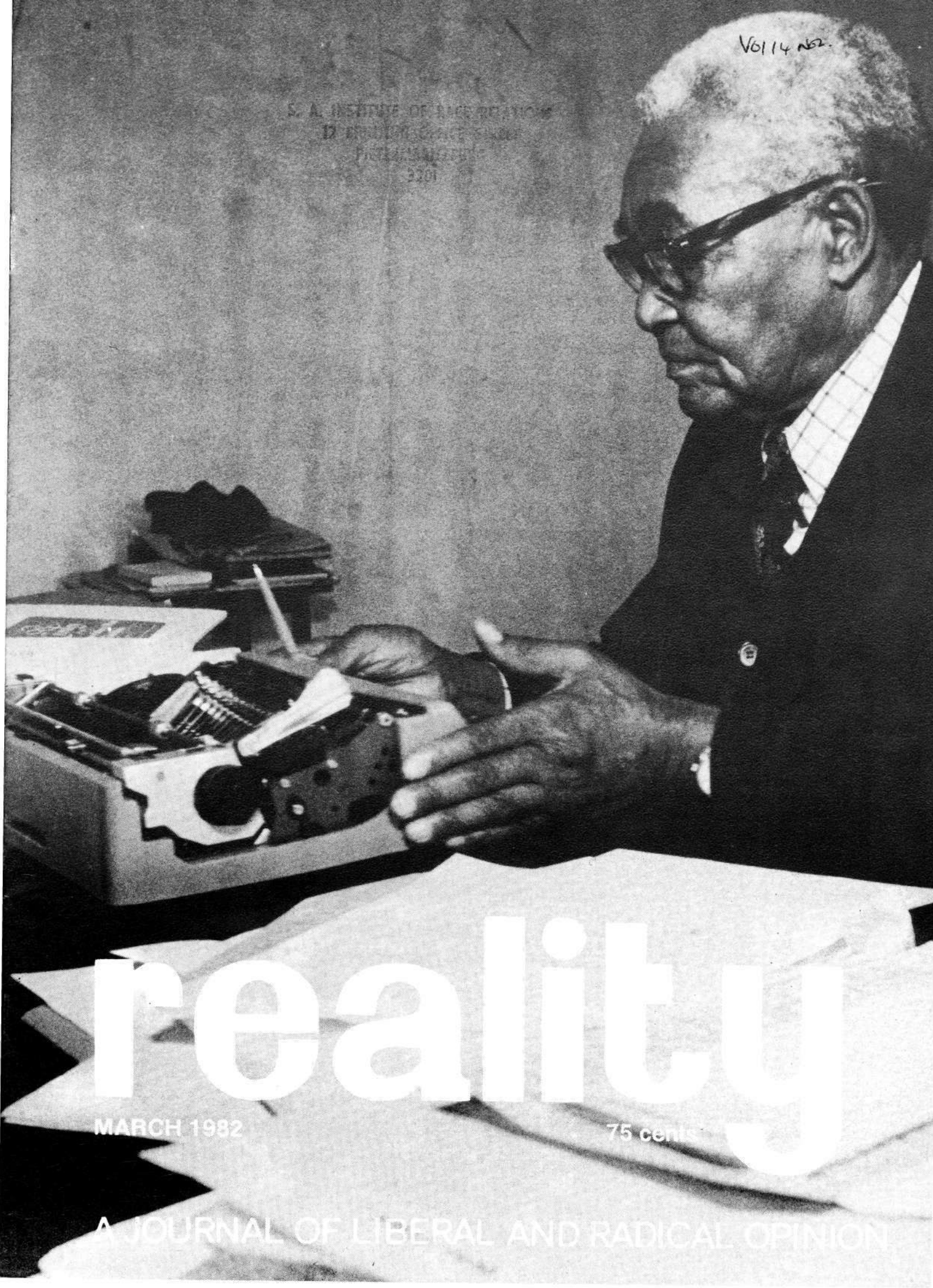


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Articles printed in Reality do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editorial Board.

EDITORIALS

1. THE MXENGE CASE

It is now just over four years since Dr. Rick Turner, banned Natal University lecturer and opponent of apartheid, was shot dead in his Durban home. Nobody saw his attacker and no arrest has yet been made. At the time of writing it is over two months since Mr. Griffiths Mxenge left his Durban office as usual one evening, to go home to Umlazi. He never got there. Next day his body was found near the Umlazi cycle track, horribly mutilated.

Mr. Mxenge was a Durban lawyer. Like Dr. Turner he was totally opposed to apartheid. For that opposition he had served a sentence on Robben Island and been both banned

and detained. In spite of this he continued to provide the defence in political trials and to be deeply involved in campaigning for change in South Africa.

The Turner murder raised the spectre of South Africa lurching towards the kind of South American situation where politically motivated murders are the order of the day and the murderers are hardly ever brought to trial.

If there has not been an arrest in the Mxenge murder by the time this REALITY appears, or is not one soon, that spectre will be raised again. □

2. THE MUNICIPAL VOTE

The Cape Town City Council wants the common municipal franchise, taken away from it by the Nationalist Government, restored to it. A municipal election has been fought in Johannesburg which might, for the first time, produce there a majority committed to a non-racial municipal franchise.

In Pietermaritzburg the City Council wants municipal representation extended to its citizens of all races.

Most remarkable of all, Durban, whose anti-Indian agitation forty years ago led to the legislation on which the present Group Areas Act was based, is now talking about having a common municipal roll.

In the present state of our society even a common roll

would unfortunately not produce an ideal state of affairs. Thirty years of the Group Areas Act have destroyed what multi-racial suburbs there used to be. The Government has eliminated what African freehold title there was in urban areas. The control of black municipal townships has been taken away from the City Councils and given to the central government. All of which means that most wards in any municipal election today would consist very largely, if not entirely, of voters of one race group, and that there might not be any black African voters at all. These are substantial drawbacks but they are no reason for not supporting these new campaigns in the big cities, which are at least one encouraging sign for the future as we enter 1982. □

POLITICAL CENSORSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA: AIMS AND CONSEQUENCES

by Christopher E Merrett

"Censorship ends in logical completeness when nobody is allowed to read any books except the books nobody can read." ¹

In AD 35, Caligula, fearful of the effect of Greek ideas on Rome, banned Homer's *Odyssey*. In the following nineteen centuries Caligula's spiritual heirs have banned Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Locke, Voltaire, Jefferson, Mill, Zola and Steinbeck among many authors. Indeed the work of almost every writer of worth has been banned at some time, in some place. Such censorship is a classic tool of totalitarian governments; the crime being opposition to the regime. Where the Soviets create the 'unperson' so in South Africa we have the 'banned Communist', the terms Communist and Marxist being used promiscuously by the Government as convenient and damning labels. Totalitarian ideology raises the State, the constitution and its agents to divine heights and sees individual morality and cultural freedom as subversive. Indeed moral questioning is denied to the individual as it has become the preserve of the State. Individual fulfillment through identification with the regime is justified by the semantic contrivance that since the State is the sum of individuals, so its authority is a manifestation of liberty. Of course, this is at odds with the West European tradition, in which a code of rules safeguards a minimum sphere of liberty for each person, protected from the licence of others. Totalitarian regimes long ago realized the advantages of possessing all the 'loudspeakers', by controlling education, the media, and public utterances in general.

Haight writes: "In the history of censorship, the oldest and most frequently recurring controls have been those designed to prevent unorthodox and unpopular expressions of political or religious opinions". ² The aim of this article is to discuss the current nature of such control in South Africa with particular emphasis on book production. This leaves aside the well known self censorship of the press, enmeshed in a labyrinthine web of laws which require editors to be lawyers rather than journalists, and ensure that the State is the only commentator on certain issues. The State has good reason to fear book and journal production. It controls and monopolizes the educational process, television and radio, while the Press, through fear of the law and the balance sheet is wrapped in its own cocoon of self restraint. Poetry and prose are powerful weapons — above all they have lasting qualities and their circulation can be vast. This is particularly galling to an authoritarian regime which sees literature in strictly utilitarian rather than aesthetic terms, a means to the end of shaping society in its image. However, free thought cannot be entirely eliminated. While people continue to think there will be others willing to record those thoughts, even if these remain unread for a long time. No State can control **entirely** either thought or writing, an exercise which could be contrasted in its futility with an attempt to swat all the flies in South Africa. Writers form an "island of separateness" ³, a powerful threat

to the establishment and total social control. In spite of persecution it must be a source of encouragement to writers to know that they are part of an indestructible force even though, for some, their writings will be relevant only to posterity.

Censorship in South Africa was codified in 1963 by the Publications and Entertainments Act which defined the term 'undesirable' in forty different ways but allowed a right of appeal to the Appellate Division, theoretically providing a check on the Publications Control Board by the application of judicial norms. Certainly open court hearings, such as that involving Andre Brink's *Kennis van die aand*, brought the censorship process into public debate. In 1974 the Publications Act abolished this right of appeal and set up its own appeal board. The Directorate of Publications continues to ban on the strength of an isolated part of a work and sees as its task " . . . to uphold a Christian view of life".⁴ The ban on the importation, continued printing, publication, display, retail and circulation of banned items was retained but a new category of 'possession prohibited' was instituted. Initially, transcripts of pleas and evidence which are part of strictly legal publications; technical, scientific and professional publications for the advance of the arts, science and literature; and religious publications, were exempted, but the last two categories were excised by the Publications Amendment Act of 1977. The Directorate of Publications also has the power of seizure and the right to enter premises on the suspicion that an undesirable publication is being printed or published, and the ability to ban all issues of any one title or the output of a specific publisher. The infamous section 47(2) contains the criteria for banning which are: a) obscenity and harm to public morals; b) blasphemy and offence to religious convictions; c) bringing of a section of the community into contempt or ridicule; d) harming relations between sections of the community; e) prejudicing the safety of the State, general welfare, peace and good order; f) disclosing certain judicial proceedings.

This, however, is not all. Censorship is also enshrined in the internal security legislation which has been built upon the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. This restrains the quoting of banned persons as well as the publications of those banned persons and listed organizations. Up to 31 December 1978, 1358 original banning orders had been served with enormous repercussions on the availability of literature. In addition, the African National Congress (ANC), South African Congress of Democrats, Pan African Congress (PAC), Defence and Aid, South African Communist Party and the African Resistance Movement are proscribed. Among many authors thus affected are Alex Hepple, Fatima Meer, Ronald Segal, Eddie Roux, Donald Woods, Helen Joseph, Brian Bunting, Alex La Guma, Denis Brutus and Ruth First.

It has been fashionable at times to discover humour in some of the more bizarre censorship decisions, most of which date from the early days of Customs embargoes — for example, the restrictions on **Black Beauty** and Hardy's **Return of the native**. Such levity can, however, easily mask the sinister and coldly logical nature of the censorship system. Censorship is not an aberration — it has become an integral part of South African society, one of the many unedifying faces on the obverse of the coin of rugby, braai, sunny skies and Chevrolet. Such suppression of freedom is accepted by a majority of White South Africans with the sheep-like conviction that 'the government must have its reasons' and 'there's no smoke without fire'. In other words, censorship is part of the grand design of apartheid and the 'total onslaught' myth which will not tolerate any questioning of the status quo. If Steiner is correct in saying that the written word is the "primary homeland"⁵ of the dispossessed, a most tenacious means of communication and an effective opponent of officially sanctioned mass values, the government has a formidable adversary. As Gordimer sums up: "No society in which a tiny minority must govern without consent over a vast majority can afford to submit any part of control of communication . . ." ⁶ It is an apt comment on apartheid that cerebral isolation is apparently essential for its survival, and this is put into context by Royston: "Apartheid is not a catastrophe . . . it is a system of routine deprivation and disruption"⁷; and Gordimer, who describes censorship as an octopus of thought surveillance. Censorship is part of a system which seeks to bury certain ideas and even to ensure that people are forgotten, as in the case of banned persons.⁸

Perversely the government appears to think that Blacks are unaware of their own repression and that if censorship controls dissemination of grievances the latter will somehow vaporize. Paternalism is too innocuous a word to describe this process in which the government is using literature as an ideological weapon to reconcile people to the roles in South African society determined for them on the basis of racial classification. This central myth of the system is supported by censorship such that the latter will not disappear until the mythology is dismantled. Any apparent amelioration of the law simply conceals a shift in purpose. Writers who see themselves as creative individuals, pointing out options for society's future and bringing to society's attention the matters it might prefer to ignore, are bound to clash head on with the totalitarian state. The latter is frightened by the truth and displays the sort of amorality which censors love across racial barriers but permits the gratuitous violence which encourages a war psychosis. Apartheid is based on repression and censorship is a vital cog in that system, using information and thought control to stifle healthy doubt, questioning and cynicism.

It has already been suggested that complete censorship is an impossible objective to fulfil. It is also possible to argue that the South African system is so inefficient that it defeats its own ends, although the writer who read a story from a manuscript in Iowa to find it banned 'publisher unknown' in the Government Gazette, might not agree. Certainly there is a looseness in the system which thwarts total control. For example, when a banned person dies, he or she is unbanned and books become freely available until individually banned by the Directorate of Publications. There is no definitive official publication containing the names of all banned or listed persons. In any case it would be impossible to remove from library shelves every book or journal with references to or by, edited by, or contributed to, by such persons. Furthermore, some titles are banned in hard or soft-

back only. The organizational obstacles are massive and policing so difficult that in practice every library has a selection of the thoughts of banned persons on its open shelves. On the other hand the complexity of the Law is such that those who enforce it clearly do not understand all the implications. This is particularly true of bannings under internal security legislation where queries directed to the Department of Justice have simply been ignored. Whether complexity of regulations and a deafening silence in response to questions aid or frustrate liberty is debatable. The resultant uncertainty and even fear would seem to suggest the latter and low usage of banned book collections means that the system works.

The process of banning books can also be seen as self-defeating in the sense that it draws attention to titles and endows them with a mysterious power which they might not otherwise deserve. Certainly some of the more turgid Marxist writings might become more alluring because they are known to be out of favour with the regime. Brink draws attention to the fact that censorship can provide stimulation for the writer in a closed society, and make obvious to him what he ought to do. "When the conspiracy of lies surrounding me demands of me to silence the one word of truth given to me, that word becomes the one word I wish to utter above all others; and at the same time it is the word my metaphysical situation, my historical situation and my own craft demand of me to utter."⁹

Writers carry the optimism of the conviction that truth will triumph and that literature can celebrate the true humanity of man as opposed to enforced patterns of behaviour, by identifying with the oppressed and exposing the lie. Indeed Pierre van den Berghe maintains^{9a} that the optimum milieu for a creative intelligentsia is an unjust and indefensible society with a moderately and inefficiently repressive regime and an urban population living at above starvation level. Clearly South Africa fits this model, as did Fanon's Algeria, Voltaire's Bourbon France and Tolstoy's Czarist Russia. In addition, he claims, such a political dispensation is tailor made for revolution. It is interesting to note that South African literary prizes are invariably awarded to left wing writers: Achmed Dangor (Mofolo-Plomer prize), Breytenbach and La Guma (Hertzog prize), Le Roux, Brink and Gordimer (CNA prize). As the last writer points out, establishment, right wing South Africa is bankrupt in a literary sense.

Conversely the censorship system has caused many writers to flee South Africa. Such exiles can no longer draw on their experiences or the language and thought of South Africa. The continued control of those who stay has had the effect of driving Black writers underground and reinforcing that wall built between Black experience and grievance and those Whites who wish to know about them. The banning, for example, of **Confused Mhlaba** by Khayaletu Mqayisa, on the grounds that the play harmed race relations and compromised the safety of the State,¹⁰ showed, according to the defence, that real events were being withheld from White South Africans and that the banning itself hurt race relations as it reduced the potential for mutual understanding. Not only is all South Africa denied access to thinking of radical Black Africa and formative political and social thinking in the Free World, but Whites are to remain ignorant of the feelings of fellow citizens. Literature written by Blacks, dealing in depth with the Black condition, is immediately a target for suppression. Grant comments that to avoid contravening the law you have to be ". . . either illiterate, philistine or an avid reader of the Government Gazette."¹¹

Nevertheless some courageous publishers continue to print the riskier literature, for example Ad Donker, Ravan, Bateleur and David Philip. In recent years there has been a tendency to turn to poetry. It is less explicit, often cryptic and perhaps less easily understood by the censors, who might in any case expect it to be less popular. It is also quicker to write in an urgent situation and is becoming increasingly political in content, as the banning of James Matthews' *Cry Rage* has shown. Loss of freedom for writers has encouraged loyalty to the struggle against repression, although the resultant jargon is not always the best vehicle for literary expression.

Brink draws attention to the growth of a clandestine literature on Soviet lines: *tamisdat* (published abroad); and *samisdat* (underground circulation). As in Moscow, literature is an instrument for political change with the surreptitious sale of books on Soweto streets, fly-by-night drama performances, poetry readings and pamphlet distribution. Two thousand copies of *A dry white season* were distributed under the imprint Taurus before Brink's book was banned in an early example of *samisdat* literature. Writers have become agents for political change to the extent that the security police are interested in the chairman of the writers' association, PEN.

It has become common to hear of the liberalization of the censorship system. Such a facile judgement seems to be based on confusion between the interdependence of censorship and apartheid, and a more liberal attitude on the part of the authorities towards nudes and swear words. The release from banning of Gordimer's *Burger's daughter*, Brink's *A dry white season* and Le Roux's *Magersfontein* can be seen as a cynical attempt to buy off White authors and drive a wedge between White and Black writers. That this is merely a change of emphasis is shown by the simultaneous banning of Matshoba's *Call me not a man*. Censorship has become more sophisticated but no less dangerous and the concept of the 'enlightened censor' has no validity. The 'probable reader' has replaced that curious species the 'average South African' as a criterion for assessment and 'quality of literature' has been invoked. In fact this is a smokescreen for crude censorship based on colour – the main consideration is what the Black masses might read as intellectuals articulate those grievances which could otherwise remain unexpressed. Black writing is feared and therefore controlled because it is inspirational. Satire, for example, is now given a freer rein but it is more appropriate to Whites, Blacks being too close to the struggle. Consideration of literary merit is thus a political contrivance, and in any case denies the right for poor quality literature to be read and judged as such. From time to time apologists of censorship try to conjure up a more liberal mood. Leighton, for example, exhorts writers to use fantasy: "If you are not allowed to criticize the government or its agencies, then describe the antics of pigs, as Orwell does in *Animal Farm*." 12

Brink suggests that exceptions have been made of a few well known and coincidentally internationally recognized White writers. This has had the side effect of disseminating radical literature. For example, *Burger's daughter* contains a banned pamphlet of Soweto Students' Council and *Rumours of Rain* reproduces much of the court testimony of Bram Fischer. In a sense writers are donning the mantle of journalist but this is allowed as an exception, fitting neatly into a society run on the basis of permits. There is no liberalization in a system which grants those permits to Whites but denies them to Blacks. Nadine Gordimer refused to appeal against the ban on *Burger's daughter* as this would legitimize the system and South Africa was treated to the bizarre spectacle

of the Directorate of Publications appealing against its own ban to itself. If the severity of the system is an indication of the effectiveness of those it is designed to contain, then it is possible that the authorities feel they have neutralized the radical Whites. Gordimer also claims that White description of Black suffering by proxy is paradoxically acceptable in a way in which similar Black writing is not, thus involving White writers, often unwilling, in a privileged position. The fact that contentious topics may now be discussed if written in a sophisticated idiom in no way obscures the fact that a different psychology is being used towards the same repressed end. Nor has there been a downturn in absolute numbers of bannings. In fact Silver has shown, through a study of the Government Gazette of the period 1974 – 8, a steady increase in the total number, in the proportion of 'possession prohibited' items and the relative number of political bannings. Student publications in particular have been hard hit.

Censorship contains an explicit attack on academic freedom. Welsh asks if it is possible to be a scholar of integrity in South Africa and yet remain within the law. Studies of Marxism and Black nationalism and literature have in particular been obstructed. Academics have to travel abroad to keep up to date and publication is accompanied by extreme nervousness. In the case of banned or listed persons, all their output is proscribed regardless of political or other content. For example, Ruth First's work cannot ordinarily be consulted in South Africa but this includes straightforward history in the form of a biography of Olive Schreiner. For those academics of strong political convictions there is the problem that applications for the use of material legitimize the system. Garson claims that "The greatest danger is the temptation simply to cease asking the questions that can only be answered by using the censored material." 13

It is of course a well known fact that authoritarian regimes enlist the general public as willing or unwilling, witting or unwitting, agents of the control process. Such an ambitious rein on free thought and its dissemination would hardly otherwise be possible. Prominent among the agents of the censorship system is the librarian, who administers the process by which access, for bona fide study purposes, is possible to banned material. An academic library's open exemption permits the use of banned books within the library or makes them available for loan on the authority of a supervisor, subject to a certain amount of form filling, and restrictions on access and photocopying. Similarly the exemption helps academics who wish to acquire such books for academic research purposes. In the case of 'possession prohibited' and internal security bannings, a library has to seek permission to hold each title. Such titles may only be used for study purposes after individual application to the Directorate of Publications or Department of Justice as appropriate, a Catch 22 situation which requires the motivation to use a book which by definition has yet to be seen by the user. The response of librarians to this system has been varied. Some have aided and abetted censorship by acting in a timid fashion, placing restrictions on or simply failing to order books which might be banned. Three libraries in the South African Library Association survey of 1978 did not include banned books in the main catalogue and a number use unnecessarily complex issue systems. Such circumspect actions effectively build a second censorship system on top of the government's. The library profession as a whole likes to pride itself on its unified opposition to censorship. This apparent liberal standpoint begins to ring hollow when it is closely examined, for it comprises a call to the Government to amalgamate censorship legislation under one Act, so that all banned material may be listed in

the Government Gazette and Jacobsen's Index. In other words it is a desire for administrative tidiness which would make the task of the librarian easier and perhaps lessen possible tension between librarian and library user; but it contains no real attack on an undemocratic and unacademic system, and thus compromises with repression. Few librarians have thought beyond the issue of academic inconvenience, to the real issues facing society. The recent introduction into South African librarianship training of 'library philosophy and ethics' might attract some respect if it were to concern itself with the implications of the totalitarian state for the library. In addition to librarians, booksellers have now been inveigled into the system. The Department of Customs and Excise embargo on books is to end and booksellers will receive material direct. The fact that the booksellers will be liable to retrospective prosecution for stocking banned books, and even the cancellation of licences as a punishment, suggests that a self censorship system will be erected on top of that recorded in the Government Gazette. Booksellers will understandably be concerned with financial survival rather than political freedom. The Government has subtly shifted the onus for the policing of its censorship system to a non official agency. This is all the more significant when bearing in mind the increasing difficulties in staffing and effectively administering the massive bureaucracy which runs apartheid South Africa.

The question of self induced censorship has implications for publishing as a whole. The insistent hammering of the propaganda machine in general and the complexity of the censorship system in particular, have encouraged the assumption in the public mind that rights are even more restricted than the law actually allows. Thus is developed the caution in librarians and booksellers noted above, and so are destroyed basic beliefs in civil rights taken for granted in the Free World. For example, in 1971 Oxford University Press published the second volume of the **Oxford history of South Africa** and excluded from the 'South African edition' Leo Kuper's contribution 'African nationalism in South Africa, 1910 – 1964'. Kuper had spent two years preparing this work and points out that self censorship in his case would not only have been academically dishonest, but actually impossible given the topic. A scholarly account of the ANC is impossible without quoting the aims of the organization. OUP and the editors took the decision to omit the chapter from the 'South African edition' and substitute blank pages. In this case, as Kuper maintains, the publishers rather than the South African government were the censors, an act of self abnegation made to seem all the more ludicrous since the 'International edition' has never been banned, and can be bought, in South Africa. OUP explained that they felt that South African law could be infringed by publishing Kuper's work which illustrates well the three stage development of censorship : official action; writers' self censorship; and an inhibiting control by non government bodies. Barend van Niekerk describes the last as "... abdication in anticipating ...", with a "... tendency to extend the scope of impermissibility to a point well beyond the demands of the law." 15. The weight of repressive law in the last twenty five years has been such that "... (it) may at times appear to be impregnated by religious or mystical norms." 16

The 1974 Publications Act emphatically removed the censorship system from the rule of law, primarily by denying the right of appeal. Although the broad outlines of the system are enshrined in law, its administration and policing are carried out by a bureaucracy answerable only to itself,

dedicated to the imposition of mass values and denial of the right to question. As with other areas of apartheid legislation it is pertinent to query the degree of congruence between the intent of the law and its implementation by bureaucrats. Bureaucratic interpretation may vary with the time and demands of a particular situation, but at all times we are being told what is good for us in the name of a spurious vox populi. Such an edifice is tailor made for the dominance of sectional interests. The chairman of the government appointed Directorate of Publications can dictate literary norms so as to "... impose the greatest restraint on expression and the search for truth ... (ushering) in an era of intellectual torpor." 17

Censorship is one of the oldest tricks of the totalitarian trade, designed to counter the immense power of the written word and turn it to the advantage of the regime. Control of literature is an integral and cynical part of the apartheid system, even though some of the results may be counterproductive. The suggestion that censorship is being liberalized is a misreading of an attempt by the South African government to placate Whites and international opinion or, even more sinister, to split the literary World on racial lines. Of course it is a direct challenge to civil rights in general and academic freedom in particular. The practical problems inherent in the policing of such a vast system have led to the implicit recruitment of librarians, booksellers and publishers as its agents. Its success has largely stemmed from its bewildering complexity. South Africans do not expect to have rights and where these are obscured they are generally assumed not to exist. Caution is the watchword, such that self censorship by writers and publishers has created a climate as effective as the official banning system itself; or, censorship within the censorship system. Above all of course is the erosion of the rule of law, substituted by a bureaucracy answerable to nothing but a prevailing and sectional ideology. The Government and its Directorate of Publications can be likened to the proverbial blind man and his deaf friend. Significantly they would like us to be blind and deaf as well, but it is unlikely that they rather than radical writers will be vindicated by posterity. History has already shown the staying power of the written word. □

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THE A.N.C. RESURGENCE 1976-1981

by Tom Lodge

(An extract from his forthcoming book **BLACK RESISTANCE POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA 1945 –**

1981, to be published by Longmans)

In the five years which have elapsed since the Soweto uprising the African National Congress has re-emerged as the political group with probably the greatest degree of popular support within the black townships.¹ Already in the process of re-establishing a presence inside South Africa before June 1976, its military wing, Umkonto we Sizwe, was able to capitalise on the political exhilaration which was generated by the disturbances themselves in mounting an at times spectacular campaign of sabotage and guerilla warfare. The uprising was succeeded by the exodus of thousands of young men and women to Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana and many of these were to provide Umkonto with a new army of highly motivated and well-educated (in contrast to the recruits in the early 1960s) saboteurs. By mid 1978 South African security police chiefs estimated that approximately 4000 refugees were undergoing insurgent training in Angola, Libya and Tanzania, most of these under ANC auspices.² At the same time the police reckoned that 2 500 people had already been brought to court as a result of their participation in the sabotage campaign.³ Together with the scale and frequency of Umkonto attacks this makes it the most sustained violent rebellion in South African history and all the indications are that it will develop into a full-scale revolutionary war. A chronology of guerilla activity made in 1981 records 112 attacks and explosions between October 1976 and May 1981.⁴ In March 1978 it was reported that one explosion a week had taken place since the previous November.⁵

In contrast to the first Umkonto campaign, the targets, particularly in the 1980 – 1981 phase, have often been ones of considerable strategic or economic importance. They have included the synthetic oil refinery at Sasolburg (June 1980), power stations in the Eastern Transvaal (July 1981), and the Voortrekkerhoogte military base (August 1981). Police stations have been a favourite target, especially those in or near townships; Germiston, Daveyton, New Brighton, Chatsworth, Moroka, Soekmekaar and Booyens police stations were all subjected to grenade, rocket or bomb attacks between 1977 and 1980. As well as this, African security policemen have been assassinated on several occasions. From the events which have been reported in the press or which have emerged from trial evidence a historical pattern is beginning to become evident. 1977 to 1979 seem to have been years in which Umkonto was principally concerned with establishing its lines of communication and infiltration (which have been principally from Mozambique, and, until a clamp-down by local authority in mid 1978, Swaziland), setting up arms caches, as well as forming a cellular organisational structure in the main townships.⁶ In consequence the most dramatic incidents were in the form of gun battles in the North-Eastern border regions between guerillas and the police.

In most cases these resulted from police patrols intercepting guerilla units returning from the training camps but in some instances the guerillas themselves mounted attacks on police patrols in what was believed to be an attempt to divert attention from the flow of insurgents to the main urban centres on the Rand.⁷ Umkonto groups also tried to establish rudimentary bases and support groups in the countryside of the North-Eastern Transvaal: the attack on Soekmekaar police station was designed to enhance the ANC's popularity in an area recently affected by enforced resettlement.⁸ Meanwhile Molotov cocktails thrown at policemen's houses and railway bombings predominated in the reports of sabotage attempts.

From 1980, it appears, the aim seems to have been to select targets, the destruction of which would create the maximum popular resonance, first on the Rand, and then, possibly as a result of police pressure in Soweto, in Durban. The avowed purpose of the attacks has been demonstrative; one captured guerilla actually used the phrase 'armed propaganda',⁹ On the whole their intention seems to have been to inspire confidence amongst the dominated population rather than terror within the white community. Much of the violence has been directed at targets with a special significance for Africans; incidents which have involved the deaths of white civilians, the 1977 Goch street warehouse shootings or the Silverton Bank siege for example, do not appear to have been preconceived and have rather been the consequence of only superficially trained men being forced on to the defensive. In contrast with the earlier Umkonto campaign much more emphasis has been placed on co-ordinating sabotage efforts with local mass struggles; as well as the Soekmekaar attack in 1980, Soweto bombings were orchestrated with a popular campaign against rent increases. With the exception of the assassination of informers and other people regarded as collaborators (African security policemen, for example), the campaign's strategy has been guided by the principle that civilian casualties should be avoided.¹⁰ In August 1981, however, Oliver Tambo announced that the ANC would in future attack 'officials of Apartheid' (which in fact Umkonto insurgents had never had any inhibitions in doing) and that moreover there might arise 'combat situations' in which civilians could be killed.¹¹ A few days before Tambo's statement appeared in the foreign press (it was not reported inside South Africa) a bomb exploded in the main shopping centre of Port Elizabeth; unlike earlier inner-city explosions this one took place during working hours. It was seen at the time as a reprisal for the then recent murder in Salisbury of the ANC representative in Zimbabwe, Joe Gqabi. Gqabi, who had played an important role in the first Umkonto campaign, was one of the Robben Island prison veterans who had been chiefly responsible for reactivating an ANC leadership in Soweto in late 1975 and establishing

what ANC links existed with the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). He had gone into exile after his acquittal in one of the first major trials arising from the sabotage campaign.

Apart from the effects of Umkonto's sabotage campaign, the ANC's influence on popular political perceptions^{1 2} has been consolidated since 1976 by the re-emergence of open political discussion within the African community. Here the commercial press has played an important role: in 1980, for example, the Soweto daily newspaper, **The Post**, ran a 'Release Mandela' petition form in its columns for several months as well as helping to popularise the Freedom Charter. The Charter was taken up and adopted by several organisations including a new student association, formed in 1979, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). COSAS stands in conscious opposition to organisations which claim to be inspired by the precepts of Black Consciousness.

Meanwhile the ANC's external organisation has been untroubled by any serious dissension. This is all the more remarkable bearing in mind the huge infusion of new recruits, many of them from a background in which the ANC's leadership had little legitimacy. The organisation was well placed to cope with this sudden expansion; it had the equipment, the financial resources, and the training facilities (located mainly in Angola) required to transform these recruits into a guerilla force. In contrast with the 1960s, training periods have been short, militarily and politically extremely effective, and of course the possibilities of going into action have been for trained insurgents infinitely greater; all this has contributed to discipline and morale in the camps. In consequence ideological dissent within the leadership does not seem to have had much effect on rank and file. In particular there have been two dissident tendencies, both of which have involved dissatisfaction with the role of the South African Communist Party within the external movement. The first involved Okhela, the faction started in Paris in 1973 as a 'white consciousness' group with the apparent encouragement of Tambo who hoped it might counter-balance the influence of communists within the ANC. With the failure of Breytenbach's expedition Okhela had lost favour with the ANC establishment. The vetoing of an Okhela scheme to circulate Afrikaans 'samizdat' literature in South Africa confirmed a growing conviction among the remaining Okhela adherents that the ANC was racist in its attitude towards Afrikaners. Already increasingly antipathetic to the SACP, between 1976 and 1978 the Okhela group made overtures to the ANC African Nationalists then based in Algiers. In 1979 Okhela collapsed in the wake of its most influential spokesman's flight to South Africa and his subsequent admission of being a police informer.^{1 3} The African Nationalists were similarly discredited with Tennyson Makiwane's return to the Transkei and his enlistment in the Transkeian foreign service. In 1980 Makiwane was assassinated. Though the Transkeians blamed the ANC it may have been significant that he had been involved in a coup d'état conspiracy by former ANC and PAC men to overthrow the Matanzima administration.^{1 4}

The second group of dissenters developed from the new generation of South African marxist academics which had emerged at English universities in the early 1970's. Together with recent exiles who had been involved with the regeneration of African trade unions in South Africa they were gradually to become increasingly sceptical of the capacity of the SACP for creating a proletarian democracy, and in-

creasingly critical of the petty-bourgeois orientation of the ANC's exile leadership. Their criticisms were first of all centred on the work of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in which some of them were involved; in particular they disagreed with what they felt to be the dominant perception of SACTU's function — to serve as a 'signpost', directing workers to Umkonto we Sizwe.^{1 5} With the expulsion of the principal figures in this group, Martin Legassick, Rob Petersen, David Hemson and Paula Ensor, the ANC effectively cut itself off from a potentially creative source of intellectual stimulation. The rebels subsequently constituted themselves as a 'workers' tendency' within the ANC but because of their isolation from rank and file ANC membership their aim of helping to transform the nationalist movement into a truly working class organisation appears forlornly romantic.

Despite the fresh emphasis on insurgent activity the ANC's leadership has been careful not to neglect diplomacy. Here it has displayed considerable self-confidence and finesse. This is a field in which the Tambo leadership was always rather adept and in the post-Soweto years it has had to contend with several significant challenges. The first of these was posed by the emergence of a third exile force as a result of the arrival in European and African capitals of leaders from the South African Students' Organisation, Black People's Convention and SSRC. The less ideologically doctrinaire of these found little difficulty in joining the ANC but for those who subscribed fully to the tenets of Black Consciousness there were obvious objections to this. At the same time the disarray among the Pan-Africanists made them equally unacceptable. Furthermore there were substantial temptations to maintain a distance from the two exile organisations: European social democrats were keen to patronise a 'third force' free of soviet connections and more vital than the Pan-Africanist-Congress (PAC). From the mid 1970s under the direction of Lars-Gunner Eriksson, the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF) began channelling large sums of money to the Black-Consciousness-movement representatives both within and outside the country. According to a South African security policeman who infiltrated the IUEF, in 1978 through skillful lobbying of the various left-wing and social democrat groupings which financed the IUEF, the ANC was able to put a stop to this. Moreover the ANC succeeded in extracting an agreement from IUEF representatives that in future no South African projects would be funded without their approval.^{1 6} By late 1980 many of the principal figures in the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (which had been formally established the year before in London) were joining the ANC. These included Barney Pityana, one of the founders of SASO in 1969.^{1 7}

The episode was an indication of an increasingly determined effort by the ANC to gain for itself 'sole legitimate representative' status in the view of potential allies. Here it has been aided by the faction fighting in the PAC which prevented the latter from fully exploiting the victory of its erstwhile ally — Mugabe's ZANU — in the Zimbabwe elections. The ANC's guerilla units, incidentally, were reported to be fighting alongside Nkomo's ZAPU-oriented forces until the ceasefire. The appointment as the ANC's representative of Joe Gqabi, who like many of the ZANU military leaders was Chinese-trained, and who in addition had not been involved in any previous exile political activity, was tactful and astute.

Meanwhile, in London, Oliver Tambo arranged and attended his daughter's wedding in St. Paul's Cathedral and main-

tained (against strong internal pressure from the left wing of his organisation) discreet links with Gatsha Buthelezi. Even when finally compelled to attack the homeland leader for his behaviour during a Kwa Mashu school boycott in 1980, Tambo was nevertheless careful not to outrightly condemn the Inkatha movement. With the revival in South Africa of legal mass organisations with previous Congress associations the stodgily petit-bourgeois respectability of the Tambo leadership has an important function in ensuring that internal support for the ANC remains as widely-based as possible. The current enthusiasm for the Freedom Charter and the apparent downgrading of the more radical 'strategy and tactics' adopted at Morogoro¹⁸ may also be indicative of a realistic perception of the danger of alienating the steadily growing Black middle class. □

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5. **Rand Daily Mail**, 10 March 1978.
6. South African Institute of Race Relations, **Annual Survey of Race Relations, 198**, SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1981, p. 61.
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8. See report on Treason Trial, **Work in Progress**, no. 16 (February 1981), p. 3.
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11. **The Times**, (London), 13 April 1981 and 14 April 1981.
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15. Robert Petersen, 'Memorandum to the National Executive Committee of SACTU', London, 8 April 1979, p. 20.
16. See Ken Owen, 'War in the Shadows', **Sunday Times**, (Johannesburg), 19 October 1980.
17. **The Star**, 13 - 14 October 1980.
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SATV SIGNATURE TUNE

by Vortex

We plough their houses into the ground,
leaving just chairs and beds,
but if anyone voices a protest
we blame that onto the Reds.

We chop their families in two,
dividing wife from man,
but as soon as there's a word of complaint
that's part of the Russian plan.

We stop them in house or street or road,
demanding permit or pass,
but when blacks get angry it goes to prove
that Western views are a farce.

We deprive them all of citizenship,
we bully, detain and ban,
but still the Western world can't see
the threat of the Kremlin plan.

In the countryside of Namibia,
SWAPO fights for its rights:
why can't the outside world discern
that Brezhnev hates us whites?

What can we do to convince the West?
We've done almost all we can.
Perhaps some display of violence
will **prove** the overall plan.

SOME NOTES ON SELBY MSIMANG AND THE FOUNDING OF THE ANC.

by Peter Brown

January 1982 marked the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the organisation which later became the ANC.

There is only one person alive today who was present at that founding meeting, which was convened in Bloemfontein on January 12th, 1912, and which lasted for four days. He is Mr. H. Selby Msimang, who lives at Edendale, near Pietermaritzburg, and who turned 95 on December 13th, 1981. Apart from many other activities in which he still engages, Mr. Msimang has been a member of the board of Reality since it was founded.

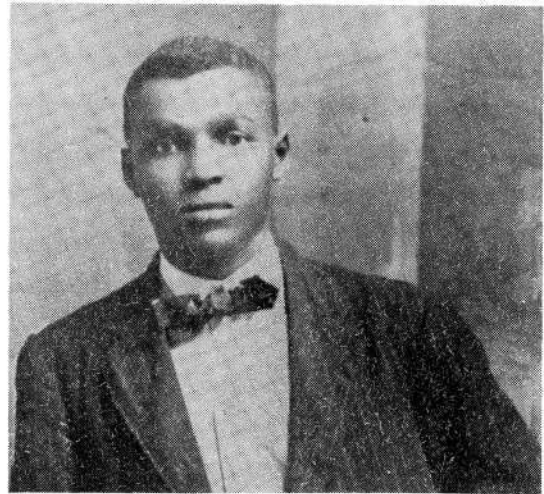
The man who inspired the 1912 conference was Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, an advocate practising in Johannesburg. Dr. Seme had been adopted by the Rev. Pixley of the American Board Mission and taken by him to be educated in America. He completed his studies there at Columbia University and then went on to Oxford, before returning to South Africa. He opened his legal office in Johannesburg and enrolled Selby Msimang as his clerk.

The African people had been dismayed by the concessions made to the defeated Boer Republics during the first decade of the century and their dismay turned to a profound sense of betrayal when, in the negotiations preceding Union, they found the Boers included and themselves excluded. They saw the Union as a simple ganging-up against them by white South Africa. In Seme's view the only possible response to this situation was to try to bring black South Africans together in one body to counter any attempts by the new white bloc to reduce their rights and status.

In collaboration with Sol Plaatje, the writer, then living in Kimberley, Seme invited to the conference leading figures from all four provinces and from the Protectorates. Some six hundred people attended. They were all men ... although not long after the conference a women's section of the movement was established under the leadership of Mrs. Maxeke, another person who had been educated in America. People at the conference who made a specially deep impression on the young Msimang were S. M. Makgatho of Pretoria, a retired Kilnerton teacher, Sol Plaatje, and Thomas Mapikela of Bloemfontein. Of the traditional leaders who made important contributions he recalls Chief Mantsioea of the Barolong, from Thaba Nchu, Chief Maama of Basutoland, and Prince Malunga of Swaziland, uncle of the present King Sobhuza.

The conference formed the S.A. Native National Congress whose membership was restricted to Africans and whose principal aim was to be the eradication of tribalism and the instilling in every black man the idea that he was first and foremost an African and only secondly a tribesman.

To create the framework within which these aims would be pursued a constitutional committee was elected whose task it was to draw up a constitution for the new organisation after the adjournment of the conference. Its convenor was to be Richard Msimang, Selby's elder brother, another lawyer. Richard's clerk at the time was Selope Thema, another name to become famous in the struggle for African rights. Sol Plaatje was elected secretary of the Constitutional Committee, but as he was living in Kimberley and most of the Committee's



Selby Msimang in 1912

work took place in Johannesburg, Selby Msimang became his Johannesburg based assistant. Another prominent figure in the Constitutional Committee was Saul Msane whose roots, like Selby's, lay in Edendale, but who was then working on the Jubilee Mine in Johannesburg.

Seme, who had been so prominent in the calling of the conference, was strangely not elected to any office in the new organisation. He was a member of its executive but the Presidency went to Dr. J. L. Dube, who had not been able to attend the Bloemfontein gathering, and the vice-Presidency to S. M. Makgatho.

Selby Msimang continued his association with the SANNC and later the ANC until its banning. He became its provincial secretary in Natal in the election which brought Chief Albert Luthuli to his first important post in the organisation, that of Natal Provincial President. From 1953, when he helped found the non-racial Liberal Party of South Africa, Selby Msimang devoted most of his political energies to that organisation, but his membership of the ANC continued and his contacts with it remained close. The energy he devoted to the Liberal Party was such that it earned him a banning order when he was in his late seventies and a prison sentence, for forgetting to make the weekly report to the police station which that banning order required of him, when he was nearly 80.

And even when the Liberal Party was closed down by the Improper Interference Act, and when he had reached an age when most people had long since retired, his fight for right and justice continued. Last year, shortly before his 95th birthday, he went with me to meet a delegation of people ejected from Charlestown who were having great difficulty in re-establishing themselves in the area of Kwa-Zulu to which they had been removed. His response? To offer to lead a deputation to see the relevant Kwa-Zulu Minister at Ulundi. To travel to Ulundi from Edendale and back again in a day is no small undertaking for a man in the prime of his life. It never seemed to occur to Selby Msimang, at the age of 95, that duty no longer required it of him.

The spirit of 1912 lives on in Selby Msimang in 1982, as it no doubt does in a great many other people whose association with the organisation he helped found has been much more recent than his. □

STRADDLING REALITIES:

THE URBAN FOUNDATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA.

by Peter Wilkinson

Until perhaps as recently as a year ago, it would have been tempting to construct a 'radical' critique of the Urban Foundation (UF) around the apparent compatibility of the organization's programme with the objectives of the 'Total Strategy' formulated by the government of P. W. Botha. Indeed, elements of such an analysis remain central to the argument that will be advanced here. But since the events of the past year have exposed the deep-seated antipathy of an important section of the government's electoral base towards any attempt at 'meaningful reform', the inadequacy of a critique which simply continues to assert the UF's complicity in 'Total Strategy' must be confronted.

After the recent much-heralded 'report back' conference between Botha and leading businessmen fizzled out inconclusively in Cape Town, it would be merely naive to attempt to maintain the notion of an *unproblematic* partnership of 'state' and 'capital' in a joint project aimed at co-opting the black 'middle classes' under the guise of implementing an essentially hollow reform strategy. What I shall be trying to do in this article, therefore, is to shift the analysis of the UF's role in contemporary South Africa beyond the terms of this now somewhat unproductive polemic. I propose to approach the problem in two stages. In the first place, I want to locate the UF within the framework of the present (November 1981) conjuncture in South Africa by tracing, briefly and somewhat schematically, certain developments bearing on the role of the Foundation during the nearly five years that have elapsed since it was initially set up in December 1976. Secondly, I shall argue that these developments have left the UF in a position in which it is poised between the reality in which it first took shape and the reality of the present, and I shall explore some of the dimensions of the critical strategic choice with which I believe it is now faced.

Throughout, in order to keep the length of this article within acceptable limits and to avoid unnecessary references to matters that have received extensive coverage in the press, I will assume a degree of broad familiarity on the part of readers with the more general aims and activities of the UF.¹

To even the most casual observer, it must be clear that the South African 'situation' has changed dramatically since 1976. In order to pick out those developments which I consider to have had particular significance in relation to the role of the UF, I shall delineate a necessarily rather arbitrary-seeming division of this period into three phases. It is, of course, obvious that such periodizations - particularly of such recent history - must be directly derived from certain analytical premises. Although these will

not be explicitly discussed here, I hope that they will become evident in the course of the analysis itself.

PHASE 1: JUNE 1976 – SEPTEMBER 1978

During the earlier part of this phase, much of the state's energy and attention was committed to re-establishing control in the townships, often with extensive and unrestrained use of force. It is understandable, then, that the initiative towards the social reforms that were obviously necessary if some degree of legitimacy for the South African system was to be maintained in the black communities, fell, in the first instance, to certain of the more progressively inclined representatives of commerce and industry. Specifically, we see that as early as August 1976, Harry Oppenheimer and Anton Rupert met in London to discuss the idea of a 'businessmen's conference on the quality of life in urban communities.'

The immediate result of the conference - which was held three months later in November - was a decision by the businessmen present to form a Foundation, financed and managed by the 'private sector', to "promote improvement of the quality of life" in the black townships "on a non-racial, non-political basis".² The Foundation was formally established as an "Incorporated Association not for Gain" in February 1977, and within three months had begun "a relentless and unremitting pursuit" of its primary objective of obtaining a secure form of tenure for Africans in urban areas - which was eventually to bear fruit in the passage of the 99-year leasehold legislation as an amendment to the Bantu (Urban Areas) Act in June 1978. A year earlier, in June 1977, the UF had initiated "intensive negotiations" with "organized commerce and industry" to secure agreement on a code of employment practice - the joint UF-SACCOLA code published in December 1977 - which predated by some two months the state's appointment of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions to enquire into "labour legislation and other related matters" and "legislation affecting the utilization of manpower", respectively.³

Yet, within the state apparatus during this early period, repression of the revolt in the townships was not the sole matter of concern. In March 1977, P. W. Botha (then Minister of Defence and possibly still smarting from the experience of the aborted invasion of Angola) tabled a White Paper calling for a "total national strategy . . . applicable at all levels and to all functions of the state according to an integrated pattern in order to achieve the national aims within the framework of specific policies".⁴ Initially, endorsement of this notion of 'Total Strategy' appears to have remained confined to a certain faction within the government and to that branch of the state

apparatus most directly involved in its formulation, i.e. the military.

Just eighteen months later, however, with the Vorster regime collapsing massively and ignominiously in the face of the 'Information scandal', the proponents of 'Total Strategy' were suddenly – if by an extremely narrow margin – elevated to the commanding heights of state power by Botha's accession to the premiership. It is this event which I take to have signalled the start of the second phase.

PHASE 2: SEPTEMBER 1978 – JANUARY 1981

Within weeks of Botha's assumption of office, the most immediate threat to his newly acquired power was summarily removed with Connie Mulder's resignation from the Cabinet as a result of further disclosures in the Information scandal. Botha and his allies – including Mulder's replacement as Minister of Plural Relations/Bantu Affairs, Piet Koornhof – moved rapidly to consolidate their position at the head of what was shortly being hailed as a truly *verligte* Nationalism. In a display of mutual goodwill unknown since the Nationalists had taken up the reins of government in 1948, overtures were made by the government to the business community to draw it into the implementation of 'Total Strategy' – always an integral part of the overall concept⁵ – and appeared to be meeting with considerable success.

The growing rapprochement between business interests and the government attained what in retrospect seems to have been its high point at the Prime Minister's Carlton conference of November 1979. It is possible that the conference was intended to smooth the way for an at least tacit 'division of labour' in the task of maintaining political, social and economic stability in South Africa which would be accepted by both sides.⁶ Broadly speaking, this would have involved the government in a restructuring of its political policies to facilitate a more 'rational' economic exploitation of the sub-continent's human and natural resources, while the private sector would have been responsible for tackling problems supposedly susceptible to amelioration by the expansion of the 'free enterprise' system, such as rural under-development, unemployment, an inadequately skilled labour force and the relative absence of a black entrepreneurial class.

In this atmosphere, it would not have been unreasonable to anticipate that the role already taken on by the UF in dealing with the unfortunate effects of 'old-style' apartheid on the 'quality of life' in the townships could take on a new and expanded effectivity. Certainly, the notion of 'quality of life' encompassed many of the problems which had been identified as open to private sector involvement. In terms of its charter, moreover, the UF had been committed to intervention in a "complementary role to the public sector", which meant that there would "at all times be full consultation with central, provincial, and local Government in the planning and execution of projects".⁷ It may well have seemed that the Botha government was attempting to implement sufficient real, if still partial reforms of its inherited apartheid policy to give the Foundation's efforts to contribute to "the creation of a long-term, socio-political climate in which free enterprise itself will survive"⁸ a good chance of succeeding.

In terms of what were apparently considered to be the essential preconditions for such survival – articulated by Anton Rupert as "a free market economy, a stable middle class with the necessary security of tenure, personal security and a feeling of hope for a betterment (sic) in the hearts

of all our people"⁹ – the programme of action that had been adopted by the UF made substantial sense. The 99-year leasehold scheme it had so assiduously championed would provide the "necessary security of tenure" for the development of a "stable black middle class", at least until full freehold tenure could be won for it. And, for those unable to aspire to the leasehold legislation's 'rights of occupancy' in such developing elite suburbs as Selection Park and Beverley Hills (in Soweto), pilot 'self help' low-cost housing projects at Khutsong (near Carletonville) and Inanda (near Durban) would provide at least the possibility of "hope for a betterment" in the material conditions of their daily existence. In the meantime, the further possibilities of a "free", or at least "freer market economy" and of "personal security" for at least some of the African inhabitants of the urban areas were under review by the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions.

Gradually, however, throughout 1980, the euphoria generated in some circles by the Carlton conference began to wane as it became increasingly clear that the 'reformist' faction within the National Party was not as tightly in control of either the party or the government as had been believed. Initiatives introduced by one state department were sometimes fiercely resisted by another – as, for instance, in the refusal of the Department of Community Development to consider the merits of 'self-help' site and service schemes proposed by the Department of Co-operation and Development. Ministers found that their ability to direct the implementation of Cabinet policy within their own departments was more constrained than they had imagined – leading in Koornhof's case to the discovery of the much-parodied 'tortoise' syndrome within the civil service. And incursions by the far right into the NP's traditional electoral base in a series of by-elections held during the year exacerbated growing tensions within the party. Finally, late in January 1981, in an attempt to re-unite a political constituency rapidly fracturing, under the pressures of both external events (escalation of the 'border' war, the consolidation of a nominally socialist government in Zimbabwe) and internal economic problems (the increasingly difficult situation of the white working class), along a bewildering variety of stress lines not previously visible, Botha dissolved Parliament and called a general election for April.

Before we proceed to examine the third and last phase I have identified here, I want briefly to point to two further tendencies which characterized the latter part of the second phase and which have continued into the third and possibly up to the present. The first of these was the dawning realisation by the leaders of the private sector's reform initiative that the Botha government might yet prove to be either unable or unwilling to actually deliver its expected package of policy reforms. This was signalled as early as June 1979 by the failure of the Riekert Commission's report (and even more so the subsequent White Paper) to confront what the *Financial Mail* identified as "the central weakness of the labour bureaux – their part in enforcing the pass laws".¹⁰ The growing disenchantment of progressive business leaders with the Botha regime was further reflected in the declining prominence accorded by the opposition press to the notion of 'Total Strategy' as 1980 wore on. In effect, it appears that the 'report-back' conference held in Cape Town in November 1981 has probably delivered the coup de grâce to whatever credibility the concept might still have retained.

The second tendency during this period to which I wish to

draw attention was the emergence, and gradual but still fragile consolidation, of a number of increasingly effective community-based movements committed to the ideal of establishing participatory democracy at the grass roots level of local government. In the major metropolitan centres, organizations able to mobilize substantial popular support in the black townships around specific issues like inadequate housing and facilities, or rent increases, arose to challenge the idea that the question of the 'quality of life' in the townships could genuinely be posed on a 'non-racial, non-political basis'. In particular, at the level of their political practices, such organisations consistently refused to operate through the medium of the blatantly unrepresentative institutions set up by the state in its efforts to secure the co-operation of 'community leaders'. Further, at the level of their understanding of the fundamental nature of the 'quality of life' problem, these organizations began to question the validity of any 'solution' which in their perception remained merely ameliorative, dealing with the symptoms rather than the underlying structural causes of the problem.¹¹

I will argue that the appearance of this social force in the townships now presents to the UF both a more complex arena in which to operate, and the possibility of making its intervention more effective in terms of its own criterion of "an over-riding emphasis on projects based on self-help and self-determination".¹²

If, in the assertion of the Foundation's executive director that "community involvement in every aspect of the Foundation is critical to its success",¹³ 'community involvement' is meant in any but the most cynical of terms, it seems unlikely that a choice between ignoring such movements and working with them as independent and authentically representative organs of popular 'self-determination' can be avoided. In order to explore this hypothesis more fully, however, I wish to bring the analysis in which we have been engaged forward to the present by considering the last phase in the periodization that I have proposed.

PHASE 3: JANUARY 1981 – PRESENT

The run up to the election in April was marked by the reversion of most of the so-called 'reformists' in the National Party to the unbridled *swart gevaar* tactics so successfully employed by the party during the 1950s and 1960s. Even such masters of the ambiguous statement of 'reformist' intention as Piet Koornhof adopted the traditional postures as panic over the extent of defections of the faithful to the far right mounted. In the event, the results of the election provided unequivocal evidence of a substantial, if still relatively contained disaffection within the white working class and elements of the middle classes with the direction taken by the party under Botha's leadership.¹⁴

The effect of the election results has been to deepen a trend which had already become apparent as 'Total Strategy' began to dissolve under the pressure of events during 1980: a propensity by the government to sequester the more controversial issues confronting it within the terms of reference of a Commission of Enquiry whose findings, when they were eventually released, could be either simply ignored or referred to yet another Commission or Committee for further consideration. In the face of this now seemingly chronic inability of the government to move positively on the issue of 'meaningful reform', the alienation of that section of the business community committed to such reform has continued.

Clear signs of impatience with the government's failure to

advance beyond this impasse and an awareness of its consequences in relation to the credibility of private sector initiatives have been expressed in some of the more recent documents published by the UF. In the Foundation's *Annual Review* for 1980/81, for instance, produced in February 1981, the executive director wrote:

Our future relationships with this important constituency (i.e. "Black communities") are unfortunately not dependent only upon our own efforts. Our third constituency (i.e. the "public sector") controls much of the access that we have to opportunities that demonstrate the private sector's willingness to contribute to structural change in South Africa.¹⁵

But, in addition to these problems, the UF has evidently also begun to encounter difficulties with the remaining member of its supposed "three constituencies"¹⁶ Again in the *Annual Review* for 1981, Judge Steyn — after noting that the initial impetus of fund-raising by the Foundation had not been maintained during the previous year — stated that it was his belief that "save for a small group of leaders of commerce and industry, much of the business community is unaware of or indifferent to the real significance which urgent Black aspirations have assumed in Africa."¹⁷

One might speculate that the origins of the resistance experienced by the UF in this quarter in its efforts to contribute to "structural change in South Africa" is not unconnected with the emergence of the so-called 'New Right' in Britain and the United States. If as a businessman, you believe merely that "the business of business is business" or, more philosophically, subscribe to the doctrine that Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' really does promote the 'public interest' most effectively,¹⁸ then you can have little in the way of common cause with an organization which "pre-eminently . . . reflects the concern and sensitivity of the business community in respect of unacceptable aspects of our society and its structures".¹⁹ (Other, of course, than on the purely charitable basis which the UF emphatically rejects.²⁰

In any event, when this possibility is coupled with an explicit recognition by the UF of the deep divisions existing within black communities — which, however, is followed immediately by what seems to be an indication of the Foundation's intention to plump for "the support of much of the acknowledged Black leadership"²¹ — it is evident that it is no longer actually attempting to mediate between "three constituencies". The Foundation is, in fact, now enmeshed in the extraordinarily complex set of deep-rooted antagonisms and conflicts which traverse the entire social fabric of South Africa. Even if at one time the notion of the 'public sector', the 'private sector' and the 'Black communities' as relatively unified or homogeneous entities (or 'constituencies') approximated to reality, it clearly no longer does so.

Furthermore I want to put forward the proposition that the UF itself is not a privileged institution and that like the state or any other element of the social structure in a society like South Africa, it remains subject to internal clashes of the values and practices generated within it by the 'external' structure. In particular, there exists in the Foundation's programme of action and its mode of operation a real tension between the idea of 'free enterprise' and the notion of 'social responsibility', which in turn is cross-cut by the tension between an emphasis on community 'self-determination' — surely only realisable

in a fully democratic society — and a pragmatic commitment to working through the existing channels of power. It is these tensions, I believe, which developments over the last five years have brought to the surface and which the Foundation must now confront.

The most significant of the factors defining the situation within which the UF must attempt to resolve these conflicts is, I would argue, the entry into the social and political arena of the new, democratically organized community movements. In a very immediate and concrete way, these organizations have defined a field of action which to an important degree overlaps, even if it does not exhaust, the areas of intervention mapped out by the Foundation. At the same time, the objectives and methods developed by the Foundation under what I have suggested were the quite different circumstances of an earlier period have apparently begun to encounter the increasingly difficult and fragmented conditions that now prevail. The notion of "three constituencies" can no longer be sustained when the divisions within those 'constituencies' have deepened and widened to the extent that they quite obviously have over the last two years.

So, with its conventional wisdom rendered untenable by the course of events, and with its accepted methods rapidly disintegrating in the cauldron of the present, it seems that the UF is now faced with a critical strategic choice. Either — despite what are clearly major differences in both long-term goals, and the more immediate questions of tactics and 'style' — it can attempt to forge links with the developing community movements which remain unequivocally committed to those structural changes without which the 'quality of life' in the townships of South Africa cannot, in any *fundamental* way, be improved. Or it can continue to cling to the approach that has served it with a certain, limited efficacy in the past — and face the prospect of being overtaken by history. Whichever choice it makes, South Africa, driven by profound contradictions and struggles which we can still only dimly comprehend, lurches on into the future. Straddling the reality of its past and the reality of its present, the Urban Foundation stands poised at the moment of its crisis. We await, with interest, an indication of the direction it will take □

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Other source materials have included the reports and information bulletins published regularly by the Foundation, as well as various pamphlets, brochures and broadsheets issued by it.

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12. 'The Urban Foundation — an investment in the future of South Africa', p. 1.
13. Judge J. H. Steyn; quoted in **Special Report : The Urban Foundation — two years on**, p. 19.
14. Cf. C. Charney, 'Towards stasis or rupture? An analysis of the 1981 South African general election', paper presented to the African Studies seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, 24th August 1981.
15. 'Review by the Executive Director', **The Urban Foundation: Annual Review 1980/81**, February 1981, p. 5. Cf. text of the press statement released by the UF on 21 May 1981; included in a brochure issued by the UF, n.d., n.p.
16. Cf. 'On a tightrope connected to three constituencies', **Special Report: The Urban Foundation — two years on**, pp. 11-19.
17. 'Review by the Executive Director', *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
18. A statement by Stephen Mulholland (now editor of the **Financial Mail**) which explicitly embraces both aspects of this view is included in **Special Report: The Urban Foundation — two years on**, p. 6; see also p. 3.
19. **The Urban Foundation: Annual Review 1980/81**, pp. 2-3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 2: "It must be emphasized that the Urban Foundation is not a charitable institution that makes hand-outs to people . . . It is the arm of free enterprise working as an agent towards the development of a society in which acceptable human values can be maintained."

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A TERRIBLE BEAUTY

ALAN PATON: AH, BUT YOUR LAND IS BEAUTIFUL. David Philip, 1981.

Reviewed by Colin Gardner.

Ah, but your land is beautiful is a beautiful and striking book. As its title suggests, it is a book about a particular land, South Africa --- South Africa in the fifties. The country at that period provides the setting, the scene, but it is also the overall protagonist --- this land, with its absorbing, dramatic, frightening variety of people and groups and opinions and emotions, one group of course firmly and fiercely dominating the others. The book is also, in many important respects, about South Africa today, for many of the country's problems and issues are essentially what they were twenty-five years ago. And beyond that, **Ah, but your land is beautiful** suggests a great deal about people and society and politics in general. (Some believe that one cannot make or embody partly ahistorical generalizations about people and society and politics; this work, like all significant imaginative creations, shows that one can.)

The title further suggests that the book is ironical --- and it is, in a number of different ways. But the deepest irony is that the sardonic phrase of the title turns out also to be strangely true. For all the land's ugliness, or rather within it --- the naked or the subtle use of force, the cruelty, the foolishness, the unimaginativeness, the elaborate chain-reactions of incomprehension --- there emerges both the beauty of honest and urgent generosity and the perhaps complementary quality of tragedy, of sadly fulfilled and contemplated failure and suffering --- that complex human experience of which W.B. Yeats wrote:

All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

But what **kind** of book is it? Is it a novel, as it seems to claim? Yes; but it is a *novel of a rather novel kind*. Alan Paton in his long career has written novels, short stories, poems, history, biographies, autobiographies, essays on religious, political and sociological themes. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** manages, astonishingly, to encompass all of these modes, in a broad, deliberately loose and yet delicately structured framework. Besides being a fresh, lively and immediately accessible dramatic narrative, it is also a **tour de force** of unification, of recapitulation --- the work of a man in his late seventies who feels the need (to quote Yeats again) to hammer his thoughts into a unity. The book is the first volume in a trilogy: as I write this review the second work is being forged. We can only hope and pray that the fire will continue at full heat.

When one reviews a book some months after it has first appeared, it is impossible not to be aware of what some of the earlier reviewers have said. In effect one finds oneself reviewing the reviewers as well as the book itself; one is entering a conversation that has already begun. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** has received many glowing notices;

but some reviewers, even some of those who have praised the book warmly, have raised questions or expressed criticisms or doubts. Because some of these criticisms and doubts seem to me to be interesting, well worthy of consideration, I shall use them as starting-points for an elaboration of what I have said already and for the introduction of some further points.

Perhaps the largest problem that some reviewers have raised is the question of fact and fiction. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** offers us, beside its purely fictional characters, characters that are based wholly or partly on real people (some of them still alive), and historical personalities who are given their actual names or names closely resembling their actual names (for example, Dr Hendrik for Dr Verwoerd); and the events of the book --- its dilemmas, its crises, its public happenings --- are also an amalgam of the fictional, the part-factual and the factual. How exactly can such a book be called a novel? How do we respond --- what area of our minds is called upon? Didn't Aristotle, whose views in these matters retain a remarkable potency, draw a clear distinction between literature and history?

The questions, as I've said, make sense --- though I must add that one or two critics have asked them, or some of them, with an insistence or a self-confidence which suggests, to me, a certain incapacity for open imaginative response (the worst of the critics that I have come across is the person who discussed the book on the SABC: he began his generally uncomplimentary and ungracious review by saying that the book had been described as a novel and then adding: "That it certainly is not"; perhaps the SABC encourages arrogance, in this as in other matters). Aristotle suggested that whereas the historian has to try to stick to and interpret "the facts" as they are known, the poet --- by which he meant the imaginative writer --- can select and invent, and thus has the freedom to create his or her vision of the essence of what human beings and life are: "while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts". That distinction seems to me valid and valuable in many ways, but it doesn't take cognizance of the fact that there are various stations on the route between "pure history" and "pure poetry". All good historical writing, to start with, is rather more creative than Aristotle's formulation seems to allow; and a significant amount of obviously imaginative literature has a distinct historical dimension. Take Shakespeare's plays as an example. In the comedies, most of the tragedies and the last plays, he was almost totally free to devise his own "facts"; but in the English history plays and the Roman plays he was in various ways tied to historical events. For all his imaginative magic, Shakespeare could not have made Julius Caesar kill Brutus or have pictured Henry V as either an atheist or a coward. Why? Because he was dealing with facts and events which his audience knew of, realities which had a power and a

significance independent of, or over-and-above, the literary text in which they appeared.

In the 170 years since Walter Scott began to write novels, there has been a great volume and variety of historical fiction; probably the greatest of historical novels, or partly historical novels, is Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1872). But a distinctive creation of the twentieth century -- a century which has seen, to some extent under the influence or the challenge of Marxism, a growing awareness of the individual as a being caught up in society --- has been the novel of contemporary history, or the "political novel". Occasionally, as in Conrad's works, such novels have managed to retain a fairly high degree of fictionality, but on the whole, inevitably, "political novels" have chosen to plant their feet in clearly recognizable soil. I think one might state as a fair generalization that novels can afford to be very largely fictional when their primary focus is on individual human destinies and relationships (as it is, superbly, in Jane Austen, in Henry James, in D.H. Lawrence), but that the element of fictionality is bound to be reduced or contained when the focus has partly shifted on to societies and their workings --- for, in our world of swift communications and easy awareness, a wholly fictional society is apt to take us to the brink of fantasy. But the decision of many "political novelists" to write about a clearly recognizable society --- usually their own --- is not simply a matter of tactics. It is also, very often, a question of conviction, of passion. Some of the most impressive writing of this century has been the expression of what one might call anguished and analytical patriotism. One thinks, for example, of John Dos Passos's trilogy *U.S.A.* (1938), in which the narrative is interspersed with impressionistic meditations, biographies of prominent Americans, and excerpts from contemporary headlines, advertisements, popular songs and newspaper articles. One thinks too, to come to more recent times, of the impassioned, committed works of Solzhenitsyn, all trained on his loved and hated Russia, and --- at the other side of the world, so similar in seriousness though so different in tone --- of Norman Mailer, who gave the two parts of his book *The Armies of the Night* (1968), which is about one of the great anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, the sub-titles "History as a Novel" and "The Novel as History". In fact a word has been devised to indicate this new way of blending fiction and fact --- "faction".

It is in this context, clearly, that one must locate Alan Paton, though I don't wish to suggest that his writing is derivative. He is a manifestation, a very notable and influential manifestation, of the spirit of the times (in Africa, indeed, he has of course been a forerunner), writing of a country and a socio-political system which cry out for imaginative treatment (in every sense of that phrase --- and it is significant that Paton, like some of the other writers I have mentioned, has committed himself to action as well as to literature). *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) is in many respects an orthodox novel, but it is far from being merely that: the very title alerts one to the crucial fact that, with all its universalizing tendency, it is also a book about South Africa, and it contains (could he have taken a hint from Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)?) a good deal of socio-political comment and analysis side-by-side with or as part of the narrative. Paton's second novel, *Too Late the Phalarope* (1953), though very firmly rooted in Afrikaner society, is the most orthodox or "classical" of his major fictions. A superbly constructed tale of brooding tragedy, it has a self-contained inevitability a little reminiscent of a Greek tragedy. After that, Paton gave himself for fifteen years to direct

political involvement --- these were the years of the Liberal Party --- and he moved into various modes of writing, all of them related in one way or another to South Africa and its continuing psycho-socio-political crisis. And now, twenty-eight years after *Too Late the Phalarope*, catching up all the strands of his personality and every facet of his complex concern about this country, about its people and about all people, he has produced this novel, a work of passionate and inspired "faction".

He has himself made it clear that what finally helped him back to the novel form, what suggested the possibility of casting his vision of South Africa in the fifties in the overall framework of a story or a group of related stories, was the example of Paul Scott's "Raj Quartet" (1975), the four novels in which Scott dramatizes his sense of people in India in the important transitional years 1942 -- 1947. Paton's book is in many ways different from Scott's books (the chief point of resemblance is the evoking of the complication of certain historical situations and dilemmas through the differing viewpoints of various participants); but a crucial dissimilarity is that while Scott was bringing to life a historical phase which he had lived through but which had come to a fairly clear end, Paton is creating and recreating a series of past situations, tensions and conflicts which reached no proper conclusion and are largely still with us. Both the many interwoven rhythms of the book's style and the canny patterning of its themes constantly remind us of this, constantly carry us forward from the past, which has a shape, towards the fluid present and future.

Another problem that has been raised by a number of critics, a problem in some respects related to what I have been discussing, is that of characterization. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** offers us a great range of people, from a wide spectrum of South African life, and all of them (as far as I can judge) are made real and alive as they are looked at and as they speak to us. But, though some characters are clearly far more central than others, none is developed in full, rich and intimate detail. It is in my view a mistake to attempt to judge **Ah, but your land is beautiful** by exactly the criteria that one would use when reading a work by a more traditional novelist. Paton's characterization has always tended to be functional --- that is, his characters have a vivid existence of their own but this existence is fairly precisely channelled to meet the demands of the story --- and besides, as I said earlier, the true protagonist is South Africa, the beloved and "beautiful" country. What we find, then, is not a set of elaborately interlocking full-length portraits, as in a nineteenth-century novel, but a subtly-ordered succession of inter-related conversations, confrontations, conflicts, crises and commentaries, each having about it something of the feeling and the form of a short-story or a vignette. And yet all of these "moments", and the momentarily vital characters who bring them about, are to be seen as rich, varied brush-strokes in the dynamic, sharply-drawn but compassionate full-scale portrayal of South Africa, past and present. A special, a central feature of that portrayal is the emerging Liberal Party, a group of people of many different types, colours and classes, each one of them dedicated bravely, hopefully, often rather forlornly, to the ideal of an open and free society. Of course some of the crises and confrontations that the book dramatizes stick in one's mind more firmly than others (perhaps each reader will have her or his own impressions and preferences), but the most obviously striking episodes, while being or seeming thoroughly "authentic" and indeed apparently almost matter-of-fact, are gripping, moving and

profound in such a way as to take one to the very heart-beat of the human condition, the condition, here, of human beings locked in social tensions which appear to be un-resolvable.

Having said that, I must move on to another criticism or problem, a criticism that hasn't appeared in many reviews but which lurks, I suspect, within some of the more radical members of the intellectual community. This criticism, or this set of criticisms, might go something like this: "A novel about the fifties, the **people** of the fifties, is hardly relevant to our present concerns. The socio-political problems of this country aren't going to be solved by novels of any kind; but a valid political novel written in the nineteen-eighties should at least offer a structural analysis of the real forces at work in South African society. All that **Ah, but your land is beautiful** can give us are the stale, impotent and slightly sentimental hopes and wishes of the defunct Liberal Party."

One could spend a whole article commenting on that statement --- a statement which seems to me unwise but not unintelligent. I must limit myself to a few remarks. The first is this: nobody imagines that a novel can **solve** socio-political problems, but it may play its part, as the novels of Dickens played their part in nineteenth-century Britain, in helping to produce the attitudes which will contribute towards solutions. As far as the contents of **Ah, but your land is beautiful** are concerned, I must clarify a point and partly concede a point to the radical critics. Paton's new novel has indeed, for a student of contemporary politics, some of the limitations of a work set in the fifties, a period when the dynamics of our society were in some ways different from what they are now (black factory workers, for example, who play no part in the novel, were then rather fewer in number, less skilled and less organized). It is true however that, for all the richness and inclusiveness of its "coverage" of the South African scene, the book doesn't encompass certain types and classes of people, and it doesn't present or dramatize an interpretation of the underlying economic situation in the country --- that aspect of the life of a social formation which for a Marxist is all-important. No book, however, a liberal must add, can hope to do everything; and in fact this novel does at least offer, through the agency of Professor Eddie Roos, a quiet comment on the Liberal Party's not having faced up to the economic dimension of the socio-political problem --- and in this way the novel does, so to speak, delineate its own boundary-lines. Similarly --- the book's mode is, throughout, one of dramatic juxtaposition --- a white judge's washing and kissing the feet of a black woman in a church, an event which is given considerable weight in the novel as a whole, is dismissed scathingly and eloquently by the Marxist journal **New Guard**. The radical viewpoint, then, is not one that the novel's world of discourse is unaware of.

Having made a partial concession to my radical critic of **Ah, but your land is beautiful**, I must go on to say that,

as far as I can judge from the fictional performances that I know, structural analyses of the socio-economic forces at work in society --- which are of course of vital importance for our understanding of society and for our calculation of concrete political strategies for change --- are in general more appropriate in lectures, articles and treatises than in works of literature. More important --- and to give a positive corollary of what I have just said --- the essential task of a novelist (and in this respect Paton turns out to be traditional in his allegiances) is to bring out and to highlight the drama and the variety and the painful complexity of human emotions, judgments and interactions. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** creates and presents many of the problems of South Africa in the fifties (and now), the human problems, and then enacts --- or rather, enacts the enacting of --- an attempted solution to those problems in the form of the Liberal Party. But (it might be asked) isn't the Liberal Party **passé**? And doesn't the known failure of the Liberal Party to transform South African society cast a shadow of gloom over the whole book?

Yes and no. **Ah, but your land is beautiful** is, as I suggested in my opening remarks, an austere, a tragic book. We are never left in any doubt that the story that unfolds before us --- a story that rolls on, in a more literal mode, through our present lives --- is one of extreme gravity. But at the same time, paradoxically (it is like the shot-silk effect of the title), we have a sense --- in many of the main characters, and in Alan Paton himself --- of a certain resilience and indestructibility. In the pages of this novel, but in a heightened and fictionalized way, the Liberal Party and its principal personalities come back to life again. And what is being quietly and artistically suggested, besides so many other things, is that the Liberal Party --- or the frame of mind and spirit that it stood for: love of people, hatred of injustice --- is still alive, for all its past failures and perhaps its miscalculations, and that it is a key to whatever livable future there may be.

"Is that so?" my radical critic may ask. "Is that realistic?" Well, ask Mr. Mugabe. His official policy of reconciliation in Zimbabwe seems to put forward the view that --- when the big changes have come, in whatever ways they may have come --- if a society is to continue and grow as a cohesive communal unit, no matter what precise political and economic policies are being put into action, people are going to have to learn to know and understand and respect one another, and to abandon practices of prejudice, domination and injustice. This is what, from their different starting-points and in their different and partly inadequate ways, the central figures in **Ah, but your land is beautiful** --- Prem Bodasingh, Robert Mansfield, Emmanuel Nene, Philip Drummond, Wilberforce Nhlapo, and the others --- strive for, heroically, sensibly, sometimes pathetically. But this surely, in the end, and at the deepest imaginative level, is what literature is and has always been about, and is also what it means to try to live in a truly human way in South Africa. □

WORKING FOR BOROKO

MARIAN LACEY: WORKING FOR BOROKO. RAVAN PRESS JOHANNESBURG 1981 (R9.95)

Reviewed by Christopher Saunders

From about 1970 the dominant 'liberal' approach to South African history writing in English was increasingly challenged by 'radical' writers. Some were Marxists; all were influenced, directly or indirectly, by the revival of Marxism in Western intellectual life. What gave unity to the new radical school was the concern of these writers to challenge liberal interpretations and to argue the determinant importance of material, and especially productive forces. Within a decade the radical challenge had revitalised the study of South African history. By 1981 the radicals were claiming that 'We've largely won our battles against the liberals . . . In the social sciences, we dictate the terms.'¹

At first the radical challenge came from outside South Africa, from political exiles like Harold Wolpe and Martin Legassick, from those studying at British universities, like Colin Bundy, Mike Morris and Rob Davies, and from occasional 'outsiders' like the Canadian Frederick Johnstone. But in the later 1970s important radical work began to emerge from within the country, from South Africans who had returned after completing their studies and from others who were radicalised by exposure to the growing corpus of work and by living in post-Soweto South Africa. Marian Lacey is one of the latter, her book a revised version of an M.A. thesis for Rhodes University. Published locally, it is uncompromisingly written from a radical perspective. Much of it is a detailed examination of the policies of the Hertzog government from the election victory of 1924 until Hertzog and Smuts joined forces in the early 1930s. Viewed through her materialist lenses, this well-known period in our history takes on a very new appearance and a new significance.

Lacey argues that the 1924-32 period was crucial in the establishment of a coercive labour system in South Africa, the roots of which she traces to Cecil Rhodes' Glen Grey Act of 1894. The supply of African labour to the mines, to the white-owned farms and (relatively neglected in her book) to the new secondary industries in the towns became controlled in an almost totalitarian way by the state; for the first time the entire country was subjected to a common system to exploit (she prefers 'super-exploit') African labour. 'Working for Boroko' meant working for nothing. This, then, not Jim Crow segregation, Group Areas or Bantustans, is the essence of apartheid; Hertzog becomes its principal architect. To support her argument, Lacey investigates such issues as the amount of land set aside for African occupation after 1913, what happened to African squatters and labour tenants on white farms, and how 'Stallardism', mainly through the mechanism of the Urban Areas Acts, rigidly controlled the entry of Africans to the towns and degraded and isolated them in urban locations. 'Civilized labour' is seen as a device on the one hand to divide the working class to prevent it threatening capitalist interests and on the other to facilitate the super-exploitation of Africans. The Cape African franchise was eroded and then destroyed, she argues, not because white politicians feared that it posed any real threat to white supremacy — it clearly did not — but because until it was removed the Cape could not be included in the uniform coercive labour system.

Lacey spends a lot of time attacking previous interpretations.

Many of her blows find their mark, for the older liberal historians were indeed often exceedingly blind to the importance of material forces and interests, and too easily took ideology at face value. C. M. Tatz, in particular, is taken to task; much of Lacey's book is a critical reworking of the first half of his M.A., published as *Shadow and Substance* (University of Natal Press, 1962; moving to Australia, Tatz turned his attention to that country's race relations). She is of course right to stress the very different needs of mining and farming capital: whereas mine-owners wanted the reserves preserved and extended because they were the labour pool from which migrant labour was drawn, farmers believed the reserves robbed them of their labour and they did not want to see any more land in African hands. But here as elsewhere in her book she carries her argument too far, tending to see Smuts and Hertzog as mere agents of mining and farming capital respectively, and their parties as mainly expressing such monolithic interests. Hers is good corrective history, provocative and stimulating, but the overall picture she draws is too crude, too mechanistic, and she is too ready to make unsubstantiated assertions. If previous historians overstressed the importance of race and ideology, she goes to the other extreme in dismissing them as merely secondary and derivative. Adept at seeing how exploitation fostered racism, she refuses to recognise that non-economic variables — racism, the differential access to political power — helped shape the labour system. Nor did Smuts, Hertzog and others set out as deliberately as she implies to create such a system, while even the capitalists were not always agreed on what was in their best interests. The super-exploitation of Africans removed a massive potential market. And while she has shown very clearly that some major steps towards the modern apartheid state were taken in her period, she surely exaggerates its significance when she argues that the main struts of that state emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s. She is right to stress continuities in policy, but the Nationalist victory of 1948 was hardly of no significance in the evolution of the coercive labour system, and its implementation.

Working for Boroko, then, is an important but-flawed book. Radicals will be disappointed that she does not have more to say about the class struggle and the way it helped to shape the evolving labour system. While she makes good use of statements by members of the African petty bourgeoisie, the experience of the mass of the people does not come alive in her pages. Yet in providing the first full radical interpretation of this period based on a considerable body of evidence, she has indeed moved discussion of it onto new ground. Now it is up to today's generation of liberal historians to show that the radicals, having fired some powerful shots, have not gained lasting control of the field. One hopes that Lacey's challenge will soon be met by a more subtle work which closely examines a wider range of sources than she does to test her assertions and which, while incorporating her insights, will treat her period and topic in a more balanced fashion, in all their true complexity. □

1. Charles van Onselen, quoted in *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 4 September 1981, p. 8.

THE KHOIKHOI REBELLION

S. NEWTON-KING AND V.C. MALHERBE, *THE KHOIKHOI REBELLION IN THE EASTERN CAPE (1799 – 1803)*, CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, 1981. 136 pp.

Reviewed by J. B. Peires

Some people prefer to believe that the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) were destroyed by the smallpox epidemics of 1713 and 1755, acts of God which conveniently absolved the white man of blame for the fate of the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape Province and made it possible to claim the region as part of the white homeland. This comfortable myth, like others of its type, has not survived historical investigation. The American historian Richard Elphick demonstrated in his unfortunately-named *Kraal and Castle* (1977) that it was the Colonial disruption which made it impossible for the Khoi to recover from the smallpox disasters of the eighteenth century. **The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape** documents another episode in the history of Khoi subjugation. It shows that the Khoi reacted to their destiny with resistance rather than indolence, and it shows that the Colonial authorities were directly responsible for enforcing that destiny.

By 1795 there was not a single legally recognised free Khoi community west of the Fish River. Most Khoi lived as labourers on their old lands, now divided among the Boers, and even those who managed to maintain an independent existence in the remote corners of the frontier were insecure and without legal rights. The Khoi saw their opportunity in 1799, when British troops arrived to fight the rebel Boers of Graaf-Reinet. They flocked to the British standard in the hope of getting their country back. "Restore," said Klaas Stuurman, "the country of which our fathers were despoiled by the Dutch and we have nothing more to ask." However, it was the aim of the British authorities to restore the old order rather than to replace it, and when the Boer rebellion collapsed, they came to view their erstwhile allies with embarrassment and worse. When the British began to withdraw, the Khoi — left once again at the mercy of their old masters — began to plunder. They were joined by the Xhosa, who feared that the British sought to push them back across the alleged boundary of the Fish River.

In September 1799, Acting Governor Dundas arrived to make separate peaces with Boers, Xhosa and Khoi. The terms of the Khoi peace are instructive inasmuch as they illustrate the British view of the Khoi place in the Colonial scheme of things. Whereas the Xhosa were treated as an independent people, the Khoi were regarded as rebellious subjects, declared to possess no landed property of their own, and expected to enter the service of the Colonists as they had done before. The British did attempt to rectify what they saw as the legitimate grievances of the Khoi with respect to their conditions of service. The liberal Maynier was reappointed to the Drostdy of Graaf-Reinet, and he attempted to introduce a more just system of labour relations. This satisfied nobody. The Boers did not want interference with 'their' servants, and the Khoi did not want to be servants at all. Three hundred families of Khoi refugees, refusing to return to their former masters, camped out in Graaff-Reinet as tangible proof of the transient and

dislocated state of society. Others remained as warrior bands on the margins of Boer settlements which they raided with increasing frequency.

From the British point of view, it was now the Khoi rather than the Boers who were disturbing the order of the frontier. They authorised Tjaart van der Walt to form a commando, and he smote the heathen hip and thigh. The Khoi were weakened by Klaas Stuurman's defection to a precarious neutrality, but after Van der Walt was killed in action, they turned the tide once again. From the Tsitsikamma forest to the lower Fish, there remained only fifteen Boer families, including the ferocious Thomas Ferreira who dubbed his redoubt, "the last outpost of the Christian empire." Just at this point, the First British Occupation gave way to the Batavian regime. General Janssens bought off Klaas Stuurman with a small farm for his personal use. Boezak, the leading bitterender, was killed by his Xhosa allies. Slowly the Boers returned to their abandoned farms, and, for reasons that cannot be fully explained, the Khoi did not resist them. Never again were they to be in a position to reoccupy the lands of their forefathers.

Of special interest is the role of the missionary, Dr J. T. van der Kemp. On the one hand, Newton-King rescues him from the misrepresentations of **The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest**. Van der Kemp genuinely believed in the equality of all men in the sight of God. He said that his Khoi converts were destined for Heaven, and that Boers who opposed their instruction were servants of Satan. At great personal risk, he defended the right of the Khoi refugees in Graaff-Reinet to worship in the village church, and when this became untenable, he led them to a kind of freedom at Bethelsdorp. On the other hand, Van der Kemp's opposition to violence and his respect for Colonial jurisdiction led him to undermine Khoi unity, particularly with regard to Klaas Stuurman. Newton-King writes that "while he did much to alleviate suffering in the short-term, his actions were harmful to the long-term interests of the indigenous people, for by virtue of his personal integrity and his genuine desire to see their lot improved, he lent credence to schemes which offered no hope of permanent independence.. but were rather designed to meet the short-term needs of the government's pacification strategy." Indeed, the liberal dilemma in South Africa is an old one.

Khoi independence fell victim more to the Colonial need for labour than to the Colonial need for land. In 1803, there was land enough to spare for mission settlements and farms for the Khoi captains and their people. But neither Dundas in 1799 nor Janssens in 1803 was prepared to countenance the re-establishment of independent and self-sufficient Khoi communities. In the words of Landdrost Bresler, "great care should be taken .. that the Cattle-breeding be not at once deprived of the indispensable

assistance by an unlimited resort of the Hottentots, who .. will not now fail to leave the Farmers and resort to the aforesaid Establishment (Bethelsdorp); which deserting would very much reduce the Cattlebreeding." The Khoi should be well-treated, but they should remain a servile class.

The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape consists of two separate long papers. Although they cover the same ground, they are by no means similar. Newton-King is more general and more interpretive; Malherbe is more detailed and takes more care to substantiate her arguments. The lucidity of Newton-King sets the stage for the slower-moving Malherbe, but Malherbe fleshes out the picture with details, such as

the following remark, addressed by a Khoi rebel to a farmer:

"Strike me, Louw van der Merwe, strike me. I will have you and all the (?) soon in the stocks, and you shall pull off your trousers and sit naked on the ground." A single joint account would probably have been better than the two presented here, but that would have been unduly hard on the authors, and, besides, the result is more than satisfactory.

The University of Cape Town is to be congratulated on making this little book available, more especially in a cheap and simple, yet attractive format. Four reproductions from Daniell enhance the pleasures of the text. It can be recommended to all serious students of South African history. □

NEWS COMMENTARY

by Vortex

We're appalled by the Polish Government:
it's sunk Solidarity.

It's clear the Russians were behind the scenes
with their lack of morality.

– You ask: do we like trade unions?
Ah, that's quite different, you see.

And poor dear Lech Walesa:
he's our hero on TV.

We're told he's been detained without trial:
such Communist tyranny!

– Have we detained trade unionists?
Ah, that's quite different, you see.

The Poles are enduring martial law
and the might of the military:
their lives are controlled at every point;
they're certainly far from free.

– Do we not rule by the gun? you ask.
But this is South Africa, you see.