



Maimie Corrigan

Maimie was a rock, a seemingly indestructible source of strength to everyone who ever worked with her in the Liberal Party and in the wider Pietermaritzburg community.

Through all the years of her active work which continued until her death she held steadfast to those values of freedom and justice, public and private integrity, and the infinite

petition between Xhosa, Gonaqua and trek boer pastoralists for the regions around Port Elizabeth, becoming institutionalised when the British became involved in a numbered worth of all human beings, which values have been so assaulted and diminished in our country. It is because of people like Maimie and those others with whom she worked so closely that such ideas have survived at all. It has taken great courage to continue to state such convictions in the fact of Government action, public unconcern and the ridicule of those who no longer understand that just and peaceful societies can only be built on such foundations.

She was one of the founders of the Black Sash in Natal. She took part in its first and most striking national enterprise: the convoy of cars converging on Cape Town to demonstrate against the Senate Act — and returned to take the lead in the Natal Midlands. Besides working in Pietermaritzburg, during those early days of widespread and heady enthusiasm she travelled all over the area, starting or visiting branches in such unlikely or remote places as Matatiele, Kokstad, New Hanover and Cramond. But these and other country branches could not survive the Black Sash's growing recognition that political logic and political idealism in South Africa demanded more than a general adherence and loyalty to the terms and spirit of the 1910 constitution. Maimie was a vigorous advocate in the Black Sash of the pursuit of the most uncompromising principles; and when this resulted in the gradual collapse of most of her work in the country branches, she was disappointed but not deterred.

Maimie was a legend in the Black Sash, a leader whose wisdom and wit and acerbic style had much to do with the overall growth and development of the organisation from the beginning and whose strength and steady determination had everything to do with keeping us alive during the long, dead political years of the nineteen sixties.

She was beloved. Her monument will be the truth she held and handed on, and we will keep faith with her.

Sheena Duncan.

BOOK REVIEWS

1. **A roar on the other side of silence - two chronicles of the penultimate Xhose war.**

by M. G. Whisson

T. R. H. Davenport : **Black Grahamstown - the agony of a community**

S.A. Institute of Race Relations. pp. 65 including maps, photographs. R2,00.

M. Nash with N. Charton: **An Empty Table? Churches and the Ciskei future . . .**

S.A. Council of Churches. pp. 81 including maps, photographs. R2,50.

The history of the Eastern Cape might be seen as a series of attempts by white forces to roll back the Xhosa to the Eastern banks of the Great Fish River, and to return them there whenever a substantial breach was made. It began in the latter part of the 18th century with intermittent com-

series of "Wars" between 1811 and 1879. With the triumph of British arms, the military solution to the "problem" of Xhosa expansion became passé, and administrative solutions were sought instead. Sir Harry Smith, the colourful, courageous madman on the horse gave way to the faceless bureaucrat and the man in a safari suit and Administration Board bakkie. Sudden, glorious death in battle gave way to miserable, meaningless death in the resettlement camps.

But history is never quite as simple as that, and the dams built to contain the Xhosa flood were never dykes. From the early years of contact there was trade between white and black, and an ever growing and ever more regulated flow of blacks was welcomed into the regions west of the Great Fish. Among the earliest were Fingo refugees who had passed through the Xhosa dominated territory in flight from the expansionist Zulu. They allied themselves with the British and after 1835 established permanent settlements in Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage,

as well as in Kaffraria itself. Following the cattle killing in 1857, the dam nearly burst as thousands of starving people sought food and work in the white controlled areas. With the development of commerce and secondary industry in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, the flow increased once more, and the state endeavoured to control it with increasingly draconian legislation.

Davenport takes up the tale in Grahamstown in 1921 and briefly recounts the history of the black sector of the town prior to the advent of the Group Areas Act. To judge from the documentary evidence, there never was a golden age, only a time when inequity was not quite as obvious and painful as it later became.

What did exist was a paternalistic form of social contract, a sense of trust and the optimistic value associated with the "school" people who believed that they could earn equality by achieving white cultural goals.

From 1957, when the Group Areas Board appeared in the town for the first time, until 1980, the blacks of Grahamstown were a threatened community. Today the initial proposals look to be little more than a bureaucrat's urge to tidy what was virtually the *status quo*. At the time they were seen as an unwarranted intrusion and greeted with opposition from all quarters. In 1964 new Board proposals would have turned Fingo Village, where blacks had held freehold for over a century, into an Indian or white area, with most blacks moved either out of Grahamstown completely, or out of sight over the eastern hills. The eventual proclamation in 1970 made Fingo Village a "coloured" area, with "Bantu" areas on either side.

Pressure was put on black owners to sell to the Board, but the proclamation could not be fully implemented until an alternative place was found for the blacks. In terms of government policy that place should have been in or near the Ciskei, so that it could be incorporated in due course. While the government tried to solve that problem, the black areas were left to stagnate. No permanent homes or schools were built, but the population grew rapidly, boosted by refugees evicted from farms in the district as well as by natural growth. By the end of the decade, which saw the "Committees Drift" proposal for a vast new city dwindle into the pathetic Glenmore resettlement camp, the trust and hope that Grahamstown's blacks had had in their fellow citizens had largely gone and the young people in particular were angry. Conventional protests and appeals continued, but against a darkening sky filled with the smoke of burning schools. When the policy was changed in 1980, and pragmatism modified the "racist idiocy" (p.58) a little, what was lost may have gone beyond recall. Fire and violence seemed to have jogged the minister's elbow, where moderate appeals had continually failed — but such is speculation and Davenport does not press that gloomy argument, for he is, above all, a man of good sense and moderation, and in part this moving booklet is his testimony. Where there have been tensions, debates, arguments, Davenport has been present, quietly, courageously pressing for peace and justice. What hopes for peace remain in Grahamstown today are a tribute to his persistence in truth — to a decorous but always audible roar.

Nash and Charton have compiled a more vigorous *aide memoire* to those who are beguiled by the prospect of enlightened national party leadership in the years ahead. Where Davenport reports a glimmer of hope in the mess that has been made of Grahamstown, Nash and Charton see nought for anyone's comfort in the successful efforts of the state to hurl some of the Xhosa back across the

Great Fish. The S.A. Council of Churches, galvanised by its General Secretary, is attempting to inform all who will listen, of the extent of South Africa's Gulag. Solzhenitsyn wrote of

"that amazing country of Gulag which, though scattered in an Archipelago geographically, was in the psychological sense, fused into a continent — an almost invisible, almost imperceptible country inhabited by the zek people.

And this Archipelago crisscrossed and patterned that other country within which it was located, like a gigantic patchwork, cutting into its cities, hovering above its streets. Yet there were many who did not even guess at its presence and many, many others who had heard something vague. And only those who had been there knew the whole truth".

(The Gulag Archipelago).

Cosmos Desmond revealed a little of the scale of the removals and the situation in the "resettlement" areas in 1969. So did David Russell. They cannot be quoted, but the "resettlement" goes on, and the Ciskei is one of the major receptacles of the people driven out of the "white" areas of the Cape.

Nash and Charton's booklet begins by arguing the case for Christian involvement in the plight of those who have been moved to the Ciskeian and other resettlement areas, and suggests ways of becoming involved. That such should be considered necessary, and that self-styled Christians should feel the issue to be in any way contentious is itself an appalling reflection on the moral state of a professedly Christian society.

Nash sharpens the focus with a regrettably unedited address on the "Ciskei Ghetto". The literary presentation may remove the enamel from the readers' teeth, but there is no escape from the hard facts. Despite losing Hershel and Glen Grey districts to the Transkei, the Ciskei *de facto* population has risen from 265,000 in 1950 to 660,000 in 1980 (p. 18), and the dormitory town of Mdantsane grown from virtually nothing to about 250,000 in the last twenty years.

Charton's estimates of the *de jure* and potential population of the Ciskei make even more shattering reading. In addition to the 660,000 currently resident in the territory there are over 1,4 million potential Ciskeians living in South Africa. Of these no fewer than 432,000 are liable to be resettled in the Ciskei in the foreseeable future as they are "illegals", living in "black spots" or are "surplus" residents on white owned farms.

These are not fanciful estimates, but figures provided by the Quail Commission on the future of the Ciskei. The Eastern Cape Administration Board's estimate of potential removees is closer to half a million.

The accommodation provided for the resettled people ranges from tents to three roomed sheds made of flimsy wood with asbestos roofs. Employment in the area of the camps is almost impossible to find — so people subsist on pensions and the erratic flow of remittances from those who can get work as migrants. Schools, even in the relatively favoured Glenmore, operate on the platoon system and do not take children beyond the primary stage. In most areas the land on which the camps are sited is unsuitable for the intensive cultivation which would be necessary if the people were to begin to feed themselves, and agricultural water unobtainable.

Mdantsane, Zwelitsha, Dimbaza and Sada have developed as towns to accommodate the population explosion. Mdantsane acts as a dormitory for East London but has little economic activity within its borders apart from essential services and retail trade. Zwelitsha has benefited both from its proximity to King William's Town and from being the administrative centre of the Ciskei, but has little more to offer its growing population, Dimbaza, the industrial showpiece, with 28 of the 31 factories in the Ciskei, developed in part in response to the publicity it got as a dumping ground, remains unable to employ many of its work seeking residents. Sada is little more than the pathetic centre of the largely destitute "village of tears" nearby.

Most who become Zeks and enter the Gulag archipelago may well die in captivity, but they do have determinate sentences and can hope to return to a normal life eventually. The "resettled" people have no such hope to sustain them, and many have no confidence that they will be able to stay where they are.

But what, in the long term, is to be done? "An Empty Table?" is a challenge to the Christian and indeed any humane conscience to become more involved; develop and extend caring ministries; strengthen the whole body; and make representations to those in authority. However the reader is left to work out his own alternatives to the iniquitous process of resettlement as there are few concrete proposals about what the authorities should be doing, as opposed to what they should not do. Is it too much to hope that the voice of protest can become the voice of prophesy and authority in spelling out the detailed implications of advocating the claims of the rural poor to a full share in the privileges and duties of all inhabitants of South Africa?

Davenport, Nash and Charton have made it more difficult for us to pretend that we do not know the enormous human cost of the homelands and resettlement policies. Theirs is a roar on the other side of silence — the silence of fear and of the conspiracy of ignorance.

RACE AND ETHNICITY – SOUTH AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES.

reviewed by Jack Unterhalter.

Edited by Hendrik W. van der Merwe and Robert A. Schrire.

Published by David Philip.

Professor Johannes Degenaar has written an important article for this valuable collection of papers many of which were given at the 1979 UCT Summer School — a lecture

series entitled "Group Identity and National Interests". The title is "Normative Dimensions of Discrimination, Differentiation and Affirmative Action." In examining the problem of the justifiability of the use of the term "Group Rights", he makes reference to the paradigms of liberalism and pluralism and says this:-

"In reading the human rights documents and the interpretation of those documents one is struck by the fact that two main frames of reference are used; a liberalist or individualist paradigm and a pluralist paradigm. These two paradigms rest on a commitment to two basic values which are irreducible to one another; the value ascribed to man as an individual or the value ascribed to a group as an association to which man belongs. In liberalism priority is given to the rights of individuals while in pluralism a concern for the rights of individuals is complemented by a concern for the reality and rights of groups or ethnic communities and for the way in which groups can protect the rights of individuals".

This summarizes the trend in the papers. Dr. Robert Schrire writes of the nature of ethnic identities and gives a detailed definition of an ethnic group some of the elements of which are a self-conscious social grouping, the key criterion for membership being an assumed common descent real or mythical. He adopts Knutson's statement that ethnic distinctions become important when they form part of the individual's or group's strategies for preserving or increasing control of resources, social status or other values in a State. It is important to note the stress on ethnicity because it takes the discussion beyond the groups referred to by Harold Laski in his Grammar of Politics and mentioned by Professor Degenaar as having moral quality.

This is how Laski puts it:-

"The variety of group life is almost bewildering in its profusion. Political parties, churches, trade unions, employers' associations, friendly societies, golf clubs, research bodies like the Institute of France, dramatic societies, are only instances of their place in social organisation. They do not of course exhaust the allegiance of the individual. He is a centre from which — there radiate outward lines of contact with the groups to which his experience calls him. They determine, quite largely, his choice of friends, of opportunities, of career".

It is clear that Laski is concerned with voluntary associations. But ethnic groups are not voluntary associations. Men and women are born into them, and in South Africa legislation provides that membership of such groups has legal and often burdensome consequences that the individual cannot escape. Too often in South Africa membership of a group has meant the denial of human rights rather than the realisation of human values.

This being so one reads Professor Nathan Glazer's article "Individual Rights Against Group Rights" rather grimly. It is a scholarly excursus which poses among other problems, the question as to why do we in effect assert that justice in the face of discrimination is justice for the individual, rather than a new and equal status for the Group. The individual rights approach is seen in the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Australia, whereas the approach in terms of rights for groups is seen in Canada, Belgium, Lebanon, Malaysia and India. The writer says that "one may also add South Africa as a State committed to group rights — though the use of the term will certainly sound ironic here".