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THE END OF THE STRIKE
(See article **SATS STRIKE RESOLVED** inside)

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION

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EDITORIALS

1. That Election

There was no comfort to be had by anyone with 20th Century thought processes in the result of the May 6th all-white election. It reversed with interest REALITY's modest hopes that the Progressives might gain a few seats and the Conservatives lose a few. Instead we now have a party as the Official Opposition whose spokesman on Law and Order is a member of the violent, racist, anti-semitic AWB. And he is not the only member of the Opposition whose affiliations lie there, where Hitler would have felt at home.

Whether those who planned the campaign to brand the election an irrelevant circus considered this outcome we don't know but that that campaign seriously affected the turn-out for the PFP there can be no doubt. It persuaded numbers of radical opponents of apartheid in key constituencies that to vote was a waste of time, and it persuaded many others, who would normally have worked for the PFP in the run-up to the election, that to do that was a waste of time. That lack of workers led inevitably to the lack of voters on polling day.

Perhaps without the 'irrelevant circus' campaign the PFP

would have retained its position as the Official Opposition, and that would have been very important, but the general rightward trend in white thinking would still have been the most important revelation of the election. And it is good that we should know it. It confirms once more that Nationalist Afrikanerdom, whether NP, CP or HNP, has no intention of handing over power to anyone else in a hurry, that it is supported by a large number of white English-speakers in this, and that its reaction to internal violence and external pressure will be harsh and unbending. We see little prospect of any short-term change in this attitude or of the new Independent Nationalists influencing it. They seem to have forgotten very quickly that a large part of their vote came from Progressives, and by no stretch of the imagination can that be seen as representing a changing mood amongst Nationalists. In any event they have a long way to go before they reach the point where what they offer approaches what the extra-parliamentary opposition is willing to talk about.

A grim road lies ahead, and with most of white south Africa in its present mood, the day of 'liberation' still lies a long way off. □

2. The Future.

As of mid-1987 the future looks pretty bleak.

The blowing up of COSATU House, the Johannesburg Court bomb, the Maputo raid, the new Emergency – what hope for a normal life for one's children, or even one's grand children, lies in more of all that? None at all!

Some hope may lie, though in van Zyl Slabbert's Institute

for Democratic Alternatives for S.A. (IDASA) which held its first conference in Port Elizabeth recently, and then arranged the visit to the ANC in Dakar.

We hope to have a report on these and subsequent developments in REALITY. □

SATS STRIKE RESOLVED . . .OR JUST ANOTHER GAIN FOR LABOUR?

The settlement resolving the three-month strike by about 18 000 South African Transport Services' workers on June 5 was a major victory for the black labour movement. The message, after Sats capitulated in the face of mounting financial losses, is clear: no employer, including the State, can afford to ignore the undeniable power of organised labour and its integral part in any future South Africa. Sats management –, of course, the Government – acknowledged this implicitly when they agreed to reinstate the workers. They had lost millions of rands, stood to lose millions more if they continued with their intractable attitude towards the workers' only one immutable "right": the withdrawal of their labour.

This strength, growing in its application and effectiveness month by month, will become more consolidated and have an increasing effect on the economy – and it does not matter who disagrees. The expectations of workers throughout the country rise with the "resolution" of a strike. This arises, obviously, through the realisation that the **organised** and **mass** withdrawal of labour – whatever the cost – is, for any management, an internecine struggle. If workers or their representatives decide to continue a strike (as happened at Sats), then management must decide how much they can afford to lose. Clearly, Sats had lost too much – too much money and too much credibility.

The pertinent and salient feature of the Sats strike was its ostensible "spontaneity". Mr Andrew Nendzanda appeared to be the only reason why 18 000 people downed tools and led to massive losses for Sats, millions of rands in damage to railway property and an implacable militancy by workers throughout the Reef. Seven workers were killed and many, both innocent and involved, were injured.

Why did they persist with apparently irrational demands, and why did Sats finally accept the strike could go no further?.

"Andrew", as he became known, was essentially a catalyst. He was fired after allegedly failing to hand in his cash takings before closing time. On March 13 about 300 workers at City Deep, where he worked as a heavy-duty driver, immediately downed tools in sympathy. Within a few days, hundreds more had joined at the depot and at other depots on the Reef, despite Sats retracting and saying he had not been fired, but only disciplined. If the workers resumed duty, said Sats, the status quo would return. The workers however had gone beyond a simple acceptance of management's apparent "honesty."

There had been, for some months prior to the strike, activity by workers and their elected officials, concerning the kind of strategy to adopt given a large recruitment to the South African Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwu), and what should be done if the workers took any kind of

action against Sats. "Andrew" became the surface issue and Sats management were certainly unaware of what the real issue had become – that is, a challenge by workers against the enormous resources of the State parastatal. Gradually, as the strike spread, junior spokesmen of the PRO department of Sats were replaced by more senior officials – until it led to the appearance of the General Manager on SABC-TV to talk about "intimidation" and "unacceptable demands."

Sats management pushed to the limits of credibility their assertion they would only "negotiate" with their in-house "soft" union, the Black Allied and Transport Workers' Union (Batu). Within a few days it was evident that Blatu officials did not have the support of the workers nor the ability to cope with Sats management. They urged the workers to return to work; the workers did not, and from that point Blatu became irrelevant to the strikers. They spread their attitudes to several depots on the Reef and soon about 10 000 vital workers were out. Sats, however, continued to maintain they were dealing with Blatu officials and "worker representatives," that is, shop stewards who were almost exclusively members of Sarhwu.

Sarhwu, formed early last year and affiliated to the largest trade union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), had a membership of 9 000 at the inception of the strike. This rapidly grew to its present paid-up membership of 19 000 on the Reef. Throughout, Sats maintained it was dealing only with worker representatives and refused to accept the existence of the 750 000-member Cosatu federation and its affiliate, Sarhwu. As is evident from subsequent developments, from the start of the strike, Sats management was negotiating with Sarhwu shop stewards and, ultimately, Cosatu officials at the highest level.

Of crucial importance is that the strike spread and grew, not from prompting by Sarhwu or Cosatu officials, but from the workers. According to a senior member of the National Executive Committee of Cosatu, "the workers were always one step ahead of whatever it was we thought they were going to do." It was the strikers, he said, who dictated the pace.

The NEC member stressed that at all times they were attempting to "hold back" the apparent "craziness" of the workers. The workers, however, had taken the initiative and were doing what they thought was "justifiable action, given their position as a dispossessed class." He said Sarhwu and Cosatu negotiators were, throughout the strike, attempting to exert discipline on the workers as well as maintain a semblance of civility in their negotiations with Sats.

Sats denied that at any stage it was involved with Sarhwu or

Cosatu; they were only talking to worker representatives, they said. Frank Meintjies, Press Officer for Cosatu, knew at every stage of the negotiations precisely what had occurred on any particular day. It was a de facto recognition – publicly unacceptable to Sats and the Government – that they were **in fact** negotiating with Sarhwu and Cosatu officials. It is not denied by either union. Cosatu released the first media statement on the settlement reached on June 5, for the moment effectively ending the strike.

At an advanced stage in the negotiations, Sats and Sarhwu officials agreed to appoint so-called “independent negotiators.” Following a new trend in labour disputes, both parties agreed to have people speaking on their behalf to give the impression it was now “a matter for the legal people,” as one labour expert said. It has become the norm for these negotiators to accept as a minimum condition a refusal to speak to the Press or anyone else – that is, no one knows what is happening until agreement has been reached. The effect is to take the issue out of the news and hence the public awareness of what either side is proposing.

One of the Sarhwu negotiators admitted after the settlement it had been “frustrating and exhausting, mainly because there was a strong reformist element apparent, but it appeared orders were coming from the highest level in Government.” During the talks, Professor Nic Wiehahn, architect of the Government’s labour reform which allowed African workers to be classified as “employees” for the first time in 1979 called for a major revision of government policy vis-a-vis unions. A voice from such an influential position – and others – probably pushed Sats and the Government to agree to the settlement they finally made.

The agreement, according to a Cosatu spokesperson, provided for the reinstatement of all 18 000 workers (despite Sats claiming throughout the strike there were only 12 000 involved). It is significant Sats agreed to reinstatement as opposed to re-employment. The implications are that workers will be entitled to benefits they would not have received if they had in fact been fired – for instance, they will remain on the pension fund, receive full medical, travelling, and length of service benefits. Sats according to Cosatu also undertook to upgrade hostel facilities at several compounds on the Reef and committed themselves to an expenditure in the long-term of R10 million on the dwellings. It was agreed “Sats workers will have the right to democratically elect their own representatives.”

Minister of Transport Affairs, Mr Eli Louw, was quick to assure the white House of Assembly on June 5 that “intimidators” would not be re-hired and all Sats workers would have to re-apply for their jobs before June 15. The principle of no work, no pay, would remain, he said. It remains to be seen how this discrepancy between the Government and Cosatu will be resolved.

An outstanding and unresolved problem is the recognition by Sats of Sarhwu and Cosatu. On the day of the agreement, Sats spokeswoman Miss Jeneé Jordaan said the right of workers to elect their own representatives did not constitute recognition of Sarhwu.

The irony of the lengthy and acrimonious dispute is that Sats will not admit they were involved in negotiations with representatives of 18 000 workers, most of whom are members of Sarhwu. It is common – and public – knowledge that Sarhwu was involved from virtually the beginning of the strike. Further, after at least 30 of the 37 “worker representatives” were detained (presumably for their role in the negotiations), Cosatu officials were brought into the dispute to fill an obvious gap left by the departure of almost the entire executive of Sarhwu.

The Government and Sats cannot admit publicly they were dealing with a union federation they so evidently do not like and, perchance, regard as some sort of threat to “law and order.” Certainly, they will continue to blinker their approach to a very costly strike and deny the people who ultimately were part of resolving the problem their due credit.

The workers pushed the strike in a direction they chose; Sarhwu and Cosatu should be commended for the restraint they were able to exert. If it were not for this “invisible” organised union presence, workers may have lost faith in their officials and caused considerably more damage than they did.

The apparently irrational demands of the workers and Sats’ response are perhaps a pointer to future labour disputes. This was a strike which developed for what seemed to be a niggly and fatuous reason: “Andrew”. Union officials have complained regularly about the impetuous reasons for dismissal of workers at Sats. On this occasion, workers did not accept reasons given by management: a groundswell of militancy swept the Sats depots, developing into an explicit challenge to the ability of the State to check their refusal to work and, last month after most of them were fired, to leave their hostels. It would have been too great a risk for Sats (and the Government) to have sent in the forces; inevitably, considering their already substantial losses, financially and in terms of credibility, they had to capitulate.

Labour had simply shown – again, but this time more explicitly – its determination to inject itself into the mainstream of South African society’s multifarious veins. Despite ideological disputes within the union movement which observers have presaged as potentially destroying their solid shop-floor power-base, workers in the Sats dispute have won a victory and demonstrated by their actions their determination (and that of most black workers) to edge into control of their own lives – albeit gradually, perhaps more rapidly than the Government would like.

Unions are legitimate; the Government may arrest leaders, shop stewards and other workers. It would be folly for the Government to engage in open confrontation. For the moment, the unions will remain a vestige of open opposition while authorities pretend they did not talk to Sarhwu or Cosatu and claim all is well in the Republic. □

“THE POWER OF THE POWERLESS”

Czech Dissident Thought and the Contemporary South African Situation.

In 1985 South Africa seemed to many observers, both internal and external, a country in the grip of revolution. There was euphoria in many townships: Liberation was coming, next year we should be in Jerusalem. In 1987 the picture is very different. Counter-revolution is if not triumphant – the situation is too confusing to allow for clear-cut victories – at least dominant. Liberation has once again been pushed back into a wholly unpredictable future

To anyone concerned to see the emergence of a juster, freer, more humane society in South Africa recent developments cannot but be regarded as profoundly depressing. The best antidote to depression is always activity – and an activity of thought, an intellectual preparedness to grapple with the hard facts of reality, is needed now more than ever before.

The first need is to clear our minds of Utopianism, the abstract construction of ideal societies, an intellectual practice that has been such a striking feature of so much recent South African political thought. Utopianism pervades the whole Verwoerdian concept of ‘grand apartheid’. For all the genuine intellectual gratification to be derived by its advocates from the concept of ‘separate development’, the concept when applied to a country whose peoples had been drawn together by over a century of lived experience, was flawed by a fatal illogicality.

But it must also be said – bitterly though this assertion will be resented in many quarters – that the notion of ‘Liberation’ is also profoundly Utopian. The term has meaning in certain precise circumstances, as when it was applied during the Second World War to the freeing of Nazi-occupied Europe. Then indeed the visual spectacle of the military defeat of the hated invaders and occupiers made the concept of Liberation meaningful and real. It was possible to wake up and find that one’s town had been ‘liberated’ to trace on the map the progress of the Allied armies and the ‘liberation’ of great tracts of territory. But in a country such as South Africa where the original invaders have had a century and more in which to sink their roots deep into the soil, such a war-time analogy is quite inappropriate. More than that, the disparities in coercive power, the resources at the disposal of the state, the unwillingness, indeed the total incapacity, of powerful elements within the dominant community to accept any meaningful reforms, all point inescapably to the continuation of the present regime for the foreseeable future.

One way to bring fresh thinking to bear on the South African situation is to look elsewhere for inspiration. And this can perhaps best be found in considering the experience of those vigorous and creative minds who have had to grapple for many years with the problem, the ‘existential problem’, of living under profoundly illiberal

regimes. There are many such regimes in the contemporary world – but in very few has the technique of repression been worked out with such comprehensive subtlety as in Czechoslovakia, and so it is to the response of Czech dissidents that South Africans will find it well worth directing their attention.

At first sight the idea of comparing the apartheid regime in South Africa with the Communist government of Czechoslovakia may seem absurd, even offensive. Is not the one dedicated to upholding ‘capitalism’, the other ‘socialism’? What freedom of expression is allowed in Communist countries compared to the still substantial freedom permitted in South Africa? How can there be any similarity between the monolithic quality of the Czech regime and the plurality of parties so confusingly apparent in contemporary South Africa? Surely, whether you take your stand on the Left or on the Right, you will find it ridiculous – as much a waste of time as comparing a buffalo with an elephant – to set the two systems one against the other.* But forget for a moment political labels, go for basic structures. Such an exercise will soon reveal certain intriguing similarities. In the first place it can be said that both governments, Czech and South Africa, lack the full legitimacy of consent, a consent that can in the modern world be conferred only through freely conducted elections based on universal franchise. In Czechoslovakia the Communist Party came to power in February 1948 when the coalition government set up after the war with communist and non-communist ministers was overthrown by well-orchestrated demonstrations backed by the threat of Soviet intervention. Twenty years later Soviet intervention was stark and brutal in bringing to an end that brief and intoxicating explosion of reform known as the Prague Spring and reestablishing the Communist Party’s ‘old-guard’, who dubbed their counter-revolutionary policy ‘normalization’.

To white South Africans mindful of their country’s long tradition of parliamentary government it may seem offensive to talk of their government as lacking legitimacy, but South Africa, it should never be forgotten, is a state founded on conquest – a long process reaching back to the seventeenth century and not formally completed until the end of the nineteenth. Conquest, some would argue, provides its own special sort of legitimacy – but it is a legitimacy ultimately acceptable only when accompanied by a vigorous process of assimilation, designed to remove differences between conquerors and conquered. Such a process has never seriously been attempted in South Africa.

The second point of similarity lies in the fact that both regimes are heavily dependent on ideology. That Marxism-Leninism is an ideology capable of much wider appli-

cation than apartheid, is not really relevant here – nor the fact that it has inspired a much more extensive literature and touched a wider range of human actions. Both apartheid and Marxism-Leninism offer in their different ways blueprints for particular societies, ground plans for social engineers, an intellectual justification for intervention in the lives of millions of people.

'Bureaucratic centralism' is the term applied to the system of government developed in Communist countries. It is almost equally apposite to South Africa and so provides a third point of similarity. Certainly it can be said that the degree of state control – which extends to every aspect of life, cultural and social as well as economic and political – is more extensive in Czechoslovakia than it is in South Africa. But South Africa has seen in the last forty years the expansion of a massive bureaucratic structure, manifested not only in the traditional civil service and in the conventional instruments for maintaining law and order – the police and army – but also in the growth of parastatal organizations designed to provide control over many sectors of the economy. Bureaucracy must never be thought of in apolitical terms; its members, both in Czechoslovakia and South Africa, present a massive constituency with a vested interest in preserving the status quo and so ensuring their own well-being.

In contrast to this bureaucratic class – the **nomenklatura** as it is called in Soviet bloc countries – there stand many millions of ordinary people for whom the immediate future appears to hold no hope of a life free from intrusive pressures. Living in a country with a fertile soil and a very low population growth rate Czechs are of course preserved from many of the problems that afflict millions of South Africans – drought, shortage of agricultural land, unemployment. There are no shanty towns, no migrant labour system, no forced removals. But for many Czechs there is a bleakness about their present situation that would not seem unfamiliar to many South Africans.

'Normalization' as the Czech regime describes its policy is a term carefully chosen to conceal one of the most effective systems of oppression the world has ever seen. It is a system skillfully designed to avoid the headlines: few dramatic trials, no executions or concentration camps. The party that had allowed the emergence of the dangerous ideas that led to the Prague Spring had to be purged of unreliable elements. Others, who were not members of the party but who had publicly expressed subversive ideas must be taught a lesson. The regime had many sanctions at its disposal, ranging from the confiscation of a driving licence or the cutting off of a telephone through denial of access to higher education for the children of an offender to loss of job and ejection from accommodation. For many the mere threat of such privations was sufficient to ensure lip service to the regime. The recalcitrant could be worked over by the security police through long hours of interrogation and frequent house searches. The system bore particularly harshly on the intelligentsia – a social group more clearly defined in Central Europe than it is in the West and one that includes those involved in the arts, the media and education. Many intellectuals chose exile. Those who stayed on paid the price. Journalists became building workers,; philosophers, thrown out of university lectureships, survived by becoming hightwatchmen or porters; artists left Prague and found jobs on collective farms. Such

a squandering of talent and ability would seem to have been of no concern to the country's rulers: political stability had been reestablished, the future of 'socialism' was assured.

But after eight years of 'normalization' a few brave spirits found themselves – as one of them put it – 'growing tired of being tired'. A relatively minor incident shocked them into action. A group of young rock musicians who called themselves 'the Plastic People of the Universe' had been put on trial. There was no suggestion that they had been involved in any covert political activity. All they wanted to do was to make their own music and sing songs whose words were relevant to their times, but they fell foul of the 'sterile puritanism' of the system.

The shock of this trial served to bring a number of dissidents together. There were prominent people among them: some had once held high rank in the Communist Party, others were well-known writers, actors or scholars. They decided to act with scrupulous legality. In 1976 the government had accepted and published in the country's code of laws a number of international covenants guaranteeing human rights. In a declaration published on the first day of 1977 – henceforth known as charter 77 – and signed by over two hundred men and women – it was pointed out that in Czechoslovakia these human rights existed 'on paper only'. The Chartists went on to list abuses committed by the authorities. Here are a few examples:

Tens of thousands of our citizens are prevented from working in their own fields for the sole reason that they hold views differing from official ones . . . Deprived as they are of any means to defend themselves, they become victims of a virtual apartheid . . .

Hundreds of thousands of other citizens are condemned to the constant risk of unemployment if they voice their own opinions.

Countless young people are prevented from studying because of their own views or even those of their parents . . .

Freedom of public expression is inhibited by the centralized control of all the communications media and of publishing and cultural institutions . . .

Civil rights are seriously vitiated by bugging telephones and houses, opening mail, following personal movements, searching homes, setting up networks of neighbourhood informers (often recruited by illicit threats or promises) and in other ways . . .

'Responsibility for the maintenance of civil rights in our country', the Chartists pointed out, 'devolves on the political and state authorities – but not only on them: everyone bears his or her responsibility for the conditions that prevail . . . It is this sense of co-responsibility, our belief in the importance of its conscious public acceptance and the general need to give it new and more effective expression that led us to the idea of creating charter 77'. Charter 77 was not to be seen, the signatories were careful to point out, as 'the basis of any oppositional political activity'. Rather it was 'a loose, informal and open association of people united by the need to strive individually and collectively for the respecting of civil and human rights in our country and throughout the world'. The aim was 'to

conduct a constructive dialogue' with the authorities "by drawing attention to abuses of human rights and suggesting how they can be remedied".

Constructive dialogue was the last thing the authorities were prepared to offer. Instead they retaliated with the heavy-handedness many Chartists must have anticipated: house searches, long interrogations conducted by the security police, finally trials and imprisonment for some of the leading signatories. The official media embarked on a vigorous smear campaign and the party faithful were called on to send in stacks of petitions and resolutions whose signatories were prepared to condemn a document most of them had never set eyes on. The chartists found themselves, as one of them remarked, in much the same position as the early Christians stigmatized 'as the carriers of a contagious disease who should be expelled from society'.

But for all the machinery of oppression at their disposal, the authorities have not been able to eliminate Charter 77. The number of chartists is now said to be in the region of one thousand, with about thirty new adherents every year – a derisory membership in a country of fifteen million, at least to anyone who does not pause to reflect that all great movements in history have started from miniscule groupings (thirteen men in an upper room). The Chartists have concentrated on producing a regular series of documents covering not only human rights issues but also other important aspects of national life-education, the economy, ecology. The contents of these documents have been broadcast by stations such as Radio Free Europe based on Munich and so easily picked up in Czechoslovakia. In this way the ideas of Charter 77 are assured of a much wider distribution.

Among the publications of the Chartists was a remarkable collection of essays mostly written in 1978 and 1979 but not available in an English translation until 1985 when they were published by Hutchinson of London under the title **The Power of the Powerless**. (The page references that follow are to this edition.) The book took its title from the longest and most important essay in the collection written by Vaclav Havel, the internationally known dramatist and the most prominent signatory of Charter 77. Unfortunately Havel's essay has never been published in paperback in an easily accessible version. But it must be seen as one of the seminal works of our time – and it is impossible to read it without being struck by its appositeness and relevance to the contemporary South African situation in every paragraph. For this reason it seems well worthwhile summarizing what Havel has to say at some length – and to follow this summary by a brief reconsideration of the relevance of Havel's ideas to South Africa in its age of counter-revolution.

II

'A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe: the spectre of what is called dissent'. with these splendidly ironic words – they echo, of course, the first words of the Communist Manifesto – Havel opens his essay. This spectre is 'a natural consequence of the present historical phase of the system it is haunting'. For 'a thousand reasons' the system is no longer in a position brutally to eliminate all forms of nonconformity. At the same time it is too ossified politically to be able to incorporate nonconformity within its official structure. (p.23)

But who are these so-called 'dissidents'? Where do they come from? What role do they have in society? Can they actually change anything? These questions lead to 'an examination of the potential of the "powerless"? But first it is necessary to consider the nature of the power with which the 'powerless' are confronted. (p. 23)

The term 'dictatorship' is often applied to the Communist system – 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', 'the dictatorship of a political bureaucracy', but it is misleading. Classical dictatorship involves the seizure of power by a small group of people. It has both a local and a temporary character. Its power derives ultimately from its police and its soldiers. But the system which exists in Eastern Europe – and equally, one may interject, the system that exists in South Africa – is very different. The Communist regimes of Eastern Europe form part of a larger whole: each country has been 'completely penetrated by a network of manipulatory instruments controlled by the superpower at the centre and totally subordinate to its interests.' (p. 24). (At first sight there may seem to be no parallel between Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the situation in Southern Africa. But when one stops to consider the concept of a 'constellation of states' as advanced from time to time by Pretoria, when one considers too the manipulatory powers possessed by Pretoria over its neighbours, both the so-called 'independent' homelands and the internationally recognized sovereign states of southern Africa, then suggestive comparisons begin to emerge.)

Classical dictatorships usually lack historical roots. But the Communist states of Eastern Europe can trace their intellectual roots back to the proletarian and socialist movements of the nineteenth century. These origins provide the system with 'a solid foundation of sorts'. (p. 25) (In the same way the architects of apartheid after 1948 had at their disposal a massive corpus of discriminatory legislation reaching back to the early nineteenth century.)

In comparison with classical dictatorships the Communist system in Eastern Europe 'commands an incomparably more precise, logically structured, generally comprehensible and, in essence, extremely flexible ideology, that in its elaborateness and completeness, is almost a secularized religion'. (p. 25) (The ideology of apartheid may not seem worthy of so lavish a range of epithets, but the importance of ideology in maintaining the apartheid structure must never be forgotten.)

Improvisation is a characteristic of the way in which power is exercised in classical dictatorships. The structure is not so solid as to be able to allow no room for opposition. By contrast the Communist system has now been in place in Eastern Europe for a considerable period of time. In the Soviet Union some of the system's structural features are clearly derived from Czarist absolutism, and the solidity of the system is further strengthened by its control over all the means of production. It is constantly able to 'invest in itself'. As the sole employer the Communist state is in a position to 'manipulate the day-to-day existence of all citizens'. (p. 26) (The South African system has never been able to accumulate the same amount of power as its counterparts in the Communist world, but the stress laid on 'total mobilization' shows that such a degree of power would clearly not come amiss to those who rule in Pretoria.)

The final contrast between the Communist system and classical dictatorship lies in the absence from the former of that 'atmosphere of revolutionary excitement' that characterizes the latter. The Communist system has now become an integral part of a larger world; Communist states now represent 'another form of the consumer and industrial society, with all its concomitant social, intellectual and psychological consequences'. (p. 27) (In the same way one may reflect that the heroic age of Afrikaner nationalism is long since past: almost all white South Africans and an increasing number of blacks are now subject to the subtle demands of consumerism.)

The Communist system of Eastern Europe is clearly then very different from 'what is traditionally understood by dictatorship'. To distinguish this system from classical dictatorship or totalitarianism (the term generally applied to the Soviet system in its early years) Havel proposes to apply to it the novel term 'post-totalitarian' (p. 27) (In the same way the present South African system has differentiated itself from all earlier forms of segregation, but the term 'apartheid regime' is sufficient designation.)

Within the post-totalitarian system ideology is of central importance – 'an increasingly important component of power, a pillar providing it with both excusatory legitimacy and an inner coherence'. (p. 32) Ideology operates both within the mind of the individual and at the same time it provides a link between the individual and the system. On the individual it operates with 'a certain hypnotic charm'. 'To wandering humankind it offers an immediately available home: all one has to do is accept it and suddenly everything becomes clear once more, life takes on a new meaning, and all mysteries, unanswered questions, anxiety and loneliness vanish'. (p. 25)

Between the regime and the people ideology acts as a bridge (p. 29). Alternatively it can be thought of as a glue. 'Without this glue the structure as a totalitarian structure would vanish: it would disintegrate into individual atoms chaotically colliding with one another in their unregulated particular interests and inclinations' (p. 32)

Gradually ideology loses touch with reality and turns into ritual. Reality is replaced by pseudo-reality. (p. 32) But this outcome was inevitable from the start. the individual who succumbs to the comfort of ideology 'pays dearly for this low rent home: the price is abdication of one's reason, conscience and responsibility, for an essential aspect of this ideology is the consignment of reason and conscience to a higher authority'. (p. 25)

In the post-totalitarian state 'the centre of power is identical with the centre of truth'. (p. 25). But 'between the aims of the post-totalitarian system and the aims of life there is a yawning abyss: while life, in its essence, moves towards plurality, diversity, independent self-constitution and self-organization, in short towards the fulfilment of its own freedom, the post-totalitarian system demands, conformity, uniformity and discipline'. (p. 29)

Life within the post-totalitarian system is 'permeated with hypocrisy and lies' 'Government by bureaucracy is called popular government: the working class is enslaved in the name of the working-class; the complete degradation of the individual is presented as his or her ultimate liberation; depriving people of information is called making it available; . . . the repression of culture is called its development

. . . the lack of free expression becomes the highest form of freedom, farcical elections become the highest form of democracy; banning independent thought becomes the most scientific or world views . . . Because the regime is captive to its own lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past, it falsifies the present, and it falsifies the future, . . . It pretends to respect human rights. It pretends to prosecute no one, it pretends to fear nothing, It pretends to pretend nothing'. (pp. 30-31)

Individuals living within the post-totalitarian system are constantly confronted with the falsifications put out by the regime. They may not believe them, but they have to behave as though they did. 'For this reason they must live **within a lie**'. (The emphasis here is Havel's.) 'They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their life with it and in it. For this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfil the system, make the system, **are** the system'. (p. 31).

In classical dictatorships it is easy to draw a line between rulers and ruled. In the post-totalitarian system this line runs through each individual Even those at the very top of the system are trapped within it and are thus unfree. 'Everyone in his or her own way is both a victim and a supporter of the system'. (p. 37) By coming to terms with living within a lie, the individual turns his or her back on 'the essential aims of life' which are 'present naturally in every person': 'some longing for humanity's rightful dignity, for moral integrity, for free expression of being and a sense of transcendence over the world of existences', Instead, 'each person somehow succumbs to a profane trivialization of his or her inherent humanity'. (p. 38)

At this point Havel sees a connection between the post-totalitarian system and the consumer society. He points to the 'general unwillingness of consumption-oriented people to sacrifice some material certainties for the sake of their own spiritual and moral integrity', 'their vulnerability to the attraction of mass indifference'. In this case 'is not the greyness and emptiness of life in the post-totalitarian system only an inflated caricature of modern life in general? And do we not in fact stand as a kind of warning to the West, revealing to it its own latent tendencies?' (pp. 38-39).

Here we must pause to ask ourselves how relevant and applicable Havel's analysis of the role of ideology in the post-totalitarian system is to contemporary South Africa. Clearly there has never existed in South Africa so all-pervasive an ideology as has prevailed in a country such as Czechoslovakia, but the agents of apartheid have succeeded in enforcing at least a tacit compliance with the system. South Africans may not be required to turn out for mass rallies or decorate their streets with banners asserting loyalty to the regime, but every time an individual obeys a segregationist directive and so observes one of the still multifarious forms of discrimination, then he or she has become willy nilly an accomplice of the system. That the ideology of apartheid is a form of mythology based on lies has been shown often enough. Those who occupy leading positions within the system may indeed realize the falsity of the ideology, but they too are trapped within it. To assert that 'apartheid is dead' is to put forward one more lie. Apartheid cannot die because it is an essential component of the existing power structure.

This dominance of ideology helps to explain two other features of South African political life which Havel notes as characteristics of the post-totalitarian system: continuity and anonymity. In many polities – and especially in classical dictatorships – succession to power is ‘a rather complicated affair’. Power struggles between different cliques certainly occur within the post-totalitarian system. But the struggles take place behind closed doors and they do not threaten the very essence of the system. ‘The binding substance – ideology – remains undisturbed’. (p. 33) Surely the same point could be made of the Nationalist Party between 1948 and the early 1980s.

When ritual dominates individual character becomes unimportant, ‘Power becomes clearly anonymous’. The men at the top take on a faceless character. This helps to explain what might be termed the ‘identikit’ character of ministers both in Communist and in South African governments in recent years. The system is self-perpetuating; it has the quality of automatism. And so the reformer will find that ‘automatism, with its enormous inertia, will triumph sooner or later’. The reformer will either find him or herself rejected or else learn to conform. (p. 34). Within the post-totalitarian system and equally within the apartheid regime there is no possibility of reform. (That surely has been the most significant lesson of P.W. Botha’s presidency.) So what is to be done?

To illustrate what the individual can do, Havel imagines the case of a greengrocer who, as manager of a state-run shop, is required to place in the window a notice proclaiming “Workers of the World Unite”. The greengrocer never stops to think about the actual meaning of the slogan. It is simply an essential sign of conformity. He is participating in the prescribed ritual. But imagine that one day the greengrocer stops putting slogans in his window merely to ingratiate himself with authority, begins to say what he really feels at political meetings, expresses solidarity with those whom his conscience commands him to support. ‘In his revolt the greengrocer steps out of living within the lie. His revolt is an attempt to live **within the truth**’. (p. 39)

Punishment will not be long in coming: the greengrocer will be subjected to various forms of harassment. He has committed something incomparably more serious than a simple, ‘individual offence’. He has broken the rules of the game. He has shown that the emperor is naked. In such a system anyone who steps out of line, ‘threatens it in its entirety’. (p. 40).

‘Living within the truth’ takes many different forms, but all of them represent a ‘revolt against manipulation’: ‘anything from a letter by intellectuals to a workers’ strike, from a rock concert to a student demonstration from refusing to vote in farcical elections, to making an open speech at some official congress, or even a hunger strike’. (p. 43) ‘Living within the truth’ provides ‘the primary breeding-ground for what might, in the widest possible sense of the word, be understood as an opposition in the post-totalitarian system.’ (p. 41) Confrontation takes place first within the mind of the individual. Truth is a ‘hidden force’, ‘a bacteriological weapon’, (p. 42)

The decision to ‘live within the truth’ involves a moral act. – moral because those who make it are not seeking their own immediate interests or looking for any tangible reward. The individual who makes this decision is led on ineluctably to the realization that ‘freedom is indivisible’, that an attack on one person who is seeking to ‘live within

the truth’ is an attack on ‘the very notion of living within the truth’, (pp. 46-47). It was the trial of the young rock musicians in 1976 that provided the spark that led to the emergence of Charter 77. ‘People were inspired to feel a genuine sense of solidarity with the young musicians and they came to realize that not standing up for the freedom of others, regardless of how remote their means of creativity or their attitude to life, meant surrendering their own freedom.’ (p. 47) Moreover this realization came to individuals from widely differing backgrounds, both communists and non-communists, and so Charter 77 emerged as ‘a community that is **a priori** open to anyone’. (p. 47) (Many people involved in community associations, student groups or detainee support committees in South Africa will be able to bear out the validity of this insight.)

In the post-totalitarian state ‘all political life in the traditional sense has been eliminated. Deprived of open political discussion, let alone the right to organize politically, people’s interest in politics naturally dwindles. (p. 49) But there still exist within society individuals who have never abandoned politics as a vocation and who continue to think independently ‘Even in the worst of times, they maintain the continuity of political thought’. (pp. 49-50) When a new impulse begins to stir they can enrich it ‘with the fruits of their own political thinking’. So in Czechoslovakia almost all of those who were political prisoners in the early 1970’s came to be among the most active members of Charter 77 a few years later (How apposite this point is to the role of old ANC and PAC activists in the townships in the bleak years of the late 1960s and early 1970s.)

But these old activists suffer from ‘one chronic fault’ – ‘an outmoded way of thinking’. (p. 50). They ‘remain faithful to traditional notions of politics established in more or less democratic countries or in classical dictatorships’. They fail fully to grasp ‘the historical uniqueness of the post-totalitarian system as a social and political reality’. (p. 50) Losing touch with reality they find themselves in a world of ‘genuinely utopian thinking’. (p. 51). (How apposite again to South Africa – to the thinking of all those political activists who imagined in 1960, in 1976 and again in 1984-86 that ‘revolution’ was just round the corner.)

These old political activists also ‘fail to appreciate the political significance of those ‘pre-political’ events and processes that provide the living humus from which genuine political change usually springs’. (p. 50) Dissident movements in Soviet bloc countries have derived their initial inspiration from people in ‘non-political’ professions – writers, academics, scientists, ordinary working people. Not being bound by traditional political thinking, they are more aware of political reality. The old alternative political models no longer serve to inspire people. In the post-totalitarian system ‘the real sphere of potential politics is elsewhere: in the continuing and cruel tension between the aims of that system and the aims of life, that is, the elementary need of human beings to live, to a certain extent at least, in harmony with themselves, that is, to live in a bearable way, not to be humiliated by their superiors and officials, not to be continually watched by the police, to be able to express themselves freely, to find an outlet for their creativity, to enjoy legal security, and so on.’ (p. 51) (So in South Africa protests over rents, or increased bus fares or inferior education or the presence of the police in the townships have a far greater chance of securing popular involvement than rhetorical talk of a new order.) □

(to be concluded in the September issue).

THE LEGACY OF INFLUX CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

This paper concentrates on the effects of the removal of influx control in the Natal/KwaZulu region, particularly in the Durban Region.

Since the two previous articles in "Reality" have dealt with recent legislative changes this aspect has not been repeated.

While the abolition of influx control is wholeheartedly to be welcomed, adjustment will be necessary to the consequences of this change.

While conducting research Inkatha Institute fieldworkers have come across a certain amount of disappointment; the opinion has been expressed that "things are no better". Possible reasons for this perception may lie in people's disappointments at legal obstacles to settlement in urban areas that remain or in unfulfilled expectations of greater job opportunities and better living conditions.

The article seeks to illuminate some difficulties that continue to face policy makers and local authorities in the wake of the removal of influx control in the spheres of employment, accommodation and squatter control.

EMPLOYMENT

Since the abolition of influx control legislation in 1986, Blacks, except for citizens of TBVC countries – i.e. Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei – have the same freedom of movement as other race groups as far as working in urban areas is concerned.

The abolition of influx control has been of great benefit to employers who no longer have to register their workers at labour bureaux. Registration at labour bureaux is now voluntary on the part of employers and employees. Employers have been "decriminalised" for employing people they wanted but who were not "legal". However this relief is not total; employers are still expected to legalise the employment of aliens through yearly contracts.

In Natal this affects particularly employers of Transkeians. Nationals of the Transkei need to have passports or travel documents and a letter from a prospective employer so that a contract can be stamped in the passport. The contract is subject to renewal yearly.

To obtain a passport or travel document is a relatively easy procedure from the Transkeian Consulate. An applicant needs 2 photographs and R1 to apply.

A citizen can avoid the yearly contract by applying for restoration of South African citizenship. To be eligible however a person must have lived "lawfully and permanently" in the Republic of South Africa for five years, according to the Restoration of Citizenship Act, No. 73 of 1986. The Department of Home Affairs appears to interpret this condition as requiring that an applicant has lived in family circumstances and not as a single man in a hostel – although there is some uncertainty about this. Moreover there is the further question as to whether residence in a shack area will be regarded as constituting "lawful" accommodation.

While most citizens of TBVC states are, therefore, technically aliens, there does not appear to be harassment of employers or alien employees in the Durban area. It is not possible to state how many people have been convicted under the Act without monitoring all court records but it would appear that there are few prosecutions; an enquiry of the Public Prosecutor in Durban revealed that there has been one prosecution against an illegal alien this year.

Employers, however, are becoming aware of the stiff penalties for non-registration of contracts. In September 1986 a circular was sent to employers by the Department of Home Affairs stating that the call-in card system, which employers had abandoned after the abolition of Influx Control Act of July 1986, had to be re-introduced for aliens. This affected thousands of workers. (The call-in card was issued by the employer, stamped by the Administration Board, and constituted in effect a permission-to-return document under the old influx-control system).

It also meant that TBVC employees of 10 or 20 years standing risked losing their jobs if Manpower decided to give the job to a South African citizen – in terms of the procedure described below.

This could have affected thousands of workers. Many employers have permanent, long-serving employees who are "migrants" who go through the formality of concluding yearly contracts while they go to and from work like any township resident.

This has been the subject of negotiations between some unions and employers, and Government. One employer interviewed stated that legal opinion had been taken which stated that, as the law stands at present, employers cannot be prosecuted nor can individuals as they are exempt from section 7 of the Aliens Act, which states that TBVC citizens whose "permanent home" is in the TBVC countries are not eligible for South African identity documents.

The need for registration is disadvantageous to workers in other respects as well; for example, Mr X who is a workers' representative, or shop steward, was nearly ousted by a rival bid for power on the grounds that he was an alien, although he had been in the firm for 20 years.

This policy does have the effect of giving job preference to citizens outside of the independent states. The Department of Home Affairs of the Central Government asks the Department of Manpower about the state of employment in the different job categories when an alien asks Home Affairs for a permit to work in South Africa. If there is an excess of manpower in a certain job category the alien could be refused a job if Home Affairs so decide. This policy is aimed at giving what jobs there are to South African citizens before aliens.

KwaZulu policy towards Transkeians and other TBVC citizens

Many Transkeians are employed in Natal. KwaZulu Government policy has been to assist these Transkei citizens since it sees them as South African citizens. The traditional

Zulu attitude has been an open-handed one. The KwaZulu Government have assisted in processing applications of TBVC citizens through Ulundi to Pretoria and assisting them to re-naturalise. (1)

Labour Bureaux

The system of labour bureaux has also been altered by the abolition of the influx control legislation. The labour bureaux were designed to play an important part in regulating the flow of people into urban areas. Under the Urban Areas Act, now repealed, "all urban Blacks had to register as workseekers at the local labour bureau in their area within three days of having become unemployed." (2)

Employers had to register vacancies with the bureaux. "No Black could be employed unless the labour bureau had granted its permission for such Black to be employed." (3) In practice however many employers and employees did not follow this procedure.

Under the labour bureau system urban and rural bureaux were set up. However the District (rural) labour bureaux did not function as intended. The KwaZulu people preferred to come to the Administration (later Development) Board's urban labour bureaux where jobs were advertised or to go directly to employers; employers often preferred to employ people they chose to suit the job to be done. The District bureaux were not placement agencies; they did not keep details of a person's skills and match him to a position. The Guidance and Placement Act 1968 provided for job categories; once a Black had taken a job in a certain category it was difficult to change categories; this failed to satisfy the demands for the matching of skilled workers to jobs requiring skills.

The abolition of influx control legislation has abolished the district labour bureaux. Now the Chief or Headman in an area can be contacted to supply workers but this is not part of an officially constituted system.

It is feared that rural people, especially matriculants who find it difficult to obtain employment in urban areas, are being excluded from the job market because employers no longer go to rural areas to recruit.

This does appear to mean that it could be harder for rural people to obtain posts in urban areas than urban dwellers.

ACCOMMODATION

While removal of influx control allows South African citizens freedom to work where they wish within the Republic, and this is a great advance, the problem of accommodation remains, indeed it may have been exacerbated.

Official accommodation is provided in townships and hostels. In the Natal townships there are waiting lists, on which in some cases "section 10" people who need houses have waited for up to 15 years. These are people who gained permission to live in urban areas, outside the "homelands", under the old influx control legislation. "Section 10's" were those who were born and brought up in urban areas or who had lived and worked for many years in an urban area.

The waiting lists in townships therefore mostly reflect the housing shortage for people who are urbanised. Rural migrants are last on the list. In the townships of Lamontville and Chesterville in Durban there are waiting lists for sites

of 400 and 300 respectively. Government policy was to freeze the growth of Lamontville and Chesterville and most of the other townships.

Many of the shack areas that have sprung up around townships have been the result of overspill from overcrowded houses. Average house occupancy ratios for a 4-roomed house in ex-Natalia Development Board townships as at 31/12/85 were 11,61 per 4-roomed house (this compared with 10,78 in the Cape; 7,62 in the OFS and 8,75 in the Transvaal). (4) In the KwaZulu townships the average in 1985 was 9.84 (5) The occupancy ratio varied between townships from 15.5 for Ngwelezane (near Empangeni) to 4.7 for Ulundi with Durban townships in KwaZulu varying between 12.00 for Kwa-Mashu, 9,39 for Umlazi and 6,1 for Ntuzuma. These are official figures and do not reflect "illegal" lodgers.

The recent Central Government housing policy of privatization has meant that only those who can afford to buy and build can obtain the sites that are available. This can cause tension in a township where the sites are allocated to developers who will then develop them and sell at a profit, instead of the old system of allocation of single units to individuals according to the waiting list at an affordable rental or, preferably, bond.

There is thus a shortage of affordable official accommodation. More than half of the black people of Durban area live in the shack areas around the city, that is 1,25 million people. (6)

Gaining access to legal urban accommodation

In addition to the shortage of housing units access to official urban housing is also made dependent on individuals meeting the requirements of administrative regulations.

To obtain a house, a site or a bed in a hostel a person has to apply and follow the regulations laid down by law or by the administrative officials and Town Councils.

Apart from the regulations in Proclamation R293 which govern townships, each township has its own additional regulations. This applies to both Natal and KwaZulu townships. Township authorities are concerned that a person who takes a house can pay the rent; or if he gets allocated a site under the new policy of privatization, that he can afford the loan repayment. Therefore those that can afford to pay are chosen from the waiting list.

Generally proof of long, stable service is preferred for anyone wanting to rent a house or obtain a site. This policy favours long-term urban residents.

Women without dependants would still find it difficult to obtain a house in the township, or to keep one, in the case of an older woman whose children are no longer with her if she had not bought the house. This is still part of Proclamation 293; however this proclamation is under review.

To find accommodation in a hostel proof of work is also called for in most of the Durban hostels.

Some of the hostels have a more stable population than others; in the centre of town there is less movement than elsewhere. Beds can be "inherited", that is, passed from father to son; each case is considered on its merits by the superintendent, otherwise the waiting list is followed.

A workseeker new in the area would therefore need to find temporary accommodation while seeking work and find

permanent accommodation later. He or she would need to find this with relatives, friends or through "informal landlords".

Housing policy appears to favour the formally employed. This summary of the position of workers shows that the abolition of influx control has meant a greater geographical mobility for workers who can now move around freely from place to place to seek work legally. In addition rural to urban mobility has not been facilitated to the same extent as inter-urban mobility. It remains to be seen how the rural workseeker will set about finding urban jobs.

The same freedom is not accorded him as far as living areas is concerned.

It is evident therefore that in the wake of the abolition of influx control the shortage of housing for Blacks is a pressing problem in the Natal/KwaZulu region.

It is recognised that many of those in hostels would prefer to be accommodated in houses with their families, and within reach of their jobs. How many this would be is a matter of estimate. In Clermont Hostel, for example, which has 12,000 people, an estimated 50% of the people are permanent, that is they have been there since 1974. (7) There is more movement in Clermont hostel, which is a large hostel and relatively new in relation to the older hostels referred to above.

If some of those currently living in hostels are wanting houses, as well as many lodging in townships and in the shack areas, the accommodation and services need in Durban alone, without considering the needs of the rest of Natal/KwaZulu, is great.

Moreover, while the abolition of influx control has meant greater freedom of non-TBVC citizens to seek work, settlement is still constrained by the Group Areas Acts and the Land Acts – an important issue which will not be elaborated here.

SQUATTER CONTROL NATAL

The abolition of influx control has brought the focus in Natal increasingly upon the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act No. 52 of 1951 as a means of squatter control. The Abolition of Influx Control Act 1986 repealed the legislation stating that a Black could not be in an urban area for more than 72 hours without official permission; statutory power to forcibly remove black communities and individuals has also been repealed.

Some people interviewed during the course of the preparation of this paper expressed the view that the abolition of influx control has resulted in "chaos", that is, an increase in the uncontrolled squatting. At this stage it is difficult to state categorically whether the rate of migration to the cities has increased as a result of the abolition of influx control but it would appear that so far this has not been the case at least from rural areas. Present shack settlements have been growing steadily since the 1940's (8).

Interviews with shack dwellers in shack areas adjacent to existing townships indicate that most of these people come from the townships where they were unable to secure housing. The reason people were living near towns was to be near employment possibilities.

The position of people living "illegally" on land, especially in Natal, is an extremely sensitive issue since there are so many dimensions to the issue, including an awareness by authorities of the housing situation.

The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act No. 52 of 1951 states that a landowner and local authority can obtain an order of ejectment against people who occupy land without permission.

Up to date it appears that eviction notices to squatters have been served in two areas in Natal, Welbedacht and Inanda Released Area 33, and in two shack areas in KwaZulu, Zamani and Malangeni, near Mpumalanga Township. However it has not yet been established what law is being used in these instances.

Local authorities such as the Durban Corporation would prefer a more rational and humane policy than that of summary eviction.

The latest resolutions made by the City Council in favour of accepting present squatters' settlements are evidence of this. (9)

KWAZULU

As far as KwaZulu is concerned a Magistrate who was consulted stated that the courts have yet to determine whether the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act is enforceable in KwaZulu.

Within KwaZulu unplanned settlement which gives rise to what are usually subsequently termed shack areas, occurs on land held under different tenures. In rural areas these are tribal tenure, freehold tenure and Trust land (formerly held by the South African Development Trust but most of which is now under the KwaZulu Government); in urban areas shack building occurs on proclaimed township land.

With regard to land matters these tenure areas are administered by their own local authorities: tribal tenure areas by Tribal Authorities. Trust Land is slightly different in that land allocation is decided between the Agricultural Department and representatives of the people.

In peri-urban areas, such as Dassenhoek in KwaZulu, which is Trust Land, the land becomes progressively more densely settled, agricultural criteria for land use give way to the need for residential plots, settlement becomes more difficult to control to conform to the official designation of the area. The Magistrates do not enforce squatter control and evictions as these would not be welcomed by the people to whom the increased density of population, or urbanisation, offers a means of livelihood.

"The KwaZulu Government and Inkatha have always made it very clear that they will not tolerate the eviction of people without alternative accommodation being supplied". (10)

Conclusion:

In this region, therefore, the authorities are looking for a solution to the housing shortage of the urban population which appears to be the main legacy of influx control. The housing situation is connected to the low standard of services – indeed non-existent services in many cases – in the urban settlements. Unemployment, however, is the other source of the problems of Black people, as they themselves perceive things. (11)

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- (3) Ibid
- (4) Parliamentary reply to PFP MP, Mr P. Soal's, question on housing.
- (5) Township Managers' Reports.
- (6) Inkatha Institute 1983: Survey conducted for the Urban Foundation.
- (7) Hostel Manager's estimate.
- (8) As per (6)
- (9) Minutes of City Council's resolutions June 2, 1987 and **Daily News** June 3 1987.
- (10) "**Malukazi Issue and KwaZulu Policy**," J. Bhengu and C. Fourie "Malukazi Issue and KwaZulu Policy", **Inhlabamkhosi**, October 1983.
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by Peter Brown.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION

In the last issue of REALITY there was a brief mention of the formation of the Liberal Democratic Association.

Individual Liberals are involved in a wide variety of anti-apartheid organisations but they have no home of their own. The Liberal Democratic Association is intended to fill this gap, not by trying to draw its supporters out of organisations in which they are active, but by providing a meeting point for them where they can discuss and think through the implications of support for Liberal principles in the future, and from which they can disseminate their ideas to other people and organisations.

The Association is a non-racial body whose members are asked to commit themselves to the following principles of liberal democracy:

1. Equal political rights for all, with regular, free elections;
2. Basic freedoms for all citizens with special emphasis on freedom of the person, of speech and conscience, of movement and residence, assembly and association;
3. A constitution which accepts the principle of majority rule modified by
 - (i) guaranteed individual rights; and
 - (ii) minority participation in decision making; and
 - (iii) measures designed to bring about cooperation and collaboration between social and cultural groupings within the society;
4. Open government and accountability to the people;
5. A just economic system which provides a balance between public and private ownership, control and initiative, and a more equal distribution of resources;
6. An independent judiciary with government under law.

and to declare their opposition to:

- (a) Discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex or belief and to all laws which give effect to such discrimination;
- (b) Cruel and inhuman measures or actions designed to bring about or to prevent social and political change;
- (c) All forms of totalitarianism.

In order to see how the application of its principles might work out in practice the Association is establishing four working groups to make suggestions for future policy in four important fields – economic, political, civil liberties, and the administration of justice. These will be **suggestions**, not fixed and immutable policy statements from which the slightest deviation becomes a heresy. The Association will be hoping to persuade critics of Liberalism that these suggestions offer the best basis for maximum freedom for everyone in a future non-racial South Africa. In turn it will be happy to be persuaded by them if they have something better to offer.

Within the limits of its principles the Association's approach to the solution of our problems will be as flexible as possible. South Africa has suffered enough at the hands of doctrinaire ideologues unendingly committed to their Utopian dreams. Dr Verwoerd was our classic example. Like all of his kind the **plan** became more important than people, who, if they got in its way, were simply brushed aside or trampled underfoot. We cannot afford another experience like that, whether the architects of the new **plan** are of the Right or the Left.

The task of Liberals in 1987 is to convince a sceptical audience that what they advocate is better than what anybody else does. Collectively, through the Liberal Democratic Association, they must now produce the facts and arguments to carry that conviction. Individually they must continue to involve themselves fully in whatever anti-apartheid activity best suits their own temperament and talents. Their ideas and their involvement will decide the extent of their influence on the future. □

THE MAY 5th-6th WORKER-STAYAWAY IN PIETERMARITZBURG

INTRODUCTION

The United Democratic Front (UDF) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) called for two days of peaceful protest on May 5th and 6th against the White elections, and the killing of six striking railway workers by the police (as well as other issues related to police response to the SATS strike). In effect it was a call for a worker stayaway and a scholars' boycott.

The Labour Monitoring Group (LMG) monitored the extent of the stayaway and boycott nationally. In Pietermaritzburg the Development Studies Research Group (DSRG), based in the Economics Department at the University of Natal undertook the task. The main aspect of the monitoring was an extensive survey of management to establish the extent of the stayaway and the attitudes of management to the stayaway generally. The interviews were conducted by telephone on May 6th.

A team of fieldworkers, all students based in the different townships, also monitored the response to the call for a stayaway and boycott.

MANAGEMENT SURVEY

Sample.

Of the African workforce in industry and commerce the majority (68%) are employed in the industrial sector. The sample was designed to reflect this distribution.

The firms interviewed in the industrial sector were mainly those that employed 75 or more people, while those in the commercial sector employed a minimum of 30 people. There were 70 firms in the sample – 42 from industry and 28 from commerce.

Findings.

The 70 firms interviewed employed 12143 workers representing 28% of the total labour force in industry and commerce.

The validity of the sample is indicated in the table below which records the correlation between the racial breakdown in the sample with the racial breakdown in the actual labour force in Pietermaritzburg.

Labour Force in sampled Firms and Actual Labour Force

Sector	Racial Group	Actual Labour Force	Sample Labour Force	
			Number	% Actual Labour Force
Industry	African	9171	5278	57.6
	Coloured	1083	456	47.4
	Indian	5960	3061	51.4
	White	2160	840	38.4
Commerce	African	4226	1175	27.8
	Coloured	856	213	24.9
	Indian	3693	764	20.7
	White	16165	356	2.2

63% of Africans stayed away from work on May 5th and 64% on May 6th.

The response of workers from other racial groups to the stayaway was negligible. (See Table below.)

Table 2. **Worker Stay-Away by Racial Group.**

Sector	Racial Group	Stayaway as % of Workforce	
		May 5th	May 6th
Industry	African	63.8	64.1
	Coloured	11.6	12.0
	Indian	3.4	3.3
	White	0.0	0.0
Commercial	African	62.4	62.7
	Coloured	1.8	3.3
	Indian	0.0	0.0
	White	0.0	0.0

93% of the firms were affected by the stayaway.

Of these firms 3/5 adopted a "no work, no pay, no penalty" policy.

3% said they would pay workers who stayed away.

6% said they would take some form of disciplinary action.

The rest were undecided or would not offer any comment.

When management was asked what they felt about stayaways being used as a form of political protest, the response was:

*60% said that everybody loses out and the stayaway does not achieve anything.

*5% felt that workers had no option but to use the stayaway for political purposes, and management will have to be understanding about this.

* The remaining 33% would offer no comment.

*40% of the firms were unionised, accounting for 59% of the workforce (55% in industry and 25% in commerce).

*74% of the unionised workers stayed away on May 6th. This represents 71% of unionised workers in industry and 76.5% of unionised workers in commerce.

81% of Cosatu members took part in the stayaway.

*53% of non-unionised workers stayed away.

SURVEY OF THE COMMUNITY

On May 4th a small number of pamphlets were distributed in some of the African Townships in support of the stayaway and boycott. Some pamphlets were distributed in the Indian business areas calling on shop-keepers to close in support of the call. By word of mouth, however, news of the stayaway spread far and wide in the African community. Press reports also suggested that there would be a stayaway. It would seem too that many companies discussed the possibility of a stayaway with their employees. The SADF distributed leaflets headed "The Security Forces Greet You" encouraging people to go to work, promising them protection against intimidation.

On the two days of the stayaway there was a very limited bus service operating in the townships. None of the KwaZulu Transport Services were operating as none of the drivers turned up to work.

There was no kombi service in the African townships either. However a monitor observed private trucks transporting workers into the city.

Most of the shops in the African areas were closed. In the Indian areas of the city about 60% of the shops were closed on May 5th and about 90% on May 6th.

Almost all the schools in the African areas were shut on both days apart from two schools. Indian and Coloured schools functioned normally.

At the University of Natal some students, mainly black, boycotted lectures on the 5th and especially the 6th of May. On the 6th about 400 students organised an open-air

meeting on the campus but the intervention of police forced them to continue the meeting inside.

CONCLUSION

In view of the State of Emergency and the almost complete lack of pamphlet distribution, the extent of the stayaway was clearly remarkable (supported by the workers and scholars). The high percentage (81) of Cosatu workers who stayed away would suggest that the Union Federation plays a significant role in ensuring the extent of the stayaway. But the fact that one half of the non-unionised workers stayed away is also significant.

The overall conclusion that might be drawn from this survey is that notwithstanding the legal restrictions, the stayaway can and will be used for political purposes, and the state, management and the workers will have to come to terms with this. □

by Richard Steyn, Editor, The Natal Witness.

AN ADDRESS AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL PIETERMARITZBURG, 1987

Mr Chancellor, Mr Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to have been invited to address you this evening. The Natal Witness and the University of Natal have had a long and fruitful association and I regard this invitation as an affirmation of our association, and I thank you for it.

Less than a year ago I was present, as a visitor, at Harvard University's graduation (commencement) ceremony. It was a spectacular occasion – a blend of high ceremonial and circus – held in the open air in the picturesque quadrangle adjoining Harvard Yard. Its climax came when the president of Harvard, in ringing tones, formally welcomed the graduands assembled before him "to the fellowship of educated men and women."

The president had a twinkle in his eye, for he knew, as did everyone present, that it was decidedly presumptuous to suppose that three or four years at a university – even one like Harvard – entitled one to enter the fellowship of educated men and women. He was also probably aware of the truth of the old saw that every man has two educations – that which is given to him and that which he gives himself. Of the two kinds the latter is the more valuable; what we are merely taught seldom nourishes the mind as does that which we teach ourselves.

Tonight we are gathered to honour not only those who have distinguished themselves in post-graduate studies, but also those who have spent three or four years at University and have come to the end of their formal education. In

congratulating all on their achievements, I want to suggest to the new graduates that the most important part of their education lies ahead.

Walter Wriston, one of America's leading bankers, made a remark which is relevant to the situation in which we in this country find ourselves today: "Since we are prisoners of what we know, often we are unable to imagine what we don't know. Man, given the proper initiative and freedom to act, has repeatedly found alternatives to ambiguity and doom."

Prisoners of what we know. It is one of the paradoxes of modern society that despite the astonishing advances in information technology – in print, in the electronic media, in home computers and word processors – and despite being virtually drowned in information, we are as lacking in knowledge as ever. We confuse information with knowledge and are so over-burdened with facts that often we fail to reflect upon their meaning. In many Western countries, literacy levels have declined alarmingly as a result of the huge increase in computer-scored, multiple-choice test-papers. These tests require no skills of composition and only moderate reading ability. The British are lamenting a general drop in education standards brought about by experimentation and Treasury cuts. In America, according to social forecaster Jim Naisbitt, high school graduates today are less skilled than their parents were. Despite America's current restructuring from an industrial to an information and services-based society and the excel-

lence of its communication systems – with cable television churning out news and information round the clock – the country continues to produce students at secondary and tertiary levels with an astounding ignorance of the world beyond America, imprisoned by how little they know of how others live.

In this country, despite technological progress and the belated advent of television, we certainly are not turning out young people with a better understanding of how the world thinks and works. Indeed, how could we?

Ask any serious minded visitor to South Africa about his or her impressions and the chances are that after making complimentary remarks about the weather and the cheapness of the rand, he or she will comment on how isolated we have become from the rest of humanity. Returning home recently after a year abroad, I was acutely aware of the narrowness of our collective focus. Our news broadcasts contain an endless diet of what cabinet ministers have to say at police passing our parades, of organ transplants into sick infants, of the level of the country's dams and how some obscure South African fared in the first round of an international tennis tournament. Regular news and informed comment about the state of the planet is virtually non-existent. Our world view continues to be based upon outdated ideological or emotional factors, upon a crude Cold War mentality typical of the 'fifties', which divides the world into the good (i.e. the West) versus the bad (i.e. the East, and particularly the evil, aggressive and expansionist Soviet Union). It passes barely unnoticed that two of the world's great powers – the Soviet Union and China – are undertaking two of the twentieth century's greatest experiments in government, as they try to inject a measure of freedom into their societies in order to compete economically and technologically with the US and Japan. We have little awareness of the rising strength and economic importance of Japan, or of the challenge that Africa faces from the technologically more advanced and now better-educated countries of the East.

We speculate darkly about the Soviet menace, yet there is virtually no awareness, or discussion in the media, of the fact that a significant shift in Soviet-thinking on Southern Africa may be taking place. A new generation of Soviet Africanists is taking a hard look at the costs and risks of getting heavily involved in this part of the world, and beginning to doubt whether even a black ruled South Africa could ever be inveigled into the Soviet camp. These are factors vital to our calculations as to how to deal with our neighbours in the front line states, not to mention the Soviet-influenced ANC. But, as psychological and economic pressures upon us have increased, we seem to have resolved collectively not only to resist that pressure – but also to close our eyes and ears to all but the most major events taking place elsewhere. Imprisoned by how little we know of the world, we continue to conduct our internal political debate in rhetoric studded with strange-sounding phrases like "healthy power-sharing", "group identity", "own affairs", "total onslaught" – terms which make no sense anywhere else.

At a more profound level, our lack of knowledge of our own history locks us into thinking in stereotypes, into a cast of mind which puts people into racial categories before considering them as individuals, which imprisons all of us in the politics of polarisation, of "us" versus "them". All

nations have their myths, but in few countries are myths so assiduously fostered as in ours. Consider a random few of them:

The myth that the Bantu-speaking people arrived as immigrants on the Transvaal Highveld at the same time that Europeans first settled in Table Bay. Our forebears were **not** here first, despite what some history books may tell us.

The myth that black people cannot farm the land. Historians now report that when given the opportunity in the Eastern Cape and Natal from 1850 onwards, black peasants did extremely well as cultivators of the soil and as pastoralists. Acre for acre and man for man, Africans often produced much more than the Settlers.

The myth that the Voortrekkers saw themselves as a "chosen people" designed to bring civilisation to the hewers of wood and drawers of water in Africa. This myth, which found expression in apartheid ideology, has arrested our progress for half a century. Now, at last, some Afrikaner historians are beginning to debunk it.

The modern myth of a planned, co-ordinated international onslaught on South Africa, when it is really apartheid which is under attack from many sides.

The counter-myth of African socialism, which contends that Africans are naturally socialist, democratic and assimilative. The fact is that conflict and war are as endemic to the African continent as they have been elsewhere.

The current myth that democracy can somehow be preserved by abrogating the Rule of Law and suspending normal democratic processes.

The power of myth, according to the sociologist Peter Berger, is most likely to erupt in situations of rapid change – especially when that change puts in question or threatens what has previously been taken for granted. The rise of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging is an obvious case in point. I studied history at university twenty years ago and the history taught now is not the history upon which my generation built its prejudices. Looking back, I realise now how much we were imprisoned by what we knew then of our past. The point is that one's education is never done, no matter what one's age. It was Bertrand Russell who said that "knowledge is fixed and certain; it is truth free from error". Without knowledge, our political struggle becomes a case of which side has the better myths.

A special threat to the free flow of information and knowledge is posed by the current state of emergency. There may be nothing wrong, in principle, with the temporary suspension of democratic values in order to deal with the threat to law and order. But this can lead to tyranny when it becomes part of the permanent order of things.

It is thoroughly disingenuous to claim, as our rulers do, that in order to preserve freedom, it is necessary to circumscribe free speech, censor and distort information and circumvent Parliament and the Courts. I find it depressing that at a time when the ANC, for whom I hold no brief, should be showing faint signs of conciliation and compromise, the Government has forbidden us to hear what its leaders are saying. Oliver Tambo can go to Washington and talk to Americans and arouse some of them to anger. Pik Botha marvels at the fact that he could not buy the

adverse publicity generated by Tambo in explaining his case in the free American press. Yet Botha denies that freedom to his own press: for news of Mr Tambo we are reliant upon the wisdom of Mr Adriaan Vlok. It has never been more necessary for all of us to know what is happening than in these difficult times. We should be allowed to work out who our friends are, and who our enemies are, and to make sensible judgements based on information and fact, not myth and rumour and propaganda from whatever source.

We live in a peculiar society in which things are seldom as they are perceived by the world outside. This is one of the darkest periods in our country's history, when between 13 000 and 30 000 people are in detention, yet it is also a time of hope. Just when liberal values, for which our antecedents fought and which we have taken for granted, seem on the point of extinction, there are signs of a revival. Inspired by a brilliant series of lectures from UCT economist Charles Simkins, the liberal community is emerging from a long period of hibernation to examine what contribution it can make to the search for a new system, rooted in values common to black and white and using the classical liberal mechanisms of a bill of rights and the rule of law. Your own Professor Tony Mathews makes a major contribution to the argument that liberal values are the surest foundation for a genuinely democratic South Africa in his new book "Freedom, State Security and Rule of Law".

The Kwa Natal Indaba – in whose deliberations many from this university have played an important part – has pointed a way out of the confines of "group think" towards a system which places individual rights ahead of group rights, yet still takes cognisance of the latter. These are encouraging developments.

Perhaps most encouraging of all is the emergence, at the Afrikaans universities, of a group of historians and philosophers who are determined to liberate Afrikaner-Nationalism from its pre-occupation with race and colour as a basis of negotiating a fairer constitutional dispensation for this country.

In his lectures Simkins makes the fascinating observation that all South Africans – black, white, Afrikaans, English, Zulu or Xhosa – have inherited a liberal tradition which expresses itself in a belief in constitutionality, in negotiation, in the Rule of Law, in democratic mechanisms and in free enterprise. Our instincts are to speak our minds, to meet to discuss grievances and to take these grievances to Court or to Parliament. The fact that the last 40 years have seen a gradual and lamentable retreat from these institutions – and an increasing willingness to resort to violence – does not mean that liberal values have been extinguished. On the contrary, the very failure of collectivist strategies elsewhere and of "group think" here lends weight to Simkins' view that more so than at any time in the past, liberals have the potential to reach a mass audience. Liberalism is a philosophy, not a political policy. It will not conjure away the hard, brutal facts of our situation, but it can provide us with a lamp to light our way.

As English-speakers, we are heirs to a tradition based on a belief in parliamentary democracy, that might is not right, that everyone has a right to be educated and that the

strong have a responsibility to the weak, and it is surely our duty to reassert those values and not to take refuge in defeatism and apathy. If we believe in the right of free speech and in academic freedom, let us stand up and say so, and not leave the field to the demagogues on the right and left who rationalise their intolerance and deny those whose views they dislike the opportunity to air them.

As an outsider, I have been following the debate about academic freedom on university campuses with considerable interest. While I understand the argument that a university is not an island unto itself and must reflect the realities of the society it serves, I do not see that it follows that academic freedom is divisible, that because the state denies freedom of expression to certain of its citizens, a university is justified in using similar methods to silence those whose views it does not like. When a university denies a platform to a visiting speaker because the latter is out of sympathy with a body of opinion on the campus, it seems to me to be undermining both its principles and the reason for its existence – which is to assert and debate and dissent, and to follow the truth, wherever that may lead.

Most of you have already left university to start your new careers. Many may have significant rôles to play in the future of this country. All of you will influence our future by the way you respond to the political demands that these times impose upon you. Some will decide to leave for less troubled pastures. Others, I hope most, will decide to stay. No-one has the right to tell you what to do; that is your choice and I would not presume to advise you. But of one thing I am certain; it is easier to get things done, to be a force for good, in a young developing country with such potential as ours, than it is in the older, more populous countries of the English-speaking world. Sir Laurens van der Post, when he was here recently, spoke of problems being a country's greatest blessing because they are the raw materials out of which mankind and civilisations have renewed themselves. Not many of us are blessed with his cosmic view of things, and I often wish that our problems were not so seemingly intractable. But I remain hopeful that, with the human resources at our disposal, we shall overcome them and find what Walter Wriston calls "an alternative to ambiguity and doom."

The other day, I came upon this pessimistic commentary:

"It is a gloomy moment in the history of our country. Not in the lifetime of most men has there been so much grave and deep apprehension. Never has the future seemed so incalculable as this time. The domestic economic situation is in chaos. Our currency is weak throughout the world. Prices are so high as to be utterly impossible. The political cauldron seethes and bubbles with uncertainty. Russia hangs, as usual, like a cloud dark and silent upon the horizon. It is a solemn moment. Of our trouble no man can see the end."

Those words appeared in Harper's magazine in the US in **1847** – fourteen years before the Civil War.

May they serve as an antidote to despair about our future. America endured – and so shall we. But if we want this country to survive with democratic values intact, and to become one in which we can all live with a clear conscience, there is work to be done. This is no time to be sitting on the sidelines. □

WHITE POLITICS: a post-election assessment

How does white and especially Afrikaner-Nationalist politics shape up in the aftermath of the 1987 election? Appearances may be deceptive, in this case as well. The outcome of the election has proved a cruel blow to those who had been working for a general realignment in white politics and who thought they saw the signs that at long last the monolithic power of the National Party was beginning to crumble. Instead the National Party maintained and even consolidated its massive parliamentary majority and, somewhat unexpectedly, it was the more liberal opposition parties which could not hold their own in some of their traditional stamping grounds. Natal, for the first time ever, also elected a Nationalist majority, giving the NP a clean sweep of all four provinces and, following the election, it was the PFP, not even the official opposition any more, whose long term prospects looked very dim indeed. In short, the NP's hold on white politics had proved as strong as ever since coming to power in 1948.

But we should beware of jumping to conclusions. A decade of "reform" – politics has certainly brought home the truth of the old adage that **the more things change, the more they stay the same**. Sometimes, though, the converse may also hold: no change, or the appearances of it, can be just a front while crucial underlying changes are in fact taking place. The bare statistics of the NP's sustained parliamentary majority does not tell the whole story. Indeed, it is arguable that the National Party which has achieved such a massive victory in the 1987 white election is no longer the same National Party, or even the same **kind** of party, as the NP of 1948, 1960 or 1977.

This goes much deeper than the evident ideological shifts which have taken place in the NP since the days of Verwoerdian hegemony. Indeed, it may be misleading to continue to focus on the more pragmatic ideological stances of the current generation of NP-leaders: the main dynamic of the PW Botha "reform" – administration has already been spent. The 1987 election should properly be viewed in the context of the second State of Emergency, that is, in the light of the massive coercive clampdown with which the government responded in mid-1986 to the sustained political protests and insurrection that had swept the townships since September 1984. It was the NP government's hard line on security, rather than its more pragmatic stance on race and apartheid issues, which was so strongly supported by the majority of white voters. Fittingly President Botha interpreted the outcome of this "whites only" -election, held during a national state of emergency, as a mandate for the government to act against extra-parliamentary opposition and resistance.

Of course the split with the rightwing faction of Dr. Treurnicht in 1982, which led to the founding of the Conservative Party, was largely ideologically inspired. And the CP continues to project itself as the guardian of the

Verwoerdian ideological heritage. But too much should not be read into the fact that the rightwing parties managed to get some 26% of the vote. This is less than half of the electoral support which the NP mobilized for similar ideological positions only twenty years ago, while the economic and political condition of the mid-80s must be regarded as highly favourable to any rightwing opposition movement in white politics. That the rightwing parties did not succeed in doing much better than they did in this election is a further indication of the general decline in the significance of ideological factors.

What has happened to the NP, then, is not so much an ideological shift but a substantial change in the social composition and the character of its electoral support. Just who voted for the NP in 1987 as compared to, say, 1977? To start with, there has been a substantial increase of non-Afrikaner support for the NP. A detailed analysis of the electoral patterns must still be made, and from the nature of the case it will not be possible to calculate any very exact figures, but it is clear that country-wide the NP must have attracted well over 50% of English-speaking support. This includes substantial numbers of former PFP-voters, in confirmation of a similar trend in the 1983-referendum. Regionally the NP has finally managed to break through in the remaining non-Afrikaner ethnic strongholds in Natal, the Eastern Cape and the inner city of Johannesburg. And in social terms the PFP has been reduced to upper-middle class constituencies with the NP sweeping the board in English-speaking middle class and lower-middle class constituencies.

It is of course nothing new for the NP to attract substantial support from English-speaking voters. Even in 1966, with Dr. Verwoerd as leader, the NP achieved almost 40% of the total vote in the English-speaking stronghold of Natal. But in the past such non-Afrikaner support for the NP was grafted on to a solid core of ethnically mobilized Afrikaner nationalists. Up to the election of 1977, and following the demise of the United Party with its traditional hold on the residual Afrikaans "**Bloed Sappe**", the NP could count on the vote of well over 80% of Afrikaners. Moreover, due to the way in which the NP was meshed into a wide network of Afrikaner cultural and community organisations, ranging from the Dutch Reformed Church to the Broederbond, this was a particularly reliable and solid political constituency. To the majority of Afrikaner nationalists voting for the NP was part of a cultural movement and of a way of life: switching your vote to another party could be a traumatic experience. The NP certainly did not spurn the support from such floating voters as might come its way, but its political base was of a very different kind. Moreover a tightly knit structure of local branch committees, regional organisation, provincial and federal congresses and an

active spirit of internal democracy, mediated by both the parliamentary caucus and the Broederbond, ensured that the party leadership often was in close touch with its grass roots support while also allowing for some input by ordinary members in party policy. Despite the formidable presence of such towering figures as Malan, Strydom and Verwoerd, the NP's course was plotted, in a real sense, by a collective leadership.

In more than one way this would no longer be a valid description of the NP in the 1980s. The Afrikaner nationalist movement has lost much of its ideological fervour as well as its social cohesion, and the NP can no longer count on the overwhelming support of Afrikaner voters. Already in the 1981 election there were substantial defections to the HNP, especially in the Transvaal and amongst Afrikaner workers and lower middle class voters, as well as a significant rise in abstentions. The HNP did not win a single seat but gained some 13% of the total poll. The rightwing split from the NP in 1982 further accelerated this trend : the indications were that nation-wide Afrikaner support for the NP was down from over 80% to under 60% with an even lower figure in the Transvaal. This picture has essentially been confirmed by the outcome of the 1987 election. Of particular note is the fact that in Transvaal the NP drew well below 50% of Afrikaner support, while a majority of those who did vote for the NP were probably non-Afrikaners. This is a far cry from the Transvaal NP of Strydom and Verwoerd and, in fact, in some ways it may be closer to the electoral profile of the old United Party! In other regions though, and especially in the Cape, there has been much greater continuity in the NP's political base and profile.

Concurrently with these changes in the ethnic make-up of the NP's electoral support there have been extensive changes in its internal dynamics and organisation. The political significance of both the Broederbond and of the parliamentary caucus has, in different ways, been severely eroded. Provincial and federal congresses are increasingly manipulated and stage-managed so as to provide "mandates" for policy initiatives by the leadership rather than providing any real opportunity for democratic accountability or grassroots input. With few exceptions party membership at branch and constituency level is much less tightly organised than it used to be, while the leadership has become increasingly remote, inaccessible and isolated. If anything, the leadership is now meshed into the military, security and technocratic bureaucracies, while the media, and especially TV, has become the crucial means for mobilising electoral support for the party. The 1983-referendum was in all probability the first national electoral contest in which television played a decisive role. (Significantly, and almost without precedent, NP party organisers were way below the mark in their predictions of the extent of the "Yes"-majority). This trend has been continued in the 1987 election. According to many accounts it was above all the media presentation on security issues during the last few weeks which rallied large numbers of floating voters to support the NP. In short, the organisational cohesion and relative internal democracy of the old-style NP has given way to a less stable media-influenced plebiscitory endorsement.

It is in this context, too, that the other main development of the 1987 election, namely the rise of the "Independents" and the defection of the NP's academic support base, should be seen. The change, in terms of the 1984-Constitution, to an executive presidency has also affected the nature of the NP-leadership itself. Arguably the executive presidency has meant the end of the NP's collective leadership in any broad sense. Parliamentary backbenchers, Afrikaner academics and business leaders increasingly found that they no longer had the ready access to the leadership to which membership of the "inner circles" had accustomed them. More often than not the blame was put on Mr Botha's personality, and there was much resentment of his "management style", but in truth these were symptoms of underlying structural changes. The crunch came when a group of Stellenbosch academics, used to having insider access and proud of a longstanding tradition of "loyal dissent", found that the party leadership both resented their critical suggestions and were not prepared to make any gestures to accommodate these. And so, while the media persuaded large numbers of whites who had never been fervent Afrikaner nationalists or even party members to vote for the NP, the insider Afrikaner academics who had at long last become frustrated by the failures of the party's internal democratic processes went the other way and rallied around Denis Worrall and the Independents. When it came to counting the votes the intellectuals were, of course, very much in the minority but in the long run their defection may prove of greater significance to the future of the party than the media-induced support of any number of floating voters. (It remains to be seen to what extent the NP will make special efforts to draw its academic critics back into the fold – and how they will respond to such overtures.)

On closer analysis the NP's massive electoral victory in the 1987 election may thus be less solid than it would at first sight appear to be. Indeed there may well be circumstances, especially with the media taking a different line, in which a substantial number of those who voted for the NP this time round would be quite prepared to switch their allegiances once more. But in which direction? The Conservative Party may still have some growth potential among more conservative Afrikaner NP-members, but it is difficult to see how it will be able to attract the non-Afrikaner floating vote. The PFP is once again close to being marginalised, and the Independents have a long way to go to be anything but marginal. For the time being, the NP remains the only game in town – and it is in effective control of the media. Short of a major crisis in the contest of a rivalry for succession to the leadership, should P.W. Botha decide to retire, the NP looks set to continue its dominance of white politics well into the next decade.

The real challenges to NP-rule, of course, should not be sought in the "whites-only" parliamentary arena at all. Increasingly it is the extra-parliamentary forces which provide any effective opposition and resistance. It is to this confrontation that we must look for significant developments. It is to be hoped that this will take the form of political realignments rather than coercive showdowns.□

KALEIDOSCOPE

29th Parallel
 by David Robbins
 (Shuter and Shooter R27,50)

Entirely by coincidence I received **The 29th Parallel** on the day I completed Shiva Naipaul's **North of South**. My first attempt at **The 29th Parallel** was thus overshadowed by Naipaul's masterpiece. As a result I abandoned the book shortly after Robbins's departure from Ja Nee, Etienne le Roux's farm. Nonetheless this incomplete reading provided the incentive for a journey through Qwa Qwa into the southern Free State and rekindled an interest in the work of Le Roux. My second reading was more successful.

The 29th Parallel documents a journey across South Africa undertaken by David Robbins and a friend, presumably photographer Wyndham Hartley. Robbins explains this project as follows:

"My reasons had not been profound. To follow the 29th is to cross south Africa at its widest point. 'All you're going to see is platteland,' my friend had said. That was my other reason. 'I want to understand the country,' I had said, 'and I think the platteland is the place to make the attempt. Maybe things are simpler there. The cities are too cluttered.'"

This formulation, which is repeated on the back cover, is problematic. Robbins regards his reasons as unprofound. That is to say that they contain little insight. One of these reasons, however, is the daunting task of understanding South African society. Furthermore, on the basis of an unsubstantiated prejudice against urban areas Robbins feels that this is best done by traversing the platteland. By refusing to confront the cluttered cities, however, he places an adequate consideration of the economy beyond his scope with the result that he confines himself to the realm of the ideological justifications of apartheid

and the unpleasant consequences of this ideology which one encounters along the 29th parallel. This is an inadequate perspective from which to understand South Africa and is comparable to an attempt to understand a cell by means of a dissection that deliberately avoids the nucleus. In the absence of a methodology the unity of the work is provided by a line on the map: Robbins has strung a washing line across South Africa on which an assortment of other people's ideas and items of historical interest are suspended.

This is not to claim that the book is without value. As a document of a journey across South Africa it contains much that is of interest. One sees both similarities and differences in the manner in which South Africans have responded to varying environmental and social conditions. Furthermore Robbins holds discussions with several people thereby establishing a kaleidoscope of perspectives on South Africa. Nonetheless, even when considered as a travelogue **The 29th Parallel** is not entirely successful. This is partly due to Robbins constantly reiterating his intention to probe beneath the surface, to discover the underlying realities of South Africa; partly due to his occasional insensitivity in discussions and partly due to his style. Robbins, it seems, has little confidence in his writing for virtually every metaphor is either explained or strained to the point where it resembles a butterfly with its wings pulled off. One pictures him as a sincere man wilting under the relentless African sun. Indeed **The 29th Parallel** is best read neither as a political text nor as a travelogue but as the account of a man in search of a sense of belonging. □

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