

Uttari

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION
MAY 1979

35 cents

in this issue . . .

EDITORIALS: 1. MORE COVERING UP	Page 2
2. GETTING 'CLEAN' GOVERNMENT	Page 3
3. URBAN TERROR	Page 3
LETTER FROM A READER	Page 4
NEW CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY by Andrew Duminy	Page 4
THE REASON WHY by Vortex	Page 6
TELLING IT LIKE IT ISN'T by Peter Enahoro	Page 7
THE PASSING OF PAGEVIEW by Alan Paton	Page 8
CONTROL IN THE S.A. SCHOOLING SYSTEM by Paddy Kearney	Page 9
THIS MUSICAL IS A MUST by Colin Gardner	Page 13
POEMS BY JOHN — Michael Gibbs	Page 14
SOCIALISM by John Aitchison	Page 15
HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE by Jill and Ernie Wentzel	Page 17
THE HAJJI AND OTHER STORIES Reviewed by Tony Voss	Page 20
COVER DESIGN — PAVEMENT SQUATTERS by Joe Alferts	

Articles printed in Reality do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editorial Board.

EDITORIALS

1. MORE COVERING UP

Even in the most open society, which South Africa is not, there are areas of official activity where, by virtue of the power wielded by those with authority over those without any, abuses of individuals are an ever-present danger. Three such areas are those controlled by the military, the prisons and the police authorities. The recent rumpus over the treatment of detainees in Northern Ireland, an area where the activities of all three authorities meet, has shown just how vital it is that the full light of public scrutiny, which in practice means press scrutiny, should shine on what these departments do.

What happens in South Africa?

For several years now it has been virtually impossible for the Press to publish anything about military matters without the prior approval of the military authorities. This meant of course that South Africa could launch its army into Angola without anyone knowing about it until it all ended in an ignominious withdrawal. Would such an escapade ever have been possible if it had been given the press publicity it deserved? And if it hadn't happened would the Namibian question not have been a great deal easier to solve?

When the Rand Daily Mail published allegations by ex-prisoners and ex-prison officers about abuses in gaols fifteen years ago it was charged with not having taken adequate steps to check the truth of the stories. The fact that it had taken affidavits from all of its informants was not considered an adequate precaution, and its publishers, editor, and reporter responsible for the stories, were all found guilty of not having taken "reasonable steps" to verify the information. Since then the Press has been extremely reluctant to publish anything about prison conditions which didn't have official blessing. If anything bad is going on in our prisons now you can be pretty sure we will never hear about it.

And now, if the Minister of Justice has his way, the same comfortable blanket of silence will descend over police activities. He wants a law which will make it well-nigh impossible for the Press to publish anything critical of the police unless they have cast-iron proof of its truth. How on earth does one ever get cast-iron proof of anything a policeman has ever done to someone in custody, when there are invariably half-a-dozen other policemen available

to swear that whatever anyone of them has been accused of simply didn't happen. In terms of the Minister's proposal, the penalty for publishing an accusation against a policeman which cannot then be proved will be a maximum fine of R10 000, a maximum prison sentence of 5 years, or both. Who will risk that?

But even this is not enough to satisfy Mr Kruger. He has introduced another Bill, the Inquests Bill, which will make it an offence to prejudice, influence or anticipate the proceedings of any inquest.

With laws like these on the statute book would we have ever heard much more about Steve Biko's death than the same Minister's bland announcement that he had been on a

hunger strike? Or would Mrs Joseph Mdluli ever have been able to press her claim for damages over the death of her husband in the hands of the security police, to the extent that she would have been paid the R15 000 she has just received in an out-of-court settlement? And how much would we have ever heard about all those other deaths in detention?

All over the world there are people with power in armies, police stations and prisons who abuse those who are helpless in their hands. The only real brake on such abuses is the fear of being found out. The law in South Africa is increasingly designed to make sure nobody can find out. That is the law of the jungle. □

2.

GETTING "CLEAN" GOVERNMENT

Since the Information Department scandal burst upon us the credibility rating of everyone touched by it has sunk to zero.

Most credibility gaps represent the difference between what a normal person's logic and commonsense tell him seems to be the truth, and what somebody else, usually somebody in a high place with an axe to grind, would like him to believe is the truth. In the Information Department affair, however, we have a new phenomenon. Here we have two groups of people, one group not long ago in high places, the other group still there, each of them consisting of people who for years have been holding one another up before us as examples of probity, honesty and incorruptibility and every other virtue we should try to emulate — and suddenly each is calling the other a bunch of liars.

What can we believe of what any of them have to say anymore, this seemingly impressive array of contestants, who between them can muster almost every important office the state has to offer? Is it possible, as both sides claim, that one side only tells the truth and the other only lies? Does not the balance of probability suggest that both tell some of each? Which brings us to another point.

The Parliamentary opposition parties and the anti-Nationalist press have been calling on the government to resign and call an election. No doubt this would be the

proper thing for it to do. But what would it achieve? The argument is that the Government must call an election in order to "cleanse" itself of the Information scandal. How will an election do that? The opposition parties might well win back a few seats from the Nationalists, where there were three-cornered contests in the last election, but does anyone seriously believe that anyone but the same old gang will end up running the country? How many Nationalists will change their affiliations just because the people they have been sending to Parliament and the Cabinet have turned out to be not as pure as they claimed to be?

Survival as boss is the Nationalist voter's main concern and if fiddling with the funds is part of the cost of that survival, so be it. This attitude is the inevitable consequence of thirty years of government based on the assumption that the end will justify the means.

If Mr P. W. Botha calls an election which he knows he cannot lose how can it possibly be argued that, by so doing, he will somehow achieve a miraculous conversion to "cleanness" and incorruptibility for his Government? The claim is nonsense. There will only be a prospect for "clean" government in South Africa when "survival as boss" at all costs is no longer the guiding principle of those who do the governing. And that moment, unfortunately, has not come yet. □

3. URBAN TERROR

Recently Harold Strachan appealed through the Press for an end to all urban terrorism, whether left or right inspired. And well he might.

Last August somebody knocked on his door one night and, when his wife opened it, tried to murder him. In March seven shots were fired into his house. On the same night, not far away, Mr Morgan Naidoo's house was fired upon.

Mr Strachan and Mr Naidoo are both people with a history of vigorous opposition to the Government. That the attacks were politically inspired there can be no doubt. They are only the latest in a long line of similar incidents.

Urban terrorism from the left is a comparatively recent development in South Africa. One knows about it because people get caught and appear in court and are sentenced.

Urban terrorism of the right has a much longer history, going back to World War II — if we dare mention that. It draws its support from sympathisers of the Nationalist

Party. In its milder manifestations it takes the form of throwing tear-gas bombs into crowded opposition meetings, or damaging or defacing the cars or homes of more outspoken critics of apartheid. At a more dangerous level it involves throwing petrol bombs into the same sort of people's houses, or firing shots through the windows. At its worst it includes the August attempt to murder Harold Strachan and, we suspect, the successful murder of Rick Turner.

These various attacks have two things in common. They are all directed at well-known opponents of the Government . . . and hardly anyone ever gets caught. As far as we know in the more than twenty years that such attacks have been going on under our present rulers there has only been one arrest which has led to a conviction, and that for a comparatively minor offence, and just recently two people have been arrested and charged with firing shots into Colin Eglin's flat. For the rest, these attacks seem to be carried out by people who appear quite confident that they will never be caught. That confidence seems fully justified. □

LETTER FROM A READER

(It is not the policy of Reality to publish letters; but we thought readers would enjoy this one.)

Dear Sir,

With reference to REALITY January '79: Someone gave my father a copy. It blew his 82 year-old and somewhat conservative mind.

He then gave it to me. "This is very depressing stuff but I think we had better read it", were his cautionary words. It blew my 39-year-old and somewhat less conservative mind.

I've given a copy to my 32-year-old wife.

When my 6-year-old daughter can read better I'll give the copy to her.

I'm also going to get Colenso's sermon "done" on tape and use it at Jo'burg College of Education (where I teach) to blow a few minds.

Perhaps the somewhat Marxist revisionism is showing history too far the other way. And perhaps not. My father and I feel that REALITY has been presented with integrity. But perhaps we are naive. Not being historians is a problem.

Please find a cheque for R12. This is to cover a one year's subscription, some extra copies of January '79 issue and back copies as far as the money will take you.

Right on!

Sincerely,
Victor Rodseth. □

NEW CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

By Andrew Duminy

Seldom do historical events arouse sufficient interest to become matter for popular debate. Historians are usually able to engage in disputes with each other in the happy knowledge that their disagreements are of little or no interest to others.

That the Anglo-Zulu War proved an exception to this rule is in large measure due to challenges that were issued in the January edition of **Reality**. "Popular historians", together with professionals, were accused of "ethnocentricity" and of not concerning themselves with the "realities of the Zulu experience", and so of presenting a perversion of the truth. The public generally were castigated for preparing to "celebrate" (though "most of them would not consciously recognise it") the "victory of British civilization over Zulu savagery". In addition, nameless profiteers were accused of preparing to cash in on the centenary of a war which reduced the Zulu to the status of wage-slaves.

The public reaction was immediate. Numerous letters appeared in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg press. The organisers of the Anglo-Zulu Centenary Celebrations at once pointed out that all the functions were planned in conjunction with the KwaZulu Government. So far from celebrating the victory of civilization over savagery, they protested, the intention was to emphasise the need for reconciliation. **Daily News** columnist, Michael Green, took exception to **Reality's** insinuations regarding the motives of those who had brought about the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom. "Tell that to my Zulu War Grandpa!" he wrote in reply to the contention that those who fought in 1879 did so as the agents of capitalism and therefore "to reduce the Zulus to a nation of mineworkers, farmhands, domestic servants, office messengers and petrol pump attendants". "I think it a pity", he commented, "that a group of academics should have used the occasion to reopen old wounds, question the motives of those involved

in the commemoration and draw sweeping conclusions, couched in the jargon of the new left".

What these exchanges reveal is a lack of understanding by the public of the radical point of view. In common with other isms, Radicalism is difficult to define, not least because, although the word was adopted by a group of academics to emphasise that they occupy common ground, there are many shades of difference between them. The word "radical" is here used to describe historians who contend that South African history is to be explained in terms of the means of production and exchange. As enunciated by their leading spokesmen, this leads to the conclusion that present-day South African politics is essentially a class-conflict, industrial capitalism having reduced the blacks to the status of an exploited proletariat. A further extension of the argument is that whites, no matter what their politics might be, serve the interests of exploitative capitalism.

It could not have surprised the radicals that the Natal public took offence at the accusations that were thrown at it and missed the subtleties of the argument regarding class, race and capitalism whereby the man-in-the-street becomes the unwitting agent of class interest, they can see the futility of attempting to "popularize" their views. Indeed, one may ask whether radicals are not trapped forever in an academic nightmare, condemned to be perpetually misunderstood except by a small group of "enlightened" persons who, like themselves, have escaped from the ideological straightjacket of the society to which they belong.

If the same analysis is applied, radicals can also expect little understanding from blacks for if, it is argued that blacks form an exploited proletariat, then it must follow that they too have become conditioned by the capitalist system. The resultant "wage-slave mentality", which the radicals thus themselves diagnose as the result of a century of industrialization, is geared to think in terms of simple material reward and, as the working class is educationally underprivileged, it should therefore be even less able than the ruling class to grasp the intellectualism of the radical case. True, the radical argument can have obvious political appeal because it propounds the idea that blacks belong to an oppressed and exploited class. But, when it comes to their arguments regarding history, this "popular" appeal is no longer quite as obvious. For one thing, it is arguable that the radicals do not really escape the ethno-centricity of which they accuse the "popular historians". That is to say, while they accuse the white ethno-centric historian of bias against the Zulu "savagery", and while these historians are accused of portraying nineteenth century South African history as a struggle between a "civilization" rooted in western Europe and the dark forces of African "barbarism", the radicals argue that the conflict is between international (read Western) capitalism and African blacks, whose technological know-how did not enable them to resist this foreign exploitation. In both cases the historical image of the black is basically the same: he is the sad victim of a foreign and superior force.

The radical's interest in the supra-personal interaction of Classes is likely to further reduce their appeal to blacks. This is because, as they see one dominant theme in the past, they cannot interest themselves in history's other "lost causes". Furthermore, as the triumph of industrial Capitalism is viewed as virtually – if not completely – inevitable, there would seem to be little point in paying attention to the feeble foredoomed efforts of individuals to oppose it. Radical history thus becomes depersonalized. It is full of victims but has no heroes, except those who succeed in some way in promoting changes which affect the modes of production. In Zulu history, Shaka thus becomes the great innovator and his successors are merely part of the long depressing tale of oppression. One asks whether such an interpretation does justice to Cetshwayo or, for that

matter, to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi? Professor Butterfield once took "Whig historians" to task for distorting history because he argued, they assumed an inevitability, and therefore, assumed also that unsuccessful statesmen were misguided or inferior because they opposed "progress". Radicals are in danger of excluding from their reckoning not the "badmen" of the Whigs, but ironically – the very people who should, by their definitions, be regarded as heroes because they opposed retrogression. These are dismissed as unimportant because they are seen as having been powerless to alter the course of History.

The difficulties which confront the Radicals, highlighted in newspaper and other debates, were again spotlighted at the recent conference on the Anglo-Zulu War in Durban. Professor Colin Webb, in analysing the problem of interpreting the origins of the war, showed how "revisionist" historians, who had concentrated on the role of individuals, had been taken to task by the radicals. There could be no disagreement, he argued, if the radicals were merely stating that "the motives of the men who initiated the war must be seen within the framework of the attempt to construct a federal South Africa in which capitalist production would be facilitated". But, he suggested, the radicals seem to be asserting much more than this. Their assertion that "capitalism caused the war asserts the primacy of the impersonal forces of the system over individual will and intelligence". Thus, the essential difference between "traditional history" and radical history is that the one is a "world of individual judgement and will; the other a world of economic imperatives".

In thus reducing the Liberal/Radical debate to its essentials, Professor Webb has issued a challenge which each individual radical must answer for himself. While this debate is in progress, it should be born in mind that other fundamental differences separate the radicals from the "revisionists" or, for that matter, from "traditional historians". One is that the radical's interpretation of history is not rooted in empiricism. In part, this is due to the fact that their conclusions regarding causation are the result of the analysis of post-industrial society generally and are not the result of an examination of the empirical evidence relative to any particular problem itself. In answering the question "What caused the Anglo-Zulu War?" the radical feels no great compulsion to delve into the complexities of the matter. It does not illuminate but seems to obscure what for him is the essential truth.

The radical's indifference to empiricism can also derive from the rejection of the notion of scholarly objectivity. While "conventional" historians acknowledge that their perception of the past is conditioned by the many limitations which act against objectivity, they remain committed to the academic belief that the "truth" (or at least a part of the truth) lies in the examination of evidence. Marxists, and Marxist-radicals, however, are frequently led to argue that objectivity is a total impossibility. Historians, they say, are themselves conditioned by the societies in which they live. What point is there therefore in attempting the impossible? Some Marxists would go so far as to contend that the frank recognition of their own "bias" makes them more honest than are scholars who pretend to impartiality.

Both these tenets of radical thought appear to mean that radicals are led in the opposite direction to that which is customarily followed by historians. This does not of course mean that radicals are totally disinterested in empirical research. What it does mean is that this research is likely to be undertaken with the intention of bolstering conclusions which have already been reached. It will therefore increase the danger that radicals will ignore evidence which contradicts their theory. To that extent, the likelihood is that the result will fail to provide a satisfactory answer – at the empirical level at least – to the question as to why a particular event occurred. The

result is more likely to be an embellishment of pre-held theory.

For example, radicals viewing the Milner administration in the Transvaal concentrate on the pre-war gold crisis and the need to restart mining activity after the British occupation. Their approach leads to the conclusion that the Milner administration became the tool of mining capitalism, as is illustrated by the decision to allow the importation of Chinese indentured labour, a development which set the pattern for South Africa's future industrial growth. This analysis is, of course, partially true. Milner did in fact see gold production as a priority. But this interpretation misses a large slice of the truth regarding his administration. It overlooks, for example, Milner's profound dislike and distrust of the "goldbugs" and his **refusal** in numerous instances to yield to their demands. It misses also the fact that the **dominating** political problem, as seen by the actors themselves, was that of ensuring British control of a self-governing South Africa. From this it may be seen that, while it is true that Milner played a part in creating the modern South African state with all its ugly characteristics, if one attempts to understand the politics of the 1902-5 era from this standpoint, one is likely to fail. To achieve real understanding, it is necessary to attempt to uncover the thoughts and the aspirations of the people who then lived and to view the political problems of the day in the way in which they were seen **at the time**.

Putting this another way, one could say that radicals are content with what they believe is an "inside explanation" of the history of the period. "Conventional historians" believe that their task goes beyond this. It is to explore all possible avenues of enquiry and to attempt to come to grips with the problem of what people thought. Even if the radicals are right in their assertion (or what appears to be their assertion) that the individual acts and thoughts of men are of no consequence because more important forces are at work, the historian's task remains that of, attempting to reconstruct an accurate picture of the past in order to answer the question "What happened?"

The Liberal/Radical debate has now raged for nearly seven years. It has absorbed a great deal of energy on both sides. In many ways, it has stimulated historical thought and has opened many new vistas. It would, however, be a pity if the debate were to continue to dominate South African historiography. One reason for this is that the influence of the radicals can be stifling. Concerned as they are with what they see as a central theme, they are inclined to dismiss as "irrelevant" matters which do not touch upon it. They are also intent upon establishing and extending an ideological and therefore an "orthodox" interpretation of History. Both of these seem to threaten the free exchange of ideas and obscure the truth that History like other academic disciplines, cannot co-exist with orthodoxy. In order to survive, it must continue to be a subject of debate in all its facets.

It is also arguable that the Liberal/Radical debate is diverting attention from other issues which are at least as important for South African historiography. One of these became very clear at the Durban Anglo-Zulu War conference. It is the failure of the South African universities to produce black historians. Mr Oscar Dhlomo, the KwaZulu minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, spoke very plainly about this. The departments of history at black universities, he said, had produced honours and masters graduates but lecturing posts remained closed to them. Chief Buthelezi made similar criticisms of the failure of the black universities to allow black students to present interpretations which challenged the "traditional view of historical events". Only one Zulu historian, S. Maphalala, in fact presented a paper at the conference.

"White South African history" owes an immense debt to historians who were trained in the British universities. Scholars such as Eric Walker, W. M. Macmillan, Michael Roberts, W. A. Maxwell and A. F. Hattersley saw their role in this country as producing not only scholars who would be trained in the discipline of historical scholarship but who would also apply these skills to the uncharted fields of South African history. The result is evident not only in the writings of trained South African scholars beginning with C. W. de Kiewet and J. S. Marais, it is also to be seen in the "local content" of the history department of any English-speaking South African university today. One could point out that a similar role was played by British scholars like J. D. Fage in Ghana, Kenneth Ingham in East Africa and Terence Ranger in Rhodesia. In South Africa, the black universities have, it seems, failed in this regard and South African history is the poorer for this neglect.

Another matter of importance for South African historiography, to which reference was also made at the Durban conference, is the collection of oral evidence. Without these sources, as Mr Dhlomo expressed it, "the complete story of the Anglo-Zulu war and indeed the whole history of the Zulu people will never be told from the Zulu point of view".

By far the most important concern for South African historiography, however, is specialised research. English-speaking universities in this country do not, as a rule, carry their good students through to the doctorate level and academic staff are overloaded with teaching duties. These facts help to explain why South African history is still largely unexplored.

In the absence of detailed knowledge, dangerous generalisations can flourish. It is in this light that the Anglo-Zulu War conference must be viewed, for it was unprecedented in this country that seventeen scholars could meet to deliver papers on a subject so specialised. The resultant exchange of ideas was predictably exciting. It re-emphasised how necessary for History is the stimulus of informed disagreement. □

THE REASON WHY

One night the shooting begins:
strange shots, thumps, explosions;
the whine of bullets,
the cry of victims.

"What is it all about?
Who is the target?
What have we done wrong?
Why be violent against us?"

A bullet howls and smashes through the glass,
ricochets around the room,
and ends up, spinning, under the table.
It is hot. But I pick it up.
On it are written three words,
words that recall a part of the past
and send it crashing into the present:
"For Whites Only".

by Vortex

TELLING IT LIKE IT ISN'T

by Peter Enahoro

Reprinted from *New African*

David Chiappetta of Rehovot, Israel is a bright kid. At a time of life when boys his age are throwing caution to the winds and hunting down the elastic string of their sister's panties to make catapults, young David concerns himself with the profound issues of the complex and difficult world into which he has been born. In a recent issue of the American Weekly magazine, *Newsweek*, he wrote to the editor:

"I am eleven years old . . . In your article "The Fallout in Zaire" there was something I didn't understand. You wrote that 'an estimated 1 000 Africans had died and almost 100 Whites had been massacred'. Why did you say that the Blacks only 'died' while the Whites had been 'massacred'?

Was there such a difference in their deaths?"

The boy will go far. Little David has asked a Goliath question that many Africans would like to put to the Editors of several foreign publications.

We Africans are often accused of being too sensitive — and too often we are. We say things about other people that we would not have them say about us. Our leaders are not only touchy they seem to read newspapers (when they do) through the bottom end of milk bottles. Our security organisations are over-zealous bullies and some of the censors should begin by going to night school. (Malawi has recently advertised for graduates to fill the position of censors. There's an admission of what the past was like for you!)

Ours is not so much a world of "publish and be damned" as it is a world of "publish and be banned".

Our Information Ministries, when they are not themselves a mystery, mistake investigative journalism for espionage. We arrest, detain and unceremoniously bundle visiting journalists out of our countries for any reasons at all and much of the time those reasons are not good enough. Things have come to such a pass that our authorities are ready to make a martyr of any irrelevant foreign journalist who narrowly steps out of line. Because they invariably control their local press or force demeaning self-censorship on the editors of the home press, the authorities in Africa are resentful and vengeful when they cannot impose the same restrictions on the foreign journalist.

The effect of all this is counter-productive. The authorities in Africa do not understand that given the highly competitive nature of the Western press, the deportation of a journalist is a bonus on which both he and his newspaper can capitalise. Nothing erodes a journalist's prestige faster than when he is continually ignored.

Africa is still a land of mysteries for most Europeans and Americans, who think that the map of Africa is an illustration of a distorted hoe. The Western newspapers in their battle for circulation have traditionally cashed-in on this ignorance. And the trick of the trade has not changed much since the old days when the European journalist came to Africa to gather reports about the natives and

returned to write tribal legends as current happenings.

But today the Western newspaper reader and television-watcher has become rather familiar with some facts about Africa. Indeed the average European now knows that Idi Amin is not a scientific political expression; that Timbuktu is not an exotic plant. The European journalist playing the intrepid writer venturing into the horrific malaria-infested jungles of darkest Africa, can no longer surprise his readers by writing strange-sounding African datelines to his story. What then to do?

What many have done is to try to perpetuate the sense of adventure and danger without actually appearing to promote their own bravery. Western newspaper offices are filled with "experts" on Africa who tell you at the first opportunity that they have been thrown out of a dozen African states as proud as veteran soldiers showing off their war wounds. The information is delivered with an air of nonchalance as though it didn't matter. In fact you are being told that you stand before a long-suffering hero.

Many level-headed Africans, admitting that sometimes they have to depend on Western newspapers to know what is really going on in their own countries, are embarrassed by the generally waspish behaviour of our authorities towards Western journalists. Yet, at the same time, those same level-headed Africans acknowledge that the Western press can be tiresome for its prejudice and racial bias when reporting Africa.

Of course the charge is bitterly rejected, especially by the "liberal" journalists who still think that they are wildly revolutionary when they write that Africans have ancient traditions. But the prejudice and the sub-conscious racial bias run deep.

Prejudice runs deep for example in the attitude of the Western press towards the Cuban and Russian presence in Africa. Why was it wicked of the Cubans and Russians to aid the Ethiopians against the Somalis in the Ogaden, but laudable for the French and the Americans to have helped and supported Zaire against the Katangese in Shaba?

Why is it wrong for the Cubans to have troops protecting the MPLA government in Angola, but praiseworthy of the French to help prop the governments in 15 African states with a total commitment of 12 340 troops?

Yet relevant though these questions are, they are not what touch most ordinary Africans. It is the evidence of racial bias that really has them worked up. This bias shows itself best in the double-stands that Western newspapers apply when reporting on the victims of violence in Africa.

Until the Steve Biko affair the deaths of Africans while in police detention in South Africa did not merit the front page. And if one may speak bluntly, one doubts that Biko's death would have earned the big headlines it did if his friend, Donald Woods, a White journalist, had not got mixed up in it.

A Fleet Street newspaper reporting the death of a Briton following an accident off the coast of Mombasa said that the deceased had been "taken to an African hospital". The apocryphal denigration of standards instantly presumed in faraway London was there. You had the distinct impression of doctors at this "African hospital" rattling cowrie shells, whispering incantations, and dancing a jig around the patient instead of using stethoscopes and other modern equipment.

No African in his right mind would jubilate over the killing of White man or woman, yet it is pertinent to recall the extent of coverage given to the sickening murder of Mrs Dora Bloch in Uganda. It just so happened that the dreadful regime in that country perpetrated this particular outrage shortly after the horrible killings in Wiriyaumu, when

Rhodesian troops invaded Mozambique and slaughtered African women and children. Who can remember the name of a single victim in Wiriyaumu?

And it does not escape attention that we know the names of some of the Whites "massacred" in Kolwezi but not a single one of those Africans who "died".

You learn also that there is one kind of language for African nationalists and another for Europeans resisting oppression. The French nationalists who fought against the Nazi occupation of their country were the "French underground". The Greek nationalists during the same period were "Greek partisans". But the African nationalist guerillas in southern Africa are "terrorists". □

THE PASSING OF PAGEVIEW

By Manfred Hermer
Reviewed by Alan Paton

Publisher Ravan Press

Manfred Hermer's "The Passing of Pageview" with its brief history, its interviews with those who tried to save Pageview and those who were ejected from it, and finally Mr Hermer's twenty-four beautiful and human paintings, is a book worth possessing.

It is the story of another triumphant operation of the Group Areas Act, another destruction of a place that had a unique inner life, a life that is irrecoverable, for it can never be found again in the soulless townships, that replace what has been destroyed.

The life of Vrededorp centred on the Pageview traders, who lived there and traded there, and whose colourful shops and streets are here so warmly portrayed.

Another such place was Sophiatown, not so affluent as Pageview, but also with a vital life of its own. It had no conventional beauty, but when it was destroyed Trevor Huddleston, using the words of Walter de la Mare, wrote: "Look thy last on all things lovely, every hour." But the loveliness that he saw was invisible to the rulers of the land, and it was lost in the matchbox town of Meadowlands. Sophiatown was replaced by the white suburb of Triomf, a name signalling the triumph of the ideology of separation over the haphazardness of human growth and imagination.

Yet another famous place was District Six, full of colour and life and song, of good and evil, and its own special kind of freedom, now lost in the sandy wastes of the Cape Flats.

In 1968 certain areas of Pageview were declared "white" under the Group Areas Act. In 1975 traders received quit notices, and the Oriental Plaza was built with very high rentals, but it has never recovered the magic of Fourteenth Street in Vrededorp, which Nat Nakasa

declared to be long overdue for recognition as one of Johannesburg's most famous streets, and which is portrayed in many of Mr Hermer's paintings.

In 1884 the London Convention meeting attended by representatives of the Transvaal Republic envisaged equal rights for Indians in the Transvaal. However in 1885 the Volksrad introduced "coolie locations" and one of these occupied the present site of Vrededorp and Pageview. By 1935 Indians owned most of the south-western corner of Vrededorp. In 1950 the Group Areas Act forced Indians who wished to own property to move to Lenasia. In 1977 the shopping areas were finally closed, and Pageview was dead.

The interviews make sad reading. The end of Pageview meant in large measure the end of the patriarchal family, though that would probably have happened anyway. Mr Essop Ismail Haffejee supported thirty-five assistants, but his business was destroyed, and very few of his old customers come to the Oriental Plaza. Mr Rashid Bulbuliya's father had one of the biggest shops in Fourteenth Street "and they took it away by the stroke of a pen".

I have a story to tell which shows clearly the great diversity of people in Pageview. I was principal of Diepkloof Reformatory, an institution for African boys, and one of them came from Pageview. He was due for release and I went to visit his family. He explained to me that I must not be surprised to find that his family was Coloured, but they claimed that he was African so that he need not be sent to faraway Cape Town. I had a long talk to his sister who must have felt some trust in me, for she confirmed that her husband was a white man, and an officer in the Union Defence Force. Such was Pageview.

This is a very beautiful book about a very ugly deed. □

CONTROL IN THE S.A. SCHOOLING SYSTEM

A talk by Paddy Kearney at Natal University, Pietermaritzburg

Introduction:

In this talk, I'm not going to elaborate those aspects of the S.A. school system which you are very familiar with, and which reflect fascist concern with control, e.g. the obsession about length of hair, uniforms, keeping a rigid control of syllabuses, compulsory attendance at or participation in sport, cadets, assemblies of an authoritarian kind, youth preparedness courses, etc., etc. We have all suffered from some or all of these.

Nor is there need to say much about the fact that pupils have virtually no say over the control of schools. Even the authority of prefects is an extension of staff authority — a kind of police authority — rather than pupil representation in decision-making. Those very few Principals who have made an attempt to set up some form of joint pupil and staff Council have fared very badly — think e.g. of Chris Hurley, the Headmaster of Thomas More and Maurice Lewis, the Headmaster of Inanda Seminary, both of whom were summarily dismissed from their posts over the last 12 months.

None of these aspects of schooling is surprising in a country where the state keeps as rigid a control over its citizens as does the S.A. Government.

S.A. Teachers' Council for Whites

I would however like to devote some attention to the so called "S.A. Teachers' Council for Whites" about which much less has been heard. There has also been very little debate about it both because most teachers do not seem to be very political animals, and because they are not permitted (by law) to make public statements.

As you may know, each profession is controlled by its own professional Council, drawn from elected members of the profession e.g. The Nurses' Council, the Medical and Dental Council, etc. These Councils discipline their members, and decide upon the training and admission of members. Well, of course, the teachers want to have similar status — they would like to be regarded as professionals and so they have started their own Council — and a very strange creation it is indeed.

The purpose of the Council is described in the following words in the Handbook:

"The object of the Council is to uphold and promote esteem for education and the teaching profession and the prestige of those who are engaged in the teaching profession."¹

They make the rather presumptuous claim:

"For the first time South African teachers now have a professional teachers' Council — a fact which brings the teaching profession into line with the other professions."²

There are two comments I would like to make:

1. A very odd way to gain prestige for the teaching profession is to ask teachers to sign on as members before the Teachers' Code had actually been finalized! I'm told that precisely two teachers refused to sign in the whole of Natal — one in Durban, and one in Pietermaritzburg. All the rest went quite happily to meet their fate — being thoroughly disciplined and controlled civil servants! They signed what was virtually a blank cheque. One was heard to say rather mournfully afterwards, when some of the implications became apparent to him, "But why didn't the Natal Teachers' Society tell us not to sign?"
2. It seems to me that the establishment of the S.A. Teachers' Council for Whites has not only caused a further loss of esteem for teachers in the way suggested above — but has actually caused teachers to step even further **out** of line with other professions. A very important feature of all other professional Councils in South Africa is that they are open to **all** races. Isn't it unforgivable that the Teachers' Council — established in **1978** — is racially exclusive. In the first press conference given by the Council, the reason given for this racial exclusivity was stated thus: "In essence education and teaching are culture-bound and it is only logical that this should be borne in mind in the organisation of education"³ — a statement which has the authentic ring of Christian National Education philosophy, but which is hardly in keeping with the concept of education appropriate in a world that has become a 'global village'.

It's interesting to note from the **Wilkins and Strydom** book **The Super Afrikaners** that seven members of the S.A. Council of Teachers for Whites as listed on pages 4 and 5 of the Councils' **Hanbook** are members of the **Broederbond**. Most appropriately the Chairman of the Council, Mr J. D. V. Terblanche is a Broederbond member.⁴

I think we should hold in esteem those teachers who refuse to join this racially exclusive Council. Our esteem will not help them very much because if they continue to teach without having registered with the Council they will be subject to a fine of R100 and/or three months' imprisonment!⁵

Black teachers will, doubtless, have their own Teachers' Council, but for the present, at least those who are Zulus, have to contend with the pressure exerted on them to become members of Inkatha if they wish to hold onto their jobs. And Zulu pupils have compulsory lessons on Inkatha to match the lessons white children have on Jeugweerbaarheid.

The Teachers' Council further entrenches the non-professional nature of teaching, by continuing to require that teachers shall only use the "correct channels" to make complaints or representations. These, in case you don't know, are precisely the same channels as those customary for public servants. In practice this means that a teacher may not enter or communicate with "Natalia", the headquarters of the N.E.D. without the express permission of his/her Headmaster. What if you want to complain about that Headmaster? Clearly the control system is designed so that you may not.

During the year that has seen the establishment of the Teachers' Council, there has been another pernicious development which has further reduced whatever self-esteem teachers might formerly have had. They are now subject to assessment by senior colleagues and their heads, not only on their teaching ability (which would be forgivable), but, amongst other things, on "character" and such vague categories as "the teacher in society" from which it is not clear whether the teacher's morality, political views or ability at cocktail parties is up for assessment! The reason generally given for this assessment is that merit awards are now being made in the form of salary increments. In fact this assessment has given a marvellous opportunity for putting each teacher under the microscope and reminding them that some form of Big Brother is watching.

The Teachers' "Code of Conduct"

In the preamble to the "Code of Conduct" which teachers accept when they join the Teachers' Council, they pledge themselves "to honour and obey the laws of the country,"⁶ I need hardly emphasize how easily a teacher of English or History or even Religion might fall foul of such a clause.

The Christian National character of education receives due mention in the Code. In a section significantly entitled "Credo" teachers are said to practise their calling "in an awareness that education in this country is founded on the Bible" and to accept "that education has a broad national character".⁷

In keeping with Christian Nationalism is the statement that "a teacher accepts the principle that the school serves the community and respects the customs and codes of the community as far as this is educationally justifiable."⁸

The qualification is very interesting — why 'educationally justifiable' and why not 'morally' or 'ethically'? In any case, it sounds like a clause which could lead to the downfall of any teacher who interprets her task as one of assisting young people to become critical and compassionate citizens.

Origins of the Teachers' Code

Despite the comments I have made about the Code, it's actually on the surface not nearly as bad as I had expected, after seeing several of the drafts which were circulated among Teachers' Societies. A Professor of Education who attended the C.N.E. Conference in Durban commented that at least some of the speakers were using the opportunity to tell the "faithful" to play it cool at the moment, and clearly C.N.E. is played cool in the Code. The draft versions drew far more heavily on the type of philosophy enunciated in the H.S.R.C. Report on "Differentiation".⁹ In Chapter 14 of this document (an accepted national policy document, signed by representatives of all Provinces) C.N.E. aims are spelt out very clearly. I would like to give you a few examples, in the belief that this sort of philosophy is actually what lies behind the rather bland statements I have already quoted from the Code:

"... the white population of the Republic of South Africa has, over the course of three centuries, emerged with a communal aim which may serve as a broad foundation for moulding the young in such a way that they will achieve self-realization and render service to their fellow-men, country, nation and their God".¹⁰

"The South African attitude to life is characterised, among other things, by striving after the **retention of identity**, which implies that the South African national groups must, in the first place, retain, preserve and amplify their identities, which means that each South African who considers South Africa as his own country, and trusting in this, wishes to rear his issue, will give expression to separation of national groups in some form or other. **This national characteristic attitude to life is of a Christian nature**, and this means that those who prefer to be South Africans automatically throw in their lot with the inhabitants of the Republic of South Africa, and this goes deeper than language, deeper than descent; it culminates in the future. The white South African accordingly sees his attitude to his fellow-man in the light of the Word of God and grants his fellow-man, irrespective of race or colour, a living space of his own, in which his identity and culture can come into their own."¹¹

"In the first place education with a national stamp and national values and norms aims at focussing the attention on that which is specifically unique to this particular country, viz. the Republic of South Africa. In view of this it is the aspiration of the White population to **guard their identity** without sacrificing the necessary respect for the other national groups and the granting of reasonable living conditions to them. For this reason Whites are confronted with an ideological conception which affects their whole lives in the sense that each must labour to fulfil this ideal for the generations which follow.

However, on the strength of the fact that the entire nation must be fed and cared for from the heart of this country, education of a national character must concern itself with educating the young to **render service born out of gratitude** to only **one** particular country and nation, i.e. the Republic of South Africa and its citizens. It is only by means of the formal and formative education of the young towards conceiving the unqualified love, pride and trust as facets of sacrificing their all that they, as future citizens, will be prevented from flinching when they are required to shoulder the responsibility implicit in being a South African. This also entails a responsibility of taking up a discriminative and evaluative standpoint as regards occurrences abroad which may be of intimate concern to the country."¹²

Finally, it can be stated that education which is primarily Christian and national in character will mean that South Africans will be satisfied with nothing less than that their children should be moulded as future citizens. This implies that they have become acquainted with society's current demands of propriety and that they have been apprised of the generally accepted values. This being the case, it would seem that formative education is a vehicle for moulding the conscience according to the South African hierarchy of values, on the basis of which the child will one day display the characteristics of adulthood."¹³

I noticed with amazement that this document carries the signature of Dr G. Hosking, the present Natal Director of Education. Perhaps he should be challenged to say whether these are in fact still his views on education or whether they ever were and if not, how he brought himself to sign the document! Teachers who signed the unseen Code of Conduct and who joined a racially segregated Teachers' Council without making the slightest protest might be forgiven when they have been given such an example from above.

Control Looked at More Deeply

But I would like to look at the issue of control in education in a way that goes much deeper than tracing elements of Christian national education or the influence of the Broederbond and which transcends national boundaries. Here I will be drawing on criticisms that the "deschoolers" have put forward, and that have been most radically and eloquently expressed by Ivan Illich.¹⁴ In the time available,

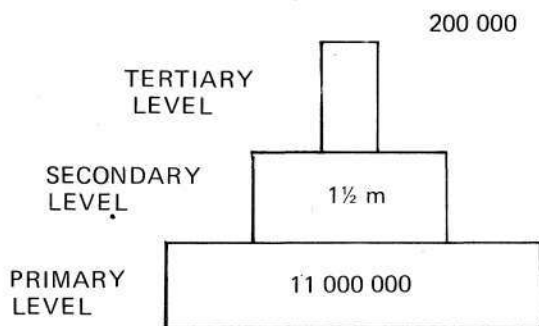
I can only select a few of these; and make only brief reference to each.

1. Compulsory schooling is a denial of the rights of free assembly:

Illich reminds his reader that one of the fundamental human rights is the right of free assembly, and that this right is denied by a law which **compels** people to gather. Such a law is the compulsory schooling law. Of course in a society where there is no right of free assembly, the gathering of pupils at school can be quite a useful opportunity for mobilizing, as students in Soweto have discovered!

2. Schooling as a form of regressive taxation:

There is clear evidence from all over the world that schooling operates as a form of 'regressive taxation' i.e. the poor pay the most and get the least out of it, while the converse is true of the rich. Let me give you an example to show what I mean and just for a change it's drawn from Brazil. In Brazil in 1967 there were 11 000 000 children in primary school, about 1½ m in high school, and just over 200 000 in tertiary education, figures which could be made more graphic by the following pyramid:



The South African figures for the same year (all races combined) were: Primary – 2½ million; Secondary – 500 000; Tertiary – 200 000.¹⁵

There are three main points to be made about these statistics:

- i) Sociologists have demonstrated the closest possible correlation between parental income and the position reached by the child in this educational 'pyramid'.
- ii) The bulk of the taxes which provide for education for the relatively few who get to secondary school and the very few (1 in 55) who get to tertiary education are paid by the parents of the 11 m. children, the majority of whom drop out at some stage during primary school.
- iii) The type of schooling in primary schools does not give rise to critical thought. It does however prepare people for obedient, subservient positions in factories. Some critical thought might be introduced in high school, and more at the tertiary level, and it is from these levels especially the tertiary, that professional and political leadership is drawn.

By and large, then, the schooling system operates as a marvellous way of controlling the majority in any country, especially the poor in a third world country. The poor actually subsidize the attainment of positions of privilege by the wealthy; they assist them to reach those positions from which they will be able to control the destinies of the poor!

3. Schooling has a monopoly over the resources available for education:

In order to ensure that this system of control works, it is necessary that all the financial and other resources available for education are monopolized by the school. This is of course the case in all countries. If a person wishes to learn then resources can only be obtained if that learning is done in or through a school. You cannot get state money to learn on your own, however successfully you may be able to do that. You can also get this money to learn at school during one specific age range, generally 6-16.

4. Only the certificated may get jobs:

But there's another loophole that must be blocked if the control system is to work. Only those who can prove by means of a certificate that they have sat in a certain way for a certain number of hours each week before a duly certificated teacher, can be admitted to jobs. It won't help you at all if you can prove you have the skill needed for the job (however you might have acquired this; at home, from parents, friends or even on your own). You must acquire that skill in an institution approved by the state – viz. the school.

5. The 'hidden' curriculum':

Illich holds that it is a waste of time simply tampering with externals of schooling e.g. changing the curriculum, making the school building more attractive, hiring jollier teachers, reducing class size, etc. This is why I said earlier that we need to pursue our analysis beyond C.N.E. or the control of the Broederbond (significant as each is on its own and in combination). There is a message that is communicated by the very existence of schooling, even for those who never get inside its gate (and that by the way is 2/3 of the world's population).¹⁶ This message is that some places are educational and some are not; that some age spans are educational and most are not; that to prepare for adulthood in society the only way is through 12 years of compulsory schooling; that only a few are worthy of such schooling – the majority are not; that if you are one of those who does not survive you do not deserve the "goodies" that are available in society because you were tried and found wanting – to put it more bluntly – because you are too stupid. The very existence of schooling makes people distrust their capacity to learn on their own or from peers outside an institutional framework.

6. Schooling leads to the alienation of the learner from her learning:

In the schooling process, the young child of six who is a natural questioner and explorer is put in an institution where the message is communicated quite clearly – don't trust your own questioning – we know the questions in which you should be interested, and will deal with those questions at the time we think appropriate. Knowledge is given out in little 40 min. doses. Even if the child has become interested in one of these doses – let's say a geography lesson, when the bell rings for maths that child must quickly alter her interest. Thus an alienation takes place between the learner and knowledge which is, of course, an excellent preparation for their work. But I'm sure you can see that people are actually drilled in school not to be independent seekers after knowledge. If they were to be self-seekers this would be far too subversive. And so in this way too schooling operates as a control system.

7. Schooling reproduces the established order:

Basically Illich sees the school as supporting the status quo, or reproducing the established order. Citizens, he says, "are schooled into their places".¹⁷ More graphically he describes school as "the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is."¹⁸

The pattern of consuming instructions is learnt in the classroom and forms citizens who are "disciplined consumers of bureaucratic instructions ready to consume other kinds of services and treatments which they are told are good for them."¹⁹ Thus the highly destructive consumer style of life has its origin, according to Illich, in the classroom.

Conclusion

I hope I have convinced you of the need to look beyond Afrikaner Nationalism, the Broederbond and C.N.E. or even the politics of White survival if you want to come to an understanding of how school operates as a control system, and if you are concerned about genuine human liberation, I recommend very strongly that you study the writings of Paul Freire and Ivan Illich, in order to reach this deeper understanding. □

NOTES

- 1 South African Teachers' Council for Whites, **Handbook**, Pretoria, 1979, pg. 3.
- 2 Ibid pg. 4
- 3 South African Teachers' Council for Whites, **First Press Conference – 20th February 1978**, Pretoria, 1978, page 4.
- 4 Wilkins, I., and Strydom, H., **The Super Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond**, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1978, pg 263.
- 5 S.A. Teachers' Council for Whites, **Handbook**, pg 18.
- 6 Ibid., pg 22.
- 7 Idem.
- 8 Idem.
- 9 Human Sciences Research Council, "**Report of the Committee for Differentiated Education and Guidance in connection with a national system of education at primary and secondary school level with reference to school guidance as an integrated service of the system of education for the Republic of South Africa and South-West Africa**," Pretoria, 1972.
- 10 Idem.
- 11 Idem.
- 12 Idem.
- 13 Idem.
- 14 Illich, I., **Deschooling Society**, Harper and Row, New York, 1972.
- 15 Simon, K. A., and Grant, W. V., **Digest of Educational Statistics (1971 Edition)**, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, pg 130.
- 16 Reimer, E., **Second Annual Report of the Seminar on Alternatives in Education**, CIDOC, Cuernavaca (Mexico), 1969 pg 1.
- 17 Illich, I., **Celebration of Awareness**, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York, 1971, page 5.
- 18 Illich, I., **Deschooling Society**, pg 163.
- 19 Illich, I., "The Breakdown of Schools", **Journal of Research and Development in Education**, Spring 1972, pg 3.

THE MOFOLO – PLOMER PRIZE

1. The Mofolo-Plomer Prize (named after the writers Thomas Mofolo, 1877-1948, author of CHAKA and William Plomer, 1903-1973, author of TURBOTT WOLFE) is awarded for an unpublished novel or volume of short stories with a length of not less than 30 000 words written by a writer resident in southern Africa or a Southern African writer living abroad. Entries must be in English.
2. Two type-written copies of each entry must be submitted before 31 May 1979 to the Mofolo-Plomer Prize Committee, c/o Ad. Donker (Pty) Ltd, P O Box 41021, Craighall 2024
3. There is no age limitation for the 1979 prize and it is the intention of the Committee to encourage writers who are not yet established.
4. The prize is R500. – donated by Nadine Gordimer, the founder of the Prize, and three Johannesburg publishers (Bateleur Press, Ad. Donker and Ravan Press).
5. The names of the judges will be announced later.
6. The organisers regret that they cannot undertake to return entries without return postage, which should be enclosed in the form of a postal order or cheque. Nor can the organisers offer detailed criticisms of manuscripts received.

The Committee of The Mofolo-Plomer Prize is pleased to announce the awarding of the 1978 prize to the joint winners:

Deon Divigny for his novel, THE ISLAND OF THE BIRD and E. B. Lurie for his novel, THE BEGINNING IS ENDLESS

The judges were Athol Fugard and Ezekiel Mphahlele who made the choice out of 23 manuscripts submitted. The authors, both of whom come from Cape Town, will each receive R250.–

Previous Mofolo-Plomer winners were:

1976 Mbulelo Mzamane: MY COUSIN COMES TO JO'BURG

1976 Peter Wilhelm: AN ISLAND FULL OF GRASS

1977 J. M. Coetsee: IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY (published by Ravan Press and Secker & Warburg, London. Also won the CNA Literary Award 1977)

The 1979 Prize will be announced later this year and entries have to reach the Prize Committee by 31 May 1979. Two type-written copies of each entry should be sent to:

The Mofolo-Plomer Prize Committee
c/o Ad. Donker (Pty) Ltd
P O Box 41021
Craighall
2024

Entries sent to the previous address, c/o Ravan Press, will be forwarded to the Committee.

THIS MUSICAL IS A MUST

Lindiwe: A musical play in two acts, by Shimane Solly Mekgoe (Ravan Playscripts 3. Ravan Press).

Reviewed by Colin Gardner

Lindiwe is typical of the excellent and enterprising publishing that Ravan Press has been offering South Africa for the last few years. In any capitalist society, but particularly in South Africa, publishing is likely, most of the time, to be in a friendly relationship with moneyed privilege of one kind or another. What Ravan Press has done is to find out what has been going on outside the usual circle of writers and readers, and it has published some of the things that it has discovered.

Lindiwe is a musical play about certain features of black township life. Its central story, which is presented as a series of loosely-connected episodes, is interesting and surprising in a number of ways, but, taken simply as a dramatic fiction, it is not profound. It is not as a play in the traditional sense, however, that **Lindiwe** asks to be judged. It is presented to us as a **script**, and a script for a musical (both the words and the music of the songs are printed fully). Moreover the overall effect of the work is to focus our attention not so much upon itself as upon the communal life and problems and sufferings and aspirations that it is a vigorous expression of. In this respect the author's introductory autobiographical note is an integral and important part of the publication.

I say that it is a vigorous expression of the life, problems, sufferings and aspirations of a community. But as an outsider (total or partial), can I be sure of that? I think I can: as the blurb assures us, Shimane Solly Mekgoe's play has been a smash-hit in Soweto since it was first performed in December 1975, and it "is still going strong".

Here, then, is popular art, art of the people, in a rich and lively vein. Those of us who do not live in Soweto can learn a lot from it. Here are some of the things that I think I may have learned:

(1) One is struck, at many points, by the earnestness and the eagerness of the tone. The community that Mekgoe speaks for seems determined not only to express its thoughts and feelings but to realise its best potentialities too. (At some moments one is reminded, perhaps not surprisingly, of a medieval morality-play).

(2) The "musical play" form has been made wholly appropriate. It seems to convey with a certain accuracy the alternations and variations of communal feeling: key moments in the story are translated and expanded into a kind of folk-music. (The author's master in this field is of course the remarkable Gibson Kente).

(3) The dialogue is in English, but the lyrics of the songs are in African languages – Zulu, Tswana, Tsonga and Xhosa. Prose, in other words – the speech of discourse and discussion – is in the language which urban blacks have chosen and are rapidly making their own, while the songs cling to the various mother tongues. The cultural richness, the flowing-together of languages and communities, tells us something about Soweto, but it also provides an image of what South Africa might eventually become.

(4) In **Lindiwe** one sees also (it is all a part of the same thing) a community struggling to reconcile traditions and value-systems which often seem incompatible. There is a special emphasis on the tension between tribal custom and Christian doctrine. Here too, then, one senses, a possible future South Africa may be coming to birth.

A final comment. **Lindiwe** as presented by Ravan is a very well-made little book: the printing, the photographs, the cover are all handsome. It is a fine format for a significant dramatic performance. □



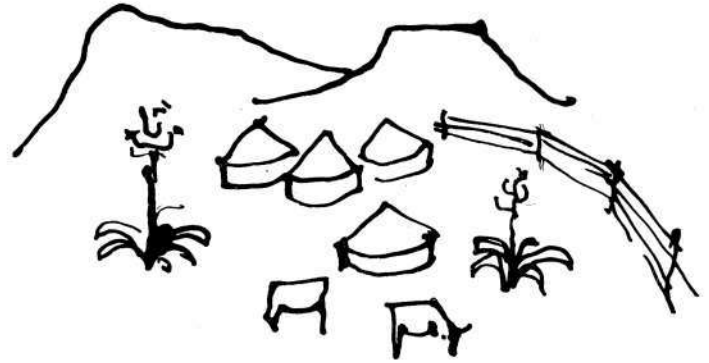
From Peace News

POEMS BY

JOHN — MICHAEL GIBBS

To Molephe Pheto, after an evening of Drums and Poetry

You brought your bitter hatred
And your love to us last night.
Your poems showed our Consciousness
The Children of Soweto dying.
Your articulate drums
Gave their death dignity.
Their sacrifice was sudden and complete:
Yours the exile's slow grey retreat.
Go well, Molephe.
Far away from the Struggle
May you liberate your heart,
With drum and word assuage the anger,
And teach the willing hearer how to love.



D. Nero

Act V, Zimbabwe

We come now to Act Five,
The catharsis, the unhappy denouement.
The play contains no single tragic hero;
All are caught in the final nemesis.
I myself played a small walk-on part
In an earlier act, knew the main actors,
Was swept up in some of the crowd scenes.
Now I wait in the wings
With a few cynics, confused radicals and easy idealists,
Watching the tightening drama from afar.
The wheel of Fortune turns inexorably down.
No running on now to stop the Show.
The Gods will take their toll
Of those who've put their faith
In Nation, Race, or what they call Humanity.
And when the quick catastrophe is done
The fathers' sins will still be visited
On countless sons through time.
Wars don't have heroes any more
But suffering still has power to purify the soul.
Out of the din of propaganda, slogan, treachery, carnage
Will come a quiet passage of new hope.
The cloud is there no bigger than a hand
That heralds rain for the scorched earth.

SEPTEMBER IN ZIMBABWE

The trees are putting on their new leaves again in Zimbabwe,
All the colours of sunrise, yellow, gold and blood red.
The rains are coming, and the land is alive again,
The assegais of grass grow while you watch.
There's blood on the land too,
But the harvest is still to come.
Women turn the soil with slow toil,
Old men have gone to the towns to look for work.
But the young men, the Boys, Vakomana, where are they?
They will be back. They are the harvest
And the harvesters. Some will tell their sons
What they did, omitting the deeds of shame.

RAINS

The rains have come in my soul again.
The drought lasted all of fifteen years,
Barring a shower or two.
Dreams thinned and died like cattle,
Grass shrivelled in the heat before it could seed,
The hot wind blew the land in arid clouds.
I moved on a few times to strange places,
Only to find despair the other end.
Now the time of the singing of birds is come again,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in my land.
Poems spring like pictures to my seeing eye,
Gourd and maize swell in the field,
And the harvest is for sharing.

SOCIALISM

— THE OTHER ALTERNATIVE

By John Aitchison

I believe that socialism is the only effective answer to the three gravest problems in Southern Africa: **poverty**, **unemployment** and a **fair distribution of political power**. I believe also that the socialist alternative needs to be considered at this time of talk of new constitutions for it is particularly worrying that the official opposition's proposals betray a fundamental acceptance of the present economic order. The various Bantustan governments equally show no obvious signs of disagreement with the South African brand of capitalism. Naturally, neither the Progressive Federal Party nor the Bantustan leaders want racialism, and they envisage a "non-racial" capitalism. But I believe that in the South African context there is a predetermined incestuous relationship between capitalism and racism and that seekers after an end to our social ills should opt for socialism.

The present opposition to the South African regime is emasculated by its inability (or unwillingness) to develop a critique of the capitalist system. Hence its failure to come to grips with what ails the country, for it has, at best, an exceedingly shallow understanding of how our land got into its present predicament. I believe this failure explains much of the curious dullness of the opposition in parliament itself. At a time when the PFP should be sharpening their knives for use on a government stricken by incompetence and corruption, they give the appearance of trying to stone the other side of the house to death with marshmallows.

The failure to develop this critique is not surprising. The mores of white society are so thoroughly those of the capitalist world, our school system so careful in its indoctrination of the ideals of competition, the survival of the "able", and group loyalty, the media so completely controlled by big business, that it would have been miraculous for a strong socialist tradition to have developed among whites. Most of us accept the capitalist model of society because we have been born into it and no alternative model is presented to us.

In saying this, some attention must be paid to the curious doctrine-advocated by pro-capitalists in South Africa, and one thinks particularly of Stephen Mulholland of the **Sunday Times** and Leon Louw of the "Free Market Foundation" (the 'agitprop' of the capitalists). This is the belief that what South Africa needs is not less capitalism but more of it! If the South African state would wither away, a capitalism would stand revealed so good, so pure, that injustice and oppression would cease and poverty would be no more. The corollary of this is that racialism will also wither away as capitalism gets the upper hand. Economic growth created by these colour-blind capitalists intent on the pursuit of profit will lead to liberalisation and the end of racialism. Typical words of wisdom from the protagonists of this view are "Apartheid is finished" and "Things are getting better". I believe this "Free Market" propaganda to be a dangerous delusion. It has a particularly pernicious effect on thinking whites who, though they have benefitted from capitalism, are beginning to be uneasy about the viability and/or morality of white rule in South Africa. The doctrine is soporific and beguiles them into thinking that impersonal market mechanisms

will somehow sort everything out to the good of all. There is no such impersonal mechanism and only people who take a personal responsibility for social and political change deserve a place in any future South Africa.

Far too many people, including much of the leadership of the PFP, accept the ludicrous contention that South Africa is already "socialist". They do this simply because there exist a fair number of large state owned enterprises in South Africa. But this is a travesty of what socialism is. As Julius Nyerere stated in the 1967 **Arusha Declaration**:

A state is not socialist simply because all, or all the major, means of production are controlled and owned by the government. It is necessary for the government to be elected by peasants and workers. If the racist governments of Rhodesia and South Africa were to bring the major means of production in these countries under their control and direction, this would entrench exploitation. It would not bring about socialism. There cannot be true socialism without democracy.

It is patently clear that the state controlled enterprises in South Africa are **not** run for the benefit of the whole people of South Africa, as any rail commuter from Soweto will gladly inform you and any domestic or agricultural worker debarred from the Unemployment Insurance Fund will testify. One can define socialism as the political and economic theory according to which the major means of production and exchange should be owned and controlled by the people; everyone should be given equal opportunity to develop his or her talents and the wealth of the community should be fairly distributed. The latter part of this definition is as important as the first, hence the conceptual fallacy of identifying socialism with state control of major industries.

But though South Africa is not a socialist society according to the above definition, there is much that socialists can learn from the genesis of the present political dispensation. Capitalism, as noted capitalists are all too fond of saying, created the present structure of wealth in South Africa (with a little help from their exploited black **and white** workers). Afrikaner dominated governments created a counterpoint battery of laws to protect their constituents from this very capitalism. The way they did it was unfortunate for it caused immense suffering to the vast majority of the people of South Africa. How many people today know that job reservation had its origins in the white miners' strikes of 1919 and 1922 against the attempts by profit hungry mine owners to replace them with cheap black migrants? How many people know of the great depression of the thirties caused by a breakdown of a capitalism that had overreached itself and which led to a white unemployment rate of 25% (the present black unemployment rate has probably not reached that figure yet)? It was state intervention on behalf of the white worker and unemployed that solved the "poor white" problem of this period. The government protected its constituents from "the law of the jungle" which capitalism offered, but at the cost of a rigid racist state structure that oppresses everybody else. But be that as

it may, it was in many ways a great success. A poverty stricken proletariat was built up into our present rulers (now all too keen to reach an accommodation with capitalism and join in the game themselves)' In spite of the negative side of the "success" story, I believe it does show the practicality of the socialist attack on poverty and unemployment.

The basic reason why South African capitalism won't end poverty is that it doesn't try to. Capitalism is by definition the pursuit of profit without state restrictions. The great productive resources of capitalism will never be invested in ending poverty because it would not be profitable. Capitalists would only try to end poverty and unemployment if it got in the way of their making money and in the South African context poverty does not. A classic example of the inadequacy of the capitalist solution to our problems is the Urban Foundation. The "Urban" in the title is itself a give away. The Foundation was a panic response to the urban uprisings of 1976. Its strategy is to build up an urban middle class. Its main preoccupation is housing (naturally I do not deny the great need here). But its result will be along the lines of these excerpts from an article in a recent issue of the Sunday Tribune Finance and Property magazine:

"The picture was supplied by the Urban Foundation, but it has added significance in drawing attention to the magazine's editorial comment, which underlines the opportunities becoming available to property salesmen to sell homes to the blacks. With black housing still among the most critical problems facing the country, it is pleasing to note that the magazine, official organ of the Institute of Estate Agents, is becoming increasingly aware of the huge market that will soon be available . . . Trading in property assets by blacks will inevitably become big business and we must expect some sizeable black estate agencies to emerge. Naturally, they will want to become part of the existing property establishment – and indeed this is already happening. The institute recently signed on its first black member."

Such "progress" offers absolutely nothing to the majority of black workers, the migrants and the unemployed. The evidence for the lack of interest among most capitalists to an ending to poverty should not be looked for in the often noble sentiments expressed by people like Harry Openheimer. Rather, get hold of your local Chamber of Commerce minutes and you will see what commitment capitalists have to ending it. From the Chamber of Mines (which, incidently maintains a cartel agreement that no mine may pay **more** than an agreed rate for black labour) down to the lowliest capitalist enterprise, I have yet to hear of a single firm that has willingly recognised a black trade union (although there is not a single legal impediment to their doing so). Capitalism has no plan to find 2 million people jobs. The only answer for that is a socialist one involving a planned use of the rich resources of South Africa with initially a huge state intervention to create the necessary jobs. The urge to do this (remembering that much of the wherewithal will come out of your taxes) can only come from a system committed to putting people before profits.

It is true that in search of profit capitalism is excellent at providing for people's **wants** -- those of you who are relatively rich will know this. You can get literally anything out of the capitalist system if you want it. You can buy that superb hi-fi, you can go on Barclaycard to England for a holiday. It is all done efficiently and well. No one denies that.

But South African capitalism has no answer to human **need** – to the human need for food in the belly, a job one can work at with dignity, adequate training or education, a house over one's head wherever one lives. Capitalists make goods for the market – for the people who have the money to buy. So capitalists inevitably produce most of their goods for whites. They do not produce goods which the poor

people of this world really need. A good example of this is television. Millions of rands of capital have been poured into making SATV the most technically perfect TV system in the world. The cheapest TV set which enables you to make use of this medium costs about R150 (a black and white portable). The people who really **need** television, the poorly educated semi-literate (and one can think of the educational possibilities of television) cannot afford R150 and are unlikely ever to be able to utilize television. Yet Victor Papanek demonstrated in 1970 that a single channel black and white television set capable of withstanding the most extreme African conditions could be produced to retail at about R7. Now no capitalist is going to make these in South Africa for the simple reason that one makes a bigger profit from a R150 set sold to well-off whites (let alone the profit from the R900 big screen colour sets) than from R7 sets sold to everybody.

Socialism, if it is true to itself, puts people first. This may sound strange because of the common identification of socialism with a very crude "Marxism" which says that economics is the only reality. The truth is the opposite, socialism does not measure people purely by economic criteria. And hence a society which is just and democratic, but which isn't very rich, is infinitely preferable to a society which has all the wealth in the world but which is racked by alienation and division. Hence I believe that a country like Tanzania does provide a model for us in spite of its poverty. (I find it significant that it was poor socialist Tanzania and not rich capitalist Kenya which invaded Uganda in an attempt to end the tyranny of Amin.)

Life in a socialist South Africa would mean a richer social life for us all. Whites would undoubtedly be poorer (a situation in which whites (17% of the population) possess 73% of the wealth is intolerable and would have to be changed). But surely it is a cost worth paying for an end to poverty and unemployment. Surely it is a cost worth paying for the participation of all members of society in the decisions that order their lives, whether it be on factory floor, city council or parliament.

Finally I would like to make some suggestions about a socialism that is relevant to South Africa:

Firstly, I do not think such a socialism would imply state ownership of everything. What need is there to deprive people of their modest personal property and even small businesses? What is important is that the people as a whole derive maximum benefit from the resources of the country. Taxation of institutions such as the mines may be quite as effective a way of doing this as nationalisation. It is quite possible that there is quite enough state ownership in South Africa already. It is regrettable that many socialists have been afflicted by a puritan obsession with rationalising the world. Hence one must not have six firms delivering milk in the morning, one must get one firm to do it. There is no need for this "Tidy things up socialism". The only important thing is that everybody gets milk! Secondly, the actual form of national government might well be changed. There may even be some merit in the recent government/opposition suggestions about consensus government. Certainly traditional African political systems had ways of reaching communal consensus on important issues. Parliamentary democracy is not the only form of democracy. The new communications technology could also aid the formation of a real participatory democracy. (You may have noticed that opinion polls are now banned in times of election). However, though a new consensus model of government needs exploring, caution is necessary, for it could become, as it is certainly intended to become when advocated by the Nationalist Party, simply a new form of the old strategy for maintaining white dominance.

Thirdly, it is not enough to end racial discrimination. Even if "apartheid" were dismantled overnight the most serious of our social evils would remain. A socialist voice will be needed to drive this point home. □

THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

By Jill and Ernie Wentzel

There seems to be a kind of Parkinson's Law of any political coming together: it results in a left, right and centre. And when it does, one of the groups is more than likely to believe that all is manipulated by one of the others, no doubt with the active support, connivance or indifference of the third.

And so it was at this conference. At the end Mrs Jacobs, of Potchefstroom (representing, one hastens to add, the "right"), complained of over representation of the "left" by which perhaps she meant the liberal establishment.

Meanwhile, more radical attenders felt that the whole spectrum of the conference was far too conservative and more especially that there were not enough Blacks. And to make sure that there was a full spectrum of complaint, some women felt that women were not properly represented as chairmen (sorry, chairpersons) and panelists.

Arthur Koestler, in writing of the "Call-Girls" used this term to describe those academics who go from conference to conference delivering papers that become traditionally theirs. Some delegates felt that this was happening in Cape Town. But tired old South African liberals were not undelighted to hear overseas speakers rather than the traditional arguments presented by one South African to another.

The tensions between "left" and "right" gave life to the conference. Thus Mrs Jacobs complained bitterly that delegates had been invited to visit Crossroads and asked why something **positive** had not been shown to the delegates. It is worth reminding those who make this criticism that one is entitled in a democratic society to take its achievements for granted and to concentrate on its failures so that these may be eliminated. It all reminded one of the BBC ITV

discussion in which the United Kingdom Pravda correspondent responded to criticism of political trials in the Soviet Union by saying that it was as if a man had a beautiful suit, but instead of admiring it, the critics rolled up a trouser leg, found a pimple on the leg and concluded that the suit was lousy anyway.

At the end of the conference Andrew Drzemczewski suggested to those who felt that the conference was loaded in favour of the liberals that the next time there should be 80% Black representation "and if you don't like it that's your problem not mine". He also suggested that those who denied that there was torture of political detainees in South Africa should write to Amnesty international for documentation, but warned that they would then be prosecuted for possessing it!

Summing it all up, Sidney Kentridge said there seemed to be a consensus that the pressure of events would bring about change in South Africa. He said that we should now build up institutions that would promote harmonious living and that we should not wait to formulate a bill of rights until power was changing hands, when it would be seen as a last ditch attempt by Whites to hold on to some power.

The epilogue was left to Professor Ellison Kahn with his mannered style of speaking and measured syntax in harmony with one who methodically and laboriously climbs temporarily down the stairs of his ivory tower to attend conferences. He warned against speeches more in keeping with the politic hustings than with the academic life of a university. He seemed to imply that somewhere in some stackroom in some library the diligent scholar might find the mechanism to protect human rights. He is welcome to try; the rest of us will go back to the hustings.

Highlights of the Conference

- * Opening address by the Honorable Mr Justice M. M. Corbett, who called for a national convention and a bill of rights.
- * Professor Charles Hamilton, a Black from Columbia University, on Human Rights and Principles of Racial Equality.
- * Professor Karl Doehring of Heidelberg on State Sovereignty and the Protection of Human Rights.
- * Professor William Gould of the University of Stanford on the Rights of the Wage Earner.

Professor Gould in a powerful address criticised the inadequacy of labour codes such as the Sullivan Code as a means of ensuring satisfactory labour practices in South Africa. He said that nothing would replace the power of organised labour with guaranteed trade union rights.

* Mr Jack Greenberg of the N.A.A.C.P. on the American System of Human Rights Protection.

He called for the building now of institutions which guaranteed human rights and said that the earlier one nurtures institutions which protect human rights and the more one promotes habits of freedom, the more likely it is that human rights will survive times of great social change.

* Professor Richard Lillich of the University of Virginia on Procedural Human Rights.

He quoted Judge Holmes (the American one) that rights without remedies are not rights at all and stressed the need to ensure that there were procedures to enforce human rights.

* Professor Amnon Rubinstein, a Member of the Knesset and a law professor on the Israeli Experience in State Security and Human Rights.

He described Israeli attempts to promote and preserve human rights in a situation of ongoing emergency akin to war. He described these attempts as being based on a pragmatic morality: "Human rights are good for you". He did not subscribe at all to the theory that in times of emergency human rights can be put to one side while the State is preserved.

* Professor James Read on Human Rights Protection in Municipal Law.

Professor Read, of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London, did not draw the audience he deserved, presumably because many people believed that they were to hear a talk on local government, misunderstanding the technical meaning of municipal. This was in many ways the most significant of all the contributions.

In a paper which was both witty and fully supported by factual reference, Professor Read concentrated on the situation of human rights in Africa and the successes and failures of constitutional government. For South Africans it was a hopeful picture, as he described the desire in black Africa to live under the law and the successes of courts in black Africa (quoting particularly from Zambia) in restraining the executive from unlawful action.

Professor Read rose during a later discussion to rebuke a chairman who said that whatever else one might say about South Africa, this conference would not have been possible in Tanzania or Nigeria.

"You could not have been present at my speech" said Professor Read (rightly) "because then you would have known of conferences such as this recently held in Nigeria, Tanzania and Sierra Leone".

Professor Read showed that human rights and their protection was a matter of ongoing debate in Africa. The Tanzanians did not have a bill of rights because they believed that as in Britain it would be the national ethic which was the best protection for human rights. This was not an opinion shared by many other black countries. The important fact was, however, not unanimity on the method of protection, but the desire to ensure real protection.

* Professor Walter Gellhorn of Columbia University; a doyen in this field of Human Rights and the Administrative State.

- * Professor L. Henken, University of Columbia on International Instruments for the Protection of Human Rights. He knocked the South African outcry against "selective targeting". He pointed out that this did not mean that the target was innocent.
- * Professor Felix Ermacora (in absentia) of the University of Vienna on The European System of Human Rights Protection.
- * Col. Draper of the University of Sussex on Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.
In a paper presented with conspicuous wit, he analysed international conventions dealing with war and the problems of making provision for unconventional wars where guerillas or freedom fighters are involved.
- * Dr Michael Veuthey, On the International Red Cross and the Protection of Human Rights.
During discussion Mr Kelsey Stuart, the South African chairman of the Red Cross, contrasted the government's handling of the Cuban prisoners of war with its treatment of its own detained citizens.
- * Mr Anthony Lewis of the New York Times on The Freedom of the Press.
This accomplished speaker was particularly impressive in dealing with questioners. The speech was followed by a panel discussion on which Mr Myburgh of the Sunday Times, Professor S. A. Strauss and Professor Barend van Niekerk participated.
- * Professor John Dugard on Human Rights in South Africa — retrospect and prospect.
He proposed a commission to investigate allegations by detainees of ill-treatment. In a lively discussion, Mr Pitje, a black lawyer, attacked Professor Dugard for allegedly promoting an unduly cautious approach. Perhaps Mr Pitje came believing that he would, but it was hard to reconcile the attack with what Professor Dugard actually said.
- * A human rights commission was elected, with the task of setting up a permanent body.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Peter Brown
 Vice-Chairman: Alan Paton
 Board: H. Bhengu, E. H. Brookes, M. Buthelezi, M. Corrigan, M. Dyer, C. Gardner, S. Lundie, S. Msimang, P. Rutsch, J. Unterhalter.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Send to: Reality, P.O. Box 1104, Pietermaritzburg 3200, R.S.A.

RATES (6 issues—published every two months)

ORDINARY SUBSCRIBERS	DONOR SUBSCRIBERS
S.A. R2,00 p.a.	S.A. R10,00 p.a.
U.K. £1,25 p.a.	U.K. £5,00 p.a.
U.S.A. \$3,00 p.a.	U.S.A. \$15,00 p.a.

THE HAJJI AND OTHER STORIES

by Ahmed Essop

(Ravan Press, paperback)

Reviewed by Tony Voss.

The South African short story like most South African fictions, was for a long time dominated by rural, pastoral settings; the bushveldt or the farm. In Jean Marquard's recently published **A Century of South African Short Stories**, which opens with a story first published in 1895, Peter Abraham's "One of the Three" (from **Dark Testament** – 1942), is the earliest story with an urban setting. Since then, as one might have expected given the history of the country, South African stories tend to be urban and suburban. Our frontier is a peri-urban zone rather than the great outdoors.

Ahmed Essop's stories in this volume, like those of Barney Simon, who, in **Jo'burg Sis**, produced the only volume equal to **The Hajji** among recent South African collections of short fiction, are city and suburban stories. They centre, as Lionel Abrahams describes it, in his laudatory but hardly over-stated foreword, "on the vivid aromatic world of Johannesburg's Indian community in Fordsburg." The greenest spot for miles around is Jamal's fruitshop: the landmarks are the Broadway Cinema and Orient House. It is a landscape of streets, yards, balconies and doorways: no gardens, no river, no kopjes, no mealie-fields. The closest it gets to the rural is the blue-gum plantation of a mine.

Socially the community itself is tightly-knit: there are no anonymous characters. This is partly a South African phenomenon. We are all minorities, and our various racial communities live isolated from one another. But within Ahmed Essop's Fordsburg/Newtown/Lenasia, as in Bosman's Marico, every character can be identified by function or relationship:

Shireen was the daughter of the widow, Wadia.
(*"Black and White"*)

... a waiter of distinction.
(*"Mr Moonreddy"*)

Within the community, social distinction and gradation can be very fine and very harsh: teachers vs. waiters, muslim vs. hindu. In the story "Red Beard's Daughter", Julie refuses to marry "a shopkeeper in a distant country town" as soon as she sees him, even though the bride price has been paid:

Ben Areff, who was wearing sun-glasses, now took them off. He was a man of average height and looked very diffident. He wasn't the sort of man to be envied. At home neither in an Indian world nor an African world, he was a derelict socially.

Mr Abrahams may be right that the interests of these stories is not "defined by a racial line". But very often the mainspring of a story is an action, even an emotion, that comes from deep within the individual but reaches outside the community. Hajji Husen, of the title story, suffers horribly for refusing recognition to his dying brother, who wishes to be buried with Moslem rites, although he has lived for 10 years with a white women in Hillbrow. Shireen, the central character of "Black and White" has a white boy-friend but ends up crying, with "blood on her mouth". Moses, an African servant, hangs himself rather than accept "repatriation" to the Transkei. All these are sombre examples of Mr Essop's art.

But there is rich humour too. Mahmood, "The Target" of the story of that title, trying to keep his end up in the world of Gool the gangster, claims to be "practising integration" when he employs "a tribal warrior" as a guard. In "The Notice" the Group Areas official who comes to serve notice of removal from Fordsburg to Lenasia on Mr Effendi, a commercial traveller, tries to seduce Mrs Effendi and offers to extend the Effendis' time in Fordsburg by saying that Mr Effendi is on a visit to India. The husband's sudden return home brings the story to a very funny ending, with all the archtypes of this kind of story ironically reversed.

Part of Ahmed Essop's art is to search out and highlight individuals and individuality in the community. This enterprise ranges from the deep ironic humour of "Aziz Khan":

I first met Aziz Khan – described in various Muslim journals as the 'author of the renowned pamphlets "Muslim in Decay" and the "Decline and Fall of the Morality of Muslims" and is the 'illustrious modern Saracen' – the day he handed me a cyclostyled copy of his pamphlet 'The Degeneracy of Muslim Marriages' at a wedding reception.

to the sad ending of the friendship between Hussein and the white boy, Riekie:

Riekie shook the barred gate and called for Hussein over and over again, and his voice was smothered by the croaks of the old man. . . . I returned to my landlady's with the hackles of revolt rising within me.
(*"Gerty's Brother"*)

"Mr Moon Reddy" brings us to the centre of a lonely man, "a self-made man, not educated like you, not belonging to intellectual class . . ." who takes his revenge on a condescending world through his Alsatian dog, which he lets loose one night to kill the little dog of a richer and perhaps happier neighbour. But

Early next morning he went into the yard and was stunned – the dog was dead. There was a scarlet band of congealed blood near the dog's ear. An involuntary scream escaped from his lips, a scream that brought the widow and her daughter running from the house.

The most profound individuality, however, is that of Mr Essop himself, although he usually adopts a shadowy, almost anonymous persona as narrator. We learn something of his friendship with Omar, of his love-affairs with the "Two Sisters", that Mahmood is his relative, that he carried messages from Mr Rajah to "certain well-nourished women in Fordsburg". But the writer's individual note is struck in every one of these compelling stories. He is able to speak for Fordsburg, and is yet somehow independent of it and thus able to speak to all of us.

Olive Schreiner's karroo, like Bosman's Marico, is gone forever from history. It is ironic and sobering that Ahmed Essop's Fordsburg is changing even more rapidly – most of it is now the Oriental Plaza, most of its citizens have moved to Lenasia. But in the fictive, re-creative world of these stories, Mr Effendi, the commercial traveller, will live in Fordsburg forever. The notice of removal will never take effect.

Buy this book! □