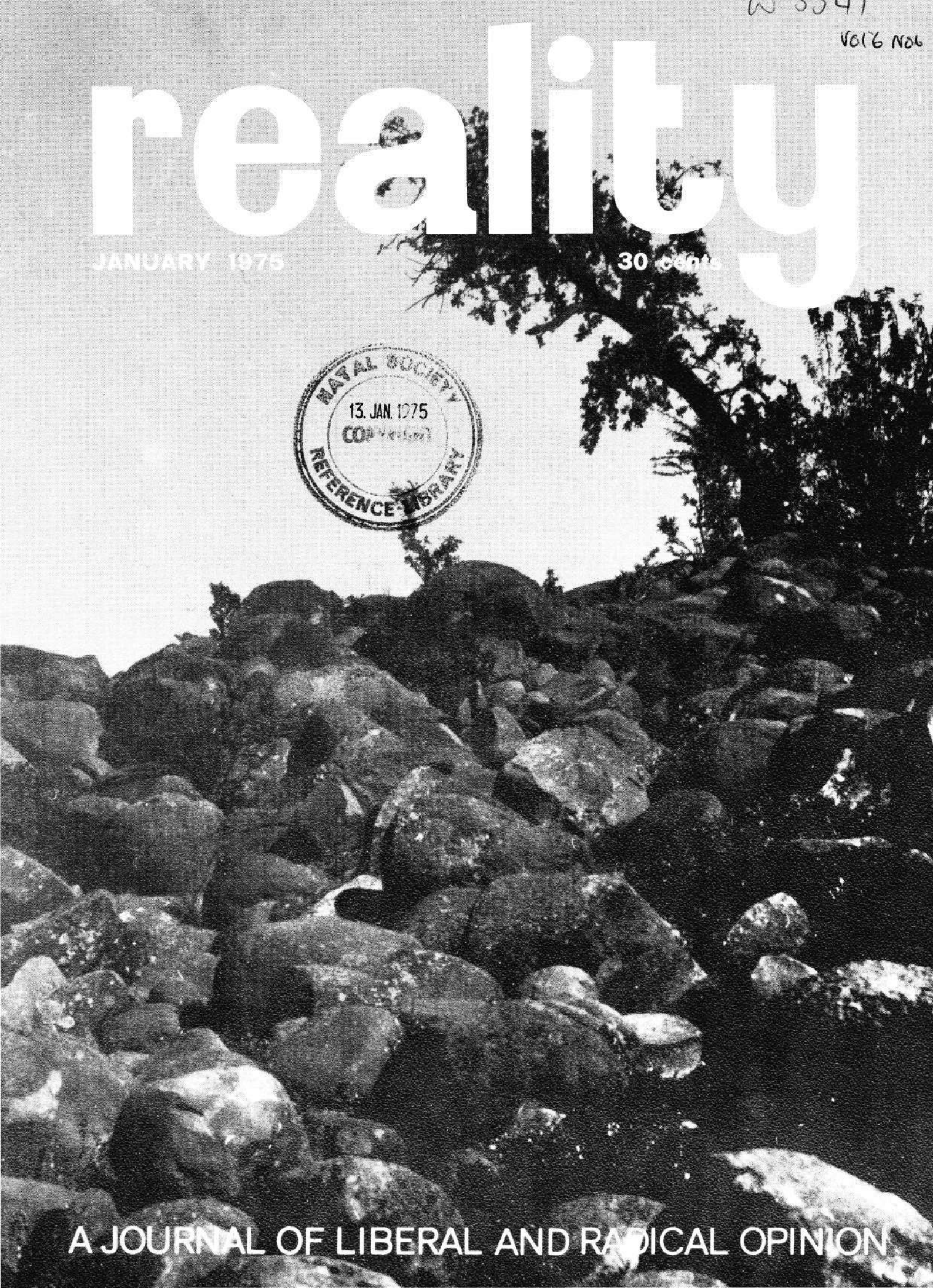


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EDITORIAL

GIVE US ANOTHER SIX MONTHS

We would not be ungenerous towards Mr Vorster. He is certainly determined to do something, and it is a matter for rejoicing that the leader of the Party pledged to apartheid has come to realise that its monolithic creed is no longer sacrosanct. If we had all the time in the world and no enemies, we could regard Mr Vorster's appeal as one more step in the long journey towards a liberal constitution.

But what in fact will Mr Vorster be able to show the world in 1975? The majority block in the United Nations will take a lot of satisfying. Nothing short of universal suffrage and a black majority will make them agree to restore South Africa to its full rights in the General Assembly.

Who then does the Prime Minister seek to please? In the context of his speech, it would seem that he desires to show moderate opinion in America, France and Britain that he is not unworthy of their chivalrous veto.

Any substantial improvement might be welcomed by them but only if it is clear that it is the beginning of a continued process of reform. But radical opinion even in the three Western Powers is so strong that a few surface improvements within the framework of apartheid would not be sufficient to ensure a second veto.

Let us consider the points which might make a real impression.

One is the release of the political prisoners on Robben Island, living in misery and hopelessness. And with this should go a general amnesty for all political prisoners, a lifting of all bans and a restoration of all forfeited passports. Such an action would make a deep impression, would encourage courageous youth all over the country and would go a long way to destroy the prestige and power of the Security Police. Will Mr Vorster do it? Dare he do it?

Again, if he would frankly face the issue of the Coloured people and their rights, if he would go back to the Coloured franchise as it was, better still if he would extend it, there would be joy not only in heaven but in London, Paris and Washington too.

We cannot imagine in our wildest moments of hopefulness that Mr Vorster will consent to abandon the conception of the "homelands". But if he would agree to replace the scattered fragments of Kwa Zulu into a single State, and to place the white sugar farmers and wattle farmers, who are the cause of the fragmentation, under a Kwa Zulu government, that would undoubtedly improve his image abroad.

Many of us would like to see much more done than has been indicated above, but the actions advocated here would at least be an earnest of good faith, and a ground for hope.

Will Mr Vorster, can Mr Vorster, do as much as this in six months? It would be nothing short of a bloodless revolution.

Would his Party follow him? Would the United Party rise above its past record, and refuse to make political capital out of these reforms among conservative white voters? Would not the Herstigte Nasional Party return from the banks of the political River Styx and stage a joyless resurrection in the South African world? These are all possibilities which Mr Vorster will have to take into account. Will he be big enough to face them? South Africa will be with him if he is.

There is one last possibility which might still, for a time, even the voice of independent Africa. That would be the calling of a National Convention adequately representative of all the races to deliberate freely and frankly as to the future of South Africa. It would be useless for Mr Vorster to do this unless he could promise that some at any rate of the major recommendations of such a National Convention would become law. This is perhaps the most striking action which Mr Vorster could take before May, 1975, and it would be wholly good in itself. If it were taken, 1975 might even see a South African Rugby Team playing overseas without hostile demonstrations, and University students cheering for a Nationalist Prime Minister.□

ONS VIR JOU SUID-AFRIKA



Dr. Anthony Barker

The Natal Witness

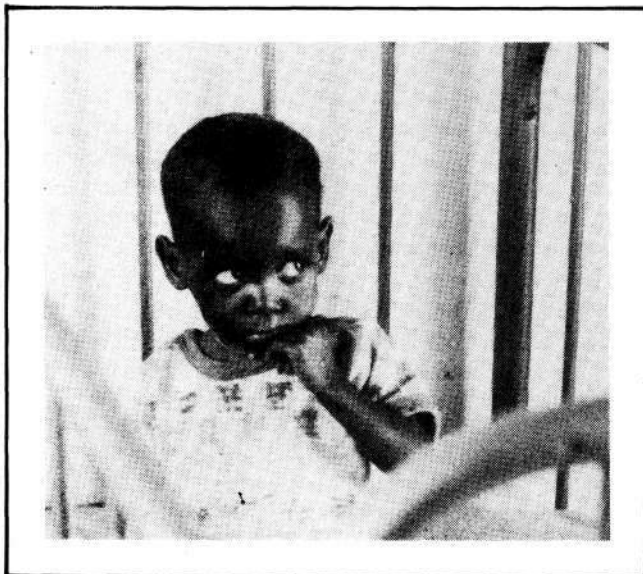
by Anthony Barker

'You will love me when I am dead', say the Zulus. Or, when I've gone you will at least find excuses for me. So the moment of leaving is proper for reflection; a time to realise how much we have loved, and to remember how much love has been extended to us. Yet this can be a dangerous exercise. None of us knows if his departure is final. None of us can be quite sure he is not making his ultimate bow one moment before stalking off the stage through the wrong door, whence he must reappear in shame, his exit-line botched and ridiculous. There is a danger, too that, freed from the necessity of coping with tomorrow, we see tomorrow's problems as insurmountable. I think none of us gets through the last week before the holidays with any great credit. So, as I sit down to write my farewells, I give due notice that we may well be seen again, haunting the old, familiar and loved places, if only on holiday. Those who drink the waters of Africa, return to drink them again.

An early instinct is to say thank you. It is a good instinct, because a loving one. And who among those who have lived in South Africa, can have failed to have loved the country? A thousand memories determine this: of tawny winter grass and turquoise horizons: of the fire of the aloes: of the Piet-my-vrou on a hot, damp summer morning. The stars seem nearer to South Africa, and the moon more silent here than anywhere else in the world. I never saw the shadows so blue as the shadows of early spring on whitewashed walls.

Beyond, and best of all, are the people. Which, for us in KwaZulu, has meant the Zulu people. Here are our neighbours, unbroken below forces too big, too menacing, too powerful for their manipulation. Here is a people who manage to receive the pain of society with a sort of joy which is as beautiful as it is unexpected. I make my astonished salute to these who have survived even the official plans for their betterment. They seem to have within themselves, a generosity of spirit which the weariness of the west has drained out of us whites. They really do forgive insult, whether intentional or by the insensitivity of our people. They laugh when I couldn't laugh: and love, where to me there might be blinding hatred. Ignorant, they teach: poor, they add to my privilege. This is a mystery whose key lies in their unforgotten humanity. Zulu people do not put up barriers against other men, because they value humanity more than do westerns. Blacks could not have invented Apartheid.

From my privileged seat as a country doctor, the view has been clear, grand and consistent. Though, in my time, I have known every sin to have been committed: though murder has been done, and rape, and the offending of little children, there has been missing from all this disgrace, any form of calculation. Violence has not been systematised, or worse still, rationalised, as it has been in the white world of power. Medicine gives an incomparable opportunity for seeking this man-ness in men. Young men, who would pass in city streets with scorn in their eyes, smile from their sickness. I have seen dull, defeated old women come to life with the returning strength of their recovering grandchildren; or vast in dignity before pitiful death. The blind, who had groped among their possessions in the blind houses of KwaZulu, have seen again after operation, and cried out with joy in their restored vision.



This doctor's point of view is perhaps an unfair one? As taken from a privileged position? Certainly it is. Yet I am glad to be able to report to the Nation that here, under the harrow, is still a man, a woman, a creature of like passions to ourselves. Which we have been in danger of forgetting. I value this people who have taught me so much, above all the tourist attractions of our land: above the rhinoceros in the game park, the thunder of smoking waterfalls, the blue of our heavens and the creaking of our ox-axles. For this, I thank God.

But what of the State? What of its rulers: the money of it: the prisons: the Acts of a sovereign Parliament: the national shames that make us so apologetic before our friends, so furious before our critics? Here is sadness which is not diminished in my mind by the thought of my leaving it. I hate the spying and the informing: I hate the hypocrisy: I hate Apartheid: I hate bannings, imprisonments and all the fearful penalties of disagreement. But, most of all, I hate the dishonesty which marks every aspect of our national life. We have become a people dedicated to make what is **not**, look like what is. And we have bolstered up our deceptions by lies. I quote the Russian, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, writing of the communist state which has the same problems with its ideology as we do here with ours:

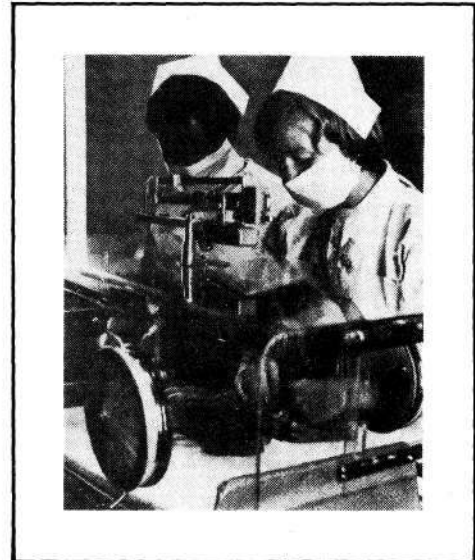
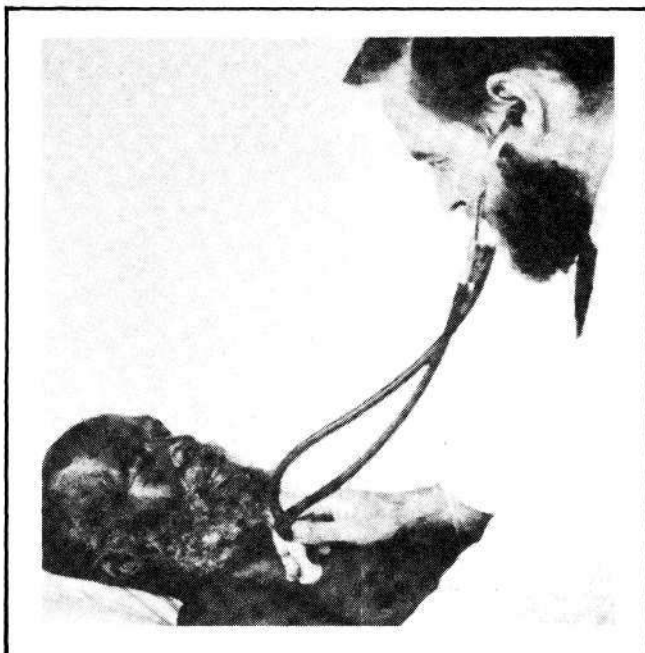
"This ideology does nothing now but sap our strength and bind us. It clogs up the whole life of society—minds, tongues, radio and press—with lies, lies, lies. For how else can something dead pretend that it is living, except by erecting a scaffolding of lies? Everything is steeped in lies and **everybody knows it**—and says so openly in private conversation, and jokes and moans about it, but in their official speeches they go on hypocritically parroting what they are 'supposed to say', and with equal hypocrisy and boredom read and listen to the speeches of others. . ."

No less than Hitler in the '30s, we here have dreamed up an ethnic dream. As Hitler, in the name of his dream, set about the Final Solution by slaughtering 6 million Jews, so—though in lesser degree—we curtail the privilege and reduce the humanity of more than twice that number. Moreover, our ideas are held under a religious sanction which must grieve the heart of God. For we do not call what we are doing discrimination, but differentiation: not oppression but development, a separate development which, we say, will give each man his true value in his own area. Is the part greater than the whole? I think not. Men are men, surely; and Blacks are men, like English men and Afrikaner men. Here is the dishonesty that, though we dress it all up to look like justice; or even like respect for old custom; or even to resemble kindness itself; there lies at the heart of it all, but one thought: to preserve white identity and to create a white state in Southern Africa which shall 'never' admit to black sharing of power, privilege or citizenship. It is on this hidden rock that all liberalism is caused to founder. He is the greatest enemy of this state who teaches the universality of man; the commonalty of human experience, the undivided nature of human aspiration. To National thinking, the idea of a shared society is the supreme unacceptability. The idea is **so bad, so irresponsible, so evil**, that it can be plucked out, root and branch, with confidence that those who pluck are doing God's uncontested will.

In the name of this white nation, men are picked off, one by one and group by group, for their disagreement. Driven by despair, or urged by their yearnings, men and women have expressed their distaste for the system. They have been rewarded with banning, imprisonment, disgrace and deportation. Despite assurances to the contrary, many of these disabled ones are never told their faults, though they are given five years of ample leisure in which to make their guesses. Insistence on orthodoxy gives us new forms of censorship, not to keep us pure and unspotted from the dirty imagery of the childish and the pornographic, but to hide us from the bursting light of liberty which might prove too bright for our hooded eyes. This insistence, also, makes us spend millions on military exercises which we euphemistically call defence: but where is the enemy? Not, I think, the faceless forces of international communism, but the rising spirit of men who also want to live and share in the pleasant things of our privileged lives.

Just because we think as white men, in white terms, all sorts of things go wrong, all sorts of things are unjust. We have an uneven health service for this reason, so that most of the nation's doctors are in the white areas, doctoring whites. In our hospitals, black patients lie under the beds, though this does not happen in white hospitals. We preach Family Planning, providing free contraception, but do not guarantee a good quality of life for those already born. For the preservation of white identity, we perpetuate migratory labour, even though we know it as a cancer in the heart of our society. We speak piously of Christian marriage, yet make it impossible for men and women to live in any sort of hallowed association whatever. Our thoughts on the homelands but make these things worse, since we want the hands of black men to work our mills, but we don't want the black man himself, whom we mendaciously refer to as a guest worker in our cities.

Therefore we are humbugs. We spoil this great land by our greed, and despoil our fellow men by our determination to stay on top. We are aware of our duplicity, and sometimes will surprisingly admit to it, in the right company. But we



avoid public debate, preferring to ridicule the question: it is naive ("you will understand when you've been here a bit longer") to ask why we don't have normal human association with blacks? The tolerant smile answers the earnest question. Perhaps this is just as well, since our attempts at public rationalisation have had about them the musical-comedy quality of the ridiculous. Our sports policy must be the supreme example of this, its intricacies couched in words which, Humpty-Dumpty-like, 'mean what we want them to mean'. See the Minister of Sport fighting his way through the absurd phraseology—I am convinced he really knows what to do—towards openness and the eventual enjoyment of game by anyone who wants to play them! The poor man is in an unenviable position, no doubt, but he must forgive my lack of enthusiasm for those occasions when he manages to cheat himself and produce a bit of open sport. Job reservation is suffering the same fate as multinational sport, with the former Minister in charge of railways as the principal architect of its downfall. Here we have seen a frontal attack launched by a Minister of State, and loudly applauded by the legislators of this unwholesome law.

But who is going to have the guts to wipe these silly laws off the statue book? Who is going to say: O.K., we were wrong: Verwoerd was wrong: Malan was wrong, the whole structure is erected on wobbly foundations? It will be very hard for National politicians to do this, since they cannot easily de-throne their seers. We may have pity here, for retreat is never easy, and seldom gracefully conducted, especially while they are watching who dwell in the other camp. But clearly, these unworkable laws must be repealed if we are to remain honest men. This is most true of the Immorality Act, which has broken so many, and caused so many suicides even within the citadel itself. But the necessity is there for all these acts. Are we going to scrub them out, or just go on pretending that they don't lie there, couched in the terrible language of the Gazette?

The photographs on pages 4, 5 and 6 were taken at the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital. Dr Anthony Barker has just retired after being in charge of the hospital for over 20 years. He and his wife Dr Margaret Barker devotedly helped the Zulu people and will be greatly missed.

Between those who yearn for a white nation in all its purity, and those who cheerfully long for a shared society with the restrictions down (albeit they must be dismantled with care), there is a great gulf fixed. We are unsure how this is to be bridged. I wish I knew that National theorists **wanted** to bridge it, for, at the moment, I don't think they do. Yet what an eruption of glory might come were we to start trying! Ons vir jou, Suid Afrika! really we are. We desire with all our hearts that a fit society might be set up in South Africa with a measure of justice spread through all the people.

We are far from this ideal, not only because our thinking has been slow and incomplete, but because we are all caught up in a long neurosis, which has us in thrall. This sickness, that incapacitates us more than we know, is bred of festering memories that we should have forgotten this 50 years back. It is compounded of guilt and ennui and physical anxiety. It makes us tetchy, exclusivist, nationalistic, chauvinist and brimming with hurt pride. People, we say, decline to play Rugby with us because they are our enemies. But is this really so? I think not. I think rather that people are telling us to grow up, to put our house in order, and, above all, to laugh a little at ourselves whose mouths go down at the corners, and who live in such self-righteous gloom. Our image is bad because people expect us to be good. The world is disappointed in us. It sees us as sinning against our own understandings, and against the marvellous and hard-won traditions of European liberalism.

We see our problems as unique, incomprehensible to those not born and bred here. But, again, is this really so? Aren't we really seeing the predictable end of a story that began when Farewell and Isaacs and Fynn settled under the watchful eye of Shaka Zulu at Port Natal? Isn't today just an extension of the murder of the Trekker leaders by Dingane, from whom those leaders were seeking land for their settlement? Far from having an unexpected or unique quality about it, our history fits well into the pattern of Empire. It is the story of the meeting of cultures and the struggle for land and resources. If this is so, and our South African dilemma can be so readily traced to its origins, then we are at fault if we do not use our reason for the solution of our problems. In the homeland policies there is more than a hint that we have not entirely given up the old Imperial formula of Divide and Rule. With a little application, we might alter that to a more humane policy of Unite and Live.

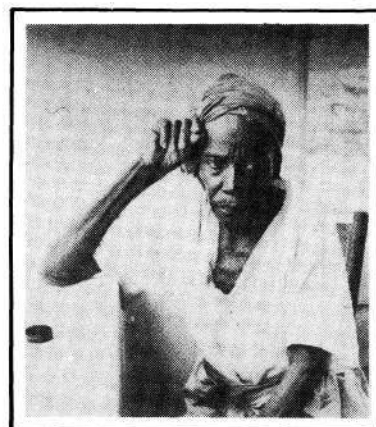
At this time of going, we leave with a genuine expression of love and concern that we might all try to set the national scene straight. No one doubts that this will take a lot of doing. No one doubts that we might not get it right straight away, but that is no sufficient reason for our not trying. Essentially, this is a spiritual exercise, demanding penitence. Perhaps that sounds naive, unrealistic? Penitence is generally held not to be applicable to nations, but we talk a lot about our Christian heritage here in South Africa, so I don't think the idea of penitence is entirely unfamiliar to us. Might we not acknowledge our faults? Might we not make public statement of our lack of freedom to do the right thing, locked as we are in history and myth? Such would startle a critical world which presently looks upon us as more misguided than evil. Such would be a strong act of a sensible people and must win us many friends with ability to help.



Then, we could start rebuilding. Or must we wait until we are forced, to begin? I think we should start by preparing our minds for the change that is inevitable and that is being taught us by the altered circumstances within the former Portuguese territories in Africa. We may not, ourselves, be the agents of change, though we seem to have all the power in our hands at present. Change will come from the powerless, by a series of minor upheavals and hopefully in a peaceful guise. It has always been little things that created the mood; the horeshoe nails of history which alter the course of battles and topple eternal dynasties. When that time comes, shall we be ready for it? Will our ideas of preparedness be a bank-account in Switzerland, or a joyful acceptance of a new order? The latter is the true patriotism, and may yet be found more commonly among those who at present, in their doubts about the National System, are made to appear unpatriotic.

It would be a great time to live through, and a time to stay around for. It would be a time of enhanced productivity and wider sharing of the sweets of our economy. We might expect education to become free and universal; medicine to be liberated from its vested interests; agriculture to be stimulated by hope and an open market. It will be a time when everyone will be able to give, both black and white, and everyone able to receive also of the riches that others bring. It would be a time when BOSS became obsolete, and the Special Branch an anachronism; when the burden of military finance would be lightened, because we should not, by then, be so threatened as we feel ourselves today. It would be a time when the prison doors might open again to release many from lifelong and bitter incarceration.

Utopian? Certainly. But as André Bieler has written: "The world has arrived at a point where Utopia alone is realistic." □



DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED WORKER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FARMER

Speech delivered to the Nottingham Road Farmers' Association

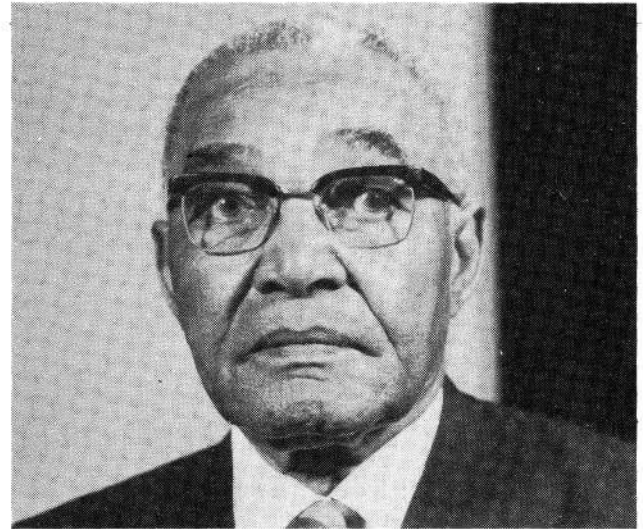
by Selby Msimang

To me this is the beginning of a new era in the history of race-relations in this country. Forty years ago, more or less, no-one would have dreamt it possible for an audience of White farmers, of their own volition, to allow themselves to be addressed by Africans, especially on a topic closely associated with their vocation. At that time, I hope I do not exaggerate, agriculture in this country had not made the strides in technology and scientific research to the heights reached today. Similarly, the type of worker required now must conform to the standard of operations of the new era. In those days farmers were invariably indifferent as to the quality of labour they got. The criterion was the number. As things are today, it means a change in the relationship between the farmer and the worker. It is this change that poses a challenge to a modern farmer—a challenge of no small magnitude.

Looking back to the period prior to the enactment of the Natives Land Act of 1913, agriculture in South Africa was, if anything, in a state approximating stagnation. Most farmers, as a result of the Anglo-Boer War did not have adequate capital and the know-how of the present standard. Consequently, some of them were compelled to abandon their farms to work in industrial areas to raise capital, leaving their farms to be operated by their squatters on a half share basis. I am not sure if this practice obtained in Natal, but it certainly was the case in the Free State and Transvaal.

I recall a case that was brought to my knowledge of a farmer on the Vaal who had almost decided to sell his farm because he could not make it pay, for lack of capital. His squatter appealed to him not to sell but to allow him (the squatter) to work it for at least two or three years. To this the farmer agreed and packed his things and went away. Sibeko, for that was the name of the squatter, grew teff grass in the first and second years with wonderful results. In the third year he planted mealies. The results were almost miraculous. When the farmer returned, he was astounded and complimented Sibeko for his achievement.

Then came the Natives Land Act of 1913, the provisions of which I have no doubt you are all conversant with. That law had a tremendous psychological effect on the entire African



Mr Selby Msimang

population. It pulverised their soul, destroyed their sense of identity and reduced their personality to zero. This was because it left them without hope; their future was bleak. The worker saw himself a slave, a vagabond in his fatherland. What could he do? The law prevented him from buying, leasing and occupying or having any interest of whatever kind on land, except in scheduled areas. He was therefore at the mercy of the farmer who would dictate the terms and conditions. The farmer could easily demand free labour in lieu of a site for erecting a hut, a small garden and limited grazing rights. It should be appreciated that a man taken on under those conditions cannot be expected to give of his best as a labourer. He would become a mere automaton, and not a conscientious worker. And a farmer on the other hand, observing this passive attitude would become irritable and tend to extract more labour from the worker by sheer force.

The ravages of the Natives Land Act took the form of wholesale evictions, especially in the Free State and some parts of the Transvaal. One could see a man, his wife and children driving their livestock listlessly, not knowing where to go. Some lost their livestock and gravitated to industrial areas. And as they could not find any accommodation, they had to do as best they could with the result that serious slum conditions developed and there was increasing irregular urbanisation.

Within ten years the situation had so deteriorated that Parliament had to enact posthaste the Natives Urban Areas Act of 1923. That was the second phase of the Natives Land Act in terms of which several families were endorsed out of urban areas. That aggravated their frustration, brought about general demoralisation, the cause of the problems confronting a modern farmer.

All persons interested and engaged in the task of rehabilitating or uplifting the African people today, are hard pressed to find a solution to the problem of how to inject in these people the power of self-discovery, how to generate in them hope and self-confidence, how to motivate them to the higher productivity required to pay higher wages and improve conditions.

Professor Nyembezi has told you of the traditional life of the Zulus, the unique status of the head of a family, the respect the head is accorded by the family. Imagine a child suddenly finding his father treated like a little boy, made to trot about the farm and being called names sometimes. The effect of such treatment on the child will destroy all respect it ever had for the father and the child will develop a character reflected in a child that had never been disciplined.

The modern farmer is meeting this type of character in the present generation of workers. A generation thirsty for and determined to find a goal, something to live and work for.

Take a young man brought up on the farms and registered as a farm labourer. When he goes out to find work elsewhere, and because his pass shows he is a farm labourer, he is rejected and told to go back to the farms. He becomes rebellious and develops a hatred for farm work which to him is as good as a prison. He wants to be extricated from this condition and to live the life of a human being. How can we bring this young man into conformity with reason? How can we rehabilitate him? I repeat, this is the challenge confronting a modern farmer.

The KwaZulu Government is facing the same problem—the problem of awakening in the African a sense of self-realisation. Recently it appointed a commission to investigate and recommend ways and means by which the average Zulu could be made conscious of the important place occupied by agriculture in the life of a community or country. Certain ideas have been put forward suggesting as a priority the creation of an incentive attractive enough to produce in the man the urge to play his part in the development of his country. The KwaZulu Government has been urged to make a thorough survey of the areas with sizeable arable lands, subdivide such land into small farms, have them properly fenced. Where such land is large enough to accommodate five potential farmers, it be subdivided into five equal parts, the centre of the area to be allotted to a qualified demonstrator, and the other subdivisions to be allotted to apprentices who at the end of the apprenticeship should be granted leasehold rights thereon of, say, ninety-nine years. To qualify for a leasehold right it would be certified by a competent board that he has the required qualities and qualifications of a bona fide farmer. It is hoped the incentive of having leasehold would produce bona fide farmers capable of producing food to feed the nation.

We of course know that land in KwaZulu is the property of the South African Bantu Trust and that KwaZulu government can only make use of the land subject to the pleasure of the Trust, and not otherwise. The highest incentive of course would be freehold rights which KwaZulu cannot offer.

The demonstrator, so situated between the apprentices, would be in a position to demonstrate on the principle "do as I do". The apprentices should be supplied with all implements which they may eventually own. In this way it is hoped many will come forward and be producers of food for the nation. As you will see, this involves training.

The sugar industry would appear to be succeeding in its efforts to interest Africans to take up cane growing seriously. African sugar cane growers have now formed an association and the sugar industry has provided a fund to assist beginners and smaller growers. I do not, of course, know if the agricultural industry can go the length already covered by the sugar industry, but I believe it can help by examining the possibilities of taking on apprentices on their farms who would, after qualifying, be employed by the KwaZulu Government as demonstrators. KwaZulu will require a crash system to produce as many demonstrators as will be required.

Farmers on the borders of the homelands can perhaps make themselves available to their African neighbours by giving advice and suggestions and assist in the same way Mr Neil Alcock helped his neighbours in the Bulwer District. He got himself interested in their struggles and arranged a system of co-operative buying of fertilizer, seed and even groceries. These are some of the strategies farmers could adopt by first exhibiting a personal interest in the progress of their African neighbours, a show of goodwill and a spirit of helpfulness.

To my way of thinking farmers should try to accept that an African worker, like all human beings, wants security. He may not know how to spell it out, but he sees other races around him obsessed with making themselves secure. It appears to him as if security to them has become the god of the times and he ascribes the reason for the condition in which he finds himself as their being enforced to safeguard their security at his expense. He may not know how to spell it out, but he sees other races enjoying a protected right to work, a guaranteed annual wage, unemployment benefits, pension schemes, the freedom to enjoy life knowing that they need not fear or be anxious about the future. When he visits his friends in the urban areas, and finds them leading a life, not entirely full, but not as bad as his own on the farms, his soul goes out craving that some day he may be able to give up farm work and go elsewhere.

Farmers should think of providing their farm labourers with sporting facilities, education, and as far as may be practicable, make life generally interesting.□

IDEOLOGY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREDICAMENT

by Peter Walshe

South Africa's parliamentary opposition continues to maintain a remarkable ideological consensus—faith in an open political system and private competition in a market economy. The deeply entrenched American equivalent is often referred to as the 'liberal consensus.' Centre and right-of-centre parties in Western Europe share a comparable ideological predilection. Visions of personal advancement and the white South African experience of material betterment have left this ideological orientation largely unexamined. Although established privilege will be determined to leave matters this way, the re-examination of this ideological consensus is a matter of the utmost importance.

In America, and Western Europe too, the threshold of critical analysis has been raised by the convergence of high rates of inflation, escalating crime, power shortages and the related prospect of unusually high unemployment. In addition there are environmental restraints on gross national products, and in the case of America, the recognition of serious limitations in foreign policy, plus Watergate's unusually clear exposure of economic power dictating the responses of the political system. Among white South Africans these pressures are, as yet, relatively muted. On the other hand, the increased tensions of racial confrontation in Southern Africa are now providing a climate for more serious debate. As a result it may be possible to separate the two strands of ideology that have been consistently tangled together by the elites of modern capitalism. What is at issue is not simply racial discrimination. More fundamental in establishing the basis for justice and peace is the need to re-examine class privilege and the starkly unequal distribution of resources. At this basic level, South Africa's problems are not unique.

What are the two strands of ideology that have been consistently tangled together? An open political system with the vigorous participation of citizens in political organisation, public debate and the exercise of their franchise, must no longer be confused with a competitive free enterprise market economy. It has been too readily assumed that the former depends upon the latter. That this is not the case needs to be clearly articulated.

Indeed, a "competitive market economy" is a figment of the imagination, a fragment of worn-out political mythology. The "competitive market economy" has evolved into a structure of large corporate units within which some may achieve rapid personal advancement; but these are not the patterns of individual and personal economic freedom assumed by that resilient liberal/conservative ideology.

In what sense is the concept of a competitive market economy a worn-out political mythology? The mechanism which permits corporate survival, growth and diversification is the profit system. A variety of motives drive men to seek positions of esteem and power within modern industry, but corporations require profits and security through the predictability of their markets. The maintenance of demand is crucial for the maintenance of profits—both consumer demand and the rapidly expanding demand of government. With growth and diversification, and often in close co-operation with government, corporations have set about controlling their markets. In short, the competition of small units of production, disciplined by price competition and goaded to innovation and efficiency by the discipline of the market, does not exist. The liberal/conservative ideology would have us believe otherwise, but a decentralized economic system that underpins the political freedom of citizens is gone. Industrialization has produced concentrations of economic power that seriously erode the tenuous control of citizens over the organs of political authority.

It may well be that the vision of a decentralized competitive economy, automatically linking self-interest to the common good, was an unreal one from the start. Certainly there have been intermittent crises—the most spectacular to date being the great depression of the 1930's. At that time, and with Stalinist Russia supposedly offering the only alternative system, the new Keynesian economics merely established the responsibility of government to sustain the private system which could clearly not maintain itself through the workings of the market. Fiscal and monetary policies, plus public works, were accepted to maintain the economic context within which a vigorous private sector was expected to operate under the old competitive ethic.

Forty years later, the tensions between the political and economic strands of the liberal/conservative consensus are again mounting. A significant minority throughout Europe and America questions the relevance of the individualistic competitive ethic and rejects it as the basis for a just and culturally diverse society. South Africans too must enter this debate. The need to openly co-ordinate the activities of giant corporations; the distortion of democratic electioneering by the weight of private fortunes and corporate donations; the insanity of producing without sensitivity to environmental constraints; and the era of labour unrest which stretches out before us, all indicate the urgent need to re-examine economic structures. It is necessary to reassess patterns of ownership, inherited wealth and the

distribution of income—and do so in South Africa with a vigorous logic that will cut across economic and race privileges to focus on the essential dignity of each and every human being.

There is no other way. Should the blatant privilege of apartheid structures be dismantled, the dilemmas of distributing resources will not go away and they cannot be “automatically” solved by the market. To rely on that defunct mechanism would be to turn our backs on the issues of distribution and to condone further polarization in society and the continuation of grotesque injustice.

The essential value of a modern parliamentary constitution is the personal dignity of all individuals. This is what leads to equality before the law, access to the franchise, the right to organize politically, open public debate, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet this prime value of personal dignity is ignored in the debasing scramble for economic privilege, the determined defence of established interests, and the mirage of happiness in higher and higher levels of personal consumption.

The implications of a commitment to respect the dignity of all men by providing comparable economic resources for the development of their personalities would devastate past assumptions and present practice. Children with particularly low IQs would have to receive comparable educational resources to those lavished on the young genius. No longer could inherited wealth be a major determinant of quality education or health services. Rather than **expecting** wage differentials and the inheritance of privilege in the form of unearned fortunes, the central economic concern would become a movement toward an equal distribution of income. Differentials might be granted for dependents, especially long hours, or onerous responsibility; but the **expectation** of equality would have been established. In all this, race would be an irrelevancy—although every man’s equal access to resources would permit groups to maintain and develop their own subcultures.

There is a secondary but important economic insight that supports this moral stance. Modern economic orders are so complex, so interdependent in their processes of production, that it is meaningless to speak of individual productivity, or even group productivity—Yet our system of rewards is posited on such judgments.

The “Productivity” of an auto-worker on an assembly line, or that of his executive colleague, is a function of capital, technology, their skills and those of their colleagues throughout the auto corporation. Moreover, that corporation is in turn dependent on a host of other corporations, from the chemical and plastics industry to steel, power and electronics. All these productive units survive on revenue generated from the sale of their output, the value of which results from prices determined by almost everything except price competition. To argue as if our present wage differentials are rational, as if they related reward to effort and enshrined a moral code, is absurd.

In fact we have inherited wage structures established by the ruthless use of economic and political power, ossified by tradition and backed up by racial discrimination. The resulting

differentials are not only an affront to the basic dignity of all men irrespective of their particular talents; they also deny our essential communality within the modern economic order.

If the principle of equality in income distribution were to be accepted, there would have to be a gradual adaptation of society in that direction—and directions are vital. Vested interests would have to be challenged and the pace of change might be debated; but a new convergence of political and economic values would have been embarked upon.

It is precisely the unwillingness to establish long-term goals in the restructuring of Europe’s and America’s economic orders that lies at the root of much of their present inability to ease social tensions and check political cynicism. In South Africa such a re-orientation of social priorities would begin to lay the foundations for racial harmony and the establishment of legitimate government—government with a residual moral authority for all South Africans.

While there is no Utopian blueprint to go by, institutional structures would have to be examined in the light of a commitment to income equality, vigorous limitations on inherited wealth, public accountability of large corporations and the co-ordination of policies in such key sectors as health, education, transportation, steel, chemicals and electronics.

If in the long run the distribution of resources in society would be profoundly altered, the process need not be culturally levelling. Indeed a commitment to eliminate privilege in access to communal and personal goods and services would permit the flowering of that rich cultural diversity already present in South African society. Various lifestyles should persistently reflect different traditions and varied faiths. At best we may stand on the brink of a new tolerance for diversity. But the prerequisite for this cultural flowering, the essential basis for the new political consensus, must be a separation of the political and economic strands of the liberal/conservative consensus. The goal should be an open political system and the rule of law; but let there be a vigorous debate on the implications of equality within the economic system. The basic prerequisite is not the illusion of “equal opportunity”, but a steady commitment to ensure each South African’s equal access to the resources of society. It is not being an alarmist to suggest that the alternative is a continuation of present directions which may well lead to the disintegration of the remnants of parliamentary democracy. This in turn will involve the reassertion of privilege and economic power through military rule.

All this implies that White South Africans would have to accept increasingly severe limitations on their standards of living—and, indeed, like the elites of Europe and America, they may not be prepared to do so voluntarily. However, as pressures for justice increase in Southern Africa, compromises will be forced upon the privileged. In this early stage of such pressures, the initial response of the power structure has been the vigorous defence of white privilege, increased authoritarianism, and a decline in the rule of law. However, longer term perspectives must be persistently articulated. SPROCAS has taken a giant step forward in this regard; Leo Marquard’s **A Federation of Southern Africa** is a useful contribution; and Black South African’s growing leverage, and increasingly determined focus on economic justice, makes it clear that white

initiatives for change can be constructive but will now be essentially secondary.

If South Africa can avoid the disaster of increasing repressive violence and counter-violence, if it can engineer a transition in ideology, the way will have been opened for a profound renewal of society. What is involved is nothing less than the efficiency of political consciousness and the deliberate articulation of values as a major factor in human evolution. The alternative is the violent defence of privilege and the pursuit of justice with the sword.

In other words, Marxist insights which rely on economic determinism and outline the processes of class friction need to be taken very seriously. In South Africa, class privilege is clearly central and vigorously bolstered by racism. Most Marxists would therefore project the inevitable grinding out of class frictions amidst increasing violence. Yet it is just possible that

this underestimates the immensely important role of social consciousness in history—a consciousness on which Marx, at times, placed great emphasis, but which many of his followers underplayed or ignored. This social awareness has a new potency in a society blessed (not always cursed!) with the opportunities of modern communications. If South Africans can rearticulate their values under bold leadership, then the social consciousness of men will have become a counterweight to the almost overwhelming elements of economic determinism within history.

Man, created in the likeness of a loving God, has the invitation to be co-creator of history—but the invitation has to be accepted. In striving for the fulfillment of this potential we need to shake ourselves loose from the fierce grip of economic interests and the ideology that defends them. The challenge will then be to pursue the full logic of our highest ideal—the dignity of each human being.□

SOLIDARITY AS A MEANS TO PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

GANDHI MEMORIAL LECTURE. PHOENIX 13.10.74

by Manas Buthelezi

Memorial days are occasions on which we are taken back to the historical roots of our heritage. We are enabled to see our struggle in the light of the invaluable contribution of those whose memory we treasure. Today we celebrate the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, a man who was able to combine political action with religious and philosophical reflection. His life of self-denial and commitment to non-violence, which has turned all of us who feel called upon to continue his struggle, into his spiritual heirs, demonstrates how a moral vision nurtured in the quiet of religious meditation can shape a political career, such as Gandhi's which was studded with intermittent prison spells and crowned with the salute of the assassin's bullet. He died in far-away India, but his spirit continues to haunt the dark corridors of the prejudices and injustices of a South Africa which he did so much to enrich during his life time.

We are gathered at this Durban outpost under the impulse of the living spirit of Gandhi. It is because today Gandhi is more than a memory that we have all converged at this place that incarnates what Gandhi was and still is to our history. At what point in our history do we commemorate Gandhi? It is a time during which a growing number of forward looking Indians, Africans and Coloureds are beginning to discover that, as black people, they have a common purpose of which they have to become increasingly aware if they can hope to continue and complete the struggle which men like Gandhi initiated. It is a time when they are beginning to rebel against the "non-white" label that has been used to describe their corporate identity. Some of our Indian, African and Coloured young people are banned or are enduring one form of physical hardship or the other simply because, among other things, they have dared to suggest

sociological and political models for the substitution of the philosophy of "non-whitism." I will discuss this "non-white philosophy" later. We are living at an important moment of history when things are beginning to take shape. Some stubbornly refuse to be part of that history which is in the process of formation. The case in point is the attitude of some Indians, Coloureds and Africans to the movement towards "black solidarity." Because of this reality I thought it fitting to celebrate the memory of Gandhi by addressing you on the theme, "Solidarity as a Means to Peaceful Coexistence."

The faith to which I subscribe compels me to espouse the ideal of the brotherhood of all men regardless of their race and colour. I shall therefore continually strive to create social and political conditions in South Africa which will make it easy for love to flourish between black and white. It is my firm belief that social, economic and political conditions as they presently exist are not in the interests of the promotion of love and peace between people of various races. This is because the guiding principle is the separation and division of people even in cases where they desperately choose to be and work together.

Two months ago the non-racial Christian Institute tried to organise a fellowship bus which would transport black and white members to attend a meeting in Dundee. We appropriately applied for a permit for such non-racial transport. Our application was typically refused. You can see therefore that the force of both law and policy is not on the side of those who struggle to bring about peace and understanding between black and white: it fights and frustrates them. In order never to falter we must remember the resolve Gandhi used to make every morning: "I shall not fear anyone on earth. I shall fear only God. I shall not bear ill-will towards anyone. I shall not submit to injustice from anyone. I shall conquer untruth by truth and in resisting untruth I shall put up with all suffering."

Indications are that solidarity between black and white is a very difficult thing to strive for. Yet we know that wars have been preceded by a break in communication and a loss of the sense of common purpose between countries and groups. South Africa has had a long tradition of creating divisions where none existed and strengthening those that were there already.

When the Union of South Africa was formed against the background of the close of the Anglo-Boer War, it ironically contained a seed of disintegration. It was a Union not of all the people of South Africa but only of those who were belligerent parties in war. The Act of Union was, as it were, a political finishing touch to the military settlement of 1902. Political power was divided between those who had tested their strength in war. The Act did nothing to enshrine the fundamental human and political rights of the black majority. The Union was for the whites and not for the blacks. This has been proved by the fact that some fifty years later the white man took it upon himself as his messianic mission to destroy whatever unity was there among black people in order to carry out his conceived plan of Separate Development. Considered improper was not only unity between black and white, but also between black and black. South Africa moved constitutionally from the Union to the Republican model under the assumption that

whatever form of government could best foster unity among the white groups and help channel their loyalties to one sovereign state was a good thing to strive for.

The tempting conclusion is that the white man in rejecting the black man is not interested in the ideal of reconciliation among all the people of God, and that we should forget all about him. I have a firm belief that doing good is not the sole prerogative of the white man. We should not let the balance of the scales of morality and justice rest entirely on what the white man does or does not do. Black people can do something where the white man fails. What the black man does will not only help the black man himself but may at the same time help the white man.

It is for this reason that I see the movement of black solidarity among Indians, Coloureds and Africans as something fresh and positive in a situation dominated by negative values like separation and division of people. It is the black man's positive answer to the programme of Apartheid.

All people of good will who at the same time cherish even elementary civilized standards welcome with approval any move towards unity, peace and mutual understanding among ethnic groups living in the same country where there is always a threat of racial riots and rivalries. Therefore when our young Indian, African and Coloured students tell us that the best guarantee for future peace and security is the discovery and realisation on our part of a common identity in our humanity and aspirations, this should be welcomed as a symptom of spiritual maturity which should put to shame all grown-up, privileged and elitist ethnic bigots amongst us. We should be humble and enlightened enough to recognise truth whenever and wherever it appears. Gandhi spoke so highly of truth that he even went to the extent of saying that it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth. We should therefore understand and take Black Solidarity for the truth it is.

1. The quest for Black Solidarity which our students try to articulate may be described as black people's creative and constructive presentation of a model for racial harmony during a time when white people are still sorting out among themselves whether their ultimate survival consists in strengthening or destroying the walls they have erected between them and the black man. It is the first positive move in a negative situation characterised by a deliberate tendency to make a virtue out of spotting and creating more divisions among ethnic groups in South Africa. When the young educated future leaders tell us what they would like their future to be, the least we can do is to stop and listen rather than continue to justify our vested interests in an ethnically divided South Africa.
2. Black Solidarity is a positive substitute of a negative philosophy of "non-whitism." How often have I heard black people say "we non-whites!" It is bad enough when other people call us "non-whites," but it is unbearable to hear it said as a personal confession of identity. It is like listening to a Zulu speaking person using "fanakalo" in order to court approval from his employer.

Non-whitism is more than just a convenient way of speech: it is a philosophy, a deep seated articulation of a world-view and understanding of the self. If I were pressed to classify this non-white philosophy I would say that it belongs to the Neo-Platonist tradition. Put crudely, as you may remember, this tradition distinguishes between reality and its appearances. What we see around us are merely shadows of real things: reality only lies behind its phenomenon. Then what does "non-white" philosophy make out of this neo-platonist tradition?

Reality is white. All else is non-white in as far as it is a participatory shadow of whiteness. What is non-white has no independent existence: it subsists in whiteness. In other words "non-whites" depend on "whites" after whose image they, as shadows, are created. Shadows derive their identity from the things of which they are shadows. Therefore the identity of the "non-white" is the extent to which it approximates "whiteness." "Non-whites" can therefore be classified and divided according to the extent they approximate whiteness.

Is this just useless sophistry? I wish it were that. But it is not. It carries over into the real life we know. In other words "non-white" philosophy has social, cultural, economic and political implications. Let us take each of these implications in turn.

a. Social Implications: It is well-known that "non-whites" feel inferior to "whites," just as a shadow cannot but defer to its substance. Similarly the social amenities of non-whites are inferior to those of whites. This applies to toilets, recreational facilities and housing conditions.

b. Cultural Implications: Who does not know that non-whites have always tended to despise their cultural heritage? Relatively speaking, Indians have been the only exception when it came to their attitude towards their culture. For an African, to be "civilised" has meant to emulate the white man's behaviour patterns, that is, to be an authentic shadow. No wonder that the white man continued to reject us in spite of the fact that we wore his clothers, spoke his language and even tried to look a little bit white in our complexion. A shadow could simply not become the substance.

While still at this point of culture I am reminded of Carus who, during the past centuries meticulously propounded a theory of the spiritual hierarchy of races which he drew up according to the degree of the imitation of European civilisation. Arthur Gobineau elaborated this further. "For him the 'Aryan race' is the aristocracy of humanity, because only Aryans are of pure white blood: other varieties of the white race have secondary importance, while the non-white are fundamentally lower, destined for subsidiary roles in the history and economy of the world."

According to Gobineau, there would be no civilisation at all outside the white race had it not been for the process of interbreeding. He is of the opinion that inferiority and superiority are inborn and therefore an inferior people cannot by the very fact possess institutions of a higher order.

Therefore you can see how far things can go in this white-non-white dichotomy.

c. Economic Implications: Non-whites have predictably been satisfied with the shadow of the substance of the wealth of the land. They were credited with the ability of performing "economic acrobatics" for being able to survive where the white man could not. Such a "credit" did not serve to enhance their dignity and tenacity as human beings, because it was a credit given to a shadow. I have heard an Australian "admiring" the ability of the aborigines of surviving without water for days in the desert by only liking moisture and dew from leaves of certain plants. I myself have sometimes looked with admiration at my shadow reflected on a very deep pool where I would fear to swim. In other words my shadow can sometimes "do" what I cannot do; but this feat does not enhance its dignity because to me it remains my shadow. Have you not wondered why the non-whites do not get sufficient credit for having also developed this land in books on Economics? Look, through their cheap labour the non-whites have subsidised the economy of this country. The amount of subsidy they have paid to the South African economy is equal to the difference between the salary scales of whites and non-whites. No credit is given for this for nobody cares about shadows.



Dr Manas Buthelezi

The Natal Witness

d. Political Implications: All meaningful power is in the hands of the whites. Non-whites can only exercise the shadow of power in their Councils or Homelands. The "parliaments" of the non-whites are the shadow of the real parliament in Cape Town. Since 1910 whites have been brought towards an ever-deepening sense of unity: they are one "nation". The non-whites on the other hand, have been divided against their will into, bits and pieces of "nations." I have seen mirrors which duplicate or triplicate the image: the more multipartite the image the more intriguing is the spectacle. Nobody would agree to have his face cut into pieces, but people do not care what happens to their images. Hence those who wield power do not mind the division of non-whites into citizens of mini-states.

3. But there is a growing number of people who care. Some have already been liberated from the multipartite non-white cocoon into unconditional black people who stand in solidarity with one another. Early this year in one magazine there was a very telling cartoon with the caption: "In every 'non-white' there is a black man, created in the image of God trying to get out."

To move from "non-white" divisions into Indian, Coloured and African to black solidarity is more than a quest for change in official names. It is a process of liberation itself: liberation from non-being to reality, from shadow to substance and from the identity of nobody to that of somebody. It is true that suffering which is found in all forms of life under "shadow existence" will still be with us for quite some time. However at this moment in South African history the suffering of the black man is becoming redemptive. The black man is now regarding his suffering as a step towards liberation instead of a pool of fate and self pity. Right in the midst

of suffering the black man has made himself believe that he can do something about his own liberation. This is proof that he is no longer a non-white who subsists in and depends entirely on the whims of the white man: he is now a liberated black man. Black Consciousness is an instance of how the black man has transmuted his present suffering into the medium of liberation towards self esteem. Look at what is happening in the field of labour. The black worker has transformed his bitter experience of being under-paid into an occasion for discovering his potential. Look at how banned black people face courageously the reality of their bitter experience. They are learning the bitter lesson that you cannot truly belong to a community for which you are not prepared to suffer. Suffering for others is the best expression of solidarity with them.

The kind of black solidarity I espouse is an open one. It is open to the white man who is prepared to accept me not just as a non-white but as a fellow human being who happens to be black. I see black solidarity as necessary at the moment because we need a model of racial harmony which will become so attractive that whites will be forced to join it and abandon apartheid. It is not enough to keep on telling whites what they should do, but we must show them what they should be.

In this manner we shall cease being victims of South African history. Instead we shall be shapers of that history. A non-white is always a victim of the situation, but as black people we shall have become masters of the situation. Being a master of the situation means sometimes undergoing suffering for the sake of others without fear and panic. In this way the whole of South Africa will benefit from the constructive model of racial harmony initiated through black solidarity. □

HEALTH SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Wells L. G. — *Health, Healing and Society.*
(Ravan Press, Braamfontein)

by Edgar Brookes

In this brief but useful book Dr Wells and his wife, Dr Harrison, survey the health services of South Africa in the light of a recent study of the health care systems of Europe made with the help of the Christian Fellowship Trust.

Great honesty, real caring and the provision of useful information are characteristics of this pamphlet. As one analyses it, one feels that it can be divided into three parts.

The first of these is an examination of existing health services in South Africa. Inevitably this must bring out the great inequality that exists, even after years of effort, to improve the situation, between white and black services. The authors perform a useful service in telling us (p.2) that the two least important causes of death among whites are the two most important among Africans. These are diseases of the respiratory system and accidents, poisoning and violence. The State health policy, perhaps quite unconsciously, tends to be geared to European needs. The authors from their own experience at a missionary hospital find that "in many rural parts of South Africa, between 30% and 50% of African children die before their fifth birthday. In Cape Town in 1971 the infantile mortality rate was 12,8 for whites, 40,4 for Coloureds and 69,5 for Africans. Figures like these should arouse the intellect and challenge the conscience of all South Africans.

Rightly the authors deplore the jettisoning by the Nationalists in and after 1948 of the proposed National Health Service scheme and the neglect and final closing down of the Health Centres. There does not seem to be any convincing reason for this closing down except that the scheme had the ardent support of J. H. Hofmeyr.

This part of the book is well done, and so is the second strand in their thinking, the attempt to evaluate the rôle of Christian Mission Hospitals. There is no doubt that, other things being equal (they are not always), there is a more personal relationship between the missionary doctor and his patients, and more scope for experimentation in the psychological and social services rendered. But the authors show unexpected equanimity as they face the State's taking over mission hospitals and, though their treatment of the subject is stimulating, it leaves a number of questions open.

It is on the third aspect of the book—a strong plea for the training of medical auxiliaries, that this reviewer is reluctantly compelled to join issue with the authors. We cannot raise this question, as they tend to do, *in vacuo*. Two efforts to do this have been made. The second was completely ruined by the abandonment of the National Health Service scheme and the closing down of the Health Centres, in which and in which alone the medical aids could have had a status and real utility. African reactions to any attempt to reintroduce sub-medical training will undoubtedly be hostile. It will be said, and deeply felt, that Africans are being offered inferior training and permanently subordinate status. And where are the students to come from who will be willing to choose this and not a full medical course? The tragic disappointment of 1948 is still remembered by the African people.

Naturally one is hesitant to denigrate a proposal which is so obviously dear to these enthusiastic and sincere research workers. The book should be read and readers will have to decide for themselves whether this suggestion is practical. This reviewer thinks it is not. □

NEW POETRY

1. Photographs of Bushmen

Peter Strauss . . . Bateleur Press 1974

by Pauline Fletcher

This is Peter Strauss's first published collection of poems, and it is extremely slender. But the quality is unmistakable. The blurb tells us that he "was for the first time seriously hooked by poetry when he stumbled on T.S. Eliot's poems at high school". This might lead one to expect yet another collection of neo-Eliotic poems by a Sensitive Young Man. Fortunately Mr Strauss is very much his own man, though one can detect certain influences in his work. I would suggest that his poetic ancestry should be traced through Ted Hughes back to D. H. Lawrence, rather than to Eliot.

The poem that seems to show that ancestry most clearly is **The Tortoise**, a poem of real quality worth quoting in full because it also shows that the affinity with Lawrence and Hughes is far from being imitation and it illustrates something of Mr Strauss's special preoccupations.

The Tortoise

He sought longevity; vegetarian
He cut pale leaves of clover with bony gums
On the hill-side. Having mastered this art,
Found he could feed on invisible influences
In the atmosphere, scent-essences and ghosts.
His membraned nose sucked in the pure ice,
Greyish-blue tinted, aetherized, of mountain air.
Like a fish winter-bound
Hibernated, bloodless.

Next turned to imitate the life of stones.
Brilliant impurities in his clay
Rose streaking to the surface and were combed
To consistent sheens. On the sea's bed
Became inured to pressure, that laid rings
On him, flake pressed down upon flake.
Or in temporary release, uplifted,
Things outside this world, the seven stars,
Aurora borealis, imprinted
Blue flickering strands on his charmed loins.
Learnt to be composite, humped with embedded stones,
Petrified wood, animal skeleton, sand.

Was rock. Only, always,
At the base of his throat,
Like a bubble in purple lava
Rolling, horrible,
Without escape, his pulse.

One line (He cut pale leaves of clover with bony gums) is enough to demonstrate Mr Strauss's gift of empathy and his debt to Lawrence. But from that point the poem takes off more in the direction of Ted Hughes with the tortoise undergoing mythical transformations. Like Hughes, Strauss invests his mythical creatures with sensuous reality so that as we track the tortoise through its lives as ice-creature, fish, stone, sea-bed, stars, rock etc., we never quite leave the flesh and blood animal behind. What we are given, in fact, is a double insight into the nature of both tortoise and the creatures or objects it resembles or becomes. It is as though the poet has telescoped the whole evolutionary process and shown us that life is a continuum. There is an underlying reality that is shared by the tortoise and the rock. Stones are not dead matter; they surge and grow with their own life. It is worth stressing at this point that Mr Strauss is not lapsing into vague mysticism. His account of the "life of stones" is geologically accurate.

But the poet is also aware of the irreducible difference between tortoise and stone, so that at the very moment when the tortoise seems to have achieved "longevity" (brilliantly expressed in the terse statement: "Was rock.") we are reminded of its life-blood bubbling away.

I have said that this poem also illustrates something of the poet's special preoccupations. In an introduction to the poems Peter Strauss tells us that for him "poetry—the rhythms and gestures of it—all has to do with the body". I would accept that, on the evidence of these poems, but I would also say that the poet has a special, almost philosophical, concern with transformations, with the potential changes lurking within any particular object or creature.

In **Earth Goddess of Mottled Granite**, for example, the raw stone is potentially "a knuckle-duster or a knife" but it is transformed by the vision, will and craft of the artist into an Earth Goddess, a woman's body which in itself seems to have the further potential for transformation into a phallus. And as with **The Tortoise**, what the poet shows us is not merely a chance, surface similarity, but an expression of some underlying reality. The elemental forces which formed the granite in the first place and which are therefore inherent in its structure or "chemistry", are the same forces which, unlocked by the sculptor, give life and meaning to his Earth Goddess:

Breasts curled by storm, a belly charged
 With lightning muscularity and white,
 A river out of a force-fielded earth
 Of tremors let loose from trance
 To lash out magnetic currents
 Of its course and pulse.

One could trace this theme through most of the poems in the collection. The women collecting Tsama melons are transformed under the poet's gaze into "an ostrich, a hen, a buck" and finally dissolve into magic lantern silhouettes. In the strangely moving little poem "The Boy with the Lungs of a Bird" the boy has the potential to become a bird. The euphorbias "are cattle of other planets", children become owls under the London street-lamps, and minotaurs and satyrs hover between man and beast. In some cases the transformations are more significant than in others, but all reveal the poet's ability to see beneath surfaces. Even in the comparatively simple poem **Bushman Woman eats a Tsama Melon** he can suddenly delight and surprise us by revealing that the dried and wrinkled mask of the bushman is not the expression of privation but of the "fat energies of greed".

The ability to delight and surprise is surely the hallmark of real poetry, and Mr Strauss has different and subtle ways of achieving this end. He can do it by shifts of tone within a single poem, as in **Earth Goddess of Mottled Granite** which opens with the casual, conversational lines:

We might at any rate try to remember
 The man's directness.

The poet then develops a central section that is both powerfully sensuous and intellectually tough, after which his tone becomes quietly subdued once more as he directs our attention away from the demonic power of the carving to the humble exigencies of the artist's craft.

Mr Strauss can also delight us by the boldness of an idea. I could give many examples but shall have to content myself with one from **He Compares Her to a Statuette** where the bow image gives the taut perfection, the strenuous restfulness of the woman:

You manufacture a bow of your body
 and there out there you spindle, and are
 somehow at peace

As an idea this is inseparable from its poetic expression, and it seems a pity that a poet capable of writing such lines should give us the somewhat portentous prosiness of this:

It is a fact about human existence
 That we know the other's body
 Largely through deformations
 Largely through clothes.

Does one detect the lecturer's tone here? A quibble on my part perhaps, but possibly a danger signal. One does not object to the poetry of ideas, in which, to quote a highly successful line from the same poem, "lines thin to a few linear ideas". Some of the later poems of Wallace Stevens, for example, have that kind of austere, refined beauty. But, along with Keats, one may object to the poetry of ideas when it loses subtlety and has "a palpable design upon us".

This very seldom happens in Mr Strauss's poetry, and I should like to end on a positive note by drawing attention to the very fine and powerful poem, **Minotauromachy: A Picture by Picasso**. Here the brutal, clumsy, anguished figure of the minotaur is enclosed as though in a frame by the contrasting figures of the two girls, whose pure Fra Angelesque simplicity imparts a poignancy to the blundering, lustful minotaur, for whom they have a strange sympathy.

Minotauromachy: A Picture by Picasso

Two girls like doves
 are sitting in the window.
 It is evening.

Outside

the retinue of the minotaur goes by.
 His hoofs clatter on the cobbles.
 He lifts his head as always
 and he groans. He moans and bellows.
 The blood in his chest chokes him;
 not a sinew in his body
 but is a whip-lash and a cord:
 so muscle-tied. It is not enough
 the disembowelling of the horse,
 the rickety horse of old age,
 the apocalypse—
 not enough. Not enough
 the violation of the female matador,
 the dancer,
 her peace in ecstasy of death-like sleep
 and the slender breasts parted with a shawl
 Did you make this, Minotaur?

Not enough. He stumbles
 and clatters on the cobbles, his one arm
 stretched out in front of his lust-blind eyes,
 and he groans. O Minotaur, o Minotaur,
 what song do you sing?
 The man escapes up the ladder;
 the little girl with the flowers and the candle,
 the miniature statue of liberty
 is cannon-fodder. Only
 the girls like doves in a window
 hear your song.
 Hear the whole of your song.

There is no hint of the lecturer here. Instead, the poet has set up two opposite and complementary poles, girls and minotaur, between which the meaning of the poem arcs.

The transformation theme takes an intriguing and complex form here. The Minotaur yearns either for the attainment or destruction of his human aspect in the form of the remote, beautiful girls, while the girls, for all their innocence echo the desire of an earlier Cretan maiden for union with a bull, from which union sprang the Minotaur.

Poems such as this one have a haunting quality and lead one to hope that it will not be long before we see more of Peter Strauss's work. □

2. Rhodesian Poetry

Published by the Poetry Society of Rhodesia
Twenty-fifth Anniversary Issue (1950–1975)

by Fenella Laband

The Poetry Society of Rhodesia has been functioning for 25 years, and its anniversary issue contains some poetry which proves that the political situation has not produced literary sterility in Rhodesia. Indeed, Colin Style, in his poem "The New Town", evokes the brashness of a town, "in new clothes . . . like the clerk in our office." and his uneasy and confused mind faced by "a knotted fence." and "our palisade of rooms." His description of the land before the growth of the town forms a rich contrast:

What I remember,
dimly wrapped in soiled paper,
is a hidden landscape still primal
but beginning to be skirted by settlements.
You could still find duikers and hares in wire nooses,
seeing in their eyes dumb but acceptant agony.
Shadows would burn darkly in the grass,
flattening the earth's suppliant body.
But, what did come bending towards me,
tapping on the scarred bones in the fields,
was rain,
dripping down and damping out a squatter's fire
distantly,
scrubbing down the baroque flourish on the houses
forehead;
and afterwards, the Africans would flood over the
empty earth
(its voice stilled, the hillocks rumped like men sleeping
with blankets pulled over their heads)
with pails, piling mushrooms steadily through the
emerald grass,
past the temporary pools, gross with barbels that
wriggled up-field and hatched,
dressed in punctured sacks, wet black faces, breath
steaming out smelling of coarse tobacco,
and the glistening white mushrooms heaped there with
helpless frilled bellies.

Philippa Berlyn, in her poem "Border Road", uses surprising natural imagery—bullets and landmines "blossom" and "sprout" to convey the shock of sudden, 'camouflaged' violence:

I drive along a border road
in mist of rain
watching the trees spin by
and waiting for them to
blossom burning bullets.
Along the soft and sandy road
grows hardy grass.
I follow on the twin tyre tracks
and wait for them to
sprout a landmine blast.

And then, I remember there are still
—thank Heaven—rainbows
in quiet places;
bush without ambush,
tracks that lead somewhere
other than bloodied death,
and star-scattered nights
with a full moon
latticed by twigs and serenaded by cicadas
not the dragon's teeth harvest
of a midnight spring.

Not all the poems in this volume are, however, stimulating. Some are convention bound. Stephen Gray, of the Rand Afrikaans University, criticises this weakness in his foreword:

"Look, some Rhodesian poets have got to defend themselves against Keats. Keats is inappropriate to Rhodesia, because his entire world-view as conveyed in his choice of words is to Rhodesia of historic interest only. For that reason I find the use of "tracery", "saffron", "flute", "swathe", "trembling strings" and still more "swathes" inept. These words are no more than nostalgia now."

Nor do I enjoy the uncontrolled melodrama of Charl Sisson's "The Terrorist." I quote a stanza from the poem:

You slipped through dim evening tunnels
Evil bright in your eyes.
Avoiding the curling sun's light

Bullets slipping in your sweat crazed hands
You pressed the gun against your thigh
And fear flapped and crouched behind you
On empty hunchman feet
Dripping a silence on leaves where you passed.

In the next stanza Sisson describes the terrorist's arm,
"a cricketer's arc around a heavy ball."

There is, however, much to enjoy in this slender volume of poetry, including Solomon M. Mutswairo's "The Grave of an Unknown Person", the late Wilson Chivaura's "Song for

Hunting Animals," and Bonus Zimunya's "Old Granny", which is reproduced below:

A little freezing Spider:
Logs and arms gathered in her chest
Rocking with flu,
I saw old Granny
At Harare Market;
It was past nine of the night.
When I saw the dusty crumpled Spider—
A torn little blanket
Was her web.□

from **IT'S GETTIN LATE** and other poems from **OPHIR: Selected by Walter Saunders and Peter Horn;**
Ravan Press; 1974

THE RUBBER STAMP

The rubber stamp cuts down
A frozen arc of motion
To land on my passbook
And leave a reverberating
Silence.
The stamp means
I can almost be a man.
I can brush shoulders
With the great white god
Along West Street,
In search for **their eternal** wallets.
The gory ink in my pocket
Is greater than me, you Kind sir,
And the man in Pretoria.
The rubber stamp is a gun
I can use to guerilla unmolested
In the white jungle.

Mandlenkosi Langa

MONOTONOUS SONG

A man,
a dark skinned man
looking at us.
A man
with big white eyes
and dark skin,
just staring at us.
Dark skinned
but a man, just the same.
A man staring
and walking on the other
side of the sidewalk.
A dark skinned man
but a man, just the same.
A man, a thousand men,
a million, ten million men
all by himself.
Ten million men
on the other side of the sidewalk
staring and walking
walking and staring at us.
Without hatred or anger,
without fear as well.
Just looking,
like any other man, looking
at his fellow man.

Rui Knopfli.

From "WALKING THROUGH OUR SLEEP"

Peter Horn. Ravan Press 1974

I'M GETTING FAMOUS SORT OF

my first poems are published
I am getting famous
sort of

I rehearse dignity
in front of a mirror
I receive visitors
young poets
present to me
their first attempts
I

say: not too bad
no need to do a lot of thinking
from now on success
breeds success in every case
I will say
I am for peace
(naturally, who is not?)
and against the government

soon they will present me
with prizes (academics, juries, professors)
and I will smile
the prescribed smile
what I say
will be reasonable
or appropriately angry
or soothingly shocking

it is time
somebody
kicked me
in the arse

ADVENTURER ON FOREIGN SHORES

The helpless adventurer,
washed ashore
on the pounding surf of madly spinning words.
shipwrecked,
speechless: when will he regain
his consciousness?

The guileless princess
is used in all her shining black beauty
as a means to lengthen the story
to its prearranged end in Ithaca

The mortal danger of the waves
and the risk of death and total loss
provide the reason
for robbing the natives
in the name of calculated profits.

The choice seems simple;
success or failure,
swindle or die.

Conscience is a luxury
Which only the poor can afford.!!

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