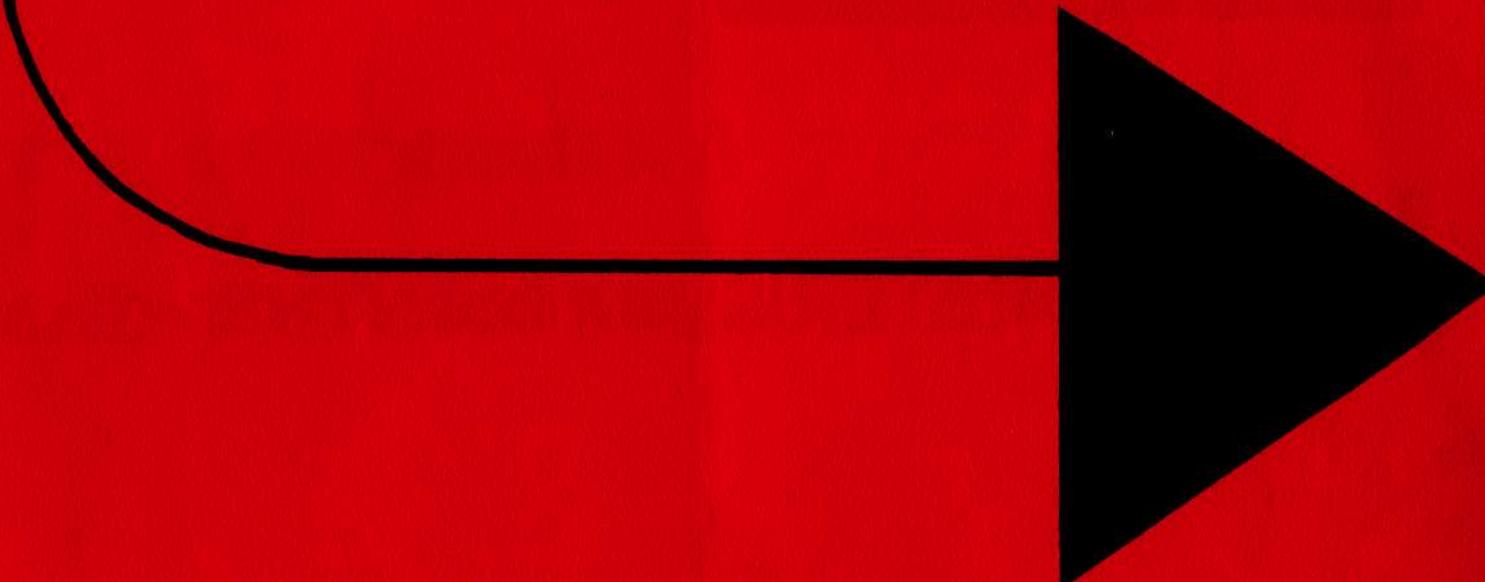


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## **EDITORIALS**

1

# **AFTER VORSTER'S SIX MONTHS**

Almost but not quite everything has been said which could be said about Mr. Vorster's famous "six months".

On several occasions recently Mr. Vorster has stressed that one of the great achievements of this period has been the acceptance by African states of South Africa; the recognition, as he told one audience, that South Africa was and would remain a part of Africa and had as much right to be there as any other nation.

We hope Mr Vorster won't mind if we point out that this attitude of African states to South Africa is not a thing of the last six months. Six years ago the signatories to the Lusaka Manifesto made perfectly clear their acceptance of the right of all South Africans of whatever colour to live in Africa and to enjoy the same rights there. But there was a condition applied to this acceptance, and it still applies. It was that

there should be an abandonment by White South Africans of discriminatory policies directed against other South Africans. Recently President Kaunda has made this point again. In a recent speech in the United States, in which he called for increased isolation of South Africa, he said "Mr Vorster thinks we are interfering. We are not. We are trying to help. We recognise three-million White settlers in South Africa are African, but they are not super Africans."

Somehow, and soon, Mr Vorster and his supporters and White South Africans generally must bring themselves to face this one simple fact, that, if they want to be accepted as Africans and to continue to live peacefully on the continent and to contribute to and enjoy its prosperity, it is going to have to be on a different basis to the one on which they have lived here up to now. Because the fact is that up till now most White South Africans **have** regarded themselves as

**super** Africans. They are going to have to change their way of life and this way of thinking, and Mr Vorster is going to have to change as much as anyone.

The policy which Mr Vorster applies to South Africa is a minority policy imposed on a majority of people. No amount of talk of "separate freedoms" and "multi-nationalism" and "independent homelands" can alter the fact that no Black man had anything to do with coining these catch-phrases or working out the policies behind them. The one consistent theme of Nationalist government over the past 27 years has been that all fundamental questions are decided by the Party and presented to the rest of us as accomplished facts. This is particularly true of race policy. What African leader would ever have agreed to Nationalist policy if he had had any say in the matter? Who on earth would ever accept that freedom for African people, such as it is, should be confined to 13% of the country; that in the other 87% of the country, where more than half the African population lives and a much higher percentage works, they should have no control over the laws by which they are governed; that the vast wealth of that 87%, which has been created by the joint effort of people of all races over many generations, should now be regarded as a White asset; that there should be gross discrimination on a purely racial basis in the provision of every

single social service—education, health, pension, to name just three? One has only to cast the most superficial glance at the South African scene to see that, up till now, this has been a country in which 17% of the population has always imposed its political views on the other 83%, whether they liked it or not. Black Africa is affronted by this, as it is by a hundred-and-one laws which prohibit mixed club sport, mixed trade unions, mixed schools, mixed marriages, and so on—each one hurtful and offensive, all seen as the acts of people who regard themselves as **super** Africans.

Mr Vorster has certainly achieved more than most people expected in his six months, but he has only just started out on a long hard road if what he wants to do, as surely he must, is to achieve real acceptance for South Africa in Africa. To do that he is going to have to set about dismantling the apartheid edifice which his Party has spent 27 years erecting and he is going to have to sit down with people of all colours and many viewpoints in South Africa and work out a new policy which is reasonably acceptable to them all. Can he bring himself to do it, if not immediately, at least within a reasonable time! We certainly hope so, because only then will Black Africa cease to regard White South Africans as bigoted **super** Africans and welcome them as part of the continent. □

# THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

The Government's shameful treatment of the Christian Institute has been fully discussed in the newspapers. There seems to be no point, therefore, in repeating either the main facts of the case or even the primary reasons for the indignation and dismay which all civilised and alert South Africans have felt. What we propose to do instead is to consider some of the wider implications of the Government's action.

The Christian Institute, as a body dedicated to the study and the implementation of the social aspects of Christ's teaching, has found, not surprisingly, that it is bound to be sharply critical of the way in which South African society is organised. The C. I. has in fact stated boldly that apartheid is unChristian. But—argues our Government—apartheid is the cherished ideal of one political party, and therefore to criticise it is to indulge in politics, and therefore a body which does so has no right to receive money from overseas sources.

In terms of crude power-politics, the Government's argument was to some extent predictable: the Nats want to stay in power and they are happy to have a crack at anyone who says anything at all which disagrees with their traditional dogmas. Nevertheless this latest act of theirs is somewhat remarkable. For one thing, they seem to be prepared to enter into combat with all those Christian denominations who have declared that apartheid is incompatible with the Gospels' statements about love and justice. Why have they done this? Is it because they are confident that when confronted by the might of the state most Christians wilt and become silent or allow their views to go a little blurred or return to the safety of purely private prayer? If this is the Government's assumption, let us devoutly hope that it is a mistaken one. The second remarkable feature of this latest piece of tyranny is that it should have been performed for all the world to see (the world sees most things

nowadays) at just the moment when Mr Vorster and some of his supposedly more enlightened colleagues are trying to convince this same world that the Government is beginning to become a little reasonable.

The fact is, of course, that at the same time as Mr Vorster and Co. are taking pains to persuade the world at large that they are becoming more liberal, they are taking equally intense pains to persuade the right wing of their own party that, for all the malicious distortions of the local and overseas press, they are certainly not lapsing into the frightful heresy of liberalism. There is perhaps some small significance in the fact that, a week or so after the disabling of the Christian Institute, there came the proclamation that apartheid was soon to be dismantled in Namibia/South-West Africa. Not that we wish to accuse Mr Vorster of downright machiavellianism: we believe that Nationalists are not really capable of machiavellianism, a procedure which—

evil though it is—requires considerable intelligence and finesse.

All successful politicians, alas, seem to have to learn the art of saying slightly different things to different groups of people. But it isn't often that one has the spectacle of a public figure making pronouncements which contradict one another completely. Mr Vorster is sometimes pictured, by some of the sillier South African journalists, as an impressive and triumphant figure, bestriding the narrow world of Southern African politics like some sort of colossus. But perhaps a truer picture of him is this: he is standing on a patch of ground which is steadily being washed away by the currents of powerful feeling that he and his predecessors have by their foolishness brought into being. So far from being mighty and triumphant, Mr Vorster is a small man, uncertain, confused, and rather pathetic. □

# THE “LEGALISATION” OF ABORTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Marjorie Dyer

In the face of a world tendency to make legal abortion freely available to women, South Africa's Abortion & Sterilization Bill of 1975 is starkly reactionary.

While the first Roman Catholic country, France, has legalised abortion in 1974, and while even in Italy, under the direct domination of the Vatican, there is a demand for a liberal law, and while legal abortion is now available to half the world's women, South Africa's legislators have produced a bill which is inhumanitarian and cumbersome, prescribes heavy penalties for abuse, and is bound to perpetuate the problems created by over-fertility and unplanned procreation.

In 1973 a draft bill was read in Parliament; this was then referred to an all-male Parliamentary Select Committee which heard evidence for a year before producing the Abortion & Sterilization Bill of 1974. There were protests about the all-male committee. At the time of its constitution there were two women in the House, neither of whom was invited to serve on the committee; cf. the Lane Committee which deliberated in England for three years on the working of the British Abortion Act, under the chairmanship of a woman—

Mrs Justice Lane—and consisted of 10 women out of 16 members. In replying this year in the House to repeated protests about the all-male Select Committee, a Member stated that there was no need to have a woman on the Committee for “if one wanted to abolish capital punishment today surely one would not appoint a bunch of murderers to go into the matter”!

As a result of its deliberations the Select Committee produced a Bill which differed significantly from the original draft bill of 1973. The original bill contained a clause which stated that a medical practitioner could procure an abortion “where the continued pregnancy may endanger the life of the woman concerned or may constitute a serious threat to her physical or mental health”. This clause was similar to one in the British Abortion Act which has been widely interpreted there, virtually to authorise abortion on request. Approximately 80% of abortions done in Britain today are done for psychological reasons.

But in our 1974 bill the physical and mental indications for abortion have been separated. As far as the physical indication is concerned, the doctor has to certify that

“the continued pregnancy endangers the life of the woman concerned, or so constitutes a serious threat to her physical health that abortion is necessary to ensure the life or physical health of the woman”; in other words this clause limits abortion to a small number of women suffering from e.g. very severe heart or kidney disease.

The mental health clause now reads as follows: “where the continued pregnancy constitutes a serious threat to the mental health of the woman concerned and the continued pregnancy creates the danger of permanent damage to the woman’s mental health”. This clause virtually excludes abortion on psychological grounds, as psychiatric illnesses are notoriously unpredictable and it is almost impossible to prognose that a psychological or psychiatric condition will be permanent.

In the original draft bill of 1973 provision was made for abortion for girls of under 16 years; in the 1975 bill they are excluded unless they are idiots or imbeciles. Can it seriously be argued that some purpose is served by forcing these girls, children themselves, either to go through with a pregnancy or to seek unskilled help? In the first alternative, this age-group is exposed to greater complications of pregnancy and delivery and of course usually to the psychological trauma of giving their babies up for adoption, if such adoption opportunities exist. As far as the African and Coloured girls are concerned it is virtually impossible to arrange successful adoptions, and the babies are frequently handed over to poor foster parents or grandparents who, by virtue of age and socio-economic conditions, are not suited to the rôle of guardians of young babies. It is pertinent that the Medical Officer of Health of Cape Town reported in 1973 that 75% of Coloured teenage births were illegitimate and that the greatest increase in illegitimacy occurred amongst 13 year-olds.



Rural Responsibility for the unwanted



‘Backstreet’ Abortions

The alternative to unwillingly going to term, and one to which many girls already resort, is a back-street abortion, with its attendant death-rate of one in 250, and permanent sterility rate of 1 in 3. There has been a great deal of argument about the numbers of back-street abortions occurring annually in South Africa, and this is obviously a very difficult figure to estimate. Many women who undergo abortions are fortunate and suffer no ill effects, or are subsequently attended to by private practitioners so that they never “become statistics”. Statistics are based on deaths from abortion and on septic abortions. (It appears that over 90% of septic abortions follow interference with the pregnancies, either by the women themselves or by abortionists.) What we do know is that about 25% of all bed space in our gynaecological wards is filled with women seriously ill as a result of interference with pregnancy; that a special septic abortion unit created at Groote Schuur Hospital has the highest bed occupancy and patient turnover of all the wards in the hospital; that Baragwanath Hospital treats 7 000 and King Edward VIII 4 000 septic cases annually. It is therefore obvious that, whereas it has often been argued that if abortion were legalised the wrong people would avail themselves of it, the whole spectrum of our population groups is currently availing itself of illegal abortion and would surely be candidates for legal abortion. On the basis of the argument that the “wrong” people would have the abortions, it could be contended that we should abolish our family planning services, as only the “wrong” people, the reasonably educated, intelligent, motivated and responsible, are using them. But we realise that, on the contrary, we must redouble our efforts and increase expenditure to educate and persuade people in their use, as we would have to do if abortion services were available.

It is also contended that medical and hospital facilities would be over-strained to deal with all the abortions that would be requested; it must be obvious that legalised abortion lightens the burden of the ante-natal clinics, the obstetric wards, the gynaecological wards currently dealing with septic abortions, the pediatric wards and out-patients’ departments, etc., etc.

and in the end provides a great saving of medical services and woman-hours of work. It is not necessary for beds to be available for most early abortions, as these patients are treated as out-patients.

In countries in which abortion is legal, educational campaigns include encouraging women to seek advice and help as early as possible, as abortions done in the first eight weeks of pregnancy are easier, quicker and have a very low complication rate. They can in fact in the majority of cases be done as out-patients, i.e. without any bed occupancy at all. And, perhaps most significant of all, it has become clear from countries in which ideally abortion is combined with counselling about contraception and sterilisation such as in America, that to over 95% of women abortion is a once-only experience. Thereafter they are much more amenable to contraceptive advice or to the acceptance of sterilisation. It has also been found that the small percentage of women who come for repeated abortions tend to be women of lower morals—in fact often prostitutes—hardly candidates for responsible parenthood.

It must be obvious by now that whereas the South African Abortion Bill theoretically legalises abortion on certain very narrowly laid-down grounds, its whole intention is to prevent and not facilitate abortion. The Chairman of the Select Committee stated to the press (18.8.74) that "there are no loop-holes in the Abortion Bill". And his attitude had the support of the S.A. Medical Council when it ruled that in terms of existing and proposed legislation medical practitioners could not refer patients elsewhere for abortions. One can envisage an interesting test case—surely a doctor can refer a case to a colleague anywhere in the world for an opinion—and treatment!

or in the case of the mental health clause one of them must be a state-employed psychiatrist, or in the case of rape or incest one of them must be a district surgeon. The abortion may be performed only at a state-controlled institution and with the written authority of the superintendent (possibly Dr. No. 4). To complete the welter of paper-work involved and as a final onslaught on the privacy of the patient, and to prevent doctors from being tempted to use their judgement when they are consulted by desperate women, a detailed report on every abortion has to be sent to the Secretary of Health within 21 days.



In many country towns there may be only one doctor, or all the doctors may be in partnership, thus forcing the unfortunate woman to travel around for her various certificates. To the under-privileged these complicated provisions will represent an insurmountable stumbling-block; on the other hand the local abortionist is apparently easily available judging from the results of the handiwork, and as in other countries (e.g. many Roman Catholic countries) where prohibitive legislation exists, the abortionist will flourish.

A request for abortion is also surely the one which, above all, requires to be dealt with with a maximum of privacy; this has been brutally denied to the South African woman who is to be shunted from doctor to doctor. Particularly in the case of rape it is accepted in civilized countries that the evil psychological effects of the experience can be minimised by gentle and considerate attention by nursing and medical personnel; but the South African woman will have to recount her experience to three doctors, one of them a district surgeon, to the police and to a magistrate.

It therefore appears to me that our Abortion Bill is a very bad piece of legislation; firstly, as already mentioned, in every other country in which such a law exists, back-street abortion with its attendant complications of ill-health, sterility and death flourishes; alternatively, women are to be forced



In order thus to prevent easy abortion the method by which the abortion is to be obtained has been made as complicated and combersome as possible. On the narrow grounds already specified, a practitioner (let's call him Dr. 1) may perform an abortion if 2 other practitioners (Drs. 2 and 3) have certified in writing that the patient falls into the stated categories; Drs. 2 or 3 may not do the abortion, may not be partners, and one of them must have been registered for 4 years;

to give birth to unwanted children. Some of these will be adopted (in fact one member of Parliament stated that the long list of people awaiting adoptive babies justifies his anti-abortion attitude—one presumes that he seriously implies that accidentally pregnant women must accept the rôle of human incubators for others who are infertile). The babies, very often Coloured and African babies who are not adopted, or who are handed over to irresponsible foster-parents, are the problem children. The anti-abortion faction which rejects termination of pregnancy on the grounds of respect for the sanctity of life seems to limit their respect for these lives until the moment of birth. The pro-abortionists on the other hand are deeply concerned about the poor quality of life forced on the unwanted. One has too often seen these children at out-patients departments, emaciated, dirty, battered and dull-witted as a result of chronic neglect, poverty, indifference or outright cruelty. Theirs are the mothers who need sympathetic help to limit their families by every possible means, and while the perfect easy-to-use contraceptive is not yet available, these means must include legal abortion.

In this age of the parent-teachers associations when the middle-class and the well-to-do parent recognises that involvement, concern and discipline are some of the prerequisites for the development of well-adjusted and useful members of society, these same concerned parents must realise that an opposite set of conditions often breeds maladjustment. We do not really need NICRO to point out that certain specific factors have a direct influence on criminality, viz. adverse social, economic and educational conditions involving poverty, broken homes, over-crowding, poor educational qualifications and slum conditions. All these are built-in for so many of these unwanted babies and could be diminished by helping families to limit their numbers.

Leading on from this, and perhaps at this moment in time most important of all, our Abortion Bill could have been a most significant and constructive weapon against our over-

whelmingly high population growth. Our growth rate of 2.8% (cf. India 2.2%) is amongst the highest in the world, and our population will double in the next 25 years. Already areas like the Western Cape cannot provide adequate facilities for huge squatter populations; it is estimated that there already exists a shortage of 45 000 housing units, with a back-log of educational, medical and recreational facilities to match. The Deputy Minister of Bantu Education has just revealed that if compulsory education for Blacks from the age of 7 years were to be introduced immediately, it would require 97 000 teachers and cost R 436 million for teachers and classrooms. The preservation of our environment in the face of an exploding population is rapidly becoming a pipe-dream. Have our legislators, one wonders, read the words of Mr Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank in 1969, viz. "The problem (of population explosion) will not disappear. What may disappear is the opportunity to find a solution that is rational and humane. If we wait too long, that option will be overtaken by events. We cannot afford that. For if there is anything certain about the population explosion, it is that if it is not dealt with reasonably it will in fact explode in suffering, explode in violence, explode in inhumanity".

No country has successfully controlled population growth without abortion—to try to do so, says Dr. Malcolm Potts of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, is to try to boil a kettle with a match. Conversely many countries have used abortion in conjunction with other methods most successfully to limit population growth. Japan has halved her growth rate, China has reduced hers from 40 per 1 000 to 10.4 per 1 000. And in many of the Latin-American countries abortion laws are simply not enforced, as illegal abortion is recognised as the only significant method of population control (also ignored by the authorities is that it is the most important single cause of maternal death in Latin-America and that the treatment of its complications takes up a considerable part of the usually low budgets of their health services). If we do not take effective population control measures now we may envisage a future situation like that existing in Singapore at the moment where harsh disincentives have had to be introduced for families which already have three children, viz. no maternity leave for the women, high ante-natal delivery fee, no tax relief on the child, a lower priority on placement for the child in primary school and the bottom of the queue for state-subsidized flats.

Why then has South Africa taken this giant step backwards for her womenkind? There are obviously many factors involved. The first is the official line of the all-powerful Dutch Reformed Church viz. "thou shalt not kill". This has a false ring in a country in which the death penalty operates; and the members of the Church are inconsistent in their attitude—they support a bill which provides for the destruction of the foetus under certain circumstances e.g. congenital abnormality or rape. Take the first case: the Bill allows abortion "where there exists a serious risk that the child to be born will suffer from a physical or mental defect of such a nature that he will be irreparably seriously handicapped". What is a serious risk? If a woman has German measles in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy she has a 20% chance of giving birth to a congenitally abnormal baby and abortion is the generally accepted alternative; therefore in these cases four out of every five foetuses destroyed would have been normal.





The second factor militating against more liberal attitudes is that the whole concept of legal abortion is a new one, one which requires deep study and re-orientation, particularly in a very conservative society. The fact that the Parliamentary Select Committee deliberated for one year only did not allow the detailed investigation into the problem, the unbiased review of the pros and cons which was essential before various ill-informed bodies made their representations to the Committee. We have apparently taken no cognisance of the experience of other countries in which legal abortion is working successfully. Can half the world be wrong and South Africa right?

But the main obstacle in the path of a realistic attitude to abortion has been the apathy and ignorance of South African women. We live in a paternalistic society; the majority of women are content to devote their "non-domestic" time to social and charitable work, in fact to tea-making and fund-raising. Although they comprise the majority of the voters in this country they are pathetically poorly represented in governing bodies. They have no conception of their potential strength, much less the motivation to utilize it. They are in fact only just beginning to protest against man's inhumanity to woman.

For let us make no mistake, when all is said and done the whole problem of abortion is a humanitarian one. Concerned as we are about the population explosion with its attendant evils of pollution and shortages of facilities and basic resources, the problem of unwanted pregnancy is the problem of each individual woman. It is the humanitarian personal problem of a woman who realises that her pregnancy is a potential threat to her already existing children, to her marriage, to her career, to her very life. It is the problem of a woman turned away by the law from the skilled medical help she should be able to rely on, either to the fear and danger of unskilled help or to the devastating alternative of giving away her child, or to the often unsuccessful adaptation of being mother to an unwanted human being.

In reviewing the report of the Lane Committee in England, the Editor of the British Medical Journal stated last year: "running through the 700 pages of the report is a humanitarian approach to the problem". In reviewing the various restrictive and punitive clauses of the South African Abortion Bill one can say, in contrast, that not one spark of humanitarianism has been allowed to filter through. □

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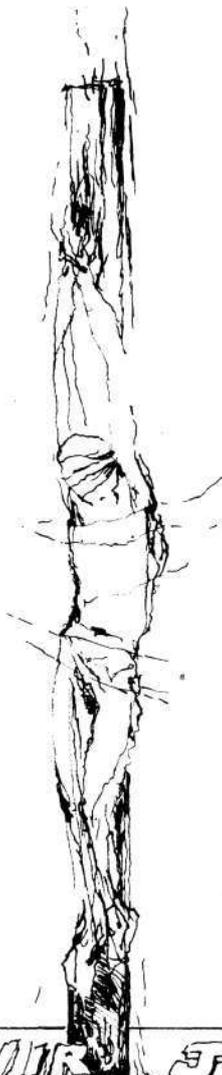
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# DEATH OF A LEADER

by Ivor Shapiro



ONS VIR JOU  
SUID AFRIKA

Bram Fishcher is dead. He died, it seems, with thousands of admirers, hundreds of friends and no allies in his own country.

This would probably be a stranger's impression after reading the South African press since Ascension Day. Since 7 May, when the 67-year old communist leader died after a long fight against cancer, all but the last six weeks of which was fought inside prison, there have been dozens of obituaries, tributes and eulogies. He has been called, by the governing National Party's Cape Town mouthpiece, "a supreme and extreme of a type . . . with a vision and an ideal . . . the intellect, the experience, the magnetism of a great leader . . ."

The policeman who twice arrested Abram Louis Fischer has described him as a "real gentleman, and tragic figure . . . a brilliant advocate with nice manners."

Editorials and obituaries in the liberal and right-wing press have pointed to his "brilliant mind", his qualities of leadership, his gentle, loving and compassionate nature.

At Fischer's non-religious cremation ceremony, writer Andre Brink spoke about "the broadening and liberating influence of men like Bram Fischer." He had enlarged and deepened the concept of the Afrikaans people.

And almost in unison the messages ended, as that of a member of parliament did, with a word of dissociation. ". . . And however strongly one disagreed with the road he walked and the means he chose to attain his ends—as many of us did—one could not but respect his determination and his dedication to a cause which he had persuaded himself was the right one."

To associate oneself with Bram Fischer's ideals, even after his death, would be to lay oneself open—as he did—to charges of furthering the aims of communism and invite prosecution—as he did—under the Suppression of Communism Act.

He was sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment under that law, and to life imprisonment under the Sabotage Act, on 9 May 1966. He had been convicted of conspiring with the African National Congress (ANC) and the militant Spear of the Nation organisation to aid and procure the commission of and to commit acts of sabotage. The court found that while acting as chairman of the South African Communist Party he had furthered the aims of that party, trained party organisers, distributed anti-government pamphlets, experimented with disguises, looked for prospective sites for sabotage, and distributed leaflets purporting to come from the ANC. There was also talk of wiping out isolated police posts, the court found.

In sentencing him, the judge said his activities had constituted a very serious threat to the safety of the State.

Fischer was a practicing advocate in Johannesburg when he and his wife Molly joined the Communist Party in the late 1930s. When the party was outlawed in 1950 he remained an active member of its underground organisation and was the party's representative at the 1952 World Peace Council in Austria. Despite these associations he was enough respected as a lawyer to be repeatedly elected to the Johannesburg Bar Council, representing the lawyers attached to the Supreme Court in South Africa's biggest city.

Fischer became widely known as a remarkable and dedicated lawyer when he appeared as senior defence advocate in the long Treason Trial of the 1950s, which resulted in acquittal for all the accused, and the Rivonia political trial of 1963, in which Nelson Mandela and seven other black leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment.

In 1964, the tide started turning against Bram Fischer. His wife died in a motor accident. He was arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act. Granted bail, he flew to London to defend and win a case before the Privy Council and returned to stand trial.

In January of the next year, he estreated bail and disappeared "to continue his work". He was struck off the roll of advocates.

Ten months later, after one of the biggest political manhunts in the country's history, he was re-arrested, heavily disguised, in Johannesburg. Unwilling to lie or implicate others, he refused to enter the witness box at his renewed trial and instead made a three-and-a-half-hour statement from the dock to justify his beliefs and actions. Then he was sentenced to life imprisonment. From that time until two months ago, he was in prison and prison hospitals. (In 1967 he was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize.) After it became known that he had terminal cancer, repeated appeals for clemency from his allies outside South Africa and admirers within were ignored.

Dying, he was allowed a month under virtual house-arrest at his brother's home. An extension of another month had only half expired when doctors found further treatment could not help.

Most of the obituaries here have called his life "a tragic waste". Andre Brink's eulogy attacked this type of statement as an attempt to deny the meaning of his life—to discount it, distort it and doubt it. "His life was only tragic in the sense that tragedy requires a sacrifice before sanity and progress can be restored to a corrupt destructive society."

There must be some remaining communists in South Africa. Wherever they are, however, they could not be expected to make this the occasion to make themselves known. They mourn in silence.

There have been so many public tributes because Bram Fischer's life was a symbol of commitment, to a broader range of South Africans than the communists represent. Thousands of blacks and whites here remember him mainly for working for justice and liberation in an era when few white faces could be seen and fewer Afrikaans names heard in the ranks of those wanting equality in South Africa.

The quest for vengeance against Bram Fischer for betraying the Afrikaner nation, of one of whose proudest families he was a descendant, was pursued after his death. His family was allowed to arrange his funeral on three conditions. That it take place within a week of his death. That it be held in the city of Bloemfontein.

And that his ashes be handed back to the Department of Prisons. □

# HISTORY TEACHING IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS

By Edgar Brookes

The subject of history textbooks is one which interests all schools, and not only African schools. Thus in the years immediately following the Anglo-Boer War, Russell's "Natal, the Land and its Story" had a huge Union Jack on the cover which seemed to seep through into the body of the book. But perhaps African schools have been placed at a special disadvantage which we have come to realise more and more during the last decade.

There have, of course, been some excellent history textbooks written for schools—it would be invidious to mention names—but they have not entirely replaced earlier books which have come to be taken for granted in a large number of schools.

How is it that the writing of history textbooks has taken the form which it has? If we must go back to the origins of our problem it must be stated that the "orthodox" view of history accepted by most of these textbooks has been that of Dr G. McCall Theal. I remember a distinguished professor of history complaining about the great South African historians of the past in these terms: "Theal writes as a Cape Civil Servant, Cory as a reader of the 'Grahamstown Journal', and McMillan for the members of the Bantu Men's Social Centre." Be that as it may, Theal had a distinct bias. For him the "farmers" were almost always right and the Africans almost always wrong. Authors preparing text books for schools did not approach Theal's work in any critical spirit. It is only fair to add that Theal was a pioneer and that a great deal of the writing of South African history since his day has started from his work and the criticism which it has aroused.

Let us take a very simple example. The series of wars between the frontier farmers and the Xhosas are described by Theal and by a large number of text books as the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth "Kaffir Wars". The term "kaffir" is considered insulting by nearly all Africans. Children could not have enjoyed having it used in their history lessons. But there is more than this in the nomenclature used by school textbooks. These wars should simply have been described as "frontier wars" or "border wars". They are very reminiscent of the border struggles between the English and Scots borderers. Children in Scottish schools would not have liked to have them described as the first, second, third, fourth, etc. "Scottish Raids".

Great changes have taken place in South African history teaching and in the writing of South African histories, but they have only just begun to percolate into the African schools and it is to be hoped that the old-fashioned textbooks will be replaced at an early date by those based on the good modern histories which have been produced during the last ten or fifteen years. Shaka was indeed a sadist but he was much more than that. Going to an African school in mature life the writer of this article was especially struck by the fact that Shaka, whom he had learned to think of as a bloodthirsty savage, was a Zulu equivalent of William the Conqueror. Even in the new atmosphere of these days few authors will be found to justify Dingane's massacres but a careful and impartial study of the circumstances surrounding these will show that Dingane had real reasons for fear of white penetration and his actions, however regrettable, were intelligible. Modern research has made it very clear that in the Zulu War of 1879 Cetshwayo was not the aggressor and that the war was really forced on him, incidentally against the wishes of the Governor of Natal, by the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, whose Indian experiences had made him feel that all "Native states" would have to be annexed sooner or later, and the sooner the better.

Text book writers in the 1970s have before them not only the Oxford History of South Africa but many other historical works of great value. It is to be hoped that more text books of the better kind will be produced and replace the older ones in African schools.

It is of course very undesirable that historical writing should swing from one extreme to the other. History books in the 19th and early 20th centuries assumed the right of the white man to rule African races and therefore the main emphasis in their historical account of the period they were studying was thrown on the whites. We do not want to swing to the position where everything that the blacks did was right and that the whites gave no benefits to South Africa. History is not political propaganda. Historians are very fallible people but they ought at any rate to attempt to be impartial and to write about the inter-relation of white and black in South Africa as a highly educated Eskimo might do. Macaulay, in his famous "History of England" was sure that the Whigs were nearly always right. This bias of his should not be met by books written to prove that the Tories were nearly always right, but by a discriminating judgment such as might be exercised by an impartial Frenchman writing the history of England. □

# IMPRESSIONS AND THOUGHTS

by Peter Royle

Big thoughts are in the offing. All but the most ostrich-like South Africans are beginning to feel this in their bones. The Blacks feel hope, and erstwhile reactionaries are talking of history and concessions. Liberals look on with amusement as government supporters see cherished illusions shattered and unchallengeable principles revised. Some English speakers express resentment at the abandonment of Smith. The 'Natal Mercury' writes of the government's mania for inter-racial sport. There is less obvious agitation than there has been at various times during the twenty-seven years of Nationalist rule—or so it seems, at least, to the returning visitor; but this is surely one of the results of the becalmed amusement with which most South Africans have awakened to the recognition that their country is part of the world. Mr Vorster may choose to call his new outward-looking policy detente; but that implies, after all, that there has been tension, which suggests there has been a relationship; whereas the truth is rather that, as far as South Africa has been concerned, the political agents in the world of which the Nationalists and their allies have disapproved have, until recently, been regarded purely as gadflies by those in authority, and as powerless courts of appeal by those who opposed them. What the new policy and the new attitudes reflect is that they are so regarded no longer. Eureka, the world exists!

What accounts for this surprising change of perspective? Partly, no doubt, very little things. It must be impossible these days to watch or play sport, whether intergraded or not, without reflecting on the existence of the outside world; and the speed limits and regulations governing the supply of petrol were a constant reminder to me, as they must be to resident South Africans, that there are external powers which have to be placated. This explanation holds chiefly, of course, for the man in the street; but insofar as he is applauding the government's hesitant steps in the direction of better relations with Blacks at home and abroad, it can only be, in many cases, because he too has come to recognise that, irrespective of the way Whites may feel and vote, there are certain imperatives which it is no longer safe to ignore. South Africans, like everybody else, live in an interdependent world; and many of them have just realised it for the first time.

Why has it taken so long for this realization to dawn? It should, after all, have been obvious for a very long time. There are, I think, specific historical reasons for this blindness which I shall try, at the risk of over simplification, to sketch.

Imperialism helped to unify the world economically on the White man's terms. Once this had been achieved, however,

it didn't take long for the colonial powers to recognise that their interests would best be served by steering their colonies to independence. Of course, it wouldn't be real independence, because in a world of gargantuan appetites and economic scarcity there can be no such thing; but it suited both colonizers and colonized, the former because, while the basic economic order remained intact, the granting of independence would give them a good conscience, and would obviate the necessity of disbursing large sums of money for defence and administration, the latter because it meant 'recognition' and an opportunity to fight for a more equitable world order. The major exception to this rule was South Africa's ally, Portugal; and as long as she went on holding back the tide, it was possible for South Africans to bury their heads in their sand castles. What has happened is that the life-guard's whistle has gone.

Of course, it would be possible to argue—and by those who are so engrossed in their castle-building that they haven't heard the whistle or have chosen to ignore it, it is being argued—that, as an already independent country of undoubted military and economic strength, governed by people who don't consider themselves imperialists and have no intention of pulling out, South Africa is immune from developments such as these. After all, the great Black-White battles of Afrikaner lore were fought 'sub specie aeternitatis' between two breakaway groups; and Nationalist attitudes ever since could be seen as a ritual re-enactment of a timeless victory. Therein, I think, lies the explanation for many South Africans' belief that their country could go it alone, impervious to the tides of history. But just as the South African war proved that economic imperialism would inevitably catch up with and reclaim its lost tribes, so the victory of the forces of liberation in Portuguese Africa, bringing militant Black Africa to within a pebble's throw of the Republic, has awakened the suspicion that, failing a withdrawal to loftier places, the lost Black tribes of Southern Africa are also about to be brought back into the mainstream of world events.

Why can't this just be resisted? The answer is simple: White South Africans would prefer not to have to fight; for one thing that the Arab-Israeli conflict has shown is that, where a rebellious group can command the gut allegiance of neighbouring states, the fight is not just with that group but with a whole sea of sympathizers; and it would be foolish to pretend any more, as Mr Vorster used to do, that they could all be gobbled up before breakfast. The prospect of an endless unwinnable war against an enemy with sanctuaries in neighbouring countries which it would be madness

to attack is, as the Americans discovered in Vietnam and the French in Algeria, a daunting one. What makes the situation even more acute is the fact, rubbed in by the speed limits and petrol regulations, that the Third World is now, for the first time, showing its economic muscle. One of the things that the malaise of Western economics demonstrates is the beginning of a major shift in the world balance of power. Decolonization, like the abolition of slavery, threw its beneficiaries to the economic wolves at a time of rapidly rising populations and increasing scarcity; but it also enabled them to organize and fight; and this is what many of the world's underdeveloped countries, following the examples of the Arabs, are starting to do. Economic sanctions can no longer be laughed off or dismissed with the argument that they would be hurting those whom they were designed to help (try using the same argument with a strike leader).

Mr Vorster's response to this new situation is clear to see: he wants to surround South Africa with satellite Bantustans.

By making minor concessions at home, he hopes to keep on the right side of as many as possible of the leaders of Black Africa to the north; and by helping the leaders of Black

Southern Africa (excluding, of course, South Africa), he hopes to establish good neighbourly relations with client regimes in the south. Although I think that in the long run the Nationalists' game is lost, the 'pragmatic' Mr Vorster is not being utterly naive in thinking that these policies may work to the advantage of South African Whites; and in any event it is important at the present juncture that he should be allowed to go on thinking it. Of course, if he could bring himself to switch sides openly in the Rhodesian conflict, his hand would be greatly strengthened, but even failing that he still has many trumps. It is a situation fraught with creative possibilities, in which each side can reasonably believe that the new policy is favouring it. Naturally, if the Nationalists think that concessions made now will be money in **their** moral bank, they are being quite unrealistic: they made their choice in the early 1960's, and concessions now like those made under the pressure of events, to the Catholic population of Ulster, will be seen for what they are.

Am I suggesting, therefore, that South Africa's future will be settled by outside forces? And if so, does this mean that liberal resistance to the less pleasant policies of the government can be seen only as symbolic, rather in the way that the actions of the French Resistance in the second world



There is a tide in the affairs of men

war, according to Sartre and Camus, who were in it, were transformed, even for themselves, into mere gestures by the knowledge that the destiny of France was being settled elsewhere? Certainly I think that South Africa's future, like that of every other nation, will be **largely** determined by outside forces; but at the same time by entering into a dialogue with representatives of some of those forces, she will in turn be able, to some extent, to influence them. What liberals could profitably do is, as they are doing, themselves establish contact with these representatives. At the same time the future of the country will also largely be determined by itself. The only changes which the outside world is virtually unanimous about is that there should be some form of majority rule and that apartheid should be scrapped. On the exact political complexion of any future government there is still room for manoeuvre. Acts can become gestures, but the opposite is also true: acts which seem like gestures to-day can, given the right circumstances, bear positive fruit in the shape of popular support at crucial moments. Far be it from me, who have left the country, to tell those who oppose the government from within what they ought to do; but it seems to me that a good line would be the one

that most of them have adopted already: to go on strenuously opposing apartheid, while welcoming any liberal change, and urging the government to accept the implications for South Africa of its own Bantustan policy. Some of these would be the scrapping of the colour bar for 'foreign' citizens (whoever heard of migrant workers in other countries being denied legal access to hotels and cinemas? ), the scrapping of the colour bar for South Africans (if it has to be scrapped for 'foreigners', how can it be justified for one's own citizens? ), and the granting of full citizen rights to all those such as the Coloureds and Indians who have no theoretical homeland in which to exercise such rights. For liberals this would, of course, be merely the thin end of the wedge. Nationalists would naturally view the matter differently. From debates of this nature, in any case, debates in which all sections of the population should be encouraged to participate, the lineaments of the Southern Africa of the future may well emerge. As realism grows in those for whom, until recently, liberalism has been equated with utopianism, the day is perhaps not far off when 'REALITY' will be publishing articles written by Nationalists. □

## EDENDALE

By: SELBY MSIMANG



The Settlement of Edendale, adjoining Pietermaritzburg, was established in 1851 on the farm Vervordient by the Rev. James Allison and several African members of the Methodist Church. It was subsequently sub-divided and these sub-divisions were transferred in freehold to individual owners. There were sub-divisions which were not allotted and, it is understood, were reserved for future expansion. Mr. Allison also had his sub-division which is where the Edendale Technical School stands today. Owing to certain disputes in the community over the un-allotted sub-divisions the Supreme Court ordered that all un-allotted sub-divisions should be sold to descendants of original buyers. Unfortunately this order coincided with the time

the Pietermaritzburg Corporation had decided to clear out all settlements of unauthorised urbanisation round the perimeter of the city. As usual, no other accommodation had been arranged for the people concerned, who were workers of Pietermaritzburg.

In some underhand way a number of the sub-divisions sold fell into the hands of land speculators. Practically all the people from the slum areas around Pietermaritzburg were accommodated on these plots and, by 1937, Edendale had become the worst slum of all. Property owners formed a Vigilance Committee with the purpose of fighting to bring about order. They soon discovered they would require a

statutory body to tackle a situation as bad as Edendale was. They then petitioned the Government for the establishment of a Village Management Board under the Natives Administration Act of 1927. Their plea was rejected. Instead the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry whose report was in turn rejected by the Provincial Administration of Natal, which proceeded to pass Ordinance 20 of 1941 establishing the Local Health Commission to administer Edendale. This it did without reference to the local community.

On 30th June, 1942, property owners of Edendale petitioned the Natal Administration seeking direct representation on the Local Health Commission on the ground, inter alia, that Edendale was a freehold settlement and that the Local Health Commission would be obliged to levy rates on their properties, wherewith to effect improvements and developments in the area, and they therefore claimed the right to be involved and to share fully in the administration of the area. The Provincial Executive Committee turned this request down and, by way of justification, informed the petitioners that the Local Health Commission would not have a permanent appointment and that it would serve only for five years, although it might be reappointed for a further period of five years.

What was important, at this time, to the Edendale petitioners was the assurance they were given that the Local Health Commission would introduce techniques for running the administration of an urban area and train the community, so that, when the time came for the disestablishment of the Local Health Commission, the community would take over and manage their own affairs. With that assurance the deputation representing the petitioners agreed to work under an Advisory Board.

After some years this Advisory Board again approached the Provincial Executive Committee praying for an advancement from its advisory position to one of policy making. This, the Board claimed, would be stage number two, which would eventually work up to the stage of decision-making. The Executive Committee pleaded for time, saying that the Government was proposing the creation of Urban Bantu Councils for municipal locations, which they hoped would give them a model on which to meet the wishes of the people of Edendale.

When it became clear that the Urban Bantu Council system could not be applied to Edendale the Provincial Executive Committee did not suggest an alternative which would satisfy the people of Edendale; it simply did nothing. Then, on 12th November 1970, Mr. J. O. Cornell, then Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Natal, addressed a public meeting at Edendale at which he read a communication from the Secretary of Bantu Affairs, Pretoria, giving the following assurances by the government on the future of Edendale:

- "a) That the Government does not intend or contemplate disturbing any Bantu owner of land in Edendale in his ownership of the land there;
- b) Edendale is within a 'released' area and Bantu were entitled to buy land and live there;

- c) As many lots in Edendale are too large for proper development on a township basis, any such lots, which have not already been sub-divided and planned properly on a township basis, will be so planned in consultation with the owner, on a proper township basis."

In August 1971 a letter (No. 1/4/3 126/70 dated 22/7/1971) from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Ladysmith (Mr. H. C. C. Scholtz), relating to an estate which was in the process of being wound up, disclosed the most alarming information that "the whole of the Edendale/Georgetown area is earmarked as a Bantu township and it is therefore necessary that the S. A. Bantu Trust be the sole owner of all properties falling within the proposed area." That shook the confidence of the community in the Government as this was a repudiation of the assurances given in the letter read to the mass meeting by Mr. Cornell. Then, in March, 1972, at a quarterly meeting of the local chiefs the Assistant Bantu Affairs Commissioner conveyed a decision by the Government on the Division of the District of Pietermaritzburg as follows:—

"The Homeland known as Zwartkops Location was extended to include Montrose and the boundary would extend to include Sweetwaters and Willowfontain. Imbali Township would fall within the urban area of Pietermaritzburg while Ashdown would be included with the Bantu homeland as defined. The whole of the area comprising the homeland would come under the jurisdiction of the Zulu Territorial Authority." This area included Edendale. No consultation with its people preceded the announcement.

During 1972 the community also received information that the South African Bantu Trust was negotiating with the Pietermaritzburg Corporation to take over the control and administration of Edendale. The community at once sought confirmation or denial of the rumour—without success. It then requested that a high official of the Department of Bantu Administration be sent to inform it of the true state of affairs with regard to the future of Edendale. There was no reply. It then applied for a copy of a "Master Plan" said to be being prepared for the Department by Town Planning Consultants and providing for a new lay-out for Edendale. No reply came to this application.

In view of the foregoing the community approached the Executive Councillor for KwaZulu Government who organised a meeting between Mr. Cronje, Township and Land Administration Officer for the Department of Bantu Administration, and representatives of Edendale and Clermont (another Local Health Commission area). The meeting was held at Imbali Township on 17th January, 1974. After hearing Mr Cronje the following submissions were made and submitted to him in writing viz:

- a) Lack of faith in Government promises in the light of past experiences.
- b) That when the Local Health Commission is disestablished the community should become actively involved in the determination of policy and administration and control of the affairs of the community.

- c) That the community asks that the administration and control of its area should fall completely under KwaZulu Government.
- d) That in the light of para. (b) hereof and that in the light of past experience gained, the representatives reject the Advisory Board system at any stage of development.
- e) That machinery be established immediately which will operate on an ad hoc basis pending the establishment of a town council, such machinery to involve the community.
- f) That all land acquired by the S. A. Bantu Trust from non-Africans in the area should be resold to Africans and that there is alarm that the Trust is now buying out Africans who own land in the community area.
- g) That if, in the implementation of the Master Plan, certain property owners are displaced, such owners should be compensated by being given other land held by the Trust in the community area, and such land to be of equal value to the land taken.

These representations were ignored by Mr Cronje who proceeded to make regulations for Edendale (and Clermont) providing for just what Edendale had told him it didn't want—an Advisory Board. The definition of its functions precludes all local involvement in the framing of estimates of income and expenditure and decision and policy making. Its status fails completely to recognise property owners even in the matter of the relationship between property owners and tenants.

And now, out of the blue, the Master Plan for the Edendale complex has at last appeared. It came with the Planner, accompanied by the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, the Vulindlela Magistrate and the Town Manager (all White Government officials) on 30th January, 1975. They met the Executive Committee of the Inhlango yabathengi base Edendale and the Advisory Board. The plan is to provide accommodation for 350 000 people within a given period and covers a complex consisting of three "released" and two unreleased areas. The fear that freehold rights are in danger has been completely justified by the new regulations already referred to. There is nothing in them differentiating the status of Africans living on land the property of the S. A. Bantu Trust and Africans who live on land legally acquired and held under a title-deed. These regulations are unmistakably based on the conception that land at

Edendale (and Clermont) is the property of the Trust. As already stated the new Master Plan covers three "released" and two unreleased areas. Four of these areas are to all intents and purposes the property of the Trust, the regulations are intended for these areas, and Edendale finds itself sandwiched in them and treated as not different from the other four. In this way the people of Edendale are in danger of losing their freehold rights. The regulations make no distinction between the different areas within their purview. Consequently Edendale falls in the same category as the other four pieces of land. Her particular status has been overshadowed by the areas with which she has been merged, without consultation, for the purpose of Government policy. Unless this is corrected Edendale is destined to become part of the area set aside for accommodating 350 000 families and the whole valley will become a mass of shanties.

One cannot help seeing a political stance through what has been disclosed by this Master Plan. The Government seeks to honour the 1936 undertaking to reserve 13% of all the land in South Africa for Africans (retaining the other 87% for the small white population). To achieve this it has apparently conceived the grand idea of congregating millions of Africans in closer settlement under conditions unfamiliar and, by African standards, unnatural. It could be a chilling device for hastening demoralisation of the African people. To think of Edendale eventually housing some 25 000 additional families, while at the present moment the population (estimated at 50 000) suffers grave discrimination in access to employment in its natural market, Pietermaritzburg, is unacceptable. Young boys and girls at Edendale are unemployed, and cannot find employment, because of the fact that what employment Pietermaritzburg has, it reserves initially for the people of its own municipal townships, Sobantu and Imbali. When a situation of this kind is persisted in and deliberately encouraged, there certainly must be an escalation in crime and violence, as is the case today.

So, nearly a century and quarter after its creators embarked so hopefully on the founding of what they thought would become a new Eden in Africa, one looks to the future of Edendale with anxiety. And as one looks back at the story of the settlement one thing stands out. It is the high-handedness with which the community has been treated by every white-controlled authority with which it has had to deal since its growing population and social problems first forced them to take an interest in it. From the day that its administration was put into the hands of the Local Health Commission in 1942, until the eventual appearance of the "Master Plan" in 1975, its people have been ruled without consent. □

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