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EDITORIALS

WHAT HOPE FROM THE U.P.

It is understandable that members of the United Party should feel elated that after 24 years in the wilderness, some rain has fallen. Even some of us who are not admirers of the Party, and who believe that the policy of race federation is an attempt to return to a past that can never come back, the past of 1936 in fact, welcome the erosion of Nationalist power, which has been so cruel in its operation, not only towards those who opposed it militantly, but towards millions of voiceless people.

There are some of us who, if we have to live under white government, would prefer to live under the United Party, because while we would not expect any realistic measure of change, we would expect less governmental cruelty and indifference. On the other hand there are others who find advantage in living under a Nationalist Party that will grow more and more intransigent, in the belief that its continuance in power will hasten the desirable catastrophic end.

In this editorial we shall try to state the conditions under which the United Party might come to power, and what it would be expected to do when it did. And ever hopeful, we shall say what we think it ought to do if it did.

SWING TO U.P.

It seems clear that the swing to the United Party has little to do with endorsement of its race federation policy. Nor is it in any important sense due to a revulsion from the policy of separate development, except, no doubt, on the part of those whose enterprises are hampered by lack of labour. Nor is it in any considerable measure, due to a revulsion from the use of detention without trial. It is largely due to increasing resentment against the continuous rise in the cost of living, and against the shortage of housing. In a lesser degree it is due to a wearing-off of the charisma of Nationalist Government, a decline in the fervour of Nationalism itself, and a growing dissatisfaction with the incompetence of some Cabinet Ministers, not to mention that of some public officials.

It is a fact of vital importance that the swing is not due to dissatisfaction with any racial policy of the Government, nor to increasing approval of the United Party's policy of race federation. What might bring the Party in would be a further deterioration in the living standards of white people, and a further crumbling of the Nationalist image that has been worshipped for so long. And what would the Party dare to do then?

STRONG AND COMPETENT

The boast of the Party is that it will give strong and competent government. It could hardly give less competent government than the Nationalists. But in what way will it be able to give strong government? Its main task will be to arrest the climb of the cost of living. One of its methods will be to ease the restrictions on the use of black labour. If this were done moderately, the Party could get away with it. If it were done boldly the Party would require a measure of determination which is not its most striking characteristic. Although the black population of the towns and cities has increased spectacularly under Nationalist rule, it would be the Nationalists who would focus the attention of the white voters on any further increase, in the hope of attracting back those who have deserted it.

Would the Party risk a new labour policy on the mines, where white miners have so long resisted any change, and where they have so long resisted any improvement in black wages unless their own wages were improved proportionately, a feat totally beyond the powers of the mining industry? It is

true that a new mine labour policy might not lose many voters (because white miners traditionally vote Nationalist), but there would be serious industrial troubles.

Would the Party seriously start to implement its race federation policy, and prepare and pass the massive legislation required for it, on the strength of a majority that would certainly be slender? It seems improbable. What makes it worse is that the policy is not only vague, but has already been repudiated by leaders and future leaders of the black territorial authorities created by the Nationalists. It seems unlikely to get support from any influential black people. And still worse, the policy of having black people represented in Parliament by white people, though endorsed by the Nationalists of 1936, was later totally repudiated by the Nationalists of 1948. What was destroyed once after having been endorsed by a tremendous majority in Parliament could hardly be recreated in the 'seventies by a party with a slender majority. What black person would have the slightest confidence in it?

NO MANDATE

If the United Party came to power because of economic dissatisfaction, it could hardly take this as a mandate to make drastic changes in race policy. Yet its only hope seems to be to come out with a new federation policy in which at least the race groups would be represented by members of their own groups. And would the Myburghs and the Douglas Mitchells support such a policy? Would the new United

Party members support it, after having won back their seats on a totally unrelated issue? It seems doubtful.

One concludes that if the United Party were returned to power it would be tempted to watch its step very carefully. It would require courage to govern boldly and imaginatively, and one must remember also that its definitions of boldness and imaginativeness would be very different from our own.

If these prognostications are true, then a change from Nationalist to United Party government would hardly affect the urgent issue of our time – will white South Africa produce a race policy, or a non-race policy, which will arrest our slide towards catastrophe? This conclusion is sombre.

There is only one creative choice that the United Party can make, but if self-interest and self-maintenance are its main concerns, it will not make it. That would be to revise radically its federation policy, to bring back hope to millions of people who have so little, to fix a minimum wage based on the estimates of what is required for a family to live a decent and law-abiding life and to announce that it will repeal or amend those apartheid laws which weigh down so heavily on voiceless people.

We say to Sir de Villiers Graaff: in these days when electoral opinion seems to be swinging in your favour, your responsibility can only be described as tremendous. We hope that you will be ready to shoulder it.□

DOCTOR NKOMO

The death of Dr. W.F. Nkomo less than four months after his election as President of the South African Institute of Race Relations will be mourned by many South Africans of all races. The Institute has had more than one African serving as Vice-President in the past, but Dr. Nkomo was the first African President and his loss is the more to be regretted.

A kind, just and moderate man, Dr. Nkomo was widely known as a leading figure in the Moral Rearmament movement. Not all the readers of "Reality" are Christians, and probably very few are supporters of Moral Rearmament, but most of us will agree that one of the hopes for a better South Africa is that spiritual and moral change in individuals for which M.R.A. works.

Pledged though he was to this personal persuasion, Dr. Nkomo did not hesitate to raise his voice on political issues when the need arose, and he was heart and soul committed to those hopes and ideals which "Reality" cherishes. We therefore join in commemorating his unselfish public service, and offer our condolences to his family and his wide circle of friends.□

BACK ISSUES :

These numbers are still available.

- July 1970 (Vol 2, No. 3) : Joel Carlson on Terrorism Act, J.V.O. Reid on Malnutrition.
- Sept. 1970 (Vol 2, No. 4): Dennis Hurley, A.L. Borraine.
- Nov. 1971 (Vol. 3 No. 5): Nadine Gordimer on Black Consciousness
Anthony Barker Mahatma Ghandi Memorial Lecture
- Jan. 1972 (Vol 3 No. 6): Norman Middleton – on C.P.C., Jonathan Crewe on Camus.
Robert Molteno on S.A. Expansion Policy.
- March 1972 (Vol 4 No. 1): Steve Biko on Black Consciousness
Alan Paton on Black Consciousness
Dudley Horner on S.W.A.

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“A TRAGIC REPORT”



A critique of the SPRO – CAS Social Commission Report: “Towards Social Change”

by Fatima Meer.

The findings of the Spro-cas social commission as recorded in Chapter 1 of the report and signed by a number of commissioners make up the most reactionary statement yet to emerge from within the body of White liberalism. (The fact that the Report has two Black signatories is irrelevant, since neither functioned as social commissioners at any time and it is doubtful that either studied the Report seriously). It tables the retreat of White liberalism, and as such pertinently challenges those Whites who hope to realise a common society with shared power and equal opportunity through changed White attitudes. Its reactionary nature, however, is not obvious and has to be abstracted from a body of facts and figures that highlight the stark discrepancy that exists in the material conditions of Black and White; and from an array of theoretical arguments that often create the feeling of radicalism.

Yet its radicalism serves the interest of White conservatism for it is an integral part of a fundamental argument for retaining the status quo, and working for amelioration within it, on the grounds: (a) that change is not possible since the objective indications are that Whites will not change and Blacks do not have the power to pressurise change; and (b) that even if change occurred it would not necessarily result in Christian justice and equality.

NO FRANCHISE PROPOSALS

This being its observations, it warns against placing too much emphasis on the enfranchisement of Blacks or on the elimination of the colour bar to attain freedom. Thus while over a decade ago, the Liberal Party proposed universal adult

franchise, and the Progressives close on their heels settled for qualified franchise, these new liberals of 1971 have no franchise proposals for Blacks. Thus 61 years after a Sauer, a Malan, and a Stanford had pleaded for a common franchise for all South Africans regardless of race, and had succeeded at least in retaining the existing Black vote in the Cape and "safeguarding" it through the requirement of a two-third majority in both Houses of Parliament to abolish it; 61 years after an Onze Jan of an Afrikaner Bond had remained unimpressed with this safeguard and had insisted on an absolute majority of Cape members to secure that vote, and a Schreiner and a Sprigg had refused all compromise with racialism in the Union about to be born; 61 years after a Jabavu and an Abdurahman had campaigned up to London for their franchise rights — these new liberals of 1971 have no franchise proposals for Blacks. So mesmerized are they by the power of the present, that they neither comprehend the past nor grasp the future, and offer the "myth" "that effective political organisation and the articulation of group interests must be present", before the franchise "can be used to full effect" (p.47). Since in their specially tailored view Blacks have never possessed these pre-requisites in the past and do not have them in the present, their enfranchisement could actually undermine their interests instead of promoting them. An evolutionary franchise could syphon off Black leaders to the White rank and thereby undermine Black solidarity; and a universal one may expose them to exploitation by unscrupulous White politicians and divide them into tribal, racial and status blocs. As evidence the Report points to the Coloureds who, it contends, did not use their franchise fully to improve their position but "voted for political parties whose primary concern was with the interests of Whites". The absurd impression is created (mischievously? since it is so patently false), that Coloureds had the opportunity to vote for Black political parties representing Black interests!

WHITES NO BETTER

However the Coloureds used their limited political power, they did not use it less intelligently or less effectively than Whites are presently using their universal franchise. Neither is the body of White politics for all its power, and all its capital, and all its privileges, less characterised by racial and status blocs. If the fear exists, as the report suggests, that Blacks may become the victims of the emotive and exploitive appeals of unscrupulous politicians in the future, this has already become a reality in the case of Whites. The "commissioners" (p. 47) do not suggest that on these grounds the White vote should be suspended. An honest appraisal of the value of the franchise leads more easily to the observation that the fact that the Coloureds have the strongest position within the Black stratum is in no small measure due to the franchise that they, until recently, exercised on the common roll. It may be useful, too, to remind ourselves that it was the pre-Union African vote that was primarily responsible for the position of some of the most important Cape statesmen, notably James Rose-Innes and J.W. Sauer.

The Report's suggestion that Blacks do not understand their interests or are incapable of articulating them is preposterous. Blacks know precisely what they want and have articulated their wants effectively and through powerful political organisations for over a century. It is *because* the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress were effective that they were banned. But even if Blacks were inarticulate and incapable of organising

themselves, they would learn to do so in the process of exercising the vote, of assessing the programmes and policies of parties and candidates, of becoming involved in electoral campaigns. Even people who win freedom and power have to learn to use it and they do so in the exercising of it. Thus Parliamentary power is learnt in the process of using it, not in a vacuum, outside of it.

The fact is that any consideration of change cannot evade the franchise issue, and South African politicians know this. Thus it is that franchise is seen as the key to the South African problem; that White South Africans have spent a large portion of their parliamentary history disenfranchising enfranchised Blacks; and that all Black political organisations have given priority to franchise demands.

SUSPECT OBSERVATIONS

The Report correctly points out that neither universal franchise nor the elimination of the colour bar will in themselves result in Christian justice and Christian equality, that South Africa "could have an all-Black cabinet but there might none-the-less be very sharp contrasts between affluent 'integrated' suburbs and very influential 'integrated boardrooms' on the one hand, and grinding poverty among peasants and soul destroying dullness and hardships among the urban poor on the other" (p-p 49-50) that "it would be unfortunate if those South Africans who espouse ideas of basic human dignity and of the liberation of the human spirit were to lose sight of the fact that freedom will not necessarily be realised with the removal of the colour bar", (p. 49). However, these observations stand suspect when they are associated with arguments that reject the fundamental importance of extending the franchise to Black South Africans. And progressive and virtuous as the "commissioners" may intend to be when they ascribe the evils of our society to the universal evils of competitive capitalism and acceptance of social conventions as absolute authority, — ("Blame for the ills that beset South Africa cannot be laid at the door of the Afrikaner, or the English-speaking Whites, or the wealthy businessman. Human alienation, in its essence, is found everywhere, in West and East, and in the first, second and third worlds". — p. 50) — they have the hollow ring of apologists, of persons seeking to vindicate White guilt and White responsibility for the existing "immoral" "unchristian" South African society. Their need to demonstrate White innocence is such that they claim "It is important to note that the majority of Whites in South Africa are probably not aware that they enjoy virtually the highest standard of living in the world by means of the systematic exploitation of black labour", that "most White employers for example, do not deliberately exploit Blacks. Indeed, many do as much as they can for Blacks within the norms of the economic system. It is the system which is exploitive rather than the people in it!" (p. 11).

While universal adult franchise may not result in a model Christian Society, (which exists nowhere to-day) it is the essential pre-requisite for such a society; for a movement towards justice and equality and through these to brotherhood. South Africans in their present predicament cannot afford to sniff at an American-model or British- or Indian-model democracy, though they may well pledge themselves to persevere towards loftier ideals.

CLASS CONFLICT THEORY

The most disturbing aspect of the Report is that such impressionistic conclusions appear to be founded on a factual and objective analysis of the South African situation and presented as flowing logically from a radical theory of class conflict. Thus the discussion on change, which includes the discussion on franchise, forms an integral part of the Report's proposition that the South African conflict is fundamentally a conflict between classes rather than a conflict between races, and that following the classical pattern this conflict will be resolved through a clash between the opposing classes – between Black (workers) representing the force for revolution and change, and White (capitalists, entrepreneurs) representing reactionary resistance. The Report contends, however, that the objective conditions for such a confrontation are not yet present and thus no change can be contemplated now; and that a qualified franchise in particular will undermine the emergence of such conditions.

Had the Report followed its radical argument through, it would have proposed ways and means of strengthening and sharpening the revolutionary force, of, say, raising the necessary millions to finance a peaceful withdrawal of labour to the reserves, or even less radically the creation of a climate conducive to the overt organisation of Black political interest through the abolition of such security and pass laws and trade union legislations as militate against this.

Instead the Report emphasises that the political climate is too hazardous for Black leaders and Black political movements, and suggests only one avenue, though it states that this is not the only avenue, through which Black leaders could work – the institutions of apartheid. But these are the bastions of the status quo, the bulwarks against a common society; and a common society, a common brotherhood is the essence of Christianity. To virtually restrict Black leaders to these is to suggest that Blacks can only have puppets for leaders, for no matter how eloquently such leaders perform their rôles and how 'fantastic' the challenge they throw out from time to time, they are tied to apartheid strings and restricted to carrying out apartheid programmes. It is to make a mockery of the 'Black revolutionary force'. As if confirming this mockery, the Report states that Black leadership is ensured in these institutions because they are powerless, and because they give the Government credibility overseas.

The Report's radicalism thus serves the function of conservation, and has the effect of relieving Whites from responsibility for change, (since they do not bear the potential for it) and of alleviating their fears of Black power, since Blacks have never had the organisational strength in the past, and are not likely to muster one in the foreseeable future to overthrow White power.

INTEREST BLURRED

One may query the validity of the marxist model for change through class conflict in present Western capitalist societies, where the interest of worker and entrepreneur becomes blurred, and where in the final analysis the two operate as partners in foreign exploitations; but even more pertinently, one questions the validity of this theory in relation to South Africa. The anatomy of apartheid is not

the anatomy of class in present day Western society. It is not even the anatomy of class as it existed in feudal or in a colonial or early industrial society, for in these the subordinated supplied military power, and through this could hope to overcome tyranny when it became unbearable. In South Africa the workers can only withdraw their labour, at the risk of bringing the violence of a modern military state on their heads as occurred in Bangla Desh, but without the weapons to raise even a Mukhti Bahini.

Racial discrimination in South Africa is a unique historical event because it occurs not only in an industrial society but in a nuclear age which can discount the human element and the will of the mass all the more effectively. This gives its exploitation of the subordinate a hitherto unknown kind of permanency. Thus Blacks cannot hope to shake off their shackles no matter how sharp their political maturity, unless they are helped by a strong external force, or unless Whites share power with them. To see the situation as one of an impending conflict awaiting the maturation of South African Black power is in effect to undermine change through internal resolution and to push the solution on external forces, economic or military, or both.

The Report's objective basis for interpreting the South African structure as a class structure is that Whites discriminate against Blacks not because of a peculiar race prejudice, but, in order to exploit them materially. But material exploitation is not exclusive to class and in South Africa it occurs regardless of class and on the basis of race. Thus the White entrepreneur exploits the Indian entrepreneur through the Group Areas Act, regardless of the fact that the two have the same exploitive interests – indeed, because of that fact, because the Indian entrepreneur competes against the White entrepreneur.

The Report risks such absurdities in straining to squeeze the South African population into two classes that one begins to question its motives. To arrive at a Black class of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, it identifies skilled Black artisans with the White class and claims that they share with that class, as an 'aristocracy of labour', the surplus profits of unskilled, non-White labour; this despite the Report's disclosure that the incomes of Black artisans are about a third and a half of that of White artisans.

FACTUAL POSITION OVERLOOKED

The Black middle class is simply operated out of the two-class system and given a sort of mid-air marginal position, presumably in formalin for it is characterised as extolling the Government or kicking against it from personal frustration. (p. 16). **Thus it does violence to an important segment of the Black community and brazenly overlooks the factual position that the Black middle class is an integral and valued part of Black society, providing it with leadership in every area, and having contributed to it such political personalities as the Ghandis, the Luthulis, Mandelas, Naickers, Sobukwes and Sitas.** What is the purpose of this strained squeezing of the South African population, into two classes, of the absurd dismembering of the constituent classes of the component race groups? Is it because class divisions find acceptance in Western eyes where racial ones evoke abhorrence?

Social classes have up to now proved inevitable in modern industrial societies, some sort of class hierarchy obtaining even in socialist countries. Whether intended or not, to conceive South Africa in terms of a class hierarchy is to give it respectability and to bring it in accord with Western democratic Christian traditions. But this is not possible, for racial discrimination in South Africa is in conflict with the fundamental principle of modern Western class society, which tolerates class on the underlying assumption that a person's position is not fixed by birth, that he is free to utilise his talents to move out of it. Western democracies explain that their vitality and dynamism are due to the motivation to compete and achieve which such social scales stimulate. It is precisely because this freedom is obstructed, this drive, this motivation to aspire to the top is blocked, that the Western world condemns the South African system and implies or contemplates sanctions against it. South Africa with its rigid, permanent, and unchangeable grouping of persons by race violates the fundamental democratic principle of individual freedom to pursue social and economic goals.

IMPRISONED AND POWERLESS

In modern class society the distance between classes constrict, and there are real expectations that lower classes move towards increasing freedom and greater power; this is so because the classes are integrated into a democracy. The Black race is not the equivalent of such a class. It does not manipulate political power to curb capitalist exploitation, and extend the areas of State control in its interest. Imprisoned and made powerless by its race, it cannot move out of its race. Though the wages and living conditions of Blacks may improve, their exploitation will continue unabated and the discrepancies between their objective condition and that of the White will remain as sharp. Exploitation on the basis of race has continued in South Africa for three hundred years and it can continue for as many more, no matter how enlightened the oppressed Blacks. This is the intrinsic difference between a class society and a race society as it exists in South Africa to-day.



Robert Sobukwe

It does not seem possible that the social scientists who are signatories to the Report, can be so ignorant of Black history or so out of touch with Black dynamics to interpret their present quiescence as absence of political awareness, or to believe that Blacks are not ready to participate in a common democracy or that they would support an even less Christian society than the one presently existing in South Africa. **It seems quite apparent that the "new liberals" are so overawed by the power of the present Government, and so fearful of losing White sympathy that they dare not propose change, and thus this tragic report.**□

FROM PROTEST TO ACTION

by David Hemson

It is commonly held that students are privileged members of society. This is true. For a comparatively short span of three years students can, if they make the effort, begin to acquire an understanding of South African society and themselves. The student who moves in the environment of the university and the farm worker who labours from sunrise to sunset occupy different worlds. There is a connection, however; a link between the exploitation of the worker and the production of knowledge at the university.

Only a small fraction of the amount of money required for study is provided by the student himself; the state provides the bulk and the proportion is increasing. These amounts are fed to the grateful universities which can then continue their 'useful' role in the production and distribution of certain forms of knowledge. The state gathers its funds from taxation :- income tax, company tax, and other forms of taxation which add to the burden of black workers. In this way the state scoops off a percentage of the profit which results from production in major sectors of the South African economy and gains revenue from workers who earn below the poverty datum line.

The amount of surplus which can be gained is related to the rate of exploitation of the workers within that sector. The clearest example of state revenue from the high rate of exploitation of workers is that of the gold mining industry

which has always been a major source of revenue and it has paid for the extension of the state and general revenues which have been absorbed by universities. The industry has had a decisive role in the establishment and development of the University of Witwatersrand. So as we see, the accumulation of knowledge is concomitant with the accumulation of capital; the means to knowledge have not dropped from heaven.

LOYALTY TO WORKERS

The universities are now in a subservient relationship to the state which has acted as a mechanism for transferring surplus value from the workers to the students. In this context the universities and students owe a loyalty to the workers of South Africa. This is not a sentence which has been written casually. The university should be involved in the production of information directly relevant to

production, to improving industrial techniques, and the level of technical knowledge. But the university owes a direct responsibility to the workers. Let us explore the meaning of this new responsibility.

The new responsibility is not likely to be undertaken willingly by the universities which are presently in a 'locked-in' relationship with managers and professional groupings. This is not to repudiate relationships between industry and universities, but the present relationships are made not toward an objective industrialisation, but toward private profit. The new orientation would require study groups in each faculty to develop critiques of the present maldevelopment of disciplines in South Africa. Wider groupings could evaluate the production of knowledge at specialised institutions such as the Institute of Race Relations and the National Institute for Personnel Research.

The Institute of Race Relations should be encouraged to take a more direct interest in the wages of black workers, to present evidence to industrial councils and wage boards during investigations, to provide constant publicity on the growing gap between black and white wages, to study the extent of foreign investment in South Africa, and to bring together the people working for change. Basically the research policy should be encouraged to move from the collation of facts (essential though this is) to the exploration of the economic functions of racism, and the means of change in apartheid society.

The National Institute for Personnel Research has been doing research into industrial problems for the benefit of management and the results of the studies are denied to the workers. It has taken a particularly supportive rôle towards the gold mining management, and its research on the motivation of African miners and production in the mines has sharpened management techniques of labour exploitation.

WITHIN THE UNIVERSITIES

A start would have to be made within the universities themselves. Students should begin by improving the working conditions and wages of those who clean the rooms, set up the laboratory experiments, and clean the lavatories. Nothing is more indicative of the racial structure and petty obsessions of the white universities than the way in which black workers are treated on campus. Apart from surveys of workers' material needs, students and academics should consult manual and technical workers on their representation within the university structure, and try to bring the arbitrary decisions on hiring, firing, and promotion, under some form of control by the workers themselves. Recent investigations at various universities have indicated considerable malpractices such as demotion over minor disciplinary matters, boss systems of favouritism, deliberate withholding of wage increases, incidents of assault, workers being denied the right of permanent employment even after 20 years service, and general indifference by university administrations. A new atmosphere can only be created when these injustices are brought into the open, discussed, and decided with workers' participation. At present the university is a duplication of the model apartheid institution with positions allocated according to the relevant slots of overall race-class structure of the society. The gap between lecturers and workers has widened dramatically in the last few years.

The movement for change within the university structure has to start within the social sciences which try to come to an understanding of social change. Within our universities we have history departments which present as history the facts

as they have been stacked by the colonial and civic authorities, political science where major attention is given to social groupings in America and Britain, an anthropology blind to the realities of colonialism, and sociology which is refusing to confront the problem of appropriate social action. Even in the applied disciplines such as the education departments basic educational problems of our country are evaded or dealt with in only the most theoretical way, while children faint from starvation in schools nearby.

ENGINEERS AND CHANGE

But what of the technological sciences; of what relevance are engineers to social change? Thorstein Veblen, an American sociologist, argues that the factory worker and the engineer are more in line with the positive direction of social change than the financier whom he regards as relatively static and pursuing ends which are inimical to those of the workers and engineers. The engineer, although limited by administrative or economic decisions, still is a crucial factor in social change. But the student engineer in our universities accepts the goal of private profit uncritically, and scorns any identification between himself and production workers. He is blind to the tension between dynamic technology and property relations.

Yet the possibility remains, as science develops and is applied in industry, of its becoming a directly productive force. At present the application of scientific research is an important component of the profit of major companies, a surplus which is distributed to wealthy share-holders here and abroad. Research workers who are engaged in producing new forms of knowledge must ensure that their work is not used for private gain and to reinforce existing property relations.

A scientific program should be drawn up independent of the need of companies to secure a high rate of profit. The program should include :-

- The *electrification* of the country
- The overall mechanisation of production
- The thorough development of new industries, new forms of power and materials
- The thorough and rational utilization of natural resources
- The closer relations of science to production.

The determined application of these measures would provide sufficient employment to absorb the 1 288 269 Africans estimated to be unemployed.

So we have demonstrated that students from all disciplines have a relevance to the full development of our country. But what directly can be expected of the students? Students cannot be expected to strike up immediate bonds of empathy with workers. There are barriers of class, language, and race; but they can communicate with workers about the essential aspects of their work life: wages, hours, and working conditions.

The struggle of workers in our society to regain an increased proportion of what they have produced is a struggle which continues whether students wish to relate to this movement or not. The question is not whether or not students are to create the conditions for this movement, but what attitude they are to take towards a movement which has existed since labour for wages has become the dominant feature of our political economy. **Students may persist in their indifference or become committed to a policy of redirecting the flow of information relevant to daily industrial activity from the exclusive property of management to the workers as a whole.**

THE INFLUENCE OF MYTH IN SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

by Robert H. Wyllie

Ernst Cassirer opens his book, *The Myth of the State*, with a reflection on the new type of political thinking which seems to have emerged in Europe between the two world wars. He says:-

“Problems that had been unknown to political thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came suddenly to the fore. Perhaps the most important and most alarming feature in the development of modern political thought is the appearance of a new power: the power of mythical thought. The preponderance of mythical thought over rational thought in some of our modern political system is obvious How can we account for the new phenomenon that so suddenly appeared on our political horizon and in a sense seemed to reverse all our former ideas of the character of our intellectual and social life? ”.

Cassirer asks, and endeavours to answer, this question in terms of post-war European political attitudes. In this essay I am concerned with our own much more limited field, which however presents extremely individual and intractable problems.

We are all accustomed to hearing the word “myth” used in everyday speech to signify a fiction, or untrue popular belief. This meaning is given by the Oxford English dictionary, whose definition of myth reads:-

“A purely fictitious narrative, usually involving supernatural persons, actions or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.”

MYTHS ARE “TRUE”

However, a great deal of important research in this century has been devoted to enquiries into the deeper significance of myths, especially in relation to primitive social structures and to primitive people’s attitudes towards their environments and the natural phenomena. We have been shown by writers such as Cassirer, whom I have quoted above, Eliade, Gurdorf, Lévi-Strauss and others, that mythic consciousness is a phase of man’s interpretation of himself and his world which is “primitive” not only in the historic or prehistoric sense of this word but also in the sense of being primary or fundamental. It becomes evident that mythic orientations are present at all stages of human development. The writers I have mentioned show us in fact that we have to understand myth to understand many current and modern attitudes, as well as attitudes which we would think of as characteristically “primitive.” And it seems that the first thing to be understood is that myths are not “false” but “true”, at least while they remain myths in the sense in which they were originally understood. This is, of course, because man has different ways of access to truth, and the truths expressed by science, mathematics and logic are not the only truths.

It seems advisable here to recapitulate a little of what has been said by modern writers about the character and structure of myths so that the true meaning of myth can be clearly kept in mind.

In its manifestations in a primitive society or tribe a myth is not so much an “account” as a re-enactment of an exemplary event which is believed to have taken place at some beginning, for instance at the genesis of the natural world or at the first emergence of the tribe itself. The myth has been described as a liturgy of repetition. In its original sense it is a rite whose function as liturgy is to hold in existence the vitally important things upon which the life

of the tribe depends, and which, without the performance of the rite, would “fall apart”, disintegrate or become lost.

In its most primitive sense a myth is the performance of a rite rather than a narrative. It is in fact an obligatory ritual in a primitive tribe because the duty devolves on the members of the tribe to maintain the tribe itself, and this in turn depends on maintaining its solidarity with its deities, its ancestors and its traditions. The mythic rites express and maintain whatever is sacred to the society, and in primitive societies the natural order retains its sacred character. Mythic re-enactments therefore include harvest festivals, celebrations of the return of spring, rites connected with human and animal fertility as well as the fertility of the earth, preliminaries to hunting, installations of head-men, initiation of adult members and so on.

I mentioned above that the characteristic of a primitive myth is that it is always *true*. It is also the characteristic of myth that it is believed in with religious ardour, so that not believing in it or neglect of the rituals would be sacrilegious and would lead to disaster, the falling apart of all that the myth holds together. Any doubt cast upon its truth would evoke a militantly defensive reaction from the tribe. For the tribe or clan who live within the reality of a myth the myth is an *absolute* value and doubt of its truth is unthinkable.

SENSE OF SECURITY

Generally speaking when myths become “stories” they are no longer valid as myths, but at the same time there seems to be a sense in which they can be validly understood as embodied in narratives. There are interpretative myths, such as the creation stories in the first two chapters of *Genesis*. The virtue of the narratives is that they interpret deep-seated and apparently unescapable aspects of the nature of man in his relationships to natural world, and in his social and religious orientations. They explain man to himself in a way which no scientific or systematic explanation could accomplish. It seems that for human beings understanding is a primary need, and it is only through understanding that stability and a sense of security can be attained. Myths offer to primitive men a sense of being “at home” and anchored through an understanding of things which would otherwise be inexplicable and uncanny.

We are concerned here with a psychological significance of myths which applies to modern and sophisticated societies as well as to those which we customarily think of as “primitive”. In all people, however sophisticated, there are attitudes, emotional states and behaviour patterns which elude rational explanation and which depend on an emotive

power which is present in myths and which is far stronger than any rational argument.

It may be of course that in saying this we are rather naive. It has been quite often said that when we speak of reason and "rational explanation", we are speaking in any case from within the "myth" of modern science, in terms of which Western European man tends to interpret and organise his world. This is the myth that reality itself is rational, and that order is imposed on nature and society by rational procedures. We live in a society which is orientated towards increasing control of nature through scientific knowledge and technical skill. The myth of science functions within the belief that rational explanation yields the key to control. There is a difference, of course, between this and the early myths in that the modern myth of science and technology is secular rather than religious. There is a difference in quality in this respect, but it is arguable that it too is founded on a blind faith.

It is also observable that sometimes a myth of earlier or different origin, which is in conflict with reason, stubbornly refuses to give way to reason, because the people who understand themselves in its terms find something outrageous and sacrilegious in its denial and find their whole security threatened by the possible destruction of a belief in which their tradition is enshrined. To them such a denial would be even more outrageous than a proof that reason does not always yield the true answer. It is here that we encounter the strange but very understandable phenomenon that myths which have lost their validity in a widening context and are no longer "myths" in the primitive sense, are clung to with fanatical tenacity and zeal. We find this exemplified in attitudes to some of the historical events in this country. A victory in war, for example, takes on a sacred character and is celebrated in an annually renewed dedication. A denial on the grounds of history, of the truly heroic qualities of national heroes, might easily give rise to a sense of blasphemy and arouse the militantly defensive type of reaction which was mentioned earlier. In order to transmit the "true" tradition to children being educated it might even seem necessary to re-write history in some of its details so as to bring it into conformity with the pattern of the myth to which the self-image of the nation is related. A primitive clan's continuity and stability is guarded by its own myths rather than by universal patterns of thinking, but here we have a situation in which a rapidly expanding and sophisticated modern nation clings stubbornly to primitive national myths, feeling that on them its identity as a people depends.

MYTHS IN THE MODERN WORLD

The problem with myths in the modern world is that they lose their character, or rather that the quality of their truth changes and their traditional interpretation of the ethos of their people can become disproportionately emphasised. This seems to have happened in this country with the result that the Nationalist myth, instead of an anchor which secures the existence of its people, becomes a fetter which destroys their freedom. Generally, myths of race and origins tend to keep a society rigid in the grip of its traditions and resistant to change. The result is an attempt to preserve the myths, and the national attitudes which the myths hold together, by direct efforts to prevent interaction with other cultures. While free association and social mixing seems good to most people it becomes anathema to those who live within the myth. The measures imposed to preserve the myth become increasingly coercive and repressive.

Before developing more fully the significance of these aspects to our contemporary and local situation I should like to mention one other fundamental characteristic of myth which is certainly not less relevant to this discussion than any of the others that have been mentioned. This is the characteristic that myth and language are closely related and appear to have a common source in that they seem to arise together and are equally possessions of and dimensions of humanity.

The theme of the relationship between myth and language is in itself a very wide and complex one, but sufficient can be said very briefly which will at least point towards its significance.

Most of us are familiar with the religious associations of sacred names, and various misapplications of sacred names which cause deep-seated emotional reactions and are considered in fact to be blasphemous. Other names among certain peoples are taboo and we know that there are holy or ineffable names which in certain religions must not be pronounced.

Again names, like myths, have interpretative significance. We do not know and often do not in fact perceive the objects of our environment until we know their names. We know that it is through language that both our perceptions and emotions can be ordered and understood.

It is mythic thinking which brings about the special relationship between the name of a person and a person himself. A name is clearly far more than a means of identification of any individual person and is more than a possession. It is a symbol of identity which in some way establishes the personal identity itself. We read of the edict of a Chinese emperor of the third Century B.C. whereby a particular pronoun in the first person should be reserved in application to him alone, and, at the other end of the scale, that slaves under Roman law had no legal name because they had no legal standing as persons. To highlight a specifically local social problem, we know that the use of common European first names (which is the way many Europeans know men and women of the black races) is belittling to Bantu races. They are known to themselves by the family names by which they are rooted in society. Again, giving people numbers instead of names, as is done to prisoners, tends to destroy them as persons.

A particular language is built up as the common creation of the community who speak it. It grows with them and is the strongest possible bond between them because it belongs literally to their origin, their environment, their beliefs and their culture. The home language is consequently a very precious possession of any people and has a strong bond of affinity with myths of origin. It seems to be true that both myths and language are very powerfully involved with the feelings of self-identity of peoples and individuals.

EMOTIVE WORDS

Again the close affinity between language and myth is one of the sources of the emotive power of words. Few of us would deny that this power too, in itself, is characteristically human. It gives words poetic life and enables them to reveal truth through what is called "affective" knowledge. It may very well be that it is the power of words which makes all emotional response possible. However, an emotive word can become associated with a minor "myth" in the debased sense of myth in which it becomes a political weapon. We have all been schooled to think of "communism" as menacing and evil even though when we ask each other what it is we are quite surprised to find we do not know.

The difficulty is that there has been a tendency to spread its connotations of evil as a sort of contamination on to other words such as "integration", "liberalism", "protest", "freedom", "human rights", etc. This seems to be done by a combination of threat and association, through the constant close juxtaposition in political speeches of the word "communism" (heavily charged with its threat of illegality, detention without trial, charges of terror, etc.) with the other words which should, in any modern society, represent perfectly respectable attitudes or fields of enquiry. On the other side of the coin we have the tendency of language to make some things sound much better than they are. For instance the "homelands" of the African people are not really homelands as such, although the name refers to land set aside, by the present and earlier governments, for the exclusive occupation of the people concerned. There is a tendency for a pseudo myth to grow up around the euphemistic term. Cassirer points out that the power of mythical thought as a political weapon depends to some extent on the skilful use of propaganda which is made possible by the affinity between myth and language. No doubt it also depends to quite a large extent on simple prejudice and the pseudo myth or "popular idea of natural or historical phenomena" given in the dictionary definition which was quoted earlier.

DISORIENTATION AND FLUX

When we look at our present situation in this country from the perspective of the influence of myth on people's thinking and attitudes we are presented with a very confused picture. In some aspects there seems to be an extreme state of disorientation and flux and in others a fixed and fanatical determination to retain traditions. The governing political party are firmly fixed in their conviction that political "good" depends on the retention and maintenance of their own national myth of racial identity, their own language, and their sense of identity with the land which goes with them. This attitude to them is identified with national virtue and closely associated with religious faith, so that any suggestion that it might not in fact be a valid or valuable attitude is met with violent reaction. However, this racial attitude in the governing body of a very heterogeneous community is by no means an unmixed blessing for those who do not belong to the tradition which inspires it. Where for instance the governing body are in control of education they seem to wish everybody else's education to be organised to preserve their tradition. Judging by their own interpretation of what is best for people they insist on

home language education for the benefit even of those who do not want it. Segregation becomes the policy because of the fear that their own tradition might be lost in integration in a mixed society. They decide therefore to make "love for one's own" the first national and religious tenet. And it is no doubt a very splendid tenet, so long as it is not applied to restriction of the development of others in a free and open situation where perhaps the first essentials of education are appreciation of the fluid state of affairs, preparedness to change and understanding of the changing world.

In this country we Whites have watched the sad process of detribalization, and the effects of destroying the myths of people whom our forebears, from the standpoint of our western 'civilization', assumed arbitrarily to be barbaric and "uncivilized". Their primitive myths have fallen before others which have proved more dominant, and which have motivated the use of force by people who crudely thought that the possession of technology was identified with civilization.

MORE PRIMITIVE AND FUNDAMENTAL

It would however be a very gross over-simplification to say that the domination by the technically sophisticated over the technically unsophisticated represents at all completely the state of affairs in this country. The Nationalist myth is far more primitive and fundamental than the modern myth of technology, because it is the myth of a people whose national origins and language are rooted in the country and are threatened by other forces within the country. The situation is however complicated by the fact that they also have all the resources of technology at their command together with all the sophisticated weapons and implements of a modern state. But I do not think that the strength of the Afrikaner nationalists lies in either technology or commerce. It is seated in their identification with a particular territory and language, and this has been strong enough to draw together, in the Afrikaans speaking world, all cultural and language organisations, the churches, the schools and universities, the press, the chambers of commerce and industry, the women's organisations, and youth groups, into an incomparably strong formation with the Nationalist party as its centre and the maintenance of the party as the governing party as its central motivation. Once again I feel that from one point of view we feel



Michaelangelo's "Creation of Man"

bound to express admiration. How could one deny the virtue of such admirable national unity? The feature which is not admirable is that it produces restrictive organisation. It cannot risk a truly out-going policy. It has to control most carefully education and public ideas by rigid censorship and propaganda.

For those of us who are none the less South Africans but who do not subscribe to the Nationalist tradition because our origins are different, so that we do not in fact by birth belong within it, and who moreover *do* subscribe to the principles of free association and enlightened social change, the situation is to say the least, uncomfortable and embarrassing, and in many ways quite absurd. Perhaps we could even laugh at the absurdity, but we can hardly do this in the face of the social injustices which accompany preservation of the myth and which bear so heavily on the social conscience of the whole country.

I do not suggest that social injustice derives from the Nationalist myth as its only or its main source. Obviously there are many elements which contribute to it. Among these of course are the myth of White superiority and the many residual prejudices and exploitation motives of colonialism which haunt our society. What I do suggest is that the Nationalist myth, which is in its effects far more dynamic than any of the other politically emotive influences in this country (at least at present), is at least something which has to be understood before the problems it poses can be squarely faced either by those who live within its tradition or by those who are naturally outside it. The question of whether or not the problems are soluble appears at the moment to be impossible to answer.□



Voortrekker Monument – Pretoria

NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS REVIVAL

by C. Sewpershad.

The revival of the Natal Indian Congress is of significance not only to the Indian community but to South Africa as a whole. It fulfills a need that has existed for some eight years in the political structure of South Africa.

The banning of the African National Congress, the Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats left the Natal Indian Congress as the only movement to voice the democratic views of the Congress Alliance.

During the early part of the 1960's almost all the leaders of the Congress Alliance were either jailed or banned. This left the way open for opportunists to step in and further their own selfish ends.

The widespread bannings of the leaders of the Natal Indian Congress led to a dangerous situation for the Indian community.

NO ORGANISATION

From about 1962 until the Congress was revived in October 1971 the Indian Community did not have an organisation

through which it could make its grievances felt and its voice heard. The government saw this as a golden opportunity to arrogate to itself the right to appoint Indian leaders. We thus saw the creation of the South African Indian Council.

The emergence of the South African Indian Council resulted in a strange situation for the Indian people. The Indian community now had to contend with the humiliation of having their representatives chosen by the very Government that had always shown them scant, if any, respect. We also had a group of people who were quite prepared to allow themselves to be nominated by an undemocratic government to speak on behalf of the Indian people.

This was a situation which was quite intolerable to our community. People throughout the country expressed their unqualified rejection of the Council. It was obvious that the

members of the Council lacked the support of the people. What was essential was an organisation through which the Indian people could express its views. The revival of the Natal Indian Congress fulfilled this long felt need.

The Natal Indian Congress is committed to the realisation of a democratic society in South Africa. It believes that only a government based on the will of all its people will be able to bring peace and racial harmony. In this regard our organisation has sometimes been criticised for restricting its membership to Indians although it advocates the democratic and non-racial idea.

PRACTICAL AND REALISTIC

The restriction of the members of Congress to Indians is not due to any racialistic or sectional beliefs. It is our belief that at this stage it is practical and realistic to limit our members to Indians. Because of Government policy, the different races in South Africa have been separated and have lived apart for a number of years. In view of this it would be difficult and unwise, at this stage, to form an

organisation representing all the races. It is unlikely that such an organisation would get massive support from the different races.

Although our membership is limited to Indians, we have always made it clear beyond any ambiguity that our aim is to create a society in which the idea of liberty, equality and justice will prevail.

Our rôle therefore is to inspire the Indian people to strive for a united democratic South Africa. The grievances of the Indian people are linked with the grievances of all the other oppressed people. It is the duty of Congress to drive home to the Indians that their problems cannot be divorced from the problems of other oppressed races. South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Congress will co-operate with the organisations of all other oppressed peoples and all democrats in its struggle for liberty and justice. Constant co-operation with people or organisations of other races will no doubt pave the way for the creation of a democratic organisation consisting of human beings and not a particular racial group.□

THE RULE OF LAW

(A review of Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa,

by A.S. Mathews)

by Edgar H. Brookes



Prof. A.S. Mathews

Professor Mathews, whose name will be known to many readers of "Reality" has in his "Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa" written a legal classic. This work, the result of full and painstaking research, will be studied for many years to come. It is divided into three parts. The first is an attempt to define what is meant by the Rule of Law. The second is a full study of South African internal security legislation. The third is an attempt to assess the rôles of freedom and order in a democratic society on the basis of the two previous studies.

Of these three parts, incomparably the most valuable is the second. It is not that the first and the third sections are poor. On the contrary they are most stimulating and thought-provoking; but they deal with theory, and it is possible for a liberal thinker to differ from Professor Mathews on theory. The second deals with facts, on which no man can challenge

Professor Mathews' reliability. The facts are given in full, legal cases are quoted and examined, and the results are devastating. Part II shows South Africa up as perhaps the most controlled country in the world, certainly in the world, of parliamentary democracy. This is what Professor Mathews says (p.300-1) :-

“The key measures of the South African security programme are in form indistinguishable from other laws. There being no time limit on their operation, they have become part of the regular law. True security laws are always temporary because their aim is to eliminate crisis, not to perpetuate it. In his discussion of emergency dictatorship, Clinton L. Rossiter says: ‘The only reason for its existence is a serious crisis: when the crisis goes, it goes.’ The South African legislation does not look forward to the end of the emergency; it assumes that the emergency is permanent. The following description of crisis rule in totalitarian societies is applicable almost without qualification to the present situation in this country: ‘Yet it is only in totalitarian régimes that a continuous state of emergency is maintained, a sense of permanent revolution, a belief that there is a continual desperate struggle against traitors within and aggressors without, which is often maintained quite artificially, though seemingly is a device of government essential to such régimes’ The reason why the emergency is permanent in South Africa is that the government is committed to maintain, not eliminate, the deficiencies in the social system.” This is one of the most important statements in a work packed with important statements.

CLARIFIES TERM

In Part I of his book, Professor Mathews endeavours to clarify the meaning of the term “Rule of Law”. In a series of arguments fascinating to students of jurisprudence and political science, he strives to work out an explanation which will be thoroughly satisfactory in a legal context. He points out the deficiencies in Dicey’s classical pioneering analysis of the subject, but does full justice to the value of his exposition. He criticises the Delhi statement of the International Commission of Jurists, which attempted to include economic justice in its exposition of the Rule of Law. Not everyone will agree with his criticism but it is worth reading, for he is anxious to strengthen loyalty to the Rule of Law and feels that to turn it into a programme of human rights may weaken its case among many lawyers. He convincingly disposes (p.3) of definitions which leave the Rule of Law purely formal without any analysis of the kind of law which is to rule. This reviewer, at least, feels that he rejects the idea of natural law (p.1) in a somewhat cavalier fashion, and he makes no mention in his bibliography of the one South African book which has something to say for it (“Civil Liberty in South Africa” by E.H. Brookes and J.B. Macaulay). Still, as he has read Jacques Maritain’s “Man and the State” he ought not to be without adequate information on the subject. It would seem that he is anxious to exclude all such interpretations of the Rule of Law as may introduce social, political or ethical theories and to find a definition which is, however

clear and compelling, purely legal. This definition he gives in Chapter V.

PROBLEM OF MEANS

In Part III of his work, Professor Mathews faces the problem of the means whereby a South Africa accepting the Rule of Law is to be built out of the autocratic and security-ridden South Africa of the present time. He rightly rejects John Stuart Mill’s theory that a uniform nationality is needed for the full success of free institutions, citing Britain, Canada and Switzerland as examples to the contrary (p. 304) – but he feels that the divisions of South Africa go so deep that some degree of caution is necessary in carrying out a full programme of democratic rights and liberties (p. 309). At this stage he begins to deviate from orthodox liberalism. He says: “Many liberals have too readily accepted the belief that the extension of rights, if accompanied by constitutional guarantees, will of itself guarantee the successful working of free institutions. It is an assumption of this chapter that the social groundwork for a transfer of power must be carried out prior to, or simultaneously with, far-reaching political changes.” This is to commit himself to the Booker T. Washington view that social and economic advance will win the franchise, as against W.E. Burgadt Dubois’ view that only the possession of the franchise will make full economic progress possible. Most American blacks would support the latter view.

Despite these criticisms many of us will accept the view that the vast political changes which are needed will achieve maximum results if they are introduced by stages. But he goes on to say (p. 310-11): “The advocates of the integrated society might concede that the development of some separate states within a federal framework could possibly offer a limited fulfilment of some black aspirations whilst simultaneously tempering white fears.” **This dangerous attitude has also found expression in the Second Report of Spro-cas. We may agree to use the “homelands” policy as a method of hoisting separatism with its own petard, but an argument which would align liberal thinkers with verligte nationalism rather than the Progressive Party demands at least careful examination.**

Notwithstanding this criticism, the fact remains that we have here a major work of legal learning of which liberal thinkers will be proud and for which they will be thankful. The ruthless nature of South Africa’s security legislation, which does tend to equate opposition with subversion, demands from us all greater knowledge, clearer thinking and more resolute determination, and these Professor Mathews’ book will help us to build up within ourselves and in others.□

THE CRUCIFIXION PROTEST

The following is the text of a pamphlet distributed during the students "crucifixion protest" in Pietermaritzburg on Maundy Thursday.

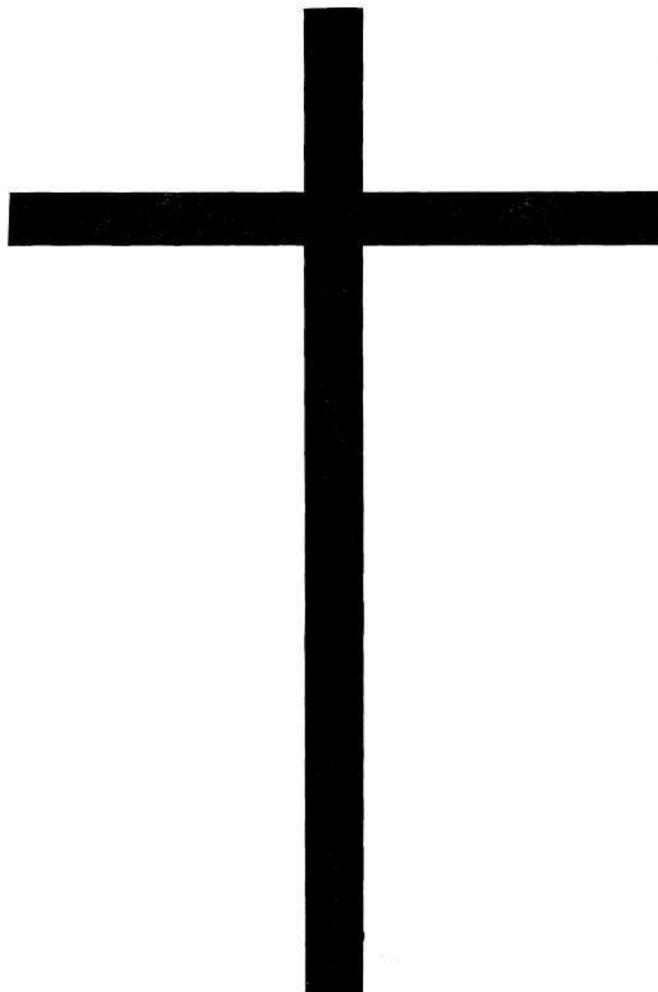
The high Priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said'. When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong, but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' (John 18: 12-24)

No evidence was led against Jesus of Nazareth. He had no proper trial, but he was regarded as a subversive element by the authorities of the times, the High Priest and his Council. He was led away to be crucified because it was thought better that 'one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish' (John 11: 50) The authorities' thought he menaced the nation. To 'save the nation' they got rid of an innocent man.

This is exactly the argument used in South Africa today by the Minister of Justice. *There are over 200 people in South Africa at present who have been got rid of by being banned.* (Gov. Gazette 23/7/71) Not one of these persons has had any evidence led against him in court. Every one of these people can justly use much the same words that Jesus used 'If I have acted wrongly *bear witness to the wrong*, but if I have acted rightly why do you punish me?

Many of the over 200 banned people are holding a fast during this week to protest against their bannings. Fasting is one of the few means left to them of protesting their innocence. Their banning orders make it illegal for them even to proclaim publicly that they have done no wrong. But the general public, ourselves, we can publicly protest that they are innocent until proved guilty in a court of law.

These 200 people who have been got rid of are undergoing a kind of modern crucifixion. We can remain silent in the face of this injustice, but to do this is to side with the mob which cried 'Crucify him'. Crucify him" on that first Good Friday which we commemorate tomorrow. The silence of many South Africans in the past has in fact been a loud



cry of support for the Minister of Justice's actions. As a result we have witnessed this month the banning without trial of two more people :-

**Dr. Basil Moore, a Methodist Church minister on March 3rd
Sibelo Ntwasa, theological student in his final year of study
for the Anglican church ministry on March 17th.**

It is surely significant that people such as these who have pledged themselves to carry on Jesus's work among men are being banned. The Government may claim there is no Church/State conflict. What is clear, however, is that there is a conflict between the State and the *founder* of the Church and that this conflict will continue until the state can 'bear witness to the wrong' that it claims the people it bans have done.

Issued by 'Concerned Students Action Group'

University of Natal,
PIETERMARITZBURG.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

(A review of "Riotous Assembly", by Tom Sharpe.)



Familiar Landmarks of Piemburg

by Jonathan Crewe

According to D.H. Lawrence insincerity — the irremediable vice of the minor writer — consists in unwillingness to admit, or inability to recognise, ones true feelings. By this definition *Riotous Assembly* is a classic of insincerity. Ostensibly a 'black comedy' of the South African situation; a satirical scourge wielded against the ruling whites in an insane society, *Riotous Assembly* turns out in the end to be something more akin to romance.

The novel is set in 'Piemburg', capital of 'Zululand' — a decaying Edwardian provincial city, still dominated socially by the descendants of 'Sir Theophilus Hazelstone', whose claim to fame had been the annihilation of 17,000 Zulus at point-blank range with the aid of ten-inch naval guns. The Union Jack still flies over the 'Alexandra Club'; precedence is still the ruling passion of the O.N.F. inhabitants, and Jacaranda House, home of the Hazelstones, is a national institution. In the heart of the city, however, the S.A.P. and the Security Branch have established themselves, and they are represented by Kommandant van Heerden, Luitenant Verkramp and Konstabel Els. Between Jacaranda House and the Piemburg gaol, the political extravaganza unfolds.

It must be admitted that Mr. Sharpe misses few of the jokes that his situation offers — though in trying to cap the inevitable jokes with ones a great deal less inevitable (chiefly concerning the perversions of Miss Hazelstone and her Zulu cook) he writes passages duller than anything a facetious public-school boy could invent to amuse the dormitory after evening prep.

MISS HAZELSTONE

The novel begins with Miss Hazelstone, every inch a lady, and doyenne of O.N.F. society, reporting to Kommandant van Heerden (who has a secret admiration for the aristocratic English) that she has murdered her Zulu cook Fivepence in a 'crime passionel'. The murder of a Zulu cook is, of course, neither here nor there — what transfixes van Heerden is her admission that Fivepence has for eight years been her lover, and that she has been forced to adopt certain bizarre stratagems to turn him into a satisfactory bedfellow. From here on the book develops into a 'scream' (the method is slightly reminiscent of Kingsley Amis's): a state of emergency is declared, twenty-one policemen are slaughtered by an over-enthusiastic colleague, Bubonic plague and Rabies scares occur, as do interrogations, hangings, heart transplantations, and much else; and finally the battle of Isandhlwana is re-enacted by the black and white inmates of 'Fort Rapier', in the course of which the two groups of indistinguishable maniacs wipe each other out. (If the book has a 'moral', perhaps it is contained in the last-mentioned episode.)

NEAR MYTHICAL VITALITY

The interesting thing about this fundamentally childish book is that for all the left-wing satire, it invests 'Piemburg' and its leading *dramatis personae* with an almost mythical vitality. Miss Hazelstone, Kommandant van Heerden and Konstabel Els are the book's heroes, indestructible, and a good deal larger than life. Miss Hazelstone wipes out Fivepence with a four-barrelled elephant gun, Konstabel Els blows up a Saracen, takes pot-shots at delivery-boys for amusement, bites to death a savage Doberman Pinscher, rapes black prisoners, and is the supreme exponent of interrogation by means of 'electro-therapy'. The stupidity, depravity, amoral brutality, etc. with which Sharpe invests his characters become interesting idiosyncracies, and the achievements of these characters are unconsciously, or half-consciously, *celebrated* by an author whose political sentiments would no doubt be irreproachable. Mr. Sharpe does not really *care* about the victims of Els's savagery: whether he knows it or not, he is of the devil's party. (One would be willing to bet heavily that the years Mr. Sharpe spent in Pietermaritzburg were the most vivid ones in his life.) The effect of *Riotous Assembly* is not so much to induce horror or compassion as it is to subvert the humane conscientiousness it appears to endorse. Raw vitality, however appalling, is king.

There is no point in pretending to be merely scandalised by such a performance. The liberal (or humanitarian) conscience, like any other institutionalised conscience, has its oppressively orthodox and anti-vital aspect; what Norman Mailer refers to as 'the great Left pall'. What is regrettable is that *Riotous Assembly* is not a far better book, and that Mr. Sharpe shows so very little reluctance to sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage. His novel, lacking any basis in real compassion or indignation, fails as satire, and the vitality it offers is a cheap product, dearly paid for in offensive cynicism. The book ends with the triumphant Hazelstones winging their way to Cambridge, leaving behind them a farcical chaos. Like Mr. Sharpe they can have their cake and eat it. □

EDUCATION BEYOND APARTHEID

by Edgar H. Brookes

This intriguing title indicates the Report of the Education Commission of Spro-Cas. It and Percy Itzler's fascinating cover design are alone worth the cost of the book. But there is much more than that to it. This is the first complete Commission Report of Spro-cas, the previous publications, however good, being only "working papers" expressing the view of those who wrote them and not necessarily those of Spro-cas as a whole.

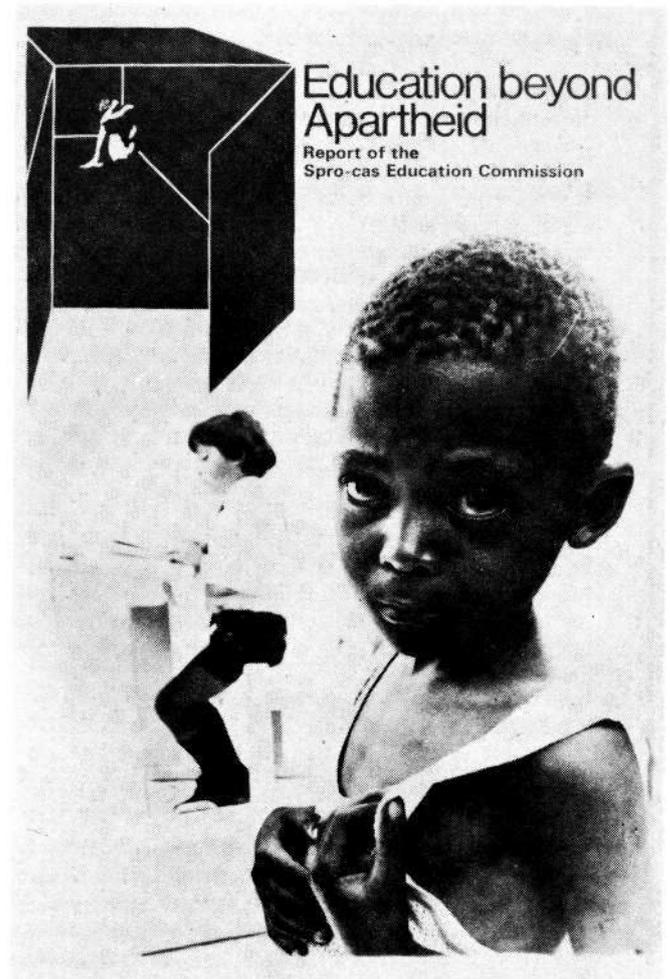
It is all the more interesting therefore to observe the arrangement by which Christian idealism is reconciled with practical politics. The far-off ideal is indicated, in Paragraph 8.10 (iv) as "the final stage at which all State institutions would cater for all people". This is explicit enough, but some Liberals may regret that it is not stressed more fully and that it is given only in outline. At the same time all of us will be grateful for the wisdom shown by the Commission in enumerating a list of reforms which could take place even within the ideology of apartheid.

This list, given in Paragraph 8.6, is worthy of careful study. It embodies nearly all the practical changes asked for by the Africans themselves or their friends, and it is not an unrealistic programme; all the expenditure demanded by it would only increase educational expenditure to a little over 5 per cent of the national income, as compared with 6.8 per cent in the United Kingdom, 6.4 per cent in the United States, 9.6 per cent in Canada, 5.6 per cent in Kenya and 7.8 per cent in Zambia. It means diverting only a small proportion of our excessive defence and internal security expenditure to more positive ends. The Commission recommends the phased introduction of six years of universal compulsory education, the expansion of secondary education especially near the students' homes, the increased financing of African education from general revenue, the reduction (how sorely needed!) of the pupil-staff ratio in African Schools, and the eventual elimination of double sessions and the "platoon" system in all schools. Somewhat surprisingly the re-introduction of School feeding does not figure in this list.

VERY HEAVY ONUS

Not one of these recommendations necessitates a departure from the system of educational apartheid, yet what a wonderful difference their adoption would make! A very heavy onus rests on supporters of apartheid to accept them: to refuse would be really indefensible.

In Chapter IV of the Report a full study is made of educational principles and practices unacceptable to the enlightened Christian conscience. It is a formidable list. Among the principles thus condemned are the denial of access to any existing state educational institution on the grounds of race, religion, culture or language alone, the idea that an economically disadvantaged group would provide its own educational facilities largely from its own resources, and the deliberate use of the educational system to indoctrinate children with the belief that apartheid is the only acceptable policy for South Africa. They say



(Para 4.14) "No Church School, or other private school which claims to have a Christian basis, may deny admission to any child on the grounds of his racial classification alone" Governing bodies of Church Schools, please note.

The Report is concluded by a lengthy and most valuable analysis of Christian National Education.□

IN MEMORIAM

MARGARET ANDERSON. Died March 10th, 1972, aged 78. Faithful member of the Liberal Party and Black Sash.

Words spoken at her funeral by Alan Paton.

We have come here today to give thanks for the life of Margaret Anderson, and to express our sympathy to her daughters Barbara and June.

I suppose that the most outstanding quality of her very strong character was her honesty, and those other qualities that go with it, such as integrity and independence of thought. It could sometimes take one aback. I remember showing her a tree in my garden of which I was particularly proud, and her response was "what a very odd place to plant a tree."

Her honesty made her very faithful to her principles. She didn't see any point in having a principle if you didn't keep to it. Therefore hypocrisy was foreign to her nature, nor was she capable, as so many white South Africans are, of self-deception.

She therefore could not deceive herself about the injustices of our society, about the terrible gap between rich and poor, about the even more terrible fact that the rich were with few exceptions white and the poor with few exceptions black. Nor could she blind herself to the terrible gap – not only economic but also of ignorance of one another – that separates black from white, or to the gross disparity between expenditure on the education of a white child and that of a black child. She concerned herself greatly about the education of her servants' children. And that of Miriam Sishi – who unfortunately cannot be here today – who took the brave step of going back to school at the age of 39 so that she could become a teacher.

Margaret sent a message from Botha's Hill – about 1955 I should think – to Peter Brown and myself, asking us to go to visit her and talk to her about the newly-formed Liberal Party, whose political aims were regarded by most white South Africans as extreme, and she joined immediately. Her politics had always been socialist, and now they became non-racialist as well.

I remember one incident well in a crowded shop in Kloof. This was at the time when the Liberal Party was under heavy fire. Many of its leading members had been banned because the Minister "deemed" them to be "furthering the aims of Communism". Some of its young ex-members and some young people who were still members were accused – and some found guilty – of acts of sabotage. At this time we all kept a stiff upper lip, but not Margaret. Her clear penetrating voice sounded through the shop, "why don't you like the Liberal Party? "

NO SERVILE FEAR

There was no trace in Margaret of that servile fear that afflicts so many of us, of the Government and the State and of authority in general. As far as I could see, and it is a word one seldom uses, she was fearless.

Early on she joined the Black Sash. Even when her physical strength was declining, she did not like to be left out of the Black Sash stands. On March 3rd, ten days ago, she went to Durban, not to sit in her chair, but to stand. There is no doubt that this hastened her end. Who are we to say that she should not have done so? It was her life, and that was the way she wanted to use it. Her will in these matters was very strong.

There were times when her will brought her into conflict with others. When she was getting older and wiser, and other people were getting older and wiser too, she would often cut short the argument, which was a sacrifice to her, because argument was very dear to her, and enabled her to employ her not inconsiderable intellectual gifts.

She was as you know a great reader. She was also a great amateur student of words. The dictionary was always nearby with the books of shrubs and flowers, and the word puzzle in the "Natal Mercury" and other puzzles as well. One could not spend an evening with her, or any other time, without her looking up some word or other. Here at least argument was pointless, the dictionary had the last word.

We give thanks today for her good, honest public-spirited, fearless life, that was so free of cant, deception, and specious argument. She was very proud of her daughters, though I suppose they know that. She was not a believer, but her moral code was essentially a Christian one. It is my own conviction that she would have liked to be able to believe. Therefore let us say, may her soul rest in peace. □

JUSTICE TRIUMPHS

All our hearts were full of joy and gratitude when we heard that Dean French-Beytagh had won his appeal. Joy in the first place, because an honourable, humane and deeply respected Priest was freed from the danger of passing five years in prison. Joy, secondly, because the impartiality of our courts had been vindicated to South Africans and to the wider world. Joy, finally, because it seemed that this judgement might be the turning-point in a long process of persecution, and that, in the words of Lord Macaulay, "the innocent might begin to breathe freely and false accusers to tremble."

We do not think that this rejoicing was misplaced or naive. We continue to rejoice; we have reason for rejoicing.

In the Dean's case immense pains had been taken to assemble from every possible quarter every conceivable bit of evidence. This mass of exaggerated, inapplicable and sometimes tainted evidence has not convinced the highest Court in the land. It is clear that the Security Police have not unlimited power to twist the law which our Courts so justly administer.

EXTREME PERSECUTION

The persecution which the Churches, and perhaps particularly the Dean's own Anglican Church, have experienced is extreme. There may be Anglican law-breakers, as there may be Dutch Reformed law-breakers, but the seizure of papers and the invasion of Bishop's houses in the early dawn have not furnished material for prosecutions. We submit that it is high time that the Government left the Anglican Church alone.

When the Dean left this country, the crowd at the airport sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers." It was a just comment.

For all these reasons we are not willing to follow the example of some overseas critics who have tried to tell us that we have nothing special to be thankful for, and that we have been

a bit simple-minded in rejoicing over the righteousness and impartiality of our country's final Court of Appeal.

NO REMEDY FOR BANNING

But of course all is not well just because Dean French-Beytagh has escaped imprisonment. Had the Government chosen to ban the Dean instead of bringing him before the Courts he and we would have had no remedy. How many banned South Africans would have been acquitted by our impartial tribunals if they had been tried instead of punished without trial! The Dean's action in leaving South Africa may well have been necessary to prevent his having to suffer banning even though acquitted by the Courts.

Finally, let us suppose that the Court had not been able to uphold the Dean's appeal. Let us suppose that he had been technically guilty of an offence. This would have meant a sentence of five year's imprisonment. It would have meant a Christian Priest being sent to jail in a professedly Christian country for having been a Good Samaritan. That our Judges who we justly respected should have been so far deprived of the free exercise of their judicial functions as to be compelled to impose a *minimum* sentence of five years for what they may feel a minor offence is incredibly bad. One result of Dean French-Beytagh's case should be an appropriate amendment to the Act under which he was charged and the dropping of this new and pernicious tendency of binding the hands of the Courts by the imposition of ferocious minimum sentences. □

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This South Africa

There was a deliberate attempt by certain Leftist and Communist organisations to destroy the national service system wherever it was in operation and South Africa would have to combat this, the Minister of Defence, Mr. P.W. Botha, said in the Assembly yesterday.

The Minister, who was replying to the debate on the second reading of the Defence Amendment Bill, said this attempt was being made because the organisations involved realised that if they could succeed in jeopardising the national service system they would shake the foundation of the nation.

In South Africa there were organisations such as the Civil Rights League which had this aim in mind. This organisation was one of the most hypocritical to be found.

South Africa would have to take measures to prevent these people from succeeding in their aims or else the nation could be destroyed.

OBJECTORS

Referring to conscientious objectors to military training, the

Minister said it was a world-wide phenomena which should not be given an opportunity to gain ground.

The Jehovah's Witnesses might appear, to be angels but they were not. He had been told that there was only one way to deal with them and that was to act sternly.

There were members of other faiths who heartily cooperated with the Defence Force and who had declared their willingness to do other non-combatant duties.

He had given the matter serious attention and he was not prepared to relax the provision proposed in the Bill in terms of which a person who refused to undergo training could be sentenced to detention for a period of 12 – 15 months.

"Daily News" 2/3/72.

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