

for whom life has no purpose—a situation particularly alien to African culture that would normally characterise itself by the roles and function that are defined by members of the community. Such a place is paradise for missionaries, anthropologists and social workers and these people with the backing of Western-sponsored organisations have started to make an impression on the locale. There are now numerous selfhelp projects often in the form of workshops entirely staffed by inhabitants of the valley who have been trained in jewellery making and leathercraft. Their produce is sold through retail outlets in Nairobi mainly to tourists. However, statistics show these efforts to be a drop in the ocean and a critical conscience questions their value because once again here is a Western solution to an African problem even though the problem may have been the result of Western interference in the first place.

Other aspects of Social Policy which appear as anathema to the liberal West is the use of capital punishment for murder and armed robbery. Any Western tourist who has witnessed mob justice in the streets of Nairobi would pro-

bably have been horrified. The cry of "Thief" can send a whole street after a thief. If he is caught it is likely he will be kicked to death. Also the rights of workers are very restricted in relation to Western Europe and the U.S.A. since here it is illegal to strike. Is this the African solution to a problem, even if the problem arises because of the extreme contrasts and unequal distribution of wealth?

In Tanzania they are solving African problems with African solutions or so we gather. The UJAMAA projects (ujamaa = togetherness or brotherhood) have been designed to utilise the indigenous attitude of the people, which is to coexist in small communities in which there are clearly defined and strictly adhered to roles for the community members. Has colonialism and the modern day equivalent in Kenya warped this natural urge which anthropology tells us is there—the natural urge of utilising the discipline to adhere strictly to a clearly defined role. The result seems that Kenya's black successors remain subservient to a colonial structure, and the status quo remains.

# TO STUDENTS, IN 1976

An address given to students of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg on March 18, 1976

by Alan Paton

It was in 1924, 52 years ago that I left this University, which then was called the Natal University College, with one campus here in Pietermaritzburg. I had a B.Sc and a Higher Diploma in Education, and I was going to earn £360,00 per annum, that is R720 per annum. If I became fluently bilingual I could earn £400,00. So I became—in the opinion of the Natal Education Department—fluently bilingual, partly for mercenary reasons, partly because I liked Afrikaans.

I have never been anti-Afrikaans or anti-Afrikaner, but I'll admit to you that I have been and am strongly anti-Afrikaner Nationalism, as it is expressed in the policy and legislation of the National Party and Government. I'm not suggesting that everything was all right up to 1948, **but from 1948 the Nationalists have been digging for themselves—and for us too—a grave, as big and as deep as any in human history, and whether they—or we—will ever get out of it alive, I don't know.** But it is because I am kind of interested in getting out of it alive, and because I am interested that you should get out of it alive, I am here tonight. In spite of my reference to the Nationalists I am not here to attack or boost any party. But I am here to talk politics, not the politics of party but the politics of survival, and not just survival but survival for some purpose. To sum it up I am here to talk to you about the politics of the just society. And I'll assume that's what you want to hear, because I am sure that all of you could be doing something else this evening, something that could be a hundred times jollier than anything will be here tonight.

When I went into the world with the B.Sc. and the Higher Diploma in 1924, we had fairly recently successfully concluded the war that was the end all war. In 1939 we went to war again, in the war that was to end racism and totalitarianism. The war was also successfully concluded, but it did not end racism and totalitarianism. It did something else though. It brought the colonial age to an end. Many of you were not then born. But the ending of the colonial age was going to make your lives quite different from mine. When I left the Natal University College, I looked forward with confidences to a life that would be spent in the relatively peaceful pursuit of my career, appointment, marriage, children, promotion, pension, retirement. Who can be sure any more? The future into which I marched so confidently appeared safe and sure to me, much safer and surer than it really was. But yours doesn't even appear safe and sure; to use a mild word, it appears problematical, and I am going to speak to you about it, but before I do that I want to speak to you about NUSAS. **I am a honorary vice president of NUSAS and I can't come here and say nothing about it, especially when I know that you are shortly going to decide whether this campus will support NUSAS or not.**

Some months ago, after the Breyten Breytenbach trial I seriously thought of getting out of NUSAS and I said so publicly. This was a serious step to take and I didn't take it lightly. I had known NUSAS and its founder Leo Marquard for fifty years. But I felt strongly that the leadership was alienating the membership, and I for one was no longer prepared to accept any responsibility for a leadership of

whose plans and thoughts I knew nothing, and some of whose actions I thought irresponsible in the extreme.

Some people including two persons very close to me—were disturbed that I appeared to be supporting the views of the Schlebusch Commission, but there are times when you must speak the truth even if the most benighted Commission in the world has caught the glimmerings of it.

Every human organisation formed for some particular purpose forms a spectrum of opinion. If the concern of the organisation is the human society in which its members live, it is usual to speak of a left and a centre and a right, but each of these has its own spectrum also. Two exceptions would be the extreme left and the extreme right, where no spectrum is permitted, where dogma rules, where deviation is punished, sometimes by death. The left usually stands for the reconstruction of society, the right usually stands for the status quo, and if it moves further right it moves towards more control and more authority. And if the left moves further to the left, it moves towards exactly the same things. There are two political positions that I hate with all my heart and soul and mind, and they are totalitarian nazism and totalitarian communism.

**When I hear our present government likened to the Nazis, I don't accept it. If they were Nazis I wouldn't be here tonight, and some of you wouldn't be either. When I hear them likened to the Russians, I don't mind it at all, because it makes them angry. And of course one of the reasons they get angry is that they know that many of their practices are like Russian practices particularly their way of dealing with those who disagree with them politically.**

I spoke to the Royal Commonwealth Society last year in London about the way in which the Suppression of Com-

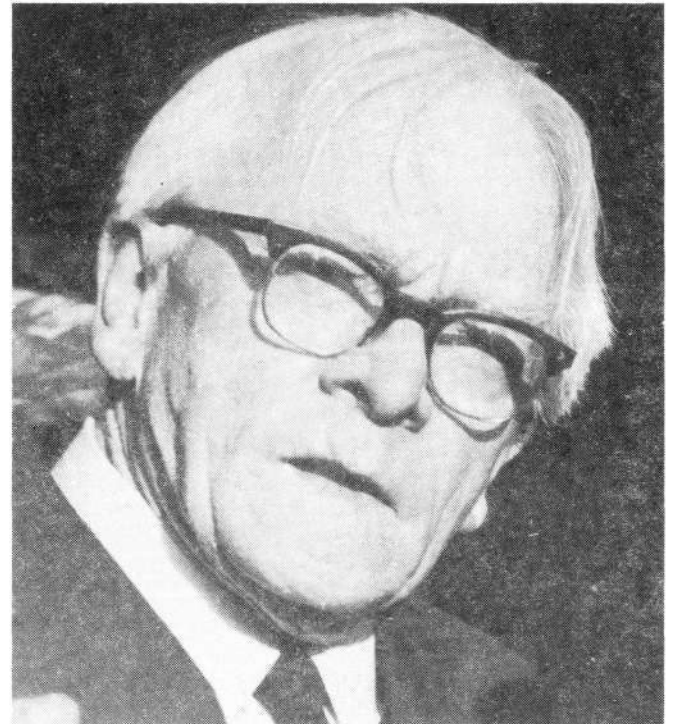
munist Act was used against people who had done nothing more than oppose the Government politically. In Durban the Prime Minister categorically denied that the Act was ever used in that way. What the Prime Minister said is simply not in accordance with the facts. My friend Mr X was banned for many years, but he was then as he is now, incapable of using or advocating violence which surely is the essence of any attempt to overthrow the State. One of our own lecturers, Mr. Y, was banned for furthering the aims of communism, but the Minister graciously permitted him to speak to his wife who had also been banned for furthering the aims of communism. Thanks to the efforts of the University, Mr Y's ban was lifted; he had presumably ceased to further the aims of communism, but he was allowed to go on living in the same house as Mrs. Y who was presumably still imbued with the aims of communism. Equally ridiculous was the case of Dr. Manas Buthelezi. He was banned for furthering the aims of communism, and a few months later his ban was lifted, presumably because he had ceased to further these aims. He had apparently seen the error of his ways. If one were to ask why Mr. X and Mr. Y and Mrs. Y and Dr. Buthelezi were banned, the Prime Minister would reply *either* that it is not the practice to give reasons *or* that it is not in the public interest to give reasons.

**And that one can believe. It is not in the public interest because there aren't any credible reasons to give.**

Let me return to the discussion of NUSAS and the spectrum of left, centre and right. The centre as a rule is not opposed to change, but if you are left of centre you will be more ready to change than if you are right of centre. If you are on the right you will be very wary of change, you will be inclined to put order above freedom, you will be inclined to put stability above reform, you will be inclined



Alan Paton as a student



Alan Paton now

to put legislation above justice. You will probably be favourably disposed to Permanent Security Commissions and you will consider that the concept of the rule of law is very fine but it should not be carried to extremes.

The stand of Dr. Denis Worrall on the rule of law is an example of the philosophy of the right, and it is made still more fascinating by Dr. Worrall's realisation that there are certain fundamental principles which even a Nationalist must honour. Dr. Worrall says unequivocally that the rule of law should be, and indeed is, a fundamental principle in our governmental and judicial procedure. But he asks, who should interpret such principles, utopian idealists or realists? **The answer is, in respect of the rule of law, neither. They should be interpreted by our courts. The rule of the law does not belong to any government or any party. It belongs to us, and was meant to belong to us. It is our defence against government and parties.** Dr. Worrall believes that the rule of law is one of our fundamental principles. I presume that he considers detention without charge or trial an example of the rule of law, presumably because there is a law which permits the police to use it. That is not what one means by the rule of law. I have said that the rule of law does not belong to any government or party. It does not belong to the police either. It belongs to you and me. It is our protection against tyranny, even the tyranny of utopian idealists or realists. I should point out a weakness in Dr. Worrall's methods of using language. He argues by use of labels. Who are the utopian idealists? Are they the Progressives or the new left? And who are the realists? I presume they are the Nationalists. For 28 years they have erected the edifice of racial separation the like of which the world has never seen before. Now, whether they like it or not, they have to begin pulling it down. And so far they have shown no sign that they know how to do it. Is that realism? And is it realism for Dr. Worrall to join such a party when its whole existence is to be challenged? I said to you earlier that your future is problematical. But it is not any more problematical than Dr. Worrall's.

**I would imagine that the task of NUSAS is to hold left and centre together and such portions of the right as are prepared to tolerate differences. That is the history of NUSAS and I don't see how it can be any different. And I should like to say, even at the risk of offending some of you, that the far left will have to be less intransigent and less contemptuous of the centre than it has been in the more or less immediate past. It is my view—and this is my last critical observation—that the leadership made its grave error when it tried to move the whole of NUSAS over to the left. You can't radicalise a national body of this kind which is first and foremost an association of students. You won't radicalise it, you will only dichotomise it and you could destroy it. I hope this has not been done.**

**I hope that NUSAS will continue to be the national body representative of students. I hope those who are to right of centre will not move further right. My advice to the extreme left and the extreme right is to form their own organisations. I urge all of you who do not belong to extreme left or right to preserve the Union, which should be the voice of all students who earnestly desire some kind of future for all the people of our country.**

What is the role of the student in our society. What are you doing here at this University? I shall try to answer these questions.

**First:** you come here to proceed further with your academic education. That means, work reasonably hard, and get your degree.

**Second:** you come here to join a new and exciting society and you must enjoy it. But don't let your enjoyment of it prevent you from getting your degree.

**Third:** you come here to learn something about the wider world especially the society in which you live, the strange country in which most of you were born, with its multiplicity of peoples, its deep racial fears, its manifest injustices its problems that at times appear to be insoluble.

**It would be my hope that some of you, and I would hope a large number of you, will choose to be the servants of this society.** This can be a religious decision or it can be solely a humanistic and ethical decision though there is no reason why a religious decision should not be humanistic and ethical. I should perhaps explain to my younger listeners that the word humanistic means to do with humanity and it can be used in two ways—one which does not exclude a religious element, and one which does. If one decides to be a servant of society for religious motives, it is because one believes that the Holy Spirit rules and sustains the world, and that one can choose to be the servant of the Spirit. If one decides to be a servant of society for solely ethical motives, it is because one is obeying some impulse within oneself. For the religious person the impulse within oneself is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. For the non-religious person the impulse is one's own, and it is believed to be good. I ask you to note that these are both matters of faith. If I believe that the impulse in me is of the Holy Spirit, that is faith. If I believe that it is wholly of myself, and it is good, that is also faith. I am myself a believer in the power of the Holy Spirit, that he rules and sustains the world and that if I so choose. He can make me His instrument. In this I am a poor follower of Francis of Assisi. But that is not my subject now.

**A reverence for truth compels me to say the people who believe that they are instruments of the Holy Spirit can be very dangerous people. For if one comes to believe that one knows the will of God, one can be capable of the utmost cruelty. Hitler believed that he was the agent of Providence, and put to death millions of people, who themselves were the work of Providence. The Spanish Inquisitors followers of the Lord of Peace, put to death many thousands of people whose crime was that their beliefs did not coincide with those of the Inquisitors.**

We are not without guilt in this country. And that means, in blunt and honest language, that our rulers are not without guilt. They tend to think that they are the instruments of Providence, and that this gives them some kind of right to control the beliefs and actions of the people they rule, to a degree that exceeds what is normal in what are usually called the countries of the free world. I shall give you only one example of this, but there are many others. It looks as though we shall soon have a Permanent Security Commission consisting of members of Parliament appointed by the State President, which means in effect the Cabinet. This Commission will consider all matters referred to it by the State President, that means the Cabinet. Although it is claimed that this Commission is an organ of Parliament, in fact it is not. Members of Parliament outside the Commission will not be entitled to know what goes on inside the Commission, which

is a secret body. If the Cabinet so desires the Commission will investigate the affairs of the University of Natal, what its students and teachers are thinking and doing, if they are interesting themselves for example in the wages paid to black people in South Africa, and if some of them are interesting themselves in the affairs of the society of which they have chosen to be the servants. If this secret Commission should decide that some of your students and teachers are—intentionally or unintentionally, it does not matter which—furthering the aims of Communism, then they will recommend the banning of such students and lecturers, the destruction of their careers and their happiness. **I tell you that no State should ever have such powers over the people they rule. You will know as well as I do that the State must rule, that the State must make laws so that we may be able to pursue the purposes of our lives, but these secret powers are monstrous and you should never accept the proposition that the State has a right to possess such powers.** And that leads us to a further consideration of what is known as *the rule of law*.

*Now I am not a lawyer, I am not a philosopher. I am only a citizen, and I shall give a citizen's view of the rule of law. And I shall hope that you will all come to hold this view of the rule of law. But if you do not, I shall never agree to the setting up of a secret Commission that will have the power to destroy your career and your happiness because you do not believe the same as I do. The great French philosopher, Voltaire uttered these words, which will never be forgotten as long as anything that can be called a civilisation exists upon the earth. He said:*

*I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.*

Hitler would have said:

*I disapprove of what you say, and I shall put you to death because you say it.*

Our rulers would say:

*We disapprove of what you say, and if our Commission recommends it, we shall order you to leave your University, and we shall confine you to whatever place we choose, and we shall decide what you may do and may not do.*

It is written in the Book of Psalms, "The Lord shall preserve your going out, and your coming in, from this time forth for evermore".

But it is written in the Book of the Security Commission, "If we so decide, the Minister will forbid your going out, and your coming in, and if we so decide, it shall be from this time forth for evermore."

The rule of law says that if you commit an offence, you shall be brought to a court of law, and it is only a court of law that shall determine your guilt or innocence, and it is only a court of law that shall have the right to punish you, to take away your goods, and to deprive you of your freedom.

The rule of law goes still further. It says that if your goods and your freedom are taken from you by a court of law, you shall have the right to appeal to a higher court of law, which may set aside or amend or confirm the sentence that has already been passed on you.

But it is written in the Book of our Rulers, "If the Minister has forbidden your going out and your coming in, you will have no right of appeal to any Court, the punishment is final and immutable, so help you God."

The rule of law is one of the noblest concepts ever conceived by sinful man, and it is the light of our troubled civilisation. I urge you all to cherish it and uphold it, and to work for the day when it will be restored to our country. And I urge you to cherish the principle that the rule of law does not belong to idealists or realists, to parties or governments, but to us all.

I should like to say another few words about making oneself the servant of society. There are some of us who, for one reason or another, take the injustices of society so intensely to heart they begin to disturb deeply the whole tenor of our lives. This is partly to do with the nature of the injustices, and partly to do with the nature of the person. I do not know whether it is of any use to warn any young person against the danger of becoming obsessed with injustices done to others. I understand fully with my emotions why a person should run the risk of getting a prison sentence of 7 years or 9 years for doing practically nothing, but my reason rebels against it totally. It is the politics of desperation and the politics of desperation is no good. And if any of you, during your university career, find yourselves taking up the politics of desperation, and coming to believe that justice can only be gained by violence and terror, then my advice to you, given in this year 1976, would be to get out of the country.

**You must understand me clearly. It may be that this society will be changed by violence and terror. It may be that this society can only be changed by violence and terror. That is a faith, and it no doubt has some ground in reason. My own faith is that this society can still be changed by work and devotion, aided no doubt by external and internal events. This is a faith, and some people would say that it has very little ground in reason. But I choose to hold it, because if I were to hold the faith that this society can be changed only by violence and terror, I would get out and go and live somewhere else. And I may add one thing to that, I have the utmost scepticism about the kind of justice you get by means of violence and terror.**

You all know—or perhaps you don't—that Mr. Pik Botha, our ambassador to the U.N. with the full approval of our Prime Minister, gave to that body a promise that we are going to move away from racial discrimination. Many people—including some of my friends—scoffed at the idea. But I have a different nature. If a person gives an undertaking of that kind, I would rather trust him than distrust him. Therefore I was not prepared to say it was a fraud. But I doubted very strongly if Mr. Botha and his Prime Minister knew what they were promising. I doubt it still more today. I do not think Mr Botha meant to defraud. I just think he did not understand what he was saying. I also think he has a responsibility that he has not yet discharged towards all South Africans who also wish to move away from racial discrimination and that is to tell them what is going to be done.

How does one undo—to any significant extent—the laws which were supposed to be fundamental for the survival of the Afrikaner? How does one bring about a more just distribution of wealth and possessions? Do the powerful ever re-distribute power? Do the rich ever redistribute wealth? And believe me, the great disparity of wealth and possessions, if it is not solved, will mean a future, not of peace, but of violence and terror.

That is why some of the members of NUSAS became more and more radical in their approach. Capitalism was almost

wholly evil, how can you possibly reform it? The only thing to do is to destroy it.

That this country needs reform of the kind that is called socialistic, I have no doubt. But I would oppose the kind of socialism or radicalism that can only envisage a new order erected on the ashes of the old. Extreme radicalism has no time for reform. It wants everything now, and you can't have everything now.

Although I have used words like Capitalism, Socialism, left, centre and right, radical and liberal, I urge you to be careful in your use of them. They are what are called labels, or oversimplifications. The world that they are dealing with is so complex that these simplifications should be distrusted. And you will have time in these next few years to learn to say more clearly just what you mean, and to admit, if you can't say it clearly, that you can't.

**I shall close by saying that there are certain things that the whole student body should be unanimous about—the rule of law, the unacceptability of racial discrimination, the opening of the universities, the right of freedom of speech and expression, the elimination of poverty, the right of all children to free and compulsory education.**

It's not an easy world you are now entering. It's not an easy subcontinent of which you are a part. It's not an easy country you are growing up in. You are going to hear a great deal of the word patriotism. I cannot speak for you. I can only speak for myself.

What is patriotism for me? It is a love of the physical land, the land where I was born, the country that holds for me the deepest meanings of my life. It is a love of the land and its peoples, and a desire that all of them should be secure and that all of them should have equal access to its wealth, its beauty, its opportunities. Patriotism for me is not a be-

lief in my country right or wrong, but an earnest desire to make it better.

For the Nationalist there is more than this. He would fight for his language, his culture, his identity. Well and good. But he would fight for the laws—some of them unjust laws—that he has made to preserve his identity—The Group Areas Act, Racial Classification, the Immorality Act, the Mixed Marriages Act, the Suppression of Communism and the Sabotage and Terrorism Acts.

**But he cannot expect me to want to be eager to rush to the borders to fight for Apartheid. I have opposed it for most of my life—why should I fight for it now? But I would fight to resist a Russian-Cuban invasion of my country. I don't like being ruled by the Nationalists, but I would rather be ruled by them than by a Russian-Cuban supported Communist government.**

But if I went to fight I would wish with all my heart that I could be fighting for a more just society where the rule of law prevailed and where the education of black children was free. Thirty years ago, Dr. J. S. Moroka said to Mr. J. H. Hofmeyer: *"In your speech you told us we must love our land. We do love our land and shall always do so. But we pray that our rulers will give us some land to love."*

What do those words mean? They mean simply "of course we shall live and die for our land if only it is the kind of land for which one willingly lives and dies."

During these last few days I have thought a lot of you, of your coming here to this new world, of all the problems of which you will now learn, and of your choices—those of you who choose—to be the servants of society.

Good luck to you all. □

# **DIVIDED WE STAND, UNITED WE FALL**

by Peter Rutsch

In a normal democratic country a citizen has the right to call on his representative in Parliament, or other representative body to see to it that the amenities in his area are adequate and improved when necessary. If the representative fails to act on such pressure he may well find himself out of office after the next election. But if the citizen is wilfully deprived of this power, he relies on goodwill, if such exists, to provide the amenities any decent citizen has the right to expect. South Africa is not a democratic country, and the vast majority of its citizens have to rely on such goodwill. But such goodwill exists only to the extent necessary to keep the voteless quiet. In other words, only enough is done

to prevent mass protest. Sometimes such protest does break through, such as in the case of the recent bus boycotts following upon fare increases.

The matter of transport facilities is one area in which the plight of the voteless can be clearly seen. Separate development requires people to live in their own areas. The voteless are pushed to the furthest point, but economically their services are desired at the centre.

In the Pietermaritzburg area, a vast number of workers live between the Pietermaritzburg City boundary of Edendale and Elandskop on the road to Underberg. This is a pleasant