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South Africa and The World

SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

sanctions, and a month later New Zealand Prime Minister, David Lange, further tightened sanctions. Understandably, perhaps, with less economic interest at stake in South Africa and with less of an eye on a global adversary, small countries could afford to cut and run.

But actions by foreign governments were one thing, unknown was the reaction of ordinary citizens throughout the world who witnessed South Africa's domestic trauma nightly in their own homes. It was the decision of the Botha government to place restrictions on television and other media coverage of the turmoil which confirmed local suspicions that Apartheid was the number one news story of 1985 throughout the world.

Seemingly, the government in Pretoria believed that it could withstand this pressure, that the "unrest" which they argued was essentially the work of outside agitators would go away or that, miraculously, another international story would capture the imagination of the international media.

That was not to be.

All this foreign pressure was, however, to be dwarfed by

the run on South Africa's currency which occurred after the "Rubicon" Speech in August 1985. Overnight, the Republic's lines of credit were down. With international bankers no longer wanting to roll over the country's loans, the currency plunged, and no amount of official hype was able to stem the tide of failing confidence in Mr Botha and his colleagues.

This was the international situation which faced South Africa at the beginning of 1986; the backdrop of foreign pressure against which P.W. Botha made his Opening Speech to Parliament on January 31st. There are many indications in the speech, and the manner of its delivery, to suggest that its message was aimed essentially for foreign consumption: to roll back the force of those who seek to further isolate this country, to restore faith in the currency. If this was the intention, and the speech is not the harbinger of serious change, it will clearly not succeed.

In the end, South Africa's international crisis remains only a pale reflection of its domestic crisis. Most South Africans know it, so do most in the outside world. The question for 1986 is: Do the State President and his colleagues know it? □

2. THE SLABBERT RESIGNATION

There are two views about Dr. Slabbert's resignation as leader of the Opposition and from Parliament. One is that he has done the PFP and its cause irreparable harm, dealt it a blow from which it will never recover, and that the dramatic manner of his going will be a nine days wonder, soon forgotten, while his own prospects for influencing our future fade to nothing. The other view is that he may have opened the way for a reconciliation of extra-parliamentary forces which could lead to the birth of a body with sufficient support, credibility and responsibility of action and purpose to be able one day to negotiate the end of apartheid with the Nationalists. The PFP has certainly suffered a heavy blow, but it seems to us highly unlikely that it will be fatal or even, for that matter, particularly damaging. This is not because the loss of Dr. Slabbert and Dr. Boraine is a small matter but because of the way in which the Party has reacted to it. There have been few recriminations and Mr. Colin Eglin's tribute to his former leader was a marvellous example of generous appreciation of all Dr. Slabbert had done for the Party and of sensitive understanding of the reasons for his going. That reaction can only have done the PFP good, something which we hope will be reflected in the coming

by-elections, because it is as important as ever that the party should continue to provide the nucleus in Parliament to which verligte Nationalists will one day have to turn if a new society is to come about without revolution.

Can Dr. Slabbert provide the catalyst to set in motion the building of the extra-parliamentary power which could negotiate the end of apartheid? We have no doubt that his action was designed, amongst other things, to shock verligte Nationalists into facing up to the disastrous course we are on as long as they refuse to commit themselves publicly to ending apartheid. For the moment there has been no reaction from them to his challenge, but the continuing barrenness of their Party's reactions to black rejection of its policies must mean growing disillusionment and desperation amongst them.

If Dr. Slabbert can reconcile this element of Nationalist Afrikanerdom and the many other conflicting forces which really want to end apartheid — his former PFP colleagues, the ANC, Inkatha, the UDF, and some elements in the other houses of the tricameral Parliament — then we may all one day have good cause to be thankful to him for doing what he did. □

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD: HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

The Republic's fortunes have changed dramatically since the heady days of the Nkomati Accord signed just two years ago. Then there were widespread expectations at home and in Western capitals that internal reform was well under way, that the security agreements with Mozambique and Swaziland were a major setback for the African National Congress and a prelude to a constructive regional role for Pretoria. The Government — it was claimed — had bought time to put its domestic house in order, free of ANC attempts to mobilise black hostility via the techniques of "armed propaganda." Externally, the neutralisation of Mozambique as an ANC sanctuary and the prospect of similar agreements with other regional states appeared to vindicate the doctrine of Constructive Engagement: the Reagan Administration had, after all, encouraged the peace process with Mozambique and promoted the Lusaka agreement on the future of Namibia. Regional peace, and Western support and approval for South Africa's initiatives would give Mr Botha prestige abroad and flexibility at home — both essential for the success of reform.

Yet by September 1984 — a bare six months after Nkomati — this happy vision of the future had begun to disintegrate: the tri-cameral constitution by its deliberate snubbing of black political aspirations paradoxically raised expectations of change which, coupled with the impact of economic recession, provoked a fierce resistance which continues unabated to the present day. The ANC — far from being deterred by the Nkomati Accord — increased its rate of attack on "hard" targets to over a hundred in 1985 from a peak figure of 56 in 1983. That much-vaunted locus of power — the State Security Council — was unable to contain the muddle that arose as rival factions within it disputed over what to do about the Mozambique Resistance Movement. Finally, following a declaration of a State of Emergency in July 1985, external pressure mounted and limited, if largely symbolic, sanctions were imposed by the Western powers.

LOBBIES

But what has really made an impact on the domestic political scene has been the "private sanctions" undertaken by foreign businessmen and bankers during the last six months. These decisions are in part based on hard headed commercial calculation, the product of growing doubt about the Republic's credibility as a debtor nation and a secure base for future investment. They are also influenced by the "hassle" factor: the unwillingness of

companies — especially in the United States — to commit time and energy to fending off pressures from a host of anti-South African lobbies whose saliency is a strikingly new feature of American politics. Born out of resentment at Reaganite indifference to the claims of the poor and the deprived at home and abroad, these groups have devised new strategies to embarrass companies with interests in South Africa and have succeeded in persuading many city and state governments to divest their shares. Their leaders are acute critics of Constructive Engagement and recent events in the Republic have confirmed their analysis of the doctrine's failure. They have not only won the intellectual argument, they have also — to a degree — won the political one as well insofar as President Reagan has been compelled, against his own political instincts, to accept a Congressional package on sanctions.

Their counterparts in Western Europe (with the possible exception of the Scandinavian countries) have not enjoyed the same success. The Anti-Apartheid Movement has no doubt influenced the British Labour Party into committing itself to sanctions against South Africa, but cynics point to the failure of previous Labour governments to fulfil similar promises made in opposition. Ethnic minorities in Britain, while hostile in principle to apartheid and all its works, have been pre-occupied with domestic problems — the plight of the inner cities, black unemployment, and police/community relations. Thus the significant influence on Mrs Thatcher's government has been external: last year's Commonwealth Conference in Bermuda was dominated by the South African issue; "eminent persons" were appointed to visit South Africa, and timetables were set for indications of positive reform. Not an epoch-making response, I agree, but evidence at least that the great majority of Commonwealth leaders will not allow Mrs Thatcher (or her successor) to get off so lightly next time — especially if, as most competent observers expect, the current crisis in South Africa persists with no break in the stalemate between the government and the militant black opposition.

Thus, on the external front, South Africa can hope for little relief. *Ad hoc* measures (for example, the proposed modification of influx control and its corollary of forced removals; freehold property rights; common citizenship; etc.) which two years ago might have been welcomed unreservedly by Western leaders lose their impact and credibility in the absence of a major declaration of intent promising radical, structural change and the political incorporation of the black majority. Nor will keeping South Africa off the world's television screens through

restraints on media reporting help the government very much; the fact that these had to be imposed was taken as a tacit admission that the State of Emergency had failed in its primary objective to restore order swiftly in the townships. The image of a state in turmoil persists — a constant reminder to Western governments that sooner or later the South African issue will have to be faced squarely and decisions taken to limit the damage to electoral and economic interests alike.

WESTERN ATTITUDES TO SOUTH AFRICA

In this context the West as a whole — like President Botha at home — appears to lack a sense of direction and purpose. The traditional policy of “wait and see”, “give reform a chance”, is in ruins. There has also been a significant change in the attitudes of businessmen and bankers at home and abroad.

When conditions were stable (for example in 1965-74 period) there was a happy coincidence of interest between Western politicians and businessmen in the West on the utility of economic growth as the ultimate solvent of apartheid. Businessmen no longer share that blithe sense of confidence in the Republic's prospects and this weakens the case of politicians like Dr David Owen, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, who do not want the South African economy brought to its knees, and who would welcome an increase in resources to the private sector in the hope that this would contribute to the building of a social infrastructure (black housing, employment, social services, etc.) without which any reform of influx control, for example, is meaningless. The irony is that bankers and investors now press for major political reform as the price of a restoration of confidence: fair enough, but at the same time an indictment of the thesis, so assiduously defended in the past, that economic development alone would produce meaningful political change. Clearly, growth, like patriotism, is not enough and men, political animals, are at last recognised as having the primary responsibility for political change, rather than the impersonal forces of the market place.

A considered, carefully planned, response by the West to the South African crisis is inhibited not simply because of the irrelevance of the conventional wisdom, but also because the one remaining option — full-scale sanctions — seems to many Western conservatives uncertain and unpredictable in its consequences. Some observers have interpreted the measures that have so far been imposed as a firm political signal to Pretoria that worse might follow if the pace of reform does not accelerate. This I believe to be an optimistic reading of Western motives; the Scandinavian countries apart, the United States, Britain and its EEC partners had to be pushed and shoved into taking these steps. In Britain, they constituted a rearguard action against domestic and Commonwealth pressures, and there will be considerable resistance to the adoption of comprehensive, mandatory sanctions involving a trade and investment embargo.

Many of the arguments against such measures will be familiar to South Africa readers: these include the strongly held belief of Mrs Thatcher, for example, that severely undermining the Republic's economy would harm the interests of blacks already suffering the impact of recession, provoke yet more frustration and violence and result in even greater repression by the state. To pragmatic, affluent Europeans this emphasis on the adverse

effects of economic deprivation seems rational enough, though it is based on a reading of human nature which gives primacy to economic well being and ignores man's capacity to suffer hardship if the case appears just. (After all in 1940 Englishmen, completely isolated in the struggle against the might of Nazi Germany, might have “rationally” concluded that peace with Germany and a division of imperial spoils might have brought them a measure of security and avoidance of the harsh sacrifices that they did, in fact, choose to make.)

Secondly there is the claim that sanctions will have a destabilising effect on the economies of South Africa's poorer neighbours, and in this context Professor Gavin Maasdorp's excellent study — **SADCC: A Post-Nkomati Evaluation** (1) has demonstrated the profound dependence of these states on the South African economy. This argument cannot be lightly dismissed, especially of the SADCC states were to require compensatory assistance (calculated at £ 1,5 billion for every year that sanctions were imposed). The Republic's recent blockade of Lesotho and the resulting overthrow of Chief Jonathan demonstrated all too clearly what economic and political damage its government can do to neighbouring states. (As the **Financial Mail** prophetically remarked in October 1984, South Africa has the capacity to “delay vital shipments . . . lose wagon loads of traffic and withhold leased locomotives”.) Nor is there much comfort to be gained from the argument that the Lesotho crisis illustrates just what sanctions can do if applied with sufficient ruthlessness: Lesotho is the weakest and most dependent of the SADCC states and comparisons with South Africa in this context are not especially helpful. And we should note the indifference of Britain and the United States to



Chief Leabua Jonathan

(picture by the Natal Witness)

Jonathan's appeals for help against the effects of the blockade: their silence and inaction might be interpreted as a tacit warning to small states in the region of the implications of full-scale economic sanctions were these to be imposed in the future.

Thirdly – and this is the joker in the sanctions pack – the likely reaction of the target state cannot be easily predicted. Here there is scope for argument and debate as supporters and opponents of sanctions alike have no foolproof way of demonstrating what the reaction of the South African government would be. The theory, and certainly the practice, of international politics is not an exact science and as in the debate over the utility of nuclear weapons as a means of keeping the peace, the protagonists in the sanctions argument can only base their judgements on what is usually a highly selective choice and interpretation of historical analogies. Thus supporters of nuclear deterrence, for example, point to forty years of peace on the European landmass as a vindication of the peace-keeping function of nuclear weapons. They assume that general war in 1914 would have resulted in the absence of the protective umbrella of nuclear weapons, but this is a plausible argument at best and certainly not one based on "scientific" premises since one cannot create a laboratory replica of a world without nuclear weapons in the hope of confirming the hypothesis that war would have resulted in their absence.

OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS

Similarly, in the case of sanctions, opponents point to the Rhodesian experience where UN measures produced unexpected consequences: import substitution on a massive scale, covert assistance from a "maverick" state (South Africa), and a restructuring of the economy to provide Robert Mugabe's successor government with a sound base for further development. Alternatively, supporters of sanctions on the Republic can only speculate, drawing on historical experience and current perceptions about how a beleaguered government would react. Here conflicting interpretations of the strength and cohesion of Afrikaner nationalism enter the analyses: would a Boer War mentality reassert itself, committed to a fight to the death despite clear evidence of inevitable defeat? Would the new breed of Afrikaner technocrats and businessmen break ranks and press the politicians to capitulate to external demands? Would Free State farmers join artisans from Alberton in welcoming a military takeover in the face of ministerial vacillation? That these questions can be asked suggests how difficult it is to make reliable estimates about the **political** impact of sanctions on a ruling elite. Those who are sceptical about the utility of sanctions point to the government's policy of stockpiling key resources such as oil, and the certainty that contingent plans exist for the creation of a siege economy within the wider framework of a garrison state in which even tighter social controls would be exercised over individuals and key institutions. Those who favour sanctions argue that a "quick kill" is preferable to a long drawn out war of attrition in which the damage to the social and economic fabric of South Africa (as well as the West's economic interests) would be far greater. Better to act now, sanctioners claim,

rather than to be faced later with civil war, the collapse of the state's authority and a gravely weakened Western capacity to manage the resulting crisis.

The difficulty with this argument is two-fold: first, it assumes that the apocalypse is closer than many Western leaders are prepared to acknowledge; in any case, their governments are not well placed to engage in prophylactic action designed to forestall a crisis, however long-predicted. For foreign ministries the short term is all; coping with the current flood of "telegrams of anger" is hard enough without having to plan for contingencies which may never arise and if they do may well assume a form and substance very different from that envisaged by contemporary scenario builders.

The second objection relates to the imprecise nature of the political objective sanctions are designed to achieve: as in the case of military intervention, economic pressure only succeeds if the objective is limited and those responsible for its imposition have some prospect of monitoring and controlling the course of events induced by sanctions.

A third objection is the economic damage inflicted on the states exerting pressure: this will vary – the United States is likely to suffer far less than the United Kingdom where, it is argued, some 150-200 000 jobs are at stake in an economy already burdened with over three million unemployed. Thus a unanimous response might be difficult to engineer, providing "maverick" states with opportunities to capitalise on the self-denial of those governments willing to accept the risks and costs of the sanctions programme.

THE IMPACT OF LIMITED SANCTIONS

Nonetheless, even the most hostile opponent of sanctions has had to admit that some external pressures – falling short of a total embargo – have produced positive results.

Prominent South African businessmen would not have made the journey to Lusaka to talk to Oliver Tambo without the dramatic fall in the value of the Rand induced by the "private sanctions" of their counterparts abroad. There is evidence too that the business community has also been influential in persuading government to ease restrictions in areas like influx control and black trade union activity. Whether their advice will, however, be heeded on major structural reform is debatable, but the fact that their voices have been raised in recent months on this issue suggests that external pressure has been influential.

Similarly, the supporters of sanctions can claim some success in compelling the South African government to modify apartheid in certain spheres: the sports boycott has led to a varying degree of integration, notably in football and athletics, but nothing like enough to win re-admission to international competition. The promise to soften the harsh impact of influx control, and the forced removals of "black" illegals to the homelands, is the consequence of years of adverse publicity in the world's media to the attempted destruction of communities such as Crossroads in the Western Cape. President Botha has admitted this publicly and equally, as Merle Lipton has convincingly demonstrated in her new book **Capitalism and Apartheid** (2) – external pressure via the international trade union movement has contributed to the growth of black unions in South Africa.

But we should not assume that the reaction of the target state will always be positive: the arms embargo led to the growth of a massive indigenous arms industry, while impatience with the outside world's tendency to "move the goal posts" as a response to South Africa's efforts in the sporting field has led to the "buying" of rebel tours.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Western policies on the regional front have not been productive: Chester Crocker's failure to secure a Namibian settlement confirms the general Western perception that no progress can be expected while domestic unrest continues and the government comes under increasing attack from right wing Afrikanerdom. There may be good strategic reasons for withdrawing to the Limpopo; there may, indeed, be a case for allowing Namibia to come under SWAPO rule on the assumption that Pretoria could still exercise a dominant influence on the new state's affairs — but these incentives to decolonise are heavily outweighed by the domestic constraint to appear tough on regional issues. Thus Western criticism of attacks on ANC sanctuaries in the neighbouring states makes little impact given the government's commitment to destroy the movement's capability and undercut its standing as a liberation movement in the eyes of the black majority.

But viewed from abroad there can be no doubting the ANC's credibility as a major actor in the South African drama. The government's attempt to portray it as a mindless terrorist organisation bent on taking innocent lives has made little impact on influential "publics" in the West who have been impressed by Oliver Tambo's exposition of his case. In this context South Africa is losing the propaganda battle with its hated rival, and Tambo's so-called "change" in strategy is regarded by sympathisers abroad — despite South African claims to the contrary — as one of degree rather than kind: hitting "hard" economic targets remains the priority, but more will be hit in the process, more civilians caught in the cross-fire.

The picture is a bleak one: neither side in the struggle can impose its will on the other. But unlike previous confrontations (in 1960 and 1976, for example) external pressure will not wither away, and "creeping sanctions", however reluctantly and haphazardly imposed, may well be the consequence of continued South African obduracy. □

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NTHATO MOTLANA



Dr Nthato Motlana

(picture by the Natal Witness)

Dr Nthato Motlana, Chairman of the Soweto Committee of Ten and President of the Soweto Civic Association, was interviewed by Sam Mabe, Senior Reporter with South Africa's Black daily newspaper, **The Sowetan**. This interview which was especially conducted for **Reality** focusses chiefly on South Africa's international position.

Reality: Dr Motlana, how would you say Blacks in South Africa view foreign investments: as propping up Apartheid or helping to end it?

Dr Motlana: There are specific laws such as the Internal Security Act, Public Safety Act and many others which will not allow any form of campaigning for disinvestment. Anybody who would start campaigning for disinvestment would be running a risk of going to Robben Island. But I can tell you now that by their very nature, foreign investments support the status quo, they support Apartheid. Blacks in this country will tell you that the only way of changing the status quo is to do whatever will wreck the country's economy, to bring the stubborn Afrikaners to the negotiation table. It would seem that more and more Blacks are subscribing to this view.

Reality: But there are people who argue that crippling the economy through disinvestment or sanctions will hurt Blacks most. What are your views on this?

Dr. Motlana: It is not the Black man who says that. In meetings that I have attended, like the one at the South African Institute of Race Relations about six months

ago, I have heard very many Black workers say they will certainly suffer, but they say this will be in the short term only. They say they are prepared to bear the consequences of their own recommendations and that in the long term, they will gain when things shall have changed, and there is a just society. Blacks are not moving into this whole thing of disinvestment blindly, they understand the implications and they say they are prepared to suffer. It has been said by some people that disinvestment will lead to a shrinkage in the economy and therefore greater unemployment, but there is tremendous unemployment right now which is a direct result of Apartheid. There is already a great deal of pulling out by many companies, which means we are already suffering the effects of the iniquitous policy of Apartheid.

Reality: What, in your view, is the Black opinion on foreign pressure, especially from the United Nations?

Dr Motlana: Blacks have become disillusioned with foreign pressure. There was a time when they thought that agencies such as the United Nations, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and others from the West might bring this country to change its views. However, the long and sorry history of

Namibia has shown that South Africa's friends in the West are not pursuing the type of economic and political pressure that needs to be exerted to get the South African government to change her policies.

Reality: What about the pressure from organisations such as Trans-Africa?

Dr Motlana: The campaigns by people like Randall Robinson and others enjoy the support of the masses here because they are bringing the whole question of Apartheid to the attention of the American public, but we are looking at Banks, Foundations, investors and the (American) government. Blacks are convinced that (American) Whites will not turn against their kith and kin in favour of Blacks in South Africa. We know that when it comes to a push it is going to be the governments and major companies that can bring effective pressure to bear on South Africa, but that is what we do not see happening, hence the disillusionment.

Reality: What form of pressure would Blacks recommend to force the South African Government to change?

Dr Motlana: I don't know. But what I've heard from some meetings I have attended, Blacks talk about the need for disinvestment and mandatory sanctions, and support for the Frontline States. More than that, Blacks would like to see the international community use whatever muscle it has to free Namibia and get South Africa out of Angola. They would also like to see South Africa being stopped from destabilising her neighbours.

Reality: Has the Reagan Administration's policy of Constructive Engagement succeeded, and how is it viewed by Blacks?

Dr Motlana: Not only Blacks, even American Conservatives in the Republican Administration are agreed that it was a failure. It has achieved absolutely nothing except encourage South Africa in its intransigence. The American Government's image has been severely tainted in the eyes of (South African) Blacks because of this policy, it has made Washington just as guilty of the crime of Apartheid as Pretoria is.

Reality: Assuming a post-Apartheid situation, in what direction should the country's foreign policy lean: East, West or Non-Aligned?

Dr Motlana: That will depend entirely on how long the struggle for justice will last. There have been many who have commented that the longer the struggle takes, the more certain it is that the unit of currency in South Africa will be the Russian Ruble! I am suggesting that in the post-Apartheid era we will remember who our friends were in our moment of need. At the moment the West is just not interested in our battle for justice, they have taken our battle and made it their own. Our policies will be to accommodate and to give comfort to our friends who gave us arms and education, our policies will lean towards the East.

Reality: Is there anything the West can do at this hour to prevent this?

Dr Motlana: Of course, the West has the wherewithal with the large investment in South Africa to support the struggle going on here, to support a just cause in this country. America's policy towards Savimbi for instance, is most disgraceful. They allow South Africa to play cat and mouse with Samora Machel by arming the M.N.R. It is those

policies which will make it impossible for us to regard the West as our true friends. They have let us down ever so often.

Reality: There have been arguments that the East provides arms to countries which could perhaps do better with food. What is your comment on this?

Dr Motlana: In post-Independent South Africa, there may be a need for food. But the greatest need at the moment is for justice, for freedom, for liberation. Surely Ethiopia and Sudan need food, independent Mozambique needs food, but we are not campaigning for food, we are campaigning for a just society. It is ridiculous to suggest that Russia can only give us arms and not food. What we need is not food, we need liberation.

Reality: The case has been made that Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland are falsely separated from South Africa. What would be the ideal relationship with these states in a post-Apartheid situation?

Dr Motlana: Having attended Fort Hare with some of the leaders like Ntsu Mokhehle and Seretse Khama, I am convinced that in a post-Apartheid South Africa, there will be a federation which might even include Namibia because of the economic, historical and communication links between all these states with South Africa. We surely belong together with all those people.

Reality: How did Blacks view the Nkomati Accord?

Dr Motlana: When Nkomati was announced, somebody asked me if I had been invited for the signing ceremony. I said I had not. If I had been, I would not have gone to witness the ultimate humiliation of an African leader whose country was made ungovernable by South Africa and in the aftermath, forced to sign a friendship treaty. That humiliation brought no joy nor security to poor Samora Machel in his country. We think Nkomati was a disgrace South Africa should be ashamed of.

Reality: Was it a wise decision for Lesotho to have refused to sign an accord with South Africa in view of the fact that they are a landlocked country; entirely dependent on South Africa for almost everything?

Dr Motlana: We Black South Africans cannot understand the need for these accords. These countries have pledged themselves to prevent infiltration of A.N.C. cadres into their countries and they will not allow them training facilities and so on. South Africa which cannot control infiltration of A.N.C. insurgents wants Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland to do that dirty job for her. If they don't, or show unwillingness to do so, she punishes them severely. I think this is a disgraceful case of a bully venting his spleen and his frustration on poor, unarmed and defenceless neighbours. I believe that it is the correct attitude for these countries to refuse to sign accords which merely allow South Africa to interfere in their internal affairs. It is for the outside world to support these weak countries against a bullying neighbour. Botswana is right in refusing to sign an accord that will diminish her independence and turn her into a puppet state of Pretoria.

Reality: What do you say about the A.N.C.'s argument that its cadres are not necessarily in the neighbouring states but are operating within South Africa?

Dr Motlana: Recent events have shown that this is quite true. We do read news and hear suggestions that there are A.N.C. men in Alexandra for instance. If South Africa

wants to make the A.N.C. redundant and ineffective it must institute a just and free society. As things now stand one cannot foresee a situation where the A.N.C. would just call it a day and decide to abandon the struggle it has been involved in over the years.

Reality: How did Blacks view President Botha's overseas trip in May 1985?

Dr Motlana: It was described in South Africa by his cronies as a great success. But it was perceived by Blacks in South Africa as a public relations exercise that misled and misinformed the outside world. Subsequent events, such as the collapse of the South African economy, showed that the outside world had not in fact been convinced about the public relations exercise that had taken place. The trip was, as far as Blacks were concerned, a waste of time.

Reality: It has been suggested that South Africa had a hand in the military coup in Lesotho recently, what is the general belief among Blacks?

Dr Motlana: Blacks are certain that South Africa had a hand in Lesotho's coup. Even if it could not be shown that in some direct fashion South Africa influenced events, there is absolutely no doubt that they then staged a blockade. Making it clear that they were unhappy with Lesotho's relationship with Eastern countries – especially the opening of the Embassies. At that moment, they were setting the stage for a possible revolt by the people of Lesotho who had interpreted South Africa's displeasure with the policies of Lesotho as having something to do with the opening of these Embassies.

Secondly, South African Blacks are well aware that the government of Leabua Jonathan was imposed on an unwilling population after the very first election when it was known that the Basotholand Congress Party, led by Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, had won the elections. Clearly, in South Africa they argued that as long as Jonathan was willing to be a puppet and play South Africa's game he was welcome, but as soon as he showed some an independent line – by opening Eastern Embassies – he had ceased to be their puppet. He, however, wanted to play a meaningful role in the OAU and other international forums, and had to show that he wasn't a puppet of South Africa. For that reason South Africa dropped him like a hot potato.

Leabua Jonathan, not that we are sorry that this usurper has lost his position. We would have liked however that the rightful ruler of Lesotho, Mr Ntsu Mokhehle and his Party, rather than a military regime should have been the alternative government.

Reality: What does the blockade which preceded the Lesotho Coup say for the effectiveness of economic sanctions?

Dr Motlana: It says everything. It rebuts the argument about the ineffectiveness of sanctions. Whenever we talk about sanctions in international conferences, we are always told about the experience of Italy and Ethiopia (or Abyssinia as it used to be called) around 1936 when, as a result of the invasion by Mussolini, the League of Nations attempted to impose an economic blockade on Italy which never succeeded.

We are also reminded of the ineffective blockade over Rhodesia. However, there are those who argue that in fact the economic blockade in Rhodesia was effective and that,

together with the guerilla war, was one of the reasons why the Smith regime capitulated. South Africa of course gives a classic example of how very effective an economic blockade can be. During my visit to the United States, a Mayor I visited was arguing for naval blockade. He said that a few ships could be stationed around South Africa so that no oil or anything should reach the country.

South Africa has proved in no uncertain terms that economic sanctions are very, very effective in bringing a recalcitrant country to heel.

Reality: What are the implications of Nelson Mandela's release for the current strife inside South Africa?

Dr Motlana: I think the release of Mandela should be viewed in its broadest perspective. If, as all of us insist, Nelson Mandela is released together with his colleagues, if this is accompanied by the return of the exiles and if, thirdly, political organisations banned in 1960 are unbanned so as to give Mandela the political base he holds to operate peacefully inside South Africa, then I would imagine that he will become an effective leader of the Black people.

On the other hand, if he is released to his home in Orlando accompanied by numerous restrictions on what he may or may not do, what kind of public meetings he may or may not address (which will deny him access to the necessary political base), and also accompanied by the refusal to release other people convicted with him in 1964, and the further refusal to the return of the exiles, his release will have no meaning at all. It will mean that he will immediately embark on a Defiance Campaign. He will probably organise meetings, he will probably join up with the UDF or put up a new organisation altogether. He will defy restrictions imposed on him and, I believe, the Government is worried by the kind of attitude he may adopt, and is therefore not about to release him. So, any talk about his release is mere speculation.

Reality: There have been suggestions that the Government is prepared to release him if only he would not stay in South Africa. Would he accept this, and what would Blacks say about this?

Dr Motlana: There have been lots and lots of rumours about discussions between the South African and the British Governments, the French and even with Zambia. There is a small number of Blacks who would advocate that he goes into exile. There is even a small number of Blacks who speak about the possibility of a (South African) Government exile. But the bigger proportion of Blacks realise that the struggle for liberation is going to take place and be won right here. So if the government sees itself under pressure it will be because of what is happening right here and therefore, to be effective a leader must work within South Africa.

I have heard that he has refused already to agree to go into exile and many of us support that contention. However, there is no reason why Mr Mandela, having spent 22 years of his life on Robben Island, should go into even more of a prison outside where there will be restrictions on his movement and speeches by the host country. He will not enjoy the kind of freedom that he would like to see. We feel therefore that he should stick to his guns and refuse to go into exile.

Reality: Thank you Dr Motlana. □

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD: UNLOVED AND LONELY

This article is based on a more comprehensive study, *Internasionale Isolasië : Suid Afrika in Vergelykende Perspektief*, to be published shortly by the Rand Afrikaans University.

"A 'no' vote will only disillusion our friends and further isolate our country." This was one of the arguments used by the National Party in a press advertisement advocating a "yes" vote in the 1983 referendum on the new constitution. In the event, the white electorate overwhelmingly endorsed the government's constitutional design. The new deal – built around the three chamber Parliament – has since been implemented. And yet South Africa is today probably even more isolated than before the constitutional referendum. Clearly, the new constitution does not address the root cause of South Africa's international isolation.

The National Party's isolation argument is nonetheless significant for two reasons. First, it concedes that there is a link between South Africa's domestic policies and its international isolation. This patently obvious correlation was long denied by the government. Second, the advertisement acknowledges that the Republic's isolation can only be countered through domestic political reform. For many years, the National Party insisted that no amount of government-initiated reform could impress foreign critics or improve South Africa's international standing.

South Africa is certainly paying a heavy international price for its peculiar domestic political order. It is one of the most ostracised states in the modern world. The Republic is more isolated than two other familiar "pariah" states, Israel and Chile. The closest modern analogy is Taiwan, which is in some respects more, yet in others less, isolated than South Africa. The Republic differs from all three of these pariahs in the sense that its isolation is combined with far more intense international pressure (e.g. boycotts and sanctions) than any of the others experience. There is also a much stronger pro-isolation lobby within South Africa than in any of the other three states.

How, then, does one measure a state's isolation?

AREAS AND INDICATORS OF ISOLATION

It is possible to distinguish four broad areas of isolation: diplomatic, economic, military and socio-cultural. In each of these, a number of specific indicators of isolation can be identified. Let us briefly apply some of the readily quantifiable indicators to South Africa, and also consider a few comparisons with other isolated states as well as with some "normal" or integrated states.

The most obvious indicator of **diplomatic isolation** is the extent of a state's formal diplomatic relations. In 1985, South Africa had resident diplomatic missions in 30 countries, including four ex-homelands. Leaving the latter aside, since they are not internationally recognised, South

Africa had diplomatic ties with only 16% of all UN-member states. Conversely, 29 states, again including the ex-homelands, maintained resident ambassadors in Pretoria in 1984. The corresponding figures for the other pariah states were Taiwan with 13, Israel with 40 and Chile with 49. Turning to "normal" states, four-year old Zimbabwe already hosts 41 embassies in Harare, Tanzania has 53, Zaire has 58 and Ethiopia has 68. Two of South Africa's former sister dominions, Australia and Canada, had 67 and 94 foreign diplomatic missions in their respective capitals in 1984.

A second indicator of diplomatic isolation is membership of inter-governmental organisations. South Africa is still a member of the United Nations, but since the rejection of its credentials by the General Assembly in 1974 it has been unable to participate in Assembly proceedings. The Republic has retained membership of a number of UN agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Atomic Energy Agency, but has resigned or been expelled from several others. In all, South Africa belongs to some 45 inter-governmental organisations dealing with technical matters, including such regional associations as the Southern African Customs Union and the Southern African Regional Tourism Council. Of the other pariahs, only Taiwan finds itself in a weaker position than South Africa. In 1971, following the People's Republic of China's admission to the UN, Taiwan lost its membership of all UN bodies. Today Taiwan belongs to only 10 inter-governmental organisations.

Third, the relative lack of official visits abroad by South African heads of state and/or government and by their opposite numbers to this country, also reflects the Republic's international isolation. In the 24 years since the establishment of a republic in 1961, South Africa's successive State Presidents paid a mere eight official foreign visits – independent ex-homelands included. The heads of government have also been remarkably home-bound. Prime Minister Vorster was, after General Smuts, the most active South African premier on the international diplomatic circuit. Particularly instructive is that no South African Prime Minister since Smuts in 1946, visited either the United States or the United Nations. Looking at foreign leaders' visits to South Africa, the last leader of a major Western power to visit this country, was Britain's Mr Harold Macmillan as far back as 1960. South African leaders' very limited involvement in personal diplomacy was not a case of self-isolation; the South Africans were simply not valued visitors to the chancelleries of the world and Pretoria was, by the

same token, a place to be avoided.

The UN's avalanche of denunciations and punitive measures directed against South Africa, provide further evidence of the Republic's alienation from the international community. Except for Rhodesia, no other state has been so persistently subjected to such drastic decisions by the world body. Many of the UN resolutions are specifically designed to isolate South Africa in virtually all areas of inter-state contact.

Finally, we can refer to the degree of diplomatic support which South Africa receives in international forums. While the vast majority of member states of international organisations as a rule side against South Africa, some Western powers are still prepared to protect the Republic in the UN on two crucial issues: membership of the organisation and comprehensive sanctions. One can thus conclude that these Western states do not wish to isolate South Africa completely — at least not at present. This kind of protection is neither unconditional nor automatic and Western powers have already supported an array of UN punitive measures against the Republic. Contrast South Africa's situation with that of other pariahs. In the case of Israel, for example, the protective diplomatic shield of particularly the US has ensured that the Security Council has not followed the General Assembly in deciding on punitive measures against Israel. Chile, in turn, has on several occasions been censured for its human rights violations but neither of the two UN organs has called for punitive measures.

ECONOMIC

The second main area of isolation concerns **economic interaction**. The focus of international (and indeed also domestic) attempts to extend South Africa's isolation is on the economic area. The reasons are clear: it is in this field that the Republic is least isolated, and where isolation could do most material damage.

The relative lack of South Africa's economic isolation is manifested in its trade links. The Republic trades — mostly clandestinely — with 49 of the 51 African states and also with the Soviet bloc. The bulk of its trade is conducted with the industrial powers of the West, viz. the US, Britain, West Germany and Japan.

An increasing number of states are however imposing official restrictions on trade with South Africa. Recently, for example, Norway, Sweden and Ireland decided to ban the importation of South African agricultural produce. In several countries, including Britain and West Germany, private organisations engage in voluntary boycott actions against the Republic.

Foreign investment in South Africa is another prime target of the advocates of economic isolation. In a resolution adopted on 26 July 1985, the UN Security Council *inter alia* called on states to suspend all new investment in South Africa. Official restrictions on such investment have already been imposed by Sweden, Austria and France, amongst others. But the most publicised activity in this field has been the disinvestment campaign in the US. To date, the American government has not given effect to demands for official curbs on American investment in South Africa.

The Reagan Administration has, however, taken action in a related field. In September 1985, Washington announced a ban on loans by any American financial

institution to the South African government or its agencies, with certain limited exceptions.

It is safe to conclude that no other national economy is today subjected to so much international pressure as South Africa's.

MILITARY

The two indicators of **military isolation** are formal military agreements with other states and the procurement of weapons abroad.

South Africa has since the Second World War not been a member of a military alliance, i.e. a formal agreement providing for military assistance (whether unilateral or bilateral) in the event of aggression. The Simonstown Agreement between South Africa and Britain (1955-75) was not an alliance, for neither party made any such commitments. It was nonetheless South Africa's first and last post-war treaty with a Western power. The absence of military pacts is not due to a lack of interest or trying on South Africa's part. Instead, it is attributable to Western states' unwillingness to enter into any alliance with the Republic. Not only had they a different perception of South Africa's strategic value but they also feared the political risks of becoming implicated in the defence of the "apartheid regime."

Pretoria has concluded non-aggression treaties with Swaziland (1982) and Mozambique (1984) and with four independent former homelands. The parties to these bilateral agreements give no undertakings to provide one another with military assistance in the case of external or internal aggression.

The Republic's problems in acquiring arms are well known. It is the only country against which the UN Security Council today maintains a mandatory arms embargo. In July 1985 the Council requested all states to prohibit all new nuclear contracts with South Africa and to ban the sale of computers that could be used by the South African security forces. The US is one of the Western powers that has already imposed the latter restrictions; all of them officially subscribe to the 1977 UN arms embargo.

No other pariah state is as isolated as South Africa in the military field. The US is a formal ally and principal arms supplier of both Israel and Taiwan. Chile has some problems in procuring arms from certain Western sources, but these are not nearly as serious as South Africa's difficulties.

SOCIAL AND CULTURE

Isolation in the **socio-cultural sphere** is the fourth and final one to be considered. There is a wide range of indicators of socio-cultural isolation, most of which do not involve interaction between governments but between a foreign government and a local non-governmental organisation or between internal and external non-governmental organisations only.

South Africa's international sports isolation is well documented. The UN is the focal point of the international campaign to drive South African sport into isolation. The UN's Special Committee on Apartheid has, for example, compiled a blacklist of foreign sportsmen and women who compete in the Republic. The Commonwealth's Gleneagles Agreement of 1977 is another international attempt at isolating South African sport.

There are also numerous efforts, by foreign governments and private organisations alike, to discourage contact with South Africa in the field of the arts and entertainment.

One such is the UN blacklist of foreign artists who perform in South Africa.

Academic interchange between South Africa and the outside world still takes place on a sizeable scale, whether through individual contact or international academic organisations. There is nonetheless ample evidence of the mounting difficulties experienced by South African academics in participating in international academic interchange. Foreign academics, in turn, increasingly seem to avoid visiting or researching or teaching in South Africa.

Official cultural agreements are another indicator of socio-cultural isolation. South Africa today has such agreements with only West Germany and Paraguay – and Bonn is reconsidering its agreement to ensure that it cannot be construed as supporting apartheid. The Netherlands and Belgium suspended their cultural agreements with South Africa in the late 1970s. Given the fact that cultural agreements are common features of inter-state relations – even between ideological adversaries – South Africa's extremely limited formal ties in this field can only be regarded as yet another indication of the extent of the Republic's international isolation.

Tourism, as an indicator of socio-cultural isolation, is more difficult to assess. If one merely compares the numbers of foreign tourists visiting South Africa and countries such as Australia, Chile and Kenya, the Republic's position is relatively favourable. The central question, however, is: Does South Africa's low international political standing undermine its tourist potential? There can be little doubt about the answer, but the actual impact of isolation in terms of people and money is hard to calculate.

Turning next to the reverse flow of visitors, we should consider the question of access to other states for South African passport holders. It is common knowledge that most African states, the communist bloc, Arab states and some countries in Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and Central and South America, will not permit South Africans to enter, or do so only in very exceptional cases and under strict limitations.

With regard to postal and telecommunication links with the outside world, South Africa experiences relatively few problems. Only two states, Somalia and Saudi Arabia, maintain complete postal bans against the Republic. Some seven other countries, including Lebanon and Uganda, have imposed limited postal embargoes. South Africa, in turn, accepts all foreign mail that can be delivered.

South Africa's position is less favourable when it comes to international transport by air and sea. A large number of states deny South African aircraft landing and over-flying rights and have closed their harbours to South African vessels. Conversely, they prohibit their aircraft and ships calling in the Republic.

Evidence of isolation is also to be found in the sphere of religion. It is particularly the three Afrikaans reformed churches that experience a combination of self-imposed and enforced isolation from the international ecumenical movement.

Both South African trade unions and employer organisations enjoy considerable international contact. The black unions and the predominantly white employer bodies however tend to pursue conflicting international objectives. Among the unions, there is support for South Africa's economic isolation, whereas the employer organisations are in the forefront of attempts to counter such moves abroad.

It would require a study of major proportions to apply each of these indicators of socio-cultural isolation to other pariah states. Nonetheless, it is highly unlikely that their isolation in this particular area covers such a wide spectrum as South Africa's.

THE PRICE OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

Pariah states as a rule try to counter their international isolation and, ideally, wish to become respectable or acceptable members of the community of nations. They are particularly keen to find acceptance among Western nations, which they typically regard as their traditional or natural allies.

In recent years, a number of (moderately) ostracised states managed to return to the fold, as it were. They are Greece, Portugal, Spain and Argentina. The same applies to Rhodesia, the pariah **par excellence**. What is significant is that international approval was in each case preceded by a change of government and not merely a change of policy. The cause of a change of government was of course not in the first instance to be found in the particular state's pariah status; the end of pariahhood was a consequence thereof. Can we nonetheless conclude from these five cases that the chances are generally slim that a government whose very policy led to the State's international isolation, can in effect reform itself out of enforced isolation – and still remain in power? □

SOUTH AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST, AND POLICY OPTIONS

(This article is an abridgement of an essay which originally appeared in Robert I. Rotberg and John Barratt (eds), **Conflict and Compromise in South Africa**; Cape Town David Philip, 1980. It is reproduced here with permission of the editors and the publisher).

Western Objectives

A distinction between the economic and strategic interests, perceived by the Western powers, that have led them to support the South African state, and the political and ideological interests that impel them to distance themselves from it (can be drawn).

The United States and Britain view South Africa as a country in which they have large investments, which is an important source of mineral resources, and which is a significant trading partner. In Britain, which commands much the greater share of South Africa's foreign investments, and in the international economic relations of which South Africa looms much larger, the consciousness of an economic interest in what is called the "stability" of South Africa is perhaps stronger. But in the United States, since the corporate investment boom of the 1960s and the anxieties about access to natural resources that developed in the 1970s, the consciousness has also been strong.

Along with these economic interests . . . there have also been strategic interests. The South African state has been intensely hostile to the Soviet Union and international communism, and a strong South Africa has served to deny a strategically important part of the world to the West's global rivals . . . There are powerful voices in the Western world contending that the governing consideration in the West's policy toward southern Africa is its strategic interest in securing the Cape sea routes and access to gold and vital industrial minerals, that this interest is now menaced as it never has been before by Soviet penetration of the subcontinent, and further that the protection of that interest requires co-operation with South Africa.

On the other hand, the Western countries (as nearly all other countries) have been impelled by political and ideological considerations to distance themselves from South Africa. South Africa has in the course of the last thirty years become a pariah, more clearly than any of the other so-called "pariah states." This change has come about not primarily because of changes in South Africa, although the policies of apartheid followed since 1948 have been an exacerbating factor, but because of changes in the rest of the world; the revolt of previously subject non-European peoples against European or Western domination; and the emergence of a consensus in international society against

racial discrimination by whites against blacks (a consensus which does not, unfortunately, embrace other forms of racial discrimination to an equal degree) and against the legitimacy of rule by whites over black majorities.

The Western countries have been impelled to join in the general ostracism of South Africa partly by internal pressures and partly by external ones. The political awakening of black peoples has included that of the black minorities within the Western countries themselves, which in response have embarked upon programs of racial integration and desegregation in flat contradiction of the policies that are being pursued in South Africa. The consequence of these programs — and especially of the triumph of the movement for civil rights in the United States, a development of truly world-historical significance — is that the Western societies to which South Africa looks for support and succor are very different societies from what they were thirty or twenty or even ten years ago . . . All the Western countries are impelled to reject intimacy with white South Africa for reasons of their own domestic peace and harmony.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

External pressures have also played their part. The international political world in which the Western powers now find themselves is no longer that of 1945 in which, apart from the challenge presented to them by the Soviet Union, they enjoyed an easy ascendancy. The majority of states in the world are Asian, African or Latin American. Not only do they command majorities of votes in the UN General Assembly and other bodies, they also, in some cases, command bargaining power (oil as in the case of the OPEC states, ideological appeal as in the case of China) and military power (at least in the sense of power to resist Western intervention, as has been demonstrated by Vietnam). Deep though the divisions are within the so-called Third World, there are certain basic propositions on which they have maintained a remarkable degree of unity: the abolition of colonialism, a new international economic order, and an end to white supremacist government in southern Africa. The Western powers have had to take account of this basic change in the character of the international system to come to terms with it, especially by seeking to find common ground with the

Asian and African states the positions of which have become so prominent. In finding this common ground, nothing has proved so great a handicap to the Western countries as their inherited links with white South Africa.

Although Western policies have reflected a consciousness both of the economic and strategic interests drawing them toward white South Africa, and of the political and ideological interests requiring them to ostracize it, the former have so far prevailed. For many years the governments of the United States, Britain and the other Western countries have joined the chorus of ritual denunciation of apartheid, but they have done nothing actually to help undermine the dominant position of the whites in South Africa. They have maintained diplomatic relations with it, traded with it, invested in it, and allowed it to become the dominant military power in southern Africa. To varying degrees, the Western powers have extended South Africa support in the United Nations — the colonial powers among them, in particular, joining with South Africa in resisting UN pressure by appealing to rights of domestic jurisdiction.

(However). . . in my view, the factors (now) inclining the United States and the other Western countries to dissociate themselves from South Africa are likely to become stronger, and the factors making for retention of the present links are likely to become weaker.

The sense in the West of an economic stake in South Africa is declining as investors perceive that the country is headed for political strife and turmoil, and calculate that their capital will be safer elsewhere. The argument that Western access to South African raw materials depends upon preservation of the present political structure of South Africa does not accord with the experience of Western traders in post-colonial black Africa, where political change has not (necessarily) proved incompatible with the maintenance and development of close economic ties with the Western World.

Nor does it seem likely that the strategic interest perceived by the Western powers in checking the Soviet penetration of southern Africa will be thought attainable by association, overt or covert, with white South Africa. . . . To imagine that Western governments will seek to provide a response to the Soviets by association with an unreformed South Africa would be to treat them as more blind to the realities of African international politics than they actually are.

Nothing would seem more likely to enhance the role of the Soviet Union in Africa or to damage the prospects for Western influence in black African states than a policy of alliance with South Africa — even if that alliance were covert in nature, and the West were successful in making it a condition of such an alliance that South Africa be given a more acceptable public face by minor changes in race policy.

LIKELY TO GROW

The pressures, internal and external, on the Western countries to dissociate themselves from South Africa . . . are likely to grow. The internal pressures on Western governments to demonstrate that they have no truck with white supremacy will become stronger as a younger generation, emotionally more committed to racial integration than the present rulers of Western countries, increases its share of political power. The external pressures will grow also as a result of a continuing shift in the distribution of wealth,

and population away from the Western countries and toward the socialist countries and the so-called Third World.

In my view, the Western powers should treat their political and ideological interests in coming to terms with black Africa, and not their surviving links with white South Africa, as the paramount consideration in the policies toward this part of the world. They cannot follow abroad a policy of discrimination against blacks that contradicts the policies of racial integration to which, however imperfect these policies are in practice, they are rightly committed at home. They cannot continue to observe the convention that when the West talks to South Africa it is simply to the white rulers of this country that they are talking, without damaging the enterprise of constructing a global international order of which the black majority of the world's states and population feel that they have a stake. They cannot fail to recognize the gross injustices embedded in the present economic, social, and political structure of South Africa without being false to their own deepest moral principles, and so undermining their own integrity and belief in themselves and their role in the world.

I hesitate to deliver the kind of moral lecture from Western liberals that many white South Africans find so irritating because I am myself often irritated by the insensitivity of these lectures. It is true that Western liberals sometimes fail to recognize the uniqueness of the predicament in which white South Africans find themselves — the invalidity of analogies from the experience of European colonial powers, for whom the end of colonial rule did not mean that their metropolitan populations had to live under black majority rule, or from the experience of the United States, where the achievement of equality of political rights by the blacks did not entail black majorities even in the South, let alone the in country as a whole.

There is (. . . however . . .) a need also for Western liberals who speak of the rights of oppressed blacks, Asians, and Coloureds in South Africa, to recognize that white South Africans also have rights. White South Africans, including those responsible for the present oppressive policies, are also human with human rights, and no vision of the future that fails to recognize their rights can be worthy of being endorsed by the West. Their rights, moreover, are not only individual rights but also group rights. The feeling of the Afrikaners or the white South Africans as a whole that their rights as a group ought to count for something in any prescription for the future of South Africa is entitled to respect.

But this should not deflect us from grasping the main point — the obvious point — about the West's obligations in South Africa. They are not to the white minority but to the people of South Africa as a whole. At one time, the moral sympathies of political man in the West were concentrated on the white man in South Africa, and took account of Africans, Coloureds, or Asians only to a lesser degree. We have since experienced an extension of our moral sympathies and it is now our duty to take account of the rights of all men and women in South Africa to an equal degree. White South Africans face a predicament, but they are a minority, they are in a privileged position, and the oppressions that they face are possible, future ones. Black South Africans are a majority, they are economically, socially, and politically deprived, and the oppression that they experience is not only massive but actual and immediate.

CHANGE

We should recognize that if white South Africans abdicate their monopoly of power they will certainly lose many of their privileges, and may also risk being deprived of rights to which we think they are entitled. But the governing consideration in Western policy should be the recognition that the majority of the people of South Africa do not enjoy these rights now, and that this is the state of affairs that first should be changed.

There is a consensus against the oppression of blacks by whites, and especially against the claims of a minority by virtue of their white race to rule over a majority of blacks. What distinguishes the South African case from the others is not that it constitutes the greater injustice, but that this particular kind of injustice is one which international society as a whole is united in condemning. If there is to be a viable international order at all we have to build upon those elements of consensus in international society that exist, and today there is simply no prospect at all that the international order can remain viable without repudiating white supremacy.

We should recognize that white South Africans, and Afrikaners in particular, have not only individual human rights but also a legitimate desire to survive as a group, but this does not entitle them to maintain their group survival by denying the individual and group rights of others. The notion that whatever is necessary for the self-preservation of a particular group is justified is one which in the twentieth century we rightly reject even in the sphere of international or interstate relations; still less can it be accepted in the relationship between one group and others within a particular state.

If there is a need, then, for us to cultivate understanding for the predicament of the white South Africans, there is also a need not to view events out of proportion. It is the predicament of black South Africans that most deserves our attention.

THE WEST AND VIOLENT CHANGE

In the event that a struggle develops within South Africa to change the present system by violence, this struggle will be widely regarded as a just one within the world community. The black African states, other Third World states, and socialist states can be expected in varying degrees to extend support to it; so also can elements within the Western countries. The Western powers are deeply concerned at the prospect of a violent struggle in South Africa. Such a struggle would be likely to provide opportunities for the Soviet Union to extend its influence in the subcontinent. The United States and other Western societies would be internally divided in their attitudes to the struggle and would therefore have strong reasons to stand aloof from it. A protracted and bitter racial conflict in South Africa would intensify racial tensions within them. No doubt the sense of urgency with which the Western countries now call upon white South Africa to begin a peaceful and constitutional process of sharing of power derives in part from this fear that the process will otherwise soon become a violent one.

There is every reason to believe that a peaceful transition to full political participation by the non-white majority is to be preferred. We should recognize, however, that a peaceful transition, even if it is set in motion, is still likely

to meet with violent opposition from those for whom the objective is not simply to bring white domination to an end but to shape the new order that replaces it.

WESTERN MEANS

Given that the West is serious in wishing to see "an end to racial discrimination and full political participation for all South African citizens," there are three broad lines of policy that it can pursue in order to bring this about. It can seek to influence white South Africa so as to make the necessary reforms. It can seek to subvert white South Africa, adding its own weight to that of the socialist countries and the Third World in assisting the revolutionary forces at work among the non-white population. Or, it can seek simply to disengage from the situation, allowing indigenous and other external elements to bring about the inevitable changes in South Africa and minimizing the damage to itself that further involvement would bring.

The policy of seeking to influence white South Africa is the one that the West is already embarked upon. The West's policy is perhaps one of approaching South Africa with carrot and stick. The carrot is the implied promise of support if South Africa reforms itself. The stick is the threat to maintain existing pressures and increase them, if it does not. Such a policy is directed toward encouraging change that is peaceful and constitutional, and thus least likely to injure Western economic and strategic interests in the country. It is also the policy that offers the best hope of reconciling the divergent attitudes toward South Africa within the Western countries. A toughening of the policy might include threats to tighten the strategic embargo, to withdraw diplomatic relations, and — the issue most discussed at present — to encourage "disinvestment."

Within the white community in South Africa there is, of course, very strong feeling against disinvestment, by which I understand an official policy of promoting not merely a cessation of new investment but a withdrawal of existing investments. It is said that this would harm black South Africans more than white ones; that it would be counterproductive, inasmuch as it is the continued economic development of South Africa which — since it breaks down barriers between ethnic groups in economic life — offers the best hope of the ultimate social and political integration of the country; and that by creating unemployment and poverty it would bring about a revolutionary situation. It is also said that the effect of pressure such as this, or even of the threat of it, is not to cause the Nationalist government to alter its policies but only to cause them to turn inward on themselves.

The effects of disinvestment seem to me very uncertain and I am not sure enough of my ground to advocate its use as a lever to influence the government of South Africa. But I must confess that I do not feel persuaded by the arguments against it. If it is the black South African who has most to lose from disinvestment, this is because of the way in which the existing structure of South African society would impose the burdens of a depressed economy upon him. To accept this argument is to accept the legitimacy of that existing structure. I am impressed by the fact that black African states and, so far as I can judge, black political leaders who have no stake in the present system, appear to favor disinvestment. It is,

I think, presumptuous to assume that black South Africans are not prepared to face some economic hardship in order to obtain social and political rights. There is a basic conflict between the economic logic which says that racial barriers should be broken down so that the talents of the South African population can be fully utilized for the benefit of the economy and the political logic of apartheid. But in this conflict it is the political logic which so far has prevailed. It is true that disinvestment is likely to bring about a politically unstable and unsettled situation. This, indeed, is why those who are concerned to promote radical change in South Africa are in favor of it. The argument that South Africa should be changed, but that on no account should its "stability" be upset, is intellectually an unconvincing one. From the point of view of a black man in Soweto, a challenge to the stability of the existing system may be a source of hope.

SUBVERSION

The policy of promoting or facilitating the subversion of white South Africa is the one for which socialist and Third World countries call. It would imply not only severing all diplomatic, strategic, and economic relations with South Africa, but also extending material support to revolutionary forces within South Africa and neighbouring states. If the policy of seeking to influence white South

Africa is clearly having no effect, radical forces in the West may call for this policy. More conservative forces may come to see more merit in it as a means of heading off the influence of the Soviet Union, gaining credit with the black political elements in South Africa that seem likely in the end to be victorious.

The policy of disengaging from South Africa is one which the Western countries show no sign of adopting at present. They might, however, feel drawn to it if they concluded that the policy of trying to influence South Africa had become bankrupt and that a situation had developed in which a violent confrontation was inevitable. Given that Western public opinion would have divided sympathies towards such a conflict, the impulse of Western government, as toward the Spanish Civil War, would be to avoid becoming involved. Even in such an extremity, however, disengagement would be a difficult policy for the West to carry through. They could not ignore the possible involvement of the Soviet Union in the conflict, and its implications for the world balance of power. Large-scale violence might call for demands for humanitarian relief or intervention. Both the West and the Soviet Union would be drawn toward seeking to exert some ultimate control of the course of the conflict by South Africa's position as a potential nuclear power. □

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(picture by the Natal Witness)

Sanford J. Ungar and Peter Vale

AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA: AN AGENDA BEYOND CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The proposals outlined in this article are a refinement of proposals set out in the article "South Africa: Why Constructive Engagement Failed" published in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Winter 1985/86).

The U.S. policy of Constructive Engagement has failed to adapt itself sufficiently to the growing domestic turmoil in South Africa. The policy also alienated black South Africans from the United States. The United States should pursue a more confrontationalist policy with the South African government and it is important for the American government and business interests to devise additional measures that might hurt the pride and prestige of the South African government without inflicting undue economic damage on black South Africans. Some of the measures proposed here should be selectively instituted for predetermined periods, with the American government making it clear that they may be lifted if circumstances improve. Alternatively, if the situation continues to deteriorate, these pressures could be intensified and other pressures sought.

We propose that the following measures be adopted by the United States.

- The landing rights enjoyed by South African Airways in the United States can be reduced or terminated.

The availability of almost daily direct service between Johannesburg and New York, with only a stop in the Cape Verde Islands, is a great advantage to South African businessmen and officials, and since Pan American abandoned its service for economic reasons in 1985, South African Airways has a monopoly on the route's substantial profits. Far from considering this step, which has frequently been proposed in the past, the Reagan Administration actually expanded South African Airways' landing rights in the United States in 1982, permitting direct service between Johannesburg and Houston (later suspended). The cancellation of direct air service is a sanction the United States has frequently taken to demonstrate disapproval of actions by other governments — including the Soviet Union, Cuba, Poland and Nicaragua. Because of the



(picture by the Natal Witness)

importance to South Africans of their links to the outside world, this would probably be more likely to have an effect in South Africa than it did in those other countries.

- The United States can take steps to reduce South Africa's diplomatic status in the US.

South African military attaches can be expelled especially in the wake of South African raids on its neighbours, and other objectionable actions by the South African Defence Force. The visa-application process for South Africans who wish to travel to the United States can be made as complicated and cumbersome as it is for Americans who seek to visit South Africa. If Pretoria proceeds with its policy of making it more difficult for American journalists to travel to South Africa, and to have the necessary access when they visit, then the number of official South African information officers permitted in the United States can be reduced.

- The flow of new American technology to South Africa can be further restricted, especially as it relates to the repressive domestic tactics of the South African government and its raids against neighbouring countries.

President Reagan's restriction on the shipment of computers to South Africa had little immediate effect because most of the material to which it applied was already in South African hands or could easily be obtained from other countries. Rigorous steps can be taken, however, including the use of U.S. Customs Service agents and other law enforcement personnel, to be sure that other American technological advances do not reach the South African police or military, directly or through third countries. It would also be possible to improve American compliance with the international arms embargo against South Africa and to take further steps to prevent nuclear material from reaching the country. It is widely known that some American companies operating in South Africa are

involved in strategic industries, and therefore in the regime's domestic and international war effort; this could be prevented with new rules governing American corporate behaviour in South Africa.

- The U.S. government can severely restrict, or even suspend entirely, its intelligence cooperating with the South African government.

There is reason to believe that these ties have helped the South Africans far more than the United States, and they carry the implication that the United States is complicit in some of the worst abuses committed by South Africa against neighbouring countries. The United States can be zealous in the appointment it makes to its mission to South Africa, ensuring that only opponents of Apartheid are appointed. One of the most troubling aspects of this problem is that some operatives of U.S. intelligence agencies and some State Department employees who have served in South Africa are outspokenly sympathetic to apartheid, and have occasionally used their positions to thwart official American actions and directives.

- The United States can seek to internationalize discussion of the South African issue by putting it on the agenda of the annual Western economic summits.

Not only could this be a way of coordinating economic pressures on South Africa, but it would prevent South Africa from being able to drive a wedge between the western allies. Differing economic and strategic interests in South Africa make it possible that the western alliance might fracture over South Africa and the development of a co-ordinated western policy is therefore imperative.

While constructively confronting the South African government, the U.S. should seek to reach out to a wider South African community with the aim of developing a healthy and vigorous non-racial opposition within the

country. Such an opposition would make it difficult for the South African government to crush it if it enjoyed wide international recognition. The route to this goal would be for the United States to send clear signals to the black majority in South Africa. Some suggestions for this strategy follow:

- The United States must open a dialogue with the African National Congress and other black organizations that have widespread support among black South Africans.

Not to know what the ANC, the oldest black nationalist organization in South Africa, is thinking and doing is not only bad diplomacy but also foolish politics. If South African businessmen and white opposition politicians have recently held such discussions, certainly American officials will be taking no great risk by doing so. This contact with black South African leaders should take place at the ambassadorial level, both inside and outside South Africa, as a means of stressing the American rejection of the notion that the white government is the only meaningful political institution in the country.

- The United States should send a black ambassador — a man or woman of international stature — to South Africa as soon as possible, to demonstrate important points of principle to South Africans of all racial groups.

This would be an opportunity to emphasize the valuable role that black people play in a multi-racial society, a system which South Africans often compare to their own. Some might complain that such an appointment smacks of tokenism, but if the ambassador behaved in an appropriate manner, his presence would be of more than symbolic value. The Ambassador should provide facilities for the meetings of groups that are trying to organize peaceful protests against the apartheid system and, in other respects, make it clear that he is the ambassador of all Americans to all South Africans, not just of white America to white South Africa. He should take it upon himself to convey to South Africans the depth of American feeling against apartheid, and the inadequate steps taken thus far by the South African government to dismantle it.

- Massive programmes, funded by the American government, foundations and business, should be instituted to help black South Africans attain better education in a broad range of fields, from engineering to international relations.

The money for such programmes should be distributed to all South African educational institutions, regardless of their nature, but special attention should be paid to encouraging the further integration of the mostly white elite universities. The committees that decide how this money is to be spent should have a majority of black South African members. American-sponsored educational programmes already available have barely scratched the surface; what is needed now is an effort to help black South Africans learn how to help run their country, an eventuality that seems not to have occurred to the ruling whites.

- The United States should offer publicly to send forensic pathologists and other experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation into South Africa to help find South Africans who have mysteriously disappeared and to help determine the cause of death of those who have been found.

This has proved to be an effective technique in Central American countries such as El Salvador, where the police do not always care to solve crimes. The South African police are accused of acting to frustrate, rather than advance, the solution of some crimes against black people, and such outside help might well be appropriate.

- The United States government, in conjunction with professional groups such as the American Bar Association, should also send legal aid to black South Africans. Although the legal systems differ in certain important respects, the American experience with public defenders and government-funded legal services is an excellent example for the South Africans. American law schools and private foundations, for example, could help train black South Africans as paralegal workers, who in turn could establish elementary legal clinics in remote areas of the country, where the civil and human rights of blacks are the most egregiously and routinely violated; these paralegal workers could in turn report to lawyers, who could make sure that the abuses are brought to the attention of the courts and the press.
- The United States should not only support the efforts of the black-led labour unions in South Africa, but where possible, should also send expert American union organizers to help them strengthen their institutions.

Until and unless other structures are established, South Africa's black unions represent one of the few ways that the disenfranchised majority can become involved in political action, and American labour organizations have relevant experience to offer in this domain.

- The American government should carefully monitor the performance of U.S. companies operating in South Africa, with a view toward creating and publicizing a list of those who treat their black workers badly.

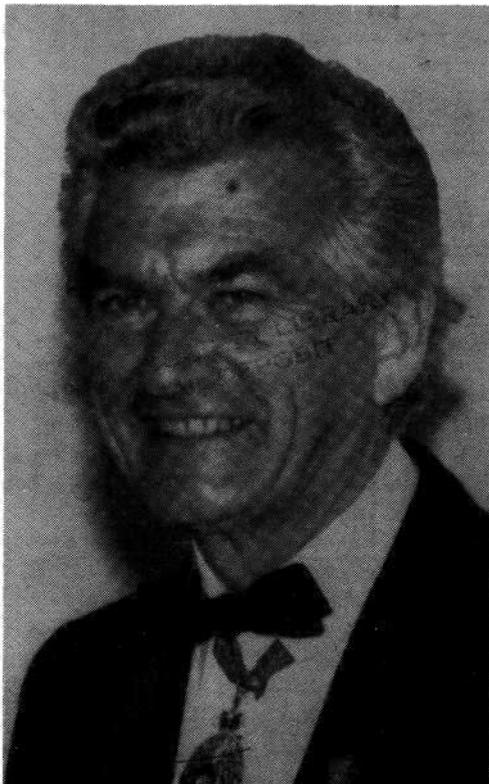
Indeed, American companies should be pressed by their government into playing a far more progressive role in South Africa — for example, by ignoring the Group Areas Act and establishing mixed housing areas where black and white South Africans can create de facto integrated neighbourhoods. U.S. businesses operating in South Africa should also make every effort to visit any of their employees who are detained on political grounds, and should establish a fund to be used for their legal defence.

- The United States should help black South Africans increase and improve their means of communication with each other and the rest of the South African people.

The exchange of South African and American journalists should be promoted, along with technical assistance in establishing black publications at the grass roots and black-oriented radio stations. Americans can help South Africans understand that a free press can often be one of the most important safety valves available to a society where there is political discontent. Severe consequences should be invoked, such as restrictions on South African diplomatic personnel in the United States, if black publications are closed and banned in South Africa, as they often have been in the past. □

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA'S SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY

(This article is a condensed and updated version of portions of an article, "The Hawke Government and Africa," which was published in *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 39, No. 3, December 1985. The author thanks the editor of *Australian Outlook* for permitting the adaptation of material which originally appeared in that journal.)



Bob Hawke (picture by the Natal Witness)

This paper traces the development of the Hawke government's policy on South Africa, and especially its policy responses to the events of 1985. The underlying theme is that Australian policy is built upon a contradiction, with moral and humanitarian considerations generally pulling one way and pragmatic economic considerations another. More precisely, the rhetoric condemnation of apartheid which has marked Australian policy since Prime Minister Whitlam's time coexists with Australian economic involvement in the apartheid system, and with a declared policy of opposition to unilateral Australian economic boycotts or sanctions directed against South Africa.

The extent to which the contradiction emerges into overt politics depends, of course, on the issue of the moment. One month before taking office, Mr Hawke showed him-

self well aware of the problem. "I think there are inconsistencies and hypocrisies in regard to the things we do in regard to South Africa. One of the early things I'll be doing is to have discussions with my relevant ministers as to how we would render Australia's position consistent." (*The Age*, 9 February 1983).

During the government's 1983-4 term in office, however, only a few minor adjustments to policy were made. SAA flights into Australia were reduced from two to one per week and the policy on sporting contacts was marginally tightened. The A.N.C. and SWAPO were permitted to establish offices in Australia. A programme of visits by prominent anti-apartheid South Africans was inaugurated, bringing Bishop Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak and Breyten Breytenbach, among others, to Australia. And it was announced that South African officials would be allowed to visit Australia only on condition that they made no attempt to promote the apartheid doctrine.

These changes served to advertise the government's general attitude, but could hardly be regarded as stepping up pressure on South Africa to pursue the internal reforms which the Australian government wished to see. In particular, the basic issues of trade and investment relations were left untouched. Probably the government's reluctance to take wider initiatives simply reflected the fact that South Africa was not a prominent issue in this period: in other words, the Hawke government felt no great impulsion to become embroiled in a difficult policy area when it was not being strongly pressed — either by events or by interested parties — to do so.

SALIENT ISSUE

In 1985, however, the South African issue became much more salient in ways that brought out sharply the underlying tension within Australian policy. We will look in turn at the two most discussed and most controversial aspects of Australia's South African relationships, sporting ties and economic ties.

In April 1985, it was announced that a rebel Australian cricket team had been contracted to play in South Africa during the next two summers. While the government had no statutory power to prevent the team from leaving

Australia to play wherever it wished, it could and did invoke the Gleneagles Agreement and sought to dissuade the players. But Mr Hawke's somewhat personalised handling of the dispute had the effect of making the rights of Australian sportsmen appear to be the issue, rather than the character of the apartheid system. A TV telephone poll in Melbourne on 20 May produced 40 880 votes for Kim Hughes and 6 840 for the Prime Minister. In June, an opinion survey found that 69 per cent of the electorate supported the cricketers. Although feelings ran ever higher among the tours' opponents as the South African domestic crisis deepened and the numbers of Africans killed or detained kept growing, it seemed that for the Australian majority, apartheid and cricket – or more broadly, politics and sport – were still separate issues. In August, however, a Morgan Gallup Poll showed that public support for the tours had fallen to 58 per cent. What produced this fall? It seems very likely that the heavy media coverage of the deteriorating situation in South Africa was a major factor.

The government's high profile on the cricket issue helped bring the problems of Australian policy very much into view. Repeatedly the point was made that the government was applying double standards: why should opposition to apartheid be used as the reason for trying to prevent a few sportsmen from earning an income when it was not being used to prevent Australian firms from earning income through trade and investment? It appeared that the sportsmen were being made to carry the moral burden of the government's policy.

It was in fact standing policy to do nothing to promote trade with South Africa (The Whitlam government had closed one of Australia's two Trade Commissions there), and the Australian government would not sell government-made goods, such as aircraft, to the Republic. Much the same applied to investment. The government would not do anything to prevent the placement of private investments from either country in the other, but neither would it do anything to facilitate it. Further, all Australian governments since Whitlam's had declared their support for the principle of international economic sanctions, in which Australia would willingly join if South Africa's major trading partners gave a lead.

At the same time, both labour and non-labour governments argued that disapproval of another country's domestic political arrangements did not provide sufficient grounds for a unilateral suspension of economic (or for that matter, diplomatic) relations. This argument applied equally to South Africa and, say, the Soviet Union. With reference to South Africa specifically, there was an additional standard argument about the difference between sports bans and trade bans: namely, that they differed significantly in their potential effects on South Africa. Because South Africa and Australia played so many of the same games, sporting boycotts could have a real effect on pressuring South Africa towards change. But because South Africa's trade was worldwide and its economy was well equipped to embark upon import substitution in many areas, a unilateral trade boycott by Australia would have negligible effect. At the same time it could well be damaging to the Australian economy and cost Australian jobs. Since the government had a responsibility to protect Australia's economic interests, the maintenance of trade with countries such as South Africa was no mere cynical expediency.

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

In allowing these economic relations to continue over the years, Australian governments have had nothing to fear from electoral opinion. Polls have regularly shown the majority of Australians in favour of trade links. In March 1983, for example, 65 per cent were in favour, while in June 1985 only 35 per cent favoured a trade ban. In the changing circumstances of 1985, however, it became clear that the government was feeling a renewed discomfort on the issue. There were several reasons for this. First, of course, there was the deepening crisis within South Africa itself. Second, during the cricket furore, charges of hypocrisy and double standards could not simply be argued away. Third, there were the overseas examples of moves to reduce economic ties with South Africa, especially the various disinvestment campaigns in the US and Europe. Fourth, there were embarrassing revelations of inconsistencies in the government's own dealings: it emerged, for example, that the Department of Trade had been authorising export incentives to Australian firms trading with South Africa, notwithstanding repeated requests from the Department of Foreign Affairs that it desist. Fifth, there were mounting pressures, if not from the electorate at large, then certainly from the government's own major support groups – the parliamentary back bench, Labor Party branches and the trade union movement.

At some point, probably in April, cabinet decided to begin toughening its policy on the economic links. Two initiatives ensued. Firstly, on 18 April the Foreign Minister, Mr Hayden, released a draft document, Australian Code of Conduct for Australian companies with interests in the Republic of South Africa. The proposed code would require Australian companies to provide standards for their black South African employees modelled on the provisions of the Sullivan, Canadian and E.E.C. Codes of Conduct, all of which had been in force for some years. Secondly, on 2 June Mr Hawke stated that the government would take a lead in organising an international campaign for mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa, both in the UN Security Council and at the Bahamas Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in October.

The first of these moves brought protests from the Confederation of Australian Industry at the Business Council of Australia, which argued that doing business with South Africa was difficult enough without additional hindrances. On the government's other flank, there came arguments from anti-apartheid groups, trade union leaders and others that a voluntary and unenforceable code would have very little useful impact in South Africa anyway, and that the only effective course would be to disinvest altogether. Nevertheless the drafting proceeded, in consultation with both business and unions, and a Sullivan-style code was duly announced at the end of November.

The second initiative looked much more dramatic, a genuine departure from Australia's previous position that the lead on international sanctions would have to be taken by the major powers. During June, Australian officials began making approaches to other countries, especially those that would be meeting at CHOGM. In July, Australia, as a temporary member of the UN Security Council, voted in support of a Franco-Danish resolution providing for a range of voluntary commercial

embargoes against South Africa: this resolution was carried (with Britain and the US abstaining), and the Government immediately ordered its officials to report on what actions Australia could take to comply with it.

POLICY REVIEW

Early in August the Government recalled its Ambassador from South Africa, with the dual purpose of delivering a diplomatic rebuke to Pretoria (as the US and ten western European countries had by then done) and involving the Ambassador in the policy review process.

The way the government approached the review exercise was neatly encapsulated by Michelle Grattan of the **Melbourne Age**:

The Government's aim is to be in the forefront of international policy without getting shot in the back as part of the scouting party. While advocating mandatory sanctions, it is seeking, until such sanctions are adopted worldwide, ways of sending signals to the South Africans which do not carry too high a price at home. If possible, it would prefer to confine itself to government actions rather than imposing actions on the private sector. (**The Age**, 5 August 1985).

The outcome of these somewhat conflicting political imperatives was a series of decisions taken by Cabinet on 12 August. These were:

- (1) To close the remaining Trade Commission (this would be done in September):
- (2) To end trade insurance (through the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation) and export grants, but only for South African-owned companies:
- (3) To extend the existing government ban on construction contracts with majority South African-owned companies to all other industries:
- (4) To prohibit the import of Kruger rands:
- (5) To prohibit the export of petroleum to South Africa:
- (6) To ask Australian banks and other financial institutions voluntary to suspend making new loans, either directly or indirectly, to borrowers in South Africa:
- (7) To seek agreement at the Bahamas CHOGM and in the United Nations, for the establishment of two expert groups, one to study the possibilities of action for "peaceful transition" to a multi-racial society in South Africa, the other to look at ways of implementing and co-ordinating an international suspension of new investment in South Africa.

Clearly, the most difficult policy options, such as trade bans and disinvestment, remained where they had always been: in the too-hard basket. Yet it is fair to judge the August decisions as representing a quite distinct move away from the government's earlier stand-pat position on the economic links. That they could have rather more than token effects was illustrated in December when a major South African construction firm, LTA Ltd, announced that it would shortly withdraw from Australia

"because of political pressure and official decisions to ban the granting of contracts to South African companies". (**The Age**, 4 December 1985). The decisions should also be seen and assessed in a wider context, as steps in an incremental process that began in April 1985 and is still continuing. As Mr Hayden has pointed out, they leave room for further tightening: for example, the measures announced in the second decision could be extended to Australian-owned companies. By November, as we have noted, they had been supplemented by the finalisation of the business code of conduct.

NON-ECONOMIC

Another possibility now being actively considered by the government is the withdrawal of SAA's landing rights in Australia. Meanwhile, in the non-economic realm Mr Hawke's initiatives at the Bahamas CHOGM in October led to the establishment of the Commonwealth Committee of "Eminent Persons", charged with trying to promote dialogue between black and white leaders in South Africa. Mr Malcolm Fraser, fresh from chairing a UN Commission on a possible code for multinational investment in South Africa, was appointed Australia's representative on this committee, becoming its co-chairman. In all these ways, the Australian Government has been attempting to move in the direction of reconciling rhetoric with actual policy.

To comment further. The August review was intended by the government to establish the framework of Australian policy for some time to come. In practice the durability of any specific policy pattern cannot be predicted, since the future course of policy would be much influenced by factors outside the government's control. For one thing, the drama of South African history itself will continue to unfold and to require policy responses. Concrete evidence of real progress in South Africa, such as talks between the regime and representative black leaders, might induce foreign governments, including Australia's, to reduce their pressures: on the other hand, a continuing cycle of rebellion and repression would keep alive the question of whether policy should be further toughened. For another thing, other countries will continue to take initiatives which will require Australian decisions on whether to follow suit. If in fact international initiatives begin to peter out, as they have done more than once in the past, Australia's own international campaign could run down quite swiftly. But if they gain momentum, the tempo of Australian policy could accelerate as well. The government has, after all, frequently affirmed that Australia will join in any genuinely international endeavours to mount comprehensive sanctions.

Thus it would be a mistake for anyone, inside or outside Government, to regard Australian policy as settled, the August review notwithstanding. In particular: if the Government is serious about joining in international sanctions, then sooner or later it will have to make its contingency plans against the possibility that sanctions will come to be. When it does this, the policy options currently relegated to the too-hard basket will have to be taken out and examined once again. □

SOUTH TO SOUTH: NEW ZEALAND-SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

White New Zealanders and South Africans, bred in the same wave of 19th century colonialism, share many things. One of these is sensitivity to our image and place in the wider world. In New Zealand we like to think we are growing up because we give visiting celebrities a few days before asking what they think of the country, where previously it was the first question asked on setting foot in the country.

Until recently we were a close-knit and parochial edge of an Empire. Over the last 10 years we have been forced to reconsider our archaic world-view, largely by the inscrutable but disastrous workings of the Common Agricultural Policy in the quota-fetishist Europe.

The unprecedented domestic "unrest" of 1981 during the Springbok Rugby Tour amazed us as well as foreigners. The truth is that it wasn't all about rugby being soft on racism. That issue pulled many others with it. The political and social hierarchies had not caught up with a widespread unease. At the urban level there had been many changes, some for the good like a greater variety of ideas and more adventurous attitudes, some for the worse as economic decline fed insecurity, and our national myths of egalitarianism and modest prosperity seemed to slip away.

The right wing politicians, quite out of sympathy with any of this "nonsense," saw a golden opportunity to use the tensions unleashed by the Springbok tour to their political advantage and subsequently won an election they would otherwise have lost.

Now we have a situation rather more complicated – a nominally left-wing government characterised by liberalism on social issues, and thorough-going right-wing monetarism in economics.

In foreign policy the necessary fence-mending ('panel-beating' was the Prime Minister's description) with Africa was achieved in quick time, though the domestic effect of this has been described as a 'political albatross.' It seemed as if infantile media reporting of the official trip to Africa stirred a chord of basic racism in the Kiwi psyche. Fortunately for the Prime Minister, David Lange, Africa and the aborted tour were soon forgotten as the stand-off with the United States over nuclear weapons developed mock-heroic qualities and then all was submerged with the farcical French initiation of terrorism in "Godzone", the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior.

Through the mist of American anger, Australian exasperation and EEC arrogance we could see that things were happening in South Africa, but our bit there was well and truly done with the astonishing judicial decision that grounded our brave All Black touring party. This elicited considerable international admiration for the subtlety of our 'processes', but it was no foregone conclusion, rather the sweetest gift any government could want.

LOOKERS ON

Far from being a hotbed of anti-apartheid activism ("the GLC (Greater London Council) of the South Pacific" according to a misinformed British commentator), we have merely looked on. The government has joined in various prestigious rituals such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, but has played no leading role. Indeed, the greatest care has been taken to see that as little controversy as possible can be read into any statements regarding South Africa, not a whiff about support for the forces of liberation, for example.

In the non-governmental arena the much vaunted anti-apartheid movement has almost died a natural death. In a sense, the chickens have come home to roost. Following debilitating ideological disputes in the past no sound link was developed between HART (the Halt All Racist Tours organisation) and the ANC. The trend has been for HART to become a utopian-type sect and its very South African orientation is even now in question, as it attempts to define itself as a generalised anti-racist movement, rather than a specific South African solidarity campaign.

The question of confronting racism in our own society is a by-product of the healthiest current movement in the country – the cultural, economic and political revival of the Maori. But it means in HART's case, that at a time when a mature understanding of South Africa is more relevant than ever before, there is only an introverted idealism and virtually no public profile.

The breadth of our responses to South Africa remain. The two most prominent South Africans to feature here in 1985 were Arnold Stofile and Gavin Relly. Stofile was crucial in the court decision to abort the rugby tour, but his experience here was often painful, and he was subjected to a great deal of abuse. Relly, for his part, had an easy ride and ably used the media platform given him to expound views which seemed more reminiscent of the patronising public relations of past Consuls-General than the shrewd wisdom of a man who talked hard facts with the ANC. The differing receptions given to these two, show something of where we in New Zealand really are, as a settler colonial society. I don't think we've learnt much from the Zimbabwe experience.

PIK BOTHA

A surprise visitor to our living-rooms was none other than Pik Botha. In a sense his intrusion sums up the naivety of many New Zealanders regarding South Africa. It was a public relations coup, a masterstroke, whether it was deliberately set up or not.



David Lange

(picture by the Natal Witness)

It was in April when the New Zealand Prime Minister's party arrived in Gaborone, with a bunch of very tired and disgruntled journalists in tow. Starved of hard news by the ceremonial side of the African tour, they jumped at the apparently innocent chance held out to them to go south and get a real story. In their extensive interview with Botha they revealed their abysmal lack of preparation and background. They were no match for the formidable minister but, storywise, they were on a winner.

Their lack of judgement meant that right at the climax of Lange's trip, when it was actually relevant and important that he talk about his government's attitudes to southern Africa, it was a South African politician who took centre stage back in New Zealand.

For all that, the Lange overture to Africa was not pointless. It was with some foresight that Zimbabwe was chosen as the site for New Zealand's first diplomatic mission in Africa, rather than Kenya or Nigeria. This was a recognition of the long-term importance of the southern region to New Zealand. The South African issue will not go away and the situation, as we see it from here, will get far worse before it can even start to get better.

The importance of SADCC (Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference) in the region is acknowledged, and this will be the logical vehicle for increased development and technical aid.

In the event of the current Labour government settling in for a reasonable period in office (i.e., winning an election in 12 to 18 months time), it is probable that New Zealand will eventually make further overtures to the ANC (the Lusaka meeting in April was brief), implying at least that the ANC is essential for a peace process, if not that it is a virtual government in waiting.

Current thinking would be that the time has not yet come for public acceptance of this position, and in the absence of a strong lobby it seems that New Zealand's 'contribution' will remain off the rugby field. It goes without saying, that if P.W. Botha's successor can make a decisive breakthrough towards the bottom line of negotiations with genuine black leaders this would be greeted with rapture in Wellington.

New Zealanders of a liberal or left persuasion don't view South Africa with the same self-righteous purity of the past. The effect of the Maori revival is felt very much by Pakehas, who are being forced to reconsider their history, its structural injustices and their identity as citizens of the Pacific rather than Europe. The cultural products of this awakening are apparent in the arts but we do not yet have a van Onselen or a Freund to make us really sit up and take stock of our history. We remain basically a pleasant backwater, with a few troubling ripples and interesting currents, but lacking stimulation of crisis. □

RESETTLEMENT

Deep beneath the rubble
tight between two
old
rusty pieces
of corrugated iron
lies my heart
I shall never get it out now
the bulldozer tracks have bruised it
into the ground
I walk on
my new home
nowhere
and nothing beats in my breast
my blood runs cold
reptile-like
my eyes do not close in sleep
I dream no more
my heart is buried in the rubble
all I have left is my nightmare
and a bent tin bucket
with a hole

Barbie Schreiner

POETRY

He read Serote
who defines fiercely
our social need.
"That's not poetry:
it's politics,"
he cried.
"Poetry is a pure thing,
quite unconcerned
with worldly aims."

Then he plunged
into a proper poem:
it was Andrew Marvell
speaking subtly
to his coy mistress.

And he exclaimed:
"That's not lyricism:
it's love.
Poetry is a pure thing,
quite unconcerned
with worldly aims."

Vortex

MYTHS, HISTORY AND POLITICS

LM Thompson: **The Political Mythology of Apartheid;**
Yale, 1985, R38,95.

In recent years much stress has been laid on the economic rationality of apartheid. But no one can deny that it also rests on a set of myths – about the importance of race, and about the past of this country. It is those racial and historical myths that Leonard Thompson – formerly Professor of History at the University of Cape Town, he retires this year as Professor of History at Yale – is concerned with in his new book, which greatly expands an essay he wrote on the subject in the **Journal of African History** as long ago as 1962.

As an historian, Thompson is interested in showing how myths are created, and how they change over time, as the interests they serve change. He shows how certain events on the Cape frontier in 1815 and during the Great Trek in 1838 were seized upon to create the myths of Slagtersnek and the Covenant respectively. Both myths were used to serve the interests of Afrikaner nationalism: Slagtersnek primarily to promote Afrikaner resistance to British imperialism – it was viewed essentially as a story of the evil British – and the Covenant to show that the Afrikaners were a chosen people, which aided the mobilisation of Afrikaners in a single political movement.

As British power waned, an Afrikaner nationalist government entrenched itself in office, and, especially as that government saw the need to incorporate English-speakers in an Afrikaner-dominated white South African nation, an anglophobic, anti-British myth became unnecessary or even counter-productive. The Covenant myth similarly lost much of its functionality, and Afrikaner scholars have undermined much of its historical basis, one being tarred and feathered for his pains. That it survives – the Day of the Vow remains a public holiday – is, Thompson suggests, primarily because of the religious element involved in the myth.

Afrikaner nationalist mythology has from the beginning had both a liberatory and a racist aspect. Thompson argues that from the Second World War the racist element came to predominate in Afrikaner nationalist mythology. As a result of successful ethnic mobilisation, 'liberation' was won in 1948. But as Afrikaners were a minority, their 'liberation' meant oppression of a majority. That oppression was legitimated by the racist ingredient of the mythology, which became the core element in apartheid mythology. According to the racial myth,

race is the fundamental division between people; everyone can be placed in one or other unassimilable race. Ethnic distinctions are regarded as being much more important among blacks than among whites. And blacks are said to have no more historical claim to the land than whites.

RACISM DISCREDITED

As Thompson points out, the world of science for long accepted the idea that racial differences were fixed and significant. It was the Nazi use of racism that did most to undermine the idea of racial hierarchy, and to discredit scientific racism. In the world in general after the Second World War a process of deracialisation gathered momentum, and the very concept of race came to be regarded as scientifically irrelevant. In South Africa, on the other hand, there was a stricter enforcement of racism.

In recent years scholars have totally undermined the myth of 'the empty land'. But the racist mythology survives in altered form. The idea of inferiority was first replaced by one of difference. Then government realised that crude and all-embracing racism might help undermine racial domination rather than preserve it, hence the recent desegregation measures. A more sophisticated racism is limited to core elements, such as the franchise. For apartheid to go in its entirety, the very idea of racial difference would have to go. Because the racist myth ultimately buttresses white supremacy, it seems likely to be with us for some time yet.

Though he includes a considerable amount of detail on his case-studies, Thompson's exceptionally lucid style makes this an easy book to read. It is not the last word on ideology in the South African context: it does not consider the English-speaking ingredient in apartheid mythology – David Welsh, after all, has found the roots of segregation in colonial Natal – and in places it confuses ideas about the past and predictions about the future. It does not get to grips with the problems involved in weighing the strength of a mythology: the works of intellectuals, school textbooks and the speeches of politicians are all only pointers. But Thompson's book casts important light on the interplay between South African history and its present politics. □

CHALLENGING CRIMINOLOGY

Dennis Davis and Mana Slabbert (eds):
Crime and Power in South Africa, David Philip,
 Cape Town, 1985.

Whether or not one agrees with the radical theoretical perspective of the book, all must welcome its publication. Despite the predominantly sociological orientation of most of the contributors, it should give a livening impetus to the stodgy discipline of Criminology and should lead to further research and argument. Many chapters provide interesting and informative historical and political assessments of the areas addressed but, as can be expected from this perspective, few offer practical guidelines on how to tackle daily problems in the context of the existing society.

The first chapter, "Criminology in South Africa" by Davis, is a closely argued reasoning of the need for a new paradigm in criminology which takes into account political as well as social factors. However, Davis should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. A factor may be neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause of crime but it could still be a contributory cause. Thus to brush aside all previously researched factors will not add to our knowledge. For example, 'blocked opportunity', however responsible the political system may be for it, is still a cause of crime. This is not to say that full weight should not be given to political factors.

In Chapter two, Slabbert, succinctly enumerates some problems specific to criminological research in all countries and in South Africa in particular. Her article gives some answers to the question why South African research lags behind that of other countries.

Pinnock's article on gangs and family structure is an indictment of forced removals which have resulted in the proliferation of Coloured gangs in the Cape. It presents a new angle for looking at an old problem. Here is an area where more research could lead to new enlightenments.

"Political Trials in South Africa" by Davis is a scathing attack on the security laws of this country. He highlights the differing conceptions of Black and White to political trials. He concludes that "during periods of extraordinary social unrest, the political trial becomes an important mechanism for legitimising State power".

Chapter 5 "Liquor, the State and Urban Blacks" by Wilfred Schärf, traces the history of the legitimate availability of liquor from the days of Paul Kruger. He views liquor laws as a political weapon of the State and outlines how changing commercial and political interests are central to the changes in the liquor laws. However, he leaves one

with the impression that, whilst he is not against prohibition, he also agrees with the legitimising of shebeens — an illogical position.

"Reforming Women: A Case of Disintegration" by Andrea Durbach addresses itself to sexism in our society, in our laws and the application of our laws. She discusses disadvantages of women before the law because of stereotypic conceptualisations about the 'nature' of women and their role in society. A case history is cited to underline her thesis that prison 'rehabilitation' takes the form of helping to propagate the sexist concept of domestic subordination and shows how imprisonment has drastic consequences not only for the woman but for her children and family. It is gratifying to note that female criminologists in South Africa are beginning to press for a further understanding and study of women as criminals and victims. (It may be noted that one doctoral thesis on the subject has recently been completed and that others are in the process of research.)

Mark Sher's article "From Dompas to Disc: The Legal Control of Migrant Labour" considers the iniquitous pass laws, the reasons why they have been instituted and the shift away from any judicial control of their implementation to control by administrative regulation, to the detriment of Black people. He also pinpoints the dismal failure of legal aid to help those it is supposed to help. The factors he discusses are closely linked to the crime rate in South Africa but have not previously been given sufficient in-depth attention by criminologists.

Mana Slabbert's contribution on "Violence on Cinema and Television and in the Streets" comes nearer to tackling day-to-day criminological problems than some of the other articles. She suggests that a more integrated family life counteracts the necessity for juveniles imitating screen violence. Thus she sees a connection between poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and the violence the young learn from watching screen violence. She lays much of the blame on the State and its mass media communications.

Wilfred Schärf's "Shebeens in the Cape Peninsula" analyses the establishment and growth of shebeens and traces the relationship between ownership of shebeens and small-time organised gang warfare. He concludes "The manner in which liquor capital and the State collude with informal-sector survivalists — the gang — constitutes a subtle but powerful form of control over the working class, and takes on strong ideological dimensions" (p 105).

“Drugs and Moral Panic” by Cathi Albertyn researches the panic surrounding the question of drugs and drug addiction. This panic is used by the State to gain White consensus for its repressive acts. However, one must question her contention that drug addiction, by its very nature, can be considered by the State as being “threatened by an alien force or even contraculture.”

Throughout the book attention is paid to reasons why the working class is criminalised but no mention is made of

the more socially costly crimes of the upper and middle classes (apart from their involvement in the state apparatus). Yet nowhere has it been positively proved that the working class is, in fact, the criminal class.

There are many assumptions and conclusions that one would like to argue. So the challenging nature of this book should lead to a deeper analysis of the problems with which it deals in order to verify or reject the conclusions to which the various writers come. □

by DARYL GLASER

IN THE SPIRIT OF FREE ENTERPRISE:

Hermann Giliomee and Lawrence Schlemmer (Eds)
Up Against the Fences; David Philip, Cape Town, 1985.

“Up Against the Fences”, edited by Hermann Giliomee and Lawrence Schlemmer, is a rather paradoxical book. It claims, in its subtitle, to speak on behalf of the impoverished, yet it is addressed very explicitly to the bearers of power and privilege: to reformers in the state and to businessmen. Its almost exclusive purpose is to persuade these parties that the amelioration of influx control, and the adoption of a “rational” urbanisation strategy (p351) will reinforce, rather than undermine political stability (pp156,298,318,332), boost capitalist profits (pp299-300, 341-2) and, moreover, avoid incurring major fiscal costs (pp115-116,ch12,ch27,p351). Like this collection as a whole, urbanisation is, A.M. Rosholt assures us, “linked to the spirit of free enterprise” (p284).

The most striking thing about the book is the conservatism of its vision. It views the demand for the “complete phasing out of the system of influx control” as “inappropriate at this stage” given “very powerful . . . anxieties amongst whites”. It accepts the need to maintain “some form of control over black movement” and insists on nothing more dramatic by way of reform than “adjustments to the policy to make it more flexible and attuned to the varying needs of individuals” (p332). Its attitude to the homelands is no less conservative. In spite of evidence – provided in a vivid contribution by Giliomee and Stanley Greenberg – that the homelands are characterised by “utter destitution and administrative disintegration” (p69), Giliomee, in another article, praises the

homelands as “discrimination-free zones” and sanguinely holds out the hope that the “homelands could still become important elements in a more just, stable federal state” (p56). A full chapter is given to Inkatha secretary general Oscar Dhlomo’s description of the evils of resettlement, and to his reassurances that KwaZulu does not collaborate in the implementation of this policy (ch19). Yet an article in the same book by P.M. Zulu exposes the corruption, regressive economic impact and unpopularity of chiefs and headmen in KwaZulu (ch17). The reader is therefore left wondering whether KwaZulu’s political order is meant to be part of the solution or a part of the problem.

URBANISATION

The alternative urbanisation strategy which emerges from this book is very much in “the spirit of free enterprise”. Relly calls for “a fairly high standard of squatter camp” (p301) while Schlemmer blandly advocates “upgraded informal settlements” (p181). In an example of sociology at its most uncritical, Schlemmer suggests that informal shack areas constitute “a specific type of urban ecology most suited to a marginal urban class with problems of adaptation to the formal system, and to people of lower socio-economic status” (p 189). In the same tenor Philip Smit warns that “over the long term” blacks in South Africa “will not have better houses and sewerage than

COMPENDIUM

they can afford to maintain themselves" and argues for the gradual elimination of housing subsidies and for the selling off of state housing stock (pp115-16). Schlemmer insists that it would be a mistake for the government to upgrade informal settlements to a level compatible with First World planning standards. Even the "typical site-and-service pattern" – posited by some as the ideal free enterprise solution – is rejected by Schlemmer, who prefers state intervention to provide "basic services" (p190) and nothing more. Moreover, service levies should be "economic" rather than "subsidised" (p351): this would reduce financing difficulties and, revealingly, act as an additional deterrent to urban influx.

What are perceived by the authors to be the advantages of this "rational" urbanisation strategy? Firstly, it will increase the legitimacy of the capitalist system (pp26,331). Secondly, it will offer more effective social control, an attitude summed up in Relly's observation that "modern defensive mechanisms and weaponry" make it "easier to control town-dwellers than rural people" (p298). Thirdly, in the words of the editorial overview, lifting influx control could end up "re-introducing the benefits to industrialists in labour-intensive sectors of supercheap black labour" (p344), weaken trade unions (p342), discourage unemployment-generating mechanisation (p332) and ensure that, in Relly's words, workers' income does not increase "at the expense of national economic growth" (p300). Finally, the proposed urbanisation strategy will be inexpensive, avoiding the businessman's worst nightmare: a tax-and-spend welfare state.

Not surprisingly, in light of this concern to win over politicians and businessmen, radical opinions are almost entirely absent from this book. In spite of claiming to speak for the victims of influx control, not one representative of a black trade union or community organisation is given a voice in this book, Desmond Tutu being the sole, token exception. And apart from Greenberg, who co-authors one article, no scholar of radical inclination is represented. To the extent that the work of Marxist writers is noted at all, it is for the "significant challenge" Jill Natrass believes they pose to capitalism in South Africa (pp26-27). On the other hand, four representatives of the private sector (Rosholt, Oppenheimer, Gavin Relly and Robert Godsell) and two of the Urban Foundation (Jan Steyn and Ann Bernstein) contribute to this book. While some non-radical writers – like Francis Wilson – are well placed to talk about the causes and cures of poverty, the collection as a whole is unmistakably weighted in favour of "privilege" and against those who bear the burdens of poverty and pass books.

The book has its merits. It is a compendium of numerous interesting facts, figures and suggestions on patterns of urbanisation (chs9,12), the operation of the labour bureaux (ch6), market hierarchies and social differentiation in the homelands (chs6,13), the rural resources of migrant workers (ch11), resettlement (ch18) and other important themes. It also offers some useful historical overviews (chs1,4). Some of the empirical work is, however, either rather banal (providing market research-type snapshots of black opinion) or insufficient to support the conclusions drawn from it (such as when Schlemmer, after discovering that shack dwellers consider informal settlements to be the best of a choice of nightmarish options open to them, concludes that such settlements constitute the best of all possible worlds for those of low socio-economic status). More seriously, the collection displays a paucity of complex or original theoretical contributions – consistently enough, given the pragmatic objectives of most of its authors. Moller (ch3), for example, provides an ahistorical and unconvincing "periodisation" of migrant labour, according to which, between the early and contemporary stages of migrant labour, there lay a golden age in which migrant work was voluntary, and migrants were contented, well adjusted, compliant and able to enjoy the benefits of an urban economy while remaining "unaffected by the negative influences of city life" (p31). This kind of contrived and static "phase model" is no substitute for the detailed historical work and theoretical elaboration that one would expect in a book that claims to be the first to deal "at any length" with influx control (p1). What kinds of interests, contradictions and struggles have shaped influx control policies over the decades? How has influx control been affected by the changing priorities of economic sectors, class actors, state managers? How has it in turn shaped the geographical, occupational and racial divisions of labour, or the rate of economic growth? Perhaps above all, how do we account for the present, and nearly universal rejection of existing forms of influx control in the commanding heights of the state and of the private sector? (The answer to this question might go some way towards helping us understand the origins of this book itself.) Finally, what are the obstacles, limits and risks of the "orderly" urbanisation currently being mooted?

One searches Giliomee and Schlemmer's collection in vain for convincing answers to these key theoretical questions.□

**CAPE OF GOOD HOPE:
FOR VASCO DE GAMA**

Day after day, week after heartsick week
The ship plunged southward. The appalling sun
Was north at noon: surely they soon must run
Over earth's frightful rim! But still the bleak
Coast blocked the eastward way they came to seek.
Leftward was pathless land, strait there was none,
And each day ended as it had begun.
The unknown stars at night made hope grow weak.

And then, land's end, the splendid finger of Hope,
And they sailed eastward into a different dawn.
So we, in later voyage, through seas that spawn
A vast despair, along dark coasts must grope
Towards destruction. Can we see the shape
Of our Good Hope, and we, too, round the cape?

Kenneth Boulding

A NOTE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

Because of the growing international interest in, and pressure on, South Africa, the March, 1986, number of REALITY was planned to be a special bumper **International** issue. However, our guest editor, Peter Vale of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University, received so many contributions, that we ended up with almost enough for two full issues.

We felt that it would be a mistake to spread these important articles over two numbers of REALITY. Instead we are printing them all in this issue, together with a number of pieces of local interest and comment, and combining our March and May numbers. This means that the next REALITY will appear in July.

Editorial Board

LEGALISTIC CYNICISM

Jan C. Heunis: **The Coventry Four**; Perskor, Johannesburg, Cape Town, 1985, R9,95

This book recounts the story of the arrest in 1984 of four Armscor employees in Britain on charges of smuggling military equipment to South Africa and how they were eventually "freed" by a decision of the South African government not to return them. This decision was justified as a lawful reprisal, resulting from a failure by the British government to evict six refugees who sought to escape the effect of a ministerial banning order by seeking refuge in the British Consulate in Durban.

Dr Heunis, at the time Law Adviser to the Department of Foreign Affairs (he is now Chief Legal Adviser to the State President), was intimately involved in this affair. ("I was sorely tempted to write in the first person".) He is aware of the implications of this for the objectivity of his account, but is quite frank about his feelings: "They became my friends and I consider them to be decent, hard working and honest South Africans who have had to suffer the humiliating experience of being jailed and the traumatic prospect of being separated from their families for a long period of time — all because of the existence of United Kingdom legislation that was founded in sin in that it incorporated into British legislation the contents of an unlawful mandatory arms embargo of the Security Council of the United Nations against South Africa".

This reflects the legalistic interpretation given to principles of International Law in defending South Africa's position in general. What it boils down to is a denial that South Africa's internal policies are at the heart of our international dilemma. According to this approach there exists an absolute prohibition on interference in the domestic affairs of another country. Thus the substance of the issue is simply not to be discussed. Needless to say, gross violations of human rights are not considered a purely domestic issue any more. It should also be recalled that the UN arms embargo was adopted in the wake of the 1976 Soweto riots and the death of Steve Biko.

Arguments about formal legal aspects constitute the bulk of the book. The basic contention is that the decision not to return the four was a lawful reprisal in response to a

prior illegal act by the British government. It should be pointed out that the British had granted "temporary refuge" and not asylum. A study of the **travaux préparatoires** of the International Law Commission's work for the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations will reveal no prohibition with respect to that. A more fundamental criticism is the purpose for which reprisals are to be used. They are exceptional measures of last resort, permitted only in the context of the peaceful settlement of disputes. In other words — the moment the six had left the Consulate, the Coventry Four had to be returned. That would have been a correct application of the concept had the real purpose been the solving of the problem with respect to the presence of the six in the Consulate. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs modified the rules slightly when he stated, immediately after the South African decision, that the four would not be returned, even if the six were turned over to the police. Both countries had had their "pound of flesh" and the matter was viewed as closed.

The inescapable conclusion remains — the purpose was never to solve a relatively minor problem about the refuge of six political activists, but to find a pretext for not honouring a commitment to another country. This inference is supported by additional evidence such as the haste with which the matter was conducted. (The decision was simply announced an hour after the final **aide memoire** to the British government was delivered).

Such a use of the law will only result in cynicism. The effect will be the exact opposite of what is demanded, namely less preparedness to play according to the rules when dealing with South Africa. In the end the ordinary South African will fail even more to understand our international problems. The few friends we have left in the international community will be less inclined to take us at our word.

Finally, one wonders about the relevance of the cover design for the subject matter of the book. Or is the picture of the launching of a missile from a fighter aircraft in flight simply the ultimate gesture of derision? □

BRIAN BISHOP

by OSCAR WOLLHEIM

Among the saddest people at the Requiem Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral for Brian Bishop must have been Catholic Bishop Adams of Oudtshoorn from whose house Brian, Molly Blackburn and their party had just left on that fateful journey which was to end in their deaths and injuries to his wife, Di, and Molly's sister.

What an extraordinary person Brian Bishop was! He was essentially a simple and practical man with an inbuilt sense of right and wrong, utterly fearless and quick-witted and with the saving grace of a fine sense of humour. With very little by way of an academic background or learning, he nevertheless through prolific reading and study became soon aware of the real problems facing our country and he determined to tackle them in his own way.

His way was essentially pragmatic. He worked hard at his business which involved computers and made himself financially independent well before the age of 50. He then sold his business and went into the field with Di, Molly and the Black Sash women, using the Institute of Race Relations, the Civil Rights League and any other body he could find to get down to the grassroots of the growing black/white confrontation. He made extensive use of the press by his clear and concise letters to make the public as aware as he, to correct misconceptions and to correct wrong facts.

Whenever there was confrontation between security forces and local people, invariably there came a phone call to him or Di and within minutes they would be off to the scene wherever it was to ensure that the authorities did not exceed their powers, to protest loudly when they did and to gather affidavits after the fracas was over. This they did in rain or shine, near or far, day or night. Harassment or detention did not deter them and they often succeeded in making the police back down or curb their zeal.

They were among the first to arrive with Molly Blackburn when trouble came to Cradock to encourage CRADORA, the local residents' association, in their opposition to the firing of their beloved teacher, Mr. Goniwe; and when his body was later found in a cane-field, Brian at once offered, later backed by the Civil Rights League, a reward of R1 000

for information leading to the arrest of the guilty person.

Again with the backing of the League he initiated another offer of R1 000 for information as to the whereabouts of Mr. Mtimkulu who had disappeared without trace after allegations that he had been detained. They were the first to get to Uitenhage to take affidavits even before the massacre took place and Molly could later be of great help to Mr. Justice Kannemeyer at the subsequent inquiry. They appeared at Oudtshoorn, Worcester, Paarl, Crossroads, Khayelitsha, anywhere where trouble broke out to pour oil on the waters and to establish the facts. Often they faced personal danger in these forays when Casspirs, Hippos and armoured cars fired birdshot and teargas while the locals responded with stones.

Afterwards one or both would appear at a meeting of the Institute, the League, the Dependants Conference or the Sash and would recite in calm and measured tones what had actually happened. Often Brian's accounts of confrontations with the police were hilarious especially when he could abash them by pointing out that they were infringing their own orders or acting in a manner condemned by Justice Kannemeyer in his Report, about which even some of the officers had not yet heard! The full story of their involvement will never be known for much of it was done quietly and never disclosed.

He was a unique sort of man to whom I did not take at the beginning for I thought that he was too unconventional, too pragmatic to get mixed up in the complications of the South African situation. But he worked his way into my heart and those of thousands by his quiet courage, his sensible approach, his directness and transparent honesty.

His loss, that much the greater for the simultaneous loss of Molly Blackburn, is a severe blow to all of us who are opposed to the present oppressive system, whatever the colour of our skins or our religious convictions — especially in the Cape. To the oppressed their passing is almost a mortal blow and Di's task, when she recovers from her injuries, will be that much more testing for she will no longer have Brian's strong arm and quick wit to back her own brand of courage and determination. □

VIVA MOLLY

by a colleague in the Black Sash Advice Office,
Port Elizabeth



Molly Blackburn

(picture by the Natal Witness)

Molly died in the service of others when, at the height of the festive season, she went to Oudtshoorn with her sister, Mrs Judy Chalmers, local chairperson of Black Sash, and Brian and Di Bishop, to experience for herself the tribulation of people of Bhongolethu; where lack of amenities under an unequal system had become a harder yoke to bear after a full tenth of the populace was arrested in two military-style operations in November.

"Now that you haven't got Molly to protest," said a youthful member of the security forces to a black priest, "Now that Molly's gone, we're going to get you!"

Molly's death seemed to illustrate the divide in the white community. It became a catalyst for commitment — an event from which people took their bearings. While a few crowed and cracked crude jokes, others, many formerly apolitical, came forward to join organisations and offer services, bearing out the biblical truth enunciated in the funeral service:

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12,24)

Thousands of letters of condolence poured in. Messages came from all over the world and from what the Roman Catholic Bishop of Port Elizabeth, Rt. Rev. J.P. Murphy termed "that great multitude of friends she acquired throughout the whole country as she sought untiringly to be of assistance." Within days of the funeral a meeting of prominent citizens met to form what they hoped would become a dynamic force for justice. Indeed it seemed that what Molly's pastor, Rev. George Irvine, head of the Methodist Church in the Eastern Cape, called the "seed of courageous caring" was even now bringing forth new life.

Why did Molly evoke so much admiration, such love and persecution and — even in death — constitute a challenge? Because her feelings were translated into action that was dynamic and daring, that captured the

affection of many and the imagination of millions. Because she fought repression with every weapon in her armoury, but mainly with her own indomitable spirit. Hers were not statements from behind the shuttered smugness of a suburban home but were the fruit of her experiences in the townships. Her home was open to all who sought it at any time and privacy was no factor.

People knew Molly loved them and was prepared to put herself at risk, endure exhaustion and discomfort, court imprisonment and look danger in the face. She was without fear, completely resolute. She never prevaricated. The only concern I ever heard her express was that after prolonged exposure she might lose sensitivity to people's sufferings. But she never did. "Molly was sensitive to the cries of those who are crushed daily under the wheels of the apartheid wagon," testified Rev. Dandala. "She allowed herself to suffer with the suffering. How many times have we called on Molly to intervene in the face of extreme brutality of Apartheid, sometimes even at the most awkward hours – to be met by her sigh of disbelief that South Africa could be so cruel to her people as it so often happens. Each moment of brutality was enough to shock Molly Blackburn."

The question was sometimes asked, he said, why people should have turned to Molly instead of to those with power. What was this power of which they spoke asked Dandala, but the power of the gun, the power to instil fear, detain without trial, split families under infamous influx laws by whatever name. "What is the power that Molly Blackburn did not have? It is the power to destroy – that she did not have. But in her was the power of moral courage. Her power was there precisely because she was weak in terms of state power and it is that power that made people to cry on her shoulder. She had the moral courage to visit the displaced squatters.

'Mrs Molly' had the moral courage to walk with a poor black mother to prison to search for her detained son or husband".

Molly became well-known in the townships, once standing waist-deep in water to rescue children in the low-lying shanty town of Port Elizabeth's Soweto when flood waters swirled. Where others needed police escorts, Molly walked freely, and entered the townships at any time of day or night until her entry was stopped by the withdrawal of

her permit. At a funeral at Zwide stadium, the vast crowd rose. "Viva Comrade Blackburn!" it roared. Sometimes mistakenly regarded as a sensationalist, Molly used the media as an ally to publicise the human catastrophes of Apartheid. She was a committed Christian, deriving support from membership of St John's Methodist Church where she was encouraged to "dare for justice." From her position of relative strength as a public representative, she was ready to take up the cudgels on behalf of the unenfranchised. Because of her, said Rev. Dandala, many black people refused to give up hope for change among white people. "She defied every attempt to limit her and refused to be silenced."

It was mourning the loss of a champion and celebrating her compassionate caring that made Molly's funeral an occasion of goodwill, an opportunity for assertion that black people were walking tall and an appeal to whites to cast off the shackles binding both black and white.

Huge throngs held aloft a wreath and danced the toyi-toyi war dance in sedate tree-lined streets in the city's central residential area. As they danced down the street, a lone traffic officer extended his arms. "Stop!" he said. The crowd stopped, turned and danced back up the road.

While police dogs, casspirs and strategically stationed soldiers watched, UDF marshalls kept tight crowd control.

Rev Alan Boesak said: "Even in death Molly is doing what she tried to do in life – bring people together. She is a true daughter of Africa and the children of Africa are here today to show how much we have loved her . . . She lived and showed us how to love and care and how to give. She gave so much of herself for so many. There are precious few white people who have gained so much credibility, who have earned so much love and respect from us. We have so little time. We have today, by God's grace, a little bit more to walk on a path that we have been shown, to try and seek what she has sought, and to build what she has tried to build. Let us not waste these moments. Let us begin now."

As the plain coffin left the church and became engulfed in a sea of mourners, words rang out that Molly would have wanted:

"Let us live to make men free . . ." □