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USUTHU !

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in this issue . . .

EDITORIAL

THE STRIKES

White South Africa can think itself lucky that it seems to have emerged from the strike situation having used and encountered the minimum of violence. What makes strikers dance and sing is a difficult question. But only a fool believes that the dancing and the singing are simply what they appear to be. They conceal emotive forces which could sweep our society away.

So much has been written about the strikes, and so many opinions have been expressed, that REALITY can do no more than set out the plain and simple truth as to why they happened, and what must be done to avoid their happening again.

The idea that the strikes were the work of "agitators" is grotesque. In fact the contrary appears to be true, and ironically, it was their absence that gave the strikes their power. The strikers were not striking to topple the government. They were striking against their miserable wages. They were striking for wives, children, education, food, and relief from the burden of never-ending poverty. They were striking against a system that puts profits before people. And for the first time in the history of our country, a large proportion of the white population conceded the justice of their cause. Some of these were people who had never thought of it before. Here tribute must be paid to those writers, speakers, teachers, students, trade unionists, and to those organisations that have made the poverty datum line a concept which has now taken up permanent occupancy of South African minds.

The concept of the poverty datum line has proved a powerful weapon in the hands of workers and all those who strive to advance their interests. The poverty datum wage does not allow of any luxury. But any worker who earns less is not receiving justice. A worker who earns half of the poverty datum wage is living in grinding poverty. And a worker who earns one-third of it is unspeakably poor.

Another cause of the strikes was the lack of communication, and the lack of any machinery of communication, between employer and worker. As Mr. Hemson points out in this issue, in his article USUTHU, the works committees, which are legal organs, are useless for raising the standard of wages. In any case there are less than 20 functioning works committees in the whole country. We believe that the establishment of trade unions for workers at present excluded is imperative.

There is another reform that is urgent. The Prime Minister has said that the government will learn the lessons of the strikes. It is imperative that there should be a revision of

minimum wages, and an overhaul of the wage determination machinery. What kind of wage determination is it that allows an employer to pay a woman worker R3,50 per week, and a male worker R6,50 per week? And what kind of society allows it?

There is yet another reform that is needed. There are some employers who are not in the least concerned about labour wastage. The wages are low and therefore the factory can get by. This employer is the first to complain of the low productivity of his workers, and therefore to justify the payment of poverty wages. It is clear that there are some inferior factories which profit by labour wastage. It is to be hoped that the Prime Minister will encourage the employers of labour to investigate the need for the more intensive training of workers, a training not necessarily confined to the job in hand, so that the employer can afford to pay better wages. The vast majority of African workers have never received any secondary education.

At least one more reform is required. Inflation, which now seems to be endemic, soon erodes pay rises. It is time that all wages, all earnings of all people, should be increased regularly to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

Whether the Government will join in consultation with employers is at the moment doubtful. If it discharges its duty in regard to wage determination, that would be something. But it is the largest employer of all. Then let it at least set a proper example, taking as its guide the words of the Prime Minister that workers are not labour units but people.

REALITY would like to reiterate another truth which it would like to see take permanent occupancy of our minds. We shall never be able to build any worthwhile kind of society, whether common or federal or multi-national, while there is this gross disparity between white income and black income. And there is no better place to begin than with the wages of the workers. But it is only a beginning.

It would be fatal to be satisfied with the progress that has been made in the last few weeks. The rises are far from spectacular. In some cases they are disgusting, when one considers the misery of the conditions against which the workers were striking. White South Africa is at the moment experiencing a pleasant euphoria, largely because the confrontation that it dreads has again been avoided.

There is nothing to be euphoric about. We live in a parasitic society, in which whites live off blacks and blacks live off whites. Until all South Africans can feel that this society belongs to them, there can be no peace. There are signs that more white South Africans are beginning to understand this, for which we must be thankful. But the pace is perilously slow. One can only wish Good Luck to all those South Africans of whatever party or persuasion who are trying to speed it up.□

SPRO-CAS : MOTIVATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

by Peter Randall

We are a deeply divided society and the needs of the black community and those of the white community are very different. To attempt to meet those needs through a "traditional" multi-racial strategy is likely to be unsuccessful – there is much evidence of this in our past history – and hence Spro-cas 2 is clearly demarcated into Black Community Programs and White Consciousness Programs, each with its own director and staff, the former based in Durban and the latter in Johannesburg. (Since a description of the Black Community Programs should clearly only be provided by those engaged in them, I shall refer interested readers to the BCP Director, Mr. Bennie A. Khoapa).

Spro-cas 2 is the second phase of a project working for a more just social order in South Africa. The initials stand for Special Project for Christian Action in Society. Spro-cas 2 is a follow-up to the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (Spro-cas 1), which began in mid-1969. The entire project is due to finish at the end of 1973, although certain independent on-going activities may emerge from it.

Spro-cas is sponsored by the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute. It thus has links with both the institutional Church and Christian bodies working in specialised fields. The work of Spro-cas is itself

specialised and limited. It does not attempt to do the work of the Church, but to assist the Church in a specific way. It seeks some vision of what South African society could be if Christianity was taken seriously, and in what way churches, organisations, institutions, government departments and individuals can work towards such a society.

The specifically Christian dimension underlying the work of Spro-cas has been spelt out by my colleague, the Rev. Danie van Zyl, who identifies five biblical principles:

the principle of change and renewal
the principle of concern for life
the principle of Christian participation
the principle of Stewardship, and
the principle of human worth.

The document in which Mr. van Zyl deals with these principles is available on request from Spro-cas. Let me merely quote two brief extracts as illustrative of the ethical concerns which guide us:

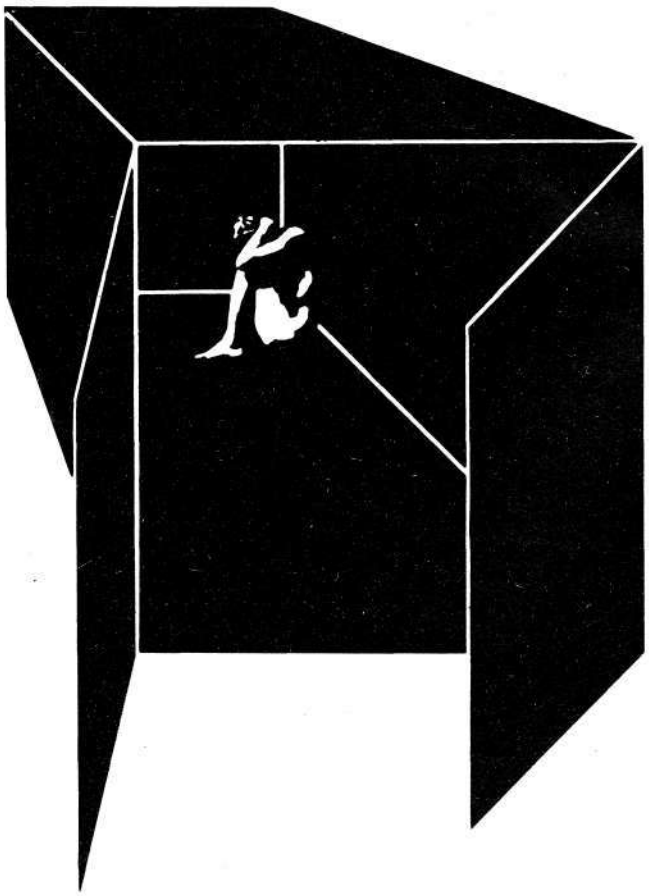
"Not only are we stewards of our own lives and abilities, but also of the land we live in, the soil, the water, and the air. We are also stewards of the social processes under our control, whether it be as employer, committee member, or driver of a motor vehicle. It seems that westeners too often operate on a principle of ownership implying a responsibility only to self, whereas the bible suggests rather a management principle where we are entrusted with resources and are responsible in using them to both God and our fellowman. . . ."

And: "The freedom of the Christian is a freedom to be true man loved by Christ and free to love. Christian love overcomes the alienation between man and man. Christian love denounces as false all that restricts his freedom, all that oppresses him, all that alienates him from his fellows".

Besides these Christian principles, which allow us no option but to see ourselves as needing to be active collaborators in social change in our situation, we base our approach on a number of assumptions about the nature of our society and strategies for change. These can be only briefly outlined in this article.

One of our assumptions is that white people will always remain in South Africa, and that the groups will thus have to achieve a basis for co-existence, involving participation in both political and economic structures. We believe that the search for an alternative society that will make this possible is only just beginning.

We accept that fundamental change in South Africa – in the sense of a *radical redistribution of power, land and wealth* – will ultimately be initiated and brought about by blacks. We thus believe that the Black Community Programs are both potentially and actually the most important single aspect of Spro-cas, and the white staff have taken a deliberate decision to phase the white programs out before the end of the project in favour of the black ones, if we are unable to meet our full budget requirements for the year. It is significant that the B.C.P.'s share of the total Spro-cas budget has increased from about 20 per cent to more than 50 per cent over the past year.



The crucial question for whites opposed to the status quo is how effective they are in working for change (much of our own thinking in this regard is shaped by the excellent chapters on Strategies for Change in *Towards Social Change,* the report of the Spro-cas Social Commission). The immediate question for white opponents of the status quo is whether they seek to be reformist or radical. For decades liberal whites have sought to exhort and convert the white masses. That this is largely a futile and even counter-productive exercise hardly needs stating. The Social Report clearly indicates the hopelessness of reacting to superficial events in our national life, which "alternately ignite or extinguish sporadic flickers of hope for change." This sensitivity to the superficial "blinds many people to the lessons of past decades, during which the basic structure of inequality has persisted despite many marginal adjustments in political terminology and practice" *(Towards Social Change* p. 158).

The necessary starting point for work for change then is an understanding of the basic social forces in our country. The reports of the various Spro-cas study commissions and the publications of the Black Community Programs have helped us to understand just how profoundly entrenched in our social system are the basic patterns of inequality, injustice and discrimination which have endured despite "marginal adjustments". That they run right into all our social institutions, including the body of the church itself, is clearly revealed in the report of the Church Commission, and in a subsequent survey which Spro-cas carried out

into the wages and conditions of work of black employees in white church schools (the average wage, for example, was R36 p.m., and one church school in the Transvaal worked its black employees for ten hours a day, seven days a week, and paid theman average of R18 p.m.)

It is necessary at the same time to recognise that we are all part and parcel of a system of exploitation, and if we are white we inevitably enjoy the benefits of this whether we consciously wish to or not. We are thus, in black eyes, part of the problem. It is our decision whether we wish rather to become part of the solution. Our understanding of the moral imperative sketched above seems to leave us with no option.

At the same time the system of exploitation (perhaps the most effective form of labour exploitation, more effective even than slavery, according to the Spro-cas Economics Commission) which provides us with material benefits, also damages us gravely, reducing our liberty and lessening our humanity. To recognise the harm being done to us, as whites, is probably a necessary starting point for effective work towards change. The concept of "white consciousness", which embraces this, is explored in *White Liberation,* published by Spro-cas in February, and edited by my colleague, Horst Kleinschmidt.

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Realising that we are necessarily limited by certain realities of the South African situation, including the draconian powers contained in legislation, we yet aim for a radical approach, i.e. in the sense of going to the roots of the problem – power and wealth. Merely to list the pre-conditions that the Economics Commission found to be necessary for fundamental change (radical redistribution of power, land and wealth referred to earlier) indicates both the extent of the task and the dimensions of the new society:

- the right of all people to effective political power
- the right of all workers to belong to legally recognised trade unions
- a significant redistribution of land
- a significant redistribution of wealth and income
- radical changes to the existing educational system, and the right of all to equal access to education
- the right of all people to effective social security benefits.

(Power, Privilege & Poverty, p. 104)

Recognising that such fundamental change may not in fact be possible within the present political and economic structures, we seek to pose really radical alternatives, and see the urgent need for a serious consideration of socialism and such concepts as participatory democracy and workers' control. (See, for example, *The Eye of the Needle* by Richard Turner, reviewed in the January issue of *Reality.)*

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The white staff of Spro-cas see our task as primarily within the white community, to prepare it for fundamental change, and to bring about such meaningful reform as possible (as, for example, contained in some of the recommendations of the six Spro-cas Commission reports). We are committed to working for the liberation of white people as a part of the creation of a liberated society. Part of this task is the need to communicate effectively with our own community, and we try to do this not only through our growing body of publications, which range from a scholarly study of Migrant Labour by Dr. Francis Wilson to a collection of poems *(Cry Rage!)* by two black writers, and our posters, dossiers, study aids and background papers, but also through small group workshops and seminars and public meetings (such as a series of lectures on 'The Need for Reform in South Africa,' to be held in Johannesburg during February – March). We see the need to be experimental and flexible, and to risk the inevitable controversies.

We see, as part of this, a need to work as effectively as possible to modify those structures to which we have access (in church, education and the economic structure), and hence we have been pursuing programs in these three areas and will continue to do so until Spro-cas ends. Workshops, seminars and public conferences form part of this, as do participation in the events of "change" organisations, and the provision of resource material and personnel to assist such organisations. Another feature of this is our contact and co-ordination program which seeks to assist "change" organisations to plan effectively and to co-ordinate their efforts. We also provide consultancy services and are collecting relevant audio-visual and other resources.

I am very conscious that these notes are much more an attempt to sketch the rationale for Spro-cas than a detailed description of our work. But the work is meaningful only in the context of our motivation and our understanding of the situation, and those who are really interested can always enquire further. Spro-cas is a short-term project and not an organisation, and is thus constantly moving and changing to meet new issues and new situations. One of our freedoms is that we do not have a vested interest in self-perpetuation.□

USUTHU !

by David Hemson

It is difficult to begin to comprehend the origin, cost, and likely effects of the series of strikes which paralysed the Durban-Pinetown-Hammarsdale industrial complex in the last few weeks. This is not to say that some of the strikes have not been expected (trade unionists in touch with African workers put out specific warnings before the strikes) but certainly nobody anticipated the popularity and internal dynamism of the strikers.

In all cases where strikes had been anticipated and the management warned by the Textile Workers' Industrial Union the approaches were snubbed. Early warnings were ignored by most firms.

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The workers milling about outside the factories, to a large extent leaderless, but with heightened expectations and the weight of numbers, are testament to the lack of recognition of African unionism. The government obviously prefers the chaos of shop floor demands which can range tremendously between a desired wage and a negotiable demand, and which are so difficult to reduce to specific industrial problems, to organised industrial unionism for all workers.

At times the signs of chaos have been overwhelming. Anyone who was in Jacobs in the past few weeks must have felt exhilaration with seeing thousands of workers pouring into the streets on their way home in the early afternoon. At times there has been a happy holiday atmosphere as the workers spurred each other to action crying "Usuthu", the old warcry of the Zulu nations and currently the rallying cry of the popular soccer team, the Zulu Royals.

But behind the rising wage demands lay a clear perception of the needs of their families. Predominant in justification for considerable wage demands was the desire to educate their children, to feed and clothe the family, to pay the rent, and get to and from work. The beginning of the new year brought exhaustion of the holiday pay, needs for uniforms and books, and steep rises in transport costs. The timing of the increase in train fares was guaranteed to bring a response in the boycott.

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Throughout the strikes the affirmation of the humanity of the African workers and the humour of the poor were evident. 'We are not children who make a noise for no reason', said one of the textile workers at a mass meeting. 'We are men and women who want to see if tomorrow can be better than today because today is a struggle which is very heavy and we would like to have hope for the future.' 'Everything costs more these days', said another. 'It even costs more to sleep! The blankets I weave I cannot buy in the shops.'

The strikes have been more widespread and determined than at any time previous in South African history. Apart from the strikes at Durban, Pinetown, and Hammarsdale there were also strikes at Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone and Umzinto. They centred around fundamental economic goals: higher wages, long service bonuses, better working conditions, and upward mobility for African workers. Altogether 120 firms were affected and more than 60 000 workers have been on strike. At times the waves of strikes have approached a general strike; on one day 32 000 workers were on strike.

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The strikes spread not through the use of skilled agitators, but through the force of example. Labour unrest in Durban was built up to a crescendo, from the Durban stevedoring strike to the Coronation brick strike, and then suddenly it swept through the factories.

From the docks which is the traditional centre of labour unrest, worker action spread to the factories which should be comparatively better off. In its sweep the strike movement included Dunlops, which has been developing a model industrial relations system within the present industrial legal context, and Smith and Nephew, which pays considerably higher wages than other textile factories in Natal

Because most of the strikes have centred around Durban commentators have sought answers in the level of wages in Durban. But although Durban has nothing to be proud of it is no worse than other South African towns.

Drawing a line at R10 a week is useful since it distinguishes the percentage of workers in dire poverty, whose families are not likely to survive in the long run and who are most susceptible to socio-economic diseases. It has also been the rallying cry of the South African Congress of Trade Unions; a cry which sparked numerous strikes in the late fifties: '£1 a day! ' The following figures show the position throughout the country.

Area	Percentage earning R10 per week or less
Bloemfontein	85
Kimberley	80
Ladysmith	74
East London	62
Pretoria	48
Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging, Sasolburg	42

Pietermaritzburg	24
Cape Town	20
Durban/Pinetown	20
Witwatersrand (central)	20
West Rand	18
East Rand	11
Port Elizabeth Uitenhage	7

Workers earning less than R10 are excluded from any benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act and are highly vulnerable to family disaster from the illness of the male earner. From a recent nation-wide survey it has been shown that at least 31,6 per cent of African industrial workers are earning less than R10 per week. But as we can see, the proportion of workers in desperate need is the same for all the three major industrial areas, Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg.

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For an explanation of the wage crisis in Durban we must look for other reasons apart from the primary one of low wages. As we have shown Durban fares no better or worse than other major industrial centres. But the difference lies in the fact that African workers in Durban are a homogeneous workforce (virtually all Zulu-speaking) who are undergoing a revolution in consciousness. They are beginning to feel hope for the future, and hope as we know is a revolutionary force. African workers are steadily gaining confidence in their work; many know they are doing skilled and rewarding work, and are becoming aware how job reservation has denied them better work opportunities. The widespread currency of the idea of the poverty line and its publicity showed the African workers that objective standards of minimum physical requirements exist: at an engineering firm the workers in support of their wage demand waved a pamphlet summarising the opinions of Professor Hilstan Watts.

But undoubtedly the most important factor of all was the relative deprivation of the African worker in the Durban area. The cost of living index has risen there fastest of all urban areas, and these price increases have hit African workers the hardest. Real wages have been virtually stagnant at a time when expectations were rising: the contradiction burst into strike action. One worker told me: 'When we asked for increases our boss gave 55 cent. I would like to give my boss 55 cents and ask him to try to buy his children a piece of meat for 55 cents! ' More than any series of strikes before, this series has been concerned with fundamental material issues, and the wage demands were symptomatic of a desire for a complete change in life. 'When I come to work I use the bus even in the rain; but the whites come in their cars. Why should I spend my life kicking the frogs out of my path? ' Behind the strikes is the revolt of a people who are economically disadvantaged, insecure in work and accommodation, and who are now becoming aware of new possibilities.

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The strikes brought some immediate relief to workers. Generally increases ranging from an immediate R1 to R1,50 were given in the textile industry. The Municipal workers got an increase of R2, at Motor Assemblies an escalating increase of R4,50, and generally wages are being revised by managers fearing strikes in their factories. Whether or not employers are considering the long term implications of paying their workers a living wage is, of course, another matter.

Durban workers on strike (Photo: Natal Witness)

The strikes broke out in a certain pattern. The following characteristics can now be drawn of the typically strike-bound factory:

- **Low wages (generally below R10 for most workers)**
- **Poor labour relations (anti-union, no works committee)**
- **Oppressive management (hiring and firing, high labour turnover, victimisation, informers)**

No company in South Africa has been entirely free of these conditions, but most observers were surprised to see even Dunlops fall, although this may be attributed to job insecurity as sections of the factory move out to the border areas. As the strike movement gained momentum factories without all these characteristics collapsed under pressure. The workers demanded that their fellows in the better paid factories join them in a common demand.

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Another feature of the strikes has been that trade unions have generally been absent. Only the Textile and Garment Unions have tried to play an active role in negotiations between striking workers and terrified management. In other cases the role of the unions has been peripheral. The reasons are not far to seek; many unions lack recognition from management, others are not at all interested in African workers, those who are fear rebuke from the Department of Labour for negotiating on behalf of workers who are not members, and finally there is the surveillance of the Security Police.

It has often been said that South Africa has an ideal industrial relations system in the form of the industrial council on which the workers and managers are represented. Although many of the factories experiencing strikes are covered by industrial councils, however, their officials have made few attempts at mediation and generally have sided openly with the management. The industrial councils contain no legitimacy whatsoever for African workers who protest that they are bound by agreements between white and coloured unions and managers.

The only legal organ which can be used by African workers is the works committee. But the committees which existed did not stop the strikes or bring back the strikers. Works committees are tightly controlled by management and in most cases are not permitted to talk about wages. Inevitably wage demands come directly from the shop floor. The works committees can be useful in the investigation and settling of individual complaints, but are quite unable to put forward a general demand for just wages. During a strike the works committees have proved themselves to be quite irrelevant. When the action began the leaders faded away: 'We want the money first, then we will talk about representatives! '

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The strikes broke out in a certain pattern. First to fall were the worst firms having the three characteristics I have outlined, but then the strikes spread street by street and area by area. It is well known that African workers travelling to work and in the streets know a lot more about what is going on than white people who have a limited social network and who don't address strangers. Under these social conditions communication and comparison was extremely easy without requiring roving agitators.

Strikes spread most notably down streets: Gillitts Road in Pinetown, and Chamberlain Road in Jacobs. In Gillitts Road first hit was Consolidated Woolwashing and Processing Mills, the lowest paying factory in the street, then followed Smith and Nephew, Hume Cement Products, Durban Concrete Fencing, again Smith and Nephew, and finally the Huski Group. It is quite probable that since workers use the same transport and live in the same area that they could talk to striking workers and then copy their example.

Later the strikes spread throughout industrial areas, and then to other towns, giving the impression of a general strike.

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Central to the strike situation has been the police who have appeared automatically at all disputes. The English language nespapers have been prolific in their praise of the police who did not enforce the numerous laws against striking, but in fact they had little choice. The whole purpose of anti-strike legislation is to get the workers back to work and workers in jail make no profits for the firm. In a 'leaderless' situation the only alternative could be to arrest the whole labour force of 60 000 who had been on strike.

There can be no doubt that the deployment of police even at completely peaceful strikes was done to show the attitude of the state and to enforce settlements in an atmosphere of repression. The use of police in camouflaged uniforms driving in army trucks was designed to reinforce settlement at whatever terms the employers chose to provide.

It is difficult to say whether the strikes have had any real impression on management. The Natal Employers' Association has adopted an anti-worker stance and has moved the employers away from conciliation to a 'take it or leave it' offensive. The Director in a number of meetings of employers has sniped away at the validity of the poverty datum line in an attempt to evade the fact that the African wages are poverty wages. It is not quite certain what was discussed at a number of 'private' meetings held between various employers and employers' associations, but one strong current of thought is opposed to setting the poverty datum line as a target for African wages, and proposes rather wages between R12 – R15 for the male wage earner. The current poverty datum line as estimated by Prof. L. Schlemmer is R19,30 per week.

Some employers have taken advantage of the strike situation, have fired the whole labour force and then taken them on again at lower wage rates. Incredible bitterness is being built up against such employers.

If the employers are not prepared to realise that a new situation has developed and that the time has passed for quibbling about African poverty, the mass strikes of the past weeks will be only a forerunner of further mass discontent. □

SHEPSTONE, NATAL AND THE ROOTS OF SEGREGATION

A review of "The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Natal 1845- 1910" by David Welsh (Oxford University Press, 1971. R8,00)

by Edgar Brookes

Sixty years ago in the Natal High Schools the political hero of Natal was Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Russell's "Natal", in the writing of which he was consulted, did full justice, perhaps a little more than justice, to his achievements. At a much more recent date the University of Natal claimed and was accorded, the honour of incorporating the Shepstone crest in its armorial bearings. Now comes David Welsh and in the best tradition of modern historical biography he "debunks", with erudition and brilliance, Shepstone and all his doings. Where does the truth lie?

"Native policy" in pre-Union Natal has been described as "embalmed Shepstonism plus acquisitiveness". In the 1870's the Shepstone policy had become a fixed tradition. It amounted to the segregation of the Africans in scattered Reserves, under the rule of Chiefs; the encouragement of the tribal system; the recognition of tribal customary law; and the discouragement – or at best the somewhat reluctant tolerance – of the spread of white civilisation among them. This, we may say, is the basis of Nationalist policy, but Nationalism is more liberal than Shepstonism: Sir Theophilus never envisaged a University of Zululand.

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One of the main points which comes out of this study – perfectly valid if not of the first importance – is that apartheid is neither an Afrikaans nor a Nationalist discovery. It originated in English-speaking Natal; it was frequently approved by the Colonial Office; Rhodesia consciously borrowed it from Natal. Even the Milner Commission of 1903-5 reported in favour of separation in land ownership and separation in the franchise, and provided the basis for the Natives' Land Act of 1913 and General Hertzog's Representation of Natives Act of 1936. The cause of Liberalism is not advanced by presenting it as the English reaction against Afrikaner obscurantism. Shepstonism was repugnant to W.P. Schreiner, Onze Jan, President Steyn and Professor B.B. Keet; it was supported by Sir John Robinson, Sir Herbert Sloley, Dr. Jameson (at least in Rhodesia) and Sir Frederick Moor.

It is not quite fair to put all the blame on to Natal. The system of Reserves began in the Cape sixteen or seventeen years earlier than in Shepstone's Colony. Even the much-lauded Transkeian system was based on territorial separation. But the later Shepstone policy was more thoroughgoing than that of the Cape, more lauded (not least by the Colonial Office) and more systematised.

We speak of the "later" Shepstone policy. It must be remembered to Sir Theophilus's credit that when he first recommended the placing of Africans in Reserves he coupled with this the recommendation that missionaries and educational institutions should be encouraged in each Reserve. It was only when all monetary aid was refused him that he fell back on the tribal system. Not only missionaries but magistrates were refused him: he *had* to resuscitate and encourage the tribal system in order to have government at all.

Out of his improvisations, both brilliant and necessary, he and others built a theory. The second-best became the ideal. The great Karl Marx once said of himself, in one of his all too rare moments of humour: "I am not a Marxist", but Shepstone never seems to have said, "I am not a Shepstonian". He was willing to accept the good opinions of the Colonial Office of the 1870's for a policy forced on him by the parsimony and unimaginativeness of the Colonial Office of the 1840's. By the time of the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 he had come to believe blindly and deeply in the "Shepstone policy".

That this analysis is correct can be illustrated in two ways.

In the early years of Natal's existence as a Crown Colony the elected members of the Legislative Council were to a man against Shepstone: in the 1870's they were all for him.

No one will accuse Bishop Colenso of being a reactionary. More than any other early Natalian he strove for the education of the Zulus. In the earlier years of his episcopate he was the close friend and admirer of Theophilus Shepstone. From the time of the Langilabalele episode (1872) he became Shepstone's unsparing critic.

Once he had started on this downward slope, Shepstone slid a long way. He must undoubtedly bear a large share of blame for the Zulu War of 1879 and for the failure of the restoration of Cetshwayo in 1883. The Zulu royal family came to hate the very name of Shepstone. It is a little-known but thoroughly attested fact that Doris Shepstone, a liberal and otherwise an excellent candidate, lost the Senate election of 1937 largely because the Zulu royal family would not support anyone who bore that hated name.

Thus far David Welsh has amply proved his case. But he and others do less than justice to the early Shepstone. He is criticised by some for putting the Africans into Reserves. What else was he to do in the conditions of the 1840's? Even Dr. John Philip, even Dr. Lindley, even Sir George

Grey, believed that some such provision was necessary, as indeed it was. Surely it is hind-sight which assumes that Shepstone ought to have known that the Reserves were going to become warrens of barbarism. There was a famous controversy between Shepstone in his last years and President Reitz on this matter: those who support President Reitz must commit themselves to the view that the Free State system of distributing almost the whole African population on European farms as farm labourers was better than a Reserve policy.

Inadequate justice has been done to the epic fight which the young Theophilus Shepstone (only in his early thirties and with no great influence behind him) put up against the colonists, Sir Harry Smith and Benjamin Pine, to preserve some land for the Africans and to prevent them from becoming merely cheap labour for white farmers. At the time it was the best thing he could do for them. It cost him popularity and peace. His motivation can only have been a sense of justice.

David Welsh has proved to the hilt that "the evil that Shepstone did lived after him". May we also plead that the good he did in his early years may not be "interred with his bones". □

Sir Theophilus Shepstone

FALLACIES OF

" THE WHITE ENLIGHTENMENT "

by John Wright

Natal readers of Reality may remember the angry reaction of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Executive Councillor of the Zulu Territorial Authority, to a leading article that appeared in the Natal Mercury in September last year under the headline 'Evolutionary Currents'. The article took Chief Buthelezi to task for referring to certain whites as 'those who keep me in the shackles of slavery', and went on to put forward the Mercury's own interpretations of 'the real slavery' of South Africa's black peoples and to make a number of general assessments of their history and culture. In a long and sharply critical reply, Chief Buthelezi rejected the Mercury's arguments as an example of 'white paternalistic arrogance' and expressed in no uncertain terms the depth of his disillusion with the politics of white 'moderation'. His letter, with a reprint of the offending article, was published in the Mercury on October 2.

In its own way each is an important document. In showing the intensity of the resentment felt by black South Africans when they see themselves as patronized by whites, Chief Buthelezi's letter focuses closer attention on the Mercury's article than would normally be given to a newspaper editorial. 'Evolutionary Currents' turns out, in fact, to be the most revealing example to appear for some time of that newspaper's periodic commentaries on the particular characteristics of South Africa's racial groups. While the Mercury's editorial judgements are not usually distinguished by any great degree of insight, its position as a large metropolitan newspaper with a predominantly white readership lends some importance to its leading articles as indicators of white public opinion, and especially of white attitudes to African culture and African achievements. It is admittedly a dangerous exercise to try to deduce the state of public opinion from newspaper articles alone, but it seems a safe enough assumption that most of the Mercury's white readers – and the great majority of white South Africans – would accept the important cultural and historical judgements

contained in Evolutionary Currents' without question. The article is therefore worth some comment, the more especially as it provoked so strong a reaction from one of Southern Africa's foremost black leaders. It is reproduced here in full.

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The patience and forbearance with which leaders of the Bantu homeland governments endure the frustrations of separate development is often admirable. They have a good case and sound arguments on their side. It is therefore all the more regrettable when they occasionally lapse into extravagant and nonsensical over-statement, as Chief Gatsha Buthelezi did this week when he referred to Whites as "those who keep me in the shackles of slavery."

Even allowing for a generous measure of hyperbole, that statement bears no relation to reality. This sort of talk antagonises even moderate and enlightened Whites and does not serve the cause of African advancement.

The real slavery of most of Black Africa, including countries that have won their political freedom, is the bondage of ignorance and primitiveness from which it is slowly and painfully emerging.

The impact of an advanced Western civilisation territorially superimposed on the primitiveness of Africa has given the African new standards, new desires and new expectations without necessarily giving him the means of realising them through his own efforts.

South African Whites are neither more nor less altruistic than other people. Where nothing existed before, they have by their enterprise and initiative built up for themselves and their children a way of life based on their inherited civilisation. They have claimed their rewards, sometimes too greedily and selfishly perhaps, but they have also shared, not generously enough perhaps, their achievements and their institutions, bringing progress and striking an evolutionary spark in a dormant wilderness

The disparity in levels of advancement is not a question of superiority or inferiority in terms of human dignity or worth. It is simply a fact of history.

To talk of the "shackles of slavery" in these circumstances, and at the stone-laying of a new educational building for Africans, is laying it on a bit thick.

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It would be difficult to find a more concise statement of the stereotypes which most white South Africans adopt in their common practice of disparaging 'black' in comparison with 'white' culture. Underlying the article's whole line of reasoning is the unquestioning assumption that the black man needs to be 'advanced'. It is not stated from where to where he must advance: it is axiomatic that he must move away from his 'primitive' traditional ways towards accepting the new standards, new desires and new expectations provided for him by an 'advanced Western civilization'. What constitutes this civilization is not defined, nor is there any recognition of the fact that African culture might have some 'advanced' merits of its own. It is simply taken for granted that 'African' is synonymous with 'primitive' and 'Western' with 'civilized'. This sort of thinking rests on two great fallacies: that some cultures are more 'advanced' than others, and that white South African society is part of what is called 'Western civilization'. The first is directly descended from the social Darwinism that was current in Western ideology in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to this view, history was the record of the evolution of human societies from 'lower' to 'higher' stages of development, as in the case of animal organisms, with higher races and cultures distinguished from the lower by their greater moral virtues and greater technological accomplishments.

This idea has long since been rejected by most social scientists, but in its time it was a very convenient philosophy for the colonial powers, who could use it to justify their forcible seizure of overseas territories in terms of the need to uplift and enlighten the 'primitive' indigenous peoples. In the same way as the Afrikaner people justified, and still justify, their history of land-grabbing and exploitation of black labour in terms of the Calvinist doctrine of the superiority of the chosen few, so English-speaking South Africans, less inclined to accept religious dogmas than the Afrikaners, but still needing a moral justification for sharing in the suppression of black South Africans, found it in the idea that 'Western' peoples were superior to Africans and therefore entitled to subdue them and guide them towards 'civilization'. In a more sophisticated form, this idea still survives strongly in the policies of the United Party and in the leading articles of newspapers such as the *Mercury*, though it is worth pointing out that not one of South Africa's fifteen other major English-language dailies and weeklies manages to put across quite so unthinking a white supremacist line as the *Mercury*.

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It is extremely difficult to get to grips with the sort of argument, as put forward by the *Mercury,* that bandies about vague and subjective terms like 'advancement', 'primitiveness' and 'civilization' without defining them. The *Mercury* does at least make the claim that it is not assessing differing degrees of 'advancement' in terms of human worth, though its use of the word 'primitive', with its strong connotations of inferiority, would seem to constitute a flat contradiction of its assertion. If, however, one accepts its statement, the only conclusion is that 'advancement' in the *Mercury's* view means 'technological advancement': that societies with sophisticated technologies are more advanced in all ways that count than are those without. One wearies of pointing out the naivety and clumsiness of this view, but it is popular among white South Africans who, of all peoples, need to be told over and over that mere possession of technical knowledge is no guarantee at all that it will be used responsibly. The usual examples advanced in support of this denial are those of Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Imperialist Japan and other regimes classified by the 'free world' as 'unfree', but all the so-called civilized nations have examples of barbaric behaviour standing to their discredit.

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In any case, the ranking of societies in a hierarchy of 'advancement' is a largely meaningless exercise when levels of advancement cannot but be judged subjectively. When white South Africans claim that they are more 'advanced' than blacks, what they should be saying is that they hold power over blacks: that through historical circumstances they have

been far more active in seizing and holding political power in southern Africa than have the black peoples. This has come about very largely because whites – some whites – have been in closer contact with more sophisticated thinking, and have used some of the products of this thinking – a complex technology, and techniques of organising large numbers of people – to ensure their own domination at the expense of the blacks. The *Mercury* rightly describes the subordinate position of black peoples as 'a fact of history', but evades the issue of describing how it actually came about in historical terms. The 'slavery' of black South Africans is ascribed to their 'ignorance' and 'primitiveness', when in fact the actual form that it has taken, and takes now in 1973, is very largely the result of three hundred years of white oppression: of occupying blacks' land, extracting labour from blacks, and using force to stifle voices of protest. Thirty years ago the historian De Kiewiet described one of the main factors shaping recent South African history as the white man's assumption that he had an unquestionable right to as much land and labour as he could get from the indigenous peoples without payment. Historians are only now beginning to follow up this theme, but even a cursory look at the history of southern Africa since the time of Van Riebeeck reveals its validity. The ousting of the Hottentots from the southern Cape where they had grazed their livestock for centuries; the mass destruction of the Bushmen in the eighteenth century, with virtually no attempt made to come to terms with them; the expulsion of the Xhosa from much of the land they once occupied in the eastern Cape – a prime factor in a long series of 'kaffir' wars; the Free State's annexation of large parts of Lesotho, where they still talk of the Conquered Territory; the crowding of several hundred thousand Natal blacks into reserves in marginally productive areas to make room for white settlers; the allocation of large parts of Zululand, after its annexation to Natal, to the forebears of today's sugar barons; the concession-mongering in Swaziland which is still a source of land problems today; the occupation of the best cattle lands of the Transvaal; and ugliest case of all - the aggressive intrusion into Rhodesia of a grasping commercial company: all these are part of the record of the white man's behaviour in southern Africa.

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So is the long succession of measures passed by white governments from the time of Van Riebeeck to the present day designed to keep their black subjects from full participation in the life of the new societies that were coming into being: taxation laws to force black men to work for white; master and servant laws to maintain 'proper' relations between white masters and black labourers, exploiters and exploited; an unequivocal denial of political rights to black people in the Orange Free State and South African Republic; a series of odious moves by Natal whites to prevent blacks from attaining a say in how they should be governed. Only in the Cape was there any sort of experiment in allowing the indigenous peoples to take an active part in political life, and even this was snuffed out after Union in 1910. These facts make a mockery of the white man's pious talk, current now for a century and a half, of his duty to 'civilize' the black man. Every time a few blacks have come remotely within reach of the white man's 'civilization', laws have been passed to keep them in subservience, whether political or economic. The few whites who have wanted to see blacks allowed political rights in South African society have always been unrepresentative of white society and regarded by it with deep suspicion. Chief Buthelezi's reference to whites as 'those who keep me in the shackles of slavery' is not an 'extravagant and nonsensical overstatement' – it is the hard truth.

In the end a society's state of 'advancement' cannot be judged by its supposed position on some ladder of evolutionary 'progress'; what counts is the way its members behave towards one another in their day-to-day relations, and the degree to which each member can satisfy his own needs and expectations without prejudicing the interests of others. By this criterion, the humblest African state can be every bit as worthy and 'advanced' a society as any of the nations of the West. By the same criterion, South African society, in which the dominant group exploits subordinate groups to gratify its own material lusts, can only be classified as 'primitive'.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Executive Officer of the Zululand Territorial Authority (Photo: Natal Witness)

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The second great fallacy in the *Mercury's* argument is the assumption that white South African society belongs to the main stream of Western civilization, when in fact it is characterized by values and attitudes that are the outcome of isolation from the West, not of contact with it. White South Africans may be descended from ancestors who once lived in western Europe, and they may still maintain personal contacts with that part of the world, but the essential part of their outlook, the part that shapes their behaviour towards other people, has evolved quite separately from that of Western Europe. Europeans or European-descended people may have introduced into Southern Africa a great number of technological and administrative innovations as developed in the West, but

to claim that this makes local white society a part of Western civilization is to ignore the fact that history has operated to produce a totally different moral climate in southern Africa.

The great achievement of Western societies is to have worked out systems for providing the majority of their members with at least a share of the material benefits produced by a sophisticated technology, while enabling them to live together with a reasonable degree of harmony. At administrative level this has entailed slowly and painfully learning the extremely difficult art of how to maintain a tolerably just balance of interests between all the individuals and groups competing for wealth and power; at the individual level it means that each member of the society has had to learn to take into account the interests of his fellows and to limit his own field of interest accordingly. The essence of this outlook is contained in the Christian injunction, 'Love thy neighbour'. Moral awareness is seen not as some luxury of the conscience invented by weak-minded priests or poets or 'liberals', but as an essential part of orderly human living. Without it a society cannot in the end remain stable, however long it may be able to impose an appearance of stability by force of arms.

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In South Africa, not even the *Mercury* can claim that the dominant white group is concerned with achieving a reasonable balance of interests between all the country's peoples when its own columns – to its credit, let it be said – almost daily expose the massive injustices imposed on Black people by white. Whites have played a vital part in increasing the wealth of southern Africa, but they have never been willing to share more of it with blacks than has been necessary for the maintenance of a class of minimally-skilled labour-producing units ministering to their needs. They have not been primarily concerned with 'civilizing' the black man: like immigrants everywhere they came to a new country to make a better life for themselves, not to bring 'progress' to the indigenous peoples. That the black man has taken to many of the ways they brought reflects no particular credit on the Whites; his 'progress' has been a by-product of their coming, not an intentional result of it. And if blacks need 'advancement', then so, it can equally well be argued, do most white South Africans. Even more than the black peoples, they need to be taught to fit into a South African society where they are in a small minority, and, for their own sakes if nobody else's, to learn to behave with some degree of honesty towards the rest of the country's citizens. For them to talk of 'civilizing' the black peoples is sheer arrogance and self-deception.

So much for the *Mercury's* two basic assumptions about the nature of present-day South African society. If it has failed to understand the present it is hardly surprising that its knowledge of South Africa's past is faulty to a degree. 'Where nothing existed before they (the whites) have by their enterprise and initiative built up . . . a way of life based on their inherited civilization.' The nature of this civilization has already been discussed, but it can only be infuriating for black South Africans to have their entire heritage, their entire ethos, developed over fifteen or twenty centuries of residence in central and southern Africa, dismissed by one of the mouthpieces of an intrusive, grasping society as 'nothing'. In this one word, the particular styles of social living that evolved in Africa are swept aside as of no account. There is not a hint of recognition that one of the foundations of present-day South African society is the fact that its indigenous peoples had gone far enough along the road of development in politics, in economics, in trade, in technology, to be able to grasp and adapt to many of the new ways brought by peoples from Europe, and to fit without too much difficulty into many of the roles that white men forced them into.

'The whites have built up for themselves . . . .' Not a single word is said about the achievements of the millions of black men and women who, over a period beginning 300 years ago, have laboured in the fields, sweated in the mines, tended the children, and carried the teatrays to sustain what the *Mercury* calls the 'inherited civilization' of the whites.

The whites struck 'an evolutionary spark in a dormant wilderness'. It is an insufferable conceit and a demonstration of gross ignorance for a white newspaper so to dismiss the evolutionary processes of state-building and social development that were taking place in southern Africa long before 1836 or 1820 or 1652 or any other key date in white South African mythology. These processes may have been slow, but they were little slower than those taking place in western Europe before the beginnings of the industrial revolution a bare two centuries ago.

All this is not to say that African societies are models of how men should behave towards one another – they have shown themselves as capable of cruelty and stupidity as any other societies – but simply that white South Africans badly need to reassess the more or less fixed ideas which they hold about the mass of the people living round them. Nor is it to minimize the positive side of white people's achievements in southern Africa, which have been of the greatest significance in raising standards of living and levels of awareness, but to try and set the white achievement in a balanced perspective. **South African society is the product of two main sets of cultural forces that over the last three centuries, and more especially over the last hundred years, have become inseparably intertwined. To deny the importance of the black contribution, as the *Mercury* does in 'Evolutionary Currents', is not merely a case of ignorance or stupidity: it is symptomatic of the deep dishonesty rooted in white South Africa's treatment of its black subjects. Chief Buthelezi's condemnation of the article was fully justified, and its publication was an alarming indication of how 'moderate and enlightened whites' are utterly insensitive to the real position of black people in South Africa today.** □

WORLD POVERTY

A review of "The Challenge of World Poverty – a World Anti Poverty Programme in Outline," by Gunnar Myrdal (Pelican 1971)

by Mike Murphy

In his "Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations" Dr. Myrdal, for various reasons, refrained from concluding the mammoth 2 000 odd page work with explicit proposals for development. In this more recent book he makes up for that shortcoming. Although references to "Asian Drama" are to be found on almost every page, "The Challenge of World Poverty" is complete in itself and does not demand a knowledge of the earlier work in order to be understood. In fact, for the average reader who would never find time to read "Asian Drama", "The Challenge" is an admirable subsitute.

Of course there will be those who can not find time to read "The Challenge" either, and it is for these people in particular that this review is intended. However, although I shall attempt to summarise, albeit ludicrously briefly, the main arguments that Myrdal presents, let me stress that "The Challenge" is immensely rewarding reading and should be thoroughly studied before one ventures again to open one's mouth on the topic of development, economics or the Third World.

The book is in four distinct parts. Part two outlines the situation in the underdeveloped countries and suggests what radical reforms these countries themselves need to implement. Part three, entitled "The Responsibility of the Developed Countries" is presented in the light of the needs listed in Part two which require the facilitating action of developed nations before they can be met. Part four handles the political implications of parts two and three in terms of current world politics.

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Part one is a critique of development economics over the last 40 years, with a special emphasis on the Post-World-War-II period. Dr. Myrdal finds himself at odds with the majority of economists writing on the Third World and he takes great pains to explain why he differs by analysing what it is in other economists' approach that has led them to erroneous conclusions.

Myrdal sees what he calls the "biased Post-War approach" as a reaction to the colonial approach which was evident in nearly all discussion of development economics in relation to the Third World up to 1945.

The colonial approach had it that people in the "backward regions" were so constituted that they reacted differently from Europeans: they normally did not respond positively to opportunities for improving their incomes and levels of living. Tendencies to idleness, inefficiency, reluctance in seeking wage employment were ascribed to peoples' "nature". This approach was aimed at relieving the colonial powers, and the rich nations generally, from moral and political responsibility for the poverty and lack of development of these peoples.

After the War the approach altered dramatically. "Backward regions" became "underdeveloped nations", a term implying the need for dynamic growth. But the research thereafter tended to become "diplomatic", forbearing and generally over-optimistic, bypassing facts that raise awkward problems, or treating them in an excusing or "understanding" way. "Under developed" became, euphemistically, "developing". This tendency to be "diplomatic", glossing over unpleasant facts, was reinforced by a general inclination among economists to construct models and plans for development in terms of the economic forces operating in *developed* countries. In such countries, precisely because economic theory is to some extent based on actual practices in commerce and government it is possible to talk in terms of "pure" economics, though most economists writing on the subject would commence by saying they were aware of all the "social" factors – before proceeding to ignore them. The Western "pure economics" theories simply do not apply at all in underdeveloped countries. They abstract from the very attitudes and institutions which are causing the poverty and low levels of living.

Myrdal maintains that the "diplomatic" and "pure economics" approaches constitute an inadmissable bias, which is all the worse because it is not recognised as such. Value premises are essential even in theoretical investigation – "Things look different, depending upon where you stand" – but these premises must be explicit. Myrdal lists his value premises as the "modernization ideals". For the undeveloped countries there is no possibility of a return to the primitive state. They either progress or stagnate then regress. The modernization ideals, adopted already by underdeveloped countries by and large are rationality, development and development planning, rise of productivity, rise of levels of living, social and economic equalization, improved institutions and attitudes, national consolidation, national independence, democracy at the grass roots and social discipline. All Myrdal's suggested reforms are aimed at bringing about change in this direction.

It will be immediately clear from the above ideals, if it was not implicit in the title of the book, that Myrdal's analysis is macro-economic on the grand scale. But Myrdal has imposed one restriction on the scope of his

macro-plan, namely the exclusion of the Communist bloc. Proposals for development action while not inapplicable to countries that have gone communist, are directed primarily at the "free" third world countries, while the call for facilitative action from developed nations is made in the first instance in terms of the assistance available in the West. This is probably largely because the book has grown out of a series of lectures delivered in America.

Dr. Myrdal commences part two of his work by exploding the assumption, common among Western economists, that there is a conflict between economic growth and egalitarian reforms. He traces this assumption to "the moral philosophies of natural law and utilitarianism out of which economic theory once branched off" (p. 64). "Greater equality in underdeveloped countries" he says, "is almost a condition for more rapid growth." (p. 68), and he maintains that, although the egalitarian reforms in developed welfare states were brought in under the banner of "social justice" despite the economists' threats of catastrophe, these reforms have actually accelerated economic growth. It is only now, in face of this factual refutation, that economists are beginning to question their assumption that "a price must be paid for development".

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In the underdeveloped countries the masses are mostly passive, apathetic and inarticulate. Productivity, for one thing, cannot increase while this situation obtains, but the situation is maintained by social and economic inequality. Poverty is thus inextricably connected with the lack of equality. Myrdal's analysis of the necessary reforms, taking different areas of the economy one by one, sets out how the inequality and hence poverty must be combatted.

Taking agriculture first, he explains that corresponding to the universal low yields per acre are serious nutritional deficiencies among the masses. In fact, had not the U.S., by coincidence and against the contention of its agricultural policy experienced enormous agricultural surplus which was then made available to these peoples, the hunger crisis would have broken out a decade ago. Related to this malnutrition is the exceedingly low productivity of the labour force. Work practices are not labour intensive but labour extensive, so that the low yields are a result of the under utilization of the available labour. The "green revolution" can have little or no effect on the majority of peasants who neither know of the new technology involved nor are in a position to buy the extra fertilizers required. The answer, says Myrdal, is to introduce technological improvements including better seeds and methods, but made effective by increased labour input. Technology here would *increase* job opportunity as well as yields, for better seeds need more soil care, more irrigation ditches, bigger crops to harvest.

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But how to overcome the apathy? Land reform is an essential ingredient. The totally landless workers, seldom less than 25% of the rural populace, are grossly underutilized. Even if the sharing out of land begins with a very small plot for the formerly landless, this should introduce a first measure of incentive. The sharecropping system, so widely practised, is a grass roots example of the inequality stifling development. To bring about land reform great efforts have to be made by liberal forces in the under-developed countries themselves. The developed countries must aid such a move at least by not strengthening (as they have up to now) the powerful vested interests that have been delaying, distracting or stopping these reforms. At present, as far as liberal elements in the underdeveloped countries are concerned, the West, and in particular America, symbolizes and embodies the forces of political reaction in this regard.

In respect of population, Myrdal stresses that it is the change in the age structure of the population which is the major reason why a decrease in fertility will decrease poverty. At a lower dependency ratio the income per head will increase. Unfortunately, because of present births, the labour force will increase by 2 to 3 percent yearly until almost the end of the century. As in land reform, implementation of effective birth control measure is an internal affair. It must be accepted as soon as possible and as widely as possible, and must be made official policy. The only real help the West can offer here (apart, presumably, from re-educating the Pope) is in the field of research: better, more effective, more readily applicable contraceptive methods.

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Moving to the problems of education, Myrdal asserts that the class monopoly here is, more than any one other single factor, responsible for the continuation of present inequalities. He calls for an attempt to rectify the grossly misleading statistics in an attempt to focus on the areas in education where immediate effort should be expanded, but he stresses that the main reforms required in education are of a *qualitative* nature. The quantitative "investment in man" approach is inapplicable in underdeveloped countries, however applicable it may be in a Western economy. This approach simply obscures the relevant issues.

As a heritage of the colonial era the underdeveloped countries were left with a school system increasing rather than decreasing the inequalitarian stratification of society. The "colleges" in the colonial era stressed passing of examinations and the acquiring of status. Yet the character of education has not altered to any great extent since the end of that era. The balance is still heavily weighted in favour of secondary and tertiary education. What stress there is on primary education is wrongly emphasized – the quality of the schools and especially of the teachers must be improved before attempts are made to increase the intake. At the same time a concerted adult literacy campaign must be entered into. A UNESCO writer has it that unless an effort is made to spread adult literacy, the primary school drive may well fail due to lack of parental support to children who are striving to become literate. At the present stage of development a halt must be called to the enrolment drive while those being enrolled at the normal rate receive the concentrated attention of the educational officers. After this recouping action, the enrolment drive can be stepped up once more. At present the drop out rate makes a high percentage of educational enterprise so much wasted effort.

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Clearly, the whole tone of schools must be changed to bring in technical and practical studies. In this, as in most of the necessary educational reform, the underdeveloped countries are on their own. Foreign aid can only be of marginal importance.

Dr. Myrdal points out that many of the reforms he suggests are officially accepted in theory by the countries concerned. What happens to the reforms in practice then? The underdeveloped countries are all, though in varying degrees, "soft states", where "soft" refers to lack of social discipline involving bribery, corruption, and collusion between officials, civil servants and influential or powerful people. The effect of this, in all strata of the population, is a greater inclination among people to resist public controls and their implementation. And this, because of the apathy of the masses and the necessity to bring about change from the top – at least to topple legally the vested interests stifling progress – means that government initiatives cannot achieve a fraction of what they should or are intended to do.

How did this state of affairs come about? Myrdal compares the gradual development of the static western community and its transfer of loyalties from family to community as the sophistication of organization grew, with the disruption of social patterns under colonialism. The colonial governor, an autocrat, ruled according to his personal understanding of the situation, his loyalty largely is to "the folks back home". The end of the colonial era did not revive the community organizations destroyed thereby. Instead there remained a legacy of interference in an individualized way and paternalistic assumption of responsibility for people's welfare – the perfect breeding ground for bribery and corruption.

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Thus it is that legislation aimed at ameliorating the lot of the poor strata seldom filters down past influential people – the wealthy, the powerful. These people can afford egalitarian laws and policy measures for they are in an unchallenged position to prevent their implementation. Of course, in line with the "post-war bias", economists have glossed over or completely avoided mentioning the "soft state" phenomenon. Much overseas aid, particularly American, had been poured into the pockets of any but the poor for whom it was intended because of a lack of awareness of this problem.

A first step to lessen corruption would be to bring the big bribers in the business class to court, yet these people and others with whom they are in collusion form the power élite. Perhaps the initial popular acceptance of a Communist revolution is partly due to the fact that it offers the people for the first time, an uncorrupt regime.

A first step to combat the soft state could be the radical streamlining of the vast bureacratic machinery that has evolved to handle the various price and directionary financial controls. The less steps from top to bottom, the less opportunity for bribery.

Secondly, the West must (apart from pressurizing the elites to stamp out the bribery) stop its own businessmen from becoming involved in the whole vicious circle. If crimes of this nature are made subject to the same sanctions abroad as in the home countries the trouble might well stop, and then it would obviously be in the interest of the foreign businessmen to pressurize the locals into limiting their bribery to affairs that do not affect the foreign interests (otherwise, unfair competition would result)

Myrdal begins section 3 on the Responsibilities of the Developed countries by pointing out that the feeling of collective responsibility for the underdeveloped lands is a new phenomenon, dating only from after World War II. International trade, on the other hand, has been operating for much longer, and the theories of international trade are not worked out to explain the reality of underdevelopment but explain away the international equality problem. The predilection of international trade theory for harmony of interests, laissez-faire and free trade is a bias, opportune to people in developed countries. Contrary to the theory, international trade and capital movements will generally tend to breed inequality and will do so the more strongly when substantial inequalities are already established. Myrdal calls for a controlled market which will favour the needs of the underdeveloped countries. In the absence of a world state it is up to the developed nations to make use of what the poor countries *can* produce without throwing up protective barriers around their own products. This is the case with e.g. tea and coffee which are expensive simply because of the huge fiscal tax placed on them. This tax could easily be transferred to other products and take the pressure off commodities which are trade's life blood to whole nations.

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Technology in the West means that primary goods become less and less important. If they cannot be substituted for, they can at least become a smaller percentage of manufacturing costs. With the decline in importance of primary goods, manufacturing industry becomes all the more important to the underdeveloped countries, yet technology makes the developed countries' produce often superior in quality and cheaper. What is needed is for developed countries *actively to seek out* ways of importing goods from underdeveloped lands, because it is in the *underdeveloped lands'* interest. Failure to do this, it must be admitted, is primarily the responsibility of the peoples in the developed nations, not the "capitalists" or governments. The people are the reactionaries in this instance, and the first step in changing this would be to correct the widespread, false impressions gained from juggling of statistics which tend to indicate that aid is increasing instead of, as is the actual case, decreasing. Myrdal claims that no Western developed nation has made any real sacrifices in shouldering aid obligations to underdeveloped countries. In order to gloss over these facts (for the poverty itself is too enormous to gloss over), statistics have to be juggled. The most often quoted statistics actually leave entirely open the problem of what the total flow of resources from developed to underdeveloped countries amounts to and, indeed, whether there is such a net flow at all to many of the underdeveloped countries, or, instead, an outflow. In fact it may well be that the "outflows" in many underdeveloped countries are as great as, or only slightly less than, the inflows. Meanwhile the results of the unethical statistical juggling are naively accepted by spokesmen and public in both developed and underdeveloped countries.

With regard to Foreign Aid, Myrdal contrasts America's generous, even over-generous, almost unconditional grants to Western Europe after the War, according to the Marshall Plan, with the decline in American aid since about 1961. The vast amounts were given to West Europe under the justification of securing Europe from Communism and this rationale has been continued in respect of subsequent

aid to the underdeveloped countries. The implication is that the aid is actually in America's political, strategic and military interest. When the recipient countries show "ingratitude" for American aid there is thus no reason not to *withdraw* the aid, rather than *change the terms* on which it is given. The whole approach is in terms of America's own interests, a hard boiled attitude diametrically opposed to the humanitarian principles and ideals as expressed in the American Constitution and Bill of Rights.

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The attempt to "justify" aid in terms of the national interest leads to inefficiency and eventual reduction in aid giving. Myrdal points to his own country, Sweden, where the only imperative to give aid has been the moral one. Swedes, Myrdal claims, are very much like Americans, but given the right motives for generosity, have accepted increased taxes in order to increase aid. There must be a strict line drawn between beneficence (implying sacrifices) and business (implying profits). Myrdal proposes that Aid as soon as possible take on a position in developed countries' Budgets that places it on a par with other important national interests. It must be accepted that the under-developed countries are going to need aid, and in increasing amounts, for a very long time, and plans must be made accordingly.

Aid must not be tied to the purchase of the donor country's goods, as is nearly always the case at present. The underdeveloped country must be free to buy on the cheapest available market. Aid must be channeled towards countries which are seriously trying to implement the modernization ideals and must be witheld from those countries that are not. There must be a concerted effort to put aid money in the hands of multilateral inter-governmental organizations.

It is obvious that these proposals demand simple unselfish generosity. But this is well worth striving for, as "it is unrealistic and self-defeating to distrust the moral forces in a nation" (p. 357

In the fourth and final section of "the Challenge", Myrdal discusses political dynamics in South Asia. He speculates about the future. Will the masses become so utterly impoverished that they eventually revolt? Judging from the present level of destitution probably not. Then will the liberals among the educated elite try to raise the masses by moving into education programs? Possibly. In general, Myrdal is noncommittal about the future when arguing from present trends. He predicts a better tomorrow only if radical reforms are implemented today.

Appendixed to section 4 is a chapter intitled "The Latin American Powder Keg". Special attention is devoted to South America because although most of Myrdal's general remarks apply, there are certain important differences.

Standards of living are slightly higher than in Asia, but the disparities between rich and poor are greater. Further, the population is increasing more rapidly in South America, so that the central underdevelopment problems. – underutilization of labour – is also increasing more rapidly. The colossal presence of foreign investment seems to be having the same effect on the apathetic masses as the American interference in Vietnam – there is a slowly burgeoning national unity centred around the hatred of America. However, Myrdal stresses that while this ironic unity in hatred has sunk to the peasant roots in Vietnam, it is still largely restricted to the educated in S. America. But it is growing.

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Dr. Myrdal does not believe that "the revolution" is possible i.e. a popular uprising to liberate the majority. A people has to be far more aware and far less apathetic to achieve such a change. Since the minority governments have a monopoly on education and other means of social advancement the apathy is unlikely to disappear or the awareness to grow overmuch in the forseeable future. Discussing at some length the unusual happenings leading to the changes in Cuba, Myrdal claims that Castro took advantage of a split in the elite and at least tacit American support to come to power. Only once he was in power could he whip up popular support on a large scale and even then only because Cuba was one of the richest Latin American countries with a relatively aware populace.

The political effect of Cuba on the United States was to bring about a belief that all insurrections against a conservative or even plainly reactionary government lead to Communism. This in turn means that the U.S. will support the status quo in America financially and politically. Myrdal sees the development of a Latin American Fascism as the most likely development.

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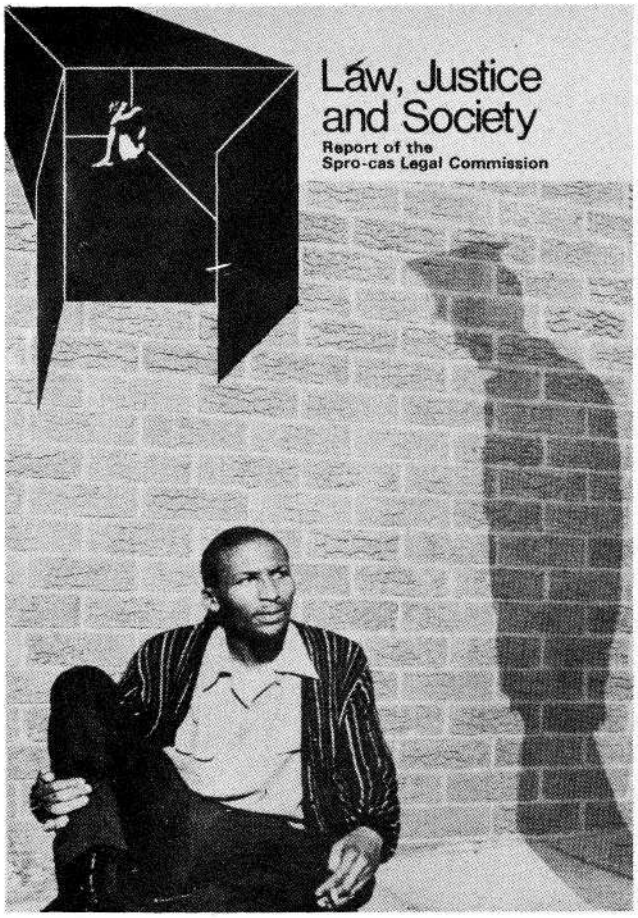
Myrdal is a "radical liberal". To those who feel that liberalism is merely vain moral posturing which offers no realistic hope, his only answer would be that it is *unrealistic* to ignore the moral forces in a nation. Clearly, all his reform proposals will not be adopted unless there is moral reassessment in the developed and among the elites in the underdeveloped countries. Myrdal believes that there are forces operative which can be moved to change in the required direction. The "First World" is not yet morally bankrupt.

There are many who will feel, however, that the struggle to change the attitudes of the oppressors is a much harder one that the struggle to change the apathy of the masses into an awareness that will provide increasing pressure from the bottom. The truth is probably that a struggle in both directions is necessary, for they must complement each other. The immense value of Myrdal's book is that it offers an analysis that both groups can utilise.□

' DISAPPOINTINGLY SLENDER '

A review of the SPRO–CAS Legal Commission Report : "Law, Justice and Society."

by A.S. Mathews



Law, Justice and Society is noteworthy as much for what it fails to achieve as for its contribution to discussion about the task of reform in South Africa. The reader's greatest disappointment will arise from the failure of the work to break new ground, its conclusions and recommendations being largely predictable. Added to this is the unfortunate, but possibly unavoidable, fact that the volume is a collection of loosely related essays of very uneven quality. There is no single theme or set of themes which are consistently explored and developed, and no overall coherence. Even when allowance is made for the composition of the Legal Commission – an awkward combination of busy practitioners and over-committed academics – a profounder and more integrated report could have been expected.

Even the four best essays have their disappointments. Though studded with penetrating insights into, and deservedly sharp strictures on, white attitudes to the law, J.F. Coaker's paper does not sufficiently underline the readiness of government supporters to sacrifice all values, including legal values, on the altar of white survival. One might have expected, too, more analysis of the uncritical acceptance by most white South Africans of the ostensible purposes of the security laws. The government's achievement in this field is an outstanding example of successful mass deception. The author deserves commendation however for his hard and unblinkered look at the public's attitude to the law and its operations – a subject upon which many lawyers entertain flattering misconceptions. John Dugard's essay on the law's liberal heritage is well written and documented; but it does not explore sufficiently the clash of value systems which lies behind recent legal developments and which constitutes the dilemma of the present-day judicial officer faced with the application and interpretation of laws. A stress on a set of more specifically legal values to which lawyers of different political persuasions could give allegiance would have been preferable to the norms of western liberalism which seem unlikely to serve as a rallying point for South African lawyers. Barend van Niekerk's essay on the police squarely raises and faces all the delicate questions about police performance in South Africa. He rightly emphasizes the influence on police conduct of the laws themselves, of the ideological tasks given to the police and the poor example emanating from higher levels of government. (An example of the latter being the Prime Minister's statement after police action against students that he would have been disappointed had they not acted as they did.) This paper stops just short of an effective description of the broad social and political determinants of police mal-performance. Colin Kinghorn highlights the defects in the operation of administrative bodies in South Africa and directs attention very pertinently to the consequences of their generally all-white composition. However, the programme of reform offered by him takes small account of developments in administrative law elsewhere with the result that his proposals are partial and sketchy.

The defects of the remaining papers are more serious. Jack Unterhalter's discussion of law, apartheid and justice opens with a curious collection of quotations about law, including Gilbert's line about law being the true embodiment of everything that is excellent which is quoted in an inappropriately serious context. The quotations have a small bearing on the ensuing discussion of the relation between law and justice and of the violation of justice by the laws of apartheid. N.M. MacArthur opens his discussion of apartheid, the courts and the legal profession with a lengthy description of apartheid which, to this reviewer at least, has no relation whatever to the ensuing discussion. That discussion, moreover, is little more than a hodge-podge of apartheid provisions and decisions with no unifying theme. The analysis by W. Lane and A.P.F. Williamson of difficulties experienced by blacks in exercising their rights seriously understates the inadequacy of legal aid. (It is not enough that the courts, like the Ritz Hotel, are open to rich and poor alike) and does not acknowledge sufficiently the failure of the South African legal profession to discharge its wider social responsibilities. Donald Molteno's

historical review of the central problems in the relation between law, justice and morality is learned and impressive; but its place in an essay entitled "Change and Methods of Change" is questionable. Even his discussion of the minimum moral content of law does not seek to explain the apparent contradiction between the sanguine assumption that law without such a content is unenforceable and the continued and successful application of apartheid laws in South Africa. The essay concludes with a recommendation for the adoption of a rigid constitution with a bill of rights.

The real achievement of the report of the Legal Commission is to reveal the dimensions of the chasm between South African apartheid law and the precepts of justice, between the society's democratic and Christian pretensions and its legal system. Much of this is, however, an elaboration of what was already known. What is badly needed, and what the report does not offer, is a graduated programme of reform which takes account of relevant social and political realities. Without this the Commission's positive contribution is disappointingly slender.□

THE WETSWINKEL OF AMSTERDAM

by Churton Collins

Most people who come to Amsterdam are immediately struck, or (as it was in my case) moved, by its spirit. It is not scientific or even strictly rational to speak of spirit, but who can describe an experience of love except in such terms? . The people there are friendly and unified in the sense of being relaxed and tolerant. The middle aged bank teller deals with the freak without suspicion and it is a common sight to see long-haired school children helping the pensioner land his fish from the green turgid depths of one of the canals.

It is in this atmosphere that a number of institutions have sprung up whose only aim and object is to provide aid to those who need it – or to put it another way, to help those who are oppressed.

I had heard from certain Dutch friends whom I had met elsewhere in Europe, that in Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam new organisations – called Wetswinkels – had been set up by law students. They told me about these after I had spoken of the dilemma facing me and other law graduates returning to South Africa – the dilemma being that entering conventional legal practice would take one into a select conclave with little immediate contact with those who really needed legal help and did not have the money to obtain it.

So in Amsterdam I went to the Wetswinkel in Onze Huis, Rosenstraat, where I was welcomed and shown round. The Wetswinkel was situated in a large old house and most of the action seemed to be taking place in a room where people were typing, writing, looking up files and just talking. It was then explained to me how the Wetswinkel was run.

It opened for 2 to 3 hours on three afternoons a week. The public were first taken to the Balie (the controller of the business) who asked for names, addresses and then simply what the nature of the problem was. As soon as he had ascertained the essential nature of the problem and that it was not entirely trivial, he would send them through to a large waiting room.

When the time came the client would be taken to a particular "consultant" who would be an expert in the branch of the law in which that client was involved.

In fact the Wetswinkel was divided into five sections each controlled by a "consultant". The sections were:

(1) **Family law**
(2) **Housing and Lease**
(3) **Consumer Law and Law of Purchase and Sale**
(4) **Employment Law and Insurance**
(5) **Criminal Law and miscellaneous.**

The consultant would then freely discuss the problem with the client and the main details would be noted down. The consultant would then either give advice on the spot or else tell the client that an answer would be forthcoming in a few days.

It was then after the winkel closed that the real work would begin. Each section consisted of a group of about six people and these people would meet as a group to resolve the various problems as they arose. Advice was often solicited from members of the university legal staff and members of the legal profession who had pledged their support to the winkel.

Th[illegible]t of this would be either:

[illegible]nswer to the problem which would be sent to the client.

b) **The matter would be passed on to one of certain practising advocates who had agreed to take on Wetswinkel work 'pro amico'.**
c) **The members of the Wetswinkel would take up certain procedures and would often appear in the Cantonhof – the lowest court of the land. Otherwise letters would be written, notices served etc.**

Obviously details of the finer working of the Wetswinkel escaped me because my Afrikaans was not entirely adequate. The same was true of their English.

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I was told that about 60 people (students, academics, lawyers) were actively involved with the Wetswinkel. And in the week or so that I spent observing and working with these people I was deeply impressed by their concern and enthusiasm. A huge amount of work was involved and they appeared to handle it with easy charm and incredible organisation.

The clients varied; many were old, some were destitute, some were drop outs; none of them appeared well off. [illegible]nominal charge of about 60c (S.A.) was made to pay the overheads such as typewriters, stationery etc. I was told that many of the clients were in fact just lonely, unhappy people wanting someone to talk to, and that it was intended to enlarge the scope of the winkel to cope with people who were in emotional distress.

I mentioned to some of the consultants that I was from South Africa and intended to start up such a Wetswinkel when I returned. Their first reaction was unbounded child-like delight followed by the qualification "Do you think it will be possible there". I said that many things would serve to obstruct the initiation of such a scheme in South Africa. i.e. apathy of the affluent public, government and police obstruction, difficulty in liason with the legal profession, and a shortage of voluntary assistance.

It will be said that Legal Aid will destroy any need for such a Wetswinkel in South Africa. Without going into the details of Legal Aid I respectfully submit that it will not provide an instant solution for many reasons:

a) **lack of advertisement of the scheme**
b) **The fact that Africans will still have to prove a host of details in the cold air of a bureaucratic office before being able to obtain legal aid.**
c) **Lack of evidence that Legal Aid has in fact got off the ground.**

It might be noted that Holland in fact possesses one of the most progressive legal aid schemes in the world. And yet all the students I spoke to were adamant that the Wetswinkel was entirely necessary – explaining that in a multitude of instances persons requiring legal aid became involved in a Kafka-like nightmare of being sent from person to person down endless bureaucratic corridors.

Certainly a Wetswinkel in South Africa would have to cater for an entirely different situation than that in Amsterdam. Logically it should aim at helping Africans in legal difficulties as they are the poorest of our community. But obviously the doors would be open to anyone in need. It might be stated quite definitely that the object of such a Wetswinkel would be to supply a service where none exists at the moment; and that the intention is in no way to encroach on the domain of the Side Bar or the Bar. It would be most gratifying if the Wetswinkels (if they ever arise) should work in hearty combination with both branches of the legal profession in South Africa. It is my opinion that the imposing of a means test on clients would be against the spirit of the whole idea. It is hoped that it would work on a basis of trust and easy informal communication.

Finally it is anticipated that such a venture should operate in close conjunction with the department of law of the nearest University. This would have numerous advantages. The organisation would be able to apply for a grant from the University; full-time students would be able to gain invaluable practical experience by working in the Wetswinkel; and advice might be obtained (hopefully) from already over-taxed academic staff.□

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