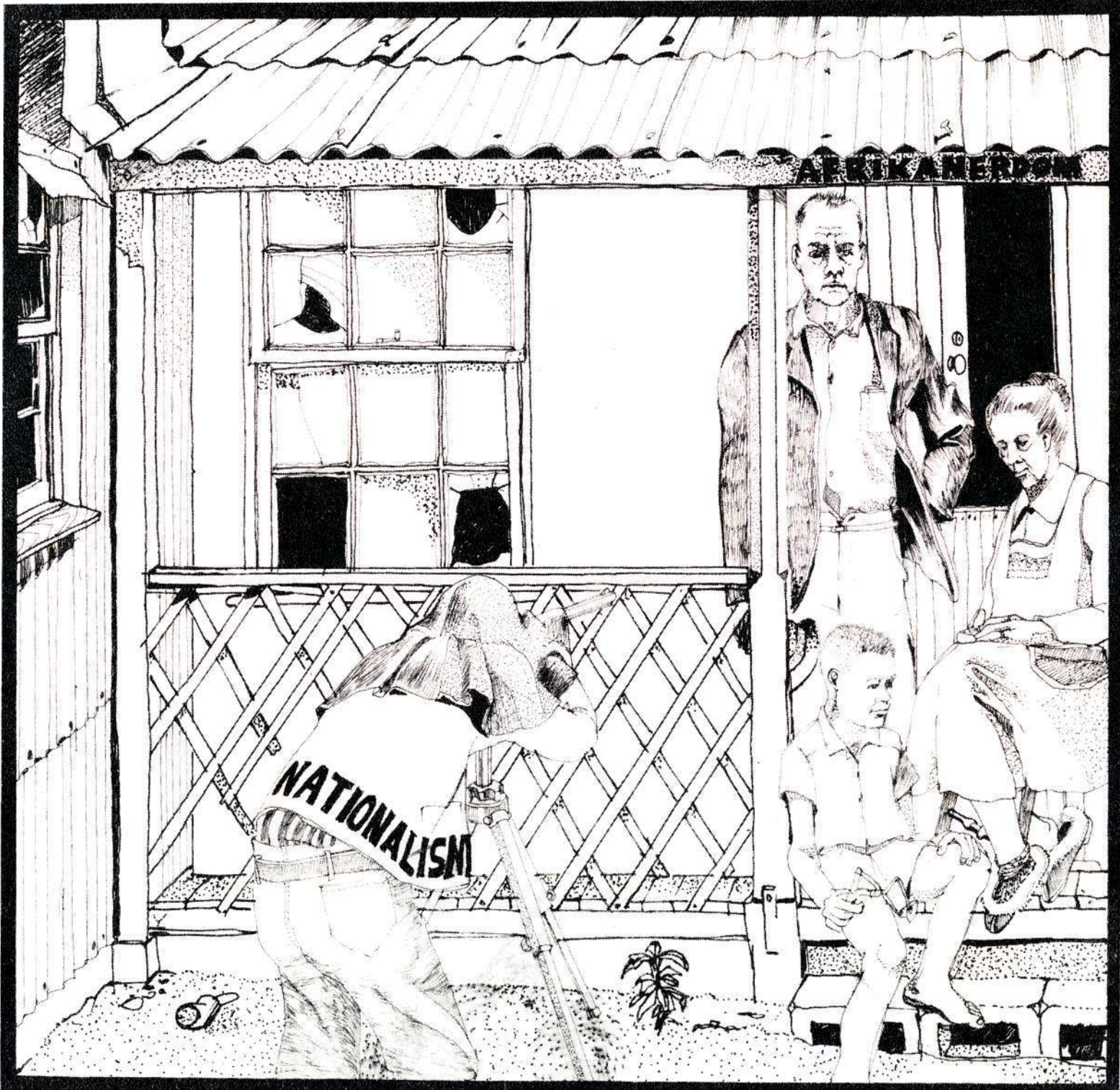


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EDITORIAL

O WHISTLE AND I'LL COME

REALITY in its desire to work for a more just order of society, and its desire to encourage all those who reach for the distant shore, however dimly seen, has been more than generous to the United Party.

It is hard to be generous any longer. The attempts to explain away the federation policy have been cowardly in the extreme. Mr Steyn's ugly attack on Mrs Helen Suzman was distasteful, and impudent too, because she is in a class to which he cannot aspire. Mr Mike Mitchell's solicitude for the imperishable right of his messenger "boy" to carry Mr Mitchell's messages without interference can only be described as nauseating. Mr Mitchell's solicitude for other rights, such as the rights of messengers to live with their wives and children, is not much in evidence.

And now the Schlebusch Commission. First there was the error of judgement that allowed the United Party to serve on the Commission after having been refused a judicial

enquiry. Second there was the support of the United Party for the Schlebusch findings, and the tacit concurrence in the banning of the students. But worst of all is the possibility that the United Party will agree to the setting up of a permanent commission, not of judges but of parliamentarians, who will decide on the guilt or innocence of people suspected of subversive activity.

We ought to know by now what the Nationalists mean by subversive activity. They mean the political activity of those who radically disagree with them. They mean the activity of those who demand radical change. If these opponents act and dress unconventionally, their subversiveness is thereby increased. The intention therefore is to give a body of parliamentarians the power to inflict severe punishments, extending even to the denying of education, the destruction of careers, the extreme restriction of liberty, on those who radically disagree with them.

The United Party is on the verge of agreeing or of not agreeing to take part in this totalitarian farce. It is torn between two fears, the fear of still further alienating its more liberal supporters and the fear of still further alienating its more reactionary supporters. A party whose policy is dictated by fears of this kind has no future. It certainly has no part in making the future. The Nationalists sneer at the United Party for having no policy, and this to a large extent is true. The United Party is an all-white party that knows there is no all-white future, but has not the guts to act on its knowledge.

The United Party has one grave and apparently incurable weakness. It is in opposition, and it is its duty to examine critically the actions of the government and the arrangements of society. But let the Prime Minister blow the security whistle, and the Party comes to heel like an obedient dog. There may be no danger in sight, there may be no danger at all, but the whistle has gone and the Party must come to heel. The Prime Minister and the Nationalists know this well, and they know exactly when to blow.

So the smell of consensus is in the air and a nasty smell it is too. The whistle blows and the UP-ites come running into the laager, some of them hoping, you may be sure, for a job on a waggon, the greasing of an axle, the wielding of a whip, the chancellorship of a voorloper

university. Let the others howl outside, the students, the supporters of the world churches, the pro-veritates, the innocent instituters that at first didn't know a schlebusch when they smelt one. Let them all be eaten up by the ever-vigilant reds that prowl eternally outside. Inside here we are safe and sound, and so jolly to be together again.

And what about you, Catherine Taylor, and Japie Basson, and Harry Schwarz? Will you be happy inside there? Will you go inside there to convert the UP-ites and bring them out again? Wouldn't you be happier outside with Helen Suzman and her sproccassian friends? Wouldn't that be better for us all?

It's hard to believe that Rabbie Burns knew the U.P. but he must have, because he couldn't possibly have written these lines if he hadn't.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

And up there on the ossewa sits my lad himself, looking as satisfied as can be. And why shouldn't he be, after having eaten the U.P. for breakfast? □

BLACK CHRISTIANS MUST LIBERATE WHITES

An address entitled "Christianity in South Africa: A Serious Look by a concerned Black Believer", delivered to The Christian Institute of Southern Africa. (Natal Regional Conference, May 19th 1973, Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre).

by Manas Buthelezi.

I am a Christian and hope to remain one because in the Christian Gospel I have discovered an assurance of the fulfillment of possibilities for the realization of my true humanity. However betrayed by fellow Christians I very often feel, I have never experienced betrayal by the Gospel itself. Had it not been for the Gospel, I would already have had every reason to believe that whoever created me is the enemy of my humanity. In the Gospel I have discovered hope for my liberation towards true humanity.

It is against the background of this expressed faith in the Gospel that you should try to understand what I am going to say. For my part, it is out of this Gospel hope that I have mustered courage to say what I am going to say about the pathology of christianity in South Africa. Listen to me as to a fellow believer speaking out of the depths of his overflowing and believing heart. If in taking South African Christianity as a spiritual pathological case, my diagnosis and prescription here and there smack of

missionary and evangelistic arrogance, kindly bear with me; I am simply moved by the black man's love for his fellow South Africans.

I shall call the first part of my address, "A Spiritual Diagnosis", and the second, "An Evangelistic Prescription".

A Spiritual Diagnosis:

The Christian Gospel has been in this land for over 300 years. This is a long time if one considers the spate of drastic changes which have taken place since then. Here I am not only referring to changes in the political map of South Africa, but also to changes in the very history of the spiritual destinies of the peoples of South Africa.

The modern history of Christianity in South Africa is a sad tale of the gradual erosion of the expression of the spirit of christianity itself. The institutional symbols of christianity like the church and the ministry are there all right but they are increasingly less of the visible incarnation of that which accounts for the uniqueness of christianity, vis - a - vis, the religion of our forefathers. Over the past decades, the church for one has been turned into a living monument of a race and colour-oriented society. Is it not true that many church buildings are no longer houses of the worship of God the father of Jesus Christ, but have become heathen shrines of a race and colour god? That is why even in this day and age some church synods still find it necessary to pre-occupy themselves with making resolutions about keeping their churches lily-white on Sunday. You see, a racially mixed worship assails the majesty of the god of racism and colour.

This is a negative appraisal of South African Christianity, you may say. Is it not true that there are more people who believe in Christ today than there were in 1652? Is South Africa not as a matter of fact the most christian country in Africa percentage-wise? The conclusions drawn from answers to these questions cannot but be disquieting unless one fails to see beyond the mere quantitative theory of progress.

To my mind the ultimate criterion for the spread of Christianity is not just how many people go to church on Sunday, but how many people allow that which is unique in the christian Gospel to shape their lives as well as the spirit of their social, economic and political environment.

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What is it that is unique in the christian Gospel? It is the love of God in Jesus Christ that transforms strange neighbours into loving brothers. It is very often said that points of race contact are points of friction. What is unique about the Gospel is that it changes points of contact into points of fellowship. Fellowship is by definition a situation of contact. It follows that there can never be christian fellowship without human contact. Any deliberate elimination of points of human contact is a calculated sabotage of the essence of christian fellowship.

About this uniqueness of the Christian Gospel Christ said: "I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples (John 13: 34-35, NEB)."

As if in commentary to this, Paul in Galatians asserts: "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28 NEB)".

In Jesus Christ the divisions of mankind into warring nations as dramatized in the story of Babel, is resolved. In Christ mankind becomes a family, a brotherhood. This is the uniqueness of christianity, otherwise white Europeans would have no business to leave Europe and come here to make christians out of black Africans. This is the uniqueness which, according to my diagnosis, the South African way of life has done its share to undermine and almost destroy. We are all the poorer for it; ours is a christianity in caricature. **The white man as the main architect of the South African way of life has, it seems, done his best to destroy the heart of the faith he brought.**

* * * * *

When white missionaries came to Natal during the time of Shaka, they were hospitably received by the black people who did not know anything about Christ and who had every reason to reject the humanity of white people because they had never seen any white human beings before. They so accepted them as human beings that they were prepared to allow their black girls to marry them. The classical case in point is the British hunter John Dunn who raised generations of coloureds in Zululand from the black wives he was allowed by King Cetshwayo to marry. Of course, Cetshwayo did not know anything about the Immorality Act because white christianity had not invented it. The black Zulus could see a dignified human being behind the facade of a white skin.

You all know Henry Francis Fynn who was among the first white men ever to visit King Shaka. In his diary, Fynn has a very touching portion where he describes the grand reception which he as well as his entourage received from the king. James Stuart who edited Fynn's diary made the following comments on Fynn's diary account:

"The first meeting of Shaka with Farewell, Fynn, and the rest of the party was manifestly a unique and memorable occasion. Instead of the formal, stiff and constrained ceremonial customary at such a moment, Shaka, whose heart had been mysteriously touched by the advent of British settlers to his shores, converted the occasion into a grand and dramatically planned festival."

This is not just an allusion to dead past history, but is a commentary on the black man's open and loving attitude towards the white man as I have grown to know it. When I grew up, white people, especially missionaries, used to

visit our home since my father was an evangelist. I cannot remember a single occasion when a white person did not receive the best courtesy and the best catering our limited resources could allow. Many a black man can testify to the same. The lack of reciprocity in treatment when we visit white people's homes has not deterred us from giving them our best. In South African Society there are many things which remind the black man of the fact that he is a rejected member. Indeed white South Africa has rejected the black man as someone with whom a self-respecting patriotic white can relate with any degree of intimacy in daily life situations. Whites who have not observed this convention, have ordinarily not escaped some degree of social and political censure bordering on the forfeiture of personal security. Even as lepers in society, black people have on the whole not withdrawn the hand of friendship and love stretched towards the white men. Nothing less is expected of those who follow the way of Christ.

There is a pattern of a racist outlook in the thinking and behaviour of the average white mainly Anglo-Saxon Protestant Northern European, whether he happens to be in America, Asia or South Africa.

As the respective histories of the United States and South Africa, in particular, demonstrate, the Northern European seems to be overly obsessed with his race and the fact that he is white. He translates this into his politics, economics and social theory. This tendency is not so pronounced in the Catholic Mediterranean Southern European. The history of the colonies which belonged to the latter also bear this contrast.

Be it as it may, white people, whether they like it or not, are our brothers. We owe them not just passive love, but creative and creating love. It is not enough for us to bemoan the pathological condition of South African Christianity; we must do something about it. To a medical doctor, diagnosis is never the end; it is a means towards a healing prescription.

Evangelistic Prescription:

Black Christians as a group have not made any significant contribution in the evangelization of South Africa as a country beyond the people of their own race. This is out of proportion to their numerical strength as Christians. Among the main denominations, the Dutch Reformed Church is the only exception with a white majority. Black people can therefore never be taken as merely an appendage to South African Christianity. They are a factor to be reckoned with. The trouble is that hitherto they have not taken themselves seriously. This is nowhere else better illustrated than in the negligible role they have played in the evangelization of South Africa.

In other words black people have not preached the Gospel to *all* nations yet. They seem to have been conditioned into thinking of themselves as third grade kaffir ambassadors of Christ, whose spiritual credentials do not in any way qualify them to carry the message of God to white people, for instance. They have underestimated both their integrity as ambassadors of



God in South Africa and the universality of the scope of their mission.

This stands in sharp contrast to the evangelistic consciousness of white Christians who have always correctly understood themselves as being sent everywhere

and to everybody. Here I am not by any means overlooking the influence of the colonial motif in European history; I am simply stating the basic essentials of the case of evangelism in South Africa.

As a black Christian, I feel obliged to thank white European Christians for having realized that God did not send them to white people only, but also to me, black as I am. In saying this, I hope that white people will also be generous enough to reciprocate this sentiment of mine as I feel moved at this hour that God has also sent me as a black person to tell them the Good News that God has died in Christ to liberate the white man from the urge to oppress the black man. This means to say that the Gospel as preached by the white man needs to be complemented by the Gospel through the black man.

I have already hinted that the Gospel preached by white Christians was of such a kind as to harbour the reality of the white man's rejection of the black man. It was and still is a Gospel with a truncated expression of Christian fellowship. By Christian fellowship here I do not mean just worshipping together on Sunday, but also sharing together all the daily blessings of God which he continually showers over his children.

It is well-known that in this land the white man has grabbed for his own use the greater portion of the wealth God has meant for us all. God is angry about this and will definitely judge the white people. White people need to be liberated from the coming wrath of God. They need to be told that God also loves them; He wants to give them power to love the black man so that they do not find it nauseating to share a meal with him in a public restaurant.

I say this being fully aware of the existence of fringe groups in the white Christian establishment which have tried to stir the white Christian conscience into the realization of the full-implications of Christian fellowship. The Christian Institute is one of those fringe groups. However, as fringe groups, they have existed as voices crying in the ecclesiastical wilderness. It has very often been said that the leadership of the English speaking churches has displayed a liberal and progressive stance which is very often out of touch with the grass-root membership of those churches. This is a euphemistic way of stating that the average white Christian still does not see any contradiction between professing Christian discipleship and rejecting the black man in his daily life. He has not been liberated into accepting the black man as his daily life brother.

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Just to illustrate how patently true this observation is, a leading white statesman of this country has recently found it necessary to exhort white people to remember that black men also have souls. I would be shocked if any one here could stand up and say that this statesman — who

will remain nameless — did not know what he was talking about. This poses a challenge to the black man: the white man needs to know that the black man was created in the image of God too. The black man must testify to the white man that he really has that image, otherwise any third person statement of that fact will not free some people from doubts. The image of God in the black man must urge him to evangelize the white man into accepting him as a brother.

If white people are lost, does it ever occur to the black man that he may be held responsible? Does it ever occur to black people that they have an evangelistic duty of getting the white man out of the spiritual darkness which has prevented him from seeing that the black man is his daily life brother? God will ask: "Black man, where were you when the white man abandoned my Gospel and went to destruction?" When the black man answers, "I was only a kaffir, how could I dare to preach to my baas?", God will say: "Was Christ's resurrection not sufficient to liberate you, black man, from that kind of spiritual and psychological death? Go to eternal condemnation, black man, for you did not muster courage to save your white brother."

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This leads me to the following practical conclusions:

- (i) There is an urgent need for the establishment of a black Christian Mission to the whites in South Africa. This mission manned by blacks will have as a general aim:
 - a. to enable the white man to share the love of God as it has been uniquely revealed to the black man in circumstances in which the white man does not have experience.
 - b. to preach love to the white man so that he may have courage to see with consequence that his security is not necessarily tied to his rejection of the black man.
 - c. to give glory to God for what he has done for the black man in spite of everything.
 - d. to work for the salvation of the white man who sorely needs it.
- (ii) It will be appreciated if some existing white church buildings will be made available to serve as mission stations. This gesture on the part of white churches will serve as a realization of a meaningful partnership in mission.
- (iii) The feasibility of this endeavour is assumed from the fact that there is freedom of preaching in this country. Whites do preach among blacks; therefore there is no reason why blacks cannot preach among whites.

This is not a neat outline of a programme, but merely an expression of an idea. Who knows? It may come as a significant contribution towards the solution of some of our basic problems.□

THE CRISIS IN THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

by Edgar Brookes

The Schlebusch Commission which has already done so much harm, predictable and unpredictable, nearly succeeded in splitting the South African Institute of Race Relations right down the middle—a split which would have left most of the middle-aged and elderly on one side and most of the young on the other.

The General Purposes Committee of the Institute decided to send a delegation to give evidence to the Schlebusch Commission. This was not motivated by any wish to please the Government but simply by the conviction of those who conduct the affairs of the Institute that they and the Institute had nothing to hide. Resignations on the part of some of the younger members followed and, under the Constitution of the Institute, a Special Council Meeting was called to consider the matter.

The division of opinion arose to some extent out of the discontent of the growing number of younger members and their feeling that the Institute was not pursuing a sufficiently "activist" policy. The discontent of the younger members was not a matter to be brushed aside. No society can afford to mortgage its future for its present, and now that the Liberal Party and some other organisations that appealed to youth have been closed down or interfered with, young members were beginning to turn to the Institute as one of the few organisations left which they could support.

To a lesser extent there arose the question of the dissatisfaction of black members of the Institute. The Institute has always, since its very first meeting, had some African members, and the older Africans have stood by the Institute during the years. The African population as a whole is not particularly anxious for immediate revolution, but younger African leaders are very dissatisfied with anything that looks like time-serving or truckling to the Government.

When the Special Meeting of the Council took place, after a very full and unrestricted debate a compromise resolution was carried, and carried by 91 votes to 10. In terms of this resolution the Institute withdrew its offer to give evidence to the Schlebusch Commission although the Council authorised its officers to produce documents if they were

compelled by subpoena to do so. This was on the whole felt to be a victory by the younger members of the Council and not regarded as a defeat by the older members. On the voting figures a majority of the younger members must have supported the resolution. Thus ended the danger of a split, and Institute members, with mutual goodwill, were able to join hands for the next stages of the struggle.

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Those who are not familiar with the past history of the Institute may not have realised that the demand for an "activist" policy goes back a long way. When the Institute was started it was dominated by the Fabian slogan, "Measurement and publicity". Rheinallt Jones, the founder of the Institute, was a Welsh Liberal who believed in this slogan and also had that faith in reason which is a mark of the Liberal creed. His personality left a deep impress on the Institute and as, in its earlier stages, he was on the staff of and closely associated with the University of the Witwatersrand, there tended to be an academic, upper-middle class outlook on the part of the leading Institute members. These things are all open to question and at the same time they can all be defended. Whatever may be the frame of mind of the 1970's, there is no reason to feel penitent for having believed that human beings are able to exercise their reasoning faculties.

The fundamental point, however, has been neatly put in the phrase, "Is the Institute to be a Ministry of Munitions or a Ministry of War?" Rheinallt Jones and others of the earlier members of the Institute felt that it must supply more active political bodies with facts. This, of course, it has done with immense success. Rheinallt Jones had the qualities of his defects and he was a most meticulously accurate research worker.

Quite early in the history of the Institute a section of its members began to press for more active policies. The pressure came mainly at that date from the Western Cape and its most eloquent spokesman was the late Douglas Buchanan, at one time M.P. for the Transkei. For the moment the Ministry of Munitions outlook won the day, but there were intermittent grumbings and murmurings which came out into the open after the election of 1948.

With all its wish to remain neutral between political parties, the Institute could not agree to the policy of apartheid and as the Government proceeded with its very dubious legislative programme the Institute came out more and more in opposition. Long before the Schibusch Commission it had ceased to be merely a Ministry of Munitions and was to some extent at any rate a Ministry of War.

It must be clear to all honest thinkers that this process cannot be carried much further without some damage to the Institute. One thinks of the withdrawal of financial support from individuals and Trusts and although this cannot be a main factor, it cannot be left entirely out of account. It is important that the Institute's scrupulously

impartial research should continue to receive respect and too militant a policy may discount the value of this research. On the other hand neither the Institute nor any other public body can afford to antagonise the mass of its younger members. Nor must the Institute ever part company with black intellectual leadership. Care will be needed for many years to come to preserve the Institute on an even keel, but after the statesmanlike attitude of the recent Special Council Meeting, there is every reason for hope that the Institute will not remain merely neutral, but at the same time will not come to be regarded as a body for organising political opposition to the Government. That at least is the hope of many of the Institute's members, young and old.□

THE THREAT TO ALICE SEMINARY

by Alan Paton

In the late nineteen-fifties representatives of seven South African Churches planned a bold forward move. This was to give up training their candidates for the ministry in separate schools, and to set up the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa. There would be four separate colleges, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Anglican, but the hope was strong that union would become closer.

The need to find a new site was increased by other factors. The London Missionary Society property of Tiger Kloof was declared white. So was St. Peter's, Rosettenville.

Although these Churches planned a common seminary, they had to take regard of the laws of the country and therefore white students were to be excluded. But it was hoped that the Government would agree to the admission of Coloured and Indian students. Further, many of the staff-members would be white.

The Rev. W. R. Booth, then principal of Adams United

Theological School, was given six months leave and commissioned to find a site. After much travel he recommended a site of 220 acres close to the town of Alice. The ground was offered as a gift by the Church of Scotland Mission.

It was felt to be imperative to get the approval of the Government, especially as Coloured and Indian students would require permits. Mr. W. Maree, Minister of Bantu Education, at a meeting with representatives of the Churches, promised to help in this matter, which fell in the province of his colleague, the Minister of Internal Affairs. The representatives naturally asked whether the Seminary would have security of tenure. They were told in open meeting by Mr. C. B. Young, Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development, that the Government would not wish to exercise rights of expropriation even if it had the legal right to do so.

The course seemed to be set fair. In 1962 buildings worth over R600 000 were begun. Water, electricity, tarred roads

and sewerage were provided. The Seminary opened in February 1963 with a staff of 13 and 83 students. The permit for Coloured students, first for two years, was extended to four. A few Indian students were given permits to be renewed annually. Staff houses, a library, a large sports field, and a language laboratory were built. Plans were laid last year to draw Roman Catholics into the programme.

A qualification known as the Associateship of the Federal Theological Seminary, the equal of a degree but without its status, could now be obtained. The introduction of this certificate displeased the University College of Fort Hare, which had hoped that the Seminary would send its ablest students to study theology at the College. The Secretary for Bantu Education accused the Seminary of being unco-operative, even hostile. In another of his letters the Seminary discerned a threat to the permit system. The presence of branches of NUSAS and the University Christian Movement on the Seminary campus did not improve relations, and when troubles occurred at Fort Hare, the Security Police accused Seminary students of incitement. It was afterwards shown conclusively that there was no truth in the allegations and the accusations were quietly dropped.

What was in fact developing was a phenomenon well-known to South Africa. It was an incipient confrontation between the Seminary and Fort Hare, and that was in effect a confrontation between the English Churches and the State. The Seminary was within the limits of the law, a multi-racial and non-racial community. Fort Hare was an institution dedicated to the policies of apartheid and separate development. There developed a strong incompatibility between the policy makers of the two institutions. This incompatibility was not lessened by the belief at Fort Hare that the Seminary was an undesirable neighbour, and an exaggerated estimate of the power of the Seminary to do ideological harm.

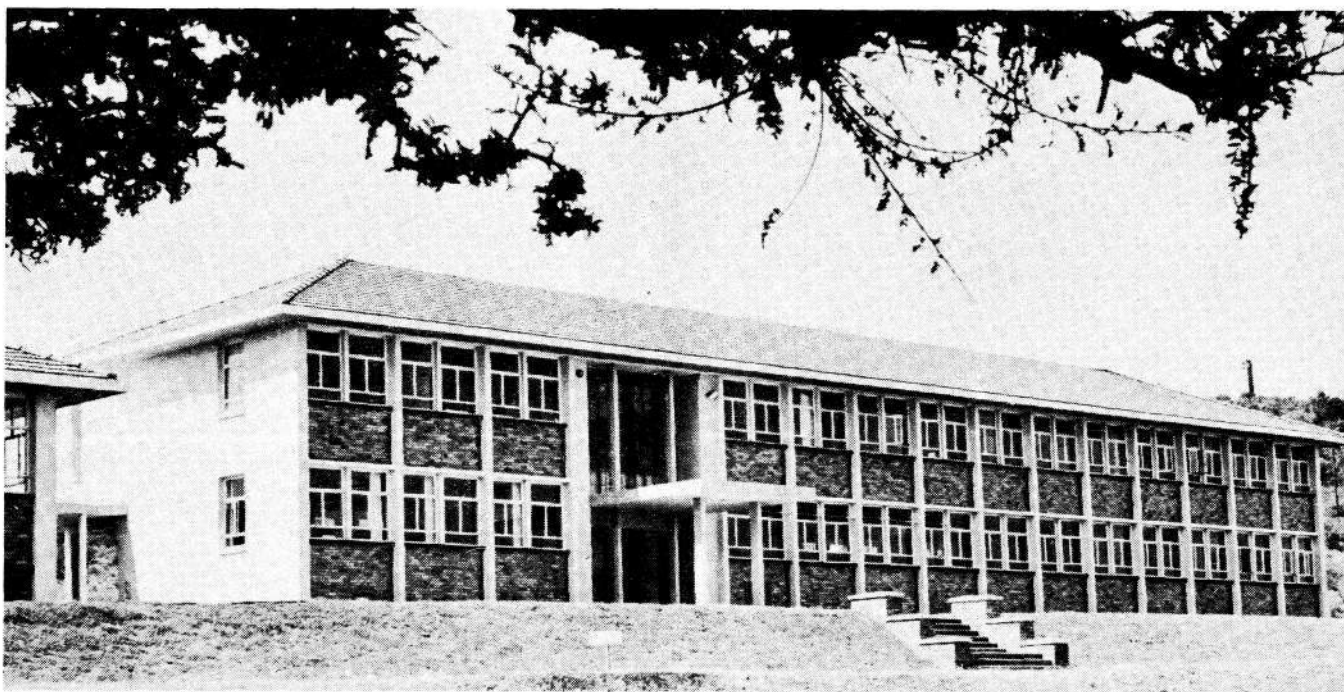
Nevertheless, in spite of this incompatibility, the Seminary was shocked to receive in March 1971, an OFFER BY FORT HARE to purchase the 220 acres belonging to the Seminary. The positive reason given was that in 1961 "there could quite easily be" 3 000 to 5 000 students at Fort Hare. The negative reason was that in 1971 only two seminary students attended lectures at Fort Hare, and that therefore there was no need for the Seminary to be adjacent to the College. A third reason overrode both, namely that such a purchase would be "in the best interests of the Xhosa people."

The Seminary Council conveyed its sense of shock to the Rector of Fort Hare, and asked for a meeting with the College authorities. It asked to see the plan for development and to hear how it would not be possible to find an alternative solution. The Rector agreed to the meeting, but declined to "re-open the matter" of the alternative solution. The Seminary replied that it could not understand the phrase "re-open the matter" when it had not even been discussed. The future looked ominous indeed.

The meeting was very unsatisfactory for the Seminary. Its president, Dr. R. J. McKelvey, thought it valuable for seminary students to meet "educated persons". The Rector of Fort Hare, Prof. J. M. de Wet, felt it was not essential for the Seminary to be where it was. The Vice-Rector, Prof. A. Coetze, declared flatly that purchase of the Seminary property was the only satisfactory solution. With heavy hearts the Seminary representatives promised to refer the whole question to the constituent Churches.

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The most disturbing feature of this affair must now be mentioned. The Fort Hare campus is approximately 180 hectares, and the College owned Honeydale Farm of 582 hectares. Fort Hare would with certainty be able to pur-



Main Seminary Block

chase 184 hectares from the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and 158 hectares of Lovedale Mission Land. This would make 1104 hectares (over 2700 acres), a handsome area. Why must the Seminary sacrifice its 94 hectares of land, with its buildings and the corporate spirit already built up?

And might not the next move be wherever the Seminary was situated to exclude Coloured and Indian students, to order separate seminaries for Xhosa, Zulus, Setho, and others, and to forbid white teachers to teach in black seminaries? The bold ecumenical venture could be broken on the rock of apartheid.

On December 7th, 1971 the seminary representatives and the Rector of Fort Hare met under the chairmanship of Mr M. C. Botha, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and Bantu Education. It was another unsatisfactory meeting. It seemed clear that the Government had made up its mind. The Minister said he did not think there was any need for Fort Hare to prove that it needed the Seminary land and buildings. The Secretary for Bantu Education, Dr. H. J. van Zyl, said there was no intention to destroy the Seminary. The Minister said there were other ways of acquiring the Seminary property than by agreement. He felt that his predecessor (Mr W. Maree) had made a mistake when he approved the site.

The Minister pressed the Seminary representatives to say where they would like a new site. It was clear by this time that the Minister had decided that the Seminary would have to move. On behalf of its representatives, Mr A. Chubb the Seminary lawyer said they would study the matter and submit a list of their requirements. So the meeting ended.

Five months later both Minister and Rector were pressing for a reply. Surely the Seminary had by now consulted its constituent Churches. Dr. D. W. Bandey, the Seminary President, asked for help from the Minister to explain to the constituent Churches why the assurance of permanency given in 1961 had fallen away. This attempt to defer the evil day was not successful. Instead the Seminary land, which had hitherto been classified as white, was proclaimed a "released area". This meant that the rights of occupation could be drastically changed. It was not only

the Seminary but also its multi-racial nature that was threatened.

The Council and Staff of the Seminary issued a grave statement on August 4th 1972, declaring that the request of Fort Hare to purchase was "both unreasonable and unjustified". They pointed out that a considerable area of land was already available to Fort Hare adjacent to Bantu Trust territory, the opportunity for expansion being thus practically unlimited. When security of tenure had been promised, the Seminary had confidently gone ahead with developments, and a new and vigorous community had come into being. It had to be remembered that the Seminary land was part of an area granted by the Xhosa Chief Tyhali to the Church of Scotland in the previous century.

The Council and Staff said they might be excused for suspecting that the real reason for the Minister's decision was that the non-racial character of their community was an embarrassment to Fort Hare. They deplored the veiled hints that "other means" were available if they did not agree to sell. "Abandonment of the request would be to the ultimate benefit of all concerned."

Let those who read this account judge for themselves. Is it a matter of urgency that Fort Hare, with so much other land at its disposal should get the 94 hectares (220 acres) belonging to the Seminary? Or is it an example of the use of the overwhelming power of the State to harm, or at the least to remove from sight, an institution belonging to the English Churches, holding the belief that Apartheid is an unChristian doctrine?

The Seminary Council has recommended to the participating churches that they should not accept the offer of Fort Hare to purchase, and the churches have firmly endorsed the recommendation. The proposal is not condemned only by them. Many of the staff members of Fort Hare strongly disapprove of the proposal, and the student body there is strong in opposition. The Seminary and the Churches are determined to oppose the move by all means within their power. They and their friends now await the outcome, confident that they are doing what they believe to be right, and confident that this is God's work and no matter what happens it will go on.□

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS

by Fatima Meer

I arrived in the United States of America in the December of 1972 and stayed there until the middle of January 1973. I spent in all six weeks and in that time travelled some ten thousand miles in the country visiting eleven cities, thirteen campuses and almost two dozen community development and welfare organizations. I talked with people on buses, trains and planes, attended revival and election meetings, rapped with students, mayors, congressmen, community leaders, and common folk in pool rooms, and ghetto kids in burger trailers digging juke box fun.

My meetings were so fleeting—I never stayed more than four nights in any one place—that I often questioned the wisdom of the exercise I had undertaken, but in retrospect I rationalise that it drew together the far flung actions of a vast tapestry into a meaningful kaleidoscope of significant impressions that would otherwise have been impossible in so short a time.

I found America to be a cauldron of many cultures and discovered that for all her sky rocketing modernity, she could be as folkish as any peasant community. Jews in New York more numerous than in Israel, preserved a Judaic worldview in some neighbourhoods: Chinatowns sprawled on the edge of Wall Street and in the heart of San Francisco, and in tubes and trains peasant-like Chicanos shared potato chips from brown paper bags. Yet this diversity was drawn together and held in a common society, and no laws barred members from competing equally with each other though few had the means to succeed.

But the American city is by and large an assortment of graffiti-smearing tenements built in the second half of the last century or in the first half of the present for a class of people who have retreated to a suburb and a life-style that has passed into history.

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Locked in my small hotel room through the window of which I could see only dull, dizzy shafts, I grew temporarily desperate and realized how easily I could be driven to plunge down a shaft. I took a lift into the thronging foyer where no one saw me, and stepped into a freezing Broadway alley in search of food. A hundred restaurants—Indian, Italian, Mexican, Greek, Jewish—and a hundred steak houses, flashed their signals. I took my place in the queue and settled down to a burger. Next to me a pair of parents worried over their child's wasted dinner—"finish it or some tramp will come and eat it".

In that large maze of splitting streets and mammoth neighbourhoods the stranger struggles against each other, indifference spreads, fear breeds. A Pakistani doctor commenting on an accident in New York said: 'We were passing in a taxi. My friend said "We better stop. No one will help these poor people." A man was bleeding profusely. We started giving First Aid. The people who were watching told us we shouldn't do that. We would have to give evidence in Court. I told them I would certainly give evidence in Court and very strong evidence too—"against you—you call this a civilized country. God help us from such civilization."

The country is divided among the super rich, the one per cent who own 70 per cent of its productive processes, the middle class suburbanists—95 per cent White, and the ghetto dwellers, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, West Indians and Chicanos. Lost among them in cities and isolated on tribal reservations scattered over 50 million acres of land, are the 600 000 so-called Indians, the original Americans, the most impoverished and culturally depleted of all Americans, clinging desperately to a Bureau of Indian Affairs it cannot love. On the reservations one sees their huts in the distance, and their weaving, pottery and basket work, and beautiful silver jewellery and dolls in museums.

I wanted above all in America to see how the country was bridging the gap between rich and poor, Black and White. So at my first meeting with my programming officer I requested a visit to the ghetto. He was put out. He detailed a number of violences I might suffer, but when I remained adamant, he suggested that perhaps I could accompany the police on patrol duty. South African as I was and Black, I balked and dropped the subject. The next day I made some enquiries at a doughnut stand and reached the ghetto.

I found myself in a neighbourhood of small 'mum and pop' style shops, grimy steak houses and unappetising hamburger stands. I turned into an intersecting street lined with handsome old houses, and latched on to a woman wheeling a trolley and keeping a firm hold on a child. We entered a supermarket. The man at the till was White, the man cleaning the floor and tidying the shelves was Black.

We moved out of the store and down the street. We passed a block of empty apartments. They looked solid and good to me and so I asked why they were empty. 'Roaches and rats and landlords who don't care' was the

reply. I was to hear later that there were close on 200 000 houses rotting into the pavements of America. At a party in New York I was told of the 'terrible plight of landlords', 'They can't raise the rents. The people resist it and they can't move the people. So they just leave the houses alone and let them go to rack and ruin. When they finally fall over the tenants they will move and then the landlords will be able to do something about it.'

We came to a block of burnt down apartments and shops and the burnt down mess continued for several blocks. 'That's from the fire the last time'. Was her mind too, Baldwin-like, on the fire the next time?

The fire had raged in the 1960's in Harlem, Brooklyn, Watts, Newark and Detroit when Black pain had exploded and ravaged the neighbourhoods. The embers still smouldered. This was the American ghetto—a ghetto born not so much of material deprivation as of inequality and injustice: and the ghetto was in one piece—in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Boston, New York packed in triple storeyed red bricked row houses that had once done their house owners proud. But as the cities had become congested and polluted, the original occupants had fled to the suburbs and waves of new Whites had moved in as on a station awaiting their turn to move out and up. By the time the Blacks had come, the handsome houses pinned to the pavements by Black balustrades, had been reduced to shells of their former glories. Blacks complain that no train appears to move them out and up.



Fatima Meer

(Natal Witness)

Blacks see themselves as trapped in rotting cities that can only be salvaged through drastic urban renewal. To date the government has shown little interest in this. Its financial commitments have been in favour of middle class suburban housing. Thus since the last World War the government insured the financing of 10 million homes for middle class dwellers, but financed only 800 000 urban units. 'The suburban commuter draws large profits from the city, practically monopolises its amenities—its culture houses, libraries and transport facilities. Yet he contributes no taxes to it', complained an irate ghetto leader in Philadelphia.

Half of the country's Blacks are concentrated in 50 cities; six cities have Black majorities, in eight Blacks constitute over 40 per cent of the population. The urban problem is increasingly becoming the Black problem.

The deputy-director of the Industrial Opportunities Centre in Pittsburgh is a college graduate who looks and speaks like a top executive. 'The young have had outraging experiences. They are angry and disillusioned. They are out to get their rights no matter how. They will burn, loot, kill if necessary. Sure Blacks have a higher crime rate, but do you blame them seeing where they come from?'

His young assistant added, 'We gotta be shrewd, we gotta be sharp. We can't go around with our eyes shut and our minds closed anymore. We gotta holler and if necessary we gotta burn to let them know that it can't go on like this.'

In Boston's run down ghetto, I was addressing a house-meeting. Some two dozen people had gathered—some middle aged and some young Black Power people. The meeting had started with the singing of spirituals, the hostesses spoke with pain about imprisoned friends a young woman volunteered "I think our trouble is that we don't believe in God." One of the Black Power men complained that Black people from Africa did not like Afro-Americans when they came to America and they lived and mixed with White people and criticised the way Black folk spoke English. At a seminar at the American University in Washington, a light complexioned Black laid similar charges against Indians "They only mix with Whites and Turks. We are of the same class, but they don't want to know us. There was a sudden tremendous crash. A rock came hurtling through the window, the meeting in Boston broke. We ran out to see our assailants but there was no one

The black militant was spawned in the church, but Christianity was for many years denied him. The white man feared that it would make him saucy and proud, and so he had bolted himself in his church in the eighteenth century; and only when it seemed that he himself would be suffocated by that bolting, he crashed open its doors and exploded Christianity on to the streets. The Black man's Christianity is traced to the Christian Revival movement. He learnt it, it is said, ranting and repenting with the whites at revival meetings, but in these repentings he realised his soul with a passion that made up for lost time.

The Black Preacher was the first Black leader recognised by Whites, he was even allowed to serve as pastor for Whites at times but by and large the presence of Blacks in Churches irked Whites and the break came in 1787 when Blacks in prayer were ordered to get up and move back in Philidelphia. Black churchmen walked out and formed their own Black church and appointed their own Black bishop: so the independent African church was born.

Black congregations provided the basis for Black political movements and these held the embryo of Black power.

The "Nation of Islam" accuses the White man of having rebuffed God's priestine message communicated to him by Jesus and Moses. He sees him to be an abberant offshoot of the Black man, evil in nature and in cohorts with the devil. The Black man by contrast is the original man, divine by nature and naturally good.

The "Nation" is one of the best organised Black Groups in America. Its followers estimated at 100 000 in 1960 have probably doubled today. Christian Blacks regard it with deep respect and admiration. They point to its discipline, and cleanliness, its campaign against alcoholism, crime and drugs and above all its programmes for self help. Gloria in Little Rock speaks enviously of the ordered existence of her Muslim neighbours "The bus comes every morning to coliect the children. 'The Nation' takes over all your problems, plans out your day, it is wonderful." It is as if ghetto Blacks deprived of family and discipline are realising these through the "Nation". Gloria's husband said that he would join the Muslims, "But I can't do without pork." Mohammed Speaks, the "Nation's" paper is the most widely circulated Black paper in the country (400 000). According to its advertisements, there are at least 57 temples and the "Nation" beams 174 weekly radio programmes throughout the country.

But the "Nation of Islam" excluded me from its fraternity. I introduced myself in a Harlem temple as 'Black' and 'Muslim'. But was politely turned away by the well groomed grey suited fezed brothers. "Sister you are pure. Our message is for the impure". Undaunted I hung around the entrance watching the pre-meeting activity—women arriving in taxis, attired in virginal white, long sleeved, ankle length gowns beneath fur coats, their clean scrubbed faces, radiant beneath high draped head gears. The assembling congregation appeared better dressed than the audience at the Metropolitan Opera House the previous evening. The brothers at the door decided that I was causing a blockage and politely but firmly asked me to leave "But I want to hear the minister". I was told I could do so on the radio. I settled for that and settling down in the cafe next door listened to Minister Farakhan's blast against Whites.

He addressed himself to Black Christians, he told them that they had been misled into the heaven of integration. He told them that Christianity was not a religion of love and warned them that Christians were destined for hell, "We left our forefathers 400 years ago. We came into the Western Hemisphere among a strange people. We tried to join them as citizens. If their destination is hell, we must get out while there is time. He ridiculed the notion that



Blacks needed Whites, "How did we make it before you, White man? You were not always here, you must remember your fathers murdered our fathers, no wonder the Black people are murderers. They had murderers for teachers. You taught us Black hate we remained like dead men and you and your children have picked on our flesh and picked it clean. You wicked people, your police officers prey on us because we have no weapons. You rob us of our labour, you turn your clock back, you rob us dumb, deaf and blind. Then you offer us some whisky and a little free sex . . . look at yourself Black man and woman . . . you have become their expression. You express their evil and their filth." The congregation echoed solemn "Amens" at each denouncement of White evil.

This was not to be the first and last time that I, a Black South African was classified as "White" and discriminated against as such. I had received an enthusiastic invitation to lecture at Boston University but the invitation was subsequently cancelled on the cool note that the Department had been misled and it had now learnt that "Professor Meer was not a Black but a light skinned Indian." I lost a 100 dollars and the promise of a rewarding seminar.

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My experiences with the Black Panthers were different. They accepted me as a fellow exploited from the third world. I met Bobby Seal, co-founder of the Party with Huey Newton in Oakland, and Bernese Jones, New York Party boss at Harlem.

Bobby Seal was inaugurating his mayoral campaign, Black Panther woman Eileen Brown was running with him for Councilman. Bobby Seal said that he hoped that a Chicano would also offer himself for election.

The election office teemed with people, soul music and soul food. Large Black women in Afro robes signed on

volunteers, young White women in sweaters and jeans and with babies on backs, spilled onto the pavements. Young Black men in dashikis distributed leaflets. There was animated discussion about Seal's chances. The fact that he "grew up in the street" was used both to strengthen and weaken his case. He was too much radical, too much Panther, stood too much for violence and in violence was one opinion. How could the White people vote for him but the White people were there.

Seal exploded on the stage, that is the pavement, a highly charged young man in a smart new suit who could hardly hold himself still. His rhetoric was easy going and of the street. "They said to me, Bobby you are always criticising the institution why don't you take over the institution and run it yourself. Pah!" He shot out his fingers, "A light bulb went up in my mind and I am here."

He outlined his programme. He would develop the harbour start mobile clinics, put on special buses for relatives to visit prisoners, spread out breakfast for children at school, "Let me take another step, and show you what I mean" he took a step. "I thought I'd get to China before Nixon. But see what's happening. It blows my mind."

He said he'd start a sister city programme with Peking. He attacked the City Council for spending 150 000 dollars on a helicopter flapping in the air while senior citizens were mugged on the ground. He defended himself against the attack of radicalism, "I say if there are hungry children, you need a radical change. You got rats and roaches you need a radical change. You got corrupt officials, you need a radical change."

He rolled his round eyes in mimicry against one opponent and lowered heavy lids over them in disdainful dismissal of another.

The Black Panthers emerging from the slums of Oakland in 1966 galvanised the rising militancy of the Black people. "The Nation of Islam" and Malcolm X had already spurned King's passive resistance. Malcolm had said "The Black man would be more justified when he stands up and starts to protect himself no matter how many necks he has to break and heads he has to crack."

Armed with guns and law books and dressed in black berets, black trousers, powder blue shirts and black leather coats, Huey Newton, Bobby Seal and Eldridge Cleaver, young men in their twenties had trailed the police to protect Black folk from undue harrassment. But if they were tough, they were also compassionate and had given away 50 000 15 lbs food parcels and registered 35 000 Black sickle cell patients; 18 000 voters. Within a few years, they had so changed the Black mood that a considerable body had abandoned King's passive resistance and replaced it with their tough militancy. But in that time, the Panthers were near smashed by the police and the Government. Scores were shot down, two brothers while they slept in their beds in Chicago. Eldridge Cleaver lives in exile in Africa today and the militant eastern wing of the party appears to be in conflict with Bobby Seal's new approach.

Black Americans have never been as sensitive in their

relation to power and poverty as now and the Church is probably the most constant medium through which this relationship has been discussed. In the compelling eloquence of such Black preachers as the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Christ emerges from a Black ghetto here and Christianity is converted into God's special command for Black Liberation. "Jesus came to save you, not to imprison you" the Rev. Jesse Jackson's voice rings out in Chicago. "Christmas is a serious business—the subjection of the child to humiliation and physical pain. The trouble of Mary having to explain a baby without a physical father, of Joseph trying to explain the Holy Ghost as the father."

The Rev. Leon Sullivan's voice rises and drops in Philadelphia as he tells his congregation that Jesus was born with afflictions of the world so that man will know that he has the power to overcome all oppressions, "he was born in a lowly class, he was born in poverty, born of a despised race—to show that it is not class or poverty or race that keeps you down, he was born illegitimate to show that God can make something out of nothing.

In the Glide Memorial Hall in San Francisco, the choir on a Sunday morning is a bunch of barefooted, hair blowing nipple pointing jiving kids—the preachers young men and women and the Rev. Cecil Williams. They preach from the Jesus book to the wretched of the Earth to Black, brown, Chicano and Asian. The agony of Vietnam explodes on the walls, giant images of lips, bloated and pierced, eyes growing wide and closing into nothingness, faces brave, disillusioned questioning. The Rev. Cecil Williams challenges, "Alas for you hypocrites who condemn violence in the streets but condone it in the corporate boardrooms and the Pentagon", Nixon's image is flashed onto the wall.

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The young boy without a jacket and with a dreamy look in his eyes stopped us and stretched out his hand to touch my handsome companion, "Mr. Widener, the Mayor of Berkeley! ?" How's is it eh? He stood back admiring the idea, seeing himself in the Black man in front of him. He savoured the idea, seeing himself in the Black man in front of him. He savoured the status. In his mind, and saw an impossible dream come true. Warren Widener 32, is one of 48 US Black Mayors, his radicalism and his energetic programme to humanise the police and emphasise community development has caused considerable excitement. People come to see him in his office, "Gee we didn't think you were so young. We pictured you as an older man, but we are glad that you are young." "At 11 p.m., after attending a meeting of household mechanics (domestic servants in our terminology) we arrived at a restaurant in San Francisco's famous bay, "Sorry we are closed," said the waiter. But when the White hostess recognised her guest, it was "Anything for you Mr. Widener? "

We were a mixed bag in the Sugar Sack—Irish, Italian, Zulu, Indian, Afro-American and Algerian: But everyone

else was Black hugging their beers and cokes and sitting jam packed around small tables, the air growing thick and dim with smoke, the scene scintillating large brimmed hats and long coats with buckles and buttons that shot beams in the dark. The male singer's voice was sweet and feminine.

"Just want you to know that

I'm so tired baby,

I'm so tired of being wrapped up in your dream,

It's so full of pain

The Irish friend leaned over the Black girl, "I know how

you must feel being a minority in America, like me in this room." They got up and danced on the floor. The crowd broke out in spontaneous and good humoured applause. Outside on the street we formed a chain and Zanele from Zululand tram-tramped the beat from Zorba the Greek and our feet moved fast, faster.

Black and White have never been as close as now in America. Yet they have never hated each other as much as now, but from that fire of hate a new resolution is being forged. We in South Africa have not even begun to talk. We repress our hate. How will we love? □

UNIQUELY RIGHT FOR ABOLITION

A review of "Migrant Labour" by Francis Wilson (S.A.C.C. and SPROCAS, 1972).

by Mike Murphy

In the Nqutu district in northern Natal people live on 5½ cents per day. In 1951 the area held 32 000 people, in 1970 the figure was 86 000 and by 1980 it will hold about 120 000. In recent years Nqutu has become the destination of thousands of Africans removed from "white" areas by the Government. In 1951 the Government appointed Tomlinson Commission stated that the Nqutu area could provide a living for only 13 000 people. The results of this grotesque disproportion between ideal and reality can be seen — 5½ cents a day, most of it earned by migrant labourers.

Migrant Labour by Francis Wilson, published this year by SPROCAS and the South African Council of Churches, is scholarly, rigorously documented, unemotional. Yet to my mind it is probably the most devastating analysis of South African society produced in the last twenty-five years.

Wilson, an economist at the University of Cape Town, concludes that the problem is that white South Africa wants to have its cake and eat it: "So long as South Africa pursues the twin goals of Separate Development and economic growth — so long will the system of migratory labour remain a central feature of the economy, far from withering away, it will continue to expand. And its maintenance will depend increasingly not on the balance of economic pressures but on the force of law."

We have become accustomed to numerous descriptions of the evils of migratory labour — breakup of family life,

degradation of men, venereal disease, drunkenness, etc. Wilson describes these evils too (incidentally displaying a masterly command of the numerous statistics involved) But the book is unique in its explanation of the *why* of migratory labour. Migration has become the harness of necessity for a whole people because their homelands, Bantustans, own areas, reserves call them what you will, exhibit "acute poverty, gross overpopulation, extensive subdivision of the land well below the size adequate for economic units, and a situation where none of the households make a living from farming."

Some of the figures that Wilson presents us with are astounding:

acute poverty: average per capita income in the homelands is 9½ cents per day. The Bantustans contribute only 2% to the Gross Domestic Product.

overpopulation: population density is three times the national average.

agricultural decline: In the Transkei, one of the more arable of the homelands, the annual income per household from farming declined (in real terms) from R34,50 in 1931 to R27,00 in 1951. Without remittances from migrants there would be mass starvation.

a higher death rate: in two areas surveyed in the Ciskei it was discovered that the men were dying at an increasingly early age. De Vos of the University of Fort Hare found that in the period 1936 to 1960 (during which there was a general population increase of 20,7% the number of old men *decreased* by 28% (compared with an increase in the number of old women of 26%. Surely in an age of modern medicine these statistics must be unique.

As a result African men have to seek work in the white owned economy. Wilson gives detailed figures on the number of migrants in Mining, Agriculture and Industry. In all these sectors migratory labourers form an increasing percentage of the work force. The extraction of men from the homelands continues apace. In the Transkei, theoretically independent since 1963, recruiting increased by 82% in the last ten years. Government Labour Bureaux recruitment went up and incredible 387% during this period. At present 53% of the Transkei's economically active males are working outside the Transkei.

The economic push away from the rural areas is equalled by the white owned economy's pull. The South African economy needs black workers at an ever increasing rate. The tragic contradictions result from white South Africa's desire for the labour but not the labourer, or perhaps more accurately, the labourer's wife and family. His labour no longer needed, the labourer must, according to the theory return to idyllic rural unemployment or retirement. But as the attraction of the rural slums grow less and less the inducements to return to the homelands must be artificially stimulated. Such stimulation is provided by the pass laws and influx control. Wilson sees no possibility of a withering away of the pass

system. On the contrary, it must become more and more strictly enforced. He dryly dismisses the plans for monorail and jet plane transport to whisk workers back to their own areas at regular intervals: "If South Africa is not yet wealthy enough to be able to pay its workers a wage that will raise them above the effective minimum level of living can one then argue that the economy is able to afford to turn its working class into a jet set."

Francis Wilson also provides a brilliant analysis of the arguments for and against migratory labour. This is undoubtedly something that all concerned South Africans should read.

The important question to intellectuals (Afrikaans and English) speaking, is what they are going to do about migratory labour. Personally, I think that Wilson's case is irrefutable. Those intellectuals who influence the corridors of power must either refute Wilson's book or urge the complete abandonment of migratory labour as a system. The author himself gives a programme for phasing out the system over a ten year period starting in 1975. Will his challenge be taken up?

Wilson is at present studying "migratory labour" in Europe. South Africans frequently indulge in the uninhibited paganism of considering a gross evil bearable as long as someone, somewhere, in the outer world, is also doing it. Perhaps South Africa might imitate the treatment of migratory labourers in the European Economic Community where, among other things the labourer needs no permit or pass, can stay as long as he likes once employed, can have his wife, children and dependent relatives with him, and has full trade union, tax, educational and social security benefits and rights. If he is incapacitated or dies his family still has permanent rights to stay in the country. Migratory labour, the South African way is unique, uniquely bad, inhuman, destructive and uniquely ripe for abolition. □



Africans in one of the countless queues in urban areas.

A NOBLE PIECE OF AFRIKAANS WRITING

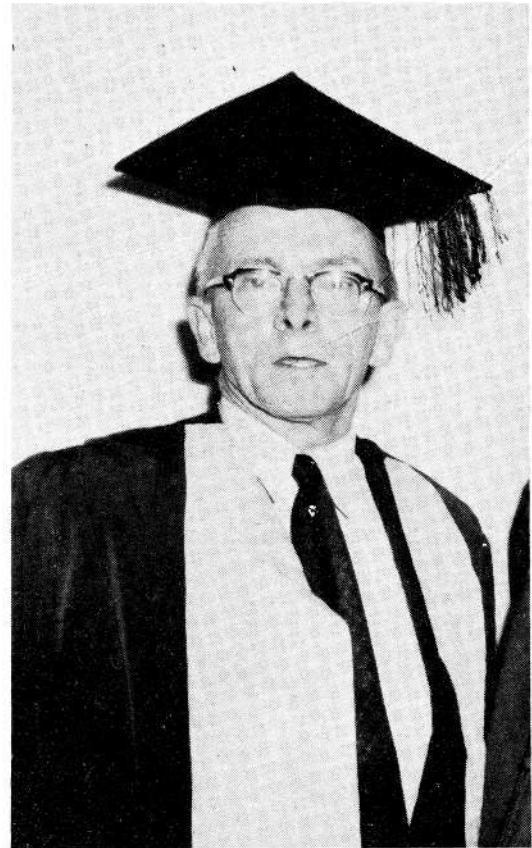
A review of "Na Die Geliefde Land" by Karel Schoeman

(with acknowledgement to "Sunday Tribune")

by Alan Paton

I suspect that this novel is a masterpiece. I cannot make the claim outright, because my judgement is largely subjective, the reason being that the theme of the novel is one that is always present in my mind. The theme is nothing less than the death of Afrikanerdom, though the publishers say it is something else. They actually call it, among other things, a description of farm life. In that case it is the story of a kind of farm life as yet unknown to us, telling not of fields and fruits and flowers, but of grief and desolation, and of longing for the days that will not come again. The reluctance of the publishers to say what the book is about is understandable. How many Afrikaners would want to read a novel about the death of Afrikanerdom?

I should make it clear that the novel is not about the actual cataclysm, the "troubles" which destroyed the Afrikaner countryside and which drove so many Afrikaners overseas. It is about the South Africa of twenty, thirty years later. At no point does the writer tell us what happened, nor does he tell us who destroyed the Afrikaner, but we can guess. Nor does he tell us how it comes about that there are still Afrikaners living on farms like Moedersgift and Eensgevonden and Kommandodrift, without labour, without hope. Nor does he tell us why the destroyer of the Afrikaner, the destroyer who surely must have had a fierce land-hunger of his own, still allows Afrikaners to occupy what one supposes to be large tracts of land. Yet it does not matter. Indeed, if we had been told too much, we would have lost the sense of the brooding presence of this desolation. One thing we know for certain: the Afrikaner has fallen from "on high."



Dr. Paton

(Natal Witness)

It is one of these Afrikaners whose parents went overseas, George, son of Anna Neethling, who now returns to visit the country of his birth, and to see the farm Rietvlei which he has inherited from his mother. The confrontation is shattering. Rietvlei is deserted, the homestead and the farm buildings have been destroyed, and the road to it is disused and overgrown. He finds a room with the Hattingshs, and from them — by inference and indirection — learns of the poverty, the lack of hope, the hidden grief, of the remnants of Afrikanerdom. From the first page one is aware that a past and present tragedy is unfolding.

Karl Kraus said that there were two kinds of writers, those who are and those who aren't. With the first, content and form belong together like soul and body. With the second, they match each other like body and clothes.

This seems to suggest that a good writer must not be too cerebrally and clinically conscious of what he is doing, and how he is making his book. That Mr Schoeman is such a writer I have no doubt. Or perhaps I should say, in this particular novel he shows himself to be such a writer. I do not know whether his other works have this characteristic of a situation that is in itself so entire, so full of many meanings, that the writer does not have to use any devices — or does not appear to have to use them — because everything, every grief, every irony, every longing for that which cannot be again, is there already in the situation that he has chosen, so that even conversations themselves seem to have some mark of inevitability. I do not know whether Mr Schoeman is always so fortunate but I hope to find out.

There are some terrible ironies in the book, and I shall record two of them. The first is that on these desolate farms, there are still pictures of the past heroes, the ministers and the senators and the members of parliament, of all those in fact whose kragdadigheid and patriotism led Afrikanerdom to its doom, but the owners of the pictures do not understand this, and talk with pride of these illustrious forerunners who, though they called themselves Afrikaners, could never come to terms with Africa.

The second example of irony is more cruel. The farmers give George a party at Kommandodrift, an occasion which is superbly described. It goes on till the early hours of the morning, when suddenly the dogs that have been shut up in some farm building, break out into demented barking. It is the police, with their uniforms, holsters, and guns. The schoolmaster is struck in the face, and falls bleeding to the floor. The police laugh at the spectacle. What colour the police are, we are not told, but we know. They shout at the young men, who endure it in silence. Then three of them are taken off. Whether they will ever be seen again, no one knows.

The scene is starkly reminiscent of what we already know. The 90 days, the 180 days, the death in the cell, the fall from the window, the laughing at the blood. How well one learns: Hattingh says

"I feel that we must apologise to you for what happened there, George. Or in any case, for the fact that you were dragged in. We wanted to make you welcome here, we wanted you to feel at home with us . . ."

George in his innocence asks how the young men can be held if they have done no wrong. Hattingh says

"They can hold us or let us go, they can kill us or let us live, they do not have to answer for anything."

George says "such a thing is not possible" and Hattingh says "That's how we live."

It is time for George to go back to Switzerland. Young Paul Hattingh clings to him and begs to be taken away.

"It's the only chance I have, the only chance I'll ever get; you must help me. Help me, help me, I tell you I'm afraid."

But George will not take him. How would the passportless boy leave the country? He gives Paul the only thing he has to give — money. The daughter Carla is tougher. He tries to tell her that he is sorry for all the hardness of their lives, but she interrupts him. "You do not need to say anything, rather go." He learns from her that Rietvlei was destroyed because young Afrikaners plotted a rising there. He offers to marry her, but she will not. She will not go with him to a land of ease and self-reproach. Nor will she stay on the farm, and be trapped in memories. "Ek wil iets uitrig; ek wil lewe . . ."

But what that means one does not know. Father and Mother, Carla and Paul, they wave him goodbye. The aeroplane goes that night. Tomorrow morning he will be home.

So ends a remarkable book. But like all true works of art, whether on screen or stage or canvas or the printed page, it lives on in the mind. And it leaves two questions with me.

It is generally conceded that most writers have two supreme aims. The one is to write, the other is to be read. If a writer believes he has written a masterpiece, his joy of achievement is enhanced when others believe it too. The more people read him, the more joyful he will be.

A writer in Afrikaans cannot expect a great circle of readers. Quite apart from that, the theme of Mr Schoeman's novel, so poignant, so compelling, cannot be expected to arouse the same response in other breasts. In all those countries where there is a burning hatred of Apartheid, and therefore of Afrikaner Nationalism, the grief of this book might well be greeted with indifference or gloating or glee. So a true work of literature might well be rejected for non-literary reasons. A South African publisher could offer a small reparation to Mr Schoeman. He could publish the book in English. Quite apart from its claim to be literature, it is a book of prophecy, and as such should be read by as many white South Africans as possible.

That brings us to the second question. What is the prophecy? Will there be a cataclysm, and will only a remnant of Afrikaners be left, powerless and lost, some still in possession of their land by who knows what kind of miracle, some bowing their heads to God or Fate, the only relics of their past being the hallowed names, Moedersgift and Rietvlei and Kommandodrift? And if there is a cataclysm, will it be because it was inevitable, or could it have been avoided by Afrikaner deeds of love and generosity and courage and wisdom? Or is it beyond reason to expect rulers to do such deeds?

Did Mr Schoeman intend to ask us these questions, or was he simply extracting the last drop of blood out of the drama of Afrikanerdom? A writer may have two purposes. The first of course is to tell a story, the second may be to teach a lesson. But the second must never overwhelm the first. In fact the second must never be seen at all. One must never in the reading or hearing of the story suspect that one is being taught a lesson. NA DIE GELIEFDE LAND meets these inexorable demands.

Will we turn in time? Will the Afrikaner turn in time? Is it really only power and privilege that he loves, or is it true that he loves South Africa? Hattingh makes it clear to George that there were two kinds who stayed, those who couldn't get away, and those who decided not to get away. But the ministers and the senators and the members of parliament were not conspicuous amongst them.

And what of the three young men who were taken away by the police from the party at Kommandodrift? Are they not the kith and kin of the Mandelas and Sobukwes, the Hugh Lewins and the Eddie Daniels, the students of NUSAS and SASO? Or were they the kith and kin the ministers and senators who ran away?

Let us leave these questions. There are too many of them. And the biggest question of all we do not know the answer to. Let us return to literature, and record our thanks to Mr Schoeman for this noble work in the Afrikaans

language. And may we be preserved from the day when it is no more spoken, except in places of grief and desolation. But that of course is not a literary question.□

MIGRATORY LABOUR

From a pamphlet published by the Justice and Reconciliation Committee of the Western Province Council of Churches.

Shame on us who separate a man from his wife, a wife from her children. This is the command of the Lord: A man shall leave his father and mother and be made one with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. What God has joined together man must not separate. (Matthew 19: 5–6)
(The Covenant Liturgy)

On 16th December, 1972 a group of Pilgrims started walking from Grahamstown to Cape Town to publicise the facts and increase awareness of all South Africans about the evils of the system of Migrant Labour. They said,

We believe we are in the midst of a most serious social and moral crisis. This society for which we are responsible is tearing husband and wife apart through the system of migratory labour.
(A Pilgrimage of Confession for the Healing of Family Life in South Africa)

The Pilgrims said that something must be done. Some effective, sacrificial action was called for. They invited white South Africans to make a personal and spiritual journey in risking giving up those privileges and practices which do harm to others. They did this in the name of Christ, 'that in Him we need have no fear of change'. They reminded us that in 1837 a Voortrekker leader set out from Grahamstown with a Bible given him by Thomas Philipps symbolic of the claim that South Africa is a nation which has resolved to apply the Biblical message about God and man to our personal, political and economic affairs.

The Pilgrims chose to set forth on 16th December, the Day of the Covenant, renewing their own covenant with God, and pledging themselves to pray and work that His will be done on earth. They walked to Cape Town, the seat of government, praying that Parliament would make it legal for every South African husband and wife to live together with their children in a family home.

In their *Charter for Family Life* they recognised two important principals:

1. We will always need large numbers of Africans to work in the urban area.
2. We must not separate those whom God has joined together.

Therefore they dedicated themselves to work with their fellow South Africans for a society in which *Family Life* is secured as a legal right in the place where people are employed and contribute to society.

The facts about Migratory Labour

Migratory Labour is a system in which workers have to oscillate between their rural 'homes' and their place of work. In the 1920's the South African Government stated that Africans would be allowed into 'white' areas only as long as they were required to 'minister to the needs of the white man'. Since then the system has been extended in spite of widespread condemnation, from most Churches, including the Dutch Reformed Church, from sociologists and from leaders such as Chief Buthelezi who has stated, "The migratory labour system is destroying my people".

Migratory labour occurs in other parts of the world, e.g. in Western Europe, but the workers can take their families with them if they wish, and they enjoy social benefits and trade union rights, and in time can acquire the citizenship of the host country. (*SPROCAS Paper No. 3*)

All Africans leaving their 'homelands' can only work in 'white' areas on contract as migrant workers. Such a worker can never earn the right to bring his wife and children to live with him where he works.

There are probably some one and a half million migrant workers in South and South West Africa, and the system probably affects about six million people. Migrants usually have to live in barrack-like single-sex hostels or compounds.

In greater Cape Town some 55 000 African migrants live as bachelors, many in dormitories holding fifty men.

In Langa, there are *eleven* men to *one* woman.

Migratory labour encourages bigamy, prostitution, illegitimacy, homosexuality and excessive drinking with resultant violence.

Because migrant workers come and go, they cannot learn skills, get promotion or better wages. Employers are hampered in trying to build a skilled work force. Wages are artificially depressed.

In 1972 79% of African men in six major urban areas were estimated to earn *below* the Poverty Datum Line (then R16,15 a week):

Earning above the P.D.L.

*

Earning below the P.D.L.

To control the system of migratory labour, there is a system of 'permits'. Failure to produce a permit leads to prosecution under the 'Pass Laws'.

Prosecutions in 1964: 373 000 (1 000 per day)

Prosecutions in 1970: 621 000 (nearly 2 000 per day)

As a result, people escape into Alcohol:

1963: R498 000 spent on hard liquor in African Townships

1971: R4 800 000 spent on hard liquor in African Townships

(Figures from 1972 SURVEY of the Institute of Race Relations and from F. Wilson, 'Migrant Labour', publ. 1973.)

What can be done? :

Read and carry out the suggestions contained in the resources mentioned above, as well as:

1. *The Covenant Liturgy.*
2. *A Pilgrimage of Confession for the Healing of Family Life in South Africa.*
3. *A Charter for Family Life.*
4. *Sprocas Background Paper No. 3 (5c)*
5. *An Open Letter to White South Africans.*
6. *A six-point Plan suggested by the Pilgrims.*
7. *What can I do about Migrant Labour? The Pilgrims' suggestions.*
8. *Migrant Labour must go on*
9. *'South African Outlook' Jan/Feb. (40c)*

Copies of all resource material are available from:

The Chairman,
WPCC Justice and Reconciliation Committee,
1 Long Street,
MOWBRAY, C.P.

(Note prices where applicable)

From a pamphlet published by the Justice and Reconciliation Committee of the Western Province Council of Churches.

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- N.B.**
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