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EDITORIALS

LIBERAL AND RADICAL

In this issue REALITY appears with a new subtitle — and with a somewhat new format to emphasize the subtitle. In the past it has described itself as "A Journal of Liberal Opinion"; now it becomes "A Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion". This change requires some comment.

When REALITY came into existence nearly four years ago, it was regarded by its editorial board and by many of its readers as largely a continuation — a legal continuation — of one aspect of the life of the Liberal Party, which, as a non-racial political organization, had been rendered illegal by the preposterous (and preposterously named) Improper Political Interference Act of 1967. The Liberal Party's journal had been called "Liberal Opinion": it was certainly no coincidence that those two words reappeared in the subtitle of the new journal.

REALITY has from the first, then, been dedicated to the values of what might perhaps be called classic South African liberalism — a strenuous rejection of racial discrimination, a belief in the essential rights and freedoms of all men, a determination to spread a humane vision and to work in every possible way for the creation of a society based on equality of opportunity. The journal has drawn its nourishment from the assumption that only in the light of such values can the reality of South Africa — past, present and future — be seen with any clarity.

IMMORTAL

For people who are aware, there can never be any question of abandoning or modifying the essential principles of liberalism as we have defined them: they are (as Wordsworth said of poetry) "as immortal as the heart of man". But in the last few years some of the traditional attitudes, approaches and formulations of many of those who have supported liberal principles have been criticised, with varying degrees of sharpness, by a number of liberally-inclined people, many of them young. They have complained that liberalism as normally proclaimed and practised — for all the value that it may have had in fairly subtle ways — has certainly not transformed South African society. (It is necessary to add, parenthetically, that the transforming of South African society is no easy task.) Many blacks have decided, largely for tactical reasons, that at the present moment some of the principles of liberalism have to be underplayed so that a special and concrete stress may be placed on other more immediately significant liberal principles. These are people who are helping to foster "black consciousness" and who

believe (with considerable justification, surely) that the first real breaches in the dykes of white South African privilege are going to be made by the bargaining power of black numbers. Others, both white and black, have decided that liberalism can be put into action with a new kind of dynamism — that energy should be channelled into specific projects rather than general exhortations and denunciations, and that at the same time a more radical transformation of South African society must be envisaged. Such radicals tend to feel that traditional liberalism has too often been, like the policies of the Progressive Party, an expression of half-detached generosity on the part of the fairly privileged rather than a genuine expression of the *need* of the dispossessed or of those who are truly prepared to associate themselves with the dispossessed. What is required, radicals feel, is a switch (in the words of Raymond Williams) from the idea of *service* — valid and valuable as that is, as far as it goes — to the idea of *solidarity*.

To talk in these terms is of course to simplify. Sincere liberals have always been fairly radical in important respects; alert radicals are always apt to be liberal in their essential

thrusts. Many liberals have been sufficiently committed to action to suffer severely for their convictions (one thinks, for example, of the large number of Liberal Party members who received banning orders). What is more, very many holders of liberal principles would consider themselves to be both liberal and radical.

REAL DISTINCTION

Still, the distinction between "liberal" and "radical" is felt by many people to be a real one, and for this reason REALITY is now to be "A Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion". The editorial board hopes that each issue will bring out many of the ways in which liberalism and radicalism coincide or merge into one another. The board is also aware, however, that there are some tensions between liberal and radical viewpoints: we hope that the journal will reflect these in an honest and fruitful manner. Any valid political attitude needs to be constantly evolving in order to meet a changing situation and at the same time constantly in touch with the past and with its own underlying values. It is to this complex task of adjustment and confirmation that REALITY hopes, now as in the past, to contribute. □

THE INWARD POLICY

There has been some significant evidence lately of the prevailing preoccupations of Afrikaner Nationalism. The continuing influence of the Broederbond in Nationalist policy; the reunion of nationalist ex-detainees and political prisoners; the ceremonial re-burial of skeletons found at concentration camp sites — these things (each associated with the Prime Minister himself) reveal that even after 24 years of supreme power in South Africa, Nationalism turns inward for the sources of its energy, and still finds at its centre the bitterness of defeat. The Broederbond probably controls through its members by far the largest slice of political and economic patronage in the country; yet it remains secret, in the doubtless disingenuous but revealing words of a member, because it fears victimisation.

A conception of oneself as perpetually injured can indeed be a source of strength and power. We remember Philoctetes in the Greek legend, cursed with a wound that would never heal, whose arrows therefore were granted unerring accuracy. And the call to the blood of a mythically threatened Volk in South Africa has never yet failed.

However it cannot be possible for people in the position of conquerors to continue permanently justifying their cruelties and oppressions, even to themselves, with the sort of desperate and persecuted excuses appropriate only to suffering victims. The truth must assert itself; in the conventional phrase, those who cannot learn from history have to repeat it; and the shadow of a similar future reunion of ex-Robben-Island prisoners must surely have hung over the Pretoria celebrations. And perhaps one day there will be ceremonies in the graveyards of Limehill and Dimbaza.

"WHAT IS BEST"

'Take what is best from the past' — the history of the Afrikaners, especially the history of their defeats, contains great courage, dignity, and heroism. We hold no brief for

what Mr. Vorster and his friends thought they were defending in the 40's, but from their distresses no doubt could have emerged the values of integrity, comradeship, generosity, loyalty — or even the humane good sense of Byron's Johnson, sold into slavery but recognising that

our disasters

may teach us better to behave when masters.

But paranoid fear and bitterness seem to be all that has significantly remained. Afrikanerdom may survive a long time hugging its injuries to itself; but it must be a diminishing survival. The gradual rejection of the Afrikaans language by the Coloured people, formerly a numerous group of its most lively and enterprising users, is already an impoverishment. Philoctetes could indeed go on existing with his wound and his bow — but the wound smelt so bad that his companions could allow him to exist, and no more, isolated from all human contact on a barren island. □

WHAT

THE BLACK WORKERS THINK

by Mike Murphy

Many Whites, as the self-appointed guardians over the present and the future of Blacks presume they know what Blacks think and how Blacks feel about the treatment they receive. The following quotes reveal how Blacks themselves feel about issues closely related to their lives – their work, their working conditions, their wages, racism, the Church, the police.

The quotes are taken from a booklet published this year following a novel experiment carried out in December 1971 and January 1972, and sponsored by a number of Christian organizations. Six Black theological students, all in their early twenties, were sent into various factories on the Witwatersrand to take on jobs as ordinary labourers, to experience what the workers experience, to learn how they feel, what they think. These students were taken off the job for a day after 4 weeks, after 6 weeks, and finally at the end of the 8th week to answer questionnaires and for purposes of reorientation and encouragement. The students went to different sorts of factories and their varying answers reflect the variety of working conditions they experienced. The students all had a minimum of a Std. 8 education and one year's theological training. Some students were more fluent in Afrikaans than in English, but answered the questionnaires in English. A selection of the questions and answers appears below, with the answers reproduced exactly as the students wrote them.

In answer to the question "To what extent were you informed with regard to

- (a) **Process of production or work**
- (b) **Your responsibilities**
- (c) **Human relationships**

To whom were you introduced? :

Student A

- (a) I was informed that the process of production and work is very low and poor because of incompetent workers. They said that production would be good if they had good workers; but, I discovered that there are capable workers but they are not taught well or why they do their work.
- (b) Machine operator or helping where the need was felt. I wasn't always clearly and adequately informed about them. I had to use my discretion. I was always told I should reach a certain quota. I was informed about efficiency, speed and industry. I was informed how to operate and maintain the plant, e.g. oiling and checking.
- (c) At first very poor. Individualism and estrangement prevailing. Life situation anonymous, soulless, bewildering, frustrating, embittering. Superiority complex – white staff
Inferiority complex – black staff

Student B

- (a) Shown only the piece of work required from you at that time.
- (b) Limited to the piece of work you're doing.
- (c) Fair. You introduce yourself.

In answer to the question "Describe the work place with regard to environment, organisation, space, appearance, flow of work, light air, noise, safety. What did your fellow-workers think about these conditions? "

Student A.

Discription of work with regard to Environment: Boredom transferred from home to industry.

Organisation: very poor; supervisor lacked mastery of his work thus inducing confusion and disorganisation among the workers and to the work as a whole.

Space: Not enough space to move and work freely.

Appearance: The place looks untidy and without order.

Flow of work: flow of work isn't satisfactory because workers are not crystal clear about purposes and goals of industry. Boredom always crops up because workers are not even allowed to talk. If found talking they're told they are hindering the progress of work.

Light: Light especially sun's rays prevented by tall buildings around the firm.

Noise: A constant, piercing, disagreeable noise causing stomach troubles.

Safety: No safety from machinery. The sickening noise causes emotionally induced illnesses. Frustration and boredom causing unpleasant emotions thus resulting in poor human relationships. Some workers complained of "pains in the neck" and "gas". One worker injured and another stayed away from work.

In answer to the question "How would you describe the attitude of your fellow workers and supervisors with regard to: Their work, Factory, Industrial work in general? "

Student A

Workers feel punk physically. They are fundamentally unhappy, because the pace and pressure are so great. Industrial work in general causes terrific emotional illnesses. It frightens off maturity to co-operate and share willingly with their fellowmen. Workers lack responsibility with regard to work. Non-creative. Supervisors play superior thus exploiting the workers. It is a "monster" with a soulless atmosphere.

The supervisor couldn't fix the machine well – failing which he started to blame me for miscarrying of machine and even promised to give me the sack if that mistake occurred again. But when someone else (engineer) came to have a look at it he discovered that the plant was badly adjusted. On one occasion the plant was so loosely adjusted that it could have cut my fingers off, but by luck I discovered it. The boss once called me "boy" when he wanted me to help him carry a box to his car.

Temporary and permanent workers were sometimes robbed of their wages because they were ignorant and illiterate and unable to calculate the hours and minutes they'd worked. Workers are cynical about all these things for they prefer being undermined, bullied/dehumanised rather than that their families should starve.

Fear dominates them, even when scolded for something they are innocent of they do not defend themselves.

In answer to the question "What was the weekly wage of workers?":

Student B

R12,00

Student C

R7,98

In answer to the question "Did the workers have any influence on conditions or decisions about working? If so, what results were achieved? "

Student A

They realised they are treated as things, not human beings; only to be dominated and pushed around like objects. Men as old as my father who have great personal responsibility in the community are treated like "boys" at work. But they decided to conform to such conditions so that their families could survive. They even remarked that since the whites had defeated the blacks they will always be "baas" to them. "A black is and will ever be inferior to the white" some said. The workers seem to be permanently crippled and impaired by the indoctrination of white superiority and despise themselves.

In answer to question "Describe the attitude of workers towards material and machines and the consent of the worker":

Student A

That they are cogs of the machine responding to its constant grinding. Their emotions are dictated by the plant, little knowledge about machine operation and materials. They don't dream they could themselves invent or construct low-cost technical instruments or machinery. They are convinced that the Government is against any invention. They feel machinery is the enemy of the worker and is filled with various unsolved problems. It is a threat to them. Most accidents or fatal injuries are caused by machines. This makes them anxious, absent-minded, worried and imposes fear which induces hatred. They find machines monotonous and boring.

In answer to the question "What were their main subjects for discussion":

Student C:

They said academic education was valueless for their young people because of job reservation.

The young educated people who should be holding higher posts in society work alongside them in unskilled jobs, so it was useless educating children.

They prefer factory work because it pays equally well or even better than nursing, clerical work, teaching or even somebody with a B.A. degree.

They said they felt that there were Africans who are capable of leading the nation, in various fields of life, such as industry, technology and inventions, but these people are stifled by Government policy and not given the chance to use their talents.

In answer to the question "Do they take part in political action"? :

Student A

They are cynical about politics but they did decide never to say "Baas" to any white man. They started to unfold but fear dominates their thinking. They are indoctrinated "Thou shalt be only seen but not heard".

In answer to the question "Describe the racial attitude in the work place":

Student E

The racial attitude in the work place is very acute and every day it grows from bad to worse. Many white workers have created an attitude of mind of trying to put Africans in a little box or compartment and trying to see in him what he is not. Every African is called a kaffir – this is the common word used in the factory. If one African has made a mistake automatically all Africans are liable to doing the very same mistake; yet, this is the opposite with regard to whites – they judge their brother's case according to its merits and demerits or judge him as an individual but not as: "all whites do this". Everyday the African appears to be strangers to whites because they don't even greet him nor give him a word of deserved appreciation after he has accomplished a good job or task. They don't feel pity for him just because he is a "kaffir" – he is a machine, they send him to dangerous spots or positions because to them his life is unnecessary and his death is a death of a dog where it isn't even worthwhile to mourn.

In answer to the question "In what were people interested or what were they most worried about? "

Student A

Low wages, family problems; thugs, workers service as means of profit, long hours but less pay.

Student F

They were interested in wages and worried about little money.

In answer to the question "What was their attitude towards politics"? :

Student F

Some whom we had some talks with were interested, but usually warned us not to talk too much because else we shall be arrested.

Others are ignorant – they are afraid – they say that everywhere the police is as the government's watchdog.

In answer to the question "How did the attitudes of workers find expression with regard to: diligence, loyalty, willingness to work overtime, pride in work, vagueness, listlessness, irresponsibility? "

Student E

Many workers are diligent and loyal to their jobs but what really discouraged them was that no matter how diligent and loyal they may have been for years, there has been no indication of appreciation or promotion, from the employers. They seem to remain as things and not people and they constitute nothing to the success of the factory as a whole. They are willing to work overtime not because they feel like it but because their salary is very low, so the way to increase it is by working overtime. The result of the whole situation is that they have no sense of pride in their work, just because they are slaves working for nothing except that they are looking forward to the day when things will be different.

In answer to the question "What was the attitude of fellow workers towards :

- (a) You as a theological student/ University student?
- (b) The Church?
- (c) The Christian Faith?

Student C

(a) Some seemed to be jealous of me and took me as their enemy of tomorrow when I shall perhaps be working

in the office set-up.

- (b) They said what was the use of attending church when you are suffering like this — they said some people do not attend church and yet they seem to have everything.
- (c) People call themselves “Christians” but there is no difference between them and us. They drink, smoke and commit adultery, and even you minister, so we don’t see any use for the Christian faith.

Student D

- (a) They said that I wanted to be a minister so that I would eat other people’s money.
- (b) It is useless to go to church and listen to another person telling you lies.
- (c) They don’t believe there is such a thing in S.A. as the Christian faith.

In answer to the question “What percentage of workers lived away from their families?”:

Student E

Approximately 80% of the workers lived away from their families.

In answer to the question “What was their attitudes

towards Trade Unions?”:

Student A

They regard it as a means to lull things — to make you think that grievances are considered though their problems increase instead of decrease. They regard Trade Unions as useless — a thing which is non-active.

Student E

The more enlightened ones see the need for Trade Unions. They have good expectations that if Africans were included in Trade Unions they would help to eliminate some of the problems facing the workers in industry.

In answer to the question “What were their questions and what discussions arose?”:

Student D

Their main question was: when will we get some independence? And their main discussion: we work hard but we get little money.

Student F

One of their discussions was: this is not the place for a clever man only you must work here until you can get a better job. □



LABOUR ARISTOCRATS

AND

AFRICAN WORKERS

by David Hemson

In the past few weeks there has been considerable debate about the relation of registered trade unions towards the mass of workers in South Africa: African workers. Once again TUCSA (The Trade Union Congress of South Africa) has called upon the Government to change its attitude towards the organisation of African workers. But on this occasion there were discordant voices among the progressive unions, and in an interview with David Hemson, Mrs. Harriet Bolton Secretary of the Garment Workers Industrial Union (Natal) traces the history of the relationship between TUCSA and African workers. Trade unions should deregister in terms of the racial Industrial Conciliation Act and new worker's organisations should be formed, she argues.

What were your general impressions of the latest TUCSA Conference?

For the first time I felt that we had come to a stalemate. All the resolutions and discussions seemed to be the same as in previous years. Many of the delegates complained on the first and second days that Conference was completely dead, and said how little progress had been made since last year.

The main item under discussion, I take it, was the question of the organisation of African workers?

This was definitely the most important item on the agenda, but unfortunately the resolution was delayed and had to be dealt with after the seminar on African Trade unions addressed by Dr. van der Merwe and Dr. Francis Wilson, which was on the fourth day.

The resolution was more or less a standard resolution as passed at previous conferences?

The actual resolution read as follows: 'This 18th Annual Conference calls on all affiliated unions of the Council to make every effort to obtain from their members an unambiguous and clear mandate, in the coming year, to press Government to permit the organising of African workers into registered trade unions in their respective industries and occupations for which they cater.'

I feel strongly that this resolution should have been put into practice in 1966. At the 15th Annual Conference that year, Mr. Scheepers, President of TUCSA, gave his reasons why we would have to change our policy on African trade unions from acceptance to rejection. 'You will recall that at the Special Conference held in 1967 to decide on the prickly question of non-registered unions, it was decided to recommend to affiliates that the Council limit its membership to registered trade unions. Many of the delegates to the Special Conference refrained from casting their votes and were instructed to go back to their unions to seek a clear mandate on the issue, so that they could vote on the matter when it arose at last year's annual conference.

NO MANDATE

'I am sorry to say, fellow trade unionists, that many of these delegates failed to obtain mandates. There was much lobbying before the vote to reverse the decision of the Special Conference, but this vote, I am quite certain, was *not based on a firm mandate from the unions concerned*, so much as on emotional, on-the-spot decisions.'

TUCSA became alienated from a large body of registered trade unions and from the Government, and the officials claimed that African workers were not industrially conscious.

At that time we were told by Conference to get a mandate, which I and others did, but some unions did not. What guarantee have we got that they will do so this time?

What is the purpose of getting a mandate?

A mandate would show that you are empowered by your unions to take a vote. I do not see the necessity for TUCSA to ask delegates to obtain a mandate from their workers, because you as a delegate are fully aware of how far you can go.

The position is as follows then: that the trade unions realise that something has to be done about African workers. The Minister of Labour has been approached, but he has refused to allow African workers to become members of a registered trade union. Conference then considers the position and puts forward yet another resolution which is identical to that turned down by the Minister the year before?

That is correct. This procedure gives the impression that we are doing something about it at last. In 1966 our leaders said it was the correct thing to do and some unions did have the required mandate. At the next conference our leaders said it was not the right thing to do, because some unions had left TUCSA in reaction to accepting African unions.

REJECTED SUGGESTIONS

In the first place TUCSA had the previous year taken many resolutions similar to those appearing on this year's agenda. The National Executive Committee resolution on African workers was similar to that of last year. But last year the Secretary for Labour flatly rejected TUCSA's suggestions. And I quote: 'I am directed to advise you that the Government has announced *time and again* that it is not prepared to amend the Industrial Conciliation Act to permit of the recognition of Bantu trade unions, and the Minister of Labour recently reiterated in Parliament that it is not intended to grant official recognition to such unions. In the circumstances no purpose would be served by pursuing the matter any further.'

The leaders of TUCSA inferred that they had the position under control and they implied that they had 'something up their sleeves', but in that case they should have told delegates exactly what it was. In fairness to them, they might have thought that by giving unions this issue to discuss they might engender action amongst them.

Industrial legislation in South Africa then does not really protect and encourage genuine trade unions?

If you examine the basic principles of the labour movement and the provisions of industrial legislation you will find that they differ immensely. In the early days (in 1924 just after the trade union movement had become active) it should not have accepted the qualification that Africans should be excluded from union membership. Of course, at that time there were far fewer African industrial workers. But when industrial legislation was amended by the National Government in 1956 to bring in job reservation, prohibit strikes, and cause racial discrimination within trade unions the trade union movement should have made a decisive stand.

At that time was there no move to de-register?

There were people who said that unions' might as well de-register but there was no move to actually do this. The trade unions fought against the Bill, but when the amendments became law they had no option but to send in their constitutions to be rewritten in terms of the new legislation. Because trade unions are having to keep within industrial law, and because the Government makes ideologically reactionary legislation, the remaining trade unions are stultifying and dying.

The bulk of the workers have no vote. When trade unions were first formed they consisted mainly of white workers who had votes. A large body of voters in the country wanted a trade union movement and were in fact members of a trade union, and therefore assumed that the Government would take notice of their pleas.

NO VOTES

Since an increased number of voteless blacks have come into industry the trade union movement has not had the same force. Although the numbers of members have increased, the percentage of the voting population in the trade union movement has decreased. Trade unions will fall away in the end because the bulk of the workers will be Africans. If you study the Transvaal Garment Union and the Engineering Union you'll find that the number of workers have doubled but those with votes have decreased. This results in trade unions being eroded.

At the TUCSA conference you felt that the trade unions were getting nowhere and that they should de-register in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act?

There is a feeling among registered unions that African workers are not equipped to run their own trade unions. This has actually been said. In 1969 Mr. Scheepers, then



President of TUCSA said: 'The question boiled down to this; that it was in the interests of South Africa as a whole that its hundreds of thousands of unorganised workers should be offered facilities for obtaining *responsible* leadership. That was the argument and it won sufficient support for our Constitution to be amended in 1962 to permit the affiliation of non-registered unions. The door was now open but what has happened in the intervening years? 'Only eleven comparatively small non-registered unions walked through that door in all those years. TUCSA, in that period, had an African Affairs Department which devoted time and energy to assist the African workers in sectors where this help was called for in the broad interests of *all* South African workers.'

I feel that the impression was given that African workers were not industrially conscious. In other words, they were not worth worrying about. That is the opinion of most of the trade unions. They feel that Africans can only succeed if helped by white unions, because they are not capable of running their own organisations.

SAME DIFFICULTIES

I felt annoyed because after all in the early days all trade unions had the same difficulties. Many trade unions still have inadequate leadership. Most of them pass the buck on to their industrial councils and take refuge in the fact that if their employers do not agree to their requests they can do nothing about it.

How many of these trade unions, if they were not registered would have been able to maintain their position? If trade unions de-register and amalgamate with the bulk of the *workers* and either form associations or some kind of united body, or whatever they expect the Africans to do, and have a go at uniting with the Africans and just ignore the

provisions of the Industrial Conciliation Act, then we will have made some progress.

The employers maintain industrial councils because they have gained control over the unions. They have learnt to make industrial councils control the unions, and how to operate the industrial machinery. Industrial councils have become a means of control rather than of assistance to trade unions.

If trade union leaders were agreeable to de-registration would they get the support of their members? Do you think it would be possible to negotiate agreements which would be legally binding?

How did trade unions get the support of their members in the early days when there was no legislation? There were trade unions in South Africa before the 20th century and most industrial legislation only came into effect in 1924. It may be a bit difficult to convince our members at first, but no more than it was in the early days. If it was brought home to workers individually that they must cast their lot with other workers they would be agreeable. If this racial problem was put in perspective people would be able to see clearly beyond the barriers that the law makes.

What was the response of the trade unions and TUCSA leaders to your suggestions?

The idea was so new that they did not even consider it, they did not even hear me. Only the distributive union came to me and pointed out that they felt that it was compulsory for trade unions to be registered. I asked them how Africans could run an organisation without being registered. I explained to them how societies could be registered. I feel that if all the workers were 100 per cent organised and belonged to a benefit society it could work.

When I was negotiating for my union's agreement I found

that the individual employers were willing to negotiate separately and willing to deduct the workers' contributions and send them in to the union. If any employer would refuse we would see that he did not get labour.

STALEMATE

TUCSA has reached a stalemate. There are going to be other unions as dissatisfied as ours, for instance the Typographical Union. At this last conference TUCSA's strength was 76 unions and 189 000 workers. The affiliated strength was more or less the same now as it was in December 1947. There were more unions affiliated then when there were less people in industry in South Africa. I do not think that TUCSA has made any real commendable progress. We have become merely a focal point for resolutions asking the Government to do certain things, the Government then refuses to do these things, and then we stop. There is nothing more we can do. That is why I feel we should now examine the effectiveness of different forms of organisation.

I feel unions should show their wishes to the Minister by organising African workers by de-registering their unions and forming other kinds of association which will take in all workers. I think that this action will bring such chaos that it will force radical rethinking.

It is a myth that industrial legislation protects us, it actually restricts us. Unions are registered in terms of laws which are fundamentally in conflict with the principles of the labour movement.

I believe that if we do make a mass move to de-register, first of all examining how we could form other organisations with a workable constitution, we could still negotiate contracts with employers individually and set up main collection offices — and work out something in that way.□

FROM THE OUTSIDE

by M. Pascal Gwala

We buried Madaza
on a Sunday;
big crowd:
hangarounds, churchgoers,
drunks and goofs;
even the fuzz
was there
as the priest
hurried
the burial sermon-
and we filled the grave
with red soil,
the mourning song
pitched fistedly high;
— what got my brow itching though
is that none
of the cops present
dared to stand out
and say
Madaza was a "Wanted"□

“A CRISIS OF FAITH”

A review of the SPRO-CAS Commission Report :
“Apartheid and the Church”

by Fenella Robbins



“The sporadic and piecemeal efforts which have been made to liberate Christians from racial prejudice must be intensified, co-ordinated and expanded. A substantial and, if possible, ecumenically co-ordinated or sponsored programme of education in attitudes which reflect faith in the Gospel or reconciliation is an urgent necessity.”

This is one of the recommendations made by the Church Commission of Spro-cas¹ in its report, *Apartheid and the Church*².

In its study project the Commission has found no room for complacency. It believes that “the Church by its very nature as the servant of the word of God is called upon to examine critically all human ideologies and societies in the light of the Gospel. Yet it has long compromised its role as prophet and critic in South Africa. We are judged by the very gospel which judges society. By the standard of the Gospel we find ourselves a Church whose performance has in no way matched what should be expected of it. Called to hope, we too often live as though without hope.”

SERIOUSLY RESTRICTED

The Church Report analyses the effects of apartheid on the life and mission of the Church. It finds that the Church’s freedom to witness to the word of God and to serve the people of God is seriously restricted by apartheid laws and customs in South Africa. Government regulations governing freedom of movement, residence, association, education and worship are serious hindrances to the work of the Church. The report points out, however, that a climate of thought has developed, encouraged by the plethora of laws and regulations, which makes even legally permissible actions seem doubtful and dangerous. A great many people assume that the law allows less freedom than it does, and

thus there are still considerable opportunities, for example, in inter-racial contact, which are often neglected because of ignorance and uncertainty regarding the law.

Although there is no direct law curtailing freedom of speech, Church workers are, however, inhibited by the fear of bannings, deportations, refusals of visas, and withdrawals of passports.

Turning from such external controls, the Report deals with the “internal ideological activity” brought about by apartheid society. Thus while the Church is still one of the few places where Black and White can meet in an environment of relative acceptance, for the most part the life of the Church reflects the prevailing social and political attitudes of the country. We are motivated by fear — racial fear, fear of failing to be successful, fear of controversy, fear of ostracism and isolation, fear of loss of identity, fear of authority. We have become prey to prejudice, conformism, authoritarianism, and despair, thus hampering the life of the Church.

The Report also examines such structural problems as disunity within the Church and the deep division between those who reject it as a pseudo-gospel.

CRISIS OF FAITH

The Church is indeed faced with a crisis of faith. The Commission makes a number of recommendations, recognising that they will be of no use unless programmes are set up to put them into effect. (It is hoped there will be support for Spro-cas 2 — the Study Project for Christian Action in Society.)

1. Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society.

2. Sponsored by the Christian Institute and the S.A. Council of Churches.

Some of the Report's more specific recommendations read as follows:

Each denomination should embark on a programme aiming at equalising stipends for ministers of all races by 1975.
Churches should concentrate on building ecumenical and multi-functional buildings.
Church members should be taxed to assist African education.
Churches should plan symbolic acts of resistance to what is false and unjust in the life of the community.
Every congregation should have a clearly visible notice board announcing that Christians of all races are welcome.□

CENSORSHIP

This article was the proposal speech for the motion "that Censorship should be abolished" delivered to the University of Natal Debating Society in Pietermaritzburg on 12th September, 1972. The motion was carried by a comfortable majority.

by Donald Beale

Some of you here tonight may not be aware that Censorship is a problem, either because you've always been shackled within its mind-structure, or because you don't care. Either way points to its insidious effect, subtle, lethal, like radioactivity slowly and silently rotting the bone.

Let us be clear at the outset: in debating the abolition of censorship we are not debating the abolition of moral standards nor of moral discrimination. We are concerned with censorship as a government-sanctioned institution which takes upon itself the right to intervene in our normal human habits of discrimination and choice in determining that which it deems fit for us, and that which is not fit for us. It seeks to impose itself on individual human moral choice, and it is our right to that, that I am concerned to defend in proposing the abolition of censorship, since I do not believe that any outside body has the right of control that blanket censorship insists on. In subverting our own right to free choice and free thought, it substitutes a definite corruption and immorality for what is only a possible one, since it lessens and evacuates the area of choice. Censorship is not unique to South Africa, but even if it is worse elsewhere, that cannot justify it here. The two most frequent imposers of censorships are invariably the State and the Church — one thinks of Blake's aphorism: *As the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.* A pattern emerges: it is almost axiomatic that the severer the censorship, the more likely it is that the government be repressive and authoritarian, and the greater the incidence of indoctrination.

Our concern tonight is with the principle of Censorship, not with Pornography and Obsenity, and while Censorship includes the latter, they are not the central focus of the motion, and I trust we shall not be side-tracked into heady moral disquisitions on degrees of sexual acceptability: censorship extends beyond these to areas of political, theological, and philosophical speculation, and seeks to curtail these areas also. It is as well to bear in mind that censorship bans not only books and films, but ideas, and, without compunction, people also.

NOT STATE'S PREROGATIVE

To advocate the abolition of censorship is a sweeping move, and obviously I am not asking for a wholesale and indiscriminate indulgence in pulp and filth. What I am claiming is that moral discrimination at this level is not the prerogative of the state at all, but something private, and domestic. Parents are understandably concerned if children are reading distasteful literature, but it seems to me to be the parents task, not the state's, to deal with it. State and church, however, violate the individual right of moral choice and discrimination, at the same time claiming that it is moral concern which justifies their intrusion, all the while, however, fashioning an exclusive and rigid framework within which the very notion of individual

freedom in matters of morality becomes suspect and subversive, until morality itself is equated with blind, mindless acquiescence in state decisions. (In this context the chain is interesting: State = Government = Party in Power. Morality therefore = Party in Power). Even the arguments for moderate censorship are going to have to offer pretty clear definitions of criteria, and to insist on censorship as something entirely other than party political propaganda, active or by default. The recent furore on the Wits "Lavatory Cartoons" in (dare one say?) upper and lower chambers of Parliament revealed just how out of perspective things are. But it also revealed more insidious possibilities when a Nationalist MP rose, brandishing a UCT newspaper, and bitterly criticised the fact that such journals were allowed to publish articles treating Lenin "warmly". The point is pretty clear.

GUARD

The central impetus of Censorship, one gathers, is to keep guard over those things likely to corrupt and deprave, thus preserving healthy moral standards. But these words are loaded. We're all familiar with such formulations as, "all right-thinking people will agree . . ." or "no decent person would claim . . ." etc. This conspiratorial, cliché-ridden, morally self-congratulatory argument tends to blur the real issue, precluding serious evaluation by its assumption that anything they disagree with, or disapprove of, ought to be put a stop to on self-evident moral grounds; and one notices that those most vociferous in advocating censorship adopt a tone of absolute certainty as regards their judgement on matters of public and private morality. "Morality" itself in these contexts is a catch word: the very use of it, signifies less an attempt to confront moral issues, than the bogus use of a value judgement to support, sanction, and justify personal prejudice, the crude apotheosis of a self-image. The word invokes an absolute standard of reference, and its gathering momentum tends to negate awareness rather than to generate it. Once "morality" is invoked regarding a book or film, it's very easy to insist that anyone who defends the free circulation of the book or film is immoral. These words "corrupt", "deprave", "defile", "moral", etc. are all crude verbal stratagems: the forces of censorship do not seek to prevent, but to impose values by removing others from circulation. In political censorship, it seeks to suppress other values, and hence prevent questioning of its own, and since the Government sanctions Censorship, this censorship is part of deliberate Government policy, and since the Government seeks to remain in power, all motions of censorship are geared to that end. Thus, any and all things outside the accepted area are corrupt and subversive: to oppose is to be corrupt, immoral, seditious — the sequence is clear. It has nothing to do with moral value at all. It's more than the simple problem of "I dislike that . . .", since censorship seeks to impose its governing principles on others. Its strategy is to bring everything under State scrutiny, and exert suppressive pressure on anything likely to promote questioning of the status quo: it seeks, in short, to curtail growth and change. Simply, Censorship does not prevent: it suppresses. It attempts to close the mind, compelling a frame of standards bogusly evolved by the pseudo use of words like "morality", proscribing our right to discriminate and evaluate for ourselves. In case of authoritarian government, it implies values based on its own ideology, shuffles "morality" into its own camp, and evades the real issues.

SEXUAL ASPECTS

This is why the over-emphasis on merely the sexual aspects of morality is really a bluff and diversion. Of course many books and films are distasteful: censorship however tends to produce no serious evaluation of pornography and obscenity,

but rather, a sickening notion of moral purity that wholly excludes sexual candour.

One thinks of Byron in an early poem:

Queries to Casuists

The Moralists tell us that loving is sinning,
And always are prating about and about it,
But as love of Existence itself's the beginning,
Say, what would Existence itself be without it?
They argue the point with much furious invective,
Though perhaps 'twere no difficult task to
confute it;
But if Venus and Hymen should once prove defective
Pray, who would there be to defend or dispute
it?

and in a much later one:

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
Expurgated by learned men, who place,
Judiciously from out the schoolboy's vision,
The grosser parts; but, fearful to deface
Too much their modest bard by this omission,
And pitying soon his mutilated case,
They only add them all in an appendix,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;
(Don Juan, Canto I, XLIV-XLVI)

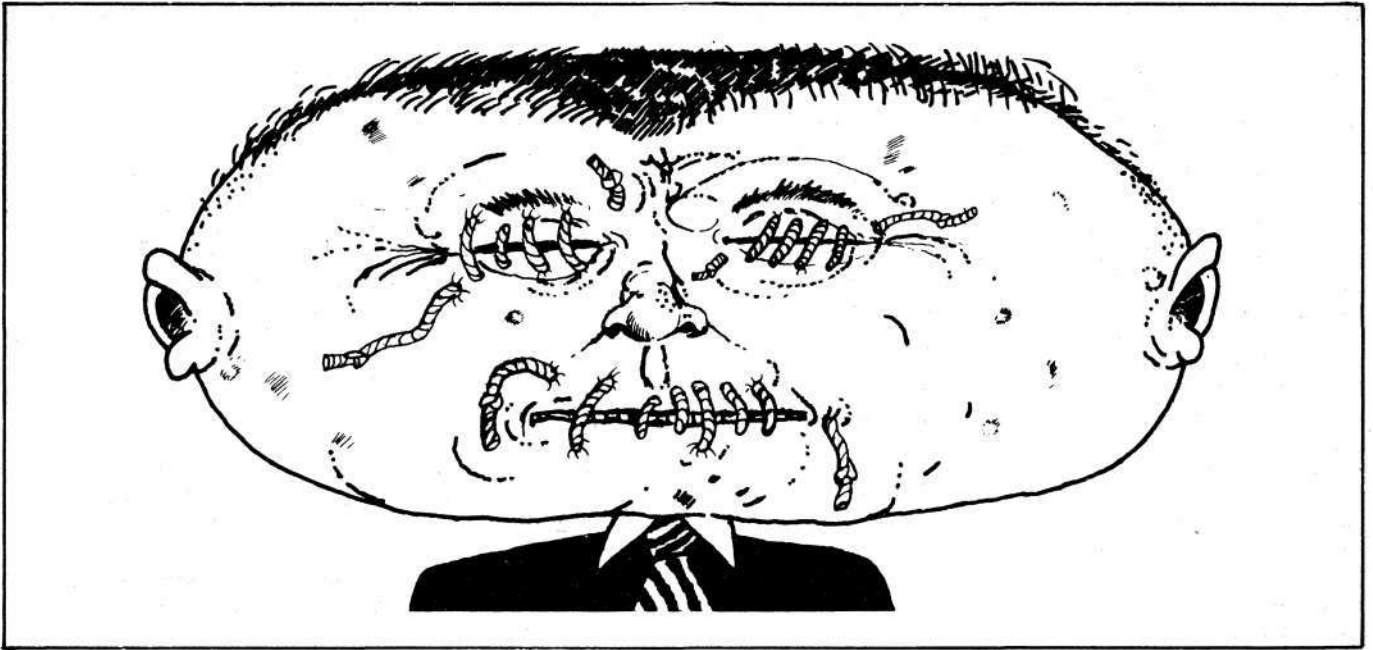
Sex itself, and nakedness becomes filthy and despicable, like psychotic obsessions. Even Milton's puritanism could distinguish between hypocrisy and the "naked majesty" of man: after their evening prayer, Adam and Eve retire,

into their inmost bow'r
Handed they went; and eased the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid, nor turned, I ween
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused;
Whatever hypocrites austere talk
Of purity and place and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
(*Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV, 738-747)

CONSEQUENCE

The consequence in South Africa is that much fifth rate pulp reaches the bookstalls, while great creative achievements like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are banned, and since censorship tends to exclude the good rather than the bad, no censorship seems infinitely preferable to the misguided and heavy-handed censorship that exists at present. It's within this context that one must consider recent authoritative pronouncements by the Moderator of the N.G.K. who is reported as saying that censorship should be increased, that the right of appeal be removed, that adverts for contraceptives be banned in the public press, and that husbands and wives have separate dressing rooms to avoid each other's nakedness. Milton seems a licentious, decadent, orgy-mad hedonist by comparison! (Could Milton have been a Communist?)

If, however, discussion of Censorship is confined only to matters sexual, much of its insidious significance is missed. This is not to claim that there isn't a great deal in the treatment of sexuality that's offensive, but it is to say that morality is not confined to sexuality alone. Censorship tends to distort those moral imperatives it purports to defend. Certain things come under scrutiny — philosophy, political, theology, sexuality, but sexuality becomes so



fixed that it carries more moral weight than it should, with the consequent assumption that if censorship is severe on sex, the nation is moral. By becoming hysterical about nude film scenes, or nude statues in Pretoria, the illusion is fostered that moral issues only arise here, that these are the critical moral cores. In terms of moral acceptability, for example, which is worse: a nude film scene, or 16 million people without political rights living in poverty and starvation? To me, the latter is inexpressably more obscene in human terms than a film sequence of sexual perversion: I don't like the perversion, but I detest the other even more. Censorship, clearly, seeks to move the question of morality out of the public sphere, and into the private one, thereby insulating the status quo from questioning. Apartheid, we're told, is not a moral issue: "Let us be bold and fearless in our fight against permissiveness, sexual license, blasphemy, and communism, but let us not bring morality to bear on the condition of the non-Whites". This, I submit, is hypocritical cant.

POP MUSIC

An eminent militarist at OFS University recently informed his audience that pop music is a Communist weapon (even though it is regarded as decadent in Russia!). Minister P.W. Botha has recently predicted the collapse of science, the arts, and knowledge in SA if the "minority" of protesters succeed, and it may be as well to bear in mind here that in the arts at any rate SA is distinguished internationally by no truly great poet, novelist, dramatist, painter, composer, etc. etc. Behind the fine phrases, it all amounts to censorship of political opposition, and of related areas, since Atheists apparently are persona non grata as immigrants. Censorship is thus a crucial organ in maintaining an atmosphere of controlled information (to comment on this or that is not in the National Interest ...), of secrecy, of the curtailment of individual freedom. Once permitted to act without having to give reasons for its decisions, Censorship possesses a carte-blanc for crude suppression. It becomes another weapon in seeking to control the mind, and freedom of thought. Even at the level of sexuality, there seems to be conflicting evidence that censorship has any significant effect on human behaviour, while it is obvious in SA that severe censorship in sexual matters takes place in a society where there is much incest, adultery, rape, and a high divorce rate. Is there any

more of these things proportionately in the more liberal UK? and if there is, even, can it be attributed to less severe censorship? . Even in the UK we've had the undignified spectacle of geriatric Lord Longford haunting the sin-bins of Denmark with aristocratic hysteria. Further, Mrs. Mary Whitehouse self-appointed arbiter of moral acceptability on TV, and infallible thermometer of degree of sexual decency, has gathered her forces to pronounce on large matters with great authority. In her wisdom, it seems, she has not yet realised that all TV sets are equipped with an "off-button". There is no compulsion to continue viewing should programme be offensive. The power of choice is fully operative here. This is crucial: no-one compels us to read this, to watch that, or to go to the cinema: we can choose not to, if we wish. Why should X impose his choice, prejudice, on Y? Can a generally imposed standard hold good for a range of minds from sub-normal to brilliant? Should it presume to? Perhaps these aphorisms of Blake's provide sufficient. *"The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction."* *"The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow; or the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey."* And most central of all, this: *"One law for the lion and Ox is oppression."* The general effect of imposed Censorship is a tyranny on the mind, a kind of oppression. Coming to terms with the distasteful, the offensive is our responsibility, not the divine right of state interventions.

CAN CORRUPT

It may be that de Sade can corrupt, but he does not corrupt everyone. It could be argued that *The Bible* can corrupt also. Which is worse: an isolated perversion deriving from de Sade, or an inhuman political system that claims to derive from the Holy Bible? Only one is censored, but both are morally unjustifiable. De Sade's perversions, however, do not necessarily encourage us to follow suit, we can choose not to: but in the second case, the whole weight of state machinery, including censorship, insists that we do follow suit, and deports, bans, or otherwise expurges, those who do not. Morality as a necessary and meritable concomitant of censorship seems less positive here!

To insist that choice be left to the individual doesn't mean he will choose the bad, but it is to insist that to claim virtue without choice is hardly morality. Even Milton in 1644 found it necessary to attack his own faction for seeking to impose

rigid censorship: human freedom mattered more than party interest:

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness . . . Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read . . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

IDEAL BOARD

It was recently suggested that the ideal censorship board would comprise Socrates and Bertrand Russell, Lawrence for novels, Shelley for poetry Ibsen and Shaw for drama. Attractive though this "ideal" group is, it still maintains an outside body controlling and supervising individual freedom, and in any event, a panel so constituted can only be a dream. Most boards are made of lesser men with specific affiliations politically. For them, moral responsibility means scrupulous deference to those laws that delimit, so we can feel protected, insisting that their formulations alone chart the actual and may be taken as real. I deny their claim: it's a weird view of morality, and of human destiny generally,

that works by avoidance and default rather than by choice. In the end it raises to perennial dilemma of liberal tolerance versus doctrinal infallibility. The greater the variety, the greater the potentiality for change, richness, and growth "Expect poison from the standing water" for "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom". By removing certain things, censorship seeks to adjudicate over our growth. It claims to prevent evil, but perpetuates evil itself, since its notion or moral excellence is bogus and *parti pris*. Imagine a garden with certain essentials removed,—the receiving of contrasts of light and shade, little water, and so on, and imagine that every plant couldn't bear its flower. It's a crude analogy, but it illustrates the grotesque unfulfilled condition of the stunted growth of the mind.

IMAGINATION

For Milton, "books promiscuously read" give an insight into the reality of Good and Evil. But their value goes further; the imagination is not only the great creative faculty, but also a central force in society: Shelley perhaps expressed it most powerfully:

"The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or persons not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination . . ."

Authoritarian, politically motivated censorship is no instrument of moral defence, but an attack on the central principles or morality itself. Abdicate your right to think and choose, and you abdicate your humanity.

The choice, fittingly enough, is yours. □

ASSECA

— A MIGHTY ADVENTURE

A REPORT ON THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ADVANCEMENT OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

by M.T. Moerane (President)

"ASSECA is the biggest thing happening in South Africa, my greatest disappointment would be if it should fail".

This is an evaluation by a Director of one of the most powerful efforts for race relations in this country.

Mr. J.W. Nxumalo, Executive Officer for Education in the Kwazulu Government in a Graduation oration at Ngoye in May spoke about the disparity in funds for Black and White education.

While the Government spends R248 per white child only R17 at best is spent on the black child. As a result in a complex like Soweto about 500 extra classrooms are needed to cope with the number eager to get education. The classrooms that are available need equipment, in some cases even basic furniture such as benches and desks. By and large they are overcrowded as many as 70 students forming one class even at matriculation level.

DOUBLE – SESSION SYSTEM

Over 3 million African pupils attend our schools today. Accommodation for the majority of these, who are in the lower primary levels, is achieved by the "double-session" system. The teacher takes charge of a hundred or more pupils divided into the morning and afternoon sessions. Thus the same teacher and the same classroom accounts for twice the usual number of pupils.

The teachers' salaries are low and their standard of qualification is on the average low.

The failure rate, especially in matriculation as well as the drop-out rate after Standard 11, is high.

What do you do to meet these crying needs, especially in a country where the Central Government disclaims responsibility for the full and free education of the African Children?

LAUNCHING

Four years ago the African people launched ASSECA dedicated to the objectives of:

- a) Getting every African child to school.
- b) Getting them to receive the best education by improving the school facilities, conditions and qualifications of the teachers.
- c) Mobilising the participation of the African people in the task of taking responsibility for African Education.
- d) Promoting the social development of the African people.

ASSECA'S purpose has been to release a force in this country which would cope with these crying needs. How far we are succeeding can be seen in the fact that whereas we started with one branch in Johannesburg four years ago, to-day we have nineteen in three provinces. Three more in Clermont, Durban and Pietermaritzburg are to be established in the fourth province of Natal.

For the first time in recent years, in 1971 we were able to accommodate all the students who needed admission to secondary education in Soweto. We were able to get the Education Department to give grants to enable secondary schools to be run in temporary premises.

T.E.A.C.H.

The "Star" newspaper, responding to our campaign, has launched the magnificent TEACH EVERY AFRICAN CHILD programme. They challenged employers of African labour to contribute R10 per employee to a fund to build schools in Soweto. To date the fund has reached the R150 000 mark and three big schools have been erected in

Soweto in the last few months. One other newspaper is taking on a similar programme in another province.

At our first Annual General Meeting in 1970 we said that the people of South Africa and men of goodwill round the world would not sit unconcerned while our children needed education. Our faith has been vindicated. The Polaroid Corporation and the Pepsi Cola Company of America have launched a Scholarship Trust. The American South African Study and Educational Trust (ASSET) with an annual contribution of R74 000 enables about 1 000 students annually to attend Post Secondary and University Colleges. South African Breweries contributes R15 000 annually for the educational needs of pupils in the Eastern Cape region. More and more companies are contributing assistance to our cause.

Our branches themselves tackle educational and cultural problems locally and assist more and more students to further their education and build up community effort.

One big national project we are undertaking, with the assistance of Teachers Associations and other groups, is the raising of a R1 million Fund from our 15 million people.

This year we were able to bring to this country Mr. Ray Wilkins the Black Civil Rights leader of the NAACP from the United States. We plan to bring another such figure to our National Annual Education Conference early in 1973. The visits provide an invaluable link with the outside world.

We have mentioned only some of the activities of ASSECA by way of example. But the whole of African education and all that is pertinent thereto is our field of education. Indeed eventually we aim to take over Bantu Education.

Culturally we mean to establish the people's Community Centres in the main centres of our country. These shall form the hub of the life of our communities, radiating culture and creative activities in self-help efforts.

We are building a new proud, self reliant, dynamic and purposeful society.

Our Five Year Plan provides for:

- a) Achievement of placing every African child in school.
- b) Youth and leadership training.
- c) Research endowments for research training scholarships in the fields of Pedagogy, History, Commerce Social Development, Administration, Co-operatives, Cultural disciplines, Communication.

We must raise the leadership to build the new society. We must mobilise men of goodwill to help us help ourselves. It is a mighty adventure. □

“SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH”

By Edgar Brookes

“I believe very few people today, “wrote an experienced critic who shall remain nameless, “would buy a book on liberalism in South Africa. In their attitude towards liberalism, black nationalists are derisive, English-speaking white students are scornful, and many former liberals are either disillusioned or disappointed – it is just painful for them to read of their own unavailing protests.”

The questions arising from this statement are to some extent a matter of semantics. “Liberal”, as the writer uses the word, means anyone who stands for equal rights for all human beings in political and economic life, irrespective of race or colour. Such an attitude cannot be faulted. Those who deride or despise liberalism do so only after they have made the name mean something less than this high ideal, just as the name “christian” is used to describe the attitude to life of some hypocritical chapel-going grocer who uses false weights, instead of denoting people like St. Francis of Assisi. To the South African Government “liberalism” means something akin to communism; to the critics referred to in my friend’s letter it means the ineffective attitudes of a comfortable middle-class reformer.

DEEPER

The real issue goes deeper than this. To many critics, black and white alike, liberalism is scorned because it has not yielded results. Since it has failed, recourse must be had to movements which believe in the use of force. This is a widespread attitude: can it be justified? Those who advocate it have used force only in a minuscule way, and they do not seem to have tried to answer, even for themselves, the questions, who is to use force, how is it to be used, whether it will be successful, and, if it should be, what sort of South Africa it will produce. The admirable emotion behind it is best expressed by Mr. Weller’s immortal words: “Ain’t nobody going to be walloped for this ‘ere?” But as a reasoned programme it is intellectually almost contemptible, at any rate in its normal manifestations.

Liberalism must indeed face the fact that innumerable protests have been made against bad laws over a quarter of a century and that nearly all the bad laws have been enacted in defiance of the protests. All this is sadly true. Where then do we go from here, unless we are prepared to advocate the use of *real* force – the galvanising of millions of the oppressed into civil war? Anyone who talks about force and shrinks from its only possible effective form merely confuses the issue. We who do not advocate such a use of force are at least intellectually coherent.

Have we failed so utterly? Suppose that we have, then let us ask since when unpopularity or lack of success have proved a doctrine to be wrong. Wilberforce’s first efforts at slave emancipation were received by the House of Commons with derisive laughter. As he lay dying four decades later the House of Commons was passing the Act emancipating slaves. Nearly every great reform which has challenged vested interests or entrenched prejudices has had the same history. Credit is due not to the big battalions who passed it in the end, but to the faithful souls who through a long night defended the beleaguered citadel of righteousness and *without whose “ineffective” fidelity the final triumph would have been impossible.*

NO CREDIT

Neither they nor we deserve credit for our firm stand in defence of justice under the silent stars. We take that stand because we can do no other. As we can do no other. As Everest is climbed because it is there, so apartheid under all its names is defied because it is there. We fight because we must. Success is not within our grasp: courage is.

But has liberalism been such a failure? Arthur Hugh Clough in his famous poem says:

While the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in the main.

What liberalism has done is to awaken the consciences of tens of thousands to the injustices of our situation. Fifty years ago, thirty years ago, student bodies and many church leaders were passive or apathetic: now they are alive, awake and wonderfully courageous. That they are not successful is not so memorable as the fact that defenders of the established order are so frightened of them that they must attack them with bludgeons and persecute them with bannings. There is reason for their fear, for nothing is more powerful than a new and true idea, however persecuted.

PACIFY CONSCIENCE

Even the "homelands", utterly inadequate though they are to the real needs of the situation, are an attempt to pacify the national conscience aroused by liberal thinkers. The disappearance of the word "baasskap" from the political vocabulary may be hypocrisy, but hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue.

The writer remembers, some twenty-five years ago, Nationalist speakers in the Senate protesting vigorously against the purchase of pedigree poultry and cattle for African agricultural colleges. We hear no more of these cock and bull stories today. Bad in principle as our "ethnic" universities are, they have been erected by the sons of men who opposed even secondary education for Africans. Many more battles remain to be won, most notably the battle for fair wage levels and for better education, but

the work of liberalism has not been fruitless, and its present discouragements are no cause for craven-hearted despair. Be it noted that economic and educational reform do not have to wait for the realisation of complete political equality, though they may well pave the way for it. That so many thinkers in Churches and the Universities have in this and other fields moved from friendly interest on to passionate conviction is also part of the triumph of liberal thinkers, who have influenced their friends as well as their enemies.

The writer recently had the task of going through documents of the years 1830 to 1910 referring to the Africans and their areas. The best of them are quaint and some are even repellent in the light of the beliefs of 1972. The distance between Sir George Grey and the student programmes now before us is the measure of what liberalism has achieved during its long night of effort. □

TERRORISM

by Marie Dyer

White South Africans think they are experts on terrorism. They have been told so often that they are threatened by it every hour of every day that they are convinced, even though most of them have never seen a trace of it. (Cape Town people may have seen the blackened ruins of St. Thomas Hall, but that is something else again). Consequently when the world was convulsed by the Black September murders, there was a note of smugness in the South African reaction. 'This will show the world how right we have been about terrorists all along' was somehow the feeling. And the outraged bewilderment in the country at the increased grants distributed by the W.C.C. has been correspondingly greater.

The truth is in fact that White South Africans are about as confused as they can be about terrorism and its implications. Their attitude to terrorism is the same as the medieval attitude to witchcraft — it is enough to be accused of it to stand condemned of it; and to be held responsible for any deed committed by anyone else similarly accused.

The terrorism which shocks most of the world is the kind that deals in violent acts of blackmail practised on civilians, for motives of politics or greed: the hijackings, kidnappings, murders, letter- and parcel-bombs which threaten and poison ordinary people's activities, ordinary daily life. With this kind of activity the guerrilla raiders and infiltrators on our borders have not had anything to do.

IDENTIFY

It is easy to see why White South Africans are so eager to identify any kind of revolutionary guerrilla activity with the horrors of terrorism. Irregular warfare is largely the method of the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich. South Africans who find ethical merit in their wealth and strength are morally comforted by the thought

that there is some inherent evil in a home-made landmine which is not shared by a tank. But in reality, although all war and violence are hateful, there is no justification for condemning the guerrilla sniper or grenade-thrower while tactfully withholding judgement on the pilot of the helicopter who sprays him with machine-gun bullets or napalm. There is no supreme moral virtue, either, in any given status quo- (although the equation; revolution *equals* guerrillas *equals* terrorists *equals* evil would seem to accord it). South Africans would understand this well if say, a band of hard-pressed democratic rebels took revolutionary arms against a Communist dictatorship; but it is not likely that this would clear up any of their verbal confusions. Dictatorships who do not want their subjects to think or criticise are adept at the manipulation of 'push-button' words — words whose very mention is enough to induce vague but passionate feelings of patriotic hatred in almost everyone. The Communists are usually the most skilful at this — one thinks of words like 'capitalist', 'bourgeois', 'Trotskyite', 'revisionist', etc. But 'terrorist' in this country is surely one of the most successful of all. □

GUIDE

TO THE BIRDS

OF SOUTH AFRICA

by D.O. Kaufman

Broederbird (Albino ad nauseam). A large carnivorous bird which only comes out on moonless nights. The broederbird is pure white and inhabits certain areas of the plattland and the Free State as well as the less inhabited areas of Natal and the Cape. It also embarks on a yearly migration to the offices of the Sunday Times. Recent reports of ornithologists indicate that it has turned cannibalistic, and there are hopes that it may soon be extinct. It tends to keep very much to itself, but has been known to mate with the Blackbird. Also known as the Super Nat, and Big John.

BlackBird (Kaffir Blerrissimus). Found throughout South Africa despite repeated attempts to get it to settle in defined areas. Feathers the nests of most other birds. Has been known to mate with the Broederbird. Eats very little, yet works fairly hard. Can be recognised by its perpetual cry "Jabaasie, Jabassie".

Protesting Nusashrike (Cogito ergo sum). Also known as the Yellow Establishment Bird, The Great Red Conspiracy and the Lesser Tit. Found in little clutches in Durban, CapeTown, Maritzburg, Grahamstown and Braamfontein. Is reputed to live solely on marijuana and government grants. It tends to be a very noisy bird, always flying around the Blackbird and annoying the Broederbird and others. It has been seen at times on Robben Island, and every few years makes a bid for London or New York.

Blue Meany (Sus non cogitere). A rather stupid, but often entertaining bird, the Blue Meany preys on the Nusashrike and the Blackbird. Is found throughout the country and in the most unlikely places. Has been known to imitate the

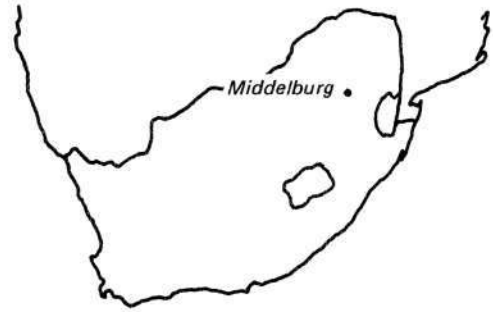
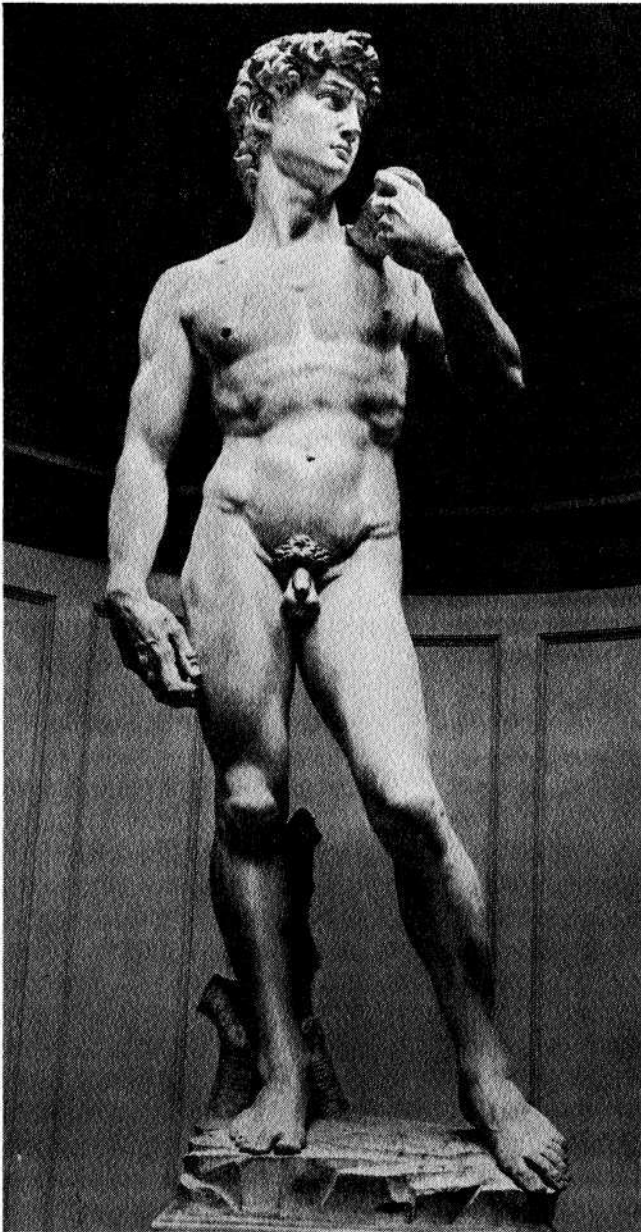
Nusashrike. It is an extremely sensitive bird and can even detect signs of a person thinking, at which it gets extremely agitated and attacks blindly. It has indiscriminate feeding and drinking habits.

Lesser Nat (Dominum nostrum). Found in large numbers throughout the country. No determined colour shade due to interbreeding with Blackbirds. Was thought to be extinct in the 18th century but has shown remarkable signs of survival. The Lesser Nat is totally dominated by the Broederbird. It feeds solely on pap, wors and biltong and drinks large quantities of KWV and Lieberstien. Often found in churches on Sundays, although the Free State variety tends to migrate to Swaziland.

Sap-Sap (Nat Britannicus.) Again found throughout the country, although predominantly in Natal, the Eastern Cape and on the Witwatersrand. Can be distinguished from the Lesser Nat by its perpetual call "Imalrite jack, imalrite". Has similar feeding habits to the lesser nat. Migrates annually to Britain.

Progull (Ardus ad solitario). Also known as the Pink Sap-Sap, the Red Stooze and the Rich Nat, the Progull is an exceedingly rare bird in South Africa. It is usually young, as few actually reach maturity. Its eating habits are similar, but far more expansive than those of the Sap-Sap and the Lesser Nat. Its nests are also far more luxurious than any other bird. □

THIS SOUTH AFRICA



The Middelburg David, a replica of Michaelangelo's famous statue, has been draped from the waist down — to preserve the "public morals" of the Transvaal town.

The draping follows Friday's warning by the town's traffic chief, Mr. Alec Coutts, that the owner of a hairdressing salon faced prosecution.

A municipal by-law covering objects which are "obscene, indecent, objectionable or undesirable or which may affect public morals, good, safety, manner or decorum," lays down a fine of R50.

The acting secretary of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk's Public Morals Commission, the Rev. C. Solijn, warned yesterday of the dangers of the unclad statues.

"It definitely poses a threat to public morals."

Referring to the part of David's anatomy that has aroused the controversy he said: "No human being is immune to the suggestions of an object so realistically and vividly portrayed."

The statue, although a work of art, should not be openly displayed because the sight of it would "stir up sexual emotions which were most undesirable in our mixed society," he said.

Rand Daily Mail

THY KINGDOM COME — BUT KEEP IT SEPARATE!

"THY KINGDOM COME" — but separately. Is this the theme of the congress to be held in Cape Town this month by the Women's Mission Society of the Dutch Reformed Church?

The theme, of the congress — as stated in the latest issue of Die Kerkbode, the DRC's weekly newspaper, is "Thy Kingdom Come"

But the theme is to be divided and discussed as follows: "Thy kingdom come among the Indians," "Thy kingdom

come among the Bantu (foreign)," "Thy kingdom come among the Coloureds," and "Thy kingdom come among the Bantu (interior)."

"Thy kingdom come among the Whites" has not been set down for discussion.

The Kerkbode reveals that the collection at the congress will be used to start a bursary fund for Africans to help provide "educated Christian leaders" for the DRC in Africa. □

Daily News

XHOSA LITERATURE COMPETITION

A Xhosa Literature competition, open to authors from South Africa and beyond has been launched here to mark the Anniversary next year in July of 150 years of Xhosa Literature in South Africa. An early Scottish missionary in the Tyumie Valley, as far back as 1821, first mastered the Xhosa language and put it in to writing. He was John Bennie who later became known as the father of this language. In 1823 the Rev. John Ross brought the first Printing Press to this area and the Xhosa language was put into print.

The competition has been organized by a committee which has been formed to be in charge of the large scale Celebrations next year at the famous Lovedale and Fort Hare institutions. Known as "Indyebo YesiXhosa" meaning "A wealth of Xhosa" the competition has already drawn many entries although only announced publicly last month. Many well known publishing firms and business houses have undertaken to sponsor different sections in the competition and prize money is already over the R1 000 mark. There are sections on the Novel, Plays, Short Stories, Narrative poetry, and Children's Stories.

Of special interest is the section sponsored by the Lovedale Mission for a Religious booklet of a 50 pages (approx 25 000 words) on 'Baptism and Holy Communion' and which carries a First Prize of R100. Also recently announced is the section sponsored by the *South African Outlook* for an article, between 5 000 and 10 000 words in length, describing any aspect of life in South Africa. A First Prize of R100 has been offered along with a Second Prize of R50.

Other sections and prizes in the Competition are as follows:

Lovedale Press	Novel	1st Prize R150 2nd Prize R100
Via Afrika	10 Short Stories	1st Prize R150 2nd Prize R100
Oxford Univ. Press	Narrative Poetry	1st Prize R100 2nd Prize R50
Educum	Drama	1st Prize R150 2nd Prize R100
Imvo Via Afrika	Newspaper Article Stories for children written by Primary School children. The best of these will be published in <i>Wamba</i> and will be paid for at the usual rate.	1st Prize R50

Further details obtainable from the Secretary, Indyebo YesiXhosa, Rev. J.J.R. Jolobe, P.O. Lovedale, C.P.

- N.B.**
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