

reality

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EDITORIAL

THE REFERENDUM

REALITY last went to press before Mr. Botha had announced the referendum date, and this editorial is being written before the result is known. We hope, without much confidence, that by the time you read it white South African voters will have taken their opportunity, on November 2nd, to throw the Nationalist Party's constitutional proposals out.

Our reasons for hoping this are much the same as many other opponents of those proposals, but we record them briefly here.

First, the proposals are the Nationalist Party's and nobody else's. There is no question of the Government having tried to achieve any sort of consensus on them. Second, black South Africans are totally excluded from the new constitution and the Nationalist have made it abundantly clear that this is the way they intend it to stay.

Third, the powers of the President are far greater than any man should ever enjoy and controls over them scarcely exist.

Fourth, there is no Bill of Rights, and the Nationalists are emphatic that they have no intention that there should ever be one.

Fifth, for those three groups for which it does cater, Whites, Coloureds and Indians, the constitution provides an inflexible framework for the perpetuation of apartheid between them, in every field in which the Nationalists choose to perpetuate it.

If they do not reject this new constitution on November 2nd white South Africans will have committed not only themselves but every member of every other group to life in an apartheid straightjacket for as far into the future as any of us can see. And this will have been made possible by English-speaking White South Africans, given their first real chance to influence the future course of events since 1948, having decided to support the Nationalists. Many of them will have done this under the illusion that the constitutional proposals are "at least a step in the right direction", that change once started can't be stopped, that soon the inevitable force of logic will compel the inclusion of Africans in government at the point where the real decisions affecting them are made.

This, we fear, is all wishful thinking. We do not think any benefits will come to Africans by way of this constitution, and they don't think so either. In fact one of the most remarkable things about it is the unanimous rejection with which it has been greeted by the entire African community. Those who have asked white voters to vote against the proposals have included the predominantly black Catholic, Methodist and Anglican Churches, which at the last count had 4 million African adherents; Chief Buthelezi's Black Alliance; the United Democratic Front, supported by more than 400 organisations across the country; the Black Consciousness Movement — and the Black Trade Union Movement. Together this represents the most complete alignment of black opinion on one issue that South Africa has ever seen.

If white voters who claim to oppose apartheid turn out to have rejected this massive black appeal for a "No" vote on November 2nd that rejection could have profound and lasting effects on the prospects for eventually building a non-racial society here. But if Mr. Botha's proposals are thrown out, the way will have been left open to start working out a new constitution, Black and White together, when the dust from this dangerous referendum exercise has settled. □

NEIL ALCOCK: A TRIBUTE

by PETER BROWN

On an evening late in September Neil Alcock was returning from a meeting at Tugela Ferry which was designed to bring peace between warring factions of the Mthembu tribe of Msinga. His vehicle was ambushed and he and five other men were killed.

I cannot remember exactly when I first met Neil. It must have been soon after the 1960 State of Emergency. I remember being told by Olga Meidner, whose husband Hans, the then Chairman of the Liberal Party in Natal, was detained in Pietermaritzburg, and who used to drive around with a placard on her car announcing how many days it was that Hans had been held without charge, that she had been approached with expressions of sympathy and support by some nice person from Underberg. So it was probably later that year that Neil first called at the Liberal Party in Pietermaritzburg. He was at that time Chairman of the old United Party in his area and although he was clearly unhappy with the United Party he was afflicted with all the old doubts about leaving it which so many of its supporters suffered from – splitting the anti-Nationalist vote and so on. Eventually, however, he took the plunge and joined the Liberal Party.

Soon after this the Bulwer/Underberg area experienced what I am sure was its first multi-racial political meeting, a house-meeting in the Alcock's home. A branch was formed and others soon followed, most of them based on threatened black freehold areas, where Neil had many friends. Multi-racial workshops to train members in organisational and other skills were held at the Alcock's farm. New things were happening in the Underberg and Bulwer areas, and they continued to happen. Christopher Shabalala, a Liberal Party worker, had the distinction of having a train stopped specially for him between stations, so that he could be removed from it by the Special Branch and prevented from going to a Party meeting. A Security Policeman nearly froze to death when he commandeered a room at a store, so that he could listen in to what was being said at a Party meeting being held on the verandah, and found when he was safely shut inside it that it was the store's cold-room.

Not long after joining the Liberal Party Neil conceived the idea of trying to get surplus milk, of which there was a glut at the time, to poor rural people. Out of this was eventually to grow Kupugani. In the mid-sixties he sold his farm and gave all his time to Kupugani. By then his thoughts had travelled far beyond the distribution of surplus milk and he was concerned to get surplus food of all sorts to people who did not get enough to eat throughout the country.

From Kupugani Neil moved on to inspire the formation of the Church Agricultural Project (CAP), an organisation designed to develop and make productive the farmlands which were attached to many missions, most of which were sadly neglected. His base for many years was the Maria Ratschitz Mission near Wasbank. There, in order to achieve correct grazing practices, he managed to persuade the local black residents to pool their cattle in a common herd, each person being credited with the value of the stock placed in the pool. This amount was to be seen as the original owner's

share in the project, and he was to be paid interest on it. Increases in the numbers and value of stock would benefit all shareholders, members being entitled to withdraw cattle for their own needs at an agreed price.

It was while he was at Maria Ratschitz that Neil learnt about, and proceeded to reveal to the world, the iniquities of the Limehill resettlement plan, and so focussed attention on "relocation", one of the most sordid evils of Nationalist policy. In 1975 CAP moved from Maria Ratschitz to Mdukutshani, on the banks of the Tugela river, in that corner where white Natal meets the black Msinga area of KwaZulu. Losses from disease and stock-theft reduced the cattle which had come from Maria Ratschitz to such an extent that stock-farming became a secondary activity and instead Neil initiated a series of small, cheap irrigation schemes based on individuals and small communities. The results were remarkable. The desert really did start to blossom. But these last years of devastating drought have taken their toll of these. There has simply been no water to keep the plants alive.

In recent times as unemployment and starvation have spread other projects have been started. Mealie-meal has been exchanged for labour on water conservation schemes, or for acacia pods for stockfeed, or for bones for fertilizer. By coincidence Reality had asked Neil's wife Creina to write something on the "bones" shortly before Neil's death. It appears alongside these tributes. Its tables tell, with brutal starkness, the tragic story of Msinga. But it also tells how a simple idea, put into practice against great odds, and at enormous expense of time and energy, has made survival just possible for many people there.

Neil Alcock's background was completely non-academic, yet his knowledge of our environment, and of how to accommodate pastoral and agricultural practices to it, was profound. He was a man of ideas, a great innovator. He pursued his unorthodox thoughts with the greatest persistence and courage and, mostly against the advice of the experts, often with success.

His greatest achievement, however, was to win the trust of the people of Msinga. The relationship he achieved with them was quite remarkable. He became for many of them their most trusted friend – one of **them**. In a strange way the manner of his death confirmed this, for he died as so many of them have died.

But that trust was not won easily. It was won the hardest way of all – by never turning away from an Msinga problem, however intractable it seemed, whatever the cost in time, energy, danger and ostracism its pursuit to the end might need. For the people of Msinga Neil Alcock was one man who really practised what he preached and their loss is irreplaceable.

His other friends' loss is great too, not least in the fact that, while he was alive, whatever you were doing in your own particular area of opposition to apartheid, you always felt that, in his field, Neil was doing more. Our best tribute to him may be always to have in the backs of our minds that sharp spur to greater efforts.

(For those who would like to contribute towards a continuation of his work a Neil Alcock Memorial Fund has been established c/o P.O. Box 100, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.) □

NEIL ALCOCK REFLECTIONS OF AN IRRESOLUTE DISCIPLE

I ache at the loss of Neil. In this week following his death, as to a drowning man, all my life memories of him came flooding back. I realize anew how much he meant to me and how much I learned from him. He changed my way of seeing reality.

Hence these reflections are difficult for me. My recollections of Neil are mainly those of the disciple, my reflections those of one not so committed. I hope that they will still outline the greatness of the man.

I first met Neil Alcock at the founding meeting of the Pietermaritzburg branch of Kupugani on the 6th of September 1962. I was a first year student at University, ran the African night school there, and had been asked to attend with some SRC representatives. There was this tall, somewhat gaunt, man on the platform of the church hall. He looked slightly uncomfortable in his suit and at being where he was. He was no public speaker and he said "um" at about every second sentence. But he was persuasive because of the dogged intensity with which he pursued his theme — malnutrition existed, food was available, people could organize to do something about it. I don't think I ever again heard Neil on a public platform but I heard him speak on innumerable occasions — I sat in on committee meetings, indabas, conversations.

Neil became a speaker of deadly effectiveness. He spoke to convince and though he was in no ways a master of rhetoric, he convinced. His logic was deadly, he used a homespun version of the Socratic method, and he had a bulldog tenacity that refused to let an issue go until the audience had conceded. It could be quite entrancing! He also had immense stamina. I remember travelling with Neil to mission station after mission station in Northern Natal and hearing the same performance. It was done each time with the same passionate intensity.

At that first Kupugani meeting I was elected to the committee and so my association and friendship with Neil began. Kupugani was a magnificent achievement, though it never became what Neil envisaged. I think I came to understand more than most what Neil was getting at and so our relationship deepened. Neil had a vision of Kupugani as a network of not just food distribution but also of development in every magisterial district and area in the country. It was all to be democratic and participatory. What Kupugani became bears no resemblance to this. It is well run, urban controlled, effective but with restricted perspectives. Nobody in their right mind would see Kupugani as a revolutionary organization today. To many of us it was an exciting vision — it enraged MDC de Wet Nel, the then minister of Bantu Administration and Development.

In the Kupugani context one can begin to assess both Neil's strengths and weaknesses as an organization man. He had the drive and the vision to initiate. Kupugani and more recently AFRA (the Association for Rural Advancement)

bear witness to that. But Neil was not an organization man. He fitted uneasily into any organization. I think he found himself helpless to control the direction that Kupugani took. In part, this was self created. Neil had a tendency to seek support (and possibly in the time of state clampdown on opposition in the early 60's, some protection) from the well connected and powerful. Some of them supported him loyally to the end. One thinks of Archbishop Hurley and Duchesne Grice. But many of them could not conceivably be expected to understand what Neil was about or to genuinely support him. By 1965 the Johannesburg (head) office of Kupugani looked like the executive suite of a multinational, complete with its dreadful OXFAM import in the person of Richard Exley, the general manager. That all collapsed and Kupugani slowly rebuilt itself into the much less pretentious and more down-to-earth organisation it is today but Neil came to find himself alienated in the very organization he had founded. Did Neil again and again fall into this trap? To some extent he did. Step by step, organization by organization, Neil was forced back until he came up against the wall in Msinga.

One can rephrase that last question. Why did Neil never find the organization man who could implement his visions? Or why did no one ever volunteer? Maybe there were deep reasons why Neil never found one. And I bear guilt because (though with sufficient humility not to think that I was the answer) I often was on the brink of volunteering but never did so.

The second great project of Neil's, Church Agricultural Projects, suffered a similar fate. Brilliant in conception, by the end of the process CAP was limited to Mdukutshani on the Tugela and Neil had no real influence on any Church farms. He continued to receive support from Church leaders but it was essentially personal support, based on loyalty, and not the commitment of the institution.

In the midst of these organizational disasters what did succeed? What was achieved by Kupugani (and still is), at Maria Ratchitz farm, and at Mdukutshani has been documented, though one hopes that Creina Alcock will write a fuller account one day. It is in many ways a truly astounding achievement by one man in 21 years. But I would rather concern myself with some more personal observations.

Neil made disciples. I think I was one of the first. It was real discipling he did. Not just getting someone to agree with him. He took me on the road with him. I spent nearly every university vacation with Neil. We roughed it, sleeping in his Peugeot station wagon. (Neil was considerably tougher than I was and could sleep in any position under any circumstances — even clouds of Tongaland mosquitos). He showed me South Africa. I marvel now at his skills as an educator. He didn't teach me. He looked and invited me to look with him. He never once criticized me

though I think I must have asked innumerable silly and ignorant questions. I saw his gentleness with people — a patience that is yet strong. I saw him meeting with blacks, sitting for hours, literally hours, discussing some point. I came gradually to see partly as Neil saw and for that great gift I am thankful. In some respects Neil almost became a father to me. And he was a good father. He even taught me how to drive and when I rolled the car off the road, once righted, immediately ordered me back into the driver's seat.

There were other disciples. Over the years a host of mainly young people worked with Neil and took from him. There were some great learnings — one thinks immediately of Cheryl Walker's Natal volume of the Surplus People Project's report as owing a lot to an Mdukutshani genesis. There were also some failures.

The educational forte of Neil's was the story. He told wonderful stories. They were his art form. More especially they were "atrocities", usually particularly directed at the state of agriculture and the church (though real atrocities were also described — in early 1963 Neil got hold of some eyewitness accounts of truly appalling tortures committed in the Transkei).

Were Neil's stories true?

This is not just an 'ethical' question but an important historical one. What assessment do we make on all that Neil wrote or influenced others to write? In answering this I would make three main points:

Firstly, a personal experience. One of the great disappointments of my life was the result of a story written by Ian Garland (doyen of Natal nature conservationists). I was a schoolboy and nature mad. Ian had written a beautiful description of himself canoeing on the dune vleis among the waterlilies and jacanas. I was invited to spend a holiday on his farm. I was ecstatic. On arrival almost my first words were, "Where is the canoe?" There was no canoe. There never had been a canoe. I was devastated. It was all artistic embellishment. **Neil's stories often had canoes.** But the vleis and the jacanas and the waterlilies were really there!

Secondly, another personal experience. I once edited an Anglican student magazine and published one of Neil's church atrocity stories, only to be publicly reprimanded by Bishop Inman (who had gained a quite undeserved reputation as a fearless opponent of apartheid) who stated baldly, "It's not true!" I think that in many cases Neil's stories were not true **IF** by true you mean the whole truth and nothing but the truth, approved of by a lawyer (popular wisdom in the Liberal Party of those days was that a lawyer's advice however legally true was **always** politically wrong!), and stamped with approval by a sociologist as having the right amount of quantifiable and empirically observable data. But all this misses the point. Even though some may have been tendentious parables based on hearsay, taken as a whole they did tell "the truth" about South Africa. And many were indeed coldly factual because court cases, initiated by Neil via CAP, AFRA and the new Legal Resources Centre, have been won.

Thirdly, Neil had a somewhat acerbic pen. I would never describe Neil as a bitter person. I don't think bitterness was ever in his nature. But he was rather like William Blake who was genuinely astounded when someone cut

him dead in the street one day merely because Blake happened to have denounced him as a murderer the day before. Neil accused all sorts of people of "atrocities", it was like a prophetic burden on him to do so, and never weighed up very carefully what effect this would have on the recipients.

Oh they were wonderful stories (I admit there were some rather long and less entrancing ones as well). I can remember laughing myself into a state of helplessness when Neil told the one about his visit to the Pomeroy Mission. But that, like many others, will have to remain unpublished. What can be done to preserve those told? The Mdukutshani newsletter documented many. Some people have tried to respond academically to some of the material. In 1965 I wrote a paper on the rural situation which I suspect started Colin Bundy's research into the history of the African peasantry. Cheryl Walker's resettlement research has been mentioned already. But more needs to be done.

Neil Alcock was not just a teller of stories. He knocked on doors. Like the friend of the parable in Luke 11:5-10 he was totally importunate. I know that some came to dread the arrival of this John the Baptist from Msinga because they would have to reorder their priorities and do something, even against their better judgement. He had a dreadful purity of heart that man. He willed one thing. And it is here that the curious ambivalence the good people have about Neil manifested itself. And it is really a curious ambivalence about the rejected — and really, without even being too melodramatic — the doomed. Urban life has won dominion in the hearts of men and we, good people all, know where the power is and want to stay close to it. We complain about powerlessness, but then powerlessness is a relative matter. Neil located himself with the powerless, the really powerless, and we couldn't make that our goal or priority.

Ironically then, people such as myself, who were conscientized and transformed by Neil, often couldn't commit ourselves wholeheartedly to his causes (though I very nearly left university to work for Kupugani and years later nearly went to Mdukutshani). Political theorists might say that we simply moved into a more political frame of reference. The struggle against apartheid was not going to be won here and our Benthamite calculations didn't encourage us to join Neil in a hopeless cause. Which may be true, but it is also more comfortable and I feel guilty all the same.

Also ironic was Neil's curious unwillingness to use religion and politics as weapons. What was Neil's relationship to religion? To me he seemed the most naturally religious man I have known. He loved the creation. Although he was a practising Anglican in the early 60's and to some extent spoke out of this tradition, he, like Ghandi, fitted uneasily into any religious categorising. I can think of no clearer expression of what I think Neil believed than Traherne's words:

You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world: and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs, as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world.

Why then did Neil never seem to really take the power of organized religion seriously? Possibly he had too much insight into the corruption and hypocrisy associated with religion and politics. And yet — it has always seemed to me that two things can make people do impossible things, radical politics and radical religion. Religious community often blends both. But Neil seemed to distance himself from this. It left us, the church people and the politicals rather helplessly looking on. Perhaps the constraints were such that Neil could never develop this aspect of his life. I know he was a good political organizer. In the 1961 stayaway when the Republic was declared the one area that had a 100% strike was Charlestown, which Neil handled. In the middle 60's Neil backed away from direct political involvement because he was in real danger of being banned and his agricultural vision seemed too important to jeopardize.

Finally, what does this man gunned down in Msinga say to us? Is he simply a reversion to some sort of rough polemical Saint Jerome, gaunt with zeal, isolated and extremist in the desert doing daily battle with devils? Or does Neil's growing dissonance with the bourgeois world that you and I inhabit suggest something significant? I think that it does. We all agree on the need for rural development and we get all sorts of middlemen to do it for us. And the corpses of failed and corrupted projects litter the countryside. Neil cut out the middlemen, be they white experts or black salary collectors.

Some called him paternalist because after years of work CAP hadn't produced any acceptable black petty bourgeois who spoke English, could write reports and "run it". Even if CAP had produced such "middlemen" they would probably have been run out of Msinga by the locals. So

it is classed as a failure? Or is it? Something beautiful happened at Mdukutshani, the place of lost grasses on the Tugela. Small brief intimations of what real development is about. Mixed up with a whole lot of failure and disaster. Tantalizing. Some notes towards a non-bourgeois agricultural development? Some hopes for a non-bourgeois church? A barefoot school? A university under the acacias? I think something significant happened here. I cannot prove it, only believe it.

Does it matter? Do not those who voluntarily choose to stay with the doomed have a grandeur? Neil came at the end to live and die for the rejected. In the regime of scarcity, said Sartre, society chooses its own victims. In the regime of apartheid, degradation and death have been chosen for Msinga. The present referendum merely decides whether this choice shall be enshrined in the constitution or not. Neil chose to be with the victims. And he died still fighting the devils of despair and death in Msinga. He had hope to the last.

And so I will hear no more stories and I will now have to remember and treasure those I have heard. I will not meet Neil again in his torn shorts and leather sandals in that sun gutted landscape he fitted into so well. I will hear no more visions and will feel no more guilt because Neil will not knock on my door anymore.

But I will remember him. In the acacias of the drylands and in the dry heat burning off dusty roads. Whenever I see the Tugela I will remember him. And I will hear Neil in the voice of the oppressed for he is now inseparably in death a part of them.

And because I know I too will pass away and my memories too, I put hope in there being a God who hears the voice of the oppressed and will remember Neil also. □

Emigrés

Our two sons.
First floating
in the liquid of the womb.
Then pulsating
in the laughing crying
fluid of our home.
And now: static, though smiling,
two photos on the piano.
Elsewhere, they are alive,
flowing, rich, and keen;
but here, they've been shot dead
by the military machine.

Vortex

BONES

"MONEY FOR BONES: We need big quantities dry bones."

"BONES REQUIRED: Top Prices Paid."

The advertisements help to proclaim a little-known fact. There is a national shortage of bones in South Africa. Yes, bones, ribs, shins, jaws and clavicles of dogs, goats, donkeys, horses, cattle. Bone merchants cannot get enough cracked skeletons, and outbid each other to obtain supplies. They will pay R75 a tonne for three tonnes or less, and R110, R120, R140 a tonne for larger quantities.

It was not the money that drew the CAP project, Msinga, into the bones business, however. It was drought. Four years ago, when the drought started at Msinga, 12 000 cattle died, and more than 300 tonnes of bones were left lying on the veld.

In October 1980 Mrs. Gezekhile Mkhize arrived at Mdukutshani, headquarters of the project, carrying a sack with the bones of her dead ox. She had heard bones could be used as fertilizer. Would we give her mealie meal for her bones? The following week there were 25 people with bones, then 94, then 461 . . . Ever since, sporadically, when there have been funds to buy mealies, there have been queues of bone pedlars. We have now had 51 collections, a total of more than 10 000 people in the queues, and more than 375 000 kilograms of bones.



Bonequeue 2

Paul Weinberg

Bone collection is nothing new at Msinga. For more than 100 years bones have been articles of trade, one of the only commodities produced in an area regularly afflicted by drought. Long ago the bones went by ox wagon to Durban harbour to be loaded onto waiting ships for export. For 40 years Natal was a bone exporting country, the record year being 1870, when 276 tonnes fetched R2 252. As agriculture in the Colony expanded, however, bone exports came to an end, for bone dust was "the only known form of artificial fertilizer in use," according to the Natal Agricultural Journal of 1898.

Bones were much more than fertilizer, however. They were also a source of phosphate for cattle grazing on African pastures deficient in this essential mineral. Without phosphate, cattle die.

By 1900 there were not enough bones to go round. S.B. Woollatt, the Colony's veterinary surgeon, complained that "In the matter of bones the demands of the colonial agriculturalist have for several years been at the cost of the pastoralist. Since bone dust became locally popular as a fertilizer the bones of dead animals which used to strew the veld have been most assiduously collected both under the direction of the farmers, and by the natives on their own account for sale."

Msinga traders were still buying in bones in the 1960's, when the fertilizer companies decided to discontinue their rounds because of the heavy costs of transport. City abattoirs were more accessible.

However bonemeal has remained an irreplaceable constituent of stocklick — and the country's abattoirs don't provide enough bones.

CAP never wanted to sell its bones, believing Msinga's fertility should remain at Msinga. The first 300 tonnes were ground into meal, and some was distributed as stocklick to local cattle owners, some is being used to fertilize gardens along the Tugela River, and a large quantity is in storage, awaiting the day when the rains return.

"Recently, however, we have been forced to change our minds about selling bones," says Mr. Petrus Majozi, the chairman of CAP. "We no longer have room to store a single bone — and we cannot find sufficient funds to buy the mealies which pay for the bones." (The R57 000 spent so far has been covered by drought relief donations).

In September, therefore, CAP railed a consignment of bones to the highest bidder, a firm in Warrenton, in the Cape. The company wants "unlimited quantities" — so CAP's Bone Exchange has a longterm future. Which has brought a sigh of relief from the 1 000 women and children who are now regulars in the queues. Some bring their bones 60 kilometres, trekking with their donkeys, sleeping along the way. Some carry their bags on their heads, across the mountain, an hour's walk away. Each brings, on average, 35 kilograms of bones, taking away half the weight in mealies.

Nobody gets past the scale without answering some questions, and the census figures, over the years, have added up to one disturbing fact: If it rains, there will be an end

to the drought, but not to famine. While it has been convenient to use the drought as a reason for famine relief, drought is not the real cause of hardship in black rural areas. The people in greatest need are those without fields, without livestock, and often without men. Recession, removals, a pension budget that leaves thousands of old people without pensions . . . all are factors contributing to poverty that is barely affected by whether or not it rains.

CAP has always regarded its bones queue as a barometer of hardship. The following analysis reflects something of the people who have queued.

(Editor's Note: The second table is a copy from pages of the CAP bone book on two different days. The first column records the approximate age of the person bringing bones. The second column indicates the number of children

at school in the family, e.g. 1/10 means 1 out of 10 goes to school. Column 3 indicates the situation of the head of the family, i.e. Father or Husband. In this column **W** means the family head is dead; **WW** means war-widow, the family-head died as a result of the Msinga fighting; **UE** means "unemployed"; **Goli** means working in Johannesburg; **TE** means working in some other town; **Para** means paralysed; **JWar** means in jail as a result of fighting; **D** means deserted by family head; **S** means "sick", often chronically; **P** means pensioner. Column 4 records whether the family has access to fields for cultivation and Column 5 whether they own any stock, **C** meaning cattle and **G** meaning goats. If these figures are in brackets it indicates the number of stock lost through drought or theft. Thus the family of Lindiwe Madondo (No.35) have lost 14 head of cattle and 10 goats and are left with 2 goats. The "Bones" column shows the weight of bones delivered that day.)

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF BONES QUEUE STATISTICS – May, June and July 1983

People in queue	832	941	1111
Total bones	24 961 kgs	36 029 kgs	37 948 kgs
Total maize swapped	14 377 kgs	26 851 kgs	19 371 kgs
Total children at school	28,9%	29,5%	30,29%
Fieldowners	15,4%	15,5%	31,5%
Stockowners	31,25%	12,93%	39,52%
Average cattle per stockowning family	2,17	4,09	1,72
Average goats per stockowning family	3,6	8,03	2,71
Widows	23,56%	26,43%	22,85%
War widows	10,82%	10,12%	12,17%
Deserted by father	2,76%	2,58%	3,09%
Sick	4,93%	6,74%	6,98%
Cripple – no pension	8,05%	9,89%	12,17%
TB	9,73%	7,87%	9,28%
Blind – no pension	2,76%	1,19%	1,29%
Mad	2,52%	3,59%	3,49%
Town employed	13,7%	10,46%	11,57%
Farm employed	4,8%	1,91%	2,49%
Unemployed	13,94%	14,84%	10,87%
In jail	2,16%	2,13%	1,59%
Old/pensioned	0,96%	1,34%	2,09%

TABLE 2

NAME	Approx. Age	Children at school	Husband/Father	Fields	Stock C	Stock G	Bones Kgs.
1. Nomazwane Ngubane	50	0/1	Induna	Yes	3	20	131
2. Sono Ngubane	11			42
3. Mamgaga Mdluli	64	1/3	TB	Yes	—	(25)	102
4. Kulilile Mdluli	53	2/4	W	No	—	—	50
5. Tibulile Mdluli	13			20
6. Manjamane Mdluli	30s	0/2	WW		(5)	(40)	22
7. Siyaphi	13	2/3	WW	Yes	3	8	25
					(6)	(10)	
8. Catherin Njamane	52	2/5	UE	Yes	—	6	47
9. Landeleni Mdluli	13						41
10. Nhlumo Mdluli	13	2/10	WW	Yes	2	9	25

TABLE 2 – continued	NAME	Approx.	Children	Husband/	Fields	Stock		Bones Kgs
		Age	at school	Father		C	G	
11.	Mashabalala Mdluli	50s	2/3	UE	Yes	—	2	43
12.	Masibande Njamane	?	1/2	Goli	No	—	—	25
13.	Mgeni Mdluli	13	0/4	UE	Yes	—	2	45
14.	Khosiphi Ndamane	14	4/7	UE	Yes	1	6	45
15.	Mashezi Ndamane	70s	0/4	W	No	(2)	(30)	82
16.	Bakhohliswe Zwane	50s	1/5	TB	Yes	(6)	2	45
17.	Mathombi Mdluli	10	1/5	TB	Yes	3	4	40
18.	Seniphi Mpanza	40s	2/2	TE	No	4	—	25
19.	Elvina Ndamane	60	2/2	UE	No	3	10	30
20.	Mandondo Shezi	?	4/7	TB	No	—	—	30
21.	Manhlula Qwade	?	0/3	WW	Yes	2	5	45
22.	Mandawonde Xulu	?	0/3	WW	Yes	2	6	50
23.	Ntombi Sithole	?	0/5	WW	No	(45)	(25)	2
24.	Mxewana Hadebe	?	4/all died	mad	Yes	(4)	—	65
25.	Nyoni Mthethwa	?	3/7	Para.	No	(3)	(8)	45
26.	Mamkhize Gumede	14	3/5	JWar	Yes	(30)	(8)	46
27.	Gezile Gumede	?	0/10	Blind	Yes	(3)	—	87
28.	Sicelaphi Gumede	?	0/3	WW	Yes	—	—	60
29.	Tandobani Gumede	10	1/5	UEW	Yes	—	—	45
30.	Qomsile Dlamini	14	0/5	TB	No	(8)	—	41
31.	Mambomvu Gumede	?	—	WW	No	—	(10)	130
32.	Magumede Nzimande	?	0/8	W	No	(12)	(14)	66
33.	Mantuli Mvelase	?	3/6	WW	Yes	—	—	20
34.	Mamtwala Shabane	?	0/5	WW	No	(5)	—	45
35.	Lindiwe Madondo	14	2/8	WW	No	(14)	(10)	35
36.	Nozipho Mvimbi	10	0/12	Blind	No	(2)	—	2
37.	Nomusa Ndawonde	10	1/5	mad	No	(6)	(10)	45
38.	Mamana Mabaso	50s	—	WW	No	—	—	4
								40
								145

FOOTNOTE: Between them this group travelled 1 500 km each way to deliver their bones.

727.	Mamvelase Mboshe	60	2/3	W	No	1	—	100
728.	Mlawu Mavundla	8	3/6	TE	No	—	—	40
729.	Mamvelase Dladla	40	0/10	Para	No	—	—	95
730.	Macule Mbatha	8	1/6	TB	Yes	2	—	50
731.	Masithole Duma	40	2/4	D	No	—	—	95
732.	Mqanquza Nyawose	8	0/5	S	No	—	—	10
733.	Xazaleni Mapumulo	12	0/6	Para	No	—	—	25
734.	Esther Dlamini	40	0/3	W	No	—	—	36
735.	Mhla Xulu	8	0/5	W	No	—	—	10
736.	Hlengile Hlatshwayo	40	5/7	D	No	1	—	64
737.	Andrina Sithole	50	4/8	TB	No	—	—	36
738.	Tobile Zwane	12	0/3	W	No	—	—	41
739.	Andrina Tabethe	30	5/6	W	No	1	—	32
740.	Bono Shengu	14	4/8	TB	No	2	—	32
741.	Mamvelase Shabalala	40	4/8	Blind	No	4	5	38
742.	Masithole Dladla	30	3/6	Para	No	—	—	32
743.	Alvina Majola	40	0/3	TB	No	3	—	10
744.	Madonsela Shengu	30	0/5	Para	No	—	—	64
745.	Gladys Malinda	30	1/1	TB	No	—	—	10
746.	Zandile Ngcobo	12	2/4	W	No	—	—	2
747.	Ngane Mayisa	10	0/4	W	No	—	—	5
748.	Ntombenhle Nxamane	12	3/6	TB	Yes	—	—	40
749.	Nokuthule Cashule	20s	0/6	W	No	—	—	65
750.	Delile Mbono	?	0/7	W	No	—	—	32
751.	Mambele Hadebe	40s	3/6	P	No	2	5	40
752.	Mamajola Xaba	60	2/5	W	No	5	4	40
753.	Maxaba Shelembe	30s	3/6	WW	No	—	—	38
754.	Mamcunu Hadebe	20s	2/3	WW	No	—	—	86
755.	Macashule Siqubu	?	6/8	WW	No	—	—	66
756.	Fihliwe Miya	?	3/6	W	No	—	—	44

Footnote: The people in this table travelled a total of 650 Kms each way to deliver their bones.

MDUDUZI HLOPE – AN ANALYSIS OF THEME IN HIS PLAYS

INTRODUCTION:— Mduduzi Hlope has written a number of successful radio plays as well as a recently acclaimed T.V. play "Usenzekile". Hlope became popular as Radio Bantu announcer through programmes he presented as well as radio plays he wrote. In 1980 he was transferred on promotion from Durban to Johannesburg SABC studios. Recently he has joined T.V. 2 where he has also shown his ability in writing T.V. plays. The public demand for a second feature of his T.V. play "Usenzekile" bears witness to this. A further confirmation of the success of Hlope's T.V. play is the first-prize award recently accorded this year. Hlope's early successful radio plays are "Ngibuyela KwaBakithi" translated "I will return to my homeland" and "Hlelani Imindeni", "Plan Families".

In this paper I will illustrate Tomaselli's observation on ideology and class in South African cinema. Hlope's radio and T.V. plays will be used as a concrete example of this observation by Tomaselli, namely that

"The diffusion of this ideology is facilitated primarily through the government monopoly in radio and television broadcasting, particularly Radio Bantu. Most of the content of this station is aimed at the maintenance and in fact, the renaissance of the traditional tribal values and social institutions and their implementation in homelands".

I will further demonstrate that the success of Hlope is in fact, not a theatrical one as we may be led to believe.

On the contrary, the real success is of the political-ideology of apartheid which South African blacks must consume. So that what Hlope succeeds in, is diffusing this ideology through theatrical genre. Thus, if there is any theatrical success in Hlope, it is success as described above, namely to bolster apartheid ideology as justified and natural through theatrical synchrony. Finally it should be said that Hlope has the advantage of mass media monopoly, so that a result of limited mass media alternative for different expression, Hlope's success is uncontested success in any way.

To enable the reader to evaluate the substance in the introductory remarks above, it is appropriate to give a synopsis of the three plays by Hlope.

1. NGIBUYELA KWABAKITHI (I WILL RETURN TO MY HOMELAND)

This radio play depicts the experiences of a rural man who stays in the township whilst employed as a factory worker. This man has always dreamt of winning a lot of money from horse betting. Thereafter he would return to his rural home, if his dream came true. Motivated by this, he always tries horses.

His wife is very angry with him because he never wins, yet he continues pouring money into horses. When, at last, luck comes his way, it is discovered that his ticket is one of the only three correct jack-pot entries. He gets a big sum of money. Now it is his time to make his dream a reality. That is, going back to his rural reserves home. He gets a lot of opposition from his wife who prefers staying on in the little township. In spite of this opposition he gets back home and establishes himself as umnumzane.

2. HLELANI IMINDENI (PLAN FAMILIES)

Like its predecessor **Ngibuyela Kwabakithi**, this play has an urban township setting in a peri-urban squatter camp. A theatrical and melodramatic term "Emjondolo" has been coined to refer to the squalid shanties in the play. The plot is about the family which refuses to use the freely available family planning service. The result is prolific breeding. Later the big family can not be accommodated in their four-roomed house. The big number of children cannot be adequately provided for nutritionally, educationally and even in clothing. This is made worse by the fact that the father is work-shy. House rent is also not payed and eviction follows. After eviction they find that moving to the squatter area is the only alternative. Eventually every family member is involved in the evils and problems of most squatters, mainly because parents did not do family planning in the beginning.

3. USENZEKILE:

Usenzekile is the first TV play in Hlope's series. There is so much continuity with the previous radio one, **Hlelani Imindeni**, that the same major characters of the former are featuring again in **Usenzekile**. In this play a Malawian widower has a successful business in Johannesburg. He employs two young female shop-assistants; first a township girl and later a country girl. The country girl proves to be a more efficient and honest worker. Although the town girl has a business insight, she is very dishonest. She steals a lot of food from the employer's shop to support her family. Her father is a work-shy man who drinks heavily and often beats his wife mercilessly. This is like the situation in the former radio play, **Hlelani Imindeni**. That is, a socially failing family structure starting from the family head down to children.

As in **Hlelani Imindeni**, **Usenzekile** singles out urban township life style as a producer of socially and morally unstable human beings. In the TV play all characters of urban township origin display an undependable character. For instance, Grace

the shop assistant not only steals, but also has a hand in the destruction of her employer's shop by fire.

Part II of *Usenzekile* still carries on this theme of township hollow character and morals. And as rural people become assimilated into township life style, they end up being destroyed by this. This is what is in store for this businessman and his wife, the country shop-assistant whom he ultimately marries.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Analysis shows that Hlophe's plays revolve around a special core-concept of determined political ideology in South Africa. By means of theatrical or entertainment camouflage, this political message is conveyed in a less painful version, yet still uncompromising in formulation, for the target group to consume. The message is in accordance with Tomaselli's formulation:

"The renaissance of traditional tribal values and social institutions and their implementation in the homelands"

As may be seen, this message is within the grand structure of apartheid, with its many ramifications in the urban black problem, the housing problem and the basic land issue. Through the impact of theatrical dilution and mass-media toning-down effect, Hlophe's play has the psychological effect of rendering these issues less poignant for the affected group.

So that in the radio play, *Ngibuyela Kwabakithi*, the homeland policy is reinforced. Mass-media and TV plays have the psychological effect of making the minds of people accept the geo-political and socio-economic arrangements as natural. Listeners and viewers are to hear and see themselves in politically determined socio-economic roles as if that is a natural arrangement. To acquire this effect of rendering the politically-determined to sound as if naturally ordained, Hlophe's plays apply a technique of confusing the cause-effect relationship in social process. So that in "*Hlelani Imindeni*" a complex socio-economic problem of urban squatting is simplified by a confused cause-effect formula of high-birth-rate and housing-shortage, which could be combated by family planning. The cause of squatting should be sought in a high birth-rate which is both an antecedent and a cause of housing shortage. Hence family planning is upheld as a likely solution to this problem. The effect, of course, is too obvious, namely the evasion of politically-related causes and a substitution of these by individually-based causes. So that "you have nobody to blame for your situation" because of "the right of all population groups to self-determination" and "Private initiative".

It was an interesting coincidence that the play "*Hlelani Imindeni*" was in the air at the very time when the Crossroads squatters were part of a public controversial issue. How the ordinary radio listener received the Crossroads news which coincided with this play, could have been an interesting investigation of mass-media influence of attitude-change and development. Without any concrete data to this regard, it can still be claimed that the coinciding of this play with the

reality of Crossroads was not insignificant. It would have to be borne out by research whether the play or the Crossroads reality was seen in a different light because of the coincidence.

LINGUISTIC EFFECT

Apart from the political distortions and social-psychological manipulations described above, the play "*Hlelani Imindeni*", has subtle psycho-linguistic manoeuvres. I will demonstrate by citing from the play how a linguistic effect is also harnessed to intended political ends. In this play Hlophe has coined a Zulu term "*Mjondolo*" for a shanty house. The term has become so received and popular that it has, through usage, widely extended its connotative and denotative sense from its original meaning (shanty home). The fluid usage of the word originated from the character in the play, a Malawian, who could neither pronounce the word well nor use it correctly in its restricted sense. His ludicrous incorrect accent and malapropisms caused a lot of humour and attention around the word "*Umjondolo*". In fact, even in the TV play, *Usenzekile*, the actor still enjoys wide popularity because of his Malawian accent and humorous grammatical errors (pidgin Zulu). This had the tragi-comic effect of romanticising shanty houses out of their reality. This streak of romanticism about shanty life was further manifested in a spurt of easy-go musical records about *Mjondolo*, released during and after the time the play was in the air. Again records were played by Radio Bantu. I am arguing that in plays of this nature there is also a psycho-linguistic component as a dimension of political distortion machinery.

I have already mentioned that the Malawian character uses the same linguistic devices in the TV drama, *Usenzekile*. The impact is even stronger seeing that a visual dimension is now added. While viewers hear his ludicrous grammatical errors and accent, they also see his gesticulation and grimaces. The major plot and sub-plot events in *Usenzekile* all retain a single message namely:

"Stable morals and character are a very rare human attribute among township people, while on the other hand, they are the order of the day in rural areas".

So that in the first play "*Ngibuyela Kwabakithi*", the man who wins a big sum of money and returns home, is acting on this principle. That is, retaining what is good in him by avoiding contamination. Even the musical prelude to *Usenzekile* Part I implies this principle as a fact. It is a woeful song about *Senzekile*, the character after whom the play is named, who leaves her rural home for Johannesburg. The singer of the prelude, probably her mother, regrets the departure of *Senzekile* because she will never be fortunate in the large city. It is as if things could have developed better if she had remained in her rural home. Who knows, she might indeed end up in the plight of the family described in "*Hlelani Imindeni*". In fact this play is continuing and events in Part II are already taking a bitter turn for *Senzekile* and her husband. It seems that they ought to have transferred to their homelands as soon as their business prospered, as was the case in "*Nqibuyela Kwabakithi*". As it is

now, trouble is building up for them as they are planning to increase their business. They fall into a trap and they accept capital from crooks who pose as financiers. At this stage, the plan has already shown how these crooks destroy their clients once they get hooked into a deal with them. These episodes already adumbrate what is going to happen to Senzekile's husband.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have given concrete examples in support of Tomaselli's reflection on South African cinema. Tomaselli's framework has been used to analyse radio and TV here because it is felt that this analysis has the same validity for radio and TV plays. For the same reason, it is maintained that Hlophe's plays are typically of the "Back to

Homelands" movie typology as described by Tomaselli where:

"The movie worked to reinforce the then official government rationale that urban life constitutes an alien existence for the black person and the Homeland policy was designed to assist black people . . . This observation presupposes that densely populated housing settlements found in the homelands border areas (squatter camps included) somehow qualify as an expression of their traditional way of life".

A second task has been to illustrate that behind the superficial surface meaning there a deeper hidden political message embodied in the text and that Hlophe's talent is caught in this ideological spiral. □

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

It is with regret that we have to announce that, as from the beginning of 1984, we will be increasing our South African subscription rate to R6,00 per annum and our sterling rate to £4,00. The US rate will not change.

This increase has been made necessary by an increase of more than 50% in our printing costs since the beginning of the year and, even with it, we will still depend heavily on those many subscribers, who give a donation in addition to their subscription, for our continued survival. We thank them for what they have done in the past and hope that we will continue to enjoy their support in the future.

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NAMIBIA: THE SOCIALIST DILEMMA

Note: What follows is the slightly shortened text of a talk given to a Joint meeting of the Royal African Society and the Royal Commonwealth Society in April 1982. The full text was first published in the journal **African Affairs**. The main burden of the talk retains its relevance for our understanding of Namibia and other African countries.

I have arrived at the title of this talk by making two assumptions. The first is that there will be a settlement in Namibia. The second is that SWAPO would win the independence elections and become the government. I am reasonably certain about the second assumption: if there are free and fair one-man-one-vote elections, SWAPO will win them. But I am not so sure about the first assumption, that there will be a settlement.

(After a discussion of various interpretations of the South African government's intentions that it was possible to make during the first half of 1982, Mr Uys turned to his main topic: 'the socialist dilemma in Namibia').

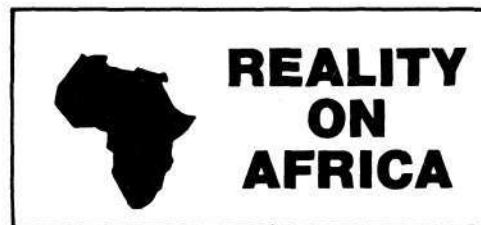
I am not going to discuss the merits of socialism in Africa — a subject in itself — but the dilemma of the African socialist whose country comes to independence and then finds that it is so tied in to the western economic system, so severely hedged in by what it can and cannot do, that it feels it is not a fully sovereign country. This was also the despairing conclusion reached by Mr Vassilev Solodovnikov, former director of the Africa Institute in Moscow and former Russian ambassador to Zambia, who said in 1976: 'A specific feature of the development of the socialist-orientated countries in Africa is that even after their choice of the non-capitalist way they are still in the orbit of the world capitalist economic system'.

To understand the dilemma of the socialist in Africa it is necessary to recognize the premises of African socialism, which is that capitalism is the system Africans knew under colonialism, and it is the system that, in their experience, failed them. They have looked for a new system and believe they have found it in socialism. One does not have to be a socialist to understand and have sympathy for the African socialist in his dilemma.

Political independence in itself cannot resolve economic dependence. As President Machel said at his country's independence: 'The first day of our political independence is the first day of the longer and harder struggle for economic independence'. The late Sir Seretse Khama, then President of Botswana, pointed out that where there are no options for a government, the process of decision-making is an empty one. The extent to which economic dependence derogates from sovereign independence, therefore, is the extent to which the pride and dignity of a people and their leaders are diminished. Nowhere is this truer than in Southern Africa where the economic dependence of a whole region on a single country, South Africa,

is so pronounced. South Africa does not make it easy for its black neighbours either: it has sought to institutionalize their dependence in the Constellation of States of Southern Africa. They in turn have responded by creating SADCC (the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference) to achieve the opposite and to lessen their dependence upon South Africa.

Too often the motives of South Africa's black neighbours have been misunderstood. Where they have tried solely to guarantee their independence, or to meet the aspirations of their people, they have been accused of showing 'the ugly face of African tyranny', or of allowing themselves to become 'Soviet puppets'. They have been told they have 'let the mask slip'.



INFLUENCING FACTORS

This shows ignorance of the factors that influence a newly independent African country. In the first place, many of them have a commitment to socialism. Now this may be a good thing or a bad thing, but it is *their* commitment. To achieve socialism, in *their* opinion, is to achieve some kind of justice, the justice they believe they were denied under colonialism and capitalism. Second, they are exposed to remorseless pressure from both the masses and from activists for political independence to be translated into economic benefits. It is Africa's familiar crisis of expectations. If these expectations cannot be met, a new government is threatened with instability. This is where the dilemma arises: expectations cannot be met within a reasonable time-span within the economic framework inherited by the new government, but when the new government begins to restructure the framework, it frightens off those very whites, in and outside the country, on whom it depends for productivity, skills, administration, investment and so forth. Governing a newly independent state with a significant white population is like walking a tight-rope: only the very clever and very fortunate ones manage to keep their balance.

Take the example of Zimbabwe. Under colonialism, the land was divided almost equally between whites and blacks with the result that a black population of about seven million, four million of them peasants, today live on 41 million acres, while 180,000 whites (4,700 of them farmers) occupy the remaining 39 million acres.

The most urgent problem in Zimbabwe, therefore, is the redistribution of the land. The government hopes to re-settle 165,000 black families within the next five or six years, but so far fewer than 6,000 families have been re-settled, partly because it is such a formidable administrative task. How is large-scale redistribution of land to be achieved without frightening off white farmers and disturbing the sensitive mechanism of agricultural productivity? As it is, there is a continuing exodus of whites, mainly to South Africa, taking their skills with them. Here is another example: Mugabe's government raised minimum wages, by 23.5 per cent for commercial and industrial workers and 66 per cent for agricultural and domestic workers, in one fell swoop. Some white employers felt that this was asking too much of them and dismissed some workers. The government retaliated by bringing in a law to provide for fines of up to \$21,000, or three months' imprisonment, for unauthorised dismissals. At the other end of the scale, executive salaries and prices of goods were frozen. This correction of the 'capitalist imbalance' causes a lot of heartache among whites.

In spite of everything, though, whites still have most of the best jobs, the best salaries and the best houses, and it is hardly surprising that blacks are left wondering what independence is all about. Then, as political instability increases, it becomes necessary for black governments to restate, ever more vigorously, their commitment to African socialism.

Mugabe, for example, has found it necessary to deny that he has gone soft on capitalism. He has reaffirmed his unswerving commitment to socialism, and 1982 was declared the Year of National Transformation in Zimbabwe. To many white Zimbabweans this is very hairy stuff. The situation may well deteriorate even further and democracy in Zimbabwe may well fall on even worse times, but I remain convinced that Mugabe has tried genuinely to be both moderate and democratic, and that if in the future he is unable to be either, this is not the way he wanted it to be.

Before Mugabe took over in Zimbabwe, the state already owned the airline, television, radio, the railways, the telephone service, the iron and steel works, and several marketing agencies. Since then it has bought a controlling interest in a commercial bank, a pharmaceutical manufacturing firm, the Argus newspaper group and a film production company. Now Mugabe says he wants to buy a controlling interest in selected mines, farms, factories and businesses, and that the shares will be turned over to the workers. But if one looks at some of the statements Mugabe and his Ministers have made which have caused alarm among whites, it is noteworthy how often the statements subsequently were toned down. They were uttered for black consumption, and then the explanations had to follow for white consumption. There is nothing unusual or sinister or even devious about this: it is part of walking the tightrope.

ON THE DOORSTEP

The phenomenon of economic constraints acting on political decision-making is familiar in Africa, but Southern Africa is unique in what might be called the metropolitan power, South Africa, is not thousands of miles away in Western Europe, but on the doorstep; and South Africa has a vested political interest — deriving from its internal poli-

tics and the need to ensure the survival of apartheid — in maintaining and extending the entire region's economic dependence on its own powerful economy. Namibia is more dependent on South Africa than any other member of SADCC because it has been administered as a fifth province of South Africa's for more than 60 years. South Africa's grip on Namibia has been described by SWAPO's own publication, *To be Born a Nation*, as a stranglehold. South Africa owns the rail transport system, the airline, the entire communications network and the only viable port, Walvis Bay. It supplies the territory's oil and coal. Of the 110,000 whites in Namibia an estimated 55,000 are South African expatriates, many of them in key positions as civil servants and farmers. If they were to leave, Namibia would be in trouble. Namibia is knitted into the Rand Monetary Area and the Customs Union with South Africa. Namibia's dependence on South Africa for food is critical. Whites have 38 million hectares of the best agricultural and ranching land, and blacks 33 million hectares of largely arid and sandy soils unsuitable for very productive cultivation.

In 1979, out of a GDP of R1,425 million, a little less than R30 million was spreading among 250,000 black subsistence farmers and their families. This meagre income was supplemented by contract wage labour, but the total income of blacks, who form nine-tenths of the population was only 12 per cent of GDP, compared with 24 per cent for whites, the rest going to businesses or the state. According to a UNIN estimate in 1977, R425 million, or 36 per cent of Namibia's GDP, was being remitted abroad. Mining in Namibia contributes 52 per cent of GDP, and much of this comes from two mines, Rössing Uranium Mine and CDM. Some 17 companies, all foreign-based, hold the major and usually complete ownership in the 18 or so significant mines in Namibia. Ten are American based transnational corporations, three are Rand-based mining houses founded on British and South African capital, and two are South African parastatals, IDC and Iscor. Farming, fishing and mining are almost wholly in white hands and account for 97 per cent of commercial primary production. Ruinous over-fishing by the South Africans, Russians, Spanish and others have almost wrecked the fishing industry. Manufacturing has been badly neglected, because goods have been imported so easily from South Africa. Ninety-five per cent of everything consumed or invested in Namibia is imported. Eighty per cent of cattle exports are live by rail to RSA and karakul pelts are shipped in their raw state. Meat, frozen or canned for export, is handled by two Afrikaner companies in RSA. Of R1,800 million invested in the means of production in mining, agriculture and fishing, and related processing and suppliers, not more than R40 million is owned by specifically local interests, and hardly any of this by black Namibians.

COMPOUNDING FACTORS

Other factors compound Namibia's dependence on South Africa. The international recession has caused prices to fall for Namibia's uranium, diamonds and base metals. There has also been a prolonged and devastating drought, the worst since 1933, which has caused huge stock losses. There is the further problem, that for as long as Namibia is occupied by what the UN has branded the illegal South African regime, neither foreign governments nor transnational corporations feel they can offer aid or investment.



Sam Nujoma

Africa Guide 1982

South Africa's hostility towards its neighbours is an important factor. The leaders of Angola, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho have all accused South Africa of trying to destabilize their regimes. Namibia under SWAPO would ask itself why it should be the exception. South African government spokesmen have hinted, too, that they may insist on punitive compensation for South Africa's assets in Namibia. It is to be hoped that they will not carry out this threat.

Under these economic and political constraints, a SWAPO government would be trying to achieve two things. First, as its 1976 *Programme of Action* states, it will be seeking to build a 'classless, non-exploitative society based on the ideals and principles of scientific socialism'. What is called 'capitalist exploitation' will be transformed into 'a genuine socialist democracy'. There will be control of the means of production; black peasants will be brought into co-operatives or collectives; the state will buy ranches and crop farms; and controls will be imposed on the big capitalist corporations which are seen as 'the very core of imperialism.' At least, these are the aims.

Second, SWAPO will want Namibia to become part of the African ethos: to join SADC and the OAU, to become non-aligned, to admit embassies and advisers from the Communist bloc, and to trade with the Communist bloc.

All these intentions and aspirations, though, would be seen by Pretoria as a threat to South Africa's interests. It would be naive to expect that Pretoria would refrain from using its economic levers to obstruct SWAPO in carrying out these policies.

This situation has produced in the West the expectation that a SWAPO government will adopt a 'pragmatic' course in Namibia, and I have no doubt that this will happen. A SWAPO government will have no choice. One of the SADC papers admits that South Africa is in a position to strike 'crippling blows' at the Namibian economy. According to this paper, if there is not to be immediate chaos there will need to be no more than a gradual switch of connections away from the Republic of South Africa.

The constraints that would operate on a SWAPO government would not only be economic. For example, SWAPO has already given an assurance that it will not allow the ANC to establish guerilla bases in the territory. But it may feel obliged to allow the ANC to establish a presence in Namibia in the form of an office. The trouble is that Pretoria makes little distinction between a base and a presence. Pretoria almost certainly would take measures to ensure that an ANC presence in Namibia did not present a threat to South Africa. Political or military constraints might be imposed.

COMPROMISE

Circumstances, then, will *impel* SWAPO towards compromise, towards the kind of 'pragmatic' decisions that white South Africans, white investors and white governments in Western Europe expect it to make. Already, a pattern is taking shape: from what SWAPO itself states in publications like its 1976 *Programme of Action* and its *To Be Born a Nation* (1981), there will be no nationalization of major industries, although the transnational corporations may have to surrender a majority share of their equity; productive white farmers and competent white civil servants will be allowed to get on with the job, provided they obey the laws of the country; the land, minerals and fish will be regarded as the property of the nation, but this will not exclude private occupancy, use and development; there will be no confiscation of smaller businesses, and so forth.

To most whites this is an admirable way to resolve the problem; it is the sensible option, the commonsense thing to do. This is what we call 'pragmatism'. Now it may well be true that this is just what Namibia needs, that compromise of this kind will be in the best interests of the country and its people, considering that there is a conflict of interests here, and that the whites have the levers to protect their interests. But, let us not delude ourselves that this will be a meeting of minds. SWAPO would see it as putting socialism on the shelf, as postponing the redistribution of wealth. It would be surprising if this did not produce tensions within SWAPO. Its more militant members do not think pragmatism is anything to be proud of, since it means they cannot meet the aspirations of their people in the way they would like to meet them. Here we have the dilemma of the socialist in Africa.

As I remarked, I am not discussing the merits of socialism or the redistribution of wealth. It is argued, for example, that a simple redistribution of wealth would soon be dissipated and that what is important is not how wealth is distributed but how it is generated. Be that as it may. But if we want to understand what is happening in newly independent African countries — and Namibia will be the last classic colony in Black Africa — it is necessary to understand the strength of the commitment to socialism or, to put it in another way, the strength of the emotional rejection of capitalism as experienced under colonialism.

LABELS AND TRAPPINGS

I would like to refer to a comment made recently by Mr David Rockefeller, retired chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, at the end of a 10-country tour of Africa. Asked about Marxism in Africa just after he had visited Zimbabwe, Mr Rockefeller said: 'The more I've seen of countries which are allegedly Marxist in Africa, the more I have a feeling it is more labels and trappings than reality'. The primary interest of the leaders of these countries, he said,

'is to improve the lot of their people and strengthen the economies of their countries. They are willing to accept help from any source to achieve it'. Mr Rockefeller said that dealing with Socialist or Marxist countries 'really does not cause us any problem at all. We do business with at least 125 countries in the world, governments ranging over the whole political spectrum'. He added that Chase Manhattan was the first Western Bank in Moscow and Peking. 'I don't think an international bank such as ours ought to try to set itself up as a judge of what kind of government a country wishes to have. We have found we can deal with just about any kind of government, provided they are orderly and responsible'. Chase Manhattan of course also has banks in South Africa and gives loans to the private sector there, and Mr Rockefeller defends this as he is also opposed to sanctions against South Africa. 'We don't feel our activities in South Africa are inconsistent with our sense of social responsibility', he said. There are two ways of looking at this. One is to see capitalism, and banks in particular, as cynical and concerned only with profits. The other is to recognize the contribution they are making to international stability by having all these cross-cutting links. In this sense, there is nothing wrong with the phrase, business is business. But Mr Rockefeller, I suggest, could have been a little more tactful to his hosts. To tell them that their socialism and Marxism are just labels and trappings is a little insensitive, to say the least. There is no need to rub salt into the wound.

Against this kind of perspective, it is possible, I suggest, to understand what is happening when leaders of newly independent black states talk about giving the land back to the tillers, restoring the mineral wealth to the nation, controlling the means of production, giving workers a share of the profits, all the phrases which we hear so often from black leaders and which strike such fear into the hearts of whites. When we look at the failure of new black countries to meet the expectations of their people, many of whom think political independence is some kind of magic wand that brings in the economic millennium, and we see the tensions and disunity that this failure creates in a new nation, and the way it reinforces old tribal divisions, then it is also possible to understand, although without excusing it, the immense pressures that build up on a black government to go over to a one-party state.

The problem whites face is to try not to overreact but to ride out the storm. This of course may not be possible — the storm may be too fierce — but once whites understand, sympathetically, the pressures that operate on black leaders, and the factors that motivate them to say the things they say and do the things they do, then they can see an historical process at work, and not panic as easily. There would be nothing heroic about another trek of whites back to the Cape Province. The whites should try to stick it out in Namibia and help build a nation, and they can do this if they have a more sympathetic understanding of the facts, rather than reacting so readily to the rhetoric. □

LINES TO A SON

The sea is calm tonight,
Empty. The mountains black and vast.
Out there a light
Signals and is gone. Few ships bother with
These parts. Restless after a storm
Which banged about this month
I walk a holocaust
Of broken gannets, dead crabs, palm,
Stopping where the headland collapses
Beneath some trees.

Years ago
On another beach others heard it:
The sound below the shallows
Suck and draw, the movement of armies
Across a plain . . . the lot
That I sense in this southern sea.

Once white flesh
Appeared along our mile of sand
In season. At night there were drums,
Marimba; and marijuana on the air.
But now all I hear
Is the wash
Among rocks;
The distant break of wind.

I miss you in a world
Turned winter where down thick roads
Come carts, cattle, dogs, people
Who do not stop. It is no time for a child.
Somewhere warm you sleep tonight,
Miles off, but under these same stars
Knowing nothing of all this, the struggle,
The fighting in the outer provinces.
Your days are young and bright.
I fear for you. There is lightning on the dark edge
Or maybe a flare, or the spark of sabotage.

by
Mike Nicol

TWO POEMS

UNDER GRASS

Here again a thought occurs and hardens
Of a farmhouse, gutted and abandoned
Among tall trees
In the low country.
The careful gardens gone to weed,
Toys, broken and rusted, on the porch. Children
Lived here until the last campaign.
All departed now; into the ground
Or down the track disappearing under grass.
The debris of small
Creatures covers the turmoil
Of how they left, at night, futureless,
Carrying what they could:
Clothes, blankets, water, food.
If they made it through lurking fields
Down exploding roads, some survivors,
Some refugees
In scattered cities
Must still hold the distant manor
In their dreams, as a child
Might half remember a father's kind hand.
The war is over: grass has won.
We have gone to our separate lives
In the confusion
Of evacuation.
In which city, under planes or olives,
Near mountains or the slow run
Of old rivers are you? The sun
Is setting on the western heights.
It is time for bats and the calls
Of guinea fowl
And owls.
The house is little more than walls,
Doors kicked or blown in, all rights
Reserved for white ants, borers, termites.

A CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL ORTHODOXIES

CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA: Political
Consideration by SAM C NOLUTSHUNGU,
Manchester University Press, 1982,
David Philip (paperback), 1983.

Nolutshungu's unassumingly entitled book presents a significant array of challenges to liberal orthodoxies concerning political reform. This is not least because this book is about politics rather than economics and hence is directed to those issues about which reformist prescriptions are most deficient — in particular those problems associated with the preservation of capitalism within a democratic political order.

The book has three sections. The first consists of a diagnosis of the essential features of liberal and Marxist perspectives on the possibilities of political change in South Africa. The second is concerned with whether strategies of elite incorporation have the capacity to legitimise successfully the rule of a substantially unaltered state. Finally there is an evaluation of the social and political significance of nationalist strategies with particular reference to the Black Consciousness movement.

Nolutshungu sees several assumptions (sometimes explicit, often implicit) as common to all South African liberal standpoints. The first is that capitalism itself is not responsible for the main barriers to political democratisation; the second is that the reordering of race relations need not involve a drastic revision of property relations, and the third is that capitalism provides better chances for black material prosperity and political freedom than any alternative. These assumptions arise from a belief that capitalism and liberal democracy are normal corollaries of each other, a belief that is, Nolutshungu argues, empirically unfounded. Liberal democracies are the exception rather than the rule among capitalist societies and are on the whole confined to older capitalist states whose political institutions evolved in circumstances which are unlikely to re-occur. The economic reductionism of reformist predictions that democracy's emergence is conditioned by a certain level of economic and social achievement usually avoids the question of just how political structures will be made more democratic. Consociational or even federal proposals are usually more concerned with preserving existing minority privileges than with the extension of political freedom and economic benefits to the majority. They are in any case highly unlikely to work in the context of a society which though racially diverse is geographically integrated.

MORE SUBTLE UNDERSTANDING

Contrasting with the vulgar economism of South African liberal/reformist analyses is the more subtle understanding

of the relationship between economy and society which Nolutshungu claims is provided by Marxism. A Marxian concept of the economic relations which form the 'base' of society in any case already contains elements which are social or political: only in the abstractions of theory is it possible to totally distinguish these from each other. A state, while it may be the means through which a dominant class exercises its power, can never merely reflect the interests of that class. Classes emerge historically in conditions which are specific to each society and may depend for their political domination on the support or at least acquiescence of sections of other classes. Political forces, therefore, seldom represent the undiluted interests of one class:

It is simply impossible to make sense of the ideological and political effectiveness of class divisions, or to understand the real boundaries of classes outside the immediate site of production, unless one recognises that politics and ideology also have important effects on the meaning of class.

In a colonial context the relationship of political institutions to class structure will be especially complex. In South Africa capitalism developed through colonial political institutions, shaping and being shaped by them. In consequence 'class oppression tended to be obscured by the racial discrimination of colonialism while the role of racialism itself in the ordering of class relations was also obfuscated'. What Nolutshungu is arguing is that the politics of racial discrimination are not just epiphenomena that can be jettisoned by a modernising capitalism; rather they are intrinsic to that capitalism's modernisation. An attack on political forms in such a society has inevitably revolutionary implications even if these are not clearly understood by those directing the attack.

NO SERIOUS INITIATIVES

There is little enough evidence in any case of serious initiatives by South African capitalism in the area of social reform. Certainly there is rhetoric in both business and government circles of the need to create a 'black bourgeoisie' but financial resources to cultivate black entrepreneurship remain meagre (and recede into insignificance when contrasted with the subsidies offered to white investment into the homelands). The policy of black embourgeoisement is qualified by the extent to which capitalism in

Changing South Africa SAM C. NOLUTSHUNGU



South Africa is state capitalism: deracialising capitalism would necessitate the 'class suicide' of the Afrikaner 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'. Even if the black middle classes were accommodated at least economically this would achieve little, contends Nolutshungu. The black salariat represents less than one per cent of the black population – too small in itself to exercise any political weight even in the unlikely event of its political aspirations being blunted by higher levels of consumption. It could hardly exert an ideological hegemony over the rest of the population without real political power. Bribing the industrial working class into acquiescence would require the equalisation of white and black wage scales. This would have to be a process of 'equalling up' which bearing in mind contemporary inequalities would be impossibly costly.

The final section of the book contains an analysis of Black Consciousness, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the proposition that:

Nationalism is primarily related to the terms of domination rather than its economic aims: yet it may, by obstructing certain economically necessary patterns of domination, disrupt the order of exploitation as well, creating the opportunity for its overthrow by direct class action'.

Nolutshungu's treatment accentuates a revolutionary theme in Black Consciousness which is missing from the accounts of the movement both by its liberal apologists⁽¹⁾ and marxist detractors⁽²⁾. He first examines its ideology which he argues was essentially fluid and disorganised and finds in it 'a radical unease with capitalism' as well as a developing 'gravitation to marxism' leading to the conclusion that the movement, though initially isolated socially from the working class, was nevertheless not hostile to the latter's interests. Turning to strategic questions he pays more

attention than previous commentators to the willingness of at least part of its leadership to accept the inevitability of armed struggle. Finally, in the efforts of the Black Consciousness movement to mobilise workers through both the Black Allied Workers' Union and-more importantly-the Black Workers' Project, Nolutshungu finds a significant 'commitment to identify with the working class'. All this leads him to reject the liberal view of Black Consciousness as 'moderate' (a perception not shared by all liberals) as well as some marxists' criticism of the movement as a vehicle for petty bourgeois ideas. More generally the development of a radical current within Black Consciousness testifies to the fact that there is an inevitable trajectory in any genuine effort to mobilise blacks nationally: the impossibility for the state to legitimise itself to blacks makes any black popular movement subversive of the existing order. The destruction of the contemporary political framework within which South African capitalism functions makes the latter's survival at least questionable.

DELICATE ARGUMENT

The book's argument is considerably more delicate than it appears from this short review: Nolutshungu's baroque prose style and gentle understatement are impossible to do justice to in a summary. The theoretical and historical underpinning of the argument is elaborate and impressive. This is by far the most sophisticated analysis of black political responses that has been published to date. This reviewer's main reservation concerns the treatment of Black Consciousness. Certainly Nolutshungu's has drawn attention to important currents within the movement which others have been unwilling to see. And left to itself it is possible that Black Consciousness might have succeeded in transforming itself into a popularly-based and popularly-oriented movement. But, as he describes it, Black Consciousness is at best populist rather than socialist. Both black workers and black middle class have a common interest in the dismantling of present state structures, but nothing in Nolutshungu's analysis suggests that the étatism of the present would not be replaced with étatism in another form. Workerist rhetoric and the advocacy of communalism have characterised the emergence of 'bureaucratic bourgeoisies' elsewhere in Africa. If the movement had been more successful in its efforts to mobilise workers as workers one might have more justification for attributing to it a more definite socialist character, but the evidence provided by its endeavours in this field are suggestive more of confusion than commitment. Though part of Nolutshungu's case is based on contemporary documentation it is possible that his impression of the movement's radicalism has been reinforced by the later radicalisation of those of its members whom he interviewed in exile. Such testimonies could be balanced by those from a more conservative group who have remained inside the country. However the major point of the case study is incontestable: no political solution which does not involve the total removal of political power from the governing minority can deflect black political aspirations. Given the intimate association between state and capital, black democratic aspirations are revolutionary in terms of the existing economic and social structure.

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1. For example: Donald Woods, *Biko*, London: Paddington Press, 1979.
2. For example: Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash*, London: Zed Press, 1979. □

THE CONTEMPORARY OBSERVER

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS
by HERMANN GILIOMEER
published by DAVID PHILIP, 1982

The cat is fain the fish to eat,
But hath no will to wet her feet.

Thus the popular press's verdict on P W Botha as Professor Giliomeer puts it, "in part he seemed to sense the urgent need for reform and some kind of political settlement between white and black. But in another part he seemed just as determined as his predecessors to perpetuate policies that militate against any such settlement and just as prepared to quash or curtail anybody or anything that interfered with his management of the political system."

In this collection of essays in political journalism, Giliomeer moves beyond depicting Botha as the poor cat in the adage. In an analysis of South African politics and society between June 1976 and the split in the National Party, he shows that the Afrikaner leadership was forced to adopt a qualitatively different strategy of control: Vorster's *ad hoc* style of government was inherently incapable of managing the building crises of hegemony, economy and rationality after the Soweto revolt.

Giliomeer also shows, however, that the range of alternatives was severely restricted by the logic of ethnicity and the ponderous weight of the bureaucratic apparatuses. The crisis of Afrikanerdom is a crisis of structural contradictions: how to share power without losing control.

In tandem with this line of reasoning, Giliomeer deploys a parallel argument about the limited possibilities of authoritarian reform. In an essay entitled *The Limits of Reform from Above*, excerpted from a paper written for the Buthelezi Commission, he draws a comparison between South Africa and Czarist Russia. Giliomeer suggests that three factors militate against conservative reform. First, there is a strong tendency to view the needs and aspirations of blacks in narrow terms — housing, job security and so on. This tendency is exacerbated by the rise of managerial government: "in this sort of thinking and planning in Pretoria there is a dangerous tendency to see blacks as mere units in plans and models and greatly to underestimate the need blacks have for political influence and human fulfilment." Second, there is an absence of vehicles for the formulation and articulation of claims and grievances. As Giliomeer points out, this phenomenon is by no means confined to South Africa, but is endemic to the capitalist democracies: "the shift towards the executive is part of a universal trend almost inexorably pulling even great democracies in the direction of a deeply illiberal centralised state system."

Third, there is no overriding purpose or transcending value behind the process of authoritarian reform. P W Botha has spoken at length about universal Christianity, but he has failed to erase the impression of opportunism and expediency. The growing challenge to white hegemony has not been stemmed by the move to conservative reform, but has on the contrary gained strength. Giliomeer bleakly

summarises his assessment in a quotation from Burke: "there are critical moments in the fortunes of all states, when they who are unable to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin."

This is not to suggest, however, that *The Parting of the Ways* is solely concerned with the agonies of P W Botha. This collection includes essays on the lessons of Zimbabwe (in which Giliomeer makes the unconventional suggestion that the challenge to the state may emerge at its strongest in the rural areas), the prospects of a Namibian settlement (grim) and self-censorship in the press. There is also a long and somewhat tedious debate with South Africa's home-grown Friedmanniacs which does not move beyond the terrain of classical economics and which therefore ends on an inconclusive note.

Even so, P W Botha and the National Party dominate this collection. This is not surprising, since these essays were written as a running commentary as events unfolded. Surprisingly, however, there is little discussion of black opposition, except as an appendage to white politics. The ANC, in particular, is conspicuous by its absence; at times Giliomeer writes as if it can be bypassed and neutralised in reaching a South African settlement.

Despite the essential coherence of this collection, there are some extraordinary inconsistencies. At one point, for example, Giliomeer writes: "there is still the time as well as the undoubted capacity of whites and blacks to devise a rational political system which can accommodate large sections of both the white and black population. But as Abba Eban, Israeli minister for foreign affairs, once said: 'Men and nations turn to rationality only after they have exhausted all other alternatives.'" Yet 60 pages later, in engaging Stanley Greenberg's *Race and State in Capitalist Development*, Giliomeer attempts to disprove that "the élite . . . will in fact turn to rationality only after it has exhausted all alternatives."

In Giliomeer's defence, it must be added that he has declined to revise these essays for publication, "to retain something of the quality of hope and despair (the folly too!) of the contemporary observer of the period." Indeed, he makes no claims about *The Parting of the Ways*, beyond "the real point of re-publishing these essays is to convey something of how people felt about developments at the time they were happening." Professor Giliomeer is too modest. Whether or not he is justified in demarcating the time-span from mid 1976 to early 1982 as "a distinct period in South African history", this collection constitutes an incisive and penetrating analysis of the time, lacking nothing for having been written by and large for the popular press; indeed, as Stanley Uys says in the preface, "his contribution, too, is enhanced by the fact that through his newspaper writing he is able to convey his ideas to a wide audience." □