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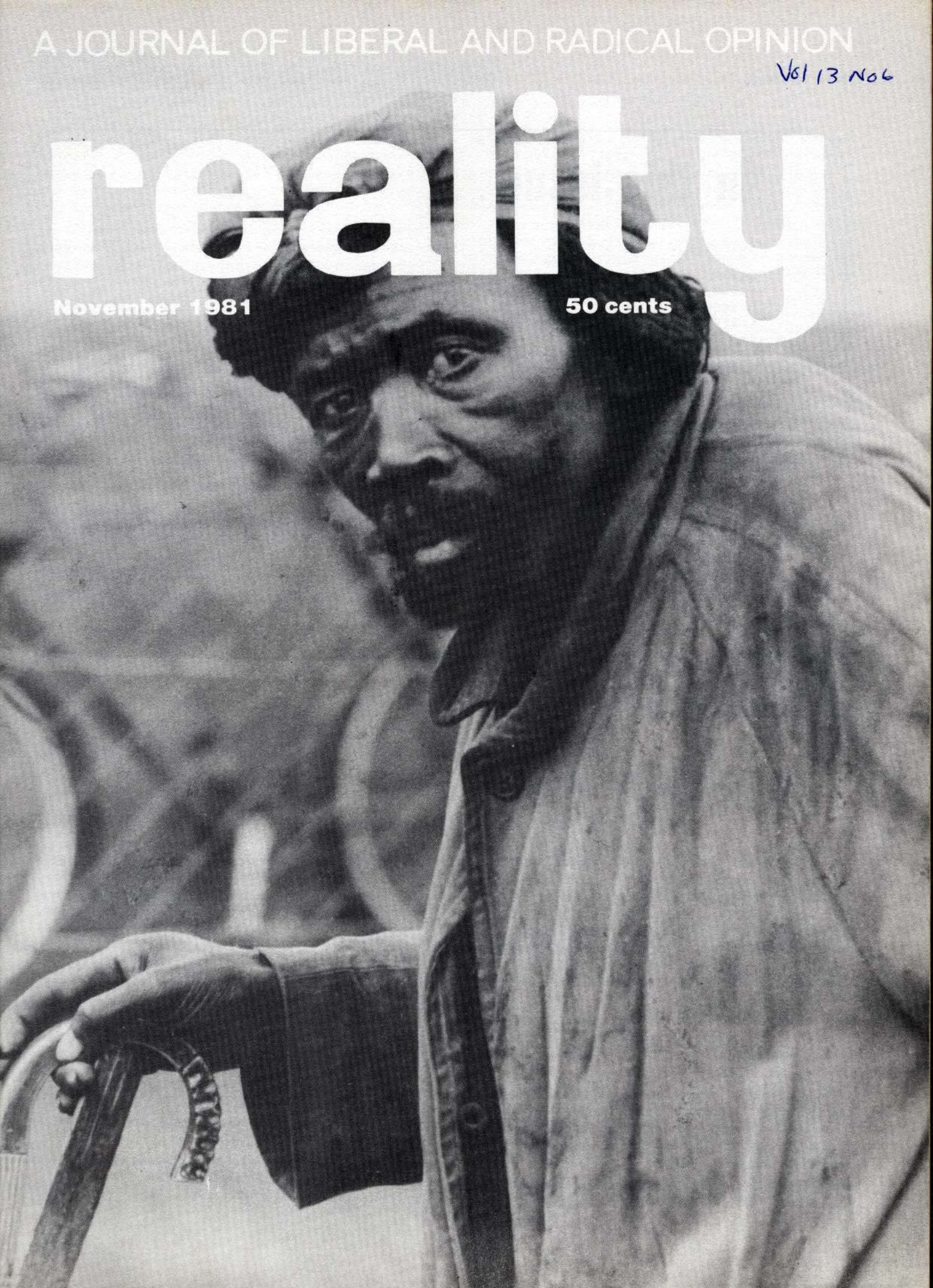

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EDITORIALS

1. BORDER WARS

It is still far too early to assess the long term implications of the recent massive South African incursion into Angola. An official statement has put the casualties at 1,000 SWAPO and Angolan Army personnel, not bothering to distinguish between the two. No figures were given for innocent inhabitants of Southern Angola, caught up in what the Rhodesian Security Forces used euphemistically to call "the crossfire", of which, in the nature of things, there were bound to have been many.

The same spokesman has said that it will take SWAPO at least a year to recover from this latest attack. Is what he is saying that, in a year's time, the whole hideous business will have to be repeated? And again the year after that?

The only faint justification there could be for all this slaughter would be that it would lead to a settlement that would save more lives in the future. This will be poor consolation to those who have suffered this time, but it might win some approval in the eyes of history.

Is this likely to happen? Will the West's new proposals now gain acceptance from SWAPO and the Frontline States and open the way to free elections under international supervision? Or will the sheer size of the South African military operation be regarded as having given South Africa such an advantage in the short-term that there will be more time-wasting?

South Africa has a legitimate complaint against the UN for its acceptance of SWAPO as the sole representative of the Namibian people, but to pretend that that acceptance gives an advantage to SWAPO in any way greater than that enjoyed by the DTA as a result of the all-pervading South African presence in Namibia is ridiculous. Set against the dangers of continuing military escalation in the area such debating points now are trivial. There will never be a moment before an election can be held when one side or the other won't be able to claim to be at a disadvantage. It is a completely neutral supervision of the Namibian elections **on the actual day the votes are cast** which is crucial.

Let's get on with arranging **that** before the whole Southern African scene gets completely out of hand. □

2. MEWA RAMGOBIN

Two months ago it was Fatima Meer, this time it is Mewa Ramgobin —– banned for a further five years. The only difference is that the Ramgobin ban is even more onerous than the Meer ban, and that Mewa is starting on his fourth stint, while Fatima was starting on her third.

The reason the Minister of Justice gives for renewing Mewa Ramgobin's ban is, it seems, that he "is satisfied" that he "was engaged in activities which endanger or are calculated to endanger public order in South Africa". While he was banned? The kindest thing one can say about the Minister is that he is talking rubbish.

Mewa Ramgobin to the best of our knowledge, and we know him a good deal better than the Minister ever will, has never wanted to endanger public order in South Africa. What he has wanted to do is to bring an end to the apartheid order in South Africa. That is something quite different, and in our view, and that of most other people who have had experience of it, highly desirable. Whatever the Minister of Justice may have been led to believe, Mewa Ramgobin does not advocate violence. It would be a strange thing if he did, as a member of Manilal Gandhi's family. So why has the Minister banned him again? Obviously because the local members of the Security Police have advised him to do so. And why should they give such advice? We think that it is because, in spite of all the terrible restrictions they have placed upon him, he won't give in. He continues to believe in a non-racial South Africa with equal rights and opportunities for everyone and no doubt tells them so when they come round pestering him. The Security Police don't like that.

Of course the Minister and the Security Police have a problem. If they unban Mewa he'll start saying and doing the things he believes in. And if they ban him, which they have decided to do, he will handle his ban in such a way that he will inspire others to say and do the things he believes in.

One thing is certain. In the contest between what the Minister advocates and what Mewa advocates, in the end only Mewa can win. We hope this knowledge will sustain him in the five long years ahead. □

DURBAN HOUSING CRISIS II

by Garth Seneque

A previous article in REALITY discussed the housing crisis in Durban.[1] It referred to the growing resistance on the part of the residents, to the City Council's and the Government's policies and actions in the public housing schemes. This article is an attempt to provide some background for an understanding of this resistance.

A publication issued by the Durban Housing Action Committee – an umbrella co-ordinating committee of community organisations – noted: "Although the struggle against high rentals reached its most intense phase in 1980, the Phoenix, Newlands East and Sydenham Heights communities have been protesting against high rentals from the very inception of these housing schemes. The responses, if any, from the Community Development and the Durban City Council to these protests have always been meaningless and indicate their non-co-operation and uncaring attitude to problems faced by the Black community."[2]

What are these problems? A few statistics provide an insight. These are taken from a survey conducted in Phoenix in September last year.[3]

	Above HSL	Below HSL
Phoenix	55,6%	44,4%
Newlands East	52,5%	47,5%

The Household Subsistence Level (HSL) is an index which has replaced the Poverty Datum Line (PDL). It takes into account only the very basic necessities required by a family for mere subsistence. It has three components – the Primary Household Subsistence Level, rent and transport

The Primary Household Subsistence Level, in turn, is comprised of estimates of food, clothing, fuel, light, washing and cleansing components.

In October, 1980 the Household Subsistence Level for a Coloured Family in Durban was:[4]

P.H.S.L.	Rent	Transport	H.S.L.
160,66	32,27	13,43	206,36

To give one a better idea of the meaning of these figures, it should be noted that the food component of the Primary Household Subsistence Level was R23.61 per month for a Coloured male, 19–50 years old. It is interesting to note that when the Minister of Health, Dr. L. Munnik maintained earlier this year that White pensioners could live on R25,00 worth of food per month, the White public was shocked and angry. The outcry that followed this contention studiously ignored the fact that this was merely a component in the subsistence level. Yet the Household Subsistence Level is not achieved by nearly 50% of the residents in the Durban City Council's Housing Schemes.

However, I believe the situation to be far worse. The three components are average figures for the Durban area as a whole. The very location of Phoenix and Newlands East increases transport costs. The rentals are, on the whole, higher. The costs of the Primary Household Subsistence Level components are higher because of the serious under provision of shopping facilities. The residents are forced to pay high prices because they have to depend on mobile shops and small stores. They do not have local shopping centres with large chain stores. Should they do the bulk of their shopping in the shopping centres in White areas, they incur further transport costs.

I would therefore, roughly estimate the Household Subsistence Level for Phoenix and Newlands East communities to have been closer to R250 per month. However, the survey indicated that more than 80% of household heads in Phoenix had a monthly income of less than R250. Further if found that nearly 20% spent more than 50% of their income on rent alone.

To cope with this situation, many families have simply cut back on the consumption of items such as food. Socio-

medical surveys have found that incidents of children fainting at school because they have not eaten that day, are common. One can safely assume that such under-nourishment leads to under-achievement at school.

In order to understand the strain a family is put under when it moves to a township such as Phoenix, it is necessary to look at their situation prior to removal.

An example is New Farm, an informal settlement, which was destroyed and its residents re-settled in Phoenix. Previously they had paid R2,50 to R4,20 rental per month. A later survey indicated that 73% of New Farm residents did not want to move to Phoenix but preferred to remain in New Farm, with upgraded services and facilities.[5] So stable, low-income communities in low rental accommodation are uprooted and forced into high rental housing which they cannot afford.

Another example is the small community of Cato Manor. Some three hundred and fifty families have somehow managed to cling to their homes in spite of nearly twenty years of Group Areas removals. They are all under the threat of eviction and removal to Phoenix and Newlands East — despite the fact that a portion of the old Cato Manor has been re-proclaimed for Indian occupation. The majority of these residents could not afford the cost of living in Phoenix. 30% have an income of less than R150 per month and 67% an income of less than R250 per month.[5]

Furthermore, a recent report by the City Treasurer indicates that there are 17 500 Indian families on the waiting list for a house in the housing schemes. Yet 66% of these earned less than R250 a month. He comments, "It is accepted that the problem is really one of poverty. . ."[7]

Last year the Durban City Council decided to increase rentals in the housing schemes by an average 15% . It held that the increase was necessary because the Council had incurred a loss of about R1,3 million in running the housing schemes.[8] It was this action that led to the formation of the Durban Housing Action Committee and the rent boycott.

Rent in the housing schemes is comprised of two main components — basic rental and additional charges. The basic rental is determined by the interest and redemption charges used to repay the Department of Community Development loan for the building of the housing schemes. The Department of Community Development appears to have accepted the principle of partial subsidisation under its Circulars 9 and 10 of 1980, in which this portion of the rent is linked to the household head's income. However, as Hemson has pointed out "In fact the net effect on "basic rentals" in Durban was a decrease of 3,3%. . . while tenants in the large R150-R250 group suffered large increases."[9]

The 'additional charges' component is comprised of administration costs, maintenance costs, rates. etc. and goes to the Durban City Council. It steadfastly refuses to accept the idea of subsidising the low income residents. Therefore, it attempts to 'balance its books' by increasing rents as the additional charges rise. However, it is quite prepared to subsidise other less crucial areas : [10]

ABSORPTION OF DEFICITS BY DURBAN CITY COUNCIL 1978 — 1981

	78 — 79	79 — 80	Estimates 80 — 81
Museum — Art Gallery	549 060	634 680	815 910
Parks and Recreation	6 403 240	7 357 540	8 716 050
Ocean Beaches, Public Pools	2 760 110	3 004 900	3 719 750
Sporting Bodies	2 686 710	2 779 270	2 995 150
TOTALS	11 850 060	13 776 390	16 246 860

The Council has further subsidised the White bus transport system by many millions of rand over the years. Yet it arguec that it could not absorb the R1,3 million deficit on the housing schemes. However, further investigations of the figur by the Durban Housing Action Committee indicated that it was misleading. In fact, it appears that a small group of White tenants in City Council housing have accounted for a large portion of the deficit :[11]

	Total	White	Indian	Coloured
1980/81 estimated deficit	1 246 620	706 700	472 120	67 800
Percentage of tenants in housing schemes		7,3%	79,1%	13,6%
Percentage of total housing deficit		56,7%	37,9%	5,4%
Number of tenants October 1980		1 123	12 196	2 093
Subsidy per tenant Oct. 1980		R629,30	R38,71	R32,39
Subsidy per tenant Jan. 1981		R541,95	R38,91	R31,52
Number of tenants January 1981		1,304	13 135	2 151

Durban Housing Action Committee, as representative of the communities of Phoenix, Newlands East, Asherville, Chatsworth, Sydenham Heights and Cato Manor puts its case quite clearly :

"The stated principle that the Council does not "subsidise" rents needs to be critically examined and balanced against the absorption by the Council of deficits incurred from other services . . . . It is clear . . . . that considerable sums of money are spent on items which can be regarded as non-essentials and luxuries in comparison to basic necessities such as housin Furthermore, it is apparent that some of these services by their nature and location are intended for and used primarily by White voters . . . . The irresistible conclusion of all this is that the priorities of the Council are inverted and oriented towards the gratification of White wants rather than the alleviation of the urgent needs of Black communities.

We may justly ask what is the critical difference between the two. It is our consistent demand that the guiding principle determining allocation of resources should be — necessities first, luxuries last." [12]

Thus, it can be seen that rent is a massive cost to the majority of the low—income families re-settled under the Group Areas Act in the public housing schemes. Further, the very determination of that rent is a sensitive political issue which appears to be highly discriminatory against those who can least afford it and who have few means to fight it — the poor.

However, rental is merely one issue. Others such as the Group Areas Act, the quality of housing, the lack of community services and facilities, high transport and food costs are all crucial issues which contribute to the crisis and resistance in the communities.

There is an urgent need for the Local and National authorities to accept that the low-income group have a right to housing and community facilities at a cost which they can afford. □

(Footnotes P. 13

THE POLICE — Part 2

by Terence Beard

(Part 1 of this article appeared in Reality Vol. 13 no. 5)

The position of the police in South Africa is one of **increasing** unpopularity, and it is difficult to see how this trend can be reversed without fundamental changes in South Africa's laws. Perhaps the biggest obstacles are the pass laws and influx control, for the enforcing of these laws necessitates **daily** confrontations between members of the police force and literally thousands of Africans. The law requires that all adult Africans carry their 'dompas' or 'reference book' at **all** times. Failure to do so is a criminal offence. Not only do Africans consider it ignominious to be compelled to carry passes but they regard having always to have them on their persons as particularly arduous, unreasonable and inequitable. Just as everyone at some time or other forgets or mislays keys, pocket-books, wallets and combs, so every African is likely occasionally to forget or to mislay his/her 'dompas', and the possibility of doing so is a mental burden which all Africans have to bear.

Government policy depends in large measure upon 'influx control', and the implementation of 'influx control' in turn depends upon the pass laws. But while Africans continue to have to carry passes, relations with the police stand no chance of improving and are likely to continue to deteriorate, particularly as the process of politicization among Africans has grown during the past few years to embrace the populations of even the smaller rural towns and villages. Continual arrests, fines and imprisonment under these laws serve only to intensify discontent, extend political polarization and reduce the chances of peaceful change. Black youth show signs of radicalization in one area after another, and the non-negotiable demands of youth are being extended and amplified as the school boycotts illustrate. The common ground between the possible negotiators on both sides of the colour line is shrinking and the possibilities for peaceful change gradually receding.

When failure to have an identity document on one's person is a crime and thousands and thousands of persons spend at least a few days in gaol or police cells each year after influx control arrests, gaol ceases to be regarded as a place for criminals only. When innocuous and innocent actions are denominated crimes, the law becomes destructive and undermines morality. Respect for law itself becomes subverted and people suffer cruel injustices. The effect upon the police is invidious, for they are burdened with the duty of having to enforce laws which undermine that very respect for the law to which they are purportedly dedicated.

While the position of the police in South African society becomes ever more difficult and the lot of a policeman ever more unenviable, bad relations between police and the black public have not always been characteristic of Southern Africa. In Southern Rhodesia, the British South Africa Police for many years enjoyed a high reputation among whites and blacks alike — this was possible during the period before blacks had become politicized, and the B.S.A.P. were rightly proud of the fact that between 1896 and the Harare riots of 1960 no-one had died at the hands of the police by the use of fire-arms. The old Natal Police also enjoyed a high reputation and the respect of blacks. In Durban, for instance, before Union, each and every policeman was known by a Zulu name, and as late as 1953 there were Africans to be found who were still able to remember the names of all the police station commanders in the Durban area prior to Union, and to talk at some length about their respective virtues and weaknesses, and of how blacks went as a matter of course to the police for help and advice.

Prior to Union the social conditions in which blacks existed were very much better than they were later to become as a result of population growth, migratory labour and the consequent rural impoverishment, and the Natal Police, despite their obvious paternalism, and despite the Bambata Rebellion, were accepted relatively willingly by a population which for the most part had not yet begun seriously to question its subordinate status. But subordinate populations cannot be expected always to accept their positions, and once they come to challenge it as chiefs had done during the Bambata Rebellion, and as literate blacks began to do at the time of Union, relations with the police underwent a gradual but nevertheless fundamental change. Successive white governments instead of attempting to eliminate discrimination and therefore racial subordination, proceeded to entrench it ever more deeply until the very nature of the police force was transformed. The police came to be looked upon as instruments of oppression and no longer as supporters of the public. South African governments thus signally failed to fulfil the aspirations of the black population, putting a premium upon white domination and legislation to serve the interests of their white electoral constituents. Racialism, shortsightedness and the blind pursuit of short-term interests led to the reinforcing and increased institutionalization of racial discrimination.

With the coming to power of the National Party government under Dr. D. F. Malan in 1948 it soon became clear that the engine of state had been put into reverse gear with the implementation of the new policy of **apartheid.** Doctrinaire racialism replaced the pragmatic racialism of former administrations, a development which coincided with a new militancy in the African nationalist movement and heralded a new era of security legislation. A chain reaction followed. Draconian security laws led to greater African militancy, followed by even more draconian laws, until eventually the African National Congress dedicated itself to the violent overthrow of the regime.

What tends to be forgotten in South Africa is that organizations such as the African National Congress adopted strategies of violence only after decades of peaceful and constitutional efforts to have African aspirations recognised had proved fruitless. This affords a classic example of society failing to

"move at a rate to give scope to the aspirations of the bulk of its people". Only after it had been proscribed and its protests made illegal did violence become the declared strategy of the A.N.C., and (in Clutterbuck's words) **"moral justification is claimed for it."** (9) And even in the 1980's the South African government is proceeding in terms of what **it** deems **ought to be** the aspirations of black people rather than in terms of their **real** aspirations. Real aspirations can be determined only through the ballot-box in contexts where people are free to articulate their interests and ideas, and to form and join political parties of their choice.

The authoritarian approach of successive governments has had important implications for the police, foremost among which has been the extent to which they have become instruments of government policy and no longer impartial and independent executors of their functions under law. This development has done more than anything else to give the police the image, particularly among blacks, of being political agents of an oppressive government, and instruments of oppression. They are seen in a more directly political context as being the means whereby the government acts against those who dare to criticise it in any fundamental way.

The instrumental use of the police is highlighted in detentions without trial, in banning orders against individuals, and in political trials such as the Treason Trial in which people have been charged, acquitted, re-arrested, faced with re-formulated charges relating to the same set of events, and then either acquitted once again or found guilty. In the Treason Trial all those charged were finally acquitted. The conclusion that the courts are being used in order to harass and finally cripple people is hard to avoid. Defence funds instituted to aid people involved in political cases of a non-violent kind have been declared illegal and closed down. All these devices involve the police being employed as instruments of policy.

Detention without trial in South Africa must be seen in the context of the prevailing 'agitator' theory of social change. The South African government has provided ample evidence of its belief in the 'agitator' theory, unrest having been blamed upon 'communists', 'liberals', 'outsiders', 'foreigners','radicals'. and 'agitators', and the practices of banning and detention without trial are logical consequences of this theory. 'Agitators' are seen as not only the root cause of social unrest but as constituting a basic threat to white security. Under these conditions it would be nothing short of the miraculous were detained people, isolated as they are from public access, and believed by the police to be 'agitators' and therefore the prime cause of social unrest, not the main focus of whatever abuses of police powers there might happen to be.

The inquests on persons who have died in detention have provided evidence of a cynicism and a contempt for the law on the part of some policemen, which unless it is eradicated, can serve only to undermine whatever attempts are made by government to bring about peaceful change. Deaths in detention now number well over forty and the case for a judicial enquiry into the treatment of detainees could hardly be stronger. One of the most serious charges against the South African Police is that of torture, and members of the public can hardly be blamed for seeing possible connections between deaths in detention and these allegations of torture. Persons appearing in court as defendants and as State witnesses have frequently alleged that they have been tortured and that statements have been extorted from them under duress. Many have detailed the treatment which they allege they have been subjected to. There are instances of actions having been brought against the police by such persons where the matter has been settled out of court, **ex-gratia** payments having been made by the State. That in itself is sufficient reason for the holding of a public judicial enquiry, but there has yet to be such an enquiry despite the frequency of the allegations. Far from instituting an enquiry, attempts have been made to prevent collected and collated evidence from reaching the public. Thus a document published by the Christian Institute in which details of such allegations were presented in a factual form, was banned not only for distribution, but also for possession..

The refusal by the government to institute an enquiry is seen by many people as an attempt to protect the police and to cover up whatever abuses of powers there might be, and, what is even more disturbing, it is tantamount to a licence or warrant for the continuation of whatever abuses there might be. The South African government and the police have far more to gain in the long run by instituting a public enquiry so that it can be seen and believed that the practice of tortur is disapproved of and will not be tolerated. **The need for proper and just procedures, for police accountability and responsibility to the public, is greater, not less, in deeply divided and polarized societies.** Only in this way can government credibility be restored among blacks. It cannot be repeated too often that justice must be done and be seen to be done if there is to be any hope of dissolving the polarization.

Mr. Schlebusch, while Minister of Justice, published the conditions of detention in a Government Gazette. Among the conditions is one which provides that "A detainee shall not communicate in writing with any person outside the place of detention, except with the consent of the officer in command of the place of detention." (10). This means **inter alia** that apart from being held in solitary confinement, detainees may be prevented not only from communicating with their families their lawyers or their Members of Parliament, but also with the Minister of Justice or even the Prime Minister or the State President! There is absolutely no recourse to anyone outside the place of detention unless the police permit it. This is a provision appropriate only to a police state.*

While detentions without trial may enable the government and the police to achieve what they perceive to be short-term objectives, not only do they involve an abandonment of due process of law and the basic principles of justice, but it is extremely doubtful that they are other than counter-productive in their long-term social and political effects.

The detention without trial of political leaders serves to give to those leaders an added charisma, for in the eyes of their followers they are deemed to have proved their willingness to suffer and make sacrifices on behalf of the oppressed. And deaths of leaders while in detention not only bring the police into disrepute, it inevitably makes martyrs of those leaders. Thus it was with Steve Biko.

The analogy of Jopie Fourie is illustrative of this. Fourie, a volunteer member of the South African Defence Force, and bound by an oath of allegiance, elected nevertheless to join the 1914 rebellion. He was involved in skirmishes with loyal forces, raised a flag of truce, and then proceeded to shoot at those approaching him. He was captured, court-martialed, an

*FOOTNOTE

* It might be objected that all detainees are subject to regulations of the Department of Prisons and that this affords them protection. Without public scrutiny through public accountability, there is no means of knowing whether the regulations are being adhered to or not. There is no guarantee that the officer in charge of the place o detention will permit a detainee to write or complain to any of his superiors. The regulation does not require it and in fact gives the officer total discretion.

subsequently executed. Although his crimes were of a nature which carry the death penalty in any army in the world, were committed at a time of war and under a regime freely elected by whites, and under which he himself enjoyed the vote, and although the government was headed by former Boer War generals, Jopie Fourie is today regarded by probably a majority of Afrikaners as a martyr and volk hero. A memorial to him was unveiled a few years ago by the then Prime Minister, Mr. B. J. Vorster, who delivered a eulogy. The treatment of Fourie involved no abuse of powers, yet his execution was nevertheless a political error, and had his treatment involved abuse of powers there is no doubt that Afrikaner anger would have been considerably greater than it was.

In deeply divided societies the harm done by governments in dealing with opponents only serves to sow the seeds of hatred and discontent and to widen and deepen existing social cleavages, and often outweighs any short-term advantages which governments might be thought to gain.

Crimes, particularly those of a political nature, have been so extended as to embrace acts which in many countries would be regarded not only as innocuous but as rights or even as civic duties. *The attempt by Mr. Donald Woods to draw an alleged police malpractice to the attention of the Minister resulted in his being arraigned before a court, and only after the case had been taken on appeal was the charge dismissed. The very notion of crime becomes debased under these circumstances, and the stigma attached to imprisonment begins to evaporate and to be replaced by status. There is no doubt that persons who have been imprisoned on Robben Island enjoy a higher status on that account, and that detentions and bannings serve also to increase the status of the victims among large numbers of people, especially blacks.

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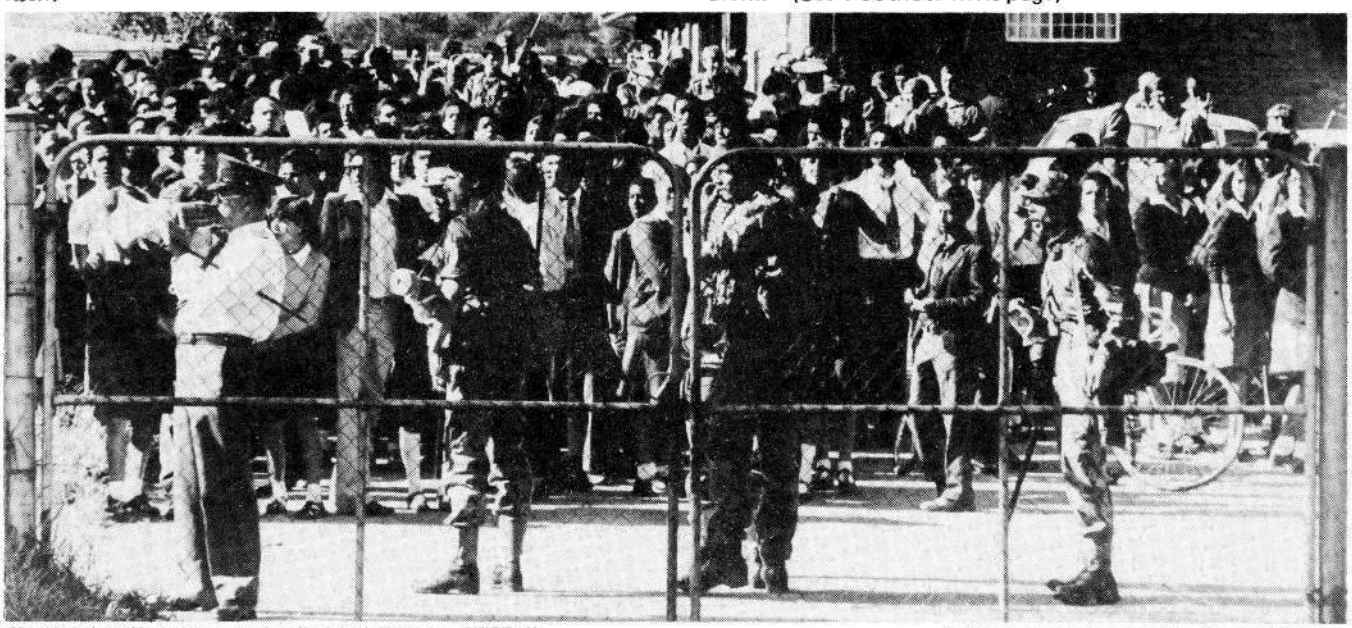
*FOOTNOTE

Professor M A. Rabie of Stellenbosch has described what he terms the 'Overkill of laws in the South African system'. (Evening Post, 13/8/80). He places the blame for the plethora of laws on the legislators who define crime in their legislation, and states that too many prohibitions have created too many criminals and that the entire system of criminal justice is threatened with collapse. "An overworked and understaffed police-force, overcrowded courts and prisons can no longer effectively cope with the inflation of crimes and the consequent flood of criminals. As a result, the deterrent effect of the threat of punishment itself has been severely affected." And also:"Sometimes the consequences of criminalising certain types of behaviour could be worse than the effects of the behaviour itself."

Human beings are naturally social and gregarious and there are very few persons indeed who seek solitude as a way of life or who will not suffer stress from enforced solitude. The conditions attached to banning orders can thus be said to constitute punishments which are meted out without trial at the stroke of an administrative pen. To prevent persons from having contact with other human-beings by making such contacts criminal offences, is to require those persons to refrain from participating in normal human activities, the business of everyday life. This kind of treatment is not only cruel and unjust but implies a lack of imagination and basic humanity on the part of those responsible for introducing and enforcing banning orders. That banning orders are enforced as a system of punishment is clear from the fact that banned persons have been refused permission to attend funerals of close relatives, weddings, and other social celebrations which they have sought special permission to attend. That bannings have been and are being treated as a form of administrative punishment without trial is beyond doubt.

Banned persons have **inter alia** been charged in the courts for having tea with one or two friends in public tea lounges, of conversing with more than one person at a time, and of forgetting to report to the police at a stipulated time. Bannings are cruel and vindictive forms of punishment, and the duty of enforcing them falls to the police. The police thereby become symbols or instruments of man's inhumanity to man, debasing them and adding to their image as instruments of oppression. And if this is true in the case of bannings, how much more so is it true of detention in solitary confinement without trial, which so clearly constitutes not only a gross injustice, but what the American constitution terms a 'cruel and unusual punishment'? It is, furthermore, not fair on the police to expect them to enforce cruel and inhuman punishments. Their job is not to punish in any case.

A source of great discontent and anger among blacks are police raids. The systematic raiding of black residential areas by large contingents of police at night or in the early hours of the morning is feared and resented. Nor does it pass unnoticed that such raids are confined to black areas. Imagine the outcry were the police to raid the Pretoria suburb of Sunnyside, say, at 4 am., waking up all householders and house occupants, searching their premises, demanding the production of identity documents, and arresting everyone not able to produce them!* (See Footnote next page)



"Armed police surround school children : 1980."

Acknowledgement: **Pic. Paul Weinberg**

An impartial observer could hardly fail to notice the discriminatory practices of the police towards the different sections of the population. Police are obliged to enforce the laws of the land, and because so many of those laws are of a discriminatory nature, the police are trapped in a situation not of their own making. And because blacks are the discontented, civil disturbances occur most frequently in black communities, and the use of force by the police is usually against blacks. Thus while batons and tearsmoke have been used against whites, firearms as well as batons and tearsmoke have frequently been used against blacks. This must be seen as a consequence of racial discrimination enshrined in the laws of the land and of the basic inequalities which those laws maintain.

A particular cause for concern is the use of firearms against black children. Recently the press reported a case in Klerksdorp in which a white pupil, dressed up to simulate a terrorist during a school-lesson, was mistaken for a real terrorist by the police, and very nearly shot. The head of the police contingent was quoted in the press as saying that he had only very narrowly averted having had to hold a dead child in his arms.(11) A similar attitude towards black children would go a long way towards counteracting the deterioration in relations between blacks and the police.

A senior police officer in the Western Cape, in replying to charges of police over-reaction in quelling civil unrest there in the early months of 1980, pleaded for understanding, reminding the public that the police are only human. (12) He was quite right of course, for the police are indeed only human, while their duties in a racially divided society call for superhuman powers of understanding and tolerance. On the other hand, **it is precisely because the police are only human that checks against the abuse of police powers are so essential.** Accountability to the public and parliamentary scrutiny of police activities afford protection not only to the public but also to the police themselves. That this is so has been arrested to by heads of the London Metropolitan Police. (13)

Pleas made from time to time by Ministers, exhorting the public to understand that the police have a difficult job, and attacks upon those who are critical of the police, are of little avail in the absence of public scrutiny, and are likely to fall upon deaf ears. Curbs upon the press and other forms of secrecy result in rumours and are bound to be damaging to the police. Furthermore, police moderation under provocation – for provocation there is bound sometimes to be – is less likely when the police are protected by secrecy than when their actions are subject to public scrutiny. The press ought to have access to every police action, subject only to their not hindering police activities, and reports ought to be tabled in Parliament on every major police action in the community. Police secrecy is counter-productive, and public accountability affords a far more efficacious mode of protection of the police as well as of the public.

The Information scandal has shown how secrecy can foster corruption, and the incidence of corruption is bound to be far higher wherever there is secrecy than where there is accountability to the public. **For secrecy is the handmaiden of corruption.**

Reference has been made to the use of firearms by the police in civil disturbances. The use of firearms against persons escaping from arrest or resisting arrest is another matter. Members of the police appear to be authorised to shoot at anyone attempting to avoid arrest regardless of the seriousness of the crime, whether the escapee be a petty pilferer or an escaped murderer. But even in the case of an escaped murderer it is not the function of the police to administer punishments; that is a matter for the courts and the prison services. Police ought to be under strict orders to use firearms only in self-defence or when life is threatened, and the principle that the minimum force necessary to achieve a police objective ought always to be strictly adhered to.

The practice of shooting at escaping thieves or in car chases is not only a barbarous practice in itself, but can easily endanger the lives of innocent people. What after all is the difference between this practice and that of the East German police shooting at persons attempting to escape over the Berlin Wall? (It is a criminal offence in East Germany to try to escape over the wall.) Cases of this kind bring the police into disrepute, sometimes involve the unnecessary taking of life, and imply a callousness and a disregard for the sanctity of human life.

The Prime Minister, Mr. P. W. Botha, has made it clear that the government has no intention of abolishing detention without trial or indeed any of the other security laws, and has given the public no reason to believe that any of the laws which place the greatest burdens upon blacks are to be repealed – certainly not in the near future. It is arguable firstly that the security laws in their present form are incompatible with Mr. Botha's promise to run a 'clean' administration, for the employment of secret police powers inevitably results in abuse of those powers. Secondly, until these laws are amended to allow for fair procedures and due process, it is arguable that appeals to the public to improve race relations are of little or no avail, and it will be virtually impossible for the police to improve their relations with the black public.

The government appears to hold the belief that the path to peaceful change lies in elite accommodation, in the creation of advisory bodies at the highest level, and in the maintenance of stability at the lower levels by strict application of the security laws. Such a strategy ignores the remoteness of the decision-making centres from the people who will be affected. Little thought seems to have been given to the fact that it is the poor and the powerless who are the real sufferers, the real discontented, and that they have not only given every indication that they will repudiate any black leaders who compromise with the government on any basic issues, but they have also made it clear that discriminatory laws and police actions to enforce those laws are among their chief grievances.

The recent series of school boycotts have illustrated this government misconception, for had it not been for police actions against pupils and the refusal of the Minister of Education and Training to consult directly with the pupils, or with their parents, the boycotts could in all probability have been quickly ended. The detention without trial of pupils and the deaths and injuries caused during the school riots inflamed passions and served to spread and intensify radicalism in the schools. The strategy adopted by the government directly contributed to the prolonging of the

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*Since the writing of this paper a suburb in Port Elizabeth was raided in terms of the legislation governing domestic servants. While the raid was **not** carried out by the police but by the officials of the Eastern Cape Administration Board, there was an immediate reaction from the Public. The raid was prominently featured in the Evening Post (19/2/81) on the front page and under the headline : "ECAB check at 4 a.m angers PE home owners." One person was quoted as saying "We object to this Gestapo treatment of civilised people", and another as having said "They are lucky I did not put a bullet through them." Such is the reaction of whites to pre-dawn raids.

boycotts, and reliance upon the police rather than upon direct consultation with pupil leaders right at the outset served only to worsen relations between the police and the black public.

Black attitudes are affected in fundamental ways by daily contacts with the police which are too often of a confrontatory nature. Without visible improvements in the daily life experiences of blacks, black leaders who accept nomination to advisory bodies will, as has so often happened in the past, within a short time lose whatever grass-roots support they might happen to have, and become heads without bodies. Visible change productive of stability means change not only at the level of the elites but also at grass-roots level, for otherwise the elites will be isolated from the mass of the people.

If wedges are not to be driven between black leaders and their followers, real attempts must be made to remove the main grievances. A phasing out of present methods of influx control and of the pass laws is a necessary condition of this, and, what is more, would enable the police to focus more of their attention upon crimes which fall under the ordinary criminal law rather than upon statutorily created crimes. Police activity could then in principle receive a much larger measure of support from the black public. But to achieve **popular** support radical economic changes would first be necessary, for while discriminatory laws are the most immediate causes of discontent, blacks have over the years come to perceive their economic deprivation as a direct consequence of white privilege and power. Thus even were all discriminatory legislation to be repealed, blacks would still perceive the police as bulwarks of white domination.

The policing of economically depressed areas is never an easy task, but when it is exacerbated by racial polarization it becomes a super-human task, as is revealed in Britain where the popular image of the 'English bobby' has taken a severe knock with the growth of black economically disadvantaged immigrant populations in some of the larger cities. The recently formed black umbrella body in Britain is reported to have refused "all co-operation with the police whose alleged harrassment of blacks is blamed for much of the current ill-feeling." (14)

If South Africa is to have peaceful change it is absolutely essential that people of all colours and persuasions be permitted the right to participate in political organizations of their choice and to articulate their ideas and their interests without the threat of arrest. This would mean making a clear distinction between legitimate expressions of grievances and of ideas by the general population, and calls for revolution and violence. In many Western countries the law guarantees this right which, in at least some cases, is supported by the police as providing a safety valve essential for stability. The law remains adequate to deal with genuine cases of conspiracy, riotous assembly etc. . People may say what they like as long as they do not propagate violence or acts of subversion. Societies which do not support freedom of assembly and expression depend upon terror and force to maintain an often precarious stability.

South Africa no longer permits these rights, and there is little doubt that in spite of the immense strength of the military, internal stability is becoming more and more precarious in the sense that it depends increasingly upon the containment of the discontented majority by the police and the para - military police, the riot police. In racially polarized societies every possible effort ought to be made to diffuse and dissolve the polarization if violence is to be eliminated and stability is to be based upon the firm foundations of public consent and consensus. The actions of the government with respect to the two Post newspapers would seem to indicate that this is a lesson which they still have to learn, for the stifling of these newspapers prevents opinions and grievances from being aired and will have effects directly opposite from those intended by the Minister of Justice.

If communism is a danger in South Africa then it has only become so through the short-sightedness and foolhardiness of successive South African governments which have continually ignored the advice and warnings of black and white leaders and members of the public who have been aware of the growing discontent. The treating of 'agitators' as causes rather than as symptoms of the discontent results in conspiracies being seen everywhere and scapegoats being sought out rather than the real causes being attended to. It should be realised too that force is inversely related to power so that the more a government relies upon force, the less power it actually has. Power is greatest where the populace willingly obeys and respects the law, and **not** where people have to be forced or terrorised into observing it.

It is essential that fair procedures and due process of law be adopted if justice is to be done. The bulk of the laws must be acceptable to the vast majority of the people. Only if these conditions are present is a stable society attainable. It is arguable that the economic, social and political conditions in South Africa today, together with the law-enforcement strategies and procedures, have contributed more to the polarization of society and to the radicalization of blacks, and to make communism seem a viable or even a preferable alternative than all the 'agitators' put together. It is easy to forget the Aristotelian dictum that 'he who wears the shoes knows where they pinch', and that the black people of South Africa do not need 'agitators' to tell them what their grievances are. They know their grievances only too well at first hand.

In this article I have suggested some of the essentials for the creation of a stable society. I have tried to make it clear that at the best of times a policeman's job is far from easy and that in a racially divided society it is a job requiring more resources than the average individual possesses. In a society based upon racial discrimination the policeman's lot is hardest of all, for he is placed in a no-win situation, and this can only be changed by changes in the basic laws of the country.

I end with a plea.

Why not begin by considering what changes are necessary in our laws and our legal procedures which would enable our police force to be transformed into an institution which will be perceived and whose members will be seen by all sections of our population as **supporters** of the public rather than as agents of an oppressive government acting against the public? At present only members of the white community see the police that way.

As Robert Reimer has put it: "The quality of policing is the litmus test of a political system's character: the ultimate criticism is to label it a police state." (15) South Africa is precariously close to becoming a police state and on some definitions is already so. Why not reverse this trend and proceed by keeping changes at the various levels, the level of the elites and the level of the man in the street, in phase? The chances of peaceful change, I believe, will thereupon become significantly enhanced. White politicians of all parties are always putting themselves forward as democrats; what is being pleaded for here is that they practice what they preach and show a little more faith and confidence in democratic practices than they are wont to do.

Appendix:

The following are the nine principles upon which the British democratic police system are based. Readers will be able to judge for themselves the extent to which these principles are presently being lived up to in Britain, and also the extent to which in South Africa they are lacking altogether. The principles were collected together by Charles Reith and all are taken from public records and police manuals. (16) They are:

1) To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment.
2) To recognize always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent upon public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and their ability to secure and maintain public support.
3) To recognize always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of law.
4) To recognize always that the extent to which the co-operation of the public can be secured diminishes, proportionately, the necessity of the use of force and compulsion for achieving police objectives.
5) To seek and preserve public favour, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of individual laws; and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.
6) To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to restore order; and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.
7) To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen, in the interests of community welfare and existence.
8) To recognize always the need for strict adherence to police executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the state, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty.
9) To recognize always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.

1) Richard Clutterbuck, p11
2) Eastern Province Herald, 8/8/80
3) Evening Post, 6/6/80
4) Evening Post, 30/5/80
5) See for example the autobiography of Sir Richard Mark: **In the Office of the Constable**
6) Eastern Province Herald, 13/8/80
7) Robert Reiner, **New Society**, 10/4/80
8) Charles Reith, pp 155-157

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Vortex •

One liked the story of van Tonder who, taking a rest from his bulldozing (it was a routine job of demolishing black houses), opened his newspaper, read about the demonstrations in New Zealand and exclaimed angrily: "Has the rest of the world forgotten about fair play?"

Vortex •

Then there was the report of English-speaking white South African, his elation at the SADF's destructive exploits in Angola undermined by news of tussles at a rugby match, who offered the view that the outside world would soon be engulfed by violence.

Vortex •

South Africa is a striking instance of a strictly Christian state: its townships are paid for, poorly, by alcohol, and its new "national states" get their meagre cash-flow from casinos.

Vortex •

The South African Government, seriously worried about the shortage of housing for blacks, has vowed to knock down 10 000 homes every year.

CROSSROADS – ANOTHER VIEW

REPLY TO ARTICLE: "CROSSROADS: FROM CONFRONTATION TO CO-OPTION : (REALITY VOL 13 no 4)

by D. Cleminshaw

The article asks what has happened to the united Crossroads community which said "we will not move", and the authors declare that there is a little truth in each of the conclusions that the community won its cause, but that "black South Africa lost".

One quite agrees that the struggle that was being waged was indeed against the evil system of black migratory labour and influx control, as well as for the creation of a just society, but also, practically, for the sake of retaining residence, employment and shelter in Cape Town.

The decision to give Dr. Koornhof's proposals a chance in a conditional sense, i.e. co-operation in building the new township, providing all was done in the letter and spirit of his undertakings to the community, did have one positive result – namely an end to the threat of demolition by bulldozers and the prospect of improved housing in the near future. Dr Koornhof stated his intention to proceed with or without that co-operation. His decision had the clearly intended effect of defusing the international publicity campaign over Crossroads.

But the Crossroads people's decision in no way gave the authorities a blank cheque, and it remained open to the community to take up their ongoing stance (as in recent times they clearly are doing) should the authorities appear to be reneging on the spirit or letter of the Koornhof undertakings. It was inevitable that once the crisis and fear of demolition were removed, divisions and factions, such as exist in most communities, would resurface in the ensuing months. In addition to corruption and internal disorganisation, these have essentially been bound up with the divided nature of the leadership, given the inevitable tendency by authorities to try and promote their own type of community council.

The fact remains that until the recent swoop on squatters (gathered together from several areas at the instigation of the officials) when some Crossroads people were caught up and bussed out of Cape Town with hundreds of others, there has as yet been no case of deportation of someone complaining of unjust treatment in the light of the Koornhof proposals. There is indeed a list of cases pending clarification, the particular situation of contract workers, and others with moral if not legal rights, but these form part of the ongoing effort to ensure that claims are properly dealt with. A positive gain has been the addition to the housing stock for Africans in the Peninsula of improved accommodation in the New Crossroads township for some 3 000 families, so that in spite of their determination to the contrary, the officials are required to regularise the presence of a significant increase of families residing in the Western Cape.

What one takes particular exception to in the article is the accusation that the Crossroads support group, and particularly the lawyer and delegation, were manoeuvred by Dr. Kroonhof in a "stroke of political genius" as an "example of total strategy at its best", to achieve a solution that was "in the interests of the government".

At least three advisers were more actively involved with the negotiations, namely Mr. Michael Richman, the lawyer, Professor Francis Wilson and Bishop Patrick Matolengwe, Anglican Suffragan Bishop of Cape Town. They were not self-appointed advisers, but emerged with the positive support of the Crossroads Residents' delegation as those they most wanted to have represent them. Among others in the wider support group, these three have devoted considerable energy to the struggle against the migratory labour system and the breakup of African family life. Quite contrary to the opinion of the authors of the article, they were always fully alive to the underlying causes of the Crossroads situation, and the dynamics within the community itself, and not so naive as to fail to recognise the existence of divisions and unverifiable leadership.

The fact that the Crossroads community exists to-day is primarily due to the people themselves, their courage and perseverance, but it is doubtful if they would have lasted without the help of friends from outside. It was tremendous how many people contributed to the campaign, and no-one can really know the effectiveness of individual roles, but the most crucial was surely the role of the lawyer, Michael Richman. He applied his considerable skills and intelligence and concern for the sake of that community. It is highly unlikely that Crossroads would still exist but for his tireless work. Bishop Patrick Matolengwe is trusted and deeply respected in the black community, and he too put a great deal of his time and energy into this issue. Francis Wilson's integrity and stature as academic, writer and campaigner against the migratory labour system is internationally acknowledged. He poured his talents and energy into the whole Crossroads situation over a long period and made a vital contribution. These three constantly sought to convey the feelings of the people clearly to Dr. Koornhof and to ensure that the people did so for themselves as well. There is no doubt that when the delegation eventually decided to give the proposals laid down by Dr. Koornhof a chance in a conditional sense, they were representing the position of the vast majority of the Crossroads residents.

Indeed, it is an unwarranted reflection on the intelligence and commonsense of the Crossroads delegation and the people themselves to suggest that, after their long experience of the ways of South African authorities, they could easily be led against their better interests by someone advising them from outside.

Among those relatively few groups and individuals who are working for fundamental change and a more just society, there are bound to be differences of approach. It is a pity therefore that there is sometimes a lack of generosity of spirit that at least gives credit to the labours of others and the integrity of their motivation. This creates unnecessary problems when the need is to continue co-operating in the struggle against the migrant labour system and the forced relocation of tens of thousands of people. □

Luli Callinicos, Gold and Workers 1886-1924

A People's History of South Africa. Volume One. Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1980.

by Ruth Edgecombe

Usually in South Africa historiography, there is a huge time lag between what historians think and what the public reads, and particularly between modern research findings and what appears in school history text books. New perspectives opened up by life and scholarship tend to be confined to specialist publications. **Gold and Workers,** a simply written and lavishly illustrated book, which has possibilities both as a general reader and a school textbook, is a unique and refreshing exception to this trend.

Gold and Workers reflects conclusions stemming from work and research done at the Institute of African Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, and ideas exchanged at reading groups in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In these contexts academic historians began asking questions about 'the people' – who they were, where they came from and how they shaped their lives. More specifically the book grew out of the first Social History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1978 and is largely based on papers presented there. It is offered as 'one contribution' to work that is still to be done.

The main theme of the book is the rise of the gold mining industry from 1886 to 1924, a theme chosen in the belief that gold imposed the 'pattern of a special form of capitalism' on South Africa – a pattern that developed and is continuing to develop in the present. Traditionally the story of the gold mining industry has been depicted as one of progress, usually related to the stirring feats of the randlords who gained great wealth and shaped the future of the country. This book has a different perspective: it stresses the high price of progress and describes 'the struggle for survival of those whose hands made the wealth, the workers who came to eGoli' – how gold gradually drew them into a capitalist system which developed and ultimately affected every part of their lives.

Major aspects analysed are: the impact of gold and the changes it wrought; the creation and control of workers; the ways in which they were forced off the land to become wage earners – the migrant labour system, the compound system, the contract and methods for keeping wages low. The final theme is the emergence of workers' resistance – desertions, strikes, boycotts, wage campaigns and embryonic political action. The story is primarily that of black workers because the mineowners succeeded in separating out white workers who became a small, well-paid elite as opposed to the mass of ill-paid black workers.

The book shows how the first generation of black workers on the Rand, who considered themselves as farmers belonging to a chiefdom, gradually evolved a worker consciousness in their resistance to the mine-owners. Although resistance in the first generation failed to change the basic system of labour control or raise low wages, subsequent years would see the emergence of more organised resistance, both politically and at work. The story of this is promised in a subsequent volume.

The striking feature of the book is the wealth of illustrations – photographs (although regrettably the sources of all but a few are not identified) sketches, cartoons and diagrams. The photographs depict vividly the nature of life and work on the mines, and have been chosen with skill and care. Cartoons and diagrams by Andy Mason are used to illustrate in simple terms such complex issues as capital, the mining of gold and the cycle of poverty in the reserves. One particularly striking cartoon is that of a minehead atop a huge mouth with jagged teeth, rearing out of the earth to swallow up an endless stream of workers. Several chapters are enlivened with extracts from books, poems, and songs drawn from all over Southern Africa. For instance, a Zulu song captures this experience of the Pass Office:

'Take off your hat.
What is your name?
Who is your father?
Who is your chief?
Where do you pay your tax?
What river do you drink?
We mourn for our country.'

The purpose and point of view from which the book is written are clearly stated:—

'In the compound, in the townships,
in the labour bureaus, in the reserves,
the pattern created by South Africa's
early industrialisation is still with
us — the present is our history.
Understanding the past is a first
step towards changing the pattern
of the present.'

The book is dedicated to those who have 'the capacity to make **this** knowledge powerful'. There is always the danger that **acutely** felt needs of the present can be a severely distorting medium through which to approach the past — whether it is a passionate desire to preserve the status quo (cf article two of the principles of Christian National Education which puts history second only to the mother tongue as a means of inculcating a particular world view) or an equally passionate desire to change present evils. In such circumstances history is in danger of degenerating into mere propaganda — a situation in which, as Hobsbawm once put it,

'Nobody . . . can be allowed to do without
history, mostly of a legendary kind, and
every educational system of the globe
bears witness to this fact. It is what
old nations use to confirm their permanence,
new ones to compensate for their novelty.
Remote golden ages or the sufferings of a
more recent past encourage revolutionaries,
and if they are victorious, the heroic achievements
of a still more recent past form the staple
of classroom teaching and political oration'. (1)

FOOTNOTES TO **DURBAN'S HOUSING CRISIS**

1. Hemson, C — 'Durban's Housing in Crisis' in REALITY VOL. No. 3, May, 1981.
2. Durban Housing Action Committee — "1981: Housing Struggles intensify", mimeo 1981.
3. Ibid. P 4A
4. Potgieter, J. F. — The Household Subsistence Level in the major Urban Centres of the Republic of South Africa, October, 1980. Institute of Planning Research, University of Port Elizabeth.
5. Haarhoff, E. J. "Indian Squatters at New Farm and Isipingo Farm: A Physical Survey. "Low cost Housing Research Project, School of Architecture and Economic Research Unit, University of Natal, Durban, 1971.
6. Cato Manor Residents Association : "Cato Manor", mimeo, 1981 p. 3.
7. The Natal Mercury, 24th July, 1981.
8. Durban Housing Action Committee, 1981, p 1.
9. Hemson, C. 1981 p. 16
10. This table is based on that in Durban Housing Action Committee, 1981, p. 4B.
11. This table is based on that in a "Memorandum from the Durban Housing Action Committee for consideration at the Joint Meeting of the Management and Health and Housing Committee on the 16th April, 1981", p. 6.
12. Ibid, p. 6 — 7.

All historical writing is biased in varying degrees because of such inescapable factors as the ideological preconceptions of the historian, the incomplete nature of the sources he has to work with, the fact that the bulk of his sources are in themselves the products of the minds of men, the fact that any historical writing depends on selection, and so on. School textbooks and general readers are particularly prone to bias because of the high degree of selection involved and the tendency to use them as tools for political ends. **Gold and Workers** demonstrates this. Mineowners, for instance, because they are depicted as 'products of a **system** in which they occupied a particular class position', have only one view in mind — 'maximum profits at the least possible expense'. Their motives are shown as no more complex than this. This is particularly evident in the account of Cecil Rhodes — 'The King of the Randlords' on page 19. Was he interested only in wealth as such, or was it a means to other ends such as the pursuit of power and his imperialist visions? Another example of distortion through over-simplification is the depiction of black subsistence society in the pre-industrial era as a kind of pastoral idyll to give point to the undoubted sufferings and evils caused by the advent of gold mining.

Yet **Gold and Workers** should be introduced into the classroom, where there is all too little critical awareness of the motives and points of view of authors of textbooks which shape their accounts of past events. The author of **Gold and Workers** makes her standpoint clear and explicit. It can serve as an example for examining textbooks in current use which are less explicit in this regard. In turn this can give point to the need for pupils and teachers alike to examine their own preconceptions which influence their perceptions of the past. This is an essential first step in limiting the abuse of history. Moreover, **Gold and Workers,** as a lucid and moving account of black workers in the early phase of industrialisation, highlights a hitherto neglected aspect of our history. In conjunction with other sources it can serve as a means of understanding, insofar as it can be done, the past as a **whole,** and not merely from the perspective of any particular group. Understanding is the prime function of the study of history. While "presentism" can never be entirely eliminated, the study of the past, should, in the first instance, be approached for its own sake. Understanding the past is the key to understanding the present. And when the present is understood thought can be given to future action.

1. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Growth of an audience', **Times Literary Supplement,** 7 April 1966.

REALITY

by Alan Paton

REALITY of September 1981 published two important contributions, one by Hendrik W. Van der Merwe (HWV) entitled "Constructive Involvement in South Africa", and one by P. N. Malherbe (PNM) entitled "Too Despairing". The first article related indirectly, and the second directly, to a REALITY editorial entitled "Poles Apart". I quote an extract from this:

> When no Herstigte, and not many Nationalists, would dream of even saying a polite word to Bishop Tutu, whose conditions for peaceful change are perfectly reasonable, and a growing number of black people won't talk to any white person, Herstigte, Nationalist, or anything else, what hope is there of avoiding the ghastly conflict even Mr. B. J. Vorster could see might come?
>
> Not much, judging by the tone of the election campaign mounted by the various brands of Afrikaner Nationalism.

HMV in an article in the QUAKER MONTHLY rejects extreme opinions about racial polarisation in South Africa, and consequent premonitions of doom. He does so for two reasons. The first one is rational : he thinks the judgements inaccurate, i.e. too extreme. The second reason is emotional (and I am not using this word in any derogatory sense) : he thinks such judgements lead to despair.

PNM also rejects extreme opinions and also for two reasons. The rational reason is that he **believes** that it is "entirely possible" that the next election might go like this :

NP	80
PFP	52
HNP	33

PNM's emotional reason is the same as HWV's. Such an item as this editorial "reveals a tone of despair".

In other words both HWV and PNM still believe in the possibility of an evolutionary solution of our tremendous problems. Particularly they believe in an evolutionary solution of what often seems an insoluble problem: is there any way in which white and black can have a future together in South Africa?

It should I think be noted that the editorial says that there appears at the time of writing to be not much hope of an evolutionary solution, and there is also the assumption that this conclusion is justified as long as there is no change in Afrikaner Nationalism.

HWV argues that it is an **oversimplification** to see the establishment as racist and as constituting a "unitary force". His knowledge of Afrikaner Nationalists does not lead him to that conclusion.

PNM suggests certain evolutionary steps and finds "white liberals" too rigid and uncompromising, partly because they believe that any compromise will alienate black opinion. He rebukes "white liberals" for making the "paternalistic assumption that they know the answer." He then proceeds to make a tremendous paternalistic assumption himself, namely that blacks regard the politics of protest as irrelevant. He calls this "my own finding" and I would not hesitate to describe it as a finding reached for emotional reasons. I would like, for the same emotional reasons, to reach the same finding, but I would regard it as rationally unjustifiable to do so.

Now let us return to the editorial. I know the writer well (MFB). He does not, as HWV suggests, adopt a "cynical attitude" towards evolutionary possibilities. He does, however, adopt a highly "sceptical attitude". I will admit that scepticism can easily become cynicism, but this has not happened in this instance, and it is not likely to happen. What has happened is that MFB has become highly sceptical of **all Afrikaner Nationalists.** Has he become **irrationally** sceptical? I would think so, but I shall admit that as a result of the shameful happenings at Nyanga, I am going through a sceptical phase myself. Neither MFB nor I share HWV's somewhat sanguine view of "Pieter Botha's pragmatist cabinet ministers." For emotional reasons I prefer to be sanguine rather than sceptical; for rational reasons I find it at the moment extremely difficult.

Now let me try to sum up the position. REALITY is a journal of opinion. HWV is a Quaker activist who still works for the evolutionary solution. PNM is a PFP activist with a great faith in his Party. It is not surprising therefore that they should criticise MFB's sceptical view of the elections. They consider that the editorial discourages and disheartens people who should be working for a more just society.

Should REALITY be something more than a journal of opinion and an observer of the political scene? Has it a responsibility to encourage and hearten? I would say Yes, even if the outlook is gloomy; it is an heir of the old Liberal Party, and therefore it is the heir of an activist tradition.

I am often invited to speak at schools, forums, clubs, and other institutions. If I could not give some encouragement and some heartening, especially to boys and girls entering an unknown future, I would not accept the invitation. If I fell into a despair about South Africa, I would go and live somewhere else, but I admit that I might evade coming to a decision through pure inertia, as some people do.

If I came to the final conclusion that the Afrikaner Nationalist was psychologically incapable (because of his history) of making any meaningful social and political and economic change, I would get out. But again I admit that it would be very difficult to reach such a final conclusion.

In any event I am glad that HWV and PNM wrote to REALITY. It should help us to avoid the dangers set out by HWV in the first paragraph of his article. He wrote:

> In recent months many foreign observers have commented on the polarized nature of South African society, on the rigidity and intransigence of the white establishment and the excessive inequality, injustice and oppression in my country. While I agree with the latter observations I find their diagnosis of polarization and intransigence to be inaccurate. In addition, I find that such interpretations lead either to despair and subsequent withdrawal or to violence.

There they are again, the rational reason and the emotional reason. Nevertheless, HWV, almost thou persuadest me to be a Quaker.

Rhetoric, Bureacracy and Co-option

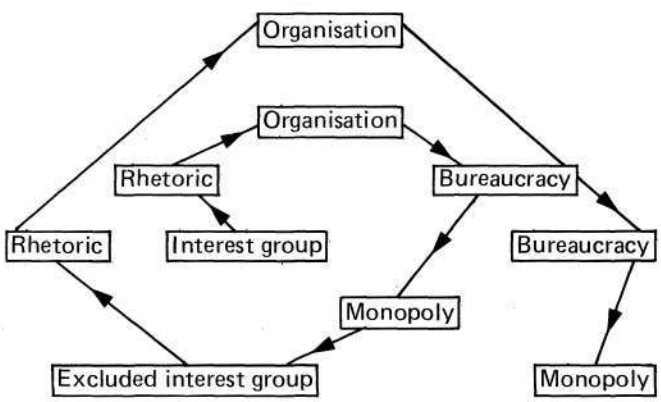
The Expanding Cycle of Trade Union Development in South Africa.

By M. G. Whisson & M. C. Roux

The model presented here does not purport to be a precise reflection of any specific social reality which has confronted the South African economy over the past century or so, nor can it incorporate all the relevant variables. Rather, we identify a process which both recurs in a predictable cycle, and which shows a development over time. The model can be applied to the rise of the craft unions, to the development of predominantly Afrikaner unskilled and semi-skilled unions during the first part of this century, to the development of unions – among the so-called "coloured" factory workers, and to the current wave of black general unions with strong community rather than workplace orientation. If the model is valid, it may help to explain both successes and failures, albeit **post hoc** and in accord with Tolstoy's view that success lies with the men who understand the processes of history and make their decisions accordingly, rather than with those who seek to change or defy them.

Thus Kadalie's attempt to form a general union for blacks would appear premature in terms of the cyclical process, and unfortunate in terms of the economic state of the nation at the time, while the rise of FOSATU in the 1970's was timely both in terms of the cyclical process and the economic climate. The process is paralleled by the strengthening of capitalist monopolies and their incorporation into or co-option by the state over the same period.

The Model



The cycle begins when a body of workers recognises that its interests will be best advanced by some form of corporate action. This is most likely to be successful in a period of economic upswing, when there is a strong demand for workers possessing certain skills and habits of industry. Ideology, rhetoric (1) and the structure of legally defined groupings will clarify for the workers who may or may not be included as members of their corporate body – a set of factors peculiarly applicable to South Africa with its "racial" hierarchy and power structure which has enabled certain categories of workers to be excluded from parts of the labour market on non-economic criteria.

The worker leaders, or committed outside organisers, who seize the time, initiate the cycle by endeavouring to organise their fellow workers to combine to fight for their rights as workers. The rhetoric of the leadership is essentially polemical and presents management or capital as being in structured opposition to labour and as taking more than its fair share of the fruits of the enterprise. The rhetoric is heightened and the solidarity of the workers enhanced when appeals are made not only on a class basis, but also on an ethnic basis. The bosses are then not only "bosses", but "foreign", "Anglo-Jewish", "white" or "non-black", in opposition to the ethnic identity of the group being organised. For the workers able to press for a sectional monopoly of certain jobs, the combination of ethnicity with class provides both a rationalisation for promoting a labour aristocracy, and a more evocative rallying cry than an appeal to class alone. Examples of this have been the slogan of the white communists in the 1920's "Workers of the world unite for a white South Africa", the rhetoric and practices of the white mineworkers' union leaders, and some of the rhetoric of the present (1980's) wave of new unions engaged in organisation of black workers and their communities. In this phase of the cycle there is liable to be considerable labour unrest, as the leadership of the new unions is inexperienced and probably engaged in a certain amount of jockeying for position, and the workers are eager to translate rhetoric into action by demonstrating their new found strength and unity. It is also a time of casualties among both the leaders and even whole unions as managements exercise their strength in organisation, negotiating expertise and wealth to destroy where they cannot mould the fledgling unions. State intervention in support of the **status quo**, which in practical terms means the employers and perhaps the established unions, also occurs in this phase. Recent events in East London and Port Elizabeth provide abundant examples of these pressures on newly formed unions.

A union which survives this phase is one which carves out for itself an exclusive niche in the labour market, either by obtaining state protection or a monopoly over trained men and entrants to its niche. In earlier cycles white and some

1) We distinguish between ideology – an organised set of values according to which adherents order and evaluate their experience and plan their actions, and rhetoric – the verbal appeal to emotionally charged values and interests.

non-black unions obtained this position through the legally defined industrial conciliation machinery which in some instances included the closed shop. In order to establish itself in this way, the union must also develop a bureaucracy of full-time, increasingly skilled organisers and negotiators able to meet their counterparts in management on equal terms, at least as far as knowing the rules of the game. At this stage the union may be faced with a dilemma, whether to broaden its membership and so dilute its monopoly control of certain areas, or to specialise on the more skilled workers and strengthen its monopoly power on a narrower base. Regardless of which way the union goes, whether to represent a craft, an industry or even a community, the institution of a paid bureaucracy transforms it from a movement into a true organisation. Formal or legal recognition or registration is obviously relevant in the process of establishing a bureaucracy – in general one would predict that a bureaucracy will seek formal or legal status as to reject it is to invite harassment by the state, with full-time officials as the prime targets.

With the bureaucracy develops a new set of relationships and constraints. The workers depend upon their full-time executives to negotiate the best possible deals with managements. The bureaucracy however evolves its own interests – the continued strength of the union, and of his own position as its chief executive, will become a priority for the General Secretary. Obviously, in the long run, there is a coincidence of interests between the professional unionists and the workers they represent, just as there is between management and labour – the more efficient and profitable the business, the greater the potential return to all the factors of production. But in the short term, sectional interests may be dominant, and it may offer quicker returns to fight for a larger segment of the cake than to co-operate in the uncertain processes of growth.

Freed from direct dependence on the labour process for his income, the professional unionist is able to contemplate strike action with more equanimity than the man who must answer to his wife and family when he goes home without his pay. At the same time, failure to achieve tangible results for his members can cost the professional unionist support, even his position if he cannot protect himself constitutionally. Like all elected officials, he must please those who have the power to remove him, whose interests may not coincide with those who form the nominal membership and electorate, for, except in the initial phase, ordinary members generally take little interest in the work of their union and elections are rarely contested fiercely. The minority of enthusiasts and activists are thus able to exercise influence disproportionate to their numbers. On the other side, continual negotiations with industrial-relations managers demand that some **modus vivendi** be established and that each understand the problems of the other. In many situations the reputation of the one depends very much upon the co-operation of the other. In time the relationship between unionist and industrial-relations manager tends towards that which exists between attorneys – while representing the interests of their clients, they communicate in an arcane jargon and reach agreements so complicated and detailed that their clients are unable to challenge them. Examples of these can be found in any Government Gazette dealing with a substantial Industrial Council agreement. Such agreements do not imply collusion in the normal sense of the term i. e. two ostensibly opposed parties conniving to the detriment of other parties, but an inescapable series of compromises on the basis of shared expertise.

Since the strength of the individual union depends largely on its ability to gain a monopoly over a segment of the labour market – either on the basis of skills or by closed shop agreements – it must operate against the interests of those who would compete for the jobs which it controls (potential "scab" labour). The deal with management involves the concession of, or connivance at, monopoly power for the union in exchange for "orderly industrial relations". "Orderly" when used in almost any economic context, such as production, marketing or industrial relations, implies an attempt to subvert the free market, and monopolists speak much the same language whether they are state boards, industrialists or unionists – once one has penetrated the rhetorical fog. In the argot of industrial relations what emerges are "laid down dispute procedures" and "closed shop provisions".

The exclusion of a substantial segment of the workforce, or potential workforce, and the co-option of established unionists into an informal association of monopolists, sets the stage for the next round of union growth. Among those who have been excluded an awareness of common interests develops, the familiar rhetoric is heard, the next round of battles is fought, and the survivors establish their own bureaucracies to protect their interests once more.

With each round of the cycle there will be a measure of inter-union strife between the established unions and the new ones, as well as trials of strength between the new unions and the employers, especially in the phase prior to the formation of a bureaucracy. The motor industry has been experiencing this over the past two years. The established unions will seek to protect their monopoly interests and their membership from the demands and "poaching" of their young rivals – in part by recourse to the traditional rhetoric of class unity. Into this fraternal, and often inter-ethnic, strife the employers may well be drawn – having to take sides on such issues as closed shops and apprenticeships and, at a more fundamental level, on whom to recognise as appropriate negotiating parties. The application of even a simple rule such as recognition for a union which has fifty per cent representation can lead to an "Irish" situation in which one union claims representation on the basis of one ethnic constituency, while another claims to be numerically stronger in the company as a whole, and hence the appropriate representative of all the workers. The established union bureaucracies can offer managements the promise of "orderly industrial relations" and a familiar process of bargaining, while the new generation of unions may offer an opportunity for a management-worker alliance against established union monopolies. Managements are generally very wary of engaging in such alliances, unless, as has happened in recent years, the demand for certain types of labour cannot be met by the established white union. However, two leading industrialists in the Eastern Cape have recently stated that there will be no industrial peace until black workers are incorporated into areas of decision making wider than the workplace – a position which is being pressed by the latest generation of unions, but which has, thus far, had little support from established unions.

Each time the cycle goes round, the number and proportion of workers who are unionised increases and, in the peculiar situation of South Africa, the proportion of politically unenfranchised i. e. black workers grows. It is this phenomenon which has important structural implications for the future of the country as a whole and not merely for the labour movement. It turns Nkrumah's dictum, "Seek first

the political kingdom and the rest will be added", neatly on its head. As organised labour becomes increasingly black labour, so the political role of organised labour will increase in the absence of acceptable political rights for blacks. The white workers who were organised between the wars might have cheered the heady rhetoric about fighting for their rights against the alliance of government and capital, but once beyond the mists of electioneering promises, there proved to be no enemy to fight. The blacks perceive clearly for what they must fight, and whom they must fight in order to get it.

The current wave of new unions is distinguished from the last (the FOSATU generation) by its sense of community involvement, which is manifested by the tendency towards general rather than craft or industrial unions, in the efforts being made to unionise the unemployed and domestic workers, and in the mobilisation of the community as a whole in mutually supportive action (e. g. pressure on the company managements to take up the cudgels with the authorities over housing problems, and the use of consumer boycotts by the communities to put pressure on intransigent employers). From this it might appear that we have reached the final stage of union development and that there are no more disadvantaged groups to be drawn into the labour movement.

However, if our analysis of the cyclical process is correct, then the present wave of unions will either collapse (in part due to state intervention) or they too will bureaucratise and seek the advantages of some sort of monopoly control over a segment of the labour market in exchange for industrial peace. The most obvious group to be disadvantaged in the interests of the new unions and their supporters are the potential workers who are not a part of the local communities. In the case of those urban areas which are not very close to a "homeland" from which they draw commuter labour, this means the migrant workers and those who are seeking to escape from the impoverished rural areas, notably the "homelands". Outside East London, which draws much of its black labour from the Ciskei, and to a lesser extent Durban with its dependence on nearby spots of Kwazulu, the new unions may well find themselves involved in a bizarre alliance with the state as it endeavours to implement the Riekert proposals and to divide the blacks into the urban privileged and the homeland labour pools. Our observations would suggest that behind the rhetoric of black unity, there has been very little practically expressed concern among black workers over the plight of the migrants who have been dismissed by the Johannesburg City Council or by the mining companies, or for the people who have been "resettled" in their hundreds of thousands. Schooling, housing, rents and other urban concerns which touch the lives of potential and actual union members have had almost exclusive priority.

If the urban blacks are divided from their rural kinsfolk, as our model would suggest (as one possibility at least) then we can expect the next wave of union activity to develop in the mines, with possibly the homeland governments promoting the interests of their major export by allowing the unions freedom to organise from the security of an "independent state" or "self-governing homeland". Areas such as the Ciskei might well see the development of unions as a threat to their own economic development, fuelled as it is by very cheap labour without union protection, and there will doubtless be pressure from Pretoria in support of that view, and the economic balances have to be calculated on a state by state basis. The rapid implementation of the policy favoured by some mining houses to stabilise their workforce would also have a dramatic effect on the operation of the model, but the demographic and infrastructural implications of a stabilised workforce living under normal family circumstances are such that significant change is unlikely in the short run.

Those observing the evolution of organised labour should not be surprised by either the new wave of unions coming to terms with influx control, or by moral support being given to the unionising of migrants by the "homeland" governments. The rhetoric will still proclaim the incompatability of those odd couplings, and the form of co-operation may well be no more than tacit non-interference. There will also be considerable regional variations based on the proportion of migrants in the workforce and the proximity of employment centres to the homelands. But real interests are readily pursued behind a smokescreen of rhetoric and it is in those real interests that the future may be divined.

More immediately, the model suggests that if the current wave of unions is destroyed, whether by state action or by organisational failures from within (or by a combination of both which seems more likely), then it will build up again. The constituency is large, politicised and able to force its attention on industry. As such, it will either move into the organisational phase and hence towards industrial peace, or remain an untamed force and a menace to profitable and productive industry until it is given its place in the political economy of the country. □

• What astonishes and angers the Pretoria regime about the UN General Assembly's refusal to accept its credentials is the fact that a relevant set of opinions is not receiving a proper hearing. Nothing like that has ever been known in South Africa.

Vortex

• Having prepared the way with the customary discreet diplomatic gestures (bombing, invasion, flame-throwing, (etc.), Mr Pik Botha has high hopes for the new Southern African summit meeting that he has just announced.

Vortex

DRIVER'S PATRICK DUNCAN

A Review of PATRICK DUNCAN: C. J. Driver; Heinemann

by Alan Paton

It is impossible – for those of us who knew and worked with Patrick Duncan – to read this story of his life by C. J. Driver, with its many remembrances of things past, without strong feelings of affection and sadness, and recollections of bi-lateral exasperations, frustrations, and admirations.

One can say straight away that it is an authentic biography, free of any hagiographic blemishes, thoroughly researched by Tom Lodge. Driver was fortunate to be able to engage the services of so competent an assistant. Not all of us biographers have that luck.

Duncan emerges from it all as one of the most extraordinary of human creatures. When I first met him thirty years ago, he believed that he was indeed a creature, and by that I mean that he believed that he was made by a Creator. He then held the belief that he, like Francis of Assisi before him, could be used as an instrument by the Lord of the Creation. He had one of his sudden "visions", and this one was that God could use even a bent tool. In this also he was like Francis, who when mocked by Brother Masseo for his ordinariness, was filled with joy that God could elect such a poor creature to be his instrument.

Duncan refused to claim that he had seen a blinding light on some Damascene road, but said that the vision changed his life.

> . . . . . the certitude stole on me that my destiny was to give everything I could, everything I had, all my time, and all my strength, to the one cause: ending the colour bar.

He writes again:

> . . . . . Was I prepared to face everything? There were things worse perhaps than death. Everything?
>
> In the end I decided I was ready.

Was Duncan true to his vision? Did he give all his time, all his strength, to his cause? I don't think there can be any doubt of it. He often did it in ways that exasperated those whom he worked with, but they acknowledged his devotion. Was he prepared to face everything? Again one must say that there cannot be much doubt of it, yet there is one apparent and notable exception which we shall read of later.

I have just completed a novel AH, BUT YOUR LAND IS BEAUTIFUL, which will be published in Cape Town in September, perhaps before this review appears. Patrick Duncan is a character in the novel and I wrote these words about him.

> Out of his bluest of blue eyes shot flames that consumed any cruelty or cant within burning distance, and he had the ruddiest cheeks in the world, giving him the appearance of abounding health. He was a man of passionate beliefs, and had a veneration for Mahatma Gandhi. He believed with all his heart that **satyagraha**, the soul-force, the power of truth, was able to topple empires.

Well, that was true. It was the vision, the passion, the devotion, the vitality, that characterised him. He was intelligent but he was not an intellectual, except in a skilled amateurish way, like myself. If he wanted to convince you of the invincible logicality of some theory or proposition, he would overwhelm you with the passion and the vitality and the earnestness until you felt almost **mean** for not believing him. Driver relates that he wrote of himself (in 1938):

> That is all I can say about most things, I like or I do not like. How uncritical and blind.

One must concede that he was then only eighteen years old, but he was old enough to understand something very important about himself. Yet he did not realise it fully. He did not realise that he would never be a cool, sober, rational, planning creature. The things that he was most emphatic about, most convincing, most overwhelming, were the things that he believed in most passionately. He was convinced that if the United States stopped buying South African gold, the United Party would sweep back into power, and the whole world would be better for it. He once cornered me on a vacant plot of ground in the Transvaal, next to the house where the Liberal Party was holding a conference, and urged me to drop everything and go with him to the White House. He left me feeling mean and exhausted.

In 1952 he and Manilal Gandhi, son of the Mahatma, led a party into the Germiston African Location in defiance of the regulations. It is fascinating to note that neither he nor Manilal liked the word "defiance". Defiance was not for them a true part of **satyagraha.** It was right to break a law because it was unjust, but it was not right to speak of defying the lawful authority (appointed by God, so said St. Paul). Duncan was sentenced to a hundred days or £100 and Manilal to fifty days or £50. After a fortnight in prison Duncan paid the rest of his fine. Driver records that he was "bitterly ashamed" of having done this. He gave as his reason the possibility that his small and exclusive book business might fold up, but his political opponents (the Afrikaner Nationalists) said he should have known that before he broke the law. Duncan had at least one other reason, and that was that he found the enforced company of real criminals quite unendurable. Their filthy language, their degeneracy, their total indifference to the ideals that Duncan himself cherished, revolted him. He found in fact, that he was not prepared to "face everything".

Driver records that for some people, for example Christopher Gell and Julius Lewin, Duncan's defiance in Germiston was the "finest moment of his political career". I have no doubt that this was so. One of the reasons for this was that his motives were simple and they were pure. He was asserting the rights of a man not to be trodden underfoot by authority. He was challenging the right of a Government to regulate the peaceful entry of any South African into any area where other South Africans lived. He was challenging the whole doctrine of racial separation. The act of defiance itself was

simple and pure. It could be understood, and was understood, by the simplest and humblest men and women. This simple and pure motive, which he never lost, was to be complicated by other motives neither simple nor pure, and of these the most powerful was his passionate and overwhelming hatred of Communism.

Driver makes it clear that Duncan was not an ideologue. The capitalist-socialist dichotomy never obsessed his mind. His hatred of Communism was really a hatred of collectivism, that would stamp out all individualism, and all individuality too. Duncan was a fierce individualist, and never became a loyal and unquestioning member of any organisation. When he finally joined the Liberal Party, the relations between him and the leadership were always to be difficult. Parties have programmes and policies and directives and loyalties. He disliked them all. He became the National Organiser of the Liberal Party, and he worked hard, but he could not endure it for longer than sixteen months. He just was not a party man. Driver writes:

> He took everything at crisis-pace, and could not realise that most people had neither his energy, nor shared his certainties, nor were aware how close each next crisis stood.

And again Driver writes:

> Everything was crucial; it was the "here-and-now" mind in operation.

After Duncan had left the post of Organiser he wrote to me:

> Our difference is this; that I see that power is the necessary ingredient of our struggle and you don't . . . . . I am **not** obsessed with power. In the **long term** it takes second place to decency and consent and goodness. But in politics it is . . . . . **the essential** ingredient . . . . .

He hammered on this theme, and on our bowed heads too, continually. The fact is that in 1958 there was no way by which the Liberal Party could win power. What one could call liberalism or progressivism received its first substantial white support in the general election of 1981, when van Zyl Slabbert's PFP won twenty-six seats (as against the National Party's one hundred and thirtyone!) And one must face it that the bulk of PFP support was affluent, urban, English-speaking, and drawn from the more highly educated sections of the white population. In 1981 the PFP (and I am not trying to be nasty) began to gain respectability. The Liberal Party of 1958 had almost no respectability. For the great bulk of Afrikanerdom it was a dangerous, subversive, communist-inclined party. For the great bulk of the English-speaking it was extreme or naive or a hundred years before its time, or "not quite the thing, old boy".

In May 1957 I wrote to Duncan (in my most schoolmasterly tones, says Driver) to remind him that we had agreed not to say in public that the Liberal Party would never be voted into power, and that he must not do it again. I wrote (rather well I thought, though Driver doesn't say so):

> . . . . I accept your assurance . . ... that you forgot about our arrangement. Whatever else I may think about you, I have never thought you would depart from a contract unless through impetuosity, generosity, or bellicosity. At such times a wind sweeps through your soul and lots of things go flying out of the window, but this is what you are, and by now I accept it.

But Duncan was unstoppable. He went for the ANC for flirting with Communism, and offended Lutuli. He made the Congress of Democrats very angry, and even the gentle Eddie Roux was very critical of him. It was not surprising that he turned more and more to the new black movement, the Pan-African Congress. He told the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, who visited South Africa in 1960, that there would be a total breakdown of "the present set-up" in ten, or at the outside, fifteen years. Getting into his stride, he told a Liberal Party meeting that in five years there would be no colour bar. Finally going at full speed he told a black lift-man (in a crowded lift apparently) that his freedom was coming, and when asked "when?" he replied "in a year". Driver is surprised that after all this, Duncan was not elected a vice-president of the Liberal Party, in spite of his fearless conduct during the emergency that was declared after the grave events in Sharpeville and Langa. Driver writes that "it seemed an espousal of a passive and naive liberalism which feared defiance as much as it feared racialism." That was not the case at all. It was the act of a party that just didn't want Duncan as vice-president. He was the most unsuitable person in the world to be a vice-president of anything. He had great and admirable gifts, but they were none of them vice-presidential.

It is with deep regret that I must move on, and I must content myself by saying that the Liberal Party distinguished itself during the drama of the emergency, and that Duncan, in the company of people like Randolf Vigne and Peter Hjul was one of the bravest actors on the Cape Town stage. Duncan also distinguished himslef at this time as the fearless editor of CONTACT, the paper that Cynthia Duncan had given to the Party. The relationship between CONTACT and the Party was decidedly tricky, and more and more they distanced themselves from each other. Duncan the editor again went to jail for not revealing sources of information; he went several times, but what he had loathed in 1952 he now enjoyed. Was it because he was in a cell on his own? Driver does not tell us. " . . . . it was a healthy life." "I bubbled over with energy." He was prepared "to stay in prison for twenty years if necessary."

This kind of thing could not last. On 22 March 1961 he was banned for five years. On 18 April the provisions of the ban were enlarged. On 3 May Duncan left for Basutoland, never to enter South Africa again. He was identifying himself more and more with PAC, whose militant arm POQO, was ready to kill. As far as I know Duncan never renounced **satyagraha** but he had come to the conclusion that it wouldn't work in South Africa, and if it wouldn't work, it was of no use to him. **Satyagraha** worked with the British government in India, but it would not work with the Afrikaner Nationalists. Therefore he gave it up. In March 1963 Duncan resigned from the Liberal Party, and joined the PAC. A visitor to Basutoland reported that Duncan talked of plans to goad the South African government into invading the protectorate, whereupon the British would have to intervene, and would, "he hoped" take over South Africa.

Driver asks whether Duncan ever understood what was meant by violence. When asked if he had anything to do with the murder of a white camping party at the Bashee River, he replied simply, "No, thank God, I didn't". Driver writes:

> It is easier to see Duncan at the head of a column of men marching unarmed to attack a police-station - . . . than it is to see him lying in the bushes at the roadside with a grenade in one hand and a panga in the other, waiting for a family on holiday to drive down the road.

The idea that Duncan would ambush anybody with the intention of killing is for me quite unthinkable. He wanted

justice, and he wanted it quickly, and if non-violence would not achieve it quickly, he would renounce non-violence. Yet by so doing he would have renounced some deep part of himself.

Again with regret I move on. Duncan wrote in THE TIMES of 6 May 1963 that white supremacy was "approaching its end". On 4 June 1963 he was dealt a bitter blow; he was declared a prohibited immigrant in all the British High Commission Territories. On 28 March 1964 he went to Algiers to represent the PAC. In June 1965 he was dealt another bitter blow; he was dismissed by the PAC. The long journey begun in the Germiston location in 1952 had come to its end. Driver writes: "He had given himself utterly to this great aim, and yet there was nothing more that this great aim wanted of him."

Duncan was in a way rescued by two things. One was that the Comité Chretien de Service en Algerie offered him a job as Director of Operations in Constantine. The other was that he began to write a book MAN AND THE EARTH. But one must read Driver to learn about these things. For us in South Africa, the links between ourselves and Duncan were being broken one by one. Yet we were deeply distressed to hear later that he was dying of a fatal anaemia, and he was not yet fifty.

He grew very humble. Those political certainties that he had once seen with such awful clarity troubled him less and less. He was facing a certainty of his own.

> A fruit-seller in Basingstoke spoke unusually kindly to me, and I had to take refuge in the car to avoid public tears. Another loss of serenity was the sight of the fall of autumnal leaves . . . . Vergil's line hit my mind with irresistible sadness: "As are the generations of leaves, so are the generations of man."

In April 1967 Duncan wrote to record "one of the most remarkable happenings in my life." He was ill and in pain and in a bed in a hotel at Timimoun in Algeria thinking perhaps of what he had written in MAN AND THE EARTH about religion. Christianity was the cult of Jehova, "and what a repulsive cult it is." Jehova was violent,jealous, and incited his people to commit crimes of genocide. Other religions were equally unpleasant, and Marxism, the "near-religion' was fading. In the hotel at Timimoun he found himself saying these words in silence.

> P.D. — God, I need your help. But I suppose if you are Jehovah I can't expect you to do anything for me.
>
> God — I am Jehovah. How can you expect me to do anything for you after the rude things you said about me in your book?
>
> Another person — in any case you should not ask for selfish things in prayer. You should ask for general benefits, that God's will be done, etc.
>
> P.D. — Maybe, but if prayer can't help in cases like this it can't be much use.

Within ten minutes the pain had gone, and he drove five hundred of the six hundred and twenty kilometres home.

He had become reconciled with me, whom he had so often tormented. "I have learnt to live as Pascal (I think it was) who said life was best lived under a sentence of death."

He kept on flying to London for transfusions. On Wednesday 31 May 1967 he had his tenth transfusion. On Friday 2 June he reacted badly, but was cheerful and was re-reading THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. On Sunday 4 June he was dead. This is a most moving chapter.

Driver's last chapter is called "Judgements". I suppose that most biographers do this. I did it for Hofmeyr, and came quickly to the conclusion that he did what he had to do. I did it for Archbishop Clayton, and came to the same conclusion. One is tempted to ask what would have happened if one's hero had done this and not that, had chosen this and not that, had said this and not that. What would have happened if Duncan had been more rational, less impetuous, more patient, less individualistic, less passionate. The answer is simple. It wouldn't have been Patrick Duncan at all.

I don't know whether biographers should review other biographers. But I have no caustic criticisms of Driver's book, and certainly no snide ones. He has a weakness to which most biographers are prone. At times he overanalyses, and the story stops for the analysis, and the analysis has more to do with Driver than it has to do with Duncan. I am sure that I do not need to tell him that if one over-analyses the subject, it tends to disappear. I am a novelist (but so of course is Driver) and I want more of Duncan with the flashing blue eyes and the bursting ruddy cheeks, and his passionate insistence that made you want to run for cover, and his overwhelming earnestness that made you feel so mean when you knew you were not going to be convinced. But Driver shouldn't take this criticism too seriously, for one of Archbishop Clayton's devoted admirers was disappointed in my biography because there was too much Paton and not enough Clayton.

Driver's book has given me much pleasure, not just because it is good, but because it brought back remembrances of things past, and it will have a place of honour in my incomplete library of the events of those strange and tempestuous times. □

• Afrikaner Nationalists still have very bitter feelings because they can dimly remember the days when they were regarded as inferior citizens in **the land of their birth.** As one spokesman said: "Man, we even had to fight for our freedom. Those soldiers and guerillas of ours were noble people. Any person who is prepared to give or risk his life for the freedom of his country and his people is a hero."

Vortex

• Van der Merwe, in a generous mood, explained how to deal with the problem of unemployment (the problem afflicts pink liberal countries overseas, but is of course unknown here): "Just declare it illegal. Then if people persist in it, have a few baton-charges or shoot a bit: you'll be surprised how quickly they'll give it up."

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