

# reality

MARCH 1987

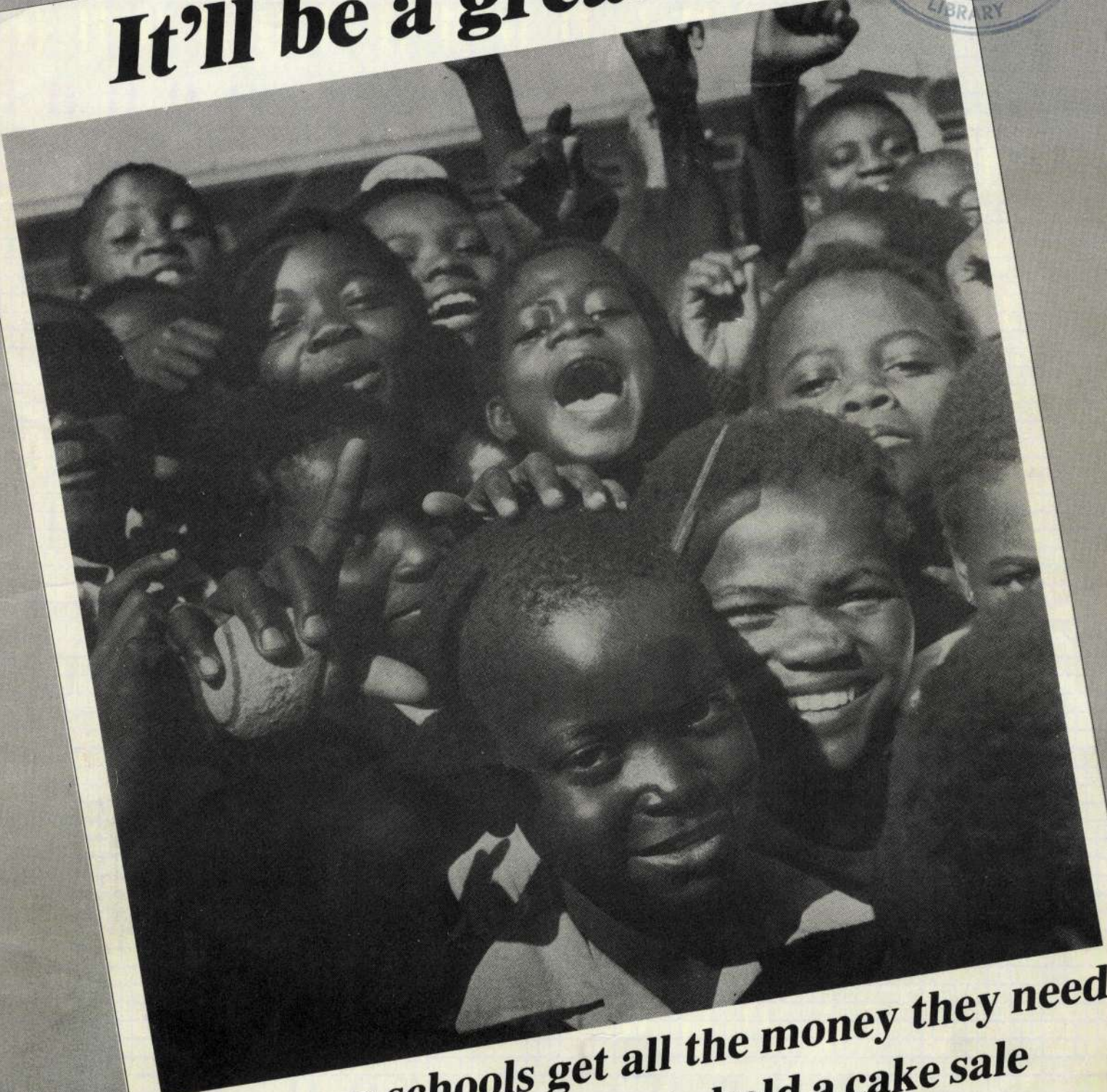
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A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION



**It'll be a great day**



**When our schools get all the money they need  
and the SADF has to hold a cake sale  
to buy a casspir**

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# EDITORIALS

## 1. THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CRISIS COMMITTEE

This edition of **Reality** is largely devoted to discussion of educational issues, surely one of the most important current debates in the country? The Nationalist Government's contribution to this debate so far has been to take virtually no part in it. Now it is trying to prevent its most telling critics from doing so either. Restrictions placed on the National Education Crisis Committee under the State of Emergency make it impossible for the Committee -

undoubtedly the most widely supported and sophisticated group engaged in this discussion - to conduct anything like a normal debate on the question.

As much as there can be no solution to our political problems which does not involve the ANC so can there be no solution to our educational problems which does not involve the NECC.□

## 2. DISASTER BENT

We could be forgiven for thinking that the South African Government has deliberately decided to copy the lemmings and embark on a course of national suicide. Early 1987 has seen it saying "No!" to talking to the ANC, "No!" to listening to the National Education Crisis Committee, "No!" to the Indaba, "No!" to the repeal of the Group Areas Act and "No!", in the most humiliating manner possible, to its only Coloured ally's swim on a 'white' beach.

It has seen it, more than once, rush out new Emergency proclamations in the middle of the night to block loopholes in old ones and to subvert a series of important Court judgements. These judgements had restored considerable credibility to the judicial system and at least partially reinstated the Courts in their role as defender and protector of the individual against state intrusions on his rights. It has

seen Mr Pik Botha spending as much of his time attacking the United States as he has ever done attacking the Soviet Union.

Is all this the inevitable response of Nationalist Afrikanerdom to sanctions? Is it saying to the world "There is nothing worse you can do to us now, so to hell with you. We will do as we like, and damn the consequences?" It would seem so. Against this bleak background the one bright spot has been the decision of Mr Wynand Malan, M.P., Dr Denis Worrall and other prominent Nationalists not to take the suicide course, and to resign from the Party. For the first time a number of Nationalists are leaving the NP because it is too reactionary and not, as has invariably been the case in the past, because it was becoming too 'liberal'. We must now wait to see, if there are enough of them for their defections to restore some sanity to Government actions.□

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by Tony Morphet

## "PEOPLES EDUCATION : WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED?"

Resistance to Bantu Education has been continuous and sustained for 30 years and more. The system has never won the support of the people who have been compelled to use it. Over the period the expression of the resistance has changed from the early reluctant compliance and strategic use of the resources, to outright rejection and revolt - the latter particularly over the last ten years. As yet the response of the State shows no sign of a willingness to relinquish its grip, nor to reorganise its position. The De Lange Report, which was the most significant attempt at reform, failed to achieve even its limited goals. A measure of the current position of the State is given in the "notice" published by the President under the Public Safety Act (December 1986) which makes any form of "alternative" education **within** the schools punishable by fines of R4 000 or two years imprisonment.

But the coercion of the State shows, better than any analysis, the degree to which it has lost the battle for educational authority. Since 1976 it has been driven steadily back from any claim to being the legitimate source of educational policy. The bid for legitimacy was the *raison d'être* of the reform movement and that is now plainly in ruins.

It is the disintegration of the framework of legitimacy which has caused the breach into which the new proposals for alternative education policies have moved. The State continues to exist as a coercive military/political unit, but where the policy making source for the society should be, there is little more than a vacuum. In an important sense, for Black people at least, there is no educational policy - only an imposed order.

Peoples Education is the most prominent grouping which has moved into the open space and it is busy working with the issues of policy, without having the political capacity to implement its decisions through an established legislative process. The movement openly and explicitly anticipates that, within a reasonable period of time, it will gain the necessary political capacity through the formation of a new state authority. At the present it appears as a part of the embryo of the new order.

The starting point for any examination and critical understanding of the movement must be its problematic political position. It is a necessary and constructive attempt to respond to the disintegration of the authority of the apartheid state; and it is part of an effort to build a new and

legitimate authority – in education first and later in the political state as a whole – and it is this position which sets the basic agenda of the movement.

There appear to be three principal overt thrusts:-

- to win and hold the support of the broad mass of the people through entry into the education conflict and its policy vacuum;
- to develop an educational policy which will meet the needs of the mass constituency;
- to direct the educational programme towards the construction of a new political order which will express the will of the people.

Behind these, though, there are other equally important, but covert, concerns, among the most important of which are maintaining strategic relations with the main political powers contending for the authority of the State – the Government on the one hand; the A.N.C. on the other.

Moreover, the movement is locked tightly into a “progressive” dynamic. It must be able to demonstrate visible advances to its constituency. The moment it begins to lose its forward momentum its support will begin to fragment and fall away.

It is under these conditions (or something approximating them) that one can put the central question “What can be expected from the movement in the form of educational change?”

Given reasonably favourable conditions (i.e. relative stability and a tolerable level of state harassment) there are important positive answers to be registered at the outset.

The movement will win support from students and, more especially, parents. At a recent education conference Fanyana Mazibuko spoke vividly of the roots of Peoples Education in the deep yearning of the people for an education which was **theirs**; which they could depend upon to nourish, support, enlighten and advance them. The yearning is nothing new since the mission schools tapped the same source. What is new is the intensity of the feeling, spurred as it is by the denial and deformation of Bantu Education, and now by the hope of some form of change after the bitter struggles of the last decade. Support will spring from these roots.

And the support will have immediate value because it will establish the movement as a focus of coherence in a very turbulent and anarchic environment. It is reasonable to hope, if not to expect, that the movement will be able to re-establish the idea of learning as a valued activity. It must be recognised that there are large and important areas of the country in which this has all but disappeared among students. In the brutalisation which children have suffered, learning, for many, no longer carries any positive significance, much less being seen as an activity in which to invest time and effort.

To sustain and develop the positive values of support, the movement will, however, have to be able to maintain its momentum with all the skill and resources at its disposal.

The second area in which one can expect significant advances to be made by Peoples Education is in the design of the school curriculum. Two conditions make this a very fertile field for development. The most obvious is the intellectual bankruptcy of the apartheid curriculum. The simple facts are that the existing curriculum (in both Black and White education) represents a systematic denial and

distortion of the daily experience of the majority of the people of the country. School learning is less about gaining knowledge and insight than it is about learning the rules of apartheid power. To introduce even the most self evident truths of daily experience into the curriculum will be a major advance. The field is open, and Peoples Education has already begun to mobilise the necessary intellectual resources to reconstitute the full range of school subjects in terms of a fresh interpretation of South African reality. The re-interpretation of history is the most obvious need and the work is already far advanced, but a good deal has been done in other fields as well including Science and Mathematics, Geography, Biology and English.

Whether Peoples Education will be able to implement the new curricula directly, depends on the problematics of its political position, but even if this is not immediately possible the importance of the work must not be underestimated. As resources for the future the new formulations and materials will have great value.

The third area in which we can look for advance is the policy basis for a new educational system. This is by far the most difficult field in which to work, not only because it is contentious, but because it is subject to so many variables and constraints. The movement has taken steps to begin the assessment of policy options from the ground up, by instituting a programme of baseline research. This involves everything from demographic projections to the assessment of potential financial resources, and it focusses on the possible dimensions of a national system.

Research is necessary because the existing information about education fits the skewed designs of the apartheid framework and fresh enquiry within a new framework will certainly reveal different dimensions to the problems and the possible solutions. But research will itself provide no answers to the policy issues. These require choices and it is here that Peoples Education will face severe difficulties.

Peoples Education is at present a populist movement. Its political predicament left it no option but the populist position. In terms of the social values of education this has meant a commitment to three basic value positions:

- education to meet the needs of the people
- education for equality
- education for the development of the economic and political life of the society under the democratic control of the people.

These constitute the ground rules of a populist position. The problem is that they cannot be coherently reconciled with a single policy. They are not, in any proper sense of the phrase, policy statements at all. They are gestures of good faith and signals of good intent. A policy position provides the framework within which rational and consistent choices can be made; and the three articles of the populist faith are aimed at avoiding just such choices.

But choices are inevitable and they will pose cruel dilemmas for the movement. South African society, like all others, and more obviously than most, is a historical creation, and it bears all the marks of a violent and radically uneven development. The “needs of the people” are not uniform; educating for equality means more than equal provision for all; the best education for social development may well mean unequal provision in denying some needs and oversupplying others.

These difficulties, which lie deep in the social historical inheritance, are amplified and exacerbated by the constraints of limited resources. Finances have strict limits; educational resources are seriously underdeveloped and distributed in grossly uneven ways. Sound policy requires that these conditions be carefully weighed against the perception of "needs".

The broad promises of a populist movement are therefore only the first step towards a new educational order. To build and hold the broadest possible support the movement naturally tries to avoid the necessary choices for as long as possible. It is this fact which lies behind the repeated statement from spokespersons that Peoples Education is a "process" not a "pre-designed programme". The point is made to stress the fact that the key choices have not been made – and that possibly some way can be found in which "the people" themselves will make them.

But this is disingenuous, despite the elaborate democratic rhetoric of mandates and elections. Such decisions are made by a political leadership and the difference lies in whether they are made openly or in secret. Populism can serve as the manipulative device of a secretive leadership or the opening of the way to a new democratic order. It is no answer in itself.

What we may expect in the form of educational change turns, therefore, in the end on the political character of the movement. This is neither easy to grasp nor to define because it is carefully masked by both the populist and the educational rhetoric. At least three traditions make their presence felt within the vocabulary of the movement. There is a clear socialist frame of reference but it is diffused within (and sometimes contradicted by) at least two other traditions – the nationalist and the liberal.

These three traditions have been in contest within South African political and educational practice since at least the early part of this century and they have played different, and important, roles in the development of South African educational practice.

The socialist tradition has been principally preoccupied with the recruitment and training of (black) working class leadership groups. As a corollary to this small-scale intensive educational endeavour, the socialist political programme has always been predicated upon the necessity for the leadership to define, for the mass following, the proper political steps to take along the road to the achievement of a socialist South Africa. South African socialism has long been characterised by both the high levels of abstraction in the theoretical debates between intellectuals, and the huge gulf between the intellectual culture of the leadership and the survival culture of the Black working class. The consequent effects in the socialist framework are a strong stress on the authority of the leadership, and on the need for rank and file discipline. Socialism, as a result, is generally understood to be the product of a planned society in which the planning is undertaken by those who by gifts and training have a deeper understanding of "the needs of the people". It implies centralised state authority.

That this relationship between mass and leadership is latent within the populism of Peoples Education does not need to be stressed. What does require stress is the point that any concerted move toward a socialist programme requires a re-definition of "the people" and their role. Under such

conditions the function of "the people" becomes the mere validation of the plans of the leadership – a scenario by now well established from East Germany to China.

The second tradition evident in the populism of Peoples Education is nationalism. "The people" (or "die volk") is a key concept within the nationalist framework and Volksonderwys was as well known to deprived Afrikaners in the 1930's as Peoples Education is to the deprived Black people now. Nationalism's answer to the key problems of choice is to provide a very strict **and very limited** definition of "the people". In the nationalist universe "the people" are those who can be said by birth, blood and belief to share in an exclusive inheritance. Anyone else is, by definition, not of the people and therefore a real or potential enemy. Thus resources are delivered to the chosen ones and support lies in the tight bonds of patronage interpreted through the semi-mystical categories of "the people".

South Africa understands nationalism better than most other countries. We have seen it at work, close up, for forty and more years. It is the social mechanism through which a minority group mobilises mass support to force their entrance into the full power and benefits of the society.

There are powerful nationalist themes in Peoples Education. The leadership is drawn from the same disadvantaged, educated, urban, petty bourgeois, class which mobilised for their own benefit the Afrikaner poor. Their strategies and their rhetoric are uncomfortably similar. The movement begins as something for all of the people but the definitions shift, and the broad promises of the movement are delivered ultimately to only a very few. Nationalism depends as much upon denial and exclusion as upon inclusion and reward – as Black people know to their cost.

The third tradition – the liberal – is at once the most pervasive and the most elusive presence in the formulations of Peoples Education. The promises of the liberal tradition are unspectacular and its capacity to mobilise support among severely disadvantaged people is minimal. It has nothing to say about the rapid transformation of educational and social structures nor is it able to produce a comprehensive theoretical plan of action. In South African terms the tradition has been deeply compromised by its close linkage with the history of white social and economic power and it has failed to halt the excesses of Afrikaner nationalism.

Nonetheless, when the full case against the tradition is granted, there remains a very important record of achievement and a form of engagement which yields a great deal. In education the liberal tradition has been preoccupied with broadening the definitions of "needs" and with small-scale incremental extensions of educational opportunities. The most obvious examples include the mission schools and colleges, the adult night schools and the "open" universities. All of these attempts fell victim to the narrowing Afrikaner definitions of "the people" but their influence remains important even 35 years later. Liberal educational practice is directed towards drawing marginal and excluded groups into a central common society and it follows the liberal political principle of incorporation of plural groups into a common political structure. Liberal approaches tend to be pragmatic though not uncritical in their acceptance of the importance of established institutions and practices and they lay more stress on

innovation and development than on radical transformations.

In considering the dilemmas of choice facing Peoples Education the liberal response is guided by the two central commitments of liberal political theory – that each person should enjoy liberty commensurate with the fact that such enjoyment does not deprive another of his liberty and that social resources should be employed to maximise the position of the least well-off persons in the society.

Taken together, these principles point toward a very open educational system in which a wide variety of resource inputs (private/public/parastatal) would be drawn together within a multi-path system designed to serve a number of different sectors of the population in different ways. The goals would be to maximise the volume of resources available for education and to stimulate the innovative capacities of the system as a whole. In the use of state

resources planners and administrators would be obliged to demonstrate the ways in which their programmes would maximise the position of the least well-off.

The liberal tradition in South Africa, in both politics and education, has been dominated by white people and Eurocentric perspectives, but there is no reason why this should be seen as something intrinsic to liberal thinking. Indeed, as Charles Simkins has recently argued, liberal traditions have taken deep root among Black South Africans. In the political formulations which must follow the populist origins of Peoples Education, it is not unreasonable to hope that liberal educational thought and practice will find a new group of proponents, new perspectives, and a new base of authority, within South Africa. The dangers inherent in a state centralised system, whether constructed on a nationalist or a doctrinaire socialist platform, are too serious to allow the liberal case to go by default.□

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by M. van Wyk Smith

## WHAT ARE WE EDUCATING THEM FOR?

A few months ago I was invited to address final-year students in the Rhodes University Faculty of Education. In a country where and at a time when education has become the very locus – indeed, a major issue – of ideological division and the struggle against repression, the topic on such an occasion dictated itself.

Within a few months of my talk, almost everyone of the young people before me would be standing in front of a classroom, and amid the chaos of settling in, preparing lessons, finding where the register, the chalk and the stationery were kept, coaching the swimming team, editing the school magazine, organizing the PTA, and marking 30 essays twice a week – amid all this one would hope that at least at the back of their minds there would be a persistent still small voice asking: “What are we educating them **for?**”.

I hoped that I would insult everyone in my audience if I were to have suggested that they might have been under the misapprehension that in January 1987 (or whenever) they would all walk into the sunny, smiling classrooms of South Africa, ready to impart wisdom.

Most of them knew that the reality was far otherwise, but the subject seemed worth pursuing, and readers of **Reality** might like to share these thoughts.

For a start, many of South Africa's classrooms are at this time cold and closed, locked up because of intransigence on the one hand, rejection on the other, and naive notions of education on both sides. “Revolution now, education later”, or “Pass one, pass all” or “Education of the people, by the

people for the people” rank about equal in naivety and intellectual stultification with old faithfuls such as: “Separate but equal education”, “Keep politics out of education”, and “Christian National Education” (which, as Ernie Malherbe pointed out many years ago, is neither Christian, nor national, nor education).

So the very first, and I should say the very least, task to which a new generation of teachers has to commit itself is to open up all the classrooms, physically and spiritually, to a new order, a new concept of an open society, and a new compassion among all South Africans. Their predecessors have failed to solve the problems; they and the children they will be teaching will have to do better; they can hardly do worse.

But not all the classrooms are locked up. What's happening in those (or at least some of them) that are open? The week before my talk Herman Gilliomee had quoted in his regular column in the **E.P. Herald** a speculation by Ken Harts-horne (perhaps this country's most respected authority on Black education) that by now irredeemable damage has been done to a large proportion of the black schoolgoing generation, expressed by the fact that only 7% of Soweto matric candidates last year were successful. A concept of education, based on rote learning and developed in a context of frustration, demoralization, and contempt for the very educational system itself, has emerged which makes its pursuit, even among the willing, virtually pointless.

In certain areas – certainly in the Eastern Cape, heartland of Rhodes University – 1987 will mark the third consecutive year

of virtually no senior schooling. To this must be added the chilly realization that the De Lange Commission Report, responsible for so much educational euphoria a few years ago, now finally stands revealed for the cruel academic hoax the government had all along intended it to be.

It would be a mistake to think that the resulting psychosis of demoralization and rejection is limited only to Black schools. Young people are sensitive, and the machinery of repression as well as the atmosphere of what I would like to call the negativization of education which is being publicly generated because of what happened to De Lange and what is happening in Black education, have already left their mark on White education as well. Indeed, the very fact that we have to go on speaking of "Black" education and "White" education contributes to the steady destabilization of *all* education in South Africa.

To this must, of course, be added the immeasurable emotional and spiritual damage caused to the very fibres of our intellectual life as a result of repression, censorship, boycotts, detentions, violence, and fear. They say that damaged brain cells can never be repaired or replaced. I have a fear that the communal brain cells of our whole society, as evidenced in intellectual debate, academic freedom and the unfettered pursuit of knowledge and creativity are being irreparably damaged in just this way.

At the very least, the repairs will have to take as many generations of school-going children to be effected as did the original damage, and that has been many years.

But, some of my aspirant teachers might have been tempted to say, surely somewhere, perhaps even in many places, education is proceeding quite calmly and thoroughly. Look at us, they might have said, we have been reasonably well educated; some of us, indeed, perhaps better than in any but a few other countries in the world. Surely, in our best schools (at least the White ones) some very fine teaching is taking place.

Precisely. But here I had to come to my final and perhaps most distressing area of concern. We have a new phenomenon in South African education – it's called "Education for Emigration". The **Weekly Mail** of 8 August 1986 listed some disheartening emigration statistics for 1985, recording a net immigration deficit of several thousands, pointing out that the greatest loss was among professional people, including some 246 doctors alone. We face the devastatingly ironic prospect that the better the education which we provide is, or becomes, the better we may be preparing people to leave. I did not wish to embarrass my audience by asking those who planned to leave South Africa in the near or approximate future to put up their hands, but I guessed the request would produce a result I should rather not have wanted to know.

Finally, however, I could not simply walk away from either these students or the challenge I had thrown out at the beginning. To the question: "What are we educating these kids **for?**," did I have an answer?

My mind turned to literature, firstly to Henry James's great novel, **The Portrait of a Lady**. Early on in the novel the heroine, Isabel Archer, is offered a very advantageous marriage, but she instinctively knows that to accept it would be to opt out of life, life with all its vicissitudes, chances, disasters, excitements. Speaking to her suitor, she says:

"I can't escape unhappiness," said Isabel. "In marrying you I shall be trying to . . . It comes over me every now

and then that I can never be happy in any extraordinary way; not by turning away, by separating myself."

"By separating yourself from what?" (asked Lord Warburton, her suitor).

"From life. From the usual chances and dangers, from what most people know and suffer." (140-41)

But some 300 pages later Isabel, having made a disastrous marriage to someone else, now dreadfully unhappy, is still convinced that her original decision had been right, for, as James puts it:

Suffering, with Isabel, was an active condition; it was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation, of response to every pressure. (461)

This view of suffering as an "active condition" is, of course, an existentialist one, and it forms the theme of that greatest of all existentialist novels, Albert Camus's **The Plague**. The novel recounts an outbreak of bubonic plague in the Algerian city of Oran, but it is clear from an early stage that Camus sees the plague as a symbol of pestilence of a much wider moral import against which humanity has to contend ceaselessly – the pestilence of injustice, inhumanity, poverty, cruelty, to name only some of its manifestations.

The book grows from, in the words of one of its characters, "the need to make a statement against the pestilence" (298) and from the conviction, in the words of another, that "the social order around (us is) based on the death sentence" (226), for the bacillus of the pestilence is in us all. Eventually one of the two main characters, Tarrou, who succumbs to the plague, sees his own commitment clearly:

All I maintain (he says) is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences. (229)

And right at the end of the book, the other main character, Dr Rieux, who survives, decides

to compile this chronicle, so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness in favour of those plague-stricken people; so that some memorial of the injustice and outrage done them might endure; and to state quite simply what we learn in a time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise.

None the less, he knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts, despite their personal afflictions, by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers. (278)

So, in wishing these young teachers well in their future careers, I could only trust that they and their young charges would always be healers, part of the cure and not part of the pestilence.□

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# TRANSFORMING ITSELF: PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The educational struggle in South Africa goes back to well before the cataclysmic effects of the June 1976 riots. That date is useful, however, in marking the sharpening focus upon educational demands by black communities which have developed well beyond claims for parity (of whatever kind) between black and white education in South Africa. The position is now that education is seen as part of the process of liberation – which is the achievement of a single, non-racial and democratic state – and that education should be wholly reconstituted so as to be appropriate to that future South Africa.

People's Education for People's Power<sup>1</sup> took form barely a year ago at the conference called by the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee in December 1985.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the March 1986 Education Crisis Conference, public statements by the National Education Crisis Committee executive, articles collected for publication,<sup>3</sup> papers at conferences<sup>4</sup> and discussions at regional and local levels have begun to provide those interested with an increasingly substantial body of material upon which to reflect and act.<sup>5</sup>

It is obvious why there is the present desire to press vehemently for an alternative form of education for the whole country. People's Education for People's Power is but one manifestation of the political, cultural and intellectual ferment of our time. Out of the long-standing convictions about the utter inferiority of Bantu Education has emerged the wider vision of the need to restructure the bases of all education in this country. Furthermore, it is the government which is trapped in the consequences of its policies while the proponents of a non-racial democracy generate radical alternatives as part of the creation of a new society. It has been realized that the forms that the alternatives take are as important as their content, for the processes by which the new is evolved are as much a challenge to dominant concepts as the substance of education can be.

The indigenous nature of the enterprise must also be noted. The limits of exotic traditions can now be defined in relation to the accounts we can give of the realms we live in, accounts which are consonant with our knowledge and experience.

For example, but for the work of radical historiography during the last fifteen years,<sup>6</sup> we would not have had the materials or the methodology with which to compile the kinds of history courses which are emerging from the People's Education Commission.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, African and Southern African literature has only recently been studied systematically at colleges of education and universities and there are only now some resources available which make possible coherent thinking about that literature. Combined with these literary developments, current thinking about

language, especially in certain areas of applied linguistics, has opened possibilities for reconsidering the teaching of English in schools and elsewhere.

It would also be erroneous to consider education (of whatever kind in South Africa) without due acknowledgement of the connexions between early childhood and education:

One truth about South Africa . . . is to be found in understanding the relationship between unequal systems of formal learning and its systems of early generational nurturing. A fundamental of this evolution is a teaching and an early learning about human polarization, pain, injury, power and powerlessness.<sup>8</sup>

As Nasson's reminder indicates, formal education is but one aspect of the broader social experience. People's Education for People's Power acknowledges this overtly and deliberately. It redefines the role of the teacher in the community, and it acknowledges the relationships between educational issues and community concerns such as rent and consumer boycotts. By perceiving education in much wider terms than school- and institution-based programmes imply, the community groups developing People's Education for People's Power encourage thinking about the interests of the whole of society. This is in sharp contrast to the educational attitudes contained in the De Lange Committee's Report on the provision of education in a future South Africa, which proposes solutions to narrowly defined problems and needs as determined by the state, the private sector and industry as well as by technological interests.<sup>9</sup>

People's Education for People's Power is intended to apply to all South Africans, and cannot be distinguished from government by all South Africans in a unitary state. It is intended to replace education for exploitation and education for domestication.

Two subject committees have been at work to produce guidelines and materials for People's Education in 1987. The People's History committee has produced initial teaching packages. This material is based upon the view that present History teaching in South African schools "not only distorts the past but maims it. In content it is exclusive, elitist and shallow; it is silent or misleading on the historical experience of the majority of South Africans; it is heavily encrusted with racial, class and gender assumptions."<sup>10</sup> Instead,

History in schools should seek to recover and comprehend the past in full; to recreate the experiences of ordinary men and women and not just the deeds and edicts of those in authority; to identify



the historic sources of dispossession, oppression and exploitation and to examine ways in which these have been resisted. The teaching of history should also encourage a critical, enquiring and participatory approach by students.<sup>11</sup>

The proposals for People's English for People's Power include assisting all learners to

- understand the evils of apartheid and to think and speak in non-racial, non-sexist and non-elitist ways
- determine their own destinies and to free themselves from oppression
- play a creative role in the achievement of a non-racial, democratic South Africa
- use English effectively for their own purposes
- proceed with their studies.<sup>12</sup>

Discussion, performance and other participatory methods are central to this kind of English teaching and learning which aims at a high degree of flexible competence which is intended to give learners confidence in the context of the broadly transformative curriculum which will characterise the full implementation of People's Education for People's Power.

It is proposed that the content of People's English should include a broad range of resources and that the texts legitimately available for discussion and study should be drawn from

popular culture, biographies and life histories, oral literature including song, talks by people of the community and elsewhere, written literature from the whole world (including translations) but particularly from our time and place, newsletters, pamphlets, advertisements, public documents, speeches, essays, sermons and orations, cartoons, material from radio, television and film, texts from other subjects in the curriculum and the range of languages and dialects in South Africa.<sup>13</sup>

Thus students at school, for example, could study over say two years some South African poetry, plays, novels and short stories; they could read a nineteenth century British or twentieth century American novel; a Russian novel; they could discuss essays by Cabral, Fanon, Ghandi, Machel, Nkosi, Schreiner and Soyinka; they could examine the Freedom Charter, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Communist Manifesto; they could listen to talks by lawyers, health workers, journalists, union officials, clerics, writers and so on.

These are merely examples of the degree of access presupposed by current thinking about People's English. It is very unlikely that setworks will be like those prescribed by the DET in the past.

The NECC is currently setting up committees to generate proposals in two other educational areas. The first is that of political education, and this is intended to become a fully-fledged subject in the curriculum. This has antecedents in a subject like Civics and the idea has also been punted in the form of 'political literacy'.<sup>14</sup> The second area is that of primary education. This is a vast field which needs urgent and intelligent attention paid to it.

At the heart of the conception and the evolution of People's Education lies the process of consultation. Consultation has characterised the method and the style of the National Education Crisis Committee as well as all the structures which have been set up for the implementation of its

programmes. One such structure is the formation of Parent-Teacher-Student associations at each school. These associations are dependent upon organized community/parent groups, teacher unions (preferably one, representing all teachers) and student representative councils. At local and regional level these PTSAs – composed of democratically elected, mandated and accountable representatives – are intended to guide the implementation of People's Education. Where the formation of PTSAs has proved difficult (because of school closures, emergency regulations and the like), the street, block and area committees reflect and represent the educational concerns of communities. Furthermore, student organizations, political movements and trade unions are becoming closely involved in the process of People's Education for People's Power.

Education and educational responsibility is thus neither the prerogative of children nor adults alone, and is not confined to schools and conventional institutions of learning. The engagement of all people and all spheres of activity in continual education is a particularly marked feature of People's Education.

The truism that education, no matter how conservative, is concerned at least partly with change is given sharp re-emphasis in People's Education because of the emerging focus upon **process** as its intrinsic mode. This is a matter of great complexity and its implications are vast. Central to the notion of process within People's Education are consultation and subsequent development. Then there is the understanding by the learner of process – the educational processes and procedures which involve learning and power; there is the understanding by workers of economic and productive processes so that they can contribute to union and industrial decisions as well as to broader community concerns; there is the education of parents – in adult education as well as a sense of the educational experiences of their children – in issues affecting their destinies. These are instances which can be extended. At other levels, process has implications for the following:

- \* the role and function of the educator when learners are actively engaged in their own education
- \* procedures most appropriate to such learning experiences methods, modes of presentation, learning resources
- \* attitudes to knowledge – its origins, purposes, implications and responsibilities
- \* the relationships of parts to the whole and the contexts of the whole
- \* the interrelationships between the school, the factory, and education centres to the community
- \* the relations of subjects to the curriculum
- \* subject content and emphasis
- \* learner involvement in the actual production of materials
- \* the connexions between mental and manual labour
- \* the role of the intellectual, the academic and the expert
- \* the purpose and function of skills
- \* methods of evaluation and means of accreditation.

The implementation of People's Education for People's Power faces daunting difficulties. The first year of People's Education has seen a massive struggle between the state and black communities for the control of schools. This struggle will continue and the state is using extensive powers to inhibit the consolidation of community-generated initiatives.<sup>15</sup> Then there is the question of the

capacity of teachers to cope with the innovative nature of People's Education. Many teachers, whose education, training, experience and organization have not given them the confidence or resources to make radical changes to the patterns of their normal classroom work, will find the implementation of People's Education difficult.

The two major factors inhibiting the introduction of People's Education indicate absolutely the need for consultation, organization and the setting up of supportive structures. Parents, teachers and students will have to work closely together to make their demands inexorable and to produce the resources and attitudes to learning that are central to the process of People's Education. This is happening in certain areas of the country already.

There is no doubt that the development and the implementation of People's Education for People's Power involves major political issues. But it is worth noting how fundamentally democratic and humane its basic thrust is. The educational systems officially in force in this country have failed utterly. In response to that acknowledged failure has arisen an educational movement which is generating theory, purpose, practical content and new social direction within the context of broad-based campaigns against all manifestations of apartheid. Compared to this, the ventures of corporate finance, the state's pretensions at educational equality, official enquiries and the timorous experiments of almost all private schooling are marginal and irrelevant. People's Education for People's Power is neither a slogan nor a rallying cry. It is a mass-based undertaking by an entire society to transform itself.□

#### REFERENCES

1. To refer to 'People's Education' only is to give the term and concept an easy assimilability which does not do justice to the notion of education implicit in the full phrase.
  2. The resolutions passed at the December 1985 and March 1986 Education Crisis Conferences are important to study. They are conveniently available in **Perspectives in Education** v 9 no 1 July 1986 pp 60-70.
  3. The availability of these articles has been retarded by the confiscation of materials by the police from NECC offices in November 1986.
  4. Among those who have offered papers on People's Education at conferences are, David Adler, Yusuf Gabru, Michael Gardiner, Ken Hartshorne, Hilary Janks, Vusi Khanyile, Malcolm Mackenzie, Fanyane Mazibuko, Ian Moll, Eric Molobi, Frank Moltano.
  5. I am aware of two post-graduate dissertations on People's Education being written at present and at least one college of education offers an elective course in this field. The HSRC is presently conducting an enquiry into People's Education.
  6. This work has been carried out by particular Anglo-South African historians. For a clear account of the issues involved in exploring alternative approaches to history, see Belinda Bozzoli ed. 1983. **Town and Countryside in the Transvaal** Johannesburg, Ravan, especially pp 1-8. See too Samuel Raphael ed. 1981. **People's History and Socialist Theory** London.
  7. This Commission was set up at the March 1986 Education Crisis Conference to give content to People's Education. It is currently led by Zwelakhe Sisulu, editor of **New Nation**. The Commission functions under the executive of the National Education Crisis Committee. At the time of writing, Mr Sisulu is in detention.
  8. Nasson B. Perspectives on education in Burman S and Reynolds P eds. 1986. **Growing Up in a Divided Society** Johannesburg, Ravan p 95.
  9. See Gardiner M 1984 Redefining education: the White Paper on the provision of education. **Africa Perspective** 24, pp 3-19.
  10. NECC Press Release: 27 November 1986.
  11. Ibid
  12. NECC Press Release: 27 November 1986
  13. Ibid
  14. Professor Andre le Roux, graduation address, Johannesburg College of Education, 1 December 1986.
  15. Since June, with the sweeping powers granted by the emergency proclamation, the Government has begun a counter-offensive aimed at crippling the "alternative" community organizations and reconstructing the official administrative system . . . The news blackout is part of a total war that has been declared on the "alternative" organisations . . .
- Allister Sparks, **The Star** Wednesday December 17 1986 p 20.
- The detention of members of the executive of the NECC (**The Weekly Mail** December 19 1986) on December 11 1986 is clearly part of the state's programme to hamper the implementation of People's Education for People's Power.
- Thus too the regulations proclaimed in terms of the 1953 Public Safety Act on 29 December 1986, whereby the Director-General of Education and Training may prohibit, among many other things, the offering on any school or hostel premises (which include colleges of education) of any syllabus, work programme, class or course which has not been approved in terms of the (1979) Education Act No. 235 Public Safety Act (3/1953) : Regulations, Government Gazette no 10563
- The Government Gazette of 9 January 1987 (no 10585) prohibits the discussion or drawing up of alternative courses and syllabi by the NECC.

Thanks to Linda Chisholm for her helpful insights.

#### Among our contributors:

- J.H. Cooper - Lecturer in Economics, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
- M.J. Daymond - Senior Lecturer in English, University of Natal, Durban.
- Michael Gardiner - Head of the Department of English, Johannesburg College of Education.
- Tony Morphet - Senior Tutor in the Department of Extra Mural Studies and Adult Education, University of Cape Town.
- Jonathan Paton - Senior Lecturer in English, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Peter Vale - Research Professor and Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University.
- M. van Wyk Smith - Professor of English, Rhodes University.

# BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLIGHT OF THE "OPEN" UNIVERSITIES.

South Africa's "open" universities face intense pressure from three increasingly hostile quarters: the state, and the international community of scholars and their students. All three seem unremitting in their determination to impress upon the open universities a particular understanding of the role the universities should be playing in the deepening national crisis.

The prescriptive nature of the demands made on the universities, from the students and the international community of scholars, arises from two parallel understandings of the current South African crisis. First, a view that the battle for the soul of South Africa is being fought in education. Secondly, a belief that other institutions – parliament, the courts, the bureaucracy – have either lost, or have almost lost, their legitimacy. With certain of the churches, the open universities still command wide respect.

There is a clear tension between these positions, and this dilemma for the universities: By adopting a more activist stance in the battle over education, the universities risk losing the legitimacy which has been so painstakingly built. Quite clearly, as custodians of the country's learning, the universities have an interest both in the battle over education and in its outcome. Equally, the respect which the universities enjoy in the wider community is the product of the hostility which they have shown to 40 years of Nationalist rule.

The question of international pressure on the universities appears secondary to the domestic dilemma. However, South Africa's universities are international institutions which until recently were largely immune from the foreign pressures which have sought to isolate the country in many other ways. To be sure, since the 1950s there have been efforts to isolate South Africa's tertiary education, but the open universities largely escaped this pressure. Their exclusion was advanced on the grounds that they strongly opposed apartheid, and paid a high price for this stand. The renewed international efforts to crush apartheid have gone further than before, and calls for boycotts against South Africa's universities are widespread on campuses all over the western world.

Thus, while the current crisis is of a new magnitude, the open universities have long been caught between the rock of Nationalist ideology and the hard place of their international standing.

The so-called open universities are "open" only in a limited sense; it is not altogether certain that they should enjoy such a title, which they have themselves chosen. By this self-anointment, they communicate to themselves and to the world at large that they embrace a set of academic principles which are the lifeblood of the western university experience. To a large degree, the open universities have been clones of non-African academic institutions – they

have not been African, nor have they been Afrikaner. They have, however, been enriched by drawing their membership from the great diversity of all South Africa's peoples; Africans and Afrikaners have made great contributions to the open universities.



South Africa's first universities were established at a time when some broad consensus existed on the traditions and values of western culture, which was at the centre of western university experience. However, the motives for the establishment of individual South African universities differed from case to case: Wits was established to serve the mining industry, whilst the University of Potchefstroom, with its overt cultural leanings, aimed to foster and promote a specific Afrikaner view of the world. However, at their establishment, the English universities and their Afrikaner sisters, were originally part of a single world culture – the one-world culture of the late-Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

The retreat of the Afrikaans universities behind the ideological curtain of Apartheid was completed by the passing of the Universities Extension Act of 1959. With this event, the Nationalist government elected instead to pursue a set of cultural loyalties which were regarded as unique; this was Christian National Education (CNE). CNE was a huge blow for the open universities. The establishment of the so-called Homeland universities – or "bush colleges" as they were once known – formally cut the open universities off from the majority of South Africa's citizens.

In spite of intense official pressure to conform to CNE, the open universities continued to claim membership to the western university experience. However, when the one-world culture began to falter with changing post-War attitudes to racialism and colonialism, South Africa's open

universities were caught between this changing experience and a government which viewed the world through an increasingly narrow lens. Today, the same forces which undercut the one-world culture, particularly the question of racial discrimination, have bought about a near universal condemnation of **apartheid**.

The international dilemma before South Africa's open universities is plain: how are they to ensure membership of a world community of scholars, given that successive Nationalist governments have prevented them from pursuing the huge cultural diversity which the wider university tradition has encouraged? If this were not enough, they recognize that the domestic order is in the process of disintegration, and that the ground is inadequately prepared for what is to follow. In addition, academics at the open universities are under sheer physical threat: witness the recent firebombings at the University of Natal; the violence at UCT during the O'Brien brouhaha; the continual incursions by the security forces on the campuses; and the permanent violation of university integrity by the security police.

In all societies, the relationship between university and state is a delicate one. In South Africa successive post-War governments have sought to curb both the influence of the universities and students. The PW Botha government appears to realize both the domestic and the international dilemma of the open universities, and is putting pressure on the open universities to conform. The persistent rumour that in late-1986, a government committee consisting of four government Ministers had carpeted the Vice-Chancellors of UCT, Wits and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) is strong on the campuses of the open universities. If true, it represents an astonishing infringement of university autonomy. How the open universities respond to the mounting government pressure will strongly influence their relationship with the international community of scholars.

In the face of this pressure South African universities will have to make a choice: either to conform to pressure, or strike out in new directions which will satisfy their international critics and, perhaps, the students. Not surprisingly, the choice will be a difficult one, and protagonists of each position will emerge across the spread of all South Africa's universities. In other words, it will be increasingly difficult to characterize those at open universities as falling into one side of a divide, and those at South Africa's other universities as falling on the other.

All too often there is a feeling of smugness within the open universities - the sentiment that English-speaking scholars command the high ground over our Afrikaner colleagues both intellectually and morally in their opposition to **apartheid**. This is a most unfortunate trait, and it should remember that in August 1986, Annica van Gylswyk, who was attached to a university not traditionally regarded as open, was denied the right to live in South Africa. Like her, many in all South Africa's universities have made personal and professional sacrifices as a result of their opposition to apartheid.

The first response to pressure on the universities will be called "Incorporation" and the alternative, "Toward the New Frontier". The former has the open universities, in particular, joining with the country's present rulers in perpetuating the **status quo**. The latter, has the same universities seeking ways to relate to the deep structural

changes which are taking place in South Africa, particularly, in the extra-parliamentary field.



In the short term, the open universities will seek to avoid making a choice. This is understandable in the face of economic pressure from the state, the rising expectations of the students and uncertainty of what exactly the academic boycott is all about. It may be possible to avoid choosing in the immediate domestic climate, simply because the state has enormous power to repress opposition. Of course, the avoidance of choice for whatever reason, will be seen abroad as having chosen the **status quo**. The international pressure on the universities is dismissive of the need of the open universities to tactically engage the state, from time to time. In the long term there can be no prevarication for the very survival of the universities **qua** universities hinges on making the correct choice.

Consider the first of these responses, "incorporation". The South African government has sought to ensure its survival both by entrenching power through constitutional means and through the establishment of what political scientists call the "corporate state". For the purpose at hand, it is sufficient to define such a state as one in which as many activities as possible are brought into the scope of the state's control. Activities which cannot through legislation be seized by the growing tentacles of the state, are simply repressed. In contemporary South Africa, there is no clearer example of this direction than the current State of Emergency, which - in the opinion of many, including the former Minister of Law and Order - is aimed at smashing all extra-parliamentary opposition.

This tactic has huge implications for the open universities: the state will draft the universities to its service, by means both fair and foul. Individual academics will be tempted to join the service of the state in its determination to survive and motives will vary widely, depending upon circumstances and disciplines. One can see that engineers will benefit from the research contracts which will become - and may already have become - available through ARMSCOR, the Atomic Energy Board or ISCOR. Social scientists will also be tempted into the State's service by the belief that they can help "save" South Africa by inventing yet another new constitutional model, one which will be seized by the governing party and lead, one fears, to yet another political

**cul-de-sac.** Indeed, many in this trade have already gone down this path, among which this government's former Ambassador to London, Denis Worrall, is the best example. In time, all the major academic disciplines, from Education to Ecology, from Physics to Physical Education, from Geography to Genetics could be pressed into the service of the State in one form or another.

In this role, the university is the handmaiden of the state. The state's immense patronage – and its control of the purse strings – will make it very difficult for the universities or for individual academics to resist the state's overtures. The recent SAPSE<sup>1</sup> proposals which financially reward universities whose academics publish in specified income-generating publications, represent obvious efforts to control both thought and its dissemination. Disturbingly, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) the state-sponsored research funding agency, recently sent out a questionnaire seeking to canvass ideas on how the academic requirements of a degree might be most efficiently blended with a student's military training.<sup>2</sup> Here the state's efforts to control the universities is brazen! Where the resistance is strongest, the government will attempt to invoke patriotism, blowing a familiar bugle; those who refuse to succumb to these inducements will be branded communists or enemies of the state.

As suggested, many in the open universities will seek a compromise with the state on the issue of incorporation. They will believe that they can continue to operate within the system and, at the same time, retain their individual academic integrity. This is the balancing act which the open universities have been performing for the better part of three decades, and in which they have been fairly successful.

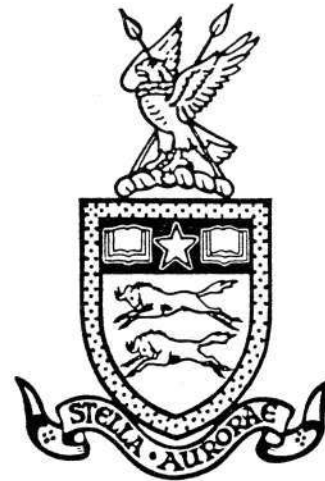
The open universities have operated in this fashion in the sincere belief that the respective disciplines are value-free, and the chief duty of the scholar is to pursue the truth. If issues of objectivity are not central, as is the case in some academic circumstances, the prevailing response is simply that the social, economic or political consequences of institutional and individual academic activities are really not the responsibility of the individual academic involved.

However, given the desire of the state to incorporate the universities, is it possible to believe that academic endeavours can be value free? One thinks not. Values – in South Africa's case, deeply ingrained racial values – penetrate every aspect of the country's life. The universities, and individual scholars, are no less free and unfettered from this than are South Africans outside the universities.

Consider two complementary and extremely value-laden ideas which have been systematically propagated by the South African government: the old chestnut "anti-communism" and the recently discovered "free-enterprise".<sup>3</sup> Increasingly, these underpin the country's education system, and the state seeks further to ensure that public debates are deeply imbued with both.

Indeed, scarcely a single aspect of our political discourse seems to be free of them. This presents immense problems for social scientists who find it impossible to work in their sub-disciplines without having first to deal with the ideological baggage accompanying both issues.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the work of a social scientist is often judged, not by its intrinsic value, but by its approach to both these issues.

A cursory consideration of these leads to the issue of the question of sanctions where the rub of "incorporation" will be most keenly felt by those in political science. We can anticipate a deluge of work on the sanctions issue, and those who have been incorporated within the structure of the state will no doubt launch a new "Rhodesian-syndrome" – a complex mythology concerning sanctions, their busting, their duplicity, their futility. Indeed, this has already started. This exercise is, however, foolish and self-serving because it is regarded as an offence – in terms of the emergency and under the ordinary law of the land – to advocate sanctions, or to write about any possible positive aspects which may flow from sanctions. The issue will, therefore, not be debated: it will only be a one-sided exhortation.



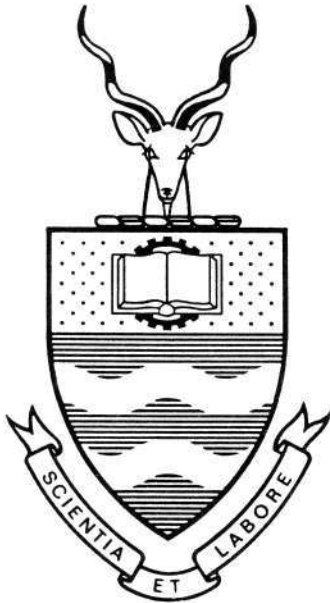
For their part, a fundamental question which the open universities are asking the international community is, "What would you **now** have us do to call the dogs off?" It is not altogether surprising that this question should be asked, given that the open universities consider themselves as part of the international community of scholars. Moreover, the open universities have consistently opposed the determined efforts of successive Nationalist governments to crush their independence. If members of the international community of scholars turn their backs on the open universities, who have worked so hard to defend their freedom, will they not themselves be limiting the academic freedom that has been so persistently defended?

The near universal condemnation of the institutionalised racial separation of people in South Africa, and the extraordinary efforts which the present rulers have made to preserve their power have given the country a special place in human affairs.<sup>5</sup> As a result, foreign academics are expecting more than merely symbolic opposition to apartheid from the open universities; they are looking for action. They are looking to the open universities for ideas about how to initiate a process of change in which common values will play a determining role. Increasingly, it appears that they will judge international acceptability on how the open universities meet this challenge. In short, they are asking the open universities to treat the causes of apartheid, and no longer its symptoms.

The alternative response, "Toward the New Frontier", rejects absolutely the state's overtures for incorporation. It holds that the present social system is totally unacceptable, and that genuine prosperity and security for all the citizens

of the country lie in the clear, unequivocal acceptance that there is a non-racial alternative for what is now known as South Africa.

There is a fairly rich body of local literature on what role the South African university – particularly, the open university – might play in the present situation.<sup>6</sup> There is no need to rehearse the many arguments which have been put in those exchanges. Rather, the open universities should build on these early suggestions and seek new and innovative ways in which they might ensure their continued acceptability to the international community, to their students and to internal popular organisations. Consider, for example, three non-threatening areas.



First, the open universities might take a firm, vigorous lead in raising the level of educational attainment of all South Africa's people. The universities possess extensive pools of intellectual material, which the great mass of South Africans do not possess; indeed, they have been denied access to for many generations. Recently, Professor Ismail Mohamed, at the DCS Oosthuizen Academic Freedom Lecture at Rhodes, reminded his audience that "While the vast mass of our youth are struggling to acquire rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing, there are those who could reach out to an understanding of the universe, theories of an expanding universe and black holes millions of light years away. While the vast mass of our black youth lack the most elementary knowledge of health and hygiene and are the victims of the diseases of malnutrition and poverty, there are those who can reach out to an understanding of the very basis of life, of DNA molecules and genetic materials and the behaviour of chemical messages and electric pulses in nerve endings, determining communications between nerve cells."<sup>7</sup>

Of course the universities are not responsible for this situation. Nevertheless, on a **per capita** basis, they have been the main beneficiaries of the state's educational largesse and therefore must bear a large part of the responsibility for meeting the growing crisis in elementary and secondary education. It is clear that the international community will judge the universities by how successfully they relate to the immediate community; by the contribution they make to the education of all the country's citizens.

Significant contributions have been made in the field of education by many South African institutions, outside of the universities. For example, the SACHED Trust is viewed favourably both by South Africans and by many abroad, and it demonstrates that important alternative routes to educational upliftment are viable. While the jury is still out on the Khanya College experiment, the verdict promises to be a positive one. If so, it will be an important model for the open universities to emulate.

Secondly, the universities should be a catalyst for change within our society. In practice, this may mean providing extra-parliamentary opponents of apartheid with the necessary tools in their struggle to overcome the present structure; research and administrative skills are just two such tools. However, no discussion of this kind of assistance could be complete without considering the question of violence. Is it any less correct, for example, to help the ANC build a limpet mine, than it is to help ARMSCOR assemble a bomb? These are the kinds of questions which individuals cannot openly answer, but they are questions which need to be asked within the universities.

Many younger academics are already directly involved in the wider struggle against **apartheid**. Should the open universities encourage and reward these young scholars? Under the SAPSE regime this will be impossible, but are other ways to be found?

Finally, the open universities should become the chief arena for serious discussion of what South Africa after **apartheid** ought to look like. This debate has, of course, already begun, but it has been muted on the campuses, partially because of the intense ideological tension which debates of this kind engender. In light of this, it is encouraging that UWC has taken a lead in looking at these issues. However, each university is set in a unique environment and can thus only itself determine a proper relationship both to the present and to the future order where it is located.

The open universities should train South Africans in the skills they will need to run their country after **apartheid**. Obviously, this will be an immense and time-consuming task. **Post-apartheid** South Africa will be a highly complex society as the search to overcome **apartheid** has so painfully shown. As countless Third World models so graphically demonstrate, there will be no easy options in the new society.

If these suggestions are impossible to implement, the open universities should perhaps begin by admitting that the formula they have thus far relied upon has failed, and that the route to true academic freedom lies in consultation with the country's majority. Such an admission should not be a fawning apology, but a statement that a new beginning is possible both in the universities and in the country itself.

The open universities face immense challenges as they move towards the new society. Their international colleagues appear to be asking them to meet the challenge, rather than buckle under the pressure from the minority government. From afar some foreign academics appear to be relishing in the quandary they have placed for the open universities. But the issue of **apartheid** will remain on the international agenda until the last vestiges of racism are removed from the statute books, until the majority rule the country.

If South Africa's open universities want to remain internationally acceptable they will need to move towards the new frontier, which the country itself faces. It will not be painless. WH Auden captured the anguish of such choices when he wrote:

**NOTE:** This article is based on notes used in an address to the Conference '86, **The Open Universities in Transition**, organised by the University Teacher's Association of South Africa at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, September 4th and 5th, 1986. David Weiner assisted in the drafting of the original notes. Ian Macdonald, Gavin Stewart, Chris Heymans, Louise Vale, Caroline White and Roux van der Merwe gave valuable comments on the redrafting of the notes. I have also benefited from listening to Nico Cloete talk on this subject on two occasions.

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<sup>1</sup>SAPSE stands for "South African Post-Secondary Education" and is the generic term given to the government's evolving university policy; obviously it encompasses the sensitive issues of university financing.

<sup>2</sup>Human Sciences Research Council, HSRC Education Research Programme. "Investigation into Better utilization of the Academic Year at South African Universities". (Project ONZA 14R001/3), Pretoria, 1986.

<sup>3</sup>I came to thinking about these issues after reading Michael D Yates, "South Africa, Anti-Communism and Value-Free Science" in **The Chronicle of Higher Education** May 14, 1986, p.84. While the piece deals with the issues raised in the title, it gives a good account of how this country is viewed by many scholars in the United States. Subsequent issues of **The Chronicle** carry responses, both favourable and antagonistic, to Yates.

"The sense of danger must not disappear,  
the way is certainly both short and steep,  
however gradual it looks from here,  
Look if you like, but you will have to leap" □

<sup>4</sup>Recently an organization called SYNCOM with links to the conservative Washington-based Heritage Foundation issued a "Privatisation Position Paper" which dealt with the topic "Towards a Community Based System of Education". A foreword to the paper written by a certain Andre Spier makes this somewhat extraordinary claim: "The purpose of publishing these PPPs is to provide interested parties with a neutral, objective and factual reference resource on key aspects and key areas of privatisation".

<sup>5</sup>It is unnecessary to traverse the issues of why this has occurred again. Perhaps, however, reference can be made to two recent articles from Jack Spence which clarify some of the points made in the March/May Special International Issue of **Reality**. The two Spence articles are to be found in **Optima**, Vol 34, No 1, pp. 2-22, entitled "**The Most Popular Corpse in History**", and the 5th Bradlow Fellow Address, entitled "**Why is South Africa popular Abroad**" to be published shortly by the South African Institute of International Affairs.

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, James Moulder (Ed) University and Community, **Philosophical Papers, Monographic Series**, No 2, June, 1980, and the articles by Ronald Dworkin, Jonathan Suzman, Geoff Budlender and Mark Orkin in **Philosophical Papers**, Vol. VII, No 1, (May 1979). The collection edited by John Marcum entitled **Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa**, University of California Press, 1982 is a helpful compilation of writings on the role of the universities (and other aspects of education). A good recent piece - with a comprehensive survey of the literature - to be found in Jon File's **The Politics of Excellence: University Education in the South African Context**, Unpublished Seminar Paper, Africa Seminar, Centre for African Studies, UCT, 19th March, 1986, 34 pp.

<sup>7</sup>Ismail Mohamed, Academic Freedom and the Crisis in Education. DCS Oosthuizen Memorial Lecture, Grahamstown, 28 August, 1986, pp. 5-6.

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### **Last winter**

*Last winter in Namibia  
the casual music droned  
through empty farmsteads -  
Africa returning  
to the tuneless stars.*

*Abandoned windpumps,  
whirring metal flowers,  
grated in the wind  
pumping hot nothing  
into empty reservoirs.*

Don Maclellan.

# SOUTH AFRICA: ON THE MOTIVATION FOR SANCTIONS

At face value, the persistent resort of governments to the use of economic sanctions – over 100 cases since 1914 according to *Hafbauer et al* (1985) – as a means to put pressure on foreign governments, is undoubtedly puzzling. The conventional wisdom, of which government policy makers presumably cannot be unaware, is that they do not work. Yet they remain a well used instrument of foreign – and as we argue below, of domestic – policy. In the case of South Africa at least, perhaps part of this puzzle can be resolved by delving a little deeper into the motivation behind sanctions.

In theory, as an institution, economic sanctions may have much in common with related measures such as economic warfare, tariffs and quotas, and the manipulation of foreign aid. But in practice their outcome is likely to be quite different. Sanctions represent for imposing countries a low cost option in comparison with, say, force of arms or economic blockade, which are options that require a much greater level of commitment, a level that is usually absent in times of peace. Even so, there is by no means complete agreement on the utility of sanctions, partly as a result of what James Mayall (1984) refers to as an ambiguity in liberal political theory.

Liberal theorists have always tended to oppose war to commerce since the former interferes with the latter and ultimately solves little. Trade on the other hand, in the vision of Adam Smith and, even more strongly, Richard Cobden, is a rational and progressive way of securing international harmony through mutual interdependence and the international division of labour. If war is irrational and trade is not, then it follows that sanctions are rational and force is not. At this stage, however, we run into problems with the interpretation of liberal logic, for, on the one hand there is the view that it is possible to resolve conflicts by economic means, and on the other hand the (Libertarian) view which opposes any interference by the government with market forces, particularly if it is done for non-economic reasons. So even within the broad Liberal house, there is no unified belief in the desirability of sanctions.

Barbour (1979) has identified three (not necessarily mutually exclusive) categories of objectives for sanctions: primary objectives – the ostensible *raison d'être* of sanctions; secondary objectives – relating to domestic considerations in the imposing countries; and tertiary objectives – dealing with broader international considerations relating to the structure and operation of the international system as a whole or those parts of it that are regarded as important by the imposing states.

We thus find a fairly complex (and dynamic) mix of potential benefits to be derived from applying sanctions. The relative weights of the categories may, of course, vary from case to case and shift over time – which we argue

below has happened in the case of South Africa. In the case of Rhodesia, for example, the primary objective was, however, to return the country to the British Crown and constitutional legality. The secondary and tertiary objectives, at least for the British government, were to counter attacks from opposition parties and protect Britain's status within the Commonwealth and the United Nations respectively. Over time the distinction between these categories became less clear, and the relative weight accorded to the tertiary class of objectives increased as the issue became internationalised.

It may be difficult to identify secondary and tertiary objectives in the context of dynamic domestic and foreign relationships, but they doubtless exert a powerful influence on policy makers. In his book **Sanctions: The Case of Rhodesia**, Harry Strack cites no less than seven secondary reasons for Rhodesia's trading partners applying sanctions. Experience gained from other instances where economic coercion has been employed, say, in the cases of Italy (1935-36), Cuba (1960-), and West Berlin (1948-49) clearly demonstrates a similar diversity of motives.

Commentators generally agree that an important factor underlying the choice of sanctions as a policy instrument is that of symbolism, elements of which are contained in all three of Barbour's categories. Applying sanctions, it is said, gives the impression of activity, of doing something when inactivity may be perceived as tacit support for, or indifference to the issues at stake. They are, like force of arms, merely an extension of international "diplomacy". They are a signalling device to underscore imposing countries' ethical, philosophical or political attitudes. They communicate on a multi-lateral as well as bi-lateral basis, and are an affirmation of principle for all to see. Schreiber (1973, p. 413) argues that: "It is mainly its symbolic function that makes economic coercion a tempting policy to governments", and concludes that if this is so, then, regardless of concrete results, governments will continue to be tempted by them.

More recently, Mayall (1984) has argued that two features of the contemporary international environment make it easier for governments to react by employing economic sanctions than by any other means. The first is the paradoxical strengthening of the state, which has facilitated easier monitoring and control of commercial and industrial activities. In other words, partly as a result of the increasing relative size of the public sector over time, at least in the industrialised countries, it is now easier for the state to administer a mercantilist type policy.

The second feature of the contemporary environment which is conducive to economic sanctions is the decay of the Western institutional order, due mainly to the non-coincidence of unilateral interests. According to Mayall,



the trend as a consequence is "clearly towards using sanctions as a symbol of 'alliance', European or even Third World solidarity rather than as an instrument of international order" (p.633). The decay of the international order has freed countries and/or blocs to pursue independent lines of action. In fact, this route has more or less been forced on them in the absence of any collective security. Concomitantly, sanctions are no longer regarded mainly as the prerogative of international institutions but are perceived as a legitimate instrument of an independent foreign policy.

In the case of South Africa, primary and tertiary objectives largely coincide, at least at the present time. The United Nations is the major forum in which calls for sanctions are made, and most if not all individual member countries stand in collective as well as unilateral opposition to the policies of the present South African government. The recommendations of the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Sanctions Against South Africa held in Paris in May 1981 thus provide a useful outline of the primary and tertiary objectives of sanctions against South Africa.

- "1. To force South Africa to abandon its racist policy of Apartheid and to put an end to its illegal occupation of Namibia;
- "2. To demonstrate, by action, the universal abhorrence of Apartheid and solidarity with the legitimate aspirations and struggles of the people of South Africa and Namibia;
- "3. To deny the benefits of international co-operation to the South African regime so as to oblige it and its supporters to heed world opinion, to abandon the policy of racist domination, and to seek a solution by consultation with the genuine leaders of the oppressed people;
- "4. To undermine the ability of the South African regime to repress its people, commit acts of aggression against independent states and pose a threat to international peace and security;
- "5. To remove economic support from Apartheid so as to mitigate suffering in the course of the struggle of the people of South Africa and Namibia for freedom, and thereby promote as peaceful a transition as possible."

Until the mid-1980s, the sanctions campaign had little success but since then it has made substantial progress in isolating South Africa. The explanation of why this is so would seem to lie in the shifting nature of the relative weights accorded to each category of objectives. Primary and tertiary motives, though still relevant variables in the sanctions equation, have declined in relative importance since about mid-1984 while secondary objectives – concerned with domestic issues in the imposing countries – have increased in importance, particularly in the Western democracies where some account has to be taken of public opinion by vote maximising politicians.

From a South African point of view it is an unfortunate coincidence that it is precisely these countries with whom trade has traditionally been conducted. As far as sanctions are concerned, South Africa is thus at the mercy of party political interests in the West. For example, the Democratic Party in the U.S. adopted an anti-South African stance after its defeat by the Republican Party in the 1984

Presidential elections, which according to **The Economist** (1985) was a "balm, a motherhood issue" (Truu, 1986),

At the same time, as Truu (1986) makes clear: "Republican politicians need votes as much as their Democrat rivals and could therefore not be seen rowing against the tide, ... anti-South African sanctions thus became a bipartisan issue in America". In other Western countries a similar political imperative exists, and given that the lead in such matters is often taken from the U.S., it is not surprising that sanctions (in the form of disinvestment) pressure has spread across the Atlantic despite the opposition of Thatcher and Kohl. European businessmen and non-governmental organisations are being forced into a trade off between their American and South African interests. In due course it seems probable that European Community governments will be forced to follow suit in order to protect their domestic party political interests. For example, the strong ties between the Labour Party and the Anti-Apartheid Movement will ensure that the issue of sanctions gets a good airing on the hustings in the lead up to the next elections in Britain.

It is precisely because the intensity of international concern about the Apartheid "problem" is now great enough to make it a legitimate election issue in western countries, that there has been a quickening of interest in sanctions. Events on the ground in South Africa, while undoubtedly having deteriorated, are essentially a matter of foreign policy, about which many people know and care very little in comparison with domestic issues. But the issue of Apartheid is easily understood, at least superficially, in terms of morality and political justice – the very stuff of which politics is made.

The substantial increase in the relative weight of the secondary category of objectives in the 1980s is a by-product of the perception that the crisis in Southern Africa has heightened in *absolute* terms. More importantly, though, is that this has given a legitimacy to Apartheid as a genuine election issue in imposing countries, which has resulted in secondary objectives assuming a greater *relative* importance.

It is impossible to assess with any confidence the success of sanctions in terms of the open-ended and idiosyncratic motives of the imposing governments. But it need not be assumed that this will prevent them from continuing to use them. To some extent governments applying sanctions on South Africa probably have no real interest in the primary (or tertiary) outcome of sanctions; their interest is more fundamental and a lot closer to home. Starving South Africans and concerned delegates at the United Nations are hardly likely to catch the eye of vote-maximising politicians.□

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# THE LOST COMMUNITY

Richard Rive  
**'Buckingham Palace' District Six**  
 David Philip: Cape Town, 1986  
 R24,90 hardcover.

Since its demolition in the 1970s, Cape Town's District Six has come to symbolise all that is evil about Apartheid. The site of what was once a busy community has remained, for the last ten years, a rubble-littered wasteland with only its churches and mosque standing as lonely reminders of what was destroyed. It would be some compensation to think that since the area was proclaimed white, its occupants evicted and its buildings demolished, it is shame which has been holding back the property developers from their work. However unlikely that may be, the present emptiness is a constant reminder that the "greed and arrogance" which decreed the resettlement of a once thriving community are purely destructive humours.

Poets and song-writers, short story writers, novelists, journalists and sociologists have all recorded their anger at what has been done. In decrying the wickedness of appropriation and resettlement, they have created the verbal equivalent of what is symbolised by that empty space at the foot of Table Mountain.

Richard Rive's latest work, **'Buckingham Palace' District Six** joins this growing body of written protest although its tone is not that of protest writing. What he undertakes is to celebrate and so give mythical status to what has been lost; in doing so he demonstrates the evil of destruction. To call this process a mythologising one is to point to the selection and simplification necessary when a writer wants to make accessible to everyone a truthful and rapidly assimilated view of a complex issue. Of course there is nothing complex about the way a decision to destroy a living community is to be seen. It is quite simply wrong. (The claim that District Six was a slum, as parts of it seem to have been, might properly lead to a decision to improve the existing housing and amenities; it has no real bearing on the decision to scatter a community in enforced resettlement.) Where the simplification of mythologising does occur is in the selective focus Rive has used in order to establish exactly what was lost and how it should be remembered.

Richard Rive has decided that the picture he wants to preserve is of a collection of loveable rogues living cheek by jowl with sober, respectable families in the row of cottages called 'Buckingham Palace'. This companionable little community is a microcosm of the whole District. In the first cottage is Mary, the madame of an establishment painted bright blue and called The Casbah; her handyman-bouncer, Zoot, and his assistants, Pretty Boy, Surprise and others, live next door in a pink splendour called Winsor Park (the painter, Oubaas, cannot spell); a family known as The Jungles because of the three sons' ferocity comes next; at the end is the barber, Last-Knight, with his wife and three daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity. Between, and acutely observant of this mixture, lives the young Richard and his

family. What emerges is the tolerance that each household learns for the other and their capacity to rally round in times of need. Rive wants the District to enter our national mythology as a community of heterogeneous people who have learnt, without too much difficulty, to live together and who thereby give the lie to the central text of Apartheid's dogma.

The embattled part of Rive's purpose is never explicitly stated. He is a genial, anecdotal writer, especially skilled at the understatement of the short story, and he has marshalled his abilities and his chosen memories into an amusing and powerful tribute to the spirit of what was destroyed in the 1970s.

The book opens with the author's own memories of his childhood and then, in a series of anecdotes, places each group of characters in their respective cottages. The most colourful of these is Mary's bouncer. Baptised Milton September (his brothers are Byron and Keats), he has versifying abilities which he turns to the cause of freedom in ways reminiscent of his great namesake, but he is known to the District as Zoot in honour of his tap-dancing. Zoot has a wise and useful guardian angel who guides him in making it clear to his landlord that although the rent will be a monthly charade, his tenancy of what becomes Winsor Park is preferable to publicity about the conditions in which the previous tenants had lived. Zoot is the homespun philosopher of the streets: it is he who is entrusted with the work's final word on the evils of "greed and arrogance" and it is he who indicates where Rive would have us place our trust - in the sometimes unconventional wisdom of the social misfit. This involves the claim that the seemingly makeshift morality of the people of the District is actually more honest and more generous than that of the larger world. As Zoot says, after a New Year's Day picnic at Kalk Bay is spoilt when Pretty Boy and Moena Lelik are prevented from walking on the adjacent white beach of St James, "it's only in the District I feel safe. District Six is like an island."

The antithesis that Rive uses between the outside world of regulated immorality that is Apartheid, and the island of unregulated morality that is District Six involves him in overt nostalgia - the days are all golden in their glow: ripe, warm and "apricot" - and is potentially sentimental. Prostitutes with hearts of gold are usually an invitation to stop thinking. But, as with all our cliches and our slogans, there is a partial or a potential truth in such figures and his achievement has been to make his figures contain, for the purposes of his book, a satisfyingly whole truth. Part of this persuasion is managed when he builds into his stories signals which clarify what is entailed in accepting them. His opening memoir indicates that he is bringing to his pages figures

who were legends in the District in their own day, and it is in their larger-than-life glamour that their particular validity can be understood. Then he shows that his characters themselves had to practise a tolerance based on the recognition of individual worth and so ensure the community's survival. For instance, remembering his childhood friend, Armien, he tells us that

"On our way to morning service (on Christmas Day) we stopped at Moodley's shop, which was open since he was not a Christian. Neither for that matter was Armien but he was our friend and went wherever we went even though he was a Muslim."

Just as friendship guides the children past potential causes of division, so good sense allows the community to ignore what it cannot alter for the better. When Mary's aged father, Pastor Adam Bruinties, comes from the Boland to spend his birthday with his daughter in her "boarding house", she decides to make the best of it. He is welcomed with a huge party which soon turns riotous, but instead of retreating in horror, her father places himself firmly at the centre of the uproar. The old man is not blind, nor is he a hypocrite; he practices a greater humanity in accepting the version of her world which Mary chooses to give him. Thus when leaving in his "old Dodge with a country registration", "he winked an eye conspiratorially at his daughter while chuckling happily to himself." In another context this might all seem rather a doubtful gloss, but in the context of meaning which Rive creates, it carries a powerful significance which overrides such everyday doubts. This is demonstrated when Mary's world is destroyed around her and she is able to turn to caring for her father as a replacement function in life.

The line Rive is treading demands considerable poise, especially as he cannot afford to have his microcosm lapse wholly into the glow of idyllic memory. The largely nostalgic first and second sections have to prepare for the subject matter of the last – the defeat of a community – and the affectionate, nostalgic note has also to include the uncertainty and pain of the days when the community is "falling apart".

He begins the last section by striking a note of heroism when he shows the determination that can be engendered in little people who suddenly find themselves up against a faceless "them". Then Rive returns to his comic mode as he shows Inspector Engelbrecht trying in vain to get the information about race that the Group Areas Board requires. At The Casbah, the Butterfly thinks he is an impatient customer: "A bit early aren't you? You must be desperate," she said looking him up and down. Next door, Oubaas's innocence offers him another kind of defeat as he cannot fit the man into any of the pigeon-holes recognised by bureaucracy. It is not until he finds the anxiously respectable Mrs Knight that he gets the responses he needs for his forms. Rive is fair-minded about the fears which lead her to comply with the order to move, but the fact remains that it is the wish to be respectable (as against respected) which proves to be her undoing.

In the little community's white landlord, Katzen, Rive strikes another, more rare note. In a moving episode, the old man attends a meeting in the church vestry and tells his tenants that as a Jew who was made a "staatsangehörige" in Hitler's Germany and who knows what is to be treated as sub-human, he will protect his tenants as far as he can: he will never "while this evil law remains . . . sell (his) houses."

Comparisons between the legalised oppression and discrimination in this country and Hitler's policy of genocide are often heard in the heated rhetoric of political platforms, but the partial truths of such sloganeering do not stand up well to cool consideration. Rive, however, has found, as he did with other matters which are clichéd or sentimental in a daily context, ways of giving a memorable, truthful quality to such comparisons without asking us to forgo better judgement. Katzen's son sells the cottages to the Dept of Community Development as soon as his father dies, saying that the old man's promise was made when he was sick and therefore not responsible for his words. The son, an affluent lawyer from Johannesburg who has been content to let his father exist in one room at the top of Long Street, clearly knows nothing about responsibility. When Oubaas is able to place the son's actions by comparing him to Pontius Pilate, his recognition, however well-worn, is an achievement for Oubaas which revitalises the cliché for us. It is in these ways that Rive's mythologising is doing his country a real service.

What makes such judgements most memorable is that Rive gives his characters a concern not to become like their oppressors. Mary, Pretty Boy, the Butterfly, Oubaas and even Zoot endeavour to retain a dignity amidst their despair and anger. This strength and their rough kindness to each other is a quality which David Muller used in his novel set in District Six, **Whitey** (1977), in which he shows that the humanity of the District, amidst its squalour, is such that it can remind even a confirmed alcoholic, unable to free himself from self-destruction, what he is losing. Such faith is also what distinguishes Rive's work from the other recent novel to have come from the destruction of District Six. Achmat Dangor's **Waiting for Leila** is a considerable, overtly angry first novel which won the Mofolo-Plomer Prize in 1980. It takes as its starting point the defeat of its protagonist, Samad, amidst the laws which are destroying his community. As the deserted buildings slowly collapse, so Samad's soul sinks, howling all the way, into torment. Dangor's axiom, the inevitable defeat of the individual, is as valid a judgement of the consequences of Apartheid as is Rive's greater faith in humanity's power to rise above the effects of "greed and arrogance". One need not choose between them as beliefs. But in responding to the power of each work to persuade and to move, I would choose Rive's writing, although I too think that more people are likely to be defeated by the destruction of their world than will find decency and heroism from within themselves. This means that the selective, mythologising focus which has created Mary and her team has value at the moment as a note of hope rather than as a simple reminder of reality, but it seems to me that it is a considerable writer who can successfully pit his little people and the value of their communal sense against the might of Apartheid's bulldozers. Rive does so quietly confident of his power to make his characters and their determination never to forget what they once had, something which may be a source of strength to all his readers. □

Just after '**Buckingham Palace**' was published last year, BP Southern Africa announced its "R100-million plan" to speed Apartheid on its way; it includes the proposal that the District should be "rebuilt as the first open residential area" (Sunday Tribune, 16 November, 1986) with R50-million earmarked for the developmental costs. It is a nice gesture which presupposes the end of the Group Areas Act. Those who hope such an aboutface will indeed follow the coming white elections may be proved right. And if such a desperately needed, sane step is taken, then many people should turn to Rive's work to understand for themselves what might hold a disparate society together again.

# COMMITTED TO THE STRUGGLE

Sipho Sepamla **Third Generation**  
Skotaville Publishers 1986

Sipho Sepamla is without doubt one of South Africa's major poets. His poem "To Whom it May Concern" from his 1975 collection **Hurry Up to It!** remains for me one of the finest short satirical poems by a South African. Sepamla's third novel **Third Generation** cannot be placed in the same category as his best poetry but it is nevertheless an important work. Brutal methods of interrogation by the South African security police are vividly portrayed in this novel. But more importantly the author gives encouragement to all those involved in the freedom struggle. The novel ends on a triumphant note when the narrator leaves the country to continue the struggle:

"I left the house like one going to the toilet in the backyard. There never was a better way to leave home for a freedom fighter. There were no farewells, there were no trumpets blowing the last note. Africa I come!"

"Third Generation" is the name of a group who have committed themselves to the overthrow of the forces of repression. The founder members are Potlako, Solly, Thandi and the narrator, Lifa. They are later joined by Sis Vi, Lifa's mother, who is a nurse at Baragwanath Hospital. The main settings of the novel are Wattville, Soweto, Botswana and police headquarters in Johannesburg. Members of the Third Generation work closely with Papa Tukwayo ("Papa Tuks"). "A colourful character" who is "head of operations on the Reef". Sis Vi is sent on a secret mission to Port Elizabeth, though the exact nature of the mission is never made clear. Later she is detained, brutally interrogated and finally charged in the case of the State vs. Tukwayo. The other accused are Papa Tuks himself, Thandi and Solly. The exact charges are also never made explicit. They each receive stiff sentences with hard labour. Lifa is the only member of the group not to be picked up. As mentioned earlier he decides to leave the country for further military training.

The plot of **Third Generation** is absorbing but there are some structural flaws and the writing is uneven. Perhaps for some readers these flaws are unimportant. These readers might argue that the message is more important than the medium. Nevertheless it is a pity that some of the climaxes are not sustained. For example, towards the end of the novel there is an exciting description of Solly's escape to

Botswana. In Gabarone he is tricked by two black security police spies who pretend they are taking him on a pleasure trip to the north of Botswana. Instead they drug him and drive him across the border into South Africa. Here he is handed over to the South African police. The reader has become engrossed in Solly's story but in the middle of the chapter the focus switches from Solly to a police spy called Stompie Lukala who is beaten to death in prison. The chapter ends with an unintelligible sentence. I quote the full paragraph so that it can be seen in context:

"Speculation was rife as to how the police would lead evidence without their principal witness. But that was without reckoning with the industrious Major Brink. Besides the public's long lost confidence in the impartiality of some judges and its prayers centred on whom not to appoint for the important task".

Is this last sentence meant to mean something? Is it a printer's error? Why wasn't it picked up in the proofreading?

Another criticism (though a minor one) is that it is unnecessary for Lifa to have been made the narrator. As it is most of the story does not feature first person narrative. Why not stick to third person narrative throughout?

**Third Generation** is a novel written from the inside. No white writer could bring out such vivid detail of township life or of the endless debates about the struggle or of attempts to elude the police. Sepamla knows intimately the Buda B's, the Mmbathos, the Sis Vi's and the Bra Thami's of this world. The novel contains many references to recent events and to real life politicians. The name of Steve Biko is mentioned several times. Sepamla's central characters are well rounded. His white policemen are flatter but their cunning and their brutality are entirely convincing. The horrifying tortures that have been inflicted by some South African security policemen on detainees have been revealed in many court cases. Sepamla's accounts of police interrogations are not exaggerated.

In spite of its flaws **Third Generation** is an important novel. It is a tribute to all those involved in the struggle against racist oppression. But in particular Sepamla admires the Sis Vi's of this world. As the blurb says: "Third Generation celebrates the courage and commitment of Black women in the liberation struggle".□

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