

# reality

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## **EDITORIALS**

### **BOTHA & MUGABE**

To say that white South Africa was taken aback by the Mugabe victory would be the understatement of the year. Given the fact that many South African newspapers hardly carry any news at all of what the rest of the world is thinking, and that South African radio and television is committed to trying to persuade its audience to believe what the Government would like it to believe, it is not surprising that ordinary people should have been so out of touch with reality. But that the government itself should have been so misinformed — that really is something.

The Prime Minister's grudging and ungracious response to Mr Mugabe's win suggests that he was totally unprepared for what happened. Who is supposed to tell him about these things? Does he know as little about the true state of affairs in other parts of Africa as he knew about Zimbabwe? More important, has he learnt anything from what happened there?

Has he realised yet that the time has come to start looking for Mugabes to talk to instead of Muzorewas to prop up? In this regard what he does in Namibia will be a crucial indicator. He must know now that the DTA is unlikely to win a free election under independent supervision there. Can he bring himself to face that possibility and hold such an election in spite of it? We sincerely hope so. And suddenly there is some hope, in the Administrator General's Statement in London that the Government might under certain circumstances be prepared to talk to SWAPO.

Even from its own point of view the Zimbabwe result should surely have shown the Government that the longer it delays free elections the more certain it will become that the one of its opponents it would least like to live with will turn out to be the eventual winner. □

# MORE PERSECUTION

Thirty years of bannings and other harassments have had no more than a marginal effect on the volume of criticism and opposition directed against the Nationalist Government's policies. Yet despite the dismal failure of these instruments to achieve what they are presumably supposed to achieve—silence and acquiescence from apartheid's opponents—the authorities go blindly on wielding them. In recent weeks the Government has, amongst other things, first detained and then banned the PEBCO leaders of the campaign for better working conditions in Port Elizabeth; it has taken away the passport of Bishop Desmond Tutu, Secretary of the South African Council of Churches; its agents have questioned leading members of the Soweto Teachers' Action Committee, with the implication that it intends to ban them; and in Cape Town Rev. David Russell has been sentenced to a year in gaol for breaking his ban in order to attend the synod of the Anglican Church, and his secretary, Mrs Dot Cleminshaw,

has been sent to gaol for a month for refusing to pay the fine imposed on her for possessing two banned books, one about Steve Biko, the other about the post-Soweto riots.

All this to what purpose? None at all. Workers' demands for a greater share of the national cake won't disappear because PEBCO leaders are banned; the international Christian community will pay more attention, not less, to the views of Bishop Tutu, now that his passport has been confiscated; black opposition to the present educational system won't go away because some of its most articulate critics are silenced; and sending David Russell to prison for breaking his ban to go to his Church's synod, and Dot Cleminshaw for being in possession of those books, will certainly and rightly boost their standing at home and abroad.

Banning is a vicious exercise in futility. It should never have started and it is high time it stopped. □

# MARGARET BALLINGER

Margaret Ballinger died shortly after our last issue went to press and so our tribute to her comes very late.

During the whole of her active life she was in the forefront of those who fought for the defence and extension of black South Africans' rights. She was tireless in this fight, brave however great the odds against her—and they were almost always overwhelming—brilliant in marshalling and presenting her invariably unpopular case. She was a founder-member of the Liberal Party of South Africa but, individualist that she was, one felt that the constraints imposed on her by party policy were often hard for her to bear, and that having been alone, and her own master, for so long, she sometimes looked back longingly to those days when she owed allegiance to no one but herself.

And in any event she was a Liberal of the old school, her

roots set in the soil of the pre-war years. The steady radicalisation of its policies which characterised the Liberal Party's development between 1953 and 1968 often made her feel uncomfortable. Yet it was this situation which brought out to the very best one of her most impressive qualities, her loyalty. Whatever she may have felt about the direction the Party was taking she stuck loyally by it until the day the Improper Interference Act closed it down. And indeed, in those last grim years, when the Party leadership and organisation had been decimated by bannings she came back to throw her full weight behind it in its battle for survival.

Margaret Ballinger was a person of great courage, character and talent. It is white South Africa's tragedy that it would not listen to her. □

# SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Editorial Board very much regrets that it has been forced to raise subscriptions from R2 to R3 per annum, as from the next subscription due. Subscriptions provide only part of our income and we depend for survival on the generosity of those many readers who give us more than the minimum we ask for. But even that is not now enough to cover our costs, even less so since the new postal rates have increased the postage on each issue by 150%.

If you cannot manage the R3 please let us know and we will continue to send you REALITY at the old rate—but if you can manage R3 (or more!) it will be a great help to us. □

# MARGARET BALLINGER:

## a tribute

by O. D. Wollheim

For 23 of her 86 years Margaret Ballinger sat stoically and heroically through six months of every year (plus one session in 1939 to declare war) in Parliament having to endure abuse, calumny, distortion of her words and often venomous attacks on her personality. The worst moments must surely have been those when her reasoned and well researched and documented approach to a question was completely ignored and answered by a torrent of emotional and racialistic prejudices.

Now anyone who has sat through a complete session of Parliament—or for that matter a three week session of a Provincial Council—realises that he has endured an ordeal during the major part of which he has had to listen to an incredible deluge of claptrap, petty scoring—off points, “You’re another” replies, and often sheer verbal padding to fill in time while a Minister gets ready or is out of the House, or merely to talk out time to avoid a vote on the issue. To have sat through 23 of them must surely indicate monumental patience, Herculean stamina and an utter conviction of the rightness of her case.

Through all this Mrs Ballinger never lost her cool. Nor did she ever reply to any such attack on the same level. Always she had her facts at her fingertips, her arguments lucidly and logically assembled and always her speeches were models of eloquence displaying a complete command of her subject. This is not to say that she never got angry. Few who heard her will ever forget her devastating replies to some particularly stupid argument when she often left her opponent virtually speechless and quivering with impotent rage.

Professor Hancock in his book on Smuts said that she had achieved an extraordinarily high standard of Parliamentary eloquence in the attack she consistently made upon the Government’s shortcomings in the economic and social sectors of Native (sic) policy. She herself in her book said that she was a liberal and that nothing had modified her belief that a broadbased democratic system progressively embracing politically all the elements of our complex society was the only way to peace and to fulfil our mission of carrying the torch of civilisation with its emphasis on the individual irrespective of colour to the uttermost ends of the earth.

For readers of REALITY there would be no need to embark on a full and detailed account of her life. Born in Scotland in 1896, she came to South Africa in 1904 where her father, John Hodgson, had fought as a Free State Burger against the British. She was immensely proud of her Vrystaat Burgerskap and this often was an additional weapon against her enemies and a shield against arrows aimed at her. She was educated in Port Elizabeth, graduated with an Honours degree in History at Rhodes and followed this on a Queen Victoria Scholarship to take an M. A. degree at Somerville College at Oxford. She returned to Rhodes as Head of their History Department and then became a Senior Lecturer at Witwatersrand until her marriage to William Ballinger in 1934. As Margaret Hodgson she is still remembered fondly by very many of her students both at Rhodes and Wits.

William Ballinger was a trade unionist who had been sent out by the British trade union movement to attempt to bring some sort of order into the chaos reigning supreme in Clements Kadalie’s Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU). He did not succeed because Kadalie, who was a prickly and eloquent demagogue who did his own thing and brooked no interference or advice, completely ignored all the rules and regulations introduced by Ballinger. The latter, himself no footstool, fell out with Kadalie very quickly and proceeded to other fields of labour organisation. In 1948 he was elected to the Senate to represent Africans of the Orange Free State and Transvaal and from then on until the abolition of the “Native Seats” ably supported and backed his wife.

The three “Natives’ Representatives” elected to the Assembly in 1938 made an impact on the serried ranks on both sides of the House out of all proportion to their numbers. For the first time the case and cause of the African could be put to the House without reservations. Although several Cape seats had some African (and Coloured) voters on the rolls, candidates for election could only make token gestures to them, continually having to look over their shoulders lest they alienate white voters.

Now for the first time a full blooded attack could be made on the pass laws, the migrant labour system, the absurdly small allocation of funds for the education of African children, the almost total lack of social pensions, sweated wages and pay discrimination based on skin colour. For the first time some members of the House began to realise that able-bodied men could not be divorced from their families and womenfolk for protracted periods without causing social dislocation both where they worked and at home where their families waited desperately for the money which the worker could spare from his already inadequate wage. Attention was increasingly focussed on shanty towns, the lack of proper housing, the abuse of labourers on farms and the total lack of any meaningful means of communication between those with black skins who did the work and those with white skins who wielded the instruments of power. But it must not be assumed that the three only paid attention to the affairs of Africans. They were full Members of Parliament and the record will show that they played a full and meaningful role in the general affairs of the country.

The 1936 Acts had set up a Natives’ Representative Council on which, after much soul searching, some of the best black brains were prepared to serve to try to make the new machinery work: Jabavu, Matthews, Dube, Selope Thema, Mosaka, Champion, Selby Msimang, Luthuli and others. Led by Margaret, the three who made up her team in the Assembly attended every session faithfully and as faithfully saw to it that their reports, conveniently pigeonholed without being read, did in fact see the light of day. This Council was supposed to be the means of communication between the Government and the African people and was the quid pro quo for the loss of their votes in the Cape seats. Until it prorogued sine die no Minister had taken the trouble to sit through any

of their sessions or to read their reports, some of which were quite outstanding. None of their recommendations were even debated unless the Ballingers saw to it that they were.

As a quid pro quo the Council was a hopeless failure for these reasons and it was small wonder that one of Dr Malan's first actions on assuming power in 1948 was to abolish the Council. In her book Margaret says: "It is impossible to read its record without being oppressed by the tragedy of those years. It is a record in which two things stand out conspicuously—the high level of African development in South Africa as compared with any other African community in Africa; and, in spite of already accumulated grievances and frustrations, how little it would have taken to establish a co-operative relationship with both the leaders and the mass of the African people . . . ."

The impact of the team, as I have said, was out of all proportion. By 1942 General Smuts, addressing a gathering of the South African Institute of Race Relations in the Cape Town City Hall, was to say that segregation was dead and that other ways of arranging intergroup relations had to be found. The Fagan Commission had reported and Smuts had accepted its findings that black South Africans had to be accepted as a permanent part of the urban population and that the migrant labour system was obsolete.

The 1948 elections came as one of South Africa's greatest shocks. On a substantial minority of votes, Dr D. F. Malan won a five seat majority in the Assembly. For the first time Smuts realised that the 'loaded vote' in rural areas (which he had stoutly defended since Union) was wrong and that it gave rural areas a distorted and disproportionate influence on the running of the country. In some constituencies 85 farmers had the same political power as 115 townsmen.

This must have been Margaret Ballinger's bitterest moment. For she was to watch all that she and her colleagues had so painstakingly accomplished systematically dismantled and in fact the whole country taking a giant leap back into the nineteenth century. A lesser spirit would have given up and retired from politics entirely.

But Mrs Ballinger was made of finer steel. Around her but keeping their distance a small group of more enlightened people had gathered. She could always rely on the tacit (never explicit) support of Hofmeyr, but others such as Harry Oppenheimer, Helen Suzman, Robin Stratford, Edgar Brookes and others were increasingly prepared to use their influence in caucus to support her attitudes and approach to the race question. By 1951 a small Liberal Group had emerged which rapidly grew to over 700 members all paid up and in 1953 the Liberal Party was formed with her first as Leader and later as President when her responsibilities became too onerous.

The Liberal Party encapsulated in its political manifesto all those things for which Margaret Ballinger had battled;

it gave political expression to the ethical bases of the Institute of Race Relations, the Penal Reform League and the Civil Rights League—as well as to the countless millions of voteless people and a steadily growing number of more enlightened whites. She carried on the battle in Parliament even against the enormously increased odds over those of before 1948. But now at least she had an organised group of people who could explicitly support her, provide her with material, encourage her and use what little voting pressure they could exercise.

Not that she lacked backing. Her constituents had elected her to Parliament time and again, in spite of the reluctance of some older African men to give authority to a woman. She had earned their respect and support by her fearless actions. But now she also had some support from people who could exercise a degree of political power. She continued as President of the Liberal Party until it of its own free will dissolved as a result of the Political Interference Act and she continued the battle in Parliament until 1960 when "Native Representation" was abolished.

Shortly after this she was invited to spend a year at Oxford University to write up the history of "Native Representation" and in 1969 her book *From Union to Apartheid: a Trek to Isolation* was published. But she continued to work in other fields too. She joined the Cape Western Regional Committee of the Institute of Race Relations, acted as Patron and adviser to the Civil Rights League and interviewed countless visitors from overseas who found themselves bewildered by the fact that South Africa, when the rest of the world was moving into the computer age, was moving steadily back to a feudal system.

She travelled widely in Britain, the United States, Africa and India and wherever she went she was treated as an honoured guest and fêted. Both Cape Town and Rhodes conferred on her well deserved degrees of L. LD.

Margaret Ballinger was one of the brightest stars to shine in the intellectual and political firmament of South Africa. Fearless and undaunted by the fiercest opposition, she remained rational, motivated by the highest ideals, eloquent in speech and gracious in bearing into ripe old age. I remain personally convinced that she, more than any other single person, laid the first real foundation for the slow but steady growth of more enlightened attitudes in this country. One marvels at what the students of Stellenbosch—let alone their teachers—say and do today compared with only ten years ago; at what "Woord en Daad" writes in Potchefstroom; at Danie Craven's volte face; at open beaches and restaurants; and even at P. W. Botha's shy peeping from behind the dark-room curtain of Afrikanerdom. Could this have happened—perhaps happened so soon—if it were not for the constant battle of this woman? Or would we, without her, have landed by now in an endless guerilla situation of Sharpevilles and Sowetos each following close upon the heels of the other? □



# REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE

by Garfield Todd



*Robert Mugabe Prime Minister, designate, leader of Z.A.N.U. (P.F.) at the helm of the New Zimbabwe.*

*P. Weinberg*

In the final months of its travail Rhodesia was so unreal that whites who thought as we did came almost to question their own sanity, let alone the soundness of their judgment.

Ian Smith's propagandist machine which for fourteen years had exerted such baleful influence in the west, continued to assure the world that the Government enjoyed the support of almost all the people and that it stood, clothed in shining armour, defending the west or anyway South Africa, against the communist hordes led by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. We, the whites, supported by "our" seven million Africans were still winning the war against the Marxists and each evening the Headquarters communique from Combined Operations Command listed X murders by terrorists and 10X laudable killings by the Security forces.

In April 1979 Bishop Muzorewa had been elected by a "free and fair" election in which every white employer, the police and the army had ruthlessly combined to ensure just that result. The week before the election and within seven miles of our home, soldiers shot three innocent men without even challenging them. It was the same soldiers who, the following week, gathered the people on the borders of our ranch and walked them six miles to a mobile polling booth to record their frightened votes. Whatever may have been the joy of the people in voting for Bishop Muzorewa in Salisbury or other places, this was the truth of the situation in our area.

The mantle of Ian Smith had now settled incongruously on the shoulders of Bishop Muzorewa, the man of God and Minister of War who claimed full responsibility for conducting the war, but in fact had no control at all over it. The army and air force now shed any remaining inhibitions and mounted a campaign of terror throughout the rural areas.

By the close of 1979 a quarter of a million villagers had fled from their devastated homes and their country and were living destitute in refugee camps in Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia. Within Rhodesia the black population of the cities and the towns had doubled as a million men, women and children trekked from the villages to find shelter with friends and relatives in the black townships. Many, in desperation, found their shelter under plastic sheets on the borders of the towns.

By the time the Commonwealth met in Conference at Lusaka to experience what proved to be their "finest hour" Mrs Thatcher, the Conservative leader, was poised to recognise Bishop Muzorewa as Prime Minister and in Rhodesia the people were in desperate straits. "Operation Turkey" a hideous name for a programme designed to starve out the "terrorists" by reducing the food available to the people to such low levels that the liberators, who numbered one in 200 of the population, half of one per cent, would not be able to survive. Mr Ian Smith's Government and the Bishop's Government which followed, limited the amount of maize meal, the basic food, which could be purchased by any one person at one time and all grinding mills in rural areas were not only closed down but were physically removed and taken to military posts for safe-keeping.

If the guerillas had been 20% of the population, "Operation Turkey" might have succeeded in its aim but as the ratio was one guerilla to 200 villagers the result was to make life extremely difficult for mothers and to limit the food available to the families. No-one can tell what the long-

term damage to children will be but no guerilla starved or was greatly inconvenienced by the measure, despite official reports to the contrary.

The guerillas established committees of the people in every operational area; teachers paid 10\$ or more monthly, store-keepers were levied and a detailed organisation for feeding the itinerant bands of twenty to thirty guerillas was set up. As the villagers were constantly being searched by troops it was not practicable to establish caches of food but the local "logistics secretary" knew where he could get enough small amounts of food to feed the visitors—though, in some areas, the day did come when people said, "Our chickens are finished, our goats are finished and now we have to kill our cattle." When that day came it was often the white farmers who provided the cattle. These were stolen in large numbers, driven through the African areas and dropped off one by one at each village. The villagers would kill their animal and then hang the meat to dry. Many people have been jailed for nine years or more for cattle theft during this period, but as their crimes were politically motivated and an integral part of the war, they will no doubt be released before long.

The propaganda machine continued to tell of the "brutal terrorists" and of the "terrorised masses", but those of us who lived with the people in friendship knew that the people and the guerillas were one. The 30 000 guerillas were indeed "the fish" swimming safely "in the water", the water being the loyal population of Zimbabwe.

When the leaders of the Liberation Armies accepted an invitation to attend talks at Lancaster House, a great many people and especially the British, expected the talks to break down at an early date. If this had happened the British Government would almost certainly have recognised Bishop Muzorewa and would have lifted sanctions. Then the British Government, together with the Government of South Africa, would have given Bishop Muzorewa all the assistance he required to defeat the "Marxist" armies. There seemed to be only the vaguest recognition in the west that in Rhodesia the basic problem was not Marxism but Nationalism—a crisis of liberty for the people. Smith told the world that he was fighting atheistic Marxism which threatened to engulf seven million people. The truth was that he, for the whites, had declared a thousand years of war against African Nationalism, against the armies of Mugabe and Nkomo which were totally committed to the liberation of Zimbabwe and her peoples. Mr Smith, his government and army had stood in their way but, by April 1979 he had found it politic to set up a black facade behind which white power would be protected by a new constitution for a minimum of ten more years. Bishop Muzorewa became Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the war against the people of Zimbabwe.

Another fact not generally recognised was that by the time the Lancaster House Conference opened, not only were the Rhodesian Government and the economy under critical strain, but the people themselves had had more than enough of war.

A third of their schools were closed, hundreds of thousands of people were confined to "protected villages", so many cattle had died and many fields were no longer cultivated. Between 20 000 and 30 000 people had been killed. Word was sent to the leaders that a solution had to be found. When some guerilla leaders demanded that the war be continued until the liberation armies marched victoriously into the streets of Salisbury, one answer was that the whites were already defeated. The 1979 Constitution had given

whites control over possible changes in the Constitution but they were to have only two representatives at the Lancaster House Conference out of a total of twenty-four delegates. This was defeat for the whites and so it proved to be.

But even at that point defeat was not recognised, certainly not accepted by the Rhodesian Government or by the whites. When one contemplated the scene in the period leading up to the election it was difficult to be confident that the people would prevail. Ranged against them were the Government of Rhodesia, the civil service, the army, the police, the whites in general, and supporting this powerful group and making the continuation of the war possible, the Government and white people of South Africa.

But in Zimbabwe we were dealing with miracles. The Lusaka Conference which might have broken the Commonwealth instead laid out the path to Lancaster House. During those London weeks the Commonwealth played a key role and following the agreement its members encouraged and supported Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo along their difficult and most dangerous way. I hold that the greatest act of faith in the whole delicate process was the decision by Nkomo and Mugabe to call their men from the bush and place them in open camps, and then for 22 000 men and women to obey the call.

The Patriotic Front had asked for adequate time to prepare voting rolls. This was refused and the party-list system had to be used. The Patriotic Front asked for a substantial peace-keeping force from the United Nations or the Commonwealth, and this also was refused. After weeks of battling they did obtain a monitoring force from the Commonwealth but the British resisted full Commonwealth participation because they realised that the Commonwealth, with the exception of Britain and perhaps of New Zealand, supported the African people in their struggle.

We are deeply indebted to Lord Carrington and to the officials of the Foreign Office for all that they accomplished. Some of the officials worked themselves to exhaustion to bring Lancaster to a viable conclusion—but the British Government were prepared to go beyond the limits of wisdom or justice to keep Mugabe out of power.

Bishop Muzorewa was acceptable to the British, or a combination of Bishop Muzorewa, the whites and any residue of the small parties. The British too, were deceived by Rhodesian propaganda and believed that all would be lost if Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo came to power.

I had hoped that with the arrival of the Governor the whole atmosphere of war would be changed. I thought that the army would largely disappear from view and I knew that the Auxiliaries, Bishop Muzorewa's private army, would be either disbanded or confined to barracks.

Nothing like this happened and the system continued as before. When I had earlier protested to Sir John Boynton because the ZANLA (PF) head office could not get one telephone installed, Sir John replied: "Mr Todd, you cannot beat the system". I thought to myself that perhaps I could not beat the system but the people could, and they did.

Twenty thousand armed Auxiliary forces were deployed throughout the country. Their presence was excused by various pretences. They were "building roads", "opening dips", "re-building schools", but the truth was that, in full co-operation with the District Commissioners, they were an integral part of the system which was determined at all costs to keep the Patriotic Front out of power.

The white population had been so imbued by Rhodesian



*Fatherly figure Joshua Nkomo makes a point at a press conference during the election build-up.*

*Paul Weinberg*

Front propaganda that they genuinely believed that a Mugabe victory would be the end of life for them in the country they love. This is not to be wondered at when in Britain a reputable publication such as the Church Times gave space as late as February 22 to a letter in which it stated that Robert Mugabe had said that if he were given control of Government "all children from the age of seven shall (be placed) under military training as well as (being taught) the principles of Socialism. . . . "all Churches will be turned into barracks, concentration camps and dancing halls. . . . .

"All those associated with the Church will be brought before a military tribunal."

The two month period leading up to the election was a grim time for anyone supporting the Nationalist cause. In my home village of Shabani the police seemed to lose all power of judgment. The Principal of our local high school, three candidates for the ZANU(PF) and even I were committed to prison under the terms of the notorious Law and Order Maintenance Act.

The three candidates are now all M.Ps and all in government while charges against the Principal and me have been dropped. What really was frightening was the air of certainty of the Police, the Magistrate, the Army—all who belonged to the system—that they could carry on along their illegal way and that nothing could stop them.

Before the election I was discussing the election with a Minister of Religion. I prophesied that Mugabe would get 40 seats, Nkomo 23, Muzorewa 15—and at that point I was interrupted by an indignant interjection: "You think Muzorewa will get 15 seats? Never! The people will not

give him one." My friend was not far wrong but the people did give the Bishop three seats.

On March 5 in a letter to a friend overseas I said "Rejoice with us. On Tuesday, March 4 Zimbabwe emerged from persecution and war with a clarity of decision which has taken the world by surprise. This overwhelming expression of the people's will is our recipe for peace.

"Some 2 649 529 people enthusiastically cast their votes, giving ZANU of the Patriotic Front 1 668 992 votes, ZAPU of the Patriotic Front 638 879 votes and Bishop Muzorewa 219 307 votes. The other six parties were eliminated by the vote. Mr Mugabe emerged with 57 seats, Dr Joshua Nkomo with 20 seats and the Bishop with three.

"Mr Mugabe, as Prime Minister designate, addressed the nation last evening and his message was one of reconciliation and of hope. Not in many years have we listened to a speech by our Prime Minister so unambiguous, so articulate, so carefully conciliatory. At the same time people from both sections of the Patriotic Front were dancing and singing in the townships and in the villages, brothers in the struggle and in the victory.

"The war has cost over 20 000 lives, the detention and imprisonment of tens of thousands of people, the destruction of innumerable homes, but we are now emerging into the sunlight of hope. So many Governments as well as the Churches around the world are offering help in the rehabilitation of our country."

"I know that there will be problems and disappointments; there are wounds of the body and of the spirit which can hardly be healed but the people have massively spoken for peace." □



# ZIMBABWE - From War to Peace

by Paul Weinberg

The landslide 57 seat election victory for Zanu (P.F.) hails a new era for Zimbabwe. It marks the end of 90 years of white minority rule in the territory. At the same time it offers the black population a new vision and eventual legitimate control over their destiny. The significance of the result lies in the fact that behind mistaken propaganda slogans of the R.F. that the "Patriotic Front were a group of uncivilised Marxist barbarians" was a true and representative people's movement. Furthermore the election process itself proves the point that majority rule means true representation and does not mean just simply buying off a few puppets and chiefs. The April 1979 elections in no way changed things, even though a black Prime Minister and a black majority then sat in parliament. The war by all accounts escalated and a few token gestures were made to dismantle some of the racial legislation.

By and large the situation remained as before-the land distribution remained the same, wages remained below the poverty datum line and political harassment of Zanu and Zapu continued. As one former U.A.N.C. supporter put it, "we voted in April because we thought the Bishop would be an improvement on the R.F. We were soon proved wrong, though." Behind the veneer of black rule was the R.F. machine an entrenched white veto to prevent any changes to the constitution, and the key ministerial posts securely in the hands of the whites.

Thus the recent elections opened the way for the true black voice to be heard and to the opportunity for real political representation. By nearly all accounts this expression and the election process itself under the supervision of the colonial power had its "free and fair" stamp of approval. If cards were stacked against anyone it was against the Patriotic Front (ZANU and ZAPU). According to the terms of the agreement:—

The B.S.A. police would be responsible for the maintenance of law and order. The police had actively taken sides in the civil war and their impartiality was questioned. War refugees were to return. Of the approximately 250 000 in camps in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana only 30 000 were allowed back in during the election. The Governor soon after the termination of the cease-fire deployed the Rhodesian security forces.

The Governor proscribed electioneering in a number of areas, most of which were key ZANU PF strongholds.

Finally the Patriotic Front alliance at Lancaster House had requested a two month postponement of the elections and as increase in the size of the monitoring forces. Both these requests were turned down.

Breaches of the cease-fire at the hands of Zanla and Zipra did occur. The existence of about 5 000 guerrillas and renegade members of these armies is an accepted fact. The media



*Cabinet Minister Earnest Kadungara member of the central committee of Z.A.N.U. (P.F.) talks to a rally in the Charter district in the Midlands.*

*P. Weinberg*

however relying on official communiques, failed in general to mention acts of intimidation perpetrated by the existing order. Numerous reports throughout Zimbabwe of people being forced at gunpoint to attend U.A.N.C. rallies and active campaigning and wholesale intimidation by the Security Force Auxilliaries were recorded. The Church and Mambo Press bombings were almost definitely the work of the Selous Scouts. At the same time intimidation of a more subtle nature was being carried out by the administrative powers. At least 4 000 ZANU (PF) campaigners and supporters were arrested on the grounds of their being "intimidators" or "terrorist collaborators". Furthermore at every rally a member of the special Branch of the Police was there taking down notes and details of speakers and participants.

In balance though, the war had de-escalated considerably.

Deaths during the cease-fire period were down to an average of 7 per day, compared with between 50 and 100 at the height of the war, and the elections themselves took place in a situation of relative peace.

To the South African Press, and the average white Rhodesian the election results came as a complete surprise. To the party Executives it was expected. As one official put it "we didn't have to politicize the people—we've done that throughout the war. All we concentrated on was teaching people to vote." For Smith and the rightwingers the common belief about the "benign African" was shattered. For years now, the rural areas have been organised into cells of about 15 to 45 people in size, each linked to the other by "bush telephone". This political organisation as in the case of Angola and Mozambique has been the backbone of the war effort and one of the major reasons for the guerilla armies success. The fact that the guerilla armies were able to move as extensively as they did in a way speaks for itself, and destroys the colonial myths so assumed by the ruling white elite.

For the man in the street ZANU (PF) represented a liberation force, one that would fundamentally change the system and its operation. For the youth, many of whom have been

institutionalised vagrants from an early age there was no other party but "Jongwe" (the cock—the symbol for Mugabe). As Pauline Zamise who has been a Zanu P.F. supporter since the start of the war and leader of her local youth wing expressed it, "I support the party that is going to bring about real changes in society—in education, land, and housing—the boys have fought for our freedom and now we are going to get it".

With the elections now over and the possibility of a right wing coup remote, the future for Zimbabwe looks bright. Behind Mr Mugabe's apparent moderation is the recognition of the importance of the process of transition for progressive development. For the whites who have clung onto their privilege and power for so long, the key word is adaption—whether they will be prepared to apply their skills to the maximum utilization and benefit of the country as a whole is the question they have to answer themselves—they do have a choice—stay and adapt or head south.

For the blacks the elections are just one part of a process that will secure their future and the rights that they have been fighting for. The vision is there, the ground work has been covered and now it is up to the imperialist power to give new Zimbabwe a chance. □



People go to the polls in the Mtoko district in relatively peaceful period. Before the cease-fire the average death rate was between 50 and 100 per day, during the election itself was 5.

P. Weinberg



# CILLIE COMMISSION

BY Pat Tucker

The Report of Mr Justice Piet Cillie's Commission into the causes of the 1976 riots in Soweto and elsewhere was tabled in Parliament on Leap Day 1980 — three years, eight months and 12 days after the inferno which began on June 16 and ended months later with 575 people dead, thousands injured and damage costing more than R45-million in cash and an inestimable amount in hatred, resentment, bitterness and fear.

The Commission's findings were greeted, almost universally, with a certain amount of amazement, some applause and, from various quarters, a degree of soul searching.

Not that anything the Commissioner said was new. The grievances to which he pointed are those that have been reiterated again and again over the years by innumerable extra-parliamentary opposition bodies black and white, by English language newspapers, churchpeople and political parties left of centre.

But, in the circumstances, it seemed like a remarkably enlightened piece of work.

The disturbances, Mr Justice Cillie concluded in his 1 000-plus page report were a consequence of apartheid injustice and official bungling.

The report, which covered events from June 16, 1976 to February 1977 confirmed that the compulsory use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in certain subjects at black schools was the immediate cause of the unrest but it blamed the escalating situation of frustration and anger on bungling by education officials and on a lack of police preparedness.

But, the Commissioner concluded, more basically, the causes of the unrest were to be sought in some of the cornerstones of the apartheid policy.

His summing up of the reasons for the unrest was cited by Die Vaderland as a document which should be a "revelation" and "compulsory reading" for every white in the country.

"It is a story of regimentation and discrimination, of frustration and a feeling of injustice. Naturally there was intimidation and exploitation of the grievances for political ends during the disturbances. . . ." but "Anyone who reads the report and still tries to oppose reforms is both blind and deaf."

The causes, as Mr Justice Cillie saw them were the Government's apartheid policies and discrimination; the influx control laws and the hurtful way in which they are applied; the group areas act, especially as it affects the Cape Coloured people; the homelands system; the rule of administration boards and the citizenship provisions applied to urban blacks.

The catalogue continued with the fact that urban blacks felt they had no say in their own affairs, they feared the loss of their South African citizenship and they were unhappy about their inability to own homes and, in general, about discrimination.

Other factors that contributed to the climate of unrest were the breaking up of families in urban areas by Section

10 of the Urban Areas Act and resettlement caused by the Group Areas Act (this was the direct cause of a riot in Stellenbosch and contributed to one in Mossel Bay.)

But, with all these factors noted, the commissioner found that intimidation was possibly the largest driving force behind the riots and that organisations like the ANC, PAC and SACP as well as the then lawful Saso and Soweto Students' Representative Council played an active role in inciting and encouraging the riots.

He found, despite evidence to the contrary, that black consciousness meant black power and that the exercise of black consciousness led to a polarisation of black and white, creating a mood which was useful to an agitator.

Bantu education officials came in for a share of the criticism when Mr Justice Cillie found they had not properly informed the then Minister of Bantu Education, M. C. Botha, his deputy and the Secretary of Bantu Education, Mr G. J. Rousseau of the badly deteriorating situation.

He also criticised the "take it or leave it attitude" of the Regional Director of the Bantu Education Department, Mr W. C. Ackermann.

And, while he criticised the Soweto police for ignoring clear signs of gathering unrest before June 16 and, when trouble broke out, for being unprepared in terms of manpower, equipment and attitudes, he also praised them for trying their best to preserve peace and for not becoming panic stricken.

This latter finding has been the subject of much criticism from both sides of the Houses of Parliament with the Minister of Police, Mr Louis le Grange rejecting the finding that the police shared collective responsibility for the outbreak of rioting and Mrs Helen Suzman finding the Commission's "exoneration" of the police except for their ignorance about "the situation" and the "incompetent" handling of the first day of the unrest "difficult to understand."

The disturbances and their aftermath, the Commissioner found, had led to "an exceptional deterioration—especially in urban areas—of the attitude of black youth to whites; the rejection by black youth of negotiation with the government and their readiness to continue their liberation struggle by force of arms."

It does not take an enormously insightful observer of the South African political scene to realise that the Commission's findings point to an urgent need for real change if the events of 1976 (or worse) are not to be repeated.

In political trials in various parts of the country, returnees from the mass exodus of black students that followed the disturbances are making their appearances, many of them accused of terrorism. The spinoff from the events of 1976 have been felt in Goch Street, in Silverton, in armed attacks on police stations and in an escalating threat of violence born of growing anger and frustrations unassuaged.

Looked at in these terms, how relevant in fact is the Cillie report in terms of promoting change? Significantly, the Commissioner made findings, he did not make recommendations.

And, in a section of the report devoted to changes that had been made in the course of and after the disturbances, he singles out shifts in policy that are at best superficially palliative, at worst irrelevant in the light of the real causes of the unrest.

The Commissioner points to the change of ruling in connection with the use of Afrikaans, a change which was made soon after the disturbances began.

He goes on to assert that "since then, a great number of changes have been made in the lifestyle of the black man. All of them applied to blacks in the urban areas."

The Commission, said Mr Justice Cillie, did not try to ascertain if the changes were all a result of the unrest because it was possible that some had already been considered necessary before the unrest.

Just what were these changes? In the field of education, the start of the introduction of compulsory education and the "so-called" free education. There had also been changes in tertiary education.

He cited the application of the Community Councils act and the replacement of advisory and urban bantu councils by community councils.

There were wide-ranging changes in regard to housing in urban areas, said Mr Justice Cillie. They involved matters like the ownership and disposal of houses; the financing, purchasing or building of houses and the taking of steps towards the provision of electricity to Soweto.

In the area of sport, the Commissioner observed that there had been a move away from discrimination.

The restrictive regulations in regard to trade in black urban residential areas had been considerably changed, he said. The list of permissible commercial enterprises in these areas was enlarged from 26 to 67.

Changes had also been made in connection with attendance at theatres, and cinemas, the use of hotels and restaurants, the sale of beer by dealers and other matters.

There is very little in the Commissioner's list to lighten the heart of the impoverished, the unemployed, the migrant or the starving child in the homeland. They are in fact relevant only to a comparatively small number of middle-class, urban blacks.

The report appeared more than three years after the events: three years in which, if anything, the factors which the commissioner cites as causes of the unrest have been exacerbated rather than ameliorated.

They are three years in which three homelands have become "independent" with the resultant loss of citizenship for hundreds of thousands of black South Africans.

They are three years in which emergent black leaders have been detained, banned and have died in South African prisons.

They are three years in which black, coloured and Indian peoples in the Government's separate development jigsaw puzzle have been deprived of their homes, and often their livelihood; in which tales of poverty and starvation in remote rural areas have filled pages of newsprint.

They are three years which have seen the institution of the R500 fine for the employment of "illegals" which has put hundreds out of jobs and made it impossible for thousands of others ever to get them.

They are three years, in short, in which little if anything has been done at any meaningful level to change any of the factors which resulted in the shots and the flames, the destruction and the misery of the events of that tragic eight months.

A question which must inevitably be asked is was there any point to the commission at all? Is there any meaning in a report which appears three years after the event?

And does the Government feel that, having allowed Mr Justice Cillie to produce his magnum opus and having taken its rap over the knuckles manfully, it can now safely bury the matter in the archives with a sigh of relief?

If previous experience is anything to go by, that might well be exactly what will happen.

Twenty years ago, as the reverberations of the guns of Sharpeville and Langa died away, the Nationalist Government established two commissions of inquiry. The findings of the two commissioners, Mr J. Wessels (Sharpeville) and Mr Justice Diemont (Langa) were in tone and content not very different from those of Mr Justice Cillie two decades later.

In his report, Mr Wessels found the first aim of the defiance campaign was the immediate abolition of the pass laws. The pass book system was regarded as evil and this factor had won over a number of Africans to the campaign of protest although they had not been members of the PAC.

Another source of dissatisfaction was the low standard of wages and a third was "the feeling of frustration of the Bantu in not having any effective body through which to air their grievances."

In Cape Town, Mr Justice Diemont found that the success of the Pan African Congress in organising large protest meetings was due to the fact that the people had serious grievances and no means of stating them or obtaining redress.

And again "Witness after witness testified that their major grievances were low wages and the operation of the reference book system."

The response of Dr Verwoerd to these findings was that the Government saw no reason to depart from the policy of separate representation and "the underlying good this held for all in the future."

It had decided too, he said, that it would have to take steps to prevent incitement from continuing.

The Government was unable to abandon the reference book or the influx control systems, nor could exemptions be considered. The size of the reference book would, however, be reduced.

As far as wages were concerned, the Government would see to it that the machinery which existed for "Bantu" workers to negotiate with their employers was implemented to a greater extent and that "Bantu" homelands must be enabled to provide for both their increase in population and the returning flow of "Bantu".

Meanwhile, the PAC and the ANC were banned and, in the years that followed, trials, bannings, detentions, decimated the organised black opposition.

Far from responding to the very real grievances expressed by witnesses to the two commissions, the Government tightened its legal stronghold on extra-parliamentary opposition and continued to implement its stated policy.

So what price the Wessels and Diemont Commission findings? What price the Cillie Commission findings? □



# PORT ELIZABETH-

## The Future is Here

by M. G. Whisson

Those who seek to establish the political temperature of black South Africa are wont to push their thermometers into Soweto as the biggest and most articulate centre of population, located conveniently close to the major international airport. But a brief recollection of past decades will remind us that the political heart-land of black South Africa lies in the Eastern Cape. There political skills were learned the hard way in the frontier wars and the negotiations which punctuated them. There rose the educational institutions of Lovedale, Healdtown and Fort Hare in which many leaders of liberation struggles learned the essential techniques of communication. There, in the 1960s, two thousand alleged supporters of the A.N.C. were tried in the scattered villages and sentenced for their association with that banned organisation. There too, phoenix-like, the Black consciousness movement rose from the ashes of the A.N.C., providing ideological and organisational models for the bigger centres and providing, tragically, the latest in a line of martyrs to the cause of civil rights.

Port Elizabeth is fed by that political heart-land, and the townships of New Brighton have been in the forefront of black politics in recent times. But Port Elizabeth is also something else. There, in a city dominated by a few big employers and multinational secondary industry, the pace of industrial and political development is being set. There the business and industrial sector is seeking a settled and increasingly skilled labour force. There, rather than on the reef, a society is rapidly outgrowing its demand for unorganised migrant labour. There then we can see foreshadowed some aspects of the future of South Africa as a whole. In the turbulence of late 1979 paradoxically, the crystal ball is clearer than through the pall of pollution which hangs over the reef.

With the shift from Vorster to Botha at the helm of South Africa, we are experiencing a change of vision at the top. Vorster earned his position through his handling of the police, prisons and justice portfolios, and his advisers continued to be dominated by the police ethos. That ethos emphasises control of unruly elements within the country as the top priority—law and order (or perhaps, to get the emphasis right, order and law.) It is a somewhat parochial vision—and one manifestation of it was the ongoing dedication to the unity of Afrikanerdom. Such an ethos readily leads to the violent repression of internal opposition—to Sharpville, Langa, Soweto 1976 shoot-outs and beat-outs. That violence in turn leads to an activity which has had rather less publicity inside South Africa—the departure of thousands of young people for military and political training outside the country.

P. W. Botha has come to the top by a different route and has a different school of advisors. The Defence Force is made up largely of conscripts rather than being wholly professional, and is hence more sensitive to changes in the mood of young white South Africans. It is also, by definition, an outward looking body, concerned with events on and beyond our borders. The exiles are not seen as a problem which has

gone away, rather as a problem about to begin. And, because it is engaged in an international competition rather than in a sort of political Currie Cup, the Defence Force has been compelled to keep fully up-to-date with the way that wars are fought these days—and not just up-to-date at the top and theoretical levels, but up-to-date at every operational level of its constantly changing body of troops. The lessons of the Middle East, Viet Nam, Rhodesia and Iran have not been lost on Magnus Malan and his staff—what does it profit an army if it conquers the world of sophisticated technology, but loses the hearts and minds of the people it seeks to protect and control?

What this shift means at the political level for whites is already evident from statements, conferences and by-elections. The Prime Minister has served notice that he is willing to shed one right wing Afrikaner vote to gain one (or even less) non-Afrikaner vote, and the S.A.B.C. is referring to “the Anglo-Afrikaner nation” in what it calls its “editorials”. The traditional suspicion of Afrikaner workers for Anglo-Jewish or multi-national big business will not be exploited in elections any more, unless it be by the white mineworkers union and the H.N.P.—although there will be more fears to exploit as blacks are given freedom to improve their skills to artisan level. The ideology of national socialism which brought into being such creatures as ISCOR and ESCOM is changing—broadening the nationalism and dropping the socialism.

These changes are not occurring overnight and the elemental passions which brought in and sustained the present regime for 30 years cannot be sublimated in the course of a year or two. Traditional prejudices have served our rulers well and cannot be discarded by a simple act of will. And of course, in a crisis or situation of challenge, the temptation of a call to the blood is almost irresistible—and I would not limit that temptation to any particular group, they will all try it if they think it a winning tactic in a fight, and complain

bitterly when people of another group try it successfully on them.

All this is familiar—it is the very stuff of white politics—it is what keeps the sex pages away from the sports pages week by week in the Sunday papers.

It is the implications of these shifts in political emphasis for the blacks which is my central concern here. The search for a national strategy on the part of the white rulers is opening up a broader range of options for blacks and at this time we are witnessing both a feeling out of white bona fides and moral resolve, and at the same time experiencing a revolution of rising expectations. The feeling out relates to the sort of optimism expressed from time to time by Dr Koornhof—just what does he mean when he says that apartheid is dead—is he proclaiming a law or making a joke? The rising expectations flowed from some of the recommendations of the Wiehaan and Riekert reports and from the responses of the more progressive companies, like Ford, which have instituted training schemes on a substantial scale and given all

recognition legally possible to the black trade unions. The questioning of white resolve and the rising expectations together create a volatile atmosphere in the Black urban areas.

There are three broad constellations of political groupings among the blacks today and the developments on the white side are giving impetus to them all. First, there are the militant revolutionaries, based for the most part outside the country, but dependent upon unhappiness within South Africa to drive recruits into their camps and assured of widespread support if and when they return to do battle. The thousands who attended the funeral of one of the Silverton bank raiders announced themselves as the sea in which the militants can hope to swim. Unfulfilled hope of an improved lot, the experience of repression (whether at the hands of white or black police is really beside the point) and economic desperation have turned the hearts and minds of young people towards the espousal or tolerance of violence as a tactic to promote change. Some may see Botha's proclamation of a "national strategy" as an indication that white resolve to go it alone is weakening as more recognise its long term futility. Revolutionary zeal is fed on hope as much as on desperation, and the apparent flexibility of the Botha administration may provide just that hope. (My own reading of Botha's character is different. I think he is actually tougher and more single-minded than his predecessor, has a clearer vision of where he is going and what appears to be flexibility is no more than a cautious but determined shift into a new and well defined direction). The revolutionaries in exile however have much to encourage them—at least from a safe distance—and hence remain attractive to both committed and romantic revolutionaries. Today they occasionally harass the northern borders and little bands make forays into the towns from time to time. Cities like Port Elizabeth are fortunate to be too far from the borders to attract such attention—yet.

The revolutionary option puts pressure on all those who feel that a violent solution to South Africa's problems is no solution at all—that violence, like fire, is no respecter of good persons. Whether one likes it or not, however, the violent option is not closed and it is institutionalised in the structures of the P.A.C. and the A.N.C. The capacity of these organisations to strike anywhere in South Africa is limited mainly by the limits of their imagination, although their capacity to strike hard or to sustain an attack is limited by the military as the first line of external defence and by the police internally. And the effectiveness of the military and the police depends very much upon what the unhappy masses within the country believe about their strength and efficiency. It is the gut level recognition by the military that repression is a short term expedient rather than a long term policy which characterises the change in emphasis between the last administration and the present one.

We must recognise then, that there exists a substantial body of people in the country, including Port Elizabeth, for whom the revolutionary option is wholly acceptable, but who do not publicly or actively espouse it only because they believe (with good reason) that it is not viable at the present time. A peaceful future for South Africa depends in the short term upon their continuing to believe that the violent option is not viable—and in the long term upon them being converted to the belief that the violent solution is no solution at all (that the spoils of war will be a smoking ruin on which nothing decent can be built). To achieve that conversion it will be necessary for them to feel that they have more to lose than they care to hazard upon the chances of war. And that means that the children have to

be assured that they will be able to achieve material comfort, human dignity and political rights.

The second constellation of political groupings among the blacks is a very mixed bag indeed. It is made up of those who theoretically and publicly reject all the institutions of apartheid, and who are not prepared to follow the path laid out by the government—a path which has led two generations of Advisory, Urban and Community councillors virtually nowhere. Its unity is based upon one fragile link—all its supporters are determined to make the present system of government unworkable. It includes a number of intellectual ideologues who split hairs over what must be boycotted and what tolerated and who argue about the true nature of the struggle or what constitutes "mystification". It includes many for whom industrial action is seen as being the effective lever for mobilising the masses and for bringing about radical changes—the argument here is quite simple; in the absence of wealth or weapons, the only effective power that the masses possess is the power to withhold their labour, and the strength to suffer for longer than their employers. We saw a few examples of that in Port Elizabeth last summer. It is a long and painful process. In Britain it took about 125 years from the repressive legislation which followed the Napoleonic wars (and which contributed to the initial wave of English settlers to Port Elizabeth) to the triumph of the labour party in 1945. Everything grows faster in our sub-

tropical climate, and it would be a rash prophet who would give us 125 years and a peaceful revolution. Our second constellation also includes many who are adopting a different strategy—who aim to capture the institutions set up by the government, and to turn them into platforms for substantial political opposition. Inkatha and the Labour Party have demonstrated the effectiveness of that strategy—good organisation and some inspirational leadership being adequate to shatter the illusion that a meaningful percentage of the coloured people and the largest of the black groups are prepared to follow in the path envisaged by the national plan. Because the revolutionary option remains open, and the military does not want to drive more people to pursue it, we may anticipate substantially more official tolerance of these mass movements over the next few years. The white political leaders may tear their hair over those movements because their positive goals are diverse and not clearly articulated—or because their goals are all too clearly unacceptable to the white electorate. They will be, as was the A.N.C. before it was hounded into revolutionary violence, an inescapable and menacing presence, denying all credibility to the institutions of separate development, unless and until the separation is played down and the development taken seriously.

Which leads us to the third constellation of political groupings—those groups and individuals who are prepared to follow the path laid down for them by the government. To the mass of blacks they may be stooges, although such a judgement would not be easily sustained in some of the so-called "black states" today. As one such "stooge" put it, "we take what we are given and use it to get what we want". As the chosen instruments of government policy, the councils, homeland structures and the individuals who work within them are very precious to the government. They are the vehicles and the personnel through which administrative experience is gained and experienced administrators are emerging. They are making a few tentative decisions, and learning skills which they could not learn in a racially stratified society. What little credibility the government can command anywhere as far as its policy towards the blacks



is concerned, depends upon the docility and support of those "stooges". For half a century it has been possible for successive generations of white administrators to fob off those generous spirited men who have brought their petitions to them through the proper channels, and the advisory, urban, community councillors have taken their humiliation in good part because they have had no choice. But they now have a choice, because they have two substantial bargaining counters. First, they are all that the government has got to negotiate with in a "constructive and moderate" way—to use the terms beloved of the administrators—they have nothing to lose because they have nothing to begin with, but the government has its national plan and its political credibility on the line. The black councillors and homeland leaders have their price—but it is no longer a bottle-store licence, a fat salary, a nice house and a bodyguard. The price has gone up—it is the price of government credibility, and it is the price of an alternative too ghastly to contemplate (to recall a cliché).

So, we are confronted with what appears at first sight to be a paradox—that the strength of the government sponsored urban councils and perhaps the homelands too lies in their weakness; not in their own strength, but in the strength of those who oppose them and who urge that they be boycotted or overthrown from within. In order to save them from collapse, it will be necessary for the government to make substantial concessions to them—and that means a bit more than painting out one set of initials on the vehicles of the Administration Board and painting on another set. It will mean giving the councils financial autonomy and a fair share of the national exchequer with which to upgrade the black areas and make them comparable with those outside the townships and homelands. Only when there is something more than a councillors robe and embarrassment as prizes will there be competition for participation in the apartheid councils—only then will there be defections from our second constellation to our third.

What I have been describing is not something terribly new—ever since black leaders came to terms with the white colonists there has been a division between those who have compromised and those who have not—between the Fingo and the Xhosa, the Sandiles and the Maqomas, the Matanzimas and the Mandelas. The goals have been more or less the same—participation in every aspect of the nation's life on equal terms—but the means have differed. What is changing, and this is why we live in interesting times, is the material environment in which the drama is being acted out. The

absence of a cordon sanitaire of colonies to the north of South Africa has made the revolutionary option more attractive and more viable than it has been since the Cattle Killing of 1857. Further, and this is why Port Elizabeth, with its sophisticated industrial development is so significant, the effectiveness of black power to withhold labour is also greater than ever before. You can replace one unskilled labourer with any of a million unemployed others, but you cannot replace a thousand striking artisans. No longer can whites cheerfully proclaim (as some seemed to be proclaiming as recently as 1976) "To end the matter we have got The Lewis gun and they have not".

South Africa has to come to terms with this new reality, and it is in Port Elizabeth that one of the front lines is being drawn. The labour unrest which began in October 1979 did not centre on miners and dockers, as in the past, but upon the most sophisticated of the multi-national companies. Further the strikers were not uneducated and unskilled migrants, herded into vast compounds far from home, but relatively well educated, permanent urban residents, integrated into a politicised local community. The ease with which their leadership moves from collaboration to confrontation is shown by their biographies. They include men who have taken their places in the Ciskei legislative assembly and in the old Advisory Board, but who have now identified themselves with the "boycotters" if not with the proponents of violence. Most of the leaders, and most of the followers too, have a sufficient stake in the community to prefer advance by negotiation—they are revisionists, not revolutionaries, but that preference is not an eternal verity. Faced by a substantial drop in their earnings due to short time working in the motor industry, the "followers" opted for confrontation rather than conciliation, and the old moderate leadership found itself in disarray.

The other major urban areas are yet to experience this new sort of challenge. Port Elizabeth, with its unique combination of historical experience, black ethnic homogeneity, settled urban population and largescale secondary industry, is blazing the trail for the rest of the country. Whether that blaze becomes a bloody conflagration will depend upon the efficiency of the secondary industry (hence its ability to meet the rising expectations created by the progressive companies) and upon the real advances made in the quality of black urban life—both material and political. The gold bonanza has helped industry and could be used to build a stable political community too, but the current rate of progress gives little cause for optimism. □

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# THE FARM-SCHOOL SYSTEM AND BANTU EDUCATION

Photographs by R.W. Harvey

by R.W. Harvey

When the Nationalists took power in 1948 they began methodically to consolidate control over their true political adversaries, the dominated African population. Their strategy was both direct, through police and juridical oppression, but also indirect, by subversion, an undermining of the strengths of their opponents, their disorganisation politically and their fragmentation as a labour movement.

Verwoerd, who became Minister of Native Affairs in 1950, introduced powerful administrative instruments of control. The Abolition of Passes Act (1952) perfected the system of influx control, by which the state regulates employment and unemployment, and apportioning labour.<sup>1</sup> The 1953 Bantu Education Act had an equivalent objective, on the ideological plane, in that it was devised to control minds. Until the fifties, education for Africans had been insufficient, uneven, decentralised, dominated by the Churches. To the Nationalists, the importance of a centrally controlled and controlling education apparatus was vividly apparent, hence the thorough going and vigorous reforms they introduced.

It is a simplification, but I think useful, to see the pre-eminence of these two measures reflected in the intensity of repudiation and anger they have provoked. Challenge to the Pass Laws climaxed at Sharpeville in 1960; challenge to Bantu Education ignited South Africa in 1976.

At the same time that they were setting their framework of domination, the Nationalists began to elaborate screen ideologies behind which to manoeuvre. Apartheid, a mirage of separate communities with corresponding separate loyalties and separate lavatories, is a fantasy in the sense of being mental relief from the despair of a useless struggle. As such it is desired and welcomed by people, who bind themselves to its spurious political extension. On the other hand, in the sense that it is manipulated cynically by those whose purpose is to maintain power, it is simply a national fraud.

Until Piet Koornhof, nobody knew so well how to produce the double talk of apartheid ideology, as Hendrik Verwoerd. On the pivot of this fantasy he presents his Bills, designed for oppression, in terms of virginal philanthropy.

... the curriculum (to a certain extent) and educational practice, by ignoring the segregation or 'apartheid' policy, was unable to prepare for service within the Bantu community.<sup>2</sup>

In the same speech he said,

The present Native schools may be characterised generally as schools within Bantu society but not of that society . . . . It is the Government's intention to transform them into real Bantu community schools.<sup>3</sup>

The vagueness of these formulations contrasts with the simple clarity of the alternative view that emerges from the same speech. In this view, there is an economic reality to which Bantu education must be made to conform,

The economic structure of our country, of course, results in large numbers of Natives having to earn their living in the service of Europeans. For that reason it is essential that Bantu pupils should receive instruction in both official languages . . . . .<sup>4</sup>

and,

The school must equip him (that is the 'native') to meet the demands which the economic life of South Africa will impose upon him.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of the two elements I have tried to isolate, the centralisation of Bantu Education, and the disguised ambience of economic realities, we should try to locate the institution and character of Farm Schools.

Together with Mine—and Factory—Schools, Farm Schools constitute a special category. They are said to be 'aided', denoting the practice of allowing support for schools that are primarily initiated by specific interests — mines, factories or farms, for their own labourers, within their own compounds.

A farm school comes into being on the initiative of an individual, who thereupon is appointed manager of that school. In a sense, therefore, they are private institutions, being privately managed; while at the same time they fall under the general supervision of the Department of Bantu Education, and are visited by inspectors on regional circuit. The farmer / manager provides the basic physical structure for the school, while the Department pays teaching staff salaries and contributes small sums towards furniture and books. There is no doubt that the most extraordinary aspect of the farm school system is its semi-private character, which nevertheless articulates with national policy in education and with the general project of subjugation. I would seek in this essay to draw out some of the significance of this juncture between private and national interest. There are a million African labourers on white farms in the





*An unregistered school serving as a church on Sunday.*

Republic, and the matter of schooling for their children is consequently of some seriousness. While as a class these workers have no power, and since they are not especially visible, it would be possible to neglect them: yet in fact there are a great number of farm schools, accounting altogether for about a tenth of the total enrolment of African school-children each year. So we see that the system rather straddles a position between extremes; while farm school is decidedly not fully incorporated within the centralised national education form, it does, nevertheless substantially thrive. I don't believe that it is productive to try to account for this by reference to the humanism of farmers, or of any other class of people. There are solid economic reasons for the farm school system, and they are presented quite boldly by Verwoerd. It is the precisid nature of the articulation that ought to be elucidated.

The establishment of farm schools has in the past been somewhat neglected, resulting in the sending of children to town schools and the moving of parents into the towns. If 'fundamental' education can also be obtained on the farms the trek from the farms will be combated, more especially if the training contributes towards more remunerative employment in farm work, owing to the greater skill and usefulness of labourers.<sup>6</sup>

It is known that one of the most serious burdens farmers shoulder, is the tendency of their labourers to wish themselves elsewhere. In the history of South Africa since the Dutch settlers, a prominent structural theme is the successive modes of enslavement or entrapment of labour on white land. It is obviously to the benefit of the farmer to be able to reconcile his work force to their occupation, and one of the ways to do this is by establishing a school, stabilising

families by allowing them what they value highly for their children. Even in cases, of course, where it is a church organisation, or a concerned local farmer who sets up a farm school, the neighbouring farmers will benefit in the same way by the proximity of such a facility; and their contentment is in this case coincident with that of the state, for whom a settled agricultural labour force and a contented farmer voter are bonded elements in their construct of state. In other respects too, the arrangement is appealing to the government. Shifting the burden of school onto the shoulders of private people relieves considerably the bureaucratic apparatus. And there are savings: farm schools are cheap to erect, to run, to close. Group Areas policy can accommodate black schools on white land so long as their impermanence is a feature. Costs are even to be saved on teaching staff.

To permit the establishment of farm schools, the transfer of land for the building of expensive schools will no longer be required. Bantu mothers can, in accordance with local methods, erect walls where farmers allow it, and the Department will provide the windows, doors and roof. If the farmer withdraws this permission these can be removed. Female teachers will, as far as possible, be recruited locally . . . . .<sup>7</sup>

For the farmer, then, a school is an instrument for stabilising his labour force. There is also the consideration that school may provide a supervisory function over the children on the farm. None the less, it cannot be said that the decision to build a school is an easy one, or that it is accomplished without serious conflict and division within the farmer's mind.

There are distinct disadvantages. Looked at selfishly, a school is a considerable nuisance. It attracts children, for one thing, and this leads to trouble for the farmer. He complains that they tramp pathways, causing erosion; that they defecate in the veld, infecting the browsing cattle; that they drop plastic bags, on which livestock choke; that they bend fences, steal pumpkins, etc. etc.

Such-like complaints are ubiquitous. The conflict is never settled and endures while the school exists and constantly threatens it. Schools close down as well as open. The owner/manager may decide to abandon the school; or he may sell his property, and the new owner not want to retain a school; or original conditions may alter, a lack of labour turn to an excess, and the need for the school fall away. West of Pretoria there is a farm school that was established in the thirties and that has changed its location five times, within a radius of a few miles, being closed down on one farm, re-opened on another.

It is not above mentioning that the struggle may be between the farmer and his wife, she wanting the school, he opposing it, for example. And while they are engaged in dialectics of this sort, the school carries on half-heartedly in a shed. That's symbolic of their compromise: she gets her way, but he spoils the effect. There might be a difference between neighbours, one willing to erect and maintain a school, the other objecting to its proximity. Neighbours wishes weigh heavily in the matter of Bantu schools. Bultfontein, a school in the Krugersdorp circuit, was closed abruptly following complaints from nearby residents who disliked the noise the children made at play. Several hundred pupils were turned out, with no school nearby to which to go.

Given that the initiative for starting or retaining a farm school rests with farmers, it can be said that the number of such schools in existence necessarily suits them. For the agricultural sector of capital, and for the state, the amount of farm schooling is always optimum.

Looking with the eyes of African parents and children, however, there is never enough school. The inadequacy is not a function of too little finance, too few facilities, physical items, buildings, chairs etc, though these certainly are pitifully inadequate. It is produced quite simply by the fact that schooling for Africans is controlled by policies that actually have nothing to do with education at all. To judge the logistics of the situation by standards of education would be to misrecognise the presence of the ideological construct one of whose facets is Bantu education.

Aside from the implicit fault in the institution, a farm school system does exist, and does have objective deficiencies:

- a) There are areas where no farmer has been found willing to erect a school. In some places there exists a lower primary, but not an upper primary – or the other way about. A school may be restricted to the children of one farm, excluding children from adjacent farms. The school may have a limited quota of pupils, so that some applicants are turned away.
- b) Poverty is such among farm labourers, that many children are unable to get to school for want of money for clothes, fees, books and food. Frequently their labour is needed by their family: older children are expected to look after younger, the old or sick must be helped, livestock must be tended. Malnutrition is common, and causes sickness and lassitude.
- c) The schools are short of furniture, books, apparatus, sports facilities. You won't find a gym or a laboratory. You might not find a latrine. Water is often a problem. The buildings are not conditioned, and lack warmth in winter, coolth in summer. They seldom have electric lights.
- d) The quality of teaching tends to be poor. A depressed morale in rural areas is induced by the career uncertainty endemic in schools that may or may not last. There is also isolation and the sense of living in a backwater. For teachers, a profound sense of futility flows from this, and from the work of educating children whose manifest destiny is to fail school and become labourers on some local farm.

Possibly the gravest social abuse within the farm environment relates to the practice of exploiting child labour. Thorough analysis of this would require a separate paper; but I do not wish to imply, by neglect, that it does not, in some way, lie at the very heart of this question of schooling.

That farmers use child labour is not in question. You have only to stand on a road between Weenen and Tugela Ferry at five in the morning, to see trucks go by laden to the tail-gate with children on their way to some farm where they will put in heavy hours of work for a pitiful return. They are not physically constrained to work: their choice is co-opted, together with that of their parents who would find it hard to live without the slight extra of the childrens' earnings. It is sometimes a condition of residence on land, that all members of a family should contribute labour to the owner. In this way a voluntary abandonment of school takes place, seasonally or permanently.

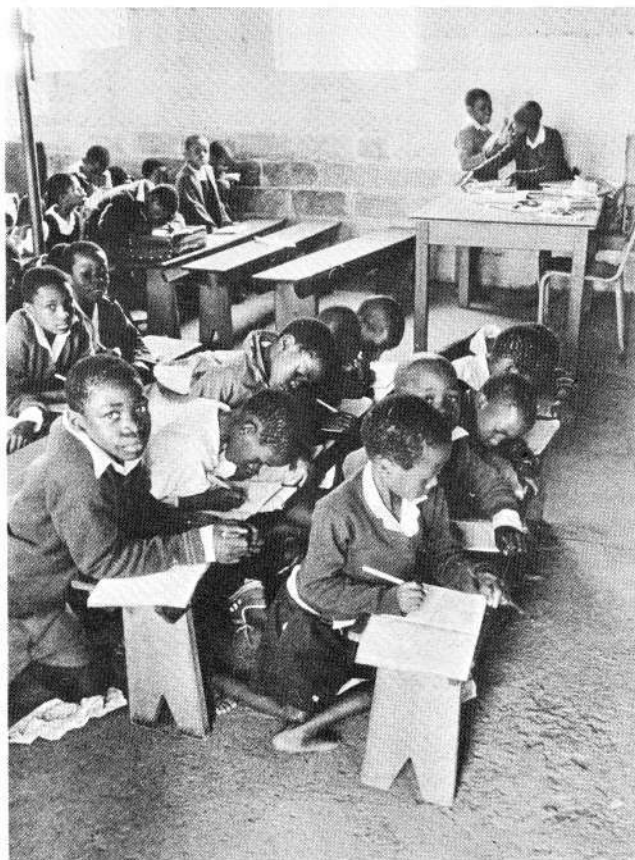
One of the misfortunes that stems from this practice, is that the concept of labour itself is contaminated, and the debate concerning relations between education and production (a vigorous topic in many progressive countries) is here prejudiced by a confusion between labour and exploitation. What we can be sure of in the present context, is that the work the children are made to do on white farms, is not at

all intended to combine in educative ways with what they may be taught in school.

We can specify the following possible relations between the use of child labour and schooling in the farm environment:

- a) A farmer might decline to establish a school in case it absorbs too much of the labour-time of children on his farm.
- b) He might set up a school in order to use the organisation provided thereby to marshal the children for work. A former Minister of Bantu Education, Mr Willie Maree, had this to say: "If there is any farmer who has a farm school and who wishes to make use of the school children under the supervision of the teacher to assist with certain activities, this can be arranged in a proper manner . . . ."
- c) There may be a farm school in an area to which children cannot go because they owe labour to the farmer on whose property they live.
- d) Children may go to school part of the time, but be required to work during their hours out of school.

The picture outlined here is not confined to isolated and remote areas. The farm school system applies on the very doorstep of major industrial centres and cities. In what is now peri-urban land, the former large farms are subdivided into plots and small-holdings, some not more than a few acres in size. These have become dormitory suburbs of the nearby towns, and the density of population has substantially increased. Besides the white owners, there are to be found multitudes of maids, cooks, gardeners, stablehands, farm workers, tenants, squatters. Many are 'illegal', but the police ignore their presence so long as they contribute services to the region, and so long as there is no definite need



*A Department school in Pretoria West Circuit. Three distinct classes are in session.*



to harass them. Their illegal status is taken advantage of by employers, who pay low wages. Now in such a community, never mind its transience, its 'illegality', its submerged and hidden identity, there are numerous children, and they need schools. It is in these circumstances that one can see the failure of the farm school system in its most intense form. Though the inadequacy of statistics make it impossible to assert this without caution, it becomes fairly evident to anyone making enquiries within the triangle bounded by Pretoria, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg, that there are as many children not attending school as there are attending; that there are, in other words, hundreds of children deprived almost totally of elementary education. In this and similar areas all the previously mentioned lacks are present in amplified form: the poverty, malnutrition, dearth of schools, distances to travel, child labour, overcrowding, miserable classrooms, poor teaching, high rate of failure, low morale (and always as well, heroic dedication of some teachers, some parents, some pupils, some managers).

Proximity to the factories of wealth and to the conspicuous consumption of urban (white) elites, makes the contrast utterly shameful. It is precisely in these conditions that unregistered schools appear, called into being by a lack and by the need for any rudimentary education offered. These are run by untrained people, motivated either by the earnings possible, or by some deep moral commitment to the people. In either case, such schools are significant both in their persistence and in their poverty. They are frequently housed in cow-sheds or in shanties. You would find, not far north of Johannesburg, schools in shacks of tin and cardboard, within clear sight of millionaires' mansions.

Deficiencies notwithstanding, any school is a powerful magnet to its surrounding community. For some children it is the chance of escape from farm labour. A few, through brilliance and fortune pass their grades and go to secondary school; but most drop out along the way and find work on a farm. Failure reconciles people to low positions, for it seems to them that their own stupidity is the cause. In this way acquiescence and servility are nourished in the African child.

This brings us to the question of Bantu Education as an ideological tool. Farm schools, as I have said, are part of a national structure, in that the children follow a common syllabus and write department exams. Teachers are paid by the department, so that their (at least outward) conformity can be assumed. The syllabus is far from neutral: I would say that its overall objective is to support the status quo, to regulate the minds of African pupils within conceptions favourable to the present structures of domination.

- a) Education for blacks differs from that for whites, and reinforces the notion of racial hierarchy, to the disadvantage of the former
- b) Syllabus content is emphatically propagandistic
- c) There is no acceptable relation between what children are taught and their actual circumstances.
- d) The practise of the school-room submits children to an acceptance of drill and conformity, of use later to an authoritarian state.
- e) The select and reject system under which so many African children are debarred from school from an early age, is unsuitable in a country that has such a huge population of insufficiently educated members.

One is directed into a strange perplexity, where an extension or improvement of school facilities can but submit more children than before to a syllabus and a pedagogy that are harmful. If one recognises that farm schools are designed to help farmers, and that the syllabus is designed to help the state, how can one reasonably suggest improvements? It would appear that progress is effectually blocked until both determinants of the system have been replaced.

In the meantime it is crucial to inspect with care the modalities that have produced Bantu Education. We must try to comprehend the motivation of people involved, the political and class positions of those who confirm and those who challenge Bantu Education. A fundamentally abusive system sets up complex tensions and currents of feeling in people;



*A Department School in Pretoria West Circuit. Three distinct classes are in session.*



*Bultfontein school now derelict three years after it was closed.*

and it is in this turbulence that we must look for the possibility and direction of change.

We have seen that there is a conflict in the farmer over the establishment of farm schools. Officials of the Department also demonstrate troubled minds: many of them experience a conflict of loyalties, since education is their objective, and the Department is their employer, and the claims of the two do not often coincide. It is not unusual for regional inspectors to connive at transgressions of rules they are supposed to apply.

More serious, more substantial, is the conflict endured by parents and teachers, who must seem to lend themselves and give support to a structure they may feel to be disgraceful and damaging, and yet which is all that is available. Between their need to teach and earn a living, and their disapproval of Bantu Education, teachers are fatally trapped. This is true of parents as well. They do not wish their children to remain illiterate and innumerate like themselves, and therefore they favour whatever schooling is available. If they can they send their children to school, because not to do so would be even more unacceptable.

As for the pupils, they are not necessarily and in every case victims. Education is always double-edged. Schooling is not bounded by the school precincts, but children are prepared

by their homes and parents and by a more general environment for the way in which they receive and absorb the education they are given in school. It is by no means certain that propaganda in favour of the dominant political arrangements will not have the reverse effect of concentrating contempt for the state.

In countries that have fought their way to democracy, a wealth of creative work is being accomplished in education theory and practice. There the nature of school is seriously considered, sensitively and intelligently discussed. We do not occupy yet even that zero point, ourselves, where an education for human beings can be produced and elaborated. Bantu Education is not for people; it is part concession, part indoctrination. It is like a break-water, designed to take the energy of advance and quell it into a safe ebb and flow.

One last quotation from Verwoerd will give us a clear retrospective perception of the political and controlling purpose behind Bantu Education as a whole,

It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupting the community life of the Bantu and endangering the community life of the European . . . . For that reason planned Bantu Education must be substituted for the unplanned. <sup>8</sup> □

#### REFERENCES:

- 1 See R. de Villiers, "The Pass Laws: Allocation and Control (1760-1979)" S.A. Labour Bulletin Vol 5 No. 4 November 1979
2. Statement by H.F. Verwoerd in the Senate, 7th June 1954. Verwoerd's famous statement appears to me still to be the clearest exposition of Nationalist education policy for blacks.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.