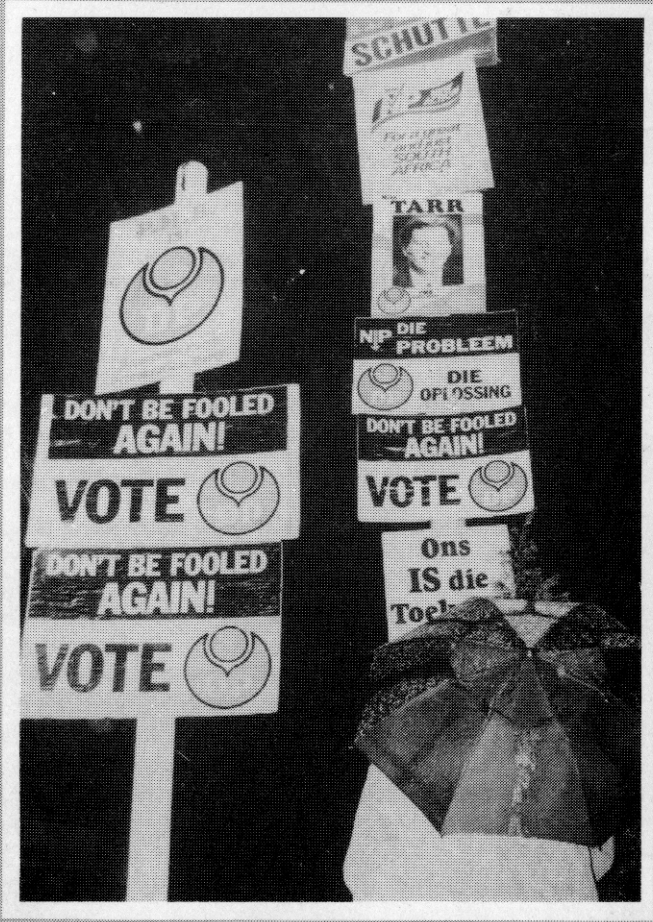
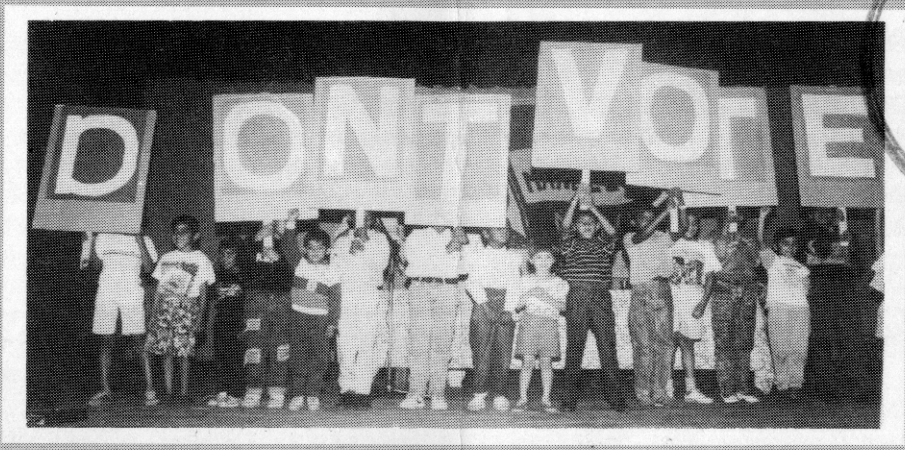
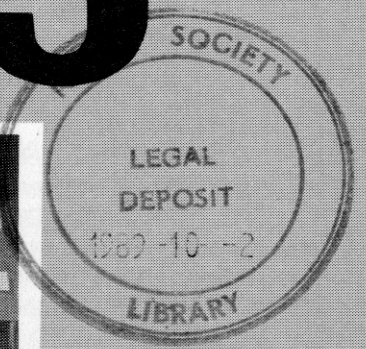


# reality

SEPTEMBER 1989

R1,20



A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION

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# EDITORIALS

## 1. Pressing for Negotiation.

On the whole the MDM and the DP have good reason to be pleased with the way their election campaigns went.

The MDM's stay-away achieved a massive disruption of normal life on election day and some of its other campaigns, notably in the hospitals and on Durban's beaches, were a remarkable display of non-violent defiance of apartheid.

In spite of this highly visible extra-parliamentary campaign the Democratic Party regained all the ground lost by the PFP in 1987 election and won a good deal more.

We say **in spite of** deliberately, for, in any previous election, a demonstration of this magnitude would have sent many potential DP voters running for cover behind the skirts of the Nationalist Party. That it didn't happen this time is a good omen for the future. It suggests a growing political maturity amongst whites (over 400,000 voters in this instance); a refusal to be panicked by **swart gevaar** tactics; a realisation that such extra-parliamentary demonstrations will continue to be part of our elections until black South Africans can show what they

feel about how the country should be run in the same way as their white counterparts, by voting with them in those same elections.

Both the DP and the MDM want to achieve a situation where negotiation towards such an end starts. Both did things in this last election which were an embarrassment to the other. We hope that no time will be wasted on recriminations over that. Good sense suggests that both recognise that their roles are not exactly the same, and that their methods may often differ. It should not be beyond their capacity to work out campaigns where the actions of one reinforce what the other is trying to do. We hope that that is what will happen. Those actions should have one main aim in mind, bringing the Nationalist government to the negotiating table quickly, and each one should be weighed carefully to assess whether that is the effect it is likely to have. Whatever the international pressures driving him in that direction may be, from his domestic point of view, it may be important in the next few months for Mr de Klerk to appear to be going there of his own accord, rather than being pushed there by his opponents. But that he should get there soon is certain. □

# Talking to the ANC

Talking to the ANC has become a growth industry. Hardly a week goes by without some group or other flying into Lusaka from South Africa. ... to talk. Now P.W. Botha has made it all look respectable by talking to Nelson Mandela. We have come a long way since van Zyl Slabbert's Dakar expedition broke the ice by doing the unthinkable less than two years ago.

Most of the groups which have been to Lusaka, or to meet the ANC at other places, have been fairly specialised. They have represented women, or lawyers, or businessmen, or educationists, and so on. The Five Freedoms Forum delegation which went at the end of June was different, not only in that it was much larger than any of its predecessors, consisting of over a hundred people, but because those people represented a fair variety of organisations and views. They were more typically "white South African" than anything else the ANC has met, although by no means fully representative, because none of the hardcore of white conservatism was there.

In spite of this last weakness the comparative ordinari-

ness of this large delegation gave it a special importance. The ANC was probably able to get a better idea of the hopes and fears of white people about the future from this large delegation than it has from any of the others it has met. And it is very important that the ANC should know about these things, especially the extent of white fears, if it is to make a proper assessment of the obstacles to negotiating an end to apartheid.

One of its own members described the Five Freedoms Forum delegation as being distinguished only by the fact that nobody in it had any political clout. This is only partly true. In terms of present power, they certainly had none, but in terms of a fairly broad organisational base from which to start influencing white people towards an acceptance of the inevitability of negotiation with the ANC and other bodies, it is that very ordinariness which may give them a special clout. We hope that serious negotiations is what they will all now be pushing for, along with everyone else who has ever visited the ANC. These cannot be delayed much longer. □

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by DUNCAN GREAVES

## TOWARDS THE GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN JAILBREAK

Review of Charles Simkin's books;

1. **THE PRISONERS OF TRADITION AND THE POLITICS OF NATION BUILDING** (SAIRR 1988);
2. **RECONSTRUCTING SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERALISM** (SAIRR 1986);
3. **LIBERALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF POWER** (SAIRR 1986).

In one of his more careful observations on the nature of ideology, Marx once remarked that "the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living". A less striking way of putting the same point is to say that ideas are not always and everywhere the creatures of economics, and even when they are they can acquire an independent life, often to the dismay of those who once profited from them but would now rather see

them extinguished. Sometimes Marxists need to be reminded of the truth of this proposition. Sometimes liberals need to be as well.

This is particularly true of South Africans, Marxists and liberals alike. The perennial debate on the relationship between apartheid and capitalism illustrates the point. Despite very sharp differences of approach and substance, a common theme in this debate for a long time – almost a consensus – was that systems of belief are essentially governed by the economic matrix in which they appear or are deployed. Whether one is dealing with Hobart Houghton, O'Dowd or Legassick this belief in the primacy of the economic holds – though of course in very different ways.

Stanley Greenberg's *Race and State in Capitalist Development* went a long way towards recasting this debate. Drawing on a comparative analysis of racially ordered societies, Greenberg argued that certain semi-class alliances typically usher in such orderings, but that once

their goals are substantially met they find that they have brought upon themselves a range of unintended consequences – mostly, the deep entrenchment of racist ideology to the detriment of further economic development.

In the present impasse, it scarcely needs to be emphasised any longer that economic forces alone will not precipitate the end of apartheid. Even under circumstances in which apartheid is not in the long-term interests of any of the major actors in South Africa – and, arguably, we have now reached this point – considerations of interest alone are not sufficient to predict its imminent demise. We have become the prisoners of traditions, traditions uncoupled from the economic sub-structure and replicating themselves daily in the confrontation of oppressor and oppressed.

### A JUST SOCIETY

What prospect, in these circumstances, is there for the attainment of a just society? It is to this question that these three books are directed. They form something like a composite whole, in the sense that they buttress one another in a complex and sustained argument. On the other hand, they are clearly not conceived of as a series, since there is a substantial degree of overlap in what they cover. Indeed, the degree of repetition of material appears to confirm the urgency with which Simkins regards this project. For urgent it certainly is: the longer reconstruction is delayed, the dimmer the chance of it succeeding.

“Is there any prospect of escaping the destructive limitations of our political traditions, and, if so, how can it be realised?” This is the key question in **The Prisoners of Tradition and the Politics of Nation Building**. It is answered in a quite fascinating way. Simkins and Monty Narsoo conducted seminars with some 22 organisations – political, economic, and “special interest” oriented. The choice effectively covered the range of South African politics, economy and society, with the exception of the CP. The key conclusions from these seminars were then interpreted and written up in a report, (Part 1) which was submitted back to the organisations for comment. These comments form Part 2; they are then subjected to a further response from Narsoo (Part 3), and from André du Toit (Part 4). Simkins then produces a rejoinder to all these responses in Part 5, and in Part 6 he offers a concluding commentary on the relationship between liberalism and nationalism.

The result is a highly complex dialogue between Simkins and a host of others (including his co-authors). The subject of the dialogue is the agenda which Simkins set in **Reconstructing South African Liberalism and Liberalism and the Problem of Power**. Specifically, he notes in the introduction that there are many paths to “modernisation” (or “modernity”; Simkins uses the terms interchangeably, a point I shall want to reflect on below). The path we choose will depend on our objectives, and these in turn should be specific enough to give content to the concepts of modernisation and democratisation while not being so narrowly defined as to exclude all but one highly specific programme from consideration.

One such set of objectives, he then suggests, is given by Rawls in his two principles of justice. One of the concerns of **The Prisoners of Tradition** is to establish to what degree these two principles can unite a complex range of contending positions, and more generally what implications there are for these two principles in the various positions on strategy and goals articulated by the participants. The question of **justice**, then, is central to the resulting discussion.

### POWER

A second central theme is the question of **power**. Simkins begins the report by outlining “two concepts of power”, derived from Weber (power is the capacity to exercise will) and Arendt (power is a condition which obtains when an agent is empowered by a group to act in its name). The first he terms the “realist view”, and the second the “communicative action” view. South Africans, he suggests, are locked into a realist view of power in which violence is seen as a potential adjunct to politics. On the communicative action view, by contrast, power must grow out of a legitimacy based on consent, and politics ends where violence begins. For historical reasons the public space in South Africa is too cramped for the second view to flourish easily; an important precondition for reconstruction is that this second view gains much more currency than it has at present. For this and other reasons our current politics is deformed: symbol-orientated rather than interest-orientated. The idea of a symbol-orientated politics, as well as the two themes of justice and power, leads to some of the most intriguing responses from the participants.

In the initial report, Simkins’s purpose is to draw out the implications for the “modernisation” issue with which the book begins, as well as the Rawlsian principles of justice. To achieve this end, he explains, the material is interpreted – “even heavily interpreted” – to extract whatever insights there are to be had from it. To separate reportage from interpretation, the summary of the seminars is rendered in bold type, and the commentary in normal type. The result of this is a text that is typographically quite hideous, especially when large gobbets of italic type (for quotations) are also dropped in. The aim, however, is certainly laudable; one only wishes it could have been achieved in another way.

The responses to the report range from the nuanced to the unintelligible. In the original seminar series, for example, the PAC said that “the land” includes everything above and below the surface of the ground. In response to Simkins’s commentary on this, they **extended** the definition of land to include “national self-determination” and “culture” – all destined for control by “the people”.

By the very nature of South African politics, some of this material is already out of date; the seminar with the ANC, for example, was conducted prior to its release of its recent constitutional principles. These are, however, taken up in an appendix. (Simkins observes here that much of what the ANC proposes to include in a constitution amounts to a party political program, which will come under pressure in a negotiated settlement.)

### THREE RESPONSES

In these responses, three things stand out. The first is the defensiveness, exhibited by several organisations, about symbolist politics. Symbols were variously said to “encourage unity of thought and action”, to “provide identification, communication with the mass of the people” and to “give direction”. The original criticism – that a symbolist politics militates against an interest-based one – was not, however, engaged.

The second is a general uncertainty about the purpose of invoking Rawls's two principles. In only one instance did an organisation explicitly state that it did not agree with Rawls; but several others confessed uncertainty as to Simkins's purpose, and none actually endorsed the two principles. On this report, the notion of distributive justice appears to have little resonance among South Africans. This too I shall want to consider further.

The third is a widespread confusion about the meaning of power. Several respondents offered their own definitions of power, others tried to locate Simkins's two conceptions in a spectrum of meaning they were comfortable with, without grasping the import of the idea of the **public space**; others still took Simkins's two conceptions to be “the” two conceptions, without perceiving that the question of power is a rather more complex one than Simkins suggested. Even André du Toit produced a confused response here. It seems to me that introducing the ideas of communicative action and communicative competence in this way rather detracted from Simkins' purpose; this too I shall take up again.

### THE PATH

On the positive side, what does the report reveal? How much common ground is there to be found, and how does it relate to the Rawlsian principles? Simkins argues that one of the principal dangers to liberty in a future South Africa is the path by which we get there. Briefly, a revolution – defined as the collapse of the state, followed by the (slow) emergence of a legitimated power centre from the resulting chaos – is most unlikely to be conducive to a pluralistic political outcome; nor is it likely to maximise the welfare of the poor – on Simkins's calculations – compared to a negotiated settlement. In the event of such a settlement, however, he discerns a degree of promise for economic arrangements:

the outline of an economic programme capable of commanding widespread support is coming into focus already: it would include limited modification to asset ownership in mining and the capital-intensive sectors of manufacturing, an expanded role for trade unions, urban infrastructural development accompanied by small business development, employment generation and land reform and rural development. This would open up many avenues for the development of power by communicative action.

Many things militate against the prospect of such a settlement, however. One is the commitment to a realist conception of power; another is the general failure of an interest-based politics. Such a politics can only emerge if the pattern of division into “racial estates” is heavily

eroded by the development of cross-cutting links and cleavages. And an important precondition for such erosion is an expanding economy. Hence the utility of sanctions is heavily questioned by Simkins. All those respondents who chose to defend sanctions, interestingly, were highly defensive about their use; and in at least one response the defence was – as Simkins points out – incoherent.

### URGENT

Given the weak prospects for a negotiated settlement, the reconstruction of South African liberalism becomes, in Simkins's view, all the more urgent. At the heart of the proposed reconstruction lie arguments about the nature of justice and the nature of power. On the evidence of this report, serious thinking about these two themes has little resonance for South Africans generally. Consider the first. In **The Prisoners of Tradition** Simkins himself provides one reason why talk about “justice” is likely to fall somewhat flat:

There is so much which is, or appears to be, obviously unjust that a careful probing of the criteria of judgement appears superfluous, if not actually the preliminaries to an apologetic for the indefensible.

There are thus two tasks: the first is to convince people that we need to think seriously about the problem of distributive justice; the second – if we are Rawlsians – is to convince them that Rawls's principles are the appropriate ones. Among white South Africans, a general reluctance to think in moral categories aggravates the first problem. Among black South Africans, the language of morality presumably has a wider currency, for obvious reasons; but here almost the opposite problem – the one Simkins refers to above – applies: the sheer harshness of oppression makes the solution to it “obvious”. It is obvious that capitalism is bad, liberalism a crude mask for it, and equality pure and simple the only appropriate form of distribution. The symbolisation of politics does not help to counteract the “obviousness” of these views. (Simkins reports a strong tendency in some black quarters to prefer equality pure and simple to an inequality that improves the absolute position of the poor.)

Simple equality, often allied to “populist” politics of some sort, is thus one approach with which the Rawlsian account must compete. A second is some or other variant of Nozickian entitlement theory, widely popular among free market libertarians (who do not always appreciate the sheer difficulties entailed in applying Nozick's account of justice consistently to South Africa). A third possible approach to the problem of justice is that encompassed by Marxism; one might expect this account to have a degree of currency among the left generally, although the details of it are often glossed over. Broadly, there are (again) two principles at issue, ordered not lexically but historically: distribution according to labour contribution, and distribution according to need. The latter is characteristic of communist society, which follows socialist society, characterised in turn by the former. Now, it must be granted that these do not qualify as principles of distributive justice in the same sort of way that Rawls's principles do. It is by no means clear, for

example, that Marx was prepared to take such moral categories seriously; and it can be argued that the needs principle is not a principle of distribution, since its material preconditions explicitly exclude scarcity of resources (and one only needs principles of justice when the product to be distributed is limited). Indeed, many Marxists have explicitly denied that these are principles of justice, on the logic that justice cannot be achieved in circumstances that require it, and is unnecessary in circumstances that do not. Nevertheless, we are dealing here with at minimum principles of distribution; and they surely count as a contender to the Rawlsian principles, though to what degree I cannot begin to guess.

In short, then, the appeal to Rawls stands in need of justification. More than one participant in the seminar series argues this case; and André du Toit makes the same case in his response to the report. What also needs to be justified, it seems to me, is the analytical uncoupling of liberalism and capitalism. (While I think this case can be made, it leaves us with a puzzle, to which I shall return in conclusion.) Until this is done liberalism stands little prospect of making headway with groups that are, for comprehensible reasons, hostile to capitalism and willing to extend that hostility to liberal values on the grounds that liberalism, capitalism and apartheid are all basically the same thing. Simkins does make this case in **The Prisoners of Tradition**, although somewhat sketchily. It is more comprehensively put in **Reconstructing South African Liberalism**, especially chapter three; and we can turn to the same text for elucidation of the Rawlsian principles. But while the latter text is a valuable companion to the former in some ways, it sows further confusion in others. To elucidate this, let me turn to the question of power.

### REALIST VIEW

As Simkins points out, it is scarcely surprising that key actors in South African politics should adopt a "realist" view of power (the capacity to realise one's will) in which violence appears as a permissible tool, in which power and ethical purposes are uncoupled from one another, and in which conflict is conceived of in zero-sum terms. That, after all, is the reality of power in South Africa today. To get people to think about the question differently entails the revivification of moral and ethical discourse in South Africa, which in turn requires a great expansion in the public space and the inducement for groups unused to dialogue and debate to utilise that space. Simkins aims, presumably, at putting this on the agenda by deploying the notion of "communicative action" power. Unfortunately, using these two conceptions of power seems to have caused considerable confusion among the participants in the seminars. They had difficulty in seeing how moral categories are built into the idea of "communicative action" power. Given this, are the other texts under review likely to resolve the confusion?

The answer, unfortunately, is: no, quite the contrary. Reading **Liberalism and the Problem of Power** and **Reconstructing South African Liberalism** brings even more confusion into the question. In the latter Simkins (following Jessop, following Parsons) distinguishes between four main types of power: economic, military/political, social, and cultural. Immediately thereafter he

invokes Lukes's three "faces" of power: overt, covert and latent. In the former text he treats Nietzsche and Marx as two exponents of "illiberal" forms of power. Later in the same text he speaks of "four approaches to power inimical to liberalism". In **The Prisoners of Tradition** he again invokes Lukes in an attempt to clear up some of the confusion, noting that

Power is an extremely complicated topic and it is possible to make analytical distinctions which are not made in the first report.

All of this seems to go nowhere. Lukes's account, in particular, is not merely analytical; it is claimed to be both analytical and value-laden at the same time. If Lukes's argument is correct, then power is one of those concepts which cannot be analytically reconstructed since any use of the term will by definition be coupled to a set of moral values. If Simkins wants to invoke Lukes, he ought to invoke him on these sorts of terms. To a degree he does this, in the notion of "communicative action" power. But in that case, all the other variegated forms of power that are spawned across the three texts confuse the issue enormously. If by contrast Simkins wants a pure analytical meaning of the term – which at times he seems to – then he ought to abandon the "communicative action" conception of power and build the idea of communicative competence into an idea more suited to carrying it.

### MODERNITY

If this is one issue that is treated too lightly, then it is worth raising another: the relationship between modernity and modernisation. On the first page of **The Prisoners of Tradition**, Simkins zigzags from the one term to the other as if they were interchangeable. To call for their distinction is not to engage in semantic niceties; it is a crucial one. One can have modernisation without the remoralisation of political life and without an authentic attempt to build justice and liberty into the workings of society. All that is required is to forge political institutions capable of commanding consent. The process is not easy, but there are experts in it, such as Samuel Huntington – who is discussed in some detail in **Reconstructing South African Liberalism**.

One can make the same point from the other end. The phenomenon of modernity in Europe entailed simultaneously technical rationality and ethical rationality. Slowly, however, it became apparent that the relationship between the two, while not simply accidental, was not an entirely necessary one either; it became possible then to uncouple technical and ethical rationality, with consequences well analysed by both the Frankfurt School and Hannah Arendt. In some senses the tragedy of South Africa is that it received only the dark side of the Enlightenment. Reconstructing South African liberalism, in one crucial sense, entails redeeming the phenomenon of modernity, of capturing for South Africa the bright side of the Enlightenment.

Most of this is to chide Simkins on relatively minor scores; he has, as Clive James remarked of Gore Vidal, toenails of clay. These texts are formidable: elegantly written, morally uncompromising, enormously energetic, and sustained by an ethical vision that is an integral part of our past, if we could but reappropriate it.

## EXPANDING RANGE

Which brings me to my closing issue: the reconstructive project that now holds in South Africa. A key part of this is an expansion of the dialogue between liberals and socialists. In this regard, Simkins's critique of Marxism is worth reflecting on briefly. To argue that at the heart of Marxism is optimism about power (**Liberalism and the Problem of Power**) is to raise one of the most telling criticisms of Marx. Marx, and Marxists more generally, have no good account of the concept of power.

Certainly for Marx, power, class, the state and politics were all forms of one another; the disappearance of one entailed the disappearance of all. The resulting account of future society – in which politics disappears but individualism does not – is quite implausible. In spite of

this, however, the political values to which Marx was wedded remain attractive: individualism, logically prior to community but compatible with it. Socialists generally have, it seems to me, learned a set of key lessons about power, about the importance of pluralistic political systems coupled with the defence of rights, and about the relationship between markets and industrial society. In this they have moved closer to liberals. Liberals, by contrast, have – some of them anyway – uncoupled liberalism from capitalism; in this they have moved closer to socialists.

My point is this. On page 71 of **Reconstructing South African Liberalism** Simkins offers an acid test, on which many socialists would qualify as liberals. Can socialists not devise the corollary of this – and claim Simkins as one of their own? □

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by ELWYN JENKINS

# CULTURE AND COUNTER-CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The boys and girls of the late Victorian and Edwardian boarding schools of Natal, the Eastern Cape, Johannesburg and Cape Town; the Afrikaans-speaking children subjected to Milner's Anglicization policy; the students of Department of Education and Training schools in the 1980s; pupils of the schools of the House of Delegates and the House of Representatives – in fact, pupils at all the schools administered by South Africa's eighteen education departments and the country's private schools – share a common educational heritage. No separation or disparity has altered the homogeneity underlying the official and hidden curricula of South Africa's schools.

Ashley (1976) has traced the roots of the South African educational system to Scottish and Dutch Calvinism, the emergence of British secular education in the nineteenth century, and the Christian ideals of the British public school. Honey develops more fully the dominant part played by the late Victorian public schools in moulding the curriculum, extramural activities and organizational structure of South African schools:

**The results of this predominance can be seen not only in the handful of boys' private schools established in South Africa in varying degree of likeness to Arnold's Rugby, from 'Bishops' down to the newest private school on the Rand, but, no less strikingly, in the English speaking government schools for boys up**

**and down the country, whose structure, ethos, and activities show many obvious derivations from the Rugby model, and many more resemblances to it than they show to other possible models in the English-speaking world or in continental Europe. Many of these characteristics can also be seen in Afrikaans-speaking government schools (1975/76: 22).**

## THE BRITISH SYSTEM

The same influence may be seen in the schools for other racial groups. British missionaries set out to develop their mission schools for Blacks into schools and colleges that would fall typically into the British public school pattern. Black schools today perpetuate sad vestiges of the British System – the uniforms, the conformity, the stress on unquestioning loyalty, the corporal punishment, being a travesty of what Arnold and Kingsley had once advocated.

Even in Britain the high ideals of Arnold and Kingsley became transmuted as the nineteenth century closed and the Empire was caught up in the militaristic and jingoist fever that presaged World War I. From an initial emphasis on character and leadership, as portrayed for example in *Eric, or little by little* by Dean Farrar (1858), the schools' aims had become, as Mangan (1985: 117) puts it, 'to create habits of respectfulness, obedience and loyalty.'

Individuality was suspect, non-conformity was discouraged, *esprit de corps* was exalted.' He points out how, to the educators in the colonies, 'Educational aims valued so highly at other times and in other contexts, such as the development of an inquiring mind, independence of thoughts and the questioning of established orthodoxies, were unacceptable in an environment of primitive backwardness.' Honey (1975/76: 25) has shown how the elitism of the system, which was embodied in exclusive admissions, 'houses', prefects, competitive games, military cadets and the old school tie network, took natural root in South Africa because it was 'functionally appropriate to the existing social and political system of South Africa'. Today the central role of organized compulsory sport in white schools is probably unique among state education systems throughout the world, and the institutionalized violence of corporal punishment, which is extremely prevalent in both primary and secondary schools, certainly sets South Africa apart from the rest of the Western world. Thus South Africa finds itself today still saddled with a brutalizing, anti-intellectual educational system which is a distorted descendant of what was itself an aberration in the history of the development of Western education – a particular version of education which was developed to serve a small section of the British population during the short period that it had to provide the rulers of the largest empire the world has ever seen or is likely to see again. To what extent this educational system has **produced** South African society as we know it today, or has simply lasted because it serves the interests of those who are inclined this way for other historical, cultural and religious reasons, is debatable; the answer is probably something of both.

## ENGLISH

However, it is obviously an oversimplification to allege that all South Africans who have gone through our state or private schools have been moulded according to the degenerate public school model. The schools have demonstrably also produced intellectuals, aesthetes, rebels, socialists, liberals, conscientious objectors and individualists. Perhaps there is another thread of educational philosophy running through South African education in the twentieth century. I take as a case study some aspects of English teaching; an analysis of history teaching would probably be just as enlightening.

English teaching was dominated by British expatriates for the first few decades of this century. Lanham (1979) considers their influence to have been so strong that they successfully retarded the development of a typical South African English accent until the Second World War. English teachers' first concern was to make their pupils as 'English' as possible. Their task was not easy. This is how South African white boys were seen by Montague J. Rendall, former Headmaster of Winchester, who worked to preserve public school ideals in the British Empire through the Rhodes Trust and as Chairman of the Schools Empire Tour Committee from 1926-1939:

**If I were to design a medal for one of these School-boys the superscription might be 'Child of the Sun'; the obverse a figure of 'Independence with a Shield', or perhaps 'Venator Intrepidus' like Pisanello's model of Alfonso the Magnanimous, where a naked**

**boy is riding astride of a fearsome boar; but a lion to replace the Boar, and the reverse should be just a bright Star to symbolize the Sun, 'radiatum insigne diei'. The rest of the field would consist of several Rugby footballs and a scanty heap of books. For indeed, truth to tell, this wholesome brown boy, with khaki shirt, khaki shorts and a pair of rough shoes, who looks straight at you from rather wild eyes half-hidden in a mat of hair, is just a Child of the Sun . . . They are by nature Children of the Sun, Sun-worshippers, and Culture has little meaning for them. Why should parents and schoolmasters disturb this happy dream? Why worry the boys with Culture? Well, this is the plea of all children since Cain and Abel first worshipped the Sun in the morning of the world, a plea urged with childish impertinence and irresistible grace; but these Schools are not meant for Mowgli (Quoted in Mangan 1985: 31-32).**

Equally despairing was G.H.M. Bobbins, the only commentator on English teaching in South Africa who was writing before World War II. (He obtained his doctorate on the subject at the University of Cape Town in 1936.) His views on the decay in standards of English are encapsulated in the title of his collected essays, *The twilight of English*, published in 1951.

But teachers could not deny the South Africanism of their pupils forever. The solution was to tack a bit of local colour on to the traditional British syllabus, resulting in what I have called the 'Bushveld syndrome' (Jenkins 1977). To be South African, a topic had to be rural. Hunting adventures and debates on farm life versus town life were safe topics for pupils to write or speak on. When Victor Pohl's *Bushveld adventures*, an extremely prosaic collection of reminiscences, was published in 1941, it was seized upon as a book worthy to be read at school: first prescribed for Std 9 and 10 in 1946, it was still the most frequent source of passages for comprehension tests in the Std 8 internal examinations set by Transvaal Education Department teachers in 1972. As a topic for oral composition for Std 8, 'How to make butter' appeared at least as far back as 1942 in the Transvaal syllabus, and it was still there in 1959 (Jenkins 1973). It is encouraging to learn from an analysis of the essay topics for all the 1986 Senior Certificate examination papers that this fashion appears now to have died out (Jenkins 1987).

## NEW INFLUENCES

World War II saw not only the espousal of the bushveld, but also the demise of part of the traditional, 'British', core of the English syllabus. In 1943, the year after Lanham's date for the advent of the new South African English, the Transvaal Education Department prescribed for the last time its double-bill of texts on the history of English literature. The desks were being cleared for South African English teachers to be introduced to the new criticism of Leavis, the romanticism of D.H. Lawrence, and the advocacy of creative writing by David Holbrook.

All three of these innovations had the effect of bringing an individualistic, solipsistic element into the formal school curriculum which contrasted with the philistine athleticism and conformity which prevailed. Since Leavis changed the nature of English studies from being an



imitation of classics or foreign language teaching to being a search for authentic meaning, English teaching has often been the troublesome conscience in educational institutions in the English-speaking world, including South Africa, fulfilling the role described in Postman and Weingartner's *Teaching as a subversive activity* (1969). The impact of these new influences began to be felt in South African schools in the 1950s. A dissertation on English teaching written at the University of Cape Town during that decade by M.I. Honikman (1959) gives evidence of the change. She saw English as a humanistic discipline, and in fact she equated it as a school subject with literature, which had to be taught by means of practical criticism. The emphasis on 'sincerity' as a criterion of excellence in literature was transferred to official expectations of what pupils' own writing should be like: the rubric of the Transvaal Education Department's Senior Certificate paper was changed in 1968 to exhort pupils, 'BE SINCERE' (sic) (Jenkins 1973: 82). Pupils were encouraged to write in response to sensory impressions ('kipper sniffing' as it was called), or to write introspectively, and Hemingway was held up as the stylistic model (for example, by Armstrong 1977). Through the reading of D.H. Lawrence teachers encouraged their pupils to respond directly to their instincts, and to find fulfilment in response to unspoilt countryside, natural materials and hand-made textures.

It is only to be expected that the climate created by English teaching of this kind should encourage children to give expression in writing to a counter-culture, particularly when they may choose their own subject matter. Most of this writing is unlikely to reach a wider public than the teacher, as it is too dangerous to appear in official publications. The Transvaal Education Department, for example, has instructed schools not to allow the use of school publications for 'sensitive or controversial' matters (Brodrick 1986). In spite of all the sifting and censoring, some material does eventually reach a wider audience, such as the following two pieces from publications of the South African Council for English Education.

Kathleen Dey writes a devastating indictment of the male chauvinism which dominates South African society, and Derek Mosenthal, in a passage of stream-of-consciousness produced at a week-end SACEE writers' workshop, attacks the rugby fetishism of a boys' school. In writing which becomes powerfully metaphorical, both writers convey the stifling effect of the hypocritical prudery and false manliness – the girl 'trembling in his unbearably hot jersey', the boy feeling the 'rugby jersey clasping my soul' – and underlying the veneer, they suggest, lies the perversion.

#### A Woman's Place

**We had been swimming naked in the sheltered pool right at the northern end of the gully. In glorious abandon we had thrown off our clothes and plunged into the icy stillness, shattering the glassy surface with our small brown bodies and splashing up shreds of glittering water. Yelling and shouting we swam right to the bottom and became evil crocodiles preying on fish before our breath ran out and we shot upwards again.**

**Afterwards we lay in the sun, the five of us indistinguishable with our short hair and strong arms and fast legs. Adam and Joe tried to bully us because they were eight and we were all only six but there were three of us so we won that skirmish. Soon after this satisfactory diversion, Mr Lemmins, Adam's father, offered to take us fishing. Eagerly we piled into the back of his car and were taken to the trout pools, dressed in our shorts only because of the heat. I managed to catch three small fish of unknown origin and Adam and Joe each caught a trout but they were helped by Adam's father. We pooled our catch and I gloated over my three, looking to my brother for his opinion.**

**'Quite good,' said Joe, grinning.**

**'For a girl,' said Adam.**

**There was a short silence. Mr Lemmins stared at me, and suddenly terrified, I stared back. His mouth dropped open and he said, or rather whispered, 'You are a girl?'**

**I nodded. He was furious. He made me wear his jersey and all the way home in the car he shouted at me for being an 'indecent little girl' and how ashamed I should feel in front of the boys.**

**Trembling in his unbearably hot jersey I huddled against Joe. All the boys stared silently out of the window.**

**I never understood his anger then. But my mother did and she was angry with him.**

Kathleen Dey (*English Alive* 1983: 17)

#### The Game

**The game, supposed to think about the game, supposed to be glad; made the team. God, it's all so boring; they do all get excited though. Rugby, ruff tuff and jolly. Was it really formulated for closet homosexuals? I have to play though. 'Don't do enough for the boarding house,' you know – housemaster said so. Why did I jump through that window anyway? I'd just been caught bunking assembly. God, he really must think I'm lazy. I am, but he isn't supposed to know. I'll definitely have to play. I told him I'd planned to try for the team all along. Quick thinking, the thought had never crossed my mind. God, what am I doing here? Rugby jersey clasping my soul. How bloody romantic; it's really a tight fit. Why am I so out of it? Ha . . . the thought amuses me, I want to be a freak. Got to get old and fat, lie in same groudy bed all day, take Vallium, see an analyst. Perhaps a few wrinkles, a sweaty purulent face, moggy eyes, the occasional sniff. Why are my hands so big? The rest of me is so small. Scrum half! I'm a scrum half, small, a mouse; be able to catch the ball with these spades for hands. No, I won't, haven't played for years. Want to hide, run away. I'd be caught though. 'Oh, Derek's trying to be different again,' they would chant, beaming. God, they're boring. Boarding school.**

**The game, supposed to think about the game, perhaps a little anger, a little aggression. God, how I sell myself, choking, can't breathe, being ravaged.**

**The game, aggro.**

Derek Mosenthal (*Karee* 1983: 12)

Although David Holbrook would consider that 'creative writing' such as 'The game' is validated by its cathartic effect for the writer (see, for example, Holbrook 1961), it can be criticized for excessive introspection. However, the kind of teaching that encourages this kind of writing also allows scope for pupils to engage with political issues. Here is a Johannesburg girl writing in 1978:

**We (she and her friend) talked about Nirvana and the pill and discovered Lawrence and supported abortion and found delight in criticizing the 'system'. We cried out against social injustices, as we thought we should do. Remember how we were virtually inebriated by the turbulent crescendo of our ideas springing from within? We were incensed by our own banality, by the way our minds erupted while our bodies lay dormant. We were trapped within the confines of a society which took us for granted. We talked of how one day we would have the courage of our convictions and fight and agitate and help to change.**  
(Jenkins 1980: 50)

Somehow, a liberal political awareness has been kept alive among teachers. Recent concern within each of the three English-language white teachers' associations bears witness to this (Gluckman 1982; Natal Teachers' Society 1986; South African Teachers' Association 1986/87), and one may assume that these attitudes have been tolerated, or even passed on, in some classrooms.

As the violence in South Africa grows, the young white contributors to *English alive* can be seen trying to cope with their guilt and helplessness:

A thousand fists are clenching  
our skies are still quiet  
but the T.V. and newspapers burn  
with news of their flaming hearts and skies  
and we close our eyes  
for it is enough  
that our skies are quiet

Robyn Hirsch (*English Alive* 1986: 13)

Increasingly, in recent issues they turn to exercises in empathy in an attempt to understand what Black people are thinking and feeling; but the most powerful pieces are those that simply register shock: the 'individual sensibility' responding to a world that can no longer be ignored. □

Written during the State of Emergency

These things must be recorded  
Tickle the words into the desert-white sand, gently  
Chiding them for their ignorant forgetfulness.  
Poke the mud to knowledge  
With a stick, draw in the wide-shadow eyes.  
Scrape a pebble of its dignity  
Carve at the blackness of a rock in your desperation  
Scream  
at the cliff cliff cliff  
Only to have that dark face turned from you  
And stare past you.  
Though Time chisels at the mute crag  
and its ash drifts  
and is dispersed across the land;  
Still these things will be remembered.  
deep scratches in the mind.

Cathy Boshoff (*English Alive* 1986: 12)

*Vista University, Mamelodi*

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#### Note:

An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the conference of the Association of University English Teachers of Southern Africa, July 1987.

# NEGOTIATIONS & PRECONDITIONS

ON Wednesday, July 6, 1989, Nelson Mandela and P.W. Botha had tea together at Tuynhuys – not exactly the start of major negotiations to decide the future of South Africa, but the signal of a major shift in Government thinking. Hardly a year ago the concept of a negotiated settlement for South Africa's internal problems was simply viewed as pie-in-the sky. Even the thought of seeing potential participants talking to each other about negotiation was sneered at. Yet, during the last few months there have been suggestions from the South African Government that it is ready for such negotiations with, among others, ANC members who renounce violence.

## LUSAKA CONFERENCE

At the Five Freedoms Forum/African National Congress Lusaka Conference held in late June, negotiation was one of the central themes. Despite major differences in strategy, some consensus was reached by the delegates, and the ANC's apparent hard line on preconditions was discussed in a fair amount of detail.

When different groups enter negotiations, they have to have a clearly-defined aim and identifiable common interests; otherwise one is looking at surrender talks, rather than genuine negotiations. The commission was unanimous that the common aim should be the establishment of a non-racial, democratic system for South Africa; in other words, negotiations should be about the process to achieve the end product, which may involve the establishment of a constituent assembly. A possible spin-off of such an approach would be to remove, at least partly, the concept of whites on the one side of the table and blacks on the other.

Furthermore, the type of negotiations will affect, in some way, the lives of all the people of the country. The latter will have to be able to decide who their representatives in a negotiating process will be, and all the parties wishing to take part in the negotiating process must have the opportunity to state their views openly in order to consult with their constituencies and canvass support. Negotiations taking place in secret can never be accepted, because within democratic systems elected representatives must have free access to their communities for consultation. And, the laws of the land must apply equally to all the people, or conversely, no one in the negotiating process must fear undue interference, such as detention without trial.

Are the ANC's preconditions unreasonable, given the above comments? My understanding of them is that:

1. The state of emergency must be lifted;
2. All political prisoners and detainees have to be released unconditionally, and all restrictions on them must be lifted;
3. All political organisations must be unbanned and allowed to operate freely;
4. Security forces which could hinder the process of consultation and canvassing should be removed from the townships; and

5. All laws which make it possible to detain and ban persons without legal recourse have to be repealed.

Because the negotiations will affect all of us, no matter on whose "side" we are, it is imperative that no negotiations take place in secret, that all agreements reached have legal status, and that negotiating parties represent all the people of South Africa, including those in the homelands. The question of proportional representation will also have to be addressed. I believe that, given the nature of the conflict in South Africa, the ANC will be amenable to discussing this aspect in preliminary talks and negotiations.

## SERIOUS OBSTACLES

There are some serious obstacles before even limited talks between the Government and its major antagonists can begin (tea parties at Tuynhuys aside). The South African Government also has its preconditions, namely, that the ANC must end its violence before it (the Government) can enter into negotiations, whereas the ANC believes that the armed struggle is one of their bargaining strengths. It is my view that the ANC believes that the violence it has used has merely been a response to the violence used by the South African Government to suppress peaceful political protest, and it can therefore not consider suspending the armed struggle until the state has demonstrated that it will allow political opposition.

Another obstacle is the very deep mistrust the ANC has of the Government's intentions and commitments to honour agreements. Promises of "give me six months" (now, nearly two decades later, it is five years), the manipulation of words to create the impression of change while effectively maintaining the status quo, the blatant lies (remember Angola), the breaking of the agreement to return accused arms dealers to Britain, and the EPG debacle have all taken their toll.

And yet, I do not believe these obstacles are insurmountable. This is where current meetings with the ANC, such as the Five Freedoms Forum initiative, have a major role to play. We are Minister Vlok's "useful idiots" – but useful to whom? For many years the South African Government has created an image of the ANC as that of a monster that has to be annihilated. Now that the Government has finally realised that the ANC is an integral part of any future solution for our country, it desperately needs to transform the image of the monster to that of a human being, a fellow South African. If FFF has helped to create this reality, negotiation towards a non-racial democracy may start sooner than we dare to hope.

Whether the Government likes it or not, the process of negotiation has effectively started among the people of South Africa. Meetings between the ANC and fellow South Africans have had a two-way effect, because both of us are learning about each other and about the South Africa we want. I believe we have an opportunity in South Africa few nations in Africa had prior to independence; that of influencing one another, and helping one another to shift entrenched beliefs and opinions, so that when negotiations start, we may be close to being a nation. We have to talk and talk and talk, not only in Lusaka, but also in Edendale and Pietermaritzburg and Soweto and Johannesburg. □

*Reprinted from The Natal Witness.*

# THE NUCLEAR CONNECTION

## Civilian and Military Uses of Nuclear Technology

### INTRODUCTION

The world's first generation of nuclear reactors was developed simply to produce plutonium for bombs. In the early fifties the novelty of producing energy as a by-product was introduced. It was clear that nuclear power and nuclear weapons could not be separated. Spread of the technology and materials required for nuclear power would also spread nuclear weapons capability.

Since World War Two, international politics has been strongly influenced by the possession of nuclear weapons and weapons capability, the exchange of nuclear technology and the trade in fissionable material. A hotch-potch of strategies to control the horizontal spread (1) of nuclear weapons has been hatched.

There are three significant phases in the history of non-proliferation politics which I shall call

- i. the monopolist phase, in which a few countries tried to monopolise nuclear technology and materials and regulate their spread,
- ii. the optimist phase of the 'atoms for peace' euphoria and
- iii. the pragmatist phase of overt and covert diplomacy.

South Africa is implicated in all three phases, sometimes profoundly. However discussion of South Africa's actions in the nuclear arena is curtailed by sections 68, 69 and 70 of the Nuclear Energy Act, No 92 of 1982.

For nuclear power or nuclear weapons, a supply of fissionable material is required. Before discussing proliferation, I will give a brief outline of the nature and origin of such materials.

### SOME TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

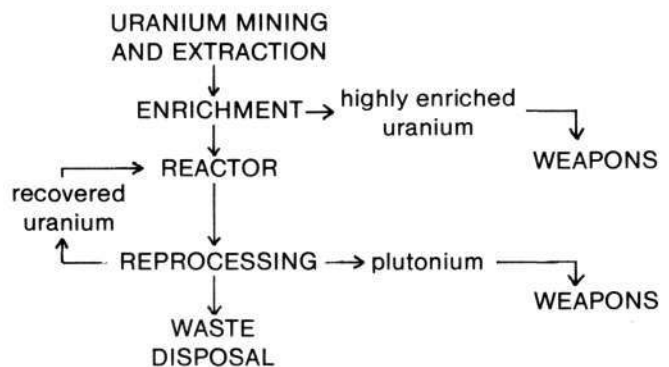
#### Fissionable material and the nuclear fuel chain

The nuclei of fissionable material are capable of rupturing into two more or less equal halves, at the same time releasing energy and a number of neutrons. These neutrons may cause other nuclei to split likewise, thus setting up a chain reaction. The reaction may be controlled for the steady release of energy or made to accelerate explosively with devastating effect.

The fissionable materials which concern us here are uranium-235 and plutonium-239. Only 0,7% of natural uranium is uranium-235. There are some technologically sophisticated processes by which the concentration can be increased. The procedure is known as enrichment. Uranium can be used as fuel or explosive depending on the degree of enrichment.

The installation in which controlled nuclear fission takes place is called a reactor. After use, the spent fuel contains a mixture of radioactive substances containing, inter alia, some unused uranium and plutonium, which occurs only as a byproduct of nuclear reactions and does not occur in

nature. Reprocessing is the name given to the process by which uranium and plutonium are recovered from spent fuel. A simplified diagram of the nuclear fuel chain is shown below.



Only a minority of the world's reactors generate electrical energy. The remainder are military reactors to produce plutonium or so-called research reactors, ostensibly for research, training and the acquisition of nuclear expertise.

#### Sensitive technologies

The stages of the fuel chain at which material may be diverted to a weapons programme are enrichment (for uranium) and reprocessing (for plutonium), so these technologies are regarded as being highly sensitive. Concerns about proliferation tend to focus on these.

Uranium and plutonium are equally effective explosives: the Hiroshima bomb used uranium and the Nagasaki bomb plutonium. However, for certain technical reasons, plutonium tends to be favoured for most types of nuclear weapons, particularly small tactical devices. Also, reprocessing is technically and economically more accessible than enrichment, so would normally be the more attractive route for most neo-nuclear states. But in the case of South Africa with its large uranium resources, its early acquisition of enrichment facilities was particularly sensitive.

No country could realistically pursue enrichment or reprocessing technology without first acquiring a reactor. It may or may not have military intentions in acquiring its first reactor, but it at least takes a large step towards weapons capability and opens options for the future.

When Prime Minister Verwoerd opened South Africa's first reactor, SAFARI 1, in 1965 he said, revealingly, to an international audience "It is the duty of South Africa not only to consider the military aspects of the material but to do all in its power to direct its uses for peaceful purposes" (2). South Africa's nuclear capability is discussed in Section 4.

## NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION POLICIES

### The Monopolist Phase: 1945 to 1953

The first attempt to regulate the spread of nuclear weapons was crude and simple (3). A cartel called the Combined Development Agency representing the USA, UK, and Canada was established to buy up all the uranium in the non-communist world and to share it out between the USA and UK according to their military requirements.

The Baruch Plan, presented to the United Nations in 1946, showed more imagination. It proposed the transfer of all nuclear facilities, including uranium mines, to an international body. It identified the entire nuclear fuel chain as a proliferation risk. The plan was rejected due mainly to Soviet objections.

Know-how was also monopolised by the nuclear "haves", but they operated independently of one another to protect nuclear secrets. The US Atomic Energy Act, known as the McMahon Act, effectively killed cooperation. It cast a blanket of secrecy over US technical information, and established a habit of covert nuclear development and dealings which was adopted by other countries and became a characteristic of the nuclear establishment.

### The Optimist Phase: 1953 to mid 1970's

An era of nuclear euphoria dawned with President Eisenhower's famous "Atoms for Peace" speech to the UN General Assembly in 1953. The policy he outlined was a "swords to ploughshares" idea. The central theme was that the peaceful atom was distinguishable from the warlike atom. Peaceful nuclear technology would be promoted vigorously in exchange for a paper declaration that the recipient country would not take military advantage of it. Instead of restricting weapons material, the new deal would actively promote its dispersal.

This was coupled to wild optimism about the benefits of the atom. Amid extravagant and unfounded claims for nuclear generated electricity came other peaceful nuclear triumphs: irradiated food and nuclear powered ships. Now only warships (submarines and aircraft carriers) are built with nuclear reactors. That billions of dollars could be wasted trying to build wildly unrealistic nuclear powered aircraft (bombers, of course) was indicative of the madness of the era. The apex of self-delusion was the concept of a peaceful bomb which would move mountains and build dams and harbours. Both the Soviet Union and the USA, with its quaintly named Ploughshares Project of 1957, began 'experiments' with peaceful nuclear explosives, but the genuine use of such devices has never been a serious possibility. But importantly, the idea opened new avenues for nuclear proliferation as we shall see.

The monolithic structures of the Monopolist Phase began to adjust to new circumstances. The 1954 US Atomic Energy Act, unlike its 1946 predecessor, provided for the export of nuclear technology, instead of blanket secrecy. As uranium reserves proved to be more widely distributed than originally thought, the Combined Development Agency could no longer maintain its policy of uranium denial. It was replaced by the enlarged, but equally secret, Western Suppliers Group of which South Africa



was a member. While the Group had a non-proliferation policy, it was also an economic cartel which controlled the world price of uranium.

In 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) formally came into existence as a UN agency. The twelve founder nations, including South Africa, enjoyed a privileged status with seats on the Board of Governors. The aims of the IAEA were later embodied in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) first signed in 1968. There are now 135 signatories, South Africa being a notable exception.

The NPT affirms that non-nuclear weapon states should not acquire nuclear weapons and that nuclear weapon states should move towards an early and complete disarmament. It affirms support for (and actively encourages) the dissemination of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, specifically including 'peaceful' nuclear explosions.

In return, non-nuclear weapon states agree to open all their nuclear facilities to inspection by the IAEA so that an audit of all fissionable material can be compiled. The idea is that the audit will detect any clandestine diversion of material to a weapons programme. However Article 10 provides that any Party may withdraw from the Treaty with three months notice "if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardised the supreme interests of its country".

In the words of Lovins and Lovins (4) the NPT "legitimizes or even mandates the supply to all NPT adherents of plants that yield pure bomb materials, or of those materials themselves so long as they have some civilian use: in short a treaty against proliferation encourages or requires that non-weapon states be placed days or hours away from having bombs provided they promise (quite revocably and unenforceably) not to make them". The NPT is a contradictory document in that it pretends that peaceful and military uses of nuclear technology can be separated, but simultaneously implies that they cannot.

The first major blow to these proliferation policies came in 1974 when India exploded a nuclear device. Its claim that the explosion was 'peaceful' was not taken seriously, least of all by Pakistan. The plutonium had come from a reactor purchased from Canada before IASEA safeguards. In recording the politics behind the Indian bomb, Moss (5) comments that nuclear installations last longer than many governments. Facilities may be peaceful today but warlike tomorrow under a new regime. Nehru opposed nuclear explosives but Mrs Gandhi sanctioned the detonation.

Pakistan responded by stealing uranium enrichment know-how from Holland and building an enrichment plant with components bought on the open market. It obtained uranium from Libya which had allegedly hijacked (6) it on its way from mines in Niger, though other reports say it was purchased. Just to make sure, Pakistan also built an unsafeguarded reprocessing plant with components obtained from a French company.

When Iraq used its influence as an oil exporter to obtain a research reactor (for which it insisted on weapons grade uranium) from Italy, Israel implemented its own brand of anti-proliferation policy and, in 1981, bombed the Iraqi reactor to pieces. Israel, of course, understood well what Iraq was probably up to since it had its own French built reactor at Dimona and was quietly and secretly building up a nuclear arsenal (as was later confirmed by informer Mordechai Vanunu now serving an 18 year sentence in an Israeli jail). Iraq learned from the experience and, in 1987, bombed an Iranian reactor out of existence.

The Israeli secret service, Mossad, had earlier deviously obtained uranium through phantom companies with laundered money. Iraq, now sans reactor, also indulged in such operations and in 1984 an investigation revealed that it had attempted to obtain 34kg of plutonium (enough for six bombs) from illegal arms dealers in Italy (7).

Last year the West German press exposed a similar covert transfer of fissile material between west and east Europe. The movement of weapons material is now clearly getting out of control. The situation is reminiscent of the shady dealings which characterise the oil trade, only doubly sinister.

#### **The Pragmatist Phase: mid 1970's to present**

With IAEA non-proliferation policy seriously dented, the emphasis shifted to diplomacy. The USA took the lead in this, first under the Carter administration and later under President Reagan. The rationale was that if it was not possible to plug all the loopholes, then it is better to alleviate the fears that cause nations to want nuclear weapons.

The USA had tightened its own non-proliferation policy (US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978) and as a result had lost out on a number of nuclear contracts to European suppliers who attached less stringent conditions. This reduced the USA's leverage in the international arena of nuclear technology. Instead non-proliferation was drawn even more intimately into foreign policy. One result was that countries with (or close to) nuclear weapons capability, or countries with the potential to sell uranium indiscriminately, could wield significant bargaining or blackmailing power in international relations, particularly with the USA.

It is not clear exactly how this influenced US policy towards South Africa, but it surely encouraged the policy of constructive engagement. Also the Reagan administration gave as much support to South Africa's nuclear development as was allowable by the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, until congressional pressure forced it to backtrack (8).

In 1987 attempts by non-aligned countries to have South Africa suspended from the IAEA were blocked. It is interesting to note that this anti-South African move failed to gain the support of the Soviet Union as well as major Western powers.

South Korea demonstrated what is possible. When South Korea appeared intent on pursuing the nuclear weapons option under the guise of nuclear power, President Carter reversed his decision to withdraw US troops from that country. The strengthening of US military links with Pakistan and Israel was also justified on the grounds of nuclear non-proliferation expediency.

Not only has diplomatic attention been turned to nuclear customers. The European suppliers have felt US pressure. For example, proposed sales of enrichment and reprocessing facilities to Pakistan, Brazil and South Korea by European suppliers incurred weighty and partly ineffective US diplomatic action to prevent the sales. These sensitive technologies were probably thrown in as sweeteners for contracts for nuclear power stations. In the case of reprocessing, there is no plausible peaceful use now or in the near future (9).

#### **SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME**

##### **Early doubts**

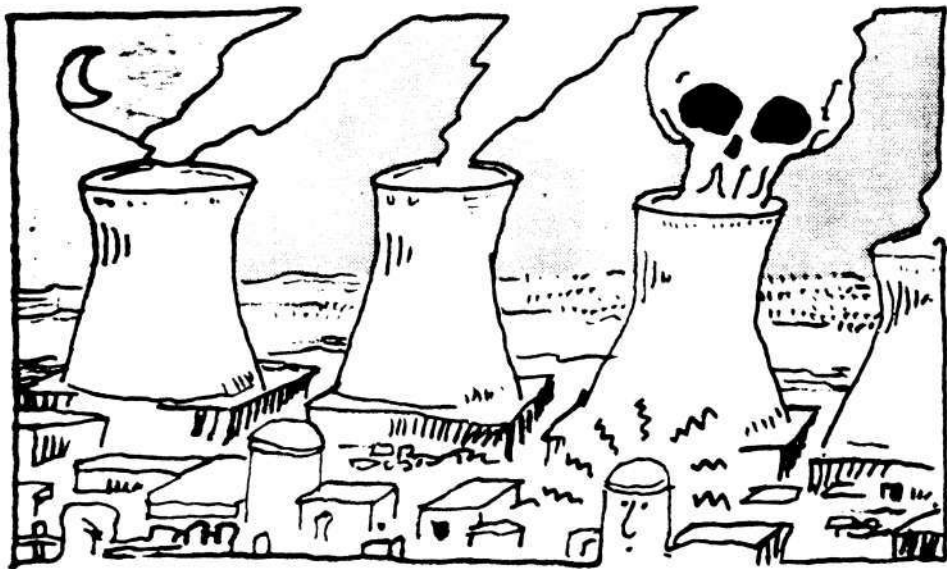
South Africa was originally an active, respected and obedient member of the nuclear club. It had uranium contracts with the Combined Development Agency during the Monopolist Phase, and was then inducted into the Western Suppliers Group when this superseded the CDA. As we have seen, South Africa was a founder member of the IAEA and on its Board of Governors. With the dawning of the Optimist Phase, South Africa was high on the list of worthy recipients of nuclear technology, and was duly rewarded with a research reactor, SAFARI 1 at Pelindaba, opened in 1965. Prime Minister Verwoerd's opening words (Section 2.2) went almost unnoticed. When General Martin let slip in 1968 that South Africa's missile tests should be seen in the context of the possible delivery of nuclear warheads, this was repudiated by the Government (10).

Doubts about South Africa's intention grew with its refusal to sign the NPT. South Africa explained the refusal in terms of guarding industrial secrets: in 1970 Prime Minister Vorster announced with great fanfare that South Africa had developed an entirely new and unique enrichment technique. The NPT would have required South Africa to open enrichment facilities to international inspection. It is widely believed by experts that the technique is not entirely original, and is only an adaptation of a West German Process (11), so the excuse for not signing the NPT is thin. A pilot enrichment plant began operation at Valindaba near Pretoria in 1975.

##### **Evidence of testing of nuclear explosives**

Two events fuelled speculation that South Africa had embarked on a programme of nuclear weapons development. In August 1977 a Soviet satellite detected what appeared to be preparations for a nuclear explosion in the Kalahari. The images were confirmed by a US satellite and interpreted to be a nuclear test site.

President Carter announced that he had assurances from Prime Minister Vorster that South Africa did not have and did not intend to develop nuclear explosive devices for any purpose (12). Vorster, in turn, denied giving such assurances, although he did say that



South Africa's only interest in nuclear technology was peaceful (13). There is evidence that South African scientists had shown interest in peaceful nuclear explosives (14). Also in the aftermath of the incident the French Foreign Minister said on radio "we did indeed receive information that South Africa was preparing for an atomic explosion, which according to the South African authorities was for peaceful purposes" (15).

Then in 1979, a US Vela satellite detected a double flash (the fingerprint of an atmospheric nuclear detonation) over the south Atlantic. The Vela satellite was specifically designed to detect atmospheric tests and all previous double flashes had been traceable to tests conducted by either France or China, the only countries conducting atmospheric tests at the time. This one however could not be linked to those countries.

A South African bomb (an atmospheric test cannot be 'peaceful') would have caused such international ructions that every effort was made by the US to offer alternative explanations for the double flash, such as lightning, meteors etcetera. However it is more than likely that some unidentified nation did explode a bomb.

There has been wide speculation that these events were the product of South African-Israeli cooperation on nuclear weapons development or that the 1979 flash was an Israeli bomb tested with South Africa's help (16).

#### Enrichment and uranium

South Africa is in the ambiguous position of being a non-signatory of the NPT and a member of the IAEA. As a result, international safeguards apply on all South Africa's reactors but not on enrichment facilities. It is improbable that South Africa could have diverted significant amounts of plutonium to a weapons programme. Any such programme would have to use enriched uranium or clandestinely imported plutonium, for example from Israel.

Uranium and enrichment have been the main concerns with regard to South Africa and proliferation.

The reason is not only because of the weapons capability it confers, but also because South Africa is a uranium producer.

Being a non-signatory of the NPT South Africa is theoretically at liberty to sell unsafeguarded uranium to anyone it chooses, although South Africa has said it will abide by the IAEA principles with regard to uranium sales. While the indiscriminate export of natural uranium is concern enough, that of enriched uranium is greater. Such action could bring nuclear weapons within other nations reach, or at least undermine other non-proliferation initiatives.

South Africa's plans to build a large commercial enrichment plant were revised as a result of economic and political forces. These were scaled down and instead a so-called semi-commercial plant has just been completed in addition to the original pilot plant.

Pressure to persuade South Africa to accept safeguards on both plants continues. A new set of procedures was drawn up in 1983 to enable IAEA safeguarding of enrichment facilities without risk to technological secrets. The arrangement was developed specifically with South African interests in mind. Despite this South Africa maintains objections to safeguards.

#### The politics of uncertainty

The uncertainty surrounding South Africa's nuclear weapons was played up by the Nationalist Government. Denials of a nuclear arsenal were interspersed with reminders about the country's capability to make weapons and hints about its preparedness to do so. The statement by Owen Horwood, then Minister of Finance, was typical of these: "If we wish to do things with our nuclear potential we will jolly well do so" (17).

South Africa's cultivated image as a near nuclear state had political advantages. Western governments could be pressured to continue support for the white regime if they were led to believe that abandoning support might drive the Nationalist Government to make (or even worse, to use) nuclear weapons. The



guessing game would also cause edginess on the part of other countries on the subcontinent which would be useful to a policy of destabilisation and regional hegemony. On the other hand open revelations of nuclear weapons could severely damage South Africa's relations with Western states, particularly in regard to nuclear cooperation. Thus South Africa has de facto nuclear deterrence without having to face the political consequences of crossing the nuclear threshold.

In order for the Nationalist Government to exploit the politics of uncertainty, South Africa has to have a programme of development of nuclear energy. The reason is that the politics of uncertainty, whether related to weapons production or to the indiscriminate sale of enriched uranium, is a ploy which needs enrichment capability (preferably unsafeguarded) to give it credibility. Enrichment, in turn, needs the impression of a domestic power programme to give it respectability.

Recently the nuclear power programme has acquired its own brand of uncertainty politics. An Eskom statement claimed that nuclear power development had been frozen until the end of the century, but added that the search for nuclear power station sites was continuing (18). After the launch of a costly investigation for possible nuclear power sites on the Natal north coast this year, the Minister of Mineral Affairs and Technology, Mr Steyn, said he considered this to be a bad area for a nuclear power station (19). There may be several reasons for the decision to keep a nuclear power programme alive and visible, but it would certainly be strategically damaging to the Government were it to fade into obscurity.

#### What use is a bomb?

It has been argued that nuclear weaponry would be useless to the South African regime since it is in conflict with its own population. This is only partly true. The possible deployment of nuclear weapons should be seen in the context of the laager mentality exemplified by Connie Mulder (then a Cabinet Minister) when, in the aftermath of the test-site incident of

1977, he said "if we are attacked no rules apply at all if it comes to a question of our existence. We will use all means at our disposal whatever they may be".

South Africa is unique amongst the nuclear and near nuclear states. In all other cases nuclear capability was acquired in response to a threat (real or perceived) of a similar capability on the part of an adversary. This does not apply to South Africa. There is no likelihood of any other sub-Saharan country acquiring nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

In conflict with a non-nuclear adversary there would be little use for medium or large strategic nuclear weapons. Only small tactical weapons could have any application. The manufacture of a small nuclear bomb is technologically more demanding than a large one. The 1979 flash over the south Atlantic indicated a small 2 to 4 kiloton detonation: either a large dud or a small sophisticated device. It is, in fact possible to make a small nuclear landmine which can be carried in a backpack.

Suppose a desperate regime felt that its existence was threatened, that it had little more to lose diplomatically, that it had conducted audacious conventional raids on neighbouring capitals with impunity, and that it possessed small tactical nuclear weapons. Would it use one? It may reason that the shock waves would bring more benefit in terms of its survival than costs in terms of retaliation. It may reason that the major powers would be more concerned about avoiding a nuclear conflagration over southern Africa than about appropriate retribution, whatever that may be.

If the nuclear device were to be used within South Africa's boundaries, the regime may feel even less inhibition about the threat or reprisal. A scenario for such deployment might arise if liberation forces were to gain control over sizeable parts of the country, as happened in Mozambique.

Although deployment is hopefully improbable, a South African nuclear bomb should not be dismissed as an expensive folly which could never be used. □



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This paper is concerned primarily with horizontal proliferation (the spread of nuclear weapon capability to additional countries) rather than vertical proliferation (the acquisition of greater destructive capabilities by existing weapon states). In the former, non-proliferation policies focus on access to technology and fissionable material. In the latter, arms control negotiations have been concerned with control of weapons testing and delivery systems.
2. Quoted in Panorama.
3. Readable accounts of non-proliferation politics and of the spread of nuclear capabilities can be found in: N. Moss 1981. The politics of uranium. Andre Deutsch. P. Pringle & J. Spigelman 1982. The nuclear barons. Michael Joseph. J.D.L. Moor 1987. South Africa and nuclear proliferation. MacMillan. R. Edwards 1987. The deadly connection: nuclear power, nuclear weapons. CND Publications.
4. A.B. Lovins & L.H. Lovins 1982. Energy/War: breaking the nuclear link. Harner & Row. Page 128.
5. Moss. op cit. Chapter 6.
6. Moss. op cit. Pages 190, 191.
7. L.S. Spector 1984. Nuclear proliferation today: the spread of nuclear weapons 1984. Ballinger. Page 187.
8. Spector. op cit. Page 297.
9. The production of plutonium for breeder reactors is sometimes given as justification for obtaining reprocessing facilities. Breeder reactors, which use plutonium fuel, are supposed to convert non-fissionable uranium-238 into plutonium at a faster rate than they use the plutonium fuel, hence the name 'breeder'. Breeder reactors have proven to be temperamental, and only a handful of countries are continuing to try to develop them. Even the USA has discontinued its breeder development programme. Should breeders ever become commonly used, the consequences for weapons control will be very serious.
10. Spector. op cit. Page 283.
11. Moore. op cit. Page 88.
12. Department of State Bulletin, 19 September 1977.
13. Washington Post, 25 October 1977.
14. Moore. op cit. Page 114.
15. UN Centre for Disarmament, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, 1981. South Africa's plan and capability in the nuclear field. Report of the Secretary General A/35/402. Appendix 2.
16. There are several somewhat speculative reports, for example: UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, 1983. South Africa's nuclear capability. Report A/AC 115/L 602. 'A most unholy alliance', an article by J. Hunter, editor of Israeli Foreign Affairs, published in Sanity, March 1987. The Guardian (14 June 1988) reported that a book by Benjamin Biet-Hallahmi soon to be published, claims that the flash was almost certainly the test of a 155mm nuclear shell produced secretly by South Africa and Israel.
17. Washington Post, 16 February 1977.
18. Natal Mercury, 4 February 1988.
19. Natal Witness, 19 May 1988.
20. Washington Post, 16 February 1977.

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# NON-VIOLENCE AND THE CHALLENGE TO APARTHEID

## A Review of:

Mokgethi Motlhabi, **Challenge to Apartheid: Towards A Moral National Resistance**. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988.

The recent restrictions placed on a number of democratic organizations have once again placed the role of non-violence as an effective instrument against the Apartheid state under the spotlight. The applicability and effectiveness of various non-violent strategies need to be soberly evaluated in the light of the state's consistently brutal response to democratic challenge. Although written some time before the recent bout of restrictions/bannings, Mokgethi Motlhabi's **Challenge to Apartheid** an updated version of **The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance To Apartheid: A Social - Ethical Analysis** (Skotaville 1984), provides an interesting approach to this question. In essence the book is an examination of the interconnection between moral-ethical analysis, and the theory and practice of the 'national resistance movements in South Africa'. It aims "to determine the moral significance of this challenge and its implications for future resistance" (p1), the intention being twofold: Firstly, "to justify the struggle itself, and the methods adopted in carrying it out"; and secondly, "to inform action through the adoption of appropriate strategies based on morally sound analysis and guidelines." (p4)

For Motlhabi morality is "not to be viewed simply as a matter of purposeless "dos" and "don'ts" but rather as a means of informing action through prior analysis and judgement of the situation before the actual decision is taken." (p5) His 'frame of reference' is an adaptation of the moral laws developed by Walter G. Muelder in **Moral Law in Christian Social Ethics**, which, it is argued, are not specific to Christianity, but have, or are hoped to have, 'equal moral significance' to Christian and non-Christian alike. These laws are seen to be universal, but not in violation of any cultural and situational relativity.

Is, however, a moral-ethical approach a good way in which to begin a study of this kind? Lenin (1977b:p301), argued that the only principle upon which the tactics of the Bolshevik Party should rest was that of expediency, while Marx and Engels were of the opinion that part of the reason for the failure of the Paris Commune (March 1830) was the initial reluctance of the revolutionary movement to employ sufficient force at the appropriate time. This is not to suggest that Marxism-Leninism views anything other than an armed struggle as totally inapplicable to a revolutionary struggle. Instead Lenin argues that the state owes its existence to its monopoly of naked terror (Lenin: 1977a), and the task of the revolutionary is to both neutralize and combat this terror. Both tasks require a realistic assessment of the relative strength of the state,

as well as the options, or possible combination of options, available to the revolutionary movement in question. Motlhabi, on the other hand, seems to oscillate between a desire to choose strategies in isolation of his ethical norms and values, and frustration at the realization that such principles may be futile in the face of reality.

Motlhabi examines five different options for social change in South Africa: guerrilla warfare, foreign intervention, sanctions, direct Christian action, and intensified noncooperation with the Government. I shall briefly discuss the fourth and fifth options, as they are most central to the discussion of non-violent resistance.

## THE CHURCH

Motlhabi argues that direct Christian action, defined as 'action by the churches and by Christian groups,' stands at the other extreme to guerrilla action. Here, as elsewhere, the discussion centres around a characterization of 'Black Theology', a phenomenon whose primary function is held to be conscientization at the grass-roots.

Motlhabi discusses several ways in which the church can participate in the struggle. Along with the central call for 'conscientization through the pulpit', he advocates a form of 'Billy Graham-type evangelizing' - which refers primarily to well planned 'crusades', for example, protest marches, which, he insists, are to occur throughout the country, in both townships and cities, leading up to some form of declaration. Motlhabi writes the "It would be interesting to find out how the government would react if all the participants were advised to carry their Bibles and, in case of police interference, raise them high in silence or in combined prayer. Such protable sanctuaries, if violated, would explode the Christian pretensions of the South African government leaders and, if they approve of its action, those who support it". (p201)

The discussion is however marked by a characteristic lack of attention to the role of class in the conscientization process, either by way of the nature of oppression, or by way of a theory of what constitutes a revolutionary, or socially rebellious class. In addition Motlhabi displays an uneasiness in crossing from the situation specific (the role of 'black theology' in South Africa) to a general discussion of the role of the church as an agent of social change. In turn he fails to explain adequately the role of the white churches in the struggle. In various places rather cursory references are made concerning the role of

some white "radicals" who are prepared to commit themselves actively to the 'struggle for national liberation', but he seems to lack any faith in the role of whites as a group. With regard to the white churches he merely rounds off his discussion of 'black theology' by arguing that, "The rest of the church in South Africa is, therefore, called to this type of grass roots re-evangelizing" (p200) This attitude is disturbingly close to PW Botha's celebrated reference to 'Afrikaners and other Whites'.

Motlhabi is writing with little reference to the heroic struggles of the working class and national liberation movements in South Africa, and, as importantly, with little or no reference to, other than a cursory recognition of, the harsh ability of the state to respond to such initiatives. References are made to only three historical occasions in which such a strategy was carried out. It would seem that Motlhabi has himself fallen foul of his own definition of strategy, i.e. the need for 'evaluation and review of previous successes and failures' (see pg 177-178). In addition, Motlhabi fails to contextualize adequately the particular movement or strategy he is discussing, and the relationship between these and other movements or strategies adopted by other organizations. By doing this, for example, by discussing the potential affects of a combination of armed struggle, Christian/moral noncooperation, and trade union action, the book could have been considerably enriched.

Another approach is the recommendation that the grass-roots approach to evangelization be taken up by ecumenical organizations like the Interdenominational African Ministers Association of South Africa (IDAMSA) and 'their white counterparts' (p201). Here Motlhabi simply argues that "A proliferation of these groups with a common purpose in both black and white churches all over the country would create not only awareness but also concern about the country's injustice, mutual trust, and the overcoming of past suspicions, as well as the desire to unite against racial oppression and hatred" (p201).

Given South Africa's abysmal human rights record, can we really expect such approaches to arouse a common concern for the welfare of all South Africa's citizens? Instead we are witnessing a structured intolerance, not some type of misconception that can be corrected by these forms of 'counter propaganda'. Indeed experience suggests that such types of 'counter propaganda' are easily met with violence by the state. As Bishop Tutu is fond of quoting, in Gandhi's India, and Martin Luther King's America, one could appeal to a basic set of common values and conceptions of 'humanity'. In South Africa these shared values do not exist, and for this reason passive campaigns of this sort are unlikely to succeed.

The Kairos theologians have tended to be more pessimistic about the value of such pressure on the state and have argued that "A tyrannical regime cannot continue to rule for very long without becoming more and more violent. As the majority of the people begin to demand their rights and put pressure on the tyrant, so will the tyrant resort more and more to desperate, cruel, gross and ruthless forms of tyranny and repression" (p23). This is not to negate their commitment to the 'struggle through

the pulpit', but rather to express a more sober estimation of the state's response to their efforts. Motlhabi's failure is not his attempt to outline certain ways in which the church can involve itself in social movements, but his failure to integrate adequately the churches' role into broader social dynamics of oppression and challenge. Here he could well have examined the Kairos document, and the work of progressive church leaders, who have sought to identify common ground with a variety of groupings, including the external movements engaged in armed struggle.

## PROTESTING

The second non-violent possibility facing resistance movements outlined by Motlhabi is that of 'active non-cooperation', which is described as a secular counterpart to direct Christian action. Motlhabi sees groups embarking on such protests as finding their "base in black consciousness and white consciousness groups" while making it clear that the role of non-racialism in the 'struggle' is by no means crucial.

Relying heavily on the work of Gene Sharp, Motlhabi discusses three options; conversion, accommodation and coercion. Again his simple dichotomous viewpoint obscures what could otherwise have been a valuable discussion. He writes that "Whites who sincerely want change in South Africa will naturally depend on converting their own communities. Blacks can no longer rely on this method alone, but must resort to some form of coercion. . . . The question facing blacks is, What form of coercion will be used?" (p203).

At this point Motlhabi seems to have accepted that, realistically speaking, a violent confrontation is inevitable. Rather reluctantly however, he refers to a number of possible acts of noncooperation that would either minimize, or hopefully remove the need for, armed conflict. Taken from Sharp these are discussed in three groups. Firstly, "pilgrimages, marches, picketing, vigils, haunting officials, public meetings, issuing and distributing protest literature, renouncing honors, protesting emigration, and humorous pranks." Secondly, social noncooperation (social boycotts), economic boycotts (consumers boycotts, traders' boycotts, rent refusal and international trade embargo), strikes and political noncooperation (eg. boycott of government employment, boycott of elections, administrative noncooperation, civil disobedience and mutiny). The third includes sit-ins, fasts, reverse strikes, nonviolent obstructions, nonviolent invasion, and parallel government. However the question remains as to whether this last hope style politics is relevant. Like the Paris Commune, is Motlhabi's democratic movement destined to fail because of its reluctance to adapt to a rapidly changing political climate?

Motlhabi points to the failure of Sharp to take adequate account of the problem of "organizing and mobilizing the people for resistance if their leadership is removed and restricted by the government" (p205). Although there is a sense in which Motlhabi's uneasiness with Sharp's formulation goes beyond the problem of leadership, he fails to express adequately his viewpoint on the prospects for these nonviolent strategies. This failure becomes especially acute when he implies that it is possible to get

enough (black) people to stop obeying and cooperating with the state. Perhaps it would be more fruitful to begin by telling us which blacks stand to gain from non-cooperation. Whether Motlhabi likes it or not black South Africa is a very real and very real class divisions. Some blacks have a very real interest in maintaining certain types of state forms, if not the Apartheid system itself. Wolpe argues that, at present, common objectives in the policies of corporate capital and in sections of the black petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie can be found which have changed their relations with one another from traditional "opposition and hostility" to "convergence and cooperation" (p75/76).

It is particularly disturbing that Motlhabi fails to discuss the effects of noncooperation, and other nonviolent strategies, on the state. The rent boycott is a good example of a nonviolent strategy which has not only been sustained for several years, in the face of harsh state responses, but has elicited major changes in the state's approach to conflict management. Naked force is being coupled with upgrading schemes and intensive propaganda efforts by the state to redefine the barriers of conflict. Surely when such a sensitive nerve has been touched it should receive far more than a few cursory remarks? It is unfortunate that a discussion of the trade union movement, potentially the most powerful and effective nonviolent grouping to date, is only incorporated in the closing pages of the book (pp.210/211). One would have imagined that the use of Wiehahn legislation by the trade unions for their own benefit would have been the subject of a major part of the discussion around non-violent resistance.

A second criticism relates directly to Motlhabi's earlier discussion of strategy, and in particular his statement that "the mere possession of a strategy must not be regarded as the solution to the problem". At no stage do we encounter an in-depth debate as to the merits of the various noncooperation strategies mentioned. The boycott strategy is a case that should never be simply accepted, but one which should be carefully contextualized and frequently re-examined, not only with respect to the boycott of elections, but to the homeland system (the latter being dismissed *in toto* by Motlhabi). It is a mistake to treat anything as an absolute 'untouchable', even an apartheid-created body. Miedzinsky, for example, has conducted a study of traditional, elected and alternative structures in a self-governing 'homeland' and has argued that the position of bantustan officials is ambiguous, making it possible for an MP in the bantustans to use his or her position for the benefit of the community.

Strategies based on participation in 'apartheid bodies' are not necessarily correct, but deserve careful examination. The aims, and chances of success, need to be soberly evaluated. Only then can we decide on their applicability. Motlhabi tends to do exactly the opposite. He assumes

that because a structure is immoral one should not consider participation within it. However such an approach is by no means peculiar to Motlhabi. Archbishop Tutu, Beyers Naude and other clergymen used similar arguments to dismiss participation in the October 25 municipal elections as a strategy for social change. Such an approach is as misguided as it is incorrect. In this regard Lenin was correct to argue that the Bolshevik decision not to participate in the Russian Duma in 1905 "proved correct at the time, not because non-participation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we accurately appraised the objective situation, which was leading to the rapid development of the mass strikes" (1977c p3031).

Unless the revolutionary movement can continually maintain a spirit of flexibility and preparedness to seize tactical advantages in all available spaces, even those areas which have a tradition of being rejected outright, it stands little chance of overthrowing the South African State. As Lenin said: "to reject compromises 'on principle', to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously" (1977b p304).

Motlhabi's use of a moral-ethical analysis reveals little more than his view of the self constitutive subjects under discussion. This does not mean that we should ignore passive resistance *per se*; on the contrary we should look for materialist reasons underlying the lack of significant overlapping areas of shared values and concern for the welfare of all classes and race groups in South Africa. This can best be done by way of an intensive study of, not only the strengths and weaknesses of various nonviolent campaigns, but also – more importantly – their impact on specific classes, and broader social movements. This will allow the movements to search for weak spots in state strategy, something which should never be considered impossible, rather than offer themselves as cannon fodder to some well meaning, but unrealistic, show of martyrdom. □

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A considerable debt is owed to Dr Rupert Taylor for his assistance in editing the review, and for his helpful comments throughout.

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