

be the low revenue to be derived from the rating of township land, due to the very low incidence of commercially rateable property.⁵

The Laws on Co-operation and Development Amendment Bill is intended to effect consequential amendments arising out of the enactment of the first two Bills. Its first section, which is reproduced here in the form in which it appears in the Gazette, brackets indicating deletions and italics insertions, creates a sense of unease. Firstly, it broadens the scope of the crime to include all race groups which would seem to fall outside the context of the Black Admin-

istration Act. Secondly, it is merely a reiteration of section 1 of the General Law Amendment Act, 94 of 1974, which "(1) Any person who utters any words or (does) *performs* any other act or thing whatever with intent to (promote any feeling) *cause, encourage or foment feelings* of hostility between (Blacks and Europeans), *different population groups of the Republic* shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to (imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or to a fine of one hundred pounds, or both) *a fine not exceeding two thousand rand or in default of payment to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment*";

Footnotes on p. 19

THE STORY OF AN AFRIKANER

by Natie Ferreira
Published by Ravan Press
A Review by Abraham de Vries

It is characteristic in the anatomy of suppression that it sometimes forces the suppressed into tiresome soul searching. At best this search leads to good literature, at it's worst to futile explorations beyond the limits of the situation, into metaphysical guilt and anxiety.

The Story of an Afrikaner by Natie Ferreira (subtitled "The revolution of the children") does not escape metaphysical vagaries and a resulting exaggerated emotionality, but at the same time it is an honest and daring account of a man's fight against what he terms Dwurg ("acronym for *doodwurg*"), meaning the strangling Ideology of Apartheid, the smothering System where the individual has no lebensraum except in submission. The book is obviously meant as fiction ("This is a true account recorded in different appearances of reality." (p.18) and "Not according to the tiresome restrictions of the god Literature." (p.4) It is also meant as a „testament“, which accounts for the form of the book: two long letters to his daughter, Nadine, arising from her questions: "Tell me about the real world" and "Explain God to me". The second letter forms an introduction and a conclusion, a framework for the most interesting part, the first letter. In this he writes about his career as political correspondent of *The Citizen* and later of the *Transvaler*. But these letters also form a very personal document which deals basically with the wresting from a situation of fear of rejection, rejection by what Freud would have called the father figures: the Party, God, the System." ("The only real sin is to point out the Lie. Remember, the System is never wrong. That is rule number one. The only God (but never say it) is the "national interest", the only justice that which protects and perpetuates 'the System', the only truth complete identification." p.69).

The book is in parts a chilling account of the ruthless dishonesty, the lack of willpower in leadership (Vorster telling Ferreira's Editor that he expected a 'shooting war' and admitting his helplessness; Wimpie de Klerk placing his hope on the role of the unexpected in history!) the deceit and the dangers in deviation from the System ("... Afrikaans newspapers and the SABC start in on what they call a 'knife job'. This simply means that the culprit is discredited, smeared, written off and buried" or in a "subtler version": the *doods-wyg-metode*, the kill-by-silence method" p.4.)

Ferreira does not draw his punches and spares nobody. His disillusion with the "theatre of cynicism" (parliament) is spelt out clearly, and so are his views about church, opposition and Mr English ("In his heart of hearts he despises the Afrikaner and considers the African a savage. He lives his life quietly and efficiently in the company of these two uncouth giants and is always slightly irritated by the fact that his obvious superiority is not recognised." p.73.)

Unfortunately some of these cynicisms have a *deja vu* character—or could it just be that there is in our situation, as Adam Small once argued, nothing new to be said?

It would be possible to go even further and say that Ferreira's book is nothing more than the work of an embittered man who makes no bones about it that he was pushed out and left out in the cold on several occasions. (He had at one time advocated a Government supporting English newspaper built on the ideal of the sovereignty of the individual!) It would be easy to discredit Ferreira's observations, but I believe it would be wrong. In a book like this "objectivity" is obviously no criterion and even distortions are sometimes more true than the "truth".

Ironically Ferreira is not always at his best where he wilfully exposes or discredits, but in "throw away" cameos such as the following:

"Uncle M was a tall educated farmer and town councillor. He spoke beautiful Afrikaans, his son, D, played Chopin and his wife served tea in the most delicate cups and won prizes for her canned fruits.

But something went wrong, something, I think, in connection with his work as councillor. He was in charge of 'Native Affairs' and apparently insisted on certain changes. Eventually he was branded a 'kaffer-boetie' and ended up in a mental home, a hollow man who accused his few visitors of avoiding him."

Which gives me reason to believe that Ferreira has more strings to his bow than those used in the greater part of this book. And sharper arrows. Because, whereas many readers could regard Ferreira's disillusionment with the System as growth pains out of naivety, the story quoted above can not easily be discredited. It is a variation on the story of many Afrikaners. □