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A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION

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EDITORIALS

1. **FIDDLING**

It is well over a year since Mr Pik Botha told the UN and Mr Vorster told the world that South Africa was setting out on a course which would lead to the end of discrimination based on race. Suddenly there was new hope that peaceful change to a just society might still be possible. This hope, coupled with the obvious pressure being put on Rhodesia to come to terms with its Black Nationalists, persuaded a number of African states to give South Africa a chance to show that it was seriously setting about dismantling the vast apparatus of discrimination which it has been erecting at an accelerating rate for 300 years. They must wonder how long they must wait. Worse than that, two events of early 1976 must be making them wonder if the whole thing wasn't just a gigantic confidence trick.

In the first instance the Nationalist Administrator of the Cape Province cut off the annual grant of R175,000 which his administration had been giving to the East London City Council to help it finance its public library. The reason was that the East London City Council had decided to eliminate discrimination from its library and throw it open to all

racess. In the second instance Mr Vorster himself announced that the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Education, Mr Punt Janson, was to be replaced by Dr Andries Treurnicht. The Deputy Minister rules the lives of urban Africans. Mr Janson had made at least some attempt to make those lives more bearable for this group of people, which, more than any other Black group, is likely to decide the future shape of South African society. Mr Janson wasn't completely ruled by doctrine and to those urban Africans who gained some relief from their problems through his pragmatic approach he must sometimes have seemed almost human. Not so, Dr Treurnicht, He is the Nationalist Party's leading parliamentary reactionary and, from all the evidence, dogmatic to a degree. It would need a very perceptive Black man to see any humanity in him.

Speculation has it that Mr Vorster decided that the safest place to have Dr Treurnicht was under his eye in the Cabinet—and to buy off some of the Afrikaner backlash against the dismantling of apartheid by having him there. One could believe this if he had been given any other job,

but why the most sensitive race relations post of all? This step of Mr Vorster's, suggests that he is quite indifferent to the feelings of the African people. That he should act in this way at this time is quite incredible, if only in the light of two factors which must surely weigh very heavily with anyone making a ministerial appointment affecting urban African people in January 1976.

The first factor is Angola. In South Africa we are not allowed to know what has happened in Angola. We just don't know how deep our involvement has been. What we do know is that the suggestion that we were involved at all was quite enough to frighten off possible support for the opponents of the MPLA. Not a single leader of an African state was prepared to defend in public a South African role in Angola. And why? The reason is—apartheid! The policy is anathema to the whole continent. If it has done nothing else the Angolan affair has shown how hollow have been Mr Vorster's recent claims that we are now accepted by Africans as Africans. We are not and will not be for as long as we have the albatross of apartheid round our necks. Why, then, in heavens' name, when he should be doing everything he can to make it easy for his detente friends in Africa to stay friendly, does Mr Vorster appoint an arch-apartheid like Dr Treurnicht to the vital post he has given him? It is incomprehensible.

The second factor is the role of Black South Africans in the economy. Figures released by the Department of Statistics in January show that, in the six main employment categories of our industrialised society, in the past ten years, 6 times as many new Black workers have been taken on as White. There are now 3 times as many African workers as there are White, and Indian and Coloured workers now

amount to two-thirds of the White work-force. Yet none of these three groups has any effective control over the political system and Africans have no political rights at all in the places in which they work. Nor, with Dr Treurnicht as their boss, are they likely to get them.

What more potent recipe for disaster could there be than one with these three ingredients;

A policy with which no Black African leader is prepared to be publicly associated;

An economy which is increasingly passing into the hands of a labour force which has no say in the system which employs it;

A Government which has made grand claims about its intentions to phase out discrimination, and then done nothing of any importance about it?

If Mr Vorster, when he first announced his detente policy, had seriously started phasing out apartheid, no doubt he would have suffered a White backlash, but he would have begun to build up a credit balance of good will in the two places where he really needs it—Black Africa and his own Black ghettos. His failure to deliver the goods which Mr Pik Botha promised and his extraordinary appointment of a reactionary to administer the affairs of the African people on whose economic involvement his whole industrialised state depends, fill one with despair. Like Nero, he is fiddling, when he should be putting the fires of discontent out, not by banking them down with a vast security and defence machine, but by giving Black people hope of a full and unfettered life soon. □

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MORE DETENTIONS

At the end of last November the Security Police began a new series of detentions. The people detained seem mainly to have been ex-members of the African National Congress. Many of them have previously served terms of imprisonment on Robben Island.

The pattern of the detentions has been familiar, and chilling. Days passed before there was any public knowledge that they had happened. Then some names appeared in the press, not because they had been announced by the Security Police, but because word got out through friends and relatives. Since those friends and relatives saw them vanish with the Security Police most of the detainees have not been seen or heard of. Nobody knows for certain where they are and certainly nobody knows what is happening to them. Nor does anyone outside the Security Police know how many of them there are or what they are supposed to

have done. It is a safe guess, however, that there are more people involved than the newspapers have been able to report, if only because some friends and relatives are terrified into silence when these things happen.

Detention for interrogation in solitary confinement is a now familiar part of the South African 'way of life', and familiarity is in danger of breeding acceptance. But REALITY does not accept it. On the contrary, we still believe in the old-fashioned idea of habeas corpus. We still hold the view, now widely discarded by many governments, not least our own, that an arrested person should be arraigned in open court within the shortest possible time of his arrest. Any diminution of this vital right puts the arrested person at the mercy of the state, and reflects a contempt for individual worth which must soon permeate the whole of society. □

INCREASED SUBSCRIPTIONS

Like everyone else Reality is feeling the inflationary pinch. Costs of printing, stationery and postage have all gone up. We have never been able to meet all our costs from subscriptions and have always been heavily dependent on donations. Now, however, to reduce the growing gap between income and costs we have, regretfully, decided that our subscription rates will have to be increased.

From the March issue these will be

South Africa	R2,00 per annum
United Kingdom	£1,25
United States	\$4,00

We hope that these new rates will not be too heavy for our readers. We hope also that those who have added a donation to their subscriptions in the past will continue to do so. New donations will, of course, be more than welcome. □

FEDERALISM AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

ANDRE DU TOIT

(1974 Maurice Webb Memorial Lectures), University of Natal, Durban.

Reviewed by John Wright

'Federation' is one of the words often bandied about today by white opponents of apartheid, but very little incisive discussion has taken place of its connotations in the South African political context. In this booklet Dr Andre du Toit, senior lecturer in political science at the University of Stellenbosch, seeks to widen the ambit of what debate there is on the subject by drawing attention to a number of basic issues that the protagonists of federation in South Africa will have to face if their ideas are ever to be realised in the sphere of political action. This publication reproduces the text of the two Maurice Webb Memorial Lectures which the author gave in Durban and Pietermaritzburg in September 1974, the first entitled 'The meaning and relevance of federalism in South Africa', and the second 'How can a federation of Southern Africa come about?'

As Du Toit points out, the idea of federalism in South Africa goes back at least to the governorship of Sir George Grey in the 1850's, but for reasons that he does not detail it has never entered the mainstream of local politics. His

own attitude to the concept is confessedly lukewarm: he sees federalism as essentially a compromise in a society where fundamental political change is necessary. Nevertheless a case for considering federalism as a vehicle of political change has been made by the emergence in the 1970's of what the author calls 'a kind of "federal consensus" among those political leaders and parties who are actively pursuing political change within South Africa', that is, the white opposition parties and the black homeland leaders. Of the ideas held on federalism by the black nationalist leaders we are not told.

The idea of a 'federal consensus', however, as Du Toit is at pains to point out, conceals basic differences in approaches and aims among its supporters. On the one hand, white liberals, and probably members of other minority groups as well, tend to see a federal constitution primarily as providing a means of safeguarding individual and local rights and interests against arbitrary action on the part of the central government. On the other hand, the black homeland leaders

probably see federalism as a means towards the gradual redistribution of wealth and power in South Africa. There is thus a basic divergence between the liberal stress on rigid constitutional safeguards, and black desires for extensive social reform.

But in any case the issue will remain an academic one so long as the group that holds power in South Africa, the Afrikaner nationalists, remains unenthusiastic about federalism. Though the Bantustan policy contains important federal elements, the aim of its proponents, though admittedly so far vaguely expressed, is the formation of a "Common Market" of politically independent states rather than a federation under a single government. This, the author suggests, is mainly because the leaders of Afrikanerdom see federalism as leading ultimately to the decentralisation of the existing party political system and, concomitantly, the fragmentation of Afrikaner nationalism.

Du Toit concludes his first lecture with a discussion of a number of practical points that South African federalists will need to consider if they are to update their rather antiquated notions of what federation means. On the important issue of how power should be exercised from the centre, he specifically takes issue with Leo Marquard's view that it matters little whether a parliamentary (i.e. British-type) or presidential (American-type) executive is chosen. Du Toit feels strongly that to avoid a winner-take-all situation, where one interest group comes to power and then holds on to it indefinitely, the executive and the legislature should be independent of each other as in the American system. He admits that this 'un-South African' proposal is unlikely to find much favour, but, in conjunction with the other points he makes about decentralisation of power within a federal framework, it merits serious consideration by planners of constitutional blueprints for South Africa.

In his second lecture Du Toit moves on to consider how a federal government might be established in the actual conditions of South African politics. As he sees it, the major catalyst is likely to be the spread of guerrilla warfare to South Africa's borders and the parallel growth of internal resistance movements aimed at overthrowing the white government. In the face of these threats to security, he maintains, it would be in the common interest of the central government and of the homeland governments to co-operate against them. This situation would provide the conditions for a 'federal bargain'—instead of pushing the homelands out of the central political system, as it is now doing, the Nationalist government would increasingly acquire an interest in keeping them within it, while for their

part the homelands would use their increasing strategic importance to bargain for a larger share of the land and wealth controlled by whites. The only alternative for the Nationalist government would be to form some kind of white 'garrison state' with authoritarian powers far in excess of those it holds today.

The author then proceeds to consider a number of serious obstacles to the achievement of a federal accommodation between blacks and whites. First: the conditions of crisis, which the author sees as needed to make a new accommodation necessary, might well make impossible the formation of the delicate system of checks and balances entailed in a federal system. Second: given South Africa's present winner-take-all parliamentary system, white authoritarian rule might well be replaced by a black equivalent, Third: the leaders of Afrikaner nationalism are reluctant to do anything that might weaken Afrikaner unity. He nevertheless perceives 'certain federalising tendencies' in the policies of separate development, and sees a much faster devolution of powers to the homelands as the first of the major stages by which federation could come about. The second stage would see the extension of homeland territories to include substantial 'white' areas, while the third would see the subdivision of white South Africa into a number of smaller regional units on a par with one another and with the homelands within the federation, and also perhaps the addition of the former protectorates and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Given the existence of the homelands, and the Afrikaner nationalist government's determination to proceed with its apartheid policies, Dr du Toit presents a thoughtful assessment of how a southern African federation might-just-come about. The great imponderable, however, and one which he hardly touches on, is how the growth of black nationalism and working class power in South Africa might limit the room for independent manoeuvre both of the white minority government and of the homeland leaders. Admittedly it would have been difficult to compress more material into the compass of two already closely argued lectures, but it would have been useful to have learnt the author's views on how, for instance, the central and the homeland Governments might in the future respond to the rising growth in bargaining power of black urban workers—surely a necessary element in any analysis of southern Africa's future. Nevertheless he has in these lectures made a useful contribution to the debate on South Africa's political alternatives and has helped give some much-needed definition to the concept of federalism in the local context.□

BLACK AMERICANS, SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AND SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

by Robert F. Haswell

American society is in the throes of a rapid and substantial conceptual change, which has significant implications for other heterogeneous and plural societies, such as South Africa. Many social scientists, particularly urban anthropologists, now recognise the existence of a black American culture or at least a modified value system which might be described as subcultural, and, many of these scholars see it as a part of their responsibility to help alert the nation to the danger-filled dynamics of the American socio-economic system. South African social scientists can follow this lead and contribute towards the lessening of intergroup conflict which springs from a lack of appreciation of differences in life style.

In order to fully comprehend the magnitude and significance of this changing view of American society, it is necessary to review the writings of social scientists on Black Americans, and, it is useful to classify and label the viewpoints as being mainstream or minorstream. The essence of the traditional mainstream view is that Black American culture is simply a crude imitation of, or an improperly learnt, White culture. A Negro sociologist, E. Franklin Frazier, in his book on **The Negro Family in the United States** (1939, revised 1966) was responsible for a highly influential version of the doctrine of the cultureless Black American. In a clear exposition of the mainstream scholarly outlook Frazier maintained that "African traditions and practices did not take root and survive in the United States" (Frazier, 1939, pp 7–8) and that "The Negro has found within the patterns of the White man's culture a purpose in life and a significance for his strivings" (Frazier, 1966, p 367). Furthermore, he stated that "... the institutions, the social stratification, and the culture of the Negro minority are essentially the same as those of the larger community..." (Frazier, 1957, pp 680–681). Such pronouncements have been the sources of nearly universal images of Black people in America.

Many social scientists regard Gunnar Myrdal's **An American Dilemma** (1944 and 1962), as the authoritative work on the Negro in the United States. This volume, of more than

1 500 pages contains only two brief chapters on "The Negro Community" and contains an emphatic summary: "American Negro culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development, or a pathological condition, of the general American culture" (Myrdal, 1962, p 928). Myrdal lists the following traits as pathological: "the instability of the Negro family, emotionalism in the Negro church, unwholesomeness of Negro recreational activity, narrowness of interests, provincialism, the high Negro crime rate, superstition and personality difficulties." The string of disparaging adjectives makes interesting reading in a book whose author describes his own work as "wholly objective and dispassionate" (Myrdal, 1962, p 11).

Other scholars have also been guilty of an uncritical acceptance of Frazier's doctrine. The historian Kenneth Stampp presented Black Americans as "white men with black skins" (Stampp, 1956, p. vii), while the sociologists Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan in **Beyond the Melting Pot** assert that "it is not possible for Negroes to view themselves as other ethnic groups viewed themselves because—and this is the key to much in the Negro world—the Negro is only an American and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect" (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963, p. 53).

model. This model built to explain the experience of the European immigrant groups in the U.S., postulated the modification and then giving up of old country institutions and values as the generations followed one another. The propulsion was provided by occupational mobility and increasing contact with American institutions, especially education. Very little of this fits the cultural experience of the Africans shipped to the New World as slaves, subjected to segregation after emancipation, faced with the mechanisation of agriculture and the decline of low-skill industrial employment, able to afford only the older, inner-city, housing areas while manufacturing employment follows the 'white flight' to the suburbs, and, above all, having to continuously contend with racial

discrimination. Because of the way American institutions operate—from schools to employment to the housing market or the judicial system—most Black Americans have not been treated as equals, and consequently assimilation rarely took place.

Notwithstanding, and despite the search for African cultural “survivals” conducted by anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits, Frazier’s mainstream viewpoint held sway until the decade of the sixties. During this period scholars began to follow up the leads uncovered by Herskovits some twenty years earlier. Herskovits launched what we can label as the minorstream viewpoint, by exploding the myth that the Negro was a man without a past (Herskovits, 1941). He emphasised that because the Black people of the New World had an African background, their culture is a product of the interaction between African and Euro-American patterns. Furthermore, he asserted that there were meaningful cultural differences between Blacks and Whites of the United States. Moreover, Herskovits contended that all ways of life are inherently worthy of respect. This position of cultural relativism, contrasted sharply with the ethnocentric mainstream outlook, which assumed that the White American way of life is inherently preferable, and that distinctiveness or divergences from mainstream norms constitute inferiority. Above all, however, Herskovits’s main legacy, in the context of this essay, was the stimulus which his scholarship provided for a considerable number of anthropologists. This stream of writers have succeeded in broadening the previous conceptions of Black culture in America.

Most of the recent writings which will be cited in the following paragraphs appear as chapters in two recent volumes: **Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives** (Whitten and Szwed, 1970); and **Black America** (Szwed, 1970). Erika Bourguignon (1970a and 1970b) has reasserted that African-derived faiths and rituals are a distinctive cultural heritage of New World Blacks, and that there is a continuum which ranges from the more purely African congregations, on some of the Caribbean Islands, to the more diluted Africanisms, such as the call-response preacher-audience relationship, which one may find in some churches in most Black communities in the United States.

Alan Lomax (1970) has presented elaborate evidence that Afro-American music closely resembles typical African song styles, and Charles Keil, in his celebrated book **Urban Blues** (Keil, 1966), demonstrated that the entertainment component of Black culture was not stripped away by slavery. Consequently, the sound and feel of the Black ghetto sharply demarcate it from the White world, and, “perhaps future books regarding black behaviour ought to be **recorded** as well as **written**” (Jones, 1972, p. 17).

Linguists have presented a convincing case that Afro-American speech patterns have their own distinctive structure (Stewart 1970, Dillard, 1970). The culmination of this research is Dillard’s fascinating study of **Black English** in which he documents that the language of about eighty percent of Americans of African ancestry differs

from other varieties of American English. Black English is now seen as a fully-fledged dialect with its own phonetics, vocabulary and a distinctive grammar (Dillard, 1973).

Other authors have pointed out that language functions differently within different cultures and subcultures. Black Americans with their African oral heritage, and often blocked from exercising any real power, place a premium on ‘rapping’. According to Watkins, ‘rapping’ may be defined as conversation “. . . but not the facile, witty and objective conversation of the British upper class; nor is it the impersonal small talk common in America. Instead it is gut-deep, salvation-oriented, ego-meshed, and ultimately directed toward the one-on-one confrontation of individuals . . . It is so highly regarded by blacks that a youth who has not acquired a moderate facility is normally ostracised” (Watkins, 1971, p. 36).

The power of the spoken word is clear in the verbal contest known as ‘sounding’ or ‘playing the dozens’ in the United States, and commonly called ‘rhyming’ in the West Indies (Abrahams, 1970). Kochman (1970) has defined ‘sounding’ as a game of verbal insults and retorts, while Roberts (1973) has identified this performance pattern as a continuation of the West African songs of derision. While on this subject it is interesting to note that Blacking (1961) has documented that the Venda use riddles in the course of a competitive game for young people.

Muhammad Ali is perhaps the most well-known ‘rapper’ but it is seldom appreciated that it is as natural for him, as a Black American, to ‘sound out’ his opponents, as it is for a White Anglo-Saxon athlete to conform to the concept of the humble athlete. A glaring example appeared recently: “it seems he (Ali) has to talk to gear himself up for fighting. So perhaps he should give up fighting (The Natal Witness, Viewpoint, Oct. 2, 1975). This is tantamount to a request that Ali should refrain from behaving like a Black American, and overlooks the fact that Ali’s banter is open to refutation. In fact, the inability of his opponents to ‘cap his rap’ leaves Black Americans in no doubt as to who is the only BLACK man in the ring.

In summary, the minorstream scholars have produced sufficient evidence to indicate that Black American culture is a subculture which features ethnic characteristics. It is overwhelmingly the product of American experience, but this is an experience unique to Black Americans. Thus, their African heritage—primarily some aesthetic and linguistic principles, has been molded by slavery, the American South, and the ghetto conditions of the urban North.

C. L. R. James has asserted that a new community was formed under slavery with “. . . its own Christian church . . . its own system of communication . . . its own value system . . . its own language patterns” (James, 1970, p. 133).

The Swedish anthropologist, Ulf Hannerz, has ‘illuminated the ghetto lifestyle of Black Americans. In **Soulside** he identifies the following as characteristic of “ghetto-specific culture”: female household dominance; a male role focused on toughness, sex, and alcohol; and a hedonistically oriented lifestyle. Apart from overlooking the fact that music,

language, and dress are far more consciously cultivated in the Black ghetto than one would find in other lower-class neighbourhoods, Hannerz was content to document only the evidence of a distinctive lifestyle. He avoided recognising the harsh realities which condition any lifestyle development in Black ghettos.

More light has been shone on the Black ghetto by Lee Rainwater in his appropriately entitled book **Behind Ghetto Walls**. Rainwater attributes many of the lower-class characteristics of Black ghettos to the marginal economic and social position to which a racist society has assigned dark skinned people. People barred from participation in mainstream institutions develop substitutes.

An even more revealing anthropological treatise is Elliot Liebow's **Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men**. This study reveals that Black males, who aspired to be successful husbands and fathers, are overwhelmed: by the surrounding failure of his father; by his unskilled and semi-literate status; by his lack of self-confidence and above all, blocked by virtue of being BLACK. In humiliation the man increasingly seeks refuge on the streetcorner, where he can conceal his failures among other streeters. Of course, these generalisations apply only to certain sectors of any Black community—a community whose culture is far more complex.

Much of the best available insight into Black American culture, appeared in earlier form from the pen of William E. B. DuBois. In one of his best known books, **The Souls of Black Folk** (1903, 1965) DuBois used the concept of "double-consciousness" in order to elaborate on the relationship of Black people to White America. He maintained that "one ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings: two warring ideas in one dark body . . ." (DuBois, 1965, p. 215). Valentine (1971 and 1972) regards the process of biculturalisation as crucial in defining and understanding the Black experience in America. Black Americans, thus, regularly draw upon both an ethnically distinctive repertoire of values and customs and, at the same time, utilise behaviour patterns from the White American mainstream.

DuBois can be recognised as the father of Black studies, a new field in the U.S. He stressed that the cultural distinctiveness of Black Americans rested in the intricate patterns of Black religion, folklore and music. Black studies is a field which aims at documenting the strengths of Black American culture patterns, and thus providing a foil to mainstream scholarship which, as we have seen, found only weakness in Black family life, for instance. The anthropologists Stack (1970) and Young (1970), along with scholars from other fields (Hill, 1971, Billingsley, 1968) herald a constructive start in this area.

DuBois also asserted that the Black man "would not Africanize America", nor would he "bleach his Negro soul in a flood of White Americanism. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows" (DuBois, 1965, p. 215). This was certainly a prophetic statement, as the civil rights movement which began largely as a struggle for inclusion in White America, has increasingly become a quest for Black power—the power of self-definition and self-

determination. Black Americans are thus more actively rejecting the White American society at the very time when the doors are beginning to open to their participation. The period of legal equality, and potential assimilation, has coincided with the revitalisation and upsurge of an ethnic group's sense of peoplehood.

This ferment in the streets and in the writings of a new genre of social scientists, has resulted in many people now looking upon the U.S. as a heterogeneous rather than as an homogeneous, or assimilated society. This perspective deals mortal blows not only to racist doctrines, but also to the neo-racist advocates and policies of integration. The concept of integration is seen as denying the distinctiveness of America's many ethnic groups, and supporting the ethnocentric notion that mainstream culture is preferable. By contrast the multi-ethnic view of society seeks its equality in a new kind of segregation—in a pluralistic acceptance of differences.

If we now transfer our focus to South African society, it should be clear that we need to move beyond the bifocal conception of cultural relations as either a case for segregation or a need for integration. This conceptual bias is based on the premise that there is a norm against which all behaviour, and franchise qualifications, can be gauged. But we live in a heterogeneous society, in which the norms are not homogeneous, but are defined variably from culture to culture. Consequently, an immediate goal for social scientists in the South African context should be the documentation and analysis of the cultural strengths of this country's many ethnic groups. This will make possible the identification of conflicts between the various norms, and dilute those confrontations which are sparked by negative caricatures.

Social scientists can follow the lead set by the geographer, John Wellington in his classic work: **South West Africa and Its Human Issues**. This book assembles the geographical, historical and political facts which bear on the present situation in the mandated territory, and, because the author felt "... constrained to express an opinion on the rights and wrongs in the wider subject of racial issues" he produced a socially relevant study (Wellington, 1967, p.v). His conclusion has a topical ring: "We White South Africans are capable of rising to the challenge of the New Age and we shall find that in working out the destiny of South West Africa on a fair and just basis we shall have the encouragement and support of all men of goodwill. On the other hand, failure to put wrongs right will play into the hands, not only of our enemies in Africa, but of other enemies who are seeking a moral justification for an entry into Africa 'to free the oppressed'" (Wellington, 1967, p. 422).

Another eminent South African geographer, T. J. D. Fair, whose forte is the spatial evolution of the Southern African economy, has lucidly shown how economic developments and human relationships in this subcontinent are best viewed within a framework of conflicting political and economic pressures. He concluded that:

There is no simple solution to the conflict of these forces for one is born of racial prejudice and fear and the other of economic necessity. Some believe that political separation and economic interdependence can co-exist in a divided society; others that solutions lie only in a common society of Black and White.



This could well be Tally's Corner—a street scene in the Black business district of Blytheville, Arkansas.

What is of fundamental significance in Southern Africa is the universal acceptance of the **interdependence of Black and White**. As long as this continues to influence the minds of men they can adapt and move towards a common goal. (Fair, 1969, p. 376)

The historian J. S. Marais has been in the vanguard of attempts to produce an impartial history of South Africa (Marais, 1938 and 1945). His standpoint is: "that justice . . . does not allow the use of two measures, one for ourselves and our own people, and another for those who differ from us in nationality, or race, or the colour of their skins." (Marais, 1939, p.x). Other historians, social anthropologists and archaeologists have also produced refreshing studies on various aspects of the human history of Southern Africa (Thompson, 1969).

Studies of this kind have exposed the conceptual bias which has prevailed for so long in White scholarship. They have also pointed to the need for a cultural relativist position in our society, and the development of cross-cultural bridges between distinct life styles.

If we in the social sciences are to be a part of the solution—rather than a part of the problem—of this country's social dilemma, we need to espouse neither integration nor separation, but acculturation—acculturation which does not seek to cut the ties that bind South Africans together. Above all, we must recognise that acculturation is a two-way street, that the English and Afrikaner elements of our White society have much to learn from each other, and even more to learn from the Black communities, and that we too can change as a result of those learnings. □

INKATHA

by David Welsh

Africa has certainly spawned some unusual political instruments. Inkatha, the National Cultural Liberation Movement, is certainly unusual on the face of things, but reading through its constitution and other statements of its aims, it comes to look more and more like the proto-type of a mass mobilization-type political party, frequently associated with newly independent African states.

In fact the structure of its proposed constitution and even the language bear some resemblance to Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP. It is to be the instrument of 'African democracy' or a single-party system. In Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's words 'Inkatha provides the machinery within which the people as a whole have a right to participate in National decision-making at all levels'. He has said explicitly that it is an instrument for involving the grass roots.

Membership is open to all Zulu above the age of 18, and provision is made for affiliate membership of organisations as well. As originally conceived Inkatha would be the single KwaZulu party: only its members could run for Legislative Assembly elections or other local elective bodies. The South African Government, however, has rejected the single-party idea, and it remains to be seen whether the people of KwaZulu will voluntarily channel their political forces into a single party. At the present time this seems highly doubtful.

Elsewhere in Africa the rationale for a single-party system has rested on two core arguments: that the competitive party systems of liberal democracies are not congruent with African political traditions, which are themselves democratic; that the effect of party competition is divisive, and in the circumstances of typical poorly integrated new societies of Africa divisiveness must be avoided at all costs.

Members of Inkatha are, in terms of the constitution, obliged 'to struggle for the unity of the country', 'to strengthen the bond between the people and the Movement' (i.e. Inkatha), and 'to explain to the people constantly the policies of the Movement . . .' A whole section of the constitution spells out these aims, which are basically the mobilisation of the people.

Structurally the Movement is strongly centralised, with power being concentrated in the Central Committee, which has among its powers and functions 'the implementation of the entire policy of the National Movement' and 'the exercise of complete control over all officials'. The Central Committee is to consist of not less than 25 persons, 21 of

whom will be elected for a five-year term by the General Conference of the movement.

Members of the Movement are constitutionally obliged to refrain from publicly criticising it or any member in relation to his activities in Inkatha, but the right of members to criticise short-comings, irregularities and to make suggestions regarding policy issues is protected so long as this occurs inside the movement.

In many respects, as I have indicated, these provisions are typical of much of the single-party idea in modern Africa. Whether in fact things will work out in the way prescribed by the constitution is, of course, entirely a different matter. It is possible to keep a quality of openness and freedom alive in the single-party system (as TANU and UNIP have demonstrated) but it is difficult, and depends on the personal qualities of the leadership, the equipoise of powerful groupings inside the movement and a host of other variables which cannot be foreseen.

KwaZulu, of course, is not typically emergent state and the context within which Inkatha will operate is radically different from, say, TANU's. KwaZulu's people reject the 'liberation' offered them by the South African government; and they reject the patchwork-quilt pattern of scattered lands. On these issues, no doubt, Inkatha can secure a ready-made basis of unity. But there are other sources of division whose magnitude may grow. Will Inkatha be able to cope with these democratically?

KwaZulu's 29 different pieces contain a variety of peoples, some with legacies of conflict with the Zulu heartland.

There are traditionalists, labour leaders, young students and intellectuals, businessmen, all of whom are actual or potential sources of opposition that will be difficult to contain and reconcile within the ranks of the Movement.

Inkatha will have to face the opposition of those who believe that it is wrong to 'work for change within the system', a powerful if muted constituency among Blacks; and it will also have to face, as Chief Buthelezi has long done, all the subtle forms of opposition which the Republican Government can mount.

All in all the prospects for a democratic movement are not propitious, and the circumstances of Inkatha will test to the utmost the undoubted democratic instincts of its leaders. □

WHY KILL

A BLACK MEDICAL SCHOOL ?

by E. G. Malherbe

It is with a sense of shock that the Natal Medical School, on the eve of its celebrating its Silver Jubilee, learned of the Government's intention to phase it out as a medical school for training Black practitioners.

By all means let the Government establish another medical school for Blacks, as it now intends to do in the Transvaal. Heaven knows, we badly need more African doctors. In South Africa there is only one African doctor for every 44 000 Africans, as compared with one Indian doctor for every 900 Indians, and one White doctor for every 400 White people.

But why kill off an institution that was established a quarter of a century ago, and has ever since grown not only in numbers, but also in reputation? To date it has produced over 600 Non-White doctors of whom over one-third were Africans.

Even during its early stages, our Medical School in Durban was visited by experts from all parts of Africa in order to learn from us how to start and run a Medical School for their indigenous populations.

Durban, with all its variegated population groups, White, Coloured, Indian and African, who have different living and food habits, and live within a radius of twenty miles of the city, provides a human laboratory for medical research, almost unique in the world. This fact by itself attracted medical men of outstanding ability to come and work in our Medical School.

In addition, the presence of many specialists in this city afforded part-time teaching staff of high quality such as would not be available in a medical school situated in an African Homeland.

The new medical school for Africans is to be called MEDUNSA (The Medical University of South Africa). It will be situated about forty kilometres outside Pretoria, and will be erected at a cost of about thirty million rand. If their medium of instruction is to be Afrikaans, in view of the fact that it is situated in an area where Afrikaans is generally spoken, what about those Blacks from KwaZulu and from the Transkei who do not speak Afrikaans at all? When it concerns White university students the Government makes a fetish of mother-tongue medium. The Government has no scruples, however, about pushing this hallowed principle into the background when it concerns Non-Whites. For

example, the English-speaking Coloureds of Natal are virtually forced to attend the Afrikaans-medium university for Coloureds in the Cape. They are not allowed by law to attend the English-medium university for Indians or the White university in Durban.

The Intake

Let us look at the potential intake of suitable African applicants. Already there are more than can be accommodated. The number of Africans who pass matriculation examination with full qualifications for university entrance has risen from a little over 300 to over 2 000 in the last ten years. The number who qualified in mathematics at the matriculation examination (mathematics being an essential for admission to medical school) increased from 201 in 1965 to 1 601 in 1974. Out of these 1 601 academically qualified matriculants, 172 applied for admission in 1975 to the pre-medical courses and were qualified for entry into our Medical School. In the two previous years, the number of qualified applicants was over 200. This number has been steadily growing. In fact, it has trebled in the last five years. In addition the Bantu universities recommend annually about 25 students for direct admission to the second medical year of study. It would seem therefore that if the potential intake of qualified applicants is any criterion, two medical schools for Africans will soon be required to accommodate them—quite apart from the crying need for more African doctors. So, why wipe out the existing one?

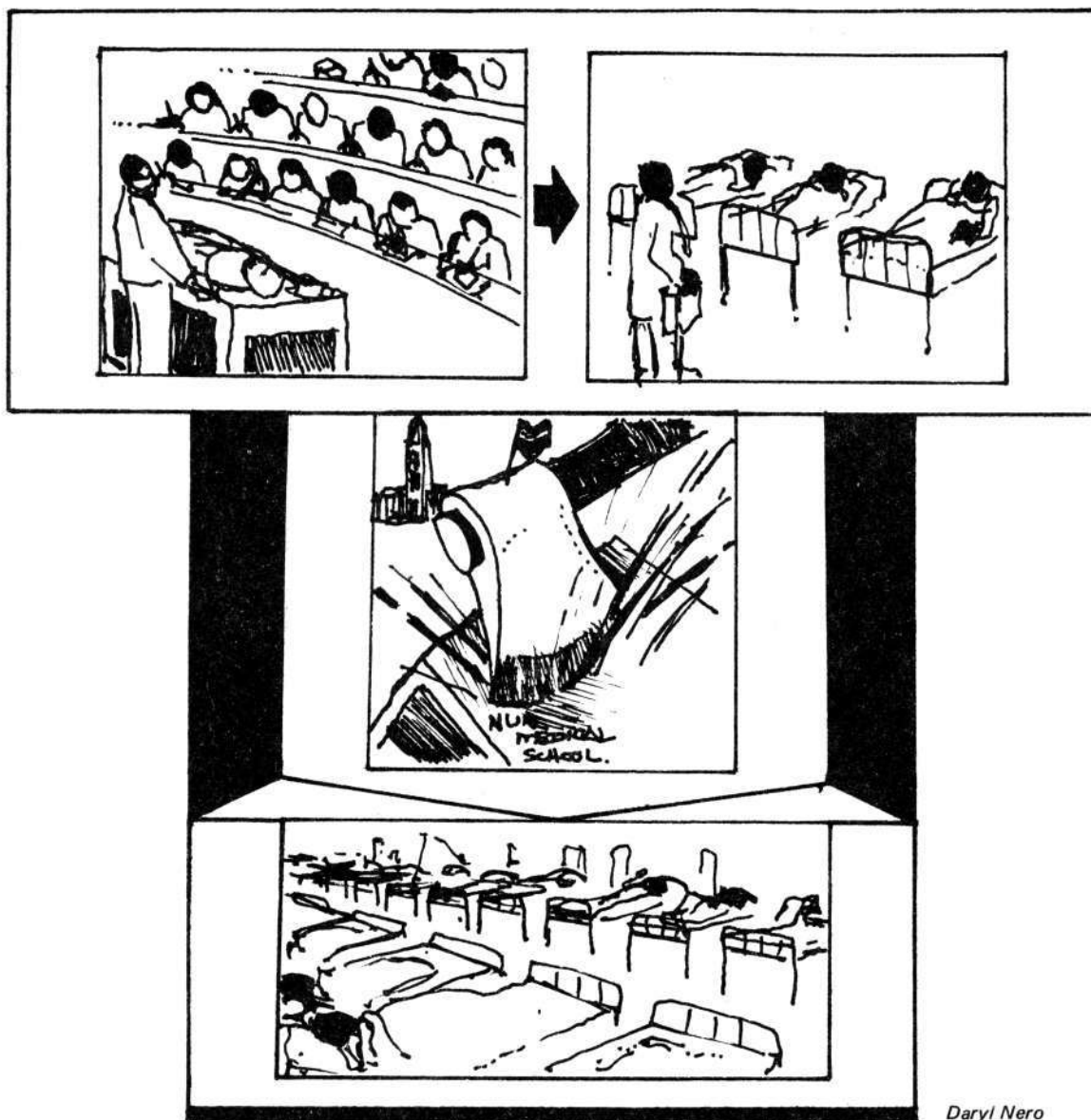
In 1975, there were, all told, 527 students in the Natal Medical School of whom 212 were Bantu. One wonders what is going to happen to the training of Indian and Coloured doctors.

Financial Aspect

It has been calculated that the Natal Medical School can increase its intake to 160, of whom 100 will be Bantu students, at a cost of only R450,000. At the present time of financial stringency, the question may be asked why, at this stage spend R30 000,000 on a new medical school for Africans when a slight extension of the Natal Medical School could in the meantime cater for the normal increase in African medical applicants, and do so at a much smaller cost to the taxpayer?

A Medical School for Whites in Durban

There are today in the Republic five medical schools for Whites—three Afrikaans (Pretoria, Stellenbosch and



Daryl Nero

Bloemfontein) and two English-medium (Cape Town and Witwatersrand).

In the past the two last mentioned were the only medical schools in the Republic. In 1943 Pretoria, and in 1957, Stellenbosch began. In the late 1960's Bloemfontein followed.

For a considerable time Cape Town and Witwatersrand Medical Schools have been so overcrowded that they had to turn away large numbers of qualified applicants. An urgent need thus arose for a third English-medium medical school. Instead, a third Afrikaans medical school at Bloemfontein was given priority at a time when there was ample room for qualified applicants in the two existing Afrikaans-medium medical schools.

Some Back History

As far back as 1928, Professor L. W. Bews, the first Principal of the Natal University College, included the establishment of a medical school in Durban as part of the programme of university development in Natal. In 1938 a

Government Commission consisting of medical men under the chairmanship of Professor M. C. Botha and myself as secretary, recognised the claims which Durban had for a third medical school by virtue of its unrivalled clinical material. However, to meet the needs of the increasing number of Afrikaans-medium students at the time, it recommended that priority be given to Pretoria for the third medical school. Durban would, however, be considered as a suitable centre where a beginning could be made for training Non-White doctors.

In fact, as far back as 1922, a private school for training Bantu doctors had already been started by Dr J. B. McCord and Dr Alan B. Taylor in Durban. This training which was given in connection with the Non-White McCord Hospital, was not recognised by the medical authorities and had to be abandoned. Dr Taylor was destined in later years to play a large part in eventually obtaining a medical school for Durban and acted as Dean during the first difficult years until he was succeeded in 1952 by Professor G. W. Gale as full-time Dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Natal.

This was achieved after prolonged negotiations with the Government which began in 1945 and in which Dr H. Gluckman, Chairman of the National Health Services Commission, played a prominent part in supporting the establishment of a medical school in Durban. In this, Durban had the backing also of the Federal Council of the Medical Association. In 1947 the Union Government agreed.

The National Party Government which came into power in 1948 confirmed this decision on condition that Whites would not be registered. Negotiations with the Natal Provincial Administration enabled the Medical Faculty to make use of King Edward VIII Hospital for training purposes and also for a joint medical service. The first medical students qualified in 1957. Until recently, the course was seven years, the first years of which included the humanities and social sciences in addition to the natural sciences. This enrichment of the non-white medical practitioners' educational background proved beneficial to the medical profession.

Durban, with its many hospitals, is so rich in the variety of clinical material, that it could easily carry a second medical school; that is another English-medium medical school in the University of Natal. Clinically, Durban is far better off than either Bloemfontein or Stellenbosch for material on which to train students. In these two centres, the medical student has to scratch around to get enough practical experience to fulfil the requirement of handling twenty maternity cases before taking the final examination in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In the King Edward VIII Hospital in Durban alone, over twenty-two tons of babies are born a year. Bantu students had often handled as many as 200 deliveries each by the time they got to their final year. External examiners from Cape Town and Witwatersrand testified that these men were so well versed in all the possible complications that can occur when babies are born, that there was hardly a question, even regarding abnormal cases, that these Bantu students could not answer.

Durban could easily accommodate two medical schools. As a result of many years of operating in two centres, Pietermaritzburg and Durban, the University of Natal has had sufficient experience in administering two science faculties and two arts faculties, and should have no difficulty in administering two medical faculties, one for White students and one for Black students, as long as this idea of racial segregation is insisted upon by the Government. The expert experience of the University of Natal in starting and running

a medical school should be capitalised and not written off by the stroke of a pen.

I don't think that those bureaucratic pundits in Pretoria who want to kill the Natal Medical School and who seem to be able to get all the money they need for a new medical school, have the foggiest idea what it involves to start and build up such an institution from scratch. They seem to think that it is merely a matter of buildings which can be erected at Government expense in a Bantu Homeland. They do not seem to realise that an institution like the Natal Medical School is an organic growth, with its roots in the human environment. Besides developing the external facilities like buildings and laboratories, it involves the creation of human relationships, based on delicate negotiations with bodies like the Provincial Council, Local Municipality and the Medical Association, not to mention the efforts put in by dedicated individuals. These are services which money cannot buy.

It is unthinkable that all this must now be wiped out by a Ministerial fiat from Pretoria. Why? Why?

Once more it seems to be a case of officials pandering to an ethnic ideology of separation with which the Government is obsessed, but which is totally irrelevant to medical practice, and insensitive to the health and welfare of those human beings who need it most. Disease recognises no ethnic barriers between English and Afrikaans or between Black and White people living in the same country. Neither should medical training and practice do so.

P.S. Since this was written the new Minister of National Education, Dr Piet Koornhof, on January 30th postponed the ill-considered **verbot** against registering first year African students at the Natal Medical School for this year.

It would seem that this respite is due to financial considerations about embarking on the new R30 million venture in the Transvaal at a time when there is the general call about restricting capital expenditure in the public as well as in the private sector. What ever the case may be, it illustrates even more the precipitate way the Government can embark on a project when it forms part of the grand policy of ethnic separation. The University of Natal was not consulted despite its 25 years of experience in training black doctors. □

BATELEUR POETS

Bateleur Press, R3,75

Reviewed by Peter Strauss

This volume contains generous collections by four different poets at a bargain price. The contents are so varied that there is no alternative but to discuss each poet separately.

Robert Greig

It's possible, no, easy to miss his strength at a first reading or hearing. The voice is such a quiet one, and unassuming—yet gradually it insists, insinuates; it keeps you on its wave-length so as to insist on its say; it steadies itself to seriousness underneath its wit (in the confidence of the surprises it has yet to spring); then suddenly it dissolves at the end, declenches into a throw-away tone, so that at last it's the poem's point you are left with and not the voice or him. It's important to remember that such modesty implies a voice all the same—that there is authority under all that retiring stratagem—that Robert Greig, lucky man, has developed a poetic voice which is at the same time the blueprint for a poem's ground plan.

Robert Greig's world is undercut with mythical dangers: everything that the poem describes exists by miracle from moment to moment. All his wit and cleverness, all his satire and irony, go to suggest that the ground under your feet may be pulled away at any moment, that the most fundamental realities need not be, could vanish, contain pitfalls. Every familiar fact (like the art of walking) is called into question, accompanied with its own negation; it defines itself against its own absence. This gives the simplest things the aspect of the totally new and fresh. This highly strenuous viewpoint is Greig's poetic stance: to regard the world, in the smallest detail, as something to be put together from scratch, with nothing taken for granted.

This, I feel, is really what **Against Nature** is about. It starts with an extremely beautiful stanza. What is being put into question here is the secure identity of the self:

Do not stroll in gardens
or greenhouses or gaze too closely
at flowers. You will feel the mound
of earth in your stomach heave
out of the walls of your skin.
your fingers will curl like tendrils,
your hair turn green and seek the wind
if you stroll in gardens or greenhouses,
or lose yourself in a flower's scent.

The poem is disappointing, for it peters out with an old moral:

Change yourself to neutral steel
that flame and grass and water fear,
change yourself to shiny steel—
you'll never die or live.

Greig also deals with the obsessive South-African-poets'—problem, more specifically the White suburban bourgeois liberal problem that Lionel Abrahams attacks directly with a bad poem called **The Whiteman Blues**. We shall meet it again. It is that sense of unreality that is endemic to us, naturally disturbing to a poet: that sense of **numbing** through unreality, of waiting passive and narcotised for an inevitable but unpredictable blow to fall. Usually this subject bores me, but the problem is dealt with magnificently in the title poem **Talking Bull**, in which the speaker takes a friend for an air flip over the Cape Flats. I think the poem is so good because the man it deals with is shown as active and so human—and this precise sense of humanness makes us feel good. The image of pilotage suggests a degree of control that the pilot is actually engaged in, even though he must know that the control can never be complete. "I know the gulf of nothing, below" would suggest the old cliché of the White man's total alienation, were it not that this gulf of nothing is actually alive with the pockets and mushrooms of air rising from the township-pocked plain below:

Rather that bleak hide below
of a tied-down bull, bucking the plane
with hot exhalations, mounding how far
into distance I do not know.

The 'reality' of the earth still reaches the poet in spite of the ghostly sense given by the plane's shadow that is, in flight, separated from him. The explicit connection of this separation with apartheid is well managed—it is never more than a fancy—it grows organically out of the poem—and it comes as enough of a surprise to be striking in its logic. It's a fine and unpretentiously honest poem.

Mike Kirkwood

From this collection may be gleaned a fair idea of how this poet has developed and changed. Skip the first two poems and you come to the earliest layer: poems that move in memory of pentameters magnificent, drunk on the romance and heroics of the colonial situation, but clear-headed and clear-eyed and thoughtful too. Then come the poems about his father's last illness and death: **Old Salt** to **A City Doctor**—the first two poems of the collection, dealing with his West Indian childhood, belong to this period too, and **Root Gatherers** prefigures it technically. Finally we get the most recent period, mainly poems in the last three pages, varied, difficult to characterise at this stage—a period of experimentation.

If one of Robert Greig's virtues was the apparent self-effacement of his voice, we find the opposite phenomenon in Kirkwood, at any rate in the early poems of his collection.

His early verse is reminiscent of heroic pentameters from the time when people had the confidence to write them. Take the book away and your ears are still ringing—and there is no hollowness in the reverberation. “Sweet as honey, sound as a bell”, as the Indian vendor used to say when he was selling plums. Sure proof of an excellent ear.

As for the language, it brags its way on to the page and unfolds itself with a pleasing swagger. At least—I like this: it means the poet can move into the direct expression of powerful emotion—he hasn’t precluded that from the first, in the way of so many poets who limit themselves to irony from the start. Yet there can be no doubt that the poet is taking up a stance that is artificial, however much genuine force there may be to back it up. The reference to Campbell in **Old Big Mouth** is significant, while it also shows Kirkwood’s half-admiring criticism of the heroic stance of this poet, a figure he seems to have found some difficulty in escaping.

The Campbellomania of this period goes with a kind of Durban patriotism that is deeply characteristic of the man. Kirkwood captures, again and again, the atmosphere of Durban: its colonial residue, its richness in legend, the megalomania of its climate and foliage, its sensuousness, its absurdity. Through Durban an element of legend enters into his poetry: the legend of place and person. We begin to be aware of another influence in his poetry—Robert Lowell, heroic too like Campbell, but more self-conscious.

Kirkwood has come close to rejecting his earlier poetry on the grounds that he was, at the time, totally naïve about language. No doubt he refers to the heroic-romantic diction of these poems. But the judgement is fundamentally wrong. The language of the poems is not naïve. It is a language that, with one part of itself, mocks itself as containing some pleasant element of bullshit, like all admiring reminiscence. The admiration is real enough on such trips as **Boers** and **Henry Finn and the Blacksmith of the Grosvenor**, but on such occasions it is well to remember that one is moving in the world of legend, and Kirkwood is always aware of this. Thus if his poetry lacks the obvious attractions of Campbell’s total allegiance to his vaquero-cloaked ego, his poems will always be more interesting than Campbell’s.

There comes a toning-down in the poems on the death of his father. Actually it is not a toning-down, but a sublation of all he has learnt into a new poetic purpose that is given, unforced, and simply itself. Here the Lowellian element of family and geographical legend takes its rightful place in submission to the unpretentious and particular, the personal. One-time stuff!

Not really, but this is what the poet should tell himself, and look around for a new mode of day-to-day existence. This is what Kirkwood is doing in his later poems, not always successfully. But in a poem such as **Now Let’s Sock it to the Schools** a new voice seems to be emerging, a voice that can only be heard as the effect of the whole poem, not at any particular point in it. (Let’s ignore the title, which is a self-conscious disaster). The voice seems possible

only on recognition, after many diastrous particular forays, of an indestructible tradition of poetry, simple in its effect and social function, that the individual poet belongs to even against his will.

The voice has a quality related to Brecht, the subtle master of simple thinking, and so has the poem **Footnote to a Post-Lyrical Poem**. As Kirkwood says of his point in this poem:

(don’t mistake me: I give it you
in reason and not other-wise)

Which is a good attitude to remain with.

Lionel Abrahams

Perhaps I should deal first with the cause of the difficulties and resistances I experienced with this artist, before his vision and passion got through to me.

It is mainly a kind of fussiness. An unnecessary intricacy of movement. One cannot criticise this without registering one’s admiration for an ear and intellect that can manage such intricate complexities. The technique is completely vindicated in a poem like **Machines Taking Over**, which describes the mating dance of a bulldozer and a truck in what sounds like one single sentence, though it is actually several. There are many subjects, however, where the fussiness is tedious, a futile running round in circles. The writer’s puns are a case in point. Often they are witty and intelligent:

Visions and lusts are of one holy piece
and lust can be Godly lustre:

Though even here the pun is retarding, unlike Shakespeare’s puns that are a momentary collision, a sudden meeting of meanings, a flaring explosion within the swift movement of thought. But at times Abrahams’ punning is downright irritating:

In the beginning was the word,
the whorl, the whore, the hole.

This is doodling, the necessary point of departure for the poet feeling his way into words—but it should not find its way into the final draft. In general I find the long poem **Lament**, from which this is taken, an artistic mistake, however important it may be in other ways.

All this is a pity because of all the poets in this volume Abrahams seems the most visionary. If Durban is Mike Kirkwood’s territory, Lionel Abrahams possesses Johannesburg, even in his sense of not possessing it. Jo’burg is genuinely visionary for him. One poem (**Citizen Dice**) conceives the city as a gambler who rolls the people out into the streets like dice. **Birds About Johannesburg** is a poem I should like to consider more specially.

Some lithographs of birds by Georges Braque are brought to Johannesburg. The poet sees them and as a result the city looks new and different to him. The forms of birds are now interwoven with the city and the high veld. The process is astonishingly similar to that of Georges Braque’s studio interiors (oils, not lithographs) where the shape of a bird has strangely found its way in among the bric-a-brac of

an artist's studio and interacts with the forms of the objects there (including a bicycle). The effect is of some hidden reality, some hidden aspect of the familiar scene, now being revealed.

Recently I received a little insight into this visionary world that seems open to Abrahams in an unusual degree. I had been reading Marcuse on Hegel about the way human relations enter, through labour, into things; and as I came out of the lavatory I suddenly had a sense of the walls on either side of me as being men. Not one person per wall, of course, but the walls had the presence of human beings. Pursuing the sensation, I could feel the walls as the building-process of the house that I had witnessed: unplastered red brick with scaffolding and men before it seemed super-imposed on my white-washed passage walls. This experience was ultimately impossible to maintain because I couldn't square the vision with the space I was in. So I imagined the scene as a fresco on the wall, and with that the authenticity of my experience was gone. It could only remain while it was unstable and in a state of flux, one thing changing into another and then changing back again, transitions and half-transitions.

It seems to me likely that such insights reveal a part of our experience that is continuous though unconscious, and that forms a large part of our sense of the world's wealth. Abrahams seems to set himself the task of conveying this world that clings invisibly to things—I sometimes wish he would hand over the key to it directly, be boldly lyrical rather than mix in his lyricism with prose experience—for his gift tends towards a kind of lyrical abstraction, as in the second and third lines of the following quotation:

The city, insistent, knows its own newness.
Square into virgin depths of the birdspace
new shafts corridor daily upward,

Such power of abstraction is a creative gift, a gift of creation by destruction, by dismantling and stripping to the bone. But Abrahams tends to explain too much, and thus to dissipate the intensity. I keep thinking of those Braque paintings; where the bird is just *there* in the room, and no explanations given. I should like to have seen the poem as what it has almost become, a series of short poems each powerfully abstracted within its frame—like Braque's series on birds, to return to him. I'd like to see Abrahams' poetic language abstracted towards the essential in the manner of Mallarme and Paul Celan. Then another aspect of his poetry would spring to life: the movement from the traditional technique of simile and metaphor to the modern one of metamorphosis: the capturing of an image in the process of meaning-revealing change.

Georges Braque describes the process:

No object can be tied down to any one sort or reality; a stone may be part of a wall, a piece of sculpture, a lethal weapon, a pebble on a beach, or anything else you like, just as this file in my hand can be metamorphosed into a shoe-horn or a spoon, according to the way in which I use it. The first time this phenomenon struck me was in the trenches during the First World War when my batman turned a bucket into a brazier by poking a few holes in it with his bayonet and filling it with coke. For me this commonplace incident had a poetic significance: I began

to see things in a new way. Everything, I realised, is subject to metamorphosis; everything changes according to circumstances. So when you ask me whether a particular form in one of my paintings depicts a woman's head, a fish, a vase, a bird, or all four at once, I can't give you a categorical answer, for this 'metamorphic' confusion is fundamental to what I am out to express."

An instance from **Birds About Johannesburg** will clarify the process (the "it" in the first line is a building that has been demolished)—

Its doorway no longer invites the leap
of those sculpted buck at the opposite fountain.

What is a sculpture? Is it one thing? Does it move? At one moment we see the buck as natural, inviting images of the wild; then again they are a construction, participating in a human architecture. And what is more the buck now leap towards a doorway that has gone; in what sense does that doorway, because of the buck's leap, still exist? The lines, in a way typical of this poet, evoke the many-layered reality that springs into life when man, the symbol-maker, introduces his constructions into nature.

Walter Saunders

Like the pop artists, he mixes the banal and the mythical and turns one into the other. His technical-stylistic virtuosity is amazing, and he uses this skill not to develop a constant idiom of his own, but to spread out a collage of styles like a hand of cards or a peacock fan. He can get something going in almost no space at all—flash an image in a couple of words. The overall structure of the poem often seems very relaxed. But perhaps the relaxedness is part of the charm of the game. Saunders has a real humour of his own, predominantly visual, and his fantasy moves like a highly-coloured dream. I liked **Vrystaat!** and **Mephisto** in particular, and the poems would be good performed. They seem ready for the stage like surrealist opera.

Having said which, I can't say that I go for the 'serious' poems, notably **Terrorist** and **Anastasia**. Saunders has designs on the reader. He is going to get through and hurt him at whatever cost. It is the old 'modern' theory, surely a bore by now, yet still so beloved in particular of the flash stacycrowd, the theory that you have failed unless you perceptibly get past your audience's guard—in other words we are dealing with the aesthetics of shock. According to one theory of Freud's, the organism's guard against the shock of stimuli is consciousness. So to stab the reader really hard, the threshold of his consciousness must first be lowered. Saunders works by lulling the reader with his smooth and glossy pop-art surface, and then introduces images of pain and violence. The intensity, not to say blatancy, of the pain cannot be denied. It would not help to say it is sentimental, crude etc. The whole aim is that there should be no way of putting the pain in its place. So poetry is no longer something that struggles to bring things into proportion but is considered powerful to the extent that it throws things out of proportion, makes things unmanageable, and discards the measuringrod of man.

But this is not the whole of the story; there is good reason behind Walter Saunders's method. In modern life, dangers

tend to come in the form of shock—bombs and motorcars—one might even say that modern life is lived in an expectance of shock (which is not the same as being guarded against it); the end result is a state of apprehensive numbness. We all know the image of the operating theatre—the peaceful, drugged whiteness in which there lurks a knife. It is another of those images that have become a bore. Saunders doesn't use it. But the image gives the general set-up. The emotion that it expresses is panic—and panic must be about the most useless emotion there is.

Bunuel showed, in *The Discrete Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, that a technique analogous to Saunders's could be used to define the consciousness of the bourgeois class: leading hot-house lives, but with the sense of terrible lives being

lived elsewhere, and lived for them, on their behalf, so that at any moment the terror might break into their own lives—hence numbness and apprehension. And all four poets show an awareness of this flabbily-lived tension in South African suburbia. Walter Saunders gives it some sharpness. He is an accurate instrument all right—I just don't see that his method does anyone any good. In fact, I don't think these 'serious' poems are serious at all—they, too, are games: the slightly hysterical games of an effete class.

Whereas when Saunders plays games for fun, he plays them for real: and I wouldn't say either that they are lacking in profundity, but never mind that . . .

CARNIVAL!

THE GRAMMAR OF INTIMIDATION

A glance at Church-State Relationships

by EDGAR BROOKES

South Africa, which somewhat ostentatiously claims to be a Christian country, and which certainly welcomes white immigration, places very effective restrictions on the immigration of white ministers of religion. The practice is to give such ministers a temporary residence permit, which requires to be renewed after a relatively short period. The simple refusal to do this has the effect of deportation. The minister has to go. There is no one to whom he may appeal. No more effective method could have been devised for intimidating young clergy, and even for encouraging their Church authorities to warn them to be quiet and inoffensive, for fear of losing them.

No one can say how many able men have been restrained from expressing their views by this ingenious method, but it is possible to gather certain statistics about the non-renewal of permits. Over the years 1965–1972 conservative figures, excluding formal deportations, show that thirty-two ministers of religion failed to secure renewal of their temporary residence permits. Of these twelve were Anglicans, seven Roman Catholics, six Lutherans, four Methodists and three Congregationalists. Needless to say the Dutch Reformed Churches, which do not import their ministers from overseas, are not hit by this particular device. The country of origin of these ministers is usually Britain, but quite a few come from Germany and from the United States of America.

The Anglican Church has suffered particularly severely. Five Bishops (Reeves of Johannesburg, Crowther of Kimberley and Kuruman, Mize, Winter and Wood of Damaraland) have either been deported or had their entrance permits withdrawn. If Bill Burnett had been born



Daryl Nero

at Stow-in-the Wold instead of (happily) at Koffiefontein, he would have been in similar danger.

Talking of Mize, Winter and Wood, the case of the diocese of Damaraland, which is equivalent to South-West Africa or Namibia, calls for special attention, for there it is possible to place restrictions **within** the area. Most of the Anglicans of this Territory are in Ovamboland, but the Administration has successfully kept most of the Anglican clergy out of that area. Not only the Bishop but the Dean (who is a qualified medical doctor) and would-be teachers and office staff have been effectively debarred from entry. This is all the more remarkable in view of Article 5 of the Mandate for South-West Africa which reads:

Subject to the provisions of any local law for the maintenance of public order and public morals, the Mandatory shall ensure in the territory freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship, and shall allow all missionaries, nationals of any State member of the League of Nations, to enter, travel and reside in the territory, for the purpose of prosecuting their calling.

Since the Mandate is the only possible argument in International Law for validating South Africa's control of South-West Africa, it is remarkable that it should have been so flagrantly violated. It is not even pretended that the ministers of the Anglican Church in South-West Africa have been engaged in subversive activities. The case of Bishop Mize (who incidentally is an American) was a nine days' wonder to his colleagues. If South-West Africa were ever to become Namibia, it would spell freedom not only to the inhabitants but to the Christian Churches.

Within the Republic, Bishop Sundkler of the Church of Sweden, a former missionary in our country and a recognised authority on the Bantu Separatist Churches, was refused permission to enter the KwaZulu homeland, in which Swedish missionaries have been working for nearly a century. It comes as no surprise after this that Martin Luther King was in 1966 refused permission to enter South Africa.

The effect of all this is to silence missionaries and ministers, to enable the Government to maintain a vendetta (as in the case of South-West Africa) against Churches which it dislikes and, with no effort, to discriminate in favour of the Dutch Reformed as against all other missionaries and ministers.

But let a minister of the N.G. Kerk kick over the traces and he will also suffer serious disabilities. Take the case of Rev. Beyers Naudé and his colleagues in the Christian Institute. There is a record of withdrawal of passports (some of which have admittedly been returned), bannings and other restrictions, which means that the Christian Institute has all the time to swim against the current, and to pursue its difficult work in the face of Government-imposed difficulties.

The recent action of the Government in applying the Affected Organisations Act to the Christian Institute and thereby depriving it of all its overseas funds is the culmination of a series of provocative actions. It is the result of the report of a non-judicial commission which has heard only evidence against the Christian Institute and has decided rather as a political than a judicial body. The decision of the Government is intended to cripple the activities of the Christian Institute and will probably do so, although the loyalty and self-denial of its South African membership will prevent the crippling from being as effective as the Government hopes. It is another and a most glaring instance of Governmental action against the Christian Churches.

There is the matter of searching homes. The writer knows of two Anglican Bishops whose homes have been searched and of a Bishop's Chaplain whose home was raided at about 3 o'clock in the morning while his wife was caring for a fortnight-old baby.

It is time that a full enquiry was made into this interference with the Churches, and with the general administration of Passports which has become quite political. It cannot be mere coincidence that African, Coloured and Indian applicants for passports to enable them to attend religious conferences have often received permission (if indeed they receive it at all) on the very day before they were due to sail or fly and no earlier. This vexatious practice must be approved by someone in the Department of the Interior; but by whom? The completely bureaucratic system of issuing passports makes it necessary to ask such a question.

For practising Christians these matters are naturally very important. But even to agnostics who never enter a church they are serious, for they represent an attack on civil liberty and on freedom of speech at a particularly vulnerable point. The Churches, with all their faults, have been led by valiant fighters against apartheid, and have had a steady influence on public opinion in this field. Must they be persecuted by anonymous officials without South Africans raising a voice of protest?□

THE WORLD OF NAT NAKASA



Selected writings of the late Nat Nakasa Ravan Press/Bateleur Press

Nat Nakasa was born in Durban. He worked as a journalist in Johannesburg writing for Drum and Golden City Post. He eventually became the first black journalist on the Rand Daily Mail. In 1964 he left South Africa on an exit permit, after being refused a passport, to take up a Niemann Scholarship to study journalism at Harvard University in the U.S.A. On the 14th July 1965 he committed suicide at the age of twenty-eight in New York City.

This book, containing 39 of Nat Nakasa's writings, is edited by Essop Patel with an introduction by Nadine Gordimer, who says of him "... he was a new kind of man in South Africa—he accepted without question and with easy dignity and natural pride his Africanness, and he took equally for granted that his identity as a man among men, a human among fellow humans, could not be legislated out of existence even by all the apartheid laws in the statute book."

We have decided to show our appreciation of this book by publishing an extract from it.

From cover of the book.

A NATIVE OF NOWHERE

Some time next week, with my exit permit in my bag, I shall cross the borders of the Republic and immediately part company with my South African citizenship. I shall be doing what some of my friends have called, 'taking a grave step.'

For my part, there is nothing grave about it. You needn't even be brave to take the 'step'. It is enough to be young, reckless and ready to squander and gamble your youth away. You may, I dare say, even find the whole business exciting.

According to reliable sources, I shall be classed as a prohibited immigrant if I ever try to return to South Africa. What this means is that self-confessed Europeans are in a position to declare me, an African, a prohibited immigrant, bang on African soil. Nothing intrigues me more.

And the story does not end there. Once out I shall apparently become a stateless person, a wanderer, unless I can find a country to take me in. And that is what I have been trying to achieve in the past few days. I cannot enter America on an exit permit even though I have a scholarship to take up in that country. The Americans will let me in only on a valid passport from a country that is prepared to have me when I leave America.

Apparently, there can be no question of getting the Americans to depart from this, their official policy, unless, perhaps, I moved into the US as a Cuban refugee. For I have read about many Cuban citizens who left their country for the US in that way. But I have ruled this out as something too involved to try. Meanwhile, I have thought of becoming a Zambian, a Nigerian, or a Malawian. But these countries have no embassies in South Africa, so getting their travel documents would take ages.

My best bet may well be to embrace the Jewish faith and procure Israeli citizenship. But again that has its own complications. As an Israeli I may automatically be prohibited entry into Egypt. I may be barred from going to report on any Pan-African conferences that may be held in Cairo in the future.

On the other hand, should I become an Egyptian, I may be expected to declare war on all my Jewish friends—and, Heaven knows, there are many of them. Besides, I don't think I have ever seen an Egyptian, and I have no idea of Egyptian life.

There is some hope, however, that my problems may be solved by the good old Scandinavian countries. I may become the first Scandinavian Pondo in history.

A Black viking! Imagine it!

Finally, if all this doesn't work out, I may be compelled to become a Russian. In this way I might even crash into the limelight as an international statesman. After all, the Russians are known to be very keen on backing an African as the next President of the United Nations. Instead of scouring Africa for a candidate, the Russians might start backing their own African—me.

Having achieved that status, there would be nothing to stop me from rising to the highest office in Russia itself. Who knows? I may wind up as the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. After all, Dr Verwoerd was born in Holland and he became the Prime Minister of **die Republiek van Suid-Afrika**.

If I should feel homesick while ruling Russia, I could pass a few laws to South-Africanise Russia a little. The first step would be to introduce influx control in Moscow. Get all the native Russians to carry passes and start endorsing them in and out of town. There are enough African and Indian students studying in Russia nowadays to help me carry out

my plan. Apartheid all over again! This time with the Russians at the receiving end. Admittedly, this may be described as Afro-Asian minority rule. Others will call it **baaskap**. But we would call it parallel development, or black leadership with justice.

We could introduce the exit-permit system to cut down on the numbers of Russians in the place. At the same time we could bring in millions of Indians and Africans from Bombay, Calcutta, Umtata and Zululand on an immigration scheme—just as South Africa brings in white immigrants by the thousand every month.

We would have to scrap Communism from the start. In fact, I would import South Africa's Suppression of Communism Act lock, stock and barrel. Communism would be an enemy number one. Anybody who opposed my apartheid policies too much would wind up banned or detained.

Unfortunately, all these are mere dreams. For the time being, my future lies in a number of diplomatic bags. Various consuls are trying to see what can be done for me. I hope, when I write next week, it will be as a former South African. As far as I can, I shall try not to interfere with your domestic affairs, let alone meddle with your white or non-white politics. □

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