reality

JULY 1986 90 cents

ALAN PATON AND ERNIE WENTZEL AT THE 1985 HOERNLE MEMORIAL LECTURE

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION

Vol 18 No 4

ISSN0034 0979
July 1986

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EDITORIALS

1. THE EMERGENCY

This is an attenuated edition of REALITY.

Material has had to be left out because our lawyers tell us it would, in terms of the Emergency Regulations, be deemed to be "subversive".

The same goes for what comment we feel would be worth making.□

2. THE ROAD TO BEIRUT

Inspired partly but by no means exclusively by the South African Government's May raids into Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, we return to an old theme — violence and our country.

You don't have to be a pacifist to argue that the lunatic spiral of violence on which we — all of us — are now embarked, each extra day it lasts, takes us one step nearer to Lebanon, and makes even more daunting the task of producing a reasonably decent society at the end of it all.

Apart from the moral considerations one practical argument against continuing violence here is that nobody can predict where it will lead or end, and another is that it appears to be feeding on itself. The evidence supporting both these arguments grows around us by the day.

We suppose the top Pretoria brass which authorised the first raids into Lesotho and Maputo those years ago reasoned that a sharp slap on our neighbours' wrists at that stage would soon choke off ANC access to the Republic. Now they are having to go to Lusaka and Harare. Once you have started, where do you stop?

The ANC has reaffirmed its policy of not attacking "soft" civilian targets, yet it is difficult to see anything "hard" about the black tractor drivers who are being blown up by mines in Transvaal border areas or the people of assorted ages, sexes and colours being blown up at bus-stops and shopping-centres. In the realm of violence intentions and results, as often as not, turn out to be two different things.

In the townships a considerable number of people must by now have gone through the process, from throwing their first stone at a bus, to tossing their first petrol bomb through the window of "an agent of the system", to bestowing a "necklace" on "an enemy of the people" ... a horrifying progression reminiscent of the descent into hell of a drug addict. How do you recover from it?

On the other side, the Government's knee-jerk reaction to even the most innocent township anti-apartheid occasion seems to be to suppress it violently.

Recently two new groups have emerged on the frontiers of violence, the "vigilantes" and the Afrikaanse Weerstand Beweging. The vigilantes have been accused of attacks across the country against "comrades", supporters of the radical liberation movement. They are accused of having links with the police, with Inkatha in Natal, and with conservative forces generally. They almost certainly do have. On the other hand they are almost certainly also a reaction to comrade violence. It was hardly to be expected that as they saw the use of the "necklace" spreading apparently unchecked through the country, "conservatives" would sit quietly at home waiting for it to come their way. They have not done so. They have gone on to the attack, and where that can lead to has been shown in all its stark tragedy with the destruction by conservative "witdoeke" of a community of some 50 000 people at Crossroads, while the forces of "law and order" seemed to be uncharacteristically incapable of doing anything about it.

Into this maelstrom is now thrown the AWB, looking for a new security for Afrikanerdom through the fist and the boot and the gun. Who can predict where that will lead?

In less than two years, since September 1984, we have travelled a long way down the road to Lebanon. The process of brutalisation of our people is now well-advanced, be they policemen, servicemen, comrades or vigilantes. Is there nobody big enough amongst the leaders of the contending factions to buck his own constituency and talk to his opponents, *without preconditions*, about how to get out of the mess? Or must we first descend, over a timespan which may be many years, into the mindless hell of Beirut? □

3. THE MEANS AND PEOPLE MAN

Ernie Wentzel has gone. No more will we be cheered by that marvellous sense of humour and that laugh which embraced and warmed everyone within its reach.

As often as not the laugh was directed against himself. He turned some of the most traumatic moments in his life into hilarious stories against himself, whether he was describing the animal grunts of the security policeman leading him through blacked-out corridors on the way to his second detention, or the horse on his beloved farm which one day set off with him not yet properly aboard.

Ernie wasn't only a wonderful raconteur, a brilliant lawyer, an analytical and deep-thinking political mind, he was above all a very human human-being. He loved people, and people loved him. He had few illusions about any of us, but he loved us all the same! Most of all he loved ordinary people. Least of all he liked ideological dogmatists. There was a correlation between the two attitudes. He saw clearly that the unbending pursuit of dogma ended up hurting ordinary people who got in the way of the dream. He had seen how the pursuit of the apartheid dream had destroyed so many of them and he suspected that the unrelenting pursuit of the utopian dreams of the left would do the same.

The only dogma Ernie Wentzel subscribed to was an old-fashioned belief that the end does not justify the means. To keep that thought constantly before us would be the kind of memorial he would like best. □

By Chris Mann

CYNICS: THE IDEALIST PROTESTS

I can survive a backstabber and a cheat,
and fervent revolutionaries
with plans for Chinese kibbutzes
or fortified mansions
in Pretoria's richer suburbs
do not endanger the soul;
polite flatterers,
worrygutsers,
and haughty rebels without a cause
are harmless
as prickles on a pumpkin plant
and softer besides;
but hell's bells and little fishes,
I have no windows,
no doors a cynic cannot force
and trample in across.

I don't mean the brotherly realist
with a bucket of water
for dreams;
I don't mean the pessimist
with a hearty handshake
and sour farewell;
I mean the pure sulphuric acid smile
shrivelling a colleague,
the hatchet word
glittering above the heads of friends,
the old Iago,
unable to curl a loving arm
around another being.

Point out some painter's delicate dawn,
they note the period's squalor;
extol some sister toiling in a slum,
they list the church's sins;
no innocence is too milky
for them to curdle,
no fresh-budding hope too green
for them to lop.

Hell's bells and bitter little fishes,
if trying to drag
the whole caboodle
into the vacuum of your lonely despair
isn't the business
of witches
I don't know what else is.
Padlocks and prickly pears —
for the lot of them! □

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to leave out six pages

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LITY.

By Alan Paton

ERNIE WENTZEL

So Ernie Wentzel has gone, and he has left a great hole behind him, not only in the hearts of his old friends in the Liberal Party, but also in the hearts of many people whose cause he defended, in the courts of law and many other places. He has also left a great hole in the hearts of many of his professional colleagues. His loss is of course most grievously felt by Jill, and by the children, Mark, Susan and Julian.

I am writing this short tribute mostly to express the great sense of loss felt by members of the old Liberal Party, and by all those who would describe themselves as liberals today. Ernie would not have objected to being called a democrat, or an out-and-out opponent of Apartheid and any other form of racialism. He would have jibbed at being called a socialist, because although he condemned the excesses of capitalism, he was totally opposed to any kind of centralised control of human society, whether it was political or social or economic. There was only one name that he would have accepted without reservation, and that was the name of liberal.

In a way I suppose this was not altogether fair, because he would have demanded the most comprehensive definitions of words like capitalism or socialism before he would have debated them. But not liberalism. Anyone in his or her right senses should know what it meant. He would have laughed to scorn those who thought liberalism meant some kind of namby-pambyism or naivety, or who thought that a liberal, if he were white, would say to the burglar, if he were black, "sit down, my good man, and have a cup of tea." Nothing annoyed him more than the cliché uttered by anti-liberal whites that blacks preferred Afrikaners to the English because Afrikaners were straight; they said they were going to flog you, and they did. But the English spoke nice words to you, and then flogged you just the same.

Liberalism for Ernie meant a total rejection of any kind of racial discrimination, an unquestioning devotion to the rule of law and therefore a total condemnation of detention without charge or access, a tolerance for otherness and therefore a tolerance of the opinions of others, with the exception of those he would have regarded as racialistic, totalitarian or extremely authoritarian.

HOSTILITY

Therefore one would expect that he would incur the hostility of all racialists, and also of course the hostility of all those who believed that Apartheid, or Separate Development, was the solution to the problems of South Africa. He saw clearly that Separate Development, however beautiful one could make it sound, could lead to nothing but injustice and deep resentment on the part of those who had to pay for it, who were almost without exception people who had no political power, which means people who were not white. He saw clearly that separate could not be equal, a truth that was affirmed by the Liberal Party when it came into being in 1953. This truth was affirmed — I would guess totally and finally — in 1954 by the Supreme Court of the United States of America in its judgement in the historic case of Brown v Board of Education, Topeka. I do not doubt for a moment that those two affirmations — the one by the weak and the other by the mighty — which were so scorned by the Afrikaner National Party in its arrogant Verwoerdian days, are today, twenty years after Verwoerd's death, recognised, though only in part and very reluctantly, by the National Party.

I wrote above that it was natural that Ernie Wentzel should incur the hatred of the believers in Apartheid, some of whom asked the Government to make it treasonable to oppose it. The Government had sense enough not to enact such a law, but their chance to act "legally" against Wentzel came after Sharpeville in 1960, when a state of emergency was declared. He was among the large number of people detained, i.e. imprisoned, including some 20 members of the Liberal Party. I shall not say that his detention had no effect on him, but it certainly had no effect on his liberal beliefs. Of bitterness there was no sign in him whatsoever.

THE LEFT

He also incurred the enmity of some of what is called "the left". This was not only because of his rejection of any kind of centralised control of human life and society, but also because he could not believe that the end could ever justify the means. In the thirteen years of the Liberal Party we had members (but not many) who believed that if one's goal was a just society, one would be justified in using what could be called "illiberal" means. We had members (but not many, though one or two were prominent in the Party) who argued fiercely that a truly liberal state would have to force Afrikaners into schools where their language might not even be the medium of instruction. Ernie regarded this as liberalism gone astray.

Ernie also had admirers on "the left" though I never knew of any on "the right". Why should that be so? For at least two reasons I should think. One was that many on "the left" regarded him as a brave man, especially in his role as a lawyer. The second reason is that — so I suppose — liberalism lies between the radical left and the moderate centre. Therefore Ernie had friends of both the left and the centre.

This does not in the least alter the fact that he rejected totally the totalitarianism of the radical left, and poured ridicule on their belief that any kind of centralised power could bring Utopia. In fact he did not believe in Utopia at all.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Having been devoutly religious in his youth, having left the church for many years, during the last two years he returned to his religious beliefs and, when he thought that his life might be drawing to an end, to the practice of

communion. This must not be attributed to any kind of superstition, but to a recognition that there are things in heaven and earth that cannot be fully comprehended in terms of logic or science or morality, and to a desire on his part to acknowledge a Supreme Power and to humble himself before it. The apostle James wrote of this power that there is in it no variableness, neither shadow of turning. In many ways these words could be used of Ernie himself.

I end with some words of my own. I shall greatly miss Ernie Wentzel's gifts of wise and clear and undogmatic judgement. If I wanted to obtain a sound judgement on P.W. Botha, Buthelezi and Inkatha, Cosatu, the UDF, the release of Mandela, judgements which I knew would be free from all spite or prejudice, I would always have gone to him if that had been possible. I have had to write the three most difficult chapters in the second volume of my autobiography, on Adrian Leftwich and the ARM, on John Harris and the bomb, and on Mandela and Rivonia. I am grateful that he had the opportunity to read these chapters before he died, and to give me his judgement and comments upon them, which were of great help to me.

May his soul rest in peace. □

By Ben Parker and Keyan Tomaselli

THE IMAGE OF AN 'OPEN' UNIVERSITY

University public relations officers are facing immense pressures as the economy worsens and as the press, businessmen and visiting 'experts' in economics, marketing and production complain about the unnecessary 'luxury' of university education. The short-term needs of the economy require technical expertise, they argue, and that is what universities should be concerned with.

This paper addresses the question of the image of the university in the present recessionary and politically volatile climate.

We'd like to begin this paper by reference to Kerr's Second Law, which we believe approaches the kernel of any university public relations problem. Kerr's Second Law reads:

In his dealings on the campus, a faculty member is an ultra-conservative, leaning slightly to the right of Herbert Hoover; (in South Africa, that would read Louis le Grange); in his dealings off campus with the general public his position is as a raging liberal far to the left of Karl Marx (1).

A schizophrenic existence, is the life of the average academic.

According to the Public Relations Institute of South Africa, "Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its public" (2). This, it would seem, embodies a dual objective:

1. To evaluate what the public wants and to correlate one's policies and actions accordingly; and then

2. To keep the public informed, in order to win understanding, acceptance and cooperation.

We consider this to be an impossibility when the organisation in question is a university. Universities are not factories producing uniform products. The complement of PR is advertising. Where advertising persuades people to need things they don't want and to buy these with money they haven't got, PR would seem to be aimed at maintaining an on-going relationship between the purchaser and the producer. Advertising, being media oriented, is the more remote form of persuasion. In contrast, PR is activity-oriented, and works through 'below the line' promotions through personal interactions, talks, conferences and displays. Where advertisers are shielded from face-to-face interaction with their target audiences, public relations officers are in direct contact and often bear the brunt of personally-expressed criticism against the products or institutions they represent.

CONTRADICTORY

Universities are contradictory institutions which relate to society in contradictory and confusing ways. Universities — English language universities, that is — are loosely administered, each department a virtual independent entity in terms of theoretical position, action, course orientation and so on. Even within departments, extreme differences of academic and political opinion occur, and are largely tolerated. There is no interference from anybody — except on occasion from faculty boards — in the way lecturers conduct themselves in terms of their disciplines.

On the one side are grouped the so-called 'liberal arts' courses which fall under the social science and arts faculties. Students to the left of Herbert Hoover tend to populate these faculties. To these we might add, depending on the university, faculties of law and medicine. Students and lecturers in these faculties are identifiable by their long hair, faded jeans and membership of the UDF and End Conscription Campaign. These individuals want to change the world.

To the right of Herbert Hoover are generally the engineering, science and commerce students and some staff. With some exceptions, these individuals are identifiable by their short hair, the wearing of ties, membership of the Students Moderate Alliance and an obvious disdain for arts students. These individuals will only change the world if their incomes are threatened.

The result of these opposites is contradiction. Paradoxically, it is this contradication that is the strength of academic freedom. This is bad news for PR officers. The public image of English language universities is a fragmented one. How can anybody try to establish and maintain understanding between the university and the 'public' in the face of these odds? 'What the public wants' is simply not an issue — in any faculty.

The contradictions manifested in English language universities are basically a reflection of our divided society. Different sections of the university are concerned with different needs, different publics and different futures. These differences are manifested in different political alignments, different ways of perceiving one's practice as either student or academic, different ways of putting one's knowledge into practice, and often, a different conception of knowledge itself.

This contradictory image has serious implications for any PR office whose task is to project a positive image of the university. Ortega Gasset's Law governs this promotional minefield:

Between us (university and public) only a relative and indirect and always dubious communication is possible (3).

Now, PR officers are always at pains to paint reassuring, unthreatening images of the university. A study of convocation and other externally targeted PR publications will show an emphasis on the sciences. Scientists tend to be uncritical of their social practice and colour pictures of test tubes and bunsen burners indicate progress, discovery and orderly — to use a favourite political phrase — development. The clinical, sterile atmosphere is somehow reassuring to potential sponsors. The problem is that these same PR departments then try to promote the humanities on the same basis.

STERILE IMAGE

One example of the socially sterile image of the university was the 75th UND Anniversary Supplement published in The Sunday Tribune on 28 July 1985. Not only was no one in the Arts Faculty consulted about the image that was being manufactured on their behalf, but the blurb suggested that the PR office has very little idea about the imperatives working in the arts faculty. The image was of a boring and irrelevant faculty populated by art historians and apolitical individuals. There was no sense of crucial social or political issues being debated, of strategies for democratic development being worked out, indeed, even of persuading students that they are South Africans and that South African literature, for example, is as valid — perhaps more valid — than is the exclusive study of the classics during these turbulent times. While the article did point out that the arts were unjustly ranked as being of less importance than the 'business' faculties, the composite image, in fact, seemed mainly to be a reflection of what the PR office would like the arts faculty to be because that is what it is best able to 'sell'. This is one of the reasons why academics are often reluctant to cooperate with the PR officers of their universities. They perhaps sense that PR people have little sense of what they are doing, while the ethos of an inherited ivory tower demeanor would look less than favourably on too much media publicity. On the other hand, PR departments may themselves be responsible to governing committees comprising academics who may have little idea of PR.

From our arguments, then, it would appear that the result of PR Law is similar to a modified version of Martin's Law of Communication:

The inevitable result of improved and enlarged communication between universities and the public is a vastly increased area of misunderstanding (4).

The ridiculous image of the university as an academic cloister in which lethargic academics wearing white coats pour over ageing manuscripts or scorch themselves with bunsen burners at their leisure is a medieval hangover. The attitude that students should 'attend to their studies' and leave politicking to 'those who know' is equally a myth.

Universities are supposed to produce knowledge; they are supposed to teach students to think, to reason from first principles; they are supposed to instil moral values in students; they are supposed to educate the new generation of scientists, managers, entrepreneurs, professional people and so on. They are supposed to study the world and its people.

The production of knowledge is an exacting task. It is a tenseful, frustrating and sometimes dangerous task, especially for South African academics during the current period of 'unrest'. The social imperatives facing South Africa at the moment hardly make for study at leisure. It is a task that often puts academics at odds with the System, with politicians, planners and those in control of things. These confrontations are both necessary and desirable — and inevitable. They are the *raison d'etre* of academic endeavour. Academics are amongst the few who have a wider view of things. This leads them to criticise processes and actions that on the surface may appear benign and harmless, but which may have untold repercussions for the future.

POSITIVE IMAGE

We have painted a complex picture of the university. We could take it a lot further. But, let's stop to think about what kind of PR is necessary to create a positive image or *images* of the contradictory institution that is the university.

Crucial to the multiple image that needs to be built up of the university is Hacker's Law which states that:

The belief that enhanced understanding will necessarily stir a nation to action is one of mankind's oldest illusions (5).

There is no one image of the university. There is no single public profile. Universities mean different things to different people. To the state they are a necessary burden which has to be kept under control (through the use of Security Police if necessary). To the oppressed masses, some universities offer hope in a sea of repression; to business, universities are nothing more than screw factories producing cogs to fit somewhere (at the higher levels) of industry and commerce. To academics they are the site of struggle of political and academic ideas.

Both the 'product' and 'target market' are fragmented. Perhaps what is required is a PR campaign that tries to legitimate the contradictory nature of the university, identifying the strengths of the institution, rather than creating an image of what it is not.

Thus far we have provided a picture of the difficulties faced by public relations personnel in their attempt to characterise a university and present an amenable and accessible package to the universities' constituency (or public). The nub of these difficulties centres on the differentiation between different kinds of academics and the contradictory nature of academia itself. These difficulties are compounded by the diverse nature of the university's constituency and in particular the different expectations that are held by potential students and by potential employers.

These difficulties, which may seem overwhelming, are those that exist at present: what we now want to do is to show how these difficulties are a mere molehill compared to the mountain that is fast approaching as developments within Southern Africa make a major impact on the nature of a university. The first factor we wish to discuss is the introduction of the SAPSE system and secondly, the 'reopening' of the universities to all applicants.

GRADING AND SUBSIDY

SAPSE, and its counterparts such as the new grading system employed by the CSIR, have important implications for the nature of the university. South African universities have always been Janus-faced: one face turned towards the developed metropoles of the West, the other towards the complex mix of developed and developing, urban and rural, that constitute their backyard. Until now, the university has managed to accommodate both faces with only a mild degree of schizophrenia. The new grading and subsidy systems, however, have driven a wedge between the two faces and force a university to choose which face it will favour.

Amongst the UTASA (the English language University Teachers Association of South Africa) universities, Wits and UCT, are now emphasising their commitment to the standards of excellence embodied in the international academic community. This will ensure their government subsidies through the ability of their academic staff to compete in the international arena. Their constituency is international and the consequence of this is that research and publications must be relevant to existing international debates and areas of research. The commitment is not just to excellence but to the primacy of issues deemed important by the international academic community. The conflict between the two faces of the university comes when issues and debates which are important in the South African context are not deemed relevant by the international community. These universities face the danger of becoming isolated from the mix of communities that exist in South Africa itself and which feed them with students.

Other UTASA universities, such as Natal, are emphasising their commitment to the communities in the surrounding region (6). Their participation in the international arena will be based on those areas of local concern which are deemed relevant by the international community. Their primary commitment, however, is to be the needs of their communities. While this may raise problems for funding, it is likely that alternative sources can be found, given the international political acceptability of this commitment.

The Afrikaans universities are in an even more difficult position. To a large extent they are isolated both from the international community and the broad South African community. Their traditional reliance on the white Afrikaner community as their only constituency will be insufficient to sustain them under the new system. As we have seen in a recent article by Jack de Wet in *Die Suid-Afrikaan* (7) and ensuing debates in the newspapers, some academics are already aware of these dangers.

THREE SCENARIOS

We now want to look at three scenarios in relation to the 'reopening' of the universities.

1. Universities that are committed to international standards of excellence and which are open to all will experience a slow increase in students other than white. The majority of potential students will be unable to meet the high academic standards required for entrance and accreditation. The consequence of this will be a growing separation from the mainstream of debate and research which is appropriate, relevant and necessary in the South African context.
2. Those universities that choose to remain white and uni-cultural will face dwindling financial resources and student populations. The end result will be deterioration of these institutions as they become increasingly irrelevant to Southern Africa.
3. Those universities that choose to become 'community' universities, open to all, will experience fairly rapid increases in students other than white. Their major problems are going to be in the area of academic standards and the complexities of practising education which is multicultural. However, their relevance to the South African context will ensure their future.

RELEVANT

We want now to focus on this last scenario as it is the most relevant one and look at the implications for the image of a university. The tensions that already exist will be greatly exacerbated. The idea of a UNI-versity will become anachronistic. The term 'university' has two important connotations:

(1) a commitment to universal academic standards; and
(2) a commitment to one particular cultural heritage.

Under scenario (3) mentioned above, both these commitments will have to be abandoned. There will be many cultures involved in the university and academic standards will have to vary according to relevant and appropriate contextual criteria.

The image of a community university would appear to become highly fragmented. However, this is only so if one continues to wear apartheid spectacles in which diversity is seen as separateness and disunity. Within a multicultural community university there will be underlying unities that bind the diversities. These unities revolve around the processes of academic practice — the critical, speculative and exploratory nature of the academic enterprise.

This point is also important in relation to the upgrading of technikons and the increasing competition they will pose to the universities. What distinguishes the university from the

technikon is that technikons are essentially technicist. They have clear objectives and know where they are going and what they are doing. Universities are essentially agnostic institutions: they can't know where they are going, although hopefully, they know what they are doing. It's a bit like the difference between Columbus and the Mayflower pilgrims. Columbus didn't know where he was going, but he discovered America. The Mayflower pilgrims knew where they were going.

To conclude, public relations will never be able to present a clear image of a university while it tries to define the university in technicist terms and to produce an image which can be sold like any other package. But if PR officers accept that they have no package to sell, but rather an ideal and a commitment which is essentially agnostic, uncertain and indefinable and they concentrate on creating an understanding of the underlying unities that are embodied in the academic process, they will be in a position to educate the community — or public(s) — as to what to expect from a university.

If they consider themselves educators rather than salesmen then they may be able to come to grips with the image of a university (8).□

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By Leslie Witz

MISPLACED IDEALS?
THE CASE OF UNIBO
A REPLY TO J F DE V GRAAFF

(Reality, January 1986)

Bophuthatswana has always been regarded as unique among the bantustans created by South Africa's apartheid structure. Although Bophuthatswana was given "independence" in 1977 its President, Lucas Manyane Mangope, has consistently stated that independence is merely a stepping stone towards a "greater independence" for a united South Africa. The primary reason for accepting independence, he has asserted, is to turn Bophuthatswana's back on apartheid and build "a model of non-discrimination that can act as a catalyst in the whole of Southern Africa". (1) That model is supposedly enshrined in the bantustan's constitution which embodies the principles of non-discrimination, non-racialism, human rights and the rule of law.

It is within this framework that the territory's major tertiary institution, the University of Bophuthatswana (Unibo), is intended to operate. Established in 1980, Unibo proclaims itself to be a totally non-racial institution with complete autonomy from the Bophuthatswana government. The University's official publication, its calendar, proclaims loudly that the university has "full academic freedom to determine whom it will appoint, whom it will enrol as students, and what it will teach". It goes on further to state that the university is controlled by a Council which encourages all staff "to help develop the theoretical framework needed for the emergence of a 'post-separate development' dispensation in South Africa".

IDEALISM

It was these principles which gave rise to the aura of idealism which permeated Unibo in its early years. Johan Graaff, one of the original staff members at Unibo, relates in the January 1986 issue of *Reality* how he and the other members of staff believed they "were re-creating a little piece of paradise". Here, for them, was a homeland university which did not take as its model the bush colleges but the liberal institutions like Wits and U.C.T. Although Mangope at times acted with an iron fist he always listened to reason and allowed the university its autonomy. Crucially then it was Mangope's character which allowed Unibo to develop its liberal image. "My own feeling", Graaff states, "is that Mangope is less authoritarian than the likes of Matanzima".

This idealism was reinforced by the "liberal education" which Unibo offered. One thing which Bophuthatswana "independence" has brought about, in spite of its political limitations, is a commitment "to break from the stranglehold of Bantu Education and introduce reforms to improve the quantity and quality of education". (2) As Francine de Clercq points out Bophuthatswana has greater freedom to introduce educational reforms since it doesn't deal directly with the Department of Education and Training. Educational reform also fits in neatly with the bantustan's ideology of self-determination. (3) Unibo plays a major role in changing education in the bantustan, not only through what it teaches but also through imparting teaching skills and conducting research into Bophuthatswana's educational structures.

On the 9th October 1985 this idealism was rudely swept away when the students called a prayer meeting on campus in response to Bishop Tutu's call for a National Day of Prayer. For Mangope the prayer meeting was the "final straw" coming after student demonstrations against the visits of P W Botha and Andries Treurnicht to Mmabatho. He marched onto the campus, accompanied by his cabinet and 300 riot police, interrupted the prayer service and closed the university. Unibo remained closed for a month as a group of students challenged the legality of Mangope's action in the Bophuthatswana Supreme court. Although the court ruled against the students the government decided to re-open the university on 6 November 1985 and a commission of enquiry was appointed by the university to investigate the closure and related events. Mangope, in the interim, had already decided to take further action against the staff and students of Unibo.

INTERNAL SECURITY ACT

On the 2nd of December, four days before the eighth anniversary of Bophuthatswana's "independence", an emergency session of the bantustan's parliament was called to amend the Internal Security Act. The amendments are aimed at giving the Bophuthatswana government greater power in the running of educational institutions, in particular the University. In terms of the amendments the President is given the power to close any educational institution if he considers it "necessary in the interests of public safety, national security and the maintenance of law and order". Students can also be debarred from a school, technikon or university, if the government is reasonably satisfied that the registration of the students is "undesirable in the public interest". For staff members the accompanying piece of legislation, the Security Clearances Act, is even more ominous. The Act states that new members of staff have to obtain a security clearance from the government of Bophuthatswana before they can take up their posts. As Mangope switched on the lights of Bophuthatswana's new multi-million rand independence stadium on the 6th of December the lights of academic freedom were slowly being extinguished in Bophuthatswana.

Armed with this battery of legislation Mangope now made his move. On the 23rd of December the government of Bophuthatswana issued deportation orders against 10 members of Unibo staff. A month later 36 students were sent letters from the University indicating that the government would not allow them to re-register in terms of the Internal Security (Amendment) Act. (4) The principles on which Unibo had apparently been created were swept away. Academic freedom became an expression that was only whispered in the corridors of Unibo. Staff and students, intimidated by Mangope's actions, hardly uttered a word of protest. The standing of the University as a credible academic institution was almost destroyed overnight.

Why did this happen at Unibo? Why did Mangope, usually a "reasonable" man, take such unreasonable action? Why did the ideals on which Unibo was built disappear so quickly? In terms of Johan Graaff's argument the answer can only be found in terms of Mangope's character : "Mangope's courage and trust were not up to the challenge. Fear won." *(Die Suid-Afrikaan,* Lente en Vroeg-Somer, 1985). This may be part of the answer but a fuller explanation must be sought in terms of the general structures in which Mangope and Bophuthatswana operate.

APARTHEID

Bophuthatswana is a child of apartheid. It was born as a direct result of the Promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Act promulgated by the Verwoerd government in 1959. Africans were, in terms of the act, to have no political rights in South Africa and instead were given political rights in the eight bantustans. This act, according to Dr Verwoerd, would place the African "on a new rung of a ladder of development which can continue as far as he is able to take it. If it is within the power of the Bantu and if the territories in which he now lives can develop to full independence, it will develop in that way". By accepting independence in 1977 Mangope in effect carried Verwoerd's plans of separate development to their logical conclusion. Therefore, despite his protestations to the contrary, Mangope *does* accept the grand structures of apartheid.

In order for Mangope to retain control he thus has to depend upon the perpetuation of apartheid. He has to rely upon those very same structures that gave him power in the first place. Any criticism of Bophuthatswana's "independence" is not tolerated as this challenges the very basis of Mangope's power. When he addressed members of Unibo staff on the 10th of December on the reasons for the security legislation he stressed this point:

> We will not tolerate anybody who doesn't respect our independence as a country. We won't. My request to such people, no matter how valuable a service they render, if that is your attitude this is not the place for you.

The university, Mangope claims, is one of the main centres of dissent to Bophuthatswana independence. This criticism, he further asserts, is orchestrated by the U.D.F. His government has "established beyond doubt" that certain students are members of the U.D.F. As he himself points out, neither the U.D.F. nor the A.N.C. are banned in Bophuthatswana but he doesn't "want non-Bophuthatswana organisations to disturb our (Bophuthatswana's) peace. If our independence as a country is threatened by what originates in the university we will not tolerate it".

The extent to which Mangope will go to retain power seems to have no limits. He would rather have Unibo turn into a second rate institution (he has stated this categorically) than have it criticise Bophuthatswana's independence. He has

even threatened to close the university down completely if such criticism emanates from it.

STRUCTURES

How then do recent events challenge the ideals which Johan Graaff and the first members of staff held so dearly? Were their ideals misplaced? What seems to have happened is that in accepting Mangope's ideological rationalisation they lost sight of the structures in which they were operating. In the early years Mangope's actions tended to reinforce their belief in those ideals. Mangope might act harshly at times but not with consistency. His heavy-handedness in recent months has therefore shocked the idealists. Yet within the structures which Mangope operates it is not altogether surprising. Throughout 1985 opposition to apartheid intensified in South Africa and the system started to crumble. Unibo students, many of them emanating from the P.W.V. areas, were exposed to this process of "informal" politicisation. At Unibo the philosophy of liberal education developed this critical awareness even further. It is this, not any A.N.C. or U.D.F. conspiracy, which threatens Mangope's power. As a group of residents from Mafikeng spelled out in a letter to the *Weekly Mail* on 6 December 1985, "the downfall of apartheid will signal the downfall of the homeland system".

Despite the limitations to the idealist vision, which have been exposed as the crisis in South Africa has deepened, I do not think that the ideals that they strove for were entirely hollow. One was able to teach what one wanted at Unibo and, as we have seen, turn graduates of Bantu Education into critically aware people. For this reason it certainly was worthwhile teaching students at Unibo.

Nonetheless it must be emphasised that even this "liberal education" has its limits narrowly defined in Bophuthatswana. The more liberal education becomes (as it did at Unibo) the more questions students are going to ask. This in turn means that the structures of apartheid, and inevitably Bophuthatswana's "independence", will increasingly be placed under the critical scrutiny of the youth. Mangope cannot accept this as it would threaten his position of power. It is thus not altogether surprising that there are rumours that some members of the Bophuthatswana government favour a return to Bantu Education. They hope the students will then become more submissive and compliant.

Therefore I do agree that Unibo in some respects did present one with an idealist vision with a limited prospect of achieving that vision. However, it must be emphasised that those ideals were *always* limited by the structures of apartheid. The hopes of the idealists were not entirely misguided but they could have been tinged with a greater degree of realism.□

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1. University of Bophuthatswana Calendar, 1986.
2. F. de Clercq, "Some Recent Trends in Bophuthatswana Commuters and Restructuring in Education". *SA Review 2*, Johannesburg (1984).
3. *Ibid.*
4. The government of Bophuthatswana later partially went back on its decision. All but 7 of the students were re-admitted to Unibo and the staff members were allowed to appeal to the government for re-instatement. 4 decided to appeal, one of the appeals being turned down and the rest upheld.

By Barbie Schreiner

RESETTLEMENT

Arms entwined on a shady park bench, framed by the excitement of a brief day in town together, we smile on paper behind shards of glass; it is pinned now under familiar corrugated iron. I shall never get it out, the bulldozer tracks have bruised it into the ground.

"Let them sleep in God's own fresh air."

Our homes have folded like paper toys into the dust. In a crinkled plastic packet my blue clock counts the time of the bulldozer's shadow across my mother's grave.

With lonely thousands I follow the winding track. A suitcase bounces from an overloaded truck, somersaults twice with lazy grace, splits, bursts like a ripe seed pod offering socks and petticoats to the wind.

Dull barrels signpost our way past a pumpkin lying at the side of the road, thrown aside, too heavy to carry. Its sweet smell beckons flocks of shiny flies that crawl on shrivelling orange seeds in the sun.

"The new location has all the facilities that the community requires, better, I assure you, than what they had before."

My new home wavers in the bending heat, a mirage in an empty Bantustan. Even the rain doesn't reach this far. My breasts have dried amongst the brown grass and the dust. My child's belly is swollen with hunger. She tastes my sour sweat with parched lips.

Across the rustling veld, from hard-packed soil tilled deep with calloused hands and simple hoes, below the unmoving aloes, small white flowers blossom, row upon row, straight, square, their names fading in the heat. Thandi, three and a half years old; Nhlanhla, six months; Sipho, five and sister Gcina, four.□

By Michael Gardiner

TO TALK LANGUAGE IS TO TALK POLITICS

Department of English, Johannesburg College of Education.

This article cannot purport to be a full discussion of so blunt an assertion, but it is an opportunity to describe what is hoped will emerge from the English Academy's Silver Jubilee Conference in September this year.

The organizers of this conference — the theme of which is English language and literature in South African society over the last twenty-five years — are aware of two recent conferences which, for different reasons, are significant to their present plans.

The first, is the national conference of 1974, 'English-speaking South Africa Today', which addressed the identity of English speaking South Africans. Among the published conference papers of the eminent speakers who addressed the conference on a wide variety of issues, is the contribution of a single Black person, Sipho Sepamla, who at the very end of a three-day conference, introduced and read his poems. Sepamla remarked at the time that

I think it is unfortunate that every time the White man arranges things, he always thinks of the Black man as a sort of afterthought. (1)

As this makes clear, the conference organized then by the 1820 Foundation was concerned only about the interests of White English-speaking South Africans.

It is highly unlikely that such a conference would be organized today. Although insular attitudes are still manifest in many areas in South African society, only the most wilful of groupings — such as racially exclusive teacher associations, cultural organizations sub-serving particular ethnic or ideological interests, government-sponsored policy making gatherings, and obsolescent business banquets — are likely to adopt so crass a stance towards South African society. Multiracialism is now a vogue and a necessity, and gatherings of South Africans are increasingly seeking a 'representative' quality and nature. This in itself, however, is not nearly enough.

It is interesting to note the observations of Lusiba Ntloko, general secretary of the National Forum, in his letter to the *Weekly Mail* when he points out that the main issues for the NF are:

the class struggle, independent working class organization, the role of liberals (whites and black) and democracy. The constituents of the National Forum have no problem with the phrase 'nonracialism' if it signifies genuine non-racialism and not multiracialism. (2)

For anyone to suggest that the contemporary multiracialism of current fashionable practice, or the nonracialism of the National Forum, as examples, are indicative of a shedding of the effects of three centuries of ideology currently known as apartheid, would be absurd.

EVIL

Any conference or gathering organised today cannot but reflect in its every aspect the ravages of the evil which riddles all facets of South African life. This has to be acknowledged at every level of any conference's conception and organization. Furthermore, a conference such as the one being planned by the English Academy needs to make a number of specific provisions to expose and to counter the insidious presences of apartheid.

In the first instance, a model is offered by the degree to which the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee and, more recently, the National Education Crisis Committee have sought to consult with parents, teachers, students, community organizations, churches, youth groups and mass political movements. This essentially democratic and consultative process is in absolute opposition to the main features of the hierarchical and autocratic bases which apartheid has consolidated in South Africa.

A second concern must be a primary interest in those groups and organizations which have a concern with English in South Africa but which also have as a fundamental principle a commitment to democratic and non-racial practices. The most 'representative' of conferences which is dominated by the powerful poise of monopoly-capital representatives; by the forcefulness of professional organizers (of teachers, workers, sports people and the like); or by the public relations operators in the media, government departments, industry and the church will not reflect with any degree of adequacy what the truth of the present situation is.

DECISION

And this raises the complex question of experts and intellectuals in a conference of this kind. A decision was endorsed by the Academy's executive not to invite 'overseas experts' to offer papers at the Silver Jubilee Conference. Such a decision did not spring from an aggressive insularity or from a desire to evade the issue of cultural boycotts. In the first instance, the conference is intended to be as participatory as possible for all who attend. Few formal papers will be delivered. Instead, discussion groups will be led by two or three people who have an informed grasp of the significant features of the topic, and those who are part of the group will have the opportunity to express their views and concerns. Thus the thrust of the conference will be upon the quality of the experience gained in exchanges which the conference makes possible, rather than upon the collection and compilation of a set of papers thereafter.

Focus on topics such as language and labour, language and education, language and theology, literature and society, English and people's education, the semantics of liberation and apartheid, and applied linguistics and South African needs, locates the interests of the expert and the intellectual after those of the community — the workers, the parents, the students, the citizens, the people.

GABORONE CONFERENCE

The second notable gathering which has been influential in the conception of the Academy's conference, is the 'Culture and Resistance' conference in Gaborone in 1982. At this conference, the political significance of all cultural activities was stressed. The notion of artists, poets, musicians and teachers as 'cultural workers' was firmly endorsed there. The emphasis which the organisers of the Academy's conference have derived from this is that the political implications — as defined by the entire nexus of developments in our present society — of all cultural manifestations need overt attention. Language is obviously central to all social and communal activity and its political significance, especially at this stage of South Africa's history, cannot be over-estimated. Far from imposing a limited perspective on either language or politics by that assertion, both are extended and enhanced by it. The particular nature of the relation between language and politics in each instance needs most precise attention and analysis, but to ignore the role of either at any moment of consideration is to omit an essential dimension of the central concerns of people.

The Gaborone conference emphasised the need for art to be non-elitist. What this implies and what it can really mean to writers, scholars, educators, students and critics requires persistent scrutiny and consideration. Readership, education, the conditions for writers to work under, as well as the dissemination of plays, poetry, novels and critical articles are significant factors in the linguistic state of a society. This is not to reduce the central linguistic concerns to mere sociological measurement or description: the forces which impinge upon a society's languages must be acknowledged and understood.

ENGLISH

Although the Academy's conference will be concerned with English, it cannot do so as if English is the only significant language in South Africa. That would be to place the conference back in 1974. T.S. Eliot's observation that poetry should not stray too far from the ordinary language of people is clearly illustrated by the most vital poetry written in South Africa in recent times. Furthermore, the real language of people — instead of standardised, internationalised, corporate, mass-media homogenized language which passes for the verbal expressions of human beings — is what an assessment of a language in South Africa needs to attend to. How language is expressed on factory floors, in shops, at resettlement camps, within urban and rural slums, in city centres, at political rallies, on buses and trains, and on school playgrounds ought to be audible to the ear that the conference turns to the speech of the entire South African community.

There are many other concerns which such a conference must acknowledge, such as vested interests, political and organizational sensitivities, as well as the expectations of very diverse sectors of society. Interest groups and individuals with strong convictions and persuasions should ensure that their views are heard, not merely discussed by others. Then the conference will have truly served the interests of South African society.□

NOTES:

(1) de Villiers A. (ed). 1976. *English-speaking South Africa Today*. Oxford University Press (Cape Town), page 377

(2) *The Weekly Mail*, Vol. 2, No. 15, 18-24 April, 1986.

N.B. The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the English Academy of Southern Africa, but those of the writer of this article, the Conference organizer.

By Gary Baines

REVIEW ARTICLE

D. Ncube, **'The influence of Apartheid and Capitalism on the Development of Black Trade Unions in South Afrca'** (Johannesburg, Skotaville Publishers, 1985) 176 pp., illus., bibl.

This is the first publication in a new series by Skotaville Publishers entitled "Izwi Labasebenzi" (We are the workers). The book is based on a M.Sc. (Manpower Studies) dissertation for the University of Manchester, Institute of Science and Technology. There can be no doubt that the development of black trade unions is an important topic and it is commendable that the writer has set himself the task of relating his study to the ongoing theoretical debate in South African social studies and historiography.

The writer sets out "to analyse the historical development and ideological disposition of Black trade unions with reference to the Unitary, the Pluralist and the Marxist frames of reference" (p.xiii). While he indentifies these three theoretical frameworks at the outset, his utilisation of them as analytical tools throughout the text is arbitrary and uneven. He falls back on a description rather than an analysis of the factors which influenced the development of Black trade unionism. Although one or other perspective is often implicit in the text, they are not clearly delineated so that there is no progression from the abstract to the particular. The theoretical frameworks only receive substantial treatment in an epilogue which is appended to the main text and, accordingly, reads like a postscript.

MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

In his analysis of the 'Marxist perspective', Ncube broaches certain issues which are of crucial concern to the role of black trade unionism within the apartheid society. He argues that "for the Marxists, collective bargaining is a process through which trade unions tinker at the system to encourage adjustments and reform, and not to effect structural change by redistributing wealth and power" (p. 155). In short, trade unions are part of the problem and not the answer to the overthrow of apartheid because they do not seek the destruction of capitalism. Instead, they "focus attention on marginal material aggrandisement and, in the process, precipitate the affluence and therefore the 'embourgeoisment' of the working class" (p. 155). He suggests that it is ironic that Marxist "rhetoric is used as an ideology to mobilise the rank and file whose life style and aspirations are intrinsically inclined towards the free market system as shown by the increasing demand for an equitable distribution of wealth" (p. 157). Thus, he dismisses the notion that the trade unions have successfully educated the black workers in the perception that apartheid and capitalism are 'hand in glove' and suggests that revolutionary rhetoric does not necessarily produce a commitment to the class struggle. In Marxist terms the conflict between capital and labour is perceived as inherent and inevitable and must ultimately resolve itself via confrontation. Ncube's conclusion that "trade unions divert and change conflict from a destructive pathology to a positive therapy" (p. 163) is clearly an endorsement of the 'Pluralistic Perspective' which holds that accommodation is possible.

STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE

Ncube's entry into the debate concerning the impact that black trade unionism will have upon the broader struggle for change in South Africa is timely. In a recent article, Martin Legassick has argued that there is a growing school of thought within the ranks of the ANC — which as a 'liberation' organisation has been committed to guerilla warfare and violence — that the mobilisation of the black working force might be more successful in establishing a workers' democracy.[1] (Which is not to say, as Chief Buthelezi does, that the newly-formed federation of trade unions, COSATU, is a front for the ANC). While Legassick holds the view that the dismantling of apartheid necessitates the overthrow of capitalism, apologists for the latter (but not necessarily the former) foresee a different role for the trade union movement. For instance, Bobby Godsell, Chairman of the Manpower Committee of the FCI, has stated that if collective bargaining failed, unions would be replaced by more truly revolutionary forms of organisation. He argued that "unions made poor vehicles for revolution, but that they could play a pre-revolutionary role in destabilising the current order and preparing the stage for radical change".[2] It would seem that the question being contended is not whether trade unionism will play a part in the struggle for change but what the nature of that role will or should be.

The past few years have seen the emergence of the trade union movement as arguably the most important focus of black mobilisation in South Africa. For, as Ncube points out, "as long as there are no sufficiently acceptable and legitimate political structures to channel Black political aspirations and frustrations, Black trade unions could unavoidably and increasingly be used to express political feelings and/or pledge solidarity with Black community organisations" (p. 157). For the politically impotent black working classes the organisation of labour has provided an outlet for the manifestation of discontent with regard to socio-economic and political grievances. Trade unions have resisted government attempts to restrict their activities to negotiating pay and conditions at factory level and have involved themselves in campaigns (such as consumer boycotts) waged by community and political organisations. While certain trade unions have affiliated themselves to the UDF, they have not forfeited their autonomy for they see as their primary political role the building up of a strong, united, independent trade union movement.[3] The formation of COSATU is in line with this strategy.

STRATEGY

Since the days of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), black trade unions have wrestled with the problem of what strategy to employ in attaining their goals (of which they themselves have not always been certain). They have equivocated between limiting their actions to the field of labour and assuming an overtly political posture. The ICU was an amorphous body of unskilled workers which relied on strength of numbers and organised as a mass movement. Unlike craft unions whose bargaining power lies in their monopoly of skills, the ICU could not flex sufficient economic muscle on the factory floor to win concessions on behalf of the workers. After a decade, the ICU collapsed with no tangible success despite it being representative of the largest labour movement in South African history. Friedman believes that the answer is for the unions to establish an organisational base in the factories by transforming mass mobilisation into an enduring power base.[4] Since the partial implementation of the Wiehahn 'dispensation' the Government has accorded black trade unions a measure of recognition and industrial action is an area in which black workers have made apparent gains. Many strikes have seen participants win concessions and an increasing number of employers have reacted to this upsurge of worker militancy by seeking to accommodate the unions. It is the spectre of economic failure that haunts the trade union movement, for it is ultimately her economic muscle that determines her political bargaining power.

To return to the book under review, a weakness is evident in the writer's attempt to set the historical stage for the development of black trade unions in South Africa. His periodisation is confusing and rather tenuously and unconvincingly related to the theme. It appears as rather odd to the reviewer that Afrikaner nationalism is set in the context of British imperialism and yet its development is not traced through the period of increasing Afrikaner assetiveness, particularly in the economic field, which culminated in the political victory of 1948. The relevance of the Afrikaner's experience of capitalism and trade unionism in understanding his response to the emergent black unions and how this shaped labour relations after 1948 would seem to be obvious. Afrikaner nationalism was the midwife of apartheid, to that extent which it emphasised the preservation of a racial identity, and, hence, a factor which impinged on the development of black trade unionism.

Numerous errors of fact in the historical background sketch detract from the accuracy and reliability of this publication. For instance, the shootings in Port Elizabeth in October 1920 occurred as a result of the crowd's threat to use force to obtain the release of Masabalala from the Baakens Street Police Station and it had not "assembled to attend a mass meeting to be addressed by him and Kadalie" (p.31). Hertzog's Nationalist Party erroneously becomes "Socialist" in name and policy (pp. 34-5). Following Bonner[5], the writer refers to the ICU's "elitist form of leadership" (p.47) and shows no acquaintance with Bradford's finding which question the assumed petit-bourgeois background of its leaders[6]. In fact, Ncube's interpretation often relies on an uncritical appraisal of secondary sources — the research involved no primary source material.

The book also has little academic merit with regard to its style. Quotations are strung together rather tenuously by a text which does not develop it's own synthesis. The 'scissors and paste' method which is used extensively is not a good advertisement for the launch of a new series by the publishers. In spite of the reviewer's reservations about this publication, it would not be amiss to repeat the observation that it is easier to criticise than it would have been to write this book.□

References:

[1]Legassick, M. 'Apartheid and the Struggle for Workers' Democracy', *Die Suid Afrikaan*, Winter 1985, no. 4 p. 24

[2]Cited in Cooper, C., et al, *Race Relations Survey 1984* (South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1985), p. 337

[3]Friedman, S. 'Emerging Unions', *Reality*, Vol. 15, no. 5, August 1983, p. 4

[4]Friedman, S. 'Political Implications of Industrial Unrest in South Africa', *Africa Perspective*, No. 18, 1981, p. 6

[5]Bonner, P. 'The decline and the fall of the ICU — a case of self-destruction', in E. Webster (ed), *Essays in Southern Labour History* (Johannesburg, 1978), p. 114

[6]Bradford, H. 'Mass movement and the Petty Bourgeoisie: the Social Origins of the ICU Leadership', *Journal of African History*, 25, 1984, pp 295-310 passim.

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